

Finance Committee

Meeting Venue:
Committee Room 2 - Senedd

Meeting date:
6 October 2011

Meeting time:
09:30

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales



For further information please contact:

Tom Jackson
Committee Clerk
02920898597
FinanceCommittee@wales.gov.uk

Name
Deputy Committee Clerk
029 2089 xxxx
Name@wales.gov.uk

Agenda

1. Apologies and substitutions

2. Scrutiny of Assembly Commission Draft Budget 2012-2013 (9:35-10:30) (Pages 1 - 29)

Assembly Commission

FIN(4)-04-11 (Paper1)

Angela Burns, Assembly Member

Claire Clancy, Chief Executive and Clerk of the Assembly

Steve O'Donoghue, Head of Assembly Resources

3. Scrutiny of Public Service Ombudsman for Wales draft estimates (10:30-11:25) (Pages 30 - 37)

FIN(4)-04-11 (Paper 2)

Peter Tyndall, Ombudsman for Wales

Susan Hudson, Policy & Communications Manager

Malcolm MacDonald, Financial Adviser.

Private session

The Committee will be invited to resolve to exclude the public from the final items of business in accordance with Standing Order 17.42(vi).

4. Members' consideration of evidence taken during the meeting (11:25-11:40)

5. Draft report on the Welsh Governments proposal to change the draft budget motion 2012-2013 (11:40-12:00) (Pages 38 - 60)

Papers to note

Minutes from previous week (28 September 2011)

Work Programme

National Assembly for Wales

Assembly Commission Draft Budget
2012–13



The National Assembly for Wales is the democratically elected body that represents the interests of Wales and its people, makes laws for Wales and holds the Welsh Government to account.

www.assemblywales.org
assembly.info@wales.gov.uk
assembly.bookings@wales.gov.uk
T 0845 010 5500

Engage with the Assembly on Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and Flickr.

© National Assembly for Wales Commission Copyright 2011
The text of this document may be reproduced free of charge in any format or medium providing that it is reproduced accurately and not used in a misleading or derogatory context. The material must be acknowledged as copyright of the National Assembly for Wales Commission and the title of the document specified.

National Assembly for Wales

Assembly Commission Draft Budget
2012–13



National Assembly for Wales

Assembly Commission Draft Budget 2012-13

Contents

The Fourth Assembly.....	2
Outstanding parliamentary support	7
Engaging with the people of Wales and promoting Wales	9
Using resources wisely	11
Financial Summary - Assembly Commission resources	14
The Remuneration Board for Members' pay and other costs	19
Assembly Commission budget ambit	23

The Fourth Assembly

Assembly Commission Strategy 2011 – 2016

The National Assembly for Wales is the democratically elected body that represents the interests of Wales and its people, makes laws for Wales and holds the Welsh Government to account.

The Assembly Commission serves the Assembly to help make it a strong, accessible and forward looking democratic institution and legislature that delivers effectively for the people of Wales.

The Commission's strategic focus for the Fourth Assembly will be to:

– Provide outstanding parliamentary support

The Assembly is in a new constitutional position and we will provide fitting support to enable Assembly Members to meet the new challenges they face.

– Engage with the people of Wales

We will create an environment that encourages interest in the work of the Assembly and facilitates engagement in the Assembly's roles of legislating, scrutiny and representation. We will engage actively and widely, and ensure that the Assembly benefits from the creative energy generated by such engagement.

– Promote Wales

Acting as an ambassador for Wales in the wider world, we will make the most of opportunities in the UK and abroad to promote Wales and the work of the Assembly and play our part in the development of parliamentary democracy elsewhere in the world.

– Use resources wisely

We will make the necessary investments to ensure that the Assembly is fully equipped to operate effectively as a parliament with new law-making powers. At the same time, we will reinforce the confidence of Assembly Members and the people of Wales in the way we deliver services and manage costs by making good use of tax-payers' money. We will manage our resources to deliver a vital public service with improved efficiency and value for money.

The Commission will exercise its functions in accordance with statutory principles: with due regard to the principle that there should be equality of

opportunity for all people; due regard to the principle of promoting sustainable development; and, so far as is both appropriate in the circumstances and reasonably practicable, that the English and Welsh languages be treated on the basis of equality.

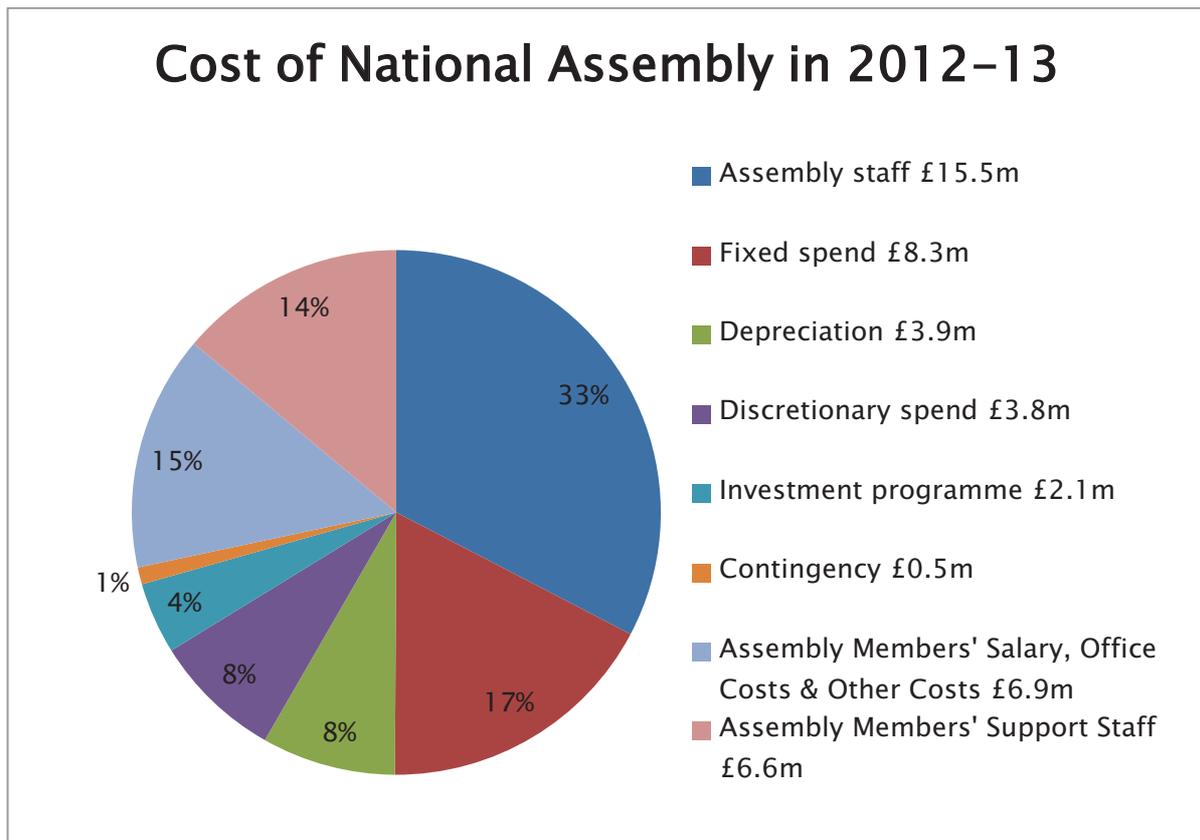
Cost of the National Assembly

The total amount of public expenditure controlled by the National Assembly (the 'Welsh Block') is around £15 billion. Almost all of this money funds the delivery of public services in Wales in the light of the decisions of the Welsh Government. A small proportion (0.3%) is used to fund the cost of the National Assembly itself, in scrutinising and challenging the actions and spending of the Government, making law, and representing the interests of the people of Wales. The Commission believes that this is the right price to pay to provide proper support for law-making, scrutiny of Government and democratic representation.

