

**National Assembly for Wales**  
Assembly Commission

## **Our Plan to deliver the Commission's Strategy for the Fourth Assembly**

February 2013



Cynulliad  
Cenedlaethol  
Cymru

National  
Assembly for  
Wales

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# Introduction

## Strategic goals

The Assembly Commission's strategic goals provide the focus for our work during the Fourth Assembly. They are that we will:

- Provide outstanding parliamentary support
- Engage with the people of Wales and Promote Wales
- Use resources wisely

Full details of the goals are in Annex One, including an indication of what success will be for each of the goals.

In support of the Commission's strategic goals, we have five priority areas for change, innovation and investment for this Assembly – these are set out in this paper. A summary sheet of the Commission's Strategy and priorities is at Annex Two.

To achieve the strategic goals, we also need to continue to deliver the full range of day-to-day business to high standards. Service Plans and PMDRs need to describe the activities, actions and projects required to deliver both the regular business activities and work on the five priority areas.

## Resources

The new constitutional position of the Assembly from 2011 reinforced the need for outstanding parliamentary support. The Commission's strategy of investment for the future, despite the difficult financial and economic backdrop, means we are able to deliver for the Assembly without compromising on the quality of the services we deliver. Following the approval of the Commission's budget for 2013-14, which continues the 3-year budget strategy for 2012-15, our budget will keep us in a position to resource services properly and to invest in necessary development work. The Commission believes that the agreed budget is an appropriate price to pay to provide support for law-making, scrutiny of Government and democratic representation. We must now demonstrate that the resources are used wisely to deliver the services Members require.

An important part of using our resources wisely, is ensuring that we all pull together to achieve our strategy. Pulling together effectively will mean collaborative working, decisive leadership, excellent communications with one another, effective prioritisation of effort, and a clear customer focus. Our budget is sufficient for us to deliver our plans, but nevertheless we will need to make clear choices about what we can and cannot do within the resources available to us. That means that some things may have to give way in order for the priority areas set out in this strategy to be delivered.

## Longer term

Longer term planning will need to take account of external factors such as the outcomes from the Commission on Devolution in Wales (Silk Commission), the independence referendum in Scotland in 2014, the Westminster General Election in 2015, the economic climate, and decisions of the Remuneration Board.

## Priority areas for change, innovation and investment

In support of the Commission's strategic goals, we have five priority areas for change, innovation and investment:

- Future ICT Strategy, 2014 and beyond
- Excellence and integration of services to support Assembly Business
- Enhanced bilingual services
- Increased engagement of people in Wales with the work of the Assembly, including young people
- Making the most of our Estate, particularly the Senedd, as the prime venue for Welsh public life

This section includes a description of each of these priority areas, including why they have been identified as priorities.

## Future ICT Strategy, 2014 and beyond

### **Why is this important?**

The Commission wants to provide more flexible services based on user need, deliver greater innovation and achieve improvements in user satisfaction of ICT. We have decided to exit from the current arrangement in which ICT services are provided by Atos via the Welsh Government's Merlin Contract. The Commission will transition, by the end of July 2014 at the latest, to new arrangements over which the Commission will have full control.

### **What are we aiming to deliver?**

- a smooth and seamless transition from the Merlin contract arrangements to our ICT services beyond 2014;
- users have access to the information and ICT services they need, regardless of location and that information is presented in the required format;
- all users have a choice of end-user device;
- ICT services support collaborative working and sharing, safely and securely;
- information assets are managed effectively; information is structured, supports the business services it is needed for, improves efficiency and delivers value;
- the model for ICT services is built around delivering value to the organisation for the money it spends, is responsive, flexible, innovative and focuses on satisfying end-user needs;
- remain at the forefront of technological innovations in our services to the public, including the channels we use for engagement and to communicate the work of the Assembly; and
- we deliver excellent ICT services in support of the Commission's strategic priorities.



## **Excellence and integration of services to support Assembly Business**

### **Why is this important?**

The formal business conducted in plenary and committees is the very heart of what the Assembly does as a legislature. It is there that the government is held to account and its proposals for legislation, its policy thinking, delivery and decisions, are improved by the scrutiny of the Assembly. The Commission sees the continued excellence and integration of all of the specialisms of Commission staff as key to the successful delivery of their goal to provide outstanding parliamentary support.

