

Comisiwn y Cynulliad Assembly Commission

**NAFWC 2012 (Paper 3 Part 1)
Draft Commission Strategy 2011–16**

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru
National
Assembly for
Wales



Date: Wednesday 29 June 2011

Time: 11:30–13:00

Venue: Conference Room 4B

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Draft Commission Strategy 2011–16

1.0 Purpose and summary of issues

- 1.1. The Commission's Strategy, once agreed, will provide a clear focus for the work of the Commission over the next five years. The strategic goals will inform the Commission's financial planning for the term of the Assembly and provide the starting point for Directorate and Service Area planning, and cascading to individual performance objectives.
- 1.2. The document will enable the Commission to communicate its strategic priorities to:
 - provide strategic direction to the Chief Executive and, through her to the staff of the Assembly, from which all planning and delivery will flow;
 - engender understanding and support for the priorities across all Assembly Members;
 - communicate outwardly the work of the Commission; and
 - provide a basis on which the Commission's performance and expenditure will be measured.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1. That Commissioners comment on the draft Statement of Purpose and Strategic Goals so that we can ensure that the final version reflects their priorities and ambitions for the Commission. A one page summary is attached at Annex B.

3.0 Experience from the Third Assembly

- 3.1. At the beginning of the Third Assembly, the Commission approved its aims and values and defined its goals for the Third Assembly. At the end of the Assembly, the Commission published a Legacy Report to capture the significant achievements and lessons from the four years. For each of their five strategic goals the Commission provided recommendations to assist the Commission in the Fourth Assembly. Annex A of the paper sets out a summary of this backdrop from the Third Assembly, drawn from the Legacy Report.

4.0 Principles to guide the new Strategy

- 4.1. The Purpose and Strategic Goals for the Third Assembly worked effectively over the course of the four year period. Their scope and ambition proved suitable and they remain relevant. There were some issues with interpretation of the meaning of the goals. For this reason, we recommend that we should keep the strategy and goals relatively short, simple and crisp.
- 4.2. We recommend that the new strategy and goals should be ambitious but at the same time should build on the momentum that has been achieved, particularly in the light of the changed constitutional situation following the referendum result, and the difficult financial context. We believe that during the Fourth Assembly we should:
 - strengthen the focus on high quality service delivery for the Assembly and Assembly Members, and particularly delivery of the full range of the Assembly’s powers;
 - build on the Assembly’s reputation as a body that proactively seeks to engage the Welsh public with its work, established during the successful “Vote 2011” programme;

- make use of the significant amount of work that was done during the Third Assembly to put in place strong foundations and develop particular strategies e.g. e-democracy, branding, asset management, equalities; and
 - reflect our stance on efficiency and budgets by charging us to work smarter, with greater flexibility and effective use of our skills and other resources at a time of serious financial constraint.
- 4.3. The strategy must also reflect the fact that the Government of Wales Act 2006 requires the Commission to have regard to the principles of equality of opportunity, sustainability and equal treatment of the English and Welsh languages when carrying out its functions.
- 4.4. The plans we put in place to deliver the strategic goals must be clear about intended outcomes, be able to map our performance and expenditure against the goals, and measure and provide evidence of progress. We will begin to prepare these detailed, measurable plans as soon as the Commission has confirmed its strategy.

5.0 Proposed new Strategy 2011–16

Draft Statement of Purpose

- 5.1. 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.
- 5.2. The Assembly Commission serves the National Assembly to foster a strong, accessible and forward looking democratic institution and legislature that delivers effectively for the people of Wales.

Draft Strategic Goals

- 5.3. The Assembly Commission's strategic goals for 2011–16 are to:
- **Provide outstanding parliamentary support**
Outcome: Assembly Members are seen to be effectively fulfilling their strategic responsibilities to represent the

interests of Wales and its people, make laws for Wales and hold the Welsh Government to account.

- **Engage actively and widely with the people of Wales**

Outcome: People in Wales become interested in the work of the Assembly and can easily understand and participate in the Assembly's roles of legislating, scrutiny and representation, and the Assembly benefits from the creative energy generated by such engagement.

