

Agenda – Finance Committee

Meeting Venue: Hybrid – Committee room 4 Tŷ Hywel and video conference via Zoom	For further information contact: Owain Roberts Committee Clerk 0300 200 6388 SeneddFinance@senedd.wales
Meeting date: 1 October 2025	
Meeting time: 09.30	

Registration

(09.00 – 09.15)

Private Pre-meeting

(09.15 – 09.30)

1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

(09.30)

2 Scrutiny of the Senedd Commission Draft Budget 2026–27: Evidence session

(09.30 – 10.30)

(Pages 1 – 57)

Elin Jones MS, Llywydd, Senedd Commission

Manon Antoniazzi, Chief Executive and Clerk of the Senedd, Senedd Commission

Lisa Bowkett, Chief Finance Office, Senedd Commission

Ed Williams, Director of Resources, Senedd Commission

Break

(10.30 – 10.45)

3 Financial implications of the Building Safety (Wales) Bill: Evidence session

(10.45 – 11.45)

(Pages 58 – 88)

Jayne Bryant MS, Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government, Welsh Government



Tania Nicholson, Deputy Director, Housing Quality, Welsh Government
Audrey Johns, Head of Building Safety Occupation Phase Policy, Welsh Government
Adrian Davies, Bill Manager, Welsh Government

Supporting documents:

[Building Safety \(Wales\) Bill, as introduced](#)

[Explanatory Memorandum](#)

- 4 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 (ix) to resolve to exclude the public from the remainder of this meeting.**
(11.45)
- 5 Financial implications of the Building Safety (Wales) Bill: Consideration of evidence**
(11.45 – 11.55)
- 6 Scrutiny of the Senedd Commission Draft Budget 2026–27: Consideration of evidence**
(11.55 – 12.05)
- 7 Financial implications of the Homelessness and Social Housing Allocation (Wales) Bill: Consideration of draft report**
(12.05 – 12.20) (Pages 89 – 114)
- 8 Financial implications of the Environment (Principles, Governance and Biodiversity Targets) (Wales) Bill: Consideration of draft report**
(12.20 – 12.35) (Pages 115 – 133)
- 9 Financial implications of the Prohibition of Greyhound Racing (Wales) Bill**
(12.35 – 12.40)
Documents for this item will be included in a supplementary pack

10 Chair's Forum – Consultation: Reviewing Committee Effectiveness in the Sixth Senedd: Consideration of draft response

(12.40 – 12.45)

(Pages 134 – 137)

Draft Budget 2026-27

October 2025



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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Draft Budget 2026-27

October 2025





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1. Introduction

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 budget for the Senedd Commission (“the Commission”) is used to ensure that the Senedd is provided with the property, staff and services required for the Senedd's purposes. It also covers the costs of salaries and allowances of Members and their staff as determined by the Independent Remuneration Board.

Members of the Senedd carry significant responsibility. They make laws for Wales, represent the interests of Wales and its people, hold the Welsh Government to account and agree Welsh taxes. In turn, the Commission provides the specialist skills, support services and resources to support Members in carrying out their scrutiny, legislative and representational roles.

The Commission would like to pay tribute to the former Commissioner for Governance and Budget Hefin David who sadly passed away in August 2025.

As the Commissioner for Finance he was engaged, supportive and passionate about the work of the Commission and for securing the resources required to deliver outstanding parliamentary services for Members of the Senedd.

2. The Budget

The Commission's budget for 2026-27 totals £102.672 million and provides for:

- **Expenditure under the Commission's direct control, including a Project Fund (the operational budget);**
- **Three ring-fenced budgets;**
 - **Expenditure relating to preparatory work for Senedd Reform;**
 - **Future accommodation project (Bay 32)**
 - **Election related expenditure**
- **Depreciation (a non-cash expense);**
- **The budget identified for the Independent Remuneration Board's Determination on Members' Pay and Allowances;**
- **The budget for the clerking, administrative and other costs to provide support to the Independent Remuneration Board;**
- **The budget for the Office of the Standards Commissioner; and**
- **The accounting provision for the Members of the Senedd Pension Scheme under HM Treasury's Annually Managed Expenditure ("AME") heading (Pension Finance Cost).**

2026-27 is the first year of the Seventh Senedd. This is, then, the first budget to fully support a Parliament that will be comprised of 96 Members. There has been significant investment in the estate over the last two financial years to accommodate the additional Members, both via the provision of office space in Ty Hywel and re-configuring the Siambr.

The Commissioner for Governance and Budget, along with officials, undertook engagement in the development of this budget to ensure it is robust, reflect Members' views and represents value for money.

2026-27 is an election year. There are a number of costs arising directly as a result, for which separate budget provision has to be made. This is primarily to meet the costs of winding-up the offices of Members who are not returned, in the form of resettlement grants and winding-up payments to Members and redundancy

payments to their staff. This is a ring-fenced provision; any surplus will be returned to the Welsh Consolidated Fund. An element of this budget will also be used to raise awareness of the election in the month preceding and the official Opening of the Parliament, expected to take place in the autumn.

