

National Assembly for Wales

Assembly Commission Draft Budget Proposals
2011-12



The National Assembly for Wales is the democratically elected body that represents the interests of Wales and its people, makes laws for Wales and holds the Welsh Government to account.

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THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR WALES COMMISSION

DRAFT BUDGET FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2012

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Introduction

1. The Government of Wales Act 2006 created the Assembly Commission in May 2007. The Commission is responsible for the provision of property, staff and services to support the National Assembly for Wales and its 60 Assembly Members. The Commission's purpose is to make the Assembly an accessible and effective parliamentary body that inspires the confidence of the people of Wales.
2. Decisions and resource allocations are guided by the Commission's strategic objectives for the Third Assembly:
 - to promote and widen engagement in devolution;
 - to show unity, leadership and a bold response to constitutional change;
 - in all our work, to demonstrate respect, probity and good governance;
 - to work sustainably; and
 - to ensure that the Assembly has the best service, provided in the most effective way.
3. This document sets out the Draft Budget Proposals for the Commission's budget for 2011-12, the fourth year of the Commission's operation, and the approach the Commission has adopted within the wider strategic context of reducing public expenditure.
4. The Commission will lay its final budget following scrutiny of this Draft Budget by the Assembly's Finance Committee and after publication of the UK Government's Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR), due to be published on 20 October 2010.

Budget Strategy

5. The next four years are going to be the toughest the Assembly has faced in financial terms. Many public services will be subject to significant budget constraints. The Chancellor's Budget on 22 June indicated 25 per cent real term reductions for non-protected government departments over the next four years. The precise

impact on the Welsh block will not be known until the CSR is published.

6. In the recent past, the Commission has sought to reflect percentage changes in the Welsh block in its budget proposals. Currently, the Commission's budget makes up 0.31 per cent of the Welsh block. The Commission's budget strategy for the Fourth Assembly sets planning assumptions of a 5 per cent reduction in real terms for 2011-12 and a cumulative reduction in the order of 20-25 per cent by March 2014, with the exception set out in the next paragraph for one-off election costs.
7. There is one exception to this approach in setting the budget. The Fourth Assembly will be elected in 2011. There are unavoidable one-off costs arising from an election which include severance costs for Members and their staff who do not continue as Assembly Members and the costs involved in establishing the new Members in constituency offices and (where appropriate) Cardiff accommodation. It is not possible to predict these costs with complete accuracy, but the Commission has included an estimate in its draft budget. These costs will only occur in an election year and cannot be subject to the reductions incurred by the rest of the budget.
8. In deciding how to accommodate reductions in its resources in 2011-12, the Commission has decided its priorities for that year. These are:
 - to protect the Assembly's core business of legislation;
 - to make a successful transition to the Fourth Assembly;
 - to make any changes necessary following the Referendum on further powers for the Assembly; and
 - to plan for reduced resources as the scale of the cuts to be made beyond 2011-12 will mean fundamental changes.

Key Changes

9. The first Assembly Measure proposed by the Commission establishes an independent review body ("the Remuneration Board") to make decisions on all aspects of financial support for Assembly Members, to take account of changing responsibilities in the work

of Assembly Members and to review the effectiveness and impact of the uprating process. The Remuneration Board members have now been appointed and it will start work shortly. This means that the remit of the Commission and the way it organises its budget and aspects of service provision will need to change.

10. In response to this change, the Commission seeks two separate authorised sums ('ambits'). One is for the expenditure which will continue to be under the Commission's direct control ('Assembly Services Budget') and the other for expenditure that will be determined by the Remuneration Board ('Assembly Members' Budget'). The Chief Executive and Clerk of the Assembly remains accountable for both areas of expenditure in her capacity as the Accounting Officer. The ambits are reviewed in more detail in Parts 1 and 2 below.

