

Annual Report and Accounts: 2020-2021

June 2021



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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June 2021

Contents

Overview **6**

Foreword.....	8
Introduction.....	10
Statement of Purpose	12
Commissioners.....	14
Independent Advisers	16
Commission Senior Leadership.....	20
Commission Management	22
Governance Structure.....	23
Planning for a Return to the Estate (RTE)	24
Summary of Activity	26

Performance Analysis **32**

Corporate Key Performance Indicator Report	35
Risk Profile.....	44
Financial Review.....	47
Provide Outstanding Parliamentary Support	53
Engage with All the People of Wales and Champion the Senedd	73
Use Resources Wisely.....	83
Sustainability	101

Accountability **110**

Corporate Governance	112
Remuneration and Staff.....	135
Accountability and Audit	151

Financial Statements

162

Notes to the Accounts.....	168
Annex - regularity reporting.....	196



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



Elin Jones MS

Llywydd, Welsh Parliament

It gives me great pleasure to introduce my fifth Annual Report as Llywydd; the final report of the 5th Senedd.

The past year has continued to challenge our ways of working as the Covid pandemic has endured, impacting every aspect of our lives. The way the Senedd held Ministers to account has evolved over the past 12 months. From virtual to hybrid Plenary and Committee meetings, we have developed greater flexibility to react to changing restrictions and continue to engage with all parts of society.

As we look to the future, our challenge is to embed the positive aspects of changing our way of working. Members who wish to contribute virtually will be able to do so, and those who wish to contribute to our Committee inquiries from all corners of Wales will find it easier. As a result, our ability to reach every part of Wales, and all our communities will be greatly enhanced.

The final report of the 5th Senedd also gives me an opportunity to reflect on the many significant moments we've experienced since the election of May 5th 2016. Brexit has led to far-reaching changes which have required thorough scrutiny by Members and Commission staff. At the same time, the Assembly became a Parliament which has allowed 16 and 17 year olds to vote.

Our emphasis on empowering the next generation also led to the creation of the Youth Parliament, whose Members have done such excellent work in representing the interests of their peers.

As this remarkable five year term draws to a close, our thoughts remain with those whose lives have been forever changed by Covid. The pandemic has shone a spotlight on our work like never before and the public have a greater understanding than ever of what we do.

As always, I would like to thank Commission staff for continuing to so effectively support the delivery of Senedd business and for their enthusiasm and energy in providing outstanding parliamentary support in such challenging circumstances.

Introduction



Manon Antoniazzi

Chief Executive and Clerk of the Senedd

In writing my introduction for last year's Annual Report, I noted that it was difficult to look too far beyond the Covid-19 pandemic.

I am sure that very few of us expected the worst public health crisis in decades to still be dominating our lives twelve months on, and that temporary arrangements would become the basis of wide-ranging discussions on our future work.

The pandemic has brought with it unprecedented challenges for the Senedd as an institution, and I could not be prouder of the manner in which we have responded with resilience and resolve in order to continue to provide outstanding parliamentary support for Members.

Thanks to the extraordinary efforts of teams across the organisation, Senedd Business has continued uninterrupted, moving with ease between hybrid and fully virtual proceedings. Committees have pressed ahead with their work in a similar vein, with the Petitions Committee in particular providing a digital platform through which people could continue to engage with their democracy, reaching the one million signatures mark in March.

We successfully navigated the latter stages of legislation with full virtual voting for the first time, and officials in the Business Directorate must be commended for going the extra mile to ensure that the emergency Welsh Elections (Coronavirus) Bill which provided for moving the date of the election should public health guidelines require received Royal Assent in a timely manner.

As the public health situation continues to improve, detailed work has been undertaken to enable us to return to a safe and Covid-secure Estate, whilst the Accommodation Pilot led by the Resources Directorate gives us a valuable blueprint for ensuring that our flexible working arrangements are underpinned by equality and inclusivity whilst not compromising our duty to provide outstanding parliamentary support.

We continue to build on our reputation as a sustainable Parliament, and the recently finalised Carbon Neutral Strategy for 2021-2030 sets out the next steps we will take to become an even greener organisation. Throughout the pandemic we have acted to ensure maximum energy efficiency across the Estate whilst it has been largely unoccupied.

The Communications and Engagement Directorate has adapted and innovated by hosting virtual events over the last twelve months, reaching new audiences and reflecting our commitment to diversity and inclusion. The Welsh Youth Parliament's hugely successful first term drew to a close with plans already underway for the election to decide the new cohort of young parliamentarians.

With a new Senedd on the way and possibly a new Government and Commission too, I know we will summon all our energies as one team to continue serving our Welsh Parliament to the best of our abilities so that, in turn, it can serve the people of Wales as effectively as possible.

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.

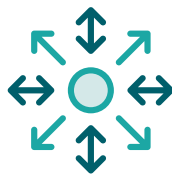
The Senedd Commission

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 Fifth Senedd



To provide outstanding parliamentary support



To engage with all the people of Wales and champion the Assembly



To use resources wisely

OUR VALUES



RESPECT

We are inclusive, kind, and value each other's contributions in delivering excellent services



PASSION

We are purposeful in our support of democracy and pull together to make a difference for the people of Wales

Priorities for the Senedd Commission for the Fifth Senedd

- Members are able to excel in their parliamentary roles, supported by responsive and innovative services.
- The Senedd has the necessary resources and expertise to represent Wales's interests, as the UK withdraws from the EU.
- Support the Senedd to deliver constitutional reform to create a parliament that works for Wales.
- An ambitious and engaging Youth Parliament that enhances the Senedd and inspires young people to participate in the democratic process.
- There is greater understanding of the role of the Senedd and how to get involved, evidenced by higher levels of engagement.
- The Senedd's work and reputation are enhanced by developing and improving our connections with parliaments across the world.
- Commission staff are one team and everyone understands their contribution to achieving the Commission's goals.
- All Members, staff and visitors can work in a safe environment where dignity and diversity is respected.
- Financial, project and other controls enable the Commission to deliver, and we evidence value for money in everything we do.



PRIDE

We embrace innovation and
celebrate our achievements
together as a team

WE ARE
ONE TEAM

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.



Elin Jones MS (Plaid Cymru)

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

Elin Jones attended 9 out of 9 Commission meetings.



Suzy Davies MS (Welsh Conservatives)

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

Suzy Davies attended 8 out of 9 Commission meetings.



Joyce Watson MS (Welsh Labour)

Commissioner with responsibility for equalities, and the Commission as the employer of Senedd staff.

Joyce Watson attended 9 out of 9 Commission meetings.

The Commission is chaired by the Llywydd and is made up of four Members of the Senedd who have been appointed by the Senedd. Each member of the Commission holds a specific portfolio of responsibilities.

The Commission has continued to meet virtually for the duration of the pandemic period. The Commissioners oversaw the activities described in this report.



David Rowlands MS (Brexit Party)

Commissioner with responsibility for security and Senedd resources.

David Rowlands attended 9 out of 9 Commission meetings.



Rhun ap Iorwerth MS (Plaid Cymru)

Commissioner with responsibility for official languages, and delivery and transformation of services to Members.

Rhun ap Iorwerth attended 9 out of 9 Commission meetings.

Following the Senedd Election in May 2021 Commissioners for the Sixth Senedd will be elected in June / July.

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.



Ann Beynon (November 2018 - Present)

Ann took up her appointment as an Independent Adviser in November 2018 and she is a member of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) and the Remuneration, Engagement and Workforce Advisory Committee (REWAC).

Ann Beynon attended 5 out of 5 ARAC meetings and 4 out of 4 REWAC meetings.



Robert (Bob) Evans (November 2018 - Present)

Bob took up his appointment as an Independent Adviser and a member of ARAC in November 2018. In February 2019, he was appointed Chair of ARAC.

Bob Evans attended 5 out of 5 ARAC meetings.



Ceri Hughes (November 2018 - Present)

Ceri took up her appointment as an Independent Adviser in November 2018 and serves as a member of REWAC.

Ceri Hughes attended 4 out of 4 REWAC meetings.



Sarah Pinch (November 2018 - Present)

Sarah took up her appointment as an Independent Adviser in November 2018 and has been appointed as Chair of REWAC.

Sarah Pinch attended 4 out of 4 REWAC 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.

Aled Eirug attended 5 out of 5 ARAC meetings.

The Independent Advisers' primary role is to act as members of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) or the Remuneration, Engagement and Workforce Advisory Committee (REWAC) and help to ensure that Commissioners and the Commission's senior management team are supported and constructively challenged in their roles. They are individuals with a wealth of boardroom, government, public and private sector experience, at the highest levels, to help the Commission meet its own high standards of good governance and efficient use of public money.

The Independent Advisers are involved in a number of the activities and service areas of the Commission, acting as critical friends on projects and sometimes participating in the meetings of the Commission.

The variation in the number of meetings is due to their respective terms of office. The Independent Advisers have continued to meet virtually for the duration of the pandemic period.

Remuneration

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



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 below.



Siwan Davies
Director of Business

Provision of specialist parliamentary, legal, 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.



David Tosh
Director of Resources

Provision of ICT, Estates and Facilities, Human Resources functions, Programme and Change Office, Security, Procurement and Corporate Governance and Assurance. The Director of Finance/Head of Financial Services, Nia Morgan, responsible for corporate financial strategy, planning, budget management, payments and pensions reports to David Tosh.



Arwyn Jones
Director of Communications and Engagement

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, as well as managing translation and reporting and official languages scheme. Ensures efficient and effective delivery of our corporate communications, visitor engagement and public information services.

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.

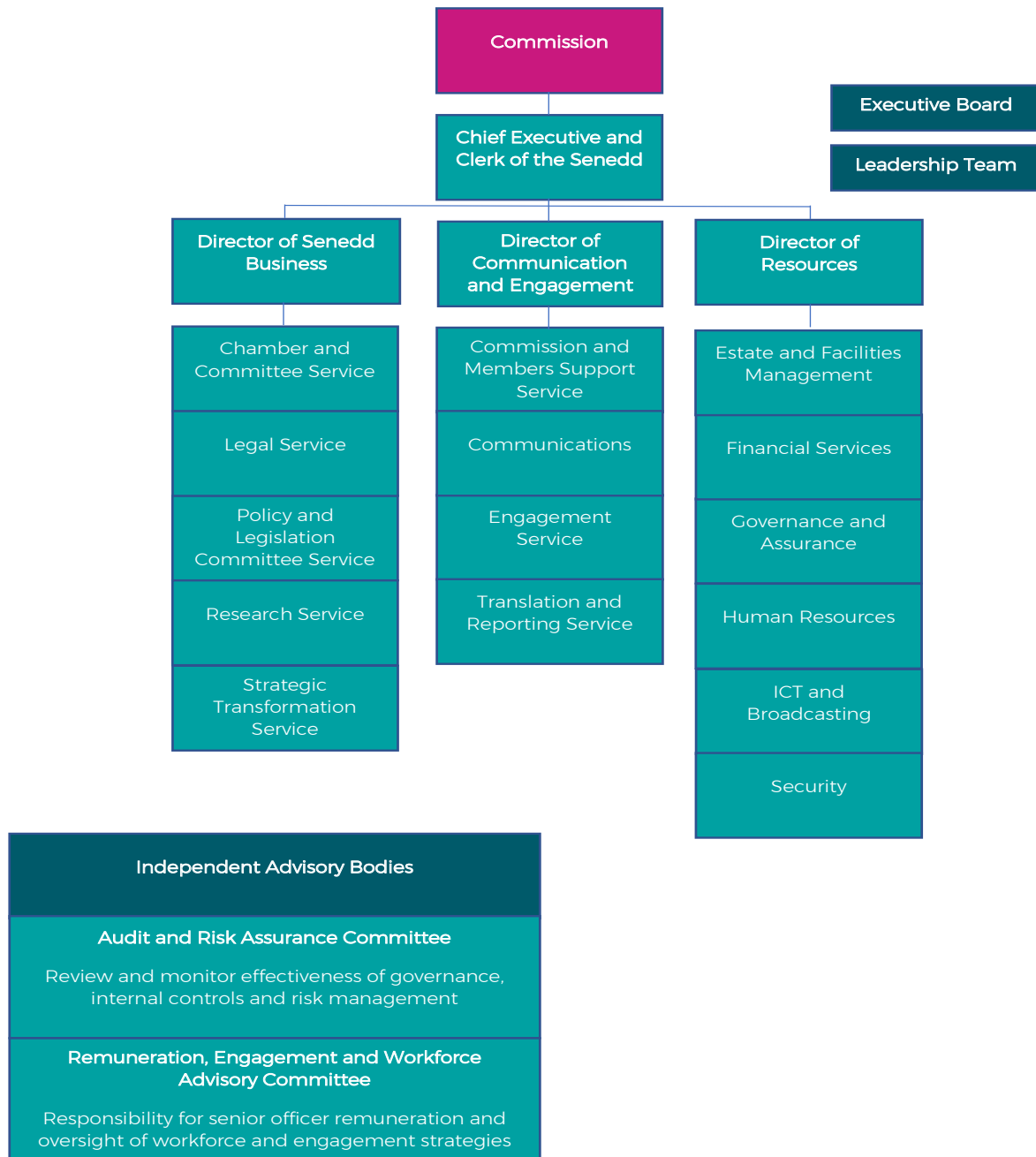
A significant element of the Executive Board's responsibility is to provide strategic oversight and leadership of the Commission's change programme. The Executive Board is chaired by the Chief Executive and includes the Directors, Director of Finance/Head of Financial Services, Head of Human Resources and Inclusion, 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 15 Heads of Service. The Leadership Team's primary responsibility is to ensure the effective delivery of operational plans and priorities.

During the pandemic, Executive Board thrice-weekly and Leadership Team bi-weekly sessions have been introduced, in addition to the continuation of formal meetings, to ensure that decision making and governance arrangements are timely and dynamic.

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

Governance Structure



Planning for a Return to the Estate (RTE)

The Commission, like every other organisation in the UK and worldwide, has been affected by Covid-19.

In the immediate days following lockdown in March 2020 it was clear that the Commission would not be able to just ‘go back’ to the way things were, and so a carefully planned and co-ordinated return to the estate was needed. Executive Board quickly appointed an RTE Programme Manager, Advisor and Senior Responsible Officer, from within the existing workforce. Working with leaders from each part of the organisation, a new delivery team was established, from within the existing workforce, comprising of six workstreams covering:

- Senedd Business and the technology needed to support essential parliamentary business.
- Senedd Estate - ensuring safe and managed access and use of the estate in line with Covid regulations.
- Senedd People - supporting health and wellbeing, policies, and training for Commission staff.
- Communications and Engagement - ensuring the needs of Members and Commission staff were understood, and communications regarding the plans for returning to the estate were made on a regular basis.
- Governance and Assurance - ensuring good governance in programme coordination, decisions, and regular reflections.
- Senedd Futures – learning from our experiences and understanding of opportunities to plan for longer term changes (further information on the Senedd Futures work can be found on page 92).

Initial tasks included setting and agreeing with the Commission, the principles that would underpin plans. These were:

- Safety is paramount and risk levels will be reduced to as low as reasonably practical.

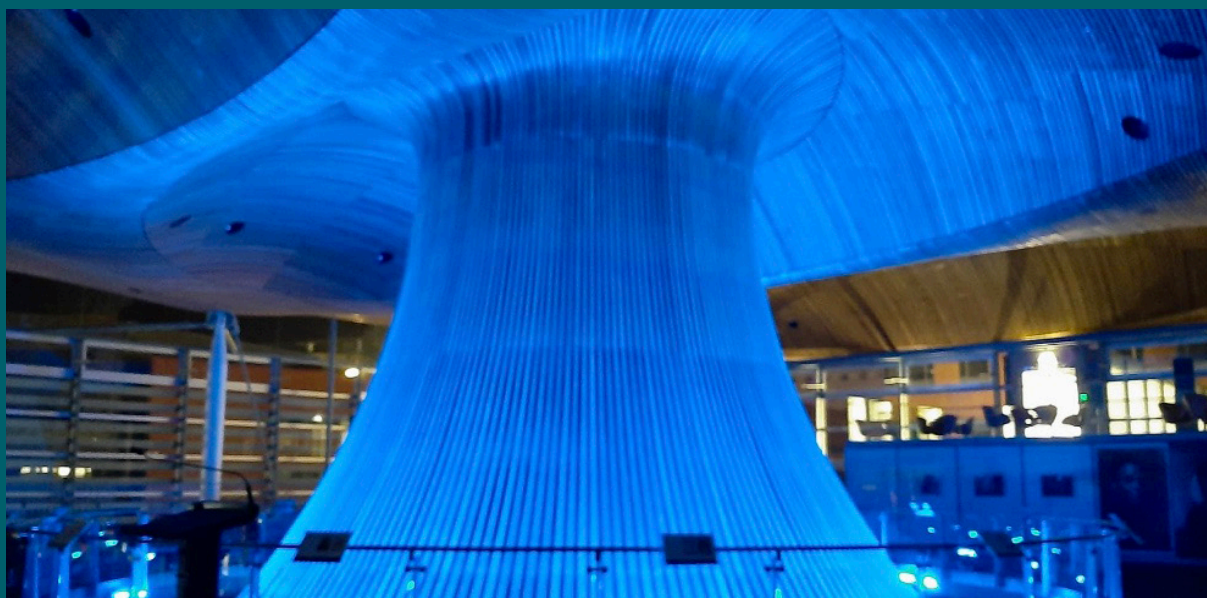
- Open parts of the estate, only where it is necessary and safe, and only for as long as needed.
- Keep numbers on the estate to a reasonable minimum.
- Support the health and wellbeing of Commission staff.
- Prepare and induct Commission staff, Members and Member Support Staff for their return to the estate.
- Engage and communicate with Members, Member Support Staff and Commission staff throughout.

The RTE programme needed to be flexible and responsive to sustain and shape evolving Senedd virtual business. The only way to do this was to start planning based on a number of assumptions, including:

1. The programme would need to prepare scenarios for a phased return to the Senedd estate, including the possibility of holding hybrid plenary sessions.
2. We expected an increased and more varied business, particularly from Government legislation and EU transition in the autumn 2020.

These assumptions were used to model scenarios, prioritise activities, test thinking and enable us to ‘forward plan’ the decisions that would need to be made to underpin changes.

Further information on the work done as part of the Return to the Estate programme can be found in the Performance Analysis section.



Summary of Activity

Commission Strategic Goal	Commission Priorities	Identified Corporate Risks	Areas identified for focus and development during 2020-21	Progress made during 2020-21	Looking forward to 2021-22
To provide outstanding parliamentary support	Members are able to excel in their parliamentary roles, supported by responsive and innovative services. 1 2 3 4 5		Planning effectively for the start of the Sixth Senedd Accelerating the review of support to Committees	To coordinate planning for transition to the Sixth Senedd, among other things, a working group, a Scenarios Group and Election Planning Board have been established which discuss a wide range of issues in relation to the transition to the Sixth Senedd, including closely monitoring the associated risks. The review of support to Committees has been incorporated into planning for the Sixth Senedd. We will take on board learning from the pandemic and the views and decisions made by the new Commission, Business Committee and Committee Chairs. A review of structures within the Business Directorate will be undertaken alongside a wider capacity review.	Evaluating lessons learned from the transition to the Sixth Senedd, including effectiveness of Members induction and training, advice and guidance
	The Senedd has the necessary resources and expertise to represent Wales's interests, as the UK withdraws from the EU.	UK constitutional change		Efficient forward planning by Service Areas ensured the Commission supported the Senedd to influence, scrutinise and engage with the evolving constitutional landscape of the UK leading up to the end of the EU transition period.	
	Support the Senedd to deliver constitutional reform to create a parliament that works for Wales.	Constitutional reform		Some key provisions of the Senedd and Elections (Wales) Act 2020 came into force, which included voter registration opening for the introduction of Votes at 16 in Senedd elections and the renaming of the Senedd to better reflect its changed powers and responsibilities.	

Commission Strategic Goal	Commission Priorities	Identified Corporate Risks	Areas identified for focus and development during 2020-21	Progress made during 2020-21	Looking forward to 2021-22
To engage with all the people of Wales and champion the Senedd	An ambitious and engaging Youth Parliament that enhances the Senedd and inspires young people to participate in the democratic process.	Safeguarding		The first two-year term of the Welsh Youth Parliament (WYP) drew to a close, with a joint session with Members of the Senedd.	
	There is greater understanding of the role of the Senedd and how to get involved, evidenced by higher levels of engagement. 7 8 9 10		Refocusing of services around public engagement with clear outcomes	During the pandemic, the Commission strategy to improve how the Senedd communicates and engages with the people of Wales has been adapted to focus on digital content, social media and engagement. In addition, a new Senedd website, petitions website and recruitment system have been launched making it easier for people to engage with us.	
	The Senedd's work and reputation are enhanced by developing and improving our connections with parliaments across the world. 6			During the pandemic we have regularly engaged with the other UK Parliaments, and various parliaments overseas, to determine what we could learn from each other.	

Commission Strategic Goal	Commission Priorities	Identified Corporate Risks	Areas identified for focus and development during 2020-21	Progress made during 2020-21	Looking forward to 2021-22
To use resources wisely	Commission staff are one team and everyone understands their contribution to achieving the Commission's goals. 12		Refreshing governance awareness across the organisation	Governance meetings with each Head of Service have continued. The Head of Governance and Assurance has attended Executive Board meetings during the pandemic and led on an Assurance Workstream as part of the wider Return to the Estate programme.	Ensuring effective governance around changes to ways of working
	All Members, staff and visitors can work in a safe environment where dignity and diversity is respected. 13 14 15	Impact of Covid-19 - Breach of OLS during virtual meetings - Senedd Election 2021 Transition - Corporate Capacity Dignity and respect	Evaluating lessons learned and the long term impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic	Many innovative changes have been introduced in order to support the Senedd during the pandemic, including remote working, virtual and hybrid Plenary and Committee meetings, and online events and engagement. A 'Futures' workstream was initiated to capture the learning and opportunities for the future. We will draw on these experiences and learning to develop new ways of working that maximise the opportunity for flexibility, efficiency and sustainability.	Evaluating lessons learned and the long term impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic
				A new Code of Conduct for the Senedd has been agreed, which includes an overarching principle of respect.	

Commission Strategic Goal	Commission Priorities	Identified Corporate Risks	Areas identified for focus and development during 2020-21	Progress made during 2020-21	Looking forward to 2021-22
To use resources wisely	Financial, project and other controls enable the Commission to deliver, and we evidence value for money in everything we do. 11 16 17	Cyber security	On-going work around cyber-security and reviewing physical security to keep pace with change	We have continued to strengthen our cyber resilience arrangements and continue to introduce improvements, carry out vigorous testing and measure ourselves against recognised best practice industry standards. In terms of physical security, the Security Service's focus has been on ensuring adherence to social distancing rules by all building users during the pandemic.	On-going work around cyber-resilience
		Compliance with Data Protection legislation	Re-energising our efforts around Data Protection / GDPR compliance	A Data Governance Working Group has been established which discusses significant data protection issues and any emerging themes. Issues are then escalated to the Senior Information Risk Officer (SIRO) as necessary. A permanent Deputy Data Protection Officer (DPO) has been appointed.	
		Support contract for Legislative Workbench software	Evaluating our approach to project and programme management, including the effectiveness of the Programme and Change Office	An internal audit carried out in April 2020 evaluated the effectiveness of programme and project governance arrangements following the creation of the Programme and Change Office (PCO) in 2019. Improvements in the consistency of business cases and project reporting have been made. Recommendations from the audit are being implemented to further strengthen governance. The PCO provides visibility of progress on delivery of projects and has been heavily involved in the Return to the Estate programme.	

Commission Strategic Goal	Commission Priorities	Identified Corporate Risks	Areas identified for focus and development during 2020-21	Progress made during 2020-21	Looking forward to 2021-22
To use resources wisely					Concluding the capacity review and starting to implement the recommendations in the context of potential budget constraints/tighter budget for 2022-23

Our KPIs – Further information on our KPIs can be found on page 35.

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| ❶ Parliamentary Business taken place as scheduled | ❷ Citizen engagement | ❸ Welsh language learners |
| ❷ RoP published to deadline | ❸ Followers of Senedd corporate media channels | ❹ Job applications from BAME individuals |
| ❸ MS/MSS satisfaction for parliamentary support | ❹ Reach of committee inquiry and report launches | ❺ Staff sickness rate |
| ❹ MS/MSS satisfaction for working in language of choice | ❺ Engagement with media distribution platforms | ❻ Carbon emissions |
| ❺ Provision of bilingual papers | ❻ Operational outturn | ❼ Spend with Welsh suppliers |
| ❻ International engagement | ❼ Staff survey | |

Further detail on how the risk profile has changed during the year, including specific risks added relating to Covid-19, is included in the Performance Analysis section on page 44. Further information on the process and mitigation for these risks and the progress made on the areas identified for focus and development during 2020-21 can be found in the Governance Statement on page 127.



