

## **Culture Committee CC 02-03 p5 Annex 1**

**Date : 22 January 2002**

**Time : 9:00am – 12-30pm**

**Venue: Committee Room 1, National Assembly for Wales**

### ***PAPER TO CULTURE COMMITTEE***

## **QUINQUENNIAL REVIEW OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE ANCIENT AND HISTORICAL MONUMENTS OF WALES**

### **Purpose**

1. To offer members an opportunity to comment on the draft review report of the quinquennial review of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales.

### **Summary**

2. This paper attaches the draft interim report of the quinquennial review of the Royal Commission which begins with a 3 page executive summary of findings and recommendations. If Members have any observations they wish to make to me before this report is finalised, please let me have them by the end of February. Following any revisions after consideration of such comments, the final version of the report will be available on the internet.

### **Background**

3. Edwina Hart's Statement to Plenary of 10 May 2000, on the regime for reviewing Assembly Public Bodies (ASPBs) and other similar bodies, affirmed the Cabinet's commitment to continuing a quinquennial review regime, but in a more open way than in pre-Assembly days. As an Assembly official (working outside the Royal Commission's sponsor, Cadw), I produced the attached draft interim review report.

## **Consideration**

4. The draft report's major recommendations are that:-

- The next suitable opportunity be taken to obtain the primary legislation which would transfer the power to the National Assembly for Wales (the Assembly) to change the functions of the Royal Commission or abolish it.
- Broadly speaking, the functions currently discharged by the Royal Commission are necessary, and those functions associated with enabling open and informative electronic access to all members of the public in Wales and beyond have great potential to contribute to a range of major Assembly themes and strategies.
- Consideration of the transfer of functions into or out of the Royal Commission awaits the Welsh Assembly Government's decisions when it has considered its consultants' report, and the implementation of Recommendation 3 to increase the general powers of the Assembly over the Royal Commission's functions.
- The Royal Commission does not merge with the National Library of Wales
- The Royal Commission considers with bodies in the libraries and archives field the opportunities for mutually beneficial and joint activities designed to improve the relevant bodies' delivery of service.
- The Royal Commission does not merge with the National Museums and Galleries of Wales.
- Merger with Cadw not be pursued, but that, in principle, this is the merger whose advantages and disadvantages will be most worthy of reconsideration in the long term.

– The Royal Commission should remain as an ASPB.

- Substantive formal communication between Cadw and the Commission , for example in the annual remit letter, should be improved, within the context of general development of the Assembly's policies for the historic environment of Wales which are likely to flow from the current consultancy commissioned by the Welsh Assembly Government, and from some of the recommendations, if accepted , of my interim report of the quinquennial review of Cadw.

## **Compliance**

5. The Royal Commission is an executive Assembly Sponsored Public Body, originally created by Royal Warrant in 1908.

6. This review was conducted using the Assembly's supplementary powers under sections 40 and 85 of the Government of Wales Act. These powers have been delegated to the Minister for Finance, Local Government and Communities (responsible for the overall review regime) and the Culture Minister (within whose field the Royal Commission lies).

## **Finance**

7. The direct cost of carrying out of this review consists essentially of my time of the officer reviewing it. This cost had been budgeted for within administrative cost allocations.

8. The report has yet to be finalised, so it is not possible to identify the total direct cost of implementing the recommendations, but they appear to be de minimis.

## **Action**

9. Members of the Committee are invited to let me have any comments they may have on the attached draft report by the end of February.

**MARTIN ROLPH**