

National Assembly for Wales
Assembly Commission

Legacy report
2007 to 2011



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.

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Foreword

To help planning and delivery of services during the Fourth Assembly, this legacy report reviews the Assembly Commission's work over the past four years.

The Government of Wales Act 1998 originally created the National Assembly for Wales as a "body corporate" with responsibility for exercising both parliamentary and governmental functions. Being a body corporate meant that, in law, it continued to exist even during an election campaign—the Assembly was not dissolved and Members remained as such right up to the date of the election.

The Government of Wales Act 2006 ("the Act") formally separated the two roles (parliamentary and governmental) and created separate legal entities to carry them out: the Welsh Assembly Government (Welsh Government) to exercise governmental functions and the National Assembly for Wales to exercise parliamentary functions, including law making and scrutiny of the Welsh Government.

The reconstituted Assembly is not a body corporate but rather an unincorporated association of 60 Members which is dissolved a few weeks before each Assembly election and reconvened after the newly elected Members are returned. The Assembly is therefore not a permanent, continuing body and, as such, is not capable (for example) of entering into long-term contracts or owning property. The 2006 Act therefore created the Commission as a permanent legal entity that is able to enter the long-term contracts, appoint the staff and own the property necessary for the National Assembly for Wales to exercise its functions.

Role of the Commission

The Commission's duty under the Act is to provide the "property, staff and services required for the Assembly's purposes". In practice, this means that it is the Commission's responsibility to:

- acquire, hold or dispose of any property on behalf of the Assembly;
- make arrangements to pay Members and provide their pensions and allowances and to employ Assembly staff; and,
- act in an appropriate and necessary way to provide the services required for the Assembly to do its work.

Schedule 2 of the Act also allows the Commission to promote public awareness of the current or future electoral system for the Assembly and empowers the Commission to promote public awareness of the current or any pending system of devolved government in Wales.

A comprehensive "Guide to the National Assembly for Wales Commission" has been produced to act as a single source of information on the role, composition, function and responsibilities of the Commission.

Looking forward to the Fourth Assembly

As we approach the Fourth Assembly, at a time when the constitutional and political landscape has changed again, it is timely for us to review the lessons learned from the past four years and to consider the challenges that lie ahead. We hope this report will assist the new Commission in identifying good practice to build into the Assembly's future ways of working, and in formulating its strategic priorities for the Fourth Assembly.

The report begins with an overview of the approach taken by the Commission to its strategy and organisation. It then provides a selection of milestones and highlights as a reminder of the considerable breadth of activity during the four years. The final chapters review achievement against each of the Commission's five strategic goals and provide recommendations to assist the Commission in the Fourth Assembly.

The 'yes' vote on the Assembly's legislative powers and a new political landscape following the Assembly election has provided the new Commission with a new context for reviewing its strategic goals for the Fourth Assembly. We hope that the learnings cited in this report help inform that process.

The Rt Hon the Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas
William Graham
Peter Black
Lorraine Barrett
Chris Franks



Strategy and organisation

The Strategy for the Third Assembly (2007–2011)

The Commission agreed that its overarching purpose should be: “To make the Assembly an accessible and effective parliamentary body that inspires the confidence of the people of Wales”.

It also agreed strategic goals and values to guide its work and that of the staff of the Assembly for the duration of the Third Assembly.

Strategic goals and values for the Third Assembly Our goals

We will promote and widen engagement in devolution.

The next four years must demonstrate that the Assembly is working for all citizens and encouraging greater and more active participation in the democratic process. We will emphasise the positive impact of the Assembly upon the lives of people in Wales. There will be greater incremental devolution through the 2006 Act, and there may be a referendum for greater legislative competence, we will be ready to grasp these challenges enthusiastically.

We will show unity, leadership and a bold response to constitutional change.

The Assembly will show confidence and competence in embracing its new powers. We are united in securing scrutiny and legislation of the best quality, and in supporting Members in all that they do as elected representatives.

In all our work, we will demonstrate respect, probity and good governance.

All that we do must be capable of intense external scrutiny, be transparent and should reflect the diverse nature of Wales and its languages in how it deals with and involves the citizen.

We will work sustainably.

We will show leadership in how we manage our work and estate, and we aim to provide the highest achievable level of sustainability in both.

We will ensure that the Assembly has the best service, provided in the most effective way.

We will take the services provided for Members and the people of Wales to a higher level, while demonstrating wise and effective use of its resources and value for money. The ethos of service, to Members and anyone who engages with the Assembly, drives everything that we do.

Our values

The Assembly Commission and its staff:

- always act in the best interests of the Assembly;
 - maintain high standards and deliver what we say we will;
 - are professional and innovative;
 - work openly and collaboratively;
 - treat everyone with respect.
-

Commissioners' areas of responsibility

The Commissioners are corporately responsible for the exercise of the functions conferred on the Commission, the governance of the organisation and, accordingly, act in the interests of the Assembly as a whole. For the Third Assembly, the Commission's responsibilities were split into separate portfolios. Each Commissioner had individual responsibility for a particular area of work. These portfolio areas were cross-cutting and strategic in approach, and allowed Commissioners to work across a range of services.

Commissioner portfolios

Chair of the Commission—Rt. Hon the Lord Elis-Thomas AM

The Commission was chaired by the Llywydd (Presiding Officer), who had special responsibility for promoting democratic engagement; excellent leadership; developing the Assembly's future legislative powers and external relations.

Commissioner for the Sustainable Assembly—Lorraine Barrett AM

This portfolio included responsibility for equality, language, environment and carbon neutrality, sustainable procurement and estate management.

Commissioner for the Assembly and the Citizen—Peter Black AM

This portfolio included looking at the quality of scrutiny and the legislative process; external communication; ICT; citizenship education; legal matters and Freedom of Information.

Commissioner for the Improving Assembly—Chris Franks AM

This portfolio included looking at improving services for Members and citizens; involving stakeholders in the Assembly's work; strategic planning; and considering value for money.

Commissioner for Assembly Resources—William Graham AM

This portfolio included considering the management of Assembly assets; Assembly people (including employees, contractors, services provided to support Assembly Member support staff); budget; Members' salaries and allowances; efficiency and good governance.

Claire ClancyChief Executive and Clerk
of the Assembly

Operations Directorate–**Dianne Bevan**

Chief Operating Officer

Connie Cockburn

Head of Estates and ICT

Steven O’DonoghueHead of Assembly
Resources**Non Gwilym**Head of External
Communications

**Assembly Business
Directorate–****Adrian Crompton**Director of Assembly
Business**Sulafa Halstead**Head of Assembly
Committees**Mair Parry-Jones**Head of Translation
& Reporting Service**Kathryn Potter**Head of the Members’
Research Service**Sian Wilkins**Head of Legislation
& Chamber Services

**Legal Services
Directorate–****Keith Bush**

Director of Legal Services

Head of Corporate Unit–

Craig Stephenson

Organisational structure

During the Commission’s inaugural meeting in June 2007, the Commission agreed, in accordance with the Act, to delegate its functions, including its responsibility for the management of staff, to the Chief Executive and Clerk of the Assembly, subject to several exceptions and conditions.

A new organisational structure, supported by appropriate resources, was put in place to support the effective functioning of the Assembly as a legislature. Three Directors were appointed—a Chief Operating Officer a Director of Assembly Business and a Chief Legal Adviser/Director of Legal Services. Over the course of the Assembly, a number of functions were strengthened to help ensure the Assembly’s ability to operate effectively as a legislature and to provide effective support to Assembly Members, as well as to engage effectively with the Welsh electorate.

