

Comisiwn y Cynulliad Assembly Commission

NAFWC 2014 (Paper 6b)
Ten Year Anniversary Events

Cynulliad
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Ten Year Anniversary Events

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1.0 Purpose and summary of issues

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to highlight the key activities which marked the ten years of devolution, how they achieved the Commission's aims and objectives, and the legacy for future engagement and participation in democracy.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 For the Commission to note the information provided.
Further information can be provided if required.

3.0 Discussion

- 3.1 The aim of the ten year anniversary programme was to reinvigorate interest, understanding and accessible engagement between the Assembly and the people of Wales. The objectives were to:

- herald the achievements of ten years of devolution;
- assist us in making the brand real;

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- **raise awareness of the Assembly routes to participation;**
- **position the Assembly as a leading partner in discourse on Welsh citizenship;**
- **deliver a twelve month programme of citizen centred activities in line with the Assembly's communication strategy; and**
- **monitor and evaluate programme outputs to enable us to address the appropriateness of current engagement practice, with a view to informing the development of future communication strategies.**

3.2 The programme was due to run from May 2009 to April 2010 and was split into three categories:

- **four major events;**
- **Assembly-led activities; and**
- **key partner events.**

Four Major Events

3.3 At the outset, the original intention was to hold four major events to mark the ten years of devolution:

- **launch event;**
- **launch of Pierhead Futures Programme;**
- **a political festival; and**
- **closing reception**

3.4 However, the delay in completing the Pierhead project (from October to March) resulted in the postponing of the Futures programme. This delay had an impact on the timing of the intended political festival (The Pierhead Sessions) which moved from October to March.

3.5 Given the current economic climate it was perceived to be unwise to have a ten year closing reception so soon after the

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Pierhead Sessions and this reception was therefore incorporated into the Sessions.

The launch event

- 3.6 The official start to the Assembly's ten year programme of events was 12 May 2009, which marked ten years since the first Plenary meeting.**
- 3.7 In order to reinvigorate interest, understanding and accessible engagement between the Assembly and the people of Wales, it was important that every aspect of the day pointed towards the past, present and future of devolution in Wales. The launch day therefore included past and present Assembly Members as well as key architects of devolution. The Presiding Officer launched the findings of his Outreach Tour to inform current Outreach work, and students participated in a CEWC-Cymru Conference in Siambr Hywel looking at issues which will affect them in the future. A number of children who celebrated their tenth birthdays on 12 May were invited to a birthday party at the Senedd where they met the Presiding Officer, Assembly Members and had a tour of the Senedd with their parents/guardians.**
- 3.8 The activities were warmly received in the media and feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive, which gave assurance that the Assembly had struck the right note to mark the occasion.**

Assembly-led activities

- 3.9 The majority of activities for the ten year programme were formed from existing projects. New initiatives, such as the Presiding Officer's Tour, establishment of the new Outreach and E-democracy service, and the launch of the North Wales Outreach Bus, were significant parts of the ten year programme and served to increase and widen engagement in democracy as well as provide a legacy for the future. Each new activity was evaluated during and after the event to highlight successes and lessons learnt.**

Presiding Officer's Tour

- 3.10** Five events were held across Wales at which the Presiding Officer engaged with groups and individuals who have been underrepresented in the democratic process for the last ten years. The Assembly worked in partnership with organisations such as the African Community Centre, Stonewall Cymru, the WCVA, Mencap Cymru, Merched y Wawr and schools, to identify real and perceived barriers towards participation in democracy. A report of the tour was launched on 12 May, which informed the Assembly's Outreach activity throughout the year.

Legacy – establishment and programming of the Outreach Service

- 3.11** The Outreach team have proactively and strategically engaged with groups who have traditionally been underrepresented, including the Welsh Refugee Council, the Somali community and Age Concern. Working with such groups has helped to ensure that information about Assembly activity and participation opportunities is disseminated to the widest and most appropriate audiences.
- 3.12** Going forward, the next stage for the Outreach work is to develop stronger links with specific sectors (for example, business, legal and public affairs) to further develop an informed and engaged civil society as the Assembly enters its next decade.

Assembly Bus - outreach and supporting business

- 3.13** The North Wales Outreach bus was launched as part of the Presiding Officer's Tour. The bus has been an exceptional new resource to assist the Assembly in enhancing its visibility particularly with the communities of North Wales. It has encouraged participation by hosting meetings with local groups and organisations. The bus introduced an innovative new approach to gathering committee evidence through podcasts and weblogs which has widened engagement in democracy and encouraged more representative outcomes. The bus has the facility to gather written and electronic feedback on Assembly initiatives; this feedback is used to

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inform future outreach activity across all Assembly services. Comprehensive evaluation tools are currently being developed to identify further gaps in the Assembly's engagement activity.

Key Partner Events

- 3.14 The National Assembly for Wales is committed to being “*an accessible and effective parliamentary body that inspires the confidence of the people of Wales*”. This commitment encouraged and challenged us to be representative and inclusive in our marking of the tenth anniversary by actively encouraging participatory planning and delivery of our events.
- 3.15 By working with partner organisations the Assembly was able to reach a wider audience as well as ensuring prudence in our finances through joint working.

