

# Assembly Commission

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

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Date: **Monday, 27 January 2020**

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Time: **12.35**

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Cynulliad  
Cenedlaethol  
Cymru

National  
Assembly for  
Wales



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## Minutes:

Commission  
Members:

**Elin Jones AM (Chair)**  
**Suzy Davies AM**  
**Siân Gwenllïan AM**  
**David J Rowlands AM**  
**Joyce Watson AM**

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Officials present:

**Manon Antoniazzi, Chief Executive & Clerk of the Assembly**  
**Siwan Davies, Director of Assembly Business**  
**Arwyn Jones, Director of Communications and Engagement**  
**Dave Tosh, Director of Resources**  
**Anna Daniel, Head of Strategic Transformation**  
**Kathryn Potter, Head of Research Service**  
**Nia Morgan, Director of Finance**  
**Sulafa Thomas, Head of Commission and Member Support**  
**Gwion Evans, Head of the Llywydd's Private Office**  
**Elin Roberts, Policy Adviser to the Llywydd**

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Others in  
attendance:

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## 1 Introduction

### 1.a Introduction and apologies

No apologies had been received.

### 1.b Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest. David Rowlands made Commissioners aware of his membership of the Committee on Electoral Reform.

#### 1.c Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting on 4 November were agreed.

## **2 Communication and Engagement Strategy**

Commissioners considered a strategy proposal to improve how the Assembly communicates and engages with the people of Wales, bringing a much greater focus on social media as a means of speaking with and involving the public in our work.

They considered the four drivers identified in the proposals:

- a. To place the Citizen at the core of everything the Assembly does.
- b. To place digital communications at the centre of the Assembly's operations as a means of facilitating and democratising the engagement process.
- c. To make communications streamlined and consistent - simple, engaging brand messages targeted at specific demographic groups.
- d. To make changes to the structure of the Communications and Engagement Directorate to support a 'Digital First' operation and culture; and to continuously improve upon digital competency, skill sets and delivery mechanisms.

Commissioners flagged some elements that they sought assurances about, such as digital exclusion, a social media strategy and the significance of editing in the success of a new approach. They supported the strategy to place a greater emphasis on social media to communicate and engage with citizens; and confirmed that the strategy reflects their engagement priorities.

They also agreed to review the initial effectiveness of this change in strategic direction before the end of this Assembly.

## **3 Committee on Assembly Electoral Reform request**

Commissioners considered a request from the Committee on Assembly Electoral Reform to access funding from the Assembly Commission budget in order to commission public engagement activity to inform its work on the size and capacity of the Assembly and how Members are elected.

Commissioners considered the balance of the proposals, one indicating a preference amongst a group of Members that consideration of the matters around electoral reform should be undertaken in the next Assembly. In conclusion, the Commission agreed the Committee's preferred option.

## **4 Assembly Reform - Name Change matters**

Commissioners were updated on the progress to date of work to take forward the name change. They considered a series of decisions necessary to implement the name change effectively by 6 May 2020, when the provisions come into force.

Commissioners agreed proposals, by majority in some cases, in relation to:

- Indicative branding for use on logo and signage etc;
- Written naming convention, the revised purpose statements, First/second mention within text;
- Assembly terms - historical and future references;
- Website, e-mail addresses and social media;
- Postcode and address;
- Updating the Official Languages Scheme;
- Marking the formal change from Assembly to Senedd;
- A new Commission seal.

## **5 Brexit update**

Commissioners noted that preparations for leaving the EU on 31st January and the ensuing implementation period (until 31 December 2020) are ongoing, in relation to both Assembly business and the corporate services (including service and supply contracts).

## **6 Supplementary budget**

Commissioners considered proposals for a supplementary budget, in the region of £0.35 million, to be included in the Welsh Government's budget motion.

The primary drivers for the supplementary budget were:

- Underspend on the Remuneration Board's Determination (reduce the allocation to meet the Determination costs by £0.500 million); and
- The mid-year IAS19 pension finance cost calculation (increase the Pension finance Cost Budget by £0.150 million).

Commissioners noted and approved the Explanatory Memorandum which will decrease the 2019-20 Budget by £0.35 million; and a letter to the Chair of the Finance Committee.

## **7 Finance Committee proposals to amend the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2013**

Commissioners noted a letter from the Finance Committee about the Committee's consultation on a draft Public Audit (Amendment) (Wales) Bill.

The Commission had previously submitted views to the Committee. Commissioners agreed a response to the Committee, subject to minor amendments, drawing the Committee's attention to the provisions within PAWA 2013 regarding the payment of expenses to the Chair of the Wales Audit Office and the Auditor General Wales.

## **8 PAC report on the 2018-19 ARA - Commission response**

Commissioners were updated on the Public Accounts Committee's routine Scrutiny of Accounts 2018-19. The report had contained six recommendations.

Commissioners agreed their response to the Public Accounts Committee report.

## **9 Papers to note:**

### **9.a Assembly Reform - Votes @16 education and awareness raising update**

Commissioners were updated about plans for the creation of education and awareness-raising resources for use by educators, youth workers, and others who work with younger people. They checked that the resources developed will be suitable for the new curriculum, and noted the update, which followed the Commission's agreement of a general approach and key audiences in November.

### **9.b Letter from Remuneration Board**

Commissioners noted a letter from the Remuneration Board updating them following the Board's November meeting. The letter requested further information and attendance of officials at a future Board meeting; this related to office costs provided by the Assembly Commission, and Employment Liability Practices Insurance.

### **9.c Pension Board change to investment strategy**

Commissioners noted information from the Pension Board about a change to the investment strategy of the Assembly Members' Pension Scheme, reducing the Scheme's investments in the oil and gas sector.

### **9.d ACARAC Minutes**

The routine update, provided following the ACARAC meeting of 21 October.

### **9.e Executive Board update (RAD decisions)**

The routine update was noted.

## **10 Any other business**

- Taking Assembly business to a location outside Cardiff

In discussions with groups and party leaders, feedback had, generally, been supportive of a compressed week of Assembly business, to be undertaken in NE Wales.

The Commission agreed, by majority, that work to deliver the initiative should now go ahead, and to an indicative budget of up to £250k.

- Letter from 3 Members

Commissioners agreed to maintain the memorials policy in its current form.

- Events on the estate

Commissioners discussed issues around events encompassing political debate, and the boundaries as to what is appropriate use of the estate, and requested a paper for a future meeting.

In the period since the previous meeting Commissioners had agreed to a request from the BBC to host an election debate on the estate. There had also been a briefing meeting with the Commissioners and the Llywydd on 11 November with regard to arrangements for a temporary Standards Commissioner.