

MINUTES

Date:	5 February 2003
Time:	9.00 – 12.30pm
Venue:	Committee Room 1, National Assembly for Wales
Attendance:	
Members	<p>Rhodri Glyn Thomas) (Plaid Cymru, Carmarthen East and Dinefwr, Chair)</p> <p>Jenny Randerson (Liberal Democrat, Cardiff Central, Assembly Minister)</p> <p>Owen John Thomas (Plaid Cymru, South Wales Central)</p> <p>Lorraine Barrett (Labour, Cardiff South and Penarth)</p> <p>Delyth Evans (Labour, Mid & West Wales)</p> <p>Alison Halford (Labour, Delyn)</p> <p>Dafydd Wigley (Plaid Cymru, Caernarfon)</p> <p>Glyn Davies (Conservative, Mid & West Wales)</p> <p>Rosemary Butler (Labour, Newport West)</p>
Officials	<p>Margaret Evans (Arts, Lottery and Sport Division)</p> <p>Arthur Emyr (Arts, Lottery and Sport Division)</p> <p>Peter Harding (Arts, Lottery and Sport Division)</p> <p>Prys Davies(Culture & Welsh Language Division)</p> <p>Debra Carter (Head, Members Research Service)</p>
Secretariat	Marie Knox: Head of MRCS

	Lynsey Hazzard: Deputy Clerk
	Gareth Woodhead: Administrative Officer

9.00am-9.05am

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

1. The Chair welcomed the Committee and members of the public.
2. The Chair reminded Members of the declarations of interest requirement, in accordance with Standing Order 4.5.
3. The Minister drew the Committee's attention to the fact that Russell Thomas would be retiring in a few weeks time. Margaret Evans would take over responsibility for Mr Thomas' staff and policy areas.

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9.05am to 10.00am

Item 2: " A Culture in Common"-implementing the Committee's recommendations. Progress with "Creative Future"

CC 02-03(p.1); CC 02-03 (p2)

Presenters: Margaret Evans; Peter Harding

2.1 The Minister introduced her paper and highlighted the following points:

- The strategy was a ten year programme and significant progress had been made since the strategy's launch last year.
- Many of the cultural Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies (ASPBs) had subsequently developed new strategies during this period.
- There had been a 11% increase in the culture budget in 2002-03 with a similar increase scheduled for 2003-04. The establishment of the Culture Fund had been a key development.
- The Assembly Government had established cultural issues as an important cross-cutting theme.
- The Arts Council for Wales (ACW) had been restructured.
- A number of discrete and flagship projects had begun, spanning from the free entry of museums initiative to the construction work on the Wales Millennium Centre.
- Cymru'n Creu played a crucial role in monitoring whether Creative Futures targets are met.
- The next meeting of Cymru'n Creu would be held on 13 February where a detailed matrix of Creative Futures actions, milestones and progress would be considered for agreement.

2. The following points were raised in the subsequent discussion:

- Members welcomed the progress that had been made in implementing the actions in Creative

Future, and the increase in the culture budget. The creation of a Ministerial culture portfolio was considered a catalyst for the progress made.

- In response to a query the Minister explained that for each of the eight broad action areas in Creative Future there was a lead body with a breakdown of their responsibilities.
- The Minister disagreed with the suggestion of establishing a full time secretariat to support Cymru'n Creu as she felt this would lead to greater bureaucracy and that the function was already the role of the Culture, Sport and Welsh Language Division of the National Assembly for Wales (NafW).
- The Minister explained that part of the increased budget allocation had helped to stabilise the funding of ASPBs' revenue clients with significant debts. She also noted that under the new Culture Funding ASPBs' running costs were shown separately from funding for specific initiatives. The Minister informed Members that lottery funding of the ACW was not be increasing.
- In response to a query the Minister explained that the Welsh Development Agency (WDA) had been asked by Cymru'n Creu to update its costing figures regarding the economic benefits of certain projects.
- Some Members queried whether dance had been sufficiently covered in the strategy. The Minister reminded Members that dance was included in the ACW's 5 year development strategy and further focus would be placed on it following the creation of the Wales Millennium Centre.
- In response to a question the Minister informed Members that the ACW was in discussion with the Welsh Books Council (WBC) regarding establishing a co-ordinated approach to the promotion of English language publishing and the possible transfer of funds.
- The Minister explained to Members that local authorities were seen as partners and their role in implementing the strategy was seen as crucial.
- Some Members felt that there was a need for the strategy to have a greater focus on disadvantaged communities. The Minister reminded Members that the bursary scheme for disadvantaged adults was still in place and was part of the ACW's 5 year development strategy.
- The Minister noted that there remained clear lines of communication to the Wales European Centre through the British Council and Wales Arts International and informed Members that she would be representing the United Kingdom alongside her Scottish counterpart at the Council of Minister's meeting on cultural diversity in Strasbourg.
- Officials noted that the Artes Mundi prize would tour around Wales each year.
- In response to requests, the Minister agreed to arrange for the committee members to have an informal meeting over lunch with Cymru'n Creu; to provide a report on the review of the Welsh Music Foundation; and to arrange for copies of Honk music magazine to be sent to Members in the future.

