

Comisiwn y Cynulliad Assembly Commission

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru
National
Assembly for
Wales



**NAFWC 2014
Minutes of 30 November 2010 meeting**

**Date: 30 November 2010
Time: After Plenary
Venue: Conference room 4B**

Minutes of 30 November 2010 meeting

Present:

**Peter Black AM (Liberal Democrats), Chair
Lorraine Barrett AM (Labour)
Chris Franks AM (Plaid Cymru)
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
Ian Summers, Head of Corporate Unit
Aled Eirug, Constitutional Adviser
Craig Stephenson, Head of Change Programme
Helen Birtwhistle, Head of External Communications
Helen Finlayson, Secretariat**

Independent Advisers:

Mair Barnes

Observers:

None

Others:

None

1. Introduction and apologies

Apologies were received from the Llywydd. The Commission agreed that Peter Black would chair the meeting in the Llywydd's absence.

Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes of meeting – 30 September 2010

The minutes were formally agreed.

Matters arising from the meeting on 30 September 2010

There were no matters arising.

2. Future organisational plans

Claire Clancy introduced paper two, noting that the drivers for the new structure had been current financial circumstances, changing priorities and, primarily, the need to ensure that services were structured in a way which would provide the best services for Assembly Members. She said that the proposed changes had been communicated to all staff, and that implementation of the new structure would begin in December and be completed before dissolution in March.

The Commission discussed the new structure, and requested that a paper be provided to the Commission on proposals for the Assembly shop.

The Commission noted that Non Gwilym would return from maternity leave the following day, and thanked Helen Birtwhistle for her hard work and professionalism in fulfilling the interim role.

The Commission noted the restructuring plans, and welcomed the emphasis on Member-focused services.

3. Unifying the Assembly's ICT network (UNO)

Dianne Bevan introduced paper three, noting that the UNO project was due for formal closure the following week. The project had been completed within budget, but had given rise to a number of challenges, partly due to its scale. The rollout to Members and their staff had been completed on schedule, and while eleven technical issues remained outstanding, these were in the process

of being resolved. Following the closure of this phase of the project, further work would be undertaken to develop service and support arrangements with Siemens, based on the results of the i-change consultation with users.

Peter Black requested that further steps be taken to publicise the availability of training to Members, and that consideration be given to providing floorwalkers before the end of term. He was concerned that the issues with the Caseworker system be resolved as soon as possible. He requested that Members be made aware that the Blackberry contract was shortly to be renewed.

Peter Black also thanked staff for their hard work in resolving the issues Members and their staff had experienced. The Commission noted the progress on the rollout of UNO but said that it wished to see the outstanding issues resolved at the earliest opportunity.

4. Bilingual services for the Fourth Assembly

Craig Stephenson introduced paper four, noting that following the report of the independent panel on bilingual services a draft Measure, supporting principles and draft official languages scheme to place the bilingual services provided by the Commission on a sound statutory and constitutional footing had been prepared.

The Commission noted the progress that had been made in implementing the key recommendations of the independent review panel and noted the latest position regarding the proposed statutory investigation by the Welsh Language Board. The Commission requested that the evidence sent to the Welsh Language Board in response to its investigation was circulated to Commissioners.

The Commission agreed that the legislative principles and proposals outlined in the annexes to the paper should proceed to a public consultation, and that the consultation and the preparation of a new draft Welsh Language/Official Languages scheme should be undertaken early in 2011. The Commission requested that the results of the consultation were brought to a future meeting for further consideration so that the Commission could, in the light of the results, take a decision on whether to proceed with the Measure.

5. Communication activities to support Vote 2011

Helen Birtwhistle introduced paper five, noting that the Commission had specific statutory powers to promote awareness and understanding of the system of elections to the Assembly and of any current or future systems of devolved government in Wales, and that Vote 2011 presented an exciting opportunity to engage the people of Wales in the democratic process and provide them with information about the work of the Assembly. She outlined the three critical benchmarks against which all work on Vote 2011 was being assessed: accuracy; authority; and impartiality, and noted that all activities were being discussed with the Assembly's Chief Legal Adviser to ensure that the Assembly's obligations in respect of these benchmarks were being met.

The programme of activities to support Vote 2011, which was funded from within existing External Communications budgets, included: use of traditional marketing materials; online activities; targeting of local media outlets; outreach work including a tour by the Llywydd; online advertising; a Pierhead session; and working with the Electoral Commission, the Wales Office and the Welsh Government.

