

Annual Report and Accounts: 2023-24

July 2024



The Welsh Parliament is the democratically elected body that represents the interests of Wales and its people. Commonly known as the Senedd, it makes laws for Wales, agrees Welsh taxes and holds the Welsh Government to account.

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July 2024



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▼ **We Belong Here: Celebrating Women in Democracy event**

October 2023



Overview

This Overview section provides information on the purpose, structure and strategic goals of the Commission and some key activities which have taken place over the past year.



Foreword



Rt Hon. Elin Jones MS
Llywydd, Welsh Parliament

I am pleased to present this Annual Report covering my eighth year as Llywydd; the third report of the Sixth Senedd.

Change has been the hallmark of the past year in a political and parliamentary sense.

Two major change programmes – Senedd Reform and Ways of Working – have dominated the Senedd Commission’s work as we continue to ensure that our Parliament, its structures and procedures are fit for the future.

The Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Bill that will increase the number of Senedd Members to 96 was introduced in September and completed its legislative journey through the Senedd on 8 May, securing a super-majority in its favour. Through our major

change programmes and in close collaboration with Welsh Government colleagues, Commission officials are developing proposals to ensure a smooth transition to the Seventh Senedd.

Committees have continued to demonstrate how the Senedd adds value to the democratic process, engaging with the public and hearing first-hand testimonies on a range of issues that matter to the people of Wales.

With the nomination of a new First Minister in March and subsequent changes to the membership of Committees, Senedd Commission officials have supported new

Committee Chairs and members to undertake their new duties and continue robust scrutiny of the government.

The Senedd and its committees have continued their work in hybrid form where innovation continues to be a hallmark of how our Parliament operates. The Wales Covid-19 Inquiry Special Purpose Committee has embarked on its work of examining each stage of the UK Covid-19 Inquiry and propose any areas of Welsh Government and other Welsh public bodies' preparedness and response that should be subject to further examination. The Committee operates with a pioneering model of co-chairing.

This year has also seen the conclusion of the second Welsh Youth Parliament. The second cohort of young Members have built on the admirable work of the First Youth Parliament and demonstrated the importance of providing a voice for the young people of Wales. Their inquiries into mental health, public transport and the length of the school day reflected the priorities of their peers, and brought them firmly to the attention of Ministers.

As we mark a quarter of a century of devolution this year, all Members and I remain indebted to Commission staff for their continued commitment and enthusiasm in providing outstanding parliamentary support, and for striving to place the Senedd at the heart of Welsh life.

Introduction



Manon Antoniazzi
Chief Executive and Clerk of the Senedd

The past year has been one of great change, of innovation, and a year where we have seen the Senedd become more and more of a focal point of Welsh public life.

Over the last year, we've seen proposals to increase the number of Members of the Senedd and introduce a new electoral system mature into Bills. The Senedd Commission has played its role by supporting robust scrutiny of the proposals, informing the cost estimates required, and prudently preparing for the implementation of the reforms in future years.

The Commission's corporate planning processes have been developed further to ensure sustainable use of resources and value for public money. We are refining our budget planning to ensure that priorities, resources and delivery are geared towards the medium-term goals as well as to current year targets.

And after years of restrictions due to the pandemic, we're pleased that more and more people are visiting the Senedd once again and engaging with its work.

We welcomed 150,000 visitors to the Senedd and Pierhead in 2023, with 70% of those we engaged with telling us they had never engaged with the Senedd before. Nearly 3,000 young people from across Wales contributed to the Welsh Youth Parliament's work on sustainable travel and the length of the school day. And the Senedd Café became the first venue in Wales to achieve accreditation from the Kids in Museums Family Café Standard – a benchmark that recognises cafés that provide a warm welcome for everyone.

Last year also saw our most popular petition ever, with over 460,000 signatures. The steps of the Senedd have been seen as a place to come for protests on national and international issues, and we've seen an increase of news coverage of the Senedd and its committees' work.

Our commitment to inclusivity and representation continues through the monitoring of the diversity of evidence presented to Senedd committees, enabling us to identify underrepresented voices and understand the barriers and incentives to participation.

By placing people's lived experiences at the heart of our work, we've not only supported committees to better understand the impact of decisions on people's lives but also made our communications more relatable to different audiences.

We are determined that the Senedd is a parliament where all voices are listened to and valued.

The year ahead of us is one where we will be looking back at 25 years of the Senedd and of devolution in Wales, but also one where we will be looking forward and preparing for the Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Bill becoming law.

Our role, though, as Commission staff will continue as it always has: to support the Members of the Senedd to serve the people of Wales.

Statement of Purpose

The Welsh Parliament

The Welsh Parliament is the democratically elected body that represents the interests of Wales and its people. Commonly known as the Senedd, it makes laws for Wales, agrees Welsh taxes and holds the Welsh Government to account.

The Senedd Commission

The Senedd Commission serves the Senedd to help facilitate its long-term success as a strong, accessible, inclusive and forward looking democratic institution and legislature that delivers effectively for the people of Wales.

Senedd Commission Strategic Goals for the Sixth Senedd

- To provide outstanding parliamentary support
 - To have citizens at the heart of all we do
 - To use resources sustainably
-

Priorities for the Senedd Commission for the Sixth Senedd

- Providing support for Members across the range of business, and adapting to Members' needs.
 - Responding to, and facilitating constitutional change, including strengthening interinstitutional networks and learning.
 - Maintaining a good reputation and developing sustainable services.
 - Listening to citizens and showing how we act on what they tell us; that we are their voice.
 - Encouraging and inspiring citizens to be involved in our deliberations online and in person.
 - Establishing the Senedd as the focal point of Welsh public life, which leads the way as a bilingual organisation.
 - Putting sustainability at the heart of all that we do.
 - Building and developing a skilled, committed and diverse workforce, equipped with the technology and facilities to perform their roles.
 - Effective planning and financial and project management, so we can respond quickly and flexibly to meet the needs of the Senedd.
 - Providing assurance through appropriate governance and evidencing value for money.
 - Providing a safe and healthy environment to work and engage.
-

Commissioners

The Government of Wales Act 2006 prescribes that the Welsh Parliament (Senedd) appoints Commissioners who are responsible for providing the Senedd with the staff and resources it needs to carry out its role effectively for the people of Wales.

The Commissioners are charged with the governance of the organisation and are accountable to the Senedd. The responsibilities of the Commissioners as the 'governing board' include setting the organisation's strategic aims, providing the leadership to put them into effect, overseeing the delivery of those strategic aims and reporting and being accountable to the Senedd on their stewardship.

The Commission is chaired by the Llywydd and is made up of four Members of the Senedd who have been appointed by the Senedd. The Commissioners have collective responsibility for decisions and have equal status in discussions, and each Commission member is involved in the full range of decision making. Each Commissioner also has oversight of a specific portfolio of responsibilities.



The Rt Hon. Elin Jones MS (Plaid Cymru)

The Llywydd is Chair of the Commission and also has responsibility as a Commissioner for communications.

The Rt Hon. Elin Jones attended 9 out of 9 Commission meetings.



Rhun ap Iorwerth MS (Plaid Cymru)

Resigned 19 June 2023.

Commissioner with responsibility for official languages.

Rhun ap Iorwerth attended 2 out of 2 Commission meetings.



Hefin David MS (Welsh Labour)

Appointed 17 April 2024

Commissioner with responsibility for budget and governance (including Audit and Risk Assurance Committee membership).

Hefin David attended no meetings as his appointment post-dates the period of meetings reported.



Janet Finch-Saunders MS (Welsh Conservatives)

Commissioner with responsibility for sustainable development.

Janet Finch-Saunders attended 9 out of 9 Commission meetings.



Adam Price MS (Plaid Cymru)

Appointed 4 July 2023.

Commissioner with responsibility for official languages.

Adam Price attended 7 out of 7 Commission meetings.



Ken Skates MS (Welsh Labour)

Resigned 15 April 2024

Commissioner with responsibility for budget and governance (including Audit and Risk Assurance Committee membership).

Ken Skates attended 9 out of 9 Commission meetings.



Joyce Watson MS (Welsh Labour)

Commissioner with responsibility for equalities.

Joyce Watson attended 9 out of 9 Commission meetings.

Independent Advisers

The Commission appoints Independent Advisers to ensure that Commissioners and the Commission's executive team are provided with constructive challenge and assurance that governance arrangements are correct, effective and appropriate.

The Independent Advisers act in a non-political, advisory capacity. They are individuals with a wealth of boardroom, government, public and private sector experience who bring diverse knowledge, skills and expertise to help the Commission meet its own high standards of good governance and efficient use of public money. They are able to provide objective insight and constructive challenge and afford assurance.

The Independent Advisers are involved in a number of the activities of the Commission, acting as critical friends on projects, through interactions with areas of Commission services, in their roles on advisory Committees to the Commission and contributing an external perspective and independence to our corporate governance.

Remuneration

Independent Advisers receive non pensionable pay of £5,000 per annum, with £7,000 per annum for the Chairs.



Robert (Bob) Evans (November 2018 - Present)

Bob took up his appointment as an Independent Adviser and a member of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) in November 2018. In February 2019, he was appointed Chair of ARAC.

Bob Evans attended 4 out of 4 ARAC meetings.



Dr Aled Eirug (April 2019 - Present)

Aled took up his appointment as an Independent Adviser in April 2019 and serves as a member of ARAC until July 2023. He was appointed as Chair of the Remuneration Committee in November 2023.

Aled Eirug attended 3 out of 3 Remuneration Committee meetings, and 2 out of 2 meetings during his ARAC membership. Aled is a standing invitee of ARAC.



Dr Mark Egan (November 2022 - Present)

Mark took up his appointment as an Independent Adviser in November 2022 and serves as a member of ARAC.

Mark Egan has attended 4 out of 4 ARAC meetings.



Professor Uzo Iwobi (November 2022 - Present)

Uzo took up her appointment as an Independent Adviser in November 2022 and serves as a member of the Remuneration Committee. Uzo is also a member of the Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group and a standing invitee of ARAC.

Uzo Iwobi has attended 3 out of 3 Remuneration Committee meetings, and 1 out of 1 Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group meetings.



Menai Owen-Jones (November 2022 - Present)

Menai took up her appointment as an Independent Adviser in November 2022 and serves as a member of ARAC and the Remuneration Committee. Menai is also a member of the Workforce Steering Group.

Menai Owen-Jones has attended 4 out of 4 ARAC meetings, 3 out of 3 Remuneration Committee meetings, and 1 out of 1 Workforce Steering Group meetings.

Commission Senior Leadership



Manon Antoniazzi
Chief Executive and Clerk of the Senedd

In accordance with the *Government of Wales Act 2006*, the Senedd Commission delegates its functions, including responsibility for the management of staff, to the Chief Executive and Clerk, subject to a number of exceptions and conditions.

The Chief Executive is also the Principal Accounting Officer for the Commission. To support her, the Chief Executive has a team of Directors who share the responsibility for strategic corporate management in addition to the specific responsibilities outlined.



Siwan Davies
Deputy Chief Executive and Clerk and Director of Senedd Business

Provision of Commission and Members' support services, including support to the office of the Llywydd and the senior management team, secretariat services to the corporate Boards and Commission.

Provision of specialist parliamentary, legal, information governance, constitutional and research services to the Senedd, ensuring the efficient and effective delivery of Senedd business including the passing of legislation through the Senedd and providing impartial expert advice to Members of the Senedd.



Arwyn Jones
Director of Communications and Engagement

Provision of translation and reporting, including the Official Languages Scheme, and provision of ICT and the Programme and Change Office. Ensuring efficient and effective delivery of our corporate communications, visitor engagement and public information services.



Edward (Ed) Williams
Director of Senedd Resources

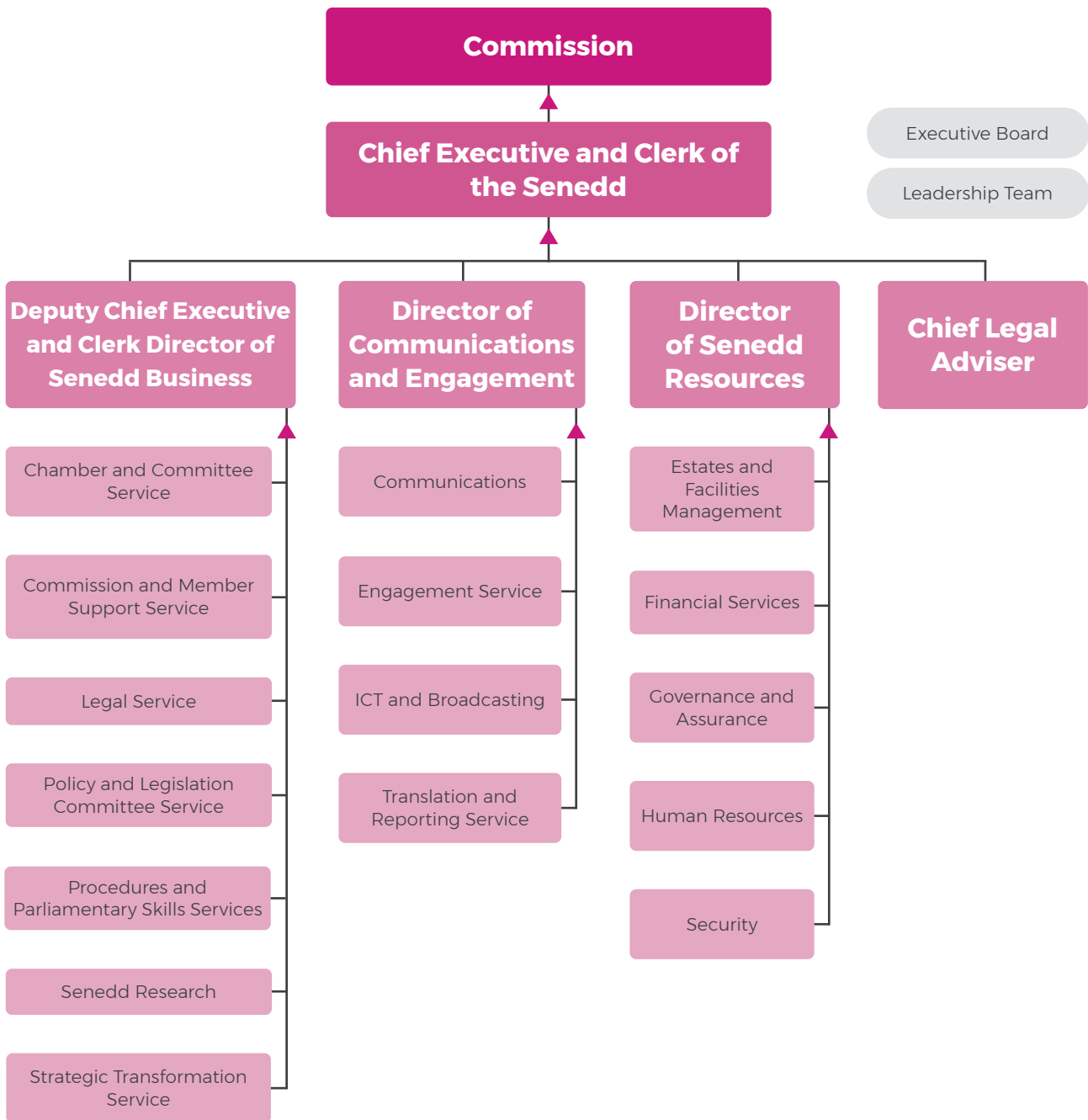
Provision of Estates and Facilities, Human Resources functions, Security, Procurement, Strategic Planning Unit and Corporate Governance and Assurance. The Chief Finance Officer, responsible for corporate financial strategy, planning, budget management, payments and pensions reports to Ed Williams.



Huw Williams
Chief Legal Adviser

Provision of expert and impartial legal advice to the Presiding Officer, the Commissioners, Members of Senedd, the Chief Executive and other Senedd Commission departments.

Governance Structure



Independent Advisory Bodies

Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

Review and monitor effectiveness of governance, internal controls, and risk management.

Remuneration Committee

Provides assurance in relation to the Chief Executive and Directors remuneration.

Commission Management

The Executive Board is responsible for ensuring that the Commission's financial and staffing resources are planned to meet known requirements. Specifically, in accordance with the Commission's strategic aims, it is responsible for planning and prioritising the Commission's project fund, which is focussed on the maintenance of the estate, the delivery of effective ICT services and the delivery of new projects to improve the performance and effectiveness of services.

A significant element of the Executive Board's responsibility is to provide strategic oversight and leadership of the Commission's change programme¹. The Executive Board is chaired by the Chief Executive and includes the Directors, Chief Finance Officer, Chief People Officer, and Head of Legal Services. It is the strategic decision-making body for all matters delegated by the Commission. It is also an advisory body to the Commission, in setting the Commission's Strategy, goals and priorities, the budget, and managing corporate risks.

The Leadership Team includes the members of the Executive Board and all Heads of Service. The Leadership Team's primary responsibility is to ensure the effective delivery of operational plans and priorities.

Communication between the Commission and Members of the Senedd

Effective communication between the Commission and Members of the Senedd is important in order to inform the provision of the highest possible standards of service. The Chief Executive and the Llywydd play a key role in facilitating this communication, with the Commission and Member Support Service providing support in handling concerns and issues raised by Members.

Various approaches are in place for communication between the Commission and Members, including regular feedback from Commissioners to their group members about the work of the Commission and provision of information through the Members' Intranet. A Senedd Party Contact Group provides structured, planned meetings with party groups to inform Commission thinking and decisions.

¹ The Commission's Change Programme includes a number of projects and initiatives, which are managed by various teams across the Senedd. The Programme Office has overall responsibility for reporting progress, exceptions, risks and issues to the Executive Board on a regular basis.

The Head of Member Liaison works with colleagues to plan engagement and communications with Members, covering appropriate timing, content, style and the channels to be used.

The second Member and Support Staff Survey for the Sixth Senedd was undertaken in Autumn 2023. The Commission has agreed to conduct this survey three times during the Senedd term, to gain understanding of how well the services it provides have performed, and how they can be improved. In addition to the standard questions, information was sought about communication preferences to help shape the way information about Commission services is provided to meet Members' needs.



Phyl
17 y Dde

The Chief Dock
Manager's Office

Arwyn
Penarth

Penarth
Head

La
St

Yr Ardal
Fasnachol

Commercial
District

Basin (y
Gardiner

New Docks
Basin

Summary of Activity

Commission Strategic Goal	Commission Priorities	Identified Corporate Risks	Areas identified for focus and development during 2023-24	Progress made during 2023-24	Looking forward to 2024-25
<p>To provide outstanding parliamentary support</p>	<p>Providing support for Members across the range of business, and adapting to Members' needs</p> <p>① ② ③ ④</p>	<p>Members' Regulatory Framework</p>	<p>Progressing the work on simplifying and communicating rules, and procedures in our regulatory framework as it applies to Members</p>	<p>Dialogue developed between the Independent Remuneration Board and the Senedd Commission aiming to establish a shared understanding of how Members' needs will be supported through Commission services and the Board's Determination, looking to the Seventh Senedd and beyond, and including discussions on simplification of the Determination.</p> <p>Further areas of progress include awareness sessions and training for Members on topical issues, and a refresh of the way information is made available to Members.</p>	<p>Improving and simplifying support for Members</p>
		<p>Senedd Reform</p>	<p>Senedd Reform</p>	<p>Robust governance arrangements are in place to manage preparations for the change this reform proposes. The work of the Senedd Reform Programme Board has provided support for the Commission and Llywydd's contributions during the scrutiny phase of the Bill process, and the implications for the draft budget. This has included an extensive exercise to provide information to Welsh Government and the committees undertaking scrutiny relating to the estimated costs of Senedd Reform to the Senedd Commission.</p>	<p>Prudently preparing for Senedd Reform</p>

Commission Strategic Goal	Commission Priorities	Identified Corporate Risks	Areas identified for focus and development during 2023-24	Progress made during 2023-24	Looking forward to 2024-25
To provide outstanding parliamentary support	Providing support for Members across the range of business, and adapting to Members' needs ① ② ③ ④	Senedd Reform driven Estates Projects		Prudent preparations made for Senedd Reform estates projects to reconfigure the estate to meet the needs of a larger Senedd and its statutory duties, including close working with Members, Welsh Government and Commission staff, and the procurement of specialist design services to ensure the Siambwr meets Senedd needs.	Carrying out an estate and digital investment programme
		Failure of the Cardiff Bay 2032 Project		The Commission formally initiated the Cardiff Bay 2032 project, and has taken steps to put in place effective governance and ensure delivery of value for money and intended benefits. The Commission approved the Strategic Outline Case for the project and authorised it to progress to the next stage of detailed project planning. This set the vision, objectives, benefits and, conducting an initial value for money appraisal, informed a preferred way forward.	Continuing to progress the Cardiff Bay 2032 project, which will provide the Commission's future accommodation beyond the ending of the current Tŷ Hywel lease.
	Responding to and facilitating constitutional change, including strengthening interinstitutional networks and learning	UK-related Constitutional Change	UK Constitutional Change	Currently considering the implications of the UK's Internal Market Act 2020 for the Senedd. Since the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act (REUL Act) received Royal Assent in June 2023, Standing Orders have been amended to enable committees a function to scrutinise Statutory Instruments flowing from the Act.	

Commission Strategic Goal	Commission Priorities	Identified Corporate Risks	Areas identified for focus and development during 2023-24	Progress made during 2023-24	Looking forward to 2024-25
				Commission staff continue to monitor the potential impact of the Act.	
To provide outstanding parliamentary support	Maintaining a good reputation and developing sustainable services	Corporate Capacity and Capability	Embedding the updated corporate and service planning framework	The Commission conducted a second round of its updated corporate and service planning activity. The Executive Board approved a Corporate Plan covering a planning horizon of two years up to the end of the Sixth Senedd, with a refreshed set of priorities to provide an improved framework for decision-making, resource allocation and progress monitoring. Service Areas plans were developed to ensure service area deliverables and the resourcing needed to realise them were identified in a timely way.	

Commission Strategic Goal	Commission Priorities	Identified Corporate Risks	Areas identified for focus and development during 2023-24	Progress made during 2022-23	Looking forward to 2024-25
To have citizens at the heart of all we do	Listening to citizens and showing how we act on what they tell us; that we are their voice 7			Evidence gathering sessions ensure the lived experiences of those directly affected by policies and legislation are at the heart of informing recommendations made to Welsh Government.	Delivering against our Communications and Engagement Strategy for the Sixth Senedd
	Encouraging and inspiring citizens to be involved in our deliberations online and in person 5 6			Held numerous citizen engagement activities, including online advisory group and face to face focus group sessions.	
	Establishing the Senedd as the focal point of Welsh public life, which leads the way as a bilingual organisation		Taking action to address any emerging issues around compliance with our Official Languages Scheme	Guidance has been developed and implemented to facilitate the recognition of emerging issues and differentiate between examples of failure to comply with the scheme and complaints in order to take the appropriate remedial steps.	

Commission Strategic Goal	Commission Priorities	Identified Corporate Risks	Areas identified for focus and development during 2023-24	Progress made during 2022-23	Looking forward to 2024-25
To use resources sustainably	Putting sustainability at the heart of all that we do 14			<p>Capitalising on more consistent working patterns and use of the estate has ensured utilities use continues to reflect occupancy levels.</p> <p>Focus has been on behavioural change and efficiency savings to drive down consumption. Low-carbon travel is being made as easy as possible for Members and staff.</p> <p>Forward planning has included supporting work with the District Heat Network being built around Cardiff, which will eventually supply our two largest buildings with low-carbon heat.</p>	Ensuring that we continue to deliver the Commission's sustainability ambitions through the Carbon Neutral Strategy
	Building and developing a skilled, committed and diverse workforce, equipped with the technology and facilities to perform their roles 10 11 12	Cyber-attack		Cyber-security remains one of the Commission's most significant risks and is subject to constant monitoring, with regular updates provided to the Executive Board and the Commission's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. During the year, additional resources have been allocated to mitigating this risk, with continuous activity to improve our resilience.	
		Corporate Capacity and Capability	Finalising and implementing the Medium-Term Resourcing Framework (MTRF)	The Commission's first MTRF, comprising a 3-year Medium Term Financial Plan and a Workforce Plan, was approved and its principles were translated into the 2024-25 annual budget. The MTRF has been	Building a committed, skilled, diverse workforce

Commission Strategic Goal	Commission Priorities	Identified Corporate Risks	Areas identified for focus and development during 2023-24	Progress made during 2022-23	Looking forward to 2024-25
				refreshed at the end of 2023-24, with the latest version for approval in 2024-25, covering a planning horizon of 2025-26 to 2027-28.	
To use resources sustainably	Effective planning and financial and project management, so we can respond quickly and flexibly to meet the needs of the Senedd 8		Ensuring project and programme governance arrangements remain effective, and implementing the portfolio management framework and joint reporting cycles for the Senedd Reform and Ways of Working programmes and other major projects	The Commission progressed delivery of the Ways of Working and Senedd Reform change programmes and delivered its 2023-24 portfolio of change projects. Both programmes are managed via Programme Boards, chaired by Senior Responsible Officers (SROs) that report directly to, and are accountable to, the Executive Board. To ensure effective governance, the Ways of Working Programme Board operates in accordance with Managing Successful Programmes expectations, meeting on a regular monthly basis during 2023-24 and developing and approving a refreshed Terms of Reference and a Programme Strategy.	
	Providing assurance through appropriate governance and evidencing value for money 9 15	Data Protection (Senedd Commission)		The programme of work to ensure the Commission's compliance with data protection legislation, including work with service areas and Information Governance Champions to raise awareness and to ensure Data Protection Impact Assessments are carried out appropriately, continues.	Maintaining strong Information Governance

Commission Strategic Goal	Commission Priorities	Identified Corporate Risks	Areas identified for focus and development during 2023-24	Progress made during 2022-23	Looking forward to 2024-25
<p>To use resources sustainably</p>	<p>Providing a safe and healthy environment to work and engage</p> <p>13</p>		<p>Finalising and implementing the Ways of Working strategy and programme of work</p>	<p>The Ways of Working Programme moved from its initial Interim Action Plan phase into a set of delivery projects. It delivered its Sarn Mynach 2023 project, successfully relocating its office base in North Wales to the Welsh Government’s central offices in Llandudno Junction.</p> <p>It has initiated the Tŷ Hywel 2026 and Siambr 2026 projects to prepare for, and deliver, the adaptations to the Senedd estate that are needed to accommodate an additional 36 Members of the Senedd and their staff.</p>	<p>Delivering the Ways of Working Programme and its constituent projects.</p>
		<p>Dignity and Respect</p>		<p>Action has been undertaken to improve Members’ awareness of the Standards regime. Further awareness sessions have been delivered to political groups by the Commissioner for Standards, and training has been provided on dignity and respect specifically. These will continue to be part of the provision on an ongoing basis throughout the course of a Senedd term.</p>	<p>Supporting our culture of Dignity and Respect</p>

Our KPIs – Further information on our KPIs can be found on page 34.

- 1 Parliamentary Business taken place as scheduled.
- 2 RoP published to deadline
- 3 Committee transcript published to deadline
- 4 Provision of bilingual papers
- 5 Citizen engagement
- 6 Followers of Senedd corporate media channels
- 7 Engagement with media distribution platforms
- 8 Operational budget
- 9 Unqualified accounts
- 10 Staff survey
- 11 Welsh language learners
- 12 Job applications from ethnic minority individuals
- 13 Staff sickness rate
- 14 Annual carbon footprint
- 15 Spend with Welsh suppliers

Further detail on how the risk profile has changed during the year is included in the Performance Analysis section on page 32. Further information on the process and mitigation of these risks and the progress made on the areas identified for focus and development during 2023-24 can be found in the Governance Statement on page 114.

▼ **Map of Wales playmat in the Senedd**

Designed by the Commission's Brand and Design team



Performance Analysis

This Performance Analysis section provides details on how we have progressed work on the Commission's priorities under our strategic goals.



Corporate Key Performance Indicator Report

Our Corporate Key Performance Indicator Report looks at how the Senedd Commission performed against its strategic goals for the period April 2023 to March 2024.

Some of our indicators are static and report year on year, and some indicators provide 'stretch' to improve performance in a number of identified areas. These indicators are reviewed annually.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the Senedd Commission adapted to the changing situation and some of our ways of working adjusted as a result. This should be borne in mind when making direct comparisons year-on-year.

In order to ensure we adequately reflected these changes to our working practices, and to ensure they were focused around the Commission's goals and priorities, a review of our key performance indicators was conducted at the beginning of the Sixth Senedd. This is the second year reporting on the key performance indicators since the review, and therefore previous year's data is not available for all indicators.

