

# Anguilla Public Accounts Committee Workshop Report



16 - 17 November 2020  
Virtual Workshop

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## PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

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From 16 – 17 November 2020, CPA UK facilitated a virtual Public Accounts Committee (PAC) Workshop, through the UK Overseas Territories Project (Phase Two). The workshop's main objective was to equip the PAC in Anguilla with the knowledge and skills that will be necessary for its members to carry out their responsibilities effectively, as the new PAC intended to sit for the first time in January 2021.

The workshop covered a wide range of themes, including: how to manage an Inquiry and prepare for a committee evidence session; the role and responsibilities of witnesses; how to remain effective as a PAC in a virtual world; producing a fair and balanced report; and measuring success as a PAC. Participants were also given the opportunity to apply the skills and knowledge they acquired, in a PAC simulation exercise based on a true case study.



This Workshop brought together parliamentarians and parliamentary officials from the Anguilla House of Assembly (AHOA), the UK Parliament, the Parliament of Wales (Senedd Cymru) and the Isle of Man's Parliament (Tynwald). Civil Servants from the Government of Anguilla and the Isle of Man also contributed to the workshop. The format of sessions included panel discussions, presentations, practical sessions involving simulations and peer-to-peer discussions.

## LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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1. Hon. Cora Richardson Hodge, Leader of the Opposition and Anguilla PAC Chair
2. Hon. Cardigan Connor, Anguilla PAC
3. Hon. Quincia Gumbs-Marie, Anguilla PAC
4. Hon. Jose Vanterpool, Anguilla PAC
5. Hon. Merrick T. Richardson, Anguilla PAC
6. Mr Lenox Joash Proctor, Clerk of The House of Assembly, Anguilla
7. Ms Vanisha Proctor, Clerk of Committees, Anguilla

## IMPACT, OUTCOMES AND OUTPUTS

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### Expected Impact

The workshop set out to achieve the following impact:

- The Anguilla Public Accounts Committee members and clerks have increased capacity to perform their duties;
- Accounting Officers have enhanced their understanding of the PAC and their role and responsibilities as potential witnesses.

### Expected Outcomes:

The workshop expected to achieve the following outcomes:

**Outcome 1:** PAC members, Members of House of Assembly, government departments and other relevant stakeholders will have a clearer understanding of the role, remit and value of the PAC.

**Outcome 2:** PAC Members will improve their ability to conduct evidence sessions and question witnesses effectively.

**Outcome 3:** The relationship between the UK (UK Parliament, Devolved Legislatures, Crown Dependencies and CPA UK) and Anguilla House of Assembly is strengthened.

### Expected Outputs:

To achieve the above outcomes, the programme aimed to produce the following outputs:

**Output 1:** A virtual workshop delivered by CPA UK via Zoom for all members and the clerks of the PAC.

**Output 2:** Action points identified by participants that they will undertake within six months, as a direct result of engagement in the workshop.

**Output 3:** A comprehensive post-workshop report will be produced by CPA UK and distributed to all relevant stakeholders.

## INTRODUCTION AND OPENING REMARKS

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To open the workshop officially, the Honourable Deputy Speaker of the Anguilla House of Assembly (AHOA) noted that collaboration with CPA UK had achieved notable results. The AHOA, he stated, valued the partnership with CPA UK through the UK Overseas Territories Project, which promotes parliamentary solidarity and respect, while highlighting the shared values of interest in people.

The Honourable Deputy Speaker observed that the workshop was essential and most welcome, since it set out to strengthen the capacity of the PAC in Anguilla. He noted the “strong need for robust oversight of the Executive, given the impacts of the financial crisis, COVID-19 and climate change”. The AHOA, he concluded, would benefit from additional support to develop an appropriate framework for value for money audit.

CPA UK’s Chief Executive, Jon Davies, also seized the opportunity to thank the Honourable members of the AHOA for their confidence in CPA UK and the work of the UK Overseas Territories Project. Pointing out that the relationship is indeed “mutually beneficial,” he highlighted the fact that UK parliamentarians “greatly benefit” from interactions with parliamentarians in the Overseas Territories. The workshop, he concluded, offered another opportunity to learn from one another.

Over two half-days, participants explored good practice in parliamentary scrutiny by Public Accounts Committees (PACs). Comparisons were drawn between different parliaments, including AHOA, the UK Parliament, the Parliament of Wales and Tynwald in the Isle of Man.

The programme included under **annex II** in this report, provides a useful overview of the structure of the workshop, which unfolded in six stages, including a practical session in the form of a committee evidence session:

1. How to manage an Inquiry and prepare for an evidence session
2. The role and responsibilities of witnesses
3. How to remain effective as a PAC in a virtual world
4. Simulating a virtual committee session
5. Producing a fair and balanced report
6. How to measure success as a PAC

# I. HOW TO MANAGE AN INQUIRY AND PREPARE FOR AN EVIDENCE SESSION

This session established what is expected of a committee, its members and clerk. It explored the steps involved in organising a PAC inquiry; including preparation, questioning techniques, and chairing a PAC. The panel which exchanged examples of good practice with participants, was composed of three speakers: Third Clerk at Clerk of Tynwald's Office, Ms Joann Corkish, UK parliamentarian, Nick Smith MP and former Leader of the Opposition in Anguilla, Ms Palmavon Webster.

## 1. PREPARATION

Ms Corkish outlined the four stages required to prepare for a committee evidence session as follows: identifying a topic; drawing up the terms of reference (ToR); gathering written and oral evidence; and organising the evidence session.

### 1.1. Identify a topic

To run a manageable and successful inquiry the committee must identify the right topic to investigate. The ability to do so depends on the tools and resources available to the PAC at the time of the inquiry. The Isle of Man's Public Accounts Committee (IOM PAC) for example, finds that the Auditor General's report is a useful source of information, as it contains data on overall accounts, budgets and estimates. This report helps IOM PAC identify relevant topics to focus on for inquiries.

Ms Corkish described fund allocation, spending and value for money as generally good topics for a PAC to pursue. For a PAC to be effective, she advised that its members should refrain from commenting on "whether a policy was a good idea", but instead focus on "whether public finances were looked after in policy pursuit".

Additional resources available to most PACs when identifying topics for inquiries include drawing on the personal experience of their members; the information at their disposal and concerns expressed in parliamentary debates, as well as by the general public.