The Commission's draft budget for 2012-13 is £47.6 million of which £13.5 million will provide funding for Assembly Members' salaries, those of their support staff and the costs of running their constituency offices located all over Wales. £34.1 million is for services delivered by the Assembly Commission to support the Assembly.

The salaries of Assembly Members are frozen at their current level until at least 2014-15 and next year there will be no increase in the salaries paid to their staff. In addition, the Commission's continuing work to ensure that value for money is provided across the Assembly has provided 2% to be reinvested in the 2012-13 budget. Additional funding approved next year will be used solely to meet cost increases to which we are committed, and to strengthen the services provided by the Commission.

The following graph shows the cost of the National Assembly for 2012-13.



Impact of previous budget reductions

In 2011-12, the then Assembly Commission's budget strategy was to reduce its spending and make savings, in practice exceeding reductions in the Welsh Block. This was achieved through efficiency and cost reduction measures, careful control of staff levels and a reduction in numbers by means of a voluntary exit scheme, which was taken up by 25 Assembly staff. Other posts have not been filled immediately as they fell vacant or have been withdrawn through restructuring the way services are delivered.

These efficiency and cost reduction measures enabled the Commission to deliver a 6.0%¹ real term reduction in its 2011-12 funding requirement equating to a £2.4 million saving. Looking forward, the Remuneration Board's decisions to freeze Assembly Members' salaries, office holder allowances and other costs are set to deliver over £2 million savings during the fourth Assembly.

¹ Updated from 5.1% by latest H M treasury assumptions (see Table 2)

In November 2010, the Assembly's Finance Committee emphasised that the Commission must have the resources needed to deliver the services necessary to support the Assembly's effective scrutiny of Government and other work. The Committee was particularly concerned about the impact on the Assembly's ability to act upon its new powers following the March 2011 referendum.

Although a good service has been maintained during the last two years, reductions and cost savings have affected services in some areas which are valued by the Assembly. In the year 2012-13, there will be further pressure as a result of unavoidable cost increases. The effect of absorbing these increases as well as reductions made in the last two years would make it difficult to meet the aspirations of the new Commission in supporting the Assembly. On this basis, the Commission wishes to maintain the focus on securing value for public money, but also to ensure that the aspirations of Wales for its Assembly are met.

The requirements of the Fourth Assembly

In the March 2011 referendum, the Welsh electorate overwhelmingly voted 'yes' to support greater law-making powers for the Assembly. The Assembly can now pass laws on all subjects in the 20 devolved areas without first needing the agreement of the UK Parliament.

This new constitutional position of the Assembly reinforces the need for outstanding parliamentary support. During the Fourth Assembly, the Commission will:

- strengthen specialist advice and services so that the scrutiny of Welsh Government policy, finance and legislation is sharper, more constructive and better informed;
- ensure that individual Members have the support they need to promote their own proposals for policy and legislative change;
- create an environment for the people of Wales to be increasingly engaged in the work of the Assembly, including the legislative process; and
- deliver all of this in the context of every pound being spent wisely.

The total financial resources required to deliver the Commission's work in 2012-13 and the indicative budgets through to 2014-2015 are summarised in table 1 below.

Table 1 – Assembly Commission Indicative Budgets £000s

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Assembly Services	32,847	31,673	34,089	35,918	35,918
Assembly Members	13,380	13,034	13,500	13,700	13,900
Total budget (DEL) required*	46,227	44,707	47,589	49,618	49,818
Change from previous year		(2.5%)	6.4%	4.3%	0.4%
Real terms change from 2010-11 baseline		(6.0%) ²	(2.4%) ³	(0.9%)	(3.1%)
Percentage of Welsh Block	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%

*An accounting adjustment of £0.5million per year is required for the Assembly Members' Pension Scheme. Since 2010-11, this is funded separately via the Annually Managed Expenditure budget.

²National Assembly for Wales, [Assembly Commission Budget 2011-12](#) as updated by latest H M treasury assumptions as at 28 June 2011

³Uses H M Treasury assumptions 2011-12 2.9%, 2012-13 2.5%, 2013-14 2.7% and 2014-15 2.7% as at 28 June 2011 [accessed 15 September 2011]

Investment in the Fourth Assembly

The budget will enable the Commission to invest in:

- research specialists in key policy areas and public finance;*
- support for committees, including access to more external expert advice and working outside Cardiff Bay to inform inquiries;*
- expanding the Commission's legal service to match demand; and*
- the professional parliamentary skills of Members and staff.*

Outstanding parliamentary support

An effective parliament must have high quality and specialist staff and support services. With only 60 Members, operating in a bilingual environment, that support is especially important if the Assembly is to meet the expectations of the people of Wales to represent their interests, scrutinise the actions and expenditure of the Welsh Government, and to make good law. The Assembly already benefits from a high level of such support and, over the next five years, the Commission will strengthen that still further.

Specific needs will emerge over the coming years as the legislative programme of the Government grows and the priorities of Members evolve. In the near term, we will strengthen areas of support where we anticipate increased demand. In the Research Service we will appoint specialists in key policy areas and public finance. The support we will then offer, for example, to the scrutiny work of the Finance Committee will be sharpened, with dedicated support to provide the necessary analysis and advice. Enhanced research capacity will also support Members in their scrutiny of some of the new priorities associated with the post-referendum powers of the Assembly such as requests from the UK Parliament for consent to legislate in devolved areas or post-legislative assessment and analysis.

In addition, the Commission will ensure that resources are available to access external expertise so that committees benefit from expert advice of the highest possible calibre during their inquiries.

The new committee structure will allow committees more flexibility in their approach to what are now extremely broad and demanding

remits. The Commission will ensure that committees are able to work outside the confines of Cardiff Bay in order to enhance their engagement with those affected by public policy and so inform their inquiries.

The Assembly's new powers to make law across the whole of the devolved fields will lead to a more comprehensive and ambitious legislative programme. There will be increased demand for legal, procedural and research advice flowing from the greater volume and complexity of Assembly legislation. Whilst much of that support will be focused on equipping Members to scrutinise government bills, the Commission will also ensure that similar parliamentary support is available to individual Members and committees seeking to develop and promote their own proposals for legislation.

The Assembly will only be able to take full advantage of the opportunities which parliaments, including devolved legislatures, have acquired under the Lisbon Treaty in relation to subsidiarity issues if specialist legal support relating to European Law is available. The Commission will ensure that the necessary legal support and external legislative drafting capacity are available to respond to these challenges when needed.