### **What are we aiming to deliver?**

- positive change, reflected in Member feedback, as a result of the Commission-led review of support for committees;
- formal business supported at every point by high quality advice and information;
- services that are focused on the needs of Members, excellence and efficiency through accurately identifying the services that Members want from us and flexing our use of resources to deliver them;
- Presiding Officers, committee chairs, Commissioners and business managers receive exceptional support to fulfil their roles as office holders.
- an integrated team approach to all aspects of support for Assembly business, with a Directorate structure that facilitates this, so that every area of relevant expertise is brought to bear from the outset;
- elimination of inefficiency in, or barriers to, the delivery of our services to Members;
- investment in technological development as a way of transforming our bilingual service provision whilst also providing value for money;
- delivery of services to Members and the public that enable them to engage with the Assembly in both our Official Languages;
- technology and systems to support our key functions that are fit for purpose and exploited to their full potential to meet the needs of Members and the wider public; and
- engagement with Assembly Business is simple and straightforward, and people gain a greater understanding of the Assembly.

## Enhanced bilingual services

### Why is this important?

Our ambition is to be a truly bilingual institution, that is one in which Assembly Members and the public can choose to work or communicate in either or both of our Official Languages, and where the use of both languages is a source of pride to all. The Official Languages Act 2012 places duties on the Assembly Commission to ensure that every engagement with Assembly proceedings can happen in either of the official languages - Welsh or English. The Official Languages Scheme sets out how the Assembly Commission will deliver bilingual services to Assembly Members and members of the public – and the work we will do to ensure we continue to raise the bar for other institutions to follow, in the UK and internationally.

### What are we aiming to deliver?

- our Official Languages Scheme provides the basis for us continually to enhance our delivery of bilingual services;
- all citizens and Assembly Members are able to be informed about, and contribute fully to, the democratic process in their official language of choice - Welsh or English;
- Commission staff, whatever their own language skills, are fully committed to the delivery of bilingual services, and respect the rights of people to use either or both of our Official Languages; and
- the services, strategies and aspirations of the Commission always reflect the equal status of our Official languages.

## Increased engagement of people in Wales with the work of the Assembly, including young people

### Why is this important?

For politics to work there needs to be an engaged electorate. Commissioners have stressed to us the importance of reaching out beyond the walls of the Assembly to all people right across Wales. They are particularly keen that we engage with different sectors of our communities, not just those who already tend to get involved. In terms of young people, our education service is already the envy of other parliaments. Building on this tremendous foundation, which currently engages with up to 30,000 children and young people each year, we will seek to develop our range of activities aimed at raising young people's awareness of the Assembly's work and the opportunities to contribute to the future shape of Wales and Welsh democracy.

### What are we aiming to deliver?

- greater publicity for the work of Members and showcasing of plenary and committee business;
- Assembly business informed by a wide perspective of views;
- information about formal Assembly business increasingly accessible to those outside;
- practice and performance in the Assembly seen as a model from which others in the parliamentary community in the UK and overseas can benefit;

- children and young people understand and take an active role in the work of the Assembly;
- an extension of the exemplar work currently being delivered by the Education and Outreach Service, including the possibility of establishing a youth parliament to provide a clear link between young people and the democratic arm of the Welsh constitution; and
- participation by young people across Wales and widespread positive feedback from young people, Members and the public.

## **Make the most of our estate, particularly the Senedd, as the prime venue for Welsh public life**

### **Why is this important?**

The Assembly's estate and its iconic buildings form a valuable and significant asset which we can use to promote the Assembly and its work. As the home of Welsh democracy our estate provides an opportunity for the Assembly to attract and engage with the public and to inform them of its work. Our stewardship of our estate also provides us with significant opportunity to demonstrate outstanding service for those visiting and using our estate, and the highest standards of best practice in terms of sustainability.

### **What are we aiming to deliver?**

- enhanced facilities in Tŷ Hywel and the Senedd, ensuring there is sufficient high quality space for meetings and events;
- improvements to the reception areas of our buildings so that first impressions are fitting for the National Assembly for Wales, achieved within budget constraints;
- consistently high numbers of visitors who give positive feedback;
- bring the work of the Assembly alive for visitors so that they leave understanding more about Assembly Business;
- the estate used regularly to showcase major events that promote Wales and raise awareness of the Assembly;
- improvements in the level of usage of space across the estate;
- effective use of ICT and communications tools across the estate;
- identification of options and feasibility of income generation opportunities; and
- a further push towards our target of carbon neutrality by 2015.

## How we will perform and deliver success

High quality performance is already evident right across the organisation. Our priority areas for change, innovation and investment are designed to keep it that way and to ensure that we are meeting expectations of Members, staff and the public.

The way in which we do our jobs is also very important. Through our work, all of us will be expected to:

- act with full regard for our equalities responsibilities, respecting everyone and treating all people fairly;
- deliver all aspects of the Commission’s responsibilities with pace, professional expertise and a strong service ethos;
- set high standards and keep our promises;
- be open and transparent, expose ourselves to the most intense scrutiny, and provide measurable evidence of our achievements; and
- demonstrate our absolute commitment to Welsh parliamentary democracy and our pride in the Assembly.

