

Manon Antoniazzi

Prif Weithredwr a Chlerc y Senedd
Chief Executive and Clerk of the Senedd

Mark Isherwood MS
Chair of Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee
Senedd Cymru
Tŷ Hywel
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1SN

2 February 2022

Dear Mark

Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee Report on the Scrutiny of Accounts 2020-21.

I am writing in response to the Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee report on the Scrutiny of Accounts 2020-21. I would like to thank the Committee for its scrutiny.

I'd also like to thank the Committee for commending the Commission on its performance during the last 12 months as it continues to aim for excellence in public sector economy, efficiency and effectiveness, and for commending the Commission on its early laying of the Annual Report and Accounts and noting the effective presentation of the document and its use of diagrams and infographics.



I would like to take this opportunity to assure the Committee that we remain as committed as ever to providing greater clarity and assurance through external scrutiny and audit as well as our internal governance framework. We have committed to a review of our corporate performance indicators and will share the outcome of this review with the Committee, with particular reference to the KPI relating to underspends.

We will also share information on our 2021-22 Capacity Review and provide the Committee with more detail on its aims, progress and outcomes by next Spring.



Your Committee's recommendations concerning the Commission are addressed in full in the attached Annex. If you would like any further information on any matter covered in the Annex, please do not hesitate to let me know.



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As ever, if there is any further information your Committee would like, please let me know.

Yours sincerely

Manson Antouiazzi

cc Senedd Commissioners, Nia Morgan



Annex 1

Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee Report on the Scrutiny of Accounts 2019-20

Recommendation 1. In the interests of greater transparency we recommend, that in advance of annual scrutiny of the accounts, the Commission provide the Committee with details summarising and collating underspends and setting out any decisions taken to reallocate underspends. It would be helpful for this to be in a similar format to the letter provided to the Finance Committee

Accepted

We welcome the Committee's scrutiny and request for further information on the Commission's underspends and reallocation of any underspend during 2021-22.

The Commission will again be providing the Finance Committee with a letter, following the end of the 2021-22 financial year, outlining the financial implications of the pandemic on the outturn. We will share this information with this Committee and also provide additional information, where necessary, to provide the required transparency in advance of the annual scrutiny session in Autumn 2022.

Recommendation 2. In order to assist the Commission in increasing its spend on suppliers from Welsh based companies, we recommend that it undertakes an exercise to split contract spend limits i.e. into brackets of <10k, <50K <100k, <500K and over 500K and analyse the financial spread of contracts awarded to identify opportunities to break down larger contracts and to increase the likelihood of smaller Welsh based companies successfully bidding for contracts. We would welcome a six monthly update on progress in this area

Accepted

We regularly carry out spend analysis on all our contracts with a value in excess of £25,000.

All contracts which exceed a value of £25,000 are managed centrally by the Commission's Procurement team. Management of contracts below the £25,000 threshold is delegated to the relevant Commission manager.

For higher value contracts, we always look at the feasibility of options to break these down into smaller 'lots' to increase opportunities for smaller Welsh based suppliers. A recent, successful, example of this approach is the printing and copying contract,



where we were able to award elements of the new contract to a Wales-based company.

The Commission continually explores ways to increase spend with Welsh suppliers. We do this through market research, early engagement with suppliers and as mentioned by considering how we can structure contracts to encourage Welsh supply. Recently, we have allocated a dedicated resource within the Procurement Service to lead on this work. We also have a policy on 'Encouraging small and medium sized enterprises'.

We agree to provide the Committee with a six monthly update on progress in this area.

Recommendation 3. We recommend that the Senedd Commission continues to work to understand drivers resulting in the low representation within their workforce from ethnic minority communities and lower socio-economic groups and strengthens policies and takes actions to reduce perceived barriers and pay gaps for these and other diverse groups

Accepted (ethnic minority communities)

The Commission is working continuously to ensure that it understands and resolves the low representation within the workforce from ethnic minority communities, particularly at senior grades.

Noted (lower socio-economic groups)

Since April 2021 the Commission has included socio-economic data within its recruitment processes which will provide an understanding of the socio-economic diversity of the applicant pool in the first instance. The information will be reviewed alongside the Commission's annual Diversity and Inclusion reporting mechanisms in May 2022.

Recommendation 4. We recommend the Commission provide a six monthly update on the use of single use plastic.

Accepted

The Senedd Commission takes seriously the need to reduce single-use plastics in its operations. We have already removed a large number of plastic items, participated in Plastic Free July initiative, and have the minimising of single-use plastic written into our Environmental Policy. We follow the waste hierarchy where possible; prioritising re-use



and recycling options, and don't send any waste to landfill.

In summary, so far we have:

- Removed disposable plastic coffee cups almost a decade ago;
- Replaced the take-away containers in the canteen with plastic-free alternatives;
- Removed plastic cutlery, water beakers, dessert pots and straws;
- We have been working with the catering contractor, before the pandemic started, to replace items sold in plastic packaging where alternatives exist (e.g. drinks bottles);

Over the next 6 months we will:

- Work with the Welsh Youth Parliament team to provide re-usable metal drinking bottles for Members, and aim to make these available to staff in order to promote the move away from single-use alternatives;
- Promote the use of our existing drinking fountains as an alternative to bottled water;
- Investigate the feasibility of adopting one of the plastic-free management standards currently available;
- Write to our major existing suppliers and ask them to adopt the principles of the UK Plastics Pact, and request the same of new suppliers as part of the procurement process.

We will update the Committee on our progress in six months.