2.3 The Chair informed Members that paper CC 03-03(p.2) was a document compiled by the new Members Research Service and commissioned by the Committee Secretariat. The Members' Research and Committee Services (MRCS) team was trialling different ways of providing additional support and briefing advice for committees.

Action Points:

- Officials to provide a paper on the Welsh Music Foundation by the next meeting.
- The Minister's office/officials to arrange for the magazine, "Honk", to be sent to all committee members.

- The Minister to circulate details of the Cymru'n Creu meeting in conference rooms A/B on Thursday 13th February and arrange for the committee members to have lunch with Cymru'n Creu.

10.00am-10.45am

Item 3: Communications Bill

CC-03-03 (p3)

Presenters: Margaret Evans; Prys Davies

1. The Chair explained that the item was an opportunity to follow up the Committee's previous discussions on the draft Communications Bill. The Chair was disappointed that DCMS had declined to attend the meeting due to Parliamentary commitments, receiving instead a letter and statement from Dr Kim Howells. The Chair was also disappointed that more of the Assembly's suggestions had not been incorporated into the Bill and felt that the link between the National Assembly for Wales and OFCOM was uncertain.
2. The Minister felt that the Welsh Assembly Government had made some progress in implementing their suggestions and a number of points raised by The Assembly had also been raised by the Joint Committee of the House of Commons and the House of Lords. The Minister felt that good relations had been established with OFCOM. She had met with Lord Currie and Ian Hargreaves in December. Ian Hargreaves had been given de facto special responsibility for nations and the regions. He was aware of the importance of association with Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland and had a good knowledge of media issues in Wales.
3. During the session the following points arose:

- Membership of OFCOM Board

Some members expressed disappointment that Wales had not secured a representative on the main OFCOM board. Others felt however that it was not the main issue. The central OFCOM board was a regulatory body for the UK and therefore issues needed to be dealt with on a UK basis. It was agreed that the structure in Wales needed to be appropriate to ensure Wales had an effective input into OFCOM.

- Content Board/Consumer Panel

The Welsh Assembly Government had been consulted in relation to the selection of names to be put forward for the Content Board. There would be a Welsh representative on both the Content Board and Consumer Panel.

- OFCOM office in Wales

The Welsh Assembly Government had been successful in arguing for the establishment of an OFCOM office in Wales.

- Memorandum of Understanding

The Minister felt it was regrettable that a lot of the suggestions made by the Assembly had been left to a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), rather than incorporated into the Bill. This meant that the terms of the MOU would be more easily overturned by future governments holding different views.

- Minister's Advisory Group

The Minister was convening a small group to advise on OFCOM's remit in Wales and provide advice to the Minister prior to her comments to Lord Currie. The Minister had invited Geraint Talfan Davies to chair the group. Other members included Leighton Andrews, Professor Mike Ted, Arwel Ellis-Owen and Delyth Evans, who would provide an important link to the Committee. The review was to be short-term, with recommendations being required by the beginning of April. The Minister was also looking at setting up a group to produce a long-term view of OFCOM's implementation. It was hoped this group would be set up in connection with Cymru'n Creu. The present group had been chosen due to their knowledge of broadcasting and not for political or geographical balance. Dafydd Wigley asked the Committee to note his unhappiness on this point. It was confirmed that the group would not be remunerated for its work and would be talking to various groups involved in communications and report on an impartial basis.

- Radio Communications Authority (RCA)

The wireless spectrum auction was an example of how Wales had failed to have an input in a decision which possibly had serious implications for Wales. Some members felt that the lack of a seat on the RCA Board was a contributory factor while others felt that it was because the RCA had not adapted to the post devolution situation, and that OFCOM as a post-devolution organisation would be more sensitive. OFCOM would in future take over the role of the RCA.

