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Management Board Report to the Assembly Commission – June 2009

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1.0 Assembly Commission's Strategic Goals

1.1 Strategic Goal – Promoting and widening engagement in devolution

(a) Media Coverage

Media coverage in this quarter has been dominated by the 10th anniversary of devolution, the Llywydd's outreach tour and the launch of the outreach bus. There was good, positive coverage for the bus in both the Daily Post and BBC Online, concentrating on the benefits of a new outreach service in North Wales, particularly as the theme of our 10th anniversary commemorations was increasing participation. 12 May activities received extensive coverage in the lead-up, throughout the day and post-event. Pre-event coverage focused on our 10-year-old guests and was well received by the regional press. Coverage on the day included lives from the Senedd, pre-records with staff members for national and regional radio.

Committee report launches also gained good press coverage over this period, in particular Enterprise and Learning's inquiry into the Welsh government's handling of the economic downturn, Sustainability Committee's Carbon Reduction reports 3 and 4, as well as the launch of their call for video evidence for the flooding inquiry.

Interest in Members' pay increase appeared in the Western Mail and was linked to general interest in Allowances.

(b) Presiding Officer's tour

As part of the Assembly's 10th anniversary, the Llywydd conducted a tour of Wales in order to involve more people in our democratic process

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and to tackle any real or perceived barriers to full participation and engagement. The Llywydd visited the African Community Centre in Swansea, The Democracy Project by Sarah Powell in Carmarthen, Partners in Politics project in Treorchy, Multi Faith Groups in Newport and culminated with a final meeting with Stonewall Cymru which also launched the Outreach Bus in North Wales. After each meeting the Llywydd met with local journalists and representatives from each sector to find out more about how devolution has impacted them and how the Assembly has engaged. The findings will be taken forward in the Assembly's outreach work through the links that have been made with key networks and effective partnerships.

(c) Outreach Bus Launch

The Outreach Bus was officially launched in Venue Cymru, Llandudno on 8 May 2009. The Llywydd participated in the Launch as part of his tour, and held a meeting with representatives from Gay and Lesbian Groups to discuss their experience of barriers to participation. He was also joined on the bus by young people from local schools and colleges, who were given the opportunity to ask the Llywydd questions that they had prepared. Visitors to the bus were able to find out more about how the Assembly works, leave video messages and learn more about how petitions can be presented to the Assembly.

The bus will primarily travel across north Wales, reaching out to north Wales citizens, informing them about how the Assembly is affecting their lives, and encouraging them to engage with, participate in, and influence the Assembly's work.

The bus will be used in May and June by the Assembly's Sustainability Committee collecting evidence in the form of images and videos from communities that have been affected by flooding, for the Committee's Flooding Inquiry. The bus will also be at local and regional events in North and Mid Wales throughout the summer.

(d) Branding update

Work on the National Assembly brand continues, and is being rolled out. New versions of Committee reports and MRS publications are already in use, along with new publications for visitors to the Senedd and for outreach services' use. All publications will be phased in to replace diminishing stocks.

(e) Urdd Eisteddfod

Between 25-30 May 2009, Cardiff Bay is being transformed to host Eisteddfod yr Urdd, Wales' cultural youth festival. The Senedd forms part of the official event and will be hosting the official Art and Craft exhibition with over 400 pieces of art created by children of all ages from across Wales. The Senedd 'Oriel' also becomes home to the

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official TV set that will be broadcasting live every day from the Eisteddfod.

In addition to this, various activities are running from the Senedd, promoting our theme this year of 10 Years of Devolution. Activities include:

- 10 year anniversary Cinema in the Media Briefing room;
- working in partnership with the Children and Young People Committee on a voting activity;
- tasks promoting the work of the Petitions Committee;
- gathering evidence from questionnaires and video evidence for the Enterprise and Learning Committee;
- floor talks from the chamber floor every hour;
- children's workshops;
- a future's questionnaire – asking the people of Wales for their opinion's on what should be the Assembly's priorities for the next 10 years; and
- the IT Zone – opportunity to leave electronic feedback and to use our website for further information and on-line activities.

1.2 Strategic Goal – Unity, leadership and a bold response to constitutional change

(a) Legislative Programme Update

Since the Commission's last report a number of further milestones in the Assembly's development as a legislature have been passed:

- Legislation Committee No.1 published the **Proposed Playing Fields (Community Involvement in Disposal Decisions) (Wales) Measure's** stage 1 report on 29 April (Dai Lloyd AM's proposed Measure). Stage 1 debate scheduled for 1 July.
- Legislation Committee No.1 has launched a consultation on the **Proposed Shipment of Waste for Recovery (Community Involvement Arrangements) (Wales) Measure**, which closes on 15 June. It is hoped that the Committee will start to take oral evidence in July, depending on the Committee's other work. They have to report by 30 November.
- The Assembly agreed the financial resolution for the proposed **Healthy Eating in Schools (Wales) Measure** on 5 May and Legislation Committee No.1 are undertaking Stage 2 which will end

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by 19 June. The Committee will begin the consideration of amendments on 10 June.