To provide outstanding parliamentary support

To have citizens at the heart of all we do

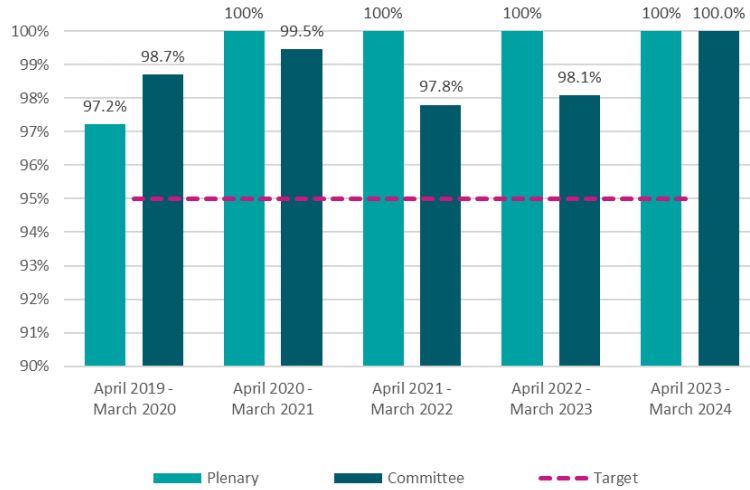
To use resources sustainably

To provide outstanding parliamentary support

Progress during the year:

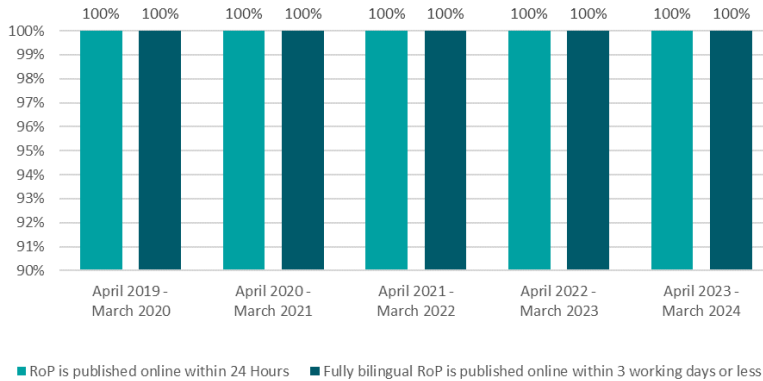
1 Plenary and committees continued to meet in hybrid format

Plenary and Committee meetings taken place within statutory requirements



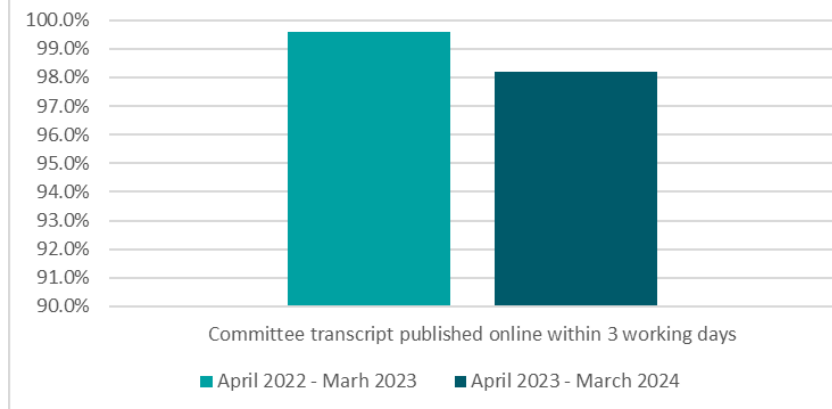
2 All targets with regard to the Record of Proceedings (RoP) were met 100 per cent throughout the year

RoP published to deadline



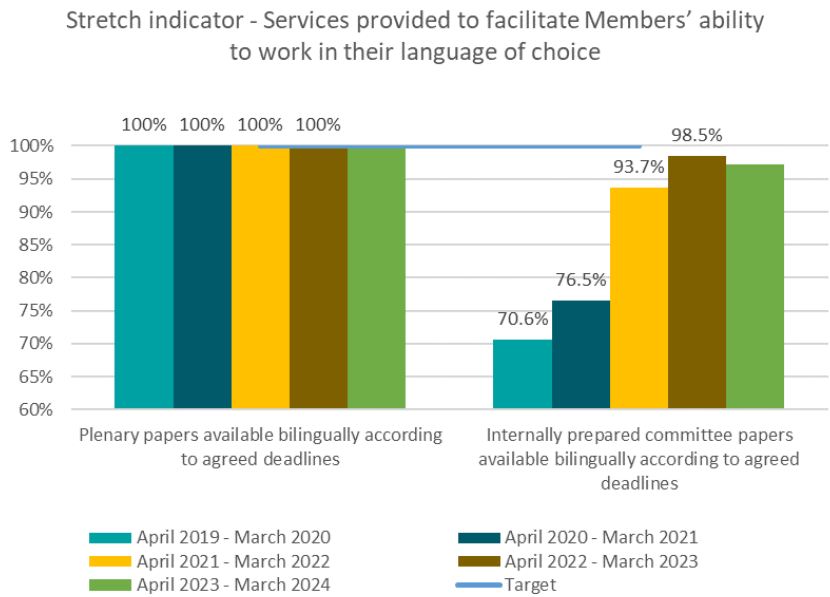
3 A KPI in its 2nd year of reporting is the publication of committee transcripts online (with Welsh contributions translated to English) within three working days. A total of 247 committee transcript deadlines were completed on target. Five committee transcript deadlines were missed due to extremely heavy, time sensitive workloads

Committee transcript published online within 3 working days



To provide outstanding parliamentary support

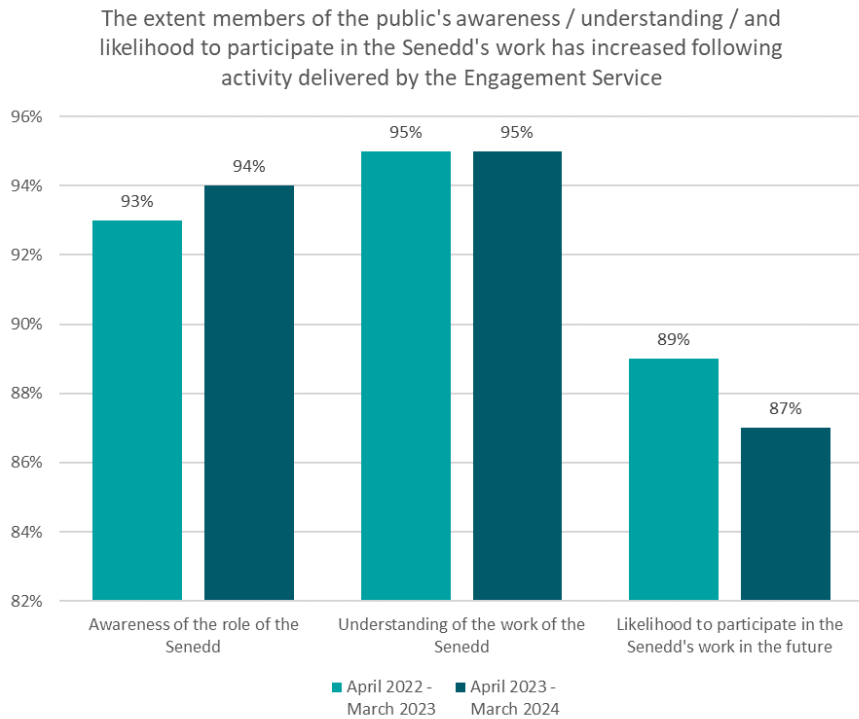
④ Within individual committees, the Chair and the Members may decide not to have all internally prepared papers produced bilingually. Of the 1,182 internally prepared committee papers, 1,148 were produced bilingually



To have citizens at the heart of all we do

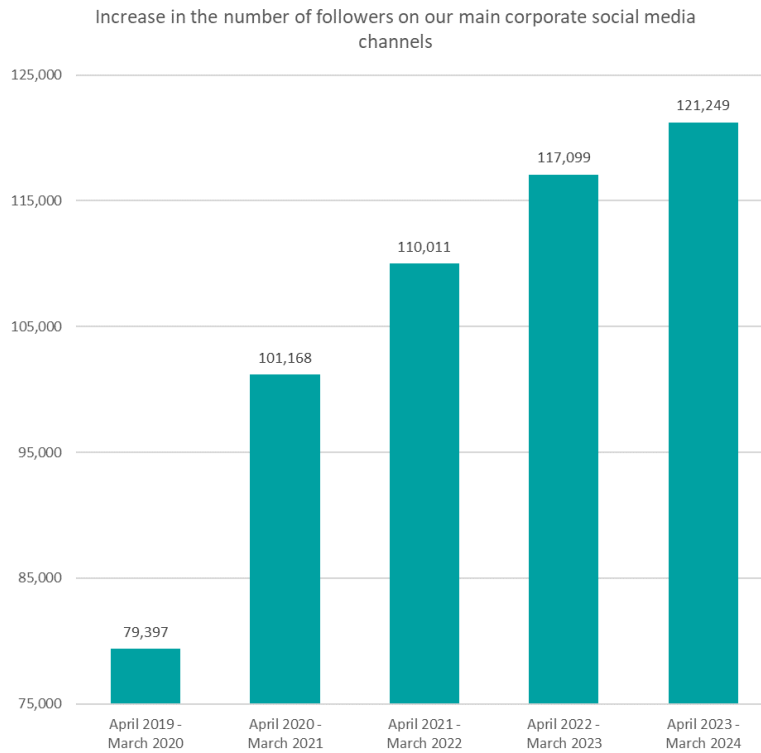
Progress during the year:

⑤ Over the past year we have strengthened our data collection methods in line with our evaluation framework, and increased the number of customer touchpoints to ensure we collect consistent data across the different services we provide. This has meant we can now compare our services against baselines and the impact they have. We are then able to review our engagement methods to continually improve our service offer



To have citizens at the heart of all we do

6 Our net social media audience growth has increased by almost 20% this year. Our long term goal is to grow audiences outside of X to become less reliant on our largest social media following. We've grown LinkedIn by 17%, Instagram by 14% and Facebook by 5.3%, with X only growing 1.1%. With network algorithms focussing more on audience engagement than follower numbers, we have focussed our efforts on engagement. Our overall engagement rate has increased this year to 3.7%, with LinkedIn (8.2%) and Facebook (7.2%) our most engaged with channels. To reach new audiences, we are also working with content creators to reach those who do not, or are less likely, to follow the Senedd. In six months we have had nearly 60,000 video views, and reached nearly 30,000 people on Instagram alone

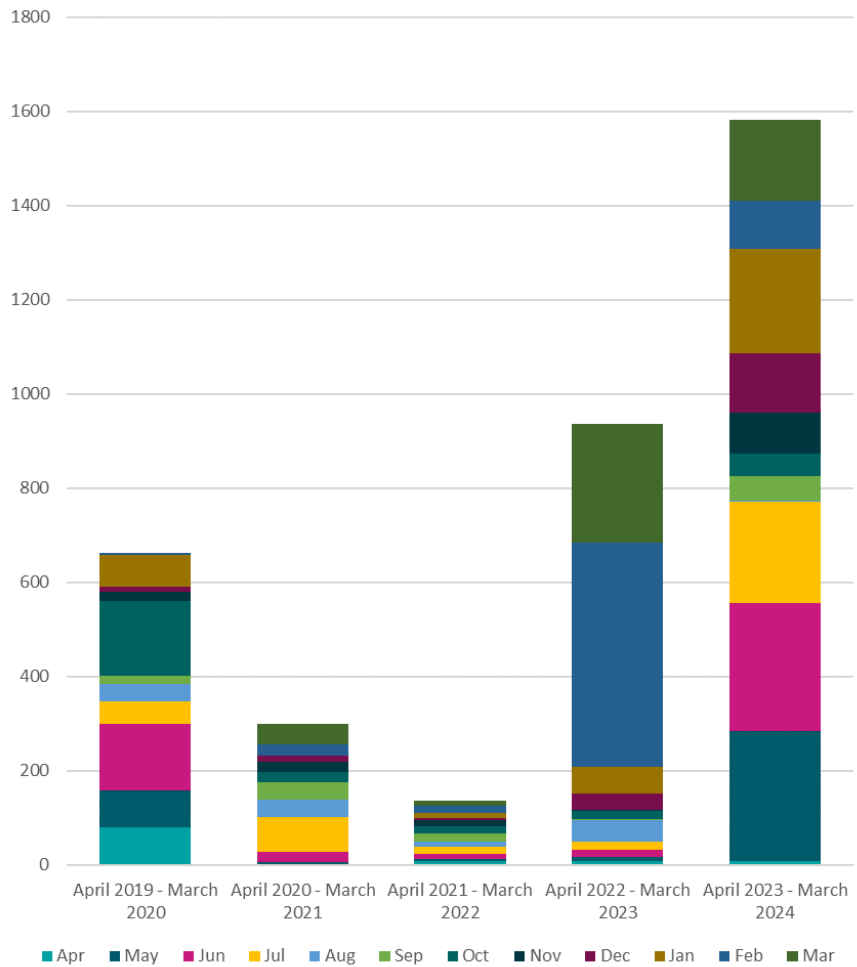


To have citizens at the heart of all we do

Progress during the year:

7 High numbers reflect when a report topic has been distributed via the Press Association news wire, resulting in high reach across Wales and UK. We will continue to nurture relationship with the PA Wales correspondent, and are exploring other ways we can use the new wire to our advantage. The highest totals in May were due to five committee reports with strong case studies, showing that our efforts to source people for media stories pays off

Media distribution platforms engaged with as a result of promotion of committee inquiry and report launches



To use resources sustainably

Progress during the year:

8 To ensure that the level of variance between the Commission's net operational expenditure and its annual operational budget is within 1.5 per cent.

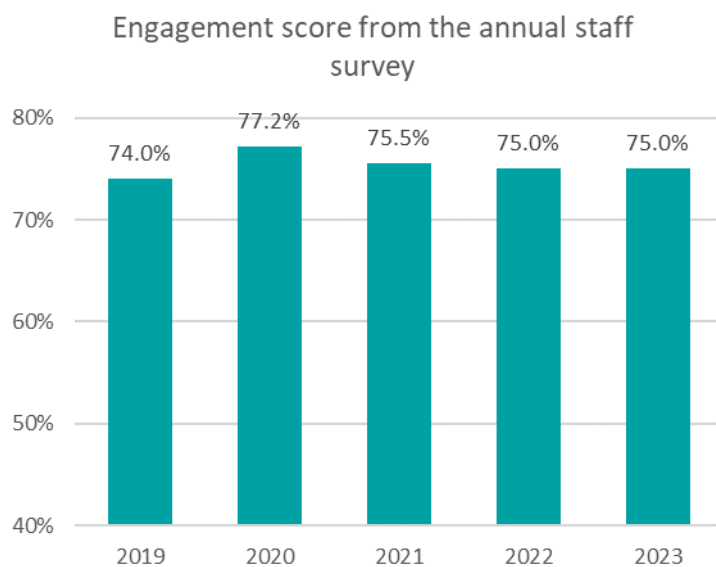
The operational outturn for 2023-24 is 0.52 per cent below budget

No table associated with this KPI

9 Our accounts are unqualified and have been certified by the Auditor General for Wales

No table associated with this KPI

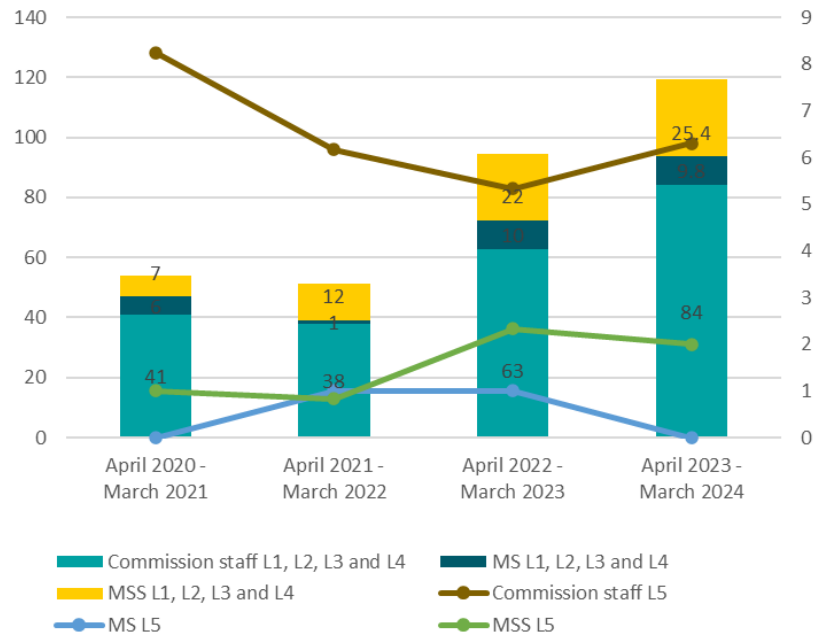
10 Our Annual People Survey was delivered via an independent survey specialist for the fourth successive year, once again using the Six Steps to Workplace engagement: well-being, reward and recognition, information sharing, empowerment, instilling pride and job satisfaction. This year's Workplace Engagement Score is 75%; 7% above the industry average and 6% above the global average



To use resources sustainably

11 Summer recess shows a hiatus as many Members cease attending lessons. However, staff member lessons continue. As staff members leave the Commission, their replacements can take up to 3 months to arrive - hence the dip in numbers. Gloywi (the Welsh language refresher course) is much more ad hoc as often it is required for a specific purpose. Future plans are the enhancement of oral skills as many staff members lack confidence in Welsh

Average number of Welsh language learners enrolled across all levels (L1 to L5) are maintained or increased

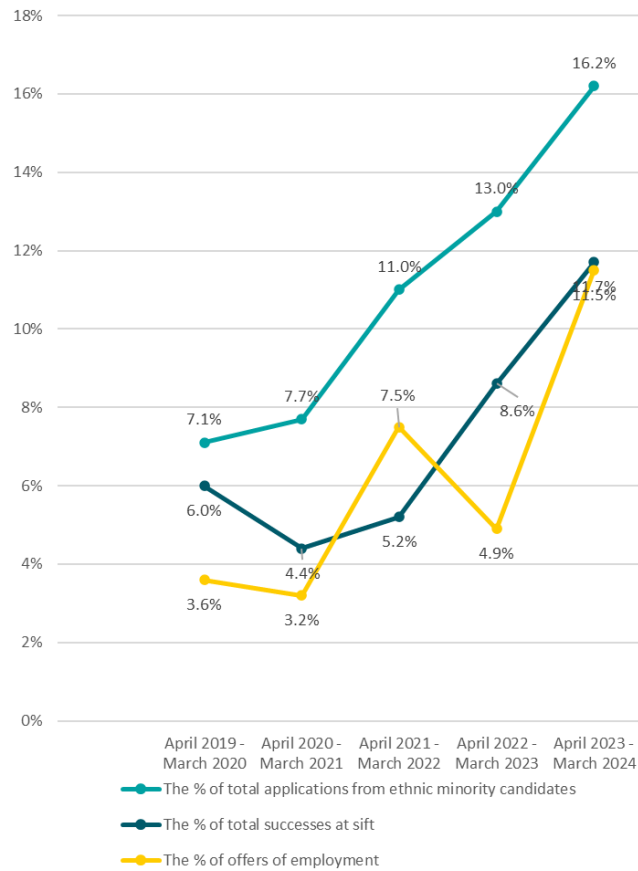


To use resources sustainably

Progress during the year:

12 Our target is to increase year-on-year the number of applications for externally advertised jobs from ethnic minority candidates. As at 31 March 2024, the number of applications from ethnic minority candidates has continued to increase and is currently at 116 (16.2 per cent), compared to the last reporting period where we had 112 (13.0 per cent) applications. This reporting year sees an improvement in the conversion rate between interview and job offer for ethnic minority candidates. We will continue to monitor the conversion rates across our recruitment processes for all protected characteristics, and utilise data insights and candidate feedback to identify any potential and/or actual barriers to adjust our processes accordingly.

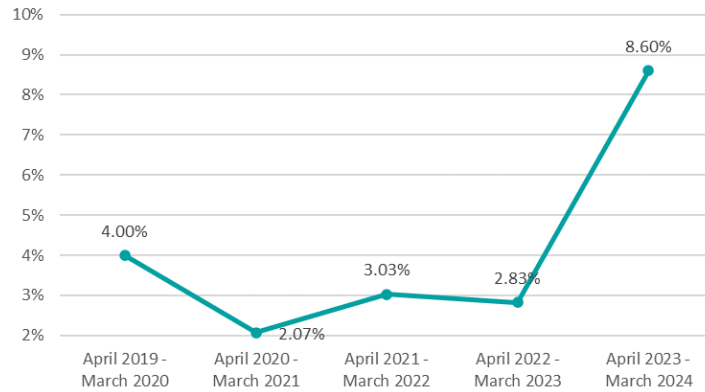
Stretch indicator - Increase applications for externally advertised jobs from individuals identifying as ethnic minority



To use resources sustainably

13 During 2023-24 we have not achieved the sickness absence benchmark of being at, or below, the Civil Service benchmark of 7.9 days. This is mainly due to a high number of long term sickness cases, which peaked in Autumn term (the number of days per person corresponds with this - since a high of 9.0 days per person in October, this has reduced back). Significant progress has been made in addressing these cases and employees who had very long-term sick have exited the organisation, with most others on long term sick during this year having returned to work. A new Long Term Sickness policy has been developed, which we intend to publish in Summer recess. Absence management training for managers is being developed with the aim of launching this by the end of the calendar year.

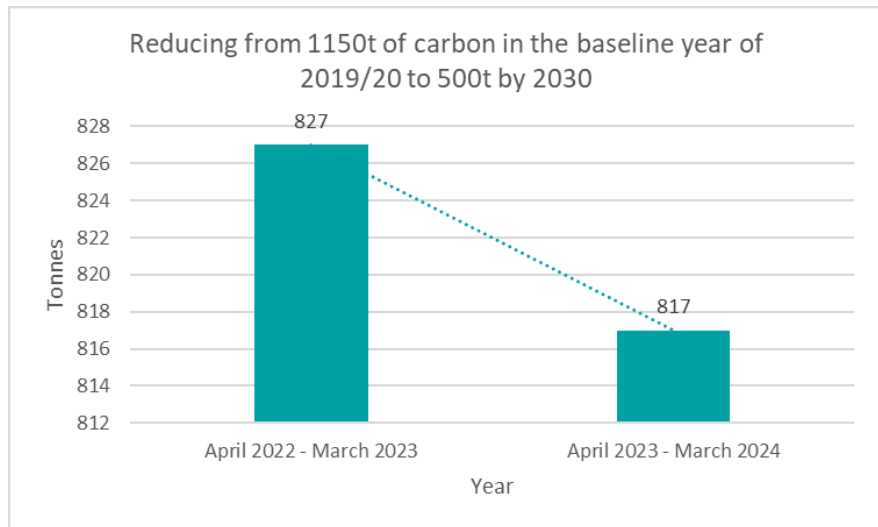
Stretch indicator - Staff rolling 12 month average sickness absence rate is at, or below, the public sector average as reported by the ONS



To use resources sustainably

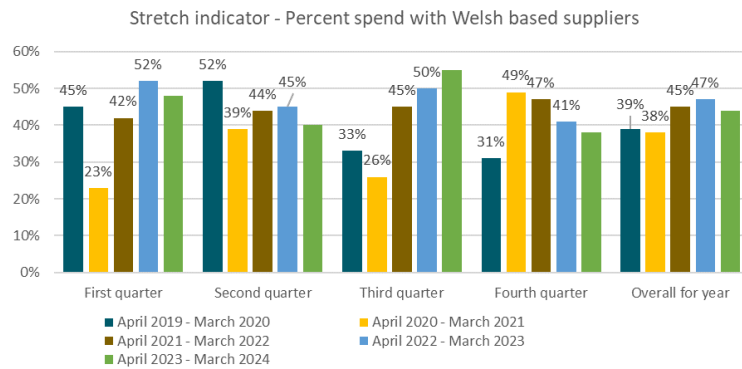
Progress during the year:

14 A new KPI for this reporting period links to the Commission's Carbon Neutral Strategy - to annually reduce our carbon footprint from 1150t in the 2019-20 baseline year to 500t by 2030. The target of <955 tonnes of carbon by year-end has been met (817 tonnes). Efficiency measures introduced have helped to significantly reduce our gas consumption in particular.

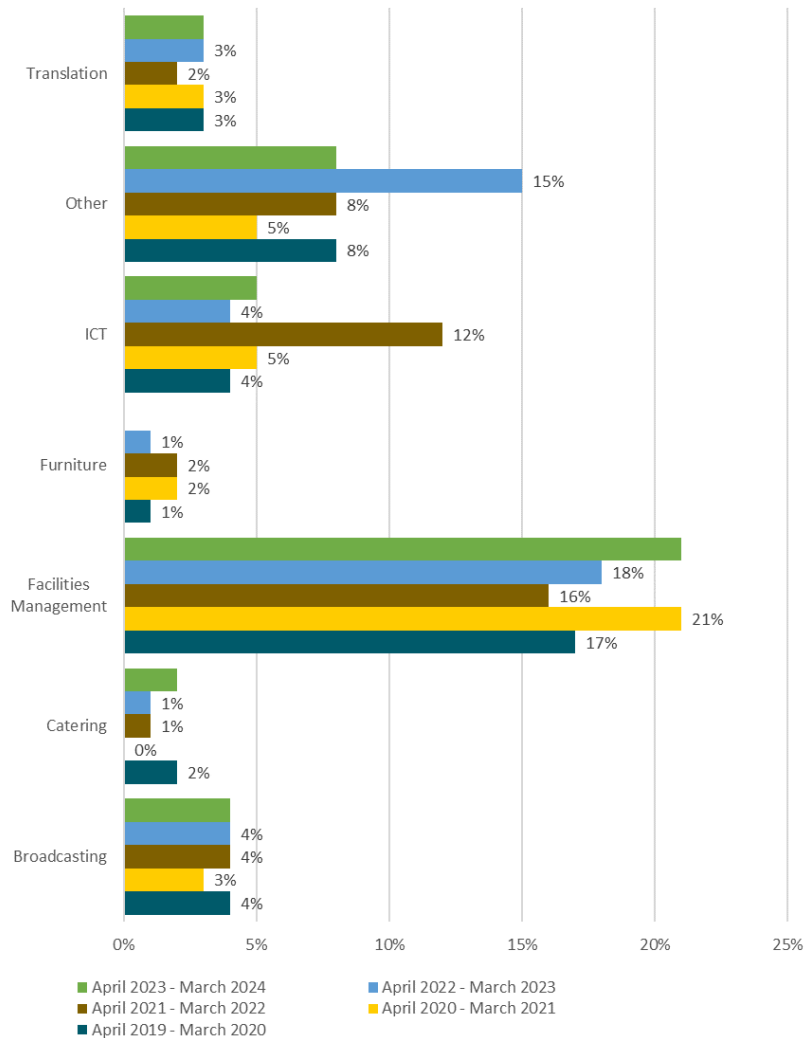


To use resources sustainably

15 Our spend with Welsh-based suppliers has reduced from 47% last year to 44% this year. This is due in part to some one-off contracts, namely Digital Archiving where we spent £125K through Bow Tie, and on the PaR project with Midland HR where we have spent £110K set up costs, (while also having paid Zellis for our existing HR/Payroll system). These two contracts account for 2.5% of our spend.



Stretch indicator - Increase the percentage of Commission spend with Welsh based suppliers to 50% by the end of the Sixth Senedd





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Risk Profile

The most significant risks the Commission faces are captured in a Corporate Risk Register (the Register), which is regularly reviewed and monitored by the Commission's Executive Board and is a standing agenda item in the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meetings. Details of the processes for identification, monitoring and reporting on risks at all levels² are included in the Governance Statement on page 114.

The Commission's Corporate Risk Register consists of the following risks:

Cyber-security

As with all organisations, cyber-security remains one of the Commission's most significant risks and is subject to constant monitoring, with regular updates and detailed assurance reports provided to the Executive Board and the Commission's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. During the year, the additional resources allocated to the cyber-security team, along with continuous mitigation activity, have strengthened controls and resilience. With the controls and mitigations in place, this risk is assessed as having a medium residual likelihood of occurring due to the continually evolving nature of the threat landscape.

Compliance with Data Protection legislation (Senedd Commission)

The Commission has maintained a focus on mitigation of risks around compliance with data protection legislation. This has included the development of refreshed training material for officials. Commission officials also provide training and awareness on data protection compliance to Members, who are data controllers in their own right, and their staff. A data mapping exercise has also been carried out to inform development of a data processing agreement between the Commission and Members. With the controls and mitigations in place, this risk is assessed as having a medium residual likelihood of occurring.

² Corporate risks – identify key events that could prevent or hinder the achievement of the goals and priorities of the Senedd Commission, or any key objectives which have a cross-cutting impact across the organisation. Service level risks – identify key events that could prevent or hinder the achievement of service level objectives.

Senedd Reform

This risk, relating to delivery of the Senedd Reform Programme, has remained on the Register to facilitate the close monitoring of the controls and mitigation by the Executive Board as the programme has developed. The risks are complex given the number of variables and stakeholders and mitigation is key to enabling effective delivery of the programme and protecting the reputation of the institution. Further details on Senedd Reform activity can be found in the *Performance Analysis* section on page 32. Details of the governance arrangements for the Senedd Reform Programme, which also has its own detailed risk register, can be found in the Governance Statement. With the controls and mitigations in place, this risk is assessed as having a medium residual likelihood of occurring.

UK-related Constitutional Change

This risk has remained on the Register to ensure visibility of the management of risks relating to the support provided to the Senedd in response to the current and evolving constitutional landscape of Wales and the UK. With the controls and mitigations in place, this risk is assessed as having a low residual likelihood of occurring.

Regulatory Framework

This risk has remained on the Register as work progresses towards simplifying and communicating rules and procedures in our Regulatory Framework as it applies to Members. Further details on the progress made on mitigation for this risk can be found in the Governance Statement. With the controls and mitigations in place, this risk is assessed as having a medium residual likelihood of occurring.

Corporate Capacity and Capability

This risk has remained on the Register to facilitate monitoring of progress against mitigating actions relating to the capacity and capability of the Commission to deliver against growing and changing demands, particularly in relation to delivery of major transformational change. This has included the development and embedding of robust planning mechanisms to help ensure the right people with the right skills are available to support a resilient and adaptable workforce, particularly whilst delivering significant transformational change. Further details on this can be found in the *Performance Analysis* section under Corporate Planning and in the *Planning and performance management*, and *Progress and performance* sections of the Governance Statement. With the controls and

mitigations in place, this risk is assessed as having a medium residual likelihood of occurring.

Dignity and Respect

This risk has remained on the Register as we continue to implement recommendations from a review of the Commission's Dignity and Respect policies and procedures. We will also monitor progress, and any emerging findings that are relevant to the Commission, from the Standards of Conduct Committee inquiry into dignity and respect in the Senedd. With the controls and mitigations in place, this risk is assessed as having a moderate residual likelihood of occurring.

HR/Payroll system

This risk was added to the Register during the year to ensure visibility of progress against mitigating action around testing and implementing a new HR/Payroll system. With the controls and mitigations in place, this risk is assessed as having a moderate residual likelihood of occurring.