The Commission is repurposing the two programmes of work as the preparatory work for Senedd Reform is now nearing completion and moving into the delivery of support for the expanded Parliament. The budgets continue to be ring-fenced to aid transparency. The Senedd Commission has given a commitment that any unutilised funding from within these ring-fenced amounts will be returned to the Welsh Consolidated Fund.

As part of this streamlining of the Commission's change structures, the Bay 32 project to secure office accommodation for the Commission at the end of the current lease in 2032 is the remaining major project from the Ways of Working programme. The preferred option for accommodation should be known at the end of 2025 based on the solution that best meets the requirements of the Commission and offers the best value for money. The estimated costs included in the 2026-27 budget refer only to moving through the next stage of the process; there is no significant capital investment assumed at this stage. Indicative future costs for any final accommodation outcome have also been excluded pending confirmation of the chosen solution and the associated timescale that will apply. These potential costs will be rigorously assessed by external professional advisers in the preparation of a final Outline Business Case and Full Business Case. The Commission's aim is to ensure the project has the financial means to progress, in order to secure the best value outcome for the taxpayer in Wales.

This budget is consistent with the Commission's Medium-Term Resourcing Framework (MTRF), establishing resource and financial principles for the next three financial years. The MTRF aims to manage any budgetary growth over time, by ensuring that existing resources are used ever-more efficiently. It also seeks to highlight future budget pressures and offers strategies for managing them. This increase in budget in 2026-27 has been anticipated in the last two budget rounds

The structure of Business for the Seventh Senedd will not be known until we are into the 2026-27 financial year; decisions in this regard will be taken by the new Business Committee only once the new financial year has begun. It is therefore challenging for this budget submission to estimate the resource need with any accuracy. Therefore, the approach of ring-fenced budgets has been maintained and is based on the 'Greater' of the two scenarios within the original Senedd Reform Regulatory Impact Assessment framework which assumed the maximum

increase to Business which could be supported before the anticipated benefits of the larger Parliament are negated.

Specifically this is an additional three committees and one extra plenary. If decisions made in the Seventh Senedd are inconsistent with planning to date, resource requirements will be re-visited and the budget re-calculated accordingly with unutilised funding being returned to the Welsh Consolidated Fund. In setting this element of the budget, consideration has been given to the dates at which these posts would become absolutely necessary and the likely pay points for staff recruited to those roles.

The budget relating to the Independent Remuneration Board's Determination has been set based on an expenditure profile in 2026-27 that recognises that the majority of Members will be new and will take time to set up their offices and recruit support staff, as well as the fact that those Members standing down will not be paid during dissolution.

The Draft Budget makes provision for a £2million Project Fund. This is separate from the day-to-day running costs of the Commission and largely funds infrastructure projects to maintain the estate and ICT systems as well as other discrete projects which cannot be met from service budgets, such as specialist software replacements. The Project Fund has decreased by £0.5million compared to 2025-26 but is still over-subscribed in terms of the projects that are expected to be put forward for consideration and will be managed proactively and dynamically to make best use of available resource.

The element of the budget relating to the day-to-day business of the Commission (the operational budget) has increased by 3.07% compared to the latest 2025-26 budget. This is within the context of the GDP deflator level being at c.4%. Taking into account the potential additional costs expected in 2026-27, modelled on the 'greater' scenario of an increase in Senedd Business and the on-going work to secure accommodation for the Commission post-2032 and the costs associated with the election, the full budget increase is 21.34% overall.

This is a high level of growth but is consistent with our previous assertions that the budget for the Senedd Commission would need to increase in some areas to support a larger Parliament.

The commitment to limit budgetary growth for the core elements of the budget remains a Commission priority in recognition of the pressures on the public purse. Following several rounds of negotiation with trade unions, there will be a pay

award to staff which is consistent with the Welsh public sector pay remit. The Commission has been unable to secure a multi-year pay deal with its TUS at this stage, so is using a 3% assumption for future years' estimates.

Description	2025-26 Budget	2025-26 Budget Supp #1	2026-27 Budget	% change compared to 2025-26 Supp #1
	£million	£million	£million	%
Operational budget	£46.134	£46.584	£48.015	3.07%
Non-cash items	£5.600	£5.600	£5.627	0.48%
Member related expenses¹	£22.233	£22.538	£35.088	55.68%
Pre-election / Election expenses	£1.000	£1.000	£4.500	350.00%
Senedd Reform and Bay 32²	£8.878	£8.895	£9.442	6.15%
Total	£83.845	£84.617	£102,672	21.34%

¹ This includes £12.745million as the estimated cost of an additional 36 Members

² Exclude costs relating to the Independent Remuneration Board's Determination

3. The Medium-Term Resourcing Framework

The Medium-Term Resourcing Framework (MTRF) is the mechanism by which the Commission identifies future cost pressures with enough foresight to manage them. This could be by redirecting resources, change and efficiency management or, at the extreme, making a cohesive and evidenced case for requesting additional resource. The MTRF is a three year forward-look which informs stakeholders and facilitates appropriate planning. It is refreshed every year ahead of budget preparation and this is the third budget produced under the framework.

