

Agenda – Finance Committee

Meeting Venue: Hybrid – Committee room 4 Ty Hywel and video conference via Zoom	For further information contact: Owain Roberts Committee Clerk 0300 200 6388 SeneddFinance@senedd.wales
Meeting date: 5 October 2023	
Meeting time: 10.00	

Registration (09.30–09.45)

Private Pre-meeting (09.45–10.00)

- 1 **Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest**
(10.00)
- 2 **Paper(s) to note**
(10.00) (Pages 1 – 5)
Minutes of the meeting held on 13 September.
 - 2.1 **PTN 1 – Letter from the First Minister to the Llywydd: Environmental Protection (Single-use Plastic Products) (Wales) Act 2023 – 21 September 2023**
(Pages 6 – 7)
 - 2.2 **PTN 2– Letter from the Llywydd and Chair of the Business Committee: Budget timetable 2024–25 – 21 September 2023**
(Pages 8 – 9)
 - 2.3 **PTN 3 – Letter from the Minister for Finance and Local Government: Finance: Interministerial Standing Committee Meeting – 27 September 2023**
(Pages 10 – 11)
 - 2.4 **PTN 4 – Letter from the Chief Executive and Clerk of the Senedd: Cost of living payment 2023–24 – 29 September 2023**
(Pages 12 – 15)



3 Scrutiny of the Senedd Commission Draft Budget 2024–25:

Evidence session

(10.00–11.00)

(Pages 16 – 65)

Ken Skates MS, Commissioner for Budget and Governance

Manon Antoniazzi, Chief Executive and Clerk of the Senedd

Kate Innes, Chief Finance Officer

Supporting papers:

FIN(6)–15–23 P1 – Senedd Commission Draft Budget 2024–25

Research Service brief

4 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 (ix) to resolve to exclude the public from the remainder of this meeting

(11.00)

5 Scrutiny of the Senedd Commission Draft Budget 2024–25:

Consideration of evidence

(11.00–11.15)

6 Infrastructure (Wales) Bill – Consideration of draft report

(11.15–11.30)

(Pages 66 – 78)

Supporting documents:

FIN(6)–15–23 P2 – Draft report

7 Review of Statement of Principles

(11.30–12.00)

(Pages 79 – 90)

Supporting documents:

FIN(6)–15–23 P3 – Draft letter to the Directly Funded Bodies: Review of the Statement of Principles

FIN(6)–15–23 P4 – Research Service Brief

Concise Minutes – Finance Committee

Meeting Venue: **Hybrid – Committee room 3, Senedd and video conference via Zoom**

This meeting can be viewed on [Senedd TV](#) at:

<http://senedd.tv/en/13647>

Meeting date: Wednesday, 13 September 2023

Meeting time: 09.30 – 11.50

Hybrid

Attendance

Category	Names
Members of the Senedd:	Peredur Owen Griffiths MS (Chair) Peter Fox MS Mike Hedges MS Rhianon Passmore MS
Witnesses:	Jonathan Price, Welsh Government Julian Revell, Welsh Government Rebecca Evans MS, Minister for Finance and Local Government Emma Watkins, Welsh Government Gawain Evans, Welsh Government
Committee Staff:	Owain Roberts (Clerk) Mike Lewis (Deputy Clerk) Martin Jennings (Researcher)



Registration (09.00–09.15)

Private Pre-meeting (09.15–09.30)

1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

1.1 The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting of the Finance Committee.

2 Paper(s) to note

2.1 The papers were noted.

- 2.1 PTN 1 – Letter from the Minister for Health and Social Services: Health Service Procurement (Wales) Bill – Revised timelines – 30 June 2023
- 2.2 PTN 2 – Letter from the Minister for Finance and Local Government – Finance: Interministerial Standing Committee – 6 July 2023
- 2.3 PTN 3 – Letter from the Minister for Finance and Local Government: Welsh rates of Income Tax outturn statistics 2021–22 – 7 July 2023
- 2.4 PTN 4 – Letter from the Minister for Education and Welsh Language: School budget overspends – 11 July 2023
- 2.5 PTN 5 – Letter from the Minister for Finance and Local Government: Financial information for Directly Funded Bodies to consider in their budget planning – 12 July 2023
- 2.6 PTN 6 – Letter from the Chair of the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Draft Budget 2024–25 timetable – 17 July 2023
- 2.7 PTN 7 – Letter from the Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd: The Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) (Wales) Bill – 13 July 2023
- 2.8 PTN 8 – Letter from the First Minister to the Llywydd: Environmental Protection (Single-use Plastic Products) (Wales) Act 2023 – 27 July 2023
- 2.9 PTN 9 – Scrutiny of the Welsh Government First Supplementary Budget 2023–24: Welsh Government response – 11 August 2023
- 2.10 PTN 10 – Letter from the Chair of the Reform Bill Committee – 23 August 2023
- 2.11 PTN 11 – The Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) (Wales) Bill: Welsh Government response – 1 September 2023

2.12 PTN 12 – Letter to the Minister for Finance and Local Government: Cost of living payment – 11 July 2023

2.13 PTN 13 – Letter from the Minister for Finance and Local Government: Cost of living payment – 1 August 2023

2.14 PTN 14 – Letter from the Minister for Finance and Local Government – Finance: Interministerial Standing Committee – 7 September 2023

2.15 PTN 15 – Letter from Audit Wales: Notification of audit deadlines – 3 August 2023

2.16 PTN 16 – Letter from the Minister for Finance and Local Government: Evidence papers supporting the 2024–25 Draft Budget – 8 September 2023

3 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 (ix) to resolve to exclude the public from items 4,5,7,8,9 and 10

3.1 The motion was agreed.

4 Welsh Government Draft Budget 2024–25 – Technical briefing with the Chief Economist

4.1 The Committee received an economic and fiscal briefing from Jonathan Price, Chief Economist, Welsh Government; and Julian Revell, Head of Fiscal Analysis, Welsh Government.