Failure of the Bay 2032 Project

This risk was added to the Register during the year as the complex Cardiff Bay 2032 Project was formally initiated. The aim of the project is to ensure that the future accommodation needs of the Commission and Senedd are met. A project risk register is also in place. Further details on the project, and the Commission's wider Ways of Working Programme, can be found under Ways of Working in the *Performance Analysis* section (page 32) and in the Governance Statement. With the controls and mitigations in place, this risk is assessed as having a low residual likelihood of occurring.

Senedd Reform-Driven Estate Projects

This risk was added to the Register during the year as the Commission made prudent preparations for Senedd Reform. This included activity to progress two projects that would reconfigure the estate to meet the needs of a larger Senedd. There is a risk that these projects fail to meet those needs and/or other relevant Commission statutory duties. Mitigating this risk has involved very close working with Members, Welsh Government and Commission staff, and the procurement of specialist design services to ensure the Siambri meets Senedd needs. With the controls and mitigations in place, this risk is assessed as having a low residual likelihood of occurring.

Financial Review

Under the terms of the *Government of Wales Act 2006*, the Commission must ensure that the Senedd is provided with the staff, property and services required to fulfil its role as a strong, accessible and forward-looking democratic legislature that delivers effectively for the people of Wales.

The Commission's budget aims to be transparent, prudent and set in the context of the long-term financial funding situation in Wales. The Commission has continued to refine the way it presents its budget based on the scrutiny and feedback it has received from both the Public Accounts and Public Administration and Finance Committees. The Commission follows the guidelines provided in the Finance Committee's 'Statement of Principles'.

The Commission presents its budget in a transparent format to show the different expenditure types. The Commission's budget is used to meet the running costs of the Senedd as well as the costs of Senedd Members' salaries and allowances, as determined by the Independent Remuneration Board.

Every five years an additional spend heading is included for Senedd Elections.

Total Commission Budget					
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Operational budget (Note 1)	40	42	41	45	47
Independent Remuneration Board's Determination	16	16	16	17	18
Annually Managed Expenditure (Note 2)	2	2	2	2	2
Election related expenditure	0	1	2	0	0
	58	61	61	64	67

Note 1 - The operational budget can be broken down into its key elements (as provided)

Note 2 - The term 'Annually Managed Expenditure' relates to the accounting provision for the Members of the Senedd Pension Scheme under HM Treasury rules and is a non-cash spend heading.

Operational Budget Analysis					
Operational budget breakdown:	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Staff related costs (Note 3)	25	26	26	27	28
Non staff related costs	12	13	13	10	12
Project fund (Note 4)	1	1	0	2	1
Depreciation (non cash)(Note 5)	2	2	2	6	6
	40	42	41	45	47

Note 3 - The change between 2018-19 and 2019-20 in staff related costs is predominantly due to an increase in the employer pension contribution rate set by HM Treasury.

Note 4 - Since 2019-20 the budget has included a designated Project Fund.

Note 5 - 'Depreciation' includes the impact of IFRS16 and the requirement to recognise leases as 'Right of Use Assets' and charge depreciation. It also includes the interest charges associated with Right of Use Assets.

Total Commission Expenditure					
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Operational spend	40	42	41	44	46
Independent Remuneration Board's Determination	15	16	15	17	17
Annually Managed Expenditure	2	2	2	2	0
Election related expenditure	0	0	2	0	0
	56	60	60	62	63
Total expenditure vs total budget - under/(over) (Note 6)	2.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	3.0

Note 6 - The Commission manages its financial budget closely. The higher underspend in 2019-20 was occasioned in part by the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, which meant that a number of projects planned for the 4th quarter of that year did not proceed.

Operational Expenditure Analysis					
Operational spend breakdown:	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Staff related costs	24	25	25	27	29
Non staff related costs	13	14	14	10	11
Project fund	1	1	0	2	1
Depreciation (non-cash)	2	2	2	5	5
	40	42	41	44	46
Operational expenditure vs operational budget - under/(over)	-	-	1.0	0	1.0

Prior to 2019-20 the Commission did not have a dedicated Project Fund. Instead, underspends generated from other budget headings were used to supplement the operational budget.

The Commission aims to achieve an end-of-year operational outturn within the range of 0 per cent to 1.5 per cent of the operational budget.

2023-24 Outturn				
	Budget	Outturn	Variance	Variance
	£m	£m	£m	%
Staff related costs	28.4	28.6	0.2	0.8%
Non staff related costs	12.0	11.0	1.0	7.85%
Project fund	0.5	0.9	0.4	86.6%
Election costs	0	0	0	-
Depreciation (non-cash)	6.2	5.3	0.9	15.6%
Total operational activity	46.9	45.7	1.1	2.53%
Independent Remuneration Board's Determination	17.8	17.3	0.4	2.64%
Annually Managed Expenditure	1.8	0.1	1.7	92.4%
	67.2	63.9	3.3	4.98%

The operational outturn (excluding non-cash items) for 2023-24 is 0.52 per cent below budget. The Commission is proactive in managing the budget and maximising value from the available resource. Careful in-year management and accurate forecasting has facilitated a year end out-turn position within the target range.

▼ **Plenary**, 19 March 2024



To provide outstanding parliamentary support

In this section of the Annual Report we describe how
we have delivered Senedd business

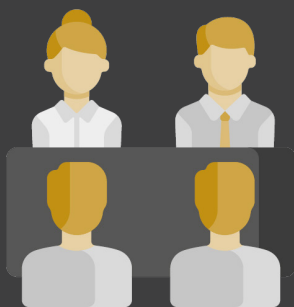


SUPPORTING PLENARY



68 Hybrid Plenary sessions

SUPPORTING COMMITTEES



322 Committee meetings



309 Committee reports

SUPPORTING LEGISLATION



6 new Bills introduced



5 Bills passed to become Acts

QUESTIONS ASKED IN PLENARY



49 Topical Questions



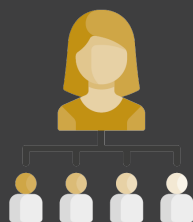
894 Oral Questions



4,294 Written Questions



2 Emergency Questions



7 Individual Member Debates

Senedd Reform

On 30 May 2022, the Special Purpose Committee on Senedd Reform published its report – Reforming our Senedd: A stronger voice for the people of Wales³. It outlined the changes that could be brought in to strengthen the role of the Senedd and give a stronger voice to the people of Wales.

Following debate and agreement of a motion by the Senedd on 8 June 2022, the Welsh Government published its formal response to the report⁴, expressing its intention to prepare and introduce legislation to take the Committee’s recommendations forward.

Welsh Government proposals for Senedd Reform have progressed significantly during the course of the year, with the Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Bill (“the SC(ME) Bill”) introduced in September confirming the Welsh Government’s preferred approach to reforming the Senedd.

The proposals include increasing the number of Members of the Senedd from 60 to 96, and introducing a new electoral system – all in time for the Senedd Election in May 2026.

The Senedd agreed the general principles of the SC(ME) Bill in January, following the publication of Senedd committee reports on the legislation.

The Bill was passed by the Senedd on 8 May 2024. Subject to Royal Assent, the Commission will now progress delivery of the necessary activities to prepare for a reformed Seventh Senedd.

In March, the Welsh Government’s Senedd Cymru (Electoral Candidates Lists) Bill was introduced. The Bill seeks to introduce statutory gender quotas to the system used to elect Members of the Senedd.

The Senedd Commission has been called upon to support the Senedd Reform process in a number of different ways:

- **in supporting scrutiny** of the legislation;
- **as a leading stakeholder** through the provision of information to support the legislative process; and

³ <https://senedd.wales/media/5mta1oyk/cr-ld15130-e.pdf>

⁴ <https://senedd.wales/media/nqcpnd3e/gen-ld15253-e.pdf>

- **by prudently preparing** for the possibility of change.

Following the Senedd's decision to create a dedicated committee to scrutinise the Senedd Reform legislation (the Reform Bill Committee), the Senedd Commission utilised its ring-fenced Senedd Reform budget to resource the work of this additional committee.

As a leading stakeholder, the Senedd Commission provided cost estimates to the Welsh Government to inform the Welsh Government's Regulatory Impact Assessment that accompanied the SC(ME) Bill, and supported scrutiny of the SC(ME) Bill, through the provision of written and oral evidence to committees. Work to respond to committee recommendations continues where they identified the need to explore further matters.

Given the scale of the proposed reforms, work to prepare for the change has had to begin before the Welsh Government's Bills become law.

The Commission has established a Senedd Reform Programme, principally focused on ensuring the Senedd is supported to prepare from the perspective of its parliamentary business.

Over the past year, the Senedd Reform Programme has supported the institutional response to the proposed Senedd Reform legislation, and the Business Committee in developing an approach to its planned procedural.

Separately, the Commission's Ways of Working Programme⁵ has initiated the Tŷ Hywel 2026 and Siambr 2026 projects to prepare for and deliver the adaptations to the Senedd estate that are needed to accommodate an additional 36 Members of the Senedd and their staff. These projects are being carefully managed to ensure that any works are only undertaken after the relevant legislation receives Royal Assent.

⁵ The Ways of Working Programme has remit that is broader than just Senedd Reform-related preparedness, but includes projects to prepare the estate and plan resourcing.

Wales Covid-19 Inquiry Special Purpose Committee

The Wales COVID-19 Inquiry Special Purpose Committee commenced its work during 2023-24, with the Committee established on 16 May 2023.

The Committee's remit was agreed by the Senedd as being responsible for identifying any gaps that arise following the publication of the UK COVID-19 Inquiry's module reports. The Committee will propose to the Senedd, by motion, any gaps that it considers merits further examination associated with the preparedness and response of the Welsh Government or any other Welsh public body during the pandemic. The Committee will publish reports and make recommendations, as appropriate. These reports will be debated in Plenary no later than two months after their publication.

The Committee's remit specifies that it will not revisit the conclusions of any inquiries undertaken by other Senedd Committees, to avoid duplication. However, it was also agreed that it will not be prohibited from considering matters considered by other Senedd Committees where there is more information and a clear benefit in scrutinising it further.

The Committee is operated based on a novel Co-Chairing arrangement, with Joyce Watson MS and Tom Giffard MS taking on the joint role. This arrangement represents a unique approach for both Senedd Committees and for other Parliaments around the world. The Co-Chairs are joined by Vicki Howells MS, Jack Sargeant MS, Altaf Hussain MS and Adam Price MS.

To enable the successful operation of the Committee, the Senedd agreed to Temporary Standing Order 35 on 12 July 2023, which agreed on the Co-Chairing proposal and set out guidelines for the successful implementation of the arrangements. Subsequently, the Co-Chairs and the wider Committee agreed on a Co-Chairing Protocol in the same month, which set out a more practical guide for navigating the novel chairing arrangements.

Whilst the Committee awaits the publication of the UK COVID-19 Inquiry's first module report, it has undertaken preparatory work to ready itself for its substantive work, in line with its remit. This has included receiving regular monitoring reports tracking the progress of the UK Inquiry, prepared by expert colleagues from Senedd Research.

The Committee has also discussed other practical considerations, including its Communications Plan. This subsequently led to a Committee stakeholder briefing event, held on 23 January 2024 on a hybrid basis, which was intended to brief the

interested stakeholders and the public at large about the work of the Committee to date, as well as the extent of its remit. The Committee will continue to explore other methods of communicating its work, as well as engage with the public.

Finally, the Committee has taken briefings from a series of relevant experts from areas relating to the UK COVID-19 Inquiry's Module 1 work, on resilience and preparedness. The Committee has heard from Professor Rowena Hill and Richard Pickford of Nottingham Trent University, and Professor Ben Anderson from Durham University, who are eminent experts in the field of civil contingencies. These preparatory sessions helped to build the knowledge of Committee Members ahead of the Committee's substantive work commencing once the first module report has been published.

The Committee's work will begin in earnest following the publication of this first report. However, until then, the Committee will continue to make preparations to best equip itself to undertake effective scrutiny and to engage with interested stakeholders and the public.

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Krytal Law



Committee evidence diversity monitoring

Since September 2023, Senedd committees have been routinely monitoring the diversity of evidence they receive. Gathering better data on who is giving evidence to Senedd committees provides valuable insights into who gives evidence, and helps to spot any patterns, trends or anomalies in the approach to activities. It allows committees to compare levels of participation against benchmarks, identify missing voices and explore what the barriers and incentives to taking part could be.

This ambitious project came after the Chairs' Forum (the body that brings together the elected chairs of Senedd committees) considered two previous pilot schemes and agreed to make it part of committees' day-to-day work.

The results of the monitoring will be fed back to the Chairs' Forum annually, and inform the ongoing debate about how the Senedd can better enable the people of Wales to have their voices heard in their parliament.

More information on the results of the second pilot is available in this Senedd Research blog: [**New data published about who gives evidence to Senedd committees**](#)

Read our [**frequently asked questions page**](#) to find out more about diversity monitoring.

Knowledge Exchange Strategy

Building relationships between the Senedd and the research community is key to broadening, deepening, and diversifying the evidence used by the Senedd for scrutiny and law making.

The two-way process of knowledge exchange brings together researchers, Members of the Senedd, and Senedd officials to share expertise, develop relationships, and learn from one another for the benefit of parliamentary and research work.

Our Knowledge Exchange Unit works to strengthen connections, support academics to engage with the Senedd, increase the impact of research, supplement our own research capacity, and situate the Senedd as a key place for research impact.

Since its inception, our Knowledge Exchange programme has built on the strong foundation of academic engagement, and has gone from strength to strength, with key successes in the last year including:

- Growing the **Knowledge Exchange Network** to more than 535 members from over 135 universities and research institutions across Wales, the UK, and beyond;
- Delivering **training** to over 450 researchers on how to effectively engage with the Senedd, and translate and mobilise their research for a parliamentary audience;
- Securing significant Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) funding for a **new two-year Knowledge Exchange Manager post**, increasing our capacity;
- Growing and developing our **Areas of Research Interest (ARI)** programme. We recently launched two new ARIs, bringing the total to six, with a total of 148 academic experts signed up. We also supported a committee ARI event, bringing academics from the ARI repository together with Members, cross-party groups and researchers to share research and expertise;
- Using our reach and networks to support committees **to find and engage with academics and expert advisers**;

- Hosting the two-day Inter-Parliamentary Research and Information **(IPRIN) annual conference**, welcoming over 50 parliamentary research and library colleagues to the Senedd to share best practice and innovation;
- Commissioning **new research** to fill evidence gaps in areas of interest to Members and committees, including work on health literacy and bus funding models;
- **Leveraging university Impact Accelerator funding**, to maximise outputs from our investment in commissioned research projects. This includes working with the University of Liverpool to access funding from UK in a Changing Europe, to explore impacts of the UK Internal Market Act;
- Hosting seven interns throughout the year via **the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) policy internship scheme**;
- Developing new links and maintaining existing connections with research institutions, research councils and research networks across Wales and beyond;
- Exchanging experiences, advice, and knowledge with **parliaments around the world**.

International activity

Senedd Women's Caucus – official launch

The Senedd Women's Caucus was launched on 7 June 2023 as a cross-party forum for Members, which brings together women parliamentarians across party lines to provide peer support and advance gender equality.

The Caucus is made up of all women Members of the Senedd, chaired by Joyce Watson MS, and a Steering Group of representatives from each party.

The launch event explored the role of parliaments in driving gender equality in society, experiences of women parliamentarians, and how women citizens engage with the work of parliaments.

Senator Fiona O'Loughlin, Chair of the Irish Women's Caucus in the Oireachtas, gave an inspirational keynote speech and shared experiences from the Irish Women's Parliamentary Caucus.

Caucus Chair, Joyce Watson MS, and the Llywydd, Rt Hon Elin Jones MS, also spoke about their experiences as women in public life and elected Members of the Senedd.

To mark International Women's Day 2024, members of the Caucus took part in roundtable discussions with students from local schools to draw connections between the importance of gender equality, the work of the Senedd and wider democratic representation.

Elect Her Event at the Senedd

The Senedd, in partnership with Women's Equality Network Wales and Elect Her, hosted an extraordinary takeover event on 21 October 2023. Bringing women together to further the cause for diverse and equal leadership in politics, the day consisted of workshops, speakers, and performances.

International Women's Day

The Llywydd welcomed Dame Amanda Blanc to the Senedd to take part in an 'In Conversation' event to celebrate this year's International Women's Day. Originally from the Rhondda Valley, Amanda is the Group Chief Executive Officer of insurance company, Aviva, and one of only nine female leaders of UK FTSE 100 companies.

The event brought together over 100 guests from different backgrounds and sectors in Wales, including a number of young women at the beginning of their professional careers, and provided an opportunity to network and build connections.

International engagement and Member networks

The focus for the implementation of the Senedd Commission's International Framework this year, has been on inward visits and enhancing Member engagement in international networks.

Inward visits included the Ceann Comhairle of Dáil Éireann, the Speaker of the lower house of the Irish Parliament (Oireachtas). This programme included a roundtable event with the Senedd representatives on the British Irish Parliamentary Assembly as well as two Senedd committees.

From further afield, the Llywydd was delighted to welcome the Speaker of the National Assembly for Namibia as well as the Speaker and Clerk of the Tasmanian House of Assembly.

Westminster Seminar

The Senedd welcomed a delegation of some 30 elected Members and Clerks from legislatures across the Commonwealth for a day, as part of a week-long Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) event in the UK. It was an opportunity to showcase the Senedd and Wales. Matters discussed on the day included the development of devolution, the work of our Welsh Youth Parliament and the Senedd's legislative process and ways in which Members are supported.

Diplomatic visits

The Senedd has hosted a number of high-profile Diplomatic visits, including those of the US Ambassador and a delegation of European Ambassadors led by the EU Ambassador.

Inaugural meeting of the Speakers of the Isles Conference

This meeting of the Speakers of the Isles conference brought together speakers and clerks of the parliaments and assemblies of neighbouring islands to discuss matters of shared interest and relevance.

The Llywydd and Chief Executive and Clerk, Manon Antoniazzi, represented the Senedd at this inaugural conference, hosted by the Ceann Comhairle in Kildare,

Ireland in July 2023. The aim of the conference was to encourage open dialogue and discussions on matters of importance and mutual interest with colleagues across parliamentary networks, and enhance working relationships.

British Irish Parliamentary Assembly (BIPA)

Senedd Members have continued their active engagement with BIPA, not only through participating in the plenary meetings in Jersey and Kildare but also on numerous committees, for instance, working on inquiries into indigenous languages and effects of Brexit on UK-Irish trade. Additionally, Senedd committees examined how the Senedd's engagement with BIPA can contribute to creating closer links with Ireland. The Senedd also hosted a meeting of the BIPA Steering Committee.

Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)

As well as the Westminster seminar, there was significant Member activity relating to the Senedd's membership of the CPA. Two Members were elected to represent the Senedd at the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Ghana.

The Senedd's CPA branch hosted a delegation from the Canadian Federal Parliament to discuss significant topics (like gender) within the respective parliaments.

British Islands and Mediterranean Region (BIMR) Conference

The 2023 Regional Conference was held in the UK Parliament and was attended by a full delegation of Senedd Members. The conference covered several topical themes, including the importance of diverse and inclusive parliaments, standards of behaviours, as well as the Climate Emergency.

Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Conference

The Senedd was represented by two Members at the Regional Annual CWP Conference, hosted this year by the Maltese Parliament. Themes discussed at the conference included challenges facing women parliamentarians and period poverty.

Wales and the EU

The Senedd's engagement with new and emerging UK-EU structures has continued to evolve. To be welcomed this year has been the strengthening of the role of Senedd Members in the UK-EU Parliamentary Partnership Assembly (PPA), which has enabled Members to participate more fully in the work of the body.

Senedd Members continue to engage in the UK-EU Committee of the Regions Contact Group. Members have proposed work to strengthen the role of the group in monitoring UK-EU relations.

The Senedd's Brussels office continues to support and facilitate Senedd Committee and Senedd Member engagement with the EU institutions. Two Senedd Committee visits to Brussels to engage on work related to UK-EU relations took place during 2023-24.

The Senedd was also invited for the first time to participate in the prestigious European Union Visitors Programme; a training programme for young professionals working in relevant fields.

Senedd Business taking on an international focus

Scrutiny and engagement of international affairs remains a priority area for Senedd Committees. The Senedd's Legislation Justice and Constitution Committee published a report on UK-EU Governance, which included recommendations on Senedd engagement with the EU. The Committee's scrutiny of the impact of international agreements and obligations on devolution continues to develop.

The Culture, Communication, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee concluded its work on Wales-Ireland relations, which made commitments to build relationships with the Oireachtas and took evidence from the co-Chairs of the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly (BIPA). An inaugural debate on the Committee's international relations annual report took place in February 2024 and set out the Committee's international relations scrutiny during the past year, including successes the Committee has had in improving the transparency of information made available by the Welsh Government.

The Senedd's Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee has closely monitored post-Brexit trade arrangements between Wales and the island of Ireland, including preparations for the UK's new border controls, visiting Holyhead Port as

part of its work. The Committee continues to consider the implications of international trade agreements for Wales.

The Senedd's Equality and Social Justice Committee monitoring of the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) and European citizens' rights in Wales has continued. This important work is shared with the UK's independent watchdog, the Independent Monitoring Authority.

In Plenary, the Senedd has frequently reflected and responded to key events that have shaped the world this year, such as the CoP climate change and biodiversity summits, the war in Ukraine and the Israel-Gaza conflict. In November 2023, the Senedd became one of the first parliaments in the world to vote for an immediate ceasefire. The Senedd has also granted or withheld consent to a number of Westminster Bills with an international dimension.

Below:

1. Inaugural meeting of the Speakers of the Isles Conference, hosted by the Ceann Comhairle in Kildare, Ireland (July 2023)



INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITY



Above:

- 2. Official Visit by the Ceann Comhairle (Speaker of the Irish Parliament) (March 2024)
- 3. Carolyn Thomas MS and Adam Price MS representing the Senedd at the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's Annual Conference in Accra, Ghana (October 2023)
- 4. Launch of the Senedd Women's Caucus (June 2023)

Below:

- 5. Visit by the US Ambassador to the UK, Jane D. Hartley



Bilingual services

This year, the Official Languages team has focused on capacity planning by beginning the process of reviewing the language plans of individual service areas with Heads of Service and Co-ordinators. Following the implementation of the recommendations of the last internal audit, reviewing and updating service language plans has become part of the Senedd Commission's assurance process. Heads of Service state in their annual assurance statement that they review and update their plans as required, and make use of them when planning capacity. The levels of assurance provided are reflected in the assurance statements of the Directors and the Chief Executive. This ensures that any recommendations or weaknesses identified during the process are recorded, and actions are identified.

The Welsh language skills survey is also an integral part of the capacity planning work of service areas. This year, the survey was conducted by the Official Languages team and the results will be analysed shortly. All Senedd Commission staff are asked to provide a self-assessment of their skills based on the Skills Matrix for Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing skills. Heads of Service use the survey results to feed into the service language plan, which provides an overview of skills across the service.

The skills survey has also provided an opportunity to trial changes to the definitions used for the Welsh language skill levels set out in the language skills matrix. Feedback has been provided at several levels that individuals are having difficulty determining their skill level using the definitions in the matrix. The team have, therefore, set about simplifying the descriptions and have added a section to help new and fluent speakers identify their level using the titles of Learn Welsh courses, and those used in education in Wales. The team will be discussing the definitions further with others to ensure they are appropriate before introducing the final changes.

The Coronavirus pandemic has affected the way in which people applying for Courtesy-level posts are assessed. There was a strong feeling that online assessment did not work at the Courtesy level, and it was therefore decided that only the successful candidates would be assessed as part of their probation period. Ways of working have also changed, with most people working flexibly between their homes and the Senedd offices. In order to ensure that we address these changes, a new Courtesy module has been developed and was trialled recently. The module is available to any Commission staff member, but will be mandatory for those appointed to a Courtesy-level post. The pilot scheme was successful, with many of the individuals who received training opting to continue

to develop their skills by joining a Welsh class at the Senedd. The training is also available to Members of the Senedd and support staff, but they are not required to complete the module as part of their probation period.

One of the themes of the Official Languages Scheme for the Sixth Senedd is sharing expertise. This year, the Official Languages team was pleased to play a prominent part in a Colloquium on Bilingual Parliaments in July 2023 organised by the Rannóg ân Aistriúcháin (Translation and Bilingual Services) of the Oireachtas. The team gave presentations on legislation, Member services, recruitment, training, public engagement, and awareness and normalisation. The relationship between the Official Languages team and the Rannóg ân Aistriúcháin team continues.

We always welcome feedback on our work. Members and their support staff were surveyed to gather their views on the Commission's services. The ability to work in their preferred language was one of the areas covered in the survey. Once again, we received very positive feedback with a high score from Members and support staff. The team set about addressing any points raised or recommendations made. The team also received several nominations this year, with one of the Welsh Tutors nominated for the National Centre for Learning Welsh 'Tlws y Tiwtor' tutor award for 2023. Two of our Welsh Tutors received nominations for the Senedd Commission Recognition Scheme award for Passion - the award was won by two learners for their dedication to learning Welsh.

▼ Eisteddfod, June 2023

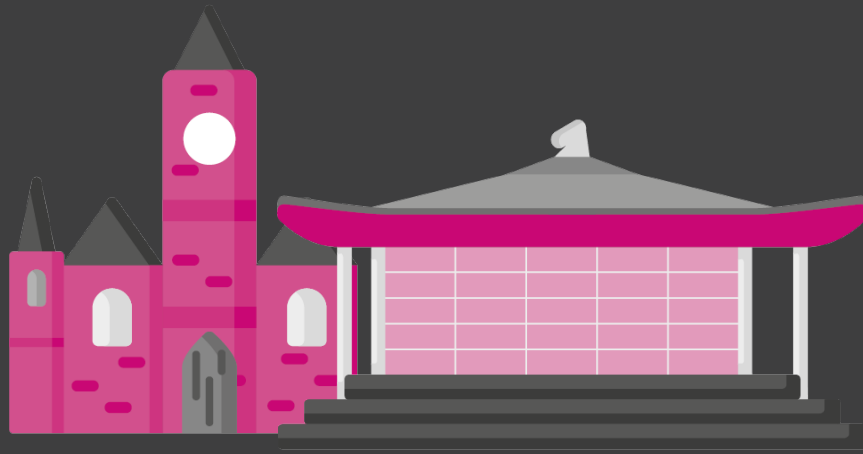


To have citizens at the heart of all we do

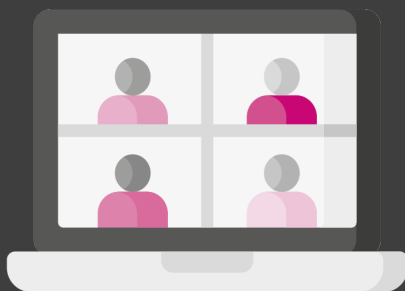
This section of the Annual Report highlights the work we have done to raise awareness of the Senedd and its work and to make it more accessible to the people of Wales.



OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT



We welcomed over **150,000** visitors to the Senedd and Pierhead in 2023



12,800 people joined us for **535** tours, either in person or online



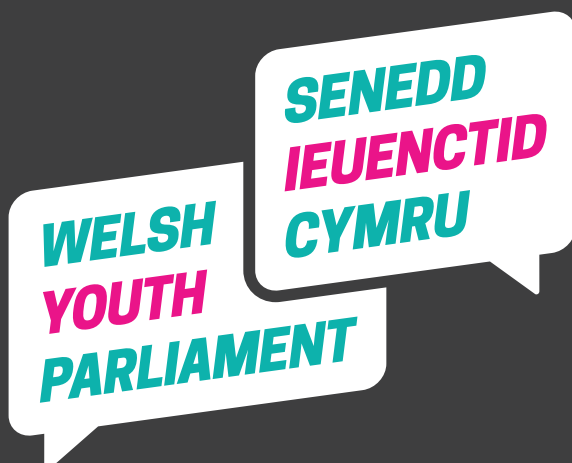
224 events were held on the Senedd estate

DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT



In January 2024, net audience growth across our social media channels was **up 56.5%** compared to the same period last year

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE



23,000

Number of young people we engaged with in person, through **577** education sessions and Welsh Youth Parliament events

Communications and Engagement strategy

We are now halfway through our Communications and Engagement Strategy for the Sixth Senedd, the objectives of which are to raise awareness and understanding of the Senedd and increase participation and involve people in our work.

Gathering lived experiences

The strategy places people's lived experience at its core. With the overarching theme of 'Your Voice', it aims to establish the Senedd as somewhere voices from all backgrounds can be heard.

Our Citizen's Engagement Team play a key role in this by helping committees to gather evidence from diverse groups of people across Wales. The team engaged with 3,140 individuals in 2023, 19% of which represented people with disabilities and 19% represented various aspects of race and ethnicity.

The team have recently introduced advisory groups, which consist of individuals with diverse lived experience related to the specific issue under committee examination. This year, advisory groups have been formed for inquiries concerning disabled children's access to childcare and education, and mental health inequalities.

The group provides evidence and advice to a committee throughout its inquiry, which has brought a fresh approach to engagement and has supported committees to better understand the impact Government decisions are having on people's lives.

Lived experience has also been used by the communications team to create content about the work of the Senedd that audiences can more easily relate to. This has been achieved through greater emphasis on the use of case studies.

In December, the team worked closely with the Citizens Engagement Team and Tenovus Cymru to help tell the stories of three brave women affected by **Gynaecological Cancer**.

Through the women's courage to share their experiences and the team's efforts to place their stories at the heart of our work to raise awareness of the Committee's findings, the report achieved coverage across Wales as well as national interest from Sky News and The Mirror.

The social media team have been building stronger relationships with prominent voices on social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram in Wales to help further our reach. By having trusted voices on social media talk about the Senedd, we've been able to engage with new audiences.

For example, work with a TikTok influencer over the summer to raise awareness of the Senedd as a visitor attraction resulted in over 42,000 views, 1,200 likes and over 50 comments, many of which expressed surprise and interest that they could visit the Senedd. The Visitor Engagement Team reported first time visitors resulting from the TikTok exposure.

Our net audience growth across our social media channels was up almost 20% compared to the same period last year.