The assumption for the medium-term is that the Commission financing requirements will be in excess of the resourcing available. The Commission therefore needs to understand and mitigate the gap between the two in order to continue to deliver against agreed priorities whilst also supporting the core business needs.

This approach allows the Commission to clearly demonstrate what is driving uplifts in its budgets (rather than creating an impression that 'business as usual' budget lines are being grown annually by an inflationary amount).

The Framework includes both a Medium-Term Financial Plan and a Workforce Plan. The former is a rolling 3-year budgetary framework. It sets out a detailed range of resourcing requirement scenarios and cost-pressures over the next 3 years. It then sets a reasonable and realistic basis for budget planning over the medium-term (a 'Managed Growth Scenario').

As a principle, a 'Target Establishment' has been defined (for the permanent staffing establishment) to ensure the Commission's people resources continue to align with Commission priorities within the available resourcing envelope. It operates as a strategic cost management tool and drives resource management in an agile, effective and efficient way. Regular engagement with Heads of Service (budget managers) has provided structured input and feedback as to how the Commission can direct resource appropriately to organisational needs via annual service planning. This is particularly important given the transition to a larger Senedd and resists extrapolating existing resource in a linear fashion.

For this Draft Budget, the Commission has used the GDP deflator as a measure of prudence and put forward an operational budget which is lower than the amount of the deflator (3.07% compared to 4.07%).

4. Staffing

The majority of the Commission's operational revenue expenditure relates to staffing costs (~65%). There is a continued commitment to develop and maintain a diverse, highly skilled workforce to support Senedd Business.

A 5% pay award was awarded for 2025-26 based on the wider public sector pay remit. The latest Welsh public sector pay remit recommends average awards of 3.75% in the current year and 2.2% for 2026-27. The Commission applies the pay remit to the following budget year rather than backdating and uses the recommendation as a basis for agreeing pay awards.

Feedback from the Commission's recent wellbeing survey indicates that 86% of staff are happy with their pay and reward package. Given that the pay remit recommends an 'average' award of 3.75%, a tapered approach has been taken to the award which is reflected in the budget for 2026-27 budget on the following basis:

Grades TS to SEO to receive 3.75%

Grade 7 and Grade 6 to receive 3.25%

Directors and CEO to receive 3%

Within the SEO to Grade 6 scales there have also been some adjustments to specific pay points to ensure all pay increments are at least 5%.

Given the on-going economic uncertainty, it seems unlikely that a multi-year pay deal can be achieved at this time. Future year staff budgets therefore assume a 3% uplift for budgetary purposes (noting that the actual pay award amounts will be subject to future negotiations with the trades unions and decisions by the Commission).

Establishment headcount for normal operational business has once again been held at the 2024-25 level. The commitment given in the Medium-Term Resourcing Framework is that there is no operational staffing uplift for what is considered 'business as usual' activity. Where resource pressures occur, they should be absorbed by seeking to improve processes and generate efficiencies.

All additional staff for programmes (as described above) and for the election transition are accounted for within those individual ringfenced budgets.

The Senedd Commission's People Strategy has just been refreshed (April 25) and is central to the delivery of our strategic aims and objectives, ensuring we have an agile workforce equipped with the right skills, knowledge and behaviours to deliver exceptional services to Senedd Business and Members. An engagement exercise was conducted with Senedd Commission staff between December and February 2025 to consult on a working draft of this refreshed strategy. The strategy aligns with the Medium-Term Resourcing Framework (MTRF) and the Senedd Commission's corresponding strategies. It is underpinned by our organisational values of respect, passion, pride and working together as 'One Team'.

The Workforce Plan (within the Medium-Term Resourcing Framework) seeks to manage and adjust our staffing complement in the medium to longer term to match resource and skills to the areas required. This will require a sophisticated and mature approach to skills mapping and agility in our recruitment and deployment of staff. This will be particularly relevant as we move to a larger Senedd and evolve our staff requirements alongside developments in technology and in particular, the use of Artificial Intelligence to supplement our resource.

5. Non-staff budgets

The vast majority of non-staff related budgets within the Commission are contractual, including Rent, Rates, facilities management and ICT-related costs.

Contractual budget lines have been increased by 3% to reflect anticipated inflationary increases. Where contracts come up for renewal during the year, every attempt is made to achieve savings and deliver the best possible value for money, notwithstanding economic pressures which inevitably cause costs to increase.

Growth in non-staff budgets is 1.51%, moving from £13,283m in 2025-26 to £13,484m in 2026-27.

This predominantly reflects inflationary uplifts and a continued move to cloud based, from premise based ICT provision.

6. Senedd Reform

The Welsh Government's Bill to reform the Senedd received Royal Assent in June 2024. From April 2026 there will therefore be 96 rather than 60 sitting Members of the Senedd.

Budgeting for the changes is complex as the support structure required will largely depend on decisions that will be taken in the early part of the Seventh Senedd.

The Regulatory Impact Assessment proposed two scenarios for the pattern of Senedd Business which has been useful in framing assumptions around the level of budget ask.

