

Scrutiny of the Electoral Commission's financial estimate for 2024-25

November 2023



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Scrutiny of the Electoral Commission's financial estimate for 2024-25

November 2023



About the Committee

The Committee was established on 14 July 2021. Its remit can be found at:
www.senedd.wales/SeneddLIC

Current Committee membership:



**Committee Chair:
David Rees MS**
Welsh Labour



Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Welsh Conservatives



Peredur Owen Griffiths MS
Plaid Cymru



Llyr Gruffydd MS
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1. Introduction

This is the Llywydd's Committee's report on the Electoral Commission's financial estimates for 2024-25.

Background context to the scrutiny of the Electoral Commission's financial estimates

1. The Electoral Commission's (the Commission) work on devolved Welsh elections and devolved Welsh referendums is paid for from the Welsh Consolidated Fund. The Senedd's Llywydd's Committee (the Committee) is responsible for scrutinising the amount of money requested for this purpose as set out in financial estimates submitted to the Committee each year by the Electoral Commission. The Committee is also responsible for scrutinising the Electoral Commission's five-year plans relating to its work on devolved Welsh elections and devolved Welsh referendums.

2. The Senedd's Standing Orders 20.20A and 20.20B set out that:

"The Electoral Commission must submit an estimate of its income and expenditure that is attributable to the exercise of its functions in relation to devolved Welsh elections and referendums, as required under paragraph 16A of Schedule 1 to the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, to the Llywydd's committee under SO 18B.2 as soon as reasonably practicable but no later than 1 October." (20.20A)

"The Llywydd's Committee must, having:

(i) consulted and taken into account any advice given to it by the Welsh Ministers, and;

(ii) had regard to any reports made to it by the Comptroller and Auditor General and to any recommendations contained in the reports;

consider and lay before the Senedd, no later than 22 November, a report including the estimate, with any modifications which the Committee, having consulted and taken into account any representations made by the Electoral Commission, considers appropriate.”¹ (20.20B)

3. At certain times (i.e. following a Senedd election or at the request of the Llywydd's Committee) the Electoral Commission must also submit to the Committee a five-year plan setting out the Commission's aims and objectives relating to devolved Welsh elections and referendums in the ensuing five-year period. The Committee considered and approved the plan in its November 2021 report.

4. The Committee must scrutinise any estimates and plans submitted to it by the Commission to ensure consistency with the economical, efficient and effective discharge by the Commission of their functions in relation to devolved Welsh elections and devolved Welsh referendums.

5. The estimate laid by the Committee in accordance with Standing Order 20.20B will then appear in the Annual Budget Motion, for agreement by the Senedd.²

Submission of the Electoral Commission's financial estimate for 2024-25

6. The Commission submitted its financial estimate for 2024-25 to the Committee on 28 September 2023.

7. The Committee met on 7 November 2023 to scrutinise the estimate and plan. The meeting was attended by the following representatives of the Commission:

¹ Senedd, Standing Orders of the Welsh Parliament, Standing Orders 20.20A and 20.20B.

² See [Standing Order 20](#) for an explanation of the Senedd's budget process.

- Professor Dame Elan Closs Stephens CBE (Electoral Commissioner for Wales)
- Shaun McNally CBE (Chief Executive and Accounting Officer)
- David Moran (Interim Finance Director)
- Rhydian Thomas (Head of the Electoral Commission in Wales)

8. The Committee must consult the Welsh Ministers on any estimates and plans submitted to it by the Commission and have regard to any advice provided by the Welsh Ministers before deciding if it is satisfied with the estimates and plans. The Committee shared the Commission's estimate for 2024-25 with the Counsel General and Minister for the Constitution and also the Minister for Finance and Local Government on 2 October 2023. The advice of the Counsel General and Minister for the Constitution was received on 24 October 2022³.

Agreement of the Finance Committee's Statement of Principles

9. The Senedd's Finance Committee published a set of principles, known as the **Statement of Principles**, that it expects bodies funded directly from the Welsh Consolidated Fund to have regard to when making budget proposals e.g. that Budget requests should be set in the context of the long term financial funding situation in Wales and funding pressures in the wider public sector. The Commission is one such body and was asked to adhere to these principles when preparing its financial estimate for 2024-25. The Committee has also agreed to adopt the Finance Committee's statement of principles, to underpin its scrutiny of the Commission's financial estimates.

