

Report of the review of Rules and Guidance on the use of Senedd Resources 2026

This document relates to Rule 8 of the Code of Conduct.



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1. Introduction

1. In anticipation of the Seventh Senedd, a review of the Rules and Guidance on the use of Senedd resources has been undertaken, with the aim of drawing on recent experience to provide greater clarity and to reflect changes in the regulatory framework. This is a report of the observations received on the proposed changes which were set out in detail for consultation, and resultant conclusions.

2. The Sixth Senedd Rules and Guidance can be found here: [Rules and Guidance on the Use of Senedd Resources](#).

Background

3. The Rules and Guidance form a key part of the Regulatory framework for Members of the Senedd, sitting alongside the Code of Conduct. Rule 8 of the Code requires Members to comply with rules on the use of resources provided by the Senedd Commission, as determined by the Senedd Commission's Principal Accounting Officer—the Chief Executive and Clerk. The Accounting Officer's responsibilities include ensuring the regularity and propriety of expenditure, value for money, risk management, and robust assurance regarding the use of public resources. To support these duties the accounting officer requires an effective assurance regime. The Rules and Guidance were first issued prior to the 2016 elections and have been periodically updated to improve clarity and usability for both Members and the Accounting Officer.

2. Clarification of wording or meaning

Considerations

4. The current review did not seek to make extensive changes, but rather to continue the process of refining wording for consistency and clarity, and to reflect developments since the last amendment. Clarifications and presentational changes were proposed, with tracked changes provided in the annex. In some cases, experience suggested that the meaning or intention of certain rules or guidance could be made clearer, and these points were summarised for consultation. Updates to cross-references, such as the removal of references to Regions following the Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Act 2024, were also identified as necessary.

5. Specific considerations included adjustments to the context and interpretation of the Rules and Guidance, clarifications regarding referrals to the Commissioner for Standards, and updates to reflect Members' responsibilities and the scope of media operations. Additional proposals included reminders about compliance with other legislation, clarification of financial procedures, and the administration of security vetting. The intention was to ensure that the Rules remain clear, consistent, and fit for purpose as the Senedd moves into its next term.

Feedback

6. The consultation invited observations on specific proposals, which were laid out in detail. Responses were received from a range of stakeholders, including one of the Commission's Independent Advisers, the Commissioner for Standards, Cymdeithas yr Iaith, the Welsh Language Commissioner, and the Independent Remuneration Board of the Senedd. The following section summarises the feedback received, highlighting both the areas of broad support and the specific suggestions for further improvement.

7. Two respondents used the consultation to advocate for a more ambitious and systemic approach to bilingualism, which extend beyond the scope of these proposals for the Rules and guidance on use of resources. However, a summary of those points made is included in section 3.

8. There was broad support for the approach to clarification and simplification from most respondents. Several respondents offered constructive, specific suggestions to improve clarity, consistency, and to inform compliance.

Rule 1: Personal accountability

9. The Independent Remuneration Board supported the amendment to Rule 1 guidance, inserting a reminder that Members must comply with applicable law when using Senedd resources. The Commissioner for Standards suggested strengthening the Guidance to Rule 1 by referencing current Rule 24 of the Code of Conduct, ensuring Members take reasonable measures to ensure staff compliance before delegating tasks. An adjustment has been made to incorporate this.

Rule 2: Value for money, sustainability and reputational obligations

10. The Independent Remuneration Board requested a change to terminology in reference to expenditure for travel as it is moving away from referencing the term ‘allowances’ in the Determination. An adjustment has been made.

11. Cymdeithas yr Iaith: Suggests that duties regarding the Welsh language should be added to Rule 2(b), to feature alongside equal opportunity and sustainable development. This suggestion has been considered in conjunction with Rule 9, as the Official Languages of the Senedd has a distinct rule, directly linked to the Official Languages Scheme.

12. An additional adjustment has been made to the wording of this rule to more closely reflect the legislative requirement on the Commission.

Rule 3: Employment of Staff Funded by Commission Resources

13. The Independent Remuneration Board supported the proposed amendment to reference “the Determination” instead of “Remuneration Board” and suggested further clarification to align with public duties specified in the Determination, rather than ‘activities’ specified. This more narrow definition can be encompassed to support clarity of the Board’s intentions.

Other rules

14. No direct respondent feedback specifically referenced the proposals set out relating to the other rules.

15. However, since the period of this consultation the Independent Remuneration Board launched its own consultation of the Determination for the Seventh Senedd. The Board highlighted the inclusion of a new principle of equality of representation, to require that Members must treat constituents equally, regardless of the party-political opinions (actual or

perceived) of the constituents, where claims relate to engaging with constituents. This mirrors a rule in the Rules and Guidance on use of Senedd Resources. Inclusion in the Determination seems more appropriate, as the issue relates to constituent engagement, and the general duty in the Rules relating to equality of opportunity is contained in current Rule 2. I will therefore take the opportunity to remove the superfluous duplication by deleting rule 7.

3. Commentary Extending Beyond the Proposals

16. Where this consultation prompted additional feedback from some respondents which was largely strategic and policy-oriented, a summary of points made is set out below. Whilst these suggestions received go beyond the scope of the Rules and guidance on use of resources, the detailed input will be provided to inform early thinking in preparation for the Official Languages Scheme for the Seventh Senedd.

Cymdeithas yr Iaith

17. Summary: The group's commentary was largely strategic and policy-oriented, addressing organisational culture, legal frameworks, and strategic planning rather than the specific rule changes under consultation. They highlighted their views of:

- Insufficient progress and ambition in promoting Welsh internally.
- Lack of clarity and urgency in reviewing the legal framework for the Official Languages Scheme.
- Absence of Welsh language requirements in Member staffing frameworks and employment practices.
- The need for stronger, explicit requirements in the Rules regarding the use of Welsh, especially in communication, staff appointments, and reporting.

and made requests for assurance and clarity on future plans and legal changes.

Welsh Language Commissioner

18. Summary: The response welcomed the consultation and sought to take the opportunity to advocate for stronger bilingual requirements, in line with their broader role responsibilities. Their views go beyond the current proposals, advocating for broader policy shifts to better support bilingualism and changes to the Official Languages Scheme itself. Points included:

- Recommending that Members be required to appoint staff able to provide services in Welsh and English.
- Suggesting explicit rules to prevent Welsh being treated less favourably than English.
- Proposing that Members' websites be required to be bilingual.

- Emphasising the need for all communication and engagement activities using Senedd resources to be bilingual.

4. Conclusions

- 19.** No responses opposed proposals made to update the Rules or guidance. Some adjustments have been made to take account of feedback received in so far as they relate to the role of the Accounting Officer.
- 20.** The suggestions relating to the framework around the Official Languages of the Senedd will be fed into considerations for the development of the next Official Languages scheme, for the Seventh Senedd.
- 21.** In addition to the textual changes made there has been further adjustment to the order in which the rules appear. This is to seek to bring together related matters, and to give greater prominence to the rule relating to official Languages.
- 22.** The Annex sets out the final proposal for updates to the Rules and Guidance for the use of Senedd Resources for the Seventh Senedd.

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