

Comisiwn y Cynulliad Assembly Commission

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru
National
Assembly for
Wales



AC(4)2014(10) Paper 4

Date: 7 July 2014

Time: 14:00-15:30

Venue: Presiding Officer's office

Author name and contact number: Claire Clancy, ext 8233

Highlight report to the Commission

Contents

Highlight report to the Commission.....	2
1.0 Introduction.....	2
A. Strategic Goal – provide outstanding parliamentary support	2
2.0 Influencing and preparing for constitutional change	2
3.0 Supporting Committees	3
4.0 Remuneration Board	5
5.0 Information and Communications Technology.....	5
6.0 Machine translation	6
7.0 Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for AMs and AMSS.....	7
8.0 Engagement and work of the Assembly on EU affairs	7
B. Strategic goal – engage with the people of Wales and promote Wales.	11
9.0 Partnership work.....	11
10.0 Youth Engagement.....	11
11.0 Media coverage of Assembly business	12
12.0 Promoting Wales Internationally	13
C. Strategic goal – use resources wisely.....	15
13.0 Staff Matters	15
14.0 Equality and accessibility.....	15
15.0 Events on the Assembly estate	16
16.0 Sustainability initiatives	17
D. Financial Update	18
17.0 2013-14 Budget	18
E. Freedom of Information (FOI)	19

July 2014

Highlight report to the Commission

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The highlight report outlines work that has recently been undertaken, or is underway, to make progress towards the Commission's strategic goals. The report aims to provide Commissioners with useful information so that they can perform their role of oversight and holding management to account. This report gives an update on key activities and projects since April 2014.

A. Strategic Goal – provide outstanding parliamentary support

2.0 Influencing and preparing for constitutional change

2.1 The Wales Bill has continued its passage through the UK Parliament. Following the Presiding Officer and Finance Committee Chair's evidence on the draft Bill in January 2014, we have had regular dialogue with the Welsh Government and Wales Office to ensure the Assembly's views are understood and responded to where possible. We are also considering the implications of recommendations as they are tabled by both the UK Government and Opposition.

2.2 A Legislative Consent Memorandum (LCM) concerning the Wales Bill was laid on 1 May 2014, and was referred by the Business Committee for consideration by the Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee and Finance Committee. Following the Committees' reports, the LCM was considered in plenary on 1 July 2014.

2.3 Subject to its consideration by Parliament, the Wales Act will enable a number of pieces of Welsh legislation to be brought forward. For example, the Act will feature the devolution of legislative control over the Assembly's budgetary procedures. To ensure that effective budget processes are put in place, the Finance Committee is currently conducting an inquiry on "Best Practice Budget Processes". This area of work, including related Welsh legislation, is likely to create pressures on the Finance Committee and our staff resources over the next few years.

2.4 Work is on-going to assess the potential impact of the recommendations arising from Silk Commission's second report.

**AC(4)2014(10) Paper 4
Highlight Report to the Commission**

3.0 Supporting Committees

Legislative programme

3.1 The Assembly's legislative workload is increasing and is projected to be heavy for the rest of this Assembly. The Business Committee, as well as the Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee, are looking closely at our approach to making laws in the Fourth Assembly.

3.2 The following Bills are currently live:

Short title	Member in Charge	Current status
Agricultural Sector (Wales) Bill	Alun Davies	- Awaiting Supreme Court judgement 9 July.
Recovery of Medical Costs for Asbestos Diseases (Wales) Bill	Mick Antoniw	- Awaiting Supreme Court judgement.
Higher Education (Wales) Bill	Huw Lewis	- CYPE Committee due to report to the Assembly on the general principles by 3 October 2014. - Stage 2 proceedings to be completed by 28 November 2014, subject to the general principles of the Bill being agreed.
Housing (Wales) Bill	Carl Sargeant	- Stage 4 plenary debate scheduled for 8 July.
Holiday Caravan Sites (Wales) Bill	Darren Millar	- CELG Committee due to report to the Assembly on the general principles by 24 October 2014. - Stage 2 proceedings to be completed by 6 February 2015, subject to the general principles of the Bill being agreed.
Gender-based Violence, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Bill	Lesley Griffiths	- Introduced on 30 June.
Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill	Jeff Cuthbert	- To be introduced on 7 July.
Financial Education and Inclusion (Wales) Bill	Bethan Jenkins	- To be introduced on 16 July.

AC(4)2014(10) Paper 4 Highlight Report to the Commission

- 3.3 As part of our continuing efforts to enhance the support we provide to Members on the legislative process, we have produced a diagram of the key stages (Annex A).