Claire Clancy outlined the assessment of risks that had been undertaken in relation to the Vote 2011 campaign, and emphasised the importance of clarity, transparency and a sound legal basis for the work. She pointed to the Vote 2011 information available on the Assembly's website.

Chris Franks requested that information be provided to Commissioners on media coverage and feedback from the outreach bus and Llywydd's tours.

The Commission discussed Member engagement with the Vote 2011 campaign whilst recognising concerns over potential perceptions of lack of impartiality of the Assembly towards the No or the Yes campaigns, or towards particular candidates and parties if the involvement of individual Members or parties was not arranged sensitively.

The Commission noted the communications activities developed to support Vote 2011, and asked that Members were kept fully informed and provided with clarity on the way that they could be

involved with Vote 2011. The Commission requested that care continued to be taken to ensure that all activities complied with the Assembly's statutory obligations, and that a further report be brought to a future Commission meeting capturing feedback and outcomes from the activities.

6. Wales Governance Centre

Helen Birtwhistle introduced paper six, noting that the Commission had agreed in principle at its May meeting that the Wales Governance Centre should be accommodated in the Pierhead in return for a clearly defined programme of events.

Keith Bush advised that the Commission holds the Pierhead as part of its function to provide the Assembly with the property, staff and services required for the Assembly's purposes and of promoting public awareness of the current or any pending system of devolved government. He said that given the legal framework within which the Commission must operate when dealing with assets such as the Pierhead, it would not be free to enter into purely commercial arrangements with potential occupiers and that therefore comparisons between commercial rents and the benefits which were expected to flow from the arrangement with the Centre were not directly applicable.

Commission staff had commissioned a commercial valuation of the space to provide an indication of the hypothetical rental income, taking account of the limited commercial appeal of the particular office space under consideration. Work had also been undertaken to estimate the costs which the Commission would face if it were to put on a similar programme of events to that which the Wales Governance Centre intended.

In response to queries from William Graham and Lorraine Barrett, Keith Bush outlined the terms of the draft Memorandum of Understanding which had been discussed with the Wales Governance Centre, including occupation on the basis of a licence, details on the building's accessibility, and a clause permitting termination of the agreement on twelve months notice by either party.

The Commission requested that use of events space in the Pierhead be carefully managed to ensure that its use by the Wales

**NAFWC 2014
Minutes of 30 November 2010 meeting**

Governance Centre did not prevent its use by Members, or reduce flexibility. Helen Birtwhistle advised that the programme of events would be managed by a working group consisting of representative Members, support staff, Assembly staff and the Wales Governance Centre.

The Commission agreed that the Wales Governance Centre should be accommodated in the otherwise unoccupied office accommodation in the Pierhead in return for a clearly defined programme of events, driven by the needs of the Assembly.

7. International strategy

Helen Birtwhistle introduced paper seven, noting that the purpose of the international strategy, which had been developed in collaboration between staff from across the Assembly, was to draw together current international activities within a proactive and flexible framework and to promote systematic engagement with Members and robust evaluation of the benefits to the Assembly of its international activities.

The Commission approved the approach for the development of a framework for the Assembly's international activities.

8. Our commitment to sustainability

Dianne Bevan introduced paper eight, outlining the achievements of year one of the carbon management strategy, including an eight per cent reduction in emissions, which was the equivalent of a saving of 247 tonnes of carbon and £50,000 of cost savings, and an award for the Most Sustainable Public Sector Organisation in the Government category at the Sustainable Facilities Management Awards. She noted that in future years increasingly creative initiatives for carbon reduction would be needed, and some investment in the Assembly estate would be required, although some of the improvements would be achieved through the routine programme of maintenance and renewal.

Lorraine Barrett and William Graham requested that further consideration be given to the lighting in the underground car park at Tŷ Hywel. All Commissioners requested that urgent attention be given to the temperature levels in the Senedd during the cold weather. Mair Barnes congratulated the Commission on the achievements set out in the paper.

NAFWC 2014

Minutes of 30 November 2010 meeting

The Chair, Peter Black, thanked Members, support staff and Assembly staff for their commitment to sustainability, and for their role in ensuring that good progress had been made against the carbon management strategy. The Commission noted the achievement of the targets set for year one of the strategy, and the action plan proposed for year two.

9. Management Board report to the Commission

The Chair welcomed the report on activities ongoing across the Assembly to support its strategic goals, in particular the work of the Business Change programme, the Assembly's role in recent Stonewall events and the work of the media team to promote committee inquiries and the Vote 2011 campaign. No other points were raised.

10. Matters to note

The Commission noted the Finance Committee's report on its draft budget for 2011-12.