

# The Assembly Commission

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Meeting Venue:  
**Conference Room 4B – Ty Hywel**

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Meeting date:  
**16 June 2011**

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Meeting time:  
**13:00**

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Cynulliad  
Cenedlaethol  
Cymru

National  
Assembly for  
Wales



For further information please contact:

**Helen Finlayson 029 2089 8705**  
Secretariat

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**Agenda**  
AC(4)2011(1)

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## 1. Introduction

**Introduction and apologies**

**Declarations of interest**

**Minutes of the previous meeting** (Pages 1 – 4)

**2. Assembly Commission Governance and Procedure** (Pages 5 – 30)

**3. Assembly Commission Portfolios** (Pages 31 – 33)

**4. Communicating Effectively with Assembly Members** (Pages 34 – 37)

**5. Assembly Commission Legacy Report** (Pages 38 – 80)

**6. Assembly Case Management System (Electoral Registers)** (Pages 81 – 83)

# Agenda Item 1c

## Comisiwn y Cynulliad Assembly Commission

Cynulliad  
Cenedlaethol  
Cymru

National  
Assembly for  
Wales



**NAFWC 2011**

**Minutes of 14 March 2011 meeting**

**Date:** 14 March 2011

**Time:** 17:00

**Venue:** Conference room 4B

### **Minutes of 14 March 2011 meeting**

**Present:**

Llywydd, Chair

William Graham AM (Conservatives)

Lorraine Barrett AM (Labour)

Peter Black AM (Liberal Democrats)

Chris Franks AM (Plaid Cymru)

**Officials present:**

Claire Clancy, Chief Executive and Clerk

Dianne Bevan, Chief Operating Officer

Keith Bush, Director of Legal Services

Adrian Crompton, Director of Assembly Business

Craig Stephenson, Head of Commission and Member Support Service

Helen Finlayson, Secretariat

Helen Birtwhistle, External Communications – item 2

Natalie Drury-Styles, Outreach and International Relations Manager – item 2

**Independent Advisers:**

Mair Barnes

**Observers:**

None

**Others:**

None

**NAFWC 2011**  
**Minutes of 14 March 2011 meeting**

**1. Introduction and apologies**

No apologies were received

**Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**Minutes of meeting – 27 January 2011**

The minutes were formally agreed.

**Matters arising from the meeting on 27 January 2011**

There were no matters arising.

**2. Opening of the Fourth Assembly**

Helen Birtwhistle introduced the paper, outlining the proposals for a multi-cultural, inclusive celebration which would be representative of Welsh society.

The Commission discussed the proposals, but was unable to reach agreement on the details of the arrangements, and was therefore unable to approve the proposals.

**3. Review of achievements in the Third Assembly: legacy report of the Assembly Commission**

Claire Clancy introduced the paper, noting that the draft legacy report recorded the achievements of the Assembly Commission during the Third Assembly, and made recommendations which sought to assist the new Commission in the Fourth Assembly.

The Commission agreed that it was content with the structure and focus of the report, and that the final report should be published in w/c 9 May 2011.

**4. Framework for the Assembly Commission annual report and accounts 2010–11**

Claire Clancy introduced the paper. She outlined the proposed framework for the annual report and accounts, and noted that it was similar to the framework used in previous years.

The Commission agreed the proposed outline and timetable for the annual report and accounts 2010–11.

**5. Report and Determination of the Remuneration Board**

Adrian Crompton introduced the paper, noting that the National

## **NAFWC 2011 Minutes of 14 March 2011 meeting**

Assembly for Wales (Remuneration) Measure 2010, which had established the Remuneration Board, placed a duty on the Commission to lay the Determination of the Board, and any accompanying report, before the Assembly as soon as was reasonably practicable.

The Commission noted its thanks to the Remuneration Board for its first Determination and report, and to the secretariat which had supported the Board's work.

William Graham AM, as chair of the Members' Pension Scheme Trustees, noted that Trustees were keen to work with the Board on its review of Members' pension arrangements, and welcomed the development of a clear Memorandum of Understanding between the Board, the Trustees and the Commission.

The Commission agreed that the Determination and accompanying report should be laid before the Assembly on 15 March, and published on its website on the same day.

### **6. Management Board report to the Commission**

The Commission noted the paper, which provided updates on work across the Assembly.

The Commission considered the process for consultation on a proposed Bilingual Services Measure and its new Bilingual Services plan, and agreed that the public consultation should be deferred until the beginning of the Fourth Assembly.

The Commission discussed the issue of access to the non-public areas of the Assembly estate during dissolution for Members' support staff who were themselves standing as candidates in the Assembly elections. The Commission supported the principle of equal treatment for all candidates, and agreed that support staff standing as candidates should therefore not be permitted access to non-public areas during dissolution.

The Commission discussed a request by a Welsh artist to secure a commission for a painting of the Fourth Assembly in session, and agreed that it could not support the request.

The Commission noted that the guidance for Member-hosted events on the Assembly estate was under review by the Chief Legal Adviser. The amended guidance would clarify Members' responsibilities in relation to events they sponsored as well as tightening up conditions

**NAFWC 2011**  
**Minutes of 14 March 2011 meeting**

as to the conduct of events. It would provide an opportunity for considering how best to respond to concerns raised recently about use of Assembly resources by an organisation some of whose members appeared to have been involved in damage to an Assembly Member's constituency office.

**7. Matters to note**

The Commission noted its thanks to its independent advisers, Mair Barnes, Richard Calvert, Tim Knighton and Professor Robert Pickard, for their support and constructive challenge during the course of the Third Assembly.

# Agenda Item 2

## Comisiwn y Cynulliad Assembly Commission

NAFWC 2011 (Paper 2)

Commission governance and procedure

Cynulliad  
Cenedlaethol  
Cymru  
National  
Assembly for  
Wales



**Date:** 16 June 2011

**Time:** 13:00

**Venue:** Conference Room 4B

**Author name and contact number:** Ian Summers, ext 1824

### Commission governance and procedure

#### 1.0 Purpose and summary of issues

- 1.1 At its first meeting in June 2007, the Commission approved three documents which set out the overarching framework principles for the governance of the organisation, the rules for conduct of Commission meetings and the delegation of functions to the Chief Executive. These documents have not been updated during the Third Assembly.
- 1.2 Since 2007, a number of developments have taken place in the field of corporate governance and the Commission has had four years of operational experience. The recent Assembly elections and the change of Commissioners presented an ideal opportunity to review these documents in the light of experience and best practice.

#### 2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Commission is asked to approve:
  - (i) the revised governance principles and supporting provisions – attached at Annex A;
  - (ii) the revised rules for conduct of Commission business – attached at Annex B; and
  - (iii) the amended delegation of Commission functions and arrangements for the exercise of the Clerk's functions – attached at Annexes C and D.

### **3.0 Discussion**

#### **Governance principles and supporting provisions**

- 3.1 The 2007 governance principles and supporting provisions were in line with the Corporate Governance Code of Good Practice published by the Treasury in 2005. The main deviations were to take account of the devolved environment and the status of the Commission as a body corporate with a “governing board” consisting wholly of elected Members.
- 3.2 The Treasury is currently in the final stages of amending the 2005 Code to take account of a number of changes in Whitehall since 2005. The revised Code focuses primarily on government departments and, in particular, the new advisory boards which will be chaired by Ministers and include non-executive members. Much of this will not apply in Wales and certainly not to the Commission (although we do have our independent advisers who perform a role akin to that of NEDs but without voting rights).
- 3.3 The Financial Reporting Council updated its Corporate Governance Code for UK private sector companies in June 2010. The principles in that Code place new emphasis on leadership and effectiveness, rather than compliance and control, whilst retaining sections on accountability and risk management.
- 3.4 The updating of the Commission’s Governance Principles and Supporting Provisions has drawn on both the FRC and Treasury publications, with a significant amount of tailoring to suit the Commission’s own status, role and remit. The resulting document is in line with existing practices and standards that have evolved since the Commission was established in 2007 and is also consistent with the Good Governance Standard for Public Services published by the Independent Commission on Good Governance in Public Services.

### **Rules for the conduct of Commission business**

3.5 The original rules for the conduct of Commission business were considered by the Shadow Commission prior to the 2007 election, and formally adopted by the Commission at its first meeting in June 2007. Whilst they have largely stood the test of time, they were drafted in the absence of any practical experience of how the Commission would operate. A number of relatively minor changes have therefore been made to reflect the four years' worth of experience that we now have.

### **Instrument of delegation**

3.6 The amendments to the instrument of delegation reflect:

- (i) the existence of a Chief Legal Adviser, who was not with us in June 2007; and
- (ii) the transfer of certain Commission functions to the Remuneration Board.

3.7 The previous requirement that the Chief Executive should consult the Commission before acquiring or disposing of land and buildings of any value and before embarking on ICT projects has also been reviewed, and it is proposed that the requirement should be reworded to embrace all capital projects costing in excess of £1 million. This reflects the Commission's strategic role, and the responsibility of the Chief Executive for operations and, as Accounting Officer, for the management of the organisation's finances. The Commission would still be consulted for major (strategic) projects such as UNO.





## **Governance principles and supporting provisions**

### **Introduction**

1. The National Assembly for Wales Commission has adopted the following governance principles and supporting provisions. Together they are intended to help instil an effective operational culture throughout the organisation which, in turn, will aid the process of managing key business risks.
2. The principles and supporting provisions are consistent with the UK Corporate Governance Code and the Good Governance Code for Public Services and they will be used to guide the work of the Commission and its staff.
3. Corporate governance is the way in which organisations are directed, controlled and led. It defines relationships and the distribution of rights and responsibilities among those who work with and in the organisation, determines the rules and procedures through which the organisation's objectives are set, and provides the means of attaining those objectives and monitoring performance. Importantly, it defines where accountability lies throughout the organisation.
4. The Commission has been established as a corporate body to provide property, staff and services required for the Assembly's purposes. The Assembly, and the people of Wales that it represents, are therefore key stakeholders and it is incumbent on the Commission to engage with them to ensure that it provides the highest possible standard of service.
5. The Commissioners are charged with the governance of the organisation and are accountable to the Assembly. The responsibilities of the Commissioners as the "governing board" include setting the organisation's strategic aims, providing the leadership to put them into effect, overseeing the delivery of those strategic aims and reporting and being accountable to the Assembly on their stewardship.

6. The Commissioners have collective responsibility for decisions and have equal status in discussions. The Presiding Officer, other Commissioners and independent advisers should challenge individual Commissioners if they do not:
  - respect constructive challenge by others;
  - support this collective responsibility for fulfilling the organisation's purpose;
  - work together towards intended outcomes for the Assembly and the people of Wales; and
  - appear to act in the interests of the Assembly as a whole but solely in the interests of the political group with which they are associated.
  
7. Good governance is central to the effective operation of the organisation. The National Assembly for Wales Commission is not a profit making corporation, but does need to be business-like and operate according to recognised precepts of good governance:
  - **leadership** – articulating a clear vision for the organisation and giving clarity about how activities contribute to achieving this vision, including setting risk appetite and managing risk;
  - **effectiveness** – bringing a wide range of relevant experience to bear, including through offering rigorous challenge and scrutinising performance;
  - **accountability** – promoting transparency through clear and fair reporting; and
  - **sustainability** – taking a sensible, long-term view about what the organisation is trying to achieve and what it is doing to get there.

## **Section A: Leadership**

### **A.1 Role of the Commission**

#### *Principles*

- The Commission should be an effective board which is collectively responsible for the long-term success of the organisation and therefore the Assembly as an institution that serves the people of Wales.
- The Commission's role is to provide leadership of the organisation within a framework of prudent and effective controls which enables risk to be assessed and managed.
- The Commission should set the organisation's strategic aims, ensure that the necessary financial and human resources are in place for the organisation to meet its objectives and review the performance of management.
- The Commission should set the organisation's values and standards and ensure that its obligations to the Assembly and others are understood and met.
- Commissioners must act collectively in what they consider to be the best interests of the Assembly, consistent with any statutory obligations.

#### *Provisions*

- The Commission should meet sufficiently regularly to discharge its duties effectively.
- The annual report should include a statement of how the Commission operates, including a high level statement of which types of decisions are to be taken by the Commission and which are to be delegated to management. The annual report should set out the number of meetings of the Commission and individual attendance by Commissioners and independent advisers.

## **A.2 Division of Responsibilities**

### *Principle*

- There should be a clear division of responsibilities between the Commission and the operational management of the organisation's business.

### *Provision*

- The division of responsibilities between the Commission (and the Presiding Officer as its Chair) and the Chief Executive should be clearly established and agreed.

## **A.3 Presiding Officer**

### *Principles*

- The Presiding Officer is responsible for leadership of the Commission and ensuring its effectiveness in all aspects of its role.
- The Presiding Officer is responsible for agreeing the Commission's agenda and ensuring that adequate time is available for discussion of all agenda items, in particular strategic issues. The Presiding Officer should also promote a culture of openness and debate by facilitating the effective contribution of independent advisers and ensuring constructive relations.
- The Presiding Officer should facilitate and ensure effective communication with Assembly Members.

