



Comisiwn y Cynulliad Assembly Commission

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Improving Public Understanding through Assembly Branding

This paper has been prepared for consideration by the National Assembly for Wales Commission. It has been deemed suitable for publication after such consideration in line with the Commission's rules for conduct of business. Premature publication or disclosure of the contents of this paper is not permitted as this might prejudice the Commission's deliberations

Purpose and summary of issues

1. This document sets out a proposed strategy for improving communications through the development and implementation of a 'Brand Manifesto' for the National Assembly for Wales.

The objective is to provide a dynamic and definitive set of guidelines on how best to communicate with external audiences and stakeholders wherever and however the National Assembly for Wales connects with them.

Recommendations (including priority deadlines)

2. The Commission is invited to review and endorse proposals for the development and implementation of the National Assembly for Wales' Brand Manifesto. The full scope of the project is detailed in Annex A.



Discussion

3. It should be noted that this proposal is *not* an exercise in rebranding. It is a process that establishes best practice in communications, and one that will establish the National Assembly for Wales, in line with its strategic objective, as an organisation that makes a ‘bold response to constitutional change’
4. The National Assembly for Wales is committed to being “*an accessible and effective parliamentary body that inspires the confidence of the people of Wales*”. However, our language can be impenetrable, our public positioning unclear, and our means of communicating is not keeping pace with best practice or the public’s changing media consumption habits.
5. The objective of the Brand Manifesto is to enhance the National Assembly for Wales brand with integrity and meaning, in the eyes of the citizens of Wales. To do so, we should re-examine the ways the National Assembly for Wales communicates with its stakeholders in terms of language, imagery, communications channels it uses and how it explains the organisation. Also we must better explain how the organisation sits within the broader political landscape of Wales and the UK.
6. The Brand Manifesto’s key objective is identical to the National Assembly for Wales’ primary goal, to promote and widen engagement in devolution, and also to encourage participation in the democratic process. It aims to achieve these through the provision of workable communications guidelines and practices that will enhance the citizens of Wales’ understanding of who we are and what we do.
7. This is a major project that has implications across all areas of the National Assembly for Wales. For it to succeed, it needs full participation from interested Members and staff, and should be a programme where the research and developmental stages encourage a vigorous and honest debate on the Assembly’s public positioning and how to achieve it.
8. The Brand Manifesto will seek to publicly reposition the National Assembly for Wales in the eyes of external and internal audiences and provide guidelines on how to achieve that repositioning.
9. To sit alongside this work on branding, we need to ensure that the coverage, reach and availability of materials about Assembly proceedings through broadcasting match these ambitions. It will be important for us to consider how we can reach growing media like



commercial radio providers and new on line news services. A specific piece of work commissioned from a specialist, looking at editorial, technological and delivery channels, would inform the branding strategy and the i-change programme.

Governance Matters

Financial implications

10. Provision for the payment of staffing costs has been included in the Commission's budget previously approved by the Assembly. There are likely to be additional costs associated with the work mentioned in paragraph 9, probably about 10 to 12 days consultancy, which can be contained within existing resources.

Risk Assessment

11. The primary risk is associated with NOT undertaking this work. The National Assembly for Wales urgently needs to consolidate its public positioning and broaden the citizens of Wales' understanding of who it is and what it does. Only through doing this will we be able to engage the public in a debate on the democratic process and encourage greater involvement in that process. Maintenance of the status quo runs the risk of engendering a sense of apathy at a time when increases in legislative powers should be fostering vigorous debate across Wales.

Compliance

12. The Commission has the power to promote public awareness of devolution.



Annex A

National Assembly for Wales - A Brand Manifesto

1. Introduction

The proposed Brand Manifesto is a wholesale reinvigoration of the National Assembly for Wales' brand, which will provide a dynamic, definitive online repository of information and guidelines on all aspects of the brand's operational applications, from the language used to the visual look and feel of every touch-point with external and internal audiences.