Draft Budget

11. This budget submission is laid before the National Assembly for Wales in compliance with Standing Order 27. It will assist in the compilation of the Annual Budget Motion required by Section 125 of the Government of Wales Act 2006. The submission covers the resource and cash requirements of the Assembly for the year ending 31 March 2012 and provisional amounts for the subsequent two years.
12. The Budget Motion will authorise the net resources to be used for the services and purposes of Members and Assembly Services. The motion includes the maximum income (or accruing resources) that may be retained for use on those services and purposes instead of being paid into the Welsh Consolidated Fund, and the cash amount that will need to be issued from the Welsh Consolidated Fund to meet the anticipated net amounts falling due for payment by the Commission.
13. The 2011-12 Budget for the Assembly Commission, addressing these requirements, is set out in Table 1:

Table 1: The Assembly Commission 2011-12 Draft Budget**£000**

Resources other than accruing resources for use by the National Assembly for Wales Commission on revenue and capital costs associated with the administration and operation of Assembly Services to support the National Assembly for Wales (“the Assembly”); promotion of the Assembly including payments to the Electoral Commission and others; payments in respect of the Commissioner for Standards and Remuneration Board; any other payments relating to functions of the Assembly or functions of the National Assembly for Wales Commission.	32,328
Resources other than accruing resources for use by the National Assembly for Wales Commission in respect of decisions of the Remuneration Board.	16,362
Annually Managed Expenditure for use by the National Assembly for Wales Commission in respect of Assembly Members’ Pension provision.	500
Accruing resources for retention pursuant to section 120(2) of the Government of Wales Act 2006 and use by the National Assembly for Wales Commission: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• from the disposal of fixed assets and other capital income for use on the purchase or acquisition of fixed assets; or• rental income; gifts; grant support; recharges and income from commercial sales and other services provided to the public or others for use on administrative costs of the Assembly.	260
Amount to be issued from the Welsh Consolidated Fund to meet the anticipated amounts falling due for payment in the year in respect of the above services and purposes less expected retainable receipts and recoverable VAT.	46,586

Part 01-

Assembly Services budget

Part 1 Assembly Services budget

New Budget Ambit

14. The Assembly Services budget ambit contains the resources which support the Assembly as a whole and do not fall within the Assembly Members' ambit. The ambit includes items like rent, rates, contracted out services and utilities, although almost half of the expenditure under this ambit is the cost of employing Assembly staff. Assembly staff are led by Claire Clancy, the Chief Executive and Clerk of the Assembly. Further information on the work of the Assembly can be found in the Commission's latest Annual Report and Accounts available at www.assemblywales.org.

Strategic approach 2011-12

15. The budget for 2011-12 and thereafter will be prepared on the basis of year on year reductions, aiming to deliver a cumulative saving of 20 to 25 per cent by 2014-15. This working assumption reflects the anticipated impact of public spending cuts on the Welsh block. Funding is forecast for inflationary¹ impact and a 5 per cent cut in 2011-12 followed by 6 per cent cut in 2012-13 and 7 per cent cut in 2013-14 and 2014-15. This should provide sufficient flexibility in future years to reflect the actual impact to the Welsh block which will not be known until the CSR is published.

16. The financial impact of these assumptions on the Assembly Services budget over the next four years is shown in Table 2.

¹ Uses H M Treasury assumptions 2011-12 1.5 per cent, 2012-13 2.5 per cent and 2013-14 2.75 per cent

Table 2 - Indicative Budget (based on stated assumptions) £000s

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Assembly Commission Services	32,847	31,673*	30,517	29,161	27,865
% cut to real term budget		5%	6%	7%	7%
Equates to reduction		1,667	1,948	2,195	2,097
One-off Election Costs		655			
Total DEL Budget	32,847	32,328	30,517	29,161	27,865

* In comparison, the 2010-11 Budget estimated £35.986m for 2011-12.

17. Achieving this reduction will present a significant challenge and will require a clear focus on priorities so that the Commission can continue to deliver high standards where it matters most. However, changes to the breadth, timing and quality of service are inevitable and Members and other service-users will notice these changes. Some work will be reduced or curtailed to enable delivery within a much constrained resource base.

