

Peredur Owen Griffiths AS
Chair of Finance Committee
Welsh Parliament
Tŷ Hywel
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1SN

19 March 2024

Dear Peredur

I am writing to provide you with the information and updates to the following recommendations as part of the follow up to the Committee's Scrutiny Report of the Commission's Draft Budget 2024-25 as detailed below. These were agreed to be provided to the Committee by the end of this financial year.

- **Recommendation 3** – Report outlining potential impact of 2023-24 savings impact on the financial year 2024-25 (Annex 1)
- **Recommendation 7** – Further information on the Bay 32 project. A technical briefing took place on 6 March for the Committee Members.
- **Recommendation 8** – Schedule of Projects to be funded through the Project Fund in 2024-25 (Annex 2).
- **Recommendation 11** - Report detailing the Engagement Plans for the forthcoming financial year (Annex 3)

Recommendation 6 – staff survey information including staff wellbeing will be provided once the current open survey has been concluded and reported on. We anticipate at this point that this information will be available following the June Commission meeting to the Committee.

The Commission confirms that the responses to the remaining recommendations will be provided in line with the letter dated 9 November 2023 sent to the Committee.

The Commission continues to be committed to openness and transparency with the Finance Committee. If you need further information or wish to clarify any of the information provided, please let me know.



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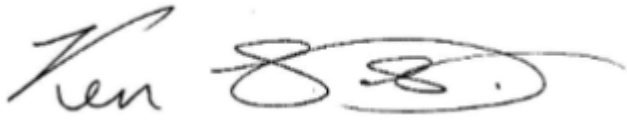
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Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink. The word "Ken" is written in a cursive style on the left. To its right is a stylized, circular signature that appears to be "SS" or "KS" with a flourish.

Ken Skates MS

cc Manon Antoniazzi

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

Report of 2023-24 Savings potential impact on 2024-25 Financial Year

Purpose of the report

This report sets out the update to the Finance Committee on the impact that any savings made in 2023-24 will continue to have on services and planned projects in 2024-25 as set out in Recommendation 3 of the Report on Scrutiny of the Draft Commission Budget for 2024-25. The recommendation is set out below.

***“Recommendation 3** The Committee recommends that the Commission provides an update on the impact that any savings made in 2023-24 will continue to have on its services and any planned projects for 2024-25, by the end of the 2023-24 financial year.”*

Background

In 2023-24 the Commission offered £435,000 savings in the first Supplementary Budget Request which formed part of the budget approved in November 2023. In September of 2023, the Commission in response to the Cost of Living request from the TUS undertook further savings programme totalling £794,000 to afford the payment to all eligible staff Grade 6 and below.

In total the savings that were required to be delivered in 2023-24 is £1.229 million in year. These savings were made across a variety of budget lines including the pausing and use of target start dates in recruitment to vacancies.

First Supplementary Budget Request

The First supplementary budget request in June 2023 returned £435,000 to the Welsh Consolidated Fund. The savings were made in the three areas set out below.

- Utilities and facility management costs of £208,000.
- ICT costs of £107,000 and
- General reduction in the Project Fund of £120,000.

Cost of Living savings

In September 2023, the Commission undertook a programme of initial budgetary savings in order to fund the estimated cost of living request of £824,000. This was funded through a broad mix of budgetary reductions on non-staff discretionary spend along with a programme

of recruitment management which included pausing recruitment for some roles and managing recruitment for other roles through targeted start dates.

The final cost of the payment was £794,000 and funds were generated as follows:

- Staff savings through managed recruitment - £588,000
- Non staff savings - £206,000.

Total savings split between staff and non-staff costs that was achieved in 2023-24 is set out in table 1 below.

Table 1

Category of Savings	£
Staff	588,000
Non Staff	641,000
Total	1,229,000

2024-25 Continued Impact

Overall, the continued savings impact of savings made in 2023-24 is £491,500 into 2024-25 split £200,000 staff savings and £291,000 non staff savings. The table below sets out the summary of continued impact of savings into 2024-25.