Senedd Cymru
Welsh Parliament

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 2020 to March 2021.

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

The Covid-19 pandemic has required the Senedd Commission to adapt to the changing situation and some of our ways of working have adjusted as a result. This has had a knock on effect to the recording of some of our key performance indicators. This should be borne in mind when using previous years data for direct comparison.

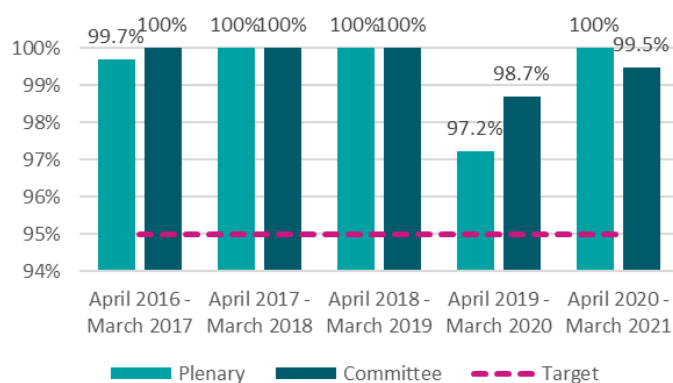
To provide outstanding parliamentary support

Progress during the year:

Due to the pandemic, the timetables for Plenary and committee meetings were reviewed, agreed or amended on a more frequent basis by the Business Committee. Therefore, some meetings which would have ordinarily been scheduled, were not. All of the 63 Plenary meetings scheduled took place within statutory requirements. This included 37 meetings being held as fully virtual and 26 of the meetings being held as hybrid meetings. This also included 3 emergency Plenary meetings. Of the 370 scheduled committee meetings 368 took place as planned, 1 extra meeting was held and 3 were cancelled due to the pandemic. All committee meetings were held virtually.

All targets with regard to the Record of Proceedings (RoP) were met 100% throughout the year.

1) Plenary and Committee meetings taken place within statutory requirements



2) RoP published to deadline April 2020 - March 2021



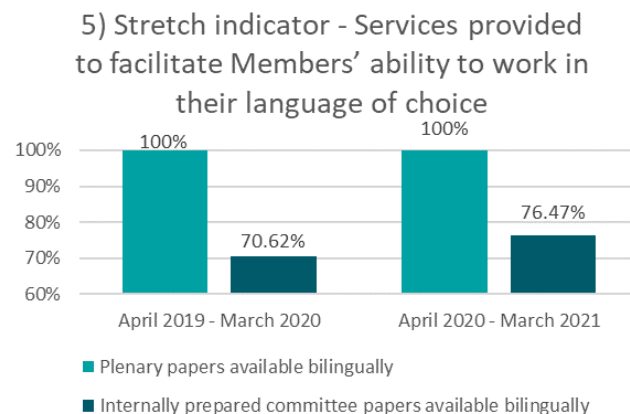
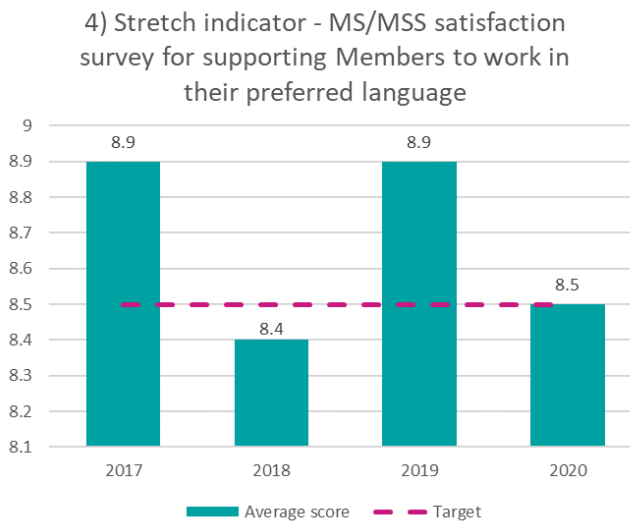
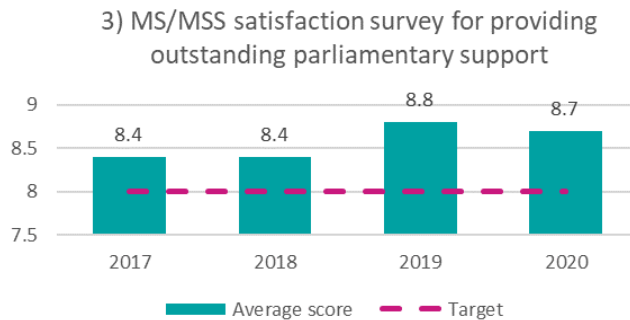
To provide outstanding parliamentary support

Progress during the year:

The Members of the Senedd (MS) and Members support staff (MSS) satisfaction survey was conducted between September and October 2020. The knock on effect the pandemic had to some services may have affected the scores given.

There was a slight decrease in the average score for providing outstanding parliamentary support compared to 2019, however, the score is still above the 8.0 target. The average score for supporting Members to work in their preferred language, although still on target, did see a decrease.

All papers produced for Plenary meetings were produced bilingually. Within individual committees, the Chair and the Members may decide to not have all internally prepared papers produced bilingually. Of the 1,768 internally prepared committee papers, 1,352 were produced bilingually in accordance with individual committee agreements.



To engage with all the people of Wales and champion the Senedd

Progress during the year:

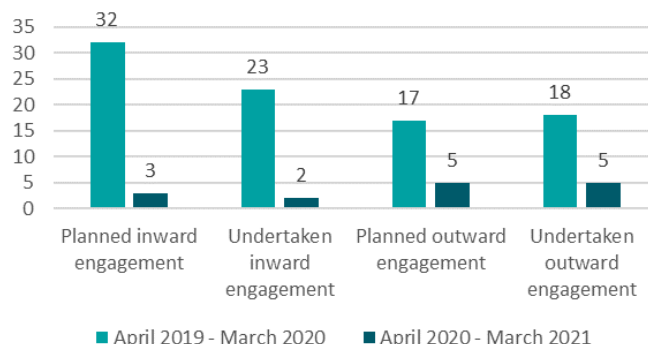
The restrictions and regulations of the pandemic have resulted in very few physical inward and outward engagements during this reporting period.

The estate closure meant no tours, events or educational visits could take place. We therefore had to adapt to new ways of engaging with the public.

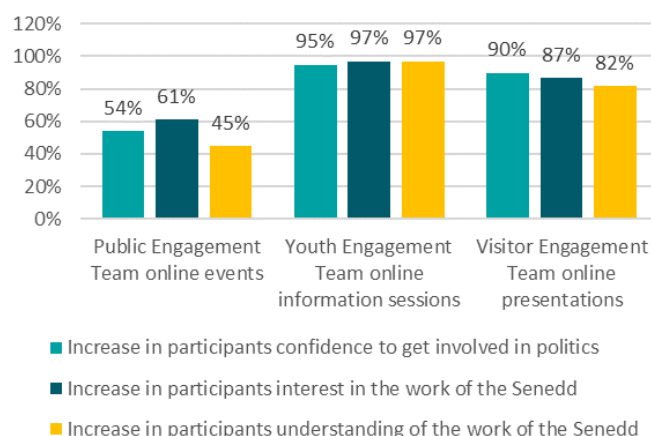
- Online events to mark key dates and campaigns – 1,566 participants.
- Online information sessions, including educational sessions with young people, workshops and presentations – 8,709 participants
- An online learning experience presented to groups online by our Tour Guides – 435 participants.

We also launched a 360 degree virtual tour of the Senedd and developed online galleries for exhibitions, which received a lot of interest on the estate social media accounts.

6) Participation in relevant international parliamentary networks



7) The extent members of the public's confidence / interest / understanding of the Senedd has increased following their engagement with certain Teams



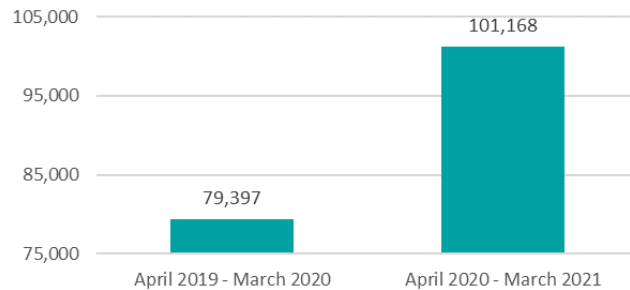
To engage with all the people of Wales and champion the Senedd

Progress during the year:

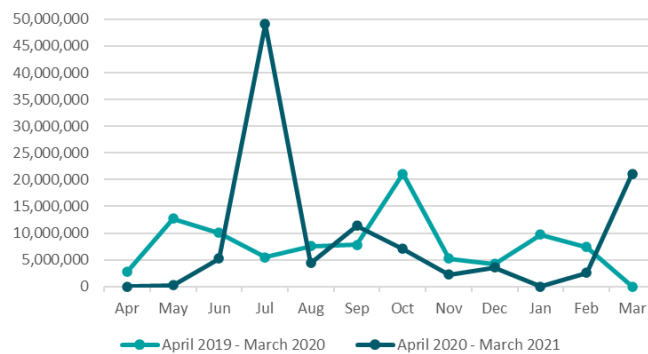
Interest in the Name Change where we became the Welsh Parliament, the scrutiny of decisions around the pandemic, and our promotion of trusted sources of information, saw people increasingly turn to our social channels, resulting in a 27% increase in our followers across the main Senedd social media accounts (main Senedd Wales / Senedd Cymru Facebook pages, Twitter channels, LinkedIn, Instagram and YouTube). Responding to public interest, we introduced greater coverage of Plenary sessions, sharing topical and explanatory information in a concise and clear way around main scrutiny areas.

Following the pandemic outbreak, committee work was suspended in March until the end of April 2020 and therefore, there was no Committee activity to promote. Instead we focused on proactively ensuring the media were fully updated on the Senedd's response to the pandemic with weekly briefings and overviews issued about forthcoming Covid scrutiny. This resulted in increased media interest in watching and drawing stories directly from Committee and Plenary sessions and new media organisations and journalists engaged in our work. We experienced a peak in July 2020 largely due to several Committee reports having been delayed because of Covid, as well as the publication of reports relating to Covid.

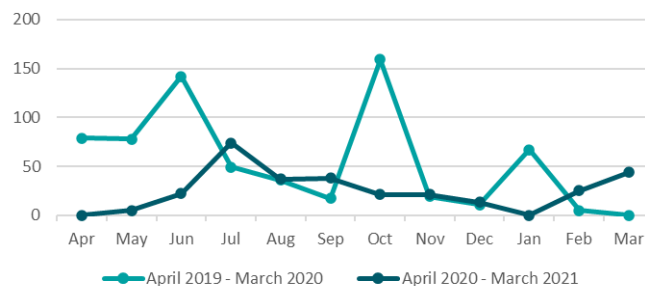
8) Increase in the number of followers on our main corporate social media channels



9) Reach as a result of promotion of committee inquiry and report launches



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



To use resources wisely

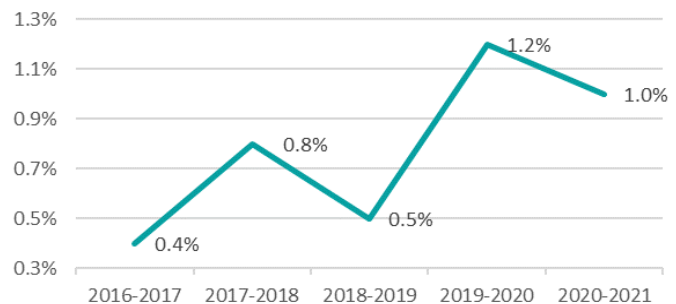
Progress during the year:

The end of year operational outturn is within target of the approved Commission's operational budget for the financial year. Our unqualified accounts have been certified by the Auditor General for Wales.

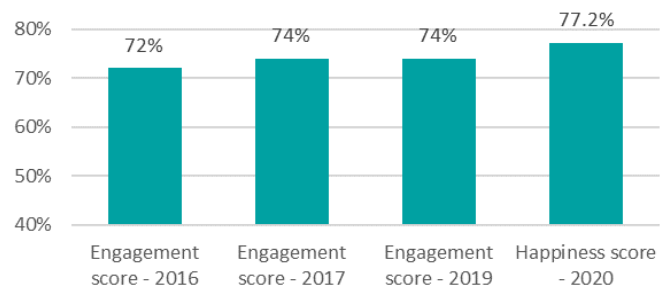
The 2020 annual Commission staff survey was delivered through an independent survey specialist. We, along with the Scottish Parliament, have replaced the Engagement Score with the Workplace Happiness Score which is a framework which measures the following: employee engagement, happiness and well-being, reward and recognition, information sharing, empowerment, instilling pride and job satisfaction. Whilst not directly comparable, previous years Engagement scores for the Commission, together with the benchmark Civil Service Median Score of Engagement (63% reported March 2020), are included here to provide continuity.

Through the pandemic Welsh language classes have continued to be delivered, albeit virtually. However, due to the personal circumstances of individual learners, for example, with home schooling and working different hours, there has been a decrease in the number of Welsh learners.

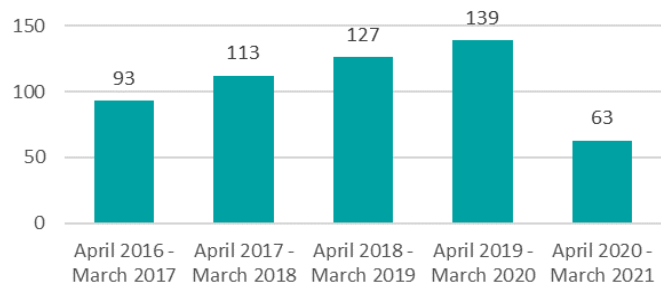
11) End of year operational outturn is within the range 0% to 1.5% of the approved operational budget



12) The happiness score from the staff survey is at, or above, the Civil Service Median score



13) Average number of Welsh language learners enrolled across all levels is maintained or increased



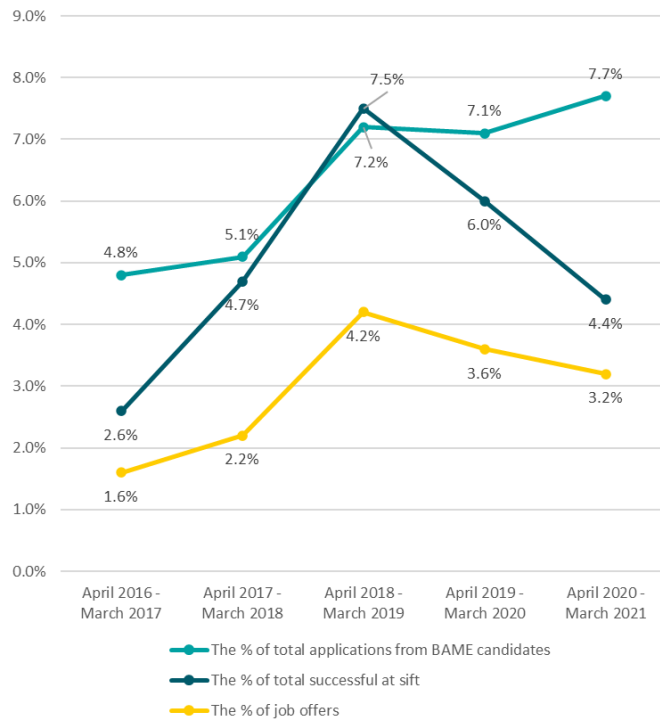
To use resources wisely

Progress during the year:

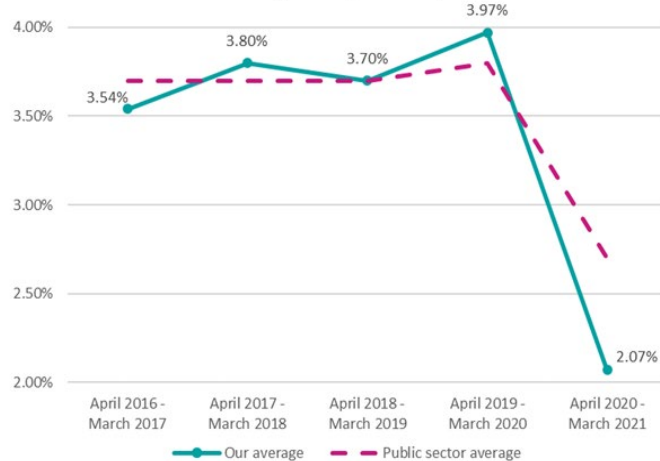
Our target is to increase the number of applications for externally advertised jobs from individuals identifying as Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) year on year. Over the Fifth Senedd, we have doubled the number of applications from candidates that identify as BAME, from 32 (4.8%) in 2016 to 64 (7.7%) in 2021.

The pandemic has affected the sickness absence rates within the Commission, mirroring the trend seen by organisations across the UK. While the virus may have led to additional sickness absence within the Commission, measures such as covid secure working, to support essential hybrid work activities, and significant levels of homeworking appear to have helped reduce other causes of absence, which now stands below the public sector average.

14) Stretch indicator - Increase applications for externally advertised jobs from individuals identifying as BAME



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



To use resources wisely

Progress during the year:

Our target is to reduce our total level of carbon emissions associated with business car travel to below the 2017-2018 baseline of 67%. In an extraordinary year due to the pandemic restrictions and regulations, business travel claims dropped by 90%. However, given public transport has been actively discouraged for covid safety, the percentage of those claims which were for private car use increased significantly.

16) Stretch indicator - Percentage of business travel emissions associated with car use

Period	Private car travel	Pool car travel	Hire car travel	Target
April 2017 - March 2018	63.0%	2.0%	2.0%	67.0%
April 2018 - March 2019	72.0%	1.7%	1.8%	67.0%
April 2019 - March 2020	73.0%	0.1%	2.8%	67.0%
April 2020 - March 2021	98.6%	0.1%	0.0%	67.0%

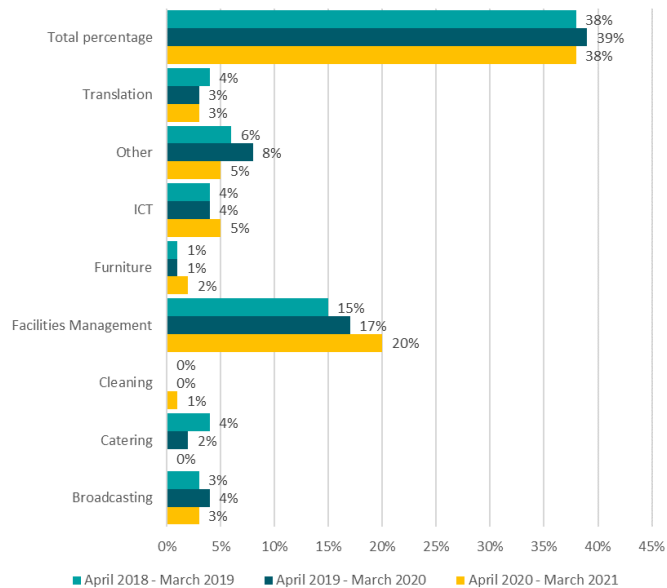
Legend: Private car travel (teal), Pool car travel (dark teal), Hire car travel (yellow), Target (dashed pink line)

To use resources wisely

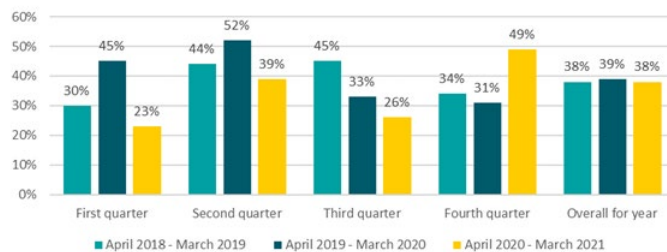
Progress during the year:

The pandemic has impacted some of our spend with Welsh suppliers. Due to the estate closure, there has been virtually no spend through the catering contract, or through our Broadcasting contractor. However, Welsh spend through the Facilities Management contract has increased as Welsh suppliers have been successful in securing supply chain opportunities and we have had success in awarding other contracts to Welsh suppliers. This has resulted in a strong Q4 and has helped to minimise the overall impact

17) Stretch indicator - Increase the percentage of Commission spend with Welsh suppliers to 43% by the end of the Fifth Senedd



17) Stretch indicator - Percent spend with Welsh suppliers



Risk Profile

The most significant risks the Commission faces are captured in a Corporate Risk 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 are included in the Governance Statement on page 127.

At the start of 2020-21, the Corporate Risk Register contained some significant risks. Despite a sharp focus on mitigating actions, these risks have remained on the Register because of their ongoing severity (particularly due to their potential impact) and largely due to external influences over which we have little or no control.

- Impact of Covid-19

In March 2020 an overarching corporate risk² was created to map out the impact of Covid-19. This provided visibility of the mitigating actions that were being taken forward to minimise the impact as far as possible and keep Senedd business running. This risk covered a myriad of related risks, including those around increased risk of cyber-attacks and fraud. Other corporate and service level³ risks were also reviewed and updated to reflect the impact of the pandemic, cross-referencing to the Covid-19 corporate risk. As other significant Covid-related risks emerged, separate assessments were carried out and documented. These included: the potential for a breach of the Official Language Scheme during virtual meetings; allowing for the possibility of moving the date of the Senedd 2021 Elections; and the impact of extended lockdown restrictions on our corporate capacity to meet objectives and deliver services. The management of the risk was a key factor in decision-making around safety and wellbeing and keeping critical Senedd business running.

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.

³ Service level risks – identify key events that could prevent or hinder the achievement of service level objectives.

- Dignity and respect and Members' standards of conduct

The Commission's Dignity and Respect policies have been reviewed and actions resulting from awareness surveys among Commission staff are being taken forward. A new Code of Conduct for the Senedd has been agreed. It includes a principle of respect, which puts the need to treat everybody with respect as a key requirement for Members of the Senedd, and that they should set an example in public life.

- UK constitutional change

The focus of this risk changed from the UK exit from the EU into wider constitutional changes within the UK. The continuous management of the risk was key to ensuring the Commission could provide the required support to the Senedd.

- Cyber security

Cyber-security remains one of the Commission's most significant risks and is subject to constant management, awareness raising, improvement, and monitoring, with regular detailed updates on mitigation provided to Executive Board. It is also an area which is subject to regular independent audit and scrutiny, including by the Commission's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

- Compliance with the Data Protection legislation

The reprioritisation of resources strengthened the mitigation of this risk. This has proved vital during the pandemic with radical changes in our approaches to gathering and using information.

Other changes to the risk profile during the year included removal of the following risks from the Corporate Risk Register as projects and objectives have been delivered or controls have been strengthened. Each of these risks were successfully mitigated. Any remaining risks continue to be managed and monitored at service level.

- Constitutional reform

Reform objectives, specifically around the name change and lowering the voting age to 16, were successfully delivered through the adoption of effective governance structures and risk management.

- Safeguarding

Controls had been strengthened during the year, through prioritisation of resources, to mitigate the risks around safeguarding young people who engage with Senedd business, both in person and remotely.

- Support contract arrangements for Legislative Workbench software

Controls put in place improved the security of the system and the contract for a replacement system has been awarded.

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 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 the Senedd elections.

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.

Total Commission Budget					
	2016-17 £m	2017-18 £m	2018-19 £m	2019-20 £m	2020-21 £m
Operational budget (Note 1)	36	37	38	40	42
Remuneration Board's Determination	15	16	16	16	16
Annually Managed Expenditure	2	2	2	2	2
Election related expenditure	3	0	0	0	1
	56	54	55	58	61

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

Operational Budget Analysis					
Operational budget breakdown:	2016-17 £m	2017-18 £m	2018-19 £m	2019-20 £m	2020-21 £m
Staff related costs (Note 2)	20	21	23	25	26
Non staff related costs	13	13	12	12	13
Project fund	0	0	0	1	1
Depreciation (non cash)	3	3	2	2	2
	36	37	38	40	42

Note 2 – 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.

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 upon the scrutiny and feedback it has received from both the Public Accounts and Finance Committees. Since 2019-20 the budget has included a designated Project Fund. The Commission follows the guidelines provided in the Finance Committee's 'Statement of Principles'.

Total Commission Expenditure – Fifth Senedd					
	2016-17 £m	2017-18 £m	2018-19 £m	2019-20 £m	2020-21 £m
Operational spend	38	38	38	40	42
Remuneration Board's Determination	14	14	15	15	16
Annually Managed Expenditure	1	2	1	2	2
Election related expenditure	2	0	0	0	0
	55	54	54	56	60
Total expenditure vs total budget – under/(over)	1.0	-	1.0	2.0	1.0

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:	2016-17 £m	2017-18 £m	2018-19 £m	2019-20 £m	2020-21 £m
Staff related costs (Note 2)	20	22	24	24	25
Non staff related costs	16	13	12	13	14
Project fund	0	0	1	1	1
Depreciation (non cash)	3	3	2	2	2
	38	38	39	40	42
Operational expenditure vs operational budget – under/(over)	(2)	(1)	(1)	-	-

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

The operational outturn for 2020-21 is 1.0% and is within the target range.

