

Darren Millar AM  
Chair of Public Accounts Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Tŷ Hywel  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff

7 October 2015

Dear Darren

Following our appearance at your Committee on 29 September, I am writing with the additional information that you have requested. The information is set out in the attached annex.

We would like to thank the Committee for your scrutiny and feedback and, in particular, your comments about the Commission's website. The Finance Committee, on 1 October, also raised similar issues about the website's accessibility and its ease of use. I am sure that the Commission will want to ask for priority to be given to reviewing the website and identifying improvements that can be made in the short and longer term.

The Commission's approach is always to try to operate with openness, transparency and clarity. So if there is anything else that we can provide you with to assist the Committee, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Melding', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**David Melding AM, Deputy Presiding Officer**

cc Assembly Commissioners; Claire Clancy; Nicola Callow

## ANNEX

### Assembly Commission: Additional information following 29 September 2015 appearance at Public Accounts Committee

1. Provide the Committee with the Internal Audit Review of effectiveness of the Commission together with the corresponding action plan.

The report and action plan are attached.

The Committee also expressed an interest in the contribution of our Independent Advisers. This review of Commission effectiveness records that: "Commissioners unanimously value the contribution made by the Independent Advisers. They add an alternative and welcome perspective to discussions. Contributions may be brief but add value to the process, succinctly summarise the key issues and offer a further independent perspective." To provide additional information about the Independent Advisers, the following documents are also attached:

- Internal Audit's summary report on the Independent Advisers;
  - the 2012 recruitment pack, which includes details of the responsibilities and remuneration for these roles;
  - relevant extracts from the report to the Assembly Commission in October 2012 on the appointment of the Independent Advisers, which includes details of the recruitment process.
2. Provide details of the budgets assigned to Women in Public Life and Vote@16? National conversation areas of work.

#### *Women in Public Life*

The Presiding Officer's Women in Public Life campaign has engaged women from all age groups and backgrounds to raise awareness about the need for more women to apply for and take up public roles and appointments.

Increasing women's parliamentary representation is one element of the campaign and this year saw the establishment of the Women in Democracy Caucus. Chaired by the Presiding Officer and made up of a cross-party group of Assembly Members, the Caucus set out to find and share best practice from other parliaments around the world on how to increase women's parliamentary representation. In March 2015, the Caucus published its report with ten recommendations outlining actions

to tackle some of the barriers that women face in terms of entering public office.

Three out of the fourteen mentees, who received training as part of Women in Public Life Development Scheme, have successfully applied for positions in public life and another two are standing for elections, one for the Assembly election in 2016 and one for town council elections.

#POWiPL events have been held on the Assembly estate, including one to mark International Women’s Day 2015, when the Senedd was lit up in purple lights as part of the global #PaintitPurple campaign to raise awareness of issues still surrounding gender equality. We also held a #POWiPL event in Wrexham as part of the #SeneddWrexham week of events in March.

Lectures and talks have also been given by Julia Gillard, Janet Street-Porter, Shami Chakrabarti and Baroness Greenfield.

The total expenditure per year and by type of expenditure, to September 2015, on the #POWiPL area of work is shown in the tables below:-

Financial year	£	Expenditure	£
2011-12	£ 1,815.70	Promotional Items	£ 11,580.40
2012-13	£ 6,314.68	Events & Visits	£ 35,265.39
2013-14	£ 37,390.49	Chwarae Teg	£ 40,000.00
2014-15	£ 55,484.35	Portal Costs	£ 30,914.56
2015-16	£ 16,755.13		
	<u>£ 117,760.35</u>		<u>£ 117,760.35</u>

Staffing costs associated with the project are in addition to these costs and are part of the larger Commission and Member Support Service (CAMS) area budget.

Part of the expenditure relates to a contract with Chwarae Teg for the development and ongoing support for a web portal site, over two years from February 2014. This was the £40k referred to at the PAC session; the total value of the contract is £50k. This was procured in line with the Assembly Commission’s procurement guidelines and within the delegated authority of budget managers. It was also scrutinised by the Investment and Resourcing Board in September 2013.

An additional £31k of Portal hosting and development costs have been paid to the National Federation of Women’s Institutes and Women Making a Difference.

## *Vote@16?*

One of the major strands of youth engagement work has been the Vote@16? national conversation.

This six month campaign, which has taken place against the backdrop of wider UK constitutional changes, asked 11 to 25-year-olds in Wales for their views about lowering the voting age to 16. We have had a tremendous response, with over 10,000 young people taking part in the consultation through a range of methods, including the dedicated young people's website, [www.yourassembly.org](http://www.yourassembly.org); at youth group meetings attended by the Education and Outreach teams; and by using specially created information packs to allow young people to hold the debate themselves. Work has also been undertaken with Assembly Members to gather the views of young people via video and photo evidence.

The 'Vote@16?' campaign focussed on getting young people to complete an online survey or a hard copy survey about lowering the vote age and voting in general. The cost of this exercise was minimal.

The bus was taken out on three occasions specifically to promote 'Vote@16?', get video and photo content for the campaign and get copies completed of the hard copy survey. The bus went to Tasker Milward School, Dwr-y-Felin School and on another occasion went to two locations in one day (Monmouth Town Centre and a Youth Club in Abergavenny). The costs of taking the bus to these locations was minimal and covered from existing 2015-16 promotion budget.