Service Plans are developed annually which are directly linked to the achievement of the strategic goals of the Assembly. They include consideration of the risks to achieving objectives as well as opportunities to improve service delivery through collaborative working with other service areas. They provide the basis for developing individuals’ Performance Management and Development Reviews (PMDRs) so that everyone is clear about how their objectives fit into the aims and objectives of the organisation.

## Cost and Performance Reporting

During their scrutiny of our budget, the Finance Committee recommended that the Commission should publish performance indicators so that they can be assured that our budget is used wisely and effectively. Before the start of the 2013-14 financial year, we will obtain the Commission’s agreement to a cost and performance reporting framework and use this to publish our results on a monthly basis from April 2013. The Management Board and Investment Board will monitor our performance against our budget plans, including the investment programme.

## **Risk Management**

Our approach to risk management is laid out in the Risk Management Policy and Risk Management process documents. The management of risks is an iterative process, so there is regular change to the risks and the status of the risks (i.e. what we are currently doing to manage the risks and the adequacy of the controls or contingencies in place).

Full details, including controls, can be found in the Corporate Risk Register on the intranet. The intranet is also an important source of information on a range of planning, budget and governance matters.

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# Annex One: Assembly Commission Strategy 2011-16

## Statement of Purpose

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.

The Assembly Commission serves the National Assembly to help make it a strong, accessible and forward looking democratic institution and legislature that delivers effectively for the people of Wales.

## Strategic Goals

### – Provide outstanding parliamentary support

The Assembly is in a new constitutional position and we will provide fitting support to enable Assembly Members to meet the new challenges as they represent the interests of Wales and its people, make laws for Wales and hold the Welsh Government to account.

### – Success will be:

- an ever growing reputation for good scrutiny and an open and robust legislative process;
- a firmly established service ethos, that leads to ever stronger relationships with Assembly Members and their staff;
- a consistently high level of service to the public in all aspects of our work.

### – Engage with the people of Wales and Promote Wales

We will create an environment that encourages interest in the work of the Assembly and facilitates engagement in the Assembly's roles of legislating, scrutiny and representation. We will engage actively and widely, and ensure that the Assembly benefits from the creative energy generated by such engagement. Acting as an ambassador for Wales in the wider world, we will make the most of opportunities in the UK and abroad to promote Wales and the work of the Assembly and play our part in the development of parliamentary democracy elsewhere in the world.

### – Success will be:

- information readily available to people in Wales that demonstrates the extent and value of the tasks of Assembly/Assembly Members, raising awareness and understanding of the Assembly's work so that the Assembly matures in the public eye;
- improved public knowledge and perceptions of the Assembly and the achievements of devolution;
- achieving greater participation in democracy through a range of channels;

- productive work with a wider range of stakeholders e.g. through enabling engagement with committees;
  - a positive image of Wales and Welsh democracy presented on the international stage through participation in relevant international bodies and partnerships with key internationally focused organisations;
  - knowledge and understanding of international good practice both gained and imparted; and
  - specific themes pursued, demonstrating the strength of Welsh democracy including: citizen participation; e-democracy, effective scrutiny of Government and sustainable and transparent democracy.
- **Use resources wisely**
- We will make the necessary investments to ensure that the Assembly is fully equipped to operate effectively as a parliament with new law-making powers. At the same time, we will reinforce the confidence of Assembly Members and the people of Wales in the way we deliver services and manage costs by making good use of tax-payers' money. We will manage our resources to deliver a vital public service with improved efficiency and value for money.
- **Success will be:**
- delivery of benefits through projects, including improved ways of working in the Assembly;
  - unqualified Audit Reports on the Commission's Annual Accounts and positive reports to the Assembly Commission from the Assembly Commission Audit Committee;
  - assurances on our use of resources and value for money savings, provided through the Internal Audit Programme;
  - clear evidence of value for money in the services we provide.

## **Annex Two: Assembly Commission's Strategy and Priorities for the Fourth Assembly**

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.

The Assembly Commission serves the National Assembly to help make it a strong, accessible and forward looking democratic institution and legislature that delivers effectively for the people of Wales.

### **The Commission's Strategic Goals 2011 - 2016**

- Provide outstanding parliamentary support
- Engage with the people of Wales and Promote Wales
- Use resources wisely

### **Priority areas for change, innovation and investment**

- Future ICT Strategy, 2014 and beyond
- Excellence and integration of services to support Assembly Business
- Enhanced bilingual services
- Increased engagement of people in Wales with the work of the Assembly, including young people
- Make the most of our Estate, particularly the Senedd, as the prime venue for Welsh public life