5 Welsh Government Draft Budget 2024–25 – Technical briefing with the Chief Economist: Consideration of evidence

5.1 The Committee considered the evidence received.

6 Welsh Government Draft Budget 2024–25 – Pre-budget scrutiny

6.1 The Committee took evidence on the Welsh Government Draft Budget 2024–25 from Rebecca Evans MS, Minister for Finance and Local Government; Emma Watkins, Deputy Director, Budget and Government Business; and Gawain Evans Director of Finance.

6.2 The Minister agreed to provide:

- A note on Welsh Rates of Income Tax (WRIT), focusing on how tax collected through WRIT is then realised in Welsh Government budgets.

7 Welsh Government Draft Budget 2024–25 – Pre-budget scrutiny: Consideration of evidence

7.1 The Committee considered the evidence received.

8 Welsh Government Draft Budget 2024–25: Approach to budget scrutiny

8.1 The Committee considered the correspondence and agreed the approach to budget scrutiny and consultation letter.

9 Review of the budget protocol

9.1 The Committee considered the paper on the review of the budget protocol and agreed to write to the Chief Secretary to the Treasury.

10 Future work: Strategic planning

10.1 The Committee considered the paper on strategic planning.



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Elin Jones MS
Llywydd
Senedd Cymru

llywydd@senedd.cymru

21 September 2023

Dear Llywydd,

In my letter of 27 July on the Environmental Protection (Single-use Plastic Products) (Wales) Act 2023, I said that I would commission a review of the circumstances around our correspondence.

The review was carried out by the Director of Propriety and Ethics, who had no previous involvement in this matter, and is now complete. He considered all the relevant documentation and spoke with the key people who were involved in this process, including your senior legal advisers. I have received the review and accepted its recommendations.

I was reassured to learn from the review that everyone involved in this process had acted in good faith and with the intention of giving the best possible advice. As we have noted previously, dealing with international trade obligations after Brexit is new territory for all of us, so it is perhaps unsurprising that we should find some grey areas which need to be worked through as we aim to establish the best approaches for the long term.

The advice given to Ministers was that the best way to comply with the World Trade Organisation (WTO) recommendation of six months between publication and coming into force, was to delay the application of the Welsh Seal. This advice was given in good faith after consideration of the options and risks and in the absence of any precedent. It was recognised as novel.

I recognise your view, however, that the First Minister has a responsibility not to delay unduly the application of the Seal, and that to do so might be seen as frustrating the intention of the Senedd to give prompt effect to legislation which it has approved.

Clearly, I have no wish for the Welsh Government to act in ways which might be seen as disrespectful to the Senedd. In this light, should we find ourselves in similar circumstances again, I appreciate that we will need to collectively consider alternative ways forward.

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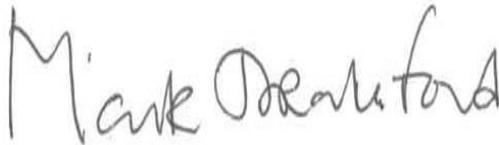
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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee, the Chair of the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee and Chair of the Finance Committee.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Drakeford". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

MARK DRAKEFORD

Senedd Cymru
Welsh Parliament

Agenda Item 2.2

Welsh Parliament
Business Committee

Peredur Owen Griffiths MS
Chair, Finance Committee

21 September 2023

Budget timetable 2024–25

Dear Peredur,

At our meeting on 19 September, Business Committee considered a letter from the Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd notifying us that the Welsh Government considers it to be no longer possible for it to publish a Draft Budget within the timetable indicated previously. Therefore, under Standing Order 20.6, the Minister intends to make changes to the Budget timetable provided in June.

Consequently, the Minister now intends to publish the draft Budget on 19 December, instead of 12 December as previously agreed. The Government's intention is that the planned dates for other stages in the process will remain unchanged.

I am writing to seek the views of the Finance Committee on the new timetable and would be grateful if you could respond at the earliest opportunity in order to enable the Business Committee to further consider the proposed change to the timetable for the consideration of the budget.

Yours sincerely,



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Rt. Hon Elin Jones MS

Y Llywydd and Chair of the Business Committee





Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Peredur Owen Griffiths MS
Chair, Finance Committee
Senedd Cymru
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27 September 2023

Dear Peredur,

Further to my recent letter advising you of the Finance: Interministerial Standing Committee Meeting (F:ISC) on 20 September in London, I would like to briefly report on the discussions. A communique was also published following the meeting: [Finance: Interministerial Standing Committee – 20 September 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/communique/finance-interministerial-standing-committee-20-september-2023)

Joining me in attendance were The Rt Hon John Glen MP, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, and Shona Robison MSP, Deputy First Minister of Scotland and Cabinet Secretary for Finance. Officials from the Northern Ireland Executive also attended virtually, to observe.

Further to an action from the previous meeting, all Ministers agreed the revised F:ISC Terms of Reference and Operating Protocols which officials reviewed over the summer: [Terms of Reference for the Finance Interministerial Standing Committee - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultation/terms-of-reference-for-the-finance-interministerial-standing-committee)

The first part of the meeting focused on economic and fiscal priorities. A conversation took place on funding pressures, including Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC). I outlined the need for further clarity of spending decisions taken in England and the implications these have for our budget settlement, in particular in relation to NHS pay. I also made the case for more flexibility, including pressing for the changes to borrowing and reserve limits made to the Scottish Government Fiscal Framework to be automatically applied to Wales.

During a discussion on the upcoming UK Government Autumn Statement, I stressed the implications that the late timing has for the Welsh Government draft budget, particularly in terms of the short timescale for Senedd scrutiny. I requested a meeting closer to the Statement to discuss any developments and priorities. I noted that it would be helpful to understand the outcome of the UK Government's Productivity Review and any implications that this might have for our budget settlement.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The second part of the meeting focused on energy security. I mentioned the Future Energy Grids for Wales report, which is helpful in detailing the urgent case for investment in the network and grid infrastructure. We discussed improvements to the Contracts for Difference funding package, which provides support for emerging renewable technologies. I also raised the need for UK Government investment in port infrastructure to support Floating Offshore Wind deployment in Wales.

