



Comisiwn y Cynulliad Assembly Commission

AC(4)2014(15)

Date: Thursday 4 December 2014
Time: 13:00
Venue: Presiding Officer's office, Tŷ Hywel

Draft Minutes of 4 December meeting

Present:

Dame Rosemary Butler AM, Presiding Officer
Peter Black AM
Angela Burns AM
Sandy Mewies AM
Rhodri Glyn Thomas AM

Officials present:

Claire Clancy, Chief Executive and Clerk
Craig Stephenson, Interim Director Commission Services
Gregg Jones, Head of National Assembly for Wales EU Office
Dave Tosh, Director of Assembly Business and ICT
Sulafa Thomas, Head of Commission Secretariat

Others:

David Melding AM, Deputy Presiding Officer
Mair Barnes, Independent Advisor

Apologies:

None

1. Chair's introduction

Apologies

There were no apologies.

Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes

The minutes of the 17 November meeting were agreed.

2. EU Office and Assembly engagement on EU affairs

Gregg Jones provided Commissioners with an update on the EU-related activities of the Assembly and the work of the EU Office in supporting and co-ordinating this work.

Commissioners held a broad ranging discussion and acknowledged the benefits of working in Europe, in particular working with other regions in Europe and getting the voice of Wales and the Assembly heard. They also recognised the value and benefits of having an EU Office in Brussels.

Commissioners felt that some Members may not have a particularly extensive knowledge of the work done by the Assembly in Europe, and suggested that consideration be given to looking at how the Assembly's EU work is communicated to Members to help address this. They welcomed plans from the EU Office to launch a new monthly update – the Brussels Report – aimed at all committees. Its purpose will be to draw to committees' attention to key strategic developments at EU level relevant to Wales; and to provide a 'tracker' of important legislative dossiers in the system (or about to be proposed).

Looking ahead to the remaining 18 months of the Fourth Assembly, and beyond, the Commission sought to maintain and build on the high quality of engagement to date by the Assembly on EU affairs.

Commissioners agreed to visit Brussels, with a view to meeting with the Welsh MEPs and other key players in the EU Institutions. They also supported secondments/training opportunities to the EU Office and agreed to explore opportunities for the secondment of

Assembly staff to the EU Institutions – in particular the European Parliament and European Commission.

Commissioners saw a real advantage in having a separate committee to look at European issues, but recognised the pressures on Members and their time. They also acknowledged that the current model of integrating European work into the responsibilities of the other committees has been effective. They agreed to address the pros and cons of the approaches in their legacy report.

The Commission was also supportive of the idea of exploring potential benefits to the Assembly of participating in EU funding programmes, for example the Erasmus+ Programme which includes support for structured dialogues between citizens, youth democracy projects, mobility actions and other forms of active citizen engagement.

3. Siambr refresh project – cost estimate

Commissioners considered a paper which set out the high level delivery plan and estimated costs for individual workspaces in the Siambr. This followed on from the Commission meeting on 29 September when Commissioners approved the proposed solution for future ICT provision in the Siambr, subject to costings.

The paper advised that the maximum cost will be £319k plus up to £199k in depreciation charges. The Investment and Resourcing Board has set aside the necessary funds from within existing budgets.

Commissioners highlighted the importance of responding to the needs to individual Members in terms of ergonomic adjustments and sought assurance that the project would be carefully planned and well run.

The Commission agreed that the work should proceed.

4. Audit and Risk Assurance Committee 10 November

Commissioners welcomed the strong role and assurance being provided by the Assembly Commission Audit and Risk Assurance Committee following an update on the latest meeting provided by Claire Clancy.

5. Any other business

The Deputy Presiding Officer raised proposals to participate in commemorations of the 20-year anniversary of Srebrenica and all Commissioners indicated their willingness in principle to join the visit.

Commissioners discussed appropriate ways to mark the sad death of Jane Wedlake and the need to take full account of the wishes of her family.

The next meeting will be held on 15 January. The Commission will continue their consideration of the implications of constitutional change.

Secretariat
December 2014