The expectations of the Welsh public for the contribution that their Assembly Members will make to improvement in public life are high. Effective parliamentary scrutiny requires Members to shine a light on the activity of government, to challenge thinking, to put forward alternatives and, hence to improve decision making. To support Members in meeting those demands, the Commission will put in place opportunities for Members, their staff and Assembly staff to access professional development activity tailored to their needs in areas such as effective questioning, analysis of evidence and international best practice in parliamentary scrutiny. Through this package of developments, it is the Commission's intention to ensure that Members also have access to the expert advice, analytical capacity and logistical support they need to deliver that objective and to provide outstanding representation for the people of Wales.

Investment in the Fourth Assembly

The budget will enable the Commission to invest in:

- innovative e-democracy;*
- more widespread engagement with people across Wales;*
- further activity with schools and young people;*
- access for Members to relevant, expert thinking; and*
- cost effective tools to provide enhanced bilingual services.*

Engaging with the people of Wales and promoting Wales

An effective parliament must also spread awareness of its work, processes and relevance so as to encourage greater engagement with the public.

The Commission will build on the Assembly's strong track record in education, e-democracy and public engagement by developing initiatives that are ground breaking and exemplary. This section describes examples.

We will continue to work with expert partners to embed the use of new and emerging technology to publicise the work of the Assembly and to ensure that we are at the forefront of e-democracy. Mindful of significant changes in the Welsh media landscape, we will work closely with regional media in Wales to publicise the work of the Assembly, but also focus on raising awareness of the Assembly's work in specialist and UK media. We will improve how we monitor our performance in this area.

The Assembly's outreach and education work will inform communities right across Wales of the Assembly's work. To enhance this service, we will hold more seminars, conferences and workshops to promote and encourage involvement with the work of committees and inquiries.

We will examine our provision of broadcasting services to establish the scope to generate savings which could be used to broadcast a wider range of Assembly activities, including those outside the Senedd.

We will promote the work of the Assembly by supporting Members to host events on the estate

and develop our corporate events programme and presence at national and regional shows, working closely with partners such as the Welsh Government and media to promote Wales.

Our programme of work with schools and others in the education sector is highly regarded. It could be broadened and enhanced by closer working with Funky Dragon, school councils, the Welsh Government and others. We will also consider how to involve schools and communities who have not previously engaged with the Assembly. The Assembly bus will be used as a mobile resource to encourage their involvement.

We will develop our relationship with the Wales Governance Centre, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and a diverse range of organisations and groups to ensure that Members have access to expertise and thinking relevant to our devolved policy areas.

We will develop our bilingual services in line with the principles set by the Commission's proposed Official Languages Bill and draft Bilingual Services Scheme. We will conclude our exploratory work into the use of IT software and machine translation for the Assembly's translation requirements with the aim of delivering a wider range of services and better value for money.

On the global stage, the Assembly will seek to gain and impart knowledge and understanding of international good parliamentary practice. This can be linked to the development of democratic institutions around the world, to which the Assembly can make a positive contribution but from which it can also learn. Engagement with other parliaments, of whatever stage of development, will be a mutually enriching experience.

Investment in the Fourth Assembly

The budget will enable the Commission to invest in:

- systems to cut duplication in back office tasks, improve accuracy and reduce overheads;*
- the sustainability of Tŷ Hywel, to make it less carbon hungry;*
- an apprenticeship and graduate placement scheme, improving opportunities at all levels for those who want to work at the Assembly;*
- a new programme to widen involvement in politics and democracy; and*
- further developing a comprehensive professional support service for Members.*

Using resources wisely

The people of Wales must have confidence that the money we spend on Assembly services is used in the best way. The Commission wants to demonstrate the effectiveness of Assembly services and the success of the outcomes we achieve from the money we receive.

Investing to save

We need to renew and replace the systems which help to deliver accurate, safe and secure services. We will make savings by streamlining processes, using systems to replace wasted activity and add value to what we already do well.

The work on the Assembly's Unified ICT Network (UNO), largely undertaken in 2010-11, delivered an infrastructure and IT service model capable of being driven by the needs, priorities and strategy of the Assembly because it provides an independent and up to date IT platform. This allows the Assembly to make decisions about future ICT independently of the Welsh Government. It provides opportunities for more innovative ways to deliver improved working practices. In undertaking this work in 2010-11 as a single project, the Commission saved an estimated £0.9million (20%) in costs which would otherwise have been incurred in spasmodic replacement and updating of systems.

Sustainability

An exemplary parliamentary body needs to lead by example in meeting its statutory duties to work sustainably. The Commission set itself a target of reducing the estate's carbon emissions by 40% by 2015. In the first two years of our strategy, by April 2011, a 19% reduction in energy emissions was achieved. Despite rising

energy costs, this saved about £100k over two years. We will need to continue to invest to sustain this progress and to continue to control our spending on energy costs.

Equality of Opportunity

We want accessibility to the Assembly estate and communications material to be best in class, to provide more opportunities for a wider range of people to discover what the Assembly does, join in the debate and help the Assembly to reach good decisions.

We want to improve our ability to attract a diverse range of people to work at the Assembly.

The Assembly estate

We will be exploring the opportunities for using our landmark buildings to attract more people and events. Where appropriate, we will generate income, investing in improvements to help us achieve this. This will allow the Assembly's facilities to be used in new ways which will help build awareness and ownership of the institution. For example, an upgrade of the Pierhead kitchens would allow use for more commercial functions at times when the Assembly does not need to use the facilities, and could provide opportunities for third sector organisations and smaller Welsh companies to showcase their strengths at a reasonable price.

Procurement and contract management

We are strengthening our procurement team and will improve the way we present opportunities to work with the Assembly, driving greater sustainability, diversity and local production and helping to grow market capacity in Wales where we can. In doing so, we will secure value for money, particularly in the way we manage contracts, and will invest further in the skills we need.

The Assembly now has an ICT platform independent of Government and in the next few years, we will transform the way we provide ICT services, building in more flexibility to fit our service with individual needs and allow greater autonomy. This should provide opportunities for smaller and more local enterprises. To achieve this, we need to invest in internal and external skills, although we will aim to deliver savings and better use of resources to offset some of these costs. If the Assembly is to be in the best position to sustain its reputation for the creative use of cutting edge technology, we

must be well prepared for decisions about our main ICT contract which is due to expire in 2014.

