

Comisiwn y Cynulliad Assembly Commission

NAFWC 2007 (Paper 6A)

Date: Wednesday 20 June 2007

Time: 9.30-12.00

Venue: Conference room 22

Author name and contact number: Corporate Unit

FORMAT AND CONTENT OF PAPERS PREPARED FOR THE ASSEMBLY COMMISSION AND EXECUTIVE BOARD

Purpose and summary of issues

1. To agree the guidance attached for the format and content of papers prepared for the Assembly Commission and the Executive Board.

Recommendations (including priority deadline)

2. The Assembly Commission is asked to agree the guidance on format and content of papers at its first meeting.

Discussion

3. The guidance and template will be issued to officials when the Corporate Unit commissions papers for consideration by the Assembly Commission and the Executive Board. The template provides a house style while the guidance provides direction to the officials with responsibility for drafting papers.

Governance Matters

Financial implications

4. None arising from agreement to these proposals.

Risk Assessment

5. There are no risk management implications arising from the content of this paper.

Compliance

6. There are no issues affecting UK and European legislation, financial procedures, equality of opportunity, data protection or Freedom of Information. The Welsh language template will comply with the requirements of our draft Welsh Language Scheme and our final Scheme once approved by the Welsh Language Board.



Draft

Guidance Note: Format and Content of Papers prepared for the Assembly Commission and Executive Board

This guidance has been approved by the Executive Board and the Assembly Commission [TBC]

1. Papers must be set out in accordance with the template attached, with the body of the text in Arial size 12 font.
2. Papers must be clear and concise setting out the issues, the background and discussion on the options available. Papers must also be clear on exactly what decision is required from the Assembly Commission/Executive Board and the author's recommendations.
3. Before any paper is submitted to the Assembly Commission or to the Executive Board, all appropriate internal consultation and involvement should have taken place. This is to ensure that any concerns have been fully explored before a discussion takes place at these meetings, and that we present a fully joined-up and corporate position. Where relevant, the paper should mention this involvement.
4. The normal length of each paper will be up to three pages with the maximum permitted (excluding annexes) being five pages. Supplementary information, (if absolutely necessary to understand the context of the paper) should be included as annexes and should be clearly cross referenced in the text of the main paper.
5. Recommendations should be clear and unambiguous. The author should, wherever possible, state his/her preferred option and avoid putting the onus on the Commission/Board to make a decision. In other words, recommendations such as "The Commission is invited to advise on which course of action to take" should be avoided.
6. Where the paper is simply to provide information, this should be clearly stated from the outset, and the final section will be a conclusion (rather than a recommendation), ending with an invitation to the Commission/Executive Board to note the information provided.
7. Assembly Commission and Executive Board papers will be made public, except those containing information which is considered exempt from publication under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Published papers will be available bilingually, in Welsh and English, in accordance with the Commission's Welsh Language Scheme. The Corporate Unit will arrange for the final versions of such papers to be translated prior to publication.
8. Papers must be submitted to the Corporate Unit ten working-days prior to the Assembly Commission meetings and five working-days prior to Executive Board meetings; this will allow sufficient time for the Corporate Unit to check

papers comply with this guidance. If a paper does not comply with this guidance, it will be returned to the author for remedy with an explanation, following discussions with necessary officials. A non-compliant paper will only be tabled with the express agreement of the Chair.

9. Paragraphs must be numbered sequentially as shown on the template.



Assembly Commission (or Executive Board) Comisiwn y Cynulliad (neu Bwrdd Gweithredol)

NAFWC 2007 (Paper XX)

Security Classification (if required)

Date:

Time:

Venue:

Author name and contact number:

Title of paper (Arial 16, bold, centre aligned)

All papers will have a clear title giving the subject and the purpose
e.g. "Arrangements for Compiling the 2007-08 Budget".

Purpose and summary of issues

1. This section shall set out the purpose of the paper. If a decision is required, it shall include a clear statement of the issue and of the decisions sought. This section shall contain sufficient background information to set the issue in context. It shall be brief and relevant. In the light of the rules regarding freedom of information and openness, it is suggested that the background shall be drafted in such a way that its contents could be released if that was necessary.

Recommendations (including priority deadline)

2. Where the paper recommends a specific course of action this section shall include a summary of all the recommendations, in order of their priority, which Commissioners are being invited to agree. If there is a preferred recommendation/option, then this should be clearly stated and a reason given as to why it is recommended. Where there is a fixed deadline for a decision the paper shall state what it is, the reason for the deadline and, if appropriate, the implications if the deadline is not met.

Discussion

3. This section shall explain the issue, build on the summary without repeating it, outline the main considerations which Commissioners/Executive Board will need to take into account in reaching a decision and identify the possible options and the pros and cons of each one.

Governance Matters

Financial implications

4. Where the issue dealt with has financial implications this section shall set out the cost (capital and current) and explain the duration and phasing of

expenditure. The appropriate budget line must be identified together with confirmation that that it can meet the proposed expenditure. If more than one option is being discussed, the financial implications of each option shall be set out clearly.

5. Where the exact cost is not yet known, an approximation is required, with reference to an upper limit or a range.

6. Should there not be any financial implications, this should be explicitly stated in this section of the paper.

Risk Assessment

7. In the medium term, when procedures are in place to assist with risk management, it is expected that papers will include the risks to the organisation, their likelihood and appropriate arrangements for mitigation.

Compliance

8. The paper will need to state that whether, as a result of any of its proposals, there would be any issues with UK and European legislation, financial procedures, equality of opportunity, the Welsh Language Scheme and Act, data protection and Freedom of Information. This statement must also refer to any relevant sections of the Government of Wales Act 2006 and the Standing Orders.

9. Should there not be any compliance issues, this should be explicitly stated in this section of the paper.