	1st Supp £	COL Staff £	COL Non Staff £	Total £
Permanent on going reduction with managed impact mitigation	-	200,000	37,250	237,250
Permanent ongoing reduction with no impact	232,000		15,250	247,250
One off in year savings not continued	203,000	388,000	146,500	737,500
Savings identified to continue through service planning			7,000	7,000
Totals	435,000	588,000	206,000	1,229,000

Non Staff budgetary savings that will continue into 2024-25 is £59,500 across a range of budget lines. Of the original 30 budget lines impacted during 2023-24, 14 have reverted to the original budget level for 2024-25; 12 budget lines have continued to be reduced based on analysis of historical expenditure and long term cost base changes from hybrid working, 2 budget line reductions are as a result of contract renegotiation, while the remaining 2 budget lines have been reduced due to changes in delivery identified through the service planning process for 2024-25.

The continuation of saving plans is due to a variety of reasons:

- Service planning for 2024-25 has informed a reduced budgetary requirement.
- Historical analysis of expenditure data demonstrated a reduced budgetary requirement.
- Hybrid working is delivering long-term change to some budget cost bases.
- Contract renegotiated have delivered permanent reductions to cost.
- Changes in ways of working because of the need to make savings have delivered positive benefits which are being taken forward
- There has also been a continued need to deliver the savings to meet the target savings for 2024-25 at minimum service impact.

Permanent ongoing savings reduction with managed impact to service or capacity

A total of £237,250 budget savings in 2023-24 will continue into 2024-25 which will require the reductions to be managed; staff savings of £200,000 through target recruitment dates and non-staff budget cost savings of £37,250.

Of this, the budgets with continued savings into 2024-25 which may have Member impact are set out below.

- Member training
- Publications and Research
- Committee refreshments
- Expert witnesses and Advisors.

Member training has continued to be reduced in 2024-25 but with a smaller reduction than in 2023-24 following the completion of service planning for 24-25 delivery and historical expenditure analysis which has informed an overall reduction of £30,000 for next year (annual budget of £115,000 remaining). Analysis demonstrated that there should be limited impact in the reduction, and Commissioners have agreed a set of principles to guide the day to day

prioritisation of L&D provision for Members and their staff, as the basis of the planned programme of training and for consideration of all L&D requests received. The previous budget has been continuously underspent each year by this amount over an extended period analysed (7 years) and this, along with the improved value for money that is achievable through hybrid delivery and application of the principles enables a reduction in the budget to be continued. Reduction in 2023-24 was £55,000.

There will also be a continued reduction in the Library budget of £5,000 (annual budget of £112,000 remaining). Reduction in 2023-24 was £10,000. As with Member training, the reduction has been informed by historical expenditure analysis. The budget will be closely managed by continuing to reduce acquisitions of new print materials and prioritising certain resources over others. Member demand for print materials and digital resources is difficult to forecast and each request will be carefully assessed.

Refreshments for Committee meetings is also continuing with a reduction in budget for 2024-25 by £2,250. Again, this is based on historical analysis of expenditure in this area which is demonstrating that the budget is not required at the current level. Hybrid meetings, remote participation of experts and those providing evidence is also delivering less expenditure in this area.

Expert witness and advisors budget will also have a reduction of £5,000 in 2024/5 based on historical expenditure. The savings have been primarily achieved as more experts and witnesses are appearing remotely, improving efficiency of use of time and reducing expenditure on travel and subsistence.

These budgets are demand led, and this has again been considered as part of the analysis work and the setting of an appropriate budget for 2024-25 with sufficient capacity.

Potential staff savings of £200,000 have been identified for 2024-25 as part of the review of the impact of the establishment of recruitment management through targeted start dates which was introduced in September 2023. Hiring managers and the recruitment team both cited improved workload management, better recruitment process and the ability to prepare for the new employee on boarding as all positive benefits derived from the need to deliver staff costs savings.

Analysis of length of time taken to recruit external and internal positions over a two year period has indicated that the average time period is seven months and ten weeks, respectively. Modelling of average recruitment targets of six and three months respectively identified additional savings that will materialise as a result of recruitment management and a further positive benefit. As a result, target recruitment is being taken forward into 2024-25 as part of the workforce planning process.

Permanent budget savings with no impact to service or capacity

A total of £247,250 of savings will continue into 2024-25 which will deliver savings to the budget without impact to service or capacity. Set out below are some of the key budgets contributing to those savings which have been in the main delivered through either contract renegotiation or changes to ways of working.