The Scottish Government will host the next meeting, in January.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca Evans." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rebecca Evans AS/MS

Y Gweinidog Cyllid a Llywodraeth Leol
Minister for Finance and Local Government

SENEDD RESTRICTED

September 29th 2023

Peredur Owen Griffiths MS
Chair of Finance Committee
Senedd Cymru

Dear Peredur

I write further to our meeting on 12 September where we discussed, among other things, the proposed cost of living payment to Commission staff. On 19 September, a formal offer was made to the Trade Unions. The proposed payment will be the full £1,500 to staff at grades TS to G6 and will be made in two instalments in this financial year at an anticipated total cost of £824,000. The TUS confirmed on 26 September that they are content with the offer made by the Commission for a payment.

As Accounting Officer for the Senedd Commission, I am writing to assure you that the expenditure is affordable, subject to savings being made. The decision to split the payment is to ensure full visibility of the necessary funds at the point of payment. We have worked closely with the Commission seeking their views and advise as we have moved through this process. The Commission have scrutinised and agreed the necessary actions to be taken to afford this payment.

Some of the identified savings required will take longer to crystallise than others in the financial year.

Savings include-

- Training for Members, Support Staff and Commission staff;
- Travel and Subsistence for Committees, International Engagement and Commission staff;
- Reduction in Events undertaken;



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- Reduction in purchase of publications;
- A pause in furniture purchases.

A full list of affected budgets is included at Annex 1.

We will continue to closely examine any proposed expenditure which has not yet been committed. Additionally, there will be a pause to most of the Commission's recruitment activity at least for the rest of this financial year. A detailed breakdown is provided in the attached Annex which I am sharing with you on a confidential basis.

We very much appreciate that members will be concerned at potential impact on services to them for the remainder of the year. We have, throughout the process, endeavoured to minimise that direct impact. However, the level of funding required to be identified and redirected in year was substantial in order to make this payment and some impact is unavoidable.

The options and recommendations for future savings required to be found from the Commission's budgets that might have ongoing implications for services to the Senedd and Members will be considered by the Commission throughout the coming months, and will also be discussed with Group Leaders, Group Chairs, Committee Chairs, Chiefs of Staff, Trade Union representatives, senior managers and staff in advance of final decisions.

I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Yours sincerely



Manon Antoniazzi
Accounting Officer

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

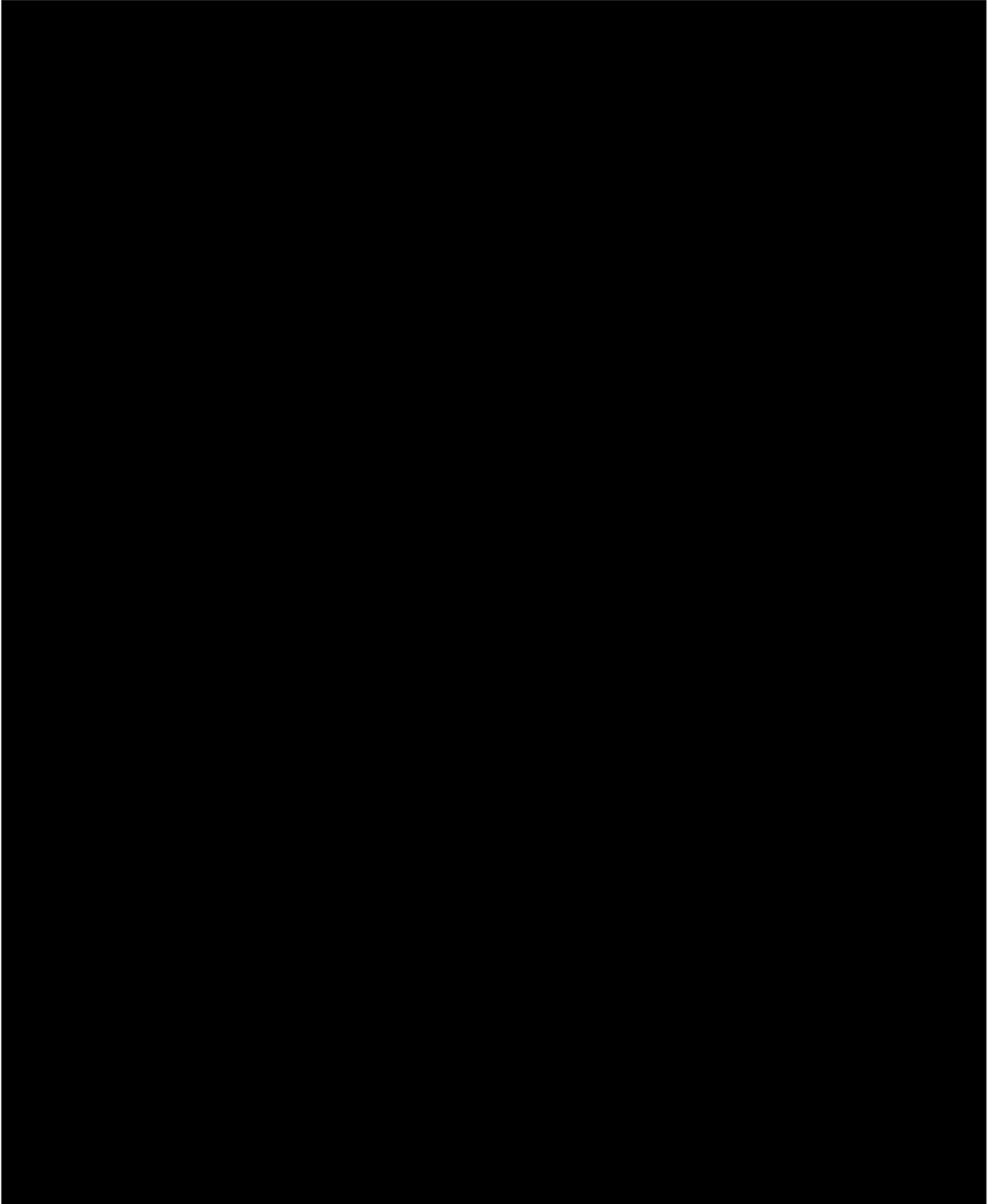


Annex A – Detailed Savings Schedule

[Redacted]

[Redacted]







Agenda Item 3

Y Pwyllgor Cyllid
Senedd Commission

Draft Budget: 2024-25

September 2023



The Welsh Parliament is the democratically elected body that represents the interests of Wales and its people. Commonly known as the Senedd, it makes laws for Wales, agrees Welsh taxes and holds the Welsh Government to account.