Building greater capacity in a small legislature

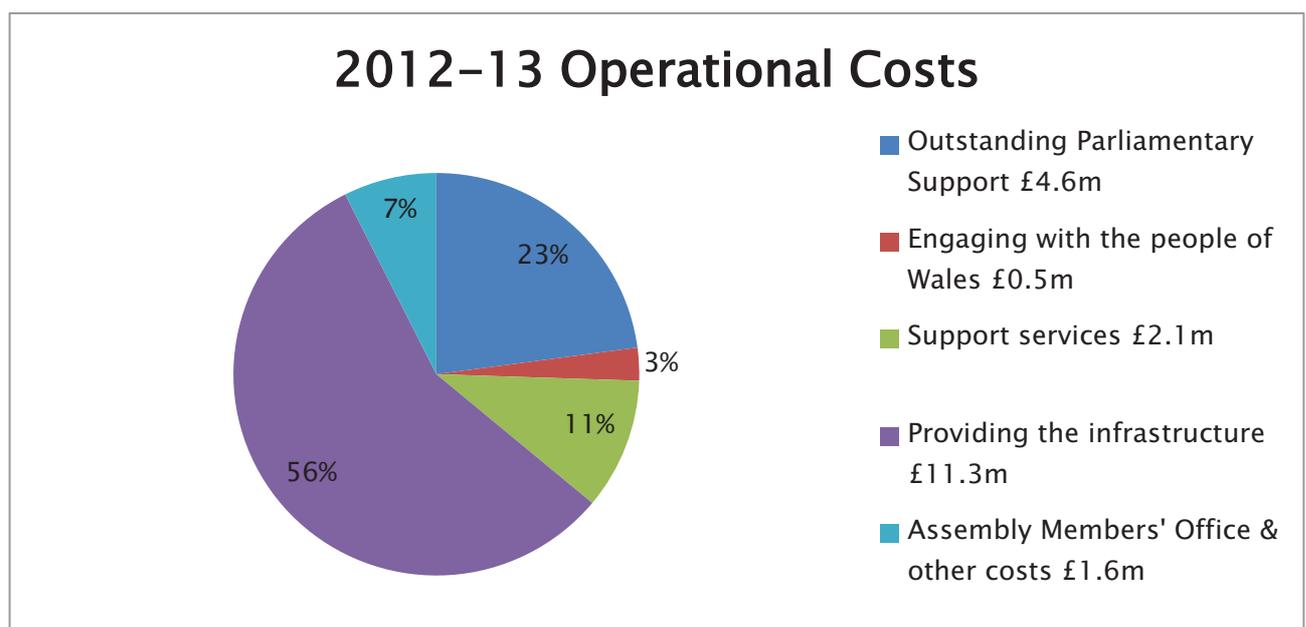
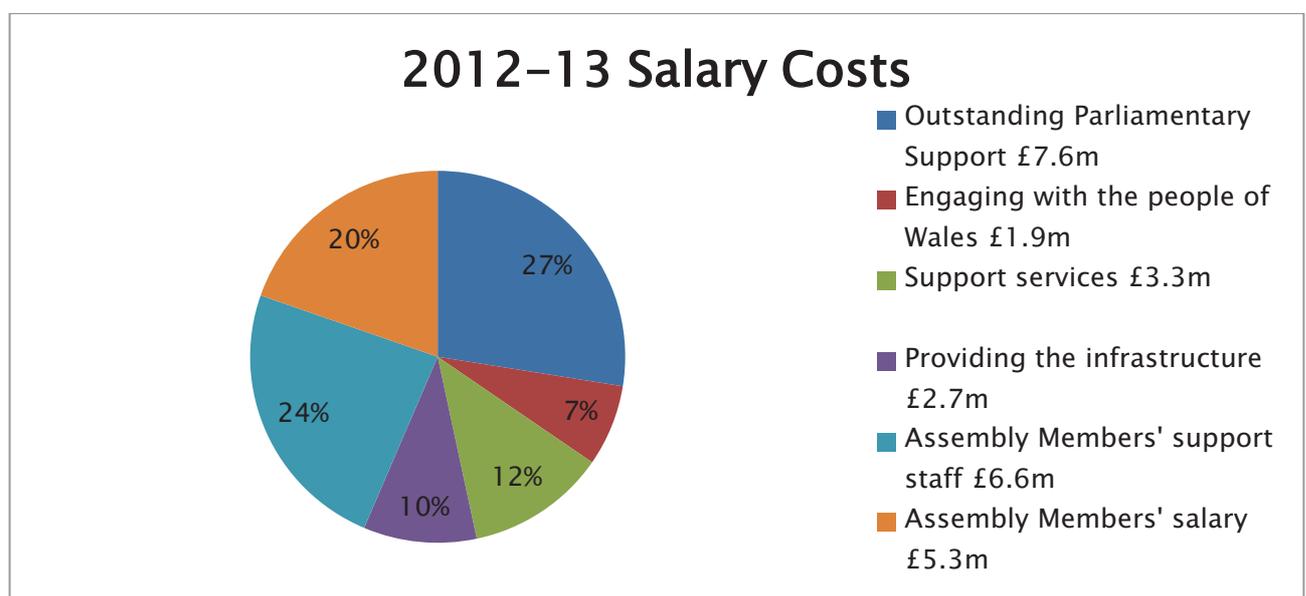
The Assembly needs to deliver at maximum capacity for its sixty Members. To support Members and enable them to play to their strengths and meet the challenge of increased powers, we will ensure that development opportunities are available and that Members' support staff and Assembly staff reach high standards of professionalism in their roles.

We provide first class facilities and opportunities for our staff, as evidenced in our Investors in People Gold status, but there are ways in which these can improve. We will extend development further, promote the Assembly as a great place to work and offer more employment opportunities for disadvantaged groups.

Financial Summary – Assembly Commission resources

The Chief Executive and Clerk of the Assembly leads a Management Board made up of the three Directors and eight heads of the different service areas within the Assembly. Services are delivered through a mix of Assembly staff and contracted supplies and services. The Commission's budget also funds the running costs of the iconic Senedd and Pierhead buildings and the Assembly offices in Cardiff (Tŷ Hywel) and Colwyn Bay. Further information on Assembly services can be found on the Assembly's website www.assemblywales.org

A breakdown of the way resources are used is set out below.



Specifically, the changes moving from the 2011-12 budget of £44.7million to the 2012-13 budget of £47.6million are set out in Table 2.

Table 2 Assembly Commission changes to the budget compared to 2011-12 £000s

	Budget 2011-12	Unavoid- able increases	Savings	Fourth Assembly Investment	Budget 2012-13
Assembly services:					
Assembly Staff	14,624	459		468	15,551
Fixed spend	7,582				8,281
- Rent increase		500			
- Inflation adjust		199			
Depreciation	3,254	646			3,900
Discretionary spend	4,597		(837)		3,760
Investment programme	1,116			981	2,097
Contingency	500				500
Remuneration Board - Assembly Members:					
Salary, Office Costs & Other Costs	6,734				6,900
- Full year adjust		166			
Support Staff	6,300	300			6,600
Total Resource required	44,707	2,071	(837)	1,449	47,589
		5%	(2%)	3%	6%
Assembly Members' pension provision	500				500

Operational Savings

In delivering the 2012-13 budget, the Commission has identified £0.8 million (2%) savings. These predominantly arise from changes to processes and from contractual negotiations. This means the Commission will benefit from these savings in future years. The budget also projects that savings will arise from turnover of staff and process improvements. The Commission has recently undertaken a series of external challenge sessions using its independent advisers and experts from other Parliamentary institutions. These challenges are highlighting strengths and weaknesses and ways that the Commission can provide its services more effectively, which are informing the service planning currently underway.