- **Earn the confidence of Assembly Members and the people of Wales in the way we deliver services and manage costs**

Outcome: Members and the public recognise and trust that we are making good use of tax-payers' money, managing resources so as to deliver a vital public service with improved efficiency and value for money.

5.4. How we deliver these goals is also important. We will:

- act with integrity, fairness and impartiality, respecting everyone and treating people equally;
- strengthen the bilingual ethos of the Assembly;
- deliver all aspects of the Commission's responsibilities with pace, professional expertise and a strong service ethos;
- set high standards and keep our promises;
- be open and transparent, expose ourselves to the most intense scrutiny, and provide measurable evidence of our achievements;
- invest in sustainability and efficiency-enhancing technology; and
- demonstrate our absolute commitment to Welsh parliamentary democracy and our pride in the Assembly.

Background from the Commission of the Third Assembly's legacy report

1. The last 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".

Five Strategic goals for the Third Assembly

We will promote and widen engagement in devolution

2. The last Commission wanted to demonstrate that the Assembly is working for all citizens and encouraging greater and more active participation in the democratic process, and emphasising the positive impact of the Assembly upon the lives of people in Wales. With greater incremental devolution through the 2006 Act, and the referendum for greater legislative competence, we wanted to demonstrate that we were ready to grasp these challenges enthusiastically. The Legacy Report recommended that the next Assembly Commission should concentrate on the following high-level issues in relation to this strategic goal:
 - 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, e.g. 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; and
 - 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

3. The last Commission wanted the Assembly to show confidence and competence in embracing its new powers. Our focus was to secure

scrutiny and legislation of the best quality, and to support Members in all that they did as elected representatives. The Legacy Report recommended that the next Assembly Commission should concentrate on the following high-level issues in relation to this strategic goal:

- 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; and
- 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

4. The last Commission recognised that all that we did had to be capable of intense external scrutiny, be transparent and that we should reflect the diverse nature of Wales and its languages in how we dealt with and involved the citizen. The Legacy Report recommended that the next Assembly Commission should concentrate on the following high-level issues in relation to this strategic goal:

- 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; and
- 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

5. The last Commission wanted to show leadership in how we managed our work and estate, and we aimed to provide the highest achievable level of sustainability in both. The Legacy Report recommended that the next Assembly Commission should concentrate on the following high-level issues in relation to this strategic goal:

- 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; and
- 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

6. The last Commission wished to 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, was a driver in everything that we did. The Legacy Report recommended that the next Assembly Commission should concentrate on the following high-level issues in relation to this strategic goal:

- 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.

Assembly Commission Strategy 2011–16

Statement of Purpose

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The Assembly Commission serves the National Assembly to foster a strong, accessible and forward looking democratic institution and legislature that delivers effectively for the people of Wales.

Strategic Goals

- **Provide outstanding parliamentary support**
Outcome: Assembly Members are seen to be effectively fulfilling their strategic responsibilities to represent the interests of Wales and its people, make laws for Wales and hold the Welsh Government to account.
- **Engage actively and widely with the people of Wales**
Outcome: People in Wales become interested in the work of the Assembly and can easily understand and participate in the Assembly's roles of legislating, scrutiny and representation, and the Assembly benefits from the creative energy generated by such engagement.
- **Earn the confidence of Assembly Members and the people of Wales in the way we deliver services and manage costs**
Outcome: Members and the public recognise and trust that we are making good use of tax-payers' money, managing resources so as to deliver a vital public service with improved efficiency and value for money.

How we deliver these goals is also important. We will:

- act with integrity, fairness and impartiality, respecting everyone and treating people equally;
- strengthen the bilingual ethos of the Assembly;
- deliver all aspects of the Commission's responsibilities with pace, professional expertise and a strong service ethos;
- set high standards and keep our promises;
- be open and transparent, expose ourselves to the most intense scrutiny, and provide measurable evidence of our achievements;
- invest in sustainability and efficiency-enhancing technology; and
- demonstrate our absolute commitment to Welsh parliamentary democracy and our pride in the Assembly.