- **Proposed Commissioner for Standards Measure** (Introduced on 25th March): The stage 1 Plenary debate took place on 13 May and the Assembly agreed the motion and financial resolution. Legislation Committee No. 1 will begin consideration of amendments on 24 June.
- The **Proposed Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure** was passed by the Assembly at Stage 4 on 17 March 2009. Royal Approval was given by Privy Council on 13 May.
- Legislation Committee No. 2 is undertaking Stage 1 considerations with the **Proposed Children and Families (Wales) Measure**. The public consultation ended on 1 May, the responses have been published and are being considered by the Committee in due course. The Committee has to report by 19 June.
- The **Proposed Education (Wales) Measure** was introduced on 27 April and referred to Legislation Committee No. 3 for Stage 1 considerations. The public consultation was launched on 11 May and closes on 8 June. The Committee has to report by 7 July.
- The Assembly agreed the **proposed Local Government (Wales) Measure** on 28 April and the 4 week intimation period is now underway. The proposed Measure is scheduled to be sealed and signed on 1 June. It is anticipated that Royal Approval be given at the 10 June Privy Council.
- The Committee report for the **proposed Carers LCO (National Assembly for Wales (Legislative Competence) (Social Welfare) Order 2008)** was laid on 2 April.
- The public consultation on **the National Assembly for Wales (Legislative Competence) (Welsh Language) Order 2009** closed on 20 March. The Committee is still taking evidence and has to report by 5 June.
- The House of Commons Welsh Affairs Committee has published the Government's response to its report on **the National Assembly for Wales (Legislative Competence) (Agriculture and Rural Development) Order 2009**. Note: the draft LCO was approved by the Assembly at the end of March, but has yet to be approved by Parliament.
- On 13 June the Presiding Officer held a ballot for legislative proposals. Joyce Watson was selected in the LCO Ballot: Proposed Hard Surfaces Legislative Competence Order. Janet Ryder was selected in the Measure Ballot: Proposed Assessing the Demand for Welsh Medium Education Measure.

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- **The Proposed National Assembly for Wales (Legislative Competence) (Environment) Order 2009** was re-laid on 19 May and has been passed to Legislation Committee 4. The reporting date is 12 June.

(b) Business Change Programme

To build upon the outcome of the i-change consultation, and to ensure that change projects are driven by improvement in efficiency and value for money, a business change programme has been established. The network unification project will be part of this programme and will provide a foundation for ICT support in changes to the way we work.

(c) Fourth Committee room

Work is underway on the provision of a fourth committee room for use at the start of the autumn term 2009. The room will enhance our resilience and provide additional flexibility to support the growth in Assembly business. The new room will be located on the ground floor of Tŷ Hywel. The building work has been completed and technical installation is well underway. The cameras, television screens and audio equipment will be installed during the half-term recess, in readiness for testing and training during the summer. Business Committee is currently considering how the availability of a fourth committee room might be used to accommodate pressures in the committee timetable and enable a more flexible approach to programming meetings.

1.3 Strategic Goal – Respect, probity and good governance

(a) Remuneration Committee

The Remuneration Committee met on 2 April and considered the performance management and development reviews for the Chief Executive and Clerk and the Directors, noting that the process had been completed appropriately and that performance had been evidenced as being satisfactory. The committee also noted considerations for the pay and reward strategy for staff whose existing three-year pay deal would end on 31 March 2010, and benchmarking information on chief executive and director salaries in other public sector organisations to ensure that existing levels were appropriate.

(b) Corporate Governance Committee

The Corporate Governance Committee met on 27 April and considered four main items: the Annual Accounts and Assurance process which would be completed by July; Internal Audit reports; governance issues which primarily concerned risk and information security; and the findings of a review of the committee's effectiveness which had been undertaken by the Wales Audit Office. These issues are covered in more detail in the committee's annual report which will be considered at the Commission's meeting on 1 June.

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(c) Annual Report and Accounts

An Annual Report working group has been established, and includes representatives of all service areas. A detailed content outline has been proposed and work has already started on the design layout of the report.