### 1.2. Agree inquiry terms of reference (ToR)

After a topic has been selected, the terms of ref-

erence (ToR) must be set. These clearly define the inquiry's boundaries to keep it manageable, stating what the inquiry will focus on and what it will leave out. Since the inquiry can revolve around one principal question, PAC members are encouraged to think about "what the question is trying to answer", when drafting the ToR. They are also advised to apply "the rule of the three Es" to this process, to ensure the inquiry is Effective, Efficient and Economical.

In the IOM PAC, for example, the principle question usually seeks to clarify two main things: first, why too much money was spent; and secondly, why the money spent did not appear to achieve "the desired effects".

### 1.3. Gather the evidence

Once the inquiry's ToR are clearly set, the committee can begin to gather written and oral evidence. This involves carrying out background research to ensure PAC members are properly briefed on the topic. The committee normally rely on the support of its clerk to gather evidence and carry out research, in the absence of dedicated research personnel and facilities as is the case in most smaller jurisdictions.

Effective methods of gathering evidence include: (i) issuing a public call for evidence; (ii) writing to government departments or individuals of interest (clearly stating whether the PAC intends to publish the evidence collected or not); (iii) reaching out to the Auditor General (AG) for support, especially when the PAC is new.

### 1.4. Organise the evidence session

Having carried out the necessary research, the committee can begin to identify the witnesses it wishes to summon to (generally) public evidence sessions. These sessions are more likely to be successful when both the PAC and its selected witnesses are well prepared. The committee clerk can help witnesses prepare, for example, by sharing with them in advance the topics that the evidence session will explore, albeit without disclosing to them the actual questions PAC members intend to ask.



To prepare the PAC the clerk can organise a committee meeting, on a placeholder basis, fortnightly. The meeting would align the diaries of PAC members with their clerk's. If there happen to be no committee business to discuss on a given day, the meeting could simply be cancelled. Its main purpose is to ensure there is a regular slot to discuss PAC business with the clerk and prepare for evidence sessions. At this meeting the clerk steers PAC members away from data-heavy questions, helping them draft focused ones instead, to encourage a discussion at the evidence session and obtain useful information.

## 2. EFFECTIVE QUESTIONING TECHNIQUES

Nick Smith MP also drew from his experience of serving on the UK PAC, to share good practice on dealing effectively with 'elusive' witnesses and encouraging more 'cooperative' ones to provide additional detail. He shared five essential tips to questioning witnesses effectively in a PAC context:

### ***2.1. Ensure questions are informed by credible material and evidence***

To formulate questions effectively, PAC members should ensure they have read 'credible' material on the topic. This would allow them to ask informed questions, based on the data and resources available to the PAC. Echoing the point made by Ms Corkish, Nick Smith MP also described Audit Reports as "excellent sources of information" alongside past PAC reports.

The evidence must be diversified; for example, the PAC members can carry out visits on sites related to the inquiry, to ensure the committee is privy to in-depth discussion and information on the topic of the inquiry. Alongside written material, these can help PAC members to formulate their questions in preparation for evidence sessions.

### ***2.2. Be informed on the latest developments on the topic***

The PAC must also ensure that the information it holds is accurate on the day of the evidence session. The clerk can support by organising pre-evidence session briefings to help PAC members identify any inquiry-related data or information, which may have been updated most recently and included in the latest Audit Report. The UK PAC holds such briefings, for example, to ensure de-

tails of the report are fully understood by the committee. This equips the PAC members to question witnesses with more confidence.

### ***2.3. Acknowledge cooperative witnesses and use simple language***

The PAC must be seen to be questioning government departments on behalf of the country, to ensure value for money. The language used to question witnesses must accordingly be kept simple; questioning must be approached from the standpoint of the ordinary citizen. During evidence sessions PAC members should give credit where it is due, appreciating the cooperation of Accounting Officers, and consider thanking witnesses as appropriate to acknowledge their service. This can bring a sense of perspective to the review. If focusing on a point or issue, the PAC member asking the question must ensure that their question helps to shed light on the three Es of "Effectiveness, Efficiency and Economic value" of public service.

### ***2.4. Work as a team when questioning witnesses***

When the witness is being uncooperative, participants were encouraged to ask open questions to engage a discussion and encourage conversation. A tactic of the evasive witness is to talk at length to use up the PAC's time, without making actual disclosures. When this is identified, the PAC member asking questions can follow through with close ended questions, such that the witness would have no choice than to answer by "yes" or "no", giving the PAC the information required.

Teamwork and cross-party collaboration make a PAC more effective at obtaining answers from witnesses. For example, one PAC member can lead on questions in a way that allows the PAC Chair to follow up with supplementary questions. If the question continues to be evaded, the PAC member asking it can point it out, as can the Chair, to convey the message that the committee is aware of what the witness is doing. This should be done as many times as necessary to ensure that responses are obtained.

Taking their lead from the Chair, all PAC members could follow up on each other's questions and try to get answers from a particularly difficult witness. This would additionally solidify the reputation of the PAC as a united committee while acting as a deterrent to potentially difficult witnesses in the future.



### 2.5. Foster relationships with Government departments

As a scrutiny committee the PAC's work is ongoing; its members must, therefore, be determined not to give up. Its ability to function effectively also depends on the relationships it can foster with Accounting Officers; potential witnesses who are more likely to be helpful to the committee if such a working relationship exists. The PAC reserves the right to revisit the topic by recalling the same witness for additional questioning, time and resources permitting, if an evidence session concludes unsatisfactorily.

Nick Smith MP concluded that effective questioning techniques are developed with experience. New PAC members can learn from "listening and watching" colleagues who have served in Parliament before, both current and past parliamentarians.

## 3. THE ROLE OF THE PAC CHAIR

Participants also heard from Ms. Palmavon Webster, who shared her experience as former PAC Chair in Anguilla. Having echoed the examples of good practice on the importance of using effective questioning techniques and teamwork on a PAC, Ms. Webster emphasised five points on good practice while chairing a PAC:

- (i) The Chair of the PAC must ensure the committee's focus is constantly on Anguilla's best interests and avoid party politics.
- (ii) By making reference to the purpose of the

PAC and its mandate, every time the committee meets, the Chair can ensure the committee keeps its objectives in focus.

(iii) The Chair must work toward building good rapport with the Chief Auditor (CA), to help the committee operate effectively.

(iv) The Chair should ensure the PAC taps into the expertise of its members, by encouraging them to lead on topics and inquiries that fall under their areas of expertise.

