



**Comisiwn y Cynulliad
Assembly Commission**

**MINUTES OF 14 NOVEMBER 2007 MEETING, 8.30-9.30
CONFERENCE ROOM 4B**

Present:

Dafydd Elis-Thomas AM (Presiding Officer)
Lorraine Barrett AM (Labour)
Peter Black AM (Liberal Democrat)
Chris Franks AM (Plaid Cymru)
William Graham AM (Conservative)

Officials present:

Claire Clancy (Chief Executive and Clerk)
Dianne Bevan (Chief Operating Officer)
Keith Bush (Director of Legal Services)
Adrian Crompton (Director of Assembly Business)
Aled Eirug (Constitutional Consultant)
Craig Stephenson (Head of Corporate Unit)
Meriel Singleton (Secretariat)

Independent advisors:

None present

Observers:

None present

Apologies:

None



Item 1a - Minutes of last meeting:

The minutes of 17 October 2007 were agreed as an accurate record.

Item 1b - Matters arising:

There were no matters arising.

Item 1c – Issues considered by correspondence since the meeting of 17 October 2007 and the decision taken:

There were no issues considered by correspondence since the 17 October 2007 meeting.

Item 2 – Resourcing and Organisation of Parliamentary Services:

The Assembly Commission considered paper 1, Resourcing and Organisation of Assembly Business and paper 2, Developing Assembly Legal Services. The joint meeting with Business Committee was welcomed by the Commission, who identified pressures on AMs as a key priority.

The Commission discussed the provision of legal services and noted the progress which had been made towards staffing the legal team. It was agreed that future recruitment of Assembly lawyers should reflect our requirements, and that we should consider all options for recruitment, including direct recruitment.

Action: Keith Bush to commence recruitment of additional lawyer for financial year 2008-09 early in 2008 to ensure they are in place at the start of the financial year.

Item 3 – Review of Assembly Members’ salaries and allowances

The Commission discussed the review of Assembly Members’ salaries and allowances and agreed it was important that the timescale outlined in the paper was achieved. Elieen Heasman, the Director of Human Resources at the Office of National Statistics, had agreed to be a member of the panel, in addition to those named in the paper.

It was agreed that it would be useful for the panel to receive evidence from AMs and party groups. The final report would be published. The Commissioners said they would like the employment and staffing of AMSS to be considered at some point, as they were concerned about the current system.



Item 4 – Equality

The Assembly Commission considered the paper on equality and discussed the issues within it. The positive response to Operation Black Vote was noted by the Commissioners. The Commissioners expressed a desire for urgent action and for the Assembly Commission to be an exemplar in this field. They agreed to look at examples of good practice across the board when developing a strategy and implementing action. It was agreed further work should be undertaken in this area prior to the publication of the proposed equalities statement

Actions: Lorraine Barrett to discuss possible equality initiatives with officials
Further figures on the break down of BME staff by grade to be gathered.

Item 5 – Sustainability of the Senedd

The Assembly Commission noted the draft environmental management report from BSDP on the Senedd and welcomed the opportunity to have a separate meeting to discuss the report in more detail.

The Commission discussed the issues around sustainability and agreed it would be important to consider the entire Assembly estate in Cardiff Bay and not just the Senedd.

Action: Commissioners to notify officials of any areas of the report they may wish to focus on during the meeting with BDSP.

Item 6 – Executive Board Report to the Commission

The Assembly Commission considered the report from the Executive Board. Lorraine Barrett praised the work of front of house staff and tour guides for the excellent service they provide. She had received much positive feedback and encouraged others to use the service. The Commission agreed to sponsor a *Woman Advancing Democracy* category at the Welsh Woman of the Year 2008 awards, and noted the appointment of four independent advisors. It was suggested that it would be useful to measure the effectiveness of coverage of the National Assembly for Wales in the media.

Action: Chief Executive to speak to Non Gwilym about scope for evaluating media coverage within the Communications strategy.

Item 7 – Papers to note



The Assembly Commission noted paper 7, the DCA Interim Report on developing the Pierhead building; paper 8, correspondence from Parliament for Wales Campaign and paper 9, correspondence from Leanne Wood the draft response for which was also agreed. It was agreed that future correspondence to the Commission, currently sent to the Presiding Officer, would be passed to the Secretariat who would prepare draft replies to issue in the portfolio Commissioner's name.

Item 8 – Date of next meeting:

The next meeting was 12 December 2007, and would be a joint meeting with the Business Committee

Secretariat
Date