Senedd as a focal point of Welsh public life

We welcomed over 150,000 visitors to the Senedd and Pierhead in 2023, and delivered 535 tours and online sessions, which were attended by 12,800 participants. We also held over 224 events on the estate.

Over 75% of those we engaged with told us their level of awareness and understanding had increased following the activity they attended, out of which approximately 70% had never engaged with the Senedd before.

Last summer, the Senedd was used as a stage for the Butetown Carnival, which helped us showcase the Senedd as part of the local community. The carnival was supported by an exhibition curated in collaboration with the community, celebrating the history of the carnival. It was supported by a workshop with *Small World Theatre* and an interactive activity to create a giant art sculpture in the Neuadd.

This collaboration with the local community, resulted in more than double the number of visitors from Cardiff visiting the Senedd last summer compared to the year before, and the number of visitors to the Pierhead increased by 17% compared to the year before. Most importantly, 79% of those who visited the Senedd in August 2023 had done so for the first time.

Engaging Young People

During 2023, we engaged with over 23,000 young people across 577 education sessions and Welsh Youth Parliament events. Of these groups around 28% were from Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority backgrounds, 19% were people with a

disability, 13% were from a low socio-economic background and 10% identified as LGBTQ+.

98% of young people who took part in education sessions or Welsh Youth Parliament events reported an increased level of understanding as a result of their session.

We're continuing to build on our efforts to engage younger audiences through our social media channels. Instagram is our number one channel for reaching young people, with 76% of Gen Z using it globally.

In early 2024, 18-24-year-olds made up over a quarter (27%) of people reached through our Instagram channel. They are our second most reached audience behind 25-34-year-olds (28%).

In November, we invited a bilingual TikToker (with 100,000 followers and 3.9 million likes) to the Welsh Youth Parliament's residential weekend. Covering the event on her channels, she reached nearly 17,000 people, with 1,300 video likes and 45 comments. The comments included young people saying they had not previously been aware of the Welsh Youth Parliament, and that their teachers were now encouraging them to stand in this year's election.

These are methods we will continue to explore and develop in the year ahead, with the Welsh Youth Parliament election as an opportunity to encourage young people to get involved in our work.

Data and Insight

In our strategy we commit to strengthening our audience insight and evaluation, to improve our understanding of our audience and their needs.

We've introduced new ways of capturing feedback from audiences to support our understanding of how our activities are helping us to achieve our strategy's objectives.

This includes customer surveys for visitors and attendees at our events. In 2023, 70% of visitors who completed surveys said they had not engaged with the Senedd previously. Of the visitors who filled out the survey, 73% said their understanding of the Senedd had increased after their visit, while 54% said they were more likely to participate in the Senedd's work following their visit.

We're developing dashboards that track this insight alongside other data, such as social media metrics and news coverage, against our objectives. This is helping us

to understand what progress has been made and identify gaps and areas for improvement.

This, alongside improved social media monitoring and audience polling, is giving us a much better picture of our audience needs.

We're using all of this data and insight to inform our plans for 2024-25, putting audience needs at the heart of our decisions so that we can continue to reach audiences that have not traditionally engaged with us and raise awareness of the Senedd as an inclusive Parliament, where all voices are heard and valued.



WELSH YOUTH PARLIAMENT

This year has seen the culmination of the second Welsh Youth Parliament (WYP) term with two consultations being held on topical issues for many young people in Wales: sustainable travel, and the length of the school day.

Nearly 3,000 young people from across Wales contributed to this work, informing the findings and recommendations of both reports. As part of each consultation, the WYP worked with partners to facilitate discussions with young people across Wales to further understand their experiences on these issues.

These two reports, and the Welsh Youth Parliament's previous report on mental health were discussed and debated between Welsh Youth Parliament Members



and Welsh Government Ministers during the final Welsh Youth Parliament Plenary session in November 2023. The Children's Commissioner for Wales, and the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee were also in attendance, and had their say on the Welsh Youth Parliament's work.

Joint Session

On 21 June, 2023, Welsh Youth Parliament Members joined Members of the Senedd in a joint sitting in the Siambr. Key updates on the Welsh Youth Parliament work programme were provided and questions answered by Welsh Government Ministers. This is only the second session of its kind and signals the Senedd's ongoing commitment to youth engagement and the work of the WYP.

Senedd Business contributions

In addition to carrying out work on issues identified by the Welsh Youth Parliament Members themselves, they have also been active in having their say on issues

debated by Senedd committees. This has seen Welsh Youth Parliament Members participate in discussions with Members of the Senedd on the Senedd Reform Bill, scrutiny of the Welsh Government's budget, and disabled access to education. Members of the Welsh Youth Parliament Climate and Environment Committee also presented the findings of their report on sustainable travel to Members of the Petitions Committee.

Exhibition

The second Welsh Youth Parliament term was formally drawn to a close with an event to launch an exhibition in the Senedd, which told the story of the Welsh Youth Parliament to date, and highlighted its work on key issues. The exhibition also aimed to inspire the next generation of young people to stand as candidates for the third Welsh Youth Parliament Election in November 2024.

The event included speeches from the Llywydd, First Minister and Welsh Youth Parliament Members from the first and second terms, detailing the highlights from their work and calling on Members of the Senedd to continue to work on implementing the findings of their reports. The event celebrated the contributions of the parents, guardians, youth workers, teachers and many others who have supported the young people during their term.

Some quotes from Welsh Youth Parliament Members at the end of their term as Members:

'Thank you for helping me grow up and mature. You are like another family to me and have helped me every step of the way. Thank you for all the opportunities and giving me a platform to let my voice be heard and help me make the change that was needed.'

'Thank you so much for the entirety of the last two years. The Welsh Youth Parliament has changed my life in so many ways and I am so grateful I was lucky enough to experience it.'



Above: The Welsh Youth Parliament Exhibition in the Senedd

Below: Members of the Welsh Youth Parliament and Senedd during a joint session in the Siambwr, 23 June 2023



**WELSH
YOUTH
PARLIAMENT**

**SENEDD
IEUENCTID
CYMRU**

Dignity and Respect

The Senedd is committed to providing an inclusive culture that is free from harassment. We expect that those who work with, or come in to contact with, Members of the Senedd, the staff they employ or Senedd Commission employees are treated with dignity and respect.

The Senedd approved its Dignity and Respect Policy in 2018 and the Commission has put a number of measures in place to ensure a safe workplace, free from intimidation and harassment. The Commission also provides advice to Members to enable them to provide safe workplaces for their employees.

In June 2023, the Commission considered a review of the Dignity and Respect framework. The review indicated that the policy is being implemented effectively. However, there is also work to be done to reinforce this culture, to simplify processes, to improve the support available and to raise visibility of the policy.

The Commission made a number of recommendations, which are coordinated by a officials across the Commission and, since June 2023, the following activity has taken place:

- The Commission Staff Code of Conduct has been updated around dignity and respect, to align with the Code of Conduct for Members.
- The Commission Grievance Policy has been updated to streamline the process and provide better information about support available, as well as informal options for resolution.
- Dignity and respect training is offered to all Members and their staff, and is mandatory for Commission staff. Further sessions are being offered and promoted.

As of March 2024, the training has been attended by:

- 95 per cent of Commission staff;
 - 92 per cent of Members of the Senedd;
 - Over 29 per cent of Member Support Staff.
- Additional Commission officials have been trained as Dignity and Respect contact officers. We now have 12 trained contact officers, who better reflect diversity related to a range of protected characteristics.

- Commission officials continue to work with the workplace equalities networks and recognised Trade Unions to ensure they are able to signpost staff to the appropriate support.
- The Senedd Dignity and Respect internet pages have been simplified and generally improved.
- New awareness raising posters have been displayed across the Senedd estate.
- The Commission undertakes Dignity and Respect surveys of Members, Member Support Staff and Commission staff. The most recent survey was undertaken in autumn 2023. The [full results](#) were shared with the Standards of Conduct Committee and published online.
- The Commission is taking forward work to engage with third party building users to seek assurances and views on their experience of working on the estate.

The [Standards of Conduct Committee](#) agreed to undertake an inquiry into Dignity and Respect to review the progress made in this area. Specifically, the Committee is considering the processes in place to raise concerns about Members of the Senedd or their staff who work on the Senedd estate. The Committee has subsequently agreed to launch a comprehensive inquiry to ensure the Senedd is an inclusive workplace, free from harassment and intimidation. It will be looking at all aspects of our policies and procedures so that they are up to date and fit for purpose and will work with the Standards Commissioner, political parties and other stakeholders to develop options for strengthening individual Members' accountability. This covers a range of issues including recall of Members, disqualification arrangements and the sanctions available to the Standards of Conduct Committee when a complaint about a Member is upheld.

▼ Wildflowers on the Senedd estate



To use resources sustainably

This section of the Annual Report highlights how we use our resources to support the business of the Senedd and how we ensure we use them efficiently, effectively and sustainably.



Corporate planning

Throughout 2023-24, the Commission's corporate planning processes and systems have been developed further to ensure that resources continue to be used sustainably and the Commission achieves value for public money.

A key development has been the approval by the Commission of a Medium-Term Resourcing Framework (MTRF), which was set out in the previous Annual Report as a goal for the following financial year.

The MTRF comprises a:

- 3-year Medium Term Financial Plan based on a prudent assumption of future funding needs that sees business-as-usual costs being contained whilst resourcing Senedd priorities, and
- Workforce Plan, recognising the proportion of the Commission's budget that is allocated to our staffing establishment.

The purpose of the MTRF is to:

- set a clear, transparent and reasonable basis upon which to base any resource request growth over the medium-term; and
- enable the Commission to plan for and manage any resulting gap between its required and its actual available resourcing in a planned manner.

As a result of the MTRF being approved, the Commission's 2024-25 budget request restricted the growth of its core operational budget (i.e. not including Members pay, Senedd Reform preparations or Ways of Working programme funding) to 2.5%.

Other developments of note during 2023-24 include:

- the approval of a refreshed Corporate Delivery Plan for 2023-24, which translates the Commission Strategy into time-bound, defined actions to enhance assurance that key activity will be delivered;
- the approval of a Project Portfolio Strategy, which shaped the prioritisation of the Commission's portfolio of change projects in a transparent and cross-organisational manner;

- the bedding in of the Portfolio Management Group. The Group recommends to Executive Board the project portfolio based on the direction from the Portfolio Strategy and controls it in-year on the Board's behalf to ensure maximum value for money is achieved; and
- a new service planning process that provides more opportunity for inter-dependencies to be identified and responded to across service plans. The process also applies a robust challenge to core resource growth requests, in line with the purpose of the MTRF.

Ways of Working

In 2023-24, the Commission's Ways of Working programme moved from its initial Interim Action Plan phase into a set of delivery projects.

The programme remains structured around three workstreams:

- **Cardiff Bay:** to deliver a high quality, flexible and inclusive Cardiff Bay estate that provides value for public money and will meet the needs of the Senedd, its Members and the Senedd Commission into the long-term. This workstream includes the Commission's Cardiff Bay 2032 project, the Siambr 2026 project and the Tŷ Hywel 2026 project, which are all discussed further below.
- **Regional Working:** under this workstream, the Commission delivered its Sarn Mynach 2023 project, successfully relocating its office base in North Wales from the previous Colwyn Bay location to the Welsh Government's central offices in Llandudno Junction. This office space will ensure an effective regional base for outreach, public information, education and translation services in North Wales on a stronger value-for-money basis. The option of exploring further potential opportunities for developing the Senedd Commission's regional footprint over time exists under this workstream, based on any identified, emerging Member need.
- **Ways of Working Framework:** to set a vision and design a framework for how and where we work in the future. The Strategy will develop new, and enhance existing, corporate planning tools to ensure resources continue to be used sustainably and wisely in a period of significant financial pressures across the public sector and for the citizens of Wales.

Cardiff Bay 2032

The current lease on Tŷ Hywel expires in 2032, however, the Commission will need to make a decision on what course of action to take well in advance of that date. The current lease ending provides the Commission an opportunity to consider what is needed from its office spaces into the long-term, and ensure a decision that delivers the best value for public money.

As a result the Commission is considering its post-2032 accommodation, working closely with professional property and legal advisers, including undertaking a market engagement exercise to begin to understand what viable options there

are beyond 2032. The ending of the current Tŷ Hywel lease does not impact on either the Senedd Building or the Pierhead – this project only relates to Tŷ Hywel.

The project is in its very early stages. However, a key milestone has been achieved in 2023-24 with the approval of a Strategic Outline Case (SOC). The document provides justification and rationale for the project as well as agreeing overall vision and objectives. The document also begins to explore what options and solutions may be viable. The approval of the SOC allows the project to move on to its next stage, which is the outline business case and initial market engagement.

Other notable achievements include The Siambur 2026, Tŷ Hywel 2026 and Cardiff Bay 2032 projects being formally established, with robust governance and project boards in place. These projects will deliver our core space and facility requirements with the passing of the Senedd Reform Bill, and longer-term accommodation needs post 2032 when the current Tŷ Hywel lease ends. These projects represent the most complex and largest set of projects the Commission has ever undertaken, which are being delivered at the same time as business-as-usual and lifecycle maintenance activity.

Going forward, Ways of Working will continue its strategic led approach to focus on the medium-to-longer term decisions that will support the Senedd and Commission's resource and infrastructure needs and requirements over the years to come.



WE'RE IN THIS
TOGETHER

REPRESENTING, SUPPORTING AND EMPOWERING
WOMEN TO PROGRESS THEIR BUSINESS VISIONS
AND PLANNING FOR SUCCESSFUL OFFICES IN EVERY
CORNER OF GOVERNMENT SERVICE



Diversity and Inclusion

The Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report 2023-2024, published on the Senedd website, includes detailed information on the work that the Senedd Commission has undertaken to celebrate diversity and promote inclusion as both a parliament and an employer. This is supplemented with an accompanying report for workforce and recruitment diversity data, an equal pay audit, and gender, ethnicity and disability pay gap data.

During this reporting period, we have:

- Established our Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group to provide strategic oversight of our priorities and help keep our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy on track.
- Been recognised as a Top Ten Employer for Working Families, as a Disability Confident Employer, and our café was the first venue in Wales to meet the Family Café standard.
- Delivered a suite of training and awareness to celebrate diversity and promote inclusion. Throughout our annual Inclusion Month, we worked with our colleagues from the Northern Ireland Assembly, the Scottish Parliament and the Oireachtas to offer a virtual suite of presentations, events and learning opportunities to celebrate inclusion. These included reading diversely to broaden perspectives; inclusive recruiting to ensure equitable opportunities; Fighting with Pride to champion LGBTQ+ rights; and a session by Race Equality First on best practices for fostering an inclusive workplace culture.
- Delivered mandatory respect and inclusion training to all Senedd Commission staff to help them identify, challenge and report any inappropriate behaviour. Similar training has been designed and offered to Members and their staff.
- Established our ENGAGE workplace network to better connect our staff. As part of our commitment to improving engagement and a sense of belonging for all staff, our newly refreshed and relaunched staff engagement network allows all our staff to be involved in shaping their work experience, and to share and celebrate ideas to drive positive change.

- Introduced a Social Mobility Champion. This year, as part of our commitment to identifying and addressing any barriers in relation to social mobility and socio-economic background, we have introduced a Senior Social Mobility Champion.
- Continued to provide peer support and inclusion advice through our Workplace Equality Networks. The networks help the Commission to achieve an inclusive working culture that supports and values the diversity of those that work on the estate and where people feel comfortable, respected and appreciated.
- Welcomed our second cohort of YMLAEN interns. Our YMLAEN programme has been another collaboration with the Windsor Fellowship, who have enabled us to effectively reach out, advertise and engage with a wide array of talented candidates across Wales. Once again, the response was remarkable, with a pool of outstanding candidates applying for positions. The scheme provides paid internship opportunities for four individuals to work within teams across the Senedd Commission.
- Developed a comprehensive peri/menopause toolkit to offer practical guidance to those working or living with people experiencing the symptoms of menstruation, menstrual health conditions and peri/menopause. The toolkit recognises that adopting a few simple changes to the working environment can make a world of difference for those experiencing the peri/menopause, and to those who are supporting colleagues experiencing the peri/menopause.
- Reviewed our progress through staff surveys, including our bi-annual Health and Wellbeing surveys.
- Reported on the diversity of committee witnesses and engaged with diverse groups across Wales as part of Committee inquiries.
- Concluded the second Welsh Youth Parliament, with representatives from across Wales and from a diverse range of inclusive organisations. Welsh Youth Parliament Members made a commitment at the start of their term to ensure that young people from diverse backgrounds were heavily involved in contributing to consultation and engagement activity connected to the work of the Youth Parliament.

- Held events and exhibitions that celebrate diversity and inclusion in Wales, including exhibitions celebrating the Butetown carnival, caregivers, International day of Disabled People, and events to mark St David's Day, Pride Cymru, International Women's Day and Black History Month.
- Delivered inclusive recruitment. The Recruitment Team has continued to monitor recruitment processes and have enhanced assessment design, created bespoke advertising strategies for campaigns, enhanced panel diversity, job descriptions and candidate pack designs, all with a view to attracting the widest range of talent.
- Supported the health and wellbeing of our staff through the ongoing implementation of our Wellbeing Strategy, by holding awareness sessions, updating our Display Screen Equipment policy, procuring a new Employee Assistant Programme provider and Occupational Health services, producing a regular Wellbeing newsletter and developing Wellness Action Plans for different service areas across the Senedd Commission.

AWARDS AND ACCREDITATION





Sustainability

In last year's report we talked about the increase in the use of the estate following the pandemic, and settling into new ways of working. These are well established now, as are the energy-saving measures we have been implementing to ensure new working patterns are adopted as efficiently as possible.

We see in the data tables at the end of this section that sustainability metrics have been relatively stable for the past two years, reinforcing how embedded post-pandemic working patterns and use of the estate have become. We have been capitalising on this consistency to ensure utilities use continues to better reflect occupancy levels.

With resources slightly more limited this year, some of the capital works planned for the mid-term period of our Carbon Neutral Strategy will now await the availability of funds. We have instead focussed on behavioural change and efficiency savings as we continue to drive down consumption.

We continue to plan ahead, including supporting work with the District Heat Network being built around Cardiff, which will eventually supply our two largest buildings with low-carbon heat. We have also been making low-carbon travel as easy as possible for our Members and staff.

Publishing data which aligns with the Welsh Government's carbon reporting guidance for the first time last year has meant a widening of our carbon footprint, and given us a new area of focus to work on with suppliers. We will continue to report our core carbon footprint in this report for consistency, along with a range of other sustainability metrics, all contained in the data tables following.

Our work continues under the banner of a certified environmental management system, which includes an annual audit by a UKAS-accredited body against the requirements of ISO14001. We were pleased to pass our certificate renewal visit by our auditing body again this year, enabling us to continue displaying the 14001 logo.

The following summary shows highlights and statistical data. Further information is published in the main Sustainability Annual Report, available separately on our website.

Carbon

Our carbon footprint has been fairly consistent the past two years reflecting the consistency in working patterns, but it has come down slightly in response to our efforts to reduce energy consumption. Scope 1 emissions show a noticeable reduction in response to the gas saving measures, whilst Scope 2 emissions show a slight rise, despite a reduction in electricity use, because of the rise in the UK Government's carbon conversion factor for electricity. (N.B. all the electricity we buy is from a 100% renewable tariff, but we continue to use this UK grid conversion factor for reporting.) Scope 3 emissions are down slightly from last year, but with a delay in claims reporting we expect they may rise slightly as more travel data is finalised before the next report.

Our work last year to calculate our wider Scope 3 emissions - the impact of purchased goods & services - meant we were able to report Welsh Government-aligned figures for the first time in our main Sustainability Annual Report. With extensive occupancy data, a legacy in part from the pandemic, we have been able to calculate a *home working* carbon figure as part of this. Our biennial travel survey allows us to produce a footprint for *employee commuting*, another component, and conversion factors for spend on *goods & services* allows further carbon figures to be produced. This is not something that is being widely calculated in this level of detail yet, but prepares us well for becoming a net zero organisation. Just seeing this data gives us the starting point for tackling these emissions, with our next efforts due to be focussed on working with suppliers to make the footprint more accurate before seeking to reduce it.

Energy

Last year we reported a reduction in gas consumption, reducing reliance on foreign imports and preparing us for the impact of higher prices. Those prices have now been realised, delayed from the changes in the wider market because of the long-term contracts under which our energy is purchased. However, this has meant that, despite efforts to reduce consumption across our utilities, energy costs have more than doubled this year. This, unfortunately, is not surprising, given that we saw the unit cost for electricity more than doubling, and even tripling, for gas.

As requested by the Commission, we have continued to implement energy saving measures and adjustments to heating demand in the buildings, and air-conditioning provision in the summer. Although the summer was milder so demand for A/C was less, there was a 5% reduction in electricity use. Similarly, our

heating saving measures reduced gas use by 7%. Set within the context of reduced public sector budgets, our savings measures have helped us realise savings of £50,000.

The measures we've taken in recent years have included lowering set-points and switching off heating in lower-occupancy areas of the building; encouraging staff to work in heated flexible working areas. This has helped lower usage, emissions and bills, and ensure the buildings better respond to occupancy changes. We recognised at the time that the changes had an impact on our staff when in the building. We worked quickly to issue communications and mitigate any issues, and will continue to do so.

Waste, water and other resources

Waste production figures have been almost exactly the same as last year. Some costs have actually lowered slightly, reducing our overall expenditure. We continue to divert all waste away from landfill; either directly recycling or sending it to the nearby energy-from-waste plant. One action for us in the forthcoming year will be compliance with new workplace recycling legislation. For many years we have been recycling all of the waste streams that the new law requires, meaning some small changes to the way those wastes are separated on site will be sufficient.

Water use is down slightly this year- a small cost saving over last year amounting to a 15% reduction in consumption. This follows a rise last year as the estate became more fully occupied. Again, water use tends to fluctuate both as a result of staff occupancy and attendance of visitors, and the general public visiting our buildings. Any fixtures and fittings that do require replacement are now substituted with water-minimising options a priority.

We continue to procure goods like stationery and our utilities through centrally-coordinated Welsh Government frameworks. Sustainability staff are involved in the development of specifications and tender reviews for all major contracts, ensuring standards such as Fair Trade and FSC are specified wherever relevant. We have also been continuing to request that new suppliers calculate the carbon footprint of goods where possible, in order to help us more accurately calculate our own footprint.

Travel

The large dip in travel figures during the pandemic well and truly behind us, this year has seen levels similar to last year; still at around two-thirds of those of pre-pandemic levels.

Virtual and hybrid meetings and training sessions are now commonplace. Our estate has extensive hybrid facilities and Members continue to join both committees and the main plenary sessions remotely from their constituencies when it's more appropriate to do so. This flexibility for Members helps reduce travel impacts.

The electric vehicle (EV) salary sacrifice scheme that we launched at the end of the last financial year is now fully up and running. Given market conditions have raised prices since we began implementation, the scheme has not yet seen the numbers of participants initially envisaged. However, we are satisfied that this is one option amongst many we offer for healthier and lower-carbon travel.

One option for business travel is the Senedd's pool car. A few years ago we switched this to a vehicle that ran primarily on electricity, but with a petrol back-up generator. This year, given improvements to technology that allow us to travel one length of Wales without charging, we have switched this to a fully-electric car.

We continue to be a member of the Public Service Board (PSB) group for active travel and have achieved the Healthy Travel Employer charter mark. This reflects our extensive facilities for those walking and cycling to work, as well as facilities for EV drivers and even e-bike users. Being part of this PSB group also helps maintain forward momentum as we share best practice in this field with other public sector organisations.

Biodiversity

With our small urban estate, we are limited by the impact we can have on the wider biodiversity of the area, but this hasn't stopped us making improvements wherever possible. We continue to maintain a new larger garden strip in the Tŷ Hywel car park, including two small ponds and blossoming trees. We maintain the land alongside the Senedd building; reducing cuts of this grassland area to annual interventions has allowed it to produce a wide range of flora, including two varieties of orchids. As a result the wildflower strip also now attracts a range of insects, including damsel flies and butterflies.

Our Bug Hotel area continues to be a success. The south-facing hotels were running at around 75% occupancy last summer with a mix of solitary bees and spiders present. The remains of the Senedd Christmas tree continues to be added in front of the more formal hotels each January, allowing for further diversity and a second use for the tree.

The Pierhead Bees project continues to run well, and has been a catalyst for some of the biodiversity measures on the wider Cardiff Bay estate. We have actively planted pollinator-friendly plants in our garden area, and the project has helped to inspire some of the school groups who've visited the apiary and taken some enthusiasm back to their own gardens.

As a Commission, we have little impact on biodiversity beyond our estate, but where we can make positive choices, such as the purchasing of FSC-certified timber, this is always prioritised as part of our sustainability impact assessment (SIA) tool.

Other Impacts

Whilst the sphere of influence of our Members covers every part of the lives of people in Wales, the Senedd Commission's operations are relatively confined, primarily to our buildings in Cardiff Bay and a small office in North Wales. These sites are not deemed at immediate risk from climate change impacts, with the Bay, for example, being protected to some extent by the Cardiff Bay Barrage. However our Carbon Neutral Strategy includes measures such as solar PV systems, which provide further protection against an uncertain future.

On a wider sustainability note, the Senedd Café achieved the Family Café Standard this year, awarded by Kids in Museums. This award recognises the family-friendly, but also environmentally-friendly features of the venue. The process to achieve the award was carried out in partnership with our catering contractor, themselves keen to lower our sustainability impact. Where possible, all foodstuffs for the café and wider catering service are procured from within Wales. Whilst we do not directly impact rural communities from our estate, this is one area where we can have a small positive impact on this sector. In this vein, the catering service also achieved the Soil Association's Food for Life bronze award this year; demonstrating their commitment to providing sustainably sourced, fresh and healthy foods.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions ^{6,7,8}		2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Non-financial indicators (tCO ₂ e)	Total gross emissions scope 1	236	234	252	211	183
	Total gross emissions scope 2	643	438	465	431	435
	Total gross emissions scope 3	272	96	156	217	199
	Total outside of scope emissions	6	4.8	4.3	4.1	5.6
	Total gross emissions	1156	752	858	836	820
	Total net emissions	1150	748	849	837	815
Expenditure on accredited offsets (e.g. Government Offsetting Fund)		£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Financial Indicators (£)	CRC Gross Expenditure	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

⁶ All energy data now contains current and retrospective transmission and distribution emissions and well-to-tank emissions where applicable.

⁷ All travel data now contains current and retrospective well-to-tank emissions for fuel use.

⁸ Excludes MS and MSSS travel January to March 2024 due to delayed reporting requirements. Previous years have been adjusted as final claims for those years have been processed.

Energy Consumption ⁶		2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Non-financial indicators (kwh)	Electricity (renewable tariff from 2018)	2,596,810	1,944,436	2,179,254	2,209,985	2,109,437
	Gas	1,289,334	1,282,969	1,352,857	1,083,181	1,020,916
	Biomass (renewable)	404,690	285,215	275,885	391,500	522,000
	Combined heating demand	1,694,024	1,568,184	1,628,742	1,200,812	1,548,040
Non-financial indicators (tCO2e)	Total energy emissions	962	734	800	701	686
Financial Indicators (£)	Total energy expenditure	521,093	406,650	424,857	437,974	1,195,034

Water consumption		2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Non-financial indicators (m3)	Supplied (direct)	6,281	1,642	2,326	4,408	3,684
	Collected (indirect)	515	141	231	469	761
	Abstracted (indirect)	0	0	0	0	0
Financial indicators (£)	Expenditure on supply and sewerage	18,065	10,499	11,387	16,832	15,705

Waste		2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Non-financial indicators (tonnes)	Total waste arising	103	59	50	63	63
	Recycled/ Recovery	104	59	49	63	62
	Energy Recovery	43	41	23	27	21
	Landfill	0	0	0	0	0
	Waste composted	17.5	2.4	1.9	6.1	7.3
	Hazardous waste	0.2	0.02	0.14	0.37	0.18
	Paper purchased (A4 million sheets equivalent)	2.33	0.86	0.65	1.97	2.05
Financial indicators (£)	Expenditure on all waste disposal	27,025	5,445	15,206	25,199	19,961

Official Travel ^{7,8}		2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Non-financial indicators (miles)	Business travel	754,431	70,112	184,005 ⁴	503,784	457,825
	Owned and leased vehicles	13,003	913	4,153	5,138	5,869
Financial Indicators (£)	Expenditure on official business travel	300,920	31,999	88,140	202,878	188,922

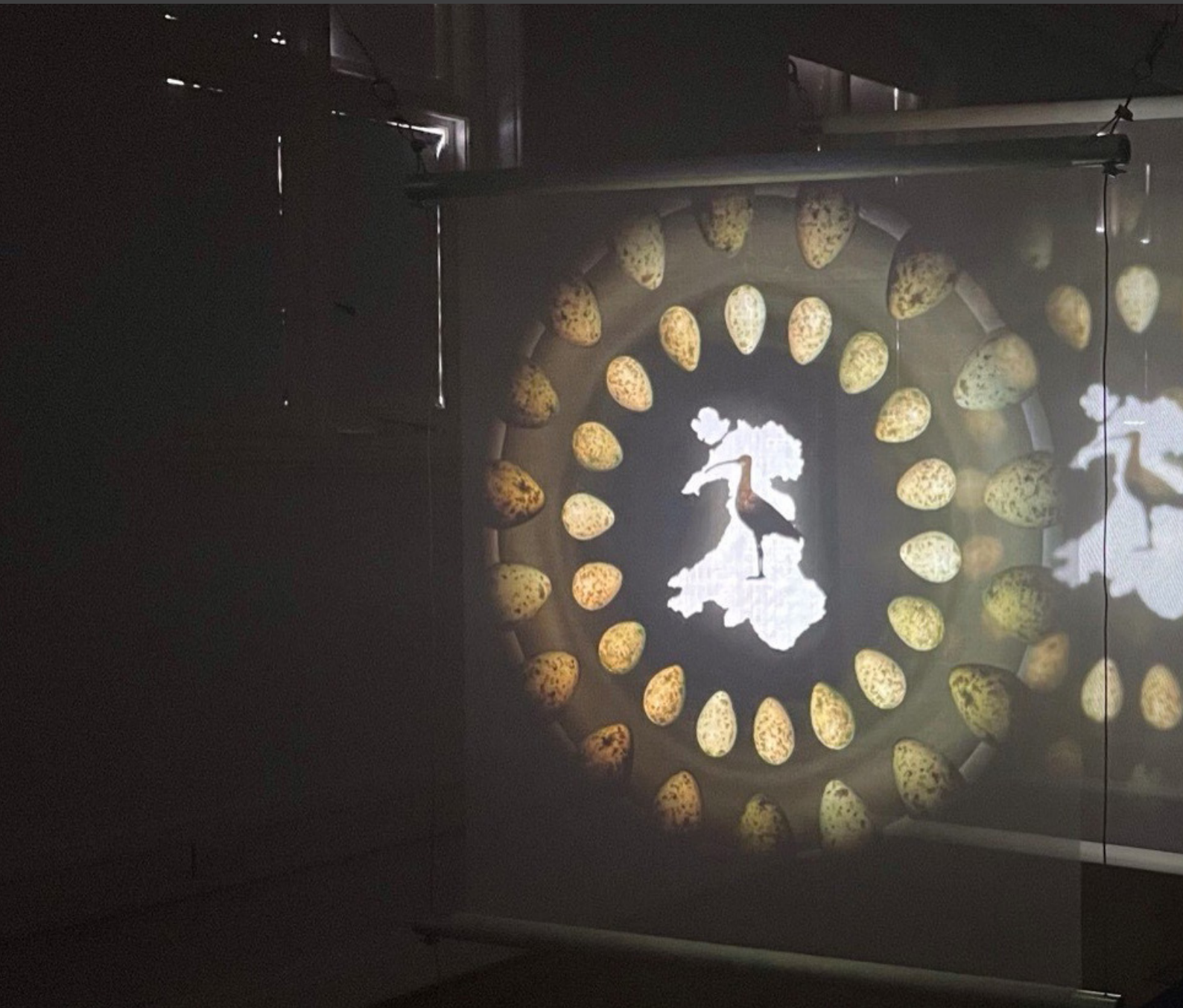
The information contained above has been developed for our Annual Report and Accounts in accordance with HM Treasury's Sustainability Reporting Guidance for the 2023-24 financial year. We also use the DEFRA conversion factors for 2023 for carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) figures. CO₂e is a universal unit of measurement that allows the global warming potential of different GHGs to be compared.