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 resource fund.

2020-21 Outturn				
	Budget £m	Outturn £m	Variance £m	Variance %
Staff related costs	26	25	1	1.0%
Non staff related costs	13	14	(1)	(1.1%)
Project fund	1	1	0	-
Election costs	1	0	1	-
Depreciation (non cash)	2	2	0	-
Total operational activity	43	42	1	1.0%
Remuneration Board's Determination	16	16	0	-
Annually Managed Expenditure	2	2	0	-
	61	60	1	1.0%

In 2020-21 detailed and prudent management of finances meant unanticipated costs were offset by Covid 19 related savings. These savings also enabled priority work to continue ensuring that the 10 year Estates plan remains on track.



..... **SUPPORTING PLENARY**



**10 Individual
Member debates**



**63 Plenary
sessions**

..... **QUESTIONS ASKED IN PLENARY**



23 Topical Questions



701 Oral Questions



**2,544 Written
Questions**



**2 Emergency
Questions**

Provide Outstanding Parliamentary Support

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

SUPPORTING LEGISLATION



2 new Bills introduced



4 Bills passed to become Acts

SUPPORTING COMMITTEES



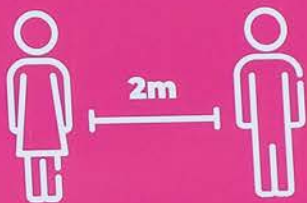
368 Committee meetings



122 Committee reports

Cofiwch chwarae'ch rhan a chadw pawb yn ddiogel

— Play your part and keep everyone safe



Cadwch bellter
diogel

—
Keep a safe distance



Golchwch eich dwylo'n
rheolaidd

—
Wash your hands regularly



Peidiwch â chyffwrdd
â'ch wyneb

—
Avoid touching your face



Ceisiwch osgoi lleoedd
llawn pobl

—
Avoid crowded areas



Senedd Cymru
Welsh Parliament

Conducting Senedd Business during the pandemic

Investment in technology, coupled with a ‘digital by default’ approach to business since 1999, enabled the Commission to adapt quickly and effectively to new ways of working. The focus was on timely and effective decision-making, clear communication, efficient use of digital capabilities, and the safety, health and well-being of all.

In last year’s annual report we outlined how the Commission had responded to the Covid-19 pandemic delivering online plenary meetings, enabling the Senedd to continue its work and to be the first Parliament in the UK to meet virtually when we were all advised to work from home. This year the priority has been to return to ‘business as usual’ as much as we could, although the focus for all formal business has inevitably been around the pandemic. This has meant expanding the business taken in plenary and enabling virtual committee meetings to allow scrutiny to continue.

Plenary meetings

Emergency standing orders, for the continuity of Parliament during the public health emergency, by facilitating virtual and hybrid plenary sittings, were turned around in two days, and agreed and tested at a physical meeting on 24 March 2020. These emergency standing orders provided for new recall provisions, a reduced quorum, flexibility around public access, and weighted voting. That meeting on 24 March, with reduced numbers of Members attending, was to be the last time Members met physically in the Chamber for almost four months. With just five days’ notice, Commission officials delivered a virtual meeting of the Senedd the following Wednesday 1 April.

April and May saw changes to the operation of virtual plenary as Members and officials learned from experience and adapted accordingly. The Senedd’s Business Committee, which considers the organisation of business, agreed a gradual increase in the number of Members able to attend virtual plenary meetings and, from 1 June, any Member who wished to attend could do so.

A pattern was established of one virtual plenary meeting each week. Core business comprised of Government statements on Covid-19, with questions from party leaders and other Members, and consideration of legislation to approve Covid-19 regulations.

Over time the range of business was expanded to include issues beyond Covid-19:

- Topical Questions, enabling Members to question Ministers on matters not otherwise on the agenda, were reintroduced on 4 May;
- one hour of non-government time per week – usually opposition debates – scheduled from 3 June, with the stipulation by Business Committee initially that they must be Covid-19 related; and
- the Llywydd decided, having consulted with Business Committee as required by the emergency standing orders, to reintroduce oral questions to all Ministers from 24 June after a three-month absence.

Hybrid meetings

In July, came a tentative emergence into a ‘new normal’: the Senedd meeting in hybrid format with remote electronic voting, and committees meeting virtually.

Careful thought was needed to ensure that the technology allowed for the seamless running of proceedings, linking Members from all corners of the country with those in the Chamber. It was essential that meetings continued to be broadcast on Senedd TV and the parliamentary YouTube channel.

Thorough testing was carried out of various platforms and applications to develop a system to support a bilingual audio feed in English or Welsh, allowing Members to contribute, and for viewers to watch, in their language of choice, and which allowed the contributors to move smoothly from one language to the other without impacting on the flow of proceedings.

This prompted many public and private organisations to approach the Senedd Commission for advice and guidance on conducting their own bilingual meetings.

From April to July the Senedd operated ‘weighted voting’ which meant that one Member of each party voted on behalf of all their Members.

Independent Members were able to cast their own votes too. Although this was a stopgap measure, there was early recognition among the Business Committee and Members that we should return to individual voting as soon as possible, especially once the Senedd returned to considering primary legislation. Officials started working on a new system to enable Members to vote individually and remotely. By mid-June, progress was advanced enough for the Business Committee to agree in principle to its introduction and to propose further temporary standing order changes to allow Members to ‘vote electronically from any location’.

One of the main challenges with the development was to safeguard the integrity of the vote. It was essential to ensure that only those who are entitled to vote could do so and that a vote would only be recorded once. Using existing technologies an online application was created. This allowed Members to vote securely, using their choice of device at their preferred location.

By the end of June, the Government was scheduling more non-Covid-19 business. As business expanded beyond an emergency programme the Llywydd was keen that the Senedd trial hybrid meetings before summer recess, so that some Members had the option of attending the Senedd as the lockdown restrictions eased.

Business Committee agreed that the last two scheduled plenary meetings before recess, 8 and 15 July, should be held in a hybrid format. It was agreed that 20 Members could be physically present in the Chamber. All other Members would be able to participate virtually via Zoom. Remote electronic voting was used for the first time on 8 July.

On 13 July, the Business Committee decided that as of September, the Senedd would return to its usual pattern of two plenary meetings per week and a ‘normal’ schedule of business, and anticipated that plenary meetings would be in a hybrid format for the foreseeable future. Business Committee endorsed principles that the Llywydd would use in deciding the format of plenary meetings during periods of local and national restrictions, ranging from physical, through various models of hybrid, to fully virtual meetings.

Committees: virtual working

Before the pandemic, Senedd committees had, from time to time, met in a hybrid format with some Members and witnesses participating via video or teleconference. However, the complete relocation of all committee proceedings into the virtual space during the pandemic was unprecedented.

To help support this change, on 17 March 2020, the Business Committee took the view that 'for the foreseeable future committees should focus on essential business'.

While committees are autonomous entities that decide their own work programmes, the view of the Business Committee, coupled with an awareness among Committee Chairs, Members and officials that Wales' public services' immediate focus would be on managing the pandemic, led the vast majority of committees to pause all non-Covid-19 related work. Shortly after the beginning of lockdown, the committee timetable was revised in response to the closure of the estate and the need to prioritise technical resources to supporting plenary business.



During this period, Committee Chairs worked together to co-ordinate scrutiny across committees, in particular agreeing an approach for the Scrutiny of the First Minister on Covid-19 recovery plans and to make best use of Members' and Ministers' time.

Each committee adopted its own approach to scrutiny to reflect its portfolio responsibilities. The majority of committees launched overarching Covid-19 inquiries to cover all issues in their remit, including rolling calls for written evidence and oral evidence from Ministers and relevant stakeholders. However, until mid-June, technological and capacity constraints of remote working prevented more than one public meeting taking place at a time. This reduced the meeting time available, leading to difficult choices about evidence taking and witness time.

By September 2020, committees were able to return to a weekly pattern of meetings and a broader range of business, although the scrutiny of matters relating to Covid-19 and legislation remained a priority.

Facilities were put in place to enable hybrid committee meetings. However, the reintroduction of Covid-19 restrictions from September 2020 onwards, in tandem with Members' general satisfaction with the virtual format, has meant that the hybrid format has not been used so far for committees. Where appropriate this model is expected to become one of the normal options available to committees for the Sixth Senedd.

Mohammad Asghar MS

On 16 June 2020 we sadly lost one of our Members of the Senedd, Mohammad Asghar MS.



Mohammad Asghar (Oscar) MS was first elected as a Member for South Wales East in 2007, making him the first ethnic minority and Muslim Member.

Among the tributes made in Plenary on 17 June, Paul Davies MS, stated:

“

Mohammad Asghar, or Oscar, as we all knew him, was a man of immense warmth and kindness, a man who embraced us all with such profound respect, a man whose life was dedicated to enriching and supporting those around him, and a man who, so full of life himself, did so much to help people across Wales.

”

The Llywydd, Elin Jones MS, stated:

“

His death came as a cruelly unexpected blow. Oscar was a proud representative of his party, his region and his country.

[...]

Oscar was an internationalist, and made the most of opportunities to build bridges with other countries, faiths and cultures and to promote Wales on the world stage.

”



Mohammad Asghar (second right) with other members of the Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee visiting British Airways Maintenance Cardiff, September 2018.

The Senedd's legislative role during the Covid-19 pandemic

Supporting the Senedd and its committees in their scrutiny of legislation is a key role for Commission staff. As such, significant efforts are made to ensure that Service Areas plan carefully to ensure that capacity and expertise are available when required to facilitate scrutiny of the Welsh Government's legislative programme.

When Wales went into its initial lockdown in March 2020, there were just over 12 months remaining until the end of the parliamentary session. At the time there were four Welsh Government Bills before the Senedd, and several more expected to be introduced before summer recess as part of the Welsh Government's legislative programme.

In addition, it was expected that a significant volume of legislation arising from the EU Exit process would need to be considered during the transition period (and immediately following its expiry), although the form of that legislation was still uncertain and dependent on the outcome of a number of potential Deal/ No Deal scenarios.

However, due to Covid-19, it was necessary for Service Areas to adapt very quickly, not only to a new way of working, but also to a new legislative agenda to ensure that outstanding parliamentary support was maintained.

Work relating to the legislative framework for the EU Exit - which had its own hard deadlines - continued throughout the period, albeit to an unpredictable timetable. This work lived up to expectations, not only in terms of volume and complexity, but also the uncertainty of the timetable to which committees were required to work.

Further information on the EU Transition can be found on page 64.

Legislation relating to Covid-19

During April 2020 the Welsh Government revised its approach to legislation in the context of the pandemic, with the result that consideration of some Bills were pushed back to later in the year, and other Bills were not taken forward. Throughout this period, committee work programmes adapted accordingly, and Commission resources were deployed flexibly to ensure the necessary levels of staff support were available to committees at all times.

Legislative measures have been introduced by the Welsh Government in relation to Covid-19 through subordinate legislation. These have largely come into force at short notice, with some subject to Senedd approval within 28 days.

Scrutiny of all such ‘subordinate legislation’ is undertaken by the Legislation, Justice and Constitution (LJC) Committee. Up until 31 March 2021, the LJC Committee had scrutinised Covid-related SIs as follows:

- 144 Statutory Instruments (SIs) reported upon;
- resulting in 383 reporting points (61 technical and 322 merits);
- the Welsh Government has provided a response to 144 of the reporting points in line with requests made by the Committee.

The size and difficulty of this task, particularly when it must be undertaken alongside EU Exit work and regular business (the scrutiny of Bills, Legislative Consent Memoranda (LCMs), non-Covid SIs), coupled with being in an unfamiliar virtual environment, cannot be overstated. The volume, complexity and frequency of Covid-related SIs have required the Commission to redeploy resources from other Service Areas to support the LJC Committee, not to mention considerable dedication and hard work from expert staff and the Committee’s Members.

In the context of a rapidly developing national public health emergency, in which legislation needs to be drafted in difficult and contentious areas to very tight deadlines, the value of such detailed committee scrutiny has regularly been recognised by the Welsh Ministers and Members of the Senedd.

EU Transition

The Commission supported the Senedd to influence, scrutinise and engage with the processes leading up to the end of the EU transition period in December 2020. Efficient forward planning by Service Areas ensured the Commission was well-prepared for the full range of potential UK-EU negotiation outcomes.

A large part of the Senedd committee's legislative work focused on scrutinising Welsh Government Legislative Consent Memoranda (LCMs) in areas relating to the UK's exit from the EU. The LCMs all related to contentious Brexit-related Bills, and required detailed and expert consideration by a series of committees – the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee, the Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee and the External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee – in order to inform debates on relevant legislative consent motions in plenary.

The UK Government's Trade Bill and the Internal Market Act 2020 were major pieces of legislation brought forward during this time and Commission staff responded quickly to amendments made to these Bills as they progressed through Parliament in order to fully support Members, providing both written and oral briefings. The External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee made strong representations on the devolution settlement and Welsh interests when considering the UK Internal Market Bill.

External expertise from academics and experts through the Commission's Brexit Academic Framework were also utilised to help support the work of Senedd committees and Members. This included expert analysis of the legal basis for the UK-EU future relationship, the UK Internal Market Act, Common Frameworks, international trade agreements, digital trade and equivalency post-Brexit and UK engagement with EU agencies post-Brexit.

The Commission took measures to refresh the governance and oversight of EU transition activity, and to ensure it could continue supporting the Senedd despite any impact of the outcome of the UK's exit. As part of this, the Commission reviewed its ICT and estates supply chains, and gave its Leadership Team a central role in monitoring preparations for the end of the transition period. These arrangements were scrutinised by both the Commission's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and its Independent Advisers.

This activity meant the Commission was well prepared for the end of the transition period, with plans put into action between Christmas and New Year to support a recall of the Senedd to scrutinise and debate the outcome of the UK-EU negotiations.





Constitutional reform

This year saw some key provisions of the Senedd and Elections (Wales) Act 2020 come into force. These included voter registration opening for the introduction of Votes at 16 in Senedd elections – the largest increase to the franchise in half a century – and the renaming of the Senedd to better reflect its changed powers and responsibilities.

Voting age

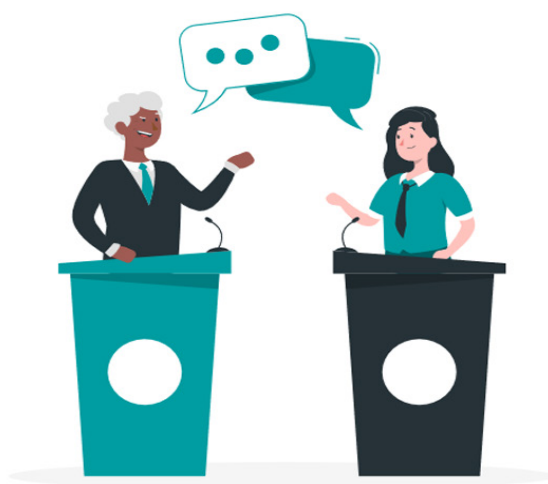
The 2021 Senedd election will see 16 and 17 year olds able to vote for the first time. Electoral registration opened for younger people for the first time in July 2020. To promote this, the Commission produced and published a range of educational resources and promoted voter registration to the newly-enfranchised with the aim of creating better awareness and understanding of their right to vote.

This work underwent a re-think due to the Covid-19 restrictions, shifting rapidly to a suite of online resources, including resources for teachers and students made available through the pan-Wales educational resources site, Hwb.



We also worked closely with partners in the electoral community, including the Electoral Commission, as well as with local government and Welsh Government colleagues. This helped to maximise exposure to the resources, and to ensure a more co-ordinated approach to informing younger people of their new rights, reducing overlap of resources and voter confusion.

A 'Vote16' week was held in February 2021 to further promote the resources and help develop young people's understanding ahead of the election.



Name Change

On 6 May 2020 the National Assembly for Wales became the Welsh Parliament, commonly known as the Senedd. Name change implementation was a Senedd wide project, requiring the engagement and active participation of staff across all Commission Service Areas.

As the Covid-19 pandemic struck, the approach to delivery required substantial adjustment to account for the change in circumstances - from the media's understanding and reporting of the name change, to the comprehensive updates to the Senedd's website and signage, domains, and software systems. The changes were delivered effectively, and at the appropriate time.

By working closely with partners, the Commission has ensured a clear and shared understanding of the implications of the change to Senedd. Uptake of the new name has been widespread across media at national and UK levels, as well as by the wider public.

The Senedd and Elections (Wales) Act 2020 also made the Electoral Commission accountable to, and financed by, the Senedd in relation to devolved elections and referendums. The Senedd established the Llywydd's Committee to scrutinise financial estimates and plans submitted by the Electoral Commission in discharging their functions relating to devolved Welsh elections and devolved Welsh referendums.

Senedd reform

The Committee Senedd Electoral Reform was established in September 2019 to examine the recommendations of the Expert Panel on Assembly Electoral Reform. The Committee was dissolved in October 2020 following a debate on its report, 'Senedd Reform: the next steps', which recommended that legislation should be introduced soon after the 2021 election to:

- Increase the size of the Senedd to between 80 and 90 Members (from the current 60) with effect from the 2026 election;
- Introduce the Single Transferable Vote electoral system; and
- Establish arrangements for reviewing the Senedd's constituency boundaries.

The Committee did not draw its membership from every party group of the Fifth Senedd. The Welsh Conservative group in the Senedd decided not to participate in the Committee and the Brexit Party group decided to withdraw from it before the Committee concluded its work.



Welsh Elections (Coronavirus) Act

On 10 February 2021, the Senedd passed the Welsh Government's Welsh Elections (Coronavirus) Act.

Its purpose was to mitigate the potential risks to the 2021 Senedd Election arising from Covid-19, to ensure a safe and fair election. The Government stated that its overriding objective was that the election proceed on 6 May 2021 as planned. However, the Act introduced a series of contingency measures if the public health circumstances required it, these included:

- The shortening of the dissolution period to begin one week before the election;
- The power to vary the date of the election by up to 6 months; and
- The extension of the period within which the Senedd must hold its first Meeting.

These provisions required decisions to be made to address the issue of some Members remaining Members while also being election candidates during the election period (which normally coincides with dissolution), respecting the need to ensure a level playing field for all candidates.

The Senedd Commission agreed a series of decisions based on the principle that during the pre-dissolution period (the three week period preceding the shortened dissolution, when the Senedd would normally have been dissolved), Members should only be provided with those resources necessary to carry out Senedd business related to the purpose of shortening dissolution; that is:

- To be able to postpone the election for a reason relating to coronavirus; and
- To enable the Senedd to respond, if required, to the unfolding public health issues leading up to the election.

Bilingual Services

Due to business continuity planning we were in a strong position to be able to continue to provide our bilingual services and were able to switch to virtual provision both smoothly and swiftly.

The Senedd was one of the first legislatures in the world to migrate to virtual Plenary meetings incorporating interpretation in our provision from the outset. We were used as a case study in the Welsh Language Commissioner's Advice Note on Holding Bilingual Video Meetings and we continue to provide practical advice to organisations across Wales on delivering interpretation as part of virtual proceedings. There have been occasions when we have been unable to provide interpretation at certain meetings or events due to the confidential nature of the discussions and security concerns regarding the platforms used. However, this has been addressed by a recent upgrade which provides more assurance in terms of security and allows us to provide interpretation upon request. The Senedd Commission's Risk and Assurance system has been used to identify actions and mitigations, and to monitor and provide assurance on this issue at all levels.

In accordance with the Official Languages Scheme, new and adapted services over the past year have been developed bilingually in order to ensure that language choice is offered proactively. Where it has not been possible to ensure a bilingual provision, every effort has been made to offer users the choice of proceeding either in Welsh or in English. The Official Languages Team have been monitoring our bilingual services and advising colleagues across the Senedd. The few occasions when it was impossible to reach the standards set out in the Official Languages Scheme have been recorded and steps taken to avoid these issues in the future.

Alongside this work, the Official Languages Team has also been working on preparations for the Sixth Senedd. Discussions have taken place in order to establish the areas of bilingual service provision that currently work well, and areas for possible improvement. A draft Official Languages Scheme for the Sixth Senedd is being developed and this will be consulted upon, and agreed as soon as possible after the election. Our language skills training support has also been reviewed in order to ensure provision remains flexible and bespoke. This work will continue over the coming months.

..... OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

748



Number of views of the
**360 degree Virtual Tour
of the Senedd**

435 people have attended
our online Introduction to the
Senedd presentations



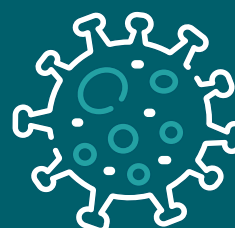
Online GWLAD events attracted **282** people who
had not engaged with the Senedd previously

..... PETITIONS COMMITTEE

ONE MILLION

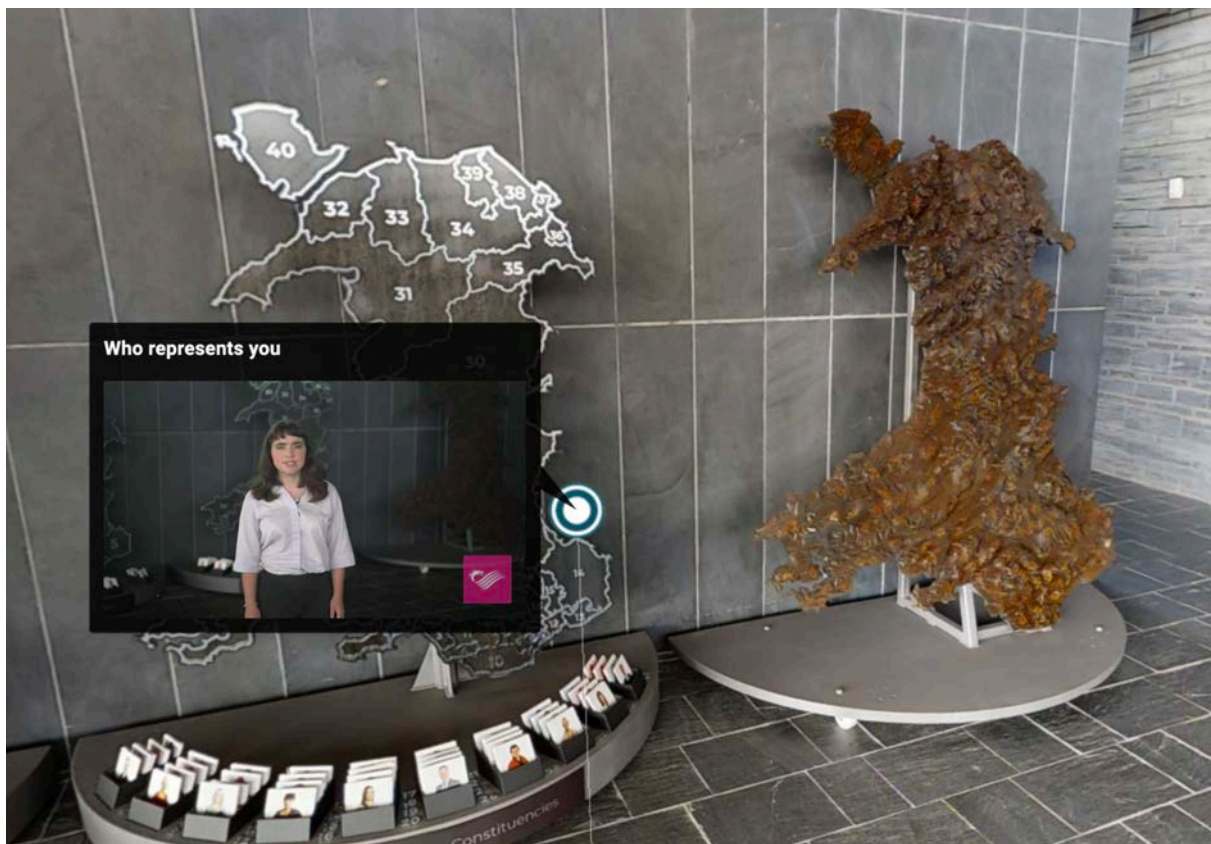
Total number of signatures on petitions during the Fifth Senedd

The **largest petition** was
related to Covid-19 and
reached **67,940** signatures



Engage with All the People of Wales and Champion the Senedd

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 all the people of Wales.



New Senedd Website

After two years of development, including consultations, surveys, requirements gathering, workshops, development of 12 personas, creation of 4 initial designs, 27 weeks of development sprints, and lots of testing, the Senedd's new website went live on 17 December 2020.

On the old site, users found it difficult to find what they were looking for, so the new website puts search front and centre, and has been built with the user's journey in mind. It has also been built with mobile in mind – with nearly 50% of visits now being made on mobile devices.

