

The Assembly Commission

Meeting Venue: **Presiding Officer's office, 4th floor – Ty Hywel**

Meeting date: **Thursday, 28 June 2012**

Meeting time: **10:30**

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales



Minutes: AC(4)2012(4)

Committee Members:

Rosemary Butler (Chair)
Peter Black
Angela Burns
Sandy Mewies
Rhodri Glyn Thomas

Officials present:

Claire Clancy, Chief Executive & Clerk of the Assembly (Official)
Adrian Crompton, Director of Assembly Business (Official)
Keith Bush, Director of Legal Services (Official)
Dave Tosh (Official)
Craig Stephenson, Principal Private Secretary to the Presiding Officer (Official)
Non Gwilym (Official)
Steven O'Donoghue, Head of Assembly Resources (Official)
Nicola Callow, Head of Finance (Official)
Carys Evans, Principal Commission Secretary (Secretary)

Others in attendance:

David Melding, Deputy Presiding Officer
Mair Barnes, Independent Adviser

1. Introduction and apologies

Commissioners agreed not to publish the restricted papers.

1(i) Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

1(ii) Minutes of the previous meeting

2. National Assembly for Wales (Official Languages) Bill and Bilingual Services Scheme

Commissioners discussed the progress of the National Assembly for Wales (Official Languages) Bill, following the completion of Stage 2 consideration of the Bill on 21 June.

All 7 of the Commission's amendments were agreed at Stage 2, including an amendment clarifying that the duty to provide a fully bilingual record is limited to plenary proceedings.

During the Committee proceedings, a number of Members had put forward amendments which they had not pressed to a vote but which they had asked the Commission to consider further before the Bill returns to the full Assembly for Stage 3. The Commission recognised that were the Bill to be debated further on 18 July, as currently planned, there would not be enough time for these matters to be considered and discussed thoroughly and constructively between the Commission and the Members in question.

The Commission agreed to seek a postponement of the Stage 3 debate on the Bill until early in the Autumn term.

Actions:

- Rhodri Glyn Thomas AM to write to the Business Committee to seek postponement of Stage 3 proceedings.
- Rhodri Glyn Thomas AM to work with officials and AMs to consider the matters that require further consideration before Stage 3.

3. Annual report and accounts 2011–12

The Assembly Commission Annual Report 2011–12 provides an overview of the strategic priorities of the Assembly Commission, with a strong emphasis on building an Assembly for the future.

The Annual Report will be published online on 12 July with the full document, including accounts, formally laid by the end of term.

Commissioners agreed the report.

4. Draft budget 2013–14

Commissioners confirmed they would continue with their commitment to working within the 2013–14 indicative funding set out in the previous year's budget document. The indicative budget for 2013–14 is £49.5 million, of which £33.5 million relates to operating costs, £13.7 million for the Members' budget and the balance available for investments.

Commissioners discussed priorities for the 2013–14 budget. Angela Burns AM agreed to meet individual Members to discuss the Commission budget prior to it being finalised.

The Budget is due to be agreed at the Commission meeting on 27 September and laid on 28 September. Further consideration of the budget will take place at the Commission meeting on 12 July.

Action: Officials to bring a draft budget document to the next meeting.

5. Future ICT Services Programme

The Commission is required to give notice to the Welsh Government and Atos, by 30 April 2013, of its decision on the future provision of ICT services.

In November 2011 the Commission agreed to assess the following two options:

- Option 1: Extension of Merlin contract –subject to new arrangements meeting Assembly cost, performance and flexibility requirements.
- Option 2: Move to mixed provision.

It was agreed that the officials would continue to develop these options to enable the Commission to make a decision on future provision in the Autumn.

6. UNO Benefits Review

At the October 2011 meeting, the Commission was presented with a review of the benefits and savings delivered by the UNO project and requested regular updates on the benefits achieved.

UNO achieved its aim of separating the Assembly's infrastructure from that of the Welsh Government. This was a necessary and unavoidable step that has put the Assembly in a position to be able to decide on its future ICT service provision and ICT strategy.

Other benefits achieved include the migration to Windows 7 and Office 2010, improved business continuity and resilience of Assembly systems and better connectivity, particularly for constituency offices.

Various technical issues have been resolved but others are still being progressed, including the achievement of the Caseworker upgrade, resolution of local printing issues and simplifying access to applications.

Whilst acknowledging that the steps taken as part of UNO were necessary, Commissioners expressed concern about the continuing ICT problems being experienced by Members and their staff and it was agreed that officials should continue to give the resolution of these issues a high priority.

7. Assembly Commission portfolios

Commissioners considered their portfolios following the first year of operation and agreed to the changes in the proposed in the paper, subject to one amendment. Sandy Mewies AM will take responsibility for Assembly Facilities whilst Peter Black AM will retain responsibility for the Assembly Estate because of the links to sustainability.

8. Remuneration Committee

Commissioners noted the Annual Report and Revised Terms of Reference of the Assembly's Remuneration Committee.

9. Rolling programme

The next meeting of the Commission will take place on Thursday 12 July. Agenda items will include:

- Draft Budget 2013–14
- Assembly Commission Audit Committee Annual Report
- Annual Equality Report 2011–12

10. Any other business

- Commissioners discussed the status of the official Record of Proceedings.
- Commissioners requested further information on the full range of services in place to support Committee proceedings.
- Angela Burns AM highlighted items of note in the Assembly Commission Internal Audit Annual Report.
- Commissioners agreed to hold an informal meeting during the summer recess.

Secretariat
June 2012