



Amending Standing Orders: Standing Order 18 – Public Audit (Wales) Act 2013

Purpose

1. In accordance with Standing Order 11.7(iv), the Business Committee is responsible for making recommendations on the general practice and procedures of the Assembly, including any proposals for the re-making or revision of Standing Orders.
2. The report recommends an amendment to Standing Order 18 to ensure an Accounting Officer Memorandum can be issued by the “responsible Committee” to the new Auditor General for Wales (AGW). The changes agreed by Business Committee are found in Annex A, and the proposals for new Standing Orders are at Annex B.

Background

3. In 2014 the then Business Committee agreed a series of changes to Standing Orders following the Royal Assent of the Public Audit (Wales) Act

(PAWA). The changes delegated many of the functions conferred on the Assembly by the Act to an Assembly committee.

4. Following the recent appointment of a new AGW, it has since come to light that a further amendment is needed to ensure provision is made for the issuing of an Accounting Officer Memorandum; a function that would be carried out under Schedule 1 33(6) of the PAWA¹. As a result, the Business Committee considered the impact of these changes on the Assembly's Standing Orders and proposes that this function, like other functions relating to the oversight of the AGW and Wales Audit Office (WAO), be delegated to the "responsible Committee" under Standing Order 18 (currently the Finance Committee).

Proposal for change

5. Standing Orders 18.10 and 18.11 delegate various responsibilities to the "responsible Committee" in relation to the Governance of the Wales Audit Office (WAO) and the (AGW). These delegations include functions relating to the appointment of the AGW, and so it makes sense to delegate the provision relating to the Accounting Officer Memorandum to the same committee.

6. Standing Order 18.10 identifies the provisions the responsible committee must exercise, whilst Standing Order 18.11 identifies the provisions the responsible committee may consider. It is suggested the new Standing Order delegation be added to SO 18.11, as it is not a statutory obligation.

¹ PAWA Schedule 2, 33(6): The accounting officer for the WAO has, in relation to the accounts and finance of the WAO, such other responsibilities which are from time to time specified by the National Assembly.

Action

7. Business Committee first considered this issue on 19 June 2018 and agreed in principle to the proposed change.

8. The Business Committee formally agreed the change to Standing Order 18 on 3 July 2018 and the Assembly is invited to approve the proposal at Annex B.

Annex A

STANDING ORDER 18 – Public Accounts and Oversight of the Wales Audit Office

18.11 A responsible committee may consider matters relating to the governance of the Wales Audit Office and oversight of the Wales Audit Office and Auditor General, including:

- (i) considering and reporting to the Assembly on the Annual Plan jointly laid before the Assembly by the Auditor General and the chair of the Wales Audit Office under Section 26 of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2013;
- (ii) advising the Wales Audit Office’s auditor on the examinations to be carried out under Paragraph 35(7) of Schedule 1 to the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2013;

Amend Standing Order

The draft amended Standing Order additionally delegates responsibility for specifying the responsibilities of the WAO accounting officer to the responsible committee.

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| <p>(iii) considering and reporting to the Assembly on documents laid before the Assembly by the auditor of the Wales Audit Office's accounts under Paragraphs 35(2) and 35(7) of Schedule 1 to the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2013;</p> <p>(iv) considering and reporting to the Assembly on the Annual Report and any interim reports jointly laid before the Assembly by the Auditor General and the chair of the Wales Audit Office under Paragraph 3(6) of Schedule 2 to the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2013;</p> <p>(v) determining dates for the Auditor General and the chair of the Wales Audit Office to jointly lay interim reports before the Assembly, in accordance with Paragraph 3(6)(b) of Schedule 2 to the</p> | |
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Public Audit (Wales) Act 2013;

- (vi) specifying responsibilities for the accounting officer of the Wales Audit Office in relation to the Wales Audit Office's accounts and finances, in accordance with Paragraph 33(6) of Schedule 1 of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2013.

Annex B

STANDING ORDER 18 – PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND OVERSIGHT OF THE WALES AUDIT OFFICE

Committee Functions Relating to the Oversight of the Wales Audit Office

18.11 A responsible committee may consider matters relating to the governance of the Wales Audit Office and oversight of the Wales Audit Office and Auditor General, including:

- (i) considering and reporting to the Assembly on the Annual Plan jointly laid before the Assembly by the Auditor General and the chair of the Wales Audit Office under Section 26 of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2013;
- (ii) advising the Wales Audit Office's auditor on the examinations to be carried out under Paragraph 35(7) of Schedule 1 to the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2013;
- (iii) considering and reporting to the Assembly on documents laid before the Assembly by the auditor of the Wales Audit Office's accounts under Paragraphs 35(2) and 35(7) of Schedule 1 to the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2013;
- (iv) considering and reporting to the Assembly on the Annual Report and any interim reports jointly laid before the Assembly by the Auditor General and the chair of the Wales Audit Office under Paragraph 3(6) of Schedule 2 to the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2013;
- (v) Determining dates for the Auditor General and the chair of the Wales Audit Office to jointly lay interim reports before the Assembly, in accordance with Paragraph 3(6)(b) of Schedule 2 to the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2013.

- (vi) specifying responsibilities for the accounting officer of the Wales Audit Office in relation to the Wales Audit Office's accounts and finances, in accordance with Paragraph 33(6) of Schedule 1 of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2013.