³ Counsel General and Minister for the Constitution, [Letter from Counsel General and Minister for the Constitution](#), 24 October 2022.

2. Scrutiny of the Electoral Commission's financial estimate for 2024-25

This chapter summarises the Committee's scrutiny of the Commission's financial estimate for 2024-25.

10. The total of the estimate submitted by the Commission for the financial year 2024-25 was £1.658 million. This equates to a 17 per cent increase compared with the estimate for 2023-24 (although this does not account for the additional funding sought by the Commission via supplementary budget which is due to be considered in February 2024 – which if approved means it would be a 13 per cent increase). The estimate is at Annex A.

The Electoral Commission Accounts 2022-23

11. The Commission laid its Annual Report and Accounts for 2022-23⁴ before the Senedd on 13 September 2023. This included a Wales (devolved) annual report for 2022-23, setting out the Commission's work on devolved matters in Wales. It also provided a breakdown of expenditure relating to Welsh activities.

12. The report noted that during 2022-23, the Commission utilised £1.51m of resources from the £1.54m available. This represents an underspend of £28K (or 2%).

13. The Commission presents its expenditure under two headings: staffing £1.14m; and goods and services £0.4m. This differs to how it presents its estimates, which are presented as direct and indirect costs. The Committee noted that this makes it difficult to analyse outturn on the same basis as the estimate submissions.

14. During scrutiny of the previous Estimate, on 7 November 2022, the Committee noted that while outturn data is published in the annual report in accordance with accounting guidelines, projected outturns are not included in the annual estimate to the Committee. Shaun McNally at that time committed

⁴ [Annual Report and Accounts 2022-23](#)

to providing projected outturns for the current financial year when submitting its Main Estimate to enable comparisons.

15. The Committee questioned the Commission on how it had included this information in the 2024/25 estimate, Shaun McNally explained:

So, in terms of the projected costs, I thought that we had, in submitting the further details on our budget line estimates, prepared that. The additional costs for this year have been set out within the supplementary estimate. Those are the only additions to the projections in the budget for the current financial year.⁵

16. The Committee notes the information included, however we would like to see clearer projected costs presented in a similar format to the Commission's Estimate.

Extending the franchise

17. The Senedd and Elections (Wales) Act 2020 enabled 16 and 17 year olds and foreign nationals to vote in Senedd elections for the first time. The provisions for extending the franchise to these groups came into effect for elections held on or after 5 April 2021.

18. The Commission outlined in its Annual Report and Accounts for 2022-23 its ongoing and future work, which noted:

We see a continuing need to support more newly enfranchised voters across Wales to become involved in democracy. We will therefore expand the reach of our education programme, developing resources relevant to the new Welsh curriculum and engaging further with partner organisations. Our aim is to educate young people about the democratic process and prepare educators to teach political literacy with confidence.⁶

⁵ RoP, 7 November 2023, paragraph 31

⁶ [Annual Report and Accounts 2022-23](#)

19. The Commission's Corporate Plan for Wales 2022-23 to 2026-27 noted how it will continue to target these groups:

Following the extension of the franchise to 16 and 17 year olds and foreign nationals resident in Wales, we will continue to work to ensure new voters understand their eligibility and can confidently participate in the 2022 local government elections and 2026 Senedd election.⁷

20. The Committee asked the Commission how it was implementing lessons learnt from devolved elections in Wales when engaging newly enfranchised voters to increase participation in future elections. Rhydian Thomas outlined the progress on the youth voice programme, their continued work with Democracy Box and the resources that they are developing for teachers.