There was one additional cost for Facebook advertising of approximately £1,900.00.

### 3. Agreed to send a note on the actual income performance versus anticipated income performance of the Pierhead Building.

Originally, the Pierhead was leased to provide accommodation for a range of functions that included the Pierhead visitor centre, Assembly shop, an education suite for curriculum related education programmes, meeting rooms and accommodation for the Auditor General.

A report from National Audit Office (NAO) in 2000 recommended purchase of the lease, in order to minimise the on-going cost of rental payments. In April 2002, a business case was presented to the House Committee at which point Members endorsed the recommendation to purchase the building.

The Pierhead building was not originally purchased as an income generating asset and, therefore, no income has been anticipated during the budget setting process. As an asset this iconic building plays a key part in supporting the Commission's strategic goal to engage with the people of Wales and Promote Wales. Since 2006 the building has received 1,304,063 visitors.

Currently the building is used by the Wales Governance Centre, Wales's foremost constitutional research unit, to work in partnership with the National Assembly. This partnership provides the Assembly with access to quality, relevant research enabling the legislature of Wales to continue to develop strong law making and scrutiny systems that will result in laws that are responsive to the needs of the people of Wales. No charge is made for the WGC's use of the building.

The building also provides a highly valued event space and we have invested in audio visual equipment and staging to support delivery of world class events. In the last financial year, a total of 123 events were hosted and, in the first six months of this financial year already, 70 events have been held.

Events held include the Wales Governance Centre 'Westminster in Cardiff Bay' lecture series, together with a highly successful series of events supporting the PO's Women in Public life campaign. In addition, the Futures Gallery has been used to host a programme of exhibitions that has included showcasing students work from the Welsh Academy of Arts. Complementing these events has been a number of in-conversation events with Guto Harri in conversation with Lord Wigley and with Lord Kinnock. Additionally the venue has been used to host the Tidy Wales Awards and Welsh Volunteer of the Year Awards. We do not make a charge for such events.

We believe this range of activity represents very good value for money in return for the annual costs of the Pierhead, which are around £175k per annum.

### **Additional items**

#### **CETV Analysis of Change**

With regard to the question on pension benefits, it might be helpful for the Committee to know that where a salary increase occurs during the year, the impact this has on the pension benefits is always greater where

an individual has a number of years of previous service. This is because the Civil Service Pension Scheme is, up to 31 March 2015, a final salary scheme. The purpose of the pension benefit table is to show the impact that pay changes within the year has on an employee's pension entitlement in the Civil Service Scheme.

As the Scheme is unfunded there is no direct cost to the Assembly. The cost, like all benefits from the Civil Service Pension Scheme, is ultimately met by the tax payer through general taxation.

### Addressing HM Treasury's Streamlining requirements

We are proud of our work in the Assembly and our Annual report outlines our progress in delivering the Commission's priorities. The annual report, together with the annual budget documents and reports on corporate performance measures, showcases our achievements.

We welcome HMT's initiative to streamline Annual reports and accounts, but it is critical for the Commission to balance streamlining with transparency.

As you already know, HMT proposed high level recommendations in early 2014 that would see a restructuring of the traditional 'front-half' annual report and 'back-half' financial statements into three more integrated reporting requirements based on:

- Performance - "telling the story"
- Accountability; and
- Financial statements

We are already working with WAO to identify options for change as part of our preparation for the 2015-16 Annual Report and Accounts.

The proposed new format of the accounts, which will be in line with the HMT Streamlining initiative and the 2015-16 Financial Reporting Manual, will be presented to the November 2015 Audit and Risk assurance Committee (ACARAC).

# **Report to the National Assembly for Wales Commission**

## **Review of the Commission's Effectiveness**

### **Background and scope**

1. The Corporate Governance Principles adopted by the Assembly Commission require it to make arrangements to “evaluate its effectiveness from time to time”. I have completed this review in compliance with this principle.
2. This is the second review since the adoption of the Corporate Governance Principles in 2011, following on from the initial review reported to the Commission in January 2013.
3. The evidence leading to this report was obtained from discussions with:
  - The five Commissioners;
  - The Commission's Independent Advisers (Mair Barnes and Helena Feltham);
  - The Chief Executive and Clerk; and
  - The Principal Commission Secretary.
4. Additionally, I reviewed minutes and papers from Commission meetings, recent press coverage and requests for disclosure of information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
5. I am grateful to all those who assisted me with the review.

## Summary

6. My overall finding is that the Commission has continued to make progress since the first review. In particular, Commissioners have displayed effective oversight of significant projects such as ICT Futures and developed a sharper strategic focus including the development of a suite of Key Performance Indicators.
7. I have raised a number of recommendations in this report, which are aimed at supporting the Commission in its on-going development as a high performing and effective 'governing board'.

## Key findings

8. This section of the report summarises the main conclusions from the review brigaded under five self-explanatory headings.