The website project team migrated over 350,000 documents (including PDFs, media items, images, and meeting outputs) to the new website and trained over 150 Commission staff as editors to ensure that all parts of the organisation have the skills to build and update pages. At the end of January the project team handed over the responsibility for the site to a new Editorial Board to deliver future priorities and ensure the benefits of the new site continue to be measured and realised.

Early feedback has been really positive, with users reporting that they like the new look, describing it as 'fresh' and 'clean', and



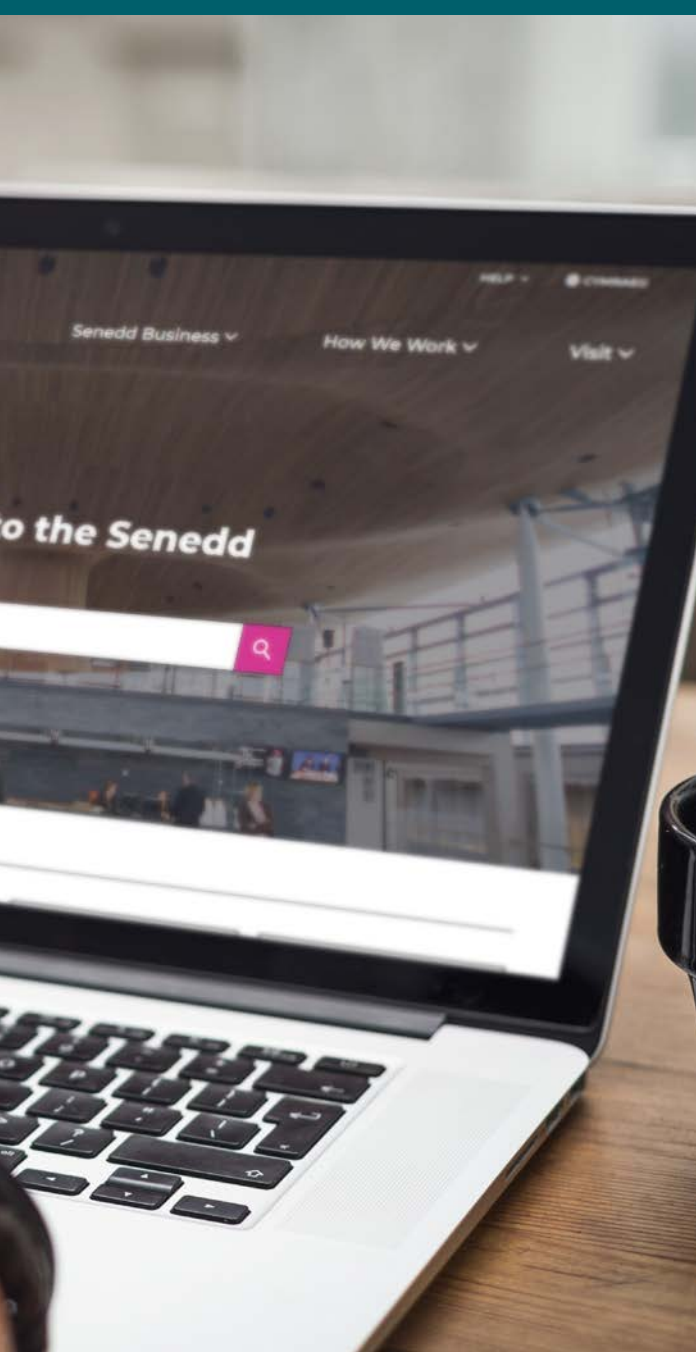
commenting on how much easier it is to navigate and find things.

The main website wasn't the only new launch this year, as the Commission strives to make engaging with the work of the Senedd easier for everyone. A new petitions website, launched in April 2020, has made it easier

for everyone to create and sign petitions. Since it was launched, the average number of signatures per petition has increased by 45%, with a Covid-19 petition achieving the most signatures on a petition to the Senedd (67,940). There has also been a substantial increase in the number of petitions submitted, partly driven by Covid-19 regulations, with nearly as many admissible petitions submitted in 2020 (222) as during the first four years of the Fifth Senedd combined (236). During the Fifth Senedd, the petitions have collectively received more than 1 million signatures.

A new recruitment system also came online in October, making it easier for people to apply for jobs with the Commission, and easier for those involved in recruitment to manage the process.

You can visit the new website at <https://senedd.wales> and <https://senedd.cymru>.



WELSH YOUTH PARLIAMENT

The first two-year term of the Welsh Youth Parliament (WYP) drew to a close on 24 February 2021, with a joint session with Members of the Senedd. During the Session the Llywydd commented that the work of the young parliamentarians was one of the standout successes of the Fifth Senedd.

The ceremony marked the end of an eventful year which included:

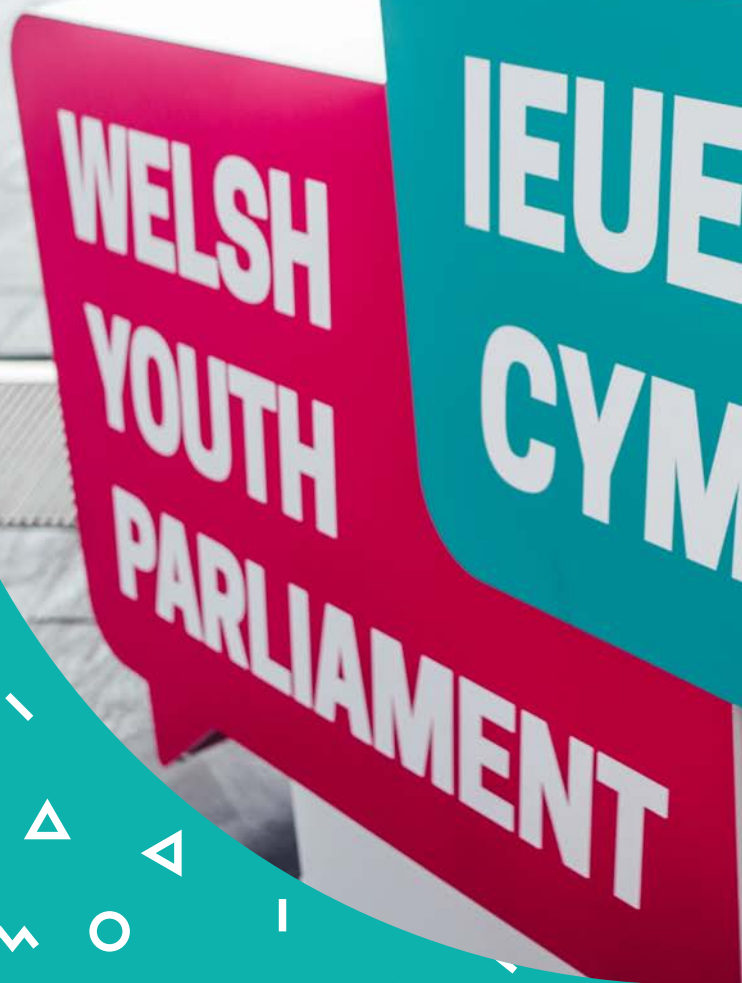
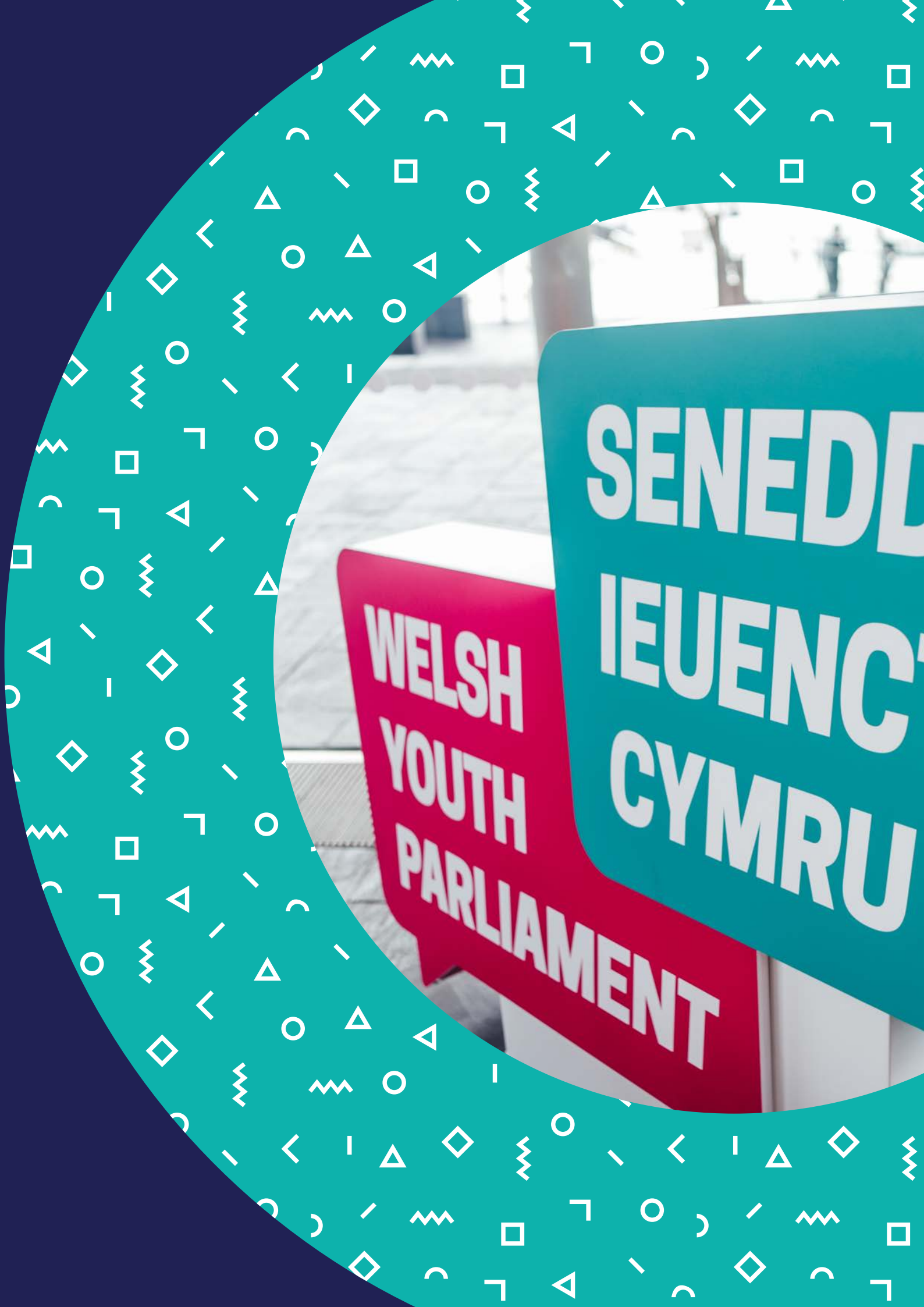
- Moving all meetings and events online in response to the pandemic;
- Hosting WYP week – a programme of virtual engagement events for young people on key issues;
- Producing and publishing a report on Littering and Plastic Waste;
- Producing and publishing a report on Emotional and Mental Health Support;
- Reviewing and updating previously published work on Life Skills in the Curriculum;
- Holding regular sessions with Welsh Ministers to ask questions from young people for young people – especially around Covid-19 and exams; and

- Collaboration with the Children's Commissioner on surveying the impact of Covid-19 on young people.

The work now starts to review what has worked well, and what could be improved in readiness for the second Welsh Youth Parliament. We are working with experts from Bangor University to complete this work.

Over the summer, we plan to open nominations for the next 60 Welsh Youth Parliament members, with elections in the autumn and a first meeting early in 2022.

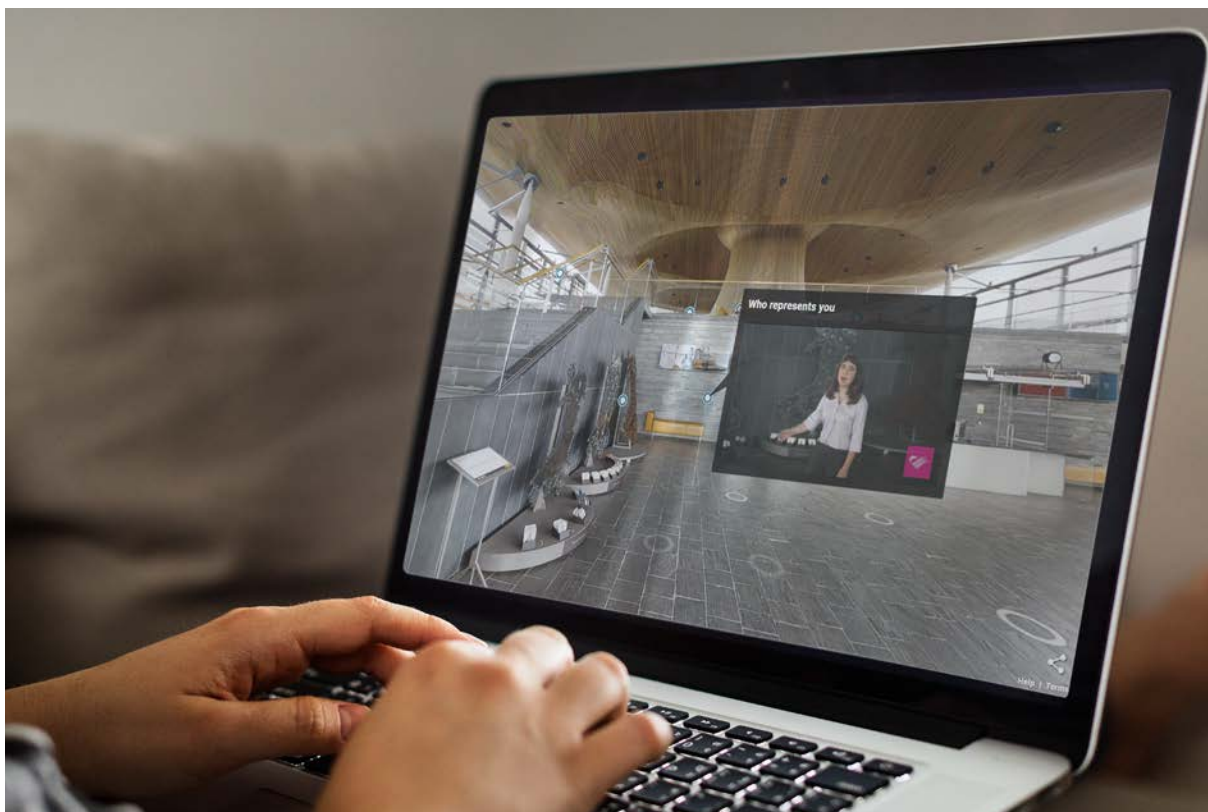




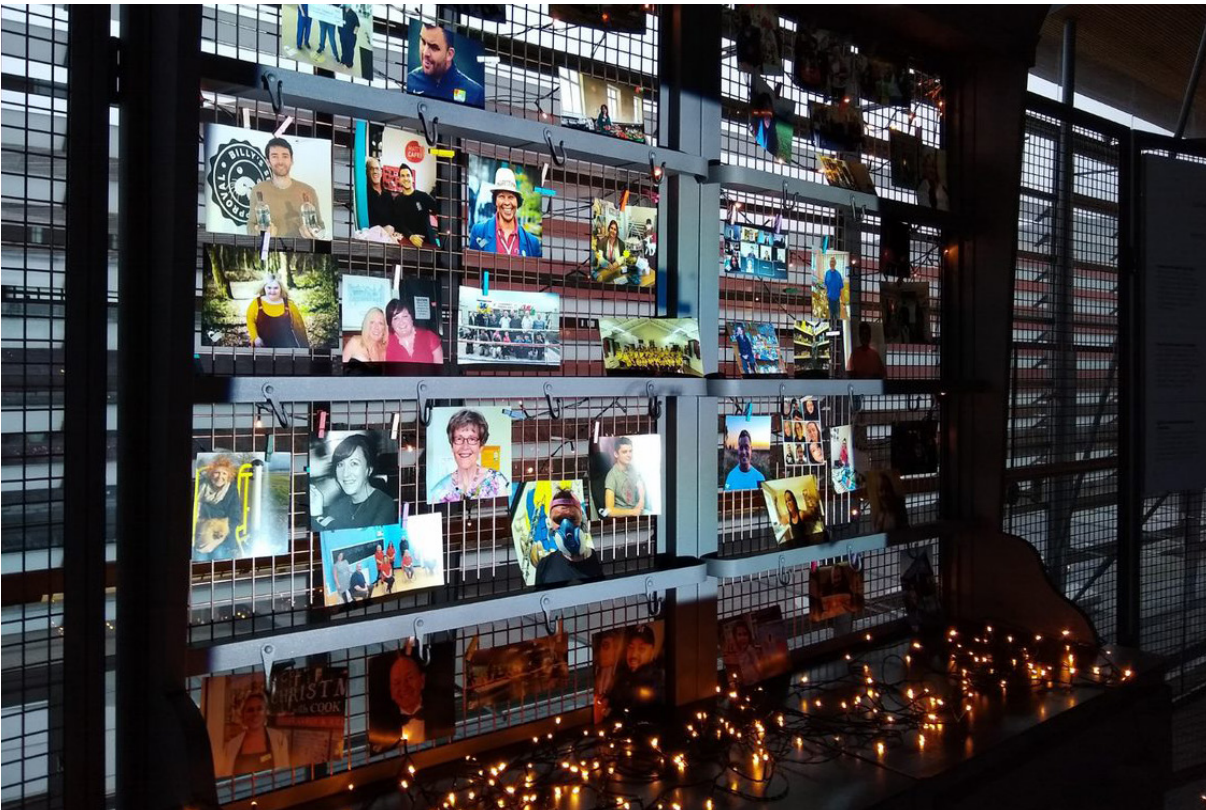
Outreach and Engagement

Restrictions due to Covid-19 brought radical changes to the way the Senedd engages with the people of Wales.

Due to the Senedd building being closed to the public we adapted our outreach and engagement work to ensure that we could still engage with people and they could still learn about the work of the Senedd, even while the doors have to be closed. For example, the Children, Young People and Education Committee included worksheets with free school meal packs for children and young people (to return by prepaid envelopes), in order for them to draw pictures or write short stories about their experiences. A 360 degree Virtual Tour of the Senedd was developed, regular online presentations giving an introduction to the Senedd were delivered, and exhibitions which would have taken place inside the Senedd, moved to Instagram and to our website. There have been almost 750 unique visits to the Virtual Tour and over 400 have attended the online presentations. One of the exhibitions developed highlighted the contributions that Member nominated Community Champions made during the past year – it gained more than 850,000 (this is 5 times higher than the average post) views on the Visit social media platforms.



Community champions at the Senedd



The new communications and engagement strategy sought to include the lived experience of members of the public for Committee inquiries as part of our social media and communications work. While physical interviews presented challenges during the pandemic, virtual engagement offered new opportunities.

The first GWLAD festival in 2019, marked the 20th anniversary of devolution in Wales with a series of events showcasing the Senedd building, and inviting speakers, comedians and musicians to perform.

For 2020 a straight repeat was impossible. As with so much of our engagement activity, we embraced online meetings in order to bring people into the work of the Senedd.

The second GWLAD festival saw us partner with a range of organisations, in an attempt to reach new audiences. The programme provided a platform for a diverse mix of people – young people, business owners, politicians, entertainers, activists, and key workers to discuss experiences, and share thoughts and ideas on ways to build a resilient, more equal Wales for the future.

The programme of 8 events attracted more than 563 people to register, including 282 who had not engaged with the Senedd previously. The events covered a range of topics including the environment, youth homelessness, rural communities, business, and the arts and worked in partnership with stakeholders across Wales including Llamau, Arts Council for Wales and Sports Wales.





GWLAD 2019

- 30% hadn't engaged with Senedd before
- 22% identified as politically apathetic / political observers

GWLAD 2020

- 50% hadn't engaged with Senedd before
- 61% identified as politically apathetic / political observers

We also worked with partners at the National and Urdd Eisteddfodau to offer online events and opportunities as part of their move to online events, and will be working to develop similar offerings in the coming months, as these national events will again not be held in the traditional way.

..... **FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Operational outturn at year end is **1%**



..... **RESEARCH SERVICE**

Our Research Service blog sites received **over 130,000 views** between March and July 2020



..... **OUR STAFF**

This year we achieved
Investors in People Platinum Standard



Wellbeing Pulse Surveys



95% of respondents said they felt well informed

..... **ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY**



100% diversion of waste from landfill for the **third consecutive year**



Our bees have doubled their honey production this year. The Pierhead is now home to **three** hives and around **100,000** bees

Use Resources Wisely

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 and effectively.

AWARDS AND ACCREDITATION

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE™
 We invest in people Platinum
 Rydym yn buddsoddi mewn pobl Platinwm





Sustaining business during the pandemic

To ensure an efficient and informed response to changing demands on our resources, effective planning and preparation have been important characteristics of our approach during this trying period. Commission staff are the most important resource in supporting Members and helping the people of Wales engage with their Parliament.

In advance of lockdown we were keeping abreast of the latest developments in relation to the virus. During this period, we:

- engaged with the other UK Parliaments and began to have regular conference calls to determine what we could learn from each other and compare notes;
- reprioritised resources to ensure that our cleaning contractors increased their cleaning regimen with additional focus on deep cleaning of high contact/high touch areas and getting assurances that sufficient supplies of sanitiser could continue to be made available;
- established a sub group of Leadership Team to spearhead our approach to the pandemic in the short term;
- ensured that every Service Area had updated their Business Continuity plans;
- introduced daily briefings for staff, developed a Covid micro intranet site and produced FAQs;
- put together a decision making matrix with a number of triggers which identified what decisions needed to be taken when and by whom;
- held a meeting of the Executive Board on Monday 16 March which made a number of recommendations to the Commission and, subsequently, the Commission made a number of decisions at their meeting held on the same day; and
- earmarked the 20 March as a day all staff should work at home to test capability.

Decision making and governance

From 23 March 2020, the vast majority of staff have continued to work at home and through this period we have continued to maintain consistent and strong governance arrangements. Thrice weekly Executive Board catch ups have been introduced and bi-weekly Leadership Team sessions in addition to the continuation of formal meetings. The Commission, the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and the Remuneration, Engagement and Workforce Advisory Committee have also continued to meet virtually for the duration of the pandemic period and have been kept abreast of our continuing approach.

Business continuity planning, management and delivery

Commission business continuity planning quickly kicked in at the start of the pandemic to facilitate a managed lockdown and transition to virtual working. Significant planning has continued across a range of different areas, including our approach to staff and Member engagement, how we modify HR policies and evaluating how we best deploy our financial, human and technological resources through the period.

The ICT Strategy, agreed in 2018, has at its core, the principles of agility and flexibility. The adoption of cloud services, together with the hardware and software needed to access these services securely, meant that the Senedd was well placed to react quickly to the changes in working practices demanded by the pandemic. It has ensured that we are well equipped to support home working for staff, with most staff now having laptops which can easily connect to our network and access the Microsoft Office 365 suite of packages.

Commission staff have been highly adaptable and flexible during the period, working at high pace and consistently delivering results. The period has helped to drive real innovation in areas such as broadcasting, delivering plenary, providing virtual Table Office (by utilising the portal which had already been introduced) and offering virtual library facilities to Members.

Extensive workforce planning and the identification of critical staff and activities have supported the development of business continuity measures. Where necessary, we have prioritised Covid-related activity and supporting plenary and committee activity. Due to the nature of their work, some Service Areas have seen their workloads increase and, inevitably, some other Service Areas have seen their workloads reduce. We have redeployed staff to provide support and resilience to those areas experiencing higher volumes of work.

Lockdown has also provided a great opportunity to drive the adoption of Microsoft Office 365. The mainstreaming of the use of Teams, SharePoint and similar platforms greatly improved our ability and willingness to work collaboratively. Support services adapted quickly to ensure the right level of training and support was available for Commission staff and Members.

Wellbeing

Commission staff's welfare has been at the core of the Commission's approach to the pandemic, whether people are working on the premises or remotely.

- Appropriate arrangements have been implemented to protect people working on the premises, including increased cleaning of high risk/high contact areas, the introduction of hand sanitiser and wipes at all building entrances, the introduction of one way systems and social distancing regimes within buildings and the use of an electronic booking and occupancy tracker to ensure that building occupancy limits are effectively managed.
- The HR and Estates Teams have worked closely to ensure that staff working remotely have appropriate display screen equipment (DSE).
- The risks of staff working from home relating to isolation, mental and physical health and work/life balance have been recognised. Guidance has been provided to staff, such as, training and staff welfare sessions that have included mental and physical health tips; guidance including office yoga and exercise videos; links to MIND resources and the Senedd mental health toolkit; tips for maintaining mental health during isolation; as well as the provision of occupational health support if required.
- Wider support has included information for anyone experiencing domestic abuse during lockdown, guidance for staff working from home with children, bereavement support and the ability for staff to work from the office premises where it is not possible for them to work from home for either personal, technical or premise reasons.
- Temporary changes have been made to our people policies to ensure staff are adequately supported during these difficult times. The Commission has actively encouraged a balance of flexible working and a focus on outputs and wellbeing, rather than on worked hours alone. This has allowed staff to find their own rhythm with regard to working, caring responsibilities and home-schooling.
- Appropriate procedures have been put in place, including undertaking detailed risk assessments, before staff, on a limited basis, have returned to the estate.