(d) AM Mentoring Scheme

The National Assembly for Wales, Welsh Government and the Welsh Local Government Association, along with partners (including Operation Black Vote), are developing a mentoring scheme which is open to under-represented groups across the equality strands, namely ethnic minority groups; lesbian, gay, bisexual people; disabled people; young people; transgender people and women. The scheme aims to engage people who are historically under-represented and will provide participants with the chance to learn about civic and democratic participation in Wales. It will have two separate elements: an AM mentoring scheme and a local councillor mentoring scheme. Politicians will mentor participants for a minimum of ten days over a six month period, providing them with an opportunity to witness a breadth of experiences.

The Scheme will be promoted to Assembly Members and local councillors early in June and participating Mentees over the summer with the launch date scheduled for the beginning of the autumn term (late September or early October). The Scheme will run for six months, and will include 10 days of mentoring and will close in the spring 2010 after which it will be evaluated before a decision is made on whether to repeat the exercise.

Guidance is being prepared for Mentors and Mentees and a Scheme Co-ordinator based at the Assembly will be in post this month. Short workshops detailing what Members can expect and hints on effective mentoring will be delivered over the summer term.

1.4 Strategic Goal – Working sustainably

(a) Bike Week: 13-21 June

We have planned for a full week of activities including a bike show featuring two or more (new) bike suppliers from our cycle to work scheme, free breakfasts for cyclists, raffles of a cycle and vouchers, bike maintenance demonstration and a community bike ride. We also intend to invite partners such as On Your Bike, Sustrans, Cycle Training Wales and Cardiff County Council.

(b) Building Review

In conjunction with the Carbon Trust, Arup is conducting a review of Tŷ Hywel's systems and will make recommendations about the ways we can improve the energy and waste outputs of the building. This should

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be available by the end of June, and will inform our approach to asset management and the sustainability strategy.

1.5 Strategic Goal – The best service, provided in the most effective way

(a) Investors in People

As a result of the recent assessment, the liP assessor found that the Assembly has met the rigorous standards necessary for liP and is recommending the Assembly for accreditation. Indeed, the assessor found that we have already achieved elements of the extended liP framework.

A highlight for the assessor, which she shared in a direct quote, was that staff have a 'clear line of sight' between what they do and how their contribution supports organisational success. She attributed this to our positive leadership in setting organisation and service direction, which has been enhanced by our recent work to improve the performance management process. The assessor noted that the leadership style within the organisation has been crucial in developing our organisational culture. The assessor confirmed that she had been provided with extensive evidence to support this positive assessment.

(b) Security Team

Phase one of the Security Change Programme is now complete and the new security structure was put in place on 28 May 2009. The new structure will provide a more efficient and effective way of operating, and six first-line managers have now been selected and trained to undertake their new roles. Phase two of this programme will see the introduction of a rolling programme of both training and exercising, designed to improve service delivery to all Members and customers across the Assembly. It is anticipated that the change programme will produce substantial efficiency savings across the service area.

(c) Bilingual Payslips

To date, our payslips have been produced in English-only format. We have been working with the Welsh government to address this shortcoming through our shared payroll contract, and will now be introducing bilingual payslips.

2.0 Key Activities and Events

2.1 Assembly Business

(a) Standards Commissioner Measure

The general principles of the proposed Measure, establishing the position of Commissioner for Standards, were agreed to by the Assembly on 13 May 2009. Legislation Committee No.1 will be

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undertaking Stage 2 proceedings at its meetings on 24 June and 1 July 2009. The deadline for amendments to be tabled is 17 June 2009, and the deadline for the Stage 2 committee to complete its proceedings is 3 July 2009. It is hoped that the Measure will complete its passage through the Assembly in the autumn so as to allow the Commissioner to be appointed in early 2010.

2.2 Pierhead update

The application for Listed Building Consent has been forwarded to CADW having been dealt with on time by Cardiff County Council. The project plan notes 12 June as a date for a decision from CADW (according to their estimated turnaround times). Decisions on contractors for phase two including building works, exhibition fit-out and AV IT development will be made before the end of May. A value engineering exercise on phase two costs will be completed before the next Project Board meeting on 3 June, where we will also present final draft of the content presentation for approval.

2.3 Hansard Society

The Hansard Society is an independent, non-partisan political research and education charity which aims to strengthen parliamentary democracy and encourage greater public involvement in politics. In recent times, the society has given the Assembly expertise in e-democracy and support for education initiatives. Dianne Bevan is a trustee and non-executive director of the Society.

The Society is currently holding a series of seminars on “Making Better Law”, the first of which (on “Bad Law: A Diagnosis”) Keith Bush attended on 26 March. Amongst the defects which speakers identified in Parliamentary procedures were the rules requiring consideration of legislation to be completed within a single session and the absence of an effective means of taking evidence from stakeholders about a Bill’s general principles. Participants seemed unaware, until it was pointed out by Keith, that Assembly (and Scottish Parliament) procedures had already eliminated these defects.

