



Cynulliad National
Cenedlaethol Assembly for
Cymru Wales

Comisiynydd y Cynulliad
Assembly Commissioner

Simon Thomas AM
Chair of Finance Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Tŷ Hywel
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30 November 2016

Dear Simon

I am writing further to my letter of 4 November about your Committee's Report on the Scrutiny of the Assembly Commission Draft Budget 2017-2018. As requested in Recommendation 2, we are now in a position to provide you with information on the outcome of the capacity planning process (details in the annex attached).

As ever, if there is any further information your Committee would like to have, please let me know.

Yours sincerely

Suzy Davies

cc Assembly Commissioners, Claire Clancy, Nia Morgan

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Annex

Finance Committee Report on the Scrutiny of the Assembly Commission Draft Budget 2017–2018

Assembly Commission response to Recommendation 2

Recommendation 2. The Committee recognises the need for additional resources to support the Fifth Assembly priorities going forward, however, to ensure transparency and offer clarity, it is recommended that an update on how this resource allocation has been used is provided to the Committee following the detailed capacity planning exercise.

The purpose of the Commission's annual capacity planning exercise is to consider whether the Commission has sufficient resources in the right areas to ensure that its strategic objectives are met. The process starts with a thorough review by each service area of the challenges for the coming year and beyond. Each service area then assesses and documents whether the demands can be met with the resources available, and whether additional resources are necessary in order to maintain an appropriately high level of service for Members. This autumn, where areas of concern or increased demand were identified, requirements for additional posts were first scrutinised at the service area level within each Directorate before being put forward for consideration at Management Board. Two Management Board sessions were devoted to reviewing and challenging the service plans and capacity plans prepared by each Directorate.

As a result of the capacity planning exercise, new resource requirements were identified. Additional demands have arisen from the:

- increase in the number of committees and extended business week;

- new Commission and LLYwydd's priorities including the establishment of a new youth parliament and a step up in our digital news and information services;
- increased emphasis on engagement in committees;
- MySenedd programme which aims to make us a truly world class, open, digital parliament by improving the way we manage and use information, deliver services to Members and interact with all our users through the use of technology; this will impact working practices and skills across the organisation;
- constitutional changes as a result of the Wales Bill and Brexit;
- growing challenges for the Security Service due to security threats and the new committee structure and schedule – a comprehensive review identified the need for a revised structure and additional posts, the cost of which will be offset to an extent by reduced overtime and agency costs;
- pressures within Estates to accommodate the number of committees, including significant refurbishment work, and to begin planning for long term accommodation requirements; and
- greater bilingual activity impacting particularly on interpretation.

Internal changes have been made wherever possible, and will continue to be made, to assist with staffing and skills pressures, but there is still an additional resource requirement. The additional resource for Committees, Communications and Strategic Transformation all flow in part from the constitutional changes as a result of the Wales Bill and from the work associated with Brexit. Overall, it was agreed that priority should be given to the following additional new posts over the course of the coming year:

- Committees: 6 posts at different grades, plus 1 temporary post to be made permanent
- Communications: Up to 9 posts, permanent and temporary, at different grades, including Head of Strategic promotion, Head of Public Engagement and News/media officers
- Strategic transformation: 1 post
- Security: Up to 12 posts
- Estates: 2 new temporary posts

- ICT: 1 post to support North Wales AM offices and 1 post to address Cyber Security.
- TRS: 2 additional interpreters, plus 1 temporary post to be made permanent
- HR: 1 post for recruitment and workforce services
- Governance: 1 temporary post to be made permanent

The capacity planning process sets the framework for future staffing resources but it does not result in approval for individual posts to proceed to recruitment and recognises areas where demands may emerge later in the year to reflect priorities. For every post a Recruitment Authorisation Document is prepared setting out the full business case and the case is considered by the Investment and Resourcing Board (IRB). IRB assesses each case against other resourcing priorities, including other forms of investment such as ICT or estates spending.

Current considerations

The budget document for 2017–18 said: “The budget has been prepared on the assumption that the Assembly will continue with 60 Members. If, during the course of the Assembly, it becomes clear that the Commission needs to plan for an increase in the size of the Assembly, then new budget provisions would need to be made.” After the budget had been prepared and scrutinised, the Commission agreed new plans to make our parliament fit for the future, including taking forward work to address the capacity of the Assembly. This work, and other matters likely to flow from the Wales Bill if passed, are likely to require additional resources in future, including legal capacity. As this work is only just beginning, the capacity planning necessary to accommodate it was not included in the process that was recently completed. The Commission will consider the budget implications and submit these for the Assembly’s consideration at the appropriate point, possibly through a supplementary budget during 2017–18.

We will consider our bilingual capacity on an ongoing basis in the light of the ambitions in the new Official Languages Scheme.

A comprehensive review of events on the Assembly estate will be complete by the end of November. This is expected to identify opportunities for efficiencies by streamlining our processes and simplifying the organisation of support for events.

Assembly Commission

November 2016