Promoting Assembly business through social media

- 3.4 There have been a variety of social media firsts for the Assembly during this period. We produced a video to explain the work of the Committee for the Scrutiny of the First Minister in May and invited questions from the public (for Members' consideration) by using Twitter hashtag #askfirstmin. This was also the first time we had uploaded content to YouTube that provided the choice of English or Welsh subtitles within the same video.
- 3.5 We tweeted live bilingually from a committee room during the PAC Grants Management session with Sir Derek Jones in June. Comments from Members, the public (via twitter) and witnesses on this approach were mostly positive.
- 3.6 An evaluation exercise is underway to ensure we learn from this trial. During the PAC session, @SeneddPAC achieved three 'Top Tweet' statuses for engaging content according to Twitter. On the day, a 'Reach' in excess of 28,000 was achieved with a top-level impression of 117,357 - remarkable for an account with a relatively small following. Both the Wales Audit Office and Welsh Government are eager to learn about our work in this area.
- 3.7 In one of the most unique social media exercises to be undertaken anywhere in the world, we have run a campaign on Twitter to invite questions for the Presiding Officer to answer. This initiative is unique because the Presiding Officer will answer the questions personally on YouTube.

Supporting Committee inquiries

- 3.8 A number of public engagement activities have supported committee work during this period, including:
- five focus groups have been held to date with cancer patients and carers, for the inquiry into progress on implementing the Welsh Government's Cancer Delivery Plan;
 - an event to discuss the inquiry into the availability of bariatric services;

AC(4)2014(10) Paper 4 Highlight Report to the Commission

- a web-chat and survey involving students for the STEM skills inquiry;
- workshops with Community groups to discuss and complete a survey on the inquiry into petitions concerning the funding of bus services;
- a survey for the consultation into the Financial Education and Inclusion (Wales) Bill; and
- to date, over 1,900 children and young people have completed young-people friendly questionnaires as part of the recycling inquiry.

4.0 Remuneration Board

4.1 The Remuneration Board is currently considering the full package of remuneration for Assembly Members in the Fifth Assembly. This includes a review of their salaries, pension arrangements and allowances. The Board will shortly issue two consultations: one on detailed proposals for a new AM pension scheme and another on some proposed changes to matters relating to the arrangements for AM support staff.

4.2 The Board will continue to meet regularly with Assembly Members, Party Leaders and Assembly Member Support Staff to receive a wide representation of political views on every strand of its remit.

5.0 Information and Communications Technology

Siambri Refit/Plenary Business Support Project

5.1 A Members' survey to determine preferences for how ICT will function within Plenary has now taken place. Commissioners received feedback on this exercise on 26 June. Results are being reviewed to determine the potential scope of the changes we can make to best meet Members' needs, including any changes to hardware and desks within the Siambri. Alongside this, we are also considering replacing the Chamber software system, which would allow us to remove our dependency on the current Medialon system and improve the voting functions.

Future Services Transition Project

- 5.2 The project is nearing completion. The team is working closely with the Welsh Government on the formal separation of the ICT networks, with our priority being the continuation of Siambr ICT services for Welsh Ministers. We will shortly be awarding the “remote” engineers contract, which provides ICT engineer support for Constituency Offices and homeworkers. We are in the process of bringing all the BT lines and circuits, currently managed by Atos, under the control of the Assembly. The project remains within time and budget parameters and will run until 31 July 2014, which is the point when all remaining contract arrangements with Atos come to an end.

Senedd.tv and the Assembly Website

- 5.3 The projects to revamp the Assembly’s websites are progressing well. The new Senedd.tv site is nearing completion – the site will enable users to watch, pause and replay live broadcasts, and allow users to select clips of meetings that can then be shared or embedded onto their own websites. It also has closer links with the Record of Proceedings, and a ‘Senedd Extra’ section containing Events, press releases, explainer videos and videos linked to consultations and inquiries. It will be released in September, following extensive testing over the summer.
- 5.4 The new Sharepoint platform for assemblywales.org is currently being tested, and over 12,000 pages and 100,000 documents have been successfully migrated from the current site. While the design will be similar, the new site will be far more ‘mobile friendly’, and have enhanced searchability functions. To coincide with the release of the new web platform, the Assembly will change its web domain name and email address suffixes to assembly.wales and cynulliad.cymru in early October.

6.0 Machine translation

- 6.1 We are continuing to work with Microsoft Research to develop the quality of the Welsh translation system. We will be reviewing the Guidance for the use of machine translation in light of feedback from Members and staff.

AC(4)2014(10) Paper 4 Highlight Report to the Commission

6.2 Work is continuing to review translation processes and evaluate the impact of the machine translation system on the capacity of the translation team. We aim to conclude the work in the autumn term when we will provide a further update to the Commission.

7.0 **Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for AMs and AMSS**

7.1 Since April 2014 a wide range of training interventions and development opportunities have been attended. During the first quarter of 2014-15, 25 Assembly Members participated in some form of CPD activity. In total, 68 CPD opportunities were taken up by AMs between April and June 2014.

