

Organisational Efficiency and
Effectiveness

Review of the Assembly Commission's approach

September 2016



National Assembly for Wales
Assembly Commission

The National Assembly for Wales is the democratically elected body that represents the interests of Wales and its people, makes laws for Wales, agrees Welsh taxes and holds the Welsh Government to account.

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National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Online: **www.assembly.wales**
Email: **Contact@assembly.wales**
Tel: **0300 200 6565**

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Assembly Commission Strategy 2016 – 2021

Our purpose

The National Assembly for Wales is the democratically elected body that represents the interests of Wales and its people, makes laws for Wales, agrees Welsh taxes and holds the Welsh Government to account.

The Assembly Commission serves the National Assembly 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.

Our strategic goals

- To provide outstanding parliamentary support.
 - To engage with all the people of Wales and champion the Assembly.
 - To use resources wisely.
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Introduction

Purpose

As a publicly funded organisation, the Assembly Commission must consistently demonstrate that it uses its resources efficiently and effectively. We recognise that across the public sector there is continuing pressure on finances, with many organisations facing year-on-year budget reductions, often resulting in cuts to services which can in fact lower effectiveness and efficiency. However, for the Commission, it is both critical and essential that we maintain the delivery of excellent services to Assembly Members so that they are able to undertake their elected role to provide effective scrutiny of the Welsh Government, to make good laws for Wales and to represent the people of Wales.

Both the Chief Executive and the Commission's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee have called for a review of our approach to efficiency, effectiveness and value for money and this report is the output of that review. The objectives of the review were to illustrate the range of activity, to provide evidence of the effectiveness of this work, to describe our arrangements for ensuring proper focus is established in our management arrangements and to show that we continue to identify and exploit opportunities to be even better.

Background

Looking ahead, we face the reality of increased workloads for Assembly Members during the Fifth Assembly. This conclusion is based on our understanding of the Welsh Government's legislative programme, the new responsibilities arising from the Wales Act 2014, including devolved powers on finance, and the expectation that the revised draft Wales Bill, once approved, will pass further powers to the Assembly. The EU Referendum vote has major implications for Wales and, although it is too early to understand with any clarity what these will be, it is clear that Assembly Members will need to make a significant contribution to both the exit process discussions and the subsequent work on new legislation to establish Wales and the UK in a post-EU world. This will add a further significant workload onto the 60 Assembly Members. Against this background, the Commission will need to review its current arrangements for delivering services to support Members and new ways of working will be needed that are as efficient and effective as they can be.

Our stakeholders must be assured that we are committed to maximising the value of the public funds that we receive, through our management of budgets, resources, investment and the services we deliver. These stakeholders include: the Assembly Commission, our Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ACARAC), the Assembly's Finance and Public Accounts Committees, the National Assembly, the Welsh public and media and not least ourselves as the deliverers of services. Providing challenge to increase efficiency still further and to provide measures of improvement is not new to us – we do this regularly within services, at Management Board, at Investment and Resourcing Board, at ACARAC and Commission. We achieve efficiency in the way we consistently improve the level of service to Members and particularly how we tailor those services within available resources. In March 2015, an internal audit report on 'Value for Money' concluded that 'the Assembly Commission has a well-developed VfM culture in place and this culture is embedded throughout the organisation.'

In our approach, we must not lose sight of the purpose of our organisation and what is culturally and strategically important. Some of the things we do and the ways we do them could be considered to be desirable rather than essential when compared to the wider public sector or the private sector. However, being a bi-lingual organisation, supporting diversity, having family friendly policies, providing opportunities for excellent professional development and training, secondments and career breaks, achieving external recognition such as the Investors in People Gold award and having periods of recess to balance the term-time pressures, are all at the heart of the Commission's culture and ways of working; reducing or ending these would have a direct cost, operational and strategic impact. This is not to say these things are exempt from an efficiency and effectiveness focus, rather that they should not be viewed as easy options for savings.

Efficiency and Effectiveness?

To demonstrate efficiency and effectiveness, we must be clear about what these terms means to us so:

Efficient

Efficient means delivering these services with the minimum necessary resources, identifying and eliminating wasteful processes, addressing and resolving underperformance and challenging what we pay for.

Effective

Effective means being focussed on our goals and priorities and implementing the best ways of working to deliver excellent services required by the Assembly and its Members.

Guiding Objectives

We have developed a number of guiding objectives to provide assurance that we treat the efficient and effective use of resources as a priority in both our daily operations and also when we introduce changes to the organisation:

- To continuously challenge ourselves and our suppliers to increase efficiency and effectiveness and to measure and report on improvement.
- To provide clear evidence that we do operate efficiently and effectively and that we are right to use our allocated budget in the way we do.
- To ensure that everything we do aligns to the Commission's Strategy, goals and priorities, is fit for purpose and is the result of an assessment of costs versus benefits.
- To subject ourselves to both internal and external scrutiny and to be clear and open about our plans and achievements.
- To capture examples of good practice, distil the essence of what makes it so and ensure that this good practice is adopted. Similarly, where things do not go well, we will show what we have learnt and done, to prevent a reoccurrence.