Delivering with less

18. Steps already implemented for managing in tighter times include:

- managing posts that become vacant more robustly, with the expectation that posts that have to be filled will be filled internally or will be held vacant for a minimum of three months. Recruitment to any vacant post requires a business case approved by the Chief Executive. This has always been the case for new posts but has now been extended to cover all vacant posts in the existing structure;
- year on year reductions in energy consumption which have mitigated the cost impact of rising energy bills. In 2009-10 the energy consumption across the Commission estate reduced by 14.6 per cent delivering a minimum 5 per cent saving from the energy budget. Over the next few years, a similar trend to reduce energy consumption year on year is expected;

- offering staff a voluntary early departure scheme to accelerate the reduction in recurring staff costs; and
 - improving staff productivity through reduced sick absence throughout the Assembly, saving in excess of £0.2 million per annum of non-productive time.
19. The Commission has sound financial management arrangements in place and will use these to identify further opportunities to reduce costs and maximise efficiency, for example:
- exploring income or cost recovery potential;
 - phasing of work programmes and projects while taking proper account of the impact of capital investment decisions;
 - changing the way in which contracted out services are delivered to reduce specifications or provide the same service more efficiently in different ways. For the major service contracts, this will result in noticeable change and is likely to impact adversely on contractor staffing levels;
 - collaborating with other public sector services, including the use of shared services;
 - reviewing how working space is used with a view to reducing energy and other costs; and
 - removing duplication and streamlining where possible using benchmark data to inform decisions.
20. Within these reviews the Commission will ensure that it continues to meet its statutory corporate responsibilities – Welsh language, sustainability, equality of opportunity, health and safety and other legal duties – but in some areas it will accept that exemplar aspirations will have to be pared back.
21. Building on the progress outlined above, further reductions have been factored into the 2011-12 budget:
- £1.4 million (4.4 per cent) reduction in salary costs achieved through the early departure schemes offered to staff in 2010-11 and tighter recruitment controls. This has off-set increases for staff pay arrangements, delivering a net reduction of £0.7 million;

- £1.100 million (3.4 per cent) reduction in ICT costs through managing a change in services delivered through contracts and completing IT projects such as Members' Casework System which off-set unavoidable increases from website costs and licences, delivering a net reduction of £0.7 million;
- £0.6 million (1.9 per cent) reduction in accommodation costs through adjusting delivery and performance targets to reflect changing priorities. This also covers reducing contract spend and reducing or removing subsidies to internal customers, for example through examining our catering and car parking service provision. This offsets unavoidable increases to deliver a net reduction of £0.4million;
- £0.6 million (1.9 per cent) from a review of areas of the budget where demand will reduce or be managed downwards, such as recruitment costs, travel and stationery costs. Also removal of funding for one-off activities such as the Member mentoring scheme and the staff leadership development programme. This off-sets unavoidable increases, delivering a net reduction of £0.3 million; and
- £0.5 million (1.6 per cent) reduction in public engagement and communications costs arising from the completion of one-off costs related to the Pierhead project and a change to how the service is delivered.

22. Increases due to new initiatives and unavoidable costs included in the 2011-12 draft budget are:

- an additional £0.4million depreciation costs arising from capital investment;
- £0.5million contingency;
- £0.6million service restructuring fund to deliver recurring savings on staff costs; and
- new initiative from the *Getting it Right for Wales* recommendations to deliver increased learning and development for Members, particularly in the first year following an election. The Commission will be delivering this training largely in-house, drawing on existing staff expertise as well as procuring external provision.

23. The depreciation charge which is a consequence of past investment decisions continues to rise and is estimated at £3.254 million for 2011-12. In 2011-12 it will require 10 per cent of the Assembly Services Budget, which has had a considerable effect by further reducing service budgets as a consequence.
24. The Commission will review its capital investment strategy in the next 12 months to ensure that its policy reflects the affordability and whole life cost of future investment decisions. For example, if the Commission were to reflect the 5 per cent real term cut on the depreciation charge, it would require a £0.5 million reduction in its asset base. Work on this capital investment strategy will commence once the outcome of the CSR is known.
25. Election costs are shown separately to cover the expenditure incurred by the Commission which is directly related to the election. It includes one-off costs including ICT changes, essential work on Members' offices in Tŷ Hywel, changes to publication materials to reflect the new Assembly and the Royal opening. Any under spend can be returned through the supplementary budget route. The addition of one-off election costs in 2011-12 explains the difference between the budgeted figures for Commission Services as set out in Tables 1 and 2.
26. Table 3 on page 13 provides a summary of the changes described above.

