

The Assembly Commission

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

Meeting date: **Monday, 11 November 2013**

Meeting time: **12:00 – 13:30**

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales



Minutes: AC(4)2013(16)

Committee Members:

Rosemary Butler (Chair)
Peter Black
Angela Burns
Sandy Mewies
Rhodri Glyn Thomas

Officials present:

Claire Clancy, Chief Executive & Clerk of the Assembly (Official)
Adrian Crompton, Director of Assembly Business (Official)
Craig Stephenson, Chief Adviser to the Presiding Officer (Official)
Carys Evans, Principal Commission Secretary (Official)

Others in attendance:

David Melding, Deputy Presiding Officer
Daniel Greenberg

1 Introduction

1(i) Introduction and apologies

The Presiding Officer introduced Daniel Greenberg to the meeting and thanked him for agreeing to participate.

1(ii) Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

1(iii) Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes were agreed.

2 World Class Parliamentary Committees

Commissioners discussed the review of the support provided to Assembly Committees, which it had initiated in December 2012. An update had been provided before the summer recess, following which Commissioners had asked for further work to be done to develop a vision for this core area of Assembly activity and options for enhancing performance through the resources put in place by the Commission.

Commissioners set out their vision for world class parliamentary committees, agreeing that:

- they should demonstrably improve the quality of policy outcomes legislation, public services and government spending for society as a whole in Wales;
- they should be respected, influential and accessible, acting with integrity and independence;
- their work should be strategic and rigorous.

Commissioners recognised that the size of the Assembly meant that all Committees had significant workloads. For some Committees the increasing volume of legislation affected the amount of time available for policy scrutiny. It was agreed that Committees worked most effectively when they took a strategic approach to their work. This helped to increase their impact and reach.

The support available to committee Members such as bilingual briefings, research and legal advice, were of a very high standard. Providing these in ways that best suited the needs of Members so that they could undertake their committee work effectively was essential. New ways of working should continue to be explored to ensure that these resources were well-targeted and had the maximum impact.

Excellent ways of working that enhanced performance and increased capacity should be regularly shared by Chairs so that innovative practices could be adopted across the Committees. Sharing information in this way would drive up performance across the Assembly whilst retaining the flexibility for Committees to set their own strategies and balance their workloads.

Examples of areas of excellence highlighted by Commissioners included engagement with civil society, continuous professional development undertaken by individual Chairs and by Committees, and the use of external advisors. In advising the Commission, Daniel Greenberg praised the work already done by Assembly Committees and agreed that aspects of the work done here are admired by other parliaments, particularly the approach to continuous professional development and use of expertise.

It was agreed that the vision and core issues would be set out in a report from the Commission. A draft of this report would be prepared for Commissioners to consider and discussions would then take place with Committee Chairs and others.

3 Any other business

Secretariat
November 2013