Benefits of Progressing This Work

We recognise the following benefits of continuing to identify and implement opportunities to improve organisational effectiveness and efficiency:

- To strengthen our ability to meet future challenges – the commitment to continuous improvement will ensure that the Assembly is best prepared to deliver change to meet future needs.
- Positive public perception – the Assembly's commitment to review and improvement will provide opportunities to further enhance the public perception of the Assembly.
- Assurance of the Commission's Strategy – we expect that there will be a renewed focus by Members, the Finance and Public Accounts Committees and external stakeholders on the Commission's costs and efficiency, as the pressure on public finances continues. The identification

of programmes of work that deliver improved efficiency and effectiveness will serve to provide this assurance.

- Smarter corporate working – the further development of our service and capacity planning and enhanced performance management along with agreed thematic reviews, will improve how we work now and how we prepare for the future.
- Enhanced organisational performance – more focussed and tailored services, delivering to budget and targets, guided by efficient plans for services and resources under a framework for continuous improvement will facilitate an improvement in the Assembly’s performance.

Our Scope and Approach

The scope within which to make efficiency and effectiveness improvements is not limited to any particular service, function or process and therefore is Assembly-wide.

Our approach will continue to be to ensure that all new change initiatives are delivered on the basis of a cost/benefit assessment, that our service and capacity planning reviews proceed on the basis of maximising the use of our resources to deliver the Commission’s strategy and goals and that we constantly challenge ourselves to demonstrate value for money.

Investors in People

“The work that the Assembly Commission staff carry out is invaluable to us as Assembly Members. They enable us to carry out the Assembly’s democratic work, representing the interests of Wales and its people, make laws for Wales and hold the Welsh Government to account.

The Gold standard award from Investors in People demonstrates that the Assembly is delivering in terms of investing in its staff. That commitment will continue as we strive to improve on what are already excellent parliamentary services.”

Elin Jones AM, Llywydd



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE | Gold



What is the evidence from the Review?

The examples that follow all point to an organisation that is tightly managed and efficient in its use of resources. This evidence also shows that we are not content to rest on the good work we have done, rather that we are committed to seeking further improvement.

Commission's Legacy Report 2011-2016 'A Platform for Strength.'

The Fourth Assembly Commission's legacy report contains 13 recommendations to its successor Commission. These recommendations are wide-ranging and include proposals for improving CPD for Members, the role of the Commission as a 'high performing' governing board, the need to continue to exploit information technology to deliver excellent services to Members and the people of Wales and the need to ensure that resources are available to deliver the necessary support to Assembly Members in a changing constitutional world. It is for the new Commission to decide which, if any of these recommendations are taken forward; however, we will ensure that the Commissioners have access to advice on the expected benefits arising as well as the requirements for introducing any changes.

Legacy Recommendations from the Business Committee and Current Committee Chairs.

One of the most significant efficiency and effectiveness decisions the new Assembly has taken relates to the design of the committee system - how many committees, the committee working week, what the committee portfolios will be and how legislation is to be handled. We have provided advice and evidence, including a report from the outgoing committee chairs, to the new Llywydd, Commissioners and Business Committee, with capacity maximisation being a predominant theme. The Business Committee, having considered the forthcoming legislation programme and to provide capacity for scrutiny of the EU exit arrangements, tabled motions to establish a new committee structure and working week for the Fifth Assembly, to establish seven policy and legislation committees, along with a new procedure to elect committee chairs; these changes were agreed in Plenary.

Investors in People

We were delighted to learn in June 2016 that we had been awarded the Investors in People (IiP) Gold standard award for the third time.

Investors in People is the UK's leading people management business improvement standard. It is used by tens of thousands of organisations in more than 50 countries. It enables organisations to benchmark themselves against some of the best employers in the world and only a small handful achieve the Gold Award.

The Investors in People report said that the National Assembly's key strengths included:

- A clarity of purpose, vision and objectives that has been well communicated across the whole organisation.

- Excellent understanding of both the key “customers” of the organisation and the wider community, their needs and the provision of key services that satisfy these needs with excellence and in a cost-effective manner.
- A strong commitment from everyone across the organisation to deliver the key goals and priorities of the organisation.
- Strong leadership from the top, identifying how the landscape and environment in which the organisation operates will be changing, and the implications of such changes for the organisation itself.
- The existence of an ethos that people across the organisation identify with, where they understand and consistently behave in accordance with the values that support this culture.
- A sense from most people that they feel high performance and working hard will be recognised by the organisation.
- A way of working where teamwork and collaboration is both encouraged, commonplace, and where people strive to work effectively across different Departments.
- A drive to improve and ensure that the organisation continues to thrive in the future.

MySenedd and Review of the Record of Proceedings (RoP).

Both of these initiatives are aimed at enhancing the Assembly as a truly ‘Digital Parliament.’ The ambition driving MySenedd is to transform Assembly Business services with a focus on far better organisation and use of information, and the personalisation of services to Members should enable them to make better use of time and to operate in a more efficient, effective way. Our aim, over the period of the Fifth Assembly and beyond, is for continuous improvement in service delivery, supported by the development and introduction of flexible IT solutions.

