

Peredur Owen Griffiths MS
Chair of Finance Committee
Senedd Cymru
Tŷ Hywel
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1SN

30 March 2023

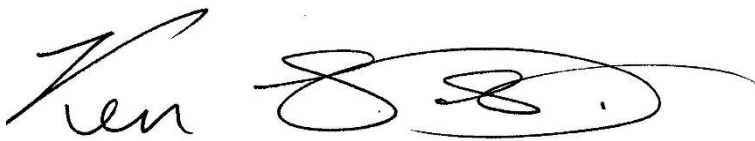
Dear Peredur

When I wrote to you in November with the Commission's response to the Finance Committee's recommendations made in the **Report on the Scrutiny of the Senedd Commission Draft Budget 2023-2024**, I committed that the Commission would provide further information in relation to Recommendations 5 and 8. This is set out in **Annex 1**.

Additional updates on recommendations 3, 4 and 7 are not yet due and will be provided once the Commission has considered the pertinent information. This is referenced in the Annex.

I would like to thank the Committee again for its scrutiny and if there is any further information you would like to have, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Yours sincerely



Ken Skates MS

cc Senedd Commissioners, Manon Antoniazzi, Ed Williams

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg / We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English



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Annex 1 - Finance Committee Recommendations

Recommendation 5.

The Committee recommends that the Senedd Commission provides an update as soon as decisions relating to the future of the Colwyn Bay office and the Senedd presence in north Wales have been made.

The Commission has approved a business case to provide the facilities currently available to staff and Members at the Commission's Colwyn Bay office at Welsh Government's Sarn Mynach Regional Office (at Llandudno Junction) through a co-location agreement. The Commission subsequently agreed to exercise the break clause to the North Wales office and relocate the office by July 2023.

The Commission has now served notice to the Colwyn Bay landlord of its intention to end the lease and the project has moved into its delivery phase. Planning is advanced for the move, with the establishment of a Project Group and with the project running to schedule. Commissioners agreed that the independence of the office from the Welsh Government should be made clear, including through appropriate branding and signage. This is being pursued with Welsh Government as part of the delivery phase. The project is expected to generate a saving of £100,000 over the appraisal period.

Recommendation 8.

The Committee recommends that the Senedd Commission seeks the views of Members to better understand the engagement work they wish to take forward and, once that work is completed, provide an update to the Committee on how such proposals can be delivered within existing budgets.

We are finalising our plans to engage with Members in the coming months. The Director of Communications and Engagement will be attending the next Chairs' Forum and attended the Political Contact Group with the Head of Engagement on *Thursday 9th March*. Our Director of Communications and Heads of Service also regularly engage with Chiefs of Staff on our engagement work.

We are exploring the best way to continue to engage directly with Members, while acknowledging the many work pressures they face. Our engagement plan will look at the best ways of engaging with Members to deliver our current strategy using existing Member engagement channels and will inform how we best engage the Members of the Seventh Senedd when developing our next strategy.



Recommendation 3. The Committee recommends that the Senedd Commission provides periodic updates on:

- **the energy-saving initiatives that are both planned and have been implemented;**
- **the effectiveness of those initiatives in delivering sustainable outcomes; and**
- **the associated impact on costs and savings.**

The next update will be included as part of the Commission's regular reports and updates on its energy saving initiatives to support its carbon neutral strategy and sustainability actions. These will form part of the Sustainability Annual Report as well as being summarised in the Commission Annual Report and Accounts. These reports are published in late June, or early July, once agreed by the Commission. We will continue to be transparent about work and progress in this area by routinely updating with information about overall costs and impact in these annual reports.

Recommendation 4. The Committee recommends that the Senedd Commission:

- **considers the financial and operational benefits or otherwise of purchasing the freehold of Tŷ Hywel as an alternative to extending the current lease; and**
- **provides regular updates on the options evaluated in relation to the future of all buildings on the estate to ensure transparency and value for money.**

At its meeting in December the Commission agreed to instruct our professional property advisers Avison Young to provide initial detailed advice on the range of property options available to the Senedd for the Cardiff Bay estate which will include the financial and operational benefits of the available options. The initial advice is now expected to be received in late Spring 2023. The advice will be carefully reviewed by officials and considered by the Commission. Subject to that, a Strategic Outline Case, evaluating the options for future office accommodation in line with the Welsh Government / HM Treasury 'Green Book' process, will be prepared during this calendar year. We will update the Committee as work on the Strategic Outline Case then develops.

Recommendation 7. The Committee recommends that the Senedd Commission puts steps in place to evaluate the effectiveness of the initiatives it has introduced to mitigate the impact of cost of living pressures on staff and shares its findings from such reviews.

The Executive Board conduct a regular 'pulse survey' which supports the evaluation of its initiatives in this area. Pertinent findings from the next pulse survey will be shared with the Committee once available.