Strong corporate governance arrangements were established from the outset. As part of this, a Corporate Governance Committee, now known as the Audit Committee, was established to advise the Commission and the Chief Executive on matters of finance, audit and corporate governance.

In order to ensure that Commissioners and senior officials could draw upon a wide range of experience to assist them in the discharge of the Commission’s functions, in November 2007 the Commission appointed independent advisers to act in an independent non-executive capacity. The independent advisers have offered constructive challenges across all the Commission’s business with a view to ensuring that all aspects of strategy and delivery were scrutinised for effectiveness and efficiency. They have contributed to the monitoring of the performance and progress of the organisation, including the use of human and financial resources, and maintained a critical overview of the organisation’s financial controls and procedures.

Year	Number of staff–total headcount	Full-time equivalents
31 March 2011	342	326.72
31 March 2010	379	364.38
31 March 2009	362	348.20
31 March 2008	321	308.11
31 March 2007	300	286.75

Independent advisers to the Commission

Mair Barnes

Mair Barnes holds a number of non-executive directorships and is the former Chair of Vantios plc and Managing Director of Woolworths plc. She has held non-executive directorships at the Department of Trade and Industry and the Cabinet Office.

Richard Calvert

Richard Calvert rejoined the Department for International Development (DFID) in August 2009 as Director-General for Finance and Corporate Performance after two and a half years at the Food Standards Agency (FSA), where he held the post of Director of Strategy and Resources. Richard's last role in DFID, before moving to the FSA, was as Director of Finance and Corporate Performance. Richard is a qualified Management Accountant, and has held a number of non-executive roles within the public sector.

Tim Knighton

Tim Knighton is currently Business Solutions Delivery Director at Companies House. Before joining Companies House in 2007 as Director of Finance, Tim spent ten years with Tesco plc in a variety of finance roles, latterly being responsible for their UK shared services operation. Prior to this he was an Executive Director with Goldman Sachs in their Capital Market Division.

Professor Robert Pickard

Professor Robert Pickard has held a large number of public appointments, many in the field of health and wellbeing. Among his current appointments, he is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine. He is a scientist by background.

Questions to the Assembly Commission

In accordance with Standing Orders, Assembly Members may table questions to the Commission about any matter relating to the Commission's responsibilities—for written or oral answer.

Written questions

Written questions are tabled by Assembly Members and the Commission's secretariat commissions a draft reply. Once cleared by the relevant Director, it is submitted to the Assembly Commissioner with portfolio responsibility for the subject matter for approval. The agreed response is provided to the Member who tabled the question and is published as part of the Record of Proceedings.

In the Third Assembly, 54 written questions were submitted on a range of subjects, including:

- the cost of Assembly Commission activities at Christmas, staff away days, Assembly rebranding, Welsh language tuition, Senedd repair bills and the Assembly Police Unit;
- the numbers of staff disciplined, suspended or dismissed;
- disability access to our buildings;
- sustainability issues.

Oral questions

Time is made available in every four weeks the Assembly meets for Members to ask oral questions related to Commission business. In the Third Assembly, Commissioners agreed that one Commissioner would answer all questions each month on rotation rather than responding individually to single questions on their portfolio areas. Questions are tabled at least five, but not more than ten, working days before they are to be answered and the order of oral questions is determined by random shuffle in the Table Office.

The secretariat to the Assembly Commission commissions draft responses and background briefings for each of the questions and these are then sent to the Commissioner for final approval. Prior to the Plenary session, briefing sessions are arranged with Assembly staff as necessary. Fifty-four oral questions were answered in the Third Assembly and were tabled by Members from all parties.

Oral questions covered a range of subjects, including:

- the Commission's role in the referendum on law-making powers for the Assembly;
- the Commission's annual budget and administrative savings;
- school visits to the Assembly;
- catering;
- staff car parking;
- dissolution;
- ICT projects;
- progress of the independent Remuneration Board.

Urgent questions

A Member may submit a request for an urgent question to be answered by the Assembly Commission but none were requested in the Third Assembly.

Third Assembly: some of the milestones and highlights

2007

May

The Assembly held its first Plenary meeting of the Third Assembly in May, for the first time under the Government of Wales Act 2006, and the larger corporate body was formally separated into the National Assembly for Wales and the Welsh Government.

The Presiding Officer and Deputy Presiding Officer were elected.

June

The Royal Opening of the Third Assembly by Her Majesty The Queen, HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, HRH The Prince of Wales and HRH The Duchess of Cornwall took place in the presence of Members, the judiciary, representatives from local government, speakers of linked UK, Commonwealth and European parliaments, diplomats and an all-Wales element of senior citizens and youth representatives.

Commissioners were elected and met for the first time.

The first Government-proposed Legislative Competence Order was introduced (the Additional Learning Needs Order 2008). The first Members' ballots were held—won by Ann Jones (Domestic Fire Safety Legislative Competence Order) and Jenny Randerson (Healthy Eating in Schools Measure).

July

The Commission agreed its strategic framework for the Third Assembly, identifying five key goals and its vision to make the Assembly an accessible and effective parliamentary body that inspires the confidence of the people of Wales.

The first Government-proposed Measure was introduced (NHS Redress Measure 2008).

The Sustainability Committee held a formal meeting at the Royal Welsh Show—the first formal meeting of a committee of the Third Assembly outside Cardiff.

The Assembly Welsh Language Scheme for 2007–11 was published, setting out the Assembly's ambition to be a truly bilingual organisation and placing bilingualism at the heart of everything it does.

September

The Presiding Officer gave a speech marking the tenth anniversary of the referendum on devolution in Wales, and called for the terms Assembly and Welsh Government to be adopted to make it easier for the public to understand the different roles.

October

Operation Black Vote was launched to help address the deficit in BME democratic participation in Wales.

The Senedd welcomed its 500,000th visitor—Maura Buckley, who was visiting the Assembly on her 71st birthday.

The Finance Committee scrutinised the Commission's budget for the first time, expressing its support for the Commission's open approach to its budget process and willingness to participate fully in ongoing scrutiny.

The Commission was recognised through the Disability Two Ticks Award, which demonstrates excellence in diversity in the way we recruit and develop disabled staff.

November

The Finance Committee scrutinised the Welsh Government's budget proposals for the first time, meeting five times in total and making recommendations, several of which were accepted by the Welsh Government.

Four independent advisers were appointed to ensure that the Assembly Commission and senior management were supported and constructively challenged in their roles.

The Senedd accessibility report was re-examined leading to accessibility improvements being made.

Public Affairs Cymru held a gala dinner in the Pierhead to celebrate its first anniversary.

December

The Corporate Governance Committee met for the first time to advise the Commission on risk, audit, good governance and financial practice. The Statement on Internal Control was introduced, which would become an integral part of the organisation's processes throughout the year.

The LGBT staff network was developed to provide informal support to LGBT employees and participate in the equality impact assessment process.

The Finance Committee reported for the first time on the Welsh Government's budget.

The first independent panel on Financial Support for Assembly Members met for the first time.

The Commission's Annual Report on Equality was scrutinised for the first time by the Equality of Opportunity Committee.

2008

January

The Health and Wellbeing Committee held a Senedd consultation on its inquiry into Presumed Consent for Organ Donation, inviting members of the public to give their views. The Committee worked with the Education team to take the consultation into schools.

