

The Assembly Commission

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

Meeting date: **Thursday, 21 November 2013**

Meeting time: **10:30 – 12:00**

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales



Minutes: AC(4)2013(17)

Committee Members:

Rosemary Butler (Chair)
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)

Dave Tosh, Director of Information and Communications Technology (Official)

Craig Stephenson, Chief Adviser to the Presiding Officer (Official)

Carys Evans, Principal Commission Secretary (Official)

Others in attendance:

David Melding, Deputy Presiding Officer
Mair Barnes, Independent Adviser

1 Introduction

1(i) Introduction and apologies

Apologies had been received from Peter Black AM.

1(ii) Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

1(iii) Minutes of the previous meeting

2 Machine Translation: improving our translation

The Official Languages Scheme, which was agreed by the Assembly in July 2013, included a commitment that the Assembly Commission would make best use of technology to translate documents so that more documents, including the Record of Proceedings, could be provided in both languages at the same time.

Following agreement at the Commission meeting in June, the Translation and Reporting Service (TRS) had been evaluating Google and Microsoft Translator solutions for the following purposes, to:

- enable TRS to increase output levels and deliver a broader range of services by translating more text as quickly and as cost effectively as possible;
- provide machine translation not only for TRS but other Assembly staff, Assembly Members and their staff by providing a self-service 'gist translation' capability to facilitate communication and working practices in the language of choice;
- share the services and our experiences with other organisations in Wales.

Work had been undertaken to assess the quality of the output provided by both systems.

Officials would continue to work with Microsoft to develop the translation tool with a view to this being a new system that would be publicly available at an appropriate point in 2014. Use of Google would continue to be piloted within TRS so that the efficiency of this system could be fully tested.

Commissioners were pleased with the progress being made to assess the capacity of both machine translator tools. Emphasis was placed on the fact that the benefits of these types of facilities would not only make a significant contribution to the ability of those within the Assembly to work in the language of their choice, but have the potential to be of great assistance to other organisations and businesses in Wales and beyond. Officials should engage with interested parties and experts in the translation field to discuss the benefits and opportunities provided by such tools.

It was felt that guidance and training would be needed to facilitate use amongst users in the Assembly and to ensure that they were aware of some of the risks regarding the accuracy of the translated outputs. Any machine translation output used without post-editing would not be appropriate for documentation to be published outside the Commission and maintaining the high standards required for published documents would be essential.

Officials were thanked for making significant progress on this project in a relatively short time.

3 Any other business

Secretariat
November 2013