(v) The Chair must also ensure that objectivity is reinforced, by using public reports to inform PAC inquiries, and holding evidence sessions in public to bring more awareness of PAC to the general public.





## II. THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF WITNESSES

This session established what is expected of witnesses who have been summoned to give evidence before the PAC. Mr Daniel Davies, Chief Executive Officer at the Department of Home Affairs, Isle of Man, delivered a virtual presentation exploring the principle of accountability in democracy, as well as good practice for witnesses, before and during an evidence session. The audience was mainly composed of Accounting Officers (AOs).

### 1. ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr Davies asserted the principle of accountability, stating that AOs are public servants who are part of the decision-making process on policy implementation. In this capacity they are accountable to Government ministers, who are themselves accountable to the electorate. Based on this principle, therefore, AOs have a responsibility to support the PAC's efforts to scrutinise the Executive, because it does so on behalf of the people. Through such cooperation AOs can contribute towards making the PAC an effective tool for parliamentary scrutiny of public finances.

PAC scrutiny, Mr Davies stated, is an important feature of the democratic exercise. He quoted to that effect the former US congressman and Senator, Jacob Koppel Javits: "When scrutiny is lacking, tyranny, corruption and man's baser qualities have a better chance of entering into the public business of any government." The presenter also observed that while giving evidence before a committee can be "at times satisfying, other times uncomfortable", it helps shape the Civil Servant's experience.

Having appeared before a committee in different

capacities in the past, Mr Davies drew from his experience to suggest ways in which a potential witness can ensure that: (i) they are prepared before giving evidence and (ii) they have the right attitude when giving evidence.

### 2. GOOD PRACTICE BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER THE EVIDENCE SESSION

Stating that "poor preparation leads to poor performance" at the evidence session, Mr Davies suggested that potential witnesses should do their research before appearing in front of the PAC to give evidence. Figures 1 and 2 on the next page provide an overview of his key suggestions for witnesses, on what to do before and during the evidence session, while Figure 3 outlines what to refrain from when giving evidence as a witness.

Accounting Officers were finally encouraged to stay in touch with their parliamentary colleagues and help one another, after the session. If the inquiry does not go well, Mr Davies advised, treat it as a learning exercise.



<p>(i) Be coherent, make sure you know what you or your minister has said on the topic of the inquiry in the past. Such records can be accessed through the media, including social media, Hansard and other public platforms. Be prepared to explain or expand on it.</p>	<p>(ii) Familiarise yourself with the ToR of the inquiry. Make sure you understand them as these can often be wider than expected.</p> <p>(iii) Understand the position of the PAC, research its past work to familiarise yourself with what the committee has already said on the topic.</p>
<p><b>TO DO BEFORE THE EVIDENCE SESSION: PREPARE YOURSELF AND MAKE A PLAN</b></p>	
<p>(iv) Make sure you understand the areas excluded in the ToR. For example, the IOM PAC is not allowed to scrutinise areas of 'emerging policy'.</p> <p>(v) Try and understand members of the PAC and identify those who might have an agenda</p>	<p>(vi) If you are uncertain on anything, email the committee clerk and ask questions to clarify what the PAC hopes to achieve through the evidence session.</p>

Figure 1

<p>(i) Bring notes with you to the evidence session. Consider creating a mind-map (e.g. using Microsoft OneNote) to guide your thinking.</p> <p>(ii) When the session begins, give a brief introduction about yourself if this has not already been done for you.</p>	<p>(iii) Avoid jargon, difficult words and acronyms. Ensure that you convert complex information into simple answers, as the expert.</p> <p>(iv) Be assertive when a question is being asked with a potential agenda; use polite phrases such as "Can I perhaps challenge the Honourable member on that point ..."</p>
<p><b>TO DO DURING THE EVIDENCE SESSION: EXECUTE YOUR PLAN WHILE BEING HONEST, COOPERATIVE AND STRATEGIC</b></p>	
<p>(v) Set the record straight whenever you identify speculation or misleading information and data. Better to fill the "vacuum" with true facts. Accept your responsibilities where appropriate.</p> <p>(vi) When answering think ahead "where is the committee going with their line of questioning?" Think also how the media could use what you will say</p>	<p>(vii) For the purposes of the media, think whether there is a line you want to get across or a concept you want to explain for them to pick up.</p> <p>(viii) Be honest, if you do not know the answer, say so. For example, if your role is strategic, you cannot be expected to know operational details. Be careful however, on how you phrase your response, especially when you should know the answer.</p>

Figure 2

<p>(i) rush your answers (check your notes when you need to).</p>	<p>(ii) be defensive in your answers.</p>
<p><b>DURING THE EVIDENCE SESSION: DO NOT...</b></p>	
<p>(iv) make flippant comments.</p> <p>(v) give misleading answers, if you do not have the actual answer.</p>	<p>(iii) comment on areas of the inquiry that are not included in the ToR.</p>

Figure 3

### III. HOW TO REMAIN EFFECTIVE AS A PAC IN A VIRTUAL WORLD

In a session that set out to explore the challenges and opportunities of operating virtually as a PAC, participants exchanged with Ms Rhianon Passmore MS (Member of Senedd, Wales), supported by the clerk to the Welsh PAC, Ms Fay Bowen. The two speakers observed that most legislatures were confronted with the necessity to invest in technological support and equipment, given the impact of COVID-19. Sharing their experiences from two different perspectives, parliamentarian and PAC clerk, they identified the challenges and opportunities of working virtually in the context of the Welsh PAC:

#### 1. TECHNICAL AND HUMAN CHALLENGES

The table below provides an overview of the challenges of operating virtually as a PAC. It offers two different perspectives, a parliamentarian and a clerk's; identifying two main kinds of challenges: technical challenges and challenges related to the loss of the human element in scrutiny.

