



Comisiwn y Cynulliad Assembly Commission

NAFWC 2014

Minutes of 8 May 2014 meeting

Date: **Thursday 8 May 2014**

Time: **10:30 – 12:00**

Venue: **Presiding Officer's office, Tŷ Hywel**

Draft Minutes of 8 May 2014 meeting

Present:

Dame Rosemary Butler AM, Presiding Officer

Peter Black AM

Sandy Mewies AM

Rhodri Glyn Thomas AM

Officials present:

Claire Clancy, Chief Executive and Clerk

Dave Tosh, Director of ICT

Nicola Callow, Head of Finance (*Items 2 and 3*)

Craig Stephenson, Interim Director Commission Services

Carys Evans, Principal Commission Secretary

Others:

David Melding AM, Deputy Presiding Officer

Mair Barnes, Independent Adviser to the Commission

Apologies:

Angela Burns AM

1. **Chair's** introduction

Introductions and apologies

Angela Burns AM had sent her apologies.

Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

The minutes of the 26 March meeting were agreed.

2. Budget Strategy 2015-16

2015-16 would be the first budget following the Commission's three-year investment period. Commissioners had already committed to financially managing the budget in line with changes to the Welsh block.

Commissioners confirmed that the following items would be treated as exceptional items outside the control of the Commission:

- increases to employer costs arising from the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme valuation as discussed by the Commission in February;
- additional funding in light of decisions made by the Remuneration Board; and
- election-related expenditure.

The Investment Board would be reviewing the exceptional items including election-related expenditure to costs were planned and managed effectively. Further information would be included on the budget pressures, strategic priorities and efficiency savings that had been achieved, particularly through significant investment such as the ICT project. It was agreed that information on income streams would also be included in the budget document.

Angela Burns and Nicola Callow were thanked for their work on the budget strategy to date.

Commissioners would discuss the draft budget again in July, prior to it being laid before the Assembly for consideration in September 2014.

3. Corporate Performance Report April 2013 - March 2014

The Corporate Performance Report summarises performance against the Commission's Key Performance Indicators over the year 2013-14.

Across the year as a whole positive progress had been made in most areas. Commissioners noted that indicators for the Value for Money

programme, budgetary performance and the robust governance structures in place had been consistently strong throughout the year. The ICT transition and Machine Translation projects were also areas where there had been significant achievements in the most recent reporting period (January – March 2014).

Some indicators would be adjusted for the forthcoming reporting period to ensure they remained relevant and provided useful information for monitoring purposes.

The report would be shared with the Assembly's Finance Committee and published on the Commission's website.

4. Highlight report January – March 2014

The Highlight Report from January – March 2014, giving an update on key activities and projects underway since December 2013 to make progress towards the Commission's strategic goals, was considered.

The following items were of particular interest:

- A substantial amount of work had been, and continued to be, carried out by Members, Assembly Committees and through the Assembly's Brussels office to influence and raise the profile of the Assembly at an EU level.
- The forthcoming Commonwealth Parliamentary Association conference, to be hosted by the Assembly in May, would showcase the work of the Assembly on increasing democratic engagement to an international audience.
- A number of recent works carried out on the Assembly estate had improved the environment for visitors and those working on the estate and enhanced security arrangements.

Commissioners also emphasised the need for further work with Members on information governance, to ensure that there was guidance and advice available to all. The planned series of visits to Members' offices was welcomed as similar visits had been of considerable value in the past.

Commissioners confirmed that the Highlight Report was of value to them, and more widely to AMs, the public and staff, as a useful source of information on the work being carried out towards achievement of the Commission's strategic goals.

The report would be published on the Commission's website.

5. Remuneration Committee Annual Report 2013-14

The National Assembly for Wales' Remuneration Committee's role is to assist the Commission and Chief Executive in ensuring the Assembly's services meet the highest standards of probity and accountability for the use of public funds. The Committee advises the Commission and Chief Executive, as accounting officer, on their responsibilities for appraisal and remuneration policies and systems. The Committee considers recommendations from the Presiding Officer concerning the performance of the Chief Executive and from the Chief Executive concerning Directors.

It has no executive powers and is required to make a formal annual report to the Commission at the end of the year.

Helena Feltham is now Chair of the Committee, with Eric Gregory and Keith Baldwin as members, all of whom are the Commission's Independent Advisors.

Commissioners noted the Committee's recommendations, in particular:

- Directors had performed to an acceptable standard, allowing for contractual entitlements to incremental awards (linked to satisfactory performance) to be made, where the individual was not already on the target rate for the pay band.
- The Committee had considered the Pay Strategy for Commission staff, which informed the settlement that was reached with the Assembly Trade Unions in March 2014. The new settlement would run from 1 October 2013 to 30 September 2016. The Committee would assist in developing options for future pay strategies in readiness for consideration in 2016.

The Committee's report was formally noted. Commissioners recorded their thanks to Tony Morgan for previously chairing the Committee.

6. Future ICT Services Update

At their meeting on 26 March Commissioners had agreed unanimously to transfer the responsibility for ICT services from Atos to the Assembly Commission on 7 April 2014.

Dave Tosh confirmed that the transition had now taken place and had been smooth. No significant problems had arisen. The ICT team was working to resolve a backlog of issues, but none of these had had an impact on service users. Commissioners agreed that the transition had

gone well and that they had not received any negative feedback from Members or their staff.

New ICT employees had taken up their positions and were familiarising themselves with the working environment of the Assembly and building up expertise. Commissioners agreed that it was essential that new employees had a thorough understanding of Members' work. Efforts should be made to help them develop this knowledge quickly to enable them to respond to queries and problems appropriately and in a timely manner.

Commissioners congratulated the ICT team on their work on this project that would improve the service to Members, deliver financial savings and enable the Assembly to become a world-leader in the use of ICT.

7. Audit and Risk Assurance Committee – 7 April Meeting

Claire Clancy provided a summary of the Assembly Commission Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meeting on 7 April. The following matters had been discussed.

The Committee members were content with the work on internal Audit and developments that had been made since the appointment of Gareth Watts as Head of Internal Audit. A new joint working protocol with the Wales Audit Office had been finalised and the completed audit reports covering Corporate Improvement, Data Analytics and the final business readiness review report for the ICT Futures project were considered.

The Committee reviewed the corporate risk register and considered in detail risks and mitigating actions around the ICT Futures project.

The Chair of the Committee, Eric Gregory, would present the Committee's Annual Report to the Commission in July.

The minutes of the meeting were formally noted.

8. Any other business

The Presiding Officer had hosted a tri-lateral meeting with her counterparts from the Northern Ireland Assembly and House of Commons.

Dave Tosh provided Commissioners with a summary of his recent work for the UN, advising the Government of Fiji on preparations for establishing a Parliament.

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Craig Stephenson had recently been appointed Interim Director of Commission Services.

Secretariat

May 2014