In line with the National Assembly for Wales' objective of making **"... the Assembly an accessible and effective parliamentary body that inspires the confidence of the people of Wales"**, it aims to place the citizen at the heart of all our communications activity, taking *their* needs, points of view and levels of understanding into consideration.

The External Relations service will have ownership of the Brand Manifesto's application under the direction of the Media, Publications and Web Manager. However, it will be accessible to all staff members, with the expectation that they Champion its guidelines when developing any form of communication.

The objective is that every piece of communications material developed across the National Assembly for Wales, will, under the guidance and overview of the External Relations service, be consistent – not only in terms of how it looks, but as regards the accessibility of language, terminology and tone.

The Brand Manifesto's development and its consistent and rigorous application will provide the National Assembly for Wales with a public positioning that amplifies its strategic and operational objectives.

Indicative timeline

Activity	Timing	Outcomes & Outputs
Scoping paper presented to Commissioners	8 July 2008	Scope of project agreed along with confirmation to proceed
Branding the subject of 'Cyfnewid'	July 2008	Suggestions and comments collated and analysed
Series of facilitated	July / August	- Brand values developed



internal brand workshops (see 3.2 [below] for detail)	2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Positioning statement developed - Key messages developed - Design Brief developed
Outputs presented to the Assembly Commission	September 2008	Confirmation to proceed with implementation
Implementation plan	September 2008	Timeline for implementation of Brand Manifesto developed and work commences

2. Detail

2.1 Summary of current situation

The current brand guidelines for the National Assembly for Wales provide instructions solely on the use of the National Assembly for Wales logotype.

Consequently, the organisation's communications channels (web, publications, outreach, events etc) and communications collateral (from business cards to letter templates and from interpretation material to email signatures etc) lack coherence and consistency in terms of their look and feel, the imagery used, the provision of a legible brand colour palette and linguistic tonality.

The National Assembly for Wales brand aspirations (how it wishes to be perceived by all external audiences) are vague and while signalling an intent to be open, accessible and trusted, do not provide robust enough operational guidelines on how that intent should manifest itself across our external communications channels.

Consequently, much of the language used in public-facing material is riddled with jargon, acronyms and has a narrative style that can disenfranchise the casual reader, instead of drawing them in, inspiring them to find out more about the organisation, and ultimately, encouraging involvement in the democratic process.

There is also no coherent brand architecture to articulate the relationship between the different sub-brands that exist within the National Assembly for Wales, nor the relationship between the National Assembly for Wales and the Welsh Assembly Government.



In brief, the execution of much of the National Assembly for Wales' communications activities is at odds with its strategic objective of positioning the organisation as one that is '*accessible*', '*effective*' or one that '*inspires the confidence of the people of Wales*'.

2.2 The National Assembly for Wales - a consistent brand

The provision of a Brand Manifesto for the National Assembly for Wales is *not* an exercise in rebranding, a pejorative term synonymous with profligacy and superficial corporate makeovers.

The current logotype was designed by VWD Design Associates in 2002. There is currently no intention to reconfigure it, nor to commission a new design. However, it would be salient to include a discussion on its efficacy in the research phase of the Brand Manifesto.

The objective of the Brand Manifesto is to imbue the National Assembly for Wales brand with integrity and meaning, and to provide the organisation with a robust identity in the eyes of the citizens of Wales. To do so, there must be a wholesale reconfiguration of the ways the National Assembly for Wales communicates with its stakeholders in terms of language, imagery, and how it articulates how the various strands of the organisation link together. Also we must better articulate how the organisation sits within the broader political landscape of Wales and the UK.

The Brand Manifesto will seek to publicly reposition the National Assembly for Wales in the eyes of external (and by default, internal) audiences, and provide guidelines on how to achieve that repositioning.

It will therefore be more than a vague articulation of vision and values, which normally only signal the organisation's intent. Rather, it is designed to provide a clear steer in the form of guidelines on how we communicate the Assembly so that they are always aligned with the National Assembly for Wales' strategic objectives, and bring the organisation's values to life in a communications context.