...we're developing resources for teachers, providing training and guidance on how to effectively deliver democratic education, especially in relation to the new curriculum. It's a real challenge. We've got a board meeting in Cardiff at the end of this month, and one of the sessions on one of the days will be with young people, so that the board can hear from young people, but also educators, to hear from them about the challenges that there are in talking about democracy, talking about politics, with young people, and how they can engage more.⁸

21. The Committee also asked about the work the Commission has done to identify foreign nationals and ensure that they can confidently participate in elections in the future. Rhydian Thomas explained that this has been more difficult:

The tricky element is actually identifying the groups within our communities, and I know we've tried to work with Members, for example, because they will have the information relating to where these groups are, and with local authorities to identify

⁷ Electoral Commission Corporate Plan 2022/23 – 2026/27

⁸ RoP, 7 November 2023, paragraph 141

*the groups. It's been a trickier audience, but we'll continue to work with the Government and with local authorities to (a) identify them and (b) get the material out to them that they need in order to register and then to vote.*⁹

22. The Committee welcomed the work the Commission has undertaken and continues to undertake in terms of educating 16-17 year olds and providing resources for teachers.

23. The Committee notes that the Commission raised similar concerns about the difficulties in engaging with foreign nationals during the last scrutiny session in 2022.,The Committee recognises this is a difficult area, nevertheless we would want the Commission to report some progress in engaging more widely with foreign nationals at the next scrutiny session.

The Electoral Commission Estimate 2024-25

24. The total contribution required by the Commission from the Welsh Consolidated Fund for 2024-25 is estimated to be £1.658 million. This amounts to a £244K increase (17%) in cash terms compared to the Commission's estimate for 2023-24 (although this does not reflect the request made by the Commission for funding via a supplementary estimate in 2023-24, which will be considered as part of the February 2024 supplementary budget).

25. The Counsel General noted in his letter to the Committee that the total funding requested in the Commission's Estimate for 2024-25 is "an almost 33% increase compared with the previous five year plan"¹⁰. He further notes that there was a negative consequential at the 2021 Spending Review in relation to the Commission's funding and the figure requested by the Commission for 2024-25 is in excess of the funding transferred by UK Government for Commission expenditure.

26. The Committee expressed concern that the increase was substantial, particularly when compared to other directly funded bodies, whose 2024-25 budgets have increased by 6-8% when compared to the previous year. When

⁹ RoP, 7 November 2023, paragraph 148

¹⁰ [Letter from Counsel General and Minister for the Constitution](#).

questioned, Shaun McNally said that the Commission had been chronically underfunded for years:

My reflection on 20 months as the chief executive and the accounting officer is that there has been historic underinvestment, and I would be, more than anyone, committed to look for efficiencies, if I believed there were efficiencies there to be had. Given what I know from my experience over the last 20 months, actually, I think that the service that we have provided has come at a cost to individuals who have continued to work excessive hours. And at times we have failed in our duty of care to the staff to ensure that they have a proportionate workload and are able to have a proper balance between work and home.¹¹

27. The Committee asked the Commission to outline the effect of reducing their Estimate, in terms of both key performance indicators and more widely. Shaun MacNally explained that a reduction in spend for campaigns such as voter registration would result in the Commission missing that target. More broadly, he also said:

So, that would obviously have an impact on both our ability to discharge our regulatory functions, the ability to invest in the campaigns, and the ability to support overall reform within Wales.¹²

28. Whilst the Committee is concerned both about staff wellbeing and the ability of the Commission to discharge its regulatory functions more broadly, we are also concerned that a 17 per cent increase in budget is not in step with other directly funded bodies, nor the civil service more widely.

29. As a result of scrutiny of the Commission's Estimate for 2023-24, the Committee concluded that:

¹¹ RoP, 7 November 2023, paragraph 94

¹² RoP, 7 November 2023, paragraph 159

Conclusion 3. The Committee would not want to see an increase to this baseline over the course of the next few years and would expect that there would not be a significant increase to the baseline when the next set of Welsh elections is due to be administered. Furthermore, when the Commission's activities in relation to areas such as Senedd reform conclude, the Committee would like to see a reduction in the Estimate baseline.¹³

30. The Commission wrote to the Chair on 8 August to inform the Committee that they had been the subject of a complex cyber-attack. The incident was first identified in October 2022, and publicly announced in August 2023. A significant portion of the increase relates to cyber-security enhancements, with a projected cost of £73k. When questioned on this increase, both Shaun McNally and Elan Closs Stephens highlighted that it was a correction of significant underfunding in the ICT systems in previous years. Shaun McNally also confirmed that the additional cost would continue in future years. The Committee is concerned that the cyber-security costs are now ongoing and represent an increase to the baseline. The Committee would welcome assurance on the value for money and effectiveness of the approach taken to enhance cyber security, given the impact on the baseline.