Table 3 provides further information on the 2012-13 savings.

Table 3 Operational Savings 2012-13	£000s	
<i>Recurring Savings</i>		
Changes to how service is delivered:		
ICT, Website & Broadcasting	(195)	
Catering	(27)	
Specialist advice - environmental	(20)	
Changes arising from contract negotiations		
Photocopier rental	(20)	
Payroll Management	(5)	
Changes arising from reduced need		
Marketing & Publicity	(75)	
Utilities	(24)	
Postage & Carriage	(5)	
Cost moved to Consolidated Fund (Commissioner for Standards)	(26)	(397)
<i>Non Recurring Savings</i>		
Increased cost recovery - car parking	(15)	
Official opening expenses	(51)	
Minor adjustments (Stationery;Hospitality;T&S)	(4)	(70)
<i>Projected savings - anticipated savings to be achieved during 2012-13</i>		(370)
Sources include vacancy management; contract negotiations,etc)		
<i>As per Table 2 - savings</i>		<u>(837)</u>

These savings match the level of new investment funds requested and in total these sums will deliver a range of improvements for the Commission. These are described in more detail in Table 4 - Fourth Assembly Investment.

Table 4	Fourth Assembly investment	£000s
<i>Assembly Staff - new initiatives</i>		
	Strengthening support for formal Assembly business	295
	Apprenticeship scheme	115
	Improving Visitor experience	33
	Improving Audit	25
	<i>As per Table 2 - Assembly Service staff</i>	<u>468</u>
<i>Restructuring Fund</i>		
	Provision for potential voluntary severance scheme; organisational change and improving professional capacity	500
<i>Service operational spend - increases</i>		
	Police contract	150
	Increase ICT Maintenance - new system investment	90
	Increased support for Broadcasting outside Cardiff	50
	Staff training and health	44
	Uniforms for Front of House staff	21
	New events and marketing	20
	Funds for Committees to access experts/advisers & away meetings	18
	Cleaning contract	17
	Increased support for Legal Services	16
	Accounting adjustment and miscellaneous items	55
	<i>As per Table 2 - Investment programme</i>	<u>481</u>
		<u>981</u>
	<i>Total per Table 2</i>	<u><u>1,449</u></u>

Five year investment programme:

Together with the amounts above, a development fund of £1.1m will be available in 2012-13. The fund is estimated at £1.9m for 2013-14 and £1.3m for 2014-15.

The programme will deliver a variety of developments, examples of which are:

- Improving Committee support
- Parliamentary systems - Audio visual, Medialon, Vision 2014
- Communications investment - Senedd tv; archiving; broadcasting
- Professionalising services - investment in skills and capacity
- Sustainability - building improvements
- Building improvements - improving visitor experience/better facilities for events
- Corporate system replacements - HR/Payroll/Finance
- ICT strategy - current contract ends 2014
- ICT Rolling programme

The Remuneration Board for Members' pay and other costs

The Remuneration Board for Members' pay and other costs

Decisions over the pay and other costs of Assembly Members are the responsibility of the National Assembly for Wales Remuneration Board, established by Assembly legislation in 2010. The Board is entirely independent of the Assembly and so Members have no direct role in setting their own pay, that of their staff nor the amounts that can be reimbursed for office and other costs. The Board's decisions are published in its National Assembly for Wales Determination and, by statute, it is the Commission's responsibility to secure the funding necessary to meet the costs arising from the Determination.

The Board has set the base salary of Assembly Members at £53,852 and frozen it at that level for the next four years together with office holder allowances. The Board has also reviewed and revised the eligibility of certain office and other costs. Over the next four years, the savings are calculated as below:

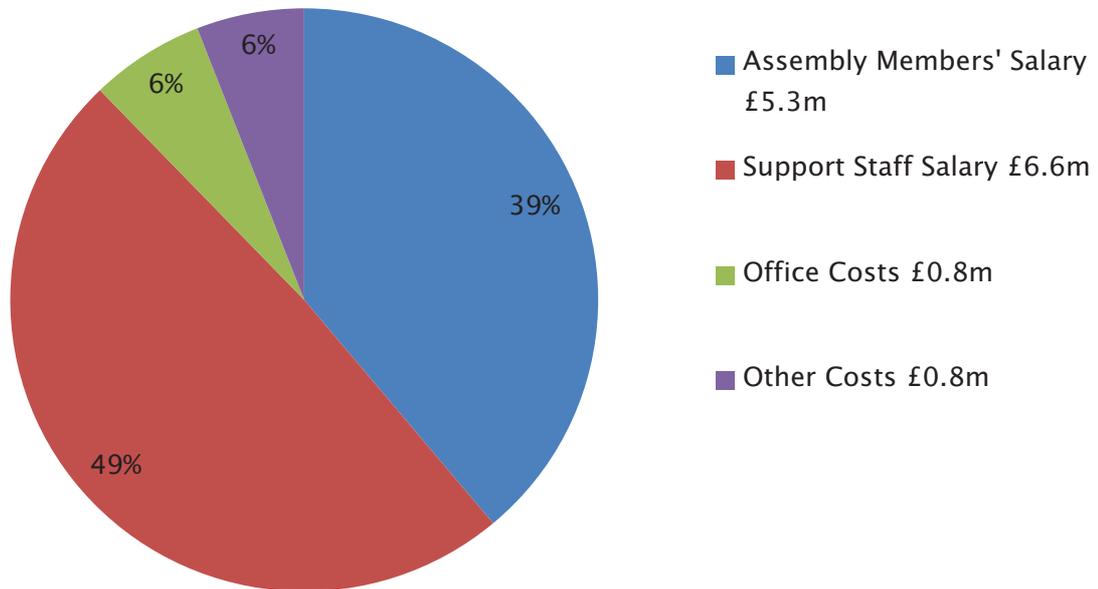
-freezing of salaries	£1.500 million:
-freezing office holder allowances	£0.428 million;
-office and other costs	£0.160 million

As set out in the Determination, Assembly Members have access to office and other costs to provide for:

- running an office and engaging with constituents;
- Support staff salary and travel expenses;
- residential accommodation;
- travel expenses necessarily incurred in the performance of duties; and
- support for Party Groups.

The percentage split across these costs is shown in the graph below.

Assembly Members' 2012-13 Budget



In total, the cost of Members' salary, support staff and office costs will be £13.5 million in 2012-13. This reflects the full twelve month pay and allowances available to each Assembly Member. In 2011-12 the Assembly was in dissolution for six weeks, resulting in a lower level of pay and allowances for that election year. There is a further charge arising from accounting adjustments for the Members' pension scheme of £0.5 million. This charge is reflected in the Annually Managed Expenditure (AME) budget and is expected to remain the same as 2011-12 at £0.5 million.

Assembly Commission budget ambit

Assembly Commission budget ambit

1. This budget submission is laid in compliance with National Assembly Standing Order 20 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 Assembly Commission for the year ending 31 March 2013 and provisional amounts for the subsequent two years.
2. The Budget Motion will authorise the net resources to be used for the services and purposes of Members and Assembly 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, and the cash amount that will need to be issued from the Welsh Consolidated Fund to meet the anticipated net amounts falling due for payment by the Commission.
3. The 2012-13 Budget for the Assembly Commission, addressing these requirements, is set out in Table 5 below.

