

Peredur Owen Griffiths AS
Chair of Finance Committee
Welsh Parliament
Tŷ Hywel
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1SN

19 March 2026

Dear Peredur

Further to our letter of **11 November 2025**, I am writing to provide you with information and updates to the following recommendations as part of the follow up to the Committee's **Scrutiny Report of the Commission's Draft Budget 2026-27** as detailed below, including those agreed to be provided to the Committee by the end of this financial year.

- Recommendation 5 – an update on the Bay 32 project;
- Recommendation 8 – a progress update on the use of emerging technologies;
- Recommendation 10 – a progress update on the social media monitoring pilot; and
- Recommendation 12 - plans regarding the Pierhead building.

Also, as previously provided

- in relation to Recommendation 11 - Report on Scrutiny of 2024-25 Draft Budget, we provide an update on the Communication and Engagement Plans for the forthcoming financial year; and
- in relation to Recommendation 16 - Report on Scrutiny of 2025-26 Draft Budget, we provide a list of planned projects for 2026-27 with estimated allocated funding (**Annex 2**)



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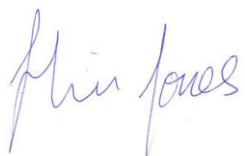
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The Commission continues to be committed to openness and transparency with the Finance Committee. If you need further information or wish to clarify any of the information provided, please let me know.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Elin Jones". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'E'.

Elin Jones MS

cc Manon Antoniazzi, Ed Williams

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

Annex 1

Recommendation 5. The Committee recommends that the Senedd Commission provides an update on the Bay 32 project in early 2026, including any budgetary impacts and continues to attend public evidence sessions on the project, as requested.

An update was provided during our appearance before the Committee on 25 February 2026.

Recommendation 8. The Committee recommends that the Senedd Commission continues to explore the use of emerging technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence, while ensuring strong governance, data security, and responsiveness to the evolving needs and expectations of Members in the next Senedd, and provides details of the progress being taken in these areas prior to dissolution.

The Commission has continued to advance both the governance and practical use of Artificial Intelligence. Work to finalise the Commission's AI Policy has progressed through detailed engagement between Information Governance, HR and the Trade Union Side, supported by completed Equality and Sustainability Impact Assessments and the continued management of AI as a corporate risk through established governance arrangements

Alongside this governance work, the Commission has taken a further step to support Members by deciding to include two Microsoft Copilot licences for each Member within the ICT Allocation for the 7th Senedd. This will allow Members to benefit from AI assisted productivity and accessibility within a secure, Commission managed Microsoft 365 environment, supported by published guidance and ongoing oversight through the AI Governance and AI Opportunities Groups.

The Commission will continue to refine its governance framework and practical support arrangements ahead of the Senedd elections in May, ensuring readiness to meet Members' needs and expectations while maintaining strong controls over data security, ethics and risk.

Recommendation 10. The Committee recommends that the Senedd Commission evaluates the outcomes of its social media monitoring pilot and consider options for mainstreaming support for Members, their staff and Commission officials, including relevant training, subject to the findings of the pilot and its effectiveness in addressing online harms, and provides an update to the Committee in early 2026.

The Senedd's Social Media Monitoring Trial has now reached its midpoint, providing an opportunity to review emerging findings and assess the effectiveness of current processes. To date, the trial has generated 198 alerts requiring further investigation, with 72% of these originating from Twitter/X. Of the total alert volume, fourteen alerts have been escalated to the Senedd Police Unit, while three have been referred to external police forces for further assessment. In parallel, the Pulsar monitoring platform used for the trial has analysed 23,968 pieces of online content drawn from nine different data sources, including major platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Reddit.

To support consistent assessment and analysis, the monitored material has been categorised into five groups: racist and religiously motivated content; sexist and homophobic content; the use of emojis in potentially harmful contexts; instances of doxing; and direct threats. At present, sexist and homophobic content is the most frequently generated category. These classifications provide a structured basis for evaluating the type and level of online risk faced by participating Members. It should be noted that Independent Members and Reform Members have not taken part in the trial, and as a result, content relating to them has not been included within the analysis.

The trial has contributed to improved information flow between Members, the Members' Security Team and policing partners, enhancing incident-handling processes and enabling more effective responses to identified risks. Dialogue has also been maintained with the UK Parliament, the Scottish Parliament and South Wales Police. These partners currently use alternative dedicated threat-monitoring systems and undertake Online Vulnerability Assessments (OVAs). Engagement with them has helped broaden understanding of wider practice and the varying approaches adopted across the UK.

