



**Comisiwn y Cynulliad
Assembly Commission**

**Minutes of 6 March 2008 Meeting 15.00 -17.00
Conference Room 4B**

Present:	Presiding Officer Lorraine Barrett AM (Labour) Peter Black AM (Liberal Democrats) Chris Franks AM (Plaid Cymru) William Graham AM (Conservatives)
Officials present:	Claire Clancy (Chief Executive and Clerk) Dianne Bevan (Chief Operating Officer) Keith Bush (Director of Legal Services) Adrian Crompton (Director of Assembly Business) Craig Stephenson (Head of Corporate Unit) Meriel Singleton (Secretariat)
Independent advisers:	Mair Barnes Richard Calvert
Observers:	None



Item 1a - Minutes of last meeting:

The Commission agreed the minutes of the last meeting.

Item 1b - Matters arising:

There were no matters arising.

Item 2 – Report from the Executive Board

The Commission noted the report from the Executive Board. The Commission welcomed the work being done to track legislation and make it as accessible as possible to the interested parties. The Presiding Officer reported that he had had a couple of very positive meetings with the Secretary of State for Wales since his appointment. Lorraine Barrett AM commented that the first Committee of the Whole Assembly for Vice-President Wallström visit had worked very well with a lively question and answer session between AMs and the European Commissioner.

Item 3 – Report from the Corporate Governance Committee

Richard Calvert gave an update to the Commission on the work of the Corporate Governance Committee. He said that the meetings held so far had indicated that the Committee should aim to give the Commission and the Chief Executive a high degree of assurance regarding their internal control and risk mechanisms, as in an organisation like the Assembly Commission 'good enough' was not 'good enough'. At present there were no issues that ought to cause concern. He said the next stage would be to ensure that the governance systems and risk register were implemented fully and effectively. He confirmed that the concerns around the timeframe for consideration of the WAO Management letter had been resolved.

Item 4 – Report from the Remuneration Committee

Claire Clancy introduced the report from the Remuneration Committee, which had considered pay arrangements for staff previously in the Senior Civil Service. She explained that the paper recommended a more transparent system which provided for a single unified pay framework, from the Team Support grade to Chief Executive. In a cohort of four staff, the current system based on relative performance and with bonuses was unworkable. The proposal would do away with this for those in the equivalent senior civil service grades. The Presiding Officer welcomed the report as it made the system more coherent and transparent. The Commission agreed, by majority, to the Remuneration Committee's recommendation; Chris Franks disagreed with the recommendation.



Item 5 – Report from the Panel Reviewing Members’ Pay and Allowances

William Graham, as the Commissioner for Assembly Resources and a member of the reviewing panel, introduced the report from the panel reviewing Members’ Pay and Allowances. He also tabled a further paper with additional recommendations for the Commission’s consideration.

The Commission was adjourned at 15.30.

When the Commission was reconvened, they agreed, by majority, to the following recommendations in the Review Panel’s first report:-

- That the salaries of Assembly Members should increase to a level of 82% of that of an MP, and that this percentage increase should have effect from 4 May 2007, the date of their election.
- That Leaders of Opposition Parties other than the main Opposition party should be paid a salary equivalent to that received by those Committee Chairs who receive additional remuneration.
- That there should be a fundamental examination of the pay and system of financial support for Members under the developing devolution settlement. This will allow for further experience of the new powers of the Assembly as they develop to inform the review, and for a new approach to be adopted, tailored for the Assembly, which had the advantages of effectiveness clarity, transparency and simplicity.

The Commission also agreed the recommendations made in the paper tabled by William Graham, subject to the following amendments:

- Chair of Standards Committee to be added to the list in paragraph 3 and;
- Paragraph seven to be altered to include the ‘Leader of **an** Opposition party other than the main opposition party’.

The Commission agreed the following recommendations in the report which give formal effect to the decisions made above:-

- To make the National Assembly for Wales (Assembly Members and Officers) (Salaries) Determination 2008 and the National Assembly for Wales (Assembly Members and Officers) (Salaries) Determination 2008
- Approves a change to Rule C2 (3) of the National Assembly for Wales Members Pension Scheme Rules to make the new office-holder’s



salary (Leader of an opposition party other than the largest opposition party) pensionable.

Chris Franks rejected all the recommendations for increases.

The Commission agreed the proposals for a comprehensive review of Members' allowances and agreed that this was an opportunity for Wales to lead the way and develop an exemplar approach that could be very different to other parliaments.

Item 6 – Future ICT for the Assembly

Peter Black presented a paper and PowerPoint presentation on the possible future provision of ICT for the Assembly. He said there was a need to take a fundamental look at our future requirements for ICT and to agree the extent the Commission were prepared to take risks. The Commission agreed that ICT experts in these types of services should be brought in to assist with this work.

Dianne Bevan reported that she had spoken to Steve Thomas, who had said the WLGA would be happy to work with us in developing our systems for e-democracy.

The work would take place over the summer, with Peter Black closely involved, and recommendations would come to the Commission in October.

Item 7 – Business for Future Meetings

The Commission agreed the future programme of work. Claire Clancy advised Commissioners that they could contact her if they wanted any additional items added in the future.

The Commission agreed to review the guidance on printing material in light of the recent correspondence from the Standards Commissioner to the Presiding Officer. It was agreed this would consider areas like the use of the Print Room.

Action: Dianne Bevan to ensure that the guidance is reviewed.

The Commission requested consideration was given to improving the equality training of the security team in light of a recent complaint. Dianne Bevan said that in addition to this, she would look at improving the booking arrangements to ensure that more details about visitors could be established at an early stage to ensure that our services could cope with expected numbers.

Action: Dianne Bevan to consider improved equality training with the Equalities Team and to consider the visitor/event booking arrangements.



The Commission discussed the start times of Thursday Commission meetings and agreed that alternatives should be looked at given that the Committee timetable was under consideration by the Business Committee.

Action: Secretariat to consider an alternative meeting schedule.

Item 8 – Any Other Business

The Commission agreed to the renaming of the Assembly office building to Tŷ Hywel. It was agreed this change would be a gradual alteration without the need for a formal launch.

Item 9 – Date of next meeting

The next meeting date will be changed; a new date and time will be confirmed as soon as possible.

Secretariat