### *Commission meetings and administrative arrangements*

9. In respect of meetings and administrative arrangements, my review found as follows:
  - Commissioners were generally content with the present meeting arrangements. Papers and information are received in enough time and are of the right level of detail;
  - Agendas are realistic and meetings generally run to time. However, there were mixed views on the inclusion of 'any other business' on agendas. The item can be viewed as a useful item to enable Commissioners to raise new concerns but at the same time a distraction and a potential loss of focus from the main business of the meeting;
  - The Commissioners value the service they receive from the Principal Commission Secretary and the support that she provides to the meetings. The Principal Commission Secretary is due to commence a period of maternity leave in the coming months and it will be important that the Commission maintains the same level of quality of service during that period;
  - Commissioners unanimously value the contribution made by the Independent Advisers. They add an alternative and welcome perspective to discussions. Contributions may be brief but add



value to the process, succinctly summarise the key issues and offer a further independent perspective;

- Interviewees were complimentary about the Presiding Officer's inclusive style and her business-like approach to chairing Commission meetings. She has also set out a clear role for the Deputy Presiding Officer and his presence at Commission meetings continues to be valued; and
- Commissioners consider that senior managers have made valued contributions to Commission meetings and presented information in a meaningful and understandable way. The main example cited being the regular progress reports presented in respect of the ICT Futures Project.

### *Working corporately*

10. The Commission is a corporate body and the Commissioners are the 'governing board' for the organisation. As such, they are required to act corporately in the interest of the Assembly as a whole rather than simply being representatives of party groups. In this regard:

- All Commissioners feel they are able to take a corporate view back to party groups which they are able to defend. Consequently, there are few Commission questions tabled by Members and more clarity about the decisions which the Commission take; and
- Commissioners have developed a strong command of their respective portfolios, taking the lead in discussions of their areas of responsibilities and forging effective working relationships with the Commission staff that have responsibility for these areas.

### *Strategy*

11. One of the key roles of the Commission is to agree the organisation's strategy and monitor the achievement of its key aims and objectives. In this regard:

- Specific meetings are set aside for Commissioners to consider strategic thinking. Indeed, during April 2014, the Commission had a half day strategy meeting without a 'structured' agenda and only attended by the Commissioners, the Chief Executive and Clerk and facilitated by two Independent Advisers. The Commissioners spent considerable time in refreshing and renewing the Commission's

Strategy and setting out the Commission's vision over the final two years of the Fourth Assembly; and

- The Commission has played an active role in the development of key performance indicators to support their strategic vision. Commissioners have provided ownership and oversight of this process.

### *Communications*

12. In respect of communications, my review found as follows:

- Interviewees noted that Communications between the Commission and Assembly Members continue to demonstrate a marked improvement from the experiences of the Third Assembly;
- Communication between the Commissioners, the Chief Executive and other senior staff is strong. Interviewees cited the successful implementation of significant projects and finalisation of the Commission's Budget as evidence of the effective relationship which has been established;
- Interviewees commented that there was little interaction with Commission staff below the most senior grades, as the running of the organisation has been delegated to the Chief Executive and her Management Board;
- However, my review did identify one occasion when staff were commended directly by a Commissioner in the Siambur at the time the Commission's budget was being debated and approved. This served as a powerful means of communication and connection with the wider body of staff and a link to the video of this was posted to the staff intranet;
- There continue to be some frustrations and disconnect in communications between the Commission and the Remuneration Board;
- Interviewees expressed frustration at local media's negative coverage of the Assembly and their lack of engagement with good news stories such as the recent launch of Machine Translation; and
- Commissioners continue to recognise their importance as leaders of the organisation. The increased high profile of the Presiding Officer and her outreach work is an important element of this work.

However, some Commissioners still believe that more can be done to be proactive and raise awareness of the Assembly.

### *Continuous Improvement and Forward Looking*

13. The Commissioners are responsible for their own performance, effectiveness and self improvement. Moreover, as part of their wider strategic outlook and responsibilities, they also need to be forward looking and consider the challenges which will face the new Commission, after the next Assembly election. In this regard:

- The Commission fully engaged with the first review of its effectiveness, reported in 2013. However, in the intervening time it has not established a plan of action to reflect how it has implemented or made progress in respect of the original recommendations from the first review;
- The Commission receives significant benefit from the expertise and experience of its Independent Advisers which contributes significantly to its development and effectiveness as a 'governing board'; and
- The Commission has started the process of planning for the Fifth Assembly and looked at developing a legacy statement to help inform and add value to the incoming Commission following the May 2016 election.

### **Recommendations**

14. The following recommendations are intended to address the main findings of this review. It remains for the Commission to decide if these recommendations are accepted.

- (i) Should the Commission wish to accept the recommendations from this review then, an action plan should be established to outline how they will be addressed. Actions should be monitored and progress should be tracked. This action plan will then inform future follow up reviews.
- (ii) A check should be undertaken on the range of activities the Principal Commission Secretary undertakes in advance of her temporary departure to ensure that the quality and level of service she provides is maintained by her temporary replacement during her period of absence.