TABLE 3 - Assembly Services - Analysis of movements between 2010-11 Budget and the draft 2011-12 Budget

	2010-11	Increases	Reductions	2011-12
	£000	£000	£000	£000
<u>Revenue expenditure</u>				
Staff salaries	14,726	694	(1,389)	14,031
Associated HR costs	151	-	(65)	86
Learning & Development costs for Members & staff	250	83	(38)	295
Staff travel and subsistence costs	208	-	(76)	132
ICT costs including website, broadcasting & licence and maintenance costs	4,258	351	(1,090)	3,519
Accommodation and facilities costs including rates, electricity, catering, cleaning and maintenance*	7,181	249	(643)	6,787
Public engagement and communications costs, including visitor services, outreach and national events	896	-	(497)	399
Other administrative costs*	1,456	175	(410)	1,221
Depreciation	2,822	432	-	3,254
Contingency	334	166	-	500
Restructuring fund	-	593	-	593
Gross Revenue Expenditure	32,282	2,743	(4,208)	30,817

	2010-11	Increases	Reductions	2011-12
<u>Revenue Income</u>				
Sales from the Assembly Shop	(40)	-	-	(40)
Accommodation rental income	(90)	-	-	(90)
Miscellaneous income	(80)	(50)	-	(130)
Gross Revenue Income	(210)	(50)	-	(260)
NET REVENUE EXPENDITURE	32,072	2,693	(4,208)	(30,557)
Capital expenditure - creation of fixed assets	775	341	-	1,116
NET CAPITAL EXPENDITURE	775	341	-	1,116
RESOURCE REQUIREMENT	32,847	3,034	(4,208)	31,673
Election costs – revenue expenditure	-	655	-	655
TOTAL RESOURCE REQUIREMENT	32,847	3,689	(4,208)	32,328

*See Annexe D for detail breakdown

Part 2 Assembly Members' budget

New Budget Ambit

27. The newly established Remuneration Board will be responsible for ensuring that Assembly Members are fairly and properly resourced for their roles of representing the people of Wales, holding the Welsh Government to account and making laws for Wales. Assembly Members receive salaries and allowances to meet their Assembly expenses, operate constituency offices and employ staff to support them in their activities as Assembly Members. These allowances and the pay of Assembly Members are set out in the 'Determination', which can be found at www.assemblywales.org.
28. A new budget ambit to cover these costs will distinguish the resource for the Remuneration Board's decisions on Assembly Members' pay and allowances from the resource for services provided to support the Assembly as a whole.
29. In keeping with the budget strategy set out at the beginning of this draft budget, the draft Members' budget for 2011-12 reflects a 5 per cent real terms reduction on equivalent budgets in 2010-11, but also includes a separate amount estimated for those election costs which are covered in the Determination (see further below under Election Expenditure). As this draft budget is being laid in advance of the Remuneration Board's decisions, the Commission does not know the levels at which Assembly Members' pay and allowances will be set for 2011-12. The Remuneration Board will decide these levels.
30. The draft Assembly Members' budget is shown in Table 4. The 2011-12 position is mirrored in the following three years in the absence of more robust assumptions which will come from the Board's decisions. This will be adjusted in the budget process for 2012-13, in light of those decisions.

Table 4 - Indicative Budget**£000**

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Assembly Members	13,380	12,902*	12,902	12,902	12,902
% cut to real term budget		5%	-	-	-
Equates to reduction		676	-	-	-
One-off Election Costs		3,460	-	-	-
Total DEL Budget	13,380	16,362	12,902	12,902	12,902
AME Budget	500	500	500	500	500

* In comparison, the 2010-11 budget estimated £13.923m for 2011-12.

31. It is not possible for the Commission to say at this stage that the decisions which the Remuneration Board makes can be fully funded by the amount set out in the above table against Assembly Members. If a different level funding is needed for 2011-12, the Assembly could make adjustments by way of supplementary budget. The main areas of spending which the budget will need to cover are listed below:

- salaries for Assembly Members and Support Staff;
- Assembly Member's Own Car Mileage;
- Assembly Member and Support Staff Travel & Subsistence;
- Assembly Member Office Costs Allowance;
- Assembly Member Additional Costs Allowance;
- support for Groups;
- one-off Election Costs (see below).