An electronic copy of this document can be found on the Senedd website:
www.senedd.wales

Copies of this document can also be obtained in accessible formats including Braille, large print, audio or hard copy from:

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Draft Budget: 2024-25

September 2023





 **Senedd Cymru**
Welsh Parliament

Contents

1.	Introduction	6
2.	The Budget	7
3.	Senedd Reform	11
4.	Ways of Working.....	13
5.	The Medium Term Resourcing Framework.....	15
6.	The Project Fund	16
7.	Staffing.....	17
8.	Sustainability	18
9.	Financial Governance and Control.....	19
10.	Budget for the Remuneration Board’s Determination	20
11.	Budget Ambit	22
	Annex 1: Budget Overview	23
	Annex 2: Budget Detail	25



1. Introduction

The Welsh Parliament is the democratically elected body that represents the interests of Wales and its people. Commonly known as the Senedd, it makes laws for Wales, agrees Welsh taxes and holds the Welsh Government to account.

The budget for the Senedd Commission (“the Commission”) is used to meet the running costs of the Senedd. It also covers the costs of salaries and allowances of Members and their staff as determined by the Independent Remuneration Board.

Members of the Senedd carry significant responsibility. They make laws for Wales, represent the interests of Wales and its people, hold the Welsh Government to account and agree Welsh taxes. In turn, the Commission provides the specialist skills, support services and resources to support Members in carrying out their scrutiny, legislative and representational roles.

2. The Budget

The budget for 2024-25 totals £72.195 million and provides for:

- **Expenditure under the Commission’s direct control, including a Project Fund (the operational budget);**
- **Two ring-fenced budgets for specific project work;**
 - **Expenditure relating to preparatory work for Senedd Reform;**
 - **Ways of Working programme of works.**
- **Depreciation (a non-cash expense);**
- **Interest expense on lease liabilities as required by International Financial Reporting Standard (IFRS) 16 (a non-cash expense)**
- **The budget identified for the Independent Remuneration Board’s Determination on Members’ Pay and Allowances;**
- **The budget for the clerking, administrative and other costs to provide support to the Independent Remuneration Board;**
- **The budget for the Office of the Standards Commissioner; and**
- **The accounting provision for the Members of the Senedd Pension Scheme under HM Treasury’s Annually Managed Expenditure (“AME”) heading (Pension Finance Cost).**

The budget for 2024-25 is set in the context of a particularly challenging financial outlook for the wider economy as the country is still in the middle of a cost of living squeeze. The Commission recognises that the funding position of the Welsh Government is set to be particularly difficult in 2024-25, with real term cuts to funding which will impact on the money available to the Commission and other public bodies.

In this context, constructing a budget for the Commission which provides adequate funding for the coming financial year has been a complex process, particularly as the budget for 2024-25 also needs to make provision for two significant multi-year programmes of work which are already underway and which will need to progress at pace in order to meet legislative and contractual deadlines.

The first of these is the “Ways of Working” programme. The rapidly changing internal and external context of the Commission and the Senedd, alongside a requirement to review our Parliamentary estate, represented a significant opportunity for a single cohesive change programme that will ensure the Commission itself continues to meet the needs of a Senedd that may be larger, and in which post-pandemic ways of working continue to evolve.

The second, is the programme of work which will be required to deliver the Welsh Government’s proposals for Senedd Reform, should these proposals be agreed by the Senedd. This includes the procedural preparations required, as well as significant capital works to reconfigure the Senedd estate. This work is driven by the Welsh Government’s Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Bill that was introduced on the 18th September 2023. This Bill includes proposals to increase the size of the Senedd from 60 to 96 Members and to change the way in which Members of the Senedd are elected. The scale of the change this represents for the Senedd Commission and the services it provides to the Senedd is exceptional in terms of workload and resource requirements such that it cannot be serviced by the existing operational budget or resources of the Commission currently. Existing resource is required during this time to continue with normal business delivery of services for the Senedd.

The two programmes introduced above will deliver their outcomes over the medium-term and beyond. These, combined with the need to contain significant cost pressures within more challenging budgets has driven a need to refresh and enhance our medium-term resource planning. To this end the Commission has developed a Medium Term Resourcing Framework. This Framework sets a basis for future budget requests that aligns with Commission priorities and, provides

mechanisms by which to manage any gap between the total resources the Commission requires, the lesser resources it requests via its budget and the final resourcing available to it.

The overall budget represents a total increase on the 2023-24 budget of 6.73%. The element relating to the day to day business of the Commission (the operational budget) has increased by 2.5% (the anticipated growth as per the latest GDP deflator). In order to deliver within this level of growth, the Commission is required to find £0.315 million worth of savings from expenditure on operational activities.

Operational budget growth before the two ringfenced programmes of work (normal business activities) has been held at a £0.101 million, a 0.22% increase on 2023-24 budget allocation, having absorbed much of the inflationary pressure that the Commission faces.

This commitment to limit budgetary growth for the core elements of the budget is the Commission's recognition of the pressures on the public purse and support to help mitigate it.

The operational budget has made provision for a pay award in the staffing budget (3.0% in 2024-25) using the agreed ASHE index-linked five-year pay settlement agreed with the Trade Union side. It will also make provision for a project fund for expenditure over and above the day to day running costs of the Commission, for example to fund the delivery of a new payroll system which is necessary due to decommissioning of the current system which will no longer be supported by the software providers and maintenance of the estate and ICT infrastructure.

