

Assembly Commission

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

Date: **Thursday, 26 January 2017**

Time: **13.00 – 14.40**

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales



Minutes: AC(5)2017(1)

Commission
Members:

Elin Jones AM (Chair)
Suzy Davies AM
Caroline Jones AM
Adam Price AM
Joyce Watson AM

Officials present:

Claire Clancy, Chief Executive & Clerk of the Assembly
Adrian Crompton, Director of Assembly Business
Dave Tosh, Director of Resources
Craig Stephenson, Director of Commission Services
Sarah Dafydd, Business Enhancement and Change Manager
Gwion Evans, Head of Presiding Officer's Private Office
Sulafa Thomas, Head of Commission and Member Support

Others in
attendance:

1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction and apologies

No apologies were received.

1.2 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

1.3 Minutes of the previous meeting

The Minutes of 5 December were agreed.

2 New Official Languages Scheme and annual reporting requirements

Adam Price, as portfolio holder, introduced proposals for the Assembly Commission's new Official Languages Scheme for the Fifth Assembly.

Commissioners paid particular attention to the consultation that had taken place and ways that the views of consultees had helped shape the draft Scheme.

Responses to the consultation were generally supportive and Commissioners considered some of the areas where suggestions had been made and how the draft had been adjusted as a result. They also discussed how staff would be supported and the relationship between the Commission's responsibilities for the provision of services in both official languages and others, such as equalities.

Commissioners noted the positive progress made since the introduction of the Official Languages Scheme, and they agreed that the version considered by the Commission represented a step up in terms of service delivery and a balanced approach in order to take us towards achieving our ambitions.

Commissioners agreed the draft Official Languages Scheme, proposals for further scrutiny of the Scheme prior to formal approval in Plenary and that Adam Price AM should sign off the final version on behalf of the Assembly Commission.

The Commission also agreed the draft annual report, which will be laid for consideration by Plenary in due course, thereby effecting closure of the current Official Languages Scheme.

3 Update on strategic issues

3.1 Assembly estate

Dave Tosh confirmed that he had met with each of the Commissioners to update them on ongoing work. Commissioners requested that a paper be provided with additional background information.

Commissioners took a decision to limit the scope of the work to be done to explore the options for future capacity provision.

3.2 The Expert Panel on constitutional reform

Following discussion at the last Commission meeting, Commissioners were content that work to establish an Expert Panel on electoral reform was progressing.

Continuing their work to address the capacity of the Assembly, the Commission were updated on progress towards the appointment of membership of the Expert Panel on Assembly Electoral Reform.

The Panel will operate independently, and its role will be to make recommendations to the Assembly Commission, by autumn 2017, on the number of Members the Assembly needs, the most suitable electoral system, and the minimum voting age for Assembly elections.

While the Panel will operate independently, it cannot work wholly in isolation from political realities. The Llywydd will also establish, and chair, a Political Reference Group with an advisory role to help the Panel ensure its work culminates in workable recommendations.

Commissioners agreed that the Llywydd should progress with announcements.

3.3 EU update

Following the departure of the Commission's previous EU Advisor, Commissioners were told of the new arrangements that had been put in place, taking account of the changed landscape following the EU referendum.

The new postholder will be based in Cardiff and travel frequently to Brussels to continue to network and represent the Assembly's interests and facilitate Member and committee visits.

4 ACARAC minutes 21 November meeting

Commissioners noted the minutes of the ACARAC meeting of 21 November.

5 Commission arrangements

Commissioners noted information provided about their meetings in the period until summer recess 2017.

6 Any other business

Adam Price mentioned the up-coming AM/AMSS survey.