ICT contract savings of £107,000 delivered in 2023-24 as a result of successful renegotiations and improved contract management are also being rolled forward into a longer term reduction in the ICT cost base. Savings are set out below and do not impact service or capacity of the organisation.

- Reduction in budget following tender for broadcast services £22,000
- Reduction in software licencing through strong contract management and efficient use of licences £35,000
- Efficient use of Cloud and infrastructure management £35,000
- Successful renegotiation of Microsoft licence contracts £15,000

Estate facility management savings of £208,000 are on target to be delivered during 2023-24 through a mix of the following;

- No uplift on rates in 2023-24 (£29,000)
- Savings on electricity and gas usage (£127,700)
- Postage and carriage (£15,000)
- Fuel for wood chip boiler (£5,000)
- Photocopying through reduced contract costs and usage (£45,000)
- Water through reduced usage (£10,000)

Some of these savings were used to offset against estate facility cost increases. Approximately £125,000 of these savings will continue in 2024-25 such as postage, generator fuel, photocopying, water reduction, and to a lesser extent gas and electricity savings. Approximately £83,000 are one off savings which will not be repeated in 2024-25.

Savings identified to continue through service planning for 2024-25

A total of £7,000 was identified through service planning of existing 2023-24 savings which will continue in 2024-25 due to changes in delivery for the year reducing cost compared to the previous year.

One-off budget savings not carried forward into 2024-25

Total one off savings in 2023-24 that will not be carried forward into 2024-25 is £737,500 made up of staff savings of £388,000 and non-staff savings of £349,500 across 14 budgetary lines including Member International Engagement, Events, and Engagement and Outreach. All these budgetary lines have reverted to the previous level of budget.

The Project Fund reduction of £120,000 at the start of the financial year impacted the amount of funds available to allocate to projects later in the year. The result of this is that projects such as flagpoles, CCTV replacement, maintenance and sustainability projects were delayed or reduced. To note, the Executive Board has already taken the decision to allocate any remaining funds available to maintenance projects in quarter 4 of the 2023-24 financial year and to protect the 2024-25 Project Fund budget of £1.5 million in full from any reductions due to the level of key projects required to be delivered in next year.

Particular consideration has also been given to ringfencing maintenance funds for 2024-25 to ensure that the estate continues to be maintained to the necessary standards.

Senedd Commission Project Fund Schedule 2024-25

The table below sets out the Commission's project Portfolio for 2024-25.

To manage the risk of underspend the Portfolio is over-programmed, i.e. not all projects in the table below are expected to be delivered in 2024-25. Over-programming allows us to manage a portfolio of projects at varying stages development and delivery. Pre-approved projects are able to take the place of projects which may have to pause or stop during the year and or absorb another project's underspend due to efficient delivery.

All the projects have been prioritised and ranked by the Portfolio Management Group (PMG) who recommended the Portfolio to Executive Board for approval. Scoring is based on priorities, which in 2024-25 has been set by Executive Board as delivering digital and estate lifecycle maintenance and replacement activity, along with improving Member experience and service delivery.

The PMG also controls the Portfolio in-year, making further recommendations to Executive Board to ensure the portfolio achieves optimum value for money and benefit delivery, and, that significant projects receive as much resourcing confidence as possible.

The Project Portfolio forecast cost is circa £1.8m. The Commission forecasts £1.3m of resourcing will be initially available for investment with a further £200,000 released later in the year.

Project	Status	Project Type
Bay 2032 project	In-flight	Ways of Working project
Siambur 26 project	In-flight	Senedd Reform related
Ty Hywel 25 project	In-flight	Senedd Reform related
CCTV Lifecycle Replacement and Maintenance Phases 2 and 3	To be started	Lifecycle Maintenance
External Senedd Website Accessibility Audit	To be started	Compliance
Senedd Archiving project	In-flight	Compliance
Payroll and Pensions system replacement project Phase 1 completion	In-flight	Lifecycle Maintenance

