

**Comisiwn y Cynulliad
Assembly Commission**

NAFWC 2007 Paper AC (3) Paper 1A

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Time: 16:30 - 19:30

Venue: 4th floor meeting room

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Assembly Commission and APS Strategy 2007-2011

Purpose and summary of issues

1. To settle the content of the Strategy and to seek the Commission's further input (see annex a and b).

Recommendations (including priority deadline)

2. That the Commission approves the Strategy for 2007 to 2011, subject to any further input and changes to the strategic objectives.

Discussion

3. The Commission has previously approved its aims and values and has defined its goals for the Third Assembly. These were fleshed out in a workshop with Commissioners in July. The output of the workshop and previous discussions has been included in the draft strategy (annex 1).

4. Some examples of strategic objectives have been added to the Strategy. These are very broad-brush and are intended to promote discussion and more suggestions. More can be added and the draft objectives substituted by areas of greater priority. When the objectives are complete they will be used as the basis for service planning.

Governance Matters

Financial implications

5. The Commission's Strategy will inform financial planning for the next four years.

Risk Assessment

6. There are clear risks in not defining the thrust and purpose of an organisation early in its life. Those who are responsible for delivering its priorities will not be clear about what is required of them, it will not be possible to ensure that adequate resources are in place and cultural change is harder to achieve. Of course, there are reputational risks in being open about demanding objectives, which may not be achieved as planned. But the risk of not setting a challenging agenda is that the organisation lacks ambition.

7. Good planning and regular monitoring and review of the Strategy will be required to mitigate these risks. It will be important to understand that the Strategy is a working and living document, not one set in stone, and is likely to need adjustment throughout its life.

Compliance

8. 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. All these are recognised in the draft Strategy.

9. Good governance principles suggest that setting down the values and goals of the organisation is essential to inform planning and resource-setting.

Publication

10. This paper is suitable for publication.

Annex A

DRAFT

ASSEMBLY COMMISSION AND ASSEMBLY PARLIAMENTARY SERVICE STRATEGY FOR THE THIRD ASSEMBLY 2007 TO 2011

OUR PURPOSE

To make the Assembly an accessible and effective parliamentary body that inspires the confidence of the people of Wales

OUR GOALS

We will promote and widen engagement in devolution

The next four years must demonstrate that the Assembly is working for all citizens and encouraging greater and more active participation in the democratic process. We will emphasise the positive impact of the Assembly upon the lives of people in Wales. There will be greater incremental devolution through the 2006 Act, and there may be a referendum for greater legislative competence, we will be ready to grasp these challenges enthusiastically.

We will show unity, leadership and a bold response to constitutional change

The Assembly will show confidence and competence in embracing its new powers. We are united in securing scrutiny and legislation of the best quality, and in supporting Members in all that they do as elected representatives.

In all our work, we will demonstrate respect, probity and good governance

All that we do must be capable of intense external scrutiny, be transparent and should reflect the diverse nature of Wales and its languages in how it deals with and involves the citizen.

We will work sustainably

We will show leadership in how we manage our work and estate, and we aim to provide the highest achievable level of sustainability in both.

We will ensure that the Assembly has the best service, provided in the most effective way

We will 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, drives everything that we do.

OUR VALUES

The Assembly Commission and its staff:-

- Always act in the best interests of the Assembly
- Maintain high standards and deliver what we say we will
- Are professional and innovative
- Work openly and collaboratively
- Treat everyone with respect

Others are able to see that we:-

- Demonstrate a shared commitment to succeed
- Show pace and passion in the way that we work
- Build strong relationships and act as ambassadors
- Lead by example

HOW WE WILL DELIVER

Our goals will be delivered through strategic objectives set out in **Annex B**. These will be translated into operational planning and personal objectives by individuals, teams, services and directorates within APS. We will make sure that all those who supply us with services are aware of our priorities and work towards them. It will be the responsibility of the Executive Board to lead on these objectives and to make sure that the Commission has the support and advice it needs to set, monitor and adjust the strategic direction.

LOOKING FORWARD

The Third Assembly has an **enhanced and growing legislative competence**, giving it huge opportunities and responsibilities in terms of producing effective and high quality legislation. The significant majority held by the new coalition Government may facilitate an increased amount of legislation produced rapidly. The Commission's role is to secure the best standards of legislative scrutiny to ensure that that legislation is improved by its passage through the Assembly. The challenge will be to ensure that the best support is in place to enable Members to achieve this.

The Commission must ensure that Members are supported in their role as **scrutineers** of the Government. In so doing, the quality of decision making will be improved and made transparent to the people of Wales.

The new coalition Government has given a commitment to seek a positive result in a **referendum on full law making powers**. The Commission has statutory powers to promote public awareness of elections and the current or any pending system of devolved government in Wales. There is scope for the Government and the Commission to work together in encouraging participation in the Referendum, ensuring the people of Wales are well informed when they come to make a choice.