The Equality of Opportunity Committee undertook a review of the results of its inquiry into Service Provision for Disabled Young People, working with the same group of disabled young people to identify what had changed.

The Presiding Officer welcomed the Vice President of the European Commission to the Senedd. A Committee of the Whole Assembly was convened for the first time to allow Members the opportunity to engage in debate with Ms Margot Wallström.

The first Assembly Measure completed the first stage of the legislative process when it was debated in Plenary. The NHS Redress (Wales) Measure aimed to make it easier and quicker for NHS patients to claim compensation when their treatment goes wrong.

Operation Black Vote won the highly acclaimed Channel 4/Hansard Society Political Award.

The first joint meeting between an Assembly committee and the House of Commons Welsh Affairs Committee was held to scrutinise proposed legislation relating to domiciliary care.

An independent Remuneration Committee was established to consider and make recommendations on the pay and performance of senior officials in a transparent and robust way.

'Cyfnewid' was launched, a mechanism to give Assembly staff a chance to have their say on corporate topics.

February

Jonathan Morgan AM tabled a proposed Order relating to rights for Mental Health patients—the first Member-proposed Legislative Competence Order to reach this stage.

The first Legislative Competence Order was approved by the Assembly—a Government-proposed Order relating to education and training.

The Chief Legal Adviser held a seminar into access to Welsh legislation, looking at ways to ensure easy and effective access to reliable information about Welsh legislation and the statutory powers of Welsh Ministers.

March

The first Member-proposed Measure was introduced (Healthy Eating in Schools 2008).

The Members' Research Service introduced an online tracking service, developed to help the public to better understand the work of scrutiny and legislation committees.

After an open recruitment process supported by Assembly staff and chaired by Alun Cairns AM, the Assembly nominated Peter Tyndall as Public Services Ombudsman for Wales—the appointment was confirmed by Her Majesty The Queen.

The report of the first independent panel on Financial Support for Assembly Members was published, making recommendations about Members' salaries which were accepted by the Commission.

April

The first Government-proposed Order received Royal Approval (The National Assembly for Wales (Legislative Competence) (Education and Training) Order 2008).

Siambwr Hywel launched as Europe's first dedicated youth debating chamber, acting as a flagship example of the Assembly's proactive engagement with young people using the latest technologies.

The Assembly's e-petitions system was introduced, launched by Peter Black AM, resulting in a significant increase in the number of submitted petitions. The Assembly also launched *senedd.tv*, e-forums, and a quick vote facility for online committee consultations.

Refurbishment work in Tŷ Hywel was undertaken with sustainability in mind, using sensor-activated lighting, carpeting using 55 per cent recycled material, improved efficiency of the heating/cooling systems, locally-supplied furniture and better use of space. Paper towels were removed from all toilet facilities, to be replaced with energy efficient hand driers, cutting some 4–6 tonnes per annum of landfill waste.

A Management Board was formed to replace the Executive Board. The new Board included Heads of Service as well as Directors and the Chief Executive. It had responsibility for management and operational and policy matters.

The Royal Badge of Wales was approved for use on published Assembly Measures. The emblem is distinctively Welsh in character and therefore appropriate for marking the unique character of Assembly Measures as Welsh legislation.

May

The NHS Redress (Wales) Measure 2008 became the first piece of primary legislation passed by the National Assembly, the first Welsh law to be passed since the middle ages and the first bilingual law ever to be passed in Britain.

Artwork by Dylan Hammond consisting of tinplate portraits of Baroness Thatcher and Aneurin Bevan caused debate and controversy when installed at the front of the Senedd.

The Presiding Officer gave a speech marking one year of the new devolution settlement, saying that he was "pleased with the way we have risen to the challenges of the new law-making Constitution of Wales".

The Presiding Officer and Adrian Crompton gave evidence to the House of Commons Justice Committee as part of its inquiry into *Devolution: a decade on*.

June

The Assembly welcomed HRH The Prince of Wales to the Assembly to speak at the 'Funding Futures' colloquium organised by the WCVA in the Pierhead. He also officially opened Siambwr Hywel.

The Commission launched a public consultation on its Draft Single Equalities Scheme and Action Plan.

The Assembly's Audit Committee scrutinised officials on the building of the Senedd in a challenging but positive session. The Committee focused on the sustainability of the building, including its energy consumption.

July

The National Assembly for Wales Commission published its first annual report.

The Petitions Committee celebrated a successful first year with a public meeting at the Royal Welsh Show. Over 100 petitions were received during its first year.

August

An independent panel, chaired by Sir Roger Jones, was appointed to review the system of Assembly Members' pay and allowances.

The Presiding Officer welcomed Welsh olympic heroes to the Senedd when gold medallists Nicola Cooke and Geraint Thomas and silver medallist David Davies arrived following an open-top bus tour of Cardiff Bay.

September

An outreach education service was launched for south Wales.

An Assembly-commissioned survey of public understanding of the political landscape in Wales was published showing that over 70 per cent of people supported either partial or full devolution of power for Wales.

November

The Assembly hosted a conference on Perspectives on Youth Participation, aimed at developing useful links across a number of UK organisations, all with interests in encouraging young people to engage in the democratic process.

The Assembly launched its Single Equality Scheme.

The Assembly achieved Level 5 Green Dragon Environmental Management System for the whole estate, the highest level that can be attained in the UK.

December

The Presiding Officer welcomed his counterparts from Scotland and Northern Ireland to the Assembly to help build and strengthen the close working relationships between the UK devolved legislatures.

The Presiding Officer won the Wales Yearbook 2008 Welsh Politician of the Year Award for his role in the Assembly's transformation into a true legislature, passing Welsh laws under its new powers.

The International Day of Disabled People was celebrated at the Assembly with a programme including accessible performance workshops, presentations from paralympians, discussions on disability rights and a DVD on the accessibility of public buildings in Wales.

2009

January

The National Assembly was named as one of the UK's top 100 gay-friendly employers, according to Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index 2009, making the Assembly Wales's most improved employer in terms of being a gay-friendly place to work and the second most improved employer in the UK.

March

Assembly media releases began to be accompanied by bilingual audio clips, helping local radio stations to carry more information about the Assembly.

The Petitions Committee received its 150th petition from Ammanford Junior Gateway Club, calling for free swimming for children and young people.

April

The ichange review was published, concentrating on how the Assembly could use IT to improve the way it works and how it engages with the public. The review was based on a comprehensive consultation exercise with Members, their staff, Assembly staff and stakeholders. Work began on changes to ICT networks, and hardware and software were identified to ensure that technology fully supported the Assembly's work.

The Assembly put out its first call for video evidence as the Sustainability Committee kicked off its flooding inquiry.

May

Tenth anniversary of the Assembly. The Presiding Officer hosted a tenth birthday party for ten children celebrating their birthdays along with the Assembly on 12 May 2009.

The multimedia Outreach Bus was launched at Venue Cymru in Llandudno, enabling people from across Wales to learn more about how the Assembly works, leave video messages for Members and provide evidence to committee inquiries.

The Children and Young People Committee took Dewi the Dragon to the Urdd Eisteddfod in Cardiff to encourage young people to have their say on the future work of the Assembly.

The Urdd Eisteddfod took place in Cardiff Bay, with the Senedd forming part of the official event, hosting the Art and Craft exhibition and housing over 400 pieces of art and the TV set which broadcast live each day.

June

The Sustainability Committee undertook an inquiry into flooding in Wales using the Assembly bus and holding public meetings across Wales to hear directly from the affected areas. A short video of voxpops was produced as part of the inquiry.