The RoP review was established to explore new opportunities for our approach to the reporting of proceedings, including how it could be used to increase engagement and understanding of the work of the Assembly. The review is now complete and an update on the initial analysis and recommendations went to the Commission in August 2015. From an efficiency point of view, Commissioners were particularly interested in how staff are used effectively to meet the variable demand. The Commission agreed the following recommendations from the Review:

- Earlier publication of the draft Record of Proceedings (with effect from the Fifth Assembly);
- Bringing forward the publishing of the fully bilingual version with effect from the Fifth Assembly, and exploring market options for delivery of this; and
- Exploring in more detail a new IT solution, including adapting systems already used successfully elsewhere.

Scenario Planning

Within the Commission, we formed a Scenarios Group to work through the major aspects of change that we were likely to face early in the Fifth Assembly, in order to give added assurance that the various strands of the Fifth Assembly Transition programme had everything covered. Examples of the issues considered by the Scenarios Group were the extension of the working week, reduction in recess length, fundamental redesign of our committee system, the political make-up of the next Assembly, the arrival of a fifth political party and the implications of a new Llywydd and Commission.

All of these touch, in some way, on the capacity of Members to undertake their work and so senior staff and their teams have been thinking through the practical implications for the support we provide and how this can be best tuned to Member's needs.

Resource Planning and Management

We have worked to establish a planning 'thread' which runs from the Commission's strategy and goals, through our corporate priorities and into our service and capacity planning. We have also developed an assurance framework, which we use to ensure evidence of effective planning and decision taking. The Management Board is responsible for ensuring that the alignment with strategy and priorities is consistent and the Investment and Resourcing Board (IRB) is responsible for decisions on investment and staffing resources and for oversight of the Commission budget.

One of the significant improvements made during the last 2 years has been the development of medium to long-term investment plans for the Assembly's estate and facilities and for ICT. The former has a 10-year time frame and allows us to assess the need for investment in the maintenance of the estate in a strategic context. The ICT plan has a 3-year time frame which reflects the pace of change of technology. The ICT investment fund which this plan draws from was established out of savings from insourcing the Assembly's ICT services. Both plans are 'zero-budget' based, and business cases for investment are determined by IRB and, in cases where the Accounting Officer's delegated authority would be exceeded, by the Assembly Commission.

We will continue to manage our resources using these processes and significant activities in 2016 will be to ensure that the use of resources is aligned to the strategic direction of the new Commission and to ensure that we deliver effectiveness and efficiency improvements following the last current voluntary exit scheme.

Service Reviews

We have an excellent record of responding flexibly to changes in need by adapting the focus, configuration and capacity of our services. Examples include: the restructure of the Assembly Business Directorate which has significantly improved the support to committees – now recognised as truly world class – and plenary and has created integrated support teams to tailor services; the insourcing of ICT services; and the current review of the Assembly's Security Service to ensure it is fit for purpose in a world where the threat of terrorist attack has increased. Looking forward, we will ensure that the required outcomes of any service review are clearly stated, we will identify benefits – both tangible and intangible and we will report on the achievements of the review.

Procurement

We have delivered some significant savings through our effective management of procurement and these have been identified in our previous two Annual Reports and Statements of Accounts – the ICT transition and replacement telephony systems are significant examples. Our IRB receives a quarterly report from the Head of Procurement and IRB actively manages the Commission's portfolio of contracts.

We view the National Procurement Service contract framework as a good opportunity to deliver value in the procurement of commodities such as stationery and ICT equipment and we work with NPS management where we have more 'bespoke' requirements such as translation services to determine whether these particular needs can be delivered without loss of service standard. The primary focus for this year is the renewal of the catering contract, ensuring that the new contract terms require the

chosen supplier to work with us to deliver efficient and effective services. Other procurement initiatives this year include progressing the introduction of a new procurement card, adopting the NPS travel service and working with services to exploit opportunities as they arise.

Internal Audit and the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

We have a highly effective programme of internal audit that is applied across the organisation and through which we supplement the statutory audit obligations with our own requirements. Recent work of this nature has seen us commission a “lessons learned” report from our HR/Payroll transition, a report on the effectiveness of our engagement activity and current work is looking at our translation services and the effectiveness of the Remuneration Board.

We are fortunate to have an independent Audit and Risk Assurance Committee made up of highly experienced individuals with both public and private sector experience. In addition to its audit and assurance responsibilities, the committee takes an active interest in the management of the Commission and is enthusiastic about our work on effectiveness and efficiency.

We will continue to use the internal audit process as a source of both opportunity for review and for recommendations for improvement. Similarly, we will engage with our Audit Committee to provide challenge and assurance on our improvement work.

