



Venue: **Conference Room 4B - Tŷ Hywel**

Date: **Monday, 12 July 2021**

Time: **12.30 - 14.55**

Minutes:

Commission
Members:

Elin Jones MS (Chair)
Rhun ap Iorwerth MS
Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Ken Skates 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
Nia Morgan, Director of Finance
Lowri Williams, Head of Human Resources and Inclusion
Gareth Watts, Head of Governance and Assurance
Sulafa Thomas, Head of Commission and Member Support
Gwion Evans, Head of the Llywydd's Private Office

Others in
attendance:

Robert (Bob) Evans, Independent Advisor
Sarah Pinch, Independent Advisor

1 Introduction

1.a Introduction and apologies

No apologies were received.

Bob Evans, Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, and Sarah Pinch, Chair of the Remuneration, Engagement and Workforce Advisory Committee were welcomed to the meeting.

1.b Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

1.c Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the Commission meeting on 15 March were noted.

2 Commission Governance and Procedure

The overarching framework principles for the governance of the Commission, the rules for conduct of Commission meetings and the delegation of functions to the Chief Executive have been refreshed in the light of experience and best practice. This is usual practice following each election, and the Commission is invited to replace the existing documents. Commissioners agreed to replace existing governance framework documents with updated versions:

- Governance principles and supporting provisions
- Rules for conduct of Commission business
- Delegation of Commission functions
- Arrangements for the exercise of the Clerk's functions

Commissioners agreed to review the level of the Delegation of Commission functions at the end of the financial year. They also noted the proposals for communicating with Members about the work of the Commission.

Commissioners were also informed that a note setting out the regulatory framework of the respective role and remits of the Remuneration Board, the Accounting Officer, Commission, the Standards Commissioner and Committee for Standards had been prepared for Groups and would be circulated.

The governance framework would be published to the Senedd website for transparency.

3 Commission Portfolios

The Commission is corporately responsible for the exercise of the functions conferred upon it and for the governance of the organisation. The Commissioners have collective responsibility for decisions and have equal status in discussions.

As the Commission may allocate responsibility for oversight of a defined range of organisational work to an individual Commissioner, Commissioners agreed the following portfolios:

Portfolio:	Commissioner
Communications	Llywydd
Budget and governance (including Audit and Risk Assurance Committee membership)	Ken Skates
Equalities	Joyce Watson
Official languages	Rhun ap Iorwerth
Sustainable development	Janet Finch-Saunders

The portfolio information will be published to the Senedd website for transparency.

4 ARAC Report / REWAC Annual Report and Senior Restructure

4.a ARAC annual report

The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee's Terms of Reference require the Committee Chair to attend a Commission meeting each year to present the Commission and the Accounting Officer with an Annual Report.

Bob Evans, Chair of ARAC, presented the Committee's Annual Report which the Commission noted.

He complimented the achievements in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic and an immaculate set of accounts, and cautioned in support of continuing the Commission's significant work on cyber security.

Commissioners discussed the importance of cyber security considerations and the rationale for the restrictions that have to apply to ICT provisions, balancing between utility and security. They agreed to include the Commission's ICT provisions on the Commission's forward work programme.

4.b REWAC Annual Report and Senior restructure

Sarah Pinch, Chair of the Remuneration, Engagement and Workforce Advisory Committee introduced the Committee's Annual Report, which Commissioners noted. The Committee had taken particular interest in opportunities to better drive socio-economic and ethnic minority representation within the Commission, and given focus to Covid responses in relation to the Commission workforce and public engagement.

All Commission officials, with the exception of the Clerk, absented themselves for the discussion on the senior restructure. Commissioners agreed proposals to make changes to Director portfolios and noted arrangements for senior staff who form part of the Executive Board.

5 Commission Strategic Direction

Commissioners considered reflections made by their predecessors about what had been learned through the most significant pieces/key aspects of work of the Commission in the Fifth Senedd, and drivers for change that would influence the direction for the strategy for the Sixth Senedd.

Commissioners discussed the need to be able to innovate, and their wider responsibilities to Wales. They indicated investing in research and good practice in the use of official languages during the pandemic and making progress on procurement practices as matters to consider alongside future ways of working, and agreed to discuss further in the autumn.

6 Draft Budget Strategy 2022-23

Commissioners were provided with background and context to inform their thinking on the budget strategy and considered approaches in relation to the budget for 2022-23.

Having reflected on the relative merits of alternatives and information provided, the Commission requested that work be taken forward on Option C. This was to take account of

the need to consider the capacity required to deliver in ways to suit Members' needs, for example continuing hybrid working. The 2022-23 draft Commission Budget would be presented to the Commission at its September meeting before being laid in line with the requirements of Standing Orders.

Commissioners also discussed the window replacement project, which had been subject of a feasibility report undertaken during 2020 to seek specialist advice to inform a future decision on the budget implications, timing and phasing of work needed to replace windows in Tŷ Hywel.

Commissioners discussed the need, in the context of overall future accommodation requirements and agreed that discussions should continue on a timescale that would allow these matters to be considered in parallel.

7 Covid Update

Returning Services

Commissioners considered, and agreed, a draft Returning Services Priority Matrix, which would be used as a route-map to continue the reintroduction of services, and by extension repatriating services back to virtual as necessary should the Welsh Government guidance on covid-19 related matters change/become heightened.

They considered the likelihood that hybrid working would need to remain in place and recognised the need to enable Members to participate in business. Commissioners agreed that existing measures would remain in place for the remainder of the term, and that Lateral Flow Tests would be made available for the start of the new term, as an additional precaution.

Options for public engagement activities on the Senedd estate

Commissioners noted the information provided about steps taken to re-commence public engagement activities on the Senedd estate, reintroducing managed access to the public to view Plenary meetings and for Members to host events with stakeholders.

8 Papers to note:

8.a Executive Board update (RAD decisions)

Commissioners noted the summary of recruitment decisions which had been routinely provided to each Commission meeting during the fifth Senedd.

8.b ARAC Minutes April 2021

Commissioners noted the Committee meeting minutes.

9 Any other business

Cardiff District Heating Network – Commissioners received a brief introduction to the work being done to enable hot water, produced from waste heat from the Viridor energy-from-waste plant in the docks, piped around the lower part of Cardiff, to be used by private and public sector customers to heat their buildings. An FAQs document would be provided to Commissioners following the meeting.

Members Pension Scheme final valuation report from the Scheme Actuary - Commissioners were informed that the pension board had agreed the valuation and identified no increase to Commission's pension contribution rate for Members. The report would be circulated for information.

In the period since the previous meeting the Commission had agreed the Commission Annual Report and Accounts and Annual Reports relating to Diversity and Inclusion, Official Languages and Sustainability, been consulted regarding arrangements relating to the Chief Legal Adviser and agreed the removal of temporary fencing around the Senedd. Commissioners had also agreed an appointment to the Remuneration Board and been consulted on proposed changes to the Members' Pension Scheme.