

# House Committee

## Minutes

**Date: 9 November 2006**

**Time: 2.00pm**

**Venue: Committee Room 3, Senedd, Cardiff Bay**

### Members present:

Deputy Presiding Officer (Chair, 1<sup>st</sup> part of meeting)

Lorraine Barrett, AM Labour

Peter Black, AM Liberal Democrat

William Graham, AM Conservative (Chair, 2<sup>nd</sup> part of meeting)

Janice Gregory, AM Labour

Jane Hutt, AM Labour

Owen John Thomas, AM Plaid Cymru

Presiding Officer (in attendance)

### Officials present:

Paul Silk, Clerk to the Assembly

Dianne Bevan, Deputy Clerk to the Assembly and Clerk to the House Committee

Gwen Parry, Director of Assembly Communications

Adrian Crompton, Acting Head of Members' Research and Committee Service

Gwyn Griffiths, Legal Adviser

Brian Davidge, Head of ICT

Steven O'Donoghue, APS Finance Manager

Wayne Cowley, Head of Fees Office

Meriel Singleton, House Committee Secretariat

### In Attendance :

Andrew George (item 2.5)

Virginia Hawkins (item 2.12)

Denise Rogers (item 2.11)

John Grimes (item 2.11)


1	<b>Minutes of previous meeting and actions arising</b>
1.1	Members noted that the minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2006 were published on 26 October 2006.
1.2	Actions arising from previous meetings HC(2)-11-06(p1)
	<p>The Committee noted the action schedule.</p> <p>Dianne Bevan agreed to look into the size of an advertisement for an Education Officer post.</p> <p>Action: Dianne Bevan to look into this matter and report back to House Committee</p>
2	<b>Items for decision</b>
2.1	Senedd
	<p>Responsibility for the Senedd (covering paper) HC(2)-11-06(p2a)</p> <p>The Senedd –Transfer of Responsibility to House Committee (paper from Senedd Project Director) HC(2)-11-06(p2b)</p>
	<p>The Chair and Committee noted that the list of defects under the contract has substantially reduced, highlighted during the recent House Committee walk through, although there were a number of faults which still needed to be rectified. This would be done either through the contract arrangements or by the Welsh Assembly Government Project Team.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to take responsibility for the Senedd subject to satisfactory assurances from the Finance Minister, that should any major unforeseen problems occur in the future with the building, bids for funding would not be resisted. It was agreed that the Chair should agree a form of words with officials.</p> <p>A figure for the rateable value of the Assembly Office, the Senedd and the Pierhead building was being determined. A report on this would be submitted to the next House Committee meeting.</p> <p>Action: Form of words for assurance to be agreed between officials and Chair of House Committee.</p>

Dianne Bevan to bring report on rateable value to the next House Committee meeting.

2.2

ICT

#### Funding of Senedd ICT, AV and Broadcasting (Oral Item)

The Committee agreed that before making a final decision on the request from the Finance Minister for the Committee to meet rescheduled costs arising from the decision not to proceed with managed service for the Senedd ICT, a paper should be prepared detailing the proposed amount and any other calls on EYF within this financial year.

Action: Dianne Bevan to prepare paper detailing the figures for House Committee contribution and any other costs to be met from EYF.

#### Information and Communications Technology Update HC(2)-11-06(p3)

The Committee agreed to defer its consideration of the various options on software and the intranet until the next meeting.

#### Resignation of Chair

John Marek announced he intended to resign as Chair of the House Committee and handed a letter of resignation to the Clerk to the Committee. He would remain a member of the Committee. The Clerk asked for nominations for Chair. William Graham was nominated and, there being no other nomination, was duly elected Chair of the House Committee and presided over the remainder of the meeting.

#### Assembly Website URL Options HC(2)-11-06(p4)

Members considered a paper on possible URL options for the Assembly. The Committee decided to adopt the following address:

[Assemblywales.org](http://Assemblywales.org)

[Cynulliadcymru.org](http://Cynulliadcymru.org)

and to arrange to reroute [assembly-wales.org](http://assembly-wales.org) and [Cynulliad-cymru.org](http://Cynulliad-cymru.org) to the site.

The Committee discussed the campaign to have .cym as a top level domain for Wales. The majority of House Committee agreed formally to support this campaign, although Lorraine Barrett registered her abstention from this decision.

The question of funding for the campaign was discussed. The Clerk said that he would need to consider further whether House Committee resources could be used for these purposes. The Committee agreed to consider further if any requests for funding for this

campaign were made.

2.3 APS Recruitment Policy – Trade Union Consultation HC(2)-11-06(p5)

The Committee noted the update on the Trade Union consultation for the Recruitment Policy.

2.4 Members Translation Service HC(2)-11-06(p6)

The Committee agreed the recommendation to allocate the budgets for Members' Translation Service on a party basis as opposed to an individual Member basis, but requested that party groups received a monthly report on the money spent.