Election Expenditure

32. Assembly expenditure in an election year is necessarily higher to reflect the costs of Members who stand down and are not returned. Total one-off costs are estimated at £3.460 million for 2011-12.
33. As the eventual total cost of the election can only be estimated there is uncertainty with regard to the funding requirement. The actual costs of the election will depend upon the circumstances of individual new and retiring Members and on the level of change in Assembly Membership. If the estimated costs exceed the actual expenditure, the Commission can seek to return the excess to the Welsh block by way of supplementary budget. If the estimate is not sufficient to meet expenditure, the Commission could consider whether it is necessary to seek supplementary funding. However, it is unlikely that the cost will be greater than the estimated £3.460 million.
34. The identified election costs are explained below.
- **New Members Office Equipment Grant** – this grant, which is in addition to the office costs allowance, is up to £5,000 per new Member;
 - **New Members Additional Expenditure** – a change of Members may initially lead to increased expenditure in the first year of the fourth Assembly;
 - **Resettlement Grant** – this grant is payable to Members standing down or defeated at an election and the average cost calculated for known leavers is £45,000;
 - **Winding Up Allowance** - this allowance is payable to Members standing down or defeated at an election to allow them to wind up their affairs in an orderly manner. The average cost calculated for known leavers is £51,000; and
 - **Redundancy** – under their terms of their employment when a Member stands down or leaves as a result of an election, their support staff are entitled to redundancy payments as their employment ceases. The statutory element of any such redundancies averages £11,000 per Member.

Appendix–

Assembly Members' Draft 2011-12 Budget

Appendix 1 - Assembly Members' Draft 2011-12 Budget

Budget analysed by type of expense and income

	£000	£000
	2011-12 Budget	2010-11 Budget
<i>Revenue expenditure</i>		
AM Salary Related Costs		5,406
AMSS Salary Related Costs		6,222
AM Car Hire		50
AM Own Car Mileage		160
AM UK T&S		81
AM Overseas T&S		61
AM Family Travel		9
AMSS T&S		24
AM Office Costs Allowance		850
AM Additional Costs Allowance		484
PO & DPO T&S		6
Assembly Commissioners' expenses		1
Constitutional Officers' Pay	-	26
NET REVENUE EXPENDITURE	12,902²	13,380
Capital Expenditure	-	-
NET CAPITAL EXPENDITURE	-	-
Election costs	3,460	-
Total Resource requirement	16,362	13,380
Annually Managed Expenditure (AME)		
Assembly Members' Pension provision	500	500

For Remuneration Board to confirm

² Reflecting the 5 per cent real term cut

Annexe A - Restated 2010-11 Budget

The draft 2011-12 budget includes HM Treasury direction to remove the cost of the capital charge and reflects the movement of the Assembly Members' pension fund provision out of the Resource budget into Annually Managed Expenditure (AME).

A breakdown of the 2010-11 figures for comparative purposes is provided below.

Restated 2010-11 budget

A supplementary 2010-11 budget motion was passed in Plenary on 13 July 2010. This supplementary budget introduced changes as a result of HM Treasury's Alignment project. One of the main consequences of the project is the revision of non-cash budgeting. The changes will be phased and the first impacts are felt in the 2010-11 financial year.

Description	Approved Budget 2010-11 (£000)	Changes 13 July 2010 (£000)	Supplementary Budget 2010-11 (£000)
Net Resource Budget (DEL)	48,973	(2,746)	46,227
Annually Managed Expenditure (AME)	-	500	500
Total Budget	48,973	(2,246)	46,727
Accruing Resources	(210)	-	(210)
Net cash Requirement	43,405	-	43,405

The main changes to 2010-11 budgets are that the cost of capital charge is no longer required and is removed entirely from budgets; and the non-cash budgets move from Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL) to Annually Managed Expenditure (AME).

The changes are reflected above with the £2.246 million relating to the removal of cost of capital from budgets and the £0.500 million treatment of pension provision as AME rather than part of the Resource Budget or (DEL).

To further aid comparisons between 2010-11 and 2011-12, the following table provides details of how the 2010-11 budget would be presented under separate ambits for the Assembly Members and Assembly Services.

