

# The Assembly Commission

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

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Meeting date: **Thursday, 22 September 2011**

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Meeting time: **11:00 - 12:30**

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Cynulliad  
Cenedlaethol  
Cymru

National  
Assembly for  
Wales



**Minutes:** AC(4)2011(4)

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**Committee Members:**

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

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**Officials present:**

**Claire Clancy, Chief Executive & Clerk of the Assembly (Official)**  
**Dianne Bevan, Chief Operating Officer (Official)**  
**Keith Bush, Director of Legal Services (Official)**  
**Helen Finlayson, Secretariat (Official)**  
**Steven O'Donoghue, Head of Assembly Resources (Official)**  
**Nicola Callow, Head of Finance (Official)**

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**Others in attendance:**

**Mair Barnes, Independent Adviser**  
**David Melding, Deputy Presiding Officer**

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## 1. Introduction

1(i) Introduction and apologies

No apologies were received.

1(ii) Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

1(iii) Minutes of meeting on 14 July 2011

## **Minutes of meeting on 14 July 2011**

The minutes were formally agreed.

### **Matters arising from the meeting on 14 July 2011**

A change had been requested to the Representation of the People (England and Wales) Regulations 2001 to include the Assembly Commission as a named body. The Commission would be informed once a response had been received from the Cabinet Office.

## **2. Draft budget 2012-13**

The principles underlying the Commission's budget strategy, as agreed in July 2011, were that:

- i. the budget should include sufficient resources to allow the Commission to provide the services required by the Assembly as a legislature with full law-making powers;
- ii. the Assembly, as a growing institution, required a high standard of appropriately resourced support services to enable Members to undertake their roles; and
- iii. delivering efficient and value for money would continue to be vital.

The draft budget proposals to fund these priorities were discussed. The proposals had been arrived at through a mix of savings, reallocation of existing resources and budget growth phased over the next two years. Commissioners requested that savings, particularly those deriving from the Determination of the Remuneration Board, were highlighted more clearly, that evidence supporting proposed investment areas was strengthened, and that some redrafting was undertaken to improve the clarity of the language used in the document.

The proposed budget of £47.7 million for 2012-13 was discussed. This was a 6.6 per cent increase compared to 2011-12; following discussion of the detailed proposals, the Commission approved a 6.4 per cent increase. Of this, 5.1 per cent would be required to cover unavoidable additional costs. This budget, representing 0.3 per cent of the Welsh Block, was agreed to be a reasonable and appropriate price for proper support for the legislative process, scrutiny of Government and democratic representation. The Commission emphasised that they wanted to ensure that value for money services were delivered efficiently and effectively.

The draft budget, updated to reflect Commissioners' feedback, would be laid on 29 September. Angela Burns, accompanied by officials, would present the budget to the Finance Committee on 6 October.

A post-Plenary session would be arranged to present the budget and Commission strategy to all Assembly Members.

**Action:** Officials, in discussion with Angela Burns, to update the draft budget document in line with feedback from the Commission.

Action: A session to be arranged to present the budget and Commission strategy to all Assembly Members.

### **3. Assembly Commission rolling programme**

The rolling programme was noted.

### **4. Any other business**

It was agreed that options should be prepared for the recognition of significant contributions to the development of the Assembly, for example by Presiding Officers, and the creation of artefacts that would provide an appropriate historical record of the development of the Assembly.

**Action:** Officials to prepare options for the recognition of significant contributions to the Assembly

ICT issues had continued to be experienced by a number of Assembly Members and their staff at the Assembly and in regional and constituency offices. New circuits were being installed, which could improve connection speeds in remote offices. It was agreed that Members could contact Peter Black if they were experiencing significant problems, and that plain English, without jargon, should be used to communicate known issues to Members.

Issues had been experienced by Members using committee rooms 1, 2 and 3 during the first week of term. Investigations were underway, and a report would be circulated.