

Assembly Commission

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

Date: **Monday, 4 December 2017**

Time: **12.35 – 14.40**

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales



Minutes: AC(5)2017(11)

Commission
Members:

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

Officials present:

Manon Antoniazzi, Chief Executive & Clerk of the Assembly
Adrian Crompton, Director of Assembly Business
Dave Tosh, Director of Resources
Craig Stephenson, Director of Commission Services
Non Gwilym, Head of Communications
Nia Morgan, Director of Finance
Phil Turner, Senior Business Analyst
Sulafa Thomas, Head of Commission and Member Support
Rhuanedd Richards, Policy Adviser to the Llywydd

Others in
attendance:

1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction and apologies

No apologies were received for the meeting.

1.2 Declarations of interest

No interests were declared.

1.3 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting on 6 November were agreed.

2 Dignity and respect action plan

At the November meeting, Commissioners agreed that this serious issue should be addressed, and received an update on progress to date as well as plans for further work.

Since the Llywydd, party leaders and Chair of Standards Committee made their statement on 15 November, work has been underway on a Dignity and Respect policy, which will be shared with 'owners' shortly in draft form.

The purpose of the draft is to set out the standards of conduct expected from everyone and improve the clarity and accessibility of the reporting routes for complaints against anyone (including contractors). Following discussion with the Llywydd and Chair of Standards Committee, information on the support available to individuals making a complaint and those who have an allegation against them will be included in the policy.

Complaints pages on the website will also be refreshed so that access to these arrangements is clear to anyone who wishes to use them. A new dedicated freephone number will be available from this week, talking to people and referring them to the relevant complaints route.

The Standards of Conduct Committee is undertaking a review of the Code of Conduct for Assembly Members. The Remuneration Board is reviewing the AMSS Code of Conduct and considering whether other policies need to be reviewed. The Llywydd had also written to the Standards Commissioner to ask him to review party procedures. Commission staff are working with ACAS (external and non-profit) to provide awareness training for party groups.

The timeline being working to is for significant progress to be made by Christmas, aiming for a Plenary debate in Spring, which would seek the Assembly's agreement to build the Respect and Dignity policy into the Code of Conduct for Members.

Commissioners agreed to consider the draft policy before the next Commission meeting.

3 Capacity review update

Commissioners were presented with information about the emerging themes from the work to date on the Commission staff capacity review.

The update's themes included benefits of an agile workforce, effective and efficient use of capacity, clarity of responsibilities and alignment of planning cycles.

Commissioners highlighted the importance of relevant prioritisation. They confirmed that work will continue to be on-going, and agreed that to receive more detail at their next meeting.

4 Digital Task Force recommendations

In November, Commissioners had requested additional information outlining the indicative cost of implementing six recommendations of the Digital News and Information Taskforce which had yet to be progressed.

Commissioners considered the resource and financial implications of delivering the six recommendations and provided a steer on how it wished to prioritise those recommendations in terms of the development of our news and public information services.

This prioritisation included agreement that they would like to pilot use of an independent arms-length news wire service, support for social media analytics and scoping a CRM system, agreement to establishing a post to drive digital content and an indication that, at this stage, the scoping of development of a new multimedia visitor experience should be put on hold.

5 Supplementary budget

The Commission's 'Annually Managed Expenditure' (AME) budget for 2017-18 was set at £1.2million in November 2016. This is predominantly the accounting adjustment (non-cash) for the Members' Pension Provision. The actual costs will not be known until after the 2017-18 year-end when the actual calculation is done by the Actuary.

This means that for the purposes of budgeting, the costs must be estimated. A recent estimate from the Actuary states that the estimated Pension Finance cost for

2017–18 (Members' Pension Scheme) is likely to be around £1.744million, substantially higher than the approved budget. This amount cannot be accommodated by an underspend within the Commission's operational budget.

Commissioners questioned the cause of the difference and requested additional narrative within the note to Finance Committee. Commissioners agreed to request the supplementary budget detailed, and that the necessary documentation be published in line with Standing Order requirements.

6 Papers to note

6.1 Diversity and Inclusion annual report

Commissioners noted the Diversity and Inclusion annual report and agreed it should be published in the usual way.

6.2 Corporate Performance report April – Sept 2017

Commissioners confirmed that the Corporate Performance report should be published in the usual way.

6.3 IRB Update

Commissioners noted the IRB update.

7 Any other business

Members' Pension Scheme – Commission nominee. Joyce Watson had indicated her intention to resign her position, due to a change in her workload pressures. A replacement nomination will be made as soon as possible.

Joyce Watson wished to place on record that she had received very good feedback about the recent support given to the Labour group during a very difficult period.

The following issues were considered, and agreed, by correspondence in the period prior to this meeting:

- British Deaf Association regarding BSL as official language.
- OAQ follow-up regarding provision of subtitling for FMQs.