- Business Continuity and Wellbeing Pulse Surveys have been conducted on a regular basis and have allowed us to ensure the wellbeing of our staff, while also informing prioritisation and our business continuity resilience.

Maintaining communications

From the outset of the pandemic, communication with staff, Members and other stakeholders has been an important part of managing our response to this unprecedented period. Early on we identified the health, safety and wellbeing of all building users as a priority for the delivery of effective scrutiny and this has been the driver for our communications.

We have increased our formal and informal communication and decision making structures. This has included shorter but more regular meetings of Executive Board and Leadership team, twice weekly Trade Union Partnership meetings and the prioritisation of team communications by line managers.

At the end of February 2020, a daily communications group was established. This group provides regular communications to staff on the latest developments, policy decisions, FAQs, actions being taken to address the situation regarding work, health care, potential symptoms and home working arrangements. At the same time specifically designed centralised pages on the intranet were developed which act as a library for these updates, as well as providing further information on relevant training, wellbeing support and guidance. Feedback from our six-weekly Wellbeing Pulse Surveys indicate that staff feel well connected to their teams, managers are communicating well, and that the organisation care about their wellbeing. The surveys have continuously demonstrated that 95% of respondents have felt well informed about how the organisation is responding to Covid-19.

All of these internal communications have brought people closer together at a time when we have been physically dispersed. It has also been important to maintain some social interaction and the advent of initiatives such as all staff 'Zoom' meetings has made this possible. We remain committed to bringing staff ever closer together and harnessing the One Team principle for the organisation.

On-going and regular communication with Members has remained important throughout the period. Running in parallel with relevant updates to staff and the Covid-19 intranet microsite has been a version for Members and their staff which keeps them up to date with relevant information. This includes details on issues such as preparing for a return to the estate, guidance on a return to

constituency offices and blogs and briefings prepared by the Research Service which equips Members with information to help inform any questions which constituents may have with regard to the virus.

In addition, we have continued to communicate with our contractors to ensure that expectations are met and that they are kept informed over issues. We have shared information, such as, guidance and risk assessments, and ensured this is cascaded to their subcontractors as necessary. This constant communication and information sharing has been instrumental in assisting us to deliver hybrid plenary and for continuing to provide our services throughout the period.

We have also effectively utilised our parliamentary networks during the period and engaged in conversations around business continuity, HR and Health and Safety, all of which has been mutually beneficial.

Since the beginning of lockdown the Senedd estate remains closed to the public, and face-to-face public engagement, such as school tours and Member-sponsored events, have ceased. A new emphasis was put on digital engagement. Looking across all of our social media platforms we have seen a doubling in the number of users engaging with us and a threefold increase in our Facebook reach. The Research Service has published a range of issues relating to the virus throughout the period and between March and July 2020, there were nearly 130,000 views on the English and Welsh blog sites, and the average number of daily views doubled.

Redeployment of Commission staff



Going into lockdown and working from home, as someone who works in a public-facing role, was tough.

[...] That changed drastically for me when I was invited to take part in the Commission Loan Pool, and was seconded to a department which needed extra support.

Not only was it nice to be busy again, but it has been a fantastic experience to see how the Senedd Commission operates for a different angle, to see that the amazing work culture here persists across departments, and to prove to myself that I can be adapt-able in adverse circumstances, and get some really valuable experiences out of it.

David Lakin

Transferred from Engagement Service to Strategic Transformation Service



Firstly he's so enthusiastic and eager to learn, [...] he picks things up really quickly and from my point of view has really helped take off some of the pressures around month end deadlines. [...] This makes the work so much more manageable.

Leanne Hockey

Line manager of a member of staff who transferred from Security to Financial Services



The loan pool has been invaluable and highly rewarding experience, giving me the chance to apply my research skills in a different environment whilst gaining a further insight in the working of Senedd Commission.

Megan Jones

Transferred from Engagement Service to Research Service



In December 2020 I was offered the chance to move over to HR to work with the Health and safety team on a short secondment, This was in order to help out with the increasing workload that Covid was demanding.

[...] Five months into this new role I find myself feeling more confident about decision making and more able to finish bigger pieces of work with minimal guidance. The skills I have gained in my short time with the health and safety team will massively benefit my substantial role and play a big part in shaping my career in the years to come.

Thomas Donne

Transferred from Security to Human Resources

Learning from our response to Covid-19 and looking to the future

The pandemic has provided over a year of direct experience of new ways of working for Members, the public, and staff, and has required rapid and significant change and continuous learning.

The Executive Board established a senior steering group early in the pandemic to co-ordinate the Commission's response. As part of this, a 'Futures' workstream was initiated to capture the learning and opportunities for the future so that the long-term strategic value to the Senedd and Commission of becoming more flexible, responsive and sustainable could be considered.

The reach and impact of this work is broad, and includes the learning from how Members have worked during this period, in particular in Plenary and committees, to inform the opportunities for the Senedd to work differently in the future. The experience has demonstrated that much of what the Senedd and Commission does can be done in a more flexible environment, through remote and hybrid working.

The Futures workstream has benefited from significant staff engagement during this period. This has included data gathering through staff surveys and the bringing together of representatives from each Service Area across the Commission, the staff equalities and engagement networks, and Trade Union Side, to reflect on their experience. The cross-organisation team made recommendations on guiding principles for flexible working and future use of the estate to enable us to continue to deliver outstanding parliamentary support in a changed world.

A report was prepared for the Executive Board, which provided learning from the pandemic and outputs from the extensive staff engagement. This report provides information for action in the Sixth Senedd, ensuring that, the Commission starts a new term in a strong position to adapt rapidly to the 'new normal'.

Investors in People

In May 2020, the Commission was delighted to attain the Platinum standard accreditation under the new Investors in People (IiP) Framework. With only 2% of organisations achieving platinum, the award truly reflects the excellent One Team ethos of the entire organisation and the pride and passion Commission employees have. It also provides the organisation with a clearer picture of what employees think and feel about working at the Commission, particularly as we all faced a new and uncertain set of circumstances.

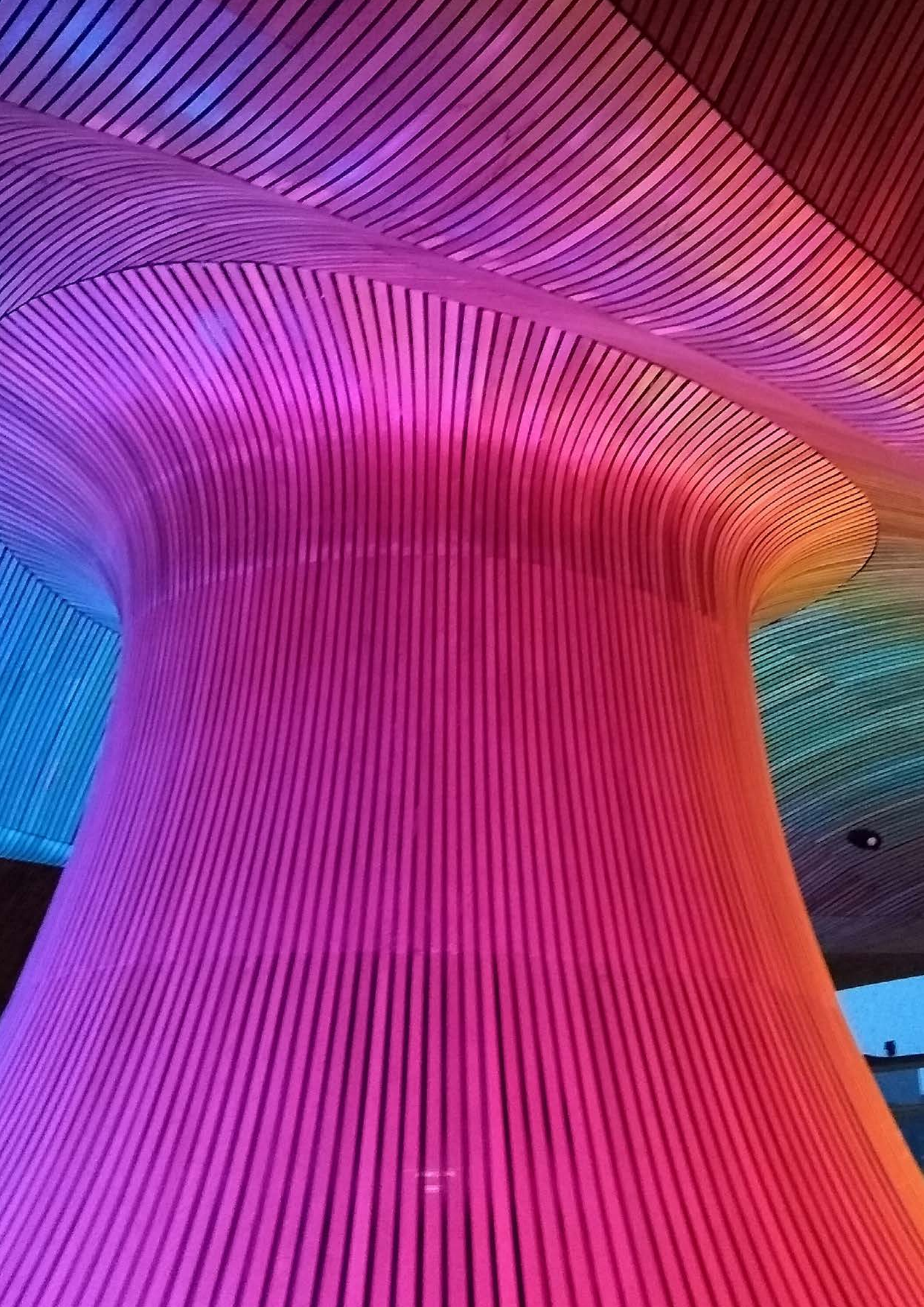
IiP assessors rated the Commission based on a staff survey and a portfolio of evidence, including staff from across the organisation attending workshops and interviews.

Investing in our people has delivered results and supported our response to the pandemic. Through our One Team culture, the Commission has empowered our people to become better leaders, which has been continuously demonstrated in our Wellbeing Pulse and Business Continuity surveys throughout the pandemic. The Commission has supported, developed, and provided the necessary equipment to continue working through the current, unprecedented situation to great effect, with 95% of our staff reporting that they feel well informed, well connected, and clear about what's expected of them.

Through co-designing our values with our employees, the Commission has made the conscious effort to ensure our values are at the heart of our everyday actions by:

- creating internal campaigns that underpin our commitment to our values;
- enabling people to call out any behaviour that goes against our Dignity and Respect policy;
- actively encouraging staff to be critical friends of the Senedd (be it through anonymous surveys, individually, or group consultations);
- supporting the re-establishment of our staff voice network; and
- engaging with all staff networks on policy design and responses.

Achieving the IiP Platinum award, alongside other accolades, including the Times Top 50 Employers of Women, the TIDE awards and others this year, is a real success that helps celebrate our commitment to continuous improvement.



Diversity and inclusion

The Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report 2020-2021 includes detailed information of our work in this area, as well as accompanying workforce and recruitment data, and our equal pay, gender pay gap and ethnicity pay gap data. These reports are available via our website.

The concepts of diversity, inclusion, wellbeing and safety have been central considerations of our decision-making in our response to the Covid-19 pandemic, ensuring that we keep people on our estate and those working remotely safe while day-to-day business continues.

Some of the highlights of this year include:

Virtual recruitment and transformation programme

- We experienced an overnight shift from face-to-face to virtual recruitment activities. We assessed the potential impacts those changes could have by conducting equality impact assessments and ensuring that our candidate management process was appropriate for the new remote interview arrangements.
- In November, an Applicant Tracking System was launched which anonymises applications and enhances our data analytics capability.
- To address underrepresentation of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) people in our workforce, we have developed individual advertising strategies and trialled different platforms for advertising our jobs.
- We have reviewed our virtual onboarding process to ensure that it is welcoming and inclusive; we have ensured that we have diversity in our recruiting panels and that candidate job packs have inclusive imagery and language.

The positive impact of our Workplace Equality Networks and Senior Champions

The visibility of our workplace equality networks has increased, particularly given we have been operating in the context of a remote working environment. They have provided vital peer support and insight for the organisation looking at how protected characteristics intersect and what this could mean for employees.

Notable activities include:

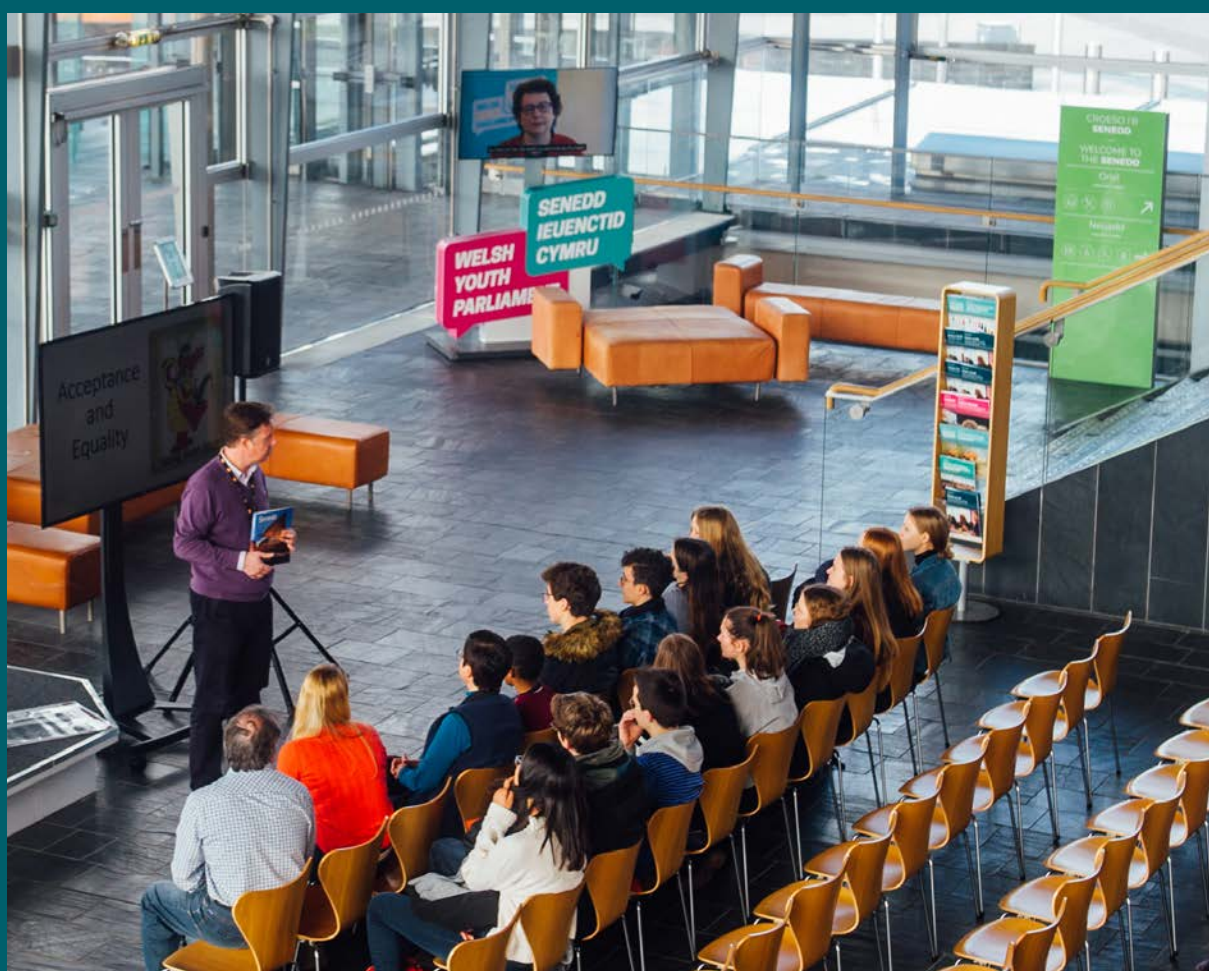
- An all-staff meeting panel, including network chairs, to share experiences of working in the context of lockdown and the challenges and opportunities it presents.
- Our Senior BAME Champion participated in a joint Black Young Professionals and Senedd Commission webinar.
- Network members, chairs and senior champions have designed and participated in topical podcasts and blogs for internal distribution.
- Our REACH network has a presence at Leadership Group meetings to provide insight that might inform inclusive decision-making.
- All our networks have observed key dates including LGBT History Month, Black History Month and Time to Talk Day with materials and tools designed and delivered by network members and their respective senior champions to raise awareness, offer insight into issues that might affect our colleagues and provide a solutions-based approach. Networks have dedicated Teams channels to provide informal ‘drop-in’ support for colleagues.
- Our network members and chairs have been supported with specific training for developing the role of network chairs to: facilitate increased collaboration and build an intersectional approach to diversity and inclusion; enable network members and chairs to empower others; assist the organisation in delivering on its Diversity and Inclusion Strategy; support members’ wellbeing; assist them in providing peer support on sensitive issues and develop coaching techniques.
- Our Leadership Group participated in a Business in the Community (BITC) ‘Let’s Talk About Race’ workshop to understand further the issues around race equality, terminology and privilege.

Other highlights

- The inclusion of diversity monitoring information in the Staff Survey and Wellbeing Pulse Surveys which allows us to gain a greater insight into the experiences of employees with different characteristics.
- A successful virtual Diversity and Inclusion Week where staff could access information and diversity and inclusion-related training.

The Senedd Commission continues to work with our strategic partners, including BITC Cymru on race and wellbeing; Stonewall, Investors in People and Working Families. We also continue to be a Disability Confident Employer, an Autism Friendly Parliament and a Race at Work Charter Signatory.

Going forward we will begin the process of refreshing our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for the Sixth Senedd.





Standards of Conduct Committee

During 2020-21, the Standards of Conduct Committee consulted and took evidence on a new Code of Conduct (the Code) for the Senedd. The review looked at international comparators and examples of best practice from across public institutions.

The Code, produced by the Committee and endorsed by the Senedd on 24 March 2021, has a set of eight overarching principles which are based on the seven principles of public life (commonly known as the Nolan Principles) with an additional principle of respect. The Committee considered the respect principle to be an important inclusion given the work around dignity and respect which has been prominent throughout the Fifth Senedd. This principle puts the need to treat everybody with respect as a key requirement for Members of the Senedd, and that they should set an example in public life. In addition to the 8 principles, there is a set of 24 rules which set out clearly the behaviour that can be expected of Members. The updated code is available on the Senedd website.

The Standards of Conduct Committee worked with the Clerk of the Senedd to appoint a new Standards Commissioner through an open public appointment procedure. The appointment of Douglas Bain, the current Acting Standards Commissioner, was agreed by the Senedd on 17 March 2021.



Sustainability

In an extraordinary year, the way our staff work and how our buildings are used has changed dramatically, in some ways permanently. The pandemic has meant people worked from home, on-site events did not take place, and most of the business of the Senedd took place virtually.

This has of course meant significant changes to our environmental impact, with noticeable drops in utilities use, and huge reduction in travel. Our primary target of ‘energy emissions’ has fallen again this year. Our energy emissions had already halved by the end of the last financial year - our last normal year - during the life of our most recent Carbon Strategy

We have continued to maintain the estate with a consideration of environmental efficiency, whilst focusing on the health of our staff, contractors and visitors. We have also worked hard to produce a new Carbon Neutral Strategy, soon to be published, which will pave the way for our organisation to be net carbon neutral by 2030. Many of the adaptations contained within the Strategy will build on previous work to reduce our energy and travel footprints, whilst including changes to continue making flexible working as easy and effective as possible into the future.

Our environmental work has continued under the banner of a formally-certified management system which includes an annual audit by a United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) accredited body against the requirements of ISO14001 (the international standard that specifies requirements for an effective environmental management system). The following summary shows highlights and statistical data, but further information is published in the Sustainability Annual Report, available on our website.

Energy

Whilst staff numbers were much reduced overall, a comfortable working environment was still required for those present in the buildings, so gas use did not drop very much compared to last year. The flexibility of our infrastructure to respond to reduced staff numbers is something our forthcoming Carbon Neutral Strategy will look to address. This is especially relevant given that

long-term changes to working patterns are likely to be experienced. We will be looking to update our office areas to make better use of space and reduce their energy consumption on days when occupancy is low.

Electricity use is down 25% for the past year. While some facilities in the building such as security measures, data servers and heating pumps have remained active throughout, forced cooling equipment has been switched off to reduce infection risk and lighting and small power demand has dropped significantly. Whereas last year we reported a considerable increase in the cost of electricity (prices rising by approximately 16%), this year there has been a 3% rise in unit rates.

We have taken the opportunity afforded by a quieter estate to progress with several planned facilities projects, some of which will demonstrate reduced electricity demand in the forthcoming year, for example more LED lighting and updated controls for the ground-source heat pump in the Senedd. Our focus for project work in the short term will be building efficiency - making equipment like the BMS (building management system) more effective in reducing energy use in line with reduced building occupancy.

Waste and resources

Waste production was down significantly this year; again a direct result of the reduction in number of building users. Total waste tonnage was almost a half of last year's, with the reduction in number of on-site personnel being offset to some extent by an increase in project work taking place on the estate, as well as the production of waste PPE. The need to ensure the appropriate disposal of items such as PPE during this past year has meant that, whilst none of our waste has been sent to landfill, a higher percentage of the waste that was produced has been sent to an energy recovery facility.

Minimal use of the Senedd building was reflected in significantly-reduced water figures. The amount of harvested rainwater we have used in the building (mainly used in the toilets) was down approximately 70% - a reduction reflected in our water bill for the estate as a whole.

Paper use has also seen a dramatic reduction - down more than 70%.

We continue to procure goods like stationery and our utilities through centrally-coordinated National Procurement Service (NPS) frameworks, and we specify Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) sourced timber in any furniture purchases. Our major contracts are assessed for their sustainability credentials, with associated criteria often added to tender specifications.

Travel

Due to covid restrictions, travel claims have reduced by around 90% with Members and staff utilising more technology-based modes of communication and engagement.

Our most recent travel survey, conducted just before Covid impacted travel, showed staff are using more efficient vehicles than ever and that more are choosing sustainable modes to travel. To support this we have increased storage facilities for cyclists and introduced facilities for electric bike users.

Other Impacts

Our forthcoming Carbon Neutral Strategy will include measures which provide further protection against climate change. Investing in renewables, for example, will ensure at least some of our energy supply is secure and shielded from any volatility in the markets.

Our estate is in an urban location, and our activities in maintaining it do not directly impact on rural areas.

Our support for the biodiversity of the site has continued throughout this past year. We have kept up the minimal cutting operations of the wildflower strip, and maintained the garden areas in the car park; all of which are showing an increase in insect life. We have introduced a third beehive to the Pierhead, whilst the original two have had a very productive year - producing double the honey crop they did in 2019. Our Carbon Strategy also promotes biodiversity; committing to doubling the overall area of green space on the estate through its life.



Greenhouse Gas Emissions 4 5 6		2012-13 (baseline)	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Non-financial indicators (tCO ₂ e)	Total gross emissions scope ⁷	329	297	239	236	234
	Total gross emissions scope ⁸	1,470	955	732	643	438
	Total gross emissions scope ⁹	432	390	316	272	93 ¹⁰
	Total outside of scope emissions	298	5.3	7.4	6.0	4.8
	Total gross emissions	2,588	1,659	1,304	1,156	752
	Total net emissions	2,290	1,654	1,296	1,150	748
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

⁴ All energy data now contains current and retrospective transmission and distribution emissions and well-to-tank emissions where applicable.

⁵ All travel data now contains current and retrospective well-to-tank emissions for fuel use.

⁶ Excludes MS and MSS travel February and March 2021 due to delayed reporting requirements. Previous years have been adjusted as final claims for those years have been processed.

⁷ Includes costs for electricity and air conditioning in offsite server farm from 2010 until its discontinuation in June 2018.

⁸ All energy data now contains current and retrospective transmission and distribution emissions and well-to-tank emissions where applicable.

⁹ All travel data now contains current and retrospective well-to-tank emissions for fuel use.

¹⁰ Excludes MS and MSS travel February and March 2021 due to delayed reporting requirements. Previous years have been adjusted as final claims for those years have been processed.