7.2 During the same period a total of 68 AMSS took up 141 CPD opportunities. Activities included:

- Financial Scrutiny
- CPD for Committee Chair
- Welsh Lessons
- Management and Leadership training
- Personal Independence Payment
- Further and Higher Education courses
- Recruitment training for office managers
- Social Media
- First Aid at Work
- Induction programme

8.0 **Engagement and work of the Assembly on EU affairs**

Activities of Committee of the Regions (CoR) Members and participation of AMs in EU conferences

8.1 Mick Antoniw AM has been actively involved in the response of the Committee of the Regions to the Ukrainian crisis. In April he had a bilateral meeting with the Deputy Vice-Prime Minister of the Ukraine, and spoke on behalf of his political group during a debate with the Vice-Prime Ministers at the CoR plenary session in Brussels. He visited the Ukraine on 2-4 July as part of a high level political delegation from the CoR, and met with the Ukrainian Prime Minister.

8.2 On 12 June Joyce Watson AM, in her capacity as Welsh representative in the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, spoke at a conference organised by Congress in Strasbourg

AC(4)2014(10) Paper 4 Highlight Report to the Commission

on the Welsh experiences of youth engagement and citizenship, with Tricia Jones from Funky Dragon.

8.3 Rhodri Glyn Thomas AM spoke in two panel sessions at a conference on EU Economic Governance and fiscal decentralisation organised by the CoR in Brussels on 24 June.

8.4 Deputy Presiding Officer, David Melding AM, chaired a panel session on the scrutiny of regional governments on 2 July, at a conference in the CoR in Brussels on strengthening the role of regional parliaments in the EU, co-organised by the University of Tuebingen and the CoR.

CALRE (EU network of regional legislatures)

8.5 The Presiding Officer, Dame Rosemary Butler AM, attended the second CALRE Standing Committee of 2014 in Brussels on 20 June, and highlighted the need for a Gender Equality Working Group to be re-established by CALRE in 2015, highlighting the work of the Assembly on Women in Public Life. Peter Black AM attended a CALRE e-democracy working group in Seville during June.

Relations/work with the UK legislatures on EU matters

8.6 On 9 June Deputy Presiding Officer and Chair of CLA Committee David Melding AM attended the EC-UK Forum in the House of Commons. This is the regular informal meeting of Chairs of European Committees (and equivalents) in the UK and Devolved Legislatures.

EU-related work in Committees

8.7 On 15 May the Presiding Officer, Committee Chairs and Assembly CoR representatives met the Greek Ambassador to the UK His Excellency, Mr Konstantinos Bikas, to discuss the Greek EU Presidency. The Assembly jointly hosted, with the Greek Ambassador and European Commission's Office in Wales, an EU reception to mark Europe Day.

8.8 On 4 June there was a plenary debate on Constitutional and Legislative Affairs (CLA) Committee report and the Welsh Government's response to its inquiry into Wales's role in EU decision-making.

AC(4)2014(10) Paper 4 Highlight Report to the Commission

- 8.9 CLA Committee in June submitted a response to the UK Government's call for evidence on subsidiarity and proportionality, which is part of the Balance of Competences Review of EU and UK competences launched in the summer of 2012. The response drew attention to the lack of consideration in the UK Government's analysis of the role of devolved legislatures in monitoring subsidiarity. It highlighted the experiences of the Assembly of the EU Reasoned Opinion Procedure on subsidiarity, including the positive relationships with the UK Parliament in this.
- 8.10 On 30 June CLA Committee considered draft EU legislation to introduce a ban on driftnets, and agreed to raise concerns regarding the proportionality of the proposed legislation with the Committee. Environment and Sustainability (E&S) Committee has written to the Welsh Government to seek clarity on its view on the draft proposals. It is likely to question the Minister on this at its session in the Royal Welsh Show in July.
- 8.11 On 9 July Environment and Sustainability Committee will receive technical briefings from Welsh Government and European Commission officials on draft EU legislation that will permit Member States to ban GMOs authorised for cultivation at EU level.
- 8.12 Enterprise and Business Committee agreed its report into EU Funding Opportunities 2014-2020 and this will be published in Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff on 16 July.
- 8.13 EU Update sessions were held with the Children and Young People Committee and Communities, Equalities and Local Government Committee in December, with follow up being undertaken scoping potential visits to the OECD (CYP) and Brussels during 2014 and 2015 on particular priority areas of these Committees' work.

Proactive EU outputs

- 8.14 The EU Office and the Research Service have produced a range of proactive publications to support Members work on EU issues. These include the EU Weekly Update, Europe Matters (published on 9 May), the @SeneddEurope twitter feed, and EU Policy Updates and blogs on draft legislative proposals including driftnets regulation, discards ban (under the Common Fisheries Policy), banning cultivation of GMOs,

AC(4)2014(10) Paper 4 Highlight Report to the Commission

organic farming, marine environment review, alien invasive species and the European Parliament elections.