## **A.4 Independent advisers**

### *Principles*

- Independent advisers should challenge constructively and help develop proposals on strategy.
- Independent advisers should scrutinise the performance of management in meeting agreed goals and objectives and monitor the reporting of performance. They should satisfy themselves on the integrity of financial information and that

financial controls and systems of risk management are robust and defensible.

*Provision*

- Where independent advisers have concerns which cannot be resolved about the running of the organisation or a proposed action, they should ensure that their concerns are recorded in the minutes. On resignation, an independent adviser should provide a written statement to the Commission if they have any such concerns.

**Section B: Effectiveness**

**B.1 Commitment**

*Principle*

- Commissioners and independent advisers should be able to allocate sufficient time to discharge their responsibilities effectively.

*Provision*

- The Commission should make arrangements to evaluate its effectiveness from time to time. As a minimum, this should include a legacy report at the end of each Assembly which covers examples of good practice and lessons learned.

**B.2 Development**

*Principles*

- New Commissioners and independent advisers should receive appropriate induction on appointment.
- Senior management should provide the necessary resources for appropriate development and training that a Commissioner or independent adviser might require.
- To function effectively, all Commissioners and independent advisers need appropriate knowledge of the organisation and access to its operations and staff.

### **B.3 Information and support**

#### *Principles*

- The Commission should be supplied in a timely manner with information in a form and of a quality appropriate to enable it to discharge its duties.
- The Commission and Member Support Service is responsible for ensuring that the Commissioners receive accurate, timely and clear information.
- The Commission and Member Support Service's responsibilities include ensuring good information flows within the Commission and between senior management and independent advisers, as well as facilitating induction and assisting with other development that might be required.

#### *Provisions*

- Under the direction of the Chief Executive, the Commission and Member Support Service's responsibilities include:
  - developing and agreeing the agenda for Commission meetings with the Presiding Officer, ensuring all relevant items are brought to the Commission's attention;
  - ensuring good information flows within the Commission and between senior management and independent advisers, including:
    - challenging and ensuring the quality of papers and information;
    - ensuring papers are received by Commissioners according to an agreed timetable; and
    - providing advice and support on governance matters and helping to implement improvements in the governance structure and arrangements;
  - ensuring the Commission follows due process; and

- recording Commission decisions accurately and ensuring action points are followed up.

## **Section C: Accountability**

### **C1. Accountability to the Assembly**

#### *Principles*

- The Commissioners are responsible and answerable to the Assembly for the exercise of the statutory functions of the Commission. They have a duty to the Assembly to account and to be held to account, for all the policies, decisions and actions of the organisation.
- The Chief Executive is the Commission's Principal Accounting Officer by virtue of Section 138 of the 2006 Act. She is personally responsible and accountable to the Assembly for the organisation and quality of management in the Assembly Commission, including its use of public money and the stewardship of its assets.

#### *Provisions*

- The Commissioners may allocate responsibility for oversight of a defined range of organisational work to an individual Commissioner.
- The delegation of the Commission's functions to the Chief Executive should be documented and clearly set out any exceptions and reservations.
- The duties of the Principal Accounting Officer are set out in a letter of designation issued by the Treasury. She should establish and document a clear allocation of responsibilities amongst officials, but retains overall personal responsibility and accountability to the Assembly for:
  - propriety and regularity;
  - prudent and economical administration;
  - avoidance of waste and extravagance;

- ensuring value for money, judged for the Welsh block and more widely for the Exchequer as a whole, not just for the Assembly Commission;
  - efficient and effective use of available resources; and
  - the organisation, staffing and management of the Assembly Commission.
- If the Principal Accounting Officer is instructed by the Commission or the Presiding Officer acting on its behalf to take a course of action that she believes to be contrary to her personal responsibilities, she must seek a written direction from the Commission. She may not rely on a Commission minute as an alternative to a formal written direction. Such directions will be forwarded to the Auditor General, who will normally draw the matter to the attention of the Public Accounts Committee.
  - All directions that would be subject to public disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 if an appropriate request were to be made should be disclosed in the governance statement that forms part of the annual accounts for the period in which the direction was granted.

## **Section D: Risk management**

### **D1. Risk management and internal control**

#### *Principles*

- The Commission and the Chief Executive should ensure that there are effective arrangements for governance, risk management and internal control for the Assembly Commission.
- The Chief Executive should take the lead on, and oversee the preparation of, the “governance statement” for publication with its resource accounts each year.

#### *Provision*

- The Chief Executive should assure herself of the effectiveness of the organisation’s risk management system and procedures and its internal controls. She should give a clear steer on the desired risk appetite for the organisation and ensure that:



- there is a proper framework of prudent and effective controls, so that risks can be assessed, managed and taken prudently;
- there is clear accountability for managing risks; and
- officials are equipped with the relevant skills and guidance to perform their assigned roles effectively and efficiently.

## **D2. Internal audit and the Audit Committee**

### *Principle*

- The Commission and the Principal Accounting Officer should be supported by:
  - an Audit Committee, chaired by a suitably experienced internal adviser; and
  - an internal audit service operating to Government Internal Audit Standards.

### *Provisions*

- The Head of Internal Audit should periodically be invited to attend senior management meetings, where key issues are discussed relating to governance, risk management or control.
- The Commission and the Principal Accounting Officer should be supported by an Audit Committee, comprising at least three independent advisers. At least one, but preferably more, of these committee members should have recent and relevant financial experience.
- Advising on key risks is a role for the Commission and senior management. However, the Audit Committee should support this role.
- The Audit Committee should not have any executive responsibilities or be charged with making or endorsing any decisions. It should take care to maintain its independence. The Committee should be established and function in accordance with the Treasury's Audit Committee Handbook.

- The annual governance statement is published with the resource accounts each year. In preparing it, the Principle Accounting Officer should assess the risks facing the organisation and ensure that its risk management and internal control systems are effective. The Audit Committee should normally lead this assessment.
- The terms of reference of the Audit Committee, including its role and the authority delegated to it by the Commission, should be made available publicly. The Committee should submit an annual report to the Commission who should report annually on the work of the Committee in its report to the Assembly.

## **Section E: Remuneration**

### **E.1 Remuneration of senior management**

#### *Principles*

- Levels of remuneration should be sufficient to attract, retain and motivate senior managers of the quality required to run the organisation having regard to wider issues of pay and remuneration within the public sector.
- There should be a formal and transparent procedure for developing policy on executive remuneration and for fixing the remuneration packages of the Chief Executive and directors. No individual should be involved in deciding his or her own remuneration.

#### *Provisions*

- The Commission should appoint a Remuneration Committee consisting of at least three independent advisers to give advice on the remuneration.
- Where senior management are involved in advising or supporting the Remuneration Committee, care should be taken to recognise and avoid conflicts of interest.
- The Remuneration Committee should make available its terms of reference, explaining its role. Where remuneration consultants

are appointed, a statement should be made available of whether they have any other connection with the organisation.

## **Section F: Relations with Assembly Members**

### **F.1 Dialogue with Assembly Members**

#### *Principle*

- The Commission and Chief Executive should establish a regular dialogue with Assembly Members based on the mutual understanding of objectives.
- The Chief Executive and the Presiding Officer should ensure that all Commissioners and independent advisers are made aware of Assembly Members' major issues and concerns.

#### *Provisions*

- The Presiding Officer and Chief Executive should ensure that the views of Assembly Members are communicated to the Commission as a whole.
- The Commission and Member Support Service should establish communication with Assembly Members by a variety of means to ensure that they are kept up to date with the Commission's deliberations and to receive and handle any concerns and issues that Members might have.
- The Commission should state in the annual report the steps they have taken to ensure that the Commissioners develop an understanding of the views of Members about the organisation, for example through direct face-to-face contact and surveys of opinion.



## **Conduct of business by the National Assembly for Wales Commission**

### **A. Background and introduction**

1. Section 27 of the Government of Wales Act 2006 (the Act) established the National Assembly for Wales Commission as a body corporate with the principal statutory duty to provide, or ensure that the Assembly is provided with, the property, staff and services required for the Assembly's purposes.
2. The Act provides for the Commission to comprise the Presiding Officer and four other Assembly Members appointed in accordance with the Standing Orders. Paragraph 1 of Schedule 2 to the Act and Standing Order 7 governs the membership of the Commission.
3. With the exception of the Presiding Officer, Commissioners are nominated by the main political parties. However, all Commissioners represent the interests of the Assembly as a whole rather than acting as party representatives.
4. A Commissioner continues to hold office until another Member of the Assembly is appointed in his or her place unless the Commissioner resigns, ceases to be an Assembly Member other than by dissolution of the Assembly, or is removed by a resolution of the Assembly. When the Assembly is dissolved, Commissioners continue in post with the same responsibilities until such time as a new Commission is appointed by the next Assembly following the election.
5. The validity of any action taken by the Commission is not, according to the Act, affected by any vacancy in its membership, or by any defect in the appointment of members or lack of qualification for membership.
6. The Chief Executive is the senior permanent employee of the Assembly Commission and, under Section 138 of the Act, is also

its Principal Accounting Officer. Under paragraph 7 of schedule 2 to the Act, the Commission may delegate any of its functions to the Presiding Officer or the Chief Executive.

7. Paragraph 11 of schedule 2 to the Act allows the Commission to determine its own procedure. This document therefore sets out the procedures for the conduct of business which the Commission has agreed.

## **B. Governance and leadership**

8. The Commission has been established as a corporate body to manage the Assembly estate, employ Assembly staff and facilitate the smooth running of the Assembly. The Commissioners are therefore corporately responsible for setting the organisation's strategy and overseeing its performance.
9. The Commissioners are also charged with the governance of the organisation and are accountable to the Assembly for its performance. As this is a corporate responsibility, it is important that all Commissioners act, and be seen to act, in the interest of the Assembly as a whole rather than as representatives of individual political parties.
10. The Chief Executive is responsible for the management of staff, and operational delivery of the strategy set by the Commission. As Principal Accounting Officer, the Chief Executive is also responsible for economic, efficient and effective use of the organisation's resources, for ensuring regularity and propriety of financial transactions, and for ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place for the effective identification and management of risk.
11. It is incumbent upon the Commissioners, Chief Executive and all levels of management to show leadership in taking the organisation forward to ensure that the Assembly is regarded as a powerful and respected democratic institution in the service of the people of Wales.

## **C. Procedures for meetings of the Commission**

### *Meetings*

12. Meetings will normally be held in private unless otherwise determined by the Commission.

*Regularity of meetings*

13. The Commission will determine the regularity of its meetings. Such meetings will normally take place when the Assembly is sitting but may also be during a recess if the need arises.

*Adjournment of meetings*

14. Any Commissioner may propose that a meeting be adjourned. The decision on any such adjournment is for the Commission.

*Special meetings*

15. The Presiding Officer may convene a special meeting of the Commission when it appears to him or her that an item of business requires urgent attention. The date of any such special meeting will be determined by the Chief Executive after contacting as many Commissioners as practical.
16. A Commissioner may request the Presiding Officer to convene a special meeting. It is for the Presiding Officer to determine whether or not to grant such a request. Any two Commissioners may call a special meeting by writing to the Chief Executive specifying the business to be transacted.
17. The Chief Executive will arrange for such special meetings to be convened and, where possible, the meeting should take place no later than seven clear working days after the date of the request or call.

*Chair*

18. The Presiding Officer will chair meetings. If the office of Presiding Officer is vacant, or if the Presiding Officer is unable to act, the remaining members will appoint a Commissioner to chair the meeting.
19. The role of the Chair is:
- to preserve order and ensure that Commissioners and special advisers have sufficient opportunity to express their views on any matter under discussion;
  - to decide in which order those wishing to speak shall do so;

- subject to these Rules, to decide on all matters of practice and procedure;
- to ensure that Commission decisions or resolutions are clearly expressed; and
- Where no motion is under consideration to summarise the discussion for the purposes of the minutes.

### *Quorum*

20. The quorum for any meeting is three members.

### *Attendance*

21. Commissioners and independent advisers should, where practical, inform the Commission and Member Support Service in advance if they are unable to attend a particular meeting.

22. Where a Commissioner or independent adviser is, for whatever reason, unable to attend a meeting then he or she may submit written comments with views on any of the issues under consideration.

23. In addition to the Commissioners, the following will normally attend:

- independent (non-executive) advisers appointed by the Commission<sup>1</sup>;
- the Chief Executive;
- the Directors; and
- a minute secretary provided by the Commission and Member Support Service.

Other officials may attend meetings as required.

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<sup>1</sup> Independent advisers may be appointed to act in a non-executive capacity providing support and constructive challenge to the Commission and its senior management – see the Commission’s governance principles and supporting provisions.