Energy Consumption ^{11 12}		2012-13 (baseline)	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Non-financial indicators (kwh)	Electricity (renewable tariff from 2018)	3,194,890	2,602,054	2,647,115	2,596,810	1,944,436
	Gas	1,741,299	1,452,075	1,314,772	1,289,334	1,282,969
	Biomass (renewable)	840,438	409,770	492,420	404,690	285,215
Non-financial indicators (tCO2e)	Total energy emissions	1,880	1,363	1,066	962	734
Financial Indicators (£)	Total energy expenditure	458,168	431,187	467,404	521,093	406,650

¹¹ Includes costs for electricity and air conditioning in offsite server farm from 2010 until its discontinuation in June 2018.

¹² All energy data now contains current and retrospective transmission and distribution emissions and well-to-tank emissions where applicable.

Waste		2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Non-financial indicators (tonnes)	Total waste arising	140	142	128	103	59
	Recycled/ Recovery	136	138	124	104	59
	Energy Recovery	-	4.04	4.07	43.0	41.0
	Landfill	5	0	0	0	0
	Waste composted	15.9	17.0	17.0	17.5	2.4
	Hazardous waste	0.15	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.02
	Paper purchased (A4 million sheets equivalent)	1.99	2.92	2.73	2.33	0.86
Financial indicators (£)	Expenditure on all waste disposal	36,455	33,008	39,749	27,025	5,445

Water consumption		2014-15 (baseline)	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Non-financial indicators (m3)	Supplied (direct)	6,117	4,158	6,064	6,281	1,642
	Collected (indirect)	1,554	578	542	515	141
	Abstracted (indirect)	0	0	0	0	0
Financial indicators (£)	Expenditure on supply and sewerage	22,245	15,424	12,189	18,065	10,499

Official Travel ^{13 14}		2013-14 (baseline)	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Non-financial indicators (miles)	Business travel	884,176	724,400	732,235	754,431	61,131 ¹⁵
	Owned and leased vehicles	31,949	16,512	16,705	13,003	913
Financial Indicators (£)	Expenditure on official business travel	349,775	337,805	301,200	300,920	27,941 ¹⁶

¹³ All travel data now contains current and retrospective well-to-tank emissions for fuel use.

¹⁴ Excludes MS and MSS travel February and March 2021 due to delayed reporting requirements. Previous years have been adjusted as final claims for those years have been processed.

¹⁵ Excludes MS and MSS travel February and March 2021 due to delayed reporting requirements. Previous years have been adjusted as final claims for those years have been processed.

¹⁶ Excludes MS and MSS travel February and March 2021 due to delayed reporting requirements. Previous years have been adjusted as final claims for those years have been processed.

The information provided has been developed for our Annual Report and Accounts in accordance with HM Treasury’s Sustainability Reporting Guidance for the 2020-21 financial year. We also use the DEFRA conversion factors for 2020 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 our website.

Manon Antoniazzi
Chief Executive and Clerk of the Senedd
Date: 21 June 2021



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 - 18.

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 20 - 21.

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 no incidents of personal data loss requiring reporting to the Information Commissioner's Office between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021. There were seven incidents 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 - 150).

Auditor

The Accounts of the Senedd Commission are audited by the Auditor General for Wales. The Audit Report can be found at page 156. The estimated external audit cost for the audit of these financial statements is £57,958 (2019-20, £57,958). No additional non-statutory audit work was incurred during 2020-21 (2019-20, 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 151 - 167 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: 21 June 2021

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.

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: 21 June 2021

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 2021.

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 (the Chief Executive) subject to a few exceptions and conditions. This includes the governance arrangements to facilitate the effective operation of the Commission to deliver against its strategic goals.

The governance framework comprises the structures, systems, processes, and the culture and values, by which the Commission is directed and controlled. It defines accountability, relationships and responsibilities among those who work with and in the organisation, determines the rules and procedures through which the Commission's goals and objectives are set, and provides the means of attaining these and monitoring performance. The framework addresses: strategic and operational planning; management of risk and performance; information governance; procurement; and financial management. 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 fraud, corruption and bribery, and whistleblowing.

Compliance with governance principles

The Commission has adopted and complies with a set of governance principles and supporting provisions¹⁷ which are consistent with 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 (page 128) describes how evidence of this compliance 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 Commissioners is included within the Overview section of the Annual Report.

The Commission's Principal Accounting Officer is the Chief Executive and Clerk 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, Engagement and Workforce Advisory 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.¹⁸

¹⁷ <https://senedd.wales/media/oaoav0cg/governance-principles-and-supporting-provisions-branded-march-2021-english.pdf>

¹⁸ Senedd Commission's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Annual Report
<https://business.senedd.wales/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?lId=13291>

The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee's role is to review the comprehensiveness, reliability and integrity of assurances and whether they meet 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; 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 pages¹⁹.

The Remuneration, Engagement and Workforce Advisory Committee makes recommendations on matters regarding the remuneration and terms of service of the Chief Executive and other senior posts and matters associated with the Commission's strategic approach to engagement and workforce development. This assists the Commission in ensuring that remuneration arrangements meet the highest standards of probity and accountability for the use of public funds.

Other

Outside the Commission's governance framework, there is also an independent Remuneration Board with statutory functions to determine the salaries and other financial support available to Members. This Board produces and publishes its own Annual Report.

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 and objectives. The Commission delegates its day-to-day management functions to the Chief Executive. The formal delegation²⁰ outlines exceptions and areas on which the Chief Executive 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, reporting to the Chief Executive. The Director of Finance is a member of the Resources Directorate with a direct reporting line to the Accounting Officer. The Directorates are further sub-divided into service areas, led by Heads of Service.

¹⁹ <https://senedd.wales/commission/senedd-commission-audit-and-risk-assurance-committee/>

²⁰ <https://senedd.wales/commission/delegation-of-senedd-commission-functions/>

The Commission's Executive Board, chaired by the Chief Executive 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.

At the start of the pandemic, the Commission agreed that Executive Board (supplemented by the Chief Legal Advisor, the Head of Governance and Assurance and the Llywydd's senior support officials) should retain operational responsibility for managing the Commission's response to the pandemic, with escalation to the Llywydd for political or significant decisions, particularly those needing to be made by the full Commission or Business Committee in respect of Senedd business. Guiding principles were agreed in relation to the continuity of Senedd business and attendance on the Senedd estate.

Additional governance arrangements during the Covid-19 pandemic

The governance arrangements which were put in place at the start of the pandemic, as outlined above, have helped ensure effective and timely decision-making and communication around decisions with staff, Members of the Senedd and their staff, media and the public.

The Performance Analysis section of the Annual Report and Accounts (under the Use Resources Wisely goal) includes a section on "Sustaining business during the pandemic" which outlines our response in terms of planning and preparation, decision making and governance, business continuity planning, management and delivery, wellbeing and maintaining communications.

To supplement our governance arrangements, early in the pandemic we established a working group to begin the process of planning for a return to the estate (RTE) and also to coordinate guidance for Members and staff. This RTE group has subsequently been replaced by the Covid Reporting and Monitoring (CRAM) group, specifically responsible for monitoring changes to Covid-19 Regulations that impact on the Commission and advising Executive Board, developing and reviewing risk assessments and monitoring data on the impact of the pandemic on the health and wellbeing of the workforce.

A robust governance framework and updated business continuity planning have stood us in good stead, enabling us to meet the challenges posed by the pandemic. We have maintained high standards of governance throughout the year with the co-ordination of governance activity continuing without disruption.

This has included ongoing review, monitoring and management of risk at corporate, operational and project levels; prioritisation of support to ensure continued compliance with information governance and procurement rules; and internal and external audit. Some changes were needed to the original internal audit plan to allow for a focus on real-time assurances around changes to procedures (further details on this can be found in the *Assurance* section of this statement). The audit of the accounts was carried out as planned.

All decisions taken to address risks and issues associated with our response to Covid-19 have been captured. This decision log has proved its worth as a record and is being used to draw lessons and conclusions and to inform our future business continuity arrangements.

Planning and performance measurement

The Commission's strategy for the Fifth Assembly, 2016-21²¹, which was agreed in June 2016, provided direction and informed planning at a corporate and service level. Our goals and priorities, along with the Commission's values, are outlined in the Statement of Purpose section of the Annual Report and Accounts.

The Chief Executive, Directors and the Executive Board have provided leadership in terms of setting out how the goals and priorities are to be delivered through effective service planning.

The Leadership Team carries out annual reviews and scrutiny of Directorate and Service plans which helps ensure effective deployment of our resources for current and future demands across the Commission. The organisation of resources within and across directorates and service areas is done continuously which enables the quick re-assignment of staff in response to emerging priorities and pressures.

The Commission's Corporate Key Performance Indicator Report includes measures which demonstrate the Commission's performance across services. A review of performance measures in response to recommendations from both the Senedd's Finance and Public Accounts Committees, has resulted in the introduction of more relevant, challenging and outcome-focused measures.

The strategic goals and priorities for the Sixth Senedd will be set by the new Commission once appointed following the Senedd Elections in May 2021. This will

²¹<https://senedd.wales/commission/senedd-commission-policy/senedd-commission-strategy-2016-2021/>

be informed by legacy reporting from the existing Commission and Executive Board's review of organisational priorities in light of the evolving needs. Further details on how we are approaching planning for the Sixth Senedd can be found in the *Progress and performance* section below.

Progress and performance

In last year's Governance Statement, a number of areas for focus and development were identified and progress on these is outlined below. These updates include details of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Evaluating lessons learned and the long-term impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic

The Commission has introduced many innovative changes in order to support the Senedd, including remote working, virtual and hybrid Plenary and Committee meetings and electronic voting. These have been well-received and have worked successfully to the extent that we consider that some will become permanent features of the future of business delivery.

Reflections and lessons learned have been presented regularly to the Commission and updates have been presented at each meeting of the Commission's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. Detailed reflections have now also been presented to the Commission to inform discussions about the strategy for the Sixth Senedd, including opportunities to work differently.

In terms of engagement activity, the most successful innovations will be retained to help us reach the more marginalised and disengaged audiences when the pandemic is over. As part of this we will continue to monitor the diversity of those who engage with us through various means and assess the appetite for online events and engagement in a post-Covid world.

Early in the pandemic, we established a senior steering group to co-ordinate the Commission's response. As part of this, a 'Futures' workstream was initiated to capture the learning and opportunities from our experiences of working remotely. From this we will draw together options for further consideration in determining how we will work, where we will work and how we will use the estate in the future, along with how we plan for business continuity. Guided by the new Commission, Business Committee and Committee Chairs, we will draw on these experiences and learning to develop new ways of working that maximise the opportunity for flexibility, efficiency and sustainability.

Planning effectively for the start of the Sixth Senedd

The governance structures which were established to coordinate planning for transition to the Fifth Senedd proved highly effective and have been refreshed and introduced for the next transition. This includes a Sixth Senedd working group and a Scenarios Group, chaired by the Director of Senedd Business and consisting of senior officials from across the Commission to discuss issues ranging from the use of Senedd resources by Members during dissolution, to impact of the timing of the Elections. Alongside this an Election Planning board has, amongst other things closely monitored the risks around moving the Elections.

The Welsh Elections (Coronavirus) Act 2021, was introduced as an Emergency Bill by the Welsh Government and received Royal Assent on 16 March. The Act provides powers for the Llywydd to move the date of the Elections should that become necessary to protect public health.

At the start of the Sixth Senedd, senior Commission officials will advise the Llywydd, Business Committee and Chairs' Forum on a range of Senedd business matters, including the election of officeholders and the structure of Senedd Committees. We are also prepared to support the Senedd, its committees and Members to navigate the UK constitutional landscape post EU-exit, and to embed the new standards of conduct regime.

The strategy for the Sixth Senedd and future ways of operating Senedd business will be shaped by decisions made by the new Commission, Business Committee and Committee Chairs. We will review our structures and adapt our services accordingly. This will include a review of our capacity to serve the Senedd, including the support for Committees, to ensure its long-term success.

Other aspects of preparing for the Sixth Senedd which Commission officials have led on, supported and co-ordinated include: a new Code of Conduct for Members of the Senedd; and procurement of a replacement Legislation Software system.

Commission officials, as required by the National Assembly for Wales (Remuneration) Measure 2010, also support the Independent Remuneration Board. This has included a review and publication of the Determination on Members' Pay and Allowances.

Our plans for engagement activity around the Senedd 2021 Elections and votes at 16 were adapted as a result of the pandemic. This involved shifting rapidly to a suite of online resources, including resources for teachers and students made available through the pan-Wales educational resources site, Hwb.

Strategic planning will also take account of the learning from our response to Covid-19 and decisions around future ways of working.

On-going work around cyber-security and reviewing physical security to keep pace with change

The pandemic has given rise to a world-wide increase in the incidence of cyber attacks and the Senedd is not immune from this. We have continued to strengthen our cyber resilience arrangements and whilst it is rewarding to note that our defences continue to hold strong, we are not complacent. Therefore, we will continue to introduce improvements, carry out vigorous testing and measure ourselves against recognised best practice industry standards. Cyber resilience is also a continuing area of priority for our Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and we report on the cyber threat and our responses at every meeting.

Further details on the management of, and assurances around cyber-security risks can be found in the *Risk identification and management* section of this statement.

In terms of physical security, the Security Service has maintained a presence on the estate throughout the pandemic where the focus has been on ensuring adherence to social distancing rules by all building users. Work is also ongoing, in collaboration with other service areas on ways to strengthen support and mitigate risks to Members of the Senedd in relation to the online abuse as a result of increased use of social media.

Evaluating our approach to project and programme management, including the effectiveness of the Programme and Change Office

An internal audit was carried out in April 2020 to evaluate the effectiveness of programme and project governance arrangements following the creation of a Programme and Change Office (PCO) in 2019. The review identified improvements in the consistency of business cases and project reporting which enabled the Executive Board to make better informed decisions, particularly around prioritisation of projects and monitoring their delivery. Recommendations from that audit are being implemented to further strengthen governance. The system of administering projects from feasibility and project mandate to business case has also been overhauled and improved.

The PCO provides visibility of progress on delivery of projects by presenting, monthly, a progress dashboard, which includes all corporate projects, to the Executive Board. The PCO has also supported the governance around the Return

to the Estate programme and been heavily involved in supporting the various workstreams tasked with implementing arrangements to continue business and plan for future working arrangements.

Accelerating the review of support to Committees

Discussions around the scope of a review of support to Senedd Committees took place during the year and, due to the refocusing of audit work because of the pandemic, it was agreed to incorporate this into planning for the Sixth Senedd. This will allow us to take on board learning from the pandemic and the views and decisions made by the new Commission, Business Committee and Committee Chairs. A review of structures within the Business Directorate will be undertaken alongside a wider capacity review.

Re-energising our efforts around Data Protection / GDPR compliance

During the year we have established the Data Governance Working Group with representatives from ICT and the Governance and Assurance team. The group discusses significant data protection issues and any emerging themes. From this forum, proposals are escalated and presented to the Senior Information Risk Officer (SIRO) for decision. We have also bolstered resources to support our data protection work with the appointment of a permanent Deputy Data Protection Officer and plans are afoot to re-establish an Information Governance Forum.

During the pandemic, the Data Protection Officer and Deputy Data Protection Officer have worked with service areas to ensure data protection impact assessments are carried out appropriately, particularly where there has been a change in the approach to engagement activities. This will continue as we expand our use of virtual and digital engagement.

Full details of the work in this area are included in the Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) Annual Report which is presented to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

Refreshing governance awareness across the organisation

The Governance Matters meetings with each Head of Service, along with meetings of the various governance fora, have continued throughout the pandemic. Furthermore, the importance of governance has been reinforced during these unprecedented times with clear decision making and audit trails being of paramount importance. The Head of Governance and Assurance has regularly attended the more frequent Executive Board meetings during the period and led on an Assurance Workstream as part of a wider Return to the

Estate planning programme. On a more 'local' level regular discussions have been held with individual teams to discuss issues such as data protection and procurement and discussions are ongoing with others around their wider governance awareness needs.

The refocusing of services around public engagement with clear outcomes

In January 2020, the Commission agreed a new strategy to improve how the Senedd communicates and engages with the people of Wales with a stronger emphasis on digital and social media. This strategy was largely drawn from recommendations in a report from an independent review carried out by the Digital and Information Task Force. The pandemic has changed how the strategy has been implemented, but not its basic principles. A focus on digital content, social media and engagement enabled us to serve the greater appetite for information and knowledge of devolution which has arisen during the pandemic.

During the year, and after a 2-month consultation with staff, there has been a restructure within the Communications and Engagement Directorate. Following a successful recruitment campaign, the new Head of Communication and Head of Engagement are now in post.

We also have a new website which is focused on the user's journey on which we have received positive feedback in terms of structure, navigation and search facilities. Alongside this we launched a new petitions website making it easier for petitions to be created and signed. This has resulted in a huge increase in the number of petitions submitted and a 45% increase in signatures per petition.

Further details on a range of outreach and engagement activity, including the Gwlad Festival, changes in approach due to the pandemic and the new website, can be found throughout the Performance Analysis section of the Annual Report and Accounts.

Financial management and performance

Our track record of strong financial management and performance has continued during the pandemic.

Over the year a number of initiatives have been taken forward. A zero-based budgeting exercise was carried out in anticipation of the Sixth Senedd; this provides budget holders and the Executive Board with greater supporting evidence of actual budget requirement.

Each year, a series of exercises are carried out to prioritise investment proposals. These give the Executive Board clarity over the forward work programme and the demands on the project fund. Each quarter, service and project budgets are tested in order to ensure any change in the level of funds required is identified promptly and, where appropriate, funds re-prioritised.

This process was scrutinised by the Finance Committee in March 2021, when it questioned the Commission on its long-term planning and specifically its plans for the Sixth Senedd around large projects such as the windows in Tŷ Hywel and the Commission's sustainability plans for the future.

Throughout the year there has been a particular focus on Covid-19 related financial implications, additional expenditure and also savings. Covid-19 activities have been monitored and recorded via a decision log and the financial impact has been specifically recorded. Updates were provided to the Finance and Public Accounts Committees twice during 2020-21, with a final update following the end of the financial year.

The Finance team has provided training material to service areas to improve understanding, awareness, cooperation and compliance in light of the increased financial fraud during the pandemic.

We received our cleanest audit report to date, with no issues to be brought to the attention of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and no recommendations raised.

An extract from the Scrutiny of Accounts 2019-20 report by the Public Accounts Committee in November 2020 reads:

Conclusion 2. We congratulate the Senedd Commission for a successful audit with no adjustments or recommendations. We acknowledge the work involved in publishing the Annual Reports and Accounts and supporting data reports early, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

The Finance team has been instrumental in developing options for future budget strategy and presentation, resulting in the Commission and Finance Committee welcoming this process for its transparency.

An extract from the scrutiny report on the draft budget for 2021-22 by the Finance Committee in October 2020 reads:

The Committee welcomes the approach taken by the Commission and Chief Executive in working with the Committee to produce transparent financial information. The Committee hopes that this effective working relationship will continue between the Senedd Commission and the Finance Committee in the Sixth Senedd.

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, to decide whether any should potentially be escalated to corporate level. This provides the basis for the quarterly risk review by the Executive Board. Programme and project related risks are reported to the Executive Board monthly.

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 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.

One area of continued focus by the Committee has been around cyber-security, providing independent challenge on the work we do, the investments we make

and the knowledge we develop 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 and respond to scrutiny.

The most recent assurance is provided by an internal audit of the Commission's cyber security backup and resilience arrangements which took place in March 2021.

Details of the Commission's risk profile and how this has changed over the year can be found under Risk Management in the Performance Analysis section of the Annual Report and Accounts.

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 three lines of defence 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 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. Scrutiny and challenge of the process for gathering evidence of assurance and the assurance statements by the independent Chair and member(s) of the Commission's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee adds a further layer of assurance.

This 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

In his role as Head of Internal Audit, the Commission's Head of Governance and Assurance provides assurance across a range of service areas and attends each meeting of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

The Head of Internal Audit has modified the audit plan during the year to reflect the challenging times the Commission has faced in respect of the pandemic and has kept the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee abreast of those changes. Specific pieces of assurance work have taken place to reflect on the Commission's response to Covid-19 after the first six months and an audit of the Commission's management of risks and issues during the period. Additionally, internal audit reports have been completed on cyber security, ICT asset management and Members' expenses. A focus on following up recommendations from prior years has also remained in place during the year.

Aside from traditional internal report outputs, internal audit has played a role in ensuring a suitable framework for decision making was put in place during the Covid-19 period; devising a decision log to record all decisions and leading on the Assurance Workstream of the Commission's Return to the Estate Programme. A large focus of the contribution during the year has been on 'real time' assurance as opposed to retrospective assurance which is reflective of the "fluid" situation the organisation has found itself in throughout the year.

Several scheduled audits have been delayed because of the refocus of the work. These are scheduled to be undertaken during the next financial year but the audit plan for 2021-22 will be kept under review.

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. However, where weaknesses or issues are identified, management continues to take positive action to address audit recommendations.

Internal Audit and Audit Wales (as the Commission's external auditors) continue to have an effective working relationship in line with a joint working protocol. Audit Wales has taken account of the internal audit work on Members' expenses in its audit of the accounts.

The 2020-21 Head of Internal Audit's Annual Opinion and Report concludes that, "...the Accounting Officer can take moderate assurance²² 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.

Other governance areas

The Head of Governance and Assurance produced an Annual Report on Fraud and presented this to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, alongside his Annual Report and Opinion for 2020-21. No incidents of fraud or whistleblowing have been reported during 2020-21.

The Senior Information Risk Owner reported that there were no incidents of personal data loss that required reporting to the Information Commissioner's Office between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021. The Commission continues to use external frameworks and internationally recognised frameworks and standards to guide our governance and assurances around cyber-security. These help us to continue to develop and strengthen our cyber-security controls and to ensure that risks associated with information and data security are dealt with appropriately.

An audit considering the Commission's cyber security backup and resilience arrangements took place in early March 2021 which adds further assurance on the control environment.

Further details on our ongoing work around cyber and physical security can be found in the *Progress and performance* section of this statement.

The Commission carries out formal compliance monitoring against legal and regulatory obligations, reports on which are published on the Commission's website. Examples of this are the Annual Equalities Report, the Official Languages Scheme Annual Compliance Report, the Annual Environmental Report, and the Annual Report of the Senior Information Risk Owner.

Meetings between the Governance and Assurance Team and Heads of Service take place through the year and, alongside the assurance statement exercise, help to identify any areas which need further focus or training. This is then addressed

²² Moderate assurance - some improvements are required to enhance the adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of governance, risk management and control.

through further briefing or targeted training sessions delivered by the Governance and Assurance Team.

Independent assurance

The Commission's non-executive, Independent Advisers provide support and constructive challenge to the Commission and its work. Aside from their important roles on the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and the Remuneration, Engagement and Workforce Advisory Committee they have helped in the staff recognition awards, challenged senior managers as part of the Assurance Statement process and continued to offer support during the difficult period of the Covid-19 outbreak.

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 where further discussions about the external audit process can be held. 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 Director of Finance 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 within the Performance Analysis section of the Annual Report (under Use Resources Wisely).

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 was unaffected by the pandemic. We did, however, adapt the templates and guidance to facilitate reference to the impact of the pandemic on each area reviewed.

Core to this review was a self-review and challenge process carried out within and across Directorates. This was followed by a meeting attended by the Chief Executive, Directors and the Head of Governance and Assurance in February 2021 to review the assurance statements from Directors which had been produced by taking account of detailed assurance maps and statements from each Head of Service. The Chair and one other member of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee attended the meeting to provide independent challenge and scrutiny.

The review covered assurances on:

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

The review concluded that a high level of assurance could be given to the Accounting Officer and that the Commission has maintained consistent and strong governance arrangements throughout the year.

Areas of focus and development for 2021-22

The scale of future change facing the organisation remains significant. Post election, there will be a focus on supporting new Members of the Senedd and the subsequent appointment of new Commissioners and office holders. Members' induction and that of their staff will initially focus on areas of compliance with legislation, including for employment of staff and data protection.

Specific areas of focus and development for 2021-22 will include:

- evaluating lessons learned and the long-term impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic;
- ensuring effective governance around changes to ways of working;
- evaluating lessons learned from the transition to the Sixth Senedd, including effectiveness of Members' induction and training, and advice and guidance;

- concluding the capacity review and starting to implement the recommendations in the context of potential budget constraints/tighter budget for 2022-23; and
- on-going work around cyber-resilience.

Concluding statement

At the end of what has been an extraordinary challenging year, I am confident that the organisation has maintained very high standards of governance and that the systems and processes within our governance framework were operated effectively. As part of our response to the Covid-19 pandemic - and where required - we have added new governance controls to provide greater assurance around decision-making and compliance with regulations. I am satisfied that any weaknesses identified through our assurance processes have been addressed or are in the process of being addressed. I am also satisfied that, over the course of the year, the systems and processes within our governance framework were operated and developed effectively.

