



Venue: **Remote - Hybrid**

Date: **Monday, 15 March 2021**

Time: **12.30 - 14.28**

Minutes: SC(5)2021(2)

Commission
Members:

Elin Jones MS (Chair)
Suzy Davies MS
Rhun ap Iorwerth MS
David J Rowlands MS
Joyce Watson MS

Officials present:

Manon Antoniazzi
Siwan Davies, Director of Senedd Business
Arwyn Jones, Director of Communications and Engagement
Dave Tosh, Director of Resources
Anna Daniel, Head of Strategic Transformation
Nerys Evans, Head of Estates and Facilities Management
Matthew Jones, Sustainability Manager
Nia Morgan, Director of Finance
Sulafa Thomas, Head of Commission and Member Support
Gwion Evans, Head of the Llywydd's Private Office

Others in
attendance:

1 Introduction

1.a Introduction and apologies

There were no apologies.

1.b Declarations of interest

There were no formal declarations of interest.

1.c Minutes of the previous meeting

Commissioners agreed the minutes of the meeting on 8 February.

2 Commission Strategic Direction

Commissioners reflected on lessons learned through the most significant pieces/key aspects of work of the Commission during the fifth Senedd, alongside drivers for change for the foreseeable future to provide a direction for the strategy for the Sixth Senedd.

They discussed aspects relating to each of their portfolio areas and provided feedback to inform the summary of reflections and drivers for change to be presented to the next Commission. They identified benefits to broadening understanding of the Commission's role and responsibilities, and asked for focus to be given to helping citizens understand the roles of MS.

3 Carbon Neutral Strategy 2021-2030

Commissioners discussed a proposed strategy outlining activities, investment, and behavioural change that would be required for the organisation to reach net carbon neutrality by 2030.

Commissioners asked questions relating to travel and transport and to greening spaces on the estate, suggesting that involving local communities could be a positive approach.

Commissioners agreed the Carbon Neutral Strategy, and that it should be published.

4 Catering Contract Renewal Options

Commissioners considered information relating to the catering contract, which would be due for renewal from 1 September 2021. They considered uncertainties about the future operation of the service as we emerge from the pandemic, with more flexible and hybrid working.

Commissioners agreed to a 12 month extension of the existing catering contract to provide an opportunity to develop an improved understanding about future needs and demands following a wider return to the office.

5 Digital Taskforce Follow Up

The Commission considered developments in relation to a recommendation made by the Digital News and Information Taskforce report to set-up an independent, arms-length newswire service. Commissioners discussed recent developments in the media sphere in Wales and agreed that at this time Commission Officials should continue to offer to support these emerging news services before resuming consideration as to whether any financial aid would be necessary.

6 Election Transition

A - Official Opening of the Sixth Senedd

Commissioners were provided with an overview of the approach to planning for the Official Opening of the sixth Senedd, reflecting that it would take a different form to previous occasions. The focus would be on a combination of virtual and physical events to mark the occasion in a covid secure way.

B - Arrangements for Commission business during election period

Commissioners agreed that issues needing consideration during the period of recess, dissolution and until the election of new Commissioners may be dealt with by email correspondence, unless Commissioners or the Llywydd feel a meeting is necessary.

C - Deferred decision relating to office hire for personal use, from February Commission meeting

Commissioners noted a letter from the Remuneration Board in response to their request for an understanding of the Board's position about any personal use of local offices during the pre-dissolution period.

The Board had agreed to allow Members standing for re-election to hire their local offices for personal use during the pre-dissolution period. They had set out specific conditions including the removal/covering of signage, agreement must be in advance to meet 100% of costs, and that if a Member decided to rent the office for their personal use, this must not be regarded as preventing the Member from also using the office for permitted activities, and may mean staff focusing on casework being based in an office that had been hired by the Member for campaigning purposes. They asked that, ahead of the election period, the Commission publish a list of those who have entered into these agreements.

Commissioners agreed to extend the period for which hire of constituency or regional offices for personal use is an option to include the formal dissolution period. The availability for hire would thus be for the whole election period, and taking up this option would require the Member to meet 100% of costs, to make it clear that it is the Member, and not the taxpayer, that is meeting the cost of the office whilst it is being used for campaigning activity.

With regard to ICT equipment and services for personal/campaigning use during the election period, the Commission would advise Members that commercially available options be sought by individuals who wish to hire equipment.

7 ICT Use and Security Conditions

Commissioners received the updated ICT security rules (called the ICT Use and Security Conditions) for Members. The rules specify the conditions that need to be applied to use of the Senedd ICT System to protect the Senedd ICT System from inappropriate use, which can expose the Senedd to risks that include loss or theft of information, cyberattacks and service failures.

Commissioners discussed some aspects of the rules, which are required to be accepted by all users before being given access to the Senedd ICT System. One observed that it would have been helpful to be able to compare detail of the new document directly against the existing version. The update reflected evolving cyber security conditions, the Senedd ICT infrastructure, business requirements and good practice for the work environment.

Commissioners agreed the updated ICT Use and Security Conditions which would apply to the use by Members of the Senedd and their staff of the Senedd ICT System from the beginning of the Sixth Senedd.

8 COVID-19 Update

Commissioners were provided with an update on arrangements in place whilst the Senedd continues to operate under the current Welsh Government regulations and guidance. They noted the information provided, that further matters may arise from the upcoming Welsh Government coronavirus reviews and it was highlighted that there had been enquiries about making use of the estate to promote awareness of the election. Commissioners agreed to delegate to Commission Officials case by case decision-making in relation to limited use of the estate for work related purposes, such as by the media to promote the Senedd elections, as regulations allow.

9 Papers to note:

9.a Review of Framework for International Engagement

Commissioners noted information about the international work undertaken by the Senedd for the period of January 2019-March 2021.

9.b Accounting Officer Rules on Use of Resources - Update for Sixth Senedd

Commissioners noted the updated edition of the Accounting Officer's Rules and Guidance on Use of Senedd Resources which will apply from the beginning of the 6th Senedd. These Rules are issued under the authority of the Code of Conduct for Senedd Members, and section 138 of the Government of Wales Act 2006, and will be published.

9.c Commission Staff Survey Results

Commissioners noted the Staff Survey report, which was the first undertaken through an independent survey specialist. They agreed to publish the summary report.

9.d Executive Board update (RAD decisions)

Commissioners noted the routine summary of recruitment decisions.

9.e Draft ARAC Minutes February 2021

Commissioners noted the routine update of ARAC meetings.

10 Any other business

- Commissioners noted a letter from the Remuneration Board confirming the Board has now incorporated current provision by the Commission for Members' stationery / bulk mailing / printing costs into the Determination for the Sixth Senedd, and that Commission direct provision will accordingly cease at the same point.
- Commissioners were asked to complete their Declaration of Interest forms.
- Commissioners agreed that two items due to be sent to Finance Committee in response to their recommendations following budget scrutiny could be approved by Suzy Davies

out of meeting. The matters relate to an update on wellbeing and an update of covid related financial implications.

- With reference to a query about the allocation of pre-existing ICT licence to a member of support staff for permitted activities during the election period, it was clarified that in a circumstance of prolonged absence, the named individual could be swapped for another member of staff, and that contact should be made with the ICT Service Desk.

The Llywydd thanked the Commissioners for the collegiate approach they had taken to delivering their roles over the course of the Fifth Senedd.