Other EU-related work

- 8.15 Shan Morgan, the UK's Deputy Ambassador to the EU in Brussels visited the Assembly on 3 July to meet with the Deputy Presiding Officer and a number of AMs to discuss developments at EU level of most relevance to Wales, including the recent European Parliament elections and appointment of top positions in EU Institutions. Shan had a similar visit to the Assembly last July.

EU Office work experience

- 8.16 Osian McGuinness a 17-year old Welsh Baccalaureate student from Mold spent three days in the EU Office in Brussels on work experience, at the end of June to learn about the work of the Assembly in Brussels.

B. Strategic goal – engage with the people of Wales and promote Wales

9.0 Partnership work

9.1 Between March and June, we have worked with the following organisations to raise awareness and share information about the Assembly and its work:

- Digartref Ynys Môn
- Women Making a Difference
- Children in Wales
- Crickhowell Ladies Probus
- Communities First groups
- TPAS Cymru
- U3A
- Welsh Refugee Council
- Chwarae Teg

9.2 A business sector information and awareness workshop was arranged at the Assembly in June for business representatives who had the opportunity to meet Members of the Enterprise and Business Committee.

10.0 Youth Engagement

10.1 On 16 July, young people will take part in an event to showcase the excellent youth engagement work already undertaken by the Assembly and present our vision for improving youth engagement services over time. A Question Time event will be held in the morning with young people from schools across Wales, hosted by BBC Wales' Nick Servini. At lunchtime, young people from youth groups who participated in the youth engagement questionnaire last Autumn, together with the Children's Commissioner for Wales, will join school groups in the Senedd. The lunchtime event will include an education fair where young people can learn how to get involved in the debate.

10.2 As part of the event, Party Leaders have been asked to sign a Young Person's Charter to demonstrate their commitment to young people, that the Assembly is reaching out to them and will take their opinions seriously. The Presiding Officer will make a statement in Plenary welcoming the Charter and outlining the Assembly's commitment to

AC(4)2014(10) Paper 4 Highlight Report to the Commission

youth engagement. Party Leaders will also have the opportunity to speak at that time.

Outreach

- 10.3 Since Easter we have delivered learning opportunities to 79 groups, 2,599 pupils. During the fortnight that marked 15 years of devolution we collated ideas from 22 schools on what they would change for Wales in the next 15 years, which we will share with Members soon. In July there will be a week of activities planned for Welsh Baccalaureate students at Aberystwyth University, in conjunction with the Politics Department and The National Library for Wales.
- 10.4 On 14 and 15 June the Assembly bus attended the All Wales Scouts Camp in Builth Wells to engage with children and young people from all over the country. We had over 1000 visitors to the bus during the weekend and more than 700 questionnaires based on the Environment and Sustainability Committee's Recycling Inquiry were completed.

11.0 Media coverage of Assembly business

- 11.1 Assembly committees have attracted a great deal of media coverage over the past three months with considerable attention paid to a number of reports.

April Highlights

- 11.2 A report from the Public Accounts Committee on unscheduled care in the NHS also received a great deal of coverage including from [BBC Wales News](#), [ITV Wales](#) and the [Western Mail/Walesonline](#).

May Highlights

- 11.3 The Finance Wales report from the Finance Committee was picked up by a number of outlets including [BBC Wales](#) and the [Western Mail/Walesonline](#) and which included [a follow-up opinion piece too](#). Pleasingly, the report was also covered by some more specialist titles including Swansea Business Life and [Insider Media](#).
- 11.4 The Health and Social Care Committee's report on Bariatric services in Wales attracted considerable interest including from the [BBC Wales News](#), [Western Mail](#), Daily Post, [South Wales Evening Post](#) and [ITV Wales](#). Further interest came from specialist titles including the [Royal](#)

AC(4)2014(10) Paper 4 Highlight Report to the Commission

College of Surgeons, Public Sector and Health Sector. Broadcast coverage also came from, among others, Radio Wales and Swansea Sound/The Wave.

11.5 And in June, while there have been fewer committee reports, coverage has still been achieved for evidence sessions and new inquiries. In particular, the Environment and Sustainability Committee's consultation on recycling in Wales has created huge interest among local titles including the South Wales Evening Post, Penarth Times, South Wales Argus and Caerphilly Campaign.

12.0 Promoting Wales Internationally

12.1 The National Assembly for Wales' Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) hosted the 44th British Isles and Mediterranean Regional (BIMR) Conference on the Assembly estate between 27 and 29 May 2014.

12.2 The Conference was a great success and provided a platform for positioning the Assembly as a distinct, innovative and progressive international legislature. It attracted over 50 delegates from 15 UK and international legislatures, including international observers representing the CPA Australia, Canada and Caribbean Regions

12.3 The BIMR Conference allowed us the opportunity to *make the most of our estate* with the conference taking place over three days in the Senedd, the Pierhead and Siambr Hywel. It also delivered two firsts for the Senedd – hosting an international conference in the Siambr and also a spectacular Gala dinner in the Neuadd.