Table 5

£000

Resources other than accruing resources for use by the National Assembly for Wales Commission on revenue and capital costs associated with the administration and operation of Assembly Services to support the National Assembly for Wales ("the Assembly"); promotion of the Assembly including payments to the Electoral Commission and others; payments in respect of the Commissioner for Standards and Remuneration Board; any other payments relating to functions of the Assembly or functions of the National Assembly for Wales Commission.	34,339
Resources other than accruing resources for use by the National Assembly for Wales Commission in respect of decisions of the Remuneration Board.	<u>13,500</u>
<i>Total resources, other than accruing resources</i>	47,839
Annually Managed Expenditure for use by the National Assembly for Wales Commission in respect of Assembly Members' Pension provision.	500

Accruing resources for retention pursuant to section 120(2) of the Government of Wales Act 2006 and use by the National Assembly for Wales Commission: from the disposal of fixed assets and other capital income for use on the purchase or acquisition of fixed assets; or rental income; gifts; grant support; recharges and income from commercial sales and other services provided to the public or others for use on administrative costs of the Assembly.	250
Amount to be issued from the Welsh Consolidated Fund to meet the anticipated amounts falling due for payment in the year in respect of the above services and purposes less expected retainable receipts and recoverable VAT.	44,439

4. Table 6 below reconciles the net resource requirement to the cash drawing requirement from the Welsh Consolidated Fund.

Table 6	CASH REQUIREMENT			£000s
	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	
Members Net Revenue Requirement	13,500	13,700	13,900	
Commission Net Revenue Requirement ¹	33,089	34,068	34,607	
Net Capital Requirement	1,000	1,850	1,311	
Assembly Members' Pension Provision	500	500	500	
<i>Adjustments:</i>				
Depreciation	(3,900)	(4,000)	(4,400)	
Movements in provisions	(500)	(500)	(500)	
Movement in debtors and creditors	500	0	0	
Use of provisions	250	0	0	
Net cash requirement for issue from the Welsh Consolidated Fund	44,439	45,618	45,418	

¹ Assumes Accruing Income of £0.250 million year on year

<p>Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Estimate for the Financial Year 2012/13 and Supplementary Estimate for 2011/12</p>
--

1. Background to this estimate submission

- 1.1 I submit this budget estimate as required by paragraph 15 of Schedule 1 of the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2005, as amended by the Government of Wales Act 2006. It sets out the resources required to carry out my statutory functions (apart from my salary, National Insurance and pension costs, which are a direct charge on the Welsh Consolidated Fund and do not therefore form part of this estimate. However, they are reported in my Annual Accounts in order to ensure that they reflect the total running costs of the office.
- 1.2 This is the first submission of my estimates to the Fourth Assembly. Under the Committee Portfolios and Responsibility in the Fourth Assembly, the Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee of the National Assembly for Wales is responsible for considering the work of the office, whilst the Finance Committee is responsible for considering this estimate submission. The information provided relates particularly to those matters which fall within the remit of the Finance Committee.
- 1.3 In preparing this submission the advice of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales's Audit Committee has been taken into account. That Committee continues to be independently chaired by Laurie Pavelin, CBE, FCA, who has extensive experience and a detailed knowledge of public sector finance and accounting. Professor Margaret Griffiths remains as an independent member of the Committee this year. Her knowledge of the Welsh legal system and her general experience of matters pertaining to the Ombudsman's work give the Audit Committee additional depth.

2. The role of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

2.1 As Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, I consider complaints made by members of the public that they have suffered hardship or injustice through maladministration or service failure on the part of a body in my jurisdiction. That jurisdiction covers:

- local government (both county and community councils);
- the National Health Service (including GPs and dentists)
- registered social landlords (housing associations)
- and the Welsh Government, together with sponsored bodies.

2.2 I have this year launched the new Complaints Wales signposting service – a telephone and web service – which enables members of the public in Wales, who wish to complain about a public service provider, but do not know how to do so, to make their complaint to that organisation (this also includes complaints about UK public service providers where the services are not devolved). I also consider complaints which allege that members of local authorities have broken their code of conduct.

3. Financial performance

3.1 I should like to inform the Committee that my arrangements for financial management and internal control have been independently reviewed by my internal auditors (RSM Tenon) and assessed as operating effectively. Their Annual Report stated:

“we are satisfied that sufficient internal audit work has been undertaken to allow us to draw a reasonable conclusion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales’s arrangement. For the 12 months ended 31 March 2011, based on the work we have undertaken our opinion regarding the adequacy and effectiveness of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales’s arrangements for governance, risk management and control is (based on the traffic light notation) as follows:

Governance	Adequate and effective	Green
Risk Management	Adequate and effective	Green
Control	Adequate and effective	Green”

3.2 The Auditor General gave my accounts for the year 2010-11 an unqualified audit opinion in keeping with all previous years.

3.3 I work on the principle that the overheads of the office should be less than 5% of the total expenditure. This has always been achieved since the office was established under the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2005.

- 3.4 We make 99% of payments to suppliers within 30 days of the invoices being received in my office. In many cases the payments are made within 10 working days.
- 3.5 These achievements are consistent with the high standards of financial management which have been in place since the organisation was established.

4. Efficiency and effectiveness

4.1 **Outcomes 2010/11** – I have previously reported to the National Assembly for Wales, both through the Finance Committee and my Annual Reports, my concern at the backlog of cases which had resulted as a consequence of the increase in complaints received by my office since its inception in April 2006. A concerted effort has been made over the past couple of years to tackle this within the resources available to my office. A key element was the creation of the Complaints Advice Team to deal more effectively with initial enquiries to the office and with the early stages of the complaints handling process. I also streamlined the investigation stage. These steps, together with the considerable efforts of my staff, resulted in significant achievements during 2010/11. Noteworthy are the following results in respect of my services in dealing with complaints about public service providers:

- we received 1,127 enquiries, up 49% on 2009/10
- we received 1,425 new complaints, up 3% on 2009/10
- we achieved 120 quick fixes/voluntary settlements, up 33% on 2009/10
- we issued 315 investigation reports, up 54% on 2009/10
- we closed 1,634 cases, up 13% on 2009/10
- the number of cases on hand at 31 March 2011 was 295, a reduction of 48% on 2009/10
- we had no investigations more than 12 months old open at 31 March 2011.

4.2 **Current position 2011/12** – The increase in the number of the enquiries and complaints received at my office has continued in the current year. Comparing the first five months (i.e. April to August) this year, with the same period in 2010/11:

- enquiries are up 73% (589 compared with 340)
- complaints are up 7% (788 compared with 739).

It is notable that health complaints currently account for 30% of the caseload of public body complaints, compared with the overall position of 25% for 2010/11. It appears, therefore, that the additional health complaints expected as a result of the changes in health redress arrangements, where all independent reviews were concentrated in my office, are now beginning to make their way to me.

