



Venue: **Hybrid - Digital**

Date: **Monday, 26 September 2022**

Time: **10.30 - 11.35**

Minutes: SC(6)2022(6)

Commission
Members:

Rt. Hon. Elin Jones MS (Chair)
Rhun ap Iorwerth MS
Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Ken Skates MS
Joyce Watson MS

Officials present:

Manon Antoniazzi, Chief Executive and Clerk
Siwan Davies, Director of Senedd Business
Arwyn Jones, Director of Communications and Engagement
Ed Williams, Director of Senedd Resources
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

No apologies had been received.

1.b Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest were received.

1.c Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 11 July were agreed.

2 Resources Management Strategy

Commissioners received information recommending an approach to resource management following the requested capacity review exercise which was concluded over the summer.

The information set out medium-term resource challenges and cost pressures the Commission must manage; and summarised resource management strategy options. Commissioners reflected that capacity demands come externally, as well as being planned internally, and cannot always be controlled, and discussed the importance of not creating undue pressure on staff.

Commissioners noted the following strategic planning assumptions:

- that the growth in resource requirements over the next three years may not be fully funded;
- that the Commission's resource requirements over the coming 3-4 years (the period into the first year of the 7th Senedd, where the impact of the current Senedd Reform proposals will fully arise) must be proactively managed;
- that control of any proposed growth in the Commission's staffing establishment should be the primary means by which to manage the resourcing pressures over this period, noting that there will otherwise be only limited scope to manage required capital costs, inflationary pressures and various fixed costs requirement growth; and
- that there may not be resourcing available for the potential additional Senedd Reform establishment costs beyond those already presented to Commission.

Commissioners agreed that Executive Board should develop a three-year Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP), covering the period 2024-25 – 2026-27, that applies both a 'cap' on the overall Commission staffing establishment and a requirement to balance controllable revenue growth with commensurate savings and efficiencies in the three years covered by the MTFP in order to seek to deal with the resourcing challenges ahead. Commissioners commented that Senedd Reform should not be at the expense of Commission services provided. They agreed to see the draft plan in the spring.

Commissioners also highlighted the importance of engaging staff in order that they would feel confident that the process would work.

3 Commission Budget 2023-24

Commissioners were presented with the 2023-24 Draft Budget which highlighted changes since the 11 July 2022 Commission meeting.

Commissioners considered the implications of the proposed reversal of the temporary 1.25% increase in Employer National Insurance rates from 6 November 2022 and the cancellation of the introduction of the Health and Social Care Levy tax in April 2023.

Commissioners approved the 2023-24 Draft Budget to be laid with revisions to reflect the proposed cancellation of the introduction of the Health and Social Care Levy tax in April

2023. This meant an increase in the Commission operational budget of 5.06% between 2022-23 and 2023-24 (3.8% excluding Senedd Reform), and the increase in the overall budget of 4.06% between 2022-23 and 2023-24; a total budget of £67.642 million.

The Commission also noted the Finance Committee's statement of principles (no change from 2019) and the letter sent from the Minister for Finance and Local Government to the Chair of the Finance Committee.

4 Independent Advisers

Commissioners considered a number of matters relating to their Independent Advisers. They agreed terms of reference to move from the Remuneration, Engagement and Workforce Advisory Committee (REWAC) to a Remuneration Committee.

Commissioners agreed to receive recommendations in relation to the appointment of Independent Advisers, including for Membership of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) and the Remuneration Committee, out of meeting, following the imminent completion of the recruitment process. They also agreed to extend the current appointment of Bob Evans as an Independent Adviser for an additional two years, in the expectation that he would continue in the role of Chair of ARAC.

5 Covid update

Commissioners were updated about the framework agreed by Executive Board for COVID-19 risk control measures, which would allow the organisation to respond in an agile way to any future changes to the Covid-19 context. This might include new WG guidance or changes to community case rates, and was to form part of preparations for business continuity arrangements looking towards the winter virus season. Commissioners welcomed the good levels of information provided in compliance with Commission requirements for attendance on site.

6 PAPAC / Finance Committee update letter

A letter to update the Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee about progress in relation to single use plastic and spend on suppliers from Welsh based companies was agreed.

7 Interim Pay Review 2022

Commissioners were provided with information about the Interim Pay Review, conducted as planned in May and June this year as part of the existing agreement which is in place to 2025; and were made aware of a National Pay Strike Ballot that had opened and would close on 6 November. Commissioners discussed the current pay and cost of living environment and asked to be kept informed.

8 Papers to note:

8.a Members' Pension Scheme - change to investments

Commissioners noted a change to the investment strategy of the Members of the Senedd Pension Scheme, made by the Pension Board.

8.b Executive Board update (RAD decisions)

Commissioners noted the routine summary of recruitment decisions provided to each Commission meeting.

8.c ARAC Minutes of 15 June Meeting

Commissioners noted the routine update about ARAC meetings provided to the Commission.

9 Any other business

A Commissioner expressed thanks for all the work that had been done to deliver arrangements following the demise of Her Majesty the Queen and the visit to the Senedd of HM King Charles III.