12.4 The conference gave the Assembly the opportunity to discuss and showcase our work on:

- the Assembly's positive record of Women in Democracy and the Presiding Officer's Campaign for Women in Public Life;
- the Assembly as a fully Bilingual Legislature, our Official Languages Act and Machine Translation; and
- the Assembly's Education Service and the ways in which we are Engaging with Young Citizens.

12.5 Feedback received from the numerous delegations participating in the conference has been overwhelmingly positive. These include

AC(4)2014(10) Paper 4
Highlight Report to the Commission

congratulations to the CPA Wales Branch for producing such a “*friendly, efficient, enjoyable and useful conference*” and the BIMR’s Chief Executive describing our conference as “*innovative, novel and.. quite the warmest conference I have attended in the CPA BIMR – the CPA Wales Team have set a very high benchmark*”

- 12.6 A full conference report will be produced over the Summer recess and the BIMR2014 webpage will be updated and maintained on the Assembly’s website as a positive legacy of the conference.
- 12.7 In addition to the BIMR conference, the main international events and visits, including diplomatic visits, are listed in Annex B.

C. Strategic goal – use resources wisely

13.0 Staff Matters

Apprenticeship Scheme 2013-14

- 13.1 Since our six new apprentices joined the Assembly in February 2014, they have spent their time working alongside Commission staff and have started an NVQ level 2 in Business Administration. The apprentices have also taken advantage of the learning and development opportunities within the Commission and have participated in a number of learning activities, including Welsh language lessons, mentoring and coaching sessions, secondment and job shadowing opportunities and numerous training courses. The apprentices are currently documenting their learning in video format, in collaboration with the Broadcasting team, in order to promote apprenticeships throughout Wales.

14.0 Equality and accessibility

- 14.1 We have produced our Annual Equality Report 2013-2014. The Report includes an update on our priorities, the publication and analysis of staff monitoring and recruitment data, and an Equal Pay Analysis. The Equal Pay Analysis did not identify any areas of concern in relation to pay differentials. The report will be published before the summer recess.

External recognition

- 14.2 The Assembly Commission has received a number of accolades demonstrating our commitment to fully supporting our staff and fostering an inclusive working environment:
- **Investors in People Gold Standard** - the highest recognition of our commitment to our staff.
 - top employer for **working families**.
 - **The Times Top 50 Employers for Women**.
 - **Action on Hearing Loss Charter Mark**, which demonstrates that we are committed to meeting the needs of staff and service users who are deaf or have a hearing loss.
 - top gay-friendly Public Sector Employer in Wales, and ranked number 11 in **Stonewall's UK Workplace Equality Index 2014**.

AC(4)2014(10) Paper 4 Highlight Report to the Commission

Our LGB staff network has also been recognised as a Star Performer network.

Events and Activities

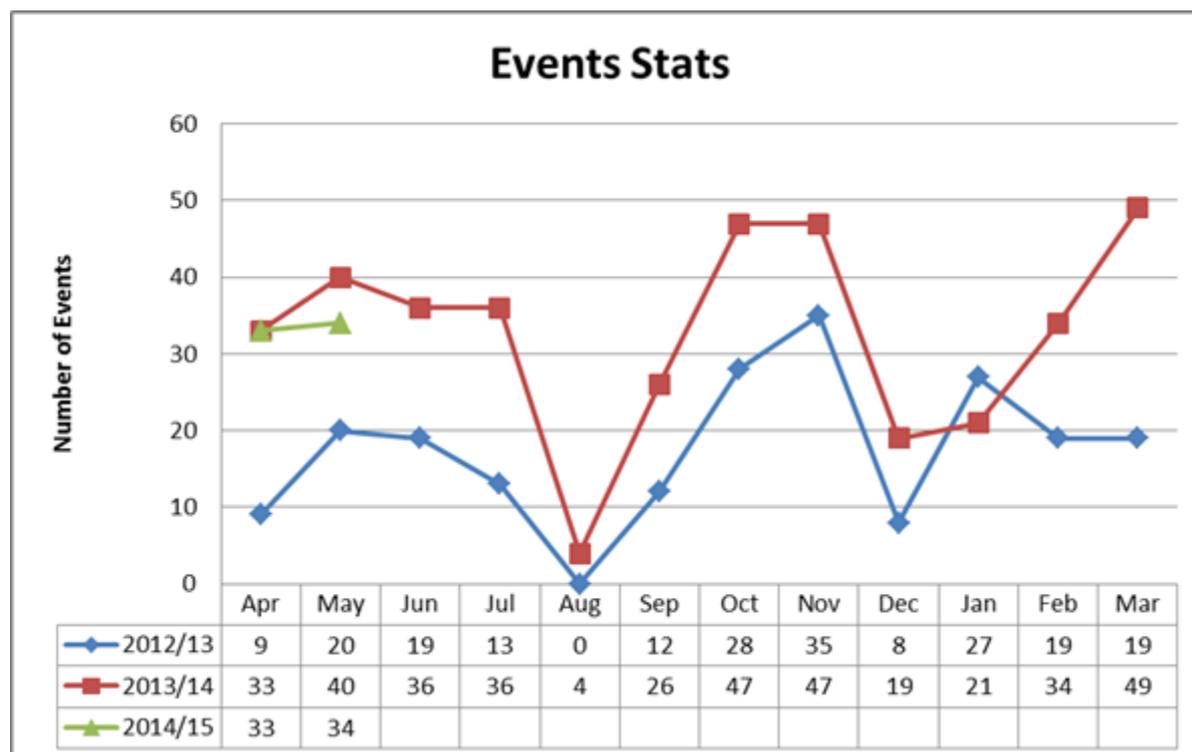
- 14.3 We have promoted and celebrated a range of equality events including International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia; Gypsy, Roma, Traveller History Month; Black History Month; International Day of Disabled People; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans History Month; and International Women's Day.
- 14.4 In addition to providing a subtitled version of First Minister's Questions (FMQs) we have also worked with S4C to pilot the provision of British Sign Language (BSL) interpretation for FMQs. From September 2014, all FMQs will be archived and available within 24 hours on our YouTube channel with subtitles and BSL interpretation.
- 14.5 In response to the low numbers of women giving evidence to the Enterprise and Business Committee we worked with Chwarae Teg to identify and train nine women to increase their confidence and raise awareness about giving evidence.
- 14.6 We are working with the National Autistic Society to achieve accreditation as an autism-friendly service provider.