- (iii) Commissioners should maintain their involvement in the key performance indicator process. They should challenge management on the results of indicators and regularly monitor and refresh the suite of indicators. This will ensure that relevant and meaningful performance management information continues to be captured.
- (iv) Time should be taken to reflect on the usefulness of the April 2014 strategy meeting and lessons learnt from the experience of this less structured meeting approach. Exploring whether other opportunities to meet as a group outside of structured meetings could enhance the Commission's effectiveness as the 'governing board'.
- (v) Efforts should be made to identify and eliminate disconnects between Commissioners and the independent Remuneration Board. Commissioners should also take advantage of opportunities to constructively engage with the Remuneration Board as and when they arise.
- (vi) Commissioners should build on their already effective working relations with senior staff by considering raising their profile and engaging with the wider community of Commission staff. This could include, for example:
  - Recording video introductions for inclusion in induction for new starters to help explain who they are and the role they play in running the Assembly Commission;
  - Messages from Commissioners at Christmas and end of term, thanking staff for their work; and
  - Addressing all staff meetings on a periodic basis.
- (vii) The Commission should consider how it might be more proactive with the media (particularly local press) with a view to minimising the likelihood of negative stories and hence the need for defensive briefing.
- (viii) The Commission should also look at utilising social media to share its messages and widen its outreach activities.
- (ix) To support continuous improvement and complement the expert advice at its disposal from Independent Advisers, the Commission should consider the establishment of a programme of training and development. This could include areas such as

governance and financial oversight for Commissioners to ensure their knowledge is up to date.

- (x) The Commission should maintain its strategic focus in the coming year and develop a clear vision and detail of the legacy it wishes to leave for the incoming Commission of the Fifth Assembly.

15. Finally, I recommend that I review progress made against these recommendations in one year's time, with a further substantive review to be undertaken prior to the dissolution of the Fourth Assembly in spring 2016.

**Gareth Watts**  
**Head of Internal Audit**  
**May 2014**

# **Report to the National Assembly for Wales Commission**

## **Review of the Commission's Effectiveness Follow up Report**

### **Background and scope**

1. The Corporate Governance Principles adopted by the Assembly Commission require it to make arrangements to "evaluate its effectiveness from time to time".
2. I completed the second full review of the Assembly Commission's Effectiveness in May 2014.
3. This report outlines the progress made by the Commission in addressing the recommendations raised in the May 2014 Report.
4. I am grateful to Sulafa Thomas, the Head of Commission Secretariat, for her assistance in providing me with the information required to complete this report.

### **Summary**

5. The Commission has used an Action Plan to ensure that the recommendations, from the May 2014 Review, have been captured and addressed over the last twelve months.
6. I have used the Action Plan as the primary source of reference in undertaking the follow up review and where appropriate cross referred to relevant Commission meeting papers to validate the action taken.
7. The Commission has responded positively in addressing the recommendations raised in the May 2014 Report.
8. Progress has been made across all areas.
9. The Commission continues to act as a high-performing 'governing board' with a sharp focus on ensuring its commitment to continuous improvement.

10. This commitment to continuous improvement will benefit the incoming Commission, post the May 2016 National Assembly for Wales Election.

### **Key findings**

11. The Commission continues to maintain strong stewardship over performance issues as demonstrated by its oversight of the Key Performance Indicator Report process.

12. There is also evidence of improved lines of communication with key stakeholders such as the Remuneration Board and the Assembly Commission staff over the past year.

13. The Commission has established and planned a clear programme of work over the remaining lifetime of the Fourth Assembly and remains focussed on producing a Legacy Report that can be utilised for the incoming Assembly Commission at the start of the Fifth Assembly.

### **Future Actions**

14. A further review of the Commission's effectiveness will take place in early 2016, prior to the dissolution of the Fourth Assembly.

**Gareth Watts**  
**Head of Internal Audit**  
**June 2015**

## Action Plan

The recommendations contained in the May 2014 report were accepted by the Commission. The Commission established an action plan to outline how the recommendations will be addressed, and to enable progress to be tracked.

I have assessed the progress made against the actions and this is recorded in the third column of the table below.

Recommendation	Agreed Commission Action	Assessment of Progress against Actions
1 - A check should be undertaken on the range of activities the Principal Commission Secretary undertakes in advance of her temporary departure to ensure that the quality and level of service she provides is maintained by her temporary replacement during her period of absence.	New role description prepared in readiness for arranging cover.	Discussion with Sulafa Thomas confirmed that a handover took place between June and August 2014. The effectiveness of this well managed transition is borne out by the on-going high level of secretariat service the Commission has continued to enjoy since September 2014.
2 - Commissioners should maintain their involvement in the key performance indicator process. They should challenge management on the results of indicators and regularly monitor and refresh the suite of indicators. This will ensure that relevant and meaningful performance management information continues to be captured.	Performance themed meeting of the Commission to be scheduled termly, based on the timing of the KPI report. KPIs have been refreshed.	During the year the Commission has had specific meetings set aside to discuss performance in September 2014, January 2015 and May 2015 with a further meeting scheduled for July 2015. The agreed minutes of the meetings completed to date, demonstrate the Commission's on-going challenge to management on the results of the Key Performance Indicators, Commissioner's views on the effectiveness of how they are presented and the need to enhance and refresh the indicators in certain areas.