Business Analysis

A small Business Analysis team works across the Commission to help identify opportunities for improvement in service efficiency and effectiveness and to ensure that information systems continue to meet the needs of Members, staff and the people of Wales. The team has undertaken significant work in a number of key areas across the Commission. The results of the analysis of the Reporting of Plenary and Committee Proceedings in support of the RoP Review are reported above. Analysis of how we manage our customers’ information and how we manage customer services is informing the MySenedd programme. Current ongoing analysis of our recruitment processes and the ways in which we engage with younger people are targeted at delivering efficiency and effectiveness benefits. Analysis work in eliciting and documenting business requirements for ICT solutions ensures that technology implementations meet business need, so optimising the efficiency and effectiveness of business processes. Over the last 12 months the team have delivered, or are in the process of delivering, business requirements for the Plenary support system, Finance system, Research Service enquiry system, Member’s case work management system, ROP transcription and editing system and the Library management system.

Directorate Reviews

The Resources Directorate is undertaking an efficiency and effectiveness review with the aim of identifying opportunities to deliver improvements over current ways of working. The objectives for this review are to:

- Review the full range and scope of all services provided by the Directorate, considering the continued validity of functions and services being provided and the opportunities to increase efficiency and effectiveness (either or both).
- Ensure that resources are being used to meet Strategic Priorities and Corporate Objectives in an efficient and effective manner;
- Identify any cross-cutting opportunities or constraints;

- Identify any areas of potential income generation; and
- Make recommendations for business improvement initiatives.

The Resources Directorate has existed in its current form for just over 12 months and during this time there have been some significant changes in function and staffing. The Directorate management team has undertaken a series of workshops to agree purpose and priorities and we have listened carefully to the rest of the organisation as to what services need to be delivered and how. All of this has been input into the review now underway. Currently, the Heads of Service are assessing those functions which were identified as potentially capable of improvement. This assessment will address the case for change, the benefits to be gained, the impact of delivering the change and a priority rating. We will then produce an overall proposal to the rest of the organisation, for comment, agreement and assurance.

Clearly, there will be opportunities identified which cross directorate boundaries and which affect other initiatives and these situations will need discussion. Where changes are agreed, we will ensure that the progress of these is captured and we have adjusted our monthly financial reporting to include efficiency and VfM gains. We expect that this process will be beneficial and that when the opportunity arises, that the other Directorates will undertake similar reviews.

Comparison and Benchmarking

We recognise that we are not unique and that other organisations succeed in delivering excellent services effectively and efficiently. Where appropriate, we compare ourselves to those organisations that are similar in terms of purpose, strategy and culture. Where they are successful and competitive but distinctive from their competitors, we will aim to learn from them. We will also look to benchmark our services; this already happens with our annual staff survey and indirectly through external awards and recognition, but we will do more. Finally, we will seek examples from other organisations who have developed performance indicators for efficiency and effectiveness and we will consider whether these can be adapted to our needs.

How is our progress evidenced?

We provide a wealth of evidence regarding the plans, performance and compliance of the Commission as well as illustrating the excellent services we deliver and our achievements. We do this through the following:

- Annual Report and Statement of Accounts
- Annual Governance Statement
- Performance Reports
- Highlight reports
- Project reports
- Official Languages Scheme Compliance Report
- Capacity planning and Service planning
- Members and Support Staff Satisfaction Survey
- Staff Survey
- Annual Audit Report
- Monthly Financial Management Reporting.

We will continue to use these outlets to report on progress and achievement. However, we will add a new category to our Assurance Framework that will require Service Heads and Directors to report on the management, monitoring and delivery of all efficiency and effectiveness activity – whether this be new work or related to existing change initiatives. We will also develop a monitoring process with the Governance and Assurance Service to add to the existing monitoring of risks, issues and projects. Finally, we will add a monitoring and assurance role for efficiency and effectiveness to the terms of reference for Investment and Resourcing Board.

PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

PROVIDING OUTSTANDING PARLIAMENTARY SUPPORT

 **8.70 OUT OF 10**

WAS THE AVERAGE SCORE GIVEN BY MEMBERS AND SUPPORT STAFF FOR PLENARY SUPPORT IN THE ANNUAL SURVEY (UP FROM 7.70 THE PREVIOUS YEAR)



46

STAFF WERE LEARNING WELSH

 **90,004**

VIEWS OF INBRIEF/PIGION, THE RESEARCH SERVICE BLOG



100%

OF COMMITTEE REPORTS WERE COVERED BY BROADCAST OR PRINT MEDIA

ENGAGING WITH THE PEOPLE OF WALES AND PROMOTING WALES



131

SCHOOLS ENGAGED FOR THE FIRST TIME



163,158

VISITORS TO THE SENEDD AND PIERHEAD



274,905

AVERAGE MONTHLY WEBSITE PAGE VIEWS



239

INTERNATIONAL VISITS TO OR FROM THE ASSEMBLY

Efficiency and Effectiveness Savings Achieved to Date

The Value for Money reporting for 2015-16 had a stronger emphasis on business efficiency, with budget managers reporting on their achievements and the progress they are making towards increasing efficiency within their service area. Returns are requested on a monthly basis as part of month end reporting.