Emissions are reported based on a financial control approach for the core administrative estate only.

A full summary of our environmental performance can be found in the Senedd's Sustainability Annual Report, available on the website.

Manon Antoniazzi
Chief Executive and Clerk of the Senedd
Date: 16 July 2024

▼ Conference of the Birds exhibition, 2023



Accountability



Corporate Governance

This report, which has been signed by the Chief Executive and Clerk as Principal Accounting Officer in line with Treasury rules, provides information about senior remuneration and audit.

Directors' report

Commissioners and other office holders

Information on the Llywydd (Presiding Officer) and Commissioners is included on pages 14-15.

Independent Advisers

Information on the Independent Advisers and Independent Committee members is included on pages 16-17.

Senior management

Information on the Chief Executive and Clerk, and senior management having responsibility for directing the major activities of the Commission during the year is included on pages 18-19.

Significant interests held by Members

A Register of Financial and Other Interests of Members is available at www.senedd.wales and www.senedd.cymru.

Personal data related incidents

There were four incidents of personal data loss requiring reporting to the Information Commissioner's Office between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024. The ICO did not require the Commission to take any action as a result of these incidents. There were five other instances of personal data breach reported internally, which were investigated and managed internally. The likelihood of damage or distress to the data subject in each case was considered to be low, so no further escalation was required.

Diversity, Inclusion and Staff engagement

Information on the Commission's policies and activities relating to diversity, inclusion and staff engagement can be found within the Remuneration Report (pages 135-152).

Auditor

The Accounts of the Senedd Commission are audited by the Auditor General for Wales. The Audit Report can be found at page 153. The estimated external audit cost for the audit of these financial statements is £71,627 (2022-23, £67,295). No additional non-statutory audit work was incurred during 2023-24 (2022-23, nil).

Disclosure of information to the Auditor General for Wales

So far as I am aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which our auditor is unaware; and
- I have taken all the steps that I ought to have taken in order to make myself aware of any relevant audit information, and to establish that our auditor is aware of that information.

Accounts Direction

The accounts set out in pages 166 to 172 have been prepared in accordance with the Treasury Direction issued under Section 137 of the *Government of Wales Act 2006*. The financial statements comply with the requirements specified in HM Treasury's Financial Reporting Manual and are supported by explanatory notes. These accounts set out the financial impact of decisions made by the Commission both within the financial year and arising from previous financial years.

Information about the Senedd and Commission is also available on the Senedd website at www.senedd.wales and www.senedd.cymru.

Manon Antoniazzi
Chief Executive and Clerk of the Senedd
Date: 16 July 2024

Statement of Commission and Principal Accounting Officer responsibilities

The Chief Executive and Clerk of the Senedd is, by virtue of Section 138 of the *Government of Wales Act 2006*, the Principal Accounting Officer for the Commission.

The Chief Executive and Clerk of the Senedd has prepared the statement of accounts in accordance with the Direction issued by HM Treasury and with the accounting principles and disclosure requirements set out in the Government Financial Reporting Manual. The Resource Accounts are prepared on an accruals accounting basis and give a true and fair view of the Commission's state of affairs at the year-end and of its net resource outturn; resources applied to objectives; statement of comprehensive net expenditure; statement of financial position; cash flows, and statement of changes in taxpayers' equity for the financial year.

In preparing the accounts the Chief Executive and Clerk of the Senedd has:

- complied with the Accounts Direction issued by HM Treasury;
- complied with the relevant accounting and disclosure requirements and applied suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis;
- made judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- stated whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the accounts; and
- prepared the accounts on a going concern basis.
- confirmed that the annual report and accounts as a whole is fair, balanced and understandable and has taken personal responsibility for the annual report and accounts and the judgements required to determine that it is fair, balanced and understandable.

The relevant responsibilities of the Principal Accounting Officer, including the responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the finances of the Commission and for the keeping of proper records, are set out in a Memorandum issued by HM Treasury.

Manon Antoniazzi
Chief Executive and Clerk of the Senedd
Date: 16 July 2024

Governance Statement

This Statement, which is signed by the Chief Executive and Clerk as Principal Accounting Officer, sets out the way in which the Commission is governed and managed and how it is accountable for what it does. It outlines assurances on the effectiveness of the Commission's governance framework in delivering its strategic goals for the year ending 31 March 2024.

Governance framework

Under the terms of the *Government of Wales Act 2006*, the Commission delegates its functions, including responsibility for the management of staff, to the Chief Executive and Clerk subject to a few exceptions and conditions. This delegation includes the governance arrangements to facilitate the effective operation of the Commission to deliver against its strategic goals and priorities.

The governance framework comprises the structures, systems, processes, and the culture and values, by which the Commission is directed and controlled. It defines relationships, accountability and responsibilities among those who work in and with the organisation, determines the rules and procedures through which the Commission's goals, priorities and objectives are set, and provides the means of attaining these and monitoring performance. The framework covers areas such as: governance principles; strategic and operational planning; management of risk and performance; information governance; procurement rules and procedures; financial management; audit; and assurance. Corporate policies and codes of conduct ensure everyone working at, or with the Commission is aware of the need to operate to the highest governance standards. This includes policies on dignity and respect, fraud, corruption and bribery, and whistleblowing.

Compliance with governance principles

The Commission has adopted a set of governance principles and supporting provisions⁹ which are consistent with the principles outlined in HM Treasury and Financial Reporting Council codes of practice and the International Framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector. The principles of leadership, effectiveness, accountability and sustainability run through the ways in which we operate, as demonstrated throughout this statement. The *Assurance* section of this statement describes how evidence of compliance with, and effectiveness of our governance framework, has been gathered through the Commission's Assurance Framework which includes assurance statements from senior management.

Governance structure

The Commission

The Commission is the corporate body which is responsible for ensuring that property, staff and services are provided for the Senedd to operate effectively. It comprises the Llywydd (Presiding Officer) who is its Chair, and four Commissioners. Further information on the Llywydd and Commissioners is included within the Overview section of the Annual Report and Accounts (the Annual Report)

The Commission's Principal Accounting Officer is the Chief Executive and Clerk of the Senedd who is accountable to the Commissioners for the delivery of their strategic goals and priorities and personally accountable to the Senedd for the organisation and quality of management in the Commission, including its use of public money and the stewardship of its assets. Senedd staff are employees of the Commission.

Commission committees

As part of the governance framework, the Commission has an Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and a Remuneration Committee, membership details of which can be found within the Overview section of the Annual Report. These are independent advisory bodies with no executive powers and produce their own Annual Reports.

The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee's role is to review the comprehensiveness, reliability and integrity of assurances and whether they meet

⁹ <https://senedd.wales/commission/governance-principles-and-supporting-provisions/>

the Commission and the Accounting Officer's needs. It has a focus on: internal and external audit reports, including the implementation of recommendations; the Commission's Annual Report and Accounts; reports on risk management, financial management and major projects; and governance and internal control arrangements. Further details on the Committee's work can be found throughout this statement and on its internet pages¹⁰.

The Remuneration Committee makes recommendations on matters regarding the remuneration and terms of service of the Chief Executive and Clerk and other senior posts. This assists the Commission in ensuring that remuneration arrangements meet the highest standards of probity and accountability for the use of public funds.

During the year, membership of Audit and Risk Assurance Committee changed slightly with one member no longer being a formal member but remaining as a standing invitee to meetings. The membership of the Remuneration Committee and the Chair and other membership of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee remained unchanged.

Decision taking and business management

The Commission meets on a regular basis to provide direction and to oversee delivery of the Commission's strategic goals, priorities and objectives.

The Commission delegates its day-to-day management functions to the Chief Executive and Clerk. The formal delegation¹¹ outlines exceptions and areas on which the Chief Executive and Clerk must consult with the Commission. There is also an established system of delegated authority to Directors and Heads of Service which covers finance, staffing and other resource responsibilities, such as procurement.

The Commission administration is divided into three directorates: Business; Resources; and Communication and Engagement, Directors of which report to the Chief Executive and Clerk. The Chief Finance Officer is a member of the Resources Directorate with a direct reporting line to the Accounting Officer and is a member of the Executive Board. The directorates are sub-divided into service areas, led by Heads of Service. Further details on the governance structure,

¹⁰ <https://senedd.wales/commission/senedd-commission-audit-and-risk-assurance-committee/>

¹¹ <https://senedd.wales/commission/delegation-of-senedd-commission-functions/>

including a structure chart can be found in the Commission Management section of the Annual Report (page 18).

In June 2023, a new Chief Finance Officer took up the position to replace the previous Director of Finance who left the Commission in December 2022. Interim arrangements were made to ensure a smooth transition.

The Commission's Executive Board, chaired by the Chief Executive and Clerk, is the strategic decision-making body for all matters delegated by the Commission. This is supported by the Leadership Team, consisting of members of the Executive Board and all Heads of Service. Further details on the Executive Board and Leadership Team can be found on in the Overview section of the Annual Report (page 6).

Planning and performance measurement

The Commission's strategic goals and priorities for the Sixth Senedd are set out in the Commission Strategy. These have provided direction and informed planning at the operational level within the Commission. The strategic goals and priorities are outlined in the Statement of Purpose section of the Annual Report.

Since 2022-23 and during 2023-24 the Commission has focussed on improving its strategic planning framework, establishing the Strategic Planning Unit to do so, and introducing and keeping under review a Corporate Delivery Plan.

The Corporate Delivery Plan was developed in conjunction with the Commission's Leadership Team and approved by Executive Board.

The Plan translated the Commission Strategy into a clear, operational direction of travel for Commission officials via the setting out of a small number of improvement priorities. These priorities in turn were reflected within other key operational level business plans, and within each service area plan. This ensured activity and resources were aligned with the Commission Strategy.

The Commission has also approved its first Medium-Term Resourcing Framework (MTRF), details of which can be found in the *Progress against specific areas identified for focus* section of this statement.

The other key operational level business plans in 2023-24 included:

- Carbon Neutral Strategy: 2021 - 2030
- People Strategy

- Diversity and Inclusion Strategy
- The Official Languages Scheme: Sixth Senedd
- Wellbeing Strategy
- Communications and Engagement Strategy
- Portfolio Strategy

Further details on how we have developed and embedded corporate planning, along with the resource and financial planning frameworks, can be found in the *Progress against specific areas for focus in 2023-24* section of this statement and in the Performance Analysis section of the Annual Report (page 32).

Commission performance measurement activity during 2023-24 comprised:

- A quarterly report to the Executive Board on progress against delivery of the Corporate Delivery Plan milestones, with a final year-end outturn report;
- Regular updates to the Executive Board on progress in delivering the Commission's portfolio of change projects;
- Regular updates to the Executive Board and the Commission on progress in delivering the Ways of Working programme milestones;
- Bi-annual review by the Commission of its Corporate Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and an annual review of the indicators themselves to ensure they reflect any changes to our working practices and remain fit for purpose. Details of the Commission's Corporate KPIs can be found in the Performance Analysis section of the Annual Report (page 32).

Progress and performance

We have made progress on some significant areas of work over the year as outlined below. Further details of the governance around the Senedd Reform and Ways of Working Programmes are outlined in the *Progress against specific areas identified for focus* section of this statement.

Senedd Reform

The Welsh Government's Senedd Cymru (Members and Election's) Bill was passed by the Senedd on 8 May 2024. Subject to Royal Assent, the Commission will now begin a programme of activity to prepare for a reformed Seventh Senedd.

The Senedd Reform programme is coordinating the provision of support and advice to enable the Senedd Commission, the Business Committee, the Independent Remuneration Board, Chairs' Forum, and the Llywydd to deliver the work required of them to prepare for parliamentary business in the Seventh Senedd, in clear sight of each other's work whilst respecting each body's independence.

The Senedd Reform Programme Board has also provided support for the Senedd Commission's and Llywydd's contributions during the scrutiny phase of the Bill process, and the implications for the draft budget. This has included an extensive exercise to provide information to Welsh Government and the committees undertaking scrutiny relating to the estimated costs of Senedd Reform to the Senedd Commission. These were based on a set of common assumptions agreed by the Senedd Commission, in consultation with the Business Committee and Independent Remuneration Board.

The Joint Assurance Board, which is co-chaired by the Director of Senedd Business and the Welsh Government's Director of European Transition, Constitution and Justice, met regularly throughout 2023-24. This Board is intended to give additional assurance to the respective Accounting Officers and political decision-makers, with a particular focus on interdependencies between the Senedd Commission and Welsh Government's respective Senedd Reform/change programmes. The Board reviewed the underpinning common assumptions for which Welsh Government and Senedd Commission have their respective responsibility to ensure that planning proceeds on the basis of a shared understanding.

Throughout 2023-24, Commission officials have supported the Independent Remuneration Board to progress its strategic work programme which includes several thematic reviews which will shape the Determination for the Seventh Senedd: including Simplification, the review of staffing support for Members and the review of Members' Remuneration and Allowances. The Board's chair has held several meetings with the chief executive and the Presiding Officer during 2023-24 and a programme of dialogue and joint work on areas of shared Board/Commission interest have been explored for 2024-25.

Ways of Working Programme

During 2023-24 the Commission formally initiated the Cardiff Bay 2032 project. This project will ensure the future accommodation needs of the Commission and Senedd are met following the end of the current Ty Hywel lease in 2032. This is the most significant and complex project the Commission has undertaken.

UK constitutional change

We have managed our response to constitutional changes in the UK by targeting resources at appropriate levels, developing inter-parliamentary working and sharing information with relevant Commission officials and political decision-makers. This has helped to ensure visibility and management of current and emerging constitutional issues. We are currently engaging with the Business Committee to consider the implications of the UK's *Internal Market Act 2020* for the Senedd. In addition, since the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act (REUL Act) received Royal Assent in June 2023, Standing Orders have been amended to provide the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee with a function to scrutinise Statutory Instruments flowing from the Act. Although no more changes to Standing Orders are anticipated as a result of the REUL Act, key staff across the Business Directorate continue to monitor the potential impact of the Act. The preparatory work has been led by the Director of Senedd Business and the associated risks have been monitored by the Executive Board via the Commission's Corporate Risk Register.

Progress against specific areas identified for focus during 2023-24

In last year's Governance Statement, we referred to a number of specific areas of focus and development for 2023-24 and details of progress against these are set out in the sub-headings below.

Finalising and implementing the Medium-Term Resourcing Framework

During 2023-24 the Commission approved its first Medium-Term Resourcing Framework (MTRF).

The MTRF sets out the Commission's financial horizon on a rolling three-year period, to assist and inform the Commission's resource allocations over time, with particular reference to its annual budgets and workforce planning.

The MTRF also sets a context for the Commission's decisions for resource requests from the Welsh Block Grant, seeking to ensure that these requests are prudent,

taut, and in-line with the overall public spending context in Wales. Finally, the framework also ensures alignment between resourcing needs and resourcing availability over time.

The principles of the MTRF were translated into the 2024-25 Commission annual budget, set during 2023-24, by capping the increase in its business as usual core costs at 2.5%, to ensure those cost increases did not outstrip the increase in the overall Welsh Block Grant.

The original version of the MTRF (covering 2023-24 to 2026-27) has now been refreshed as planned at the end of 2023-24, with the latest version for approval in 2024-25 covering a planning horizon of 2025-26 to 2027-28.

The MTRF has received scrutiny from the Senedd's Finance Committee and Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee (PAPAC) which noted the following in its report on the Commission's 2022-23 annual report and accounts:

We acknowledge the importance of the Medium-Term Resourcing Framework and the Workforce Plan that is being developed, as there are significant challenges associated with supporting more Members, whilst also maintaining the level of service provided to date

Ensuring project and programme governance arrangements remain effective, and implementing the portfolio management framework and joint reporting cycles for the Senedd Reform and Ways of Working programmes and other major projects

The Commission progressed delivery of two significant change programmes in 2023-24 – Senedd Reform and Ways of Working – details of the delivery are outlined in the *Progress against specific areas identified for focus* section of this statement; this section focuses on the governance of the programmes.

A portfolio of wider change projects was also delivered in 2023-24. The Portfolio Management Group (PMG) has met frequently during the year, and has made recommendations to the Executive Board on the project portfolio. These were based on the direction from the Portfolio Strategy which the PMG has managed and controlled on behalf of the Executive Board to ensure maximum value for money is achieved.

During the year the Commission's Head of Internal Audit conducted an advisory exercise with the objective of assessing if a suitable governance framework had

been established for the two change programmes. A small number of advisory recommendations were made at the very start of 2024-25 (therefore falling outside this reporting period). Both change programmes will review these recommendations during 2024-25.

During 2023-24 both change programmes were managed via Programme Boards, and chaired by Senior Responsible Owners (SROs) that report directly to, and are accountable to, the Executive Board.

Dashboards and detailed progress reports are presented regularly to the Executive Board on the wider portfolio of change projects.

Senedd Reform

The Senedd Reform Programme Board met as required during 2023-24, having established a governance structure for the programme. Membership of the Board, which consists of Directors and senior managers from across the Commission, has been updated to include representatives from Human Resources and trade unions.

Alongside the advisory audit recommendations, the Senedd Reform Programme Board also considered and agreed the scope of the Senedd Reform programme and how it could manage change successfully and deliver outcomes in support of the Commission's objectives.

Within the framework of the Welsh Government/Senedd Commission Joint Assurance Board, there is a formal set of common planning assumptions maintained between the parties to ensure consistency of understanding between the Welsh Government and Senedd Commission and facilitate planning.

The Senedd Commission is also represented on the Welsh Government's Senedd Electoral Reform Delivery Board, which has met as necessary during 2023-24. It brings together key partners involved in implementing Senedd Reform to develop a shared understanding on the implementation work required to deliver it and management of associated risks and interdependencies.

The Executive Board, as the Commission's decision-making body, has strategic oversight of the programme and received oral reports on progress. The Executive Board also regularly reviews the corporate risk on Senedd Reform and related risks around capacity and capability of the Commission to respond and prepare for this transformational change, alongside business-as usual priorities and

delivering the Ways of Working programme. The Senedd Reform Programme Board has developed and maintains a programme-level risk and issues register.

Ways of Working Programme

To ensure effective governance, the Ways of Working Programme Board operates in accordance with *Managing Successful Programmes* expectations. This Board met on a monthly basis during 2023-24. It developed and approved a refreshed Terms of Reference and a Programme Strategy and maintains active risk and issue registers and decision logs which will be enhanced in line with the advisory audit recommendations.

Cardiff Bay 2032 project

For the Cardiff Bay 2032 project, which was formally initiated during 2023-24, the Commission has taken steps to ensure the effective governance of such a complex project, and to ensure it delivers value for money and the intended benefits.

As part of this, a Project Board has been established and is operating on best public sector practice principles and in accordance with the Welsh Government / HM Treasury Green Book. To that end a Strategic Outline Case was commissioned. This set out the project vision, objectives, benefits and an initial value for money appraisal was conducted to inform a preferred way forward. This was approved by the Commission which provided the authorisation to progress to the next stage; detailed project planning. At the same time the Project Board approved the escalation of a specific Cardiff Bay 2032 risk to the Corporate Risk Register to ensure close oversight of a significant Commission risk.

The project will continue to operate during 2024-25 in-line with the expectations set out in *Managing Welsh Public Money* and the Green Book. This will include commissioning an Outline Business Case and the relevant technical and professional services and expertise to ensure it is a robust basis for launching a procurement exercise.

Embedding the updated corporate and service planning framework

The Commission conducted a second round of its updated corporate and service planning activity during 2023-24, building on the lessons learned from the inaugural round in 2022-23.

As part of this, the Executive Board approved a Corporate Plan, which replaced the Corporate Delivery Plan (CDP) (details of which are outlined in the *Planning and performance measurement* section of this statement). This Corporate Plan covers a planning horizon of two years, up until the end of the Sixth Senedd, rather than the single year of the CDP. It also includes a refreshed set of priorities to provide an improved framework for decision-making, resource allocation and progress monitoring.

In conjunction with the drafting of the Corporate Plan, service areas were required to develop service plans covering the same planning period utilising an improved template to ensure service area deliverables, and the resourcing needed to achieve them were identified in a timely manner.

To offer greater assurance that service plans accurately reflected requirements, a two-stage process was conducted that allowed enabling services such as ICT (where resource needs are strongly driven by the activity of other service areas), sufficient time and information to ensure their own plans corresponded with the proposed pattern of activity and services in the wider Commission.

With a refreshed Corporate Plan and a refreshed and improved service planning round significant progress was made in this area of development during 2023-24.

Progressing the work on simplifying and communicating rules, and procedures in our regulatory framework as it applies to Members

Plans to develop a dialogue between the Independent Remuneration Board and the Senedd Commission have progressed. This dialogue aims to establish a shared understanding of how Members' needs will be supported through Commission services and the Board's Determination, looking to the Seventh Senedd and beyond, and includes discussions on simplification of the Determination. This involves taking forward simplification of the regulatory framework, with support being provided to the Committee on Standards of Conduct, the Commission and the Independent Remuneration Board.

The review of the Dignity and Respect policy was shared by the Commission with the Commissioner for Standards, the Remuneration Board and the Standards of Conduct Committee. Following its consultation on the Senedd's Dignity and Respect policy and associated procedures, the Standards of Conduct Committee has committed to a comprehensive inquiry, looking at all aspects of our policies and procedures so that they are up to date and fit for purpose. Action has been undertaken to improve Members' awareness of the Standards regime. Further

awareness sessions have been delivered to political groups by the Commissioner for Standards, and training has been provided on dignity and respect specifically. These will continue to be part of the provision on an ongoing basis throughout the course of a Senedd term.

The Commission has been running a programme of “Power Half Hours” to provide awareness and training in a condensed form, which supplements the more in-depth training programme. These sessions are available to Members and their support staff and cover topical issues or items that have been requested by Members and their support staff, for example relating to the rules and processes around submitting claims against the Determination and supporting Members in their roles as an employer. Details of the sessions are routinely publicised through monthly support staff bulletins and are identified in the Learning Calendar on the Intranet.

The Commission has begun a refresh of the Members’ Intranet in order to improve the way in which information is made available to Members, simplifying the content and its presentation.

Risks relating to the Regulatory Framework and Dignity and Respect are captured on the Commission’s Corporate Risk Register. Progress on the mitigation for these risks is reported regularly to the Executive Board and the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

Taking action to address any emerging issues around compliance with our Official Languages Scheme

Work on ensuring that emerging issues around compliance with the Official Languages Scheme are identified at an early stage has progressed during the year. The team has developed and implemented guidance for Official Languages Co-ordinators to enable them to recognise emerging issues and to differentiate between examples of failure to comply with the scheme and complaints in order to take the appropriate remedial steps. It is important that the Senedd Commission has a procedure in place to record and learn from occasions when we fail to comply with the service standards set out in the Official Languages Scheme. The procedure includes the requirement to record and share steps taken and lessons learned so that we can avoid regular re-occurrences. Identifying emerging issues at an early stage means that they can be remedied quickly and that complaints from either Members or the public are avoided.

Financial management and performance

We work within a system of strong and effective control to ensure probity and proper use of funds.

Executive Board is responsible for in year management of available funds and takes advice from the 'Project Management Group', chaired by the Chief Finance Officer and has responsibility for considering business cases for funding and prioritising expenditure to align with corporate priorities, maintaining enough flexibility to respond to emerging pressures. This new process has allowed maximising of resource during the financial year.

Service budget positions are reviewed monthly by the Finance team, quarterly with the budget managers and reported each period to the Executive Board.

Energy costs continue to be a cost pressure which has been managed by cost saving measures on the estate and in future will partly be mitigated by moving to the District Heat Network.

The Audit Report for 2022-23 was unqualified and an extract from the Scrutiny of Accounts 2022-23 report by the Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee in December 2023 reads:

The Committee is encouraged by the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and that the innovations from this challenging period are now being maintained to the benefit of staff and Members. The impact of this new way of working on future estate planning is particularly noteworthy, given the forthcoming impact of Senedd reform on the organisation.

The Committee acknowledges the challenges posed by rising costs in delivering key Carbon Neutral Strategy projects and would like to be updated on the Commission's activities in this area, to ensure the Commission remains within its estimated spend and is able to deliver the projects necessary to hit the medium-term and long-term targets set in the Strategy.

We have continued to receive challenge from the Commission and Finance Committee around the level and use of Commission resources.

We have fully introduced in 2023-24 the Medium Term Resource Framework (MTRF) which considers the medium term delivery for the organisation on a three

year rolling basis. It will, through service planning, identify potential resource requirements, funding and staffing needs and enable more efficient planning in future years. This is of particular importance as the Commission begin to deliver multiyear projects such as Ways of Working and Senedd Reform to ensure clarity of understanding of the financial requirements of both the programmes and the project deliveries within. This work will inform budget assumptions and funding requirements on rolling basis.

The Finance team has been, and will continue to be, instrumental in developing options for future budget strategy and presentation. This is of particular relevance as we seek to deliver the changes associated with Senedd Reform and consider the Commission's estate through the Ways of Working programme of work. We continue to work with both the Commission and Finance Committee to enhance transparency in our budget setting and expenditure reporting, ensuring we are demonstrating our commitment to the Finance Committee's Statement of Principles expected of Directly funded Bodies.

An extract from the scrutiny report on the draft budget for 2024-25 by the Finance Committee in October 2023 reads:

The Committee was pleased to hear that the Commission's new rolling Medium Term Resourcing Framework will actively look to identify savings. This demonstrates that the Commission is adhering to the Statement of Principles in continuing to seek to improve processes and accrue efficiencies, both in terms of reducing costs and maximising income

The Commission has had to take some difficult financial decisions during the year. At the start of the year the Commission were required to identify and return savings to the Welsh Consolidated Fund totalling £435,000 as part of the budget approval agreement; a further £800,000 for an unbudgeted in-year cost of living payment requested by the TUS for staff was also considered and agreed by the Commission. Savings were identified and tight budgetary control was implemented to ensure the Commission delivered services within the funds allocated, monitored closely by the Executive Board on a monthly basis to ensure the necessary savings crystallised and to adjust if necessary. Although this was a difficult operational period for the organisation, some of the controls implemented enabled improved operational and financial management of some areas of the organisation. These processes have now been incorporated into the MTRF process.

A key role of the Commission's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee is to review and recommend the signing of the Commission's accounts. The Committee also receives an update on our financial position at each of its meetings from the Chief Finance Officer and information such as reports on scrutiny by Senedd Committees (as previously referenced in this section) and the Commission's responses, are shared with its members in real time.

Risk identification and management

The system of internal control is based on a continuous process designed to identify, prioritise and effectively manage the risks to the achievement of the Commission's strategic goals and priorities, together with compliance with legislation, policies and procedures.

The Commission's most significant risks are captured in a Corporate Risk Register. These corporate risks are collectively owned by the Executive Board and actively managed and regularly monitored by the relevant Director and their Heads of Service. The Corporate Risk Register is reviewed in its entirety by the Executive Board quarterly to ensure the controls are adequate and that progress is being made on further actions to improve the controls. This includes horizon scanning for new or emerging risks.

Below this, risks are captured, managed and monitored at a service level, and Heads of Service provide quarterly reports to their Directors outlining movements and details of any new or emerging risks. This provides an opportunity for Directors to challenge the risks and to decide whether any should potentially be escalated and included on the Corporate Risk Register. The reports provide the basis for the quarterly risk review by the Executive Board. Programme and project related risks are reported to the Executive Board monthly.

During the year the Commission's Corporate Risk Register has been updated to reflect perceived risks. New risks relating to the Cardiff Bay 2032 and Senedd Reform driven estates projects have been added to reflect their criticality to the future provision of accommodation for the Commission and the Senedd. We have also been closely monitoring risks around corporate capacity and capability, particularly as we plan for major transformational change in terms of Senedd Reform and new ways of working. Details of all risks captured in the Commission's Corporate Risk Register, including movements during the year, can be found under Risk Profile in the Performance Analysis section of the Annual Report (page 32).

