

Manon Antoniazzi

Prif Weithredwr a Chlerc y Senedd
Chief Executive and Clerk of the Senedd

Mark Isherwood MS
Chair of Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee
Senedd Cymru
Tŷ Hywel
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1SN

16 February 2023

Dear Mark,

Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee Report on the Scrutiny of Accounts 2021-22.

I am writing in response to the **Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee report on the Scrutiny of Accounts 2021-22**. I would like to thank the Committee for its scrutiny.


The Commission notes that the Committee is pleased to hear that its underspends are subject to rigorous evaluation, with reinvestment being allocated to improve services for staff and members and notes that the Committee is also pleased to hear about the YMLAEN initiative.

We are proud that, although there is some way to go, the report highlights the progress that is being made in making the Senedd a more diverse representation of modern Wales. I can assure the Committee that the Commission will continue to evaluate its recruitment campaigns with a view to expanding their aims and adding to the diversity of its staff.



I would like to take this opportunity to assure the Committee that we remain as committed as ever to providing greater clarity and assurance through external scrutiny and audit as well as through our internal governance framework. We have committed to a review into the effectiveness of the Commission's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and will share a copy of this review with the Committee.



Senedd Cymru
Bae Caerdydd, Caerdydd, CF99 1SN

 Contact@senedd.cymru
 0300 200 6565

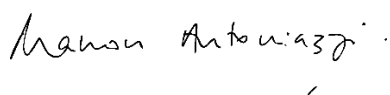
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay, Cardiff, CF99 1SN

 Contact@senedd.wales
 0300 200 6565

Your Committee's recommendations concerning the Commission are addressed in full in the attached Annex. If you would like any further information on any matter covered in the Annex, please do not hesitate to let me know.

The Commission's approach is always to try to operate with openness, transparency and clarity. As ever, if there is any further information your Committee would like, please let me know.

Yours sincerely,



Manon Antoniazzi

Prif Weithredwr a Chlerc y Senedd / Chief Executive and Clerk of the Senedd

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



Annex 1

Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee Report on the Scrutiny of Accounts 2021-22

Recommendation 1. The Committee would like to hear from the Commission on an annual basis with a breakdown of the projects actioned as part of the project fund and the funding allocated to these individual projects. This information should be provided ahead of the Committee's annual scrutiny of the Commission's Accounts.

Accepted

We welcome the Committee's scrutiny and request for further information on the Commission's project fund expenditure and its funding.

The Commission will provide the Committee with a letter, following the end of the 2022-23 financial year, outlining the breakdown of the projects actioned as part of the project fund and the funding allocated to these individual projects. We will also provide additional information, where necessary, to provide the required transparency in advance of the annual scrutiny session in Autumn 2023.

Recommendation 2. The Commission should keep the Committee updated about the work of the Risk Assurance Committee specifically in relation to future planning around Senedd reform, with a particular focus on future staffing and funding considerations.

Accepted

We agree with the Committee's observation that it considers the work of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) to be of vital importance and we will provide the Committee with an update of ARAC's work, specifically in relation to future planning around Senedd Reform, in advance of the annual scrutiny session in Autumn 2023.

Recommendation 3. The Committee recommends that the Commission provide an update to the Committee, ahead of the scrutiny of next year's Accounts, of the learnings from the review of the effectiveness of their response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The update should include details about how efficiencies, costs, and savings from changes to ways of working and how services were delivered during the pandemic have been incorporated into current practices, and how these savings have been made recurrent.



Accepted

We note that the Committee would welcome a copy of the review and we agree to provide the Committee with an update on the Commission's learnings from the review of the effectiveness of its response to the COVID-19 pandemic, in advance of the annual scrutiny session in Autumn 2023.

Recommendation 4. The Commission should continue providing details about contract awarded to Welsh suppliers by the Commission. The Committee requests that this information be provided by size of contract in the future, to include contracts up to £10,000, between £10,000 and £50,000, between £50,000 and £100,000 and in excess of £100,000.

Accepted

We agree to provide the Committee with an update, in advance of the annual scrutiny session in Autumn 2023, on progress in this area.

Recommendation 5. The Commission should share a summary of the results of each pulse survey, when available, with the Committee with a focus on mental ill health, indices of mental ill health and staff absences more generally. The Committee also looks forward to reviewing the results of the annual staff survey for 2022.

Accepted

We agree to share a summary of the results of the next pulse survey and the results of the next staff survey, once these are available in early/mid-2023.

Recommendation 6. The Committee encourages the Commission to share updates, as and when they arise, of staff recruitment projects aimed at increasing the diversity of the organisations as a whole, as well as updates on the progress of the YMLAEN project, amongst others.