Supporting the Assembly's Black Minority Ethnic (BME) Staff and Increasing BME Representation in the Workforce

- 14.7 A nine month project started in June 2014 and is headed by a BME Action Plan Coordinator, who will take forward our work to encourage more Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) people to apply for work at the Assembly and to support the development of our BME staff. The project is designed to review current practice and maximise opportunities to increase representation.

15.0 Events on the Assembly estate

- 15.1 The number of Assembly Member sponsored events on the Assembly's estate has risen significantly in the last two years, as can be seen in the graph below, and bookings have been taken up to the next election.



16.0 Sustainability initiatives

Developing a Carbon Reduction Routemap

- 16.1 The Assembly Commission has successfully achieved a 34% reduction in energy emissions since 2008/09, which is a significant accomplishment and an excellent standard of performance within the Welsh public sector. Following this successful work with the Carbon Trust and partners, further technical and specialist support has been provided by Arup and the Carbon Trust to develop a Carbon Reduction Routemap, to assist our sustainability objectives and achievements to date.
- 16.2 The Routemap was agreed by the Commission on 26 June. It identifies practical and achievable actions to reduce emissions, maintain a comfortable working environment and manage utility budgets against a trend of annually increasing utility costs. The work will be funded from existing budgets and much of it is linked to the necessary replacement of equipment at the end of its operational life, providing opportunities for more efficient and sustainable replacements. The Routemap will enable the Commission to achieve a further 30% reduction in carbon emissions by 2021.

D. Financial Update

17.0 2013-14 Budget

17.1 The Commission's key financial performance indicators have been to deliver a year end outturn underspend of 1% or less than the Budget, to achieve £500k of Value for Money savings and to pay invoices and expense claims within 10 days. We have met all of these targets. Our year end underspend, subject to final audit verification, was £34k and thus delivers a 0.07% underspend on the £49m Budget.

17.2 The annual audit started on 3 June 2014, with the final accounts due to be presented to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee on Monday 7 July 2014, when we anticipate receiving their recommendation for the Chief Executive to sign the accounts.

18.0 2014-15 Financial position

18.1 In approving the 2015-16 Budget Strategy, Commissioners confirmed their approach will continue to focus on driving up efficiency and securing value for money. The budget provides funding for continued innovation and delivers the Commission's on-going commitment to the quality of services to Members and the public. Longer term plans and scenarios are also being considered to ensure a smooth transition for the next Commission in 2016.

18.2 Work is in hand to agree the 2015-16 draft budget document before the end of summer recess 2014. The anticipated laying date will be late September 2014.