24. The Commission may if appropriate, invite individual Assembly Members to attend for specific meetings or individual items of business. These Members would not be permitted to vote.
25. Where, in the opinion of the Commissioners, an issue is particularly sensitive or confidential in nature, the Chair may recommend that the item be considered without observers, advisers or officials present. If the Commission approves such a recommendation such individuals as the Commissioners determine must withdraw, but the minute secretary should normally remain in attendance.

*Papers*

26. Papers for any meeting, other than a special meeting, should be set out in accordance with guidance to be issued by the Commission and Member Support Service.
27. All papers should be presented in a clear, concise format setting out the issues, the background, a discussion on the options available, resource implications, next steps and the decision required from the Commission.
28. Where the purpose of the paper is to ask the Commission to express a view, it should include an appropriate conclusion rather than a recommendation. Where the paper is simply providing information, the conclusion should invite the Commission to note the information provided.
29. Commission minutes and papers will normally be published one week after the meeting, except those papers containing information which is considered may be exempt from publication under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
30. The Commission and Member Support Service will issue the papers and agenda by email, where practical, not later than three working days preceding the date of the meeting. Commissioners may consult colleagues on any issue but should take reasonable steps to prevent any action that would pre-empt full and proper consideration by the Commission at the meeting.



### *Agenda*

31. The agenda for each meeting will be set by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Presiding Officer and, other than for a special meeting, should include:

- date, time and location of the meeting;
- minutes of the previous meeting;
- matters arising; and
- papers which are to be considered at the meeting

32. Under normal circumstances there will be no heading of “Any Other Business” on the agenda. However, if any Commissioner, independent adviser or official wishes to raise an urgent matter under this heading, notice should be given to the Presiding Officer at least one day in advance. Should this not be possible notice must be given as quickly as possible prior to the commencement of the meeting. It is for the Commission to determine whether such items will be discussed and at what point in the meeting.

### *Minutes*

33. The minutes of meetings should record:

- the date, venue and time of the meeting;
- Commissioners present;
- independent advisers, officials and observers in attendance;
- apologies for absence;
- declarations of interest;
- approval of the previous minutes or any amendments thereto;
- matters arising from the previous minutes;
- a note of any issues considered by correspondence since the previous meeting and any decisions taken;

- issues discussed at the meeting and any decisions taken or resolutions made on each issue;
  - the outcome of voting on any decision taken; and
  - any actions arising.
34. Minutes of meetings must be approved by the Commission at the following meeting and the duly approved minutes will then be formally signed off by the Chair.
35. When an amendment to the minutes is agreed the Chair must, unless the meeting determines otherwise, authorise the amendment to the minute, which thereafter must be agreed.
36. The approved minutes of meetings will be published on the Assembly's website.

*Decisions and voting*

37. Only Commissioners are entitled to vote. Each Commissioner has a vote. The Chair of the meeting also has a casting vote in the event of a tie.

*Disclosures of interest*

38. A Commissioner, independent adviser or participating official must disclose any financial interest in any matter under consideration at a meeting. Where such an interest has been declared the individual concerned must take no part in the proceedings and should withdraw from that part of the meeting.
39. Where a Commissioner or independent adviser has an interest, other than financial (e.g. family), advice should be sought as to whether the interest may be regarded as significant.
40. A Commissioner or independent adviser may seek advice from the Commission's Legal Services Directorate in relation to any particular circumstances which he or she believes may constitute a direct or indirect interest in a matter before a meeting. All declarations of interest must be recorded in the minutes.

*Resolutions*

41. The Chair should attempt to secure a consensus for all Commission resolutions. Where this is not possible, the Chair must call for a vote.
42. Votes will be taken by a show of hands unless the meeting determines that a roll call vote should take place.
43. Any motions to be submitted for consideration of the Assembly require the prior approval by a resolution of the Commission at a duly constituted meeting.

*Dealing with items by correspondence*

44. Any issues to be dealt with by correspondence, at the discretion of the Chief Executive, must be limited to issues:
  - of real urgency where it is clear that a decision is needed before the next meeting;
  - to note for information;
  - agreed at a previous meeting to be dealt with by correspondence; or
  - where it is likely to gain consensus agreement with no need for discussion.
45. When a paper is issued, it should clearly state a closing date by which comments are required. It will be presumed that if a Commissioner does not respond by the closing date it will be interpreted as if consent was given to the proposal under consideration. The Commission and Member Support Service will strive to achieve a consensus on all papers issued by correspondence.
46. If there is a consensus in favour (or not in favour) of a proposal or if there is a majority view then that decision will be put to the next meeting for formal ratification. However, where there is a majority view, but a Commissioner dissenting considers that the matter requires further discussion then the issue will be considered at the next available meeting. If the issue is significantly urgent then

consideration should be given to calling a specially convened meeting to resolve the issue.

*Amendments to procedures*

47. These procedure rules may be varied, revoked or added to by the Commission at a meeting where due notice has been given.



## **Delegation of Assembly Commission functions**

1. In accordance with the provisions of paragraph 7 of Schedule 2 to the Government of Wales Act 2006, the Assembly Commission hereby delegates its functions, including its responsibility for the management of staff, to the Chief Executive and Clerk subject to the following exceptions and conditions.
2. The following matters are excepted from this delegation:
  - a) the appointment, terms and conditions and remuneration of the Chief Executive and Clerk, non-executive advisers to the Commission, and members of the Audit Committee; and
  - b) the authorisation of expenditure under paragraph 6 of Schedule 2 to the 2006 Act (provision of financial assistance to the Electoral Commission).
3. The Chief Executive and Clerk must consult the Commission before:
  - a) making appointments to the posts of Chief Operating Officer, Director of Assembly Business and Chief Legal Adviser;
  - b) changing the remuneration and terms and conditions for the staff occupying those posts;
  - c) creating new director posts or abolishing existing director posts;
  - d) authorising capital expenditure for projects in excess of £1 million; and
  - e) authorising expenditure on matters that could be regarded as novel or contentious.

4. The delegation of functions mentioned above does not prevent the exercise of those delegated functions by the Commission.

*Signed on behalf of the Commission by the Presiding Officer*

.....

June 2011



## **Exercise of Clerk's functions**

In accordance with Section 26(3) of the Government of Wales Act 2006, the Assembly Commission hereby authorises the Chief Operating Officer, the Director of Assembly Business and the Chief Legal Adviser to exercise the Clerk's functions if the Clerk is for any reason unable to act.

*Signed on behalf of the Commission by the Presiding Officer*

.....

June 2011

# Agenda Item 3

## Comisiwn y Cynulliad Assembly Commission

NAFWC 2011 (Paper 3)  
Assembly Commission portfolios

Cynulliad  
Cenedlaethol  
Cymru  
National  
Assembly for  
Wales



**Date:** 16 June 2011

**Time:** 13:00

**Venue:** Conference Room 4B

**Author name and contact number:** Claire Clancy, ext 8233

### Assembly Commission portfolios

#### 1.0 Purpose and summary of issues

1.1. The Commission is corporately responsible for the exercise of the functions conferred upon it and for the governance of the organisation. During the Third Assembly each Commissioner had particular responsibility for a portfolio of services.

#### 2.0 Recommendations

2.1. The Commission is asked to agree portfolios for each Commissioner.

#### 3.0 Discussion

3.1. The Commissioners are corporately responsible for the exercise of the functions conferred on the Commission and for the governance of the organisation and, accordingly, act in the interests of the Assembly as a whole.

3.2. During the Third Assembly, the Commission's responsibilities were split into separate portfolios. Each Commissioner took a particular interest in an area of the Commission's work. This provided Commissioners with the opportunity to build up their knowledge in particular areas and to work with officials to provide strategic direction on a more regular and thorough basis than Commission meetings alone would allow.

3.3. The draft portfolios attached at Annex A are, in part, aligned with the structure by which services to Members are delivered,



NAFWC 2011 (Paper 3)  
Assembly Commission portfolios

but also balanced to ensure a reasonable distribution between Commissioners. These reflect experience of portfolio working in the Third Assembly. A senior official has been paired with each portfolio to act as the key link between the Commissioner and service areas.

- 3.4. Although the Deputy Presiding Officer is not a member of the Commission, the Presiding Officer has asked him to attend meetings. Identifying areas of interest upon which he will focus complements his other responsibilities as DPO and will support the portfolios of Commissioners. Possible areas of interest include Assembly business, the Pierhead as a centre for Assembly development and debate, and links with Wales Governance Centre and other bodies relevant to this role. Adrian Crompton would be the lead official for these purposes.



## Assembly Commission – draft portfolios 2011–16

Portfolio	Lead official(s)
Presiding Officer as Commission Chair	Claire Clancy
Budget, governance, including Audit Committee membership, and links with the Remuneration Board. Improvement of services to Members, employment support and professional development for Members and their staff.	Claire Clancy with Steve O'Donoghue and Craig Stephenson
ICT, broadcasting and e-democracy, the Assembly estate, facilities and sustainability. The Commission as the employer of Assembly staff.	Dianne Bevan
Education services, front of house, catering and security. The Commission's statutory equality functions.	Connie Robertson
Citizen engagement and communications, national and international outreach. Freedom of information and the Commission's Welsh language functions and policy.	Non Gwilym

Note: Proposed focus of interest for the Deputy Presiding Officer referred to in the covering paper.

## **Comisiwn y Cynulliad Assembly Commission**

Cynulliad  
Cenedlaethol  
Cymru  
National  
Assembly for  
Wales

**NAFWC 2011(Paper 4)**

**Communicating effectively with Assembly Members**



**Date:** 16 June 2011

**Time:** 13:00

**Venue:** Conference Room 4B

**Author name and contact number:** Craig Stephenson, ext 8230

### **Communicating effectively with Assembly Members**

#### **1.0 Purpose and summary of issues**

1.1. This paper seeks the Assembly Commission's views on the actions proposed to communicate the work of the Assembly Commission to Assembly Members more effectively in the Fourth Assembly. The proposals set out in this paper enhance the role of the secretariat in this respect, allowing Commissioners to concentrate on the strategic and decision making elements of their role.

#### **2.0 Recommendations**

2.1. The Assembly Commission is asked to agree the proposals set out at paragraphs 5.1 – 5.4.

#### **3.0 Discussion**

3.1. In 2009–10, an Assembly Member satisfaction survey was undertaken. Thirty-one Members, sometimes also accompanied by their support staff, provided feedback on the services we provide to them. During those discussions it became apparent that a number of Members were dissatisfied with the level of feedback and pre-decision consultation on the work of the Assembly Commission. The Chief Executive and Clerk also met party leaders periodically and similar feedback was provided during those discussions.

## Communicating effectively with Assembly Members

3.2. A number of actions were in place already to keep Members informed and these were strengthened as a result of the feedback. We now have an opportunity to engage Members more proactively on the work of the Assembly Commission and the following paragraphs detail those proposals.

### **4.0 Approaches taken to date**

4.1. The following bullet points summarise the approaches taken in the Third Assembly and it is proposed that these should continue:

- the Chief Executive met with opposition Party Leaders to discuss a number of current and on-going issues. Regular meetings were also undertaken with individual Assembly Commissioners;
- Assembly Commission papers were supplemented with briefing sheets which were made available prior to Commission meetings and were designed specifically to engage Members on the Commission's work;
- a few days after each Commission meeting, a summary of the discussions was published on the Members' homepage;
- Commission papers were also published bilingually one week after a meeting and a link to the published papers is provided in an email to Members;
- Chief Executive monthly update was introduced and well received;
- Chief Executive and other staff discussed specific issues with Members at party group meetings;
- Senedd drop-in sessions were arranged so that Members could meet key staff in the margins of Plenary sessions. These were largely related to Members' Business Support and ICT work;
- an Assembly Member Reference Group was established for consultation purposes on the work of the Fourth Assembly

## Communicating effectively with Assembly Members

Programme to facilitate pre-decision consultation with Members and Groups; and

- a Members' support staff advisory group was also established and worked well.

### **5.0 Opportunities for the Fourth Assembly**

- 5.1. In addition to maintaining the communication strands listed above, we also suggest the following actions to enhance engagement with Members:
- 5.2. The Chief Executive's monthly update could be used to signpost forthcoming consultations to encourage engagement from the outset. There might also be opportunities for senior officials to attend party group meetings periodically, upon invitation, to discuss particular issues. Subject to the Commissioners' views, this could commence before the summer recess so that the role of the Commission can be explained, in particular, to new Members.
- 5.3. The Head of Member Liaison and Professional Development has a pivotal role in engaging Members on the work of the Commission and would take forward the following initiatives as part of her duties:
  - re-establish the Assembly Member Reference Group which provided valuable intelligence on corporate services in the lead up to the Fourth Assembly elections. Using the Reference Group as a mechanism for consultation would allow Commissioners to be the decision makers who receive the product of consultation. We would need to ensure that it was specific and focused with involvement being fluid and picking up on special interests that Members may have;
  - take a proactive role in capitalising on the partnership approach that has developed with Group Managers through the Members' Support Staff Advisory Group and make arrangements for that to continue;
  - use to best effect the Members' pages on the Intranet to communicate the work of the Commission; and

Communicating effectively with Assembly Members

- communicate and clarify decisions taken by the Assembly Commission when she meets with individual or groups of Members.