Target

The VfM target has been £500k. In 2014-15, 60% of the savings delivered were recurring i.e. provided a saving in more than one financial year. There was not the same level of opportunity to make contract savings during 2015-16, In fact, there was only one contract negotiation which was able to provide savings this year resulting in savings of £39k per annum for 3 years.

However, we will continue to look to achieve recurring savings in future years through contract renewal and replacement (as better contract terms provide the best opportunity), but also through other initiatives such as the transformation work under MySenedd

Initiatives

Initiatives in 2015/16 included:

- Covering vacant posts by re-distributing work between other team members.
- Utilising in-house resource to provide courses which traditionally were delivered by an external provider e.g. Gloywi Iaith
- Better oversight of training needs to co-ordinate provision in the most appropriate way e.g. delivering training in-house instead of sending people on a course externally
- Efficiencies from Machine Translation and RoP review facilitated the translation of work by internal staff rather than sending it externally as would usually be expected to be the case.
- Moving Members Constituency and Home office broadband, will deliver a more reliable service and will save £43K per year over existing costs.
- The Voluntary Exit Scheme will deliver improved efficiency and effectiveness and savings.

Detailed Case studies

This section provides information on specific case studies where efficiency and effectiveness has been demonstrated during the Fourth Assembly.

ICT Transition

We have achieved impressive levels of savings as a result of insourcing ICT services and these have allowed us to build a strong and effective ICT service as well as fulfilling our insourcing commitment to deliver the objectives of the ICT Strategy at pre-transfer budget levels, thus avoiding the need for additional investment funds in addition to the ICT budget. Putting some figures to this statement provides the following view, with 2014/15 being the first Financial Year following exit from the outsourced contract.

Year	FTE	Staff Budget £	Non-Staff £	Total Budget £	ICT Investment £
2012/13	15	589,199	3,290,710	3,879,909	0
2013/14	11.6	586,475	3,582,840	4,169,315	0
2014/15	32	1,597,422	2,302,750	3,900,172	472,355
2015/16	36	1,779,536	1,767,122	3,546,658	825,869
2016/17	40	1,979,060	1,877,350	3,856,410	516,117

The Investment Fund was created from savings achieved by insourcing ICT services and also the re-provision of contracts for services such as Audio Visual support and software licencing. This fund has been used to make significant improvements to the ICT infrastructure in terms of the data network, server resilience and internet bandwidth and the Assembly now experiences far fewer interruptions to its ICT services as a result.

Notable investments which have delivered savings as well as improvements include:

- **New Telephony System** – In 2015 the Commission replaced its ageing and unpopular telephony system with a new IP solution, a change which has been welcomed by Members, AMSS and Commission staff alike, for the improvements in functionality and ease of use. The annual operating cost for the outgoing contracted service was £220K, the new system cost £350K to procure install and configure and has annual running costs of £37.5K. The new system will pay for itself by the Autumn of 2016 and will deliver a saving of £180K per year over its predecessor.
- **Broadband connections to Constituency Offices and Members’ home offices** – the old ECX service has been replaced at no cost to the Assembly, with an improved EBB service from BT, saving £45K per year and offering improved levels of reliability and support from the provider.
- **Data backup** – Under the outsourced ICT service, the Commission was contracted to use the Service Provider’s solution, at a cost of £96K. This contract expired at the end of 2014 and was replaced by a Microsoft solution that the Commission was already licenced for and some additional disk capacity at £20K.

– **Siambr Refresh** – In 2012, the Commission had to undertake essential maintenance work to the Plenary ICT support and electronic voting systems, installed when the Senedd opened in 2006 and which were becoming unreliable and difficult to support. This work was delivered under the outsourced ICT Service, at a cost of £650K and was limited to an upgrade of the software and a replacement of 60 mini PCs. During, 2015/16 and for the same cost, the Commission has completely replaced the Siambr software solution with the most modern parliamentary ICT software available on the market, all Siambr hardware has been replaced, including new Member desk IT and a comprehensive redesign of the Siambr desktop working space has been delivered, giving Members much more available space. This is a significant example of the Commission being able to deliver more benefits and much greater efficiency by having established an in-house ICT service.

Since transition in 2014 an investment fund for ICT has been 'ring-fenced' by the Investment and Resourcing Board (IRB), to ensure funds were available to improve ICT services and to deliver the ICT strategy. With much of this work now achieved, this protection has now effectively been removed (the £516K is indicative and relates to proposed expenditure, subject to business case). From 2017, there will be no ring-fenced ICT expenditure and bids for investment will be prioritised by IRB alongside other Commission needs. What this reveals is that we have effectively achieved our ICT strategy aims within budget and we are now in a position to release ongoing savings for wider investment.

Review of the Record of Proceedings – Translation

To achieve greatest efficiency from our resources, we have a hybrid system where the Translation and Reporting Service staff members undertake a combination of RoP editing work, text translation and/or interpretation. We supplement our internal resource with external contracted translators, to manage peaks in demand and for rapid turn-around times. We make increasing use of our machine translation (MT) solution and this has seen a significant shift in focus for our translators, from mainly translation to post translation editing.

