

Mark Isherwood MS
Chair of Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee
Senedd Cymru
Tŷ Hywel
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1SN

3 November 2023

Dear Mark,

Scrutiny of annual report and accounts 2022-23

I am writing to provide you with the further information that we promised in the course of Committee questioning on 12th October.

The following information is set out in the attached annex:

- A supplementary note on the recruitment process of the Commission's Independent Advisors.
- A supplementary note on the level of cyber-attacks experienced by the Commission in the last year.

Further to one outstanding matter, I can confirm that no cases of harassment were brought against the Senedd Commission and no payments were made by the Commission in respect of any matters involving alleged harassment during the 2022-23 financial year

A supplementary note with benchmark details of cost of living support payments made by other Parliaments will be provided under a separate confidential cover as that information has been provided to the Commission on a confidential basis.

During the meeting, I also said that we would publicise the Terms of Reference of the Remuneration Committee. These can now be found on the Senedd website: [Commission Corporate Governance Framework \(senedd.wales\)](https://www.senedd.wales)

Finally, external access to the intranet was raised as an issue and discussed during the meeting. Having given this some further consideration, I would like to offer a meeting to the Member who raised the matter, Mike Hedges MS, with the Commission's Head of ICT and Cyber Security team who will be happy to provide a briefing and discuss any concerns and suggestions that the Member may have, on a confidential basis.



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We would like to thank the Committee for its scrutiny. The Commission's approach is always to try to operate with openness, transparency, and clarity. If there is anything else that we can provide you with to assist the Committee, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Yours sincerely,



Manon Antoniazzi

Prif Weithredwr a Chlerc y Senedd / Chief Executive and Clerk of the Senedd

cc Senedd Commissioners, Ken Skates MS, Kate Innes

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg. We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.



Annex

1 A Supplementary Note on the Recruitment and Selection of new Independent Advisers

Purpose

This document provides a summary of the steps taken in relation to the appointment the new cohort of 3 Independent Advisers - Mark Egan, Menai Owen-Jones, and Uzo Iwobi - between June 2022 to November 2022.

Background

The Delegation of Senedd Commission functions to the Chief Executive and Clerk is subject to a number of exceptions which include the appointment, terms and conditions and remuneration of the non-executive Independent Advisers to the Commission.

The role of Independent Advisors is to act in an advisory and non-political capacity. The Advisors are expected to offer constructive challenge across the Commission's business with a view to ensuring that all aspects of strategy and delivery are scrutinised for effectiveness and efficiency. They contribute to the monitoring of the performance and progress of the organisation, including the use of human and financial resources, and maintain a critical overview of the organisation's financial controls and procedures. Two of the Independent Advisers sit as members of the Commission's Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group and the Workforce Engagement Steering Group.

Executive Search

In 2021, the Commission entered into a four year contract with an executive search agent, Penna. The purpose of the contract is to support the Commission's Diversity and Inclusion commitments to increasing diversity across senior Commission and public appointments.

Given the specialist nature and number of Independent Advisers required it was agreed by the Commission that this campaign would benefit from dedicated executive search activity, to diversify the candidate pool, through targeted approaches to potential applicants.

Panel membership

The selection panel consisted of: -

- Manon Antoniazzi, Chief Executive and Clerk to the Senedd
- Siwan Davies, Deputy Chief Executive and Clerk and Director of Senedd Business
- Robert Evans, Independent Adviser to the Commission



Advertising the role

The campaign was published in June 2022 with links to the advert on Penna's website included on the Senedd's website. Both Penna and the Senedd's Linked In accounts were also used to promote the opportunities.

After the advert's publication confidential interim search reports were provided to the selection panel.

The final search report was received shortly after the closing date 8 August 2022.

Longlist

A longlist pack and all 19 applications (CVs and supporting statements) were provided to the selection panel on 10 August 2022.

Roger Russell (Penna) and the selection panel met on 12 August to review the initial list of applications and to agree a longlist of candidates for Penna to undertake preliminary interviews ahead of the shortlist meeting on 6 September 2022.

The panel agreed to put eight candidates forward for preliminary interviews. These interviews were conducted by Roger Russell (Penna) and Aled Eurig (Independent Adviser to the Senedd Commission).

Shortlist

Following the preliminary interviews, a shortlist pack was received from Penna which contained a sift summary report which provided a breakdown of candidates as follows:

- Recommended for interview (6 candidates);
- Marginal for interview (3 candidates).

The shortlist report also included brief career histories for each candidate and observations from Penna based on the preliminary interviews conducted.

This document formed the basis of the shortlist meeting held on 06 September.

The meeting on 06 September was attended by all panel members including Roger Russell. The panel agreed to invite six candidates for interview on 26 and 28 September and for those interviews to take place in person on the Tŷ Hywel estate.

Penna then undertook references and due diligence interviews for each of the candidates.

Final Interviews

Interviews were held in person on 26th and 28th September on the Tŷ Hywel Estate. Two of the candidates requested their interview be conducted remotely.



Each interview lasted 45 minutes, and consisted of a range of competency based questions pre-agreed by the panel and designed to assess their suitability to the role and the skills and experience they would bring.

During each interview, each panel member made assessments individually. Following completion of each interview, members of the selection panel considered all the evidence provided during each of the candidate's interviews and an overall rating was applied.

The completion of all interviews was further followed by a detailed discussion to agree the preferred candidates.

The Senedd Commission accepted this recommendation on 6 October 2022 and proceeded to appoint.



2 A supplementary note on the number of cyber attacks experienced by the Commission.

The Senedd ICT System and its users are targeted by thousands of cyber attacks on a daily basis. These include different types of email-based attacks such as phishing, direct probing of our infrastructure and website, as well as various web-based risks. Each year we block millions of emails, deal with thousands of phishing messages and web incidents, observe thousands of network/website scans, and address hundreds of device incidents.

The below table provides some basic background information:

Attack type / attack vector / event	2022*	2023* – first three quarters
Blocked email	1,118,315	529,188
Phishing	76,075	39,312
Firewall prevented attacks	41,600	14,990
Firewall detected scans	13,335	5,379
Web incidents / blocks	35,796	59,514
Extended Detection and Remediation device incidents	346	267

*Calendar Year

In the past few years, the ICT and Broadcasting Service has also responded to DDoS (Distributed Denial of Service) attacks, provided guidance during a number of fraud attempts, and advised on technical matter relating to potential data governance and protection issues.