Description	Approved Budget 2010-11 (£000)	Changes 13 July 2010 (£000)	Supplementary Budget 2010-11 (£000)
Assembly Services Net Resource Budget (DEL)	35,093	(2,246)	32,847
Assembly Members' Budget	13,880	(500)	13,380
Annually Managed Expenditure (AME)	-	500	500
Total Budget	48,973	(2,246)	46,727
Accruing Resources	(210)	-	(210)
Net cash Requirement	43,405	-	43,405

Annexe B - Draft Budget by Service/function and the Assembly Commission's Strategic Aims

Assembly Commission: Alignment of 2011-12 Draft Budget by Service and Strategic Goal					£000	
<u>Service/function</u>	To promote and widen engagement in devolution	To show unity, leadership and a bold response to constitutional change	To demonstrate respect, probity and good governance in all our work	To work sustainably	To ensure the Assembly has the best service, provided in the most effective way	Budget
Corporate Unit & Change Board	362	199	920	341	1,378	3,200
Legal Services	100	200	100	67	200	667
Assembly Business Directorate	1,181	1,409	665	465	2,540	6,260
Assembly Operations Directorate	3,109	1,257	4,583	3,091	5,814	17,854
Depreciation	650	651	651	651	651	3,254
Contingency	100	100	100	100	100	500
Restructuring Fund					593	593
Total Commission Services	5,502	3,816	7,019	4,715	11,276	32,328
Members' salaries & allowances, Office Holders' salaries, Members' staff salaries						16,362
Total Commission Budget						48,690
Annually Managed Expenditure (Members' Pension Scheme Provision)						500

Annexe C - Reconciles the net resource requirement to the cash drawing requirement from the Welsh Consolidated Fund

	£000		
	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Members Net Revenue Requirement	16,362	12,902	12,902
Commission Net Revenue Requirement ¹	31,212	29,767	28,411
Net Capital Requirement	1,116	750	750
<i>Adjustments:</i>			
Depreciation	(3,254)	(3,300)	(3,300)
Impairments	-	-	-
Movements in provisions ²	-	-	-
Profit/loss on sale of assets	-	-	-
Movements in stocks	-	-	-
Movement in debtors and creditors	1,150	-	-
Use of provisions	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-
Net cash requirement for issue from the Welsh Consolidated Fund	46,586	40,119	38,763

¹ Assumes Accruing Income of £0.260 million year on year

² Provision for Members Pension Scheme (£0.5million) is now a separate ambit

Annexe D - Assembly Services Budget – further detail

Breakdown of ‘Other Administrative costs’ and ‘Accommodation and Facilities costs’

Other administrative costs £000	2011-12 Budget	2010-11 Budget
Postage & Carriage	60	65
External Audit	70	42
Internal Audit	25	15
Stationery	23	41
Uniforms & Clothing	19	21
Hospitality	43	58
Insurance	85	80
Accountancy & Finance Services	3	-
Legal Costs	12	26
Bilingual Services	143	288
Payroll Management	58	48
Publications	103	117
Miscellaneous Expenditure	8	20
Information Services - Electronic	142	142
Venue Hire	5	17
Expert Advisors	25	55
Interparliamentary Expenses	50	59
Banking Charges	2	3
AM stationery	86	126
Presiding Office Vehicle	22	22
Consultancy	45	94
Ordinance Survey Licences	6	12

Brussels Expenses	13	13
Corporate Subscriptions	4	4
Corporate Initiatives	1	18
Independent Advisors	25	25
External Reporting	30	35
Equalities & Access	5	10
Pensions Administration	12	-
Security Equipment	10	-
Printing Measures	10	-
Sustainability Improvements	5	-
Vetting	20	
Remuneration Board	25	
Constitutional Officers' Pay	26	
	1,221	1,456

Accommodation Costs £000	2011-12 Budget	2010-11 Budget
Office Rentals	2,291	2,150
Rates	1,271	1,245
Maintenance	870	950
Furniture & Fittings	50	102
Fuel	15	15
Gas	81	80
Electricity	408	400
Water	22	22
Cleaning, laundry, waste disposal	290	305
Building Security	410	615
Consumables	39	40
Catering	337	390
Photocopier Rental	150	160
Window Cleaning	41	55
Removals	-	2
Car Parking	140	75
Creche	-	103
Works & Projects	350	450
Refuse	20	12
Van	2	10
	6,787	7,181