Library Management System renewal	In-flight	Lifecycle Maintenance
Insourcing Commission services scoping project	In-flight	Ways of Working project
Senedd business document management system renewal	In-flight	Lifecycle Maintenance
ICT Infrastructure - Perimeter & Cloud Firewall	To be started	Lifecycle Maintenance
ICT Infrastructure - User Awareness Training	To be started	Lifecycle Maintenance
Commission Broadcasting Investment Programme Phase 1	To be started	Lifecycle Maintenance
ICT Infrastructure - Backup System	To be started	Lifecycle Maintenance
Ty Hywel Air Handling Units (AHUs) & Chillers replacement feasibility study	To be started	Lifecycle Maintenance
Estates: Senedd Building Management System (BMS) Feasibility Study Stage 2	To be started	Lifecycle Maintenance
Commission rolling ICT& workstation kit programme 24 to 25	To be started	Lifecycle Maintenance
ICT Infrastructure - Wireless Network Management platform	To be started	Lifecycle Maintenance
Pierhead Repairs	To be started	Lifecycle Maintenance
Car Park Barrier Upgrade (Barrier Arm) Critical Spares	To be started	Lifecycle Maintenance
Members Claim System	To be started	Enhancement & Change
LED Replacement - Phase 6	To be started	Lifecycle Maintenance
AI development project (Microsoft Co-Pilot) Phase 1	To be started	Enhancement & Change
Specialist ICT professional advice & security service Yr 2	To be started	Enhancement & Change
Customer Relationship Management System Project	To be started	Enhancement & Change
Citizen Online Engagement Tool for Commission committees	To be started	Enhancement & Change

Senedd Onsite Counselling service pilot	To be started	Enhancement & Change
Welsh Parliament Building Voice Alarm and Ty Hywel Public Address System	To be started	Lifecycle Maintenance
ICT Laptop Repair (post Warranty expiration)	To be started	Lifecycle Maintenance
ICT Infrastructure - MS Windows Autopilot	To be started	Enhancement & Change
Pierhead Hall AV System replacement	To be started	Lifecycle Maintenance
AI development project (Microsoft Co-Pilot) Phase 1	To be started	Enhancement & Change
Members Mobile Phone maintenance	To be started	Lifecycle Maintenance

Engagement Programme 2024-25

February 2024

Purpose and summary

This paper is to note the external Engagement Programme for 2024-25 in line with the objectives of the Commission's Communications and Engagement Strategy for the Sixth Senedd.

Background

Following a restructure in 2022-23 Engagement Services was re-purposed to deliver its objectives under the three pillars of engagement:

- Visitor Experience and Customer Services
- Events
- Engagement Programmes

Our strategy seeks to build trust with our audience and reaffirm the Senedd as the heart of democracy in Wales.

We want the public to be more informed about the role of the Senedd and its place in Welsh democracy. We want them to know where to find information and, where relevant, how to get involved.

Our strategy puts people's lived experiences at its core. It aims to build greater understanding of the work of the Senedd and its impact on people's lives, providing more opportunities for people of all walks of life to get involved with its work and to build greater trust in the Senedd as an inclusive and accessible Parliament for all.

We will achieve this by:

- Increasing awareness of the role the Senedd performs
- Improving understanding of the work of the Senedd
- Increasing participation and involving people in our work

In 2023 teams within Engagement Services achieved the following results:

Visitor Experience and Customer Services

- We welcomed over **150,000** visitors to the Senedd and Pierhead and delivered **535** between tours in person and online sessions. They were attended by **12,800** participants.
- Over **75%** of those we engaged with told us their level of awareness and understating had increased following the activity. About **70%** of them had never engaged with the Senedd before.
- We handled a total of **14,000** queries between phone calls and emails.

Events

Venue Bookings, Member Sponsored Events and Major events

- We answered **14,413** queries. This included **8,272** room booking queries and **5,098** event booking queries.
- We booked approx. **2,580 rooms** on the estate and held **214 Member Sponsored events**
- **764** people attended one of **10 Senedd led events** held on the estate.
- We had conversations with **6159** people at the Urdd Eisteddfod, the Royal Welsh Show and the National Eisteddfod

Engagement Programmes (Citizen Engagement Team & Education and Welsh Youth Parliament teams)

Citizen Engagement Team

- We engaged with **3,140** people and supported **46** Committee inquiries.