<p>3 - Time should be taken to reflect on the usefulness of the April 2014 strategy meeting and lessons learnt from the experience of this less structured meeting approach. Exploring whether other opportunities to meet as a group outside of structured meetings could enhance the Commission's effectiveness as the 'governing board'.</p>	<p>Commissioners said they valued the experience.</p> <p>A second 'away day' has been agreed.</p>	<p>My discussions with Sulafa Thomas reveal that the Commission remain committed to utilising opportunities to increase its effectiveness and cohesiveness as a 'governing board' outside of the structured meeting environment.</p> <p>During the period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commission members visited Canada and Brussels in Autumn 2014;</li> <li>• A planned away day was cancelled (due to unforeseen circumstance) but Commissioners continue to get together as a group outside of structured meetings;</li> <li>• A visit to Bosnia-Herzegovina took place in April 2015; and</li> <li>• A visit to Patagonia is planned for autumn 2015.</li> </ul>
<p>4 - Efforts should be made to identify and eliminate disconnects between Commissioners and the independent Remuneration Board. Commissioners should also take advantage of opportunities to constructively engage with the Remuneration Board as and when they arise.</p>	<p>Increase the Commission lead on communication between the two bodies.</p>	<p>Remuneration Board members attended a Commission meeting on 3 November 2014, and constructive discussions took place. The two boards agreed to meet again at an appropriate time.</p> <p>Interaction also continues through correspondence. The Commission and the Remuneration Board could consider taking advantage of the potential window of opportunity presented by the appointment of a new Remuneration Board and new Assembly Commission over the next twelve months. Once both new boards are fully established there is the potential for early engagement and to cultivate a constructive working</p>

		relationship, within the framework of their respective roles, on issues of mutual interest for both Boards.
<p>5 - Commissioners should build on their already effective working relations with senior staff by considering raising their profile and engaging with the wider community of Commission staff. This could include, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recording video introductions for inclusion in induction for new starters to help explain who they are and the role they play in running the Assembly Commission;</li> <li>• Messages from Commissioners at Christmas and end of term, thanking staff for their work; and</li> <li>• Addressing all staff meetings on a periodic basis.</li> </ul>	<p>Update corporate induction</p> <p>Consider mechanisms to increase interaction with, and feedback to, staff.</p>	<p>A new approach to corporate induction was agreed by Management Board in August 2014.</p> <p>The Presiding Officer and Commissioners have attended all staff meetings and brunches. They are also active supporters of staff support networks such as OUT-NAW and Inspire.</p> <p>Feedback on specific aspects of the Highlight report is included in the Note to members and staff following consideration at a Commission meeting (in response to a suggestion to make it a more rounded tool).</p>
<p>6 - The Commission should consider how it might be more proactive with the media (particularly local press) with a view to minimising the likelihood of negative stories and hence the need for defensive briefing.</p>	<p>Aim to target specific audiences with appropriate materials.</p> <p>Make use of social media (Reference point 7 below).</p> <p>Consider including appropriate training or coaching in a programme of training and development</p>	<p>The Commission has built communications into the process earlier to enable a pro-active approach to both communications opportunities and potential hazards. Advice is routinely sought from the Presiding Officer's Media Manager, with meetings taking place regularly, focussed on each Commission meeting.</p>

	(Reference point 8 below).	
7 - The Commission should also look at utilising social media to share its messages and widen its outreach activities.	Review the social media policy.	<p>A review of the social media policy took place during the summer of 2014. Considered by Commission in September 2014.</p> <p>Commissioners displayed a keen interest in this important area and discussed the impact of social media as part of a spectrum of engagement activity, not something to be taken in isolation. They identified that Assembly tweets are most valuable when they link to Senedd.tv and other useful sites.</p>
8 - To support continuous improvement and complement the expert advice at its disposal from Independent Advisers, the Commission should consider the establishment of a programme of training and development. This could include areas such as governance and financial oversight for Commissioners to ensure their knowledge is up to date.	Consider the establishment of a Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programme for future Commissioners.	<p>Commissioners are able to take advantage of the existing CPD programme.</p> <p>The CPD team are actively investigating details of CPD for new Commissioners in the Fifth Assembly, at the request of the current Commission members.</p>
9 - The Commission should maintain its strategic focus in the coming year and develop a clear vision and detail of the legacy it wishes to leave for the incoming Commission of the Fifth Assembly.	<p>Forward work programme details the approach to activity for the year ahead.</p> <p>(Also reference Point 3 above)</p>	<p>The detail of plans for future work is in the rolling forward work programme.</p> <p>The Commission plans to produce a legacy report before the end of the Fourth Assembly.</p>

## **Summary report on Independent Advisers**

### **Background**

1. Under the Government of Wales Act, the National Assembly for Wales Commission (the Commission) is a corporate body to provide property, staff and services required for the Assembly's purposes. The Commissioners are also charged with the governance of the organisation and are accountable to the Assembly. The Commission comprises the Presiding Officer and four Assembly Members nominated by their parties.
2. The Commission has adopted a set of governance principles and supporting provisions to guide the work of the Commission and its staff.
3. In order to ensure that Commissioners and senior officials can draw upon a wide range of experience to assist them in the discharge of the Commission's functions, the Commission has appointed Independent Advisers to act in an independent non-executive capacity.
4. The Commission expects Independent Advisers to offer constructive challenge across all the Commission's business with a view to ensuring that all aspects of strategy and delivery are scrutinised for effectiveness and efficiency. They contribute to the monitoring of the performance and progress of the organisation, including the use of human and financial resources, and maintain a critical overview of the organisation's financial controls and procedures.
5. As part of their due diligence, the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ACARAC) conducts regular and thorough anonymous effectiveness reviews with the WAO, involving all key stakeholders. The outcome in 2014 was very positive. The review will be repeated later in 2015.