We have not yet been informed of the results of the triennial pension scheme valuation for Commission staff. It is expected that the valuation will result in an increase in the contributions that the Commission pays for staff who are in the Civil Service Pension Scheme. The previous valuation resulted in a 6.25% increase. In line with budgetary requirements, the Commission have not included this unknown cost within the laid draft budget. It should be noted, an increase of the previous magnitude would be an estimated additional cost of ~£1.2million. The Commission would be unable to meet this from the laid draft budget.

The Commission expects to be informed by UK Central Government of any change by the end of September / early October. The final budget will be required to be amended to take account of this adjustment should details arrive within the relevant timescale to do so. Otherwise, the additional funding will be

requested to meet this cost via supplementary budget once known . Our current understanding is that any change in contribution will be accompanied by specific funding from UK Government.

Description	2023-24 Budget £million	2024-25 Budget £million	% change compared to 2023-24
Operational budget	£40.518	£41.531	2.5%
Non-cash items	£6.272	£5.360	-14.5%
Member related expenses	£20.282	£21.708	7.0%
Senedd Reform and Ways of Working	£0.571	£3.596	529.7%
Total	£67.643	£72.195	6.73%

3. Senedd Reform

The Welsh Government's Bill to reform the Senedd will, if agreed by the Senedd, constitute the largest programme of change that the Senedd has been required to deliver since its inception in 1999. The reforms, as currently proposed, will see the size of the Senedd increase from 60 Members to 96.

With the introduction of the Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Bill, the Welsh Government's proposals for Senedd Reform have become clearer. However, the final shape of the reforms, and whether they are to be made at all, will not be known until the legislation has completed its passage through the Senedd.

Decisions on the organisation of Senedd Business in the Seventh Senedd and, consequently, the support that the Commission will be required to provide will not be known until the start of the Seventh Senedd. Whilst acknowledging this uncertainty, the Commission must prepare to respond flexibly to the needs of the Seventh Senedd.

Due to the level of uncertainty, the budget for Senedd Reform has been prepared using the cost estimates that the Senedd Commission submitted to the Welsh Government for inclusion in the Regulatory Impact Assessment the Welsh Government prepared to accompany the Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Bill. The budget is ring-fenced so that as the Bill progresses and the nature of the work becomes clear, there is money available to deliver priority work, and likewise, if the funding is not required, it will be returned to the Welsh Consolidated Fund. This approach is transparent and separates funding for Senedd Reform from the money required to continue to deliver the core Commission services which will continue.

In anticipation of the additional workload resulting from Senedd Reform, a number of posts were approved during the 2023-24 budget year, predominantly on a temporary basis. A further 3 posts are proposed for 2024-25 at a cost of £0.122million and will support the preparatory work for the transition to a 96 Member Senedd.

The revenue and capital costs for 2024-25 are set out in the table below. The capital costs will depend entirely on the progression of the Bill as the vast majority of these costs (£1.399million) relate to the required reconfiguration of Ty Hywel to provide offices for the additional Members and their staff.

Description	Budget £million
2024-25 cost of posts approved in 2023-24	£0.520
Additional staff (x3)	£0.122
Non staff costs	£0.023
Capital costs (Members offices & ICT kit for new staff)	£1.399
Total	£2.065

4. Ways of Working

The Ways of Working Programme was established by the Commission in March 2022.

It is a single, cohesive programme structure through which the Commission is responding to the challenges and opportunities arising from its own changing environment, and the evolving needs of the Senedd and its Members.

The programme comprises three workstreams, reporting into a central Programme Board:

- Cardiff Bay Workstream: Will deliver a high quality, flexible and inclusive Cardiff Bay estate that provides value for public money and that meets the needs of the Senedd, its Members, their staff, Welsh Government, Citizens, media, and the Senedd Commission into the short, medium and long-term.
- Regional Working Workstream: Will ensure an effective regional base for outreach, public information, education and translation services in North Wales; and to explore potential opportunities for developing the Senedd Commission's regional footprint over time and bringing forward proposals for doing so.
- Strategy Development and Delivery: Will design and deliver an integrated strategic framework for the Senedd Commission's people, places, technology, service delivery models and future generations.

The Cardiff Bay workstream will deliver:

- the necessary estates projects to prepare for a larger Senedd (expanding the Senedd's Siambr and increasing the capacity of Ty Hywel to accommodate 36 more Members and their staff). Whilst the WOW programme will manage delivery of these Senedd Reform related projects, for transparency purposes the funding for them lies within the Senedd Reform ring-fence discussed above.
- the Cardiff Bay 2032 project. This project will provide the Commission with long-term, secure accommodation beyond the 2032 end of the Tŷ Hywel lease (which currently accommodates Member offices and facilities, Commission staff and Welsh Government). The costs

associated with the Bay 2032 project are anticipated to be capital costs. This project is in its very early stages and will evaluate a robust range of options as part of a full, three-stage business case process (as per HM Treasury / Welsh Government Green Book).

The budget for this programme of work for 2024-25 is, as with Senedd Reform programme ring-fenced so that costs are separate and transparent. This is of particular importance due to the extent of decisions to be made within this programme on Estates during 2024-25. Ringfencing will ensure unutilised funding to be returned to the Welsh Consolidated Fund should the business case for change support an option which requires a lower level of resource than requested. An analysis of the potential budget requirement for the next three financial years is shown below:

	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	Total Cost
	£million	£million	£million	£million
Bay 2032 project*	£1.250	£0.335	£0.080	£1.665
Pierhead review project	£0.030	£0.000	£0.000	£0.030
Legal costs	£0.050	£0.050	£0.050	£0.150
WOW strategy delivery	£0.100	£0.100	£0.100	£0.300
Programme Management	£0.101	£0.104	£0.107	£0.312
Totals	£1.531	£0.589	£0.337	£2.457

As the programme is still in its early stage of development, options have not yet been fully defined nor subject to the full Green Book evaluation process. The resources requested as part of this budget for the Cardiff Bay 2032 project represent provision for enabling progress to be made on any selected option which will need to be expedited given the Ty Hywel lease is ending in 2032. The picture will become clearer as the project progresses during the next 18 months and the business case is developed.