The Commission's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee has maintained an overview of the effectiveness of risk management arrangements and has welcomed the continual assessment and visibility of risks, the dynamic nature of the risk register and the focus on change and uncertainty. It carries out reviews of corporate risks at its meetings and selects specific risks for a 'deep dive' assessment. In 2023-24 deep-dives included risks relating to:

- The Members' regulatory framework;
- UK-related Constitutional Change; and
- Dignity & Respect.

One area of continued focus by the Committee has been around cyber-security, providing independent challenge to the work we do to protect the Senedd against cyber-attack and denial of service. As well as reviewing detailed updates on the corporate risk at each meeting and carrying out regular 'deep-dive' reviews, the Committee also considers annual internal audit reports on cyber-security. In addition, senior ICT officials attend Committee meetings twice-yearly to provide further updates, including presentation of a detailed Cyber Security Assurance Report, and respond to scrutiny. Further assurance is provided by a report on progress against all internal audit recommendations relating to cyber security.

Another area of focus for the Committee has been around the development of our plans for Senedd Reform, with corporate updates supplementing the detailed information on the risks at each meeting. The Committee also receives a corporate update at each meeting on progress against delivery of the Ways of Working programme.

Assurance

Assurance framework

The Commission's Assurance Framework has continued to provide an effective means of gathering evidence on levels of assurance. Based on the widely adopted three lines model, the framework provides a structured and evidence-based approach to help us assess the strength of our internal controls, with each service area mapping their levels of assurance. These maps, along with tools to test awareness of staff, are used to inform service-level assurance statements which are reviewed by Directors. Each Director also produces an assurance statement for the Accounting Officer to inform this Governance Statement.

This year, in line with emerging public sector best practice on assurance mapping, a further step was introduced whereby Director carried out structured mapping of assurance at the second-line/corporate oversight level to inform their statements. This will be evaluated to ensure it is fit for purpose ahead of next year's assurance gathering process.

The Commission's Independent Advisers (including the Chair of the Commission's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee) carry out detailed scrutiny and challenge of these assurance statements and the process for gathering evidence to support the assurances provided. This adds a further layer of assurance.

Meetings between the Governance and Assurance team and Heads of Service take place through the year and, alongside the assurance statement process, help to identify any areas which need further focus, awareness-raising or training. This is then addressed through further briefing or targeted training sessions delivered by the Governance and Assurance team. This all provides confidence that the principles of good governance are well understood and being applied across the Commission and that any areas of relative weakness are being addressed.

Further details on the levels of assurance reported can be found in the section on *Review of effectiveness of internal control and governance arrangements* in this statement.

Internal audit

The role of Head of Internal Audit in 2023-24 sat within the responsibilities of the Commission's Head of Governance and Assurance, providing assurance across a range of service areas and attends each meeting of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

The Head of Governance and Assurance left the organisation in July 2023 with the responsibility of Head of Internal Audit for the financial year being undertaken on an interim basis by our external Internal Audit Engagement Director, with the Chief Finance Officer assuming the role of the Designated Senior Sponsor as well as providing continuity and liaison across the organisation. This structure has been made permanent subsequent to year end.

Internal Audit has delivered a programme of audits during 2023-24. Audit reviews have been completed on Public Appointments, use of Procurement Cards, and the governance structure for projects and programmes within the Commission. In addition, the annual audit of Members' expenses has taken place, and the audit of cyber security and follow up on audit recommendations are ongoing.

Internal audit reports continue to identify a small number of areas where improvements to the control environment can be made and highlight areas where the Commission demonstrates good practice in terms of the systems and controls in place. Where weaknesses or issues are identified, management continues to take positive action to address audit recommendations. No significant concerns were raised in the audit reports during the year.

The Commission's Internal Audit function (both internally and externally resourced) and Audit Wales (as the Commission's external auditors) continue to have an effective working relationship in line with a joint working protocol. As part of their risk assessment Audit Wales takes into account the work undertaken in year by Internal Audit.

The Head of Internal Audit's Annual Opinion and Report concludes that, "...the Accounting Officer can take moderate assurance¹² that arrangements to secure governance, risk management and internal control, are suitably designed and applied effectively". The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee considered the report to be a good assessment of work undertaken during the year.

During the year, the outcome of a review into the effectiveness of the Independent Remuneration Board was considered alongside the completion of the review of the effectiveness of the Executive Board which reported in June 2023.

Other governance areas

The Chief Finance Officer produced an Annual Report on Fraud and presented this to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. No incidents of fraud or whistleblowing have been reported during 2023-24.

The Head of Internal Audit produced and presented his Annual Report and Opinion for 2023-24 to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

The Commission continues to use external frameworks and internationally recognised frameworks and standards to guide our governance, management of risk, and assurances in areas such as cyber-security and sustainability.

The Commission carries out formal compliance monitoring against legal and regulatory obligations, reports on which are published on the Commission's

¹² Moderate assurance - some improvements are required to enhance the adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of governance, risk management and control.

website. Examples of this are the Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report, the Official Languages Scheme Annual Report, the Annual Environmental Report. A Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) Annual Report is also produced and presented to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

Independent assurance

The Commission's Independent Advisers¹³ provide support and constructive challenge to the Commission and its work. Aside from their important advisory roles on the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and the Remuneration Committee they have helped in a number of recruitment schemes, participated in staff meetings and our staff recognition awards, supported our work to make our organisation more inclusive, assisted by bringing their expertise to specific issues and provided challenge to senior managers as part of the assurance statement process.

As part of its role in reviewing audit activity, the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee also assesses the independence of both internal and external auditors. The Committee receives assurances on this from the Head of Internal Audit, including through his Annual Report and Opinion, and from Audit Wales through the submission of the Annual Audit Strategy which contains a section on independence.

Also included in the Committee's work programme is an annual private session with Audit Wales, providing a further opportunity to discuss the external audit process. This is in addition to the discussions of the process during the formal meetings. Additionally, there are opportunities for representatives from Audit Wales and the Commission's Chief Finance Officer to debrief the Committee after the annual lessons learned session held between the Finance team and the external audit team.

The results of independent external recognition activities are also important to the Commission and reflect the inclusive culture and environment in which Commission staff work. Further information on this is included under Diversity and Inclusion within the Performance Analysis section of the Annual Report (page 32).

¹³ <https://senedd.wales/commission/independent-advisers/?CId=386&Year=2015>

Review of effectiveness of internal control and governance arrangements

The process for gathering and reviewing assurances on the effectiveness of internal control and governance arrangements has been in place for a number of years and has evolved over time.

Core to this review was a self-review and challenge process carried out within and across directorates. This was followed by Independent Advisers conducting the regular annual assurance challenge session with members of the Executive Board. The purpose of the annual assurance challenge exercise is to discuss and review:

- awareness of and compliance with governance principles, rules and procedures and the effectiveness of the governance arrangements;
- the management of risks;
- progress against areas identified for improvement; and
- areas for focus or strengthening.

The 2023-24 review concluded that the process for gathering and reporting on assurances remained effective and demonstrated maturity. The review recommended to the Executive Board that the structure of Director assurance statements should be adapted to ensure they captured cross-cutting assurance issues.

Areas of focus and development for 2024-25

During the next year, we will continue to take forward our priorities as set out in the Commission's Strategy and Corporate Plan, whilst responding to a dynamic public funding and constitutional landscape.

Specific areas of focus and development for 2024-25 will include:

- ensure effective change management during transition to the Seventh Senedd;
- continuing to evolve the strategic planning framework; and
- maintaining strong information governance.

Concluding statement

This statement provides assurance that the ways in which we have delivered our objectives in pursuit of our strategic goals have been effective.

I am satisfied that any weaknesses identified through our assurance processes have been addressed or are in the process of being addressed. I am confident that, over the course of the year, we have maintained high standards of governance and that our internal controls and systems and processes within our governance framework have operated effectively.

Manon Antoniazzi
Chief Executive and Clerk of the Senedd
Date: 16 July 2024

Remuneration and Staff

This section of the report sets out financial information and commentary about Commission office-holders, staff and others paid by the Commission.

Remuneration Policy

The Independent Remuneration Board (the Board) established by *The National Assembly for Wales (Remuneration) Measure 2010* (the Measure) has responsibility for setting Members' Pay and Allowances. Dr Elizabeth Haywood was appointed Chair of the Board in September 2020 for a five year term.

The Chair receives a day rate of £400. The four other members of the Board (Dame Jane Roberts, Michael Redhouse, Hugh Widdis and Sir David Hanson) are eligible for a day rate of £310¹⁴.

As an independent Board, it publishes its own Annual Report and arrangements for this are set out in the Measure.

Members' base salary for the 2023-24 financial year was set at £69,958 (2022-23, £67,920). Members' salaries are adjusted in April of each year in accordance with ASHE (Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings), subject to the adjustment being no lower than 0 per cent and no higher than 3 per cent. The increase applied to 2023-24 was 3 per cent.

Due to the continued exceptional circumstances and financial pressure from worldwide events, Remuneration Board took the decision in November 2023 to make a further cost of living payment to Support Staff of £600 (pro-rated) which has been consolidated into the 2024-25 pay scales.

¹⁴ Hugh Widdis does not claim a daily rate for his work on the Board.

The following positions were entitled to additional salaries as follows:

Position	From 1 April 2023	From 1 April 2022
Llywydd (Presiding Officer)	£44,816	£43,511
Deputy Presiding Officer	£22,955	£22,286
Senedd Commissioners	£14,210	£13,796
Committee Chairs (higher) ^{3F15}	£14,210	£13,796
Committee Chair (lower) ^{4F}	£9,467	£9,191
Business Committee Member	£9,467	£9,191

This table is subject to audit

From 1 April 2023 a leader of a political group without an executive role received an additional office holder's allowance calculated using a base level of £14,210 (2022-23, £13,796) plus an additional £1,093 (2022-23, £1,061) for every member of the group to a maximum additional salary of £39,350 (2021-22, £38,204).

The Commission does not provide any benefits-in-kind. Members of the Senedd are members of the Members of the Senedd Pension Scheme for which separate annual accounts are published via the Senedd website¹⁶.

The Commission pays the salaries and related costs of Welsh Ministers and the Counsel General and they are charged to the Commission's resource accounts for administrative efficiency. The Welsh Government Consolidated Resource Accounts contain the disclosure information.

¹⁵ Committees were Children, Young People and Education; Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure; Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations; Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs; Equality and Social Justice; Finance; Health and Social Care; Legislation, Justice and Constitution; Local Government and Housing; Petitions; Public Accounts and Public Administration; Standards of Conduct; Wales Covid 19 Inquiry Special Purpose Committee

The chairs / co-chairs of four committees are not remunerated for chairing those committees as they receive other additional office holder salaries and Members may claim only one additional office holder salary. They include the Business Committee, Scrutiny of the First Minister Committee, the Llywydd's Committee, the Reform Bill Committee and the Wales Covid-19 Inquiry Special Purpose Committee

¹⁶ <https://senedd.wales/how-we-work/about-members-of-the-senedd/members-of-the-senedd-pension-scheme-the-scheme/>

Commission office holders

The Commission was established in May 2007 under Section 27 of the *Government of Wales Act 2006* (the 2006 Act). The Commission is made up of five Commissioners: the Llywydd, who chairs the Commission, and four other Members of the Senedd appointed by the Senedd. The Commissioners who served during 2023-24 are listed on pages 14 - 15.

Their pension details are not included in the details below because only part of their remuneration related to their roles as Commissioners. Their accrued pension and Cash Equivalent Transfer Values (CETV) as Commissioners cannot be disaggregated from the total amounts accrued.

The salary costs for the Llywydd and the Deputy Presiding Officer¹⁷ are a direct charge on the Welsh Consolidated Fund and are not charged to the Commission's resource accounts.

Table 1: Single total figure of remuneration

Name and title	Salary		Pension Benefits ^{18 19}		Total	
	2023-24 £'000	2022-23 £'000	2023-24 £'000	2022-23 £'000	2023-24 £'000	2022-23 £'000
Elin Jones MS - Llywydd	110-115	110-115	15	(20)	125-130	90-95
David Rees MS - Deputy Presiding Officer - from 12 May 2021	90-95	90-95	17	(3)	105-110	85-90

¹⁷ https://senedd.wales/en/abthome/about_us-commission_assembly_administration/abt-presiding-officer/Pages/abt_us-deputy-presiding-officer.aspx

¹⁸ The value of pension benefits accrued during the year is calculated as (the real increase in pension multiplied by 20) less (the contributions made by the individual). The real increase excludes increases due to inflation or any increase or decrease due to a transfer of pension rights. (Pension benefits are shown to the nearest £1,000).

¹⁹ Some members may incur Annual Allowance tax charges as a result of pension accrual during the accounting period.

Table 2: Llywydd and Deputy Presiding Officer – pension benefits

Name and title	Real increase / (decrease) in pension	Total accrued member	CETV at 31 March 2024	CETV at 31 March 2023	Real increase / (decrease) in CETV
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Elin Jones MS – Llywydd	0-2.5	55-60	1078	1,078	14
David Rees MS – Deputy Presiding Officer – from 12 May 2021	0-2.5	25-30	498	457	2

Table 1 and Table 2 are subject to audit

The Clerk of the Senedd (appointed under Section 26 of the 2006 Act) is the Chief Executive of the Commission and its Principal Accounting Officer. In practice the Commission has delegated its operational responsibilities to the Chief Executive and Clerk, with some exceptions. Its staff are appointed under paragraph 3 of Schedule 2 to the 2006 Act. The Commission is independent of Ministers of the Welsh Government.

The Commission has a statutory duty to ensure that the Senedd is provided with the property, staff and services it requires to undertake its obligations. This ensures the Senedd and its committees can convene, encourage public awareness of and engagement with the democratic process and support the aspiration to make the Senedd an accessible and effective parliamentary body that inspires the confidence of the people of Wales.

Independent Advisers and Committee members

The Senedd Commission appoints Independent Advisers to ensure that Commissioners and the Senedd's senior management team are supported and constructively challenged in their roles. The Independent Advisers who served during 2023–24 are listed on pages 16-17.

Commission senior staff

Appointments of Commission staff, on terms and conditions set by the Commission, are made on merit on the basis of fair and open competition. This

approach is in line with civil service arrangements. Staff are not members of the Civil Service but are entitled to benefits under the Civil Service pension arrangements.

The Commission's senior staff are shown in the table below. These director-level posts were agreed in accordance with the Commission's Instrument of Delegation. Directors have declared that they hold no significant third party interests that may conflict with their duties.

The senior managers covered by this report hold appointments which are open-ended. Early termination, other than for misconduct or resignation, would result in the individual receiving compensation as set out in the Civil Service Compensation Scheme.

The role of Chief Legal Officer was created and Huw Williams was appointed to the role on 1 April 2022. His new role was noted in 2023-24 Annual Report and Accounts but for full transparency, his details have been provided as for the other Senior Staff in this report.

Name	Title and attendance at meetings
Manon Antoniazzi	Chief Executive and Clerk of the Senedd Manon Antoniazzi attended nine out of nine Commission meetings, four out of four Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meetings and three out of three Remuneration Committee meetings.
Siwan Davies	Deputy Chief Executive and Clerk and Director of Senedd Business Siwan Davies attended nine out of nine Commission meetings, four out of four Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meetings and none of the three Remuneration Committee meetings.
Arwyn Jones	Director of Communications and Engagement Arwyn Jones attended eight out of nine Commission meetings, four out of four Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meetings and none of the three Remuneration Committee meetings.
Ed Williams	Director of Senedd Resources Ed Williams attended nine out of nine Commission meetings, four out of four Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meetings and none of the three Remuneration Committee meetings.

Name	Title and attendance at meetings
Huw Williams	Chief Legal Adviser Huw Williams attended none out of nine Commission meetings, none out of four Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meetings and none of the three Remuneration Committee meetings.

Aside from the Chief Executive and Clerk of the Senedd, the directors do not attend all Commission and Committee meetings. The directors attend relevant meetings that correspond to their individual responsibilities.

Table 3: Single total figure of remuneration

Name	Salary (£'000)		Pension benefits (to the nearest £1,000) ²⁰		Total (£'000)	
	2023-24	2022-23	2023-24	2022-23	2023-24	2022-23
Manon Antoniazzi	170-175	165-170	66	64	235-240	230-235
Siwan Davies	125-130	115-120	49	46	175-180	160-165
Arwyn Jones	110-115	105-110	44	41	155-160	145-150
Ed Williams	100-105	95-100	41	38	145-150	135-140
Huw Williams²¹ Joined pension scheme on 01/12/2023	65-70	0	9	0	75-80	0

This table is subject to audit.

“Salary” includes gross salary, overtime, recruitment and retention allowances.

²⁰ The value of pension benefits accrued during the year is calculated as (the real increase in pension multiplied by 20) less (the contributions made by the individual). The real increase exclude increases due to inflation or any increase or decreases due to a transfer of pension rights.

²¹ Huw Williams is a 0.6 FTE; his costs are not grossed up to FTE.

The Chief Executive and Clerk of the Senedd and the directors do not receive any bonus payments or benefits-in-kind.

Huw Williams was appointed to the post of Chief Legal Adviser on 1 April 2022. Prior to that he provided Legal advice via a secondment from Geldards on a consultancy basis (since 1 August 2019).

Commission staff salaries

Salaries (or “pay”) are the annualised, full-time equivalent remuneration of all staff (including temporary staff) as at 31 March 2024. Pay does not include Employer’s National Insurance, pension contributions, severance payments, employer pension contributions and the cash equivalent transfer value of pensions.

There were no benefits-in-kind, performance pay or bonuses payable in 2023-24 or in 2022-23.

Pay information	2023-24 £	2022-23 £
Mid-point of the banded remuneration of the highest paid director	172,500	167,500
Percentage change in the mid-point of the banded remuneration of the highest paid director from the previous financial year	2.99%	3.08%
Percentage change in the average FTE employee pay (excluding the highest paid director) from the previous financial year	2.65%	3.76%
Pay of an employee whose pay is on the 25th percentile of pay of all employees for the financial year	31,884	31,137
Pay of an employee whose pay is on the 50th percentile of pay of all employees for the financial year	41,393	40,422
Pay of an employee whose pay is on the 75th percentile of pay of all employees for the financial year	52,364	51,137

This table is subject to audit.

The relationship between the mid-point of the banded remuneration of the highest-paid director during the year ended 31 March 2024 and the pay of an employee on the 25th, 50th and 75th percentile of all Commission staff is disclosed in the following table.

Pay Ratio Information	25th percentile pay ratio	Median pay ratio	75th percentile pay ratio
2023-24	5.41:1	4.17:1	3.29:1
2022-23	5.38:1	4.14:1	3.28:1

This table is subject to audit.

The 25th percentile ratio has decreased by 0.55 per cent and the median and 75th percentile ratios have decreased since the prior year by 0.72 and 0.3 per cent respectively. The ratios are fairly static compared to the previous year as they are all comparisons between top of the relevant pay bands so have all increased by the same proportion. The highest salary increased by 3 per cent as per the pay award.

In 2023-24 and 2022-23 there was no remuneration paid in excess of the highest-paid director. Remuneration ranged from £23,000, which ensured that employees received a Living Wage, to £170,000 (2022-23, £21,000 to £167,000).

Pensions

Table 4: Senior management - pension benefits

Real increase in pension²²	Total accrued pension²³	CETV at 31 March 2024²⁴	CETV at 31 March 2023	Real increase in CETV
£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Chief Executive and Clerk of the Senedd: Manon Antoniazzi				
2.5-5	35-40	622	498	49
Deputy Chief Executive and Clerk and Director of Senedd Business Siwan Davies				
2.5-5	10-15	206	146	33
Director of Communications and Engagement: Arwyn Jones				
0-2.5	10-15	137	95	23
Director of Senedd Resources: Ed Williams				
0-2.5	5-10	78	38	27
Chief Legal Advisor: Huw Williams (Joined Pension scheme on 01/12/2023)				
0-2.5	0-5	8	0	7

This table is subject to audit.

The pension benefits of any members affected by the public service pensions remedy which were reported in 2022-23 on the basis of alpha membership for the period between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022 are reported in 2023-24 on the basis of PCSPS membership for the same period.

There has been a factor change during the reporting period. For consistency, the CETVs as at 31 March 2023 and 31 March 2024 for all members covered by reports (not just those in scope of Remedy) have been calculated using the new factors.

²² Real increase in pension and related lump sum at pension age.

²³ Total accrued pension at pension age and related lump sum at 31 March 2023 for current post holders and at date they ceased to hold office for previous post holders.

²⁴ The value of pension benefits accrued during the year is calculated as (the real increase in pension multiplied by 20) plus (the real increase in any lump sum) less (the contributions made by the individual). The real increases exclude increases due to inflation or any increase or decreases due to a transfer of pension rights.

Civil Service pensions

Pension benefits are provided through the Civil Service pension arrangements. Before 1 April 2015, the only scheme was the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS), which is divided into a few different sections – classic, premium, and classic plus provide benefits on a final salary basis, whilst nuvos provides benefits on a career average basis. From 1 April 2015 a new pension scheme for civil servants was introduced – the Civil Servants and Others Pension Scheme or alpha, which provides benefits on a career average basis. All newly appointed civil servants, and the majority of those already in service, joined the new scheme.

The PCSPS and alpha are unfunded statutory schemes. Employees and employers make contributions (employee contributions range between 4.6% and 8.05%, depending on salary). The balance of the cost of benefits in payment is met by monies voted by Parliament each year. Pensions in payment are increased annually in line with the Pensions Increase legislation. Instead of the defined benefit arrangements, employees may opt for a defined contribution pension with an employer contribution, the partnership pension account.

In alpha, pension builds up at a rate of 2.32% of pensionable earnings each year, and the total amount accrued is adjusted annually in line with a rate set by HM Treasury. Members may opt to give up (commute) pension for a lump sum up to the limits set by the Finance Act 2004. All members who switched to alpha from the PCSPS had their PCSPS benefits ‘banked’, with those with earlier benefits in one of the final salary sections of the PCSPS having those benefits based on their final salary when they leave alpha.

The accrued pensions shown in this report are the pension the member is entitled to receive when they reach normal pension age, or immediately on ceasing to be an active member of the scheme if they are already at or over normal pension age. Normal pension age is 60 for members of classic, premium, and classic plus, 65 for members of nuvos, and the higher of 65 or State Pension Age for members of alpha. The pension figures in this report show pension earned in PCSPS or alpha – as appropriate. Where a member has benefits in both the PCSPS and alpha, the figures show the combined value of their benefits in the two schemes but note that the constituent parts of that pension may be payable from different ages.

When the Government introduced new public service pension schemes in 2015, there were transitional arrangements which treated existing scheme members differently based on their age. Older members of the PCSPS remained in that

scheme, rather than moving to alpha. In 2018, the Court of Appeal found that the transitional arrangements in the public service pension schemes unlawfully discriminated against younger members.

As a result, steps are being taken to remedy those 2015 reforms, making the pension scheme provisions fair to all members. The public service pensions remedy^[1] is made up of two parts. The first part closed the PCSPS on 31 March 2022, with all active members becoming members of alpha from 1 April 2022. The second part removes the age discrimination for the remedy period, between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022, by moving the membership of eligible members during this period back into the PCSPS on 1 October 2023. This is known as “rollback”.

For members who are in scope of the public service pension remedy, the calculation of their benefits for the purpose of calculating their Cash Equivalent Transfer Value and their single total figure of remuneration, as of 31 March 2023 and 31 March 2024, reflects the fact that membership between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022 has been rolled back into the PCSPS. Although members will in due course get an option to decide whether that period should count towards PCSPS or alpha benefits, the figures show the rolled back position i.e., PCSPS benefits for that period.

The partnership pension account is an occupational defined contribution pension arrangement which is part of the Legal & General Mastertrust. The employer makes a basic contribution of between 8% and 14.75% (depending on the age of the member). The employee does not have to contribute but, where they do make contributions, the employer will match these up to a limit of 3% of pensionable salary (in addition to the employer’s basic contribution). Employers also contribute a further 0.5% of pensionable salary to cover the cost of centrally provided risk benefit cover (death in service and ill health retirement).

Further details about the Civil Service pension arrangements can be found at the website www.civilservicepensionscheme.org.uk

The Cash Equivalent Transfer Value (CETV)

A Cash Equivalent Transfer Value (CETV) is the actuarially assessed capitalised value of the pension scheme benefits accrued by a member at a particular point in time. The benefits valued are the member's accrued benefits and any contingent spouse's pension payable from the scheme. A CETV is a payment made by a pension scheme or arrangement to secure pension benefits in another pension scheme or arrangement when the member leaves a scheme and chooses to transfer the benefits accrued in their former scheme. The pension figures shown relate to the benefits that the individual has accrued as a consequence of their total membership of the pension scheme, not just their service in a senior capacity to which disclosure applies.

The figures include the value of any pension benefit in another scheme or arrangement which the member has transferred to the Civil Service pension arrangements. They also include any additional pension benefit accrued to the member as a result of their buying additional pension benefits at their own cost.

CETVs are worked out in accordance with The Occupational Pension Schemes (Transfer Values) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 and do not take account of any actual or potential reduction to benefits resulting from Lifetime Allowance Tax which may be due when pension benefits are taken.

Real increase in CETV

This reflects the increase in CETV that is funded by the employer. It does not include the increase in accrued pension due to inflation, contributions paid by the employee (including the value of any benefits transferred from another pension scheme or arrangement) and uses common market valuation factors for the start and end of the period.

Pension liabilities

The treatment of pension liabilities and details of the relevant pension schemes are set out in the Statement of Accounting Policies within these accounts.

Staff numbers

Staff numbers by category

All senior managers and staff are employees of the Commission. The average number of full time equivalent persons employed by the Commission across the year (including senior management) was as follows:

Table 5: Average full time equivalent staff

Category	2023-24	2022-23*
Employed staff	485.69	480.43
Agency staff	1.50	
Seconded staff	0.65	1.54
Temporary/casual staff	15.08	13.95
Total	502.92	495.92

*Numbers have been re-stated

This table is subject to audit.

At the end of the financial year, the Commission employed 486 full time equivalent staff (31 March 2023: 473).

Table 6: Off-payroll appointments

Off-payroll engagements for more than £245 per day and more as at 31 March 2024	31 March 2024 No.
Number of existing engagements	1
Number of temporary off-payroll workers engaged at any point during the year ended 31 March 2024	2023-24 No.
Number	2
Of which: Subject to off-payroll legislation and determined as in-scope of IR35	2

There was one off-payroll engagement of board members or senior officials with significant financial responsibility between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024 (Interim Chief Finance Officer, November 2022 - June 2023) (2022-23 - one).

Table 7: Staff composition by gender and band*

Category		31 March 2024				Total
	Female	Male	Non-binary	Other Gender Identity		
Directors	2	3	-	-	5	
Staff	264	242	-	-	506	
Total	266	245	-	-	511	

Category		31 March 2023				Total
	Female	Male	Non-binary	Other Gender Identity		
Directors	2	3	-	-	5	
Staff	248	243	-	-	489	
Total	250	246	-	-	496	

*In the tables above staff employed are reported as full time equivalent numbers. However, the gender breakdown is reported as actual numbers.

Independent advisers are not included in the FTE figures or gender breakdown above.

Sickness absence data

The Commission is committed to supporting and managing employees who are absent from work due to ill health or sickness. This means striving to create an environment that provides for open and constructive communication and support for employees' wellbeing to allow them to bring their whole selves to work. We continue to implement our 2022-25 Wellbeing Strategy, which provides for a strategic approach to the planning and management of wellbeing interventions, as well as allowing for the assessment of the impact of these activities.

We place a high value on the health and wellbeing of our employees and we are committed to ensuring that these needs are supported and managed with due consideration to the operational needs of the Commission. Absenteeism exacts a high cost and impact on the Commission and our employees and it is in everyone's

interest to maximise attendance. We have in place procedures to manage absence to ensure that a fair, consistent and where appropriate, robust approach is taken to manage absence in the Senedd, and this year have undertake a review and update of our long term sickness policy and procedure.

The sickness absence rate for the year increased to an average of 8.6 days lost per person (2022-2023 it was 8 days lost per person). This is similar to the Civil Service benchmark (8.1 days) that we use to monitor sickness absence as a whole. Absence related to mental health now accounts for 1512 days lost (40.6 per cent of total absence), which represents a return to pandemic levels in 2020-21 where mental health absence accounted for 40 per cent of total absence. The Senedd's MINDFUL network have continued to hold virtual drop-in sessions, creating a space for general chat and advice to all as and when needed, as well as on site sessions.

The HR, Estates and ICT Services continue to work together to ensure that staff working remotely have appropriate display screen equipment (DSE), including any reasonable adjustments and ergonomic requirements. The Senedd has procured and is in the process of rolling out a new online DSE system which will continue to support those working remotely or on the estate.

Termly Wellbeing Pulse Surveys continue to be conducted (two were undertaken during 2023-24) which allow us to monitor the wellbeing of our staff, put in place responsive interventions, and monitor the overall effectiveness of our Wellbeing Strategy.

Staff Turnover data

Turnover has decreased over the last 12 months to 6 per cent (2022-23 8.3 per cent). This is below the UK average for the voluntary resignation rate (11.7 per cent in 2023 according to **Xpert HR**). This year's turnover rate of 6 per cent, is still slightly down from a Commission average of 6.9 per cent based on the turnover rates of the last 4 financial years. Prior to the pandemic turnover was 9.7 per cent in 2018-19.

Staff Engagement Indicators

Following the 10th annual people survey which was undertaken in March 2023, it was agreed that our annual staff surveys move to an 18-month cycle, complemented by semi-annual pulse surveys. This adjustment offers several advantages for our organisation. It fosters a more agile and responsive approach

to employee feedback, allowing us to stay attuned to the evolving needs and concerns of our colleagues. The 18-month cycle provides sufficient time for action plans and tangible changes to be implemented and assessed, while the six-month pulse surveys act as vital checkpoints to gauge the impact of our initiatives and swiftly address any emerging issues. This approach not only promotes continuous improvement but also reduces survey fatigue among our staff, as it strikes a balance between gathering comprehensive data and respecting their time. It reflects our commitment to nurturing a dynamic and engaging work environment, where employee voices are heard and acted upon regularly.