There are several areas of support that will see an increase in demand from the first day of the new Senedd, for example, ICT support and Members' Business Support. However, not all areas of the Commission will necessarily see any increase in demand and those that do may see a less than 60% increase depending on decisions made. Indeed, it's been an important principle in constructing this budget to reflect on the rationale for Senedd Reform being to increase Member capacity rather than increasing the size of the Commission.

To that end, service plans and assumptions have been stress-tested as to whether anticipated costs are 'day one' needs or 'subject to decision'. This principle has been applied to both 'staff' and 'non staff' cost assumptions. The budget remains ring-fenced to reflect the uncertainties so that funding can easily be returned to the Welsh Block if not required.

The 2027-28 budget will then build on what emerges from the Seventh Senedd Business Committee so that it reflects the actual need in order to continue to provide excellent services to Members.

Works to re-configure the estate will largely be complete by the end of 2025-26 with the final elements completed during the dissolution period. The 'Projects' element of the ring-fence is therefore much reduced compared to prior years.

The number of posts required and expected to be required along with potential budgetary implications are shown in the table below.

	FTE	2026-27 Budget £million
Existing posts	49.7	£3.132
New posts (from 1 April 2026)	8.0	£0.313
New posts – pending Seventh Senedd decisions	38.0	£1.288
Assumed churn / underspend		(£0.550)
Total		£4.183

The non-staff and project costs are set out in the table below, again split between those that are known with relative certainty versus those which will emerge, evolve or disappear during the financial year.

	2026-27 Budget £million
Non-staff costs	£1.436
Non-staff costs pending Seventh Senedd decisions	£0.332
Project / estate costs	£0.394
Total	£2.162

7. Bay 32

The Bay 32 project will provide a high-quality, adaptable, and inclusive Cardiff Bay estate that delivers value for public funds while addressing the requirements of the Senedd, its Members, their staff, the Welsh Government, citizens, media, and the Senedd Commission over the short, medium, and long term.

The Bay 32 Project has progressed significantly since the 2025-26 budget. Following a successful Gateway Review the Commission approved an initial Outline Business Case in December 2024 which has allowed a competitive procurement process to progress during 2025. An invitation to submit final tenders is expected to be issued in the autumn of 2025, with the outcome known in early 2026. The preferred solution will be the solution that best meets the requirements of the Commission and offers the best value for money for the taxpayer.

The estimated costs in the 2026-27 budget relate to professional services for the successful bidder to advance their concept designs to a level of maturity and costing confidence that will allow consideration by the Commission of a Full Business Case during 2026.

Indicative future costs have also been excluded pending confirmation of the winning solution and the associated commercial structure and project timescales which will all impact on future funding requirements and which are forecast to become known during 2026; however no significant capital investment is assumed at this stage.

It is highly likely that the conclusion of the procurement will result in the need for the Commission to revalue the 'Right of Use' asset held in relation to Ty Hywel which will result in a significant capital receipt to the Welsh Consolidated Fund (~£40million). Given that at this stage, the outcome of the project is uncertain, this adjustment, if arising, will be dealt with via a supplementary budget during the 2026-27 financial year.

The Draft Budget for this programme of work for 2025-26 is, as with the Senedd Reform programme, ring-fenced so that costs are separate and transparent. This is of particular importance due to the number of milestones remaining during 2025-26. Ringfencing provides transparency and means that any unutilised funding is returned to the Welsh Consolidated Fund and not repurposed for operational activity.

8. The Project Fund

The Commission maintains a Project Fund to manage expenditure over and above the delegated service budgets, including lifecycle replacement for ICT, broadcast and estate infrastructure.

The Project Fund is managed by the Project Management Group (PMG). Chaired by the Chief Financial Officer and supported by a panel from across the Commission, the Group is responsible for ensuring that the project portfolio for the financial year is aligned with Commission priorities, is appropriately resourced, provides value for money and that projects are delivered to agreed timescales and agreed specification. This approach delivers:

- increased efficiency and effectiveness;
- reduced risk; and
- the Commission's sustainability strategic objective.

The PMG recommends to the Executive Board which projects should be prioritised, monitors delivery, and employs an agile approach to respond to changes and issues in-year.

The strategy for management of funds is set out in a Portfolio Strategy which sets:

- the vision and aims agreed for the project portfolio;
- the value drivers that are used to inform the prioritisation of the portfolio; and
- the headline risks, resourcing envelope, and timings.

This strategy facilitates the allocation and where relevant, the re-purposing or re-prioritisation of funds to maximise use of resource to achieve value for money.

The MTRF process identified a period of significant and sustained pressure on the Project Fund in 2025-26 to 2027-28 due to the number of significant life-cycle replacements becoming due as well as the more usual cycle of works. The Commission undertakes maintenance work to extend where possible the useful life of major plant and infrastructure and will consider whether plant and equipment coming towards the end of its operational life can be further utilised.

The outcome of the Bay 32 procurement could also change the context in which plant and equipment replacements are considered and prioritised.

Key projects which will be considered for prioritisation during 2026-27 are:

- Air Handling Units
- Chiller replacement
- Standby Generators
- Lift upgrades
- ICT infrastructure update; along with
- Completion of multiyear projects started in 2025-26.