2.4 Commonwealth Parliamentary Association

The Wales Branch of the CPA continues to work towards raising the serious concerns it has with CPA Governance and Finance to the wider organisation, concerns which first materialised during last year’s Annual Conference in Kuala Lumpur. The main areas of concern surround:

- the voting process (rotation of elected CPA Executive Officers)
- election of the CPA Chair; and
- the CPA’s financial management.

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The CPA asked Ian Summers to do a review and his paper, CPA Finance and Governance Arrangements, has been distributed to all twelve other member branches of the BIMR (British Isles and Mediterranean Region) and the issue has now been accepted as an agenda item for discussion at the conference of the region, to be held in Guernsey in June. Meanwhile, the Branch Executive Committee is also in direct contact with the CPA's newly appointed Director of Administration and Finance to discuss specific areas of concern, and with the Secretary General himself.

2.5 Appointment of Auditor General Wales

After several months of preparatory work involving the Audit Committee, a motion was agreed by the Assembly extending Jeremy Colman's appointment to last for a total of eight years, ending in 2013.

2.6 Inter-Parliamentary Corporate Contact Group

This group, which undertakes benchmarking, shares best practice and experience across the UK and Ireland parliamentary bodies, met recently at Stormont. Discussion covered topics like benchmarking parliamentary performance, the new Northern Ireland Assembly engagement strategy and sharing targets on energy emissions and waste. The next meeting will take place here in Cardiff in early September.

3.0 Financial report

We are currently completing the close down of the Commission's accounts for the year ended 31 March 2009. The projected outturn is £45.1m against the budget of £46.2m. This represents an underspend of £1.1m (2.4%), which is just outside the 2% tolerance set for the year. This is in line with the estimates reported to the Commission at the end of the February period, which were £1.2m and 2.5%.

The current projection is subject to final accounting adjustments, particularly regarding depreciation, notional interest charges and revaluation of the Pierhead building. The final position will be known by the end of May when the accounts are presented for audit by the Wales Audit Office.

As reported to the Commission in March 2009 total savings and underspends during the year amounted to around £2.8m, comprising, in the main, savings on staff costs (£1.2m), Members Pay and Allowances (£1.2m) and the Creche (£0.4m). The areas of underspend have been offset by bringing forward other expenditure and projects. These projects include the creation of the new Committee Room and sustainability improvements to reduce the carbon impact of our buildings and equipment, including replacement chillers and pipework lagging. Also a number of ICT projects have been progressed, including i-player and initial stages of i-change. This position reflects

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the considerable work done by budget holders to successfully identify and bring forward work initially planned for future years.

Commissioners will recall that we have previously reported the uncertainty regarding the accounting adjustments required to the Members' Pension Fund under Financial Reporting Standard 17 because of the turbulent economic climate. The final position for the year has now been received from the Government Actuary and the amount required was some £287,000 compared with the £500,000 included in the budget.

Looking forward to 2009-10 the financial position is considerably tighter and consequently, we took steps to maximise the use of resources available in 2008-09 by successfully bringing forward some expenditure planned for future years. Despite this action additional cost pressures have been identified for 2009-10, including completion of phase 2 of the Pierhead project (£0.75m), the work to provide a unified ICT network (separate paper) and completion of other improvement projects. As a consequence we have sought further ways of identifying additional savings and efficiencies to ensure that as many of these additional priorities as possible can be accommodated within the approved budget of £47.751m.

The process for compiling the budget for 2010-11 has started and a separate paper is included on the Commission's agenda.

4.0 Other information

- 4.1 A list of information disclosed since the last report under the Freedom of Information Act is attached at **Annex A**. The full disclosure can be provided to Commissioners on request.

INFORMATION RELEASED FOLLOWING ACCESS TO INFORMATION REQUESTS

MARCH - JUNE 2009

- A copy of the briefing provided by the Members' Research Service to the Petitions Committee in respect of the petition P-03-190 (NEVAR).
- Costs, where they could be identified of running the Sustainability Committee.
- Costs, where they could be identified, borne by the Assembly for the translation and publishing of documents into languages other than English.
- Copies of pamphlets/leaflets produced by the Assembly Copy Unit between 2008 and 2009 which were funded by Members' Expenses.
- Details and costs of flights taken by Assembly Members since 2007.
- Costs borne by the Assembly Commission relating to the Standing Order 25 Committee to consider proposed improvements to the A40.

INFORMATION WITHHELD FOLLOWING ACCESS TO INFORMATION REQUESTS

MARCH - JUNE 2009

- Details of membership and pensions payable to previous Assembly Members (personal information and information not held by the Assembly (section 40(3) and 3(2)).
- Information regarding personal contact data and job titles of officials (section 40).