- S4C and HTV

Sufficient consideration needed to be given to the unique position of S4C in terms of regional programming.

- RNIB Cymru

More consideration needed to be given to deaf and blind people in the Bill. Concerns on this point had been raised by the Minister during her meeting with Lord Currie.

Action Points

- Committee to consider scrutinising OFCOM on the issue of regional broadcasting once it takes up responsibility for this matter. This was most likely to be in the autumn term.

Break: 10.45am-11.00am

11.00am to 11.45am

Item 4: Research Support for Committee

Presenter: Debra Carter, MRCS

1. The Chair introduced the presentation which was to formally introduce the re-launched Members Research and Committee Services (MRCS) to the Committee.
- Following the Assembly Review of Procedure recommendations, an additional 10 researchers had been recruited since summer 2002. There were four subject teams, each of whom, with the exception of the health team supported two subject committees and one standing committee or cross-cutting issue. The Culture Committee team therefore also covered the Equal Opportunities and the Education and Life Long Learning Committees. MRCS also provided briefing support to individual AMs. At present there was no specific expertise in the culture team in relation to the Welsh language.
 - It was suggested that the research carried out for one committee should be made available to all Members, as Members found it difficult to keep up to date with the workings of other committees, given their workload. A site was being developed on the Intranet to allow all MRS research papers to be accessed as required.
 - MRS obtained research information from many sources, however time available in which to access research and compile information was an issue. Contrasts were highlighted with Westminster, where 170 researchers working in the library provided in-depth briefs to MPs. In addition to this service for individual MPs, the Westminster select committees had expert advisers. Members were concerned that the authority and accuracy of papers produced by MRS was essential if they were to assist Members. If no information was available on a particular topic, it would be useful for Members to know why this was the case and whether MRS had experienced any difficulties when approaching certain organisations. The Secretariat should be completely independent from the officials supporting the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) in order to provide objective information, but should be able to access information from officials as well as other sources. The Minister offered to provide the information required to complete the blanks in the table in paper P2.
 - Members were concerned at how the MRS team would cope with multiple requests for briefings from different committee members. The Chair said that requests for committee-related briefings should be submitted via the Chair to ensure a fair allocation of resources. Individual AMs would continue to be free to request confidential briefs direct from the Members' Library.

Action Points

- Officials to provide missing information on progress with the creative future strategy.

11.45am to 12.30pm

Item 5: Policy Review of Participation in Sport: outline recommendations ("heads of report")

5.1 The purpose of this item was to consider the draft outline structure of the Committee report and its key recommendations. The following points arose during discussion:

- The title of the report was agreed as "Sport and Physical Exercise".
- The report should include a definition of sport. The Minister provided the Committee with the Council of Europe definition: "All forms of physical activity which, through casual or organised participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and well being, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels." The Committee adopted this definition.
- More emphasis was needed on the "fun" elements of sport. It was suggested that the "Chair's Foreword" of the report could include this.
- The more deprived community groups should be a high priority in the report.
- There was a concern that items relating to ethnic minorities and disabled people had been placed at the end of the content sheet and also at the end of the item headed "Priorities".
- Given that there were already so many initiatives in place throughout Wales, it was suggested that the Committee consider establishing "best practice" as a main theme for the report. It was also suggested that sport be a cross-Assembly policy issue, incorporating both the health and education portfolios. In this way, the Assembly could look at preventing ill health rather than curing it, adopting Finland's policy of "Fit for Life".
- Under the heading "Opportunities" the lack of primary school amenities should be noted as this reduced the amount of activity time available for schoolchildren.
- The report should cover dance as well as sport. More research into what local authorities were doing in this area was suggested. In some circles, dance was now being referred to as "Dance Sport".
- It was not the Committee's remit to determine funding issues in relation to their recommendations, however cost should be borne in mind.
- The recommendations should be arranged in relation to priority groups or sectors, not in relation to specific organisations.
- In terms of elite sports, it was felt important to include people's ability to access support through regional centres across Wales.

5.2 Any further ideas or suggestions in relation to the report should be passed to the Secretariat.

Item 6: Minutes of Previous Meeting

CC-02-03 (min)

6.1 The members agreed to ratify the minutes of 22nd January 2003.

Members' Research and Committee Services February 2003