

Pwyllgor Cyfrifon Cyhoeddus
Public Accounts Committee

Rosemary Butler AM
Presiding Officer
Chair, Business Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

18 February 2013

Dear Presiding Officer

Thank you for your recent correspondence of 30 January, regarding a potential revision to the Committee timetable. As you are aware, in my previous correspondence of 14 February, I indicated that I would provide you with correspondence outlining the views of the Committee as a whole on the potential revision of the Committee timetable. I have detailed these below.

Members appreciate that revising the timetable as detailed in Presiding **Officer's correspondence would have significant implications for other committees**. On balance, **Members' do not consider that the additional time the timetable revision would make available to the Public Accounts Committee merit these implications.**

Members were concerned that the Public Accounts Committee should have adequate timetabled meeting slots to effectively conduct its business, and that it should be treated with equality to other scrutiny committees.

Members are grateful to the Business Committee for previously seeking to accommodate it with additional time on Monday afternoons. Without this intervention, the Public Accounts Committee would have experienced significant difficulties in managing its workload during the 2012 autumn term. During this term, the Committee considered the Public Audit Wales Bill, the Auditor **General's budgetary estimates for 2013-2014, the Auditor General's accounts**, and conducted a number of high profile inquiries into issues raised by Wales Audit Office reports. However, this arrangement has **inevitably had practical implications for Members' constituency business**, and Members do not consider it to be a practical long term solution.

Members are aware that in response to the Presiding Officer's correspondence, the Finance Committee has suggested that the Public

Accounts Committee could utilise its spare Thursday meeting slots (i.e. those outside budget periods).

Members note that this proposal would currently cause one membership clash between it and the Health and Social Care committee. Accepting this drawback, Members consider that it would be valuable for it **to accept the Finance Committee's gracious offer on a trial basis**. This would enable the Public Accounts Committee (and indeed the Finance Committee) to gain a better understanding of the ramifications of such an arrangement.

The Public Accounts Committee would therefore be grateful if Business Committee could make provision for it to be able to:

- continue to meet every week on a Tuesday morning; and
- on a trial basis, to meet fortnightly on a Thursday, using the **Finance Committee's spare slots**.

Members also discussed that if other Committees determined that they did not require all of their available slots in a particular term (for example some Wednesday mornings), then ad-hoc dialogue could take place between Chairs to enable such slots to be offered to the Public Accounts Committee.

I am very grateful to all Members of the Public Accounts Committee for their contributions to this correspondence.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Darren Millar', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Darren Millar AM
Chair of the Public Accounts Committee