CHALLENGES OF WORKING VIRTUALLY	THE MEMBERS' PERSPECTIVE	THE CLERK'S PERSPECTIVE
<b>(i) Technical challenges</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The papers necessary for PAC meetings must be either downloaded at home by PAC members or sent out to them.</li> <li>• PAC members must have technological devices in place, to work virtually.</li> <li>• All PAC members require essential IT training, including on Zoom and Microsoft Teams, to fully function as a committee.</li> <li>• Additional ICT support is required, to ensure the PAC meetings comply with language requirements - Wales being a bilingual nation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The clerk must now provide ICT help as well as procedural advice.</li> <li>• Clerks must ensure PAC members have documents that are compatible with the virtual platform they use.</li> <li>• The clerk must also ensure that the platform being used for private meetings is secured.</li> <li>• While private PAC sessions take place on Teams this platform is less intuitive than Zoom and can present technical difficulties.</li> <li>• PAC Wales is working to develop an intuitive and safer platform, which will also require ICT training for the PAC members and clerk.</li> </ul>
<b>(ii) Human challenges</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More difficult to pick on body language cues when questioning witnesses in a virtual setting.</li> <li>• Difficult for PAC members to catch the Chair's eye quickly, to interject, during virtual evidence sessions.</li> <li>• The reaction time is delayed for example, by checking that the microphone is unmuted to ensure one is heard.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The clerk now supports witnesses before and during evidence sessions, carrying out test runs, for example, to ensure witnesses can use virtual platforms.</li> <li>• Difficult to get advice to the Chair quickly during virtual evidence sessions. There is sometimes a delayed delivery of messages sent via instant messenger.</li> <li>• Communication with the PAC is now formalised, mainly by email or through Microsoft Teams meetings.</li> <li>• Spontaneous meetings formerly offered opportunities to discuss urgent matters with PAC members informally. These are not possible virtually.</li> </ul>



## 2. OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUTREACH

Participants also noted that virtual working had offered “unintended” opportunities, such as inspiring PAC Wales to work harder to engage disenfranchised groups; including older people who may struggle to keep up with the PAC’s work because of technology, and stakeholders with disabilities such as visual impairment and hearing challenges.

Being aware of the barriers faced by these groups gives the PAC an opportunity to test new methods of access to democratic systems; ensuring special equipment and ICT support are available to challenged stakeholders who belong to disenfranchised groups; and taking advantage of the flexibility of virtual working to engage debates on socio-economic issues as PAC members. In the context of Wales such issues may include the gender pay gap, care working and women issues. Engaging more with these issues virtually would be a way to keep PAC Wales relevant in the public debate.

This approach has achieved an impact as far as PAC Wales is concerned. The committee’s virtual engagement with stakeholders resulted in greater and encouraging feedback. Three main factors help to explain this, according to Ms Bowen:

(i) There is a sense that those taking part are less overwhelmed virtually than they would have been in a formal setting;

(ii) A virtual world removes the barriers of geographical and time differences, so good practice can be shared around the world.

(iii) Stakeholders, now able to contribute to PAC discussions from their own home, are no longer affected by transport challenges between North and South Wales.

To conclude their presentation Ms Passmore MS and Ms Bowen acknowledged that the knowledge they shared, was based on challenges and opportunities they encountered working in the context of PAC Welsh Assembly. Parliamentarians from Anguilla PAC took the opportunity to share their own experiences in a discussion also. Keen to replicate what had worked successfully in Wales to their own context, they were also prepared to build on it if necessary and ultimately develop frameworks adapted to Anguilla PAC.

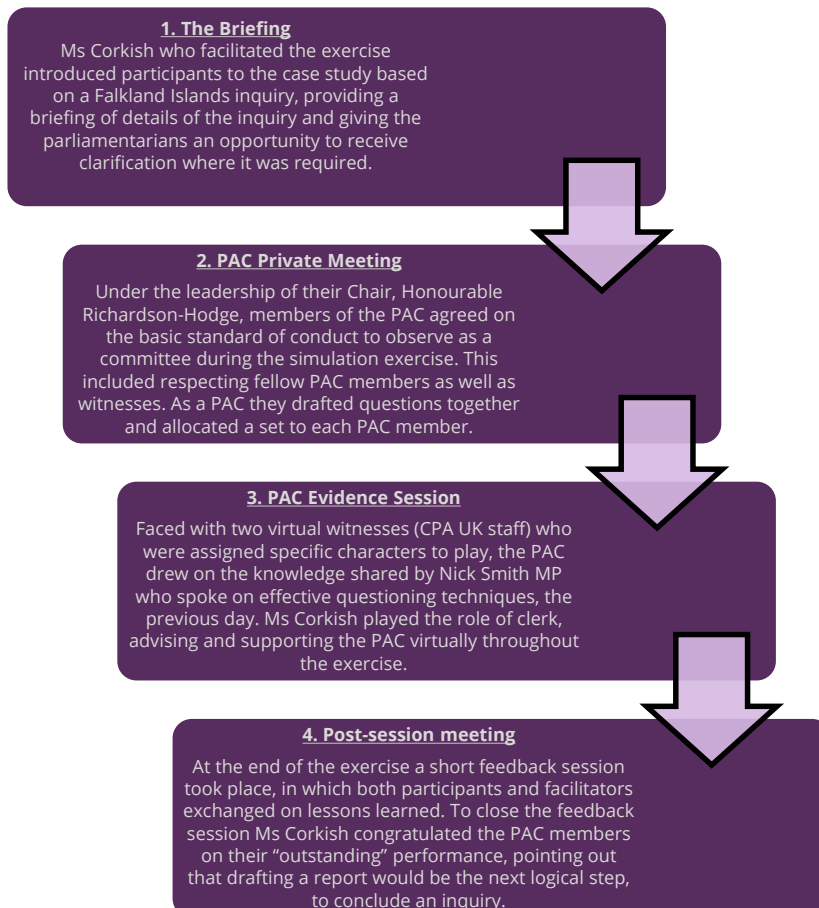


## IV. THE COMMITTEE EXERCISE

The focus of the committee exercise was on the practical aspect of PAC scrutiny, in line with preliminary feedback received on the first day of the workshop, noting a keenness from participants to put theory into practice. Participants took this opportunity to demonstrate the skills and knowledge they had assimilated during the workshop, having explored a range of topics: preparing for a committee hearing, effective questioning, handling evasive and difficult witnesses, working together as a PAC and chairing a PAC.