Manon Antoniazzi
Chief Executive and Clerk of the Senedd
Date: 21 June 2021



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 has responsibility for setting Members' Pay and Allowances. The Board became operational in September 2010 and was chaired by Dame Dawn Primarolo from September 2015 until September 2020. Dr Elizabeth Haywood was appointed Chair of the Board from September 2020.

The Chair receives a day rate which was £333 for the period from 1 April to 19 September and increased to £400 with effect from 20 September 2020. The four other members of the Board (Ronnie Alexander, Dame Jane Roberts, Michael Redhouse and Hugh Widdis) also receive a day rate. This was £267 for the period 1 April to 19 September 2020 and increased to £310 from 20 September 2020. As an independent Board, it publishes its own Annual Report.

The Determination on Members' Pay and Allowances, published in April 2020, set Members' base salary for the first half of the 2020-21 financial year at £67,649 (2019-20, £67,649). The Determination stated that an adjustment would be made in October 2020 of +4.4%, and thereafter in April of each year, by reference to the change in the ASHE (Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings) gross Median Earnings for full-time employee jobs in Wales between March and March of the preceding year. However, on 24 September 2020, in response to the circumstances brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic, the Board published a further determination which removed that adjustment and therefore Members' base salary and allowances remained at the same level throughout the financial year 2020-21.

The following positions were entitled to additional salaries as follows:

Position	From 1 April 2020	From 1 April 2019
Llywydd (Presiding Officer)	£43,338	£43,338
Deputy Presiding Officer	£22,197	£22,197
Senedd Commissioners	£13,741	£13,741
Committee Chairs (higher) ²³	£13,741	£13,741
Committee Chair (lower) ²⁴	£9,154	£9,154
Business Committee Member	£9,154	£9,154

This table is subject to audit

From 1 April 2020 a leader of a political group without an executive role received an additional office holder's allowance calculated using a base level of £13,741 (2019-20, £13,741) plus an additional £1,057 (2019-20, £1,057) for every member of the group to a maximum additional salary of £38,052 (2019-20, £38,052).

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 website ²⁵.

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.

²³ Committees were Children, Young People and Education; Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs; Constitutional and Legislative Affairs; Culture, Welsh Language and Communications; Economy, Infrastructure and Skills; Equality, Local Government and Communities; External Affairs and Additional Legislation; Finance; Health, Social Care and Sport and Public Accounts; Senedd Electoral Reform and Standards of Conduct. The Committee for Senedd Electoral Reform disbanded following plenary debate of their final report on 7 October 2020.

²⁴ Committee was Petitions

²⁵ www.senedd.wales

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 2020–21 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 Officer²⁶ 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 ^{27 28}		Total	
	2020-21 £'000	2019-20 £'000	2020-21 £'000	2019-20 £'000	2020-21 £'000	2019-20 £'000
Elin Jones MS – Llywydd	110-115	110-115	30	31	140-145	140-145
Ann Jones MS – Deputy Presiding Officer	85-90	85-90	32	33	120-125	120-125

This table is subject to audit.

²⁶ https://senedd.wales/en/abthome/about_us-commission_assembly_administration/abt-presiding-officer/Pages/abt_us-deputy-presiding-officer.aspx

²⁷ 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).

²⁸ 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 in pension	Total accrued pension	CETV at 31 March 2021	CETV at 31 March 2020	Real increase in CETV
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Elin Jones MS – Llywydd	0-2.5	45-50	824	774	17
Ann Jones MS – Deputy Presiding Officer	0-2.5	40-45	768	747	29

This table is 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 2020-21 are listed on pages 16-18.

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.

Name	Title and attendance at meetings
Manon Antoniazzi	Chief Executive and Clerk of the Senedd Manon Antoniazzi attended nine out of nine Commission meetings, five out of five Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meetings and four out of four Remuneration, Engagement and Workforce Advisory Committee meetings.
Siwan Davies	Director of Senedd Business Siwan Davies attended nine out of nine Commission meetings and four out of five Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meetings.
Dave Tosh	Director of Senedd Resources Dave Tosh attended nine out of nine Commission meetings, five out of five Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meetings and three out of four Remuneration, Engagement and Workforce Advisory Committee meetings.
Arwyn Jones	Director of Communications and Engagement Arwyn Jones attended nine out of nine Commission meetings, five out of five Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meetings and three out of four Remuneration, Engagement and Workforce Advisory 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) ²⁹		Total (£'000)	
	2020-21	2019-20	2020-21	2019-20	2020-21	2019-20
Manon Antoniazzi	145-150	135-140	57	54	200-205	190-195
Siwan Davies	95-100	90-95	38	35	130-135	125-130
Dave Tosh	110-115	110-115	48	47	160-165	155-160
Arwyn Jones from 9 September 2019	85-90	45-50	35	19	125-130	65-70
Craig Stephenson to 13 September 2019	-	45-50	-	22	-	65-70
Elisabeth Jones to 31 May 2019	-	10-15	-	22	-	35-40

This table is subject to audit.

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

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

The 2019-20 full year equivalent salary for Elisabeth Jones was £101,346, for Craig Stephenson was £101,346 and for Arwyn Jones was £86,228.

Elisabeth Jones left the Senedd Commission on 31 May 2019 under agreed terms and the cost of £115-120,000 was provided for within the 2018-19 accounts and paid in 2019-20. Craig Stephenson left the Senedd Commission on 13 September 2019 under agreed terms and the cost of £125-130,000 was provided for within the 2018-19 accounts and paid in 2019-20. These payments were part of a wider Voluntary Exit Scheme.

²⁹ 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.

The post of Chief Legal Adviser, previously held by Elisabeth Jones, has remained vacant since 31 May 2019. Legal advice to the Commission since that date has been provided by Huw Williams initially on a secondment via Geldards LLP and from 1 August 2019 on a consultancy basis. The cost to the Commission in 2020-21 was £120,000 (2019-20 - £99,000 for ten months).

Commission staff salaries

The relationship between the mid-point of the banded remuneration of the highest-paid director during the year ended 31 March 2021 and the median remuneration of the Commission staff is disclosed in the following table. Salaries are the annualised, full time equivalent remuneration of all staff (including agency and temporary staff) as at 31 March 2021. They do not include Employer's National Insurance or pension contributions. There were no benefits-in-kind or performance related bonuses payable in 2020-21 or in 2019-20.

Measure	2020-21 Salary £	2019-20 Salary £
Band of highest paid director	145,000 – 150,000	135,000 – 140,000
Median total remuneration	38,362	37,647
Ratio	3.81	3.65

This table is subject to audit.

The median salary has increased by approximately two percent in line with the pay award formula applicable from April 2020. The ratio has increased by around four per cent, as the salary of the highest paid director has moved up one pay point within the band.

In 2020-21 and 2019-20 there was no remuneration paid in excess of the highest-paid director. Remuneration ranged from £18,000, which ensured that employees received a Living Wage, to £146,000 (2019-20, £18,000 to £138,000).

Total remuneration includes salary. It does not include severance payments, employer pension contributions and the cash equivalent transfer value of pensions.

Pensions

Table 4: Senior management – pension benefits

Real increase in pension ³⁰	Total accrued pension ³¹	CETV at 31 March 2021 ³²	CETV at 31 March 2020	Real increase in CETV
£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Chief Executive and Clerk of the Senedd: Manon Antoniazzi				
2.5-5.0	20-25	313	257	35
Director of Senedd Business: Siwan Davies				
0-2.5	0-5	55	28	19
Director of Senedd Resources: Dave Tosh				
2.5-5.0	45-50	765	701	33
Director of Communications and Engagement: Arwyn Jones – from 9 September 2019				
0-2.5	0-5	29	10	12

This table is subject to audit.

Civil Service pensions

Pension benefits for Senedd staff are provided through the Civil Service pension arrangements. 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 with a normal pension age equal to the member's State Pension Age (or 65 if higher). From that date all newly appointed civil servants and the majority of those already in service joined alpha. Prior to that date, civil servants participated in the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS). The PCSPS has four sections: three providing benefits on a final salary basis (classic, premium or classic plus) with a normal pension age of 60; and

³⁰ Real increase in pension and related lump sum at pension age.

³¹ Total accrued pension at pension age and related lump sum at 31 March 2021 for current post holders and at date they ceased to hold office for previous post holders.

³² 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.

one providing benefits on a whole career basis (nuvos) with a normal pension age of 65.

These statutory arrangements are unfunded with the cost of benefits met by monies voted by Parliament each year. Pensions payable under classic, premium, classic plus, nuvos and alpha are increased annually in line with Pensions Increase legislation. Existing members of the PCSPS who were within 10 years of their normal pension age on 1 April 2012 remained in the PCSPS after 1 April 2015. Those who were between 10 years and 13 years and 5 months from their normal pension age on 1 April 2012 will switch into alpha sometime between 1 June 2015 and 1 February 2022. Because the Government plans to remove discrimination identified by the courts in the way that the 2015 pension reforms were introduced for some members, it is expected that, in due course, eligible members with relevant service between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022 may be entitled to different pension benefits in relation to that period (and this may affect the Cash Equivalent Transfer Values shown in this report – see below). All members who switch to alpha have 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 pension figures quoted for officials show pension earned in PCSPS or alpha – as appropriate. Where the official has benefits in both the PCSPS and alpha, the figure quoted is the combined value of their benefits in the two schemes.)

Members joining from October 2002 may opt for either the appropriate defined benefit arrangement or a defined contribution (money purchase) pension with an employer contribution (partnership pension account).

Employee contributions are salary-related and range between 4.6 per cent and 8.05 per cent of pensionable earnings for members of classic, premium, classic plus, nuvos and alpha. Benefits in classic accrue at the rate of 1/80th of final pensionable earnings for each year of service. In addition, a lump sum equivalent to three years’ initial pension is payable on retirement. For premium, benefits accrue at the rate of 1/60th of final pensionable earnings for each year of service. Unlike classic, there is no automatic lump sum. Classic plus is essentially a hybrid with benefits for service before 1 October 2002 calculated broadly as per classic and benefits for service from October 2002 worked out as in premium. In nuvos a member builds up a pension based on their pensionable earnings during their period of scheme membership. At the end of the scheme year (31 March) the member’s earned pension account is credited with 2.3 per cent of their pensionable earnings in that scheme year and the accrued pension is uprated in line with Pensions Increase legislation. Benefits in alpha build up in a similar way

to nuvos, except that the accrual rate is 2.32 per cent. In all cases members may opt to give up (commute) pension for a lump sum up to the limits set by the *Finance Act 2004*.

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 per cent and 14.75 per cent (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 per cent of pensionable salary (in addition to the employer's basic contribution). Employers also contribute a further 0.5 per cent of pensionable salary to cover the cost of centrally-provided risk benefit cover (death in service and ill health retirement).

The accrued pension quoted is the pension the member is entitled to receive when they reach pension age, or immediately on ceasing to be an active member of the scheme if they are already at or over pension age. 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 quoted for senior staff show pension earned in PCSPS or alpha – as appropriate. Where the official has benefits in both the PCSPS and alpha the figure quoted is the combined value of their benefits in the two schemes, but note that part of that pension may be payable from different ages).

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 in 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	2020-21	2019-20
Employed staff	441.55	434.72
Seconded staff	2.08	4.65
Temporary/casual staff	17.62	14.02
Total	461.25	453.39

This table is subject to audit.

At the end of the financial year, the Commission employed 461 full time equivalent staff (31 March 2020: 459).

Table 6: Staff composition by gender and band*

Category	31 March 2021				
	Female	Male	Non-binary	Other Gender Identity	Total
Directors	2	2	0	0	4
Staff	245	235	0	0	480
Total	247	237	0	0	484

Category	31 March 2020				
	Female	Male	Non-binary	Other Gender Identity	Total
Directors	2	2	0	0	4
Staff	245	234	0	0	479
Total	247	236	0	0	483

*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 maintains a strategic focus on absence management and actively supports absences through organisational commitment to wellbeing, supported by effective line managers together with professional advice and guidance from Human Resources and Occupational Health. Wellbeing has been at the heart of the Commission's response during the pandemic, underpinning strategic decision making, right through to practical support and activities during this challenging year. In line with the UK national trend³³, the sickness absence rate for the year was down to 2.07% (2019-2020 - 4.00 %) Absence related to mental health and wellbeing now accounts for 833 days lost (2019-20 - 1,159.5 days). As a percentage of all absences it has increased to 39.7% (from 29% in 2019-20); this is due to a decrease in other reasons for absence.

This year our focus has been to support the health and wellbeing of employees whilst working at home. This has concentrated on practical support including virtual DSE and workplace assessments, supportive policy changes, particularly for those with caring responsibilities, advice on line managing teams remotely, keeping up morale, and a variety of support, guidance and tips for working at home for all staff groups. We have emphasised the importance of continuous communication and engagement with colleagues, through all-staff meetings, informal discussions, blogs. Quarterly wellbeing surveys show that this has had a good effect with 98% of employees reporting feeling supported. While we have seen a marginal improvement in people's physical wellbeing while working from home, naturally we have seen a marginal decrease in people's mental wellbeing and have continued our work on initiatives to support and improve mental health and wellbeing.

Staff Turnover data

Turnover has decreased over the last 12 months to 6.07% (2019-20 14.34%). This is due to the higher than usual levels of turnover in 2019-20 in relation to leavers as part of the Voluntary Exit Scheme. It is also likely this is in part a response to the pandemic, placing a greater emphasis on job security. This year's turnover rate of 6.07%, is down from an average of 10.11% based on the turnover rates of the last 4 financial years.

³³<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/labourproductivity/articles/sicknessabsenceinthelabourmarket/2020>

Staff Engagement Indicators

The 2020 annual staff survey was delivered through an independent survey specialist, Engaging Works. The Engagement Score has been replaced by the Workplace Happiness Score. The Six Steps to Workplace Happiness is a framework that encompasses the six key drivers of employee engagement, happiness and well-being: Reward and Recognition, Information Sharing, Empowerment, Well-being, Instilling Pride and Job Satisfaction.

The global pandemic has brought about rapid change in the way we work as an organisation, and the Survey has played an important role in monitoring the impact of this change on Commission staff. We are delighted that despite the professional and personal pressures faced by all during this unusual period, our commitment to a values-led culture has ensured a continuing strong sense of one team and individual satisfaction.

Disability

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 in terms of accessibility for all aspects of the recruitment process. Reasonable adjustments will be made where required.

Reasonable adjustments are made, wherever possible, following discussions between employees and managers for new starters, employees in post or returning to work following injury or development of an 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. 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. We have received external recognition from partners such as Action on Hearing Loss and we are an Autism Friendly organisation.

EMBRACE, our 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.

Trade union relationships

The Senedd Partnership Forum is a body consisting of management and TUS representatives. In addition to our strategic partnership meeting and an operational partnership meeting to ensure there is opportunity to discuss the breadth of issues across the Commission, for the duration of the pandemic, informal weekly meetings have taken place to facilitate working in partnership on a range of Covid related issues. Each of the three official Unions (PCS, FDA and Prospect) have their own representatives but all three regularly work together to represent all Union members.

Diversity and Inclusion

One of the Commission's priorities for this Senedd term is that 'All Members, staff and visitors can work in a safe environment where dignity and diversity is respected.' As such it is important the Senedd continues to be accessible to the people of Wales and beyond: making it relevant, easy and meaningful for people to interact with and contribute to its work.

It is also important that we are an inclusive employer, enabling all of our staff to realise their full potential. 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 BAME people in our workforce particularly at senior decision-making level. Activities include: broadening our talent pipeline, enhancing our employer brand and working with partners such as Business in the Community to engage more closely as a potential employer of choice with local communities.

Further information can be found in our Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report.

Manon Antoniazzi
Chief Executive and Clerk of the Senedd
Date: 21 June 2021

Accountability and Audit

Statement of Senedd supply and supporting notes

a) Summary of Resource Outturn 2020-21

		Budget	Outturn	2020-21	2019-20
		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	41,953	41,574	379	39,818
Election related costs	Note SOS 01	500	471	29	-
Resources in respect of Remuneration Board decisions	Note SOS 01	16,172	15,595	577	14,956
Annually Managed Expenditure	Note SOS 01	2,000	1,992	8	1,562
		60,625	59,632	993	56,336

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 2020-21

		Budget	Outturn	2020-21	2019-20
		£'000	£'000	Net total outturn compared with budget: under spend /(excess) £'000	Outturn £'000
Net cash requirement	Note SOS 03	56,075	54,648	1,427	53,482

This table is subject to audit.

SOS 03 can be found in the Annex – regularity reporting, page 196.

Notes to the Resource Accounts

(Statement of Senedd supply)

SOS 01. Analysis of net resource outturn 2020-21

	Outturn	Analysis of approved budget	Outturn compared with approved budget	Analysis of revised budget	Outturn compared with revised budget	Outturn 2019-20
Revenue expenditure	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Staff salaries and related costs	24,321	24,858	537	24,858	537	23,596
Movement in accrual for annual leave	512	-	(512)	650	138	-
Non staff costs	16,373	18,001	1,628	16,165	(208)	15,795
Gross revenue expenditure	41,206	42,859	1,653	41,673	467	39,391
Gross revenue income applied	(50)	(220)	(170)	(220)	(170)	(220)
Net revenue expenditure	41,156	42,639	1,483	41,453	297	39,171
Capital expenditure*	418	500	82	500	82	647
Net resource outturn (Commission expenditure)	41,574	43,139	1,565	41,953	379	39,818
Members' salaries allowances and related costs	15,595	16,172	577	16,172	577	14,956
Election related costs - revenue	352	381	29	381	29	-
Election related costs - capital*	119	119	-	119	-	-
Resource outturn	57,640	59,811	2,171	58,625	985	54,774
Members' Pension finance costs	1,992	1,600	(392)	2,000	8	1,562
Total net resource outturn	59,632	61,411	1,779	60,625	993	56,336

This table is subject to audit. * Total Capital expenditure is £537,000.

Net resource outturn – Management commentary

The resource outturn on Commission expenditure, before Members' Salaries and Allowances and pension finance costs, for 2020-21 was £41.6 million against a budget of £42.0 million resulting in an overall underspend of £0.4 million (1.0 per cent) which falls within the Commission's target range of 0.0% to 1.5% of budget.

The Commission submitted two Supplementary budgets in year. The first, in May, was to remove the budget impact of a new accounting standard for leases because HMT delayed its implementation. The second, in March, had two elements: one for the finance cost for the Senedd Members' Pension Scheme, explained further below, and the other to address a substantial increase in the amount of annual leave accrued by staff in year and not taken, due to Covid, and which represents a liability in the Commission accounts. This is a non-cash item and has therefore been shown on its own line in the Statement of Senedd Supply. The underspend on Commission controlled expenditure excluding this item reduces to 0.6 per cent of budget.

The estate was largely unoccupied for much of the year with restrictions in place due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This provided an opportunity to bring forward work to strengthen physical security around the entrances to the Senedd and Tŷ Hywel. Resources were prioritised on the technology needed to support hybrid Plenary as well as virtual working for staff. Other planned areas for investment in 2020-21 included completion of the new website, infrastructure works in Tŷ Hywel, upgrading and extending ICT equipment, especially audio visual and broadcasting systems, and technology solutions to support Plenary, Committees and research. Staff salaries and related costs were underspent against budget by approximately two per cent and this underspend was utilised to supplement the project fund.

From 2020-21 the Commission established a Project fund in order to keep the Commission and Remuneration Board budgets separate. The Members' Salaries and Allowances budget was £16.2 million and the outturn was £15.6 million giving an underspend of approximately four per cent. This was largely attributable to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and significantly reduced costs for Member travel and engagement. These savings are not available to the Commission for operational expenditure.

The Commission's AME budget is for the non-cash accounting adjustment in respect of the future financial liability of the Senedd Members' Pension Scheme. The budget for 2020-21 was laid in November 2019 and the estimate required for

AME of £1.6 million was made based on data available at the time. In June 2020, the Commission received a revised estimate, of approximately £2.0 million, from its professional advisers, leading to the submission of a supplementary budget of £2.0 million for AME during 2020-21.

SOS 02. Reconciliation of outturn to net operating expenditure

	Note	2020-21 £000	2019-20 £'000
Net resource outturn	SOS 01	59,632	56,336
Capital expenditure	4	(537)	(647)
Direct charges on the Welsh Consolidated Fund		775	761
Income payable to the Welsh Consolidated Fund	SOS 05	-	-
Net operating expenditure		59,870	56,450

This table is subject to audit

The direct charges on the Welsh Consolidated Fund £775,092 (2019-20, £761,220) 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 but, as a direct charge on the Fund, are excluded from the net resource outturn.

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 (known as the National Assembly for Wales Commission until 5 May 2020) for the year ended 31 March 2021 under the Government of Wales Act 2006. These 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 related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies. These financial statements have been prepared under the accounting policies set out within them. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by HM Treasury's Financial Reporting Manual.

In my opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the Senedd Commission's affairs as at 31 March 2021 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 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 issued under the Government of Wales Act 2006.

Opinion on regularity

In my opinion, in all material respects, the expenditure and income 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 report. I am 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 report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements, those areas of the remuneration report subject to audit and my auditor's report thereon. Legislation and directions issued to the Senedd Commission do not specify the content and form of the other information to be presented with the financial statements. 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.

Report on other requirements

Opinion on other matters

As legislation and directions issued to the Senedd Commission do not specify the content and form of the other information to be presented with the financial statements, I am not able to confirm that other information within the Annual Report has been prepared in accordance with guidance.

In my opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of my audit, the information given in the Annual Report is consistent with the financial statements.

Although there are no legislative requirements for a Remuneration Report, the Senedd Commission has prepared such a report, and in my opinion that part ordinarily required to be audited has been properly prepared in accordance with HM Treasury guidance.

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 Annual Report or the Governance Statement.

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

- proper accounting records have not been kept;
- the financial statements and the part of the Remuneration Report to be audited are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns;
- information specified by HM Treasury regarding the remuneration and other transactions is not disclosed; or

- I have not received all of the information and explanations I require for my audit.

Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the Principal Accounting Officer for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Principal Accounting Officer's Responsibilities, the Principal Accounting Officer is responsible for preparing the financial statements in accordance with the Government of Wales Act 2006 and HM Treasury directions made there under, for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view and for such internal control as the Principal Accounting Officer determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Principal Accounting Officer is responsible for assessing the body'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 deemed inappropriate.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

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 an auditor's report 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:

- Enquiries 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
- 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. As part of this discussion, I identified potential for fraud in the following areas: revenue recognition, posting of unusual journals and management override of controls;
- 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 the Senedd Commission.

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 and legal advisors about actual and potential litigation and claims;
- reading minutes of meetings of the Senedd Commission, Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and the Executive Board;
- 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.

Responsibilities for regularity

The Principal Accounting Officer is responsible for ensuring the regularity of financial transactions.

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

Report

I have no observations to make on these financial statements.

Ann-Marie Harkin

For and On Behalf of the Auditor General for Wales

Date: 22 June 2021

24 Cathedral Road

Cardiff

CF11 9LJ

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.