Over the period of the Fourth Assembly, we have seen a 30% increase in the volume of translation and this has been met with no increase in external costs and with MT playing a significant role in meeting this demand, alongside improved processes within TRS.

We have also reviewed the nature of the work we send externally, with rates of pay for external text translation varying due to the deadlines for returning work. Generally we are now sending more work out externally at a lower rate.

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Increase or decrease on 2014-15	Overall trend from 2013-14
External translation costs	£246,254	£241,853	£235,461	Decrease of £7,637	Decrease of £10,793 4.4%
Words translated (internal and external)	3,884,400	4,637,000	5,052,000	Increase of 415,000	Increase of 1,167,600 30%
Work sent externally (words)	895,000	1,170,200	891,700	Decrease of 278,500	Decrease of 3,300 0.33%
Translation of the Record (words completed externally)	2,671,000	2,619,000	2,622,600	Increase of 3,600	Decrease 48,400 1.81%

Resource and Planning Management

Savings as a result of the Voluntary Exit Scheme will be in the order of £484K, arising from in-Service reallocation of responsibilities where posts are to be deleted, or restructuring to allow replacement at lower grades. A significant part of this saving has helped to offset the impact of the last round of capacity planning so, when we first drafted the staff budget for 2016-17, the total was £20.391m and by the time we actually allocated the budgets in March, the budget was £20.282m. This included the impact of VES but also the other changes and new posts which had been agreed in the meantime. Without the VES savings we would be looking to fund the additional resources from other areas of the Commission budget.

Procurement

Over the period of the Fourth Assembly there have been some significant savings achieved on contracts for the supply of services and goods; of particular note are the savings achieved on the provision of software licences, telephony and photocopiers. The table below provides further detail:

Date	Function/ Division	Contract Description	Contract Period (Years)	Budget Price/ Original Price Paid	Final Contract Value	Total Saving	Cash Release Saving						
							2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	
July 2012	Finance	Logica Payroll Contract	1	£19,992	£13,020	£6,972	£5,229	£1,743					
Oct 2012	Coordination Unit	PO Official Vehicle	3	£27,811	£22,496	£5,315	£1,034	£1,772	£1,772	£738			
2012-13	Estate and FM	Installation of Security Bollards	1	£139,355	£123,526	£15,829	£15,829						
May 2013	ICT	Mobile Devices	2	£135,600	£50,172	£85,428		£42,714	£42,714				
July 2013	Governance and Audit	Internal Audit Service	4	£65,452	£56,160	£9,292		£2,323	£2,323	£2,323	£2,323	£2,323	£2,323
Nov 2013	ICT	IT Software Support Licenses	4	£667,012	£491,213	£175,799		£43,950	£43,950	£43,950	£43,950	£43,950	£43,950
Dec 2013	ICT	Case Management System	2	£72,328	£71,158	£1,170		£585	£585				
Jan 2014	ICT	Sharepoint Website Development	1	£112,320	£100,800	£11,520		£11,520					
April 2014	ICT	BT PSTN lines	1	£84,800	£61,056	£23,744			£23,744				
May 2014	ICT	Legislative Workbench	2	£80,910	£45,000	£35,910			£17,955	£17,955			
August 2014	ICT	Field Engineers	4	£85,000	£65,000	£20,000			£3,333	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000	£6,667
August 2014	ICT	Telephony Service	1	£278,928	£263,084	£15,844			£15,844				
December 2014	ICT	Telephony Service 2015	3	£789,252	£353,119	£436,133				£145,378	£145,378	£145,378	£145,378
January 2015	ICT	Internet Connectivity - Colwyn Bay	4	£60,000	£34,505	£25,495			£1,062	£6,374	£6,374	£6,374	£11,685
April 2014	Estate and FM	Copiers	3	£420,483	£302,949	£117,534				£39,174	£39,174	£39,174	£39,174
ESTIMATED SAVINGS							£22,092	£104,607	£153,282	£260,891	£242,198	£249,177	

Looking forward into 2016 and beyond we have a number of high-value contracts to be re-let including Catering £1.7M, software licencing £540K, Occupational Health £150K and Telephony support £120K. The Catering contract has just been tendered, with Charlton House again being successful. We have agreed savings of £72K per year compared to the previous contract, delivering £360K over the 5-year life. This is the position at the outset and we will work to agree a further improved position as the contract proceeds.

MySenedd – Table Office Project

The Table office is the first port of call for any Member wishing to submit an item of business such as questions, statements of opinion, motions and amendments to motions. Currently, these business activities are supported by many manual processes, involving numbers of staff, multiple entry into different systems and tracking progress, informing Members and publishing the outcomes is difficult and inefficient.

The MySenedd Programme has identified improving the Table Office functionality as a high priority to deliver a more efficient way of processing these items that supports the business need and Members' preferences. The changes that have been identified in the Outline Business Case include:

- An interactive online service for Members to log and track business items in the language of their choice;
- Provide automatic notifications to Members to inform them on the progress of their business items;
- Members can use their ICT to communicate with the Table Office from any location;
- More accessible and easily searchable information;
- A solution for Table Office staff to conduct ballots for oral questions in an efficient and effective manner, in order to update Members quickly and accurately.
- Overall to release staff capacity from manual processing.