3. Brand Manifesto – Research Phase (June to September 08)

Significant preparatory work needs to be done in order to provide a robust foundation for the National Assembly for Wales' Brand Manifesto.

3.1 Establishing the brand - Assessing and addressing the National Assembly for Wales' brand values, and their application across a variety of communications channels.



This first step will analyse and dissect the National Assembly for Wales brand, to baseline what it actually stands for, and to ensure that it is firmly aligned with all strategic and operational objectives.

It is not envisaged that there will be a revolutionary re-baselining of the National Assembly for Wales' brand values rather, we will aim to complement the values as articulated in the Commission's strategy developed in Summer '07. However, this unpicking of the brand is a necessary step in ensuring there exists an internal consensus on who the National Assembly for Wales *is* and what the National Assembly for Wales *does*.

It is also an important step in the development of an agreed public positioning for the National Assembly for Wales in terms of key messages.

3.2 Outcomes of the Research Phase

- Desk research on the current brand and a comprehensive audit of its applications across all communications channels
- The National Assembly for Wales brand is the subject of '**Cyfnewid**'
- A series of brand workshops with internal National Assembly for Wales stakeholders, facilitated by the Media, Publications and Website Manager. The objectives are:
 - o to gain an understanding of what communications are deemed effective and which ones can be improved
 - o establish what various internal stakeholders deem to be the most integral brand values
 - o baseline who the National Assembly for Wales is and what we do
- Information on who should attend to be included here following internal discussions

3.3 Brand Manifesto - Outputs

- A refreshed set of **draft brand values** aligned to the National Assembly for Wales' strategic objectives
- A **positioning statement** articulating who we are and what we do.
- A comprehensive suite of **supporting key messages** to reinforce and augment the positioning statement.
- A **detailed Design Brief** spanning all brand applications (publications, outreach signage, web, display material, comms collateral etc).

It is expected that the Research Phase will be complete by the beginning of September 2008.



4. Brand Manifesto – Application

With these fundamental building blocks in place, work can commence on applying the outputs across all communications activity.

Oversight of the development and implementation of the various components of the Brand Manifesto detailed below will sit within the External Relations service as the responsibility of the Media, Publications and Web Manager, in conjunction with identified and agreed internal stakeholders.

No precise timings are included in this scoping document, but it is envisaged that there will be an immediate and concurrent start to many of the workstreams.

Proposed workstreams of the Brand Manifesto, are outlined below:

4.1 Visual Style Guide

Based on the Design Brief that will be developed as part of the Research Phase, the Visual Style Guide, (covering the look and feel of the National Assembly for Wales communications), will address the following aspects:

Visual identity Guidelines designed to provide a coherent look and feel to the visual aspects of all the National Assembly for Wales' communications activities. This will include instructions on colour palettes for use across all publications, (designed for example, to differentiate between different publications suites). It will also include information on font size, font colourways, use of capitalisation and typography across publications, web site, email sign-off, letter templates, presentation templates, signage etc and consistent use of imagery.

Visual identity and brand hierarchy An exposition of the inter-relation between the National Assembly for Wales parent logotype and its sub-brands – for example the Senedd (an iconic architectural manifestation of sustainability and parliamentary transparency, Siambwr Hywel (the home of learning about democracy) and the Pier Head (a Chatam House for Wales).

There is currently no coherent visual relationship between these brands, nor guidelines on the relationship between logotypes – for example, how should the National Assembly for Wales logotype sit in relation to a sub-brand such as the Education logotype?



In addition, there is a strong risk associated with the proliferation of discrete internal brands and logotypes developed in isolation of a coherent overarching strategy (cf Constitutional Quick Notes) and other teams' (notably Security) expressed desire to establish a separate logotype as a badge of identity.