Proactive publication of Assembly Members' expenses on the Assembly's website began, with 2,000 hits in the first 24 hours. The 750,000th visitor was welcomed to the Senedd.

The House of Commons Speaker's Conference held a formal meeting at the Assembly, and heard from the Commissioner for the Sustainable Assembly about the way in which the Assembly was leading the way on gender balance in political representation.

July

The Getting it Right for Wales report was published, setting out improvements to the system of financial support for Assembly Members. It was a far-reaching and comprehensive independent review of Members' pay and allowances for travel, accommodation, funding for constituency and regional offices and support staff. The Commission accepted all 108 recommendations and implementation began immediately.

The Senedd was recognised as the greenest government building in the UK—the announcement was made to coincide with Green Britain Day on 10 July.

The Commission published its second annual report, focusing on how to make democracy work in Wales.

September

60 young people visited the Assembly to take part in Academi's Writing Squad. As well as taking part in a debate, the young people were encouraged to seek inspiration from the Senedd to pen poems for devolution.

The Commons Speaker, John Bercow MP, visited the Assembly to meet with the Presiding Officer to learn more about the work of the Assembly, specifically what the Assembly is doing to encourage more people to take part in the democratic process through e-petitions and Senedd.tv.

A fourth committee room was created to increase the capacity for committee work.

The UK School Games, managed by the Youth Sport Trust, held a leadership workshop event for its young leaders and volunteers in Siambr Hywel prior to the opening ceremony.

October

The Senedd became one of the UK's most energy-efficient public buildings when its Display Energy Certificate was upgraded from C to B.

Step Up Cymru was launched. This was an all-Wales project in partnership with the WLGA and the Welsh Government which was designed to help those who have not traditionally engaged politically. It gave people an opportunity to gain experience of working with Assembly Members and local councillors and to engage with civic and public life with a view to becoming ambassadors for democracy within their communities and groups.

The first Commission-proposed Measure was tabled with a view to creating a statutory, independent body to determine Members' pay and allowances.

The Assembly passed the first Committee-proposed legislation (the Standards Commissioner Measure) to place the office of the Commissioner on a statutory footing.

November

The All Wales Convention reported that a move to full law-making powers for the Assembly in all devolved areas offered substantial advantage over the current arrangements.

The Commission agreed its Carbon Management Strategy, committing the Assembly to the challenging goal of carbon neutrality by 2015, to be achieved by the development of more energy-efficient business practices and the encouragement of sustainability among staff, Members and other stakeholders.

The first committee-proposed Legislative Competence Order, which was also the first to come directly from the petitions process, received backing from the Welsh Government.

The Assembly held an Open Weekend to celebrate the tenth year of devolution and five years of the Wales Millennium Centre. A variety of performances were showcased, and a concert was held to premiere a composition by Karl Jenkins.

The Change Programme Board was established to ensure a prioritised and co-ordinated approach to Assembly business change projects.

December

The new First Minister was appointed.

The CPA Wales branch officially marked and celebrated the 60th anniversary of the modern Commonwealth with an event in the Senedd attended by over 130 guests from over 30 Commonwealth countries.

An independent panel began its review of provision of bilingual services at the Assembly.

The National Assembly for Wales Commissioner for Standards Measure received Royal Approval.

The Petitions Committee received its largest petition to date, with over 15,000 signatures. The petition called for withdrawal from the West Cheshire/North East Wales Sub-Regional Strategy.

2010

January

The Assembly was ranked 47th in the top 100 gay-friendly places to work in the UK according to the Workplace Equality Index produced by Stonewall (an improvement from 73rd the previous year).

A BBC Democracy Live pod was installed in the Senedd to make it even easier for people to engage with the work of the Assembly.

The report of the House of Commons Speaker's Conference on equalities praised the equalities work undertaken at the National Assembly, recommending that Westminster considers developing a UK scheme along the lines of the Step Up Cymru scheme, and saying that "the House and its Members would benefit from having a small in-house team on the model of the National Assembly for Wales Equalities team".

February

The Assembly unanimously voted for a referendum on whether it should be granted further legislative powers.

The European and External Affairs Committee held a formal meeting in Brussels, the Committee's first formal meeting with all four Welsh MEPs.

The UNO project, to create computer systems independent of the Welsh Government, began.

March

After internal refurbishment and restoration, the Pierhead opened to the public as part of the St David's Day celebrations. Almost 10,000 people visited the Pierhead in the first month of opening. The inaugural Pierhead Sessions took place, cementing the Pierhead as a space to inform, involve and inspire public debate. Over 700 people attended.

The first Commission-proposed Measure—to establish an independent body to set Members' pay and levels of financial support—was debated by the Assembly in Plenary.

May

The independent panel on bilingual services, chaired by Arwel Ellis Owen, reported on the future of bilingual services at the Assembly. The Commission accepted the recommendations and committed the Assembly to creating a more citizen-friendly and accessible Record of Proceedings, and working towards our objective of becoming a truly bilingual organisation.

The Presiding Officer welcomed the Rt Hon David Cameron MP to the Assembly on his first visit as UK Prime Minister. The Prime Minister spoke about the Respect Agenda and his commitment to making sure that devolution works even better in future. He reaffirmed that he and senior Treasury Ministers would be willing to come before the Assembly and its committees to answer questions.

The Assembly announced its review of the Assembly's Standing Orders for the Fourth Assembly.

June

Huw Vaughan Thomas was chosen as the preferred candidate for the Auditor General for Wales.

The Assembly achieved the Investors in People Gold award, one of only 25 public bodies in the UK to reach this standard, and the only UK legislature.

National Armed Forces day celebrations were held on the Assembly estate—more than 50,000 people attended including HRH The Prince of Wales, HRH the Duchess of Cornwall and Armed Forces Air Chief Marshal, Sir Jock Stirrup.

July

The Remuneration Measure was agreed by the Assembly and given Royal Approval, establishing an independent statutory body to decide upon the system of financial support for Members. The recruitment process began.

A new Assembly Member for South Wales East was sworn in following Lord German's ennoblement.

For the third year running, the Auditor General for Wales issued an unqualified opinion on the Commission's statement of accounts.

August

The Presiding Officer spoke with young people at the summer shows and heard about the importance of digital engagement as the key to getting young people voting in the referendum and Assembly election in 2011.

The Outreach Bus visited the main summer shows, as well as a number of smaller local shows promoting the Vote 2011 theme.

Bow Tie TV began work as the Assembly's host broadcaster. Video screens in the public galleries to the Siambr and Senedd committee rooms were replaced to improve access to proceedings.

Screens in the information pods were also replaced, and new multimedia content was developed to improve visitors' experiences.

September

The Commission agreed its e-democracy strategy, setting out how it would use new technologies to further engage with the people of Wales.

The Chair and members of the Remuneration Board were appointed.

The initial stages of the Vote 2011 campaign began, encouraging people to register to vote.

The International Day of the Disabled forum, arranged by the Commission, concluded that disabled people often feel excluded from the democratic process in Wales because their specific requirements are not catered for.

The new 'Cofnod Cryno' (Concise Record) was introduced, providing a more customer friendly approach to accessing Assembly proceedings. The Concise Record was one of the recommendations of the independent panel on bilingual services.

Staff and Members voted overwhelmingly to have Freedom Food used across the Assembly estate. The RSPCA congratulated the Assembly saying that it was "the first national institution in the UK to choose animal welfare-friendly food, and Assembly Members and their staff are to be applauded".