These are in addition to a schedule of priority items relating the forward work programme of maintenance / repair to ICT infrastructure and the estate which will be assessed in early 2026-27 for funding.

9. Election-related expenditure

The incidence of an election gives rise to several expenditure items which are anticipated, significant in value and cannot be absorbed within the operational budget of the Commission.

A ring-fenced budget of £4.5 million has been set aside to meet these costs.

This budget will primarily be for meeting the costs of terminating the office of those Members who are not returned after the election (by way of resettlement grant) and their support staff who will receive redundancy payments. It will also meet the cost of 'Winding Up Allowances' which have been introduced by the Independent Remuneration Board for the end of the current Senedd. Payments will be equivalent to two months' salary for those Members standing down and three months for those not returned.

This budget will also be used to provide ICT equipment and software to all incoming Members, meet the costs of the Official Opening and any accommodation changes that are required.

ICT hardware costs have almost doubled in price since the last election, following the pandemic and a period of high inflation. With current ways of working highly reliant on ICT infrastructure, these costs are unavoidable as it is imperative that Members are equipped to carry out their roles. The ICT element of this budget relates to 60 Members, with the costs for the additional 36 being part of the Senedd Reform ring-fenced budget.

There will also be engagement costs associated with the expansion of the Senedd and promoting the change to the electorate.

By including this as a distinct budget, the specific election related costs charged to the budget are transparent and easily identifiable. Any surplus funds after all costs have been met will be returned to the Welsh Consolidated Fund. Any shortfall in this budget could require funding via Supplementary Budget.

10. Sustainability

The financial and service delivery plans in the short, medium and longer term are all within the context of being a truly sustainable organisation.

The Senedd Commission was one of the first public organisations to produce a strategy detailing a proposed response to the Climate Emergency and a plan to become net carbon neutral. During 2026-27, given that key decision points around the Bay 32 project will have been reached, the Carbon Neutral Strategy will be renewed and updated to reflect the greater certainty of the future accommodation solution as well as the larger Senedd.

The roll-out of LED lighting is now all but complete in Ty Hywel, but further replacements are planned for the Senedd and Pierhead buildings, should resources allow, to further reduce electricity consumption. Also at this point, dependant on decisions around the office building, the air-handling units in Ty Hywel will be considered as part of the lifecycle renewal programme. These would be for more efficient units, also lowering energy consumption. Both projects were initially approved as part of the Carbon Neutral Strategy.

Following the election, the Commission will be fully utilising the new office arrangements in Ty Hywel. Developed with sustainability in mind, it will be possible to analyse monitoring data from, for example, any increase in utilities consumption.

During 2024-25, a period when the estate was slightly busier than the previous year, there was an increase in heating demand and therefore gas consumption. There was also an increase in travel - by Members, their staff and Commission staff. Electricity consumption however dropped; reflecting continued efficiency measures around the estate. Gas consumption and travel emissions will therefore be the focus moving forwards.

The Commission believes in transparency as well as setting the highest standards for itself. For this reason, an environmental management system is maintained. It is externally audited for compliance with ISO14001. This management standard requires a range of measures to be demonstrated, including controls on key environmental impacts, compliance with legislation, and a programme of internal audits.

The Commission continues work with other public sector bodies in Wales and other UK parliaments, to share best practice and pursue continual improvement.

11. Communications and Engagement

The focus is on raising public awareness of the changes coming to the Senedd in 2026 and increasing understanding of the role of the Senedd. This work will step-up in the first quarter of 2026-27, to inform the public ahead of the May election.

Investment in audience insight will ensure the engagement campaign is providing the information people need on the channels where they are most likely to interact with it. This has included improving evaluation methodology, undertaking audience polling and focus groups; and is making sure we are using resources to their best effect.

Face-to-face engagement has been increased to support the campaign. This has included having a presence at some smaller shows, like the Wales Air Show, Caernarfon Food Festival and Pembrokeshire Show for the first time. There has also been a shift of focus to education sessions in secondary schools and colleges to reach those who will be voting for the first time.

In early 2026-27, presence in local communities will be increased to reach those who are less likely to have engaged with the Senedd before. Face-to-face interactions are considered as being even more important as social media and the media landscape in Wales becomes more fractioned.

This important engagement work will be underpinned by investment in a marketing campaign from early in 2026 to highlight the date of the election and the role of the Senedd as the voice of Wales's communities when decisions on issues like healthcare, education and transport are made. This will greatly boost the reach of messaging with the aim of ensuring as many people as possible are aware of their opportunity to shape the next Senedd.

The importance of investing wisely in our efforts to inform the public is paramount. Our evaluation systems are continually being strengthened and will keep the performance of the campaign under close and constant review – with the facility to switch communications approaches to achieve the best results and using lessons learnt to continually improve efforts.

A communications group has been established with representatives from Welsh Government, Electoral Commission, Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru and local authorities to co-ordinate activities around the election. This is providing efficiencies by avoiding duplication – for example and Electoral Commission household booklet will now contain information on the Senedd, to

make savings on a separate mailout, and Senedd Commission leaflets are being used in Electoral Commission and local authority communications to avoid mixed messaging to audiences. The effectiveness of the group will be evaluated after the election.