5. The Medium Term Resourcing Framework

The assumption for the medium term is that the Commission financing requirements will be in excess of the resourcing available. The Commission therefore needs to understand and mitigate the gap between the two in order to continue to deliver against agreed priorities whilst also supporting the core business needs.

The Commission has therefore established a Medium Term Resourcing Framework so that future cost pressures are identified, understood and costed ahead of the budget round to which they will relate and to provide enough time to manage and direct resources to the relevant cost drivers. As we are now delivering multiyear programmes of work, moving to a medium term (three year) perspective rather than considering our financial resources year by year will ensure that all stakeholders understand costs on a timely basis to enable full planning to occur.

Taking this approach will also allow the Commission to clearly demonstrate what is driving uplifts in its budgets (rather than creating an impression that the Commission's 'business as usual' budget lines are being grown annually by an inflationary amount).

The Framework includes both a Medium Term Financial Plan and a Workforce Plan.

The former is a rolling 3-year budgetary framework. It sets out a detailed range of resourcing requirement scenarios and cost-pressures over the next 3 years. It then sets a reasonable and realistic basis for budget planning over the medium-term (a 'Managed Growth Scenario').

The latter will involve setting a Target Establishment (for the permanent staffing establishment) to ensure the Commission's people resources continue to align with Commission priorities within the available resourcing envelope. It will operate as a strategic cost management tool and drive resource management in an agile, effective and efficient way. Regular engagement with Heads of Service (budget managers) will provide structured input and feedback as to how the Commission can direct resource appropriately to organisational needs.

6. The Project Fund

The Commission maintains a project fund in order to fund expenditure over and above the delegated service budgets.

Approval was given in 2022-23 for the creation of the Project Management Group (PMG). Chaired by the Chief Financial Officer and supported by a panel from across the Commission, the group is responsible for ensuring that the project portfolio for the financial year is aligned with Commission priorities, is appropriately resourced, provides value for money and that projects are delivered to agreed timescales and agreed specification. This approach will deliver:

- increased efficiency and effectiveness,
- reduced risk
- meeting our Sustainability strategic objective.

The PMG recommends to the Executive Board which projects should be prioritised, monitors delivery, and employs an agile approach to respond to changes and issues in-year.

The strategy for management of funds is set out in a Portfolio Strategy which sets:

- the vision and aims agreed for the project portfolio;
- the value drivers that are used to inform the prioritisation of the portfolio; and
- the headline risks, resourcing envelope, and timings.

This strategy will facilitate the allocation and where relevant, the re-purposing or re-prioritisation of funds to maximise use of resource to achieve value for money.

Key projects which are likely to be considered for prioritisation during 2024-25 are:

- Payroll system replacement
- Senedd Business Management System replacement
- Broadcasting infrastructure update

These are in addition to priority items relating the forward work programme of maintenance / repair to ICT infrastructure and the estate.

7. Staffing

A large percentage of the Commission's total operating expenditure relates to staffing costs (~71%), demonstrating our commitment to develop and maintain a diverse, highly skilled workforce to support Senedd Business.

2024-25 financial year, is the final year of the agreed pay award. It is assumed that the principles of the existing pay deal are adhered to and that a 3% pay award will be applied. To address the cost of living crisis, payments were made to the two lowest pay bands of staff in the financial year 2022-23 and to all staff below Director level in 2023-24. These payments were outside of the current pay deal which ends March 2024.

Negotiations for the new pay deal will conclude during 2024-25 and set the basis for the budget for the following years.

The Senedd Commission People Strategy is central to the delivery of our strategic aims and objectives, ensuring we have an agile workforce equipped with the right skills, knowledge and behaviours to deliver exceptional services to Senedd Business and Members. The strategy is underpinned by our organisational values of respect, passion, pride and working together as 'One Team'. The current strategy ends during 2023-24 and will be refreshed and renewed under the Ways of Working programme.

The Workforce Plan will seek to manage and adjust our staffing complement in the medium to longer term to match resource and skills to the areas required. This will require a sophisticated and mature approach to skills mapping and agility in our recruitment and deployment of staff.

8. Sustainability

The financial and service delivery plans in the short, medium and longer term are all within the context of being a truly sustainable organisation.

The Senedd Commission was one of the first public organisations to produce a strategy detailing how we'd respond to the Climate Emergency and become net carbon neutral.

The Ways of Working programme - bringing together the Commission's estate, people and sustainability strategies and its 'agile futures' plan - has seen us install flexible working areas across the estate and more hybrid meeting facilities. Whilst we've been trying to capitalise on these changes with energy-efficiency savings, they have also created wellbeing benefits amongst our staff.

Continued roll-out of LED lighting, and the introduction of numerous efficiency savings related to the building management system (BMS) and efforts to reduce demand for heating and air conditioning have helped reduce energy costs.

The Commission believes in transparency as well as setting the highest standards for ourselves, which is why we maintain an environment management system which is externally-audited against the requirements of ISO14001. This management standard requires a range of measures to be demonstrated, including controls on key environmental impacts, compliance with legislation, and a programme of internal audits. We have a team of trained internal auditors checking the physical site and our operational controls to ensure continued compliance throughout the year. The auditors also check for pollution risk and look for efficiency savings where possible.

We continue to work with other public sector bodies in Wales, as well as the other UK parliaments, in order to share best practice in continual environmental improvement.

9. Financial Governance and Control

The Senedd Commission Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (“ARAC”) supports the Commission and the Principal Accounting Officer regarding their responsibilities for risk management, internal control and corporate governance.

As part of its role, ARAC maintains a strong interest in, and oversight of, the internal financial control environment. Updates on accounting policies and the budgetary position are considered by ARAC and it takes a keen interest in the audit of the Annual Report and Accounts. Members of the Committee have also provided oversight and challenge of the assurance framework and governance statement.

External and Internal Audit provide important sources of assurance to ARAC and the Accounting Officer. The Auditor General for Wales (“AGW”) is the Commission’s external auditor and he is supported in his work by Audit Wales. For the 2022-23 financial year an unqualified opinion was issued on the financial statements.