5.4. Operationally, the secretariat could continue to advise Members that Commission papers have been published but this could be done by using the Presiding Officer's mailbox which would have the effect of raising the status of the communication. To help ensure that all Members receive the Assembly Member Briefing Sheet at the same time prior to Commission meetings, the secretariat could also provide these directly to Members, or publish the briefing on the Members' Intranet, on behalf of the Commissioners.

**National Assembly for Wales**  
Assembly Commission

Legacy report  
2007 to 2011



The National Assembly for Wales is the democratically elected body that represents the interests of Wales and its people, makes laws for Wales and holds the Welsh Government to account.

[www.assemblywales.org](http://www.assemblywales.org)  
[assembly.info@wales.gov.uk](mailto:assembly.info@wales.gov.uk)  
[assembly.bookings@wales.gov.uk](mailto:assembly.bookings@wales.gov.uk)  
T 0845 010 5500

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AGORWYD GAN EI MAWR  
OPENED BY HER MAJESTY



## Foreword

To help planning and delivery of services during the Fourth Assembly, this legacy report reviews the Assembly Commission's work over the past four years.

The Government of Wales Act 1998 originally created the National Assembly for Wales as a "body corporate" with responsibility for exercising both parliamentary and governmental functions. Being a body corporate meant that, in law, it continued to exist even during an election campaign—the Assembly was not dissolved and Members remained as such right up to the date of the election.

The Government of Wales Act 2006 ("the Act") formally separated the two roles (parliamentary and governmental) and created separate legal entities to carry them out: the Welsh Assembly Government (Welsh Government) to exercise governmental functions and the National Assembly for Wales to exercise parliamentary functions, including law making and scrutiny of the Welsh Government.

The reconstituted Assembly is not a body corporate but rather an unincorporated association of 60 Members which is dissolved a few weeks before each Assembly election and reconvened after the newly elected Members are returned. The Assembly is therefore not a permanent, continuing body and, as such, is not capable (for example) of entering into long-term contracts or owning property. The 2006 Act therefore created the Commission as a permanent legal entity that is able to enter the long-term contracts, appoint the staff and own the property necessary for the National Assembly for Wales to exercise its functions.

### Role of the Commission

The Commission's duty under the Act is to provide the "property, staff and services required for the Assembly's purposes". In practice, this means that it is the Commission's responsibility to:

- acquire, hold or dispose of any property on behalf of the Assembly;
- make arrangements to pay Members and provide their pensions and allowances and to employ Assembly staff; and,
- act in an appropriate and necessary way to provide the services required for the Assembly to do its work.

Schedule 2 of the Act also allows the Commission to promote public awareness of the current or future electoral system for the Assembly and empowers the Commission to promote public awareness of the current or any pending system of devolved government in Wales.

A comprehensive "Guide to the National Assembly for Wales Commission" has been produced to act as a single source of information on the role, composition, function and responsibilities of the Commission.



**Looking forward to the Fourth Assembly**

As we approach the Fourth Assembly, at a time when the constitutional and political landscape has changed again, it is timely for us to review the lessons learned from the past four years and to consider the challenges that lie ahead. We hope this report will assist the new Commission in identifying good practice to build into the Assembly's future ways of working, and in formulating its strategic priorities for the Fourth Assembly.

The report begins with an overview of the approach taken by the Commission to its strategy and organisation. It then provides a selection of milestones and highlights as a reminder of the considerable breadth of activity during the four years. The final chapters review achievement against each of the Commission's five strategic goals and provide recommendations to assist the Commission in the Fourth Assembly.

The 'yes' vote on the Assembly's legislative powers and a new political landscape following the Assembly election has provided the new Commission with a new context for reviewing its strategic goals for the Fourth Assembly. We hope that the learnings cited in this report help inform that process.

The Rt Hon the Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas  
William Graham  
Peter Black  
Lorraine Barrett  
Chris Franks



## Strategy and organisation

### The Strategy for the Third Assembly (2007–2011)

The Commission agreed that its overarching purpose should be: “To make the Assembly an accessible and effective parliamentary body that inspires the confidence of the people of Wales”.

It also agreed strategic goals and values to guide its work and that of the staff of the Assembly for the duration of the Third Assembly.

### Strategic goals and values for the Third Assembly Our goals

#### We will promote and widen engagement in devolution.

The next four years must demonstrate that the Assembly is working for all citizens and encouraging greater and more active participation in the democratic process. We will emphasise the positive impact of the Assembly upon the lives of people in Wales. There will be greater incremental devolution through the 2006 Act, and there may be a referendum for greater legislative competence, we will be ready to grasp these challenges enthusiastically.

#### We will show unity, leadership and a bold response to constitutional change.

The Assembly will show confidence and competence in embracing its new powers. We are united in securing scrutiny and legislation of the best quality, and in supporting Members in all that they do as elected representatives.

#### In all our work, we will demonstrate respect, probity and good governance.

All that we do must be capable of intense external scrutiny, be transparent and should reflect the diverse nature of Wales and its languages in how it deals with and involves the citizen.

#### We will work sustainably.

We will show leadership in how we manage our work and estate, and we aim to provide the highest achievable level of sustainability in both.

#### We will ensure that the Assembly has the best service, provided in the most effective way.

We will take the services provided for Members and the people of Wales to a higher level, while demonstrating wise and effective use of its resources and value for money. The ethos of service, to Members and anyone who engages with the Assembly, drives everything that we do.

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#### Our values

The Assembly Commission and its staff:

- always act in the best interests of the Assembly;
  - maintain high standards and deliver what we say we will;
  - are professional and innovative;
  - work openly and collaboratively;
  - treat everyone with respect.
-

## Commissioners' areas of responsibility

The Commissioners are corporately responsible for the exercise of the functions conferred on the Commission, the governance of the organisation and, accordingly, act in the interests of the Assembly as a whole. For the Third Assembly, the Commission's responsibilities were split into separate portfolios. Each Commissioner had individual responsibility for a particular area of work. These portfolio areas were cross-cutting and strategic in approach, and allowed Commissioners to work across a range of services.

## Commissioner portfolios

### **Chair of the Commission—Rt. Hon the Lord Elis-Thomas AM**

The Commission was chaired by the Llywydd (Presiding Officer), who had special responsibility for promoting democratic engagement; excellent leadership; developing the Assembly's future legislative powers and external relations.

### **Commissioner for the Sustainable Assembly—Lorraine Barrett AM**

This portfolio included responsibility for equality, language, environment and carbon neutrality, sustainable procurement and estate management.

### **Commissioner for the Assembly and the Citizen—Peter Black AM**

This portfolio included looking at the quality of scrutiny and the legislative process; external communication; ICT; citizenship education; legal matters and Freedom of Information.

### **Commissioner for the Improving Assembly—Chris Franks AM**

This portfolio included looking at improving services for Members and citizens; involving stakeholders in the Assembly's work; strategic planning; and considering value for money.

### **Commissioner for Assembly Resources—William Graham AM**

This portfolio included considering the management of Assembly assets; Assembly people (including employees, contractors, services provided to support Assembly Member support staff); budget; Members' salaries and allowances; efficiency and good governance.

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**Claire Clancy**Chief Executive and Clerk  
of the Assembly

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**Operations Directorate–****Dianne Bevan**

Chief Operating Officer

**Connie Cockburn**

Head of Estates and ICT

**Steven O’Donoghue**Head of Assembly  
Resources**Non Gwilym**Head of External  
Communications

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**Assembly Business  
Directorate–****Adrian Crompton**Director of Assembly  
Business**Sulafa Halstead**Head of Assembly  
Committees**Mair Parry-Jones**Head of Translation  
& Reporting Service**Kathryn Potter**Head of the Members’  
Research Service**Sian Wilkins**Head of Legislation  
& Chamber Services

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**Legal Services  
Directorate–****Keith Bush**

Director of Legal Services

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**Head of Corporate Unit–****Craig Stephenson**

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**Organisational structure**

During the Commission’s inaugural meeting in June 2007, the Commission agreed, in accordance with the Act, to delegate its functions, including its responsibility for the management of staff, to the Chief Executive and Clerk of the Assembly, subject to several exceptions and conditions.

A new organisational structure, supported by appropriate resources, was put in place to support the effective functioning of the Assembly as a legislature. Three Directors were appointed—a Chief Operating Officer a Director of Assembly Business and a Chief Legal Adviser/Director of Legal Services. Over the course of the Assembly, a number of functions were strengthened to help ensure the Assembly’s ability to operate effectively as a legislature and to provide effective support to Assembly Members, as well as to engage effectively with the Welsh electorate.

Strong corporate governance arrangements were established from the outset. As part of this, a Corporate Governance Committee, now known as the Audit Committee, was established to advise the Commission and the Chief Executive on matters of finance, audit and corporate governance.

In order to ensure that Commissioners and senior officials could draw upon a wide range of experience to assist them in the discharge of the Commission’s functions, in November 2007 the Commission appointed independent advisers to act in an independent non-executive capacity. The independent advisers have offered constructive challenges across all the Commission’s business with a view to ensuring that all aspects of strategy and delivery were scrutinised for effectiveness and efficiency. They have contributed to the monitoring of the performance and progress of the organisation, including the use of human and financial resources, and maintained a critical overview of the organisation’s financial controls and procedures.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of staff–total headcount</b>	<b>Full-time equivalents</b>
<b>31 March 2011</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>326.72</b>
<b>31 March 2010</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>364.38</b>
<b>31 March 2009</b>	<b>362</b>	<b>348.20</b>
<b>31 March 2008</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>308.11</b>
<b>31 March 2007</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>286.75</b>



## Independent advisers to the Commission

### **Mair Barnes**

Mair Barnes holds a number of non-executive directorships and is the former Chair of Vantios plc and Managing Director of Woolworths plc. She has held non-executive directorships at the Department of Trade and Industry and the Cabinet Office.

### **Richard Calvert**

Richard Calvert rejoined the Department for International Development (DFID) in August 2009 as Director-General for Finance and Corporate Performance after two and a half years at the Food Standards Agency (FSA), where he held the post of Director of Strategy and Resources. Richard's last role in DFID, before moving to the FSA, was as Director of Finance and Corporate Performance. Richard is a qualified Management Accountant, and has held a number of non-executive roles within the public sector.

### **Tim Knighton**

Tim Knighton is currently Business Solutions Delivery Director at Companies House. Before joining Companies House in 2007 as Director of Finance, Tim spent ten years with Tesco plc in a variety of finance roles, latterly being responsible for their UK shared services operation. Prior to this he was an Executive Director with Goldman Sachs in their Capital Market Division.

### **Professor Robert Pickard**

Professor Robert Pickard has held a large number of public appointments, many in the field of health and wellbeing. Among his current appointments, he is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine. He is a scientist by background.

## Questions to the Assembly Commission

In accordance with Standing Orders, Assembly Members may table questions to the Commission about any matter relating to the Commission's responsibilities—for written or oral answer.

### **Written questions**

Written questions are tabled by Assembly Members and the Commission's secretariat commissions a draft reply. Once cleared by the relevant Director, it is submitted to the Assembly Commissioner with portfolio responsibility for the subject matter for approval. The agreed response is provided to the Member who tabled the question and is published as part of the Record of Proceedings.

In the Third Assembly, 54 written questions were submitted on a range of subjects, including:

- the cost of Assembly Commission activities at Christmas, staff away days, Assembly rebranding, Welsh language tuition, Senedd repair bills and the Assembly Police Unit;
- the numbers of staff disciplined, suspended or dismissed;
- disability access to our buildings;
- sustainability issues.

### **Oral questions**

Time is made available in every four weeks the Assembly meets for Members to ask oral questions related to Commission business. In the Third Assembly, Commissioners agreed that one Commissioner would answer all questions each month on rotation rather than responding individually to single questions on their portfolio areas. Questions are tabled at least five, but not more than ten, working days before they are to be answered and the order of oral questions is determined by random shuffle in the Table Office.

The secretariat to the Assembly Commission commissions draft responses and background briefings for each of the questions and these are then sent to the Commissioner for final approval. Prior to the Plenary session, briefing sessions are arranged with Assembly staff as necessary. Fifty-four oral questions were answered in the Third Assembly and were tabled by Members from all parties. Oral questions covered a range of subjects, including:

- the Commission’s role in the referendum on law-making powers for the Assembly;
- the Commission’s annual budget and administrative savings;
- school visits to the Assembly;
- catering;
- staff car parking;
- dissolution;
- ICT projects;
- progress of the independent Remuneration Board.

### **Urgent questions**

A Member may submit a request for an urgent question to be answered by the Assembly Commission but none were requested in the Third Assembly.

## Third Assembly: some of the milestones and highlights

### 2007

#### May

The Assembly held its first Plenary meeting of the Third Assembly in May, for the first time under the Government of Wales Act 2006, and the larger corporate body was formally separated into the National Assembly for Wales and the Welsh Government.

