

The Assembly Commission

Meeting Venue: **Presiding Officer's office, 4th floor – Ty Hywel**

Meeting date: **Thursday, 20 June 2013**

Meeting time:

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales



Minutes: AC(4)2013(9)

Committee Members:

Rosemary Butler (Chair)
Peter Black
Angela Burns
Sandy Mewies
Rhodri Glyn Thomas

Officials present:

Claire Clancy, Chief Executive & Clerk of the Assembly (Official)
Adrian Crompton, Director of Assembly Business (Official)
Craig Stephenson, Principal Private Secretary to the Presiding Officer (Official)
Carys Evans, Principal Commission Secretary (Official)
Holly Pembridge, Equalities Manager (Official)

Others in attendance:

David Melding, Deputy Presiding Officer
Mair Barnes, Independent Adviser

1 Introduction

1(i) Introduction and apologies

No apologies had been received.

1(ii) Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

1(iii) Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes were agreed.

2 Review of support for Committees

In December 2012 the Commission initiated a review of the support provided to Assembly Committees, which looked at the whole range of support in place. The review set out to identify immediate improvements, and to ensure the support provided is always driven by the Chairs and the Committees themselves and meets the needs of individual Members and Committees.

Over the last 6 months, evidence had been gathered from Chairs and individual Committee Members to better understand their requirements and the extent to which they felt the existing provision needed to be changed. Views had varied, with some of the evidence showing that Members were satisfied with the support on offer, and others calling for changes in working practices. The work had provided an opportunity to try new ways of working. The Assembly Member and support staff survey results, which had just been compiled, would also influence future proposals for change.

Although Commissioners felt that the information presented provided a useful update on progress to date and the range of views represented, they expressed concern that the paper did not provide them with a strategic view of future options. It was felt that there should be a greater emphasis on building on best practice, including identifying a model for the core services that would provide outstanding parliamentary support. Commissioners wanted to take a more holistic approach and include all aspects of available support to Members, including, for example, technological advances and continual professional development. The proposals also needed to take account of the volume of work that needed to be done by only 42 Assembly Members. It was agreed that the matter would be brought back to a Commission meeting in the Autumn.

Action: A further paper would be presented in the Autumn.

3 Annual Report and Accounts 2012–13

The Commission's Annual Report and Accounts will be published online on 11 July. Copies will be sent to Members before the end of term and a limited number will be available, along with a summary at the Commission's summer events.

Commissioners agreed the draft report subject to a small number of amendments.

4 Annual Equality Report 2012–13

The Equality Report provides an update on progress against the Commission's Equality plan for 2012–16. The report highlights a number of significant achievements over the year but also recognises some opportunities for improvement. Commissioners thanked staff for their on-going commitment to delivering the equalities agenda, which continued to demonstrate the Assembly's positive contribution in this area.

The report was agreed.

5 Audit Committee 18 April

The minutes of the 18 April Audit Committee were noted.

Commissioners received a verbal update on matters discussed at the 13 June Audit Committee including confirmation of the level of assurance on the accounts for 2012-13 and a brief discussion of the internal audit plans for the forthcoming year

6 Any other business