October

The Remuneration Board met for the first time to start its consideration of the system of financial support for Assembly Members in the Fourth Assembly.

The first statutory Commissioner for Standards was selected.

The Welsh Government laid an Order setting up a referendum on the legislative powers of the Assembly, setting a date of 3 March 2011.

The Assembly was named the most sustainable public sector organisation at government level in the UK by the Sustainable Facilities Management Awards 2010.

The Presiding Officer welcomed Nick Clegg MP to the Assembly.

The Presiding Officer welcomed the President of the EU Commission, José Manuel Barroso, to the Assembly where he attended an exhibition of Structural Funds projects arranged by the Welsh Government. On the same day the four Welsh MEPs attended an event in the Pierhead.

25 members of staff left the Assembly under a voluntary early severance scheme. The UNO project was rolled out to equip Members, their staff and Assembly staff with leading edge and independent IT facilities.

November

The Hansard Society and the Assembly worked in partnership to host an event exploring the issue of gender and devolution.

The Presiding Officer toured Wales to encourage people to register to vote.

The Referendum Order was passed by the UK Parliament.

The first gala dinner to be held in the Pierhead since its refurbishment was held in support of the RSPCA's Freedom Food campaign.

A reorganisation of the Assembly's staff structure for the Fourth Assembly was announced.

December

The Queen in Council gave Royal Approval to the Playing Fields (Community Involvement in Disposal Decisions (Wales) Measure 2010). The second Member-proposed Measure to be agreed by the Assembly, the Measure places a duty on local authorities to consider the impact of selling off local authority owned playing fields on local communities.

The Assembly approved the proposed Welsh Language (Wales) Measure.

2011

January

A Vote 2011 event was held to raise awareness of barriers to democratic engagement faced by disabled people.

Following an upgrading of Assembly systems, the Assembly donated more than 500 PCs, 250 printers and 130 laptops to Remploy for reconditioning and recycling.

March

'Yes' vote in the Referendum on future powers for the Assembly.

The Assembly was dissolved for the first time at midnight on 31 March 2011.



The Commission's five strategic goals

“We will promote and widen engagement in devolution.

“The next four years must demonstrate that the Assembly is working for all citizens and encouraging greater and more active participation in the democratic process. We will emphasise the positive impact of the Assembly upon the lives of people in Wales. There will be greater incremental devolution through the 2006 Act, and there may be a referendum for greater legislative competence, we will be ready to grasp these challenges enthusiastically.”

The Assembly's communications requirement

The Government of Wales Act 2006 placed a duty on the Assembly Commission “to promote public awareness of devolved government in Wales, and the system for the election of Assembly Members”. As a result, the Assembly Commission made effective communications with the people of Wales a priority for the Third Assembly.

A dedicated communications function was established, and by December 2007, the Commission had agreed a communications strategy that was designed to:

- inform and promote a widening understanding of the work of the National Assembly for Wales, its powers and constitutional status;
- encourage engagement and participation in Assembly business and Welsh democracy;
- herald the Assembly's achievements in a Welsh, UK and international context; and,
- develop and guard the National Assembly brand.

Over the course of the Third Assembly, the Commission has secured wider understanding and recognition of the Assembly as a modern forward-looking democratic body. It has also reopened and increased access to the Pierhead, providing a stage for public debate and deliberation. The Assembly's old debating chamber, Siambr Hywel, was also adapted to become the world's first dedicated youth debating chamber, enabling a key target audience to learn about and discuss Assembly business. The Assembly can now be proud of excellent links with stakeholders and of a robust and rapidly improving online presence. The Commission has, through its commitment to public engagement, ensured that the Assembly and its business are accessible to, and discussed among, hundreds of thousands of people.

Defining who we are and what we do

Following the separation of the Assembly from the Welsh Government, the Department of International Politics at Aberystwyth University was commissioned to undertake the largest ever Welsh political research survey about public perceptions of the Assembly and its role. The results indicated that there was still confusion about the difference between the National Assembly for Wales and the Welsh Government.

Work had already started on establishing a clear identity for the Assembly, and the Commission endorsed a strategy to develop a strong visual brand for the legislature. This included a prominent place for images of the iconic Senedd, and a clear written style that avoided jargon and created a recognisable and consistent visual style for publications.

This was underpinned by the development of a positioning statement, used on everything from email signatures to publications, which articulates (to an internal audience as well as externally) the legislature's identity and its constitutional function:

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.

Taking into account the research findings, the positioning statement references the Welsh Government, to highlight the difference between the Assembly and the government which it must scrutinise.

Communicating beyond the Senedd

The Commission has invested considerable effort in outreach, seeking to take the Assembly and its work to the heartlands and communities of the people of Wales. As part of the Assembly's tenth anniversary project, the Presiding Officer visited electoral regions in Wales to speak with representatives of traditionally disengaged sectors, including the black and ethnic minority communities, as well as disabled people, faith communities and sexual orientation and young people's groups.

The Assembly's outreach work also included the purchase of a bus dedicated to securing a mobile Assembly presence allowing access to areas across Wales that were traditionally removed from outreach efforts. The bus also provided a means for rethinking our presence at Wales's national and regional shows and events with an emphasis on attending more for the same cost, if not less.

In addition, Siambr Hywel, the world's first dedicated youth debating chamber, was formed from the old debating chamber in Tŷ Hywel, and has welcomed over 30,000 students to participate in democratic debates since it opened in April 2008.

The National Assembly has, through its international relations and association with professional parliamentary bodies such as the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), British Irish Parliamentary Association (BIPA) and The Conference of European Regional Legislative Assemblies (CALRE), maintained its presence and influence on the international stage; sending delegates to conferences and seminars in the UK and overseas as well as hosting a range of visitors from all continents to the Assembly. Particular emphasis has been put on ensuring value for money from our international activity and sharing experiences with other legislatures which, in turn, enables us to learn from good practice elsewhere and promote our own achievements. For example, the Third Assembly

has seen the National Assembly Branch of the CPA focus on working in an increasingly strategic, open and accountable manner with lessons learned from post-conference and seminar reports fed back, where practical, into the wider work of the National Assembly.

The Commission took a strategic decision to redevelop the Pierhead, a key part of the Assembly's estate and an iconic Welsh landmark. On 1 March 2010, following months of extensive refurbishment, the building re-opened to take on its new role as a unique events and free visitor attraction. To date, over 100,000 visitors have passed through the doors of the Pierhead, establishing it as one of the capital's top attractions.

The reopening of the Pierhead coincided with the beginning of a year-long programme of events marking ten years of devolution in Wales. The aim of the anniversary programme was to use the celebrations to reinvigorate interest, understanding and accessible engagement between the Assembly and the people of Wales.

In addition, new initiatives, such as the Presiding Officer's tour of Wales, the establishment of a new outreach and e-democracy service, and the launch of the Outreach Bus, were significant milestones of the ten-year programme and served to increase and widen engagement in democracy as well as provide a legacy for future Assembly communications.


Innovative communications

The Assembly Commission has championed the use of innovative communications techniques. As early as 2007, the Assembly had introduced a petitions system through which, for the first time, members of the public could petition the National Assembly and ask for action to be taken in those areas of policy for which the Assembly was responsible. A complementary e-petitions system was launched on 15 April 2008, making interaction with the Assembly even easier.

As traditional communications channels continued to be challenged by technological innovations and new and emerging communications tools, the Commission agreed an e-democracy strategy in 2010. Designed to make greater use of a range of digital channels to inform and engage, it aimed to increase the breadth and depth of the Assembly's engagement with the people of Wales.

