

Assembly Commission

Venue: **Conference Room 4B – Tŷ Hywel**

Date: **Monday, 17 July 2017**

Time: **12.30 – 14.50**

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales



Minutes: AC(5)2017(8)

**Commission
Members:**

**Elin Jones AM (Chair)
Suzy Davies AM
Caroline Jones AM
Adam Price AM
Joyce Watson AM**

Officials present:

**Manon Antoniazzi, Chief Executive & Clerk of the Assembly
Adrian Crompton, Director of Assembly Business
Dave Tosh, Director of Resources
Craig Stephenson, Director of Commission Services
Nia Morgan, Director of Finance
Sulafa Thomas, Head of Commission and Member Support
Non Gwilym, Head of Communications
Natalie Drury-Styles, Head of Parliamentary Venues and
Visitor Services
Gwion Evans, Head of Presiding Officer's Private Office
Rhuanedd Richards, Policy Adviser to the Llywydd**

**Others in
attendance:**

Eric Gregory, Independent Advisor

1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction and apologies

No apologies were received.

Eric Gregory, Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, was welcomed to the meeting.

1.2 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

1.3 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting on 12 June were agreed.

2 Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

The Chair of the Assembly's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee attended the meeting to present the Committee's Annual Report. This was timed to support finalisation of the accounts and the governance statement. He reported that it had been a good year, with the Committee not needing to make any major recommendations.

He did highlight that one issue had been raised in the previous week by the WAO, in relation to an historic matter linked to the AGW's remuneration arrangements, which had been dealt with in July 2016.

Commissioner also asked questions relating to cyber security, and supported plans to continue awareness raising, particularly amongst AMs and their staff.

Commissioners welcomed the positive contribution made by ACARAC and noted the ACARAC Annual Report.

3 Meeting our Future Accommodation needs – update

Commissioners were provided with an update on the exploratory conversations with land owners and answers to questions they had raised at the meeting in June 2017.

4 Budget strategy update 2018–19 update

Following initial consideration of the draft budget at the last meeting, Commissioners considered further work that had been done including new information received in relation to the Assembly Member Pension Scheme and the Pension Service Cost (AME budget).

Commissioners reflected on the position in relation to their strategy and the work of the Assembly a year on from the election, and the steer they wish to provide in terms of prioritisation. They agreed that they should be involved in further work on this during recess.

The draft budget will be laid following the Commission's final consideration in September.

5 Managing the programming of the estate

At their May meeting Commissioners had agreed to a better managed approach towards a more purposeful use of the Assembly estate.

Commissioners considered proposals for implementing changes to achieve this goal. They agreed that changes should be progressed and highlighted some mechanisms that could be useful in some circumstances, for example linking people with existing Cross Party Groups.

6 Digital Task Force recommendations

Commissioners were presented with the recommendations of the Digital News and Information Task Force. They welcomed the report and discussed several aspects including the need to respond in greater detail to individual recommendations.

They discussed the potential for a changing dynamic in terms of interesting content, and the relationship between the Assembly as an institution and its political make-up.

Commissioners requested further work be done in order that they could return to the matters raised at a meeting in the Autumn term.

7 Annual Environmental Report 2016–17

Commissioners agreed the 2016-17 Annual Environmental Report. It covered the second year of the Commission's five-year sustainability plan, and Commissioners were supportive of achievements to date.

8 Any other business

The Assembly reform programme

The Llywydd updated Commissioners on the work of the Expert Panel. She informed them that the panel will start to come to conclusions on the three subjects in question which are should the voting age be reduced, should the number of members of the Assembly increase and whether to change the voting system. There will be a report from the Panel which will come to the Commission later in the year.

The Assembly Members' Pension Scheme

Joyce Watson provided a brief update and reminded Commissioners that they had received a paper on the AM pension scheme asking for their comments.

Youth Parliament

The Llywydd informed Commissioners that the consultation on a Youth Parliament had now closed, and that over 5,000 responses had been received from across Wales. She set out that the data is being analysed and a paper will come to the Commission on 25 September.

Purple plaque

The Llywydd informed Commissioners that she had received a request from the cross-party group which campaigns to identify the contribution of women across Wales to erect a plaque on the estate to commemorate Val Feld. Commissioners agreed in principle to the request, subject to appropriate arrangements and a suitable location being identified.

Official Languages Scheme

Commissioners raised queries relating to media coverage of various aspects of the OLS the previous week, including disappointment at the way the issue had been covered in the media and the inaccurate perceptions this could cause.

9 Papers to note

9.1 Highlight report (January to July 2017)

The report was noted, and will be prepared for publication.

9.2 ACARAC Draft Minutes of 19 June 2017

The draft minutes of the ACARAC meeting of 19 June 2017 were noted.