The survey provides insight into the employee experience of working in the Senedd and helps identify areas for improvement so we can implement change based on employee feedback. We once again partnered with WorkL to undertake the survey, combining their expertise with our specific needs. This partnership has allowed us to continue to benchmark our results against a wider range of comparable organisations, including the civil service.

The survey is based on a framework which measures six core themes: Reward and Recognition; Information Sharing; Empowerment; Wellbeing; Instilling Pride and Job Satisfaction. Once again, the results demonstrate that teams work flexibly, and support each other through challenge and change, and overwhelmingly, colleagues are proud to work at the Senedd. This year's Workplace Engagement Score continues to be positive (75 per cent) and compares favourably with the Public Sector comparator score (63 per cent).

To effectively implement this transition, we have leveraged our newly revived Staff Engagement Network (Engage) as a pivotal support system. This network serves as a conduit for disseminating information about the new survey approach, ensuring that employees understand its purpose and benefits. Additionally, the Engage network plays a vital role in encouraging active participation in both the annual surveys and the pulse surveys. Advocates and leaders within the network help foster a culture of continuous feedback, answering questions, addressing concerns, and highlighting the importance of staff input in shaping our organisation. The Staff Engagement Network's reach and influence make it an invaluable tool in promoting a more dynamic and inclusive feedback system, aligning perfectly with the proposed survey cycle and further enhancing our employee engagement efforts.

Disability

EMBRACE, the Senedd's workplace equality network for disability, provides peer support, awareness raising activities, generates and contributes to policy development through providing insight and challenge. We also have a Senior Champion for disability who works closely with our network and advocates for disability equality at senior decision-making level.

We have measures in place to support employees who identify as having a disability. We are a Disability Confident Employer. Our Recruitment Policy references our guaranteed interview position for applicants who meet the minimum criteria requirements for roles, which also applies internally for employees seeking promotion. Candidates are invited to discuss with the Recruitment Team any individual requirements to support accessibility throughout all aspects of the recruitment process and are made where required.

Workplace adjustments are made, wherever possible, following discussions between employees and managers for new starters, employees in post or those returning to work following injury or illness that may have an impact on their ability to do their work. This could involve adjustments to working patterns and/or modified equipment and assistive technology that takes account of remote or on-site working. Disabled employees will be provided with a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) when ordinarily located on our estate. Our estate has hearing loop systems in multiple locations and accessible signage. Regular access audits are conducted on our estate.

Trade union relationships

The Senedd Partnership Forum is a body consisting of Management and Trade Union Side (TUS) representatives and is based on the principle that the aims and objectives of an organisation are best achieved by management and employees, represented by their recognised trade unions, working together cooperatively to achieve shared goals. Formal Partnership meetings take place once every half term, with regular less formal meetings each term, to provide an opportunity to discuss the breadth of issues across the Commission and ensure that TUS are consulted with and engaged appropriately. This year the particular focus for partnership working between TUS and HR has been on negotiations for the future Commission staff pay deal, as the current seven year pay deal comes to an end in March 2025.

Diversity and Inclusion

The Commission's Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022-2026 outlines four priority objectives for this Senedd term: Diversity and Inclusion underpins our everyday activities and strategic planning; A representative, inclusive place to work; Values-led leadership and culture; and an inclusive, accessible Parliament for the people of Wales.

One of our longstanding priorities is to ensure that our workforce is representative of the society it serves, and we are working to address the underrepresentation of ethnic minority people in our workforce, particularly at senior decision-making level. Activities include broadening our talent pipeline, enhancing our employer brand and working with trusted partners to engage more closely as a potential employer of choice with local communities. This year we have worked with our executive search partners to diversify the talent pipeline for senior and public/Crown appointments. We have welcomed our second cohort of YMLAEN interns, our graduate programme for ethnic minority graduates.

During this reporting period the Senedd Commission has been recognised as a Top Ten Employer for Working Families, reaccredited as a Disability Confident Employer, and the Senedd Café is the first venue in Wales to have achieved accreditation from the Kids in Museums Family Café Standard, a benchmark that recognises cafés at museums and cultural attractions that are great for families, providing a warm welcome for everyone.

We have established a Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group to provide strategic oversight of our diversity and inclusion priorities and help keep our D&I Strategy on-track. The Group consists of a Chair who is a member of the Leadership Team; an Independent Adviser to the Senedd Commission; as well as representatives from human resources, trade unions and our Workplace Equality Networks.

Further information on our work to embed diversity and inclusion in our work to be an exemplar employer supporting an inclusive parliament can be found in our Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report.

Manon Antoniazzi
Chief Executive and Clerk of the Senedd
Date: 16 July 2024

Accountability and Audit

Statement of Senedd supply and supporting notes

a) Summary of Resource Outturn 2023-24

		Budget	Outturn	2023-24	2022-23
		Total £'000	Total £'000	Net total outturn compared with budget: under spend / (excess) £'000	Outturn £'000
Resources for use by the Senedd Commission	Note SOS 01	47,574	46,360	1,214	43,862
Election related costs	Note SOS 01	-	-	-	-
Resources in respect of Remuneration Board decisions	Note SOS 01	17,834	17,364	470	16,529
Annually Managed Expenditure	Note SOS 01	1,800	136	1,664	1,822
		67,208	63,860	3,348	62,213

This table is subject to audit.

Explanations of variations between budget and outturn are given in SOS 01 and in the Performance Report.

b) Net cash requirement 2023-24

		Budget	Outturn	2023-24	2022-23
				Net total outturn compared with budget: under spend / (excess)	Outturn
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Net cash requirement	Note SOS 03	61,536	60,797	739	58,297

This table is subject to audit.

SOS 03 can be found in the Annex – regularity reporting, page 202.

Notes to the Resource Accounts

(Statement of Senedd supply)

SOS 01. Analysis of net resource outturn 2023-24

	Outturn	Analysis of approved budget	Outturn compared with approved budget	Analysis of revised budget	Outturn compared with revised budget	Outturn 2022-23
Revenue expenditure	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Staff salaries and related costs	28,585	28,357	(228)	28,357	(228)	27,171
Non staff costs	11,028	12,402	1,374	11,967	939	10,810
Capital charges – non cash	5,297	6,272	975	6,272	975	5,224
Gross revenue expenditure	44,910	47,031	2,121	46,596	1,686	43,205
Gross revenue income applied	(102)	(170)	(68)	(170)	(68)	(73)
Net revenue expenditure	44,808	46,861	2,053	46,426	1,618	43,132
Capital expenditure*	933	500	(433)	500	(433)	380
Net resource outturn (Commission expenditure)	45,741	47,361	1,620	46,926	1,185	43,512
Members' salaries allowances and related costs	17,364	17,834	470	17,834	470	16,529
Support for Remuneration Board	539	547	8	547	8	274
Office of the Standards Commissioners	80	101	21	101	21	76
Resource outturn	63,724	65,843	2,119	65,408	1,684	60,391
Members' Pension finance costs	136	1,800	1,664	1,800	1,664	1,822
Total net resource outturn	63,860	67,643	3,783	67,208	3,348	62,213

This table is subject to audit. * Total Capital expenditure is £933,000 (2022-23 £380,000)

Net resource outturn - Management commentary

The resource outturn on Commission expenditure, before Members' Salaries and Allowances, costs to support the Remuneration Board, costs to support the Office of the Standards Commissioner and pension finance costs, for 2023-24 was £45.7 million against a budget of £46.9 million resulting in an overall underspend of £1.1 million (2.5 per cent). While this falls outside the Commission's target range of 0.0 per cent to 1.5 per cent of budget this was primarily due to a larger than anticipated underspend against non-cash budgets, namely depreciation for Right of Use assets and notional interest charges resulting from the introduction of a new accounting standard concerning the treatment of leases (IFRS 16).

Excluding non-cash items, the out-turn was £40.4 million against a budget of £40.7 million, resulting in an underspend of 0.51 per cent, well within the Commission's target range and reflective of the pro-active approach to managing Commission resources.

Hybrid working is now embedded as the way of working for the Commission. Proactive estate management has facilitated reductions in utility costs. Efforts continue to maximise efficiency in this regard

The estate has been utilised for hybrid working for the duration of the financial year. Occupancy levels are still significantly below capacity and work has been undertaken to maximise the value and use of the estate by providing flexible working space and upgrading ICT equipment to provide Members with a better experience in hybrid meetings. Better estate management and space utilisation has also led to savings in utilities costs

Project spend and staff recruitment during 2023-24 was impacted by the request to make a further cost of living payment of £1,500 (pro-rated) to Commission staff below Director grade. It was paid in two instalments (October and January) to ensure sufficient funding was available. This significantly impacted on project delivery during quarters two and three of the year particularly in Estates and Facilities Management and ICT. In quarter four key Estate and Facilities Management and ICT projects were prioritised by the Executive Board and delivered.

Staff salaries and related costs were overspent against budget by 0.80 per cent (due to the cost of living payment), non-staff budgets (including non-cash budgets) were underspent by 7.84 per cent.

The Members' Salaries and Allowances laid budget was £17.8 million. The outturn was £17.3 million giving an underspend of 2.61 per cent. Savings from this budget are ring-fenced and not available to the Commission.

The Remuneration Board also approved two payment to all Support Staff of £1,200 (pro-rated) which was funded by the Determination and paid in two instalments (April 23 and January 24).

The Commission's AME budget is for the non-cash accounting adjustment in respect of the future financial liability of the Members of the Senedd Pension Scheme. The budget for 2023-24, laid in November 2022 was for £1.8 million based on data available at the time. The actual costs were £0.135 million.

SOS 02. Reconciliation of outturn to net operating expenditure

	Note	2023-24 £'000	2022-23 £'000
Net resource outturn	SOS 01	63,857	62,211
Capital expenditure	4	(933)	(380)
Direct charges on the Welsh Consolidated Fund		800	764
Net operating expenditure		63,724	62,595
Income payable to the Welsh Consolidated Fund		3	2

This table is subject to audit

The direct charges on the Welsh Consolidated Fund £800,257 (2022-23, £764,479) are in respect of the salary costs of the Llywydd, Deputy Presiding Officer, Auditor General for Wales and the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales; and the salary costs and expenses of the Standards Commissioner, Acting Standards Commissioner and the Chair of the Wales Audit Office. These salaries and expenses are paid by the Commission and reclaimed from the Fund. As a direct charge on the Fund they are excluded from the net resource outturn. At year end there was a debtor of £2,840.26 for funds owing to the Commission from the Welsh Consolidated Fund. This was settled in early April 24.

The Commission received £3,314.41 (2022-23 £1,811) in interest on its commercial bank account during financial year 2023-24. This will be surrendered back to the Welsh Consolidated Fund in 2023-24 as per the *Government of Wales Act 2006* which does not permit the Commission to retain bank interest earned.

The Certificate and independent auditor's report of the Auditor General for Wales to the Senedd

Report on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion on financial statements

I certify that I have audited the financial statements of the Senedd Commission for the year ended 2023-24 under the *Government of Wales Act 2006*.

The financial statements comprise the:

- Statement of Supply, Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, Statement of the Financial Position, Statement of Cash Flows, Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity; and
- the related notes including the significant accounting policies.

The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and UK adopted international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by HM Treasury's Financial Reporting Manual.

In my opinion, in all material respects the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the Senedd Commission's affairs as at 31 March 2024 and of its net cash requirement, net resource outturn and net operating cost for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with UK adopted international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by HM Treasury's Financial Reporting Manual and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with HM Treasury directions under the *Government of Wales Act 2006*.

Opinion on regularity

In my opinion, in all material respects:

- the Statement of Supply properly presents the outturn against the sums authorised by the Senedd for the year ended 31 March 2024 and shows that those totals have not been exceeded; and
- the income and expenditure recorded in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by the Senedd and the financial transactions recorded in the financial statements conform to the authorities which govern them.

Basis for opinions

I conducted my audit in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing in the UK (ISAs (UK)) and Practice Note 10 'Audit of Financial Statements of Public Sector Entities in the United Kingdom'. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of my certificate.

My staff and I are independent of the body in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in the UK including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and I have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinions.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that the use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work I have performed, I have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the body's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

My responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Principal Accounting Officer with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this Certificate.

The going concern basis of accounting for the Senedd Commission is adopted in consideration of the requirements set out in HM Treasury's Government Financial Reporting Manual, which require entities to adopt the going concern basis of

accounting in the preparation of the financial statements where it anticipated that the services which they provide will continue into the future.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report other than the financial statements and those parts of the Remuneration and Staff Report that are audited and my auditor's report thereon. The Principal Accounting Officer is responsible for the other information in the annual report. My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in my report, I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. My responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

If I identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, I am required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact.

I have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters

In my opinion, the part of the Remuneration and Staff Report to be audited has been properly prepared in accordance with HM Treasury directions made under the *Government of Wales Act 2006*.

In my opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of my audit:

- the parts of the Accountability Report subject to audit have been properly prepared in accordance with HM Treasury directions made under the *Government of Wales Act 2006*; and
- the information given in the Overview, Performance Analysis and Accountability Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and is in accordance with the applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which I report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the body and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not identified material misstatements in the Overview, Performance Analysis and Accountability Report

I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters which I report to you if, in my opinion:

- I have not received all of the information and explanations I require for my audit.
- proper accounting records have not been kept or returns adequate for my audit have not been received from branches not visited by my team;
- the financial statements and the audited part of the Accountability Report are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns;
- information specified by HM Treasury regarding remuneration and other transactions is not disclosed;
- certain disclosures of remuneration specified by HM Treasury's Government Financial Reporting Manual are not made or parts of the Remuneration and Staff Report to be audited are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- the Governance Statement does not reflect compliance with HM Treasury's guidance.

Responsibilities of the Principal Accounting Officer for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Accounting Officer's Responsibilities, the Principal Accounting Officer is responsible for:

- maintaining proper accounting records;
- the preparation of the financial statements and Annual Report in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view;
- ensuring that the Annual Report and financial statements as a whole are fair, balanced and understandable;

- ensuring the regularity of financial transactions;
- internal controls as the Principal Accounting Officer determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statement to be free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error;
- assessing the Senedd Commission's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Principal Accounting Officer anticipates that the services provided by the Senedd Commission will not continue to be provided in the future.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

My responsibility is to audit, certify and report on the financial statements in accordance with the *Government of Wales Act 2006*.

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue a certificate that includes my opinion.

Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. I design procedures in line with my responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud.

My procedures included the following:

- Enquiring of management, the Senedd Commission's head of internal audit and those charged with governance, including obtaining and reviewing supporting documentation relating to the Senedd Commission's policies and procedures concerned with:
 - identifying, evaluating and complying with laws and regulations and whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance;

- detecting and responding to the risks of fraud and whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud; and
 - the internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations.
- Considering as an audit team how and where fraud might occur in the financial statements and any potential indicators of fraud.
 - Obtaining an understanding of the Senedd Commission's framework of authority as well as other legal and regulatory frameworks that the Senedd Commission operates in, focusing on those laws and regulations that had a direct effect on the financial statements or that had a fundamental effect on the operations of Senedd Commission.
 - Obtaining an understanding of related party relationships

In addition to the above, my procedures to respond to identified risks included the following:

- reviewing the financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with relevant laws and regulations discussed above;
- enquiring of management, the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee about actual and potential litigation and claims;
- reading minutes of meetings of the Senedd Commission, the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and the Executive Board; and
- in addressing the risk of fraud through management override of controls, testing the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments; assessing whether the judgements made in making accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluating the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business.

I also communicated relevant identified laws and regulations and potential fraud risks to all audit team members and remained alert to any indications of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations throughout the audit.

The extent to which my procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is affected by the inherent difficulty in detecting irregularities, the

effectiveness of the Senedd Commission's controls, and the nature, timing and extent of the audit procedures performed.

A further description of the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of my auditor's report.

Other auditor's responsibilities

I am required to obtain evidence sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the Statement of Supply properly presents the outturn against the sums authorised by the Senedd for the year ended 31 March 2024 and shows that those totals have not been exceeded.

I am also required to obtain evidence sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the expenditure and income recorded in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by the Senedd and the financial transactions recorded in the financial statements conform to the authorities which govern them.

I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

Report

I have no observations to make on these financial statements.

Adrian Crompton
Auditor General for Wales
Date: 17 July 2024

1 Capital Quarter
Tyndall Street,
Cardiff
CF10 4BZ

The maintenance and integrity of the Welsh Parliament website is the responsibility of the Accounting Officer; the work carried out by auditors does not involve consideration of these matters and accordingly auditors accept no responsibility for any changes that may have occurred to the financial statements since they were initially presented on the website.



▼ Butetown carnival exhibition, 2023



Financial Statements



Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure

For the year ended 31 March 2024

Income from operations	Note	2023-24 £'000	2022-23 £'000
Income from sale of goods and services	SOS 05	99	73
Total operating income		99	73
Operating expenditure			
Members, office holders and staff salary costs	2a	36,435	34,521
Members' other costs	2b	10,839	10,260
Members' Pension finance costs	2a and 9	136	1,822
Depreciation and impairment charges	3	4,673	4,591
Finance cost	3	624	633
Other administration costs	3	11,119	10,843
Total operating expenditure		63,826	62,670
Finance income		3	2
Net expenditure for the year ended 31 March	SOS 02	63,724	62,599
Other comprehensive net expenditure			
Items which will not be reclassified to net operating costs:			
Actuarial gain on pension scheme liabilities	2a and 9	(1,424)	(18,506)
Net gain on revaluation of property, plant and equipment	4	192	(7,305)
Comprehensive net expenditure for the year		62,492	36,788

All activities are continuing.

There are no significant gains or losses other than those included within the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure.

The notes on pages 173 to 204 form part of these accounts

Statement of Financial Position

As at 31 March 2024

Non-current assets:	Note	31 March 2024 £'000	31 March 2023 £'000
Property, plant and equipment	4	71,296	73,230
Right of use assets	10	65,153	66,920
Intangible assets	5	-	-
Total non-current assets		136,449	140,150
Current assets:			
Inventories		14	18
Trade and other receivables	6	2,249	2,152
Cash and cash equivalents	7	276	226
Total current assets		2,539	2,396
Total assets		138,988	142,546
Current liabilities:			
Trade and other payables	8	(4,485)	(4,351)
Lease liabilities	10	(1,733)	(1,708)
Total current liabilities		(6,218)	(6,059)
Total assets less current liabilities		132,770	136,487
Non-current liabilities:			
Provisions	9	(1,217)	(2,532)
Lease liabilities	10	(64,039)	(65,547)
Total non-current liabilities		(65,256)	(68,079)
Total assets less total liabilities		67,514	68,408
Taxpayers' equity and other reserves:			
General Fund		33,467	35,457
Pension Fund Reserve	9	(1,073)	(2,361)
Revaluation Reserve		35,120	35,312
Total equity		67,514	68,408

The Commission retains the following reserves:

- General Fund which represents the total assets less liabilities of the Commission, to the extent that the total is not represented by other reserves and financing items.
- Pension Fund Reserve shows the movement in actuarial gains or losses on pension scheme liabilities (recognised in the Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity).
- The Revaluation Reserve is a non-cash reserve created to reflect the true value of Commission assets when the market value of a certain category of asset is more or less than the value of such asset at which it is recorded in the books of account.

Manon Antoniazzi
Chief Executive and Clerk of the Senedd
Date: 16 July 2024

The notes on pages 173 to 204 form part of these accounts

Statement of Cash Flows

For the year ended 31 March 2024

	Note	2023-24 £'000	2022-23 £'000
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net operating expenditure	SOS 02	(63,724)	(62,595)
Adjustments for non-cash transactions:			
Depreciation, amortisation and impairment	3, 4 and 5	2,676	2,603
Loss on disposal of assets	3, 4 and 5	-	-
Increase in inventories		4	(3)
Increase in trade and other receivables	6	(94)	(54)
Increase in provision			-
Increase in trade and other payables	8	131	(1,730)
Increase / (decrease) in payables relating to items not passing through the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure	SOS 03	(50)	945
Increase in lease liabilities	10	230	68,908
Interest on lease liabilities		624	633
Use of provisions		(27)	-
Pension finance costs	9	136	1,822
Net cash inflow / (outflow) from operating activities		(60,094)	10,529
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	4	(933)	(380)
Net cash outflow from investing activities		(933)	(380)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Right of use assets - additions		(230)	(66,920)
Right of use assets - depreciation		1,997	
From the Welsh Consolidated Fund (supply)		61,076	58,521
From the Welsh Consolidated Fund (direct charges)	SOS 02	800	764
Payments to the Welsh Consolidated Fund	SOS 03	(226)	(1,171)
Bank interest (payable to the Welsh Consolidated Fund)		(3)	(2)
Payment of lease liabilities	10	(2,337)	(2,286)
Net cash inflow / (outflow) from financing activities		61,077	(11,094)
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents	SOS 03	50	(945)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	7	226	1,171
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year	7	276	226

The notes on pages 173 to 204 form part of these accounts

Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity

For the year ended 31 March 2024

	Note	General Fund £'000	Revaluation Reserve £'000	Pension Reserve £'000	Taxpayers' equity £'000
Balance at 31 March 2022		37,173	28,007	(19,045)	46,135
Comprehensive net expenditure for the year	SOS 02	(62,595)	7,305	18,506	(36,784)
Transfer between reserves	9	1,822	-	(1,822)	-
Welsh Consolidated Fund					
Supply (authorised)	SOS 03	58,592	-	-	58,952
Supply (not drawn)	SOS 03	(71)	-	-	(71)
Direct charges	SOS 02	764	-	-	764
Bank Interest (payable)		(2)	-	-	(2)
Amount payable to the Welsh Consolidated Fund					
Supply		(226)	-	-	(226)
Balance at 31 March 2023		35,457	35,312	(2,361)	68,408
Comprehensive net expenditure for the year	SOS 02	(63,724)	(192)	1,424	(60,492)
Transfer between reserves	9	136		(136)	0
Welsh Consolidated Fund					
Supply (authorised)	SOS 03	61,536			61,536
Supply (not drawn)	SOS 03	(460)			(460)
Direct charges	SOS 02	800			800
Bank interest (payable)	SOS 02	(2)			(2)
Amount payable to the Welsh Consolidated Fund					
Supply		(276)			(276)
Balance at 31 March 2024		33,467	35,120	(1,073)	67,514

The notes on pages 173 to 204 form part of these accounts

Notes to the Accounts

01. Statement of accounting policies

These financial statements have been prepared on an accruals basis in accordance with the 2023-24 Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) suitably adapted for the constitution of the Senedd and the Commission as specified by the *Government of Wales Act 2006*. The accounting policies contained in the FReM follow International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) to the extent that it is meaningful and appropriate to the public sector.

Where the FReM permits a choice of accounting policy, the accounting policy which has been judged to be most appropriate to the particular circumstances of the Commission for the purpose of giving a true and fair view has been selected. The Commission's accounting policies have been applied consistently in dealing with items considered material in relation to the accounts. In addition to the primary statements prepared under IFRS, the FReM also requires the Commission to prepare two additional statements of supply.

Review of new standards

A review of all new standards and interpretations issued and effective in 2023-24 by the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) and the International Financial Reporting Interpretations Committee (IFRIC) during the year has been completed.

The following standards and interpretations/amendments, which have not been applied in these financial statements, were in issue but not yet effective:

- Classification of Liabilities as Current or Non-current— with Covenants (amendments to IAS 1, Presentation of Financial Statements)
- Lease Liability in a Sales-and-Leaseback (Amendments to IFRS 16, Leases)
- Supplier Finance Arrangements (Amendments to IAS 7, Statement of Cashflows, and IFRS 7, Financial Instruments).

The Commission does not expect that the adoption of the standards and interpretations would have a material impact on the financial statements in future periods.

IFRS 16 - Leases

The Commission has adopted a de-minimis level of £20,000 and has chosen not to apply IFRS 16 to intangible assets as these are fully written off.

Accounting convention

These accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention, modified to account for the revaluation of fixed assets in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

Property, plant and equipment

Assets are capitalised when expenditure on equipment and / or projects is considered to meet the recognition tests set out within International Accounting Standard 16 on Property, plant and equipment. The Commission does not apply a de-minimis to capitalisation but carries out a substantive assessment of transactions to capitalise expenditure when appropriate to do so.

Professional valuations are obtained for land and buildings every three years as a minimum. Other tangible assets are not revalued but held at fair value as, in the opinion of the Commission, the amounts involved would not be material.

Asset impairment

Property, plant and equipment are reviewed annually to ensure that assets are not carried above their recoverable amounts. Where these values are less than the carrying amount of the assets, an impairment loss is charged first to the Revaluation Reserve with any residual balance being charged to the Statement of Net Expenditure.

Assets under construction

Assets under construction are carried at historic cost as this is considered to be a satisfactory proxy for fair value. Once brought into use, the asset is transferred to the appropriate asset category and included in subsequent revaluations and impairment reviews.

Intangible assets

Software licences are capitalised as intangible fixed assets and amortised on a straight line basis over the expected life of the asset.

Donated assets

Donated assets are capitalised at current value on receipt and are normally revalued in the same way as purchased assets. The value of donated assets is credited with the value of the original donation and subsequent revaluations. The value of donated assets is included within the General Reserve in accordance with HM Treasury's guidance under the Clear Line of Sight Programme.

Depreciation

Assets under construction are not depreciated. Depreciation is provided at a rate calculated to write off the value of buildings and other tangible assets by equal instalments over their estimated useful lives. Assets are analysed into relevant component parts to reflect the differing economic lives. Assets are not depreciated in the year of acquisition.

Asset lives are normally as follows, but are reviewed on a case by case basis so that useful lives best reflect the prevailing circumstances:

Asset	Asset life
Land and Buildings:	50 years or an alternative period provided by a qualified (RICS) valuer
Fixed plant:	10 years, or an alternative period provided by the supplier at the time of purchase or valuation
Fixtures and fittings:	Five to ten years
ICT, audio visual and broadcasting equipment:	Four to ten years
ICT infrastructure:	10 years
Intangible assets (software):	Five years
Motor vehicles:	Four years
Donated assets:	Assessed on receipt of asset

Realised element of depreciation from revaluation reserve

Depreciation is charged on the revalued amount of assets. An element of the depreciation, therefore, may arise due to an increase in valuation and would be in excess of the depreciation that would be charged on the historical cost of assets. The amount relating to such an excess would be a realised gain on valuation and

is to be transferred from the Revaluation Reserve to the General Fund, on disposal of the asset.

Asset components

Property assets are reviewed through the triennial professional valuations to confirm whether any part of the asset has a significantly different useful life. Where this is the case the asset will be split into components and the different parts will be depreciated over their respective useful lives. Assets purchased in the interim period are reviewed by the Finance team and Asset Managers.

ICT assets are “grouped” into ICT; audio visual and broadcasting equipment; ICT infrastructure, and intangible assets. The different parts will be depreciated over their respective useful lives.

Statement of comprehensive expenditure

Operating income and costs relate directly to the operating activities of the Commission. Income includes charges for goods and services provided on a full cost basis to external customers. Income and costs are shown net of Value Added Tax where it is recoverable.

The Commission reimburses Members in respect of expenses or costs incurred in each financial year in accordance with the Determination on Members’ Pay and Allowances, subject to the various limits on expenses or costs set out in the Determination.

Inventories

Inventories, including goods held for resale in the Commission’s shop, are stated at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

Foreign exchange

Transactions which are denominated in a foreign currency are translated into sterling at the exchange rate ruling on the date of each transaction.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash in hand and current balances with the Government Banking Service and with commercial banks which are readily convertible to a known amount of cash and which are subject to insignificant risk to changes in value.

Leases

Leased assets: A lease is a contract or part of a contract that conveys the right to use an asset for a period of time in exchange for consideration.

The leased assets are measured initially at an amount equal to the lower of their fair value and the present value of the minimum lease payments. Subsequent to initial recognition, the assets are revalued, in accordance with the accounting policy for Property, plant and equipment.

At lease commencement date, the Commission recognises a right-of-use asset and a lease liability on the balance sheet. The right-of-use asset is measured at cost, which is made up of the initial measurement of the lease liability, any initial direct costs incurred by the Commission, and any lease payments made in advance of the lease commencement date (net of any incentives received).

The Commission depreciates the right-of-use assets on a straight-line basis from the lease commencement date to the earlier of the end of the useful life of the right-of-use asset or the end of the lease term. The Commission also assesses the right-of-use asset for impairment when such indicators exist. At the commencement date, the Commission measures the lease liability at the present value of the lease payments unpaid at that date, discounted using the interest rate implicit in the lease if that rate is readily available or the Commission's incremental borrowing rate. The incremental borrowing rate which has been applied (set by HMT) is 3.51 per cent.

Lease payments included in the measurement of the lease liability are made up of fixed payments (including in substance fixed), variable payments based on an index or rate, amounts expected to be payable under a residual value guarantee and payments arising from options reasonably certain to be exercised.

Subsequent to initial measurement, the liability will be reduced for payments made and increased for interest. It will be remeasured to reflect any reassessment or modification, or if there are changes in in-substance fixed payments. When the lease liability is remeasured, the corresponding adjustment is reflected in the right-of-use asset, or profit and loss if the right-of-use asset is already reduced to zero. The Commission has elected to account for short-term leases (less than one year) and leases of low-value assets (less than £20k) using the practical expedients. Instead of recognising a right-of-use asset and lease liability, the payments in relation to these are recognised as an expense in profit or loss on a straight-line basis over the lease term. On the statement of financial position, right-of-use

assets have been included in property, plant and equipment and lease liabilities have been included in trade and other payables.

Assets held under other leases are classified as operating leases and are not recognised in statement of financial position.

Lease payments: Rentals payable under operating leases are charged to the statement of comprehensive expenditure in the period to which they relate.

Segmental reporting

Management is satisfied that under the requirements of IFRS 8 the organisation has no additional disclosure to make.

