

The Assembly Commission

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

Meeting date: **Thursday, 13 February 2014**

Meeting time: **10.30 – 12.00**

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales



Minutes: AC(4)2014(2)

Committee Members:

Dame Rosemary Butler (Chair)
Peter Black
Angela Burns
Sandy Mewies

Officials present:

Claire Clancy, Chief Executive & Clerk of the Assembly (Official)

Adrian Crompton, Director of Assembly Business (Official)

Nicola Callow, Head of Finance (Official)

Christopher Warner, Head of Policy and Legislation Committee Service, Head of Policy and Legislation Committee Service (Official)

Craig Stephenson, Chief Adviser to the Presiding Officer (Official)

Carys Evans, Principal Commission Secretary (Official)

Others in attendance:

David Melding, Deputy Presiding Officer
Helena Feltham, Independent Adviser

1 Introduction

1(i) Introduction and apologies

Rhodri Glyn Thomas was unable to attend due to Committee of the Regions business and had sent his apologies.

1(ii) Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

1(iii) Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the 30 January meeting were agreed.

2 Commission Budget Strategy 2015–16

The Commission's budget strategy during the Fourth Assembly had allowed for investment to achieve outstanding parliamentary support in facilities, services, expertise and the public interface, whilst also delivering value for money and efficiency. 2015-16 would be the final year of the Fourth Assembly and the culmination of the current Commission's work in these areas.

It was agreed that the approach for the 2015-16 budget would follow that adopted since the start of the Fourth Assembly. It would focus on driving out inefficiency and securing value for money to allow for continued innovation and an ongoing commitment to the quality of services to Members and the public. Longer term plans and scenarios should also be considered to ease the transition for the next Commission in 2016.

Commissioners approved the Budget Strategy 2015-16, including the recommendations in section 2. Officials would develop the draft budget in line with the agreed approach for further discussion in May.

3 Future Assembly Youth Engagement Services

In May 2013 the Commission had agreed to consult young people on the future of the Assembly's youth engagement work. This was done during Autumn 2013 and had resulted in views being contributed by nearly 3,000 young people from across Wales. The consultation had provided new information about young people's understanding of and interest in the Assembly and some ideas about how the Assembly could best engage with young people in ways that enabled them to contribute to its work.

Commissioners discussed the proposed approach that had arisen from the consultation and the direct feedback from young people, which was to make youth engagement an integral part of the work Members do, supported by the full range of services the Commission provides. The proposed approach was based upon three main themes:

- reaching out (to make sure young people could find out about Assembly business and what it meant for them);
- enabling debate (providing a range of ways for young people to get involved); and
- feedback for young people about the outcomes of their participation.

An external stakeholder group, comprising umbrella organisations that between them reached over 80,000 young people, had discussed the proposed approach at the end of January and was very supportive of it.

Commissioners considered a number of ideas, including:

- more support for Assembly Members and Commission staff, including specialist youth work expertise;
- linking up with other organisations and networks to reach diverse groups, including harder to reach young people;
- holding events such as “youth day” and awarding certificates to participants; and
- increasing the range of services available through the www.yourassembly.org young people’s website.

Assembly Members would be able to participate in work if they wished, including the launch event proposed for the Summer Term. The project would continue alongside the normal business of the Assembly so that it was not entirely dependent on Members’ involvement.

Although the approach was significantly different to that which had been initially discussed by the Commission, it was felt that the strategic direction being put forward was right because it was based on young people’s views. Achieving the ambitious vision would require the delivery of short, medium and long term actions. An action plan was being developed by officials.

4 Update from 3 February Assembly Commission's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ACARAC)

Angela Burns gave an oral update on discussions by the Assembly’s Audit and Risk Assurance Committee at its meeting on 3 February. Eric Gregory had taken over as Chair and this was his first meeting in that role.

The Committee had discussed business continuity planning and were satisfied with progress being made in this area following a review in October 2013. Work was being carried out in relation to the performance of the facilities management contract and the Committee discussed the corporate risks linked to the Official Languages Scheme.

The Wales Audit Office had provided their Audit Outline for the accounts for 2013-14, which had identified nothing unusual. As part of normal audit assurances provided for Members’ pay and allowances the WAO would sample audit records of payments to AMSS.

5 Any other business

Angela Burns summarised discussions at the Children and Young People Committee regarding the need for external providers, who were engaged to support under the Members’ Continuing Professional Development programme, to have a thorough

understanding of the work of the Assembly and how this differs from other legislatures. This matter would be taken forward by officials.

The next Commission meeting would be held on 6 March 2014. Agenda items would include the Record of Proceedings and progress towards the ICT transition.

Secretariat

February 2014