A full and objective assessment will be required upon completion of the trial. This will include a comprehensive analysis of the scale of the problem and an options appraisal that examines a range of potential models, including possible data-sharing approaches. These steps will ensure that any future recommendations are evidence-based and informed by the complete dataset.

Recommendation 12. The Committee recommends that the Senedd Commission notifies the Committee as soon as plans regarding the Pierhead building are published

A market engagement exercise seeking potential commercial interest for use of the Pierhead building (within the framework of the Senedd's requirements for use of the building) is

currently live with any interested parties required to respond by the end of the current financial year.

Recommendations from earlier Committee Reports requested annually

Communication and Engagement plans

The Commission is continuing to work through its phased approach to communicating the changes to the Senedd and raising awareness of the upcoming Senedd election. Following agreement on budget with Commissioners and a robust procurement exercise, a marketing agency is in place and leading the paid-for element of this campaign, which went live on 23 February and runs until 7 May. The campaign is being evaluated throughout its phases, with evaluation of this latest phase due in June. Lessons learnt from this will be used to shape future campaigns and our Communications and Engagement Strategy for the Seventh Senedd.

Phase Four of the Senedd 26 campaign begins from 8 May and will focus on introducing a new and reformed Senedd to the public. Building on new relationships and lessons learnt over the past year, it will aim to increase understanding of the role of the Senedd, with particular focus on the influence of the changes (for example, greater scrutiny) and awareness of new Members and their roles. It will capitalise on increased media interest following the election to explain the Senedd's role, use our summer show programme to familiarise the public with the changes, and ensure the official opening is maximised as an opportunity to introduce the Seventh Senedd to a wide audience.

In the next year, we'll be developing our Communications and Engagement Strategy for the Seventh Senedd, and will be consulting with Members during its development. It will reflect the significant changes in the digital landscape and the fragmented way audiences consume information as a result. This will require us to continue to build our multi-channel approach to reaching audiences where they are.

Planned projects for 2026-27

The Portfolio Management Group meets regularly to prioritise which projects should receive funding from the Project Fund.

The funding has generally been approved in three tranches – the first committing ~70% of the Project Fund, the second two tranches committing the funding remaining in the project fund. Given the inherent uncertainty in how the 7th Senedd may wish to conduct its business, the approach of committing 70% of the Fund early in the financial year may be adjusted.

Project prioritisation for 2026-27 will occur in March/April, after which mission-critical projects will be selected and submitted for Executive Board approval via a business case. These include essential lifecycle works from Estates, Facilities Management, ICT plans, and operational proposals from service areas.

Annex 2

Senedd Commission Project Fund Schedule 2026-27

At the time of writing, the Commission is finalising its project portfolio for 26-27, which will be completed in April.

The Commission conducts a full prioritisation and portfolio building exercise each year that starts with Executive Board agreeing a Portfolio Strategy prior to the financial year. The strategy sets out its ambition and goals for the project portfolio. Once this is agreed all candidates' projects are prioritised against each other to ensure the overall portfolio aligns with the Executive Board's direction.

Part of the strategy includes a decision on the level of investment for 26-27. This decision will be taken in early April. It will be key for the Commission to balance the delivery of emerging projects against retaining enough flexibility to be able to respond to the demands of the new Senedd. Prioritisation workshops will take place in March / April with approval due in April.

Whilst the complete portfolio is not yet set, it is possible to provide the Committee with information on projects that already have a financial commitment agreed in 26-27, or which will be prioritised on the basis of a clear Commission / Senedd direction being set to do so. Such projects are set out below – the projects relating to Senedd Reform and Bay 32 will be funded from the ring-fenced amounts provided in the budget:

- Bay 32 – the delivery of the work included with the pre-development agreement, specifically agreeing the design of the new accommodation and completing the required work up to RIBA 3 / planning application.
- People and Remuneration – this project will continue delivery into 26-27 after the successful delivery of the payroll and HR modules in 24-25.
- Senedd Business Management System (SBMS) replacement – a business critical project to procure a document management system for Senedd Business on the current contract expiring; and
- Co-Pilot – the continuation of the Commission's AI pilot into 26-27
- Lawmaker – the project to deliver new legislative management software for use by Welsh Government and the Commission.

It is anticipated that the majority of the investment made (outside of the above) will be on critical and essential estates and ICT maintenance and life-cycle projects.

During 26-27 the Commission will administer a small £50K "invest to save" fund as part of the overall £2m available, which projects that are able to demonstrate a positive return on investment can access. This is in line with, and will support, the Medium-Term Resourcing Framework's emphasis on finding efficiencies. A number of smaller projects that were able to demonstrate a return on investment were approved in 25-26, its first year of operation.