In 2019, the Senedd’s Finance Committee issued a Statement of Principles for Directly Funded Bodies to consider when preparing their annual budget estimates. The Commission has kept these principles firmly in mind in the preparation of its budget estimate for 2024-25. The estimate is transparent and the evidence of the need for, and benefit from, the resources requested is provided in the narrative of this document.

The Executive Board (the “Board”) has strategic responsibility for ensuring that the Commission's resources are used effectively, provides challenge to service leaders to strive for continuous improvement and drives efforts at delivering efficiencies. The Board is responsible for approving the Commission's annual investment plans and for prioritising investment to best effect. The Board ensures that resource capacity planning aligns with the Commission's goals and priorities and provides governance and assurance to significant change projects.

10. Budget for the Remuneration Board's Determination

The Independent Remuneration Board is the body that determines the pay and remuneration of Members and their support staff; and the system of financial support needed for Members to fulfil their responsibilities as elected representatives.

The Independent Remuneration Board's Determination provides the funding to cover the expenses associated with being a Member and discharging their parliamentary duties, for example:

- running an office and engaging with constituents;
- salaries and costs relating to support staff;
- residential accommodation in Cardiff for Members whose home is a significant distance from the Senedd (eligibility criteria apply); and
- support for the Party Groups and policy research.

The Determination sets the basic salary for Members and additional office holder salaries. The Determination also sets the mechanism for increases to these salaries; in 2024-25 it is expected that Member salaries will increase in line with the average earnings in Wales as measured by the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings ("ASHE"), capped at 3%. The basic salary for Members at the start of 2024-25 is budgeted at £72,056 which assumes a 3% increase on the current salary level of £69,958.

The Independent Remuneration Board reviews elements of its Determination on an annual or periodic basis to ensure that they remain appropriate. The Board will be undertaking its annual review of the Determination during autumn 2023 - spring 2024. It is not possible to anticipate decisions which the Board may choose to make in future. For budgeting purposes, some assumptions have been made for 24-25 Determination costs.

Members can employ staff to support them in all aspects of their role. The budget for support staff costs for 2024-25 is £10.502 million, which includes an uplift of 3% on salaries and support to the political groups. An increase of 3% has also been applied for the following two years, since support staff costs also follow ASHE, capped at 3%.

The Determination sets out the range of costs and allowances which Members may claim in order to run their offices and fulfil their duties. The budget for office costs is £2.394 million. For budgeting purposes the inflation factor used for 2024-25 is 5% for allowances (where relevant) with an inflationary uplift of 2% applied to the following two years. This reflects an anticipated 'catch up' on the high levels of inflation currently being experienced tempered by an expectation that it will return to more manageable levels for financial years following 2024-25.

Provision has been made for an anticipated £0.5 million underspend against the total budget for the Determination which is a prudent assumption based on historic trends. It is likely that an amount in excess of this £0.5 million will be released from across both the support staff and the office costs budgets. This approach assists in budget management, allowing a moderate level of contingency, if the Board decides to implement changes. Should the total budget prove to be insufficient, due to e.g. increases to allowances for 2024-25 or indeed during 2025-26 it may be necessary to prepare a Supplementary Budget.

The budget to fund the Determination for 2024-25 and the following two years is shown in Table 9.

Direct support for the Independent Remuneration Board is provided by the Commission as required by the National Assembly for Wales (Remuneration) Measure 2010. Since 2022-23 the cost of this support has been ring-fenced within the total Commission budget to improve transparency. The budget provides for the secretariat team in addition to the cost of the fees and travel expenses for Board members and other expenditure items such as the commissioning of external expertise. Detail is provided in Table 11.

11. Budget Ambit

This budget submission is laid in compliance with the Senedd Standing Order 20.13 to assist in the compilation of the Annual Budget Motion required by Section 125 of the Government of Wales Act 2006. The submission covers the resource and cash requirements of the Senedd Commission for the year ending 31 March 2025.

The Budget Motion will authorise the net resources to be used for the services and purposes of Members and Senedd Services. The motion includes the maximum income (or accruing resources) that may be retained for use on those services and purposes instead of being paid into the Welsh Consolidated Fund. It will also set out the cash amount that will be needed from the Welsh Consolidated Fund to meet the anticipated net amounts falling due for payment by the Commission.

The 2024-25 Budget for the Senedd addressing these requirements is set out in Table 1.

Table 1: 2024-25 Budget for the Senedd against requirements

Senedd Requirements	2024-25 £000
Resources other than accruing resources for use by the Senedd Commission ('the Commission') on resource and capital costs associated with the administration and operation of services to support the Senedd; promotion of the Senedd including payments to the Electoral Commission and others; payments in respect of the Commission for Standards and Remuneration Board; any other payments relating to the functions of the Senedd or functions of the Commission. Resources other than accruing resources for use by the Commission in respect of the decisions of the Remuneration Board and expenditure in respect of Members of the Senedd Pension provision	£72,195 Table 2
Accruing resources for retention pursuant to section 120(2) of the Government of Wales Act 2006 and use by the Commission from the disposal of fixed assets and other capital income for use on the purchase or acquisition of fixed assets, rental income, gifts, grants, cheques, recharges and income from commercial sales and other services provided to the public or others for use on administrative costs of the Senedd.	£100 Table 8
Amount to be issued from the Welsh Consolidated Fund to meet the anticipated amounts falling due for payment in the year and in respect of the above services and purposes less expected receipts and recoverable VAT	£67,365 Table 3