Beyond the election, efforts in 2026-27 will be invested in introducing a new, reformed Senedd to the public. This includes a focus on understanding who the new Members are, and their role. A key moment for this will be the Official Opening of the Senedd, which will showcase a strengthened Senedd and its ambitions to deliver for the people of Wales. The Welsh Youth Parliament will also resume their third term and continue to focus on their three priority areas: Cost of Living and Poverty, Public Transport and Active Travel; and Crime and Safety.

Investment in the tools and technology needed to ensure we have long term engagement with the people of Wales, as outlined in our Communications and Engagement Strategy for the Sixth Senedd will continue. This includes continuing to roll out a new CRM system and online engagement tools bringing many efficiencies such as streamlining processes and communication. Implementing a CRM system alongside online engagement tools empowers sustained, meaningful connections with the people of Wales by personalising interactions and enabling long-term relationship building.

12. Financial Governance and Control

The Senedd Commission Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (“ARAC”) supports the Commission and the Principal Accounting Officer regarding their responsibilities for risk management, internal control and corporate governance.

As part of its role, ARAC maintains a strong interest in, and oversight of, the internal financial control environment. Updates on accounting policies and the budgetary position are considered by ARAC; it takes a keen interest in the audit of the Annual Report and Accounts. Members of the Committee have also provided oversight and challenge of the assurance framework and governance statement.

External and Internal Audit provide important sources of assurance to ARAC and the Accounting Officer. The Auditor General for Wales (“AGW”) is the Commission’s external auditor, and he is supported in his work by Audit Wales. For the 2024-25 financial year an unqualified opinion was issued in relation to the financial statements.

In 2019, the Senedd’s Finance Committee issued a Statement of Principles for Directly Funded Bodies to consider when preparing their annual budget estimates. The Commission has kept these principles firmly in mind in the preparation of its budget estimate for 2026-27. The estimate is transparent and the evidence of the need for, and benefit from, the resources requested is provided in the narrative of this document.

The Executive Board (“EB”) has strategic responsibility for ensuring that the Commission’s resources are used effectively, provide challenge to service leaders to strive for continuous improvement and drive efforts at delivering efficiencies. The Board is responsible for approving the Commission’s annual investment plans and for prioritising investment to best effect. The Board ensures that resource capacity planning aligns with the Commission’s goals and priorities and provides governance and assurance to significant change projects.

13. Budget for the Remuneration Board's Determination

The Independent Remuneration Board ("the Board") is the body that determines the pay and remuneration of Members and their support staff; and the system of financial support needed for Members to fulfil their responsibilities as elected representatives.

The Board's Determination sets the available funding to cover the expenses associated with being a Member and discharging their parliamentary duties, for example:

- running an office and engaging with constituents;
- salaries and costs relating to support staff;
- residential accommodation in Cardiff for Members whose home is a significant distance from the Senedd (eligibility criteria apply); and
- support for the Party Groups and policy research.

The Determination sets the basic salary for Members and additional office holder salaries. The Determination also sets the mechanism for increases to these salaries; in 2026-27 it is expected that Member salaries will increase in line with the average earnings in Wales as measured by the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings ("ASHE"). The basic salary for Members at the start of 2026-27 is budgeted at £80,199 which assumes a 5% increase on the current salary level of £76,380 (the ASHE figure for October 2024 was 6%, however, with the peak of high inflation now past, it's expected that ASHE will start to return to reduce back in line with historical rates)

The Board issued its Determination for the Seventh Senedd in July 2025. There will be uplifts applied to the current baselines, which have been estimated for the purpose of this budget as 5% for ASHE and 3% for CPI.

In calculating the budget for the Determination for 2026-27, consideration has been given to the fact that it is an election year and one of great change. The budget is ~12% lower than the estimated full potential cost of the provisions in the Determination. This is consistent with experience in previous Seneddau whereby expenditure has been low in the first year and gradually increased over the term. This also reflects, that new Members will take time to set up offices and recruit

Support Staff. Likewise, there will be a period of time during which Office Holder salaries are not in payment and salaries for those Members who are standing down will cease. Winding up payments made to Members who are not returned will be charged to the Election budget.

For 2026-27 only, the budget has been split to recognise the cost of 60 Members within the operational budget and the additional 36 Members as a separate budget line linked to Senedd Reform.

Members are able to employ staff to support them in all aspects of their role. Political groups are also entitled to funding for group staff. The cap on support staff salaries was removed for the 2024-25 financial year. Given the previous ASHE figure of 5.7% (October 2024), the budget has assumed a 5% increase for 2026-27.

The Determination sets out the range of costs and allowances which Members may claim to run their offices and fulfil their duties. For budgeting purposes, the inflation factor used for 2026-27 is 3% for allowances (where relevant) with an inflationary uplift of 2.5% applied to the following two years. This reflects an expectation that although the Bank of England expects inflation to return to the target rate (2%) for financial years after 2025-26, to date, the reduction in the rate of inflation to date has been lower than anticipated.