## **Key Areas of Involvement with the Assembly Commission**

### **Keith Baldwin**

- Member of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ACARAC) – attended 12/14 meetings since his appointment
- Member of the Remuneration Committee – attended 2/3 meetings since his appointment
- Attended 2 Management Board Meetings (February 2013 and February 2014) to offer challenge at discussions on the Governance Statement
- Involved in the recruitment of the Head of Internal Audit (May 2013)
- Mentors Head of Internal Audit (February 2014 onwards)
- Offers challenge to the Director of Finance – on new finance system from April 2015

### **Helena Feltham**

- Chair of the Assembly Commission's Remuneration Committee (attended 3/3 meetings since appointment)
- Attendee at Assembly Commission meetings (attended 9 meetings since appointment)
- Involved in the recruitment of the Head of Human Resources (January 2014)
- Involved in the recruitment of members to the new Remuneration Board (June and July 2015)

### **Eric Gregory**

- Chair of ACARAC (since November 2013; member since November 2012) – attended 14/14 meeting since his appointment to ACARAC
- Member of the Remuneration Committee
- Attended three Assembly Commission meetings since his appointment

- Attended Investment and Resourcing Board to offer challenge on moving to Phase 2 of the HR-Payroll Project
- Involved in the appointment of the Head of ICT Infrastructure
- Advised on the ICT Transformation, the corporate performance report, and change portfolio management
- Organised a presentation by a senior Cabinet Office official on Successful Change Programmes

## Overall Summary

6. I consider the Commission's approach to the appointment and use of Independent Advisers to represent good value for money. The Advisers receive very modest remuneration of £5,000 for 10-15 days' work a year, with additional payments to recognise additional responsibilities (e.g. extra £2,000 for the role of ACARAC Chair). There is sufficient evidence to suggest that these Advisers go beyond the expectations of their contracts in terms of time commitments and are available for Commission staff to contact via phone and email at most times. The way in which they are appointed clearly demonstrates efficiency as they have an on-going relationship with the Commission over a reasonable amount of time rather than the Commission having to undertake regular recruitment, selection or procurement of Advisers.
7. Their effectiveness is borne out by the comments of stakeholders, including that the Advisers:
  - provide robust challenge to business decisions and take a keen and valued interest in all areas of assurance and risk management;
  - bring skills and experience from their professional careers, including in managing complex projects at a national level;
  - demonstrate diligence and commitment to the role, always contributing and making substantive comments;
  - are supportive of staff, offering their own perspective and stimulating discussion and further thinking;
  - act as strong and authoritative Chairs for ACARAC and the Remuneration Committee.
8. Their on-going involvement allows them to build up their understanding of the organisation, thus increasing their effectiveness. All three of the Advisers reviewed have made an impact at the

Assembly Commission and without exceptions have shown their commitment to their roles. Based upon the evidence gathered they are all undertaking their duties in line with the Commission's expectations of Independent Advisers.

9. The Assembly Commission is shortly to undergo a significant amount of change in its leadership. Over the next year, the Commission will recruit a new Chief Executive and Clerk and 2016 will mark the appointment of new Commissioners, a new Presiding Officer and potentially a new Deputy Presiding Officer.
10. The Independent Advisers continue to represent a rich source of advice and guidance on which the Commission can draw. At this crucial point in the Commission's development, the continuity and knowledge, which these three Independent Advisers may bring in the future, may be of significant value to the Commission.
11. However, the importance of continuity should also be set against the Assembly Commission's on-going commitment to excellence in all that it does and the potential expertise that new Advisers with different backgrounds and experiences could also contribute in the years that lie immediately ahead.

**Gareth Watts**

**Head of Internal Audit**

**July 2015**

N.B. Following this review, contracts for three independent Advisers were renewed for a further three years, in line with the original terms of appointment.



**WIG**

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Cenedlaethol  
Cymru  
National  
Assembly for  
Wales



# Independent Advisors

## National Assembly for Wales Commission

**Time Commitment:** 15 days per annum  
**Duration:** 3 years  
**Location:** Cardiff  
**Remuneration:** £5,000 per annum  
**Closing date:** Monday 3 September

Two opportunities are available to become Independent Advisors to the National Assembly for Wales Commission. Both the successful candidates will also become members of the Assembly Commission's Audit Committee.

### Background:

The National Assembly for Wales (the Assembly) 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.

The National Assembly for Wales Commission ("the Commission") was created by the Government of Wales Act 2006 and came into existence after the May 2007 Assembly elections. Its principal statutory function is to provide the National Assembly for Wales with the staff, property and services required to carry out its role effectively and efficiently.