The committee exercise unfolded in four stages:





## V. PRODUCING A FAIR AND BALANCED REPORT

The Head of the International Affairs and Defence Section in the Research and Information Unit of the House of Commons Library, Dr Anna Dickson advised participants that the publication of a report is formally the final step of a PAC inquiry. She listed all the steps that come before and after publication of the report as follows:

- 1) Inquiry scoping
- 2) Inquiry launch
- 3) Evidence gathering and sessions planning
- 4) Oral evidence, visits, outreach, engagement
- 5) Report preparation and agreement
- 6) Report publication
- 7) Government response
- 8) PAC follow up on Government response

Before providing an outline of a PAC report, Dr Dickson observed that there are many models of reports being developed and used in the current digital age. She stated notwithstanding, that “the core model remains the traditional report”, described below for the purposes of the session:

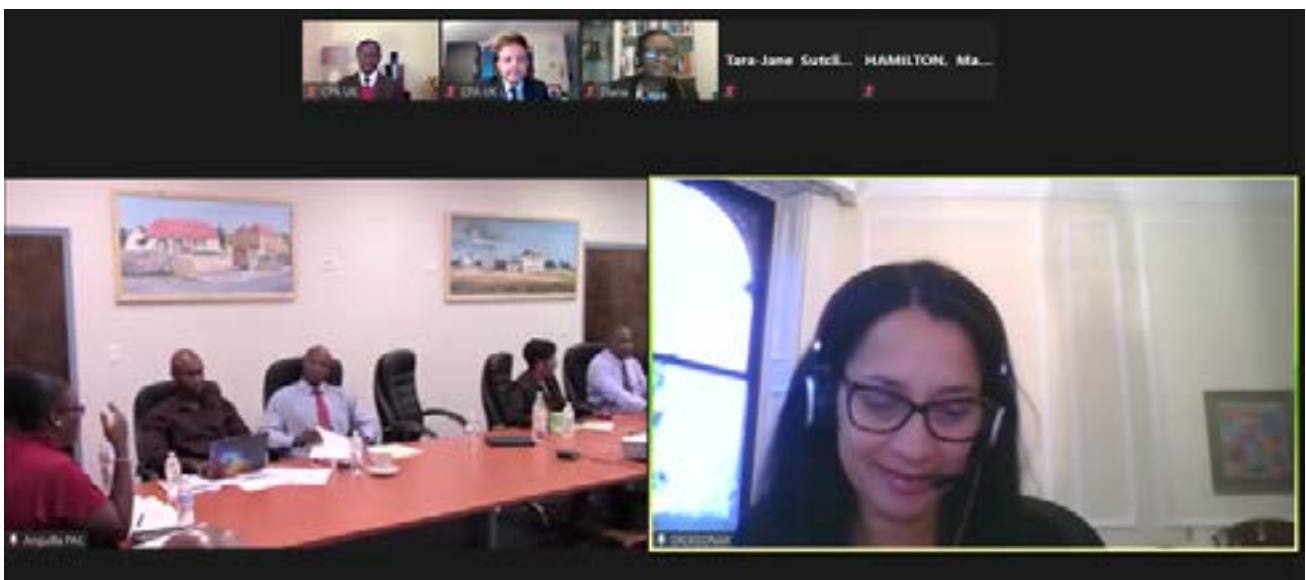
- The traditional report is a piece of informative writing that describes a set of actions and analyses any results in response to a specific briefing paper.
- A big part of it consists of an analysis of the oral, written and informal evidence gathered from a range of stakeholders during an inquiry.
- The analysis of the evidence is sometimes accompanied by supporting text and visual aids like graphs, tables and infographics.

- The evidence in the report leads to a set of conclusions and recommendations, aimed at the government and its agencies.
- Increasingly, alongside the report and depending on the subject area, committees may produce an ‘easy to digest’ version of the report. This would usually be a ‘Social Shorthand’ which would be publicised via social media.

### 1. HOW TO PRODUCE A “GOOD REPORT”

Dr Dickson held that a PAC should aim to produce “a good report” for three main reasons; (i) a report is “the main product” of an inquiry; (ii) through the report the world knows what a committee thinks; (iii) the report is the channel through which the committee is able make recommendations to Government. In short, a good report ultimately upholds the reputation of the PAC. It must therefore meet specific criteria:

- It must contain a clear, concise and helpful summary. This is likely to be the most read part of the report and must therefore flag up key points.
- It must have a logical structure for an easy read, clearly flowing from the issue under consideration to conclusions and recommendations.
- It must be written in clear and concise language, using quotations effectively, short sentences, simple and appropriate words, and explaining jargon.



- It must adopt a tone that is authoritative, not pompous, to indicate the committee's confidence and knowledge of the subject matter.
- It must be firmly based on the evidence received, providing the committee's evaluation of the evidence and leading to clear conclusions.
- It must use graphics and charts effectively, to present complex statistical information more clearly than a page of figures.
- It must include S.M.A.R.T (i.e. Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely) recommendations, backed by evidence.
- It must clearly state to whom the recommendation(s) is (are) addressed.
- It should be impactful; the impact of a report can be measured by policy change, media, Government and public response.

## 2. ACHIEVING IMPACT THROUGH BALANCE AND FAIRNESS

Dr Dickson also remarked that PAC members who are committed to working together to achieve consensus, despite their different political colours, increase the committee's capacity to achieve impact. This also increases the likelihood to produce a "good report". Dr Dickson drew from her experience as a former PAC clerk to advise the participants as follows:

- Committees are at their most effective when they present a cross-party consensus, so leave your politics at the door when attending to PAC business.
- Work with your colleagues to achieve consensus.
- Deciding at the start of the parliament what the PAC's overall direction should be, can help maintain an overall sense of focus as members make decisions about what inquiries to pursue.
- Each PAC member should play to their strengths, including by using their knowledge and contacts to benefit the PAC during relevant inquiries.
- Evidence of party-political division makes it much easier for the government to dismiss the committee's recommendations.
- A well-informed cross-party consensus makes it harder for the government to ignore the committee's recommendations.

## 3. CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPACT OF A "GOOD REPORT"

Participants were advised that the committee should aim to produce short reports if possible, to achieve more impact. Long reports with lots of recommendations, Dr Dickson held, can be harder to digest. This would make it easier for the government to "cherry pick" the recommendations it wants to address. The PAC must therefore think strategically when drawing up conclusions and recommendations, especially because there is no guarantee that the entire report will be read. Participants were encouraged to frame recommendations in ways that increase the chances of achieving the report's intended impacts. This highlight conclusions and recommendations as the most important part of the report. To maximise the chances of a report achieving its intended outcome, Dr Dickson accordingly suggested that conclusions and recommendations should be:

- Challenging to the government (or whoever they are directed at) but achievable.
- Tailored to fit the target audience (i.e. the government often ignores conclusions but focuses on recommendations, while other audiences may look for endorsement of their position, which would lead them to focus more on conclusions).
- Precise and include timescales for action where possible (e.g. ... to happen within 12 months).
- Able to stand alone, in case the rest of the report was overlooked (i.e. they should be able to be transferred to the list at the end of the report without extensive changes).
- Woven into the text, as well as listed at the end (over-arching conclusion).