- We facilitated a total of **232** focus groups, interviews, advisory groups, and questionnaires and re-purposed engagement data to avoid consultation fatigue (i.e. cost of living crisis).

Education and Welsh Youth Parliament

- Over **23,000** young people engaged in **577** of our education sessions and **98%** young people reported levels of understanding increasing having participated in an education session.
- We dealt with **760** external enquires for Welsh Youth Parliament (WYP) member involvement in 2023, including participation in numerous media interviews and events. We also supported the completion of two WYP consultations, report launches and Ministerial debates and we delivered the last WYP residential of 2nd term.

Engagement Activity and Projects

Across the three pillars of engagement our regular 'business as usual' (BAU) activity includes:

- Welcoming visitors to our estate and providing a customer service (front of house in person, phonenumber and email enquiries)
- Tours (in person and online)
- Exhibitions (member sponsored and Senedd-led)
- Stocking the shop and having products to generate income
- Member Sponsored events
- Room bookings on the estate
- Major events and productions
- Gathering lived experiences for various committee enquiries
- School visits inbound & outbound
- Running Welsh Youth Parliament

In addition to our BAU engagement activity we are also working on a number of internal projects:

- Continuing to deliver against the Communications and Engagement Strategy for the Sixth Senedd – half way review completed
- Customer Relationship Management system, roll out 12 month pilot based on the current ‘proof of concept’ – pending financial approval
- New Online Engagement Tools - pending financial approval
- Roll out approved recommendations from the Review of the Estate
- Finalise the review into School Travel Subsidy
- Review schools engagement (approach to visits and resources)
- Ongoing improvements to data collection and evaluation methods
- Developing and delivering a partnership strategy, working with the Communications Service

We are also involved in work across the two major Senedd programmes:

- Senedd Reform (including preparations for transition to 7th Senedd and the Senedd election campaign)
- Ways of Working

Engagement programme for 2024-25

In addition to the above, the below table provides an outline of our engagement programme for 2024-25.

This is not a final timetable of activity and is subject to change depending on competing priorities and budgetary need. Some of our activity is also dependent on the Commission agreeing a set of principles and approach to marking significant days.

Month	Engagement Activity
April	Welsh Youth Parliament exhibition – sponsored by Llywydd Oriol Feb-May
	Peredur Tapestry – sponsored by Paul Davies MS Curation Corner (Neuadd) March-May

Month	Engagement Activity
	What a Scenery - sponsored by Heledd Fychan MS & Darren Millar MS Pierhead Futures Gallery April - May
May	Urdd Eisteddfod – launch Welsh Youth Parliament election campaign (Your Voice – Community Engagement Summer Show Programme)
	25 year campaign launch: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tour scripts updated • new products launched in the shop • Exhibition 1: 25 Years of Devolution - In partnership with the National Library Political archive, Neuadd • Llywydd Panel Event – Senedd @ 25 - event held in partnership with the Wales Governance Centre.
	Llywydd launching 'Marketplaces' (an outcome from the Review of the Estate)
June	Senedd Reform - Llywydd Lecture Event
	Land and Sea exhibition with Mike Perry (June-September - Oriel & Pierhead Futures Gallery)
	Bookings open for Inbound Education Sessions for the next school year
July	Royal Welsh Show (Your Voice – Community Engagement Summer Show Programme)
August	National Eisteddfod (Your Voice – Community Engagement Summer Show Programme)
September	Exhibition 2: 'Your Voice' - Case study exhibition, Oriel (will run until Nov – part of 25 year campaign)
	Owain Glyndwr portraits Exhibition Sponsored by Russell George MS Senedd Curation Corner (Neuadd)
	Witnessing Wales Exhibition Sponsored by Paul Davies MS Pierhead Futures Gallery September - October
October	Black History Month (activity TBC)
November	Welsh Youth Parliament election
	Remembrance Day (activity TBC)
December	Welsh Youth Parliament members announced

Month	Engagement Activity
	International Day of Persons with Disability (activity TBC)
	Christmas (carols event – details TBC)
January	Holocaust Memorial Day (activity TBC)
February	Welsh Youth Parliament Residential, and selection of priority issues
	LGBT History Month (activity TBC)
March	St David’s Day (activity TBC)
	International Women’s Day (activity TBC)