To make the Assembly more open than ever before, the Commission will need to promote and support services that encourage public participation in and understanding of the Assembly. It will inform people, young and old, of its work, seeking to engage them directly in scrutiny and legislative processes and ensuring that everything we do is as transparent as possible.

The Assembly Commission has statutory duties to promote **sustainable development, equality of opportunity and to give effect to the principle that the English and Welsh languages should be treated equally**.

Environmental sustainability will be a key issue in the management of the Commission's estate. Sustainability in its workforce will depend upon how creatively the Commission secures diversity and creates attractive and interesting opportunities for those who provide its services. The Assembly will be expected to show leadership in all these areas.

Resources may become more limited. We will need to ensure that we demonstrate value for money, deploy our resources well in line with this Strategy, manage our contracts to best effect and with high standards of governance to ensure that the growing needs of the Assembly are met within an acceptable resource framework.

The **good reputation of the primary democratic institution in Wales** is vital if the Assembly is to match its promise, develop and grow with the support of the citizens of Wales. A major challenge will be to build upon our links with citizens, both individually and through their institutions and wider civic society. Resources should be targeted to promote positive messages and deal skilfully with those which are more challenging.

WHAT COULD GO WRONG?

To deliver this challenging agenda means that we will need to take risks. This will not inhibit achievement – well managed risk taking, encouraging “what if?” questions and good planning will help us to be innovative and forward-thinking, without damaging the Assembly's reputation or resources. The following high level risks have been identified:-

- Safety and security of the estate threatened and business disrupted as a result of terrorist attack or unplanned events like fire, flood, or epidemic;
- Business disrupted and reputation damaged as a result of IT and/or business continuity failure;
- Deterioration in services caused by failure to retain and attract staff, poor planning, inappropriate rate of change or inadequate resources;
- Defective legislation or a failure to hold the Government to account, as a result of poor advice or inadequate process;
- Loss of reputation caused by failure to comply with legal requirements, poor governance, lack of probity or mismanagement of resources, or failure to deliver against stated objectives;
- Poor services caused by bad contract management, inadequate procurement or bad project management.

The Commission will take a particular interest in monitoring those risks which provide a significant threat to services for Assembly Members and those which could have a serious impact upon the Assembly's reputation.



ANNEX B

DRAFT
ASSEMBLY COMMISSION AND APS STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 2007-2011

| <u>GOAL</u> | <u>OBJECTIVES</u> | <u>2007</u> | <u>2008</u> | <u>2009</u> | <u>2010</u> | <u>2011</u> |
|--|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| We will promote and widen engagement in devolution | <p>We will seek to increase voter participation (by x%) in any new referendum on the future of devolution and in the next Assembly elections</p> <p>We will build upon the Assembly's exemplar status in use of electronic media and use it in innovative ways to capture the interest and engagement of citizens</p> <p>We will achieve wider, more regular and more positive media coverage of the Assembly in its Third term</p> | | | | | |
| We will show unity, leadership | We will provide the Assembly, | | | | | |



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|--|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| <p>and a bold response to constitutional change</p> | <p>its committees and Members with support of the highest quality to enable them to conduct business and fulfil their parliamentary roles</p> <p>Legislation made by the Assembly will not be successfully challenged on grounds of vires</p> | | | | | |
| <p>In all our work, we will demonstrate respect, probity and good governance</p> | <p>We will publicly promote our goals and values and make them clear to all</p> <p>We will be enthusiastic about being held to account</p> <p>We will work closely with internal and external auditors to establish and improve systems, pre-empt problems and resolve any criticisms.</p> <p>Our management of public money will be open to scrutiny</p> <p>Our services and procedures will be accessible to all and will</p> | | | | | |



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|---------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | <p>be planned with equality of opportunity for all people in mind</p> <p>We will treat the English and Welsh languages equally</p> <p>We will be able to retain and recruit excellent staff from backgrounds which reflect the diversity of our communities</p> | | | | | |
| <p>We will work sustainably</p> | <p>We will plan services with regard to the principle of promoting sustainable development</p> <p>We will achieve a 50 per cent reduction in carbon emissions from the Commission's estate by the end of 2011</p> <p>We will actively promote the Senedd as an exemplar environmental building</p> <p>We will be able to recruit and retain the people we need to provide effective services</p> | | | | | |
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| <p>We will ensure that the Assembly has the best service, provided in the most effective way</p> | <p>We will establish the views of Members about all aspects of the services we deliver to use as a baseline</p> <p>We will achieve clear service improvements in the areas identified by Members or the people of Wales as lacking</p> <p>We will demonstrate excellent customer skills in all aspects of the services we provide</p> <p>We will make improvements by both innovation and implementing best practice from other legislatures and comparable bodies</p> | | | | | |
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