Financial Statements

Overview

Performance Analysis

Accountability

Financial Statements



Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure

For the year ended 31 March 2021

Income from operations	Note	2020-21 £'000	2019-20 £'000
Income from sale of goods and services	SOS 05	50	220
Total operating income		50	220
Operating expenditure			
Members, office holders and staff salary costs	2a	32,316	30,604
Members' other costs	2b	9,358	8,709
Members' Pension finance costs	2a and 9	1,992	1,562
Depreciation and impairment charges	3	2,239	2,213
Other administration costs	3	14,015	13,582
Total operating expenditure		59,920	56,670
Net operating expenditure		59,870	56,450
Net expenditure for the year ended 31 March		59,870	56,450
Other comprehensive net expenditure			
Items which will not be reclassified to net operating costs:			
Net gain on revaluation of property, plant and equipment	4	0	(4,639)
Actuarial gain on pension scheme liabilities	2a and 9	(1,182)	(159)
Comprehensive net expenditure for the year		58,688	51,652

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 168 to 195 form part of these accounts

Statement of Financial Position

As at 31 March 2021

Non-current assets:	Note	31 March 2021 £'000	31 March 2020 £'000
Property, plant and equipment	4	61,357	63,059
Intangible assets	5	-	-
Total non-current assets		61,357	63,059
Current assets:			
Inventories		10	10
Trade and other receivables	6	1,900	1,878
Cash and cash equivalents	7	412	60
Total current assets		2,322	1,948
Total assets		63,679	65,007
Current liabilities:			
Trade and other payables	8	(5,003)	(3,876)
Total current liabilities		(5,003)	(3,876)
Total assets less current liabilities		58,676	61,131
Non-current liabilities:			
Provisions	9	(20,412)	(19,602)
Total non-current liabilities		(20,412)	(19,602)
Total assets less total liabilities		38,264	41,529
Taxpayers' equity and other reserves:			
General Fund		38,244	40,699
Pension Fund Reserve	9	(20,241)	(19,431)
Revaluation Reserve		20,261	20,261
Total equity		38,264	41,529

Manon Antoniazzi
Chief Executive and Clerk of the Senedd
Date: 21 June 2021

The notes on pages 168 to 195 form part of these accounts

Statement of Cash Flows

For the year ended 31 March 2021

	Note	2020-21 £'000	2019-20 £'000
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net operating expenditure	SOS 02	(59,870)	(56,450)
Adjustments for non-cash transactions:			
Depreciation, amortisation and impairment	3, 4 and 5	2,239	2,213
Decrease in inventories		0	3
Increase in trade and other receivables	6	(22)	(154)
Increase / (decrease) in trade and other payables	8	1,127	(1,053)
(Decrease) / increase in payables relating to items not passing through the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure		(352)	232
Creation of provisions		0	51
Pension finance costs	9	1,992	1,562
Net cash outflow from operating activities		(55,886)	(53,596)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	4	(537)	(647)
Net cash outflow from investing activities		(537)	(647)
Cash flows from financing activities			
From the Welsh Consolidated Fund (supply)		55,060	53,542
From the Welsh Consolidated Fund (direct charges)		775	761
Payments to the Welsh Consolidated Fund		(60)	(292)
Net cash inflow from financing activities		55,775	54,011
Net increase / (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	SOS 03	352	(232)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	7	60	292
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year	7	412	60

The notes on pages 168 to 195 form part of these accounts

Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity

For the year ended 31 March 2021

	Note	General Fund £'000	Revaluation Reserve £'000	Pension Reserve £'000	Taxpayers' equity £'000
Balance at 31 March 2019		41,344	15,622	(18,028)	38,938
Comprehensive net expenditure for the year		(56,450)	4,639	159	(51,652)
Transfer between reserves	9	1,562	-	(1,562)	-
Welsh Consolidated fund					
Supply (authorised)	SOS 03	54,088	-	-	54,088
Supply (not drawn)	SOS 03	(546)	-	-	(546)
Direct charges		761	-	-	761
Amount payable to the Welsh Consolidated Fund					
Supply		(60)	-	-	(60)
Balance at 31 March 2020		40,699	20,261	(19,431)	41,529
Comprehensive net expenditure for the year		(59,870)	-	1,182	(58,688)
Transfer between reserves	9	1,992	-	(1,992)	-
Welsh Consolidated Fund					
Supply (authorised)	SOS 03	56,075	-	-	56,075
Supply (not drawn)	SOS 03	(1,015)	-	-	(1,015)
Direct charges		775	-	-	775
Amount payable to the Welsh Consolidated Fund					
Supply		(412)	-	-	(412)
Balance at 31 March 2021		38,244	20,261	(20,241)	38,264

The notes on pages 168 to 195 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 2020-21 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 2020–21 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:

- IFRS 16 Leases and Covid-19;
- Fees in the '10 per cent' Test for Derecognition of Financial Liabilities (Amendments to IFRS 9)
- Onerous Contracts—Cost of Fulfilling a Contract (Amendments to IAS 37)
- Property, Plant and Equipment: Proceeds before Intended Use (Amendments to IAS 16)
- Subsidiary as a First-time Adopter (Amendment to IFRS 1)
- Taxation in Fair Value Measurements (Amendment to IAS 41)

- Updating a Reference to the Conceptual Framework (Amendments to IFRS 3)
- Amendments to IFRS 17 Insurance Contracts
- Classification of Liabilities as Current or Non-current (Amendments to IAS 1)

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, except for IFRS 16.

IFRS 16 - Leases

IFRS 16 - Leases provides a single lessee accounting model, requiring lessees to recognise leased assets and the liabilities representing the right to use the leased items and the respective future lease payments.

The rental expense on operating leases previously recognised within the income statement is replaced by a depreciation charge and a finance charge. This will apply to all relevant leases unless the term is less than 12 months or the underlying asset has a low value. The Commission has adopted a de-minimis level of £5,000.

IFRS 16 gives a narrower definition of a lease than IAS 17 and IFRIC 4 and requires that assets and liabilities will be recognised initially at the discounted value of the minimum lease payments, and that the assets, to be described as right of use assets, will be presented under property, plant and equipment. Therefore, implementation of IFRS 16 will increase the value of property, plant and equipment assets and the value of lease liabilities. The Commission has chosen not to apply IFRS 16 to intangible assets.

Impact on 21-22 accounts

For leases signed as at 31 March 2022 (the date of initial application), that are currently reported under Note 10, the impact of adopting the new standard would increase the property, plant and equipment asset by around £114 million and the value of lease liabilities will also increase by around £114 million.

Depreciation and Finance Costs, which replace rental payments, will be charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure (SoCNE). Rental payments will be charged to the lease liability in future.

The adoption of IFRS 16 will result in a decrease of approximately £2.8 million in net cash outflow from operating activities, offset by a corresponding increase in net cash outflow from financing activities. There will, however, be no overall cash flow impact from the adoption of the new standard.

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

The minimum level for capitalisation of a tangible asset is £5,000 inclusive of irrecoverable VAT, except where the nature of the transaction suggests that capitalisation may be more appropriate.

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 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:

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:	Three to six 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: Leases of land and property that transfer substantially all of the risks and rewards of ownership are classified as finance leases. 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.

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 March 2016 on 26 February 2019. 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 website³⁴.

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:

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.

³⁴ <https://senedd.wales/en/memhome/pay-expenses-financial-interests-standards/Pages/mem-pay.aspx>

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 1: Staff costs comprise

Category	Staff £'000	Members and office holders £'000	Total 2020-21 £'000	Total 2019-20 £'000
Salaries				
Permanent Staff, Members and office holders	17,909	5,303	23,212	22,286
Temporary and Agency Staff	537	-	537	-
Seconded staff	72	-	72	227
Social security costs				
Permanent Staff, Members and office holders	1,909	666	2,575	2,506
Temporary and Agency Staff	51	-	51	-
Seconded staff	7	-	7	15
Other pension costs				
Permanent Staff, Members and office holders	4,761	1,043	5,804	5,642
Temporary and Agency Staff	110	-	110	-
Seconded staff	17	-	17	26
Subtotal Members, office holders and staff salary costs	25,373	7,012	32,385	30,702
Less recoveries in respect of outward secondments	(69)	-	(69)	(98)
Total Members, office holders and staff salary costs	25,304	7,012	32,316	30,604

There was one severance payment made to a member of Commission staff in the band £0 - 20,000 (2019-20, nil payments.)

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 2021 there were 60 serving Members of the Senedd. At the year-end there were 40 office holder posts of which 14 formed the Cabinet: one First Minister, eight Ministers of whom one is also Counsel General, and five Deputy Ministers of whom one is also Chief Whip.

Civil Service Pension arrangements

For 2020-21 employer's contributions of £4.846 million (2019-20, £4.567 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 a stakeholder pension arrangement. Contributions due to the partnership pension providers at the Statement of Financial Position date were £24,549 (2019-20, £23,455). 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 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.

The Remuneration Board as part of its Determination for the Fifth Senedd introduced a new career average pension scheme 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. Members aged 55 or over on 1 April 2012 are subject to 'Transitional Protection' and continued to have their

benefits calculated on a final salary basis for an additional five years until 5 May 2021.

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 for new members and for those who moved to the CARE scheme on 6 May 2016. Members aged 55 or over on 1 April 2012 are subject to 'Transitional Protection' and continue to have their benefits calculated on a final salary basis for an additional five years until 5 May 2021. These members will continue to contribute at their current rate of either 10 per cent or 6 per cent for 40th or 50th accrual respectively until 5 May 2021. With effect from 6 May 2021 all Members are now in the CARE scheme. The employer contribution rate is currently 19.9 per cent and is subject to a cap. The last actuarial valuation of the Scheme took place as at 31 March 2020.

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. The Trustees invest in a Diversified Growth fund ("DGF"), a Sustainable Real Return fund, a Private Markets fund, an Ethical Global Equity Index (hedged and unhedged) fund, a Property fund and an Index Linked Gilts fund. During the year, the Trustees recognised that the current asset allocation across the two Diversified Growth funds could be better aligned with the Trustees' objectives to reduce the Scheme's exposure to the Oil and Gas sector to zero over a five year period, subject to the availability, over that timescale, of suitable investment vehicles for the size of the Scheme. In light of this, in December 2020 the Trustees agreed to reduce the Scheme's exposure to the Baillie Gifford Diversified Growth Fund in favour of the BNY Mellon Sustainable Real Return fund.

The change is not expected to have a material impact on the level of expected return associated with the Scheme's investment strategy or to compromise the Scheme's ability to target the required level of investment return to support the actuarial valuation assumptions. The change is based on the Board's belief that long-term investment returns are more likely to be secured from sustainable companies.

At the Pension Board meeting on 16 March 2021 the Board agreed to hedge half the Scheme's direct exposure so that c.12.5% of the Scheme's assets held in direct equity holdings would remain exposed to overseas currency via the currency unhedged fund.

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 April 2020.

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 20 years.

Table 2: The amounts recognised in the Statement of Financial Position are as follows

	Note	31 March 2021 £'000	31 March 2020 £'000
Present value of scheme liabilities		(63,885)	(54,679)
Fair value of scheme assets		43,644	35,248
Net liability		(20,241)	(19,431)
Amount in the Statement of Financial Position			
Liabilities		(20,241)	(19,431)
Assets		-	-
Net liability	9	(20,241)	(19,431)

Table 3: Analysis of amounts charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure

	2020-21 £'000	2019-20 £'000
Current service cost	2,488	2,090
Interest on pension liability	1,253	1,347
Interest on scheme assets	(798)	(915)
	2,943	2,522
Allocated in the account as:		
Other pension costs	951	960
Pension finance costs	1,992	1,562
	2,943	2,522

Table 4: Analysis of amounts recognised in the Statement of Change in Taxpayer's Equity (SCITE)

	2020-21 £'000	2019-20 £'000
Actual return less interest on scheme assets	7,144	(3,220)
Experience gains and losses arising on pension liabilities	355	(635)
Changes in assumptions	(6,317)	4,014
Net actuarial gains recognised in SCITE	1,182	159

Table 5: Movement in liabilities during the year

	31 March 2021 £'000	31 March 2020 £'000
Liabilities at 1 April	54,679	55,178
Current service cost (net of member contributions)	2,488	2,090
Member contributions (including net transfers-in)	498	502
Benefits paid during the year	(995)	(1,059)
Interest on pension liability	1,253	1,347
Actuarial losses/(gains)	5,962	(3,379)
Liabilities at 31 March	63,885	54,679

Table 6: Movement in assets during the year

	31 March 2021 £'000	31 March 2020 £'000
Assets at 1 April	35,248	37,150
Interest on scheme assets	798	915
Actual return less interest on scheme assets	7,144	(3,220)
Employer contributions	951	960
Contributions by Members (including net transfers-in)	498	502
Benefits paid and expenses	(995)	(1,059)
Closing fair value of scheme assets at 31 March	43,644	35,248

The Commission expects to contribute £980,977 to the Members of the Senedd Pension Scheme in 2021-22.

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

Table 7: major categories of scheme assets as a percentage of total scheme assets

	2020-21	2019-20
Equities	53%	38%
Alternative investments	15%	20%
Property	7%	9%
Fixed interest and cash	25%	33%
	100%	100%

The Pension Board carried out a review of the Scheme's investment strategy in 2020. As a result of the review the assets of the Scheme invested in a diverse spread of funds as follows:

- Baillie Gifford Diversified Growth
- BNY Mellon Sustainable Real Return
- Legal & General Investment Management ("LGIM") Managed Property
- Partners Group Generations
- LGIM Ethical Global Equity Index

- LGIM Over 5 Year Index-Linked Gilt
- 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)

This strategy is forecast to deliver a similar expected level of return to the Scheme's previous investment strategy. The total market value of the Funds invested at 31 March 2021 was £43.6 million (31 March 2020, £35.2 million)

The Scheme's investment portfolio generated a return of approximately 23.6%. This was driven by the significant rise in return seeking markets (e.g. equity) during 2020-21 (2019-20, -12% return). The actual return on scheme assets during 2020-21 was a gain of £8.2 million (2019-20, £2.2 million loss). This return was generated by positive performance across all of the Scheme's funds during this period.

The Scheme's investment strategy underperformed against equity markets over the same period, which were up over 50% (in local terms), but outperformed both UK long term Government bonds (which returned c.-10.4%) and the Scheme's discount rate (Consumer Prices Index plus 2.5%), which returned c.3.2%.

Principal actuarial assumptions at the Statement of Financial Position date:

Table 8: Principal actuarial assumptions at the Statement of Financial Position date

Assumption	31 March 2021	31 March 2020
Discount rate	1.95%	2.25%
Future earnings increases – in excess of discount rate	-2.20%	-1.75%
Future pension increases (CPI) – in excess of discount rate	-0.45%	0.25%
Expectation of life at age 65 (years):		
Male	23.8	23.7
Female	25.2	25.1
Widows	24.0	23.9

Sensitivity to main assumptions

If the real rate of return in excess of earnings changes by 0.5 per cent a year, the total actuarial liability would change by around 1.0 per cent and the change in total liabilities by circa £0.6 million.

If the real rate of return in excess of pension changes by 0.5 per cent a year the total actuarial liability would change by about 9.5 per cent and the change in total liabilities by circa £6.1 million.

If longevity at retirement were assumed to be 2 years greater, this would increase the total actuarial liability by about 8 per cent and would increase total liability by circa £5.1 million.

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

Table 9: Amounts for the current and previous four periods

	31 March 2021 £'000	31 March 2020 £'000	31 March 2019 £'000	31 March 2018 £'000	31 March 2017 £'000
Defined benefit obligation	63,885	54,679	55,178	50,385	49,456
Scheme assets	43,644	35,248	37,150	35,406	33,713
Net liability	(20,241)	(19,431)	(18,028)	(14,979)	(15,743)
Experience gains and losses arising on pension liabilities	355	(635)	(370)	297	160
Actual return less interest on scheme assets	7,144	(3,220)	388	669	3,615

Further information on the Members of the Senedd Pension Scheme³⁵ can be found in the Annual Report and Accounts for the scheme for the year ending 31 March 2021.

³⁵ <https://senedd.wales/en/memhome/pay-expenses-financial-interests-standards/Pages/mem-pay.aspx>

02. B – Members' other costs

Members' other costs of £9.358 million (2019-20, £8.709 million) in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure consist of:

Category	2020-21 £'000	2019-20 £'000
Office Costs	998	889
Additional Costs	245	244
Members' Staff Costs	8,082	7,370
Travel costs	33	206
Total Members' other costs	9,358	8,709

Members' staff costs include five severance payments, totalling £26,716, made in 2020-21, (2019-20, seven payments totalling £35,907).

The Senedd has a group stakeholder (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, there is an option for the employee to make a regular monthly contribution. The Scheme was compliant with automatic enrolment legislation and the Scheme's re-enrolment staging date was 1 January 2021. The employer pension contributions paid in 2020-21 were £775,792 (2019-20, £700,461).

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.

During the financial year 2020-21 Douglas Bain held the post of Acting Commissioner for Standards. Following a recruitment process, Douglas Bain was appointed as Commissioner with effect from 1 April 2021. More information about Douglas Bain and his work as the Acting 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 Acting Commissioner and the salary costs of his support staff. In addition, during 2020-21, the Acting Commissioner sought legal advice on a number of matters. This advice was provided by Commission staff and, in one instance, supplemented by external support.

Staffing hours and costs

Nature of cost	2020-21		2019-20	
	Hours	Costs	Hours	Costs
Commissioner Hours	-	-	220	-
Commissioner Costs	-	-	-	£17,900
Acting Commissioner Hours	540	-	171	-
Acting Commissioner Costs	-	£42,517	-	£12,898
Costs charged to the Welsh Consolidated Fund		£42,517		£30,798
Support Staff Costs		£89,570		£123,630
Legal Support Costs		£16,667		-
Directly attributable resource costs supplied by the Commission		£106,237		£123,630

03. Other administration costs

Other administration costs of £16.4 million (2019-20, £15.8 million) in the Statement of Comprehensive Expenditure consist of:

	2020-21 £'000	2019-20 £'000
Leases – buildings	2,790	2,794
Leases – other	68	75
Accommodation and facilities costs	5,736	5,669
ICT costs	3,724	2,705
Administrative expenses	1,350	1,737
Staff related costs	347	602
Other administration costs	14,015	13,582
Depreciation, amortisation and impairment charges	2,239	2,213
Total Other administration costs	16,254	15,795

The estimated external audit cost for the audit of these financial statements is £57,958 (2019-20, £57,958). No additional non-statutory audit work was incurred in 2020-21 (2019-20, nil).

Impact of Covid-19 on supply contracts

In common with many other public bodies the Senedd Commission maintains a number of contracts for supply of services. In March 2020 Cabinet Office produced a Procurement Policy Note (PPN) "Supplier relief due to Covid-19"³⁶ to provide advice and guidance for public bodies on payment of their suppliers to ensure continuity of service during and after the Covid-19 outbreak. An extract from the PPN reads: "Contracting authorities should act now to support suppliers at risk so they are better able to cope with the current crisis and to resume normal service delivery and fulfil their contractual obligations when the outbreak is over" and continues: "It is vital that contracting authorities pay all suppliers as quickly as possible to maintain cash flow and protect jobs. Contracting authorities should also take action to continue to pay suppliers at risk due to Covid-19 on a continuity and retention basis."

³⁶https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/874178/PPN_02_20_Supplier_Relief_due_to_Covid19.pdf

The Commission studied each arrangement in turn to identify the financial contract implications and worked with the suppliers concerned in an open and transparent manner. In the financial year 2020-21 the Commission paid £0.363 million (2019-20, nil) to support and secure supply contracts but did not receive any services. This amount is included in the expenditure heading ‘Accommodation and Facilities costs’.

04. Property, plant and equipment

	Land and buildings	ICT	Fixtures and fittings ³⁷	Assets under construction	2020-21 Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Cost or valuation					
At 1 April 2020	61,131	7,166	1,519	167	69,983
Additions	-	200	293	44	537
Reclassification	-	-	20	(20)	-
Disposals	-	-	(43)	-	(43)
At 31 March 2021	61,131	7,366	1,789	191	70,477
Depreciation					
At 1 April 2020	-	(6,041)	(883)	-	(6,924)
Charged in year	(1,683)	(467)	(89)	-	(2,239)
Disposals	-	-	43	-	43
At 31 March 2021	(1,683)	(6,508)	(929)	-	(9,120)
Carrying amount at 31 March 2021	59,448	858	860	191	61,357
Carrying amount at 31 March 2020	61,131	1,125	636	167	63,059

The carrying amount of land and buildings held under lease arrangements as at 31 March 2021 is £4.185 million (31 March 2020, £4.250 million).

The latest revaluation of land and buildings was undertaken by DS Gibbon FRICS of Avison Young (UK) Limited, as at 31 March 2020, in accordance with the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors Valuation Standards. The Senedd and the Pierhead were re-valued at depreciated replacement cost (DRC) as a proxy for current value. The valuer's approach included calculating the cost of constructing modern equivalent buildings and depreciating the cost to account for the age and future economic life of the buildings.

³⁷ Fixtures and fittings includes 'donated assets', consisting of the Mace donated by the Parliament of New South Wales for the opening of the Senedd.

Impairment reviews did not identify any indications of impairment at 31 March 2021 and hence no impairments have been recognised.

	Land and buildings	ICT	Fixtures and fittings ³⁸	Assets under construction	2019-20 Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Cost or valuation					
At 1 April 2019	61,641	6,817	1,376	12	69,846
Additions	-	349	131	167	647
Reclassification	-	-	12	(12)	-
Revaluation	(510)	-	-	-	(510)
At 31 March 2020	61,131	7,166	1,519	167	69,983
Depreciation					
At 1 April 2019	(3,432)	(5,628)	(800)	-	(9,860)
Charged in year	(1,717)	(413)	(83)	-	(2,213)
Revaluation	5,149	-	-	-	5,149
At 31 March 2020	-	(6,041)	(883)	-	(6,924)
Carrying amount at 31 March 2020	61,131	1,125	636	167	63,059
Carrying amount at 31 March 2019	58,209	1,189	576	12	59,986

³⁸ 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

Intangible assets comprise software and software licences for major systems used by the Commission:

	Software £'000	2021 Total £'000
Cost or valuation		
At 1 April 2020 and at 31 March 2021	884	884
Amortisation		
At 1 April 2020 and at 31 March 2021	(884)	(884)
Carrying amount at 31 March 2020 and 2021	-	-

	Software £'000	2020 Total £'000
Cost or valuation		
At 1 April 2019 and at 31 March 2020	884	884
Amortisation		
At 1 April 2019 and at 31 March 2020	(884)	(884)
Carrying amount at 31 March 2019 and 2020	-	-

06. Trade and other receivables

	31 March 2021 £'000	31 March 2020 £'000
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Trade receivables	44	115
Other receivables	12	21
Prepayments	1,647	1,485
Recoverable VAT	197	257
	1,900	1,878

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

07. Cash and cash equivalents

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Balance at 1 April	60	292
Net change in cash and cash equivalent balances	352	(232)
Balance at 31 March	412	60
The following balances at 31 March were held at:		
Government Banking Service	98	44
Commercial banks and cash in hand	314	16
Balance at 31 March	412	60

08. Trade payables and other current liabilities

	31 March 2021 £'000	31 March 2020 £'000
Amounts falling due within one year:		
VAT payable	4	15
Other taxation and social security	838	805
Trade payables	622	1,083
Accruals	3,127	1,913
Amounts due to the Welsh Consolidated Fund	412	60
	5,003	3,876

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	2020-21 Total £'000	2019-20 Total £'000
Balance at 1 April	19,431	171	19,602	18,148
Decrease in provision	(1,182)	-	(1,182)	(108)
Pension finance costs	1,992	-	1,992	1,562
Balance at 31 March	20,241	171	20,412	19,602

Under IAS 19, a liability of £20.241 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 £20.412 million (2019-20, £19.602 million), no amount is expected to crystallise within one year (2019-20, £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 2021 £'000	31 March 2020 £'000
Land and buildings:		
Not later than one year	2,796	2,796
Later than one year but not more than five years	11,120	11,156
Later than five years	16,629	19,389
	30,545	33,341
Other – car, printers and copiers:		
Not later than one year	40	14
Later than one year but not more than five years	122	9
	162	23

(b) Finance leases

There are no current obligations under finance leases.

11. Capital and other commitments

There were no contracted capital commitments at 31 March 2021 and 31 March 2020.

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). Standing Orders of the Senedd require the Senedd, on a motion proposed by the Commission, to elect Trustees to the Members of the Senedd Pension Scheme.

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 employ family members as their support staff. However, this is only permitted where the Member plays no part in the fair and open selection process, which is conducted by Commission staff on their behalf.

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.

15. Subsequent events

Senedd election

As a result of the Senedd election on 6 May 2021, it will be necessary to pay the costs relating to MS resettlement claims, defeated Senedd Members' support staff redundancies and other related costs. This is estimated at £2.6 million.

The amounts paid as resettlement claims are calculated as set out in the Remuneration Board's Determination. The Remuneration Board is the independent body responsible for setting the pay, pensions and allowances of Senedd Members and their staff.

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 2020–2021 Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) 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 / (decrease) in cash

	31 March 2021 £'000	31 March 2020 £'000
Net cash requirement	(54,648)	(53,482)
From the Consolidated Fund (supply) – current year	56,075	54,088
Amounts due from the Consolidated Fund not drawn	(1,015)	(546)
Amounts paid to the Consolidated Fund	(60)	(292)
Increase/(decrease) in cash	352	(232)

This table is subject to audit.

SOS 04 Reconciliation of Net Resource Outturn to Net Cash Requirement 2020-21

	Note	Budget £'000	Outturn £'000	Net total outturn compared with budget: under spend/(excess) £'000	Outturn 2019-20 £'000
Net Resource Outturn	SOS 01	60,625	59,632	993	56,336
Accruals adjustments					
Non-cash items	See below	(4,250)	(4,231)	(19)	(3,775)
Changes in working capital other than cash		(300)	(753)	453	921
Net cash requirement		56,075	54,648	1,427	53,482

<i>Non-cash items</i>	Note	Budget £'000	Outturn £'000	Outturn compared with budget 2020-21 £'000	Outturn 2019-20 £'000
Depreciation and amortisation and de- recognition	4 and 5	(2,250)	(2,239)	(11)	(2,213)
Pension finance costs and other provision movements	9	(2,000)	(1,992)	(8)	(1,562)
		(4,250)	(4,231)	(19)	(3,775)

This table is subject to audit.

SOS 05 Analysis of income payable to the Welsh Consolidated Fund

	Budget 2020-21 £'000	Outturn 2020-21 £'000	Outturn 2019-20 £'000
Retainable operating income	220	50	220
Subtotal	220	50	220
Amount retained	220	50	220
Amount payable to the WCF	-	-	-

There has been no other operating income in 2020–21 (2019-20, nil).

This table is subject to audit.





Senedd Cymru
Welsh Parliament