

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

19 July 2024

Dear Peredur

First Supplementary Budget 2024-25

Thank you for your Committee's consideration of the Commission's supplementary budget request.

I am pleased to note that the Committee is content in principle with the overall additional funding request and that you are assured that the budgeted target of £315,000 planned savings to be accrued by the Commission is the most that is achievable without having an impact on services.

The Commission is committed to continual improvement of processes and accruing efficiencies in accordance with Statement of Principles. I note that the Committee recognises that we have brought this supplementary budget forward only after having exhausted all credible options within the organisation, without impacting Member services.

The Committee has requested further information on how the Commission will engage with Members regarding future service delivery, to ensure Member priorities are reflected, and how those priorities will be managed within current resources. The Commission continues to prioritise engagement with Members. In the attached, I have set out the plans already in place for Senedd Reform-related Member engagement. I have also set out current processes and initiatives to engage with Members and understand and incorporate their objectives into future plans. The Commission keeps these processes and initiatives under review to ensure that they continue to be appropriate.

Balancing priorities within a constrained economic environment can be challenging. However, the Commission, through the introduction of the Medium-Term Resourcing Framework (MTRF), has developed a system which enables those financial pressures to be identified early and considered by the Commissioners. The MTRF also ensures that our staff are able to deliver our priorities through service planning and workforce planning, both of which are informed by Member engagement. The Portfolio Management Group, responsible for recommending the allocation of funds from the Project Fund, is also informed by the priorities of Members, which is a significant element in the scoring matrix for assessing business cases requesting funds. When completing allocation of budgets, the



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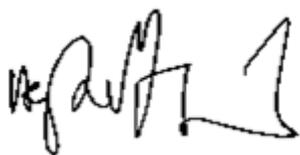
assessment is again informed by the principle of considering the impact on Member services. These are all scrutinised by the Commissioners at our meetings.

The Commission welcomes the Committee's rigorous scrutiny and can give assurance that this supplementary budget has indeed been considered as a last resort and that all potential savings and efficiencies have been exhausted. I also note your request to be informed of the outcome of pay negotiations for both 2024-25 and the new pay deal. I will provide an update on those at the appropriate time. Please let me know if you require any further information.

In accordance with Standing Order 20.32, following your Committee's consideration of this request, the Commission will be laying an **explanatory memorandum** noting this First Supplementary Budget request to meet the revised Welsh Government timetable when published. I do not expect this to now happen until the Autumn and, after the Commission has laid its annual Draft Budget at the end of September. This may create some challenges for the Commission as it prepares its 2025-26 budget and in completing its 2024-25 pay negotiations along with the next pay agreements scheduled to begin from April 2025.

If you need further information, please let me know.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hefin David', written in a cursive style.

Hefin David MS
cc Manon Antoniazzi

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

ANNEX A

Senedd Reform related Member engagement plans

Business Committee – procedural preparedness

In December 2023, Business Committee considered its approach to procedural preparedness for Senedd reform and agreed in principle to commence consideration of areas of procedural reform in autumn 2024.

During this term, Business Committee is informally gathering information from Members to help inform the development of terms of reference for its Senedd reform-related review of procedure.

Draft terms of reference will be considered before the summer recess, after the legislation is in place, and the review is due to commence in the autumn.

Independent Remuneration Board's Determination for the Seventh Senedd

The IRB's strategic work programme includes several thematic reviews: Simplification, PPSA, Ways of Working, Staffing Review and Members' Remuneration & Allowances, which have all now commenced and are phased during 2023-25.

The work is underway to gather evidence, comparative research and engagement with Members and stakeholders at various stages during 2024-25, which will be coordinated with planned Commission Member engagement where possible to minimise burden and duplication. Any proposals for change will be subject to formal consultation with Members as well.

The Board's planned work is closely linked to Senedd reform and any amendments or matters addressed through scrutiny of the Bill may have an impact on planned activity; the Board is therefore monitoring stage 2 developments closely – particularly given the Reform Bill Committee's recommendations relating to PPSA and the Board's ongoing review of this allowance.

In addition to the broad and targeted engagement above, the IRB's Member and Support Staff Representative Groups meet regularly with the aim of ensuring an effective flow of information between the Board and Groups.

Regulatory Framework

Plans are developing for the dialogue between the IRB and the Senedd Commission. This dialogue aims to establish a shared understanding of how Members' needs will be supported through Commission services and the Board's Determination, looking to the Seventh Senedd and beyond.

On simplification of the regulatory framework (which is part of the Commission-IRB dialogue), Hugh Widdis, the lead Board member meet with the Clerk and Chief Executive, as Accounting Officer in March to discuss the Board's simplification review, the interaction with the Accounting Officer's role and the Rules and Guidance on the Use of Resources, and related work being undertaken by the Commission in this area.

Following its consultation on the Senedd's Dignity and Respect policy and associated procedures, the Standards of Conduct Committee has committed to a comprehensive inquiry, looking at all aspects of our policies and procedures so that they are up to date and fit for purpose, ahead of the Seventh

Senedd (although not driven specifically by Senedd Reform). There will be Member consultation as part of its work.