- 4.3 **Staff resources** – The Finance Committee was made aware last year that as a result of the level of financial resources made available to my office for the current financial year (2011/12) I would have to take steps to reduce my staffing establishment. I concluded that an 8.5% reduction in posts (full time equivalents) would be necessary. This I have done. It has been achieved through a reorganisation where I made changes at management level and implemented arrangements to deal with the consequential effects of this – for example, reducing the number of investigation teams from three to two. Notably, five posts were cut: one Director (from two); two Senior Investigator posts and two Casework Support Officers. Beyond this, it is also my current policy not to fill vacancies unless a sound business case can be made as to why the post must be filled.
- 4.4 **Clinical advisers** – I use clinical advisers with expertise in various areas of the health professions to assist me with the consideration of health cases. Previously, I relied upon advisers engaged through an arrangement with the office of the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) and subject to a recharge to this office. However, I have recently increased the number and range of clinical advisers that I am able to engage directly. This will reduce the number of cases where files have to be sent to PHSO's London or Manchester office. This will not only result in reduced costs, but also enable a more prompt review of cases.
- 4.5 **Other efficiencies** – Staff resources account for the bulk of the expenditure of my office and most of the other costs incurred are fixed and difficult to control in the short to medium term (e.g. office rental). However, those areas where we do have some control are under regular review in relation to obtaining best value. For example:
- (a) Travel and accommodation – arrangements are made centrally through the office's corporate services team. This ensures that the most cost effective rates can be obtained. Unless there are extenuating circumstances, standard rail travel is used and we pre-book tickets in order to obtain the cheapest fares possible. We have also taken measures such as obtaining an Oyster card for travel within the London area, which has resulted in lower costs against the purchase of day tickets.
 - (b) Procurement – due to restrictions under the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2005, it is not possible to be a party to contractual arrangements with a body within my jurisdiction. However, I do look for opportunities for service level agreements (SLAs) with other organisations where possible. I have already referred to the arrangement with the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman for engaging clinical advisers and I also have an SLA in place for human resource advice. Also, when a vacancy arises and I take a view that it is crucial for this to be filled, we now undertake the recruitment process ourselves, rather than engage an employment agency to do this on my behalf (up to shortlisting stage) as has been the practice in the past.

- (c) Library resources – The nature of the investigation work undertaken by my office means that it is critical that we have comprehensive and up to date reference material available to us, particularly in relation to the legal basis of services provided by the bodies within my jurisdiction. A recent review undertaken has meant that we have been able to achieve cost savings by dispensing with subscriptions for hard copy materials and replacing these with the use of electronic data services.

5. The next three years

- 5.1 Over the next three years we will be looking to further develop the work of the newly established Complaints Wales service as well as the arrangements for the additional independent review of health complaints that now come to my office. We will be doing this with a view to fully realising the efficiency gains of the new arrangements in order to cope with the level of complaints received with a smaller staffing complement than originally anticipated.
- 5.2 We have to be realistic and mindful of what can be achieved with a reduced staffing establishment. Although it has not come as a surprise, from an operational point of view, the continued increase in the number of complaints that I receive is of some concern. Health complaints are invariably the most complex and resource intensive type of complaint to investigate. The fact that health currently accounts for 30% of the caseload of complaints about public bodies and could rise further, will be a major consideration. I remain resolute that our endeavours to deliver a quality complaints handling service will continue. Nevertheless, on the basis of the budget estimate being put forward for 2012/13, if this upward trend continues, I may well have to review the criteria used for deciding whether or not to take a complaint forward to investigation.
- 5.3 We are also absorbing the impact of inflation in areas such as energy and travel costs and, therefore, not requesting any additional funding in this regard.
- 5.4 Given the considerable pressures on my service, I have allowed for a 1.5% increase in my budget estimate for 2013/14 (held for 2014/15), which is in line with the Comprehensive Spending Review where the Welsh Block will similarly receive a 1.5% increase.

6. Supplementary request for resources in 2011/12: an exceptional item – pensions

- 6.1 Under the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2005, my staff are members of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS). However, when the office of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales was established in 2006, a number of members of staff formerly employed by the Commission for Local Administration in Wales were entitled to remain in the Local

Government Pension Scheme. Since then, the scheme, which is administered by Cardiff County Council, has incurred a considerable deficit. This has arisen because of the increases in life expectancy that affects the liabilities of the pension scheme while its assets have been reduced by decreases in the value of its investments and by lower rates of return.

- 6.2 Although this deficit affects all member organisations of the Local Government Pension Scheme, other member organisations are able to spread the cost of recovering the deficit over 22 years. In the case of my office, which has a small number of staff belonging to that scheme and no new members since 2006, that ability to spread the cost is not available and I am required to clear the deficit by the time there are no longer any active members (a person paying contributions into the scheme). Based on current expectations of staff retiring, this is estimated to happen in the 2017/18 financial year).
- 6.3 As stated in the Annual Accounts for 2010/11, the deficit is £1.565m and I have arranged with the pension administrators to make six annual payments from 2012/13 to 2017/18 to clear the deficit. However, under the resource accounting rules I am advised that I should provide for the full cost in the current financial year. I have therefore asked the Welsh Government to include an additional resource request for that amount in the next supplementary budget motion for 2011/12. I have also been advised that this supplementary estimate is expected to be treated as Annually Managed Expenditure and will not have a negative impact on the Welsh Block. As I am not required to make any cash payments until 2012/13, there will be no change to the amount of funding that I will need from the Welsh Consolidated Fund in 2011/12.
- 6.4 The deficit has arisen from factors beyond my control and cannot be found from current funds without major cuts to services. As set out above, the greatest proportion of office costs are salary related and staff numbers have already been reduced by five posts over the past year. Any further reduction in staff posts would mean that I would not be able to fulfil my duties under the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2005.

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
28 September 2011

Appendix – 2012/13 Estimates

Appendix

Estimates 2012/13

	Actual 2010/11	Budget 2011/12	Estimate 2012/13	Estimate 2013/14	Estimate 2014/15
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Capital	461	15	14	13	13
Running costs					
Salaries and related costs	2,385	2,580	2,620	2,647	2,652
Premises	310	337	337	340	367
Computer systems and support	200	105	90	85	105
Office costs	163	146	146	148	148
Advisory fees	313	300	300	323	350
Communications	80	105	80	82	82
Training and recruitment	67	70	65	65	75
Travel and subsistence	28	34	34	34	34
Audit fee	25	20	20	22	22
Notional charges	150	148	153	158	44
Total running costs	3,721	3,845	3,845	3,904	3,879
Income	-37	-6	-6	-6	-6
Net revenue expenditure	3,684	3,839	3,839	3,898	3,873
Total net resource requirement	4,145	3,854	3,853	3,911	3,886
Supplementary Resource Requirement for 2011-12					
Local Government Pension Scheme deficit		1,565			
Total revised net resource requirement	4,145	5,419	3,853	3,911	3,886
Non cash items	-110	-98	-97	-99	-77
Changes in working capital other than cash	34	25	25	25	25
Provisions movements	36	-1,615	-50	-50	-47
Cash payments to discharge pension and other provisions	-	-	231	242	254
Total cash requirement from the Welsh Consolidated Fund	4,105	3,731	3,962	4,029	4,041