The Presiding Officer and Deputy Presiding Officer were elected.

#### June

The Royal Opening of the Third Assembly by Her Majesty The Queen, HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, HRH The Prince of Wales and HRH The Duchess of Cornwall took place in the presence of Members, the judiciary, representatives from local government, speakers of linked UK, Commonwealth and European parliaments, diplomats and an all-Wales element of senior citizens and youth representatives.

Commissioners were elected and met for the first time.

The first Government-proposed Legislative Competence Order was introduced (the Additional Learning Needs Order 2008). The first Members' ballots were held—won by Ann Jones (Domestic Fire Safety Legislative Competence Order) and Jenny Randerson (Healthy Eating in Schools Measure).

#### July

The Commission agreed its strategic framework for the Third Assembly, identifying five key goals and its vision to make the Assembly an accessible and effective parliamentary body that inspires the confidence of the people of Wales.

The first Government-proposed Measure was introduced (NHS Redress Measure 2008).

The Sustainability Committee held a formal meeting at the Royal Welsh Show—the first formal meeting of a committee of the Third Assembly outside Cardiff.

The Assembly Welsh Language Scheme for 2007–11 was published, setting out the Assembly's ambition to be a truly bilingual organisation and placing bilingualism at the heart of everything it does.

#### September

The Presiding Officer gave a speech marking the tenth anniversary of the referendum on devolution in Wales, and called for the terms Assembly and Welsh Government to be adopted to make it easier for the public to understand the different roles.

#### October

Operation Black Vote was launched to help address the deficit in BME democratic participation in Wales.

The Senedd welcomed its 500,000th visitor—Maura Buckley, who was visiting the Assembly on her 71st birthday.

The Finance Committee scrutinised the Commission's budget for the first time, expressing its support for the Commission's open approach to its budget process and willingness to participate fully in ongoing scrutiny.

The Commission was recognised through the Disability Two Ticks Award, which demonstrates excellence in diversity in the way we recruit and develop disabled staff.

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**November**

The Finance Committee scrutinised the Welsh Government's budget proposals for the first time, meeting five times in total and making recommendations, several of which were accepted by the Welsh Government.

Four independent advisers were appointed to ensure that the Assembly Commission and senior management were supported and constructively challenged in their roles.

The Senedd accessibility report was re-examined leading to accessibility improvements being made.

Public Affairs Cymru held a gala dinner in the Pierhead to celebrate its first anniversary.

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**December**

The Corporate Governance Committee met for the first time to advise the Commission on risk, audit, good governance and financial practice. The Statement on Internal Control was introduced, which would become an integral part of the organisation's processes throughout the year.

The LGBT staff network was developed to provide informal support to LGBT employees and participate in the equality impact assessment process.

The Finance Committee reported for the first time on the Welsh Government's budget.

The first independent panel on Financial Support for Assembly Members met for the first time.

The Commission's Annual Report on Equality was scrutinised for the first time by the Equality of Opportunity Committee.

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## 2008

### January

The Health and Wellbeing Committee held a Senedd consultation on its inquiry into Presumed Consent for Organ Donation, inviting members of the public to give their views. The Committee worked with the Education team to take the consultation into schools.

The Equality of Opportunity Committee undertook a review of the results of its inquiry into Service Provision for Disabled Young People, working with the same group of disabled young people to identify what had changed.

The Presiding Officer welcomed the Vice President of the European Commission to the Senedd. A Committee of the Whole Assembly was convened for the first time to allow Members the opportunity to engage in debate with Ms Margot Wallström.

The first Assembly Measure completed the first stage of the legislative process when it was debated in Plenary. The NHS Redress (Wales) Measure aimed to make it easier and quicker for NHS patients to claim compensation when their treatment goes wrong.

Operation Black Vote won the highly acclaimed Channel 4/Hansard Society Political Award.

The first joint meeting between an Assembly committee and the House of Commons Welsh Affairs Committee was held to scrutinise proposed legislation relating to domiciliary care.

An independent Remuneration Committee was established to consider and make recommendations on the pay and performance of senior officials in a transparent and robust way.

‘Cyfnewid’ was launched, a mechanism to give Assembly staff a chance to have their say on corporate topics.

### February

Jonathan Morgan AM tabled a proposed Order relating to rights for Mental Health patients—the first Member-proposed Legislative Competence Order to reach this stage.

The first Legislative Competence Order was approved by the Assembly—a Government-proposed Order relating to education and training.

The Chief Legal Adviser held a seminar into access to Welsh legislation, looking at ways to ensure easy and effective access to reliable information about Welsh legislation and the statutory powers of Welsh Ministers.

### March

The first Member-proposed Measure was introduced (Healthy Eating in Schools 2008).

The Members’ Research Service introduced an online tracking service, developed to help the public to better understand the work of scrutiny and legislation committees.

After an open recruitment process supported by Assembly staff and chaired by Alun Cairns AM, the Assembly nominated Peter Tyndall as Public Services Ombudsman for Wales—the appointment was confirmed by Her Majesty The Queen.

The report of the first independent panel on Financial Support for Assembly Members was published, making recommendations about Members’ salaries which were accepted by the Commission.

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## April

The first Government-proposed Order received Royal Approval (The National Assembly for Wales (Legislative Competence) (Education and Training) Order 2008).

Siambr Hywel launched as Europe's first dedicated youth debating chamber, acting as a flagship example of the Assembly's proactive engagement with young people using the latest technologies.

The Assembly's e-petitions system was introduced, launched by Peter Black AM, resulting in a significant increase in the number of submitted petitions. The Assembly also launched *senedd.tv*, e-forums, and a quick vote facility for online committee consultations.

Refurbishment work in Tŷ Hywel was undertaken with sustainability in mind, using sensor-activated lighting, carpeting using 55 per cent recycled material, improved efficiency of the heating/cooling systems, locally-supplied furniture and better use of space. Paper towels were removed from all toilet facilities, to be replaced with energy efficient hand driers, cutting some 4–6 tonnes per annum of landfill waste.

A Management Board was formed to replace the Executive Board. The new Board included Heads of Service as well as Directors and the Chief Executive. It had responsibility for management and operational and policy matters.

The Royal Badge of Wales was approved for use on published Assembly Measures. The emblem is distinctively Welsh in character and therefore appropriate for marking the unique character of Assembly Measures as Welsh legislation.

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## May

The NHS Redress (Wales) Measure 2008 became the first piece of primary legislation passed by the National Assembly, the first Welsh law to be passed since the middle ages and the first bilingual law ever to be passed in Britain.

Artwork by Dylan Hammond consisting of tinplate portraits of Baroness Thatcher and Aneurin Bevan caused debate and controversy when installed at the front of the Senedd.

The Presiding Officer gave a speech marking one year of the new devolution settlement, saying that he was "pleased with the way we have risen to the challenges of the new law-making Constitution of Wales".

The Presiding Officer and Adrian Crompton gave evidence to the House of Commons Justice Committee as part of its inquiry into *Devolution: a decade on*.

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## June

The Assembly welcomed HRH The Prince of Wales to the Assembly to speak at the 'Funding Futures' colloquium organised by the WCVA in the Pierhead. He also officially opened Siambr Hywel.

The Commission launched a public consultation on its Draft Single Equalities Scheme and Action Plan.

The Assembly's Audit Committee scrutinised officials on the building of the Senedd in a challenging but positive session. The Committee focused on the sustainability of the building, including its energy consumption.

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## July

The National Assembly for Wales Commission published its first annual report.

The Petitions Committee celebrated a successful first year with a public meeting at the Royal Welsh Show. Over 100 petitions were received during its first year.

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**August**

An independent panel, chaired by Sir Roger Jones, was appointed to review the system of Assembly Members' pay and allowances.

The Presiding Officer welcomed Welsh olympic heroes to the Senedd when gold medallists Nicola Cooke and Geraint Thomas and silver medallist David Davies arrived following an open-top bus tour of Cardiff Bay.

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**September**

An outreach education service was launched for south Wales.

An Assembly-commissioned survey of public understanding of the political landscape in Wales was published showing that over 70 per cent of people supported either partial or full devolution of power for Wales.

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**November**

The Assembly hosted a conference on Perspectives on Youth Participation, aimed at developing useful links across a number of UK organisations, all with interests in encouraging young people to engage in the democratic process.

The Assembly launched its Single Equality Scheme.

The Assembly achieved Level 5 Green Dragon Environmental Management System for the whole estate, the highest level that can be attained in the UK.

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**December**

The Presiding Officer welcomed his counterparts from Scotland and Northern Ireland to the Assembly to help build and strengthen the close working relationships between the UK devolved legislatures.

The Presiding Officer won the Wales Yearbook 2008 Welsh Politician of the Year Award for his role in the Assembly's transformation into a true legislature, passing Welsh laws under its new powers.

The International Day of Disabled People was celebrated at the Assembly with a programme including accessible performance workshops, presentations from paralympians, discussions on disability rights and a DVD on the accessibility of public buildings in Wales.

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## 2009

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### January

The National Assembly was named as one of the UK's top 100 gay-friendly employers, according to Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index 2009, making the Assembly Wales's most improved employer in terms of being a gay-friendly place to work and the second most improved employer in the UK.

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### March

Assembly media releases began to be accompanied by bilingual audio clips, helping local radio stations to carry more information about the Assembly.

The Petitions Committee received its 150th petition from Ammanford Junior Gateway Club, calling for free swimming for children and young people.

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### April

The ichange review was published, concentrating on how the Assembly could use IT to improve the way it works and how it engages with the public. The review was based on a comprehensive consultation exercise with Members, their staff, Assembly staff and stakeholders. Work began on changes to ICT networks, and hardware and software were identified to ensure that technology fully supported the Assembly's work.

The Assembly put out its first call for video evidence as the Sustainability Committee kicked off its flooding inquiry.

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### May

Tenth anniversary of the Assembly. The Presiding Officer hosted a tenth birthday party for ten children celebrating their birthdays along with the Assembly on 12 May 2009.

The multimedia Outreach Bus was launched at Venue Cymru in Llandudno, enabling people from across Wales to learn more about how the Assembly works, leave video messages for Members and provide evidence to committee inquiries.

The Children and Young People Committee took Dewi the Dragon to the Urdd Eisteddfod in Cardiff to encourage young people to have their say on the future work of the Assembly.

The Urdd Eisteddfod took place in Cardiff Bay, with the Senedd forming part of the official event, hosting the Art and Craft exhibition and housing over 400 pieces of art and the TV set which broadcast live each day.

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### June

The Sustainability Committee undertook an inquiry into flooding in Wales using the Assembly bus and holding public meetings across Wales to hear directly from the affected areas. A short video of voxpops was produced as part of the inquiry.

Proactive publication of Assembly Members' expenses on the Assembly's website began, with 2,000 hits in the first 24 hours. The 750,000th visitor was welcomed to the Senedd.

The House of Commons Speaker's Conference held a formal meeting at the Assembly, and heard from the Commissioner for the Sustainable Assembly about the way in which the Assembly was leading the way on gender balance in political representation.

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### July

The Getting it Right for Wales report was published, setting out improvements to the system of financial support for Assembly Members. It was a far-reaching and comprehensive independent review of Members' pay and allowances for travel, accommodation, funding for constituency and regional offices and support staff. The Commission accepted all 108 recommendations and implementation began immediately.

The Senedd was recognised as the greenest government building in the UK—the announcement was made to coincide with Green Britain Day on 10 July.

The Commission published its second annual report, focusing on how to make democracy work in Wales.

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## September

60 young people visited the Assembly to take part in Academi's Writing Squad. As well as taking part in a debate, the young people were encouraged to seek inspiration from the Senedd to pen poems for devolution.

The Commons Speaker, John Bercow MP, visited the Assembly to meet with the Presiding Officer to learn more about the work of the Assembly, specifically what the Assembly is doing to encourage more people to take part in the democratic process through e-petitions and Senedd.tv.

A fourth committee room was created to increase the capacity for committee work.

The UK School Games, managed by the Youth Sport Trust, held a leadership workshop event for its young leaders and volunteers in Siambr Hywel prior to the opening ceremony.

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## October

The Senedd became one of the UK's most energy-efficient public buildings when its Display Energy Certificate was upgraded from C to B.

Step Up Cymru was launched. This was an all-Wales project in partnership with the WLGA and the Welsh Government which was designed to help those who have not traditionally engaged politically. It gave people an opportunity to gain experience of working with Assembly Members and local councillors and to engage with civic and public life with a view to becoming ambassadors for democracy within their communities and groups.

The first Commission-proposed Measure was tabled with a view to creating a statutory, independent body to determine Members' pay and allowances.

The Assembly passed the first Committee-proposed legislation (the Standards Commissioner Measure) to place the office of the Commissioner on a statutory footing.

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## November

The All Wales Convention reported that a move to full law-making powers for the Assembly in all devolved areas offered substantial advantage over the current arrangements.