The budget to fund the Determination for 2026-27 and the following two years (including the impact of Senedd Reform) is shown in Table 9.

Direct support for the Board is provided by the Commission as required by the National Assembly for Wales (Remuneration) Measure 2010. Since 2022-23 the cost of this support has been ring-fenced within the total Senedd Commission budget to improve transparency; this continues to be the case. The budget provides for an unchanged secretariat. In addition, fees and travel expenses are paid to Board members. Other expenditure includes items such as the commissioning of external expertise. Detail is provided in Table 11.

14. Budget Ambit

This budget submission is laid in compliance with the Senedd Standing Order 20.13 to assist in the compilation of the Annual Budget Motion required by Section 125 of the Government of Wales Act 2006. The submission covers the resource and cash requirements of the Senedd Commission for the year ending 31 March 2027.

The Budget Motion will authorise the net resources to be used for the services and purposes of Members and Senedd Services. The motion includes the maximum income (or accruing resources) that may be retained for use on those services and purposes instead of being paid into the Welsh Consolidated Fund. It will also set out the cash amount that will be needed from the Welsh Consolidated Fund to meet the anticipated net amounts falling due for payment by the Commission.

The 2026-27 Budget for the Senedd addressing these requirements is set out in Table 1.

Table 1: 2026-27 Budget for the Senedd against requirements

Senedd Requirements	2026-27 £000
Resources other than accruing resources for use by the Senedd Commission ('the Commission') on resource and capital costs associated with the administration and operation of services to support the Senedd; promotion of the Senedd including payments to the Electoral Commission and others; payments in respect of the Commissioner for Standards and the Independent Remuneration Board; any other payments relating to the functions of the Senedd or functions of the Commission. Resources other than accruing resources for use by the Commission in respect of the decisions of the Independent Remuneration Board and expenditure in respect of Members of the Senedd Pension provision	£102,672 (Table 2)
Accruing resources for retention pursuant to section 120(2) of the Government of Wales Act 2006 and use by the Commission from the disposal of fixed assets and other capital income for use on the purchase or acquisition of fixed assets, rental income, gifts, grants, cheques, recharges and income from commercial sales and other services provided to the public or others for use on administrative costs of the Senedd.	£85 (Table 8)
Amount to be issued from the Welsh Consolidated Fund to meet the anticipated amounts falling due for payment in the year and in respect of the above services and purposes less expected receipts and recoverable VAT	£98,975 (Table 3)

Annex 1: Budget Overview

Table 2: Budget overview

Budget Heading	2025-26 (Supp#1) £000	2026-27 £000	2027-28 £000	2028-29 £000
Commission Related Expenditure				
Staff salaries and related costs (Table 4)	£32,801	£34,031	£35,052	£36,104
Accommodation and facilities (Table 5)	£6,229	£6,399	£6,546	£6,698
ICT costs (Table 6)	£2,944	£3,534	£3,603	£3,661
Other costs (Table 7)	£2,172	£2,136	£2,160	£2,174
Total Revenue Expenditure	£44,146	£46,100	£47,361	£48,637
Total Income (Table 8)	(£61)	(£85)	(£85)	(£85)
Capital Expenditure	£500	£500	£500	£500
Project Fund	£2,000	£1,500	£1,500	£1,500
Total Operational Resource	£46,585	£48,015	£49,276	£50,552
Interest Charges	£600	£600	£600	£600
Depreciation Charges	£5,000	£5,027	£5,027	£5,027
Ring-fenced project budgets				
Senedd Reform costs	£6,494	£6,345	£6,780	£6,982
Bay 32	£2,401	£3,097	£1,004	£745
Total Commission Related Expenditure	£61,080	£63,084	£62,687	£63,906
Member Related Expenditure				
Members' salaries and related costs (Table 9) (as per the Remuneration Board's Determination)	£20,823	£21,232	£23,098	£23,939
Members' salaries and related costs arising from Senedd Reform (Table 9)	£0	£12,739	£13,859	£14,364
Budget for the Office of the Standards Commissioner (Table 10)	£106	£110	£112	£115

Budget Heading	2025-26 (Supp#1) £000	2026-27 £000	2027-28 £000	2028-29 £000
Budget to support the Independent Remuneration Board (Table 11)	£609	£607	£620	£641
Election related expenditure	£1,000	£4,500	£0	£0
Members' pension finance costs	£1,000	£400	£400	£400
Total Senedd Commission Budget	£84,618	£102,672	£100,775	£103,365

Table 3: Reconciliation of the new resource requirement to the cash drawing from the Welsh Consolidated Fund

Net cash requirement	2026-27 £000
Members' net revenue requirement	£21,232
Members' net revenue requirement - Senedd Reform	£12,739
Office of the Standards Commissioner	£110
Independent Remuneration Board support costs	£607
Senedd Reform Costs revenue costs	£4,956
Bay 32 revenue costs	£254
Commission net revenue requirement	£53,142
Net capital requirement (including Senedd Reform and Bay 32)	£6,161
Election expenditure revenue costs	£3,071
Annually managed expenditure	£400
Subtotal	£102,672
Adjustments	
Depreciation	(£5,027)
Interest charges / Capital adjustments relating to IFRS 16	(£600)
Rental payments relating to IFRS 16	£2,330
Movements in provisions	(£400)
Subtotal	(£3,697)
Net cash requirement from the Welsh Consolidated Fund	£98,975