A coherent brand and visual identity hierarchy will provide a visual articulation of the various external-facing aspects of the National Assembly for Wales, and help clarify their relationship with each other.

Logotype guidelines Instructions on the use of different logotypes in full colour, spot colour, monotone and monochrome. These will cover the parent National Assembly for Wales brand and all other sub brands.

Resource implication The development of a visual style guide and its subsequent long-term application across all communications channels are specialised tasks and offers implications in terms of resource, as a specialist experienced graphic-design capability is not currently available.

There are two broad solutions for consideration:

- (i) *Outsource this task to a professional design agency.*
- (ii) *Establish an in-house design capability*

The research phase of the development of the Brand Manifesto will provide a better insight in the nature and weight of the work, and will allow for a more informed decision on the optimal solution as regards resource.

4.2 Positioning statement and supporting key messages

An integral part of the public positioning of the National Assembly for Wales and its brand is the development of an unequivocal positioning statement and supporting key messages.

The statement and messages should articulate who the National Assembly for Wales is, what its roles are – in short, answer the '*what's its relevance to me*' question that is going unanswered for many citizens.

4.3 Language Style Guide

A set of guidelines spanning diction, vocabulary, linguistic style, avoidance of jargon, glossary of technical terminology etc in both Welsh and English. This will be a comprehensive online resource (to ensure it is accessible and dynamic and able to be easily updated) that will provide definitive guidelines



for publications, media releases and content published on the website and any other external-facing written communications.

4.4 Image Bank

A regularly-updated online repository of high-resolution photographic images indexed by subject matter, which can be used across all communications channels.

There is also scope for this to be password-accessed by the media and other external stakeholders.

This could help alleviate the electronic storage issue noted at the June 2008 IT Board, caused by the large number of images currently being stored on the National Assembly for Wales SAN.

A photographic brief will be developed to ensure consistency of approach of all new commissioned photography.

4.5 Publications Review

Provision of a coherent strategy for all National Assembly for Wales' publications, including a publications hierarchy based on user-needs from outreach, education, visitor requests etc.

The strategy will also cover the implications of new technology on print requirements, including downloadable online print files, publications that can be disseminated by CD-Rom, memory sticks or other new and emerging technology.

Given the need to review the public positioning of the National Assembly for Wales in terms of its looks and feel, positioning statement, supporting key messages and language (see points 4.1 to 4.4 above) it is envisaged that a priority will be the development of a new suite of 'Introduction to the National Assembly for Wales', with other publications cascading from this starting point.

It should be noted that the Publications Review will encompass ALL National Assembly for Wales publications, not only those developed by External Relations.

4.6 Web Review



The National Assembly for Wales' website is in need of a complete review to take into account changing user needs and expectations vis-à-vis new and emerging technology.

The review will include an analysis of the information architecture, and a visual and linguistic revamp to ensure it conforms to the revised the Style and Language guidelines outlined above.

In this context, the review covers more than just web copy and image content. It will also cover the websites functionality, usability and an analysis of future needs to assess ongoing development of associated digital multimedia activity.

4.7 Broadcast strategy

The proposed BBC Digital Democracy initiative (due to launch in January 2009) has the potential to transform public, media and stakeholder expectations of live and archived political broadcasts, and we will be working closely with them to help achieve mutually beneficial results.

Senedd.TV has been successfully launched, but it is necessary that we ensure we are optimising use of this invaluable resource.

The Broadcast Strategy will be linked to the Web Review (above) and also to the Media Relations Strategy (4.8 *below*), the Outreach Review (4.9 *below*) and the ichange project. It will address how the high uptake of new technology (free podcasts, distribution of edited clips containing branded interstitials to interested broadcast and online media, and public subscribers to information on the National Assembly for Wales etc) can help encourage involvement in the democratic process among traditionally hard to reach audiences.

4.8 Media Relations Strategy

The development of a revised proactive media relations strategy with a strong focus on broadening understanding among the people of Wales on who the National Assembly for Wales is and what role it plays in their lives.