The Commission agreed its Carbon Management Strategy, committing the Assembly to the challenging goal of carbon neutrality by 2015, to be achieved by the development of more energy-efficient business practices and the encouragement of sustainability among staff, Members and other stakeholders.

The first committee-proposed Legislative Competence Order, which was also the first to come directly from the petitions process, received backing from the Welsh Government.

The Assembly held an Open Weekend to celebrate the tenth year of devolution and five years of the Wales Millennium Centre. A variety of performances were showcased, and a concert was held to premiere a composition by Karl Jenkins.

The Change Programme Board was established to ensure a prioritised and co-ordinated approach to Assembly business change projects.

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## December

The new First Minister was appointed.

The CPA Wales branch officially marked and celebrated the 60th anniversary of the modern Commonwealth with an event in the Senedd attended by over 130 guests from over 30 Commonwealth countries.

An independent panel began its review of provision of bilingual services at the Assembly.

The National Assembly for Wales Commissioner for Standards Measure received Royal Approval.

The Petitions Committee received its largest petition to date, with over 15,000 signatures. The petition called for withdrawal from the West Cheshire/North East Wales Sub-Regional Strategy.

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## 2010

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### January

The Assembly was ranked 47th in the top 100 gay-friendly places to work in the UK according to the Workplace Equality Index produced by Stonewall (an improvement from 73rd the previous year).

A BBC Democracy Live pod was installed in the Senedd to make it even easier for people to engage with the work of the Assembly.

The report of the House of Commons Speaker's Conference on equalities praised the equalities work undertaken at the National Assembly, recommending that Westminster considers developing a UK scheme along the lines of the Step Up Cymru scheme, and saying that "the House and its Members would benefit from having a small in-house team on the model of the National Assembly for Wales Equalities team".

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### February

The Assembly unanimously voted for a referendum on whether it should be granted further legislative powers.

The European and External Affairs Committee held a formal meeting in Brussels, the Committee's first formal meeting with all four Welsh MEPs.

The UNO project, to create computer systems independent of the Welsh Government, began.

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### March

After internal refurbishment and restoration, the Pierhead opened to the public as part of the St David's Day celebrations. Almost 10,000 people visited the Pierhead in the first month of opening. The inaugural Pierhead Sessions took place, cementing the Pierhead as a space to inform, involve and inspire public debate. Over 700 people attended.

The first Commission-proposed Measure—to establish an independent body to set Members' pay and levels of financial support—was debated by the Assembly in Plenary.

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### May

The independent panel on bilingual services, chaired by Arwel Ellis Owen, reported on the future of bilingual services at the Assembly. The Commission accepted the recommendations and committed the Assembly to creating a more citizen-friendly and accessible Record of Proceedings, and working towards our objective of becoming a truly bilingual organisation.

The Presiding Officer welcomed the Rt Hon David Cameron MP to the Assembly on his first visit as UK Prime Minister. The Prime Minister spoke about the Respect Agenda and his commitment to making sure that devolution works even better in future. He reaffirmed that he and senior Treasury Ministers would be willing to come before the Assembly and its committees to answer questions.

The Assembly announced its review of the Assembly's Standing Orders for the Fourth Assembly.

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### June

Huw Vaughan Thomas was chosen as the preferred candidate for the Auditor General for Wales.

The Assembly achieved the Investors in People Gold award, one of only 25 public bodies in the UK to reach this standard, and the only UK legislature.

National Armed Forces day celebrations were held on the Assembly estate—more than 50,000 people attended including HRH The Prince of Wales, HRH the Duchess of Cornwall and Armed Forces Air Chief Marshal, Sir Jock Stirrup.

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### July

The Remuneration Measure was agreed by the Assembly and given Royal Approval, establishing an independent statutory body to decide upon the system of financial support for Members. The recruitment process began.

A new Assembly Member for South Wales East was sworn in following Lord German's ennoblement.

For the third year running, the Auditor General for Wales issued an unqualified opinion on the Commission's statement of accounts.

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## August

The Presiding Officer spoke with young people at the summer shows and heard about the importance of digital engagement as the key to getting young people voting in the referendum and Assembly election in 2011.

The Outreach Bus visited the main summer shows, as well as a number of smaller local shows promoting the Vote 2011 theme.

Bow Tie TV began work as the Assembly's host broadcaster. Video screens in the public galleries to the Siambr and Senedd committee rooms were replaced to improve access to proceedings.

Screens in the information pods were also replaced, and new multimedia content was developed to improve visitors' experiences.

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## September

The Commission agreed its e-democracy strategy, setting out how it would use new technologies to further engage with the people of Wales.

The Chair and members of the Remuneration Board were appointed.

The initial stages of the Vote 2011 campaign began, encouraging people to register to vote.

The International Day of the Disabled forum, arranged by the Commission, concluded that disabled people often feel excluded from the democratic process in Wales because their specific requirements are not catered for.

The new 'Cofnod Cryno' (Concise Record) was introduced, providing a more customer friendly approach to accessing Assembly proceedings. The Concise Record was one of the recommendations of the independent panel on bilingual services.

Staff and Members voted overwhelmingly to have Freedom Food used across the Assembly estate. The RSPCA congratulated the Assembly saying that it was "the first national institution in the UK to choose animal welfare-friendly food, and Assembly Members and their staff are to be applauded".

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## October

The Remuneration Board met for the first time to start its consideration of the system of financial support for Assembly Members in the Fourth Assembly.

The first statutory Commissioner for Standards was selected.

The Welsh Government laid an Order setting up a referendum on the legislative powers of the Assembly, setting a date of 3 March 2011.

The Assembly was named the most sustainable public sector organisation at government level in the UK by the Sustainable Facilities Management Awards 2010.

The Presiding Officer welcomed Nick Clegg MP to the Assembly.

The Presiding Officer welcomed the President of the EU Commission, José Manuel Barroso, to the Assembly where he attended an exhibition of Structural Funds projects arranged by the Welsh Government. On the same day the four Welsh MEPs attended an event in the Pierhead.

25 members of staff left the Assembly under a voluntary early severance scheme. The UNO project was rolled out to equip Members, their staff and Assembly staff with leading edge and independent IT facilities.

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**November**

The Hansard Society and the Assembly worked in partnership to host an event exploring the issue of gender and devolution.

The Presiding Officer toured Wales to encourage people to register to vote.

The Referendum Order was passed by the UK Parliament.

The first gala dinner to be held in the Pierhead since its refurbishment was held in support of the RSPCA's Freedom Food campaign.

A reorganisation of the Assembly's staff structure for the Fourth Assembly was announced.

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**December**

The Queen in Council gave Royal Approval to the Playing Fields (Community Involvement in Disposal Decisions (Wales) Measure 2010). The second Member-proposed Measure to be agreed by the Assembly, the Measure places a duty on local authorities to consider the impact of selling off local authority owned playing fields on local communities.

The Assembly approved the proposed Welsh Language (Wales) Measure.

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## 2011

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### January

A Vote 2011 event was held to raise awareness of barriers to democratic engagement faced by disabled people.

Following an upgrading of Assembly systems, the Assembly donated more than 500 PCs, 250 printers and 130 laptops to Remploy for reconditioning and recycling.

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### March

'Yes' vote in the Referendum on future powers for the Assembly.

The Assembly was dissolved for the first time at midnight on 31 March 2011.

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## The Commission's five strategic goals

### **“We will promote and widen engagement in devolution.**

“The next four years must demonstrate that the Assembly is working for all citizens and encouraging greater and more active participation in the democratic process. We will emphasise the positive impact of the Assembly upon the lives of people in Wales. There will be greater incremental devolution through the 2006 Act, and there may be a referendum for greater legislative competence, we will be ready to grasp these challenges enthusiastically.”

### **The Assembly's communications requirement**

The Government of Wales Act 2006 placed a duty on the Assembly Commission “to promote public awareness of devolved government in Wales, and the system for the election of Assembly Members”. As a result, the Assembly Commission made effective communications with the people of Wales a priority for the Third Assembly.

A dedicated communications function was established, and by December 2007, the Commission had agreed a communications strategy that was designed to:

- inform and promote a widening understanding of the work of the National Assembly for Wales, its powers and constitutional status;
- encourage engagement and participation in Assembly business and Welsh democracy;
- herald the Assembly's achievements in a Welsh, UK and international context; and,
- develop and guard the National Assembly brand.

Over the course of the Third Assembly, the Commission has secured wider understanding and recognition of the Assembly as a modern forward-looking democratic body. It has also reopened and increased access to the Pierhead, providing a stage for public debate and deliberation. The Assembly's old debating chamber, Siambr Hywel, was also adapted to become the world's first dedicated youth debating chamber, enabling a key target audience to learn about and discuss Assembly business. The Assembly can now be proud of excellent links with stakeholders and of a robust and rapidly improving online presence. The Commission has, through its commitment to public engagement, ensured that the Assembly and its business are accessible to, and discussed among, hundreds of thousands of people.

### **Defining who we are and what we do**

Following the separation of the Assembly from the Welsh Government, the Department of International Politics at Aberystwyth University was commissioned to undertake the largest ever Welsh political research survey about public perceptions of the Assembly and its role. The results indicated that there was still confusion about the difference between the National Assembly for Wales and the Welsh Government.



Work had already started on establishing a clear identity for the Assembly, and the Commission endorsed a strategy to develop a strong visual brand for the legislature. This included a prominent place for images of the iconic Senedd, and a clear written style that avoided jargon and created a recognisable and consistent visual style for publications.

This was underpinned by the development of a positioning statement, used on everything from email signatures to publications, which articulates (to an internal audience as well as externally) the legislature's identity and its constitutional function:

*The National Assembly for Wales is the democratically elected body that represents the interests of Wales and its people, makes laws for Wales and holds the Welsh Government to account.*

Taking into account the research findings, the positioning statement references the Welsh Government, to highlight the difference between the Assembly and the government which it must scrutinise.

### **Communicating beyond the Senedd**

The Commission has invested considerable effort in outreach, seeking to take the Assembly and its work to the heartlands and communities of the people of Wales. As part of the Assembly's tenth anniversary project, the Presiding Officer visited electoral regions in Wales to speak with representatives of traditionally disengaged sectors, including the black and ethnic minority communities, as well as disabled people, faith communities and sexual orientation and young people's groups.

The Assembly's outreach work also included the purchase of a bus dedicated to securing a mobile Assembly presence allowing access to areas across Wales that were traditionally removed from outreach efforts. The bus also provided a means for rethinking our presence at Wales's national and regional shows and events with an emphasis on attending more for the same cost, if not less.

In addition, Siambr Hywel, the world's first dedicated youth debating chamber, was formed from the old debating chamber in Tŷ Hywel, and has welcomed over 30,000 students to participate in democratic debates since it opened in April 2008.

The National Assembly has, through its international relations and association with professional parliamentary bodies such as the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), British Irish Parliamentary Association (BIPA) and The Conference of European Regional Legislative Assemblies (CALRE), maintained its presence and influence on the international stage; sending delegates to conferences and seminars in the UK and overseas as well as hosting a range of visitors from all continents to the Assembly. Particular emphasis has been put on ensuring value for money from our international activity and sharing experiences with other legislatures which, in turn, enables us to learn from good practice elsewhere and promote our own achievements. For example, the Third Assembly



has seen the National Assembly Branch of the CPA focus on working in an increasingly strategic, open and accountable manner with lessons learned from post-conference and seminar reports fed back, where practical, into the wider work of the National Assembly.

The Commission took a strategic decision to redevelop the Pierhead, a key part of the Assembly's estate and an iconic Welsh landmark. On 1 March 2010, following months of extensive refurbishment, the building re-opened to take on its new role as a unique events and free visitor attraction. To date, over 100,000 visitors have passed through the doors of the Pierhead, establishing it as one of the capital's top attractions.

The reopening of the Pierhead coincided with the beginning of a year-long programme of events marking ten years of devolution in Wales. The aim of the anniversary programme was to use the celebrations to reinvigorate interest, understanding and accessible engagement between the Assembly and the people of Wales.

In addition, new initiatives, such as the Presiding Officer's tour of Wales, the establishment of a new outreach and e-democracy service, and the launch of the Outreach Bus, were significant milestones of the ten-year programme and served to increase and widen engagement in democracy as well as provide a legacy for future Assembly communications.


### **Innovative communications**

The Assembly Commission has championed the use of innovative communications techniques. As early as 2007, the Assembly had introduced a petitions system through which, for the first time, members of the public could petition the National Assembly and ask for action to be taken in those areas of policy for which the Assembly was responsible. A complementary e-petitions system was launched on 15 April 2008, making interaction with the Assembly even easier.

As traditional communications channels continued to be challenged by technological innovations and new and emerging communications tools, the Commission agreed an e-democracy strategy in 2010. Designed to make greater use of a range of digital channels to inform and engage, it aimed to increase the breadth and depth of the Assembly's engagement with the people of Wales.