Joint open weekend with the Wales Millennium Centre

- 3.16 On 14 and 15 November the Senedd and the WMC hosted a special weekend of music, theatre and poetry. This included: a colourful theatre and music performance by Hijinx; poetry readings (including poetry about and to mark the ten years of devolution) by the National Poet of Wales, Gillian Clarke, and Ceri Wyn Jones, winner of last year's crown at the Eisteddfod; and performances by the Cardiff Style Ladies Barbershop Chorus and Band Pres Dinas Caerdydd “Melin Griffith” in the Senedd.
- 3.17 The Outreach bus was parked alongside the Senedd for the whole weekend and provided an opportunity for families and bay visitors to meet with some Assembly Members and the Presiding Officer. The activities were well received by the public as was captured by the exit survey pod.

Pierhead Opening and St David's Day events, 1 March

- 3.18 The Pierhead Project reached an exciting and successful conclusion and the building was officially re-opened to the public on 1 March. Invited guests included staff who used to work at the Pierhead, the Merchant Navy Association,

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Butetown History of Art, partner organisations from the Bay, contractors involved with the Pierhead Project and children from Mount Stuart School who performed songs.

- 3.19 Following the official Pierhead opening, Justice John Thomas delivered the Welsh Governance Centre's annual St David's Day lecture, "*Our Changing Governance Structures: Clarity and Confidence*", at the Pierhead.
- 3.20 The Pierhead was then opened to the public. It had over 400 visitors on its opening day and over 2500 visitors during its first week.
- 3.21 A final component of the St David's Day activities linked the Pierhead and the Senedd together. The WCVA United Nations Gold Star Community Awards were hosted at the Senedd which recognised the contribution of Welsh people to international development.
- 3.22 The inaugural art exhibition at the Futures Gallery was *Recollections* by Philip Jones Griffiths. The nature of this space and the exhibition itself attracted key individuals from the art sector to visit the venue and learn about the possibilities of the Pierhead.

Pierhead Sessions, 4-6 March

- 3.23 The Pierhead Sessions was the first big event held at the Pierhead and took place between 4-6 March. The main sessions included a mixture of interviews and panel discussions with a variety of speakers to attract and engage with new audiences. The Sessions explored issues such as the future of journalism, what we will be eating in 2050 and the Dr Who effect on Wales. 94 per cent of the audience noted that they would attend a similar event again. Plans are currently in place for a Pierhead Sessions 2011 as well as a series of 'Taster' Sessions throughout the year and outside of Cardiff.
- 3.24 The series of activities across the Pierhead's opening week succeeded in making democracy accessible to existing partners as well as new and wide ranging audiences. It

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showcased the events spaces throughout the building and the possibilities for future partnership working. Plans are in place to proactively populate the Pierhead with Assembly-led events, partner events and further work to target different audiences through research on footfall and event attendees.

- 3.25 The Sessions reflected the core values of the Pierhead: to inform, involve and inspire and established it as an arena for free speech and debate. Detailed evaluation demonstrated that the Sessions had achieved their objectives and were overwhelmingly popular. In order to ensure that the festival was accessible to people in Wales, the UK and abroad, all of the Sessions were recorded and made available on the website post-festival. Similar events are being considered to enhance the Assembly's communication and engagement methods, and to build on the legacy of the inaugural Sessions.

Year-long activities

- 3.26 The tenth year provided the Assembly with an opportunity to make the brand real. To further increase understanding of how we make Welsh law, how we hold the Welsh government to account, increase understanding of how the Assembly works and to raise the profile of the work and activity of Assembly Members, a series of smaller projects which collectively formed a suite of communication activities highlighting key milestones in ten years of devolution were created. Such tools included anniversary videos, which were displayed on the bus, at events and on the website, and broadcast and display materials which documented key successes of devolution, portrayed 'a day in the life of an Assembly Member', or the 'backroom' of the Assembly.
- 3.27 All public facing services worked to ensure a consistent message in heralding the Assembly's achievements and also creating a legacy for the next ten years.

The legacy

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- 3.28 Each of the ten year activities was evaluated against the Commission's strategic goals, the Communications Strategy objectives and the programme's objectives.**
- 3.29 Going forward, the Assembly is planning and delivering a strategic events and outreach programme to communicate corporate messages. The Assembly will significantly change the focus for its event programme by realising efficiencies in the summer events programme and redirecting resources to target new and hard to reach audiences.**
- 3.30 The ten year programme demonstrated that the Assembly takes its commitment to increase and widen engagement in democracy seriously.**
- 3.31 Features of our approach to the ten year anniversary will form a key part of the communication for future activities such as the Referendum and the 2011 Election:**
- approaching communication through new types of events such as the Sessions;**
 - taking messages out to the people of Wales in their communities and social groups through the Outreach Bus and Presiding Officer's Tour; and**
 - communicating through innovative e-democracy channels will form a key part of the communication for future activities such as the Referendum and the 2011 Election.**
- 3.32 We are committed to further enhancing the Welsh people's understanding of democracy, and building on the Assembly's achievements in order to go forward with a strategic, targeted and invigorated programme of engagement.**