There are five Commissioners – the Presiding Officer (as chair) and four other Assembly Members, one from each of the main political parties. The Commission employs around 350 staff serving the Assembly, headed by the Chief Executive and Clerk who is also the Principal Accounting Officer. The Commission has a total annual budget approaching £50 million. The Commission has four independent advisors, two of whom are due to stand down in the autumn of 2012. The other two existing independent advisers (Mair Barnes and Richard Calvert) will be replaced in the autumn of 2013.

### Roles and Responsibilities of Independent Advisors

The Commission is seeking to appoint two independent advisors to act in a non-executive capacity advising the Commissioners and senior management on the Commission's business. This includes:

- the efficient and effective running of operations and services;
- innovative use of information technology and other resources;
- corporate governance and risk management.

The advisors appointed from this exercise will be members of the Commission's Audit Committee. The Committee acts in an advisory capacity and has no executive powers. The role of the Committee is to provide advice and support to the Commission and to the Chief Executive in respect of her Accounting Officer responsibilities.



These responsibilities include a requirement to ensure that public money is spent in a regular and proper manner and that value for money is secured in the use of resources. The Audit Committee advises on corporate governance arrangements and internal controls, including ensuring that risks are properly identified and managed. The Committee meets four or five times a year.

In addition to being members of the Audit Committee, the advisors would be asked to contribute in ways that make the most of their experience and capabilities. This could include:

- attending Commission meetings (including private meetings of Commissioners);
- acting as a sounding board and providing advice to the Presiding Officer, Commissioners or the senior management of the Commission;
- contribute to the review of improvement of performance internally;
- assist with particular areas where the independent adviser might have particular expertise or experience.

## Person Specification

Candidates should provide evidence that they have the relevant experience to fulfill the role and responsibilities of the post.

The successful candidates will be expected to contribute to the development of the Commission's work and strategic planning. We are therefore looking for candidates who have experience of one or more of the following:

- strategic and board level leadership in a service delivery organisation;
- enabling transformation that is customer led and innovative;
- corporate governance, financial management and risk management;
- driving up standards of performance in an organisation;
- acting in a non-executive capacity.

Successful candidates will be able to provide evidence of:

- the ability to contribute positively to an organisation in a non-executive capacity;
- the ability to maintain a strategic vision and focus;
- the personality and presence needed to command respect and have influence with the Commissioners and Assembly Members;
- an awareness of public service delivery and the ability to operate in a political environment.

## Terms of the Appointment

### Remuneration

£5,000 per annum (non pensionable). Commitment is expected to be around 15 days per annum.

### Duration

Each appointment will be for a 3 year term, renewable for another 3 year term subject to satisfactory performance evaluation.

## Location:

Meetings are held in the Assembly Offices in Cardiff Bay.

## Political and Outside Activities:

To minimise the risk of conflicts of interest, certain persons will not be considered for appointment. These are:

- Assembly Members or candidates to be Assembly Members;
- Elected members of other UK parliamentary bodies;
- Members of staff of the Assembly Commission or the Welsh Government and persons employed by Assembly Members or a group of Assembly Members;
- Members of the National Assembly for Wales Remuneration Board;
- The Counsel General (where such person is not an Assembly Member);
- The Auditor General for Wales;
- The National Assembly for Wales Commissioner for Standards;
- A person holding the appointment of Non-Executive Director of the Welsh Government.

## Selection Process

The Chief Executive and Clerk of the Assembly will make arrangements for selecting candidates for appointment. In doing so she will have due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people.

The appointment panel will sift applications against the criteria set out in the person specification. The panel will agree a shortlist of candidates and those applicants will be invited to appear before a selection panel in late September 2012. Successful candidates will then be invited to meet with the Presiding Officer and Commissioners in October 2012 so that they can make a final selection.

It is hoped to make the appointment in early November, with the successful candidate taking up appointment straight away.

## Application Process:

- Submission of an application form, CV and Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form to WIG. A NED application/Equal Opportunities form can be downloaded by clicking here: [www.wig.co.uk/naw](http://www.wig.co.uk/naw)
- Welsh Assembly Commission operate under the Positive about Disabled People Scheme and welcome applications from people with disabilities. This scheme guarantees an interview to people with disabilities if they meet the essential requirements for the position. Should this apply to you, a Guaranteed Interview Scheme Declaration form can be downloaded here: [www.wig.co.uk/naw](http://www.wig.co.uk/naw)
- Compilation of a short-list after the closing date from applications received;
- An interview for shortlisted candidates, with a view to the successful candidate taking up the post in November 2012.

If you have any questions about this opportunity, please contact Kathryn Brown at WIG on 020 7222 1166 or e-mail [nonexecutive@wig.co.uk](mailto:nonexecutive@wig.co.uk)

## Equalities Statement

The National Assembly for Wales particularly welcome and encourage applications from under-represented groups, including people from minority ethnic groups and disabled people.

We are an equal opportunities employer - This means that everybody should have the same opportunities for employment and promotion, based on their ability, qualifications and suitability for the job. Nobody should receive less favourable treatment because of their race, sex, sexuality, age, marital status, disability, religion, HIV status, family or domestic responsibilities, and working patterns, for example, part time. Nor should anybody be disadvantaged because of conditions or requirements, which cannot be shown to be justified.