Annex 2: Budget Detail

Table 4: Analysis of staff salaries and related costs

	2025-26 (Supp#1) £000	2026-27 £000	2027-28 £000	2028-29 £000
Commission staff costs	£33,801	£35,049	£36,144	£37,380
Vacant post estimate	(£1,000)	(£1,018)	(£1,092)	(£1,276)
Total	£32,801	£34,031	£35,052	£36,104

Table 5: Analysis of Accommodation and Facilities costs

	2025-26 (Supp#1) £000	2026-27 £000	2027-28 £000	2028-29 £000
Rent and rates incl. car parking (adjusted for IFRS 16)	£1,930	£1,960	£2,004	£2,048
Maintenance and works	£1,110	£1,128	£1,128	£1,128
Security	£949	£1,016	£1,054	£1,094
Utilities	£1,039	£1,039	£1,070	£1,102
Cleaning	£643	£698	£719	£741
Catering	£453	£453	£467	£481
Photocopier Rentals	£40	£40	£40	£40
Furniture and Fittings	£65	£65	£65	£65
Total	£6,229	£6,399	£6,546	£6,698

Table 6: Analysis of ICT costs

	2025-26 (Supp#1) £000	2026-27 £000	2027-28 £000	2028-29 £000
ICT Services	£731	£727	£734	£738
Broadcasting	£870	£964	£964	£964
Licences and Maintenance	£1,243	£1,743	£1,795	£1,849
Revenue and Consumables	£100	£100	£110	£110
Total	£2,944	£3,534	£3,603	£3,661

Table 7: Analysis of other costs

	2025-26 (Supp#1) £000	2026-27 £000	2027-28 £000	2028-29 £000
Training and development	£312	£312	£312	£312
Promoting awareness and understanding	£305	£308	£318	£318
Language contracted-out services	£305	£302	£302	£302
Other HR costs	£172	£175	£177	£179
Insurance and legal costs	£162	£155	£166	£177
Audit	£135	£135	£135	£135
Publications	£146	£148	£148	£148
Staff T&S	£108	£108	£108	£108
Other travel and subsistence	£95	£95	£95	£95
Accounting and financial services	£32	£73	£74	£75
Specialist advice	£146	£71	£71	£71
Printing, stationery and postage	£58	£58	£58	£58
Consultancy	£50	£50	£50	£50
Academic Engagement	£30	£30	£30	£30
Hospitality	£24	£24	£24	£24
Vetting	£22	£22	£22	£22
Uniforms and clothing	£15	£15	£15	£15
Other items <£20k	£55	£55	£55	£55
Total	£2,172	£2,136	£2,160	£2,174

Table 8: Analysis of Income

	2025-26 (Supp#1) £000	2026-27 £000	2027-28 £000	2028-29 £000
Sales - the Senedd shop	(£20)	(£15)	(£15)	(£15)
Accommodation - rental income	(£19)	(£60)	(£60)	(£60)
Other income	(£22)	(£10)	(£10)	(£10)
Total	(£61)	(£85)	(£85)	(£85)

Table 9: Analysis of Members' salaries and related costs

	2025-26 (Supp#1) £000	2026-27 £000	2027-28 £000	2028-29 £000
Senedd Members' salaries and on-costs	£6,841	£7,284	£7,503	£7,728
Members' Support Staff salaries and on-costs	£11,808	£13,043	£13,435	£13,838
Allowances and office costs	£2,674	£3,432	£3,535	£3,624
Anticipated underspend	(£500)	(£2,527)	(£1,375)	(£1,250)
Subtotal – 60 Members	£20,823	£21,232	£23,098	£23,939
Additional costs for 36 new Members				
Senedd Members' salaries and on-costs	-	£4,371	£4,502	£4,637
Members' Support Staff salaries and on-costs	-	£7,826	£8,061	£8,303
Allowances and office costs	-	£2,059	£2,121	£2,174
Anticipated underspend	-	(£1,517)	(£825)	(£750)
Subtotal – additional 36 Members	-	£12,739	£13,859	£14,364
Total including additional 36 Members	£20,823	£33,972	£36,956	£38,303

Table 10: Budget for the Office of the Standards Commissioner

	2025-26 (Supp#1) £000	2026-27 £000	2027-28 £000	2028-29 £000
Staff costs	£80	£84	£86	£89
Legal Advice	£26	£26	£26	£26
Total	£106	£110	£112	£115

Table 11: Budget to support the Independent Remuneration Board

	2025-26 (Supp#1) £000	2026-27 £000	2027-28 £000	2028-29 £000
Staff costs	£511	£527	£542	£563
Fees and Expenses	£47	£47	£47	£47
Other costs and expenses	£51	£32	£31	£31
Total	£609	£607	£620	£641







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