Participants were also advised to avoid trivial and minor recommendations, as these can detract from the more important ones. To achieve impact with a report, Dr Dickson suggested having as few recommendations as is practically acceptable, in line with recommendations from the [Liaison Committee's report on Select Committee effectiveness, resources and powers \(2012\)](#) which state that reports should be kept "short and accessible... [and] avoid too many recommendations" [paragraph 70].

Responding to close, to a participant's enquiry on tips to ensure an inquiry is successful, based on her previous experience working on the PAC in An-

guilla, Dr Dickson shared the following advice:

- People may have little to no knowledge of what giving oral evidence means, so they may be apprehensive about the process and unwilling to engage with the PAC.
  - The clerk should talk to witnesses beforehand to explain the processes and why they are being called to give evidence.
  - They should provide impartial guidance without unveiling to witnesses the actual questions PAC members will ask.
  - The witness would be best prepared if they have been given clear indications (e.g. bring facts and figures to hand).
  - Emphasise that the purpose of the oral evidence session is to get evidence, for which the PAC needs witnesses to help.
  - Try not to have antagonistic relations with potential witnesses, including Accounting Officers.
- Get more engagement by inviting the public to attend evidence sessions and listen in while the PAC demonstrates how it holds the government to account.

To monitor the PAC’s progress, Dr Dickson advised that it is important to hold a meeting to reflect on the extent to which the committee’s goals were met, at the end of an inquiry. She cited the UK committees as an example, noting that they hold a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet to keep track of every recommendation and what the concerned government departments’ responses have been. This also sets deadlines for a robust follow up.

Dr Dickson acknowledged that this process requires time and resources, noting that PAC members in Anguilla have other occupations beside their parliamentary roles, and will therefore need to strike a balance to achieve this, especially when deciding whether to revisit an inquiry.

## VI. MEASURING SUCCESS AS A PAC

In a short presentation CPA UK’s Monitoring and Evaluations Manager, Mr Matthew Hamilton, advised participants that to measure success as a committee, the PAC must set clear, realistic and measurable goals, and be sure to regularly monitor the progress made. A brief feedback session followed, where participants reflected on the content of the workshop, what learning they would be taking away and how they intended to apply it to their roles. Four key observations were made:

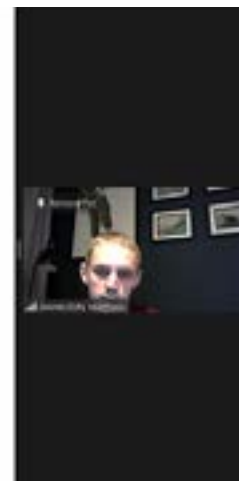
- (i) The committee exercise was a useful practice run, which helped participants better understand the process of holding a PAC evidence session.
- (ii) The role play demonstrated the ability of the new PAC members to work well together, picking up on each other’s lines of questioning to get more information from evasive witnesses.
- (iii) Participants experimented the importance of working together as a committee during an inquiry (i.e. not getting political points over one another, rather focusing on assisting each other).
- (iv) Participants appreciated the importance of asking the right questions in a respectful way (i.e. not attacking witnesses personally, rather striving to “make Anguilla a better place through policy”).