The e-democracy strategy was applied in the Vote 2011 campaign which aimed to raise awareness of the Assembly election as well as the referendum on the future powers of the Assembly and the UK referendum on the alternative voting system.

The campaign comprised a coherent communications message promoted by all outreach staff, the use of videos on the Assembly's social networking sites, an innovative online advertising campaign targeting 18 to 35 year-olds as well as a multi-platform media relations campaign targeting hyper-local, regional and national media.



The first official visit by a federal Canadian delegation to the National Assembly for Wales in spring 2011 provided an excellent opportunity to share knowledge and experiences of public engagement. The visit included the direct involvement of 12 Assembly Members including the Presiding Officer, the Deputy Presiding Officer and three of the Commissioners. It delivered a full programme, consisting of ten formal sessions, including the first in a planned series of “Lessons from Abroad” Pierhead Sessions.

The delegation described their visit as extremely positive. Dr Carolyn Bennett PC MP, recognised as a leader in citizen engagement in her own right, commented widely on the Assembly’s positive work in the field of engagement and during her presentation on the subject in the Pierhead, commended the National Assembly for its commitment to transparent democracy stating that “Citizen Engagement is clearly a priority (for the Assembly) and is built into its DNA”.

Recommendations to successor Commission

It is recommended that the next Assembly Commission should concentrate on the following high-level issues in relation to the strategic goal “Promote and widen engagement in devolution”:

- work with Members on communications activities to enable and empower them to act as ambassadors for the Assembly’s work;
- concentrate on basics in terms of messaging; eg the distinction between Government and Assembly which continues, despite our efforts, to cause confusion to the detriment of the citizen’s experience of Welsh democracy;
- deliver clear messages about the work of the Assembly following the ‘yes’ vote;
- keep up the effort on key strategies such as branding, e-democracy and the Pierhead, so that we realise the full benefits of the foundation work that was done during the Third Assembly.

“We will show unity, leadership and a bold response to constitutional change.

“The Assembly will show confidence and competence in embracing its new powers. We are united in securing scrutiny and legislation of the best quality, and in supporting Members in all that they do as elected representatives.”

Supporting the legislature

The constitutional and legislative functions conferred by the Government of Wales Act 2006 placed significant additional demands on the services provided by Assembly staff. These were characterised by:

- a higher volume of work—Plenary sat for longer and committees were more active than in previous Assemblies; use of the Research Service rose inexorably; the legislative programme grew steadily; and the development of legislative proposals by individual Assembly Members and committees generated a huge amount of demanding work for researchers, lawyers and clerks and longer hours for supporting staff;
- greater complexity and sophistication in the services required by Members throughout the legislative process and in fulfilling their scrutiny role in committee; the procedural advice required from Legislation Office and Chamber staff; the legislative drafting and advice delivered by the Legal Service; specialist legal translation; and the combination of policy and procedural advice demanded by independent scrutiny and other committees.

From the outset, the Commission’s objective was to ensure that the necessary resources were in place to meet these pressures.

Some of the practical steps it took were to:

- meet jointly with the Business Committee so as to match resourcing with the organisation of formal Assembly business;
- approve an increase in the resources available to those areas whose primary focus is the support of Assembly business, namely Committee Services, Legislation and Chamber Service, the Research Service, Translation and Reporting Service. Resourcing rose to £6 million in 2008–09 from £4.6 million in 2007–08. Within these figures, the budget for staffing increased from some £2.4 million to around £3 million. As a result, these service areas were able to undertake a strategic restructuring, and an increase in the necessary resource to support the increase and change in pattern of Assembly business;
- convert a conference room in Tŷ Hywel into another functioning committee room. This provided business continuity back-up in the event of rooms in the Senedd being unavailable and also, very quickly, permitted the routine scheduling of a higher level of formal committee work.

The Third Assembly saw changes in almost every aspect of formal Assembly business: scrutiny in committee and Plenary had a sharper edge after the separation of legislature and executive; a significant legislative procedure was established for the first time; a non-government legislative programme was developed and was, in the early days, as significant in volume terms as that of the government; and committees undertaking entirely new functions were established, such as those scrutinising finance and public petitions.

In every one of these aspects, the Commission ensured that from day one, the resources available allowed these procedures to be carried out in a way that could be seen as an exemplar for other legislatures in the UK.

A new approach to the legislative process

The Third Assembly championed an innovative approach to legislation and public consultations on proposed laws.

In June 2007, Jenny Randerson AM was successful in the first ballot to introduce a proposal for a new law in Wales, on how best to ensure children had access to healthy and nutritious food while at school. To help inform the proposed law, the Assembly's education service and outreach services used school visits to the Senedd and outreach efforts to gather information from the children the proposed law directly affected. This invaluable information was presented to and used by the Committee as evidence to help form the law.

Following the agreement of the Assembly in Plenary, the law was introduced in March 2008. It was the first Measure to bear the Royal Badge of Wales, which now appears on all Assembly Measures. Based on the arms of the native princes of Wales, dating back to the 13th century, it was designed by the Garter King of Arms, Peter Gwynne-Jones.

As part of the Assembly's commitment to making information available in the best possible way and supporting its objective of promoting and widening engagement in devolution, the Commission also endorsed the on going funding of Wales Legislation Online. Funded jointly by the Commission and the Welsh Government, it provides a public source of information on Welsh legislation and on the legal framework within which devolved functions are discharged. It is free to users and is specific to Welsh legislation.

Legislation and scrutiny

This is a summary of the Assembly's legislative and scrutiny achievements over the past four years.

Fifteen Legislative Competence Orders have been made by Her Majesty in Council. **One Legislative Competence Order** was withdrawn. **Twenty-two Measures** have received Royal Approval, including the first committee-proposed Measure (the National Assembly for Wales Commissioner for Standards Measure 2009) and the first Assembly Commission-proposed Measure (the National Assembly for Wales (Remuneration) Measure 2010).

Total number of committee meetings in the Third Assembly

	2007–08	2008–09	2009–10	2010–11	Total
Communities & Culture	13	14	16	17	60
Enterprise & Learning	22	33	26	23	104
Health, Wellbeing and Local Government	17	32	23	17	89
Sustainability	18	26	24	21	89
Rural Development Sub-Committee	11	22	20	14	67
	81	127	109	92	409
Audit/Public Accounts	06	17	16	23	62
Children & Young People	07	19	16	17	59
Equality of Opportunity	11	16	16	15	58
European and External Affairs	06	13	15	16	50
Finance	14	19	23	22	78
Petitions	11	19	15	16	61
Scrutiny of First Minister			02	02	04
Standards of Conduct	03	06	02	04	15
	58	109	105	102	387
Legislation Committees	50	96	102	79	327
Subordinate Legislation/ Constitutional Affairs Committee	19	33	30	29	111
	69	129	132	108	438
Total	208	365	346	302	1234
Includes 28 external meetings	03	14	07	04	28

In undertaking their legislative, scrutiny and representative functions, Assembly Members must have access to factual information held by the Welsh Government. The Research Service has a key role to play in providing Members with authoritative, high quality, timely and up-to-date information, thereby supporting the strategic purpose of the Assembly, which cannot function without a proper flow of information. This was recognised by the Independent Review Panel in 2009 and by the Remuneration Board in 2011 which recommended that individual Assembly Members need better access to Welsh Government officials and the information they hold, via the Research Service.