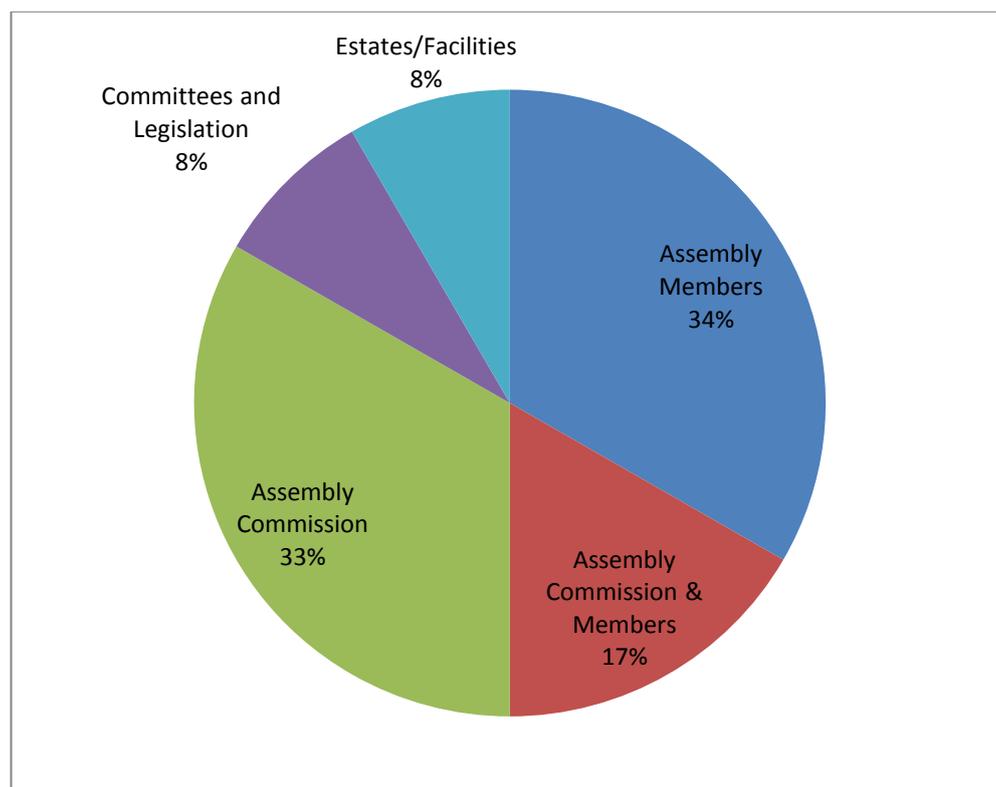
E. Freedom of Information (FOI)

19.0 FOI requests for the period April-June 2014

19.1 A list of information disclosed since the last report under the Freedom of Information Act is attached at Annex C. This has been categorised to indicate the subject matter of FOI requests in the period. The list also includes details of information withheld due to FOI exemptions, those that have been partially released and those where no information is held.

19.2 The chart below shows the 12 requests as they have been categorised. There were no time and cost exemptions applied.

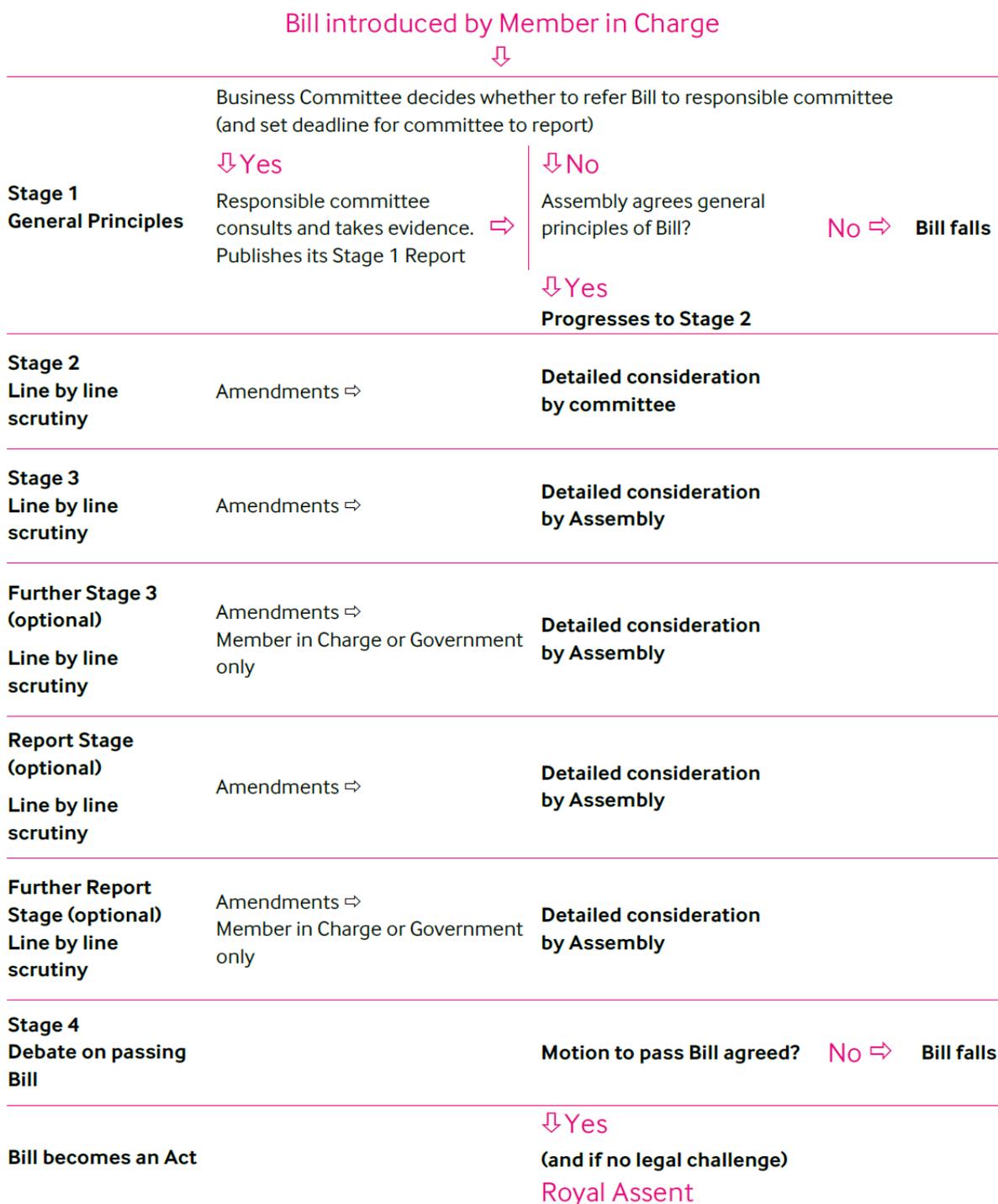
FOI requests by category (October 2013 to March 2014)