BE CLEAR ABOUT YOUR GOALS

Agree as a committee at the start

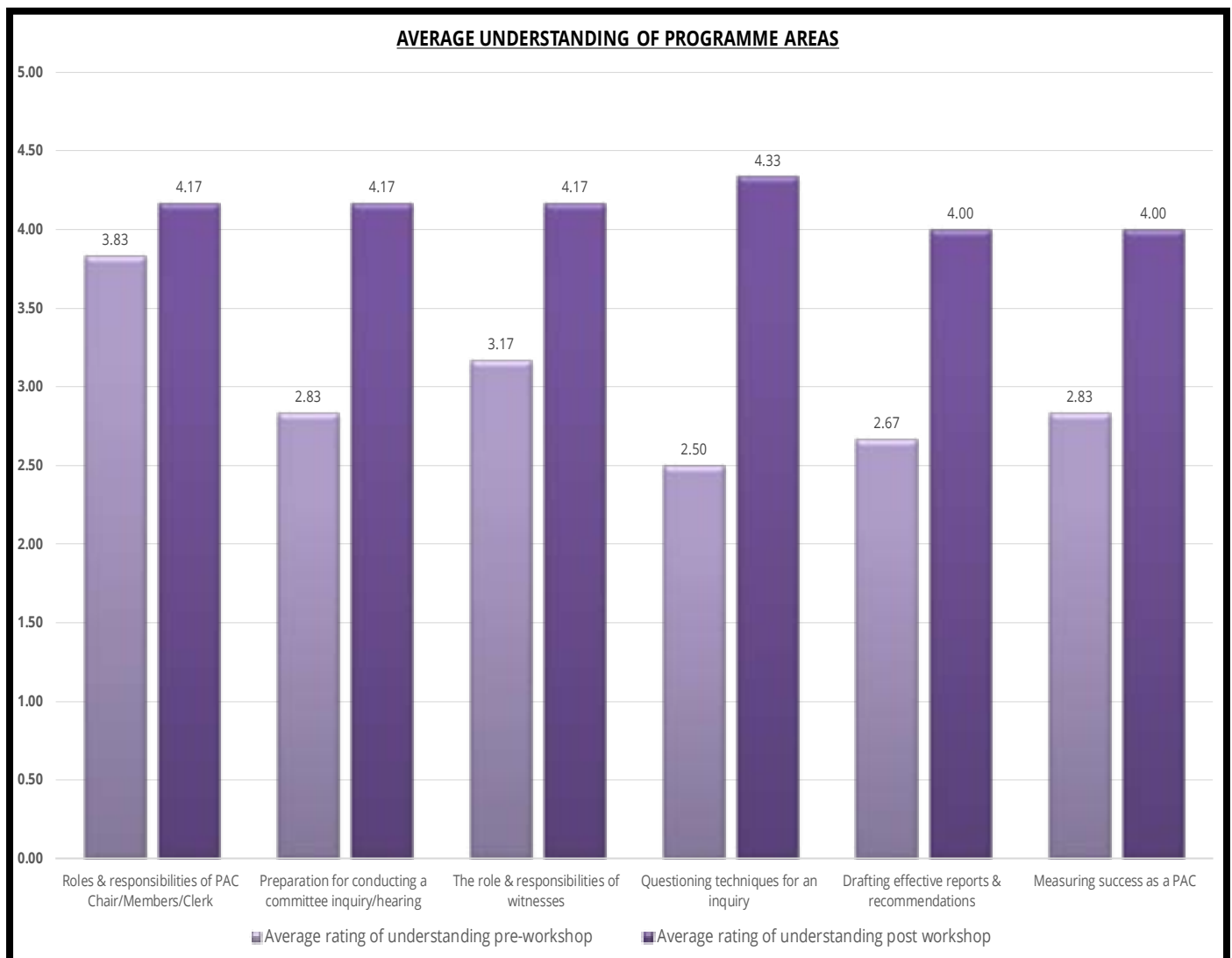
Plan for each inquiry and report

Reflect on if you have met your goal



## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Every participant completed a pre-assessment feedback form before the workshop and post-assessment form after, where they rated the level of their own knowledge and understanding in the six areas explored throughout the workshop. Participants evaluated themselves according to the following scale: "None" (1), "Basic" (2), "Moderate" (3), "Confident" (4) and "Very Confident" (5). The feedback forms indicate overall a 41.97% increase in the participants' understanding of the different areas explored throughout the programme, as the chart below illustrates:



Participants will be approached after a period to identify tangible outcomes in their roles as PAC members, that can be attributed to the training received throughout the workshop, and to identify areas where further support will be required from the UK Overseas Territories Project Phase II.

ANNEX I

**BIOGRAPHIES - SPEAKERS AND FACILITATORS**

**Fay Bowen**

*Clerk to the National Assembly for Wales PAC*

Fay Bowen is Clerk to the National Assembly for Wales Public Accounts Committee. Within this role she has responsibility for managing the relationship between the Committee, the Auditor General for Wales and his staff. Previous roles include Clerk to the National Assembly for Wales Legislation Committees, which involved assisting Members in scrutinising and amending Welsh Government legislation.

Her CPA UK engagement includes a PAC workshop in Anguilla in 2016, the launch of the UK Overseas Territories Project in February 2017, hosting a visit to the National Assembly by the PAC of Bermuda in January 2018 and a CPA Clerking attachment to St Helena during May 2018.



**Jo Corkish**

*Third Clerk at Clerk of Tynwald's Office*

Jo joined the Clerk of Tynwald's Office in 2009 as Head of the Chamber and Information Service. Following a year seconded to the Isle of Man Government Cabinet Office, as Change and Reform Programme Lead, she returned to Tynwald in 2015 and took on the role of Third Clerk. She has been Clerk to the Public Accounts Committee since 2016 and is also currently clerking committees on Poverty, Whistleblowing and an inquiry into the Media Development Fund.

For the CPA UK Overseas Territories project she has undertaken in country placements in both Montserrat and the Falkland Islands and Tynwald has hosted visits from St Helena and the Falkland Islands. In 2018 she completed the International Professional Development Program for Parliamentary Staff with McGill University, after being sponsored by the CPA and is currently studying for a law degree via distance learning. She previously worked in the private sector in finance, business analysis and project management roles.



**Daniel Davies**

*Chief Executive Officer, Department of Home Affairs, Isle of Man*

Daniel has been the Chief Executive Officer at the Department of Home Affairs in the Isle of Man since 2018. The Department has a budget of £38m and is responsible for the Fire and Ambulance Service, the Prison and Probation Service, Government communications network, Civil Defence and Emergency planning and resilience.

He also headed up a major transformation and cost reduction programme which brought together a number of core support services from across Government. He supported the Council of Ministers in the creation and development of the current Programme for Government, moving to an outcomes based framework. In his role, Dan has appeared on numerous occasions as a witness before committees.





## BIOGRAPHIES - SPEAKERS AND FACILITATORS

### **Jon Davies**

*Chief Executive of CPA UK*

Jon has been Chief Executive of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK (CPA UK) since September 2017. He joined the UK Civil Service in 1990 as Desk Officer in the East African Department in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO).

After working in the Cabinet Office Assessment Staff from 1991 to 1993 he became head of the FCO's Iraq Section. He then worked in Madrid and the Tsunami Unit in the Consular Directorate, before spending 2005-2007 as Deputy Director of Communications. From 2007- 2010 Jon was Deputy Head of Mission, British Embassy, Cairo.

In 2010 he returned to London as Iran Co-ordinator, and from 2011-2013 he was also Director, Middle East and North Africa. Jon then became the first Director of the new FCO Diplomatic Academy, from 2014 to July 2017. John has attended multiple CPA UK and CPA BIMR events since starting in 2017, plus CPC 2017 in Dhaka and CPA Executive Committee meetings in Mauritius, London and Ottawa.



### **Dr Anna Dickson**

*Research and Information Unit, UK Parliament*

Anna works as Head of the International Affairs and Defence Section in the Research and Information Unit, in the House of Commons Library. Between October and December 2019, she was on secondment in Anguilla, where she supported the work of the House of Assembly as a clerk. During that time, Anna also worked as clerk to the Public Accounts Committee. Since 2004, she has played numerous roles in the House of Commons, including Table Office Clerk, Senior Clerk of the Defence Committee, Communities and Local Government Committee, Environment Food and Rural Affairs Committee, and Specialist in the International Development Committee.



### **Rhianon Passmore MS**

*Member of the Senedd Public Accounts Committee*

Rhianon Passmore was elected to the National Assembly in 2016 representing the constituency of Islwyn. A dedicated member of the Labour Party for many years, Rhianon has served on the party's National Policy Forum. She has extensive political experience of policy development at a local and national level. She believes strongly in the values of practical application of the Labour values of equality of opportunity for all.

Rhianon has a strong background in Local Government and is an accredited Local Government Peer Mentor. Committed to public service delivery, Rhianon was the Welsh representative on the Local Government Association Regeneration and Transport Board. She has worked as a senior Trade Union officer delivering equality priorities across the South West UK.