In 2007 the Welsh Government put in place a set of arrangements whereby all requests for information made by the Research Service on behalf of Members had to be routed, in writing, through the Ministerial Private Offices. Research Service staff are prohibited by direct contact with Welsh Government officials and so have more restricted access than other Assembly Commission staff or colleagues in the equivalent research services in the Houses of Parliament and the other devolved legislatures.

The Remuneration Board recommended that the Commission engaged with the Welsh Government to put in place arrangements equivalent to those in other parliamentary institutions of the UK, namely a service based on the principles that individual Members and committees must have a prioritised right of access to factual information held by the Welsh Government and that Research Service staff should be able to communicate directly with the relevant Welsh Government policy officials.

Recommendations to successor Commission

It is recommended that the next Assembly Commission should concentrate on the following high level issues in relation to the strategic goal “Show unity, leadership, and a bold response to constitutional change”:

Early in the Fourth Assembly term:

- ensure that resources are in place to meet the future requirements of the Assembly following the ‘yes’ vote and the decisions of the Business Committee/Assembly in respect of the organisation of Plenary and committee business;
- liaise with the Remuneration Board to ensure that Commission and Board decisions complement each other wherever possible;
- engage with the Welsh Government to ensure that individual Members and committees have a prioritised right of access to factual information held by the Welsh Government.

“In all our work, we will demonstrate respect, probity and good governance.

“All that we do must be capable of intense external scrutiny, be transparent and should reflect the diverse nature of Wales and its languages in how it deals with and involves the citizen.”

In planning for the establishment of the inaugural Assembly Commission, the Shadow Commission placed rigorous corporate governance at the heart of the emerging parliamentary body’s operations. A Corporate Governance Committee was established to advise the Commission and the Chief Executive on issues to do with finance, audit protocol and corporate governance. Strong internal capabilities were further bolstered by the appointment of independent advisers to assist the Commission in carrying out its duties.

Financial resources and priorities for the Commission are approved during the Autumn term through a vote in Plenary. The process is set out in the Assembly’s Standing Orders and involves the Commission laying a draft budget, which is scrutinised by the Assembly’s Finance Committee. The Committee’s findings on the budget proposals are considered and approved by the Assembly in a debate. In addition, during the Third Assembly the Commission has sought supplementary budgets as a mechanism to adjust the approved budget. In doing so, the Commission must explain the rationale for the proposed additional spend to the Finance Committee.

The Commission has set out a budget strategy for the Fourth Assembly with the aim of reducing its budget in line with percentage reductions in the Welsh block.

This robust scrutiny process helps strengthen the accountability and transparency of the Commission’s spending plans.

A further commitment to making the Assembly a truly transparent and accountable institution was a prompt and open approach to responding to requests under the Freedom of Information Act. The Assembly received 205 requests during the Third Assembly with 2011 seeing a particularly sharp rise in the number of requests received. The focus of requests varied significantly and requests were sent by members of the general public, interest groups and the media.

The nature of requests have ranged from simple explanations about the work of the Assembly and requests for copies of documents through to more involved analyses. A significant number of requests received (64) related to Assembly Members, including their pay and pensions, allowances and expenses, and costs of their support staff. A considerable amount of information relating to Assembly Members’ allowances and expenses is now published on the Assembly website which has helped us to provide this information to the general public and stakeholders in an open and transparent way.

The table opposite details the number of requests received and identifies those specifically relating to Assembly Members between 2007–11.

Other requests processed during this period related to costs borne by the Assembly for areas of specific expenditure such as public engagement, training and development, Welsh language use and policies, the organisation and structure of the Assembly, complaints relating to Members, the work of the Commissioner for Standards and sustainability.

In May 2008, a full year before the Daily Telegraph published details of MPs' expenses, the Commission approved the establishment of an independent panel to review Assembly Members' remuneration. Over a ten-month period a panel, chaired by Sir Roger Jones, undertook a full review of Assembly Members' pay and allowances for travel, accommodation, funding for constituency and regional offices and support staff. Its report, *Getting it Right for Wales*, was published in July 2009, and was the first such review to be published in the UK. The Commission accepted all the recommendations contained in the review.

In the meantime, a public online log of Assembly Members' expenses claims was launched on the National Assembly website, allowing everyone to see, at the click of a mouse, what expenses their Assembly Members had claimed. Claims are published monthly, three months in arrears.

To implement the findings, and in a further significant step to ensure that there are rigorous and independent mechanisms for deciding how and what Assembly Members are paid, the Commission proposed its first ever Measure to establish an independent Remuneration Board. The Board, which had responsibility for setting the pay and allowances for Assembly Members, reported in March 2011. The Determination, which was accompanied by the report, *Fit for Purpose*, was designed to provide Members with the requisite tools and support to perform their core functions of scrutinising the Welsh Government, making laws and representing their constituents. It also reflected the Welsh financial topography in terms of tight public sector budgets and average pay levels across Wales. It offered a sustainable and cost-effective system of financial support for Assembly Members and was underpinned by three core principles to ensure that the system of financial support for Members:

- does not deter, on financial grounds, persons with the necessary commitment and ability from seeking election as Assembly Members;
- provides Assembly Members with adequate resources to enable them to exercise their functions as Assembly Members; and,
- ensures that public money is spent with probity, accountability, value for money and transparency.

Year	Total number of requests	Number of requests relating to Members
2007	24	07
2008	45	25
2009	52	12
2010	54	15
2011 (to April)	30	05

In 2011, the Commission produced its first Equality Statement, including the Commission's values and vision for promoting equality and published an Equality Scheme. Following extensive consultation with stakeholders and exploration of best practice arrangements in other organisations, the Scheme set out the equality objectives for the Third Assembly term and annual reports have been published every year to provide an update on progress. The objectives have focused on increasing access to the Assembly and its services, widening engagement, and becoming an exemplar employer and service provider. The Assembly's Equality of Opportunity Committee scrutinised the report annually and monitored progress on its implementation.

The Assembly Commission worked in partnership with Operation Black Vote in 2007 to run the first Assembly Member Shadowing Scheme in Wales for black and minority ethnic people. Following on from the success of that scheme, in 2009–10 the Commission worked in partnership with the Welsh Government and Welsh Local Government Association to develop and run Step Up Cymru, a mentoring and role-shadowing scheme for people who felt that they were under-represented in Welsh political and civil life.

A truly bilingual organisation

In 2009, the Commission established an independent review panel to look at the provision of its bilingual services. Chaired by Arwel Ellis Owen, it made a number of recommendations, including developing a more user-friendly version of the Record of Proceedings, the verbatim transcription of debates in the Assembly Siambr.

The Commission also proposed that it should introduce a new Measure that would place a legal duty on the Assembly to ensure bilingualism was at the centre of its service provision. The process will begin with a public consultation early in the Fourth Assembly.

Recommendations to successor Commission

It is recommended that the next Assembly Commission should concentrate on the following high-level issues in relation to the strategic goal "Demonstrate respect, probity and good governance":

- consider carefully the appropriate balance between economies and service delivery to avoid damaging essential services to Members and wasting energy and resources on defending decisions that Members find unacceptable;
- ensure that equality and diversity do not suffer during tough economic times;
- proceed with new arrangements to strengthen our delivery of bilingual services, including an Official Languages Scheme;
- support the Audit Committee in its work to maintain high standards of governance right across the organisation, including in the areas of procurement and contract management.

“We will work sustainably.

