



Venue: **Hybrid - Digital**

Date: **Monday, 30 January 2023**

Time: **10.30**

Minutes: SC(6)2023(2)

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
Simon Hart, Interim Head of Financial Services
Joanna Adams, Assembly Members' Senior Business Partner
Sulafa Thomas, Head of Commission and Member Support
Gwion Evans, Head of the Llywydd's Private Office
Elin Roberts, Clerk to Executive Board

Others in
attendance:

1 Introduction

1.a Introduction and apologies

No apologies were received.

1.b Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

1.c Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 12 December were agreed.

2 Commission Budget Review 2023-24

In submitting the Commission 2023-24 Budget for agreement in November 2022, the Commission committed to an in year review to identify and propose measures to reduce the overall budget level for 2023-24, taking account of the wider economic context.

Commissioners were updated on progress made to review the '23-24 budget and deliberated areas being considered for budget reduction in 2023-24.

Commissioners noted the approach and progress relating to service level savings proposals, noting in turn that potential savings were emerging within the following areas:

- Estates and facilities energy saving measures and costs,
- Robust renegotiation of ICT contracts.

Commissioners noted the approach and progress relating to the corporate level savings proposal of reducing the Commission's Project Fund.

Commissioners noted that the recommended options set out, if exercised or realised in full, would in aggregate result in savings of c.£435K, giving a reduced overall budget increase of 3.4% (against the first 2022-23 supplementary budget) a decrease from the 4.1% level originally agreed.

This reflected that difficult choices had needed to be made, and would result in reduced flexibility, for example to be able to respond to MS requests for additional activity or support.

Subject to final decisions to be made at the Commission meeting in March, the outcome of this work will lead to a draft 1st Supplementary Budget for 2023-24.

Commissioners also noted that further potential options for savings and efficiencies, would be considered as part of the medium-term planning for the 2024-25 Commission budget and the subsequent two years.

3 Ways of Working programme

A - Presentation – Emerging themes from Ways of Working engagement exercise with Members

Commissioners were presented with information about emerging themes from the engagement exercise with Members, which had been undertaken in November and December as a joint exercise with the Remuneration Board.

The purpose of the exercise was to establish a better understanding of Members medium-to-long term ways of working needs. Members' views were presented in five main themes:

- Ways of Working - Universal themes

- Commission Services
- Pay and Allowances
- Hub Working
- Senedd Reform

Commissioners discussed the strength of feeling expressed in relation to some areas, hubs as an office space shared between Members being an example where the Commission felt that Members' views suggested this would not be a fruitful direction to pursue. They highlighted a distinction between the type of 'Hub' generally discussed by Members, and Commission provided locations, such as that in North Wales, which enable Commission staff to work in parts of Wales other than the estate in Cardiff Bay.

Commissioners reflected that the findings of the exercise were interesting, and recognised that some aspects of the presentation would be particularly useful for the Remuneration Board in light of its planned work programme. Commissioners expressed that the significance to the current cohort of Members of some matters which would appear to merit further interrogation, for example factors which may influence the ability of Members to retain staff.

Commissioners agreed that in addition to the audiences who would use the information gathered to shape future service and support provision, it would be useful to provide some wider feedback to Members. They requested a note be produced.

B - North Wales office relocation update

Commissioners noted that work is underway to finalise the Licence with Welsh Government and that the current lease will terminate on 30 June 2023. An update was provided about the discussions with Welsh Government to ensure the independence for the future space for the Senedd Commission through appropriate signage in Sarn Mynach.

4 Response to PAPAC Report on 2021-22 Accounts

Commissioners agreed their response to 7 recommendations made by the Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee in their Report on the Scrutiny of the 2021-22 Accounts on 7 December 2022.

5 Chaplaincy/Pastoral care

Commissioners noted the request from the Cross Party Group (CPG) on Faith for support to enable its proposals to re-launch the chaplaincy services it had previously arranged, with an expanded team of multi-faith chaplains including a representative from a humanist (or no faith) background; the views of political groups and considered other information provided.

They agreed to reply to recognise the proposal from the Cross Party Group on Faith to arrange a wider pastoral care/chaplaincy service, making it available to Members, their staff and Commission staff.

The Commission agreed to facilitate this CPG activity by offering that the Quiet Room in the Senedd would routinely be reserved for this activity on Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons, and made available for the chaplains, to be booked separately, if they are attending the estate at other times. The room will be furnished appropriately from stock,

bearing in mind that at other times it will remain available as a quiet room.

The Commission considered implications relating to providing an ICT profile/email for use by the chaplains. Provision of this sort would mean the Commission would become a data controller (and/or processor) in relation to these interactions and concluded that the route for contacting the chaplains should not be Commission-provided. They agreed that information routes to contact the chaplains may be made available on the Member and staff intranets (if provided by the CPG).

The Commission noted that appropriate governance arrangements need to be put in place and agreed to ask to be informed if, in future, the Group would like to make changes to this arrangement, and of any changes to the identity of the chaplains.

6 Remuneration Board

Commissioners received two letters which had been sent by the Remuneration Board for the Commission's attention.

The first highlighted the Board's current consultation on proposed changes to the Determination on Members' Pay and Allowances for 2023/24. The Commission agreed to respond to the Consultation to highlight the implications for Commission budgeting. Commissioners agreed to finalise their response out of meeting.

The second letter identified a request from the Board to engage in a dialogue with the Commission about how future support for Members to deliver their duties will be provided through Commission services and the Board's Determination.

Commissioners discussed the significance of protecting the integrity of the two bodies and emphasised the importance of not creating confusion about the respective roles of the two bodies and safeguarding the separation between the two.

Commissioners agreed the principle that a mechanism for a dialogue would be useful to enable a shared understanding of the direction of travel and agreed that Commission officials would work with those supporting the Remuneration Board to pursue this. Commissioners were also informed that PAPAC had written to Ken Skates about Remuneration Board accountability.

7 Papers to note:

7.a Sustainability update

Commissioners noted the update on current sustainability matters and initiatives.

7.b Executive Board update (RAD decisions)

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

8 Any other business

- Commission staff strike notification – Commissioners agreed that it would be useful for them to be informed of any formal notifications of strike action received.

- Booking rooms on the Senedd Estate – Commissioners agreed to receive information in due course with regard to updating the policy for use of the estate.