



Comisiwn y Cynulliad Assembly Commission

MINUTES OF 2 FEBRUARY 2009 MEETING 1.30- 3.00PM, CONFERENCE ROOM 4B

Present:

Presiding Officer, Chair
Lorraine Barrett AM (Labour)
Peter Black AM (Liberal Democrats)
William Graham AM (Conservatives)

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)
Craig Stephenson (Head of Corporate Unit)
Aled Eirug (Constitutional Consultant)
Kevin Tumelty, Head of Security (matters arising)
Non Gwilym, Head of External Communications (item 5)
Iwan Williams, Media, Publications and Web Manager (item 5)

Independent advisers: None

Observers: Connie Robertson, Head of Estates and ICT

Others: Aled Phillips and Rhian Edwards, Departures (item 5)

Apologies: Chris Franks AM (Plaid Cymru)

1. Introduction:

Welcome

The Presiding Officer welcomed Connie Robertson who was observing the meeting.

Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes of meeting – 4 December 2008

The minutes were formally agreed.

Matter arising from the meeting on 16 October 2008



At the Assembly Commission meeting on 16 October, it was agreed that Keith Bush would explore the provisions of Section 128 of the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 and advise further on its relevance to the organisation. He and Kevin Tumelty, Head of Security, reported to the Commission on their further investigation of the possible applicability of the provision in question to the Assembly estate. The Commission noted the position and decided that no immediate further action should be taken but that the position be kept under review and that Kevin Tumelty should advise the Commission if there was any change of circumstance which called for further consideration to be given to the matter.

2. Accounts Preparation Plan for Assembly Members

Dianne Bevan introduced paper 2 which provided draft guidance for Assembly Members on the end year account preparation. It was noted that staff would be available to assist AMs to ensure that the finalised accounts for the Assembly could be laid before the summer recess. The guidance was agreed and would be issued to Assembly Members as soon as possible.

Action: Chris Koehli, Interim Head of Financial Services to issue guidance.

3. Nursery and Crèche Facilities

Paper 3 which provided progress on the provision of nursery and crèche facilities for staff and visitors to Cardiff Bay was discussed. Options had been presented by potential suppliers and these were detailed in the paper. Given the demands on other capital projects for 2009/10, the Assembly Commission agreed that higher cost options should not be pursued and before further consideration was given, a more detailed investigation on the likely demand by AMs, AMSS and Assembly staff should be undertaken.

Action: Nerys Evans, Estates and Facilities Management to investigate demand as noted above.

4. Management Board Report to the Assembly Commission

The Commission considered the Management Board Report (paper 4) and discussed the following issues:

Visitor guidance: The Commission discussed access by Assembly Members and their visitors to the Cwrt area and Siambr floor. It was agreed that the guidance would need to be reviewed and re-circulated and that access to the secure areas on business days should be restricted to pass holders only unless by prior agreement. A note to all occupants of the Cardiff Bay estate would be issued in the Presiding Officer's name to ensure that the arrangements were enforced robustly.



Media coverage: Following the Presiding Officer's recent visit to Swansea, he had noted that there was increasing regional interest in the work of the Assembly and in particular on the need for video and audio feeds of committee and plenary business. It was noted that the Head of External Communications was looking into this provision and that she would report on timescales and keep the Commission updated.

All Wales Convention: Keith Bush said that he and Adrian Crompton, Director of Assembly Business, would be attending a meeting of the All Wales Convention following an invitation to provide evidence on the capacity of Assembly staff to deal with the challenges of moving to Part 4 of the Government of Wales Act 2006. The evidence session would take place on Thursday 5 February.

Assembly Member guidance: It was noted that Commissioners would be consulted shortly about the rollout of guidance on the use of resources and websites. It was necessary to improve the clarity of this guidance, although a fuller review would follow consideration of the forthcoming report of the independent panel.

5. Branding

The Commission welcomed Non Gwilym and Iwan Williams, External Communications, along with Aled Phillips and Rhian Edwards from Departures, the agency appointed to assist in the design of our brand. The presentation outlined work undertaken so far. Work on our brand was therefore designed from robust data gathered through workshops and discussions undertaken throughout the autumn with Commissioners, staff at all levels and the Management Board. It was noted that the brand should address perception difficulties and the difference between the Welsh Government and the Assembly, was central to work on communicating who we are, the use of clear language, provide uniformity in our outputs and was based on our purpose and goals as outlined in the Assembly Commission Strategy.

The Commission noted that the branding work would include a linguistic style guide, agreed typeface, standard templates for letters, Email signatures, business cards, powerpoint presentations, standard colour palates for our reports and the logo. All would be in place by May 2009 and would be applied to new products and outputs from thereon thus minimising wastage on materials and stationery currently in use. It was noted that all materials would be developed in line with best practice on accessibility and our Welsh Language Scheme.



It was agreed that the External Communications team should engage with AMs, AMSS and party group staff so that they too became aware of the branding work and how it would be rolled out post May. Internal Communications and all staff meetings would be used for Assembly staff.

Action: External Communications to develop communications plan as agreed by Commissioners.

6. Matters to note

Paper 6A: An exchange of correspondence had taken place between Nerys Evans AM and William Graham, Commissioner for Assembly Resources about an extra day's holiday on 1 March for Assembly staff. It was noted that Commission staff were currently entitled to 31 days leave plus public and privilege days and that any changes to terms and conditions would be subject to formal consultation with employees and their representatives. Discussions around the April 2010 pay deal for Assembly staff had recently commenced and this might be one idea that the steering group could consider. The Assembly Commission agreed that the proposal was not practical at the present time and William Graham would respond accordingly.

Paper 6B: Val Lloyd, Chair of the Petitions Committee had written to the Presiding Officer following receipt of a petition about the development of a Welsh Honours system. Assembly Government and Commission staff had been in discussion about a possible joint project and the Petitions Committee was keen to contribute to the process by encouraging a more public debate on the issue – possibly through an on-line discussion forum. It was noted that some public debate had already taken place through the media as well as feedback direct to the Presiding Officer. After some consideration, the Assembly Commission determined that it would not proceed with the proposal to develop a project to honour one individual annually at the present time.

Secretariat