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

Document is Restricted

Agenda Annex

Finance Committee

Meeting Venue: **Committee Room 2 - Senedd**

Meeting date: **Wednesday, 28 September 2011**

Meeting time: **09:30 - 11:45**

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales



This meeting can be viewed on Senedd TV at:
[<insert link here>](#)

Concise Minutes:

Assembly Members:

Jocelyn Davies (Chair)
Peter Black
Christine Chapman
Paul Davies
Mike Hedges
Ann Jones
Julie Morgan
Ieuan Wyn Jones

Witnesses:

Cllr Rodney Berman, WLGA Finance Spokesperson
Vanessa Phillips, Director of Resources, WLGA
Steve Thomas, WLGA

Committee Staff:

Tom Jackson (Clerk)
Daniel Collier (Deputy Clerk)
Martin Jennings (Researcher)
Eleanor Roy (Researcher)
Susan Morgan (Legal Advisor)

1. Introduction and apologies

2. Draft budget motion 2012-2013

2.1 The Committee welcomed Jane Hutt AM, Minister for Finance; Andrew Jeffreys, Head of Strategic Budgeting; Jo Salway, Head of Budget Policy; and Jeff Andrews, Specialist Policy Adviser – Finance to the meeting.

2.2 The Committee scrutinised the Minister.

2.3 The Committee requested that the Clerk produce a report on its consideration of the Minister's proposals for amending the Welsh Government Annual Budget Motion.

3. Draft budget motion 2012-2013

3.1 The Committee welcomed Steve Thomas, Chief Executive, WLGA; Cllr Rodney Berman, WLGA Finance Spokesperson and Leader, Cardiff County Council; and Vanessa Phillips, Director of Resources WLGA.

3.2 The Committee questioned the witnesses.

Action points:

The Welsh Local Government Association agreed to provide:

- Further details on efficiency savings made by the Welsh Government's efficiency and innovation and invest to save programmes.
- Figures highlighting the level of reserves in place for local authorities and the implications of the reduction in those reserves.
- A note on how Cymorth and other specific grants within last year's local government settlement have helped reduce the administrative burden of hypothecated grants.
- A note on the outcome of the meeting between the WLGA and Welsh Fire and Rescue Services regarding the pension abatement service.

4. Members' consideration of evidence

4.1 The Committee considered the evidence provided by the witnesses.

5. Potential inquiry into devolution funding

5.1 The Committee discussed its potential inquiry into devolution funding.

6. Potential inquiry into effectiveness of European Structural Funding in Wales

6.1 The Committee discussed its potential inquiry into the effectiveness of European Structural Funds in Wales.

Draft Finance Committee Forward Work Programme: Autumn 2011

Wednesday 28 September 2011 (9.30-11.30)

- 1. Scrutiny of proposal to amend Welsh Government budget motion (9.35-10.15)**
 - Welsh Government
 - Jane Hutt AM, Minister for Finance
 - Andrew Jeffreys (Head of Strategic Budgeting / Pennaeth Cyllido Strategol).
 - Jo Salway (Head of Budget Policy / Pennaeth Polisi Cyllideb).
 - Jeff Andrews (Specialist Policy Adviser, Finance / Cynghorydd Arbennigol Polisi, Cyllid).

- 2. Information gathering: Stakeholder concerns around potential implications of Welsh Government draft budget 2012-2013 (10.15-11.00)**
 - WLGA (10.15 – 11.00)
 - Cllr Rodney Berman, WLGA Finance Spokesperson and Leader, Cardiff County Council
 - Steve Thomas CBE, Chief Executive, Welsh Local Government Association
 - Vanessa Phillips, Director of Resources, Welsh Local Government Association

- 3. PRIVATE- Members' consideration of evidence taken during meeting (11.00-11.10)**

- 4. PRIVATE- Potential inquiry into Devolution Funding**
 - Members' consideration of scoping paper (11.10-11:25)

- 5. PRIVATE- Potential inquiry into effectiveness of European Structural Funding in Wales**
 - Members' consideration of scoping paper (11.25-11.40)

Thursday 6 October 2011 (9:30-11:30)

- 1. Scrutiny of Assembly Commission draft budget (9:35-10:30)**
 - Assembly Commission
 - Angela Burns AM, Assembly Commissioner for budget and governance
 - Claire Clancy, Chief Executive and Clerk of the Assembly,
 - Steve O' Donoghue, Head of Assembly Resources

2. **Scrutiny of Public Service Ombudsman for Wales draft estimates (10:30-11:25)**
 - Public Service Ombudsman for Wales
 - Peter Tyndall, Ombudsman for Wales
 - Susan Hudson, Policy & Communications Manager
 - Malcolm MacDonald, Financial Adviser.
3. **PRIVATE- Members' consideration of evidence taken during meeting (11.25-11.30)**

Wednesday 12 October 2011 (9.30-11.30)

- 1 **Scrutiny of Welsh Government draft budget**
 - Welsh Government (9:30-10:20)
 - Jane Hutt AM, Minister for Finance
 - Welsh Council for Voluntary Action (10.20-11.10)
 - Phil Fiander, Director of Programmes
 - Michelle Matheron, Senior Policy Officer
- 2 **PRIVATE- Members' consideration of evidence taken during meeting (11.10-11.15)**
- 3 **PRIVATE- Members' consideration of draft report on Assembly Commission draft budget (11.15-11.30)**

Thursday 20 October (9.30-11.30)

1. **Scrutiny of Welsh Government draft budget**
 - NHS Confederation & an NHS Health Board tbc (9:35-10:15)
 - Witnesses tbc (10:15-11:00)
2. **PRIVATE- Members' consideration of evidence taken during meeting (11:00-11:15)**
3. **PRIVATE- Members' consideration of draft report on Public Service Ombudsman for Wales draft estimates (11.15-11.30)**

Monday 31 October 2011 (15.00-16.30)

1. **Scrutiny of Welsh Government draft budget (15:00-16:00)**
 - Jane Hutt AM, Minister for Finance
2. **PRIVATE- Members consideration of evidence taken during meeting (16.00-16.30)**

Wednesday 2 November 2011 (9.30-11.30)

1. **PRIVATE: Scrutiny of Welsh Government draft budget** (9.30-11.30)
 - Members' consideration of draft report

Possible- Monday 7 November (15:00-16:00)

1. **PRIVATE: Scrutiny of Welsh Government draft budget** (15.00-16.00)
 - Members' further consideration of draft report

Meeting of 7 November may be cancelled if Committee agrees a draft report on the budget at its previous meeting of 2 November.

Wednesday 16 November (9:30-11:30)

1. **Oral evidence taking in new committee inquiry** (9:30-11:25)
 - Witnesses tbc
2. **PRIVATE- Members consideration of evidence taken during meeting** (11.25-11.30)

Wednesday 30 November (9:30-11:30)

1. **Oral evidence taking in new committee inquiry** (9:30-11:25)
 - Witnesses tbc
2. **PRIVATE- Members consideration of evidence taken during meeting** (11.25-11.30)

-----**End of Autumn Term**-----