

Llyr Gruffydd
Chair, Finance Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Tŷ Hywel
Cardiff Bay
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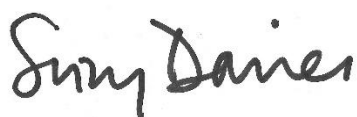
16 October 2018

Dear Llyr

Following our appearance at your Committee on 3 October, I am writing to provide you with further information to add to the responses we provided during the meeting. The information is set out in the attached annex.

We would like to thank the Committee for your scrutiny. The Commission's approach is always to try to operate with openness, transparency and clarity. So if there is anything else that we can provide you with to assist the Committee, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Yours sincerely



Suzy Davies

cc Assembly Commissioners, Manon Antoniazzi, Nia Morgan



Assembly Commission: Additional information following 3 October 2018 appearance at Finance Committee

Priority Projects – Detail on priority projects for 2019–20

Annex 3 of the Draft Budget document sets out the priority projects for 2019–20:

2019-20 Commission Investment Priorities:	£'000
Legislative Workbench	£100
Plenary and Petitions projects	£60
Name Change	£25
Public information and engagement	£125
Website	£275
Estates Priority Expenditure:	
Infrastructure repairs - Atrium	£65
Window replacement - Phase 1	£345
Boilers	£295
Fire Door and window replacement - Phase 1	£80
ICT Priority Expenditure:	
Infrastructure refresh	£50
Cyber Security	£30
Voice to Text project	£50
2019-20 Investment Priorities	£1,500

Within the Budget document, these projects are grouped with others that achieve the same strategic objective. The Commission has three strategic objectives:



- **TO PROVIDE OUTSTANDING PARLIAMENTARY SUPPORT**
- **TO ENGAGE WITH ALL THE PEOPLE OF WALES AND CHAMPION THE ASSEMBLY**
- **USE RESOURCES WISELY**

We have grouped our priority projects in this way to ensure that only projects that help achieve one of these goals can be considered a priority project.

Pages 21 to 26 include detailed information on all of our priority projects along with additional information on our new Academic Engagement work, which is included within the budget in Table 7 (p36).

These projects are currently what the Commission is planning to deliver during 2019–20. At this stage, the information on pages 21–26 sets out the current understanding of the scope and work involved within these projects.

In every case, a detailed business case will be brought to the Executive Board for thorough scrutiny and challenge, before any funds are allocated to these projects.

It is possible that we may need to vary the planned list of priority projects to be undertaken in 2019–20 as new, higher priorities emerge, or there are changes required to the plan for projects to be delivered in 2018–19.

Capital vs Revenue spend

As highlighted during the scrutiny session, the Commission does not distinguish between capital and revenue priority project expenditure.

The Commission, like other public bodies, has one control total, in compliance with the National Assembly Standing Order 20.13. This means that, at the end of the financial year, the Commission must ensure that only its actual overall expenditure (revenue and capital) remains within the overall resource amount approved by the Assembly.

This provides the Commission with flexibility within its budget. This enables the Commission to prioritise its expenditure in line with its actual requirements rather than focusing too closely on whether an item is capital or revenue in nature. A project can be assessed on its merit rather than discounting a capital project if the Commission's capital line has been exceeded.



Absence – Figures for sickness absence since March 2018

The Commission is actively working on initiatives to improve absence levels and the wellbeing and mental health of staff.

Since March 2018, the sickness figures have improved and have dropped below the public sector benchmark over the last three months, though we have yet to see the full impact of the action we are taking:

Month	Sickness Absence – % rolling 12m average
March 2018	3.8%
July 2018	3.64%
August 2018	3.44%
September 2018	3.36%
Public sector Benchmark	3.7%

We have recently promoted our own extended Work Life Wellbeing week that spanned 2-12 October, with events that the HR department has developed dedicated to better health and wellbeing and there was advice for employees and managers about how best to manage their work and home life in order to improve their wellbeing and lifestyle. This also encompassed World Mental Health Day on 10 October, supported by the members of our mental health staff network MINDFUL and occupational health nurse.

Work has also taken place on developing improved system management and management capability. Absence is the focal point of HR Business Partner discussions, and absence data and reporting have been improved to clearly show how each department compares to the benchmark and our organisational target.