Accepted

We agree to provide the Committee with updates, as and when they arise and in advance of the annual scrutiny session in Autumn 2023, on progress in this area.



Recommendation 7. Data in relation to engagement during 2021-22 should be shared with the Committee, to evaluate the impact of online engagement tools. The Commission should provide a breakdown of the types of engagement activity with the Committee and the parts of Wales who are engaging or visiting the Senedd.

Accepted

The following table provides information on the types of engagement activity and the parts of Wales that are engaging with or visiting the Senedd during 2021-22.

The data provided shows the different types of engagement activity delivered during this period, the number of sessions held, and participants. This period includes the lead up to the Senedd Election, and the need to diversify our offer due to restrictions imposed as result of the pandemic, which impacted our services in different ways. The transition from the 5th to the 6th Senedd also meant that the amount of activity to directly support committees (through the Citizen Engagement Team) is lower than it would be in other financial years because of the time it took for committees to set up and conduct their strategic planning work before deciding what scrutiny work to undertake.

We were able to successfully adapt our offer to deliver online engagement and engage with large numbers of people across all local authority areas at a very challenging time. We have taken the learning from this period to provide a more varied offer now that restrictions have lifted, and are able to utilise in person, hybrid, and fully online means to engagement and participation to best fit the need of the project, and the audiences we are aiming to engage, which helps us provide more accessible options to the public.

We will continue to develop our engagement offer over the coming months by sourcing online engagement tools that will provide digital forums for the public to engage and feed into the work of our committees and be able to maintain contact with groups and individuals in a more secure manner for on-going, longer-term engagement.



Manon Antoniazzi

Prif Weithredwr a Chlerc y Senedd
Chief Executive and Clerk of the Senedd

Engagement type	Number of sessions / events online	Number of sessions / events in person	Number of participants / visitors online	Number of participants in person / visitors
Citizen Engagement (including focus groups, interviews and events)	92	11	274	119
Education and Youth Engagement (workshops, presentations, and events)	283	20	37,882	851
Community Engagement	19	0	308	0
Senedd Tours (including 'introduction to your Senedd session' and pre-booked tours)	86	23 (They started again on the w/c 14 March 2022)	537 for online presentations 1,629 (Unique views of virtual 360 tour of the Senedd)	566
Senedd Visitors	N/A	N/A	N/A	6,463

MS Sponsored Events	7 (hybrid and online)	34 (started again in November 2021)	214	1,077
Commission Sponsored Events	2	2	100	100

Local Authority Area (of the group, or where the session was held in person)	Citizen Engagement	Education & Youth Engagement	Community Engagement	Senedd Tours / sessions	Senedd Visitors*	MS Sponsored Events	Commission Sponsored Events	Total
Activity held at the Senedd	1	14	0	23	-	34	2	74
Wales wide (including online/hybrid events open to all)	39	35	12	86 online sessions	-	7	2	181
Groups from outside of Wales	0	2	0	2	-	-	-	4
Blaenau Gwent	1	1	0	0	-	-	-	2

Bridgend	2	6	0	0	-	-	-	8
Caerphilly	4	18	0	1	-	-	-	22
Cardiff	18	30	2	4	-	-	-	54
Carmarthenshire	0	3	0	0	-	-	-	3
Ceredigion	1	10	0	0	-	-	-	11
Conwy	3	45	1	0	-	-	-	49
Denbighshire	1	12	0	0	-	-	-	13
Flintshire	2	7	1	0	-	-	-	10
Gwynedd	0	22	0	0	-	-	-	22
Isle of Anglesey	4	7	0	0	-	-	-	9
Merthyr Tydfil	1	4	0	0	-	-	-	5
Monmouthshire	0	9	0	0	-	-	-	9

Neath Port Talbot	0	11	0	1	-	-	-	12
Newport	7	26	0	2	-	-	-	35
Pembrokeshire	1	4	1	1	-	-	-	7
Powys	3	5	0	0	-	-	-	8
Rhondda Cynon Taf	7	6	0	0	-	-	-	13
Swansea	5	5	0	0	-	-	-	10
Vale of Glamorgan	0	5	0	0	-	-	-	5
Torfaen	0	4	0	1	-	-	-	5
Wrexham	3	28	0	1	-	-	-	32

* (data capture began in July 2022)

Unique visits to visit webpages	12,858
Likes / followers of Visit social media Facebook	2,812
Followers of Visit social media Twitter	2,741
Followers of Visit social media Instagram	3,348
Number of profile views across three platforms	46,188
Number of Impressions / Reach to all posts (number of views)	857,768