

Audit Committee

Minutes AC(2) 07-06

Meeting date: 6 July 2006

Meeting time: 1.30pm – 4.30pm

Meeting venue: Committee Room 2, Senedd

Assembly Members in Attendance

Assembly Member	Constituency
Janet Davies (Chair)	South Wales West
Leighton Andrews	Rhondda
Denise Idris Jones	Conwy
Mick Bates	Montgomeryshire
Jocelyn Davies	South Wales East
Christine Gwyther	Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire
Mark Isherwood	North Wales
Catherine Thomas	Llanelli

Officials in Attendance

Jeremy Colman	Auditor General for Wales
Gillian Body	Wales Audit Office
Mike Usher	Wales Audit Office
Geraint Morgan	Wales Audit Office
Rob Powell	Wales Audit Office
David Powell	Assembly Compliance Officer
Ian Gibson	Deputy Compliance Officer

Witnesses

Sir Jon Shortridge	Permanent Secretary, National Assembly for Wales
Peter Ryland	Chief Accountant, National Assembly for Wales
Ann Lloyd	Head of Health and Social Services, Welsh Assembly Government
Dr Christine Daws	DHSS Resource Directorate, Welsh Assembly Government.
John Hill-Tout	Joint Director, Directorate of Performance and Operations, Health and Social Services, Welsh Assembly Government

Committee Service

Name	Job title
Kathryn Jenkins	Committee Clerk
Daniel Collier	Deputy Committee Clerk

Item 1: Introduction, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interests

1.1 The Chair welcomed Committee Members and members of the public to the meeting.

1.2 Apologies were received from Irene James for whom Christine Gwyther was substituting. Alun Cairns and Carl Sergeant also apologised.

1.3 There were no declarations of interest.

Item 2: Financial Audit of central Government and NHS bodies in Wales: 2006 Paper: AC(2) 07-06(p1)

2.1 The Committee took evidence from Sir Jon Shortridge, Permanent Secretary, National Assembly for Wales and Peter Ryland, Chief Accountant, National Assembly for Wales, and Ann Lloyd, Head of Department of Health and Social Services, Welsh Assembly Government.

Action points

The Permanent Secretary agreed to provide:

- a note on the recommendations of internal audit on the monitoring and control of grant expenditure and its written financial procedures.

- a note on figure 5 of the Auditor General's report explaining the comparison between the 96% of public sector organisations in Wales that have participated in the Value Wales Training Programme and the 62 out of 65 that have participated in the Buy4Wales national procurement website.
- a note on key lessons from the closure process of the 1994-99 EU Programmes.
- a note on whether the Assembly has the powers to make the compliance training given to EU Project sponsors and managers compulsory as a condition of being awarded the grant payment.
- Statistics on the time taken to deal with FOI requests including examples of where and for how long extensions to the 20 day response deadline have been made for requests.
- indicative figures of the proportion of Freedom of Information requests made by the Welsh media over the past year.

Item 3: NHS Waiting Times: Follow up report

Paper: AC(2) 07-06(p2)

3.1 The Committee took evidence from Ann Lloyd, Head of Department of Health and Social Services, Welsh Assembly Government and John Hill-Tout, Joint Director, Directorate of Performance and Operations, Health and Social Services, Welsh Assembly Government.

Action point

John Hill-Tout agreed to provide a note explaining the levels of specialist surgery in Swansea and the impact on inpatient/day case treatment waiting times.

Item 4: The Welsh Assembly Government response to the Audit Committee report on Funding for the National Botanic Garden of Wales

Paper: AC(2) 07-06(p3), AC(2) 07-06(p4)

4.1 The Committee considered the Welsh Assembly Government response to the Committee's report on 'Funding for the National Botanic Garden of Wales' and discussed the AGW's advice. The Committee was content.

Item 5: Update report on procurement in the Higher Education Sector in Wales

Paper: AC(2) 07-06(p5), AC(2) 07-06(p6)

5.1 The Committee received an update report on the progress on implementing its recommendations on procurement in the Higher Education sector from the Welsh Assembly Government and discussed the AGW's advice. The Committee was content.

Item 6: Audit Committee's Annual Report to Plenary 2005-06

Paper: AC(2) 07-06(p7)

6.1 The Committee approved the Committee's draft Annual report 2005-06.

Item 7: Minutes of the previous meeting

Paper: AC(2) 06-06(mins)

7.1 The Committee approved the minutes of its 15 June 2006 meeting.

7.2 Leighton Andrews withdrew from the meeting.

The Committee resolved to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 8.24 (vi)

Private Session

Item 8: Audit Committee draft report The Merlin Contract – Enabling the National Assembly to change its business processes through ICT

Paper: AC(2) 07-06(p8)

8.1 The Committee considered the draft report.

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