The e-democracy strategy was applied in the Vote 2011 campaign which aimed to raise awareness of the Assembly election as well as the referendum on the future powers of the Assembly and the UK referendum on the alternative voting system.

The campaign comprised a coherent communications message promoted by all outreach staff, the use of videos on the Assembly's social networking sites, an innovative online advertising campaign targeting 18 to 35 year-olds as well as a multi-platform media relations campaign targeting hyper-local, regional and national media.



The first official visit by a federal Canadian delegation to the National Assembly for Wales in spring 2011 provided an excellent opportunity to share knowledge and experiences of public engagement. The visit included the direct involvement of 12 Assembly Members including the Presiding Officer, the Deputy Presiding Officer and three of the Commissioners. It delivered a full programme, consisting of ten formal sessions, including the first in a planned series of “Lessons from Abroad” Pierhead Sessions.

The delegation described their visit as extremely positive. Dr Carolyn Bennett PC MP, recognised as a leader in citizen engagement in her own right, commented widely on the Assembly’s positive work in the field of engagement and during her presentation on the subject in the Pierhead, commended the National Assembly for its commitment to transparent democracy stating that “Citizen Engagement is clearly a priority (for the Assembly) and is built into its DNA”.

### **Recommendations to successor Commission**

*It is recommended that the next Assembly Commission should concentrate on the following high-level issues in relation to the strategic goal “Promote and widen engagement in devolution”:*

- work with Members on communications activities to enable and empower them to act as ambassadors for the Assembly’s work;
- concentrate on basics in terms of messaging; eg the distinction between Government and Assembly which continues, despite our efforts, to cause confusion to the detriment of the citizen’s experience of Welsh democracy;
- deliver clear messages about the work of the Assembly following the ‘yes’ vote;
- keep up the effort on key strategies such as branding, e-democracy and the Pierhead, so that we realise the full benefits of the foundation work that was done during the Third Assembly.

### **“We will show unity, leadership and a bold response to constitutional change.**

“The Assembly will show confidence and competence in embracing its new powers. We are united in securing scrutiny and legislation of the best quality, and in supporting Members in all that they do as elected representatives.”

#### **Supporting the legislature**

The constitutional and legislative functions conferred by the Government of Wales Act 2006 placed significant additional demands on the services provided by Assembly staff. These were characterised by:

- a higher volume of work—Plenary sat for longer and committees were more active than in previous Assemblies; use of the Research Service rose inexorably; the legislative programme grew steadily; and the development of legislative proposals by individual Assembly Members and committees generated a huge amount of demanding work for researchers, lawyers and clerks and longer hours for supporting staff;
- greater complexity and sophistication in the services required by Members throughout the legislative process and in fulfilling their scrutiny role in committee; the procedural advice required from Legislation Office and Chamber staff; the legislative drafting and advice delivered by the Legal Service; specialist legal translation; and the combination of policy and procedural advice demanded by independent scrutiny and other committees.

From the outset, the Commission’s objective was to ensure that the necessary resources were in place to meet these pressures.

Some of the practical steps it took were to:

- meet jointly with the Business Committee so as to match resourcing with the organisation of formal Assembly business;
- approve an increase in the resources available to those areas whose primary focus is the support of Assembly business, namely Committee Services, Legislation and Chamber Service, the Research Service, Translation and Reporting Service. Resourcing rose to £6 million in 2008–09 from £4.6 million in 2007–08. Within these figures, the budget for staffing increased from some £2.4 million to around £3 million. As a result, these service areas were able to undertake a strategic restructuring, and an increase in the necessary resource to support the increase and change in pattern of Assembly business;
- convert a conference room in Tŷ Hywel into another functioning committee room. This provided business continuity back-up in the event of rooms in the Senedd being unavailable and also, very quickly, permitted the routine scheduling of a higher level of formal committee work.



The Third Assembly saw changes in almost every aspect of formal Assembly business: scrutiny in committee and Plenary had a sharper edge after the separation of legislature and executive; a significant legislative procedure was established for the first time; a non-government legislative programme was developed and was, in the early days, as significant in volume terms as that of the government; and committees undertaking entirely new functions were established, such as those scrutinising finance and public petitions.

In every one of these aspects, the Commission ensured that from day one, the resources available allowed these procedures to be carried out in a way that could be seen as an exemplar for other legislatures in the UK.

### **A new approach to the legislative process**

The Third Assembly championed an innovative approach to legislation and public consultations on proposed laws.

In June 2007, Jenny Randerson AM was successful in the first ballot to introduce a proposal for a new law in Wales, on how best to ensure children had access to healthy and nutritious food while at school. To help inform the proposed law, the Assembly's education service and outreach services used school visits to the Senedd and outreach efforts to gather information from the children the proposed law directly affected. This invaluable information was presented to and used by the Committee as evidence to help form the law.

Following the agreement of the Assembly in Plenary, the law was introduced in March 2008. It was the first Measure to bear the Royal Badge of Wales, which now appears on all Assembly Measures. Based on the arms of the native princes of Wales, dating back to the 13th century, it was designed by the Garter King of Arms, Peter Gwynne-Jones.

As part of the Assembly's commitment to making information available in the best possible way and supporting its objective of promoting and widening engagement in devolution, the Commission also endorsed the on going funding of Wales Legislation Online. Funded jointly by the Commission and the Welsh Government, it provides a public source of information on Welsh legislation and on the legal framework within which devolved functions are discharged. It is free to users and is specific to Welsh legislation.

### **Legislation and scrutiny**

This is a summary of the Assembly's legislative and scrutiny achievements over the past four years.

**Fifteen Legislative Competence Orders** have been made by Her Majesty in Council. **One Legislative Competence Order** was withdrawn. **Twenty-two Measures** have received Royal Approval, including the first committee-proposed Measure (the National Assembly for Wales Commissioner for Standards Measure 2009) and the first Assembly Commission-proposed Measure (the National Assembly for Wales (Remuneration) Measure 2010).

### Total number of committee meetings in the Third Assembly

	2007–08	2008–09	2009–10	2010–11	Total
<b>Communities &amp; Culture</b>	13	14	16	17	60
<b>Enterprise &amp; Learning</b>	22	33	26	23	104
<b>Health, Wellbeing and Local Government</b>	17	32	23	17	89
<b>Sustainability</b>	18	26	24	21	89
<b>Rural Development Sub-Committee</b>	11	22	20	14	67
	<b>81</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>409</b>
<b>Audit/Public Accounts</b>	06	17	16	23	62
<b>Children &amp; Young People</b>	07	19	16	17	59
<b>Equality of Opportunity</b>	11	16	16	15	58
<b>European and External Affairs</b>	06	13	15	16	50
<b>Finance</b>	14	19	23	22	78
<b>Petitions</b>	11	19	15	16	61
<b>Scrutiny of First Minister</b>			02	02	04
<b>Standards of Conduct</b>	03	06	02	04	15
	<b>58</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>387</b>
<b>Legislation Committees</b>	50	96	102	79	327
<b>Subordinate Legislation/ Constitutional Affairs Committee</b>	19	33	30	29	111
	69	129	132	108	438
<b>Total</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>1234</b>
<b>Includes 28 external meetings</b>	03	14	07	04	28

In undertaking their legislative, scrutiny and representative functions, Assembly Members must have access to factual information held by the Welsh Government. The Research Service has a key role to play in providing Members with authoritative, high quality, timely and up-to-date information, thereby supporting the strategic purpose of the Assembly, which cannot function without a proper flow of information. This was recognised by the Independent Review Panel in 2009 and by the Remuneration Board in 2011 which recommended that individual Assembly Members need better access to Welsh Government officials and the information they hold, via the Research Service.

In 2007 the Welsh Government put in place a set of arrangements whereby all requests for information made by the Research Service on behalf of Members had to be routed, in writing, through the Ministerial Private Offices. Research Service staff are prohibited by direct contact with Welsh Government officials and so have more restricted access than other Assembly Commission staff or colleagues in the equivalent research services in the Houses of Parliament and the other devolved legislatures.

The Remuneration Board recommended that the Commission engaged with the Welsh Government to put in place arrangements equivalent to those in other parliamentary institutions of the UK, namely a service based on the principles that individual Members and committees must have a prioritised right of access to factual information held by the Welsh Government and that Research Service staff should be able to communicate directly with the relevant Welsh Government policy officials.

### **Recommendations to successor Commission**

It is recommended that the next Assembly Commission should concentrate on the following high level issues in relation to the strategic goal “Show unity, leadership, and a bold response to constitutional change”:

Early in the Fourth Assembly term:

- ensure that resources are in place to meet the future requirements of the Assembly following the ‘yes’ vote and the decisions of the Business Committee/Assembly in respect of the organisation of Plenary and committee business;
- liaise with the Remuneration Board to ensure that Commission and Board decisions complement each other wherever possible;
- engage with the Welsh Government to ensure that individual Members and committees have a prioritised right of access to factual information held by the Welsh Government.

**“In all our work, we will demonstrate respect, probity and good governance.**

“All that we do must be capable of intense external scrutiny, be transparent and should reflect the diverse nature of Wales and its languages in how it deals with and involves the citizen.”

In planning for the establishment of the inaugural Assembly Commission, the Shadow Commission placed rigorous corporate governance at the heart of the emerging parliamentary body’s operations. A Corporate Governance Committee was established to advise the Commission and the Chief Executive on issues to do with finance, audit protocol and corporate governance. Strong internal capabilities were further bolstered by the appointment of independent advisers to assist the Commission in carrying out its duties.

Financial resources and priorities for the Commission are approved during the Autumn term through a vote in Plenary. The process is set out in the Assembly’s Standing Orders and involves the Commission laying a draft budget, which is scrutinised by the Assembly’s Finance Committee. The Committee’s findings on the budget proposals are considered and approved by the Assembly in a debate. In addition, during the Third Assembly the Commission has sought supplementary budgets as a mechanism to adjust the approved budget. In doing so, the Commission must explain the rationale for the proposed additional spend to the Finance Committee.

The Commission has set out a budget strategy for the Fourth Assembly with the aim of reducing its budget in line with percentage reductions in the Welsh block.

This robust scrutiny process helps strengthen the accountability and transparency of the Commission’s spending plans.

A further commitment to making the Assembly a truly transparent and accountable institution was a prompt and open approach to responding to requests under the Freedom of Information Act. The Assembly received 205 requests during the Third Assembly with 2011 seeing a particularly sharp rise in the number of requests received. The focus of requests varied significantly and requests were sent by members of the general public, interest groups and the media.

The nature of requests have ranged from simple explanations about the work of the Assembly and requests for copies of documents through to more involved analyses. A significant number of requests received (64) related to Assembly Members, including their pay and pensions, allowances and expenses, and costs of their support staff. A considerable amount of information relating to Assembly Members’ allowances and expenses is now published on the Assembly website which has helped us to provide this information to the general public and stakeholders in an open and transparent way.

The table opposite details the number of requests received and identifies those specifically relating to Assembly Members between 2007–11.

Other requests processed during this period related to costs borne by the Assembly for areas of specific expenditure such as public engagement, training and development, Welsh language use and policies, the organisation and structure of the Assembly, complaints relating to Members, the work of the Commissioner for Standards and sustainability.

In May 2008, a full year before the Daily Telegraph published details of MPs' expenses, the Commission approved the establishment of an independent panel to review Assembly Members' remuneration. Over a ten-month period a panel, chaired by Sir Roger Jones, undertook a full review of Assembly Members' pay and allowances for travel, accommodation, funding for constituency and regional offices and support staff. Its report, *Getting it Right for Wales*, was published in July 2009, and was the first such review to be published in the UK. The Commission accepted all the recommendations contained in the review.

In the meantime, a public online log of Assembly Members' expenses claims was launched on the National Assembly website, allowing everyone to see, at the click of a mouse, what expenses their Assembly Members had claimed. Claims are published monthly, three months in arrears.

To implement the findings, and in a further significant step to ensure that there are rigorous and independent mechanisms for deciding how and what Assembly Members are paid, the Commission proposed its first ever Measure to establish an independent Remuneration Board. The Board, which had responsibility for setting the pay and allowances for Assembly Members, reported in March 2011. The Determination, which was accompanied by the report, *Fit for Purpose*, was designed to provide Members with the requisite tools and support to perform their core functions of scrutinising the Welsh Government, making laws and representing their constituents. It also reflected the Welsh financial topography in terms of tight public sector budgets and average pay levels across Wales. It offered a sustainable and cost-effective system of financial support for Assembly Members and was underpinned by three core principles to ensure that the system of financial support for Members:

- does not deter, on financial grounds, persons with the necessary commitment and ability from seeking election as Assembly Members;
- provides Assembly Members with adequate resources to enable them to exercise their functions as Assembly Members; and,
- ensures that public money is spent with probity, accountability, value for money and transparency.