The Full Business Case for this project will be presented to IRB in September and will contain a detailed cost-benefit assessment.

Print room paper – use A3 instead of A4

Prior to November 2015, 80% of Print Room printing was done on A4 paper. However, an internal review has resulted in a significant turnaround whereby we now print 80% to A3 and then cut to size. The remaining 20% A4 paper is still used to allow for high quality for specific printing requests. As a result, the print paper costs from November 2015 to May 2016 have reduced by £8K and whilst some of this is as a result of less demand (dissolution), there is a clear cost-benefit arising from the change.



Our Performance - Measured

Performance summary – September 2015 to March 2016

Performance in providing outstanding parliamentary support

We maintained high levels of performance across this range of indicators, despite a peak in legislative scrutiny. In terms of performance against our corporate priorities, we made good progress in delivering the ICT strategy, preparing for the transition to the Fifth Assembly and enhancing our bi-lingual services. It is particularly pleasing that the Members' and Support Staff satisfaction levels significantly increased again in this area – a reflection that Members' views were listened to and acted upon.

Performance in engaging with the people of Wales and Promoting Wales

We continued to receive large numbers of visitors to the estate, with more during this period via organised tours. We grew our online presence significantly, and there are now over 50 social media accounts providing information in Welsh and English. Improvements were made to the Assembly website to allow the use of news articles to promote events and the promotion of these articles on the homepage.

The Education and Youth Engagement team made contact with all secondary schools in Wales during the Fourth Assembly, yet despite repeated efforts, 14 schools did not take the opportunity to engage with the Assembly. Communication with the schools, to encourage engagement, will continue into the Fifth Assembly. During the period April 2015-March 2016 we continued to enhance our offer to other 'new' groups outside the school setting, working with 178 youth groups. Through numerous engagement activities we engaged with 571 groups and worked with 20,967 young people.

Performance in using resources wisely

At the end of the reporting period, budgetary performance was achieved within target, and all savings were reinvested in improving Commission services.

The staff survey in May 2015 was the first time the Assembly included employee engagement as a measure. Benchmarking against the 101 individual Civil Service organisations from across the UK that participated in the Civil Service People Survey, only three have a higher engagement index score than the Assembly. Of those organisations with their main base in Wales, the Assembly's engagement index score was the highest.

Good progress was made in the first year of the new Carbon Reduction Strategy. Infrastructure improvements and continual efficiency improvements enabled us to operate at 11% below our baseline year, a significantly higher reduction than the 6% year-on-year needed.

PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

USING RESOURCES WISELY



72%

STAFF ENGAGEMENT LEVEL MEASURED
IN ANNUAL STAFF SURVEY
(AGAINST CIVIL SERVICE MEDIAN OF 59%)

7.6%

REDUCTION IN EMISSIONS
(6% ANNUAL TARGET)



0.13%

BUDGET UNDERSPEND
(TARGET OF <1%)

450

PERMANENT, POLITICALLY
IMPARTIAL STAFF WORK FOR
THE ASSEMBLY COMMISSION



163,158



















VISITORS TO THE
SENEDD AND
PIERHEAD















12%

REDUCTION IN COST OF ICT SERVICES

Summary of Key Performance Indicators

Providing outstanding parliamentary support	April 2014 - March 2015	April 2015 - March 2016
<p>KPI 1: Timeliness and service delivery A consistently high performance on timeliness of issuing committee papers, briefings and Record of Proceedings, despite a peak in legislative scrutiny.</p>	 green	 green
<p>KPI 2: Professional development A review of language learning provision for Members and staff led to the creation of a new Language Skills team. The Commission continued to share its experience and expertise on working bilingually and was represented on the Ministerial Working Group on the Welsh language in Local Government administration and economic development.</p>	 amber	 green
Engage with the people of Wales and promote Wales	April 2014 - March 2015	April 2015 - March 2016
<p>KPI 3: Engagement at the Assembly Although visitor numbers decreased, the number engaging through tours increased. Visitor satisfaction levels remained above target.</p>	 green	 green
<p>KPI 4: External profile of the Assembly Using social media, our online presence grew significantly. Considerable media coverage for the work of committees continues.</p>	 green	 green
Use resources wisely	April 2014 - March 2015	April 2015 - March 2016
<p>KPI 5: Budgetary performance A strong position: delivering an underspend of 0.13 per cent of the budget, well within the less than one per cent target; also exceeded the value for money target.</p>	 green	 green
<p>KPI 6: Staff Absence management continued to be a strategic priority, with absence levels giving some cause for concern. Enhancements to our staff performance management and development approach were introduced and positive feedback received.</p>	 amber	 amber
<p>KPI 7: ICT customer service Improvements were made through ongoing training for Service Desk agents. This was reflected via an increase in customer satisfaction scores.</p>	 amber	 amber
<p>KPI 8: Governance Despite an increase in the number of Freedom of Information requests received, the number answered within the statutory deadline increased.</p>	 green	 green
<p>KPI 9: Sustainability Good progress continued against the new target for reduction in total energy. A new target of zero tonnes of waste to landfill by March 2021 was set and work began towards achieving it.</p>	 green	 green