Employee benefits

Salaries, wages and the cost of all employment related benefits, including the liability associated with untaken annual leave, are recognised in the period in which the service is received from employees. The liability for untaken annual leave is based upon the average number of days accrued per staff member multiplied by the median staff salary.

Pensions

Civil Service and Others Pension Scheme

Staff employed directly by the Commission and staff seconded to the Commission are eligible for membership of the Scheme. It is an unfunded multi-employer defined benefit scheme and the Commission is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities. The valuation of the Scheme was completed as at 31 March 2020 by the Government Actuary's Department. The results of the valuation showed the need for the introduction of a flat employer contribution rate of 28.7%, moving away from tiered rates; this rate will be payable from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2027. The results of the valuation also confirmed that there had been no breach of the cost control mechanism. Amounts payable to the Scheme are charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure when due.

Details can be found in the resource accounts of the Cabinet Office: Civil Superannuation Accounts

(<https://www.civilservicepensionscheme.org.uk/about-us/resource-accounts/>).

The Members of the Senedd Pension Scheme (MSPS)

A pension scheme for the Members of the Senedd was originally established under the *Government of Wales Act 1998* and continues in force under the *Government of Wales Act 2006*. The scheme is a defined benefit scheme and applies to the salary of Members and to any office holder salary. The cost of pensions provided for the Members is met by payment of charges calculated on an accruing basis, with liability for payment of future benefits charged to the accounts of the MSPS. Any liabilities of the fund arising from a deficit on assets would currently be met through increased funding by the Commission. In reporting on the assets and liabilities of the Scheme, the Commission has followed International Accounting Standard 19. In accordance with IAS 19, the Scheme Trustees are required to undertake a sensitivity analysis for each significant actuarial assumption as of the end of the reporting period, showing how the defined benefit obligation would have been affected by changes in the relevant actuarial assumption at that date.

The MSPS prepares its own annual accounts, separate from the Commission's accounts, and these are available on the Senedd website²⁵.

Value Added Tax

The Commission is treated as a Crown Body for the purposes of the *Value Added Tax Act 1994* and accordingly for the purposes of Section 41 of that Act (application to the Crown) it is treated as a government department, and VAT on goods and services supplied to the Senedd may be recoverable. The Commission is standard rated for VAT on its trading activities, such as the Senedd shop.

Provisions

The preparation of the financial statements requires various estimates and assumptions to be made that affect the application of accounting policies and reported amounts. The Commission recognises a provision in full in the year that the obligating event occurred. All such estimates and judgments are reviewed on an ongoing basis and any revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised and in any future period affected. The most significant areas of estimation and critical judgments are:

²⁵ <https://senedd.wales/how-we-work/about-members-of-the-senedd/members-of-the-senedd-pension-scheme-the-scheme/members-of-the-senedd-pension-scheme-annual-report-and-accounts/>

Members of the Senedd Pension Scheme. Details of the actuarial assumptions can be found in Note 02.A and the Annual Report and Accounts for the Pension Scheme.

Dilapidations. Generally, the Commission considers that, with the minimal backlog of maintenance and the annual review and agreement to the 10-year forward work programme, there is no current need to make a provision for general dilapidations. Advice regarding specific issues is sought and a provision made where deemed appropriate.

02. A - Member and staff related costs

Information on Members and staff numbers (and other relevant disclosures) can be found in the Accountability Section – Remuneration and Staff Report.

Member and staff related costs

Table 8: Staff costs comprise

Category	Staff £'000	Members and office holders £'000	Total 2023-24 £'000	Total 2022-23 £'000
Salaries				
Permanent Staff, Members and office holders	20,931	5,475	26,406	24,754
Temporary and Agency Staff	536		536	569
Seconded staff	30		30	156
Social security costs				
Permanent Staff, Members and office holders	2,344	687	3,031	2,960
Temporary and Agency Staff	62		62	54
Seconded staff	3		3	15
Other pension costs				
Permanent Staff, Members and office holders	5,466	1,163	6,609	6,266
Temporary and Agency Staff	133		133	107
Seconded staff	6		6	30
Subtotal Members, office holders and staff salary costs	29,491	7,325	36,816	34,911
Less recoveries in respect of outward secondments	(381)		(381)	(390)
Total Members, office holders and staff salary costs	29,110	7,325	36,435	34,521

There were no severance payments made to Commission staff in 2023-24 (2023-24, nil.)

The Commission pays the salary and related costs of the Welsh Ministers, as explained in the Remuneration Report within these accounts. Amounts paid to the Welsh Ministers are disclosed within the Welsh Government's consolidated resource accounts. As at 31 March 2024 there were 60 serving Members of the Senedd. At the year-end there were 34 office holder posts of which 14 formed the Cabinet: one First Minister, eight Cabinet Secretaries, three Ministers, one Counsel General and one Chief Whip and Trefnydd.

Civil Service Pension arrangements

For 2023-24 employer's contributions of £5,536 million (2022-23, £5,299 million) were payable at one of four rates in the range 26.6 per cent to 30.3 per cent of pensionable pay, based on salary bands. The scheme's actuary reviews employer contributions every four years following a full scheme valuation. The contribution rates reflect benefits as they are accrued, not when the costs are actually incurred, and reflect past experience of the scheme.

New employees since 1 April 2015 are eligible to join either alpha or partnership. Alpha is a career average defined benefit pension scheme; partnership is a defined contribution pension scheme.

The partnership pension account is an occupational defined contribution pension arrangement which is part of the Legal & General Mastertrust. Contributions due to the partnership pension providers at the Statement of Financial Position date were £41,660 (2022-23, £34,444). There were no contributions prepaid at that date.

Further details about the Civil Service pension arrangements can be found at the website www.civilservicepensionscheme.org.uk.

Members of the Senedd Pension Scheme

The Senedd provides a defined benefit scheme, governed by section 18 of the *Government of Wales Act 1998*. Section 20 (4) of and Schedule 11 to the *Government of Wales Act 2006* provides continuity for the Scheme. The *Government of Wales Act 2006* has not affected the legal status of the Scheme.

The Remuneration Board of the Senedd is the independent body responsible for setting the pay, allowances and pensions for Members of the Senedd and their staff. Details of pay and allowances are contained in the Board's Determination published in March 2023.

The Remuneration Board as part of its Determination for the Fifth Senedd introduced a new career average pension scheme (CARE) for Members. The Scheme was approved by HM Treasury in accordance with the *Public Service Pensions Act 2013* and introduced with effect from 6 May 2016.

The Scheme provides benefits for Members of the Senedd and Office Holders. All Members of the Senedd are members of the Scheme from the date they enter the Senedd unless they specifically opt not to be.

From the start of the Sixth Senedd all Members are in the CARE Scheme. The Scheme has an accrual rate of 1/50th and pension age is linked to State Pension Age. The member contribution rate is 10.5 per cent. Members aged 55 or over on 1 April 2012 were subject to 'Transitional Protection' and continued to have their benefits calculated on a final salary basis for an additional five years until 6 May 2021. These members contributed either 10 per cent or 6 per cent for 40th or 50th accrual respectively until 6 May 2021.

In December 2018, the Court of Appeal ruled that the 'transitional protection' offered to some members of the judges' and firefighters' schemes, gave rise to unlawful discrimination. On 15 July 2019, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury made a written ministerial statement confirming that, as 'transitional protection' was offered to members of all the main public service pension schemes, the difference in treatment needed to be removed from all schemes for members with relevant service.

The Independent Remuneration Board of the Senedd is responsible for the rules of the Members Pension Scheme. Having considered the view of the Pension Board, the Board agreed that a remedy should be adopted to remove the discrimination in the rules of the Members Pension Scheme as a result of the transitional protection provisions they currently contain. The Board consulted with the affected Members and the Senedd Commission on a proposed remedy. Affected Members will be offered an immediate choice in 2024/25 to remain in the CARE Scheme or to return to the Final Salary section for the Remedy period (6 May 2016- 6 May 2021).

With effect from 7 May 2021 all Members are now in the CARE scheme.

Normal Retirement Age is linked to State Pension Age (or 65, whichever is higher). Any Final Salary pension accrued before 6 May 2021 will continue to be payable at a Normal Retirement Age of 65.

The assets of the Scheme are held, separately from those of the Senedd Commission, by Mobius Life Limited, and are managed by four investment managers. Investments comprise units in pooled funds managed by Baillie Gifford, BNY Mellon, Partners Group and LGIM. The Trustees invest in a Sustainable Real Return fund, a Sustainable Multi Asset Fund, a Private Markets fund, an Ethical Global Equity Index (hedged and unhedged) fund, a Property fund and an Index Linked Gilts fund. The Trustees continue to work towards their ESG and investment objectives to reduce the Scheme's direct exposure to the oil and gas sector.

Following completion of the valuation the employer contribution rate payable by the Senedd reduced from 19.9% to 18% of Members' aggregate salaries. This reflected improvements in the scheme funding level and changes in market outlook. The Member contribution is 10.5% of salary.

The Pension Board has a set of funding objectives and carries out a triennial funding valuation which aims to monitor funding levels and control the costs of the Scheme. The next actuarial valuation will be at 1 April 2026.

The principal funding objective is to maintain a fund of assets which is expected to be sufficient to provide the benefits promised to members and their beneficiaries. This objective is as advised by the Trustees of the Scheme, taking into account, advice from the Actuary. The aim is to ensure that accruing benefits are paid for during members' participation in the Scheme and that the charges borne by the Senedd for accruing benefits are reasonably stable over time. These objectives are addressed by determining a contribution rate expressed as a level percentage of pensionable salary called the Standard Contribution Rate. This standard rate is such that it would be just sufficient to finance the benefits under the Scheme, provided that experience is in accordance with the actuarial assumptions made. Depending on the size of the accumulated fund and the actual experience of the Scheme as disclosed at each three-yearly actuarial valuation, larger or smaller contributions may have to be paid for a period to allow, in particular, for amortising surpluses and deficits.

The Pension Scheme was set up in 1999 and is immature, with contribution income still exceeding regular outgoings on benefits. The weighted average duration of the scheme's liabilities is around 17 years.

Table 9: The amounts recognised in the Statement of Financial Position are as follows

	Note	31 March 2024 £'000	31 March 2023 £'000*
Present value of scheme liabilities		(48,158)	(45,135)
Fair value of scheme assets		47,085	42,801
Net liability		(1,073)	(2,334)
Amount in the Statement of Financial Position			
Liabilities		(1,073)	(2,334)
Assets			-
Net liability	9	(1,073)	(2,334)

*2022-23 figures have been re-stated to reflect value published in the Members' Pension Scheme Annual Report and Accounts for 2022-23

Table 10: Analysis of amounts charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure

	2023-24 £'000	2022-23 £'000
Current service cost	909	2,251
Interest on pension liability	2,097	1,749
Interest on scheme assets	(1,987)	(1,227)
Administrative expenses	188	-
	1,207	2,773
Allocated in the account as:		
Other pension costs	1,071	951
Pension finance costs	136	1,822
	1,207	2,773

Table 11: Analysis of amounts recognised in the Statement of Change in Taxpayer's Equity (SCITE)

	2023-24 £'000	2022-23 £'000
Actual return less interest on scheme assets	2,412	(4,894)*
Experience gains and losses arising on pension liabilities	(990)	(3,536)
Changes in assumptions	(25)	26,963
Net actuarial gains recognised in SCITE	1,397	18,533

*2022-23 figures have been re-stated to reflect value published in the Members' Pension Scheme Annual Report and Accounts for 2022-23

Table 12: Movement in liabilities during the year

	31 March 2024	31 March 2023
	£'000	£'000
Liabilities at 1 April	45,135	65,211
Current service cost (net of member contributions)	909	2,251
Member contributions (including net transfers-in)	518	502
Benefits paid during the year	(1,516)	(1,151)
Interest on pension liability	2,097	1,749
Actuarial (gains)/losses	1,015	(23,427)
Liabilities at 31 March	48,158	45,135

Table 13: Movement in assets during the year

	31 March 2024	31 March 2023
	£'000	£'000
Assets at 1 April	42,801	46,166
Interest on scheme assets	1,987	1,225
Actual return less interest on scheme assets	2,412	(4,761)
Employer contributions	1,071	951
Contributions by Members (including net transfers-in)	518	502
Benefits paid and expenses	(1,516)	(1,151)
Administrative expenses	(188)	(131)
Closing fair value of scheme assets at 31 March	47,085	42,801

The Commission expects to contribute £938,176 to the Members of the Senedd Pension Scheme in 2024-25.

The major categories of scheme assets as a percentage of total scheme assets are as follows:

Table 14: major categories of scheme assets as a percentage of total scheme assets

	2023-24	2022-23
Equities	52%	51%
Alternative investments	14%	16%
Property	7%	8%
Fixed interest and cash	27%	25%
	100%	100%

The assets of the Scheme are invested in a diverse spread of funds as follows:

- BNY Mellon Sustainable Real Return
- Baillie Gifford Sustainable Multi Asset Growth
- Legal & General Investment Management (“LGIM”) Managed Property
- Partners Group Generations
- LGIM Ethical Global Equity Index (hedged and unhedged share classes)
- LGIM Over 5 Year Index-Linked Gilt Index
- LGIM Cash (note this does not form part of the Scheme’s strategic asset allocation and is utilised on an ad-hoc basis for cash flow purposes)

The total market value of the Funds invested at 31 March 2024 was £47.0 million (31 March 2023, £42.8 million).

Over the year to 31 March 2024 the Scheme’s investment portfolio generated a return of approximately 10.4 per cent. This was driven by gains in major asset classes during the period, particularly equity. The actual return on scheme investments during 2023-24 was a gain of £4.3 million (2022-23, loss of £3.6 million). The Scheme’s investment strategy underperformed against equity markets over the same period, which appreciated c. 22.4 per cent (in local terms), but outperformed UK long term Government bonds (which returned c. -4.6 per cent). The Scheme outperformed against its discount rate (Consumer Prices Index plus 3.0 per cent), which returned c. 5.7 per cent during a period of heightened inflation.

Principal actuarial assumptions at the Statement of Financial Position date:**Table 15: Principal actuarial assumptions at the Statement of Financial Position date**

Assumption	31 March 2024	31 March 2023
Discount rate	4.75%	4.65%
Future earnings increases - in excess of discount rate	0.75%	0.55%
Future pension increases (CPI) - in excess of discount rate	1.95%	2.05%
Expectation of life at age 65 (years):		
Male	23.7	23.6
Female	25.3	25.2
Widows	24.1	24.0

Sensitivity to main assumptions

If the real rate of return in excess of earnings changes by 1 per cent a year, the total actuarial liability would change by around 1 per cent.

If the real rate of return in excess of pension changes by 1 per cent a year the total actuarial liability would change by about 17 per cent.

If longevity at retirement were assumed to be 2 years greater, this would increase the total actuarial liability by about 6 per cent.

Amounts for the current and previous four periods are as follows:

Table 16: Amounts for the current and previous four periods

	31 March 2024 £'000	31 March 2023 £'000	31 March 2022 £'000	31 March 2021 £'000	31 March 2020 £'000
Defined benefit obligation	48,158	45,135	65,211	63,885	54,679
Scheme assets	47,085	42,801*	46,166	43,644	35,248
Net liability	(1,073)	(2,334)*	(19,045)	(20,241)	(19,431)
Experience gains and losses arising on pension liabilities	990	3,536	229	355	(635)
Actual return less interest on scheme assets	2,412	(4,894)*	2,233	7,144	(3,220)

**2022-23 figures have been re-stated to reflect value published in the Members' Pension Scheme Annual Report and Accounts for 2022-23*

Further information on the Members of the Senedd Pension Scheme²⁶ can be found in the Annual Report and Accounts for the scheme for the year ending 31 March 2024.

²⁶ <https://senedd.wales/how-we-work/about-members-of-the-senedd/members-of-the-senedd-pension-scheme-the-scheme/>

02. B - Members' other costs

Members' other costs of £10.839 million (2022-23 £10.260 million) in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure consist of:

Category	2023-24 £'000	2022-23 £'000
Office Costs	1,314	1,408
Additional Costs	263	260
Members' Staff Costs	9,056	8,410
Travel costs	206	182
Total Members' other costs	10,839	10,260

Members' staff costs don't include any severance payments for 2023-24 (2022-23, three at a total cost of £25,361).

With effect from 1 April 2023 the pension scheme for the Member Support Staff changed from a Stakeholder arrangement to a Group Personal Pension Scheme. The Scheme is a defined contribution pension scheme with Aviva to which the Commission makes a monthly contribution of 10 per cent of gross salary for Members of the Senedd support staff. In addition, from the start of the Sixth Senedd, where a member of support staff chooses to make a personal contribution to their pension, those personal contributions are matched by an employer contribution up to a maximum of three percent of actual salary paid. The Scheme is compliant with automatic enrolment legislation and the Scheme's last re-enrolment staging date was 1 January 2023. The employer pension contributions paid in 2023-24 were £805,636 (2022-23 £746,691).

02. C – Commissioner for Standards

Under the terms of *The National Assembly for Wales (Commissioner for Standards) Measure 2009*, the Commission pays the salary of, and any related costs incurred by, the Commissioner for Standards ('Commissioner'). The Commission is responsible for ensuring that the salary and allowances agreed in the terms and conditions of the appointment of the Commissioner, and any reasonable liabilities incurred in the course of his duties, are charged to the Welsh Consolidated Fund.

The Commissioner for Standards is Douglas Bain CBE TD who was appointed with effect from 1 April 2021. The appointment is for a six year period. More information about Douglas Bain and his work as the Commissioner is available from <http://standardscommissionerwales.org/>

Support resources

The Commissioner's office is supported by members of Commission staff who have been seconded to assist with the volume of casework under consideration, to provide customer service and to ensure that the office runs effectively. The table below provides the detail of the time and costs incurred by the Commissioner and the salary costs of his support staff. In addition, during 2023-24, the Acting Commissioner sought legal advice from Commission staff where relevant

Staffing hours and costs

Nature of cost	2023-24		2022-23	
	Hours	Costs	Hours	Costs
Commissioner Hours	626		429	
Commissioner Employment Costs		£54,624		£38,955
Costs charged to the Welsh Consolidated Fund ⁽¹⁾		£54,624		£38,740
Support Staff Employment Costs		£74,448		£71,115
Legal and other professional support Costs		£5,498		£9,524
Directly attributable resource costs supplied by the Commission		£134,570		£119,595

⁽¹⁾ There was a gross underpayment of £216 in October 2022, corrected in April 2023.

03. Other administration costs

Other administration costs of £16.4 million (2022-23, £16.1 million) in the Statement of Comprehensive Expenditure consist of:

	2023-24 £'000	2022-23 £'000
Leases - buildings	495	535
Leases - other	42	37
Accommodation and facilities costs	5,901	5,345
ICT costs	2,855	2,972
Administrative expenses	1,364	1,311
Staff related costs	462	643
Other administration costs	11,119	10,843
Interest charges on right of use assets	624	633
Depreciation, amortisation and impairment charges	4,673	4,591
Total Other administration costs	16,416	16,067

The estimated external audit cost for the audit of these financial statements is £71,627 (2022-23, £67,294). No additional non-statutory audit work was incurred in 2023-24 (2022-23, nil).

04. Property, plant and equipment

	Land and buildings	ICT	Fixtures and fittings ²⁷	Assets under construction	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Cost or valuation					
At 1 April 2023	70,924	8,678	2,013	149	81,764
Additions	-	677	6	250	933
Reclassification	-	147	-	(147)	-
Revaluation	(2,264)	-	-	-	(2,264)
Disposals	-	(847)	-	-	(847)
At 31 March 2024	68,660	8,655	2,019	252	79,586
Depreciation					
At 1 April 2023	-	(7,364)	(1,170)	-	(8,534)
Charged in year	(2,073)	(468)	(135)	-	(2,676)
Revaluation	2,073	-	-	-	2,073
Disposals	-	847	-	-	847
At 31 March 2024	0	(6,985)	(1,305)	-	(8,290)
Carrying amount at 31 March 2024	68,660	1,670	714	252	71,296
Carrying amount at 31 March 2023	70,924	1,314	843	149	73,230

The carrying amount of land and buildings held under lease arrangements as at 31 March 2024 is £5.3 million (31 March 2023, £5.284 million).

A revaluation of land and buildings was undertaken by T Merrifield MRICS of Avison Young (UK) Limited as at 31 March 2024, in accordance with the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors Valuation Standards. The Commission undertake a full revaluation every three years, the last one was carried out for the year ended 31 March 2023. The valuation for period ended 31 March 2024 reflected inflationary increases and BCIS revisions.

²⁷ Fixtures and fittings includes 'donated assets', consisting of the Mace donated by the Parliament of New South Wales for the opening of the Senedd.

Revaluations have resulted in increase in the value of Land and Buildings in the Statement of Financial Position of £1.852 million compared to the carrying amount that would have been recognised had the assets been carried under the cost model.

Impairment reviews did not identify any indications of impairment at 31 March 2024 and hence no impairments have been recognised.

	Land and buildings	ICT	Fixtures and fittings ²⁸	Assets under construction	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Cost or valuation					
At 1 April 2022	65,510	8,502	1,863	118	75,993
Additions	24	97	150	109	213
Reclassification	-	79	-	(79)	-
Revaluation	5,390	-	-	-	5,414
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2023	70,924	8,678	1,924	148	81,620
Depreciation					
At 1 April 2022	-	(6,803)	(1,042)	-	(7,845)
Charged in year	(1,914)	(561)	(128)	-	(2,603)
Revaluation	-	-	-	-	-
Disposals	1,914	-	-	-	1,914
At 31 March 2023	-	(7,364)	(1,170)	-	(8,534)
Carrying amount at 31 March 2023	70,924	1,314	843	149	73,230
Carrying amount at 31 March 2022	65,510	1,699	821	118	68,148

²⁸ Fixtures and fittings includes 'donated assets', consisting of the Mace donated by the Parliament of New South Wales for the opening of the Senedd.

05. Intangible assets

The Commission has fully written off its intangible assets in previously years and has intangible assets of £0 value as at 31 March 2024, (£0 as at 31 March 2023).

06. Trade and other receivables

	31 March 2024 £'000	31 March 2023 £'000
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Trade receivables	149	176
Other receivables	34	24
Prepayments	1,786	1,771
Recoverable VAT	280	181
	2,249	2,152

There were no receivable amounts falling due after more than one year.

07. Cash and cash equivalents

	31 March 2024 £'000	31 March 2023 £'000
Balance at 1 April	226	1,171
Net change in cash and cash equivalent balances	50	(945)
Balance at 31 March	276	226
The following balances at 31 March were held at:		
Government Banking Service	272	71
Commercial banks and cash in hand	4	155
Balance at 31 March	276	226

08. Trade payables and other current liabilities

	31 March 2024 £'000	31 March 2023 £'000
Amounts falling due within one year:		
VAT payable	7	21
Other taxation and social security	917	881
Trade payables	853	721
Accruals	2,432	2,500
Amounts due to the Welsh Consolidated Fund	276	226
	4,485	4,349

There were no payable amounts falling due after more than one year.

09. Provisions for liabilities and charges

	MS Pension Scheme £'000	Dilapidation Provision £'000	2023-24 Total £'000	2022-23 Total £'000
Balance at 1 April	2,361	171	2,532	19,216
Decrease in provision	(1,424)	(27)	(1,451)	(18,506)
Pension finance costs	136	-	136	1,822
Balance at 31 March	1,073	144	1,217	2,532

Under IAS 19, a liability of £1.073 million is recognised for the Members of the Senedd Pension Scheme. Further information is provided on this in Note 02.A. Additional information on the dilapidation provisions can be found within the provisions section of Note 01 – Statement of accounting policies.

From the total provision of £1.073 million (2022-23, £0 million), no amount is expected to crystallise within one year (2022-23, £0 million).

10. Commitments under leases

(a) Operating leases

Commitments under operating leases to pay rentals during the year following the year of these accounts are given in the table below, analysed according to the period in which payments are incurred.

Category	31 March 2024 £'000	31 March 2023 £'000
Land and buildings:		
Not later than one year	-	-
Later than one year but not more than five years	-	-
Later than five years	-	-
	-	-
Other – car, printers and copiers:		
Not later than one year	7	18
Later than one year but not more than five years	23	41
	30	59

(b) Finance leases

Commitments that are classed as leases as per the application of IFRS 16 are analysed in the tables below. The Commission has no other finance leases. The Commission has applied the 'cumulative catch-up method' to transition and applied a discount rate of 3.51% in calculating the value of the right of use assets added during 2023-24 (2022-23 – 0.95%). This is the HM Treasury Discount rate promulgated in PES papers as the incremental borrowing rate effective as at 31 March 2024.

The liquidity risk inherent in the maturity analysis of the right of use asset is minimal given that the Commission receives funding from the Welsh Government on the basis of a budget which provides for the costs of servicing the lease.

Right of Use Assets	Buildings	Information Technology	Plant and Machinery	Total
At 1 April 2023	66,855	65	0	66,920
Additions during the year	217		13	230
Depreciation expense	(1,972)	(22)	(3)	(1,997)
At 31 March 2024	65,100	43	10	65,153

Maturity analysis	31 March 2024 £'000	31 March 2023 £'000
Buildings		
Not later than one year	2,311	2,261
Later than one and not later than five years	11,553	11,500
Later than five years	62,397	66,700
Less interest element	(10,536)	(11,640)
Present value of obligations	65,725	68,821
Other		
Not later than one year	30	25
Later than one and not later than five years	18	63
Later than five years	-	-
Less interest element	-	(1)
Present value of obligations	47	87
Total present value of obligations	65,772	68,908
Current portion	1,733	1,653
Non-current portion	64,039	67,255

	31 March 2024 £'000	31 March 2023 £'000
Total cash outflow for leases	2,338	2,286

Figures exclude VAT

11. Capital and other commitments

There were no contracted capital commitments at 31 March 2024 and 31 March 2023.

12. Other financial commitments

The Commission has contracts that make reference to early termination but do not quantify charges for such an event. Early termination would be a breach of contract and the contractor would be entitled to damages representing the loss of profit on the work which would have been done under the contract if it had run its full course. As this figure is variable for each contract, such contracts have not been included in this note.

13. Financial instruments

The Commission does not issue or trade in financial instruments such as loans and has no borrowings. It relies primarily on funding from the Welsh Consolidated Fund for its cash requirements, and is therefore not exposed to liquidity risks. It also has no material deposits, and all material assets and liabilities are denominated in sterling, so it is not exposed to interest rate risk or currency risk.

14. Related-party transactions

The Commission has a number of transactions with the Welsh Government and with other government departments and public bodies, including HM Revenue and Customs. Additionally, regular transactions take place with the Members of the Senedd Pension Scheme (see Remuneration and staff report, page 135).

The Senedd may give special or general directions to the Commission for the purpose of, or in connection with, the exercise of the Senedd Commission's functions.

The Commission has not undertaken any material transactions directly with Commissioners, senior managers or their close family members nor with any organisations where Commissioners, senior managers or members of their close family hold positions of control or influence.

An independent Remuneration Board was established by *The National Assembly for Wales (Remuneration) Measure 2010*. The Remuneration Board determines the salaries and allowances of all Members of the Senedd and office holders. The Members may no longer employ family members as their support staff and any

who are currently employed must be made redundant at the end of the current Senedd.

The Commission decides the policies on salary and conditions for Commission staff. There are no restrictions in place relating to the employment by the Commission of family members of Commissioners or senior management.

Directors have declared that they hold no significant third party interests that may conflict with their duties. A Register of Financial and Other Interests of Members is available at www.senedd.wales and www.senedd.cymru.

Annex – regularity reporting

Regularity Reporting

The Senedd Commission’s budget is authorised by the Senedd via formal budget motions. These motions authorise the Commission’s capital and revenue expenditure, as well as retainable income and the amount that may be drawn from the Welsh Consolidated Fund.

The Statement and supporting notes have been prepared in accordance with the 2023–2024 Government Financial Reporting Manual (FRoM) suitably adapted for the constitution of the Senedd and the Commission as specified by the *Government of Wales Act 2006*.

SOS 03 Reconciliation of Net Cash Requirement to increase in cash

	31 March 2024 £'000	31 March 2023 £'000
Net cash requirement	(60,797)	(58,297)
From the Consolidated Fund (supply) – current year	61,536	58,592
Amounts due from the Consolidated Fund not drawn	(460)	(71)
Bank interest received	(3)	2
Amounts paid to the Consolidated Fund	(226)	(1,171)
Increase in cash	50	(945)

This table is subject to audit.

An amount of £3,314 (2022-23 £1,811) was received in respect of bank interest for the year ended 31 March 2024. As per the *Government of Wales Act 2006*, the Commission is not permitted to retain this amount and will return it to the Welsh Consolidated Fund.

SOS 04 Reconciliation of Net Resource Outturn to Net Cash Requirement 2023-24

	Note	Budget	Outturn	Net total outturn compared with budget: under spend/(excess)	Outturn 2022-23
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Net Resource Outturn	SOS 01	67,208	63,857	3,351	62,213
Cash required for rent		2,300	2,337	(37)	2,286
Accruals adjustments		-	-		-
Non-cash items	See below	(8,072)	(5,433)	(2,639)	(7,046)
Changes in working capital other than cash		100	36	64	843
Net cash requirement		61,536	60,797	739	58,297

<i>Non-cash items</i>	Note	Budget	Outturn	Outturn compared with budget 2023-24	Outturn 2022-23
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Depreciation and amortisation and de-recognition	4 and 5	(5,406)	(4,673)	(733)	(4,591)
Interest charges and depreciation relation to IFRS16		(866)	(624)	(242)	(633)
Pension finance costs and other provision movements	9	(1,800)	(136)	(1,664)	(1,822)
		(8,072)	(5,433)	(2,639)	(7,046)

This table is subject to audit.

SOS 05 Analysis of income payable to the Welsh Consolidated Fund

	Budget	Outturn	Outturn
	2023-24	2023-24	2022-23
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Retainable operating income	170	102	73
Subtotal	170	102	73
Amount retained	170	99	73
Amount payable to the WCF	-	3	-

There has been no other operating income in 2023-24 (2022-23, nil).

This table is subject to audit.