Members requested that a reminder e-mail was sent outlining the procedure for accessing the Translation Service.

Action: Gwen Parry to circulate an e-mail reminding Members of the procedure for accessing the Translation Service and to provide monthly reports to party groups on the use of this service.

2.5 Election 2007 Preparations Project HC(2)-11-06(p7)

The Committee noted the approach for the Election 2007 Preparations project and approved the method for monitoring progress on this project.

2.6 Amendment to Determination on Pay and Allowances HC(2)-11-06(p8)

The Committee agreed the proposed changes to the National Assembly for Wales (Assembly Members and Officers)(Salaries, Allowances etc) Determination 2005 and that this should be considered in Plenary before the end of the Autumn term.

2.7 Budget Virement 2006-07 HC(2)-11-06(p9)

The Committee agreed the Virements set out in the paper.

2.8 Childcare Facilities Feasibility Interim Report HC(2)-11-06(p10)

The Committee noted the feasibility interim report for childcare facilities.

Nerys Evans confirmed the intention was to provide a facility for those children who would be entering Welsh Medium education.

2.9 Cash Withdrawal Facilities for the Assembly Office HC(2)-11-06(p11)

The Committee agreed that officials invite expressions of interest for a cash machine on the Assembly Estate in the Bay.

2.10	<p>Annual Leave – Cleaning Contract Oral Item</p> <p>The Committee noted the change to the annual leave provision for workers in the cleaning contract, which had been increased to 20 days plus Bank Holidays.</p>
2.11	<p>Draft Disability Equality Scheme HC(2)-11-06(p12)</p> <p>The Committee endorsed the Draft Disability Equality scheme and noted that the items on the action schedule would be brought back for consideration in due course, and that costs may arise if and when any were implemented.</p> <p>Members expressed concern about some negative publicity in specialist press regarding accessibility in the Senedd, despite the very considerable efforts made to facilitate accessibility. Denise Rogers said that all specific criticisms would be investigated as part of the action plan and action taken to resolve any problems as appropriate.</p>
2.12	<p>Operation Black Vote HC(2)-11-06(p13) (This was taken out of order with John Marek as Chair)</p> <p>The Committee endorsed the proposal for this scheme in principle, subject to Plenary agreeing any necessary delegations to the House Committee.</p> <p>There was a discussion about whether financial assistance could be offered to those involved in the scheme. Wayne Cowley agreed to look into whether this would have any tax implications.</p> <p>Action: Wayne Cowley to consider tax implications of financial assistance.</p>
3	<p><b>Items for noting</b></p>

3.1 Building Sub-Group Meeting HC(2)-11-06(p14)

Members endorsed the minutes of the Building Sub-group and agreed to the recommendations contained within them.

ICT Sub-Group Meeting HC(2)-11-06(p15)

The Committee noted the minutes.

3.2

The Committee discussed the proposal in the ICT sub-group minutes for the House Committee to allocate additional funds to pay for AMs to have a lightweight laptop. They agreed that Members should be asked to state a preference regarding which type of laptop they wanted on the understanding that it was subject to a final decision by House Committee and that this matter should be brought back to House Committee once the final costs were known.

Gwen Parry agreed to circulate information concerning what happens to the existing laptops to Members.

Action: Gwen Parry to bring final costs of lightweight laptops to House Committee

Gwen Parry to circulate information on what happens to the old laptops to Members.

Catering Sub-Group Meeting HC(2)-11-06(p16)

The Committee noted the minutes of the Catering Sub-Group.

Concern was expressed about a recent occasion when Assembly Members had invited large numbers of visitors to use the staff canteen without proper notice, and some Assembly staff could not be accommodated as a result. The Committee asked the Catering Sub-Group to consider what might be done to prevent this happening again. Action: Catering Sub-Group to make recommendations for the next House Committee

Indicators Against Targets HC(2)-11-06(p17)

Members noted the report.

APS Budget Report HC(2)-11-06(p18)

Members noted the report, and the comments made by Steven O'Donoghue regarding the ICT budget and the Facilities Management budget.

Monthly HR report HC(2)-09-06(p19)

Members noted the report.

Access to information HC(2)-09-06(p20)

3.3

Members noted the report.

Overseas and external relations activities HC(2)-09-06(p21)

4

Members noted the report.

4.1

Matters referred including Assembly Questions

Members noted that OAQ47882 tabled for answer on 20 September 2006 was previously circulated.

5

### **Any Other Business**

5.1

The Committee agreed that a reminder should be sent out reminding AMs that visitors using the link bridge from the Senedd to the Assembly Office should be signed in at the Assembly Office and not at the Senedd in view of security requirements.

The Committee noted the paper on the future strategy for Regional Public Information Strategy.

Date of next meeting: 7 December 2006

House Committee Secretariat