



Venue: **Remote**

Date: **Monday, 2 November 2020**

Time: **12.30 - 14.10**

Minutes:

Commission
Members:

Elin Jones MS (Chair)
Suzy Davies MS
Rhun ap Iorwerth MS
David J Rowlands MS
Joyce Watson MS

Officials present:

Manon Antoniazzi, Chief Executive & Clerk of the Senedd
Siwan Davies, Director of Senedd Business
Arwyn Jones, Director of Communications and Engagement
Dave Tosh, Director of Resources
Nia Morgan, Director of Finance
Kathryn Potter, Head of Research Service
Nia Moss, European Adviser and Research Team Leader
Phil Boshier, Senior Research Officer
Sulafa Thomas, Head of Commission and Member Support
Gwion Evans, Head of the Llywydd's Private Office
Elin Roberts, Policy Adviser to the Llywydd

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.

1.c Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

2 Draft Commission Budget 2021/22. Response to the Finance Committee Report on the draft budget

Commissioners considered the recommendations made by the Finance Committee in its report on the 2021-22 Senedd Commission Draft Budget, following its scrutiny. Commissioners discussed areas the Committee had been particularly interested in: Financial implications of the COVID-19 pandemic, including impact on the project fund; the 2019 VES and the Communications and Engagement strategy, along with archiving and business continuity resilience.

Commissioners agreed their response to the recommendations, and approved the Final Budget document for 2021-22, to be laid on 4 November 2020. They noted that the Budget Motion is planned for debate in plenary on 11 November 2020.

3 COVID-19 Update

Commissioners considered a paper providing updates on the operation of the Commission under the Welsh Government regulations and guidance, as at 23 October. They were updated orally on more recent developments, and discussed the updated Welsh Government restrictions announced to follow on from the firebreak period, and noted that the Llywydd will take decisions in consultation with Business Committee on the format for plenary.

Commissioners discussed the matter of public engagement activity based on the estate during the covid restrictions. Having considered aspects relating to safety, planning, and effective staff deployment, they agreed an extended period of closure to the public whereby the working assumption will be that the estate remains closed to the public and for public engagement activity until Dissolution of the Fifth Senedd. They also agreed that should circumstances relating to Covid-19 change dramatically during that period this decision may be re-visited.

4 EU Exit update

Commissioners were provided with information about how the Commission is continuing to deliver its priority of supporting 'a strong institutional response' to EU exit. They noted the actions being taken to support the Senedd as a legislature and to mitigate the risk to Senedd business continuity in relation to the end of the EU transition period on 31 December 2020.

They also discussed a decision needed in relation to the Senedd's Brussels office, and having come from different perspectives, agreed the option to maintain the Brussels Office as it

currently operates until a longer-term decision on its future is taken by the Commission in the Sixth Senedd.

5 Personal security

Some Members had recently reported experiencing issues relating to online security and trolling. Commissioners were provided with information on the support available, including a new intranet page, and further steps that could be taken. Commissioners noted the information provided and agreed to highlight the new intranet page bringing together relevant information to the members of their groups.

6 Papers to note:

6.a Executive Board update (RAD decisions)

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

6.b Letter to PAC

Commissioners noted additional information which had been provided to the Public accounts Committee following the evidence session relating to scrutiny of the 2019-20 budget, in September.

7 Any other business

- **Election matters** Commissioners were briefed on the potential of decisions being made by the Welsh Government relating to legislative proposals or other changes in relation to the 2021 Senedd election, following consideration of a report of their elections group.
- **Approach to lessons learned** Commissioners agreed a proposal to briefly capture lessons learned re the most significant pieces/key aspects of work of the Commission during the fifth Senedd, to support the development of the next Commission strategy. This will replace production of a more traditional 'legacy report', to avoid duplicating information is captured and published each year in the annual report.
- **Follow-up to Oral Question on Supporting Commission staff working from home during pandemic** Commissioners received a brief update responding to points raised and information about the results of the Commission's Business Continuity survey. They welcomed the extensive work that had been done and recognised that employees' views and needs may be different over the winter period to their experience through the spring and summer. They also recognised the significance of Members' own responsibilities as employers, for example in ensuring their support staff take leave.