Annex 1: Budget Overview

Table 2: Budget overview

Budget Heading	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Commission Related Expenditure	£000	£000	£000	£000
Staff salaries and related costs (Table 4)	£28,357	£29,663	£31,033	£31,982
Accommodation and facilities (Table 5)	£6,069	£5,991	£6,093	£6,198
ICT costs (Table 6)	£2,801	£2,731	£2,763	£2,796
Other costs (Table 7)	£1,961	£2,061	£2,046	£2,046
Total Revenue Expenditure	£39,188	£40,446	£41,935	£43,022
Total Income (Table 8)	(£170)	(£100)	(£100)	(£100)
Capital Expenditure	£500	£500	£500	£500
Project Fund	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000
Savings to be identified	£0	(£315)	£0	£0
Total Operational Resource	£40,518	£41,531	£43,334	£44,422
Interest Charges	£866	£610	£600	£580
Depreciation Charges	£5,406	£4,750	£4,750	£4,750
Ring-fenced project budgets				
Senedd Reform costs	£571	£2,065	£5,308	£6,018
Members' salaries and related costs arising from Senedd Reform	£0	£0	£0	£10,569
Ways of Working	£0	£1,531	£589	£337
Total Commission Related Expenditure	£47,361	£50,487	£54,581	£66,677
Member Related Expenditure				
Members' salaries and related costs (Table 9) (as per the Remuneration Board's Determination)	£17,834	£19,180	£19,747	£20,330
Budget for the Office of the Standards Commissioner (Table 10)	£101	£101	£103	£106
Budget to support the Independent Remuneration Board (Table 11)	£547	£627	£581	£596
Election related expenditure	£0	£0	£500	£2,500
Members' pension finance costs	£1,800	£1,800	£1,800	£1,800
Total Commission Budget	£67,643	£72,195	£77,312	£92,009

Table 3: Reconciliation of the new resource requirement to the cash drawing from the Welsh Consolidated Fund

Net cash requirement	2024-25 £000
Members' net revenue requirement	£19,180
Office of the Standards Commissioner	£101
Independent Remuneration Board support costs	£627
Senedd Reform Costs revenue costs	£666
Ways of Working revenue costs	£281
Commission net revenue requirement	£46,391
Net capital requirement (including Senedd Reform and Ways of Working)	£3,149
Annually managed expenditure	£1,800
Subtotal	£72,195
Adjustments	
Depreciation	(£2,750)
Interest charges / Capital adjustments relating to IFRS 16	(£2,610)
Rental payments relating to IFRS 16	£2,330
Movements in provisions	(£1,800)
Subtotal	
Net cash requirement from the Welsh Consolidated Fund	£67,365

Annex 2: Budget Detail

Table 4: Analysis of staff salaries and related costs

	2023-24 £000	2024-25 £000	2025-26 £000	2026-27 £000
Commission staff costs	£29,357	£30,663	£32,033	£32,982
Vacant post estimate	(£1,000)	(£1,000)	(£1,000)	(£1,000)
Total	£28,357	£29,663	£31,033	£31,982

Table 5: Analysis of Accommodation and Facilities costs

	2023-24 £000	2024-25 £000	2025-26 £000	2026-27 £000
Rent and rates incl. car parking (adjusted for IFRS 16)	£1,895	£1,895	£1,923	£1,951
Maintenance and works	£1,035	£1,090	£1,090	£1,090
Security	£773	£923	£958	£994
Utilities	£1,251	£980	£1,000	£1,020
Cleaning	£561	£575	£587	£598
Catering	£430	£443	£452	£461
Photocopier Rentals	£85	£20	£20	£20
Furniture and Fittings	£60	£65	£65	£65
Total	£6,069	£5,991	£6,093	£6,198

Table 6: Analysis of ICT costs

	2023-24 £000	2024-25 £000	2025-26 £000	2026-27 £000
ICT Services	£704	£739	£739	£739
Broadcasting	£766	£743	£743	£743
Licences and Maintenance	£1,231	£1,149	£1,181	£1,214
Revenue and Consumables	£100	£100	£100	£100
Total	£2,801	£2,731	£2,763	£2,796

Table 7: Analysis of other costs

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Training and development	£344	£344	£344	£344
Language contracted-out services	£300	£305	£305	£305
Promoting awareness and understanding	£300	£305	£290	£290
Other HR costs	£166	£166	£166	£166
Insurance and legal costs	£141	£162	£162	£162
Publications	£131	£131	£131	£131
Staff T&S	£108	£113	£113	£113
Other travel and subsistence	£95	£95	£95	£95
Audit	£70	£95	£95	£95
Printing, stationery and postage	£60	£60	£60	£60
Specialist advice	£46	£46	£46	£46
Academic Engagement	£30	£30	£30	£30
Consultancy	£30	£45	£45	£45
Hospitality	£28	£28	£28	£28
Accounting and financial services	£26	£32	£32	£32
Uniforms and clothing	£15	£15	£15	£15
Vetting	£10	£22	£22	£22
Other items <£20k	£61	£67	£67	£67
Total	£1,961	£2,061	£2,046	£2,046

Table 8: Analysis of Income

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Sales - the Senedd shop	(£20)	(£20)	(£20)	(£20)
Accommodation - rental income	(£58)	(£58)	(£58)	(£58)
Other income	(£92)	(£22)	(£22)	(£22)
Total	(£170)	(£100)	(£100)	(£100)

Table 9: Analysis of Members' salaries and related costs

	2023-24 £000	2024-25 £000	2025-26 £000	2026-27 £000
Senedd Members' salaries and on-costs	£6,450	£6,645	£6,844	£7,050
Members' Support Staff salaries and on-costs	£9,583	£10,641	£10,960	£11,289
Allowances and office costs	£2,301	£2,394	£2,442	£2,491
Anticipated underspend	(£500)	(£500)	(£500)	(£500)
Total	£17,834	£19,180	£19,747	£20,330

Table 10: Budget for the Office of the Standards Commissioner

	2023-24 £000	2024-25 £000	2025-26 £000	2026-27 £000
Staff costs	£71	£75	£77	£80
Legal Advice	£30	£26	£26	£26
Total	£101	£101	£103	£106

Table 11: Budget to support the Independent Remuneration Board

	2023-24 £000	2024-25 £000	2025-26 £000	2026-27 £000
Staff costs	£462	£482	£496	£511
Fees and Expenses	£47	£47	£47	£47
Other costs and expenses	£38	£98	£38	£38
Total	£547	£627	£581	£596

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Agenda Item 6

By virtue of paragraph(s) vi of Standing Order 17.42

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