Progress on Corporate Plan priorities	April 2014 - March 2015	April 2015 - March 2016
Provide outstanding parliamentary support Commission staff supported committees to produce legacy reports which described the impact of their work during the Fourth Assembly, and made recommendations to inform the work of successor committees in the Fifth Assembly.	 green	 green
Engage with the people of Wales and promote Wales Good levels of engagement with Assembly business continued. Social media engagement made significant improvements.	 green	 green
Use resources wisely The work to refresh the Senedd Siambr ICT and improve the ergonomics was almost complete at the year end. Improved wireless networking was delivered to all constituency offices, and changes were made to help drive down energy usage and achieve sustainability targets.	 green	 green
Member satisfaction survey	April 2014 - March 2015	April 2015 - March 2016
Provide outstanding parliamentary support The satisfaction survey 2015 showed a significant improvement in scores for overall support for Plenary and committee meetings, up from 7.7 to 8.7 and 7.9 to 8.4 respectively.	 green	 green
Engage with the people of Wales and promote Wales The satisfaction survey 2015 showed a marked improvement in the score for overall effectiveness on engagement, up from 6.7 to 7.4.	 amber	 green
Use resources wisely The satisfaction survey 2015 showed a significant improvement in scores on a range of services to Members, including allowances and staffing, and ICT, up from 8.7 to 9.3 and 7.5 to 8.4 respectively.	 green	 green

Key



RED: There are significant issues impacting the achievement of business objectives. To achieve delivery, changes must be made to timing, costs and/or scope.



AMBER: There are issues or risks which must be addressed. However, successful delivery is achievable without major impacts to budget, service standards or target dates.

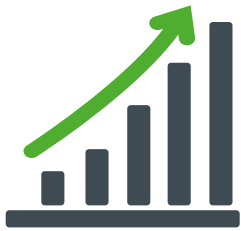


GREEN: Work is meeting agreed standards or is proceeding to plan. All known risks are being managed.

Consultation and Feedback on our Performance

The Assembly Commission has a continued commitment to build organisational capability, against a backdrop of changing organisational need; to ensure the Assembly has skilled, motivated people in the right posts, ready to deliver outstanding parliamentary services.

Our most recent staff survey, benchmarked against civil service comparators, continues to demonstrate a very positive picture of continued high levels of employee engagement, a true commitment to delivering high quality services, and positive reinforcement that the Assembly is a great place to work.



WE HAD A **85%** RESPONSE RATE IN OUR LATEST SURVEY

THE WELSH GOVERNMENT HAD A **62%** RESPONSE RATE TO THEIR LATEST SURVEY

THE CIVIL SERVICE RESPONSE RATE IS **65%**

85% 2016

93% 2015

77% 2013

384

MEMBERS OF STAFF RESPONDED TO THE SURVEY

KEY THEMES

The proportion of employees who selected either 'agree' or 'strongly agree' has been calculated as an average percentage of positive responses within each theme to provide a comparative measure.

Me and my work

Having the tools and time to do the job

76%

Organisational objective and purpose

Understanding of what the Assembly is here to do

82%

My manager

Your relationship with your immediate supervisor

68%

My team

Your relationship with your immediate colleagues

84%

Inclusion and fair treatment

Feeling valued and respected for who you are

83%

Leadership and managing change

Managerial relationships and effective organisational change management

52%

ENGAGEMENT INDEX



WE HAD A **72%** ENGAGEMENT INDEX SCORE

THE WELSH GOVERNMENT HAD **63%** ENGAGEMENT INDEX SCORE IN THEIR LAST SURVEY

THE CIVIL SERVICE MEDIAN IS **58%**

ENGAGEMENT INDEX

Breakdown of engagement index:

Q13a I am proud when I tell others I am part of the Assembly Commission	79%
Q13b I would recommend the Assembly Commission as a great place to work	81%
Q13c I feel a strong personal attachment to the Assembly Commission	64%
Q13d The Assembly Commission inspires me to do the best in my job	62%
Q13e The Assembly Commission motivates me to help it achieve its objectives	58%

MOST/ LEAST POSITIVE QUESTION RESPONSES

Based on total positive percentage response per question, the following tables show questions with the most and least positive responses.

✓ Top 5 questions	Positive percentage
I am trusted to carry out my job effectively	87.9%
The people in my team can be relied upon to help when things get difficult in my job	87.6%
The people in my team work together to find ways to improve the service we provide	86.8%
I am treated with respect by the people I work with	85.4%
I understand how my work contributes to the Assembly Commission's strategic goals	83.0%
✗ Bottom 5 questions	Positive percentage
I think it is safe to challenge the way things are done in the Assembly	40.7%
I have the opportunity to contribute my views before decisions are made that affect me	41.0%
Poor performance is dealt with effectively in my team	45.6%
When changes are made in the Assembly they are usually for the better	48.3%
Senior managers in the Assembly are sufficiently visible	48.9%