“We will show leadership in how we manage our work and estate, and we aim to provide the highest achievable level of sustainability in both.”

From the outset, the Commission has recognised the need for the Assembly to be a leader in its ambition to work sustainably and has set rigorous but workable sustainability policies. Through the Commission’s environmental policy, the Assembly continues to minimise its environmental impact by consuming fewer non-renewable resources, reducing waste, recycling, preventing pollution and complying with all environmental legislation. The Commission is committed to achieving environmental excellence and being an exemplar in environmental performance. The Senedd has been hailed as a benchmark for sustainable construction and operational use.

Over the course of the past four years, the Assembly Commission has overseen a number of notable achievements in terms of operational sustainability. These range from improving the carbon footprint of our estate to developing new ways of working to lessen adverse environmental impact.

- The Assembly has achieved re-certification to Level 5 of the Green Dragon Environmental Standard for the whole Cardiff Bay estate.
- In 2009–10, an 8 per cent reduction in energy emissions was achieved in line with the targets outlined in the Carbon Management Plan. This has also kept our energy costs stable, despite increasing prices.
- In March 2009, the Assembly achieved ‘Level 4–Enhancing Organisation’ on the Value Wales Sustainable Procurement Assessment Framework.
- The Commission has agreed a programme of improvements to the sustainability of our buildings over the next four years and all routine maintenance is carried out with environmental impact in mind.
- Display Energy Certificate (DEC) ratings for all three buildings in the Assembly estate have improved.
- In May 2009, a cycle to work salary sacrifice scheme was introduced to encourage sustainable commuting. A total of 16 building users have signed up.
- In 2009–10, a commercial compost collection was set up and the Assembly composted over seven tonnes of its food waste for local reclamation projects.
- Improvements in corporate reporting led to openness about scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions for the first time in 2009–10.
- The introduction of a low emission pool car for business travel has led to cost savings of £2,500 and a reduction of 0.5 tonnes of CO₂ over 10 months.

Recommendations to successor Commission

It is recommended that the next Assembly Commission should concentrate on the following high-level issues in relation to the strategic goal “Work Sustainably”:

- recognise and build upon the Commission’s leadership in securing sustainable working for the Assembly when deciding priorities for the Fourth Assembly;
- identify ways to maintain momentum when the economic climate could make direct investment in sustainability more difficult to achieve;
- make our achievements in environmental policies and our wish to sustain the momentum a key part of communications with and education of users of the Assembly estate, visitors and wider Wales;
- as part of this approach, prioritise sustainability policies carefully to achieve desired outcomes without inappropriate impact upon Members and others who use the Assembly estate.

“We will ensure that the Assembly has the best service, provided in the most effective way.

“We will take the services provided for Members and the people of Wales to a higher level, while demonstrating wise and effective use of its resources and value for money. The ethos of service, to Members and anyone who engages with the Assembly, drives everything that we do.”

Ensuring best use of technology

Following a major consultation with Members, staff and other stakeholders on how it can optimise use of information and communications technology to better engage with the people of Wales, the Commission completed a significant project to create a unified information technology network for Members and Assembly staff.

This would finally secure an IT infrastructure that was separate to that of the Welsh Government, which offered longer-term benefits of cost-effectiveness, managing information, public engagement, IT procurement and enhancing business continuity. This was achieved through redirecting £1 million of service and project budgets to ensure the delivery of the project in the 2010–11 financial year without the need for additional funding.

Making the most of our staff

Recognising that success depends on people, one of the Commission’s early decisions was to adopt a People Strategy setting out five ambitions for staff engagement and development:

- to have the right skills in the right place at the right time;
- for people to be developed to maximise their contribution;
- to recognise success and reward contribution;
- to value diversity and wellbeing; and,
- to have great leaders and great managers.

The Commission became accredited as an Investor in People in April 2009 and cemented its approach to staff engagement and development by being assessed as a Gold Standard Investor in People during 2010, one of only three awarded in Wales. Investment in learning and development is hugely important to the Commission, with £1.2 million being spent over the course of the Third Assembly.

A changing financial landscape

Sound financial management lies at the heart of good corporate governance. However, its importance became even more evident with the shift in the financial climate over the course of the past Assembly.

Having established an appropriate level of financial resources at the start of the Third Assembly, the Commission adopted a strategy of aiming to keep changes in the annual budget in line with changes in the funding coming to Wales through the 'Welsh block grant' from Westminster.

While the Assembly's core business capabilities could not be compromised, the Commission has been committed to increasing efficiency and reducing cost wherever possible. Steps already taken include a voluntary severance scheme for staff in conjunction with managing posts that become vacant more robustly with the expectation that such posts will be vacant for a minimum of three months. Strategies were put in place to improve staff productivity by bringing down sickness absence throughout the Assembly, reducing the reliance on overtime, and increasing staff flexibility in order to manage with a smaller workforce, while maintaining opportunities for staff to expand their experience and ability to undertake stimulating work.

Improvement programme and performance reporting

The Commission introduced a Change Programme in 2009, recognising the opportunity to improve co-ordination, development and management of projects to enable business improvements and support the Commission's strategic goals. Aspects of this programme have focused on enhancing project management skills, building the ability to better identify business benefits and then measure achievement.

Serving Assembly Members

Assembly Member satisfaction survey

In 2008, the Assembly Commission agreed to undertake a survey to generate information on the level of Member satisfaction with the services provided by the Assembly. Three rounds, each targeting 20 Members, were undertaken through to April 2009 and a total of 31 interviews were undertaken. The approach and questions were approved by Chris Franks AM, the Assembly Commissioner with specific responsibility for improving the services provided to Members.

As well as producing high-level indicators of satisfaction with key service areas, the survey was designed to give Members the chance to give direct feedback on their experience of the services provided and to make specific suggestions for service improvements. Interviews were carried out by the Chief Executive and Directors who were each accompanied by a senior manager. The results enabled senior managers to shape the services they provide.

Survey questions were in four main areas:

- Plenary;
- committee;
- other services (such as research, ICT, payment of allowances); and,
- support provided in the role of a Member to scrutinise, make legislation and support constituents.

Overall scores in the four main areas were positive, ranging from 7.7 (other services) to 8.2 (Plenary) out of a possible 10.

The survey results and the comments provided enabled Commission staff to take specific and immediate action on some of the points raised by Members. In addition to providing benchmark information for future satisfaction surveys, we were also able to focus on a high-level approach to improving satisfaction on ICT connectivity, in particular from constituency offices and mobile devices through a project which delivered the anticipated business benefits in 2010.

Bringing the Third Assembly to a close

The 2006 Act changed the way in which the Assembly drew to a close, in that rather than remaining in office until the election, Assembly Members ceased to be Members about five weeks beforehand, when the Assembly was dissolved.

Ensuring a successful dissolution required thorough consultation with Assembly Members and their support staff. A major challenge was to ensure that constituents would not be disadvantaged by dissolution, while maintaining a level playing field for prospective and former Members. This was a testing process, and lessons will emerge for the new Commission from the project and in the weeks before and after the election.

Recommendations to successor Commission

It is recommended that the next Assembly Commission should concentrate on the following high-level issues in relation to the strategic goal “Ensure that the Assembly has the best service, provided in the most effective way”:

- engage closely with Members and their support staff on the services they need and the quality of the services we provide;
- review the Merlin contract (work is underway) and the benefits realisation and value for money aspects of the UNO project; and,
- maintain the strongest governance arrangements in order not to compromise our ability to deliver or our reputation.