**To: Commissioners**  
**From: Claire Clancy**  
**Date: 10 October 2012**

## **Appointment of Independent Advisors to the Commission**

(N.B. personal information about candidates who were not appointed has been removed from this version of the paper)

### **Recommendation**

- 1. Commissioners are invited to agree the appointment of new independent advisors following the recent recruitment process.**

### **Background**

- 2. In my note to you of 14 May, I explained that two of the Commission's Independent Advisors will step down in November this year. They are members of the Commission's Audit Committee so must be replaced by individuals with relevant governance experience. Originally, the intention was to appoint just these two independent Advisors. However, as we had a strong field of applicants, and to save the time, effort and cost of having to repeat the appointment process when our other two advisors stand down next year, we are recommending that we make four new appointments now. We will phase the introduction of the new advisors over the next year to ensure a smooth transition; the cost of the additional two advisors will be lower than repeating the recruitment campaign next year.**
- 3. A description of the appointment process is at Annex One for your information.**

4. We propose making offers to the candidates. If you would prefer to meet them yourselves before the appointments are offered, please let me know and we will make arrangements for that. Otherwise, we will arrange for you to meet with them at a convenient date after they have been offered the appointment - the Presiding Officer has asked us to invite them to lunch with you.

### Candidates recommended for appointment

5. The selection panel considered all of the evidence offered by the candidates and recommend that the following candidates should be offered the role of Independent Advisor. The panel recommended that the remaining candidates should not be offered a post - these candidates are shown in Annex Two (N.B. not included in this version of the paper).

Candidate	Notes
<p>Helena Feltham</p> <p>HR Director, Jack Wills Ltd.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has held three executive board roles in the retail sector.</li> <li>• Currently HR Director for Jack Wills Ltd. - played a major strategic role in driving major growth.</li> <li>• Partner at Odgers Ray and Bernedtsen - executive search</li> <li>• HR Director for Woolworth's South Africa 2003 - 2005.</li> <li>• HR Director for Marks &amp; Spencer from 1990 - 2003.</li> <li>• Non-executive Director at Salisbury NHS Trust for 4 years from 1996 - helped to embed new structure and support Executive Team at time of radical change.</li> </ul>
<p>Eric Gregory</p> <p>Portfolio of non-executive roles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently Non-executive Director with Home Office Identity &amp; Passport Service and with Cabinet Office Electoral Registration Transformation Programme (ERTP).</li> <li>• Has just completed 3 years non-executive for Crown Prosecution Service and Chair of Change, Risk and Audit Committee, and member of Restructure (3-site) Board.</li> <li>• HR Director (and Board Member) for John Lewis Partnership from 2007 - 09.</li> <li>• Career with John Lewis since 1998, including as IT Director and Director of Computer Services. Earlier career in IT programming.</li> </ul>

<p>Keith Baldwin</p> <p>Non-executive Board Member</p> <p>CVQO Ltd. and National Army Museum</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20 years as a Partner with PWC, most recently as Deputy Partner-in-Charge of Government Consulting.</li> <li>• Also led the Risk Management function of PWC's Advisory Business</li> <li>• Currently Non-executive of CVQO Ltd. (which helps young people obtain vocational qualifications) since 2010.</li> <li>• Non-executive member of National Army Museum since 2010.</li> <li>• Non-executive for Judicial Studies Board (within MOJ) from 2007 to 2011</li> </ul>
<p>N.B One further candidate was selected but did not take up the role.</p>	

## Recruitment process

The vacancy was advertised in the following locations:

The Whitehall and Industry Group  
Western Mail  
The Daily Post  
The National Assembly for Wales Internet and Intranet site  
Welsh Government Internet site  
Welsh Government Central Database for Public Appointments

The selection panel was:

- Claire Clancy, Chief Executive and Clerk to the Assembly - Chair
- Adrian Crompton, Director of Assembly Business
- Mair Barnes, Independent Advisor to the National Assembly for Wales Commission

## Short Listing

65 applications were received and the Whitehall and Industry Group, using the criteria in the Job and Person Specification, initially categorised candidates as A, B and C based on their relevant experience.

The selection panel conducted the final short list on 11 September 2012 and 11 candidates were invited to the selection process.

To enable candidates to get the most from the selection process, a range of information was provided prior to interview. This included

[Commission Strategy for the Fourth Assembly](#)

[Key issues for the Fourth Assembly](#)

[Assembly Commission Budget 2012-2013](#)

[Annual Report and Accounts for 2011-2012](#)

[Remuneration Board's Determination for Assembly Members](#)

The selection process was designed to identify people with a breadth of experience in business, industry and other sectors. The selection panel set out with the aim of appointing two advisors with a sound financial background and two who would offer broad business experience gained within blue chip or best practice organisations.

The selection process was conducted on 26 and 27 September with additional dates on 4 and 9 October to accommodate two candidates. The process involved informal

interviews with the panel. During these discussions candidates were asked a range of questions to enable them to demonstrate to panel members their suitability for the role.

Immediately prior to interview various stakeholders within the organisation met with candidates to provide them additional background information on the Assembly, the Assembly Commission and Audit Committee.

A review of all candidates was conducted by the selection panel. This included feedback from the stakeholders who had met with candidates prior to the review.