AC(4)2014(10) Paper 4 Highlight Report to the Commission

Annex A

Summary of process for Assembly scrutiny of Public Bills



Annex B - International events and visits, including diplomatic visits

Date	Details
20 May	The Presiding Officer hosted a visit by the Canadian Senate Speaker the Hon. Noël A. Kinsella
12-14 June	Assembly Commissioner Peter Black AM represented the Presiding Officer at the CALRE (Conference of European regional Legislative Assemblies) Working Group Meeting on e-democracy hosted by the Andalucía Parliament in Seville, where he gave a presentation on the Assembly's positive experience in this area.
16 June	Joyce Watson AM represented the Assembly on the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly (BIPA) 's Committee D (which focuses on Environment and Social Issues) meeting in Westminster, as part of its inquiry into <i>Travellers and the Roma Population</i>
20 June	The Presiding Officer attended the CALRE Standing Committee held in Brussels
30 June	The British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly (BIPA) 's Committee C (which focuses on Economic Matters and on which Lindsay Whittle AM sits) met at the Assembly to take evidence, as part of its inquiry into <i>Youth Unemployment</i>

Diplomatic visits

The Presiding Officers also hosted the following diplomatic visits to Cardiff Bay. During these meetings, they gave an overview of the Assembly and its work and discussed the importance of promoting Wales and Welsh democracy on the world stage, and the positive role of diplomatic relations in achieving this:

- 8 May - Mr Ranjan Mathai, The Indian High Commissioner to the UK
- 14 May - Mr Diego Gómez-Pickering, The Mexican Ambassador to the UK

AC(4)2014(10) Paper 4
Highlight Report to the Commission

- 15 May - His Excellency Mr Konstantinos Bikas, The Greek Ambassador to the UK
- 20 June - Her Excellency Aloun Ndombet-Assamba , The Jamaican High Commissioner to the UK
- 26 June - His Excellency Dr Peter Ammon, The German Ambassador to the UK

AC(4)2014(10) Paper 4
Highlight Report to the Commission

ANNEX C

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS

April - June 2014

13 requests for information were received during the period April 2014 - June 2014. The categories are indicative of the nature of the request.

1. Information released following access to information requests

Assembly Commission & Members

- Browser history of political party websites

Assembly Commission

- Process for dealing with public enquiries - Head of Front of House dealt with the request informally.

2. Information Withheld

Assembly Commission & Members

- Bullying and complaints. **Relied on section 40 (Personal information).**

Assembly Members

- Assembly Member's salary increase. **Relied on section 36 (Effective conduct of public affairs).**

Assembly Commission

- Health or welfare affected by witnessing hunger strikes. **Relied on section 14 (Vexatious request).**
- Correspondence with protestor and a member of the public. **Relied on section 40.**

AC(4)2014(10) Paper 4
Highlight Report to the Commission

3. Partial Release of information but some information not held or withheld

Assembly Members

- Bonuses, overtime & mileage for family members employed as support staff. **Relied on section 40.**

Assembly Commission

- Annual costs of running the 'Welsh Assembly' including all salaries, expenses and fixed costs compared with those for the Welsh office before devolution. **Relied on section 21 (Information already available elsewhere).**

Committees and Legislation

- Budget of the Welsh Ombudsman. Public Service Ombudsman Wales (PSOW). **Relied on section 21 and directed the requestor to the PSOW.**

4. No information held

Assembly Members

- Correspondence between AMs and an MP over the last 12 months. **Information not held.**
- Number of people taken on by Welsh Labour Assembly Members as AMSS through the Jobs Growth Wales programme. **Information not held.**

Estates/Facilities

- Lightning Risk Assessment. **Information not held.**