**Nick Smith MP**

*Member for Blaenau Gwent (Labour Party)*

Nick Smith was elected as Labour MP for Blaenau Gwent in 2015, having grown up in the local town of Tredegar. Prior to entering Parliament, he worked as Director of Policy and Partnerships at the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists. He has also worked as secretary general of the European Parliamentary Labour Party, in campaigns for NSPCC and in other roles within the Labour Party. He was also previously a councillor in the London Borough of Camden and executive member for education.



**Ms Pam Webster**

*Former PAC Chair and MHA, Anguilla*

Pam Webster is the Managing Partner of WEBSTER LP. Early in her carrier, she served as Crown Counsel for the Government of Anguilla. A Notary Public and a Commissioner for Oaths, Pam entered the political arena for the first time in 2010 as a member of the Anguilla Progressive Party (APP). Pam is the first woman ever, in the history of Anguilla, to have served as Leader of the Opposition, a post she held until July 2020. Pam has a strong interest in education and economic development and is best known for her association with the Community for Change and Future Focus initiatives and as founder of the Care Centres in Island Harbour and Pond Ground.



**CPA UK TEAM**



Tara-Jane Sutcliffe,  
*Strategic Lead,*  
UK Overseas  
Territories Project



Diana Atungire-Ocaya,  
*Delivery Lead,*  
UK Overseas  
Territories Project



Matthew Hamilton,  
*Monitoring and*  
*Evaluation Manager,*  
CPA UK



Axell Kaubo,  
*Programme Officer,*  
UK Overseas  
Territories Project



Ellen Boivin  
*Communications Officer,*  
CPA UK



Christopher Brown  
*Project Assistant,*  
UK Overseas  
Territories Project

ANNEX II

PROGRAMME

Monday, 16 November, 2020

TIME	SESSION
14:00 GMT	<b>Introduction to Workshop</b>
<b>10:00 ANG</b>	<b>Speakers:</b> Hon. Barbara Webster-Bourne, <i>Speaker of Anguilla House of Assembly</i> Hon. Cora Richardson-Hodge, <i>Chair Anguilla PAC</i> Jon Davies, <i>Chief Executive, CPA UK</i>
14:20 GMT	<b>Session 1: Managing an Inquiry and Preparing for a Committee Hearing</b>
<b>10:20 ANG</b>	This session will emphasise the role Select Committees play in scrutiny. It will focus on the planning of committee business, questioning techniques and good practice when conducting a committee hearing session as a member and as a Chair.  <b>Speakers:</b> Jo Corkish, <i>Third Clerk at Clerk of Tynwald's Office</i> Nick Smith MP, <i>Member for Blaenau Gwent</i> Ms Pam Webster, <i>Former PAC Chair and MHA</i>
15:30 GMT	<b>Break</b>
<b>11:30 ANG</b>	
15:45 GMT	<b>Session 2: Roles and Responsibilities of Witnesses</b>
<b>11:45 ANG</b>	This session targets Accounting Officers. It focuses on powers of the PAC in a small jurisdiction and the role and responsibilities of witnesses, including how to prepare for an evidence session, how to carry yourself as a witness, and how to relate to the PAC.  <b>Speakers:</b> Daniel Davies, <i>CEO, Department of Home Affairs, Isle of Man</i>
16:30 GMT	<b>Session 3: How to Remain Effective as a PAC in a Virtual World</b>
<b>12:30 ANG</b>	This session explores the challenges and opportunities of operating virtually as a PAC. Speaking from two perspectives (PAC member and PAC Clerk), Speakers will share how to remain effective as a PAC in a virtual world, from their recent first-hand experience.  <b>Speakers:</b> Rhianon Passmore MS, <i>Member of the Senedd PAC</i> Fay Bowen, <i>Clerk to the National Assembly for Wales PAC</i>
17:10 GMT	<b>Session 4: Feedback</b>
<b>13:10 ANG</b>	
17:30 GMT	<b>End of Day 1</b>
<b>13:30 ANG</b>	

Tuesday, 17 November, 2020

TIME	SESSION
14:00 GMT	<b>Introduction of Session and Summary of Previous Day</b>
<b>10:00 ANG</b>	
14:05 GMT	<b>Session 5: Committee Exercise</b>
<b>10:05 ANG</b>	Participants will form a committee and take evidence, based on a real case study. This will be an opportunity to apply and demonstrate the learning gained during Day 1 of the workshop.  <b>Speaker:</b> Jo Corkish, <i>Third Clerk at Clerk of Tynwald's Office</i>
15:00 GMT	<b>Reflection and Recommendations</b>
<b>11:00 ANG</b>	To conclude the committee exercise, participants will be encouraged to reflect on what they have learnt and identify remaining gaps to address in their knowledge.  <b>Speaker:</b> Jo Corkish, <i>Third Clerk at Clerk of Tynwald's Office</i>
15:30 GMT	<b>Break</b>
<b>11:30 ANG</b>	
16:00 GMT	<b>Session 6: Producing a Fair and Balanced Report</b>
<b>12:00 ANG</b>	This session will explore the process of report formulation, and steps to take to leverage committee reports effectively, in order to encourage an executive response and achieve impact.  <b>Speaker:</b> Dr Anna Dickson, <i>Research and Information Unit, UK Parliament</i>
17:00 GMT	<b>Session 7: Measuring Success as a PAC</b>
<b>13:00 ANG</b>	This session will be an opportunity to consider international standards and good PAC practice.  <b>Speaker:</b> Matthew Hamilton, <i>Monitoring &amp; Evaluations Manager, CPA UK</i>
17:30 GMT	<b>Final Discussion and Feedback</b>
<b>13:30 ANG</b>	<b>Speaker:</b> Matthew Hamilton, <i>Monitoring &amp; Evaluations Manager, CPA UK</i>
17:45 GMT	<b>End of Day 2</b>
<b>13:45 ANG</b>	

## ABOUT CPA UK

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CPA UK supports and strengthens parliamentary democracy throughout the Commonwealth. It focuses on key themes including women in parliament, modern slavery, financial oversight, security and trade.

Peer to peer learning is central to the way CPA UK works. CPA UK brings together UK and Commonwealth parliamentarians and officials to share knowledge and learn from each other. It aims to improve parliamentary oversight, scrutiny and representation and is located in and funded by the UK Parliament.

For more information, please visit the CPA UK website at [www.uk-cpa.org](http://www.uk-cpa.org) and follow on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/cpa\\_uk](https://www.twitter.com/cpa_uk).





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