Consideration needs to be given to all media outlets, including online, and should include the provision of digital information (edited audio clips, edited and branded embedded video clips etc) to maximise controlled coverage across the media.

It will give prominent weighting to local media, and also 'softer' human interest that illustrate the positive influence of the Assembly's work on individuals.



4.9 Outreach and events

Any new outreach strategy should be closely informed by the outputs of the Brand Manifesto, especially the style and language guidelines, and the Image Bank.

The objective is to provide a consistent and coherent public positioning of the National Assembly for Wales that links together our discrete communications channels.

The Web (4.6 *above*) and Broadcast (4.7 *above*) reviews will also need to work closely with Outreach to optimise opportunities for interactive communication with the National Assembly for Wales, and to maximise data-capture for communications and marketing purposes.

4.10 Educational Activities

Although part of the Outreach strand, this merits a separate workstream, as it is a discrete and tightly targeted activity and a brand in its own right, with Siambr Hywel having the potential as a base for a Youth Parliament for Wales.

This brand needs work to become fully established, and its links to the National Assembly for Wales brand to be clearly articulated to maximise mutual brand leverage.

4.11 Retail outlet and merchandise review

The retail outlet and merchandise is possibly the most tangible manifestation of the National Assembly for Wales brand for visitors to Cardiff Bay after the Senedd.

Consideration therefore needs to be given to the application of the brand and related sub-brands (the youth-focused Education sub-brand in particular) on the available merchandise, and on all point-of-sale branding.

The retail outlet already seeks to augment the positive environmental credentials of the National Assembly for Wales brand through extensive use of goods using recycled material, but it may be possible to explore the 'innovative' and 'forward-looking' elements of the brand through merchandise that reinforces new technology – eg branded memory sticks that include pages from the website, such as AM profiles etc.



A peer review of other well-regarded visitor attraction retail outlets (eg the Eden Project) may prove useful.

4.12 Communications Collateral

This is currently a catch-all category, and may need further sub-categorisation. However, there needs to be a definitive audit of branded material in the following categories to ensure that they are either incorporated into the Design Brief, or are reviewed to ensure brand consistency:

Presentations: A standardised multi-media template for presentations by all National Assembly for Wales staff.

Communications templates: A standardisation of templates for letters, email signatures, media releases etc

E-communications: A review of the efficacy and marketing potential of electronic communications, including a review of the current e-newsletter

Stationery: An audit of all stationery, to ensure conformity with the parent and sub-brands

Interpretation: Guidelines to be produced to ensure that all interpretation panels and signage confirm to brand guidelines.

Clothing: A review of any bespoke clothing for outreach and events, the Education team, security etc

Other: To be identified as part of the Research Phase.

5. Summary and Conclusion

This is a major project that has implications across many internal departments within the National Assembly for Wales. For it to succeed, it needs full participation from interested members of staff, and should be a programme where the research and developmental stages encourage a vigorous and honest debate on the Assembly's public positioning and how to achieve it.

As previously noted, this is not an exercise in rebranding. Rather it is a process that establishes best practice in communications, and one that can establish the National Assembly for Wales, in line with its strategic objective, as an organisation that makes a 'bold response to constitutional change'



The Brand Manifesto's key objective is identical to the National Assembly for Wales' primary goal, namely to promote and widen engagement in devolution, and also to encourage participation in the democratic process. It aims to achieve these through the provision of workable communications guidelines and practices that will enhance the citizens of Wales' understanding of who we are and what we do.

As an evolving, dynamic communications reference point for the National Assembly for Wales, the onus for ensuring that it is current, informed by development in communications disciplines and workable rests with the External Communications department.

However, each individual within the National Assembly for Wales has a responsibility to ensure they adhere to the Brand Manifesto's principles and recommendations, and as such, it should be positioned as a Service Level Agreement between External Communications and ALL other departments and individuals within the Assembly.