Year	Total number of requests	Number of requests relating to Members
2007	24	07
2008	45	25
2009	52	12
2010	54	15
2011 (to April)	30	05



In 2011, the Commission produced its first Equality Statement, including the Commission's values and vision for promoting equality and published an Equality Scheme. Following extensive consultation with stakeholders and exploration of best practice arrangements in other organisations, the Scheme set out the equality objectives for the Third Assembly term and annual reports have been published every year to provide an update on progress. The objectives have focused on increasing access to the Assembly and its services, widening engagement, and becoming an exemplar employer and service provider. The Assembly's Equality of Opportunity Committee scrutinised the report annually and monitored progress on its implementation.

The Assembly Commission worked in partnership with Operation Black Vote in 2007 to run the first Assembly Member Shadowing Scheme in Wales for black and minority ethnic people. Following on from the success of that scheme, in 2009–10 the Commission worked in partnership with the Welsh Government and Welsh Local Government Association to develop and run Step Up Cymru, a mentoring and role-shadowing scheme for people who felt that they were under-represented in Welsh political and civil life.

### **A truly bilingual organisation**

In 2009, the Commission established an independent review panel to look at the provision of its bilingual services. Chaired by Arwel Ellis Owen, it made a number of recommendations, including developing a more user-friendly version of the Record of Proceedings, the verbatim transcription of debates in the Assembly Siambr.

The Commission also proposed that it should introduce a new Measure that would place a legal duty on the Assembly to ensure bilingualism was at the centre of its service provision. The process will begin with a public consultation early in the Fourth Assembly.

### **Recommendations to successor Commission**

It is recommended that the next Assembly Commission should concentrate on the following high-level issues in relation to the strategic goal "Demonstrate respect, probity and good governance":

- consider carefully the appropriate balance between economies and service delivery to avoid damaging essential services to Members and wasting energy and resources on defending decisions that Members find unacceptable;
- ensure that equality and diversity do not suffer during tough economic times;
- proceed with new arrangements to strengthen our delivery of bilingual services, including an Official Languages Scheme;
- support the Audit Committee in its work to maintain high standards of governance right across the organisation, including in the areas of procurement and contract management.

**“We will work sustainably.**

“We will show leadership in how we manage our work and estate, and we aim to provide the highest achievable level of sustainability in both.”

From the outset, the Commission has recognised the need for the Assembly to be a leader in its ambition to work sustainably and has set rigorous but workable sustainability policies. Through the Commission’s environmental policy, the Assembly continues to minimise its environmental impact by consuming fewer non-renewable resources, reducing waste, recycling, preventing pollution and complying with all environmental legislation. The Commission is committed to achieving environmental excellence and being an exemplar in environmental performance. The Senedd has been hailed as a benchmark for sustainable construction and operational use.

Over the course of the past four years, the Assembly Commission has overseen a number of notable achievements in terms of operational sustainability. These range from improving the carbon footprint of our estate to developing new ways of working to lessen adverse environmental impact.

- The Assembly has achieved re-certification to Level 5 of the Green Dragon Environmental Standard for the whole Cardiff Bay estate.
- In 2009–10, an 8 per cent reduction in energy emissions was achieved in line with the targets outlined in the Carbon Management Plan. This has also kept our energy costs stable, despite increasing prices.
- In March 2009, the Assembly achieved ‘Level 4–Enhancing Organisation’ on the Value Wales Sustainable Procurement Assessment Framework.
- The Commission has agreed a programme of improvements to the sustainability of our buildings over the next four years and all routine maintenance is carried out with environmental impact in mind.
- Display Energy Certificate (DEC) ratings for all three buildings in the Assembly estate have improved.
- In May 2009, a cycle to work salary sacrifice scheme was introduced to encourage sustainable commuting. A total of 16 building users have signed up.
- In 2009–10, a commercial compost collection was set up and the Assembly composted over seven tonnes of its food waste for local reclamation projects.
- Improvements in corporate reporting led to openness about scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions for the first time in 2009–10.
- The introduction of a low emission pool car for business travel has led to cost savings of £2,500 and a reduction of 0.5 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> over 10 months.

**Recommendations to successor Commission**

It is recommended that the next Assembly Commission should concentrate on the following high-level issues in relation to the strategic goal “Work Sustainably”:

- recognise and build upon the Commission’s leadership in securing sustainable working for the Assembly when deciding priorities for the Fourth Assembly;
- identify ways to maintain momentum when the economic climate could make direct investment in sustainability more difficult to achieve;
- make our achievements in environmental policies and our wish to sustain the momentum a key part of communications with and education of users of the Assembly estate, visitors and wider Wales;
- as part of this approach, prioritise sustainability policies carefully to achieve desired outcomes without inappropriate impact upon Members and others who use the Assembly estate.

**“We will ensure that the Assembly has the best service, provided in the most effective way.**

“We will take the services provided for Members and the people of Wales to a higher level, while demonstrating wise and effective use of its resources and value for money. The ethos of service, to Members and anyone who engages with the Assembly, drives everything that we do.”

**Ensuring best use of technology**

Following a major consultation with Members, staff and other stakeholders on how it can optimise use of information and communications technology to better engage with the people of Wales, the Commission completed a significant project to create a unified information technology network for Members and Assembly staff.

This would finally secure an IT infrastructure that was separate to that of the Welsh Government, which offered longer-term benefits of cost-effectiveness, managing information, public engagement, IT procurement and enhancing business continuity. This was achieved through redirecting £1 million of service and project budgets to ensure the delivery of the project in the 2010–11 financial year without the need for additional funding.

**Making the most of our staff**

Recognising that success depends on people, one of the Commission’s early decisions was to adopt a People Strategy setting out five ambitions for staff engagement and development:

- to have the right skills in the right place at the right time;
- for people to be developed to maximise their contribution;
- to recognise success and reward contribution;
- to value diversity and wellbeing; and,
- to have great leaders and great managers.

The Commission became accredited as an Investor in People in April 2009 and cemented its approach to staff engagement and development by being assessed as a Gold Standard Investor in People during 2010, one of only three awarded in Wales. Investment in learning and development is hugely important to the Commission, with £1.2 million being spent over the course of the Third Assembly.

**A changing financial landscape**

Sound financial management lies at the heart of good corporate governance. However, its importance became even more evident with the shift in the financial climate over the course of the past Assembly.

Having established an appropriate level of financial resources at the start of the Third Assembly, the Commission adopted a strategy of aiming to keep changes in the annual budget in line with changes in the funding coming to Wales through the 'Welsh block grant' from Westminster.

While the Assembly's core business capabilities could not be compromised, the Commission has been committed to increasing efficiency and reducing cost wherever possible. Steps already taken include a voluntary severance scheme for staff in conjunction with managing posts that become vacant more robustly with the expectation that such posts will be vacant for a minimum of three months. Strategies were put in place to improve staff productivity by bringing down sickness absence throughout the Assembly, reducing the reliance on overtime, and increasing staff flexibility in order to manage with a smaller workforce, while maintaining opportunities for staff to expand their experience and ability to undertake stimulating work.

**Improvement programme and performance reporting**

The Commission introduced a Change Programme in 2009, recognising the opportunity to improve co-ordination, development and management of projects to enable business improvements and support the Commission's strategic goals. Aspects of this programme have focused on enhancing project management skills, building the ability to better identify business benefits and then measure achievement.

## Serving Assembly Members

### Assembly Member satisfaction survey

In 2008, the Assembly Commission agreed to undertake a survey to generate information on the level of Member satisfaction with the services provided by the Assembly. Three rounds, each targeting 20 Members, were undertaken through to April 2009 and a total of 31 interviews were undertaken. The approach and questions were approved by Chris Franks AM, the Assembly Commissioner with specific responsibility for improving the services provided to Members.

As well as producing high-level indicators of satisfaction with key service areas, the survey was designed to give Members the chance to give direct feedback on their experience of the services provided and to make specific suggestions for service improvements. Interviews were carried out by the Chief Executive and Directors who were each accompanied by a senior manager. The results enabled senior managers to shape the services they provide.

Survey questions were in four main areas:

- Plenary;
- committee;
- other services (such as research, ICT, payment of allowances); and,
- support provided in the role of a Member to scrutinise, make legislation and support constituents.

Overall scores in the four main areas were positive, ranging from 7.7 (other services) to 8.2 (Plenary) out of a possible 10.

The survey results and the comments provided enabled Commission staff to take specific and immediate action on some of the points raised by Members. In addition to providing benchmark information for future satisfaction surveys, we were also able to focus on a high-level approach to improving satisfaction on ICT connectivity, in particular from constituency offices and mobile devices through a project which delivered the anticipated business benefits in 2010.

**Bringing the Third Assembly to a close**

The 2006 Act changed the way in which the Assembly drew to a close, in that rather than remaining in office until the election, Assembly Members ceased to be Members about five weeks beforehand, when the Assembly was dissolved.

Ensuring a successful dissolution required thorough consultation with Assembly Members and their support staff. A major challenge was to ensure that constituents would not be disadvantaged by dissolution, while maintaining a level playing field for prospective and former Members. This was a testing process, and lessons will emerge for the new Commission from the project and in the weeks before and after the election.

**Recommendations to successor Commission**

It is recommended that the next Assembly Commission should concentrate on the following high-level issues in relation to the strategic goal “Ensure that the Assembly has the best service, provided in the most effective way”:

- engage closely with Members and their support staff on the services they need and the quality of the services we provide;
- review the Merlin contract (work is underway) and the benefits realisation and value for money aspects of the UNO project; and,
- maintain the strongest governance arrangements in order not to compromise our ability to deliver or our reputation.







# Agenda Item 6

## Comisiwn y Cynulliad Assembly Commission

NAFWC 2011 (Paper 6)  
Assembly case management system  
(electoral registers)

**Date:** Thursday 16 June 2011

**Time:** 13:00

**Venue:** Conference Room 4B

**Author name and contact number:** Dominic Houlihan, ext 8811

Cynulliad  
Cenedlaethol  
Cymru  
National  
Assembly for  
Wales



### Assembly case management system (electoral registers)

#### 1.0 Purpose and summary of issues

- 1.1. The Assembly case management system has the facility to allow Members and their caseworkers to access a full, unedited constituency (or regional) electoral register in order to search and check constituent details. Data held within the unedited registers is strictly confidential and regulated under the *Representation of the People (England and Wales) Regulations 2001*.
- 1.2. Only bodies named within the Regulations may request a copy of the electoral register from the appropriate Electoral Returning Officer. This includes Assembly Members, but does not include the National Assembly for Wales Commission, which cannot therefore request copies on behalf of Members.
- 1.3. A request has been received that the Assembly Commission should pursue a new approach to uploading electoral registers onto the Assembly Case Management system by seeking to become an authorised body within the Regulations.

#### 2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1. The Assembly Commission is invited to consider whether to:
- 2.2. Pursue a legislative change by approaching the Secretary of State for Wales to request a change to the relevant Regulation in order

to become a named body authorised to make requests for electoral registers on behalf of Members.

- 2.3. If a change in legislation is not achievable, the existing arrangements would be retained (whereby Members' offices individually request electronic copies of the register and forward to ICT to upload).

### 3.0 Discussion

- 3.1. At present, individual offices request a copy of their electronic electoral register from their returning officer (regional Members request a number of registers that make up their region) and import the data into a template to be uploaded onto the Assembly case management system. The Commission is permitted to upload copies of the register without viewing the data, and the ICT Operations service facilitates this.
- 3.2. The Case Management Project team has previously explored with the Electoral Commission Wales the possibility of informally requesting copies of the electoral register on behalf of Members given that *section 27* of the *Government of Wales Act 2006*, requires the Commission to provide "... *the property, staff and services required for the Assembly's purposes*". It was proposed that all Members would sign a declaration authorising the Commission to act on their behalf to request the registers.
- 3.3. However, Electoral Commission advice was clear, stating that the Assembly Commission is not a body named within the *Representation of the People (England and Wales) Regulations 2001*, and is not therefore entitled to make requests of Electoral Returning Officers to obtain the registers on behalf of Members.
- 3.4. A change in legislation allowing the Assembly Commission to become a named body would be required to remove the need for Members' offices to request copies and import the data into a template document for upload.
- 3.5. The UK government would have to agree to any request to amend the Regulations (which, if agreed, may further require public consultation) and this could therefore take some time to achieve.

- 3.6. If the current arrangements are maintained, responsibility would remain within the office of the Member to request a copy of the register on an annual basis (by emailing the Electoral Returning Officer), transferring the data into the template and forwarding to ICT Operations to upload.
- 3.7. Were the Assembly Commission to become a named body, the responsibility for obtaining copies of registers would transfer to Assembly Commission ICT staff, who would request the registers on an annual basis, and import and upload the data onto the case management system. As a consequence, Service Level Agreements between ICT and Members would need to be reviewed at a later date to agree timeframes for delivery of electoral registers.
- 3.8. Although registers are revised and reissued on a monthly basis between December–September of each year, it is proposed that Assembly Commission staff would only upload one, annual register onto the Assembly case management system. This is due to resource implications of providing monthly updates for each constituency and region. Members that would prefer monthly updates would still be able to request copies from the Returning Officers themselves, and forward to ICT for uploading.