Siambwr 2026

A Member Reference Group has been established to ensure that Members, in addition to the Commissioners can engage with the Siambwr work as it progresses.

Ty Hywel 2026

Commissioners, Members and other identified stakeholders have been consulted to capture detailed requirements. Methods of engagement included drop in sessions, in person meetings, on line meetings, user groups, surveys etc.

The transition and election period – winding up, dissolution, election and welcome arrangements

This work is currently being scoped and will be presented to the Commission in due course.

ANNEX B – Member engagement by the Commission

The purpose of the Senedd Commission is to serve the Senedd to help facilitate its long-term success as a strong, accessible, inclusive and forward looking democratic institution and legislature that delivers effectively for the people of Wales. Members of the Senedd are thus the most significant stakeholder group in relation to Commission activity.

Managing the process of effectively communicating and engaging with Members requires us to understand their needs. The aim of our Member communications and engagement activity should always be to improve the Commission's performance by listening, understanding and working with Members of the Senedd to provide the support that is necessary for them to undertake the crucial work that they do.

Consultation and engagement will be a vitally important part of informing how we shape our services, preparing for whatever constitutional and organisational change may come in the next few years.

We aim to engage in a proportionate way with Members, having regard to their degree of involvement and interest in the matter concerned. The frequency and depth of our engagement and the number of topics on which we engage will vary. In all our engagement with stakeholders we are guided by several principles:

- Member input is key to our consideration in decision making.
- We provide multiple opportunities and channels for engagement, adapting our approach to accommodate differing need on key issues.
- We maintain engagement mechanisms that are working well and find better ways to reach those where our opportunity for engagement is currently limited or not working.
- We proactively help Members by providing impactful training and support.
- We seek to gain maximum benefit from Members' knowledge and experience of our services.

A broad reach of comms delivery and engagement with Members already exists in the organisation, with large amounts of activity taking place. We continue to explore and develop ways of simplifying access to information to Commission services and are currently working with content editors to regularly update and simplify the Members' intranet, responding to areas of feedback.

Recognising different types of communication mechanisms have different goals, and what tools work for different types of need, we recognise that we need to choose the right communication channel in different circumstances.

Appendix A sets out the multiple communication and engagement channels currently in use between the Commission and Members, including illustrations of where these are used.

Appendix A

Communication and engagement channels currently in use between the Commission and Members

How we communicate (the channel)	What	Contact
Members' Intranet	Intranet site to access relevant and concise information – projects & quick links.	MLE team
Newspage items on Intranet.	'News' – business focussed to raise awareness on Commission services, changing procedure etc. Important for disseminating info to everyone – short messages	MLE team
Commissioners	Formal and informal feedback and engagement including about services and support to Members	Clerk to the Commission
Senedd Political Contact Group	Coordinated agenda of sharing info including upcoming consultation/engagement activities	MLE team
Emails to Members and/or Support Staff	Important info that may be overlooked on intranet	MLE team
Contact with Chief of Staff or key contact points within Independent Member offices	Information that may be sensitive and/or needs to be co-ordinated either face to face or via email	MLE/ MBS – can advise on contact points and content if unsure
Direct 1-2-1 interactions	Used in many forms, eg meetings with group leaders, questions or conversations between individuals, structures conversations eg WoW Interviews	various
Group meetings – attendance by senior officials	To brief in relation to specific matters if invited eg Ways of Working project engagement – Clerk and Director of Resources to on Bay '32 and Siambri '26 projects.	/ Exec Office team
User Groups	Representatives of MS/MSS on various matters eg Ty Hywel 2026 – user group	various

Commission Reference Group	Membership set out. Eg to inform Siambr '26 project	various
Operational Group	Meeting with Chiefs of Staff and key contact points within Independent Member offices. Good when launching new initiatives, procedures or changes and need to engage Support Staff	MLE team
Support Staff Bulletin	Open to all Support Staff, of interest to Office Managers and Chiefs of Staff in particular. Operational information relevant to Support Staff provided by MBS, MLE, ICT and Security.	MLE team
Caseworker Forum	Targeted training, news and information relevant to MSS Caseworkers	MLE / Senedd Research Service
Support Staff engagement events	Networking for Support Staff at locations across Wales to inform key priorities and training	MLE team
ICT account managers	Support with any ICT related issues, but also act as a point of contact for any other queries	ICT
Chamber and Table Office Support Staff forum	Discussion of procedural or business issues e.g. SO changes	Chamber Secretariat & Table Office
Research Service improvement group	Support Staff groups to identify service improvements and get feedback / engagement	Research Service
Cwrt Drop ins	Useful for raising awareness and gauging feedback, helps to elicit views	MLE team
MS/MSS Surveys	Gain opinions and source feedback	MLE team
IRB Member / Support Staff reference groups	Remuneration Board consultation / engagement on Determination or policy changes affecting Support Staff	Remuneration Board secretariat