31. The Committee noted the Commission's projected cost of £65k for building a skilled and diverse workforce, and asked for further details on what this would entail. Shaun McNally set out the following:

... the areas where we are and where we will be employing more people next year is to strengthen the team in the digital team in terms of cyber and digital. There is a need to strengthen the finance team, and we will be implementing a new human resources system, which will give us better data and information on equality, diversity and inclusion, but will also enable the

¹³ [Scrutiny of the Electoral Commission's financial estimate for 2023-24](#)

*commission to operate with an up-to-date HR system in the years ahead.*¹⁴

32. The Committee noted the Commission's projected cost of £44k for increased capacity across its Wales, policy, legal, research and regulation functions given the introduction of the electoral reform bills in Wales, and were interested in whether this was correctly apportioned to Wales, as per the Counsel General's letter. When being questioned on pay awards, Shaun McNally assured the Committee in relation to about the allocation of costs to Wales that the Commission has :

*... not attributed any cost to Wales that should be attributed across to the UK Parliament.*¹⁵

33. When scrutinising the Commission's Estimate for 2023-24, the Committee established that one additional post focused on electoral reform in Wales. In its report, the Committee recommended the Commission set out the intention for this post. When questioned on this, Rhydian Thomas explained that the post had been fully funded by the Senedd initially, but is now funded as a percentage.

*In terms of the individual role, there were two roles in the Wales team that were fully funded by the Senedd initially, and by the Llywydd's Committee; they've now been brought into the establishment.*¹⁶

34. The Commission's Estimate includes £206k for regulation activities, which is an increase of £19k (or 10%) on the funding for the previous year. Regulation allocations are split into three spending areas – registration and reporting, monitoring and enforcement and regulatory support.

35. In its report on the scrutiny of the Commission's estimate for 2023-24, the Committee noted an increase of 70% on the funding from the previous year for regulation activities. It had some concerns about "how to ensure that there is value regarding this significantly higher investment in regulation". The

¹⁴ RoP, 7 November 2023, paragraph 73

¹⁵ RoP, 7 November 2023, paragraph 103

¹⁶ RoP, 7 November 2023, paragraph 79

Committee questioned the Commission on the progress made with this recommendation. Shaun McNally explained that the Commission had had difficulty coming up with a suitable measure:

If I can be candid, this has proven to be very difficult, to come up with a quantitative measure. A lot of the effort goes into the qualitative work and the advice, guidance and intelligence that helps to support compliance with electoral law and regulation. We will continue— and it is a commitment— to look at this, to see if we can find a way, to the satisfaction of this committee, to come up with a quantitative as well as a qualitative measure, so that you can track how the money is being invested.¹⁷

36. The Committee noted this commitment and remains keen to see a suitable set of measurements for the evaluation of this work.

37. The Commission notes the pay award for 2024-25 is a key investment driver with its pay award and inflation reflected in contracts, estimated at £74k, based on the assumption of a 5% increase being agreed. When questioned on why this assumption had been made, Shaun McNally said:

What we have attempted to do this year in terms of looking at 5 per cent is to have a weather eye on what is happening in terms of inflation, and to avoid a situation where we put in a prudent rather than a pragmatic assumption in relation to pay for next year.¹⁸

38. The Committee questioned whether the Commission have been in discussions with the relevant Trade Union around the pay award, and Shaun McNally responded:

Yes. I have regular discussions. The representative body within the Electoral Commission is the Public and Commercial

¹⁷ RoP, 7 November 2023, paragraph 89

¹⁸ RoP, 7 November 2023, paragraph 121

Services Union, and we know where their national executive has been in terms of their pay demands, which was for 10 per cent.¹⁹

39. The Committee is concerned that the forecast pay increase does not correspond with the pay demand of the PCS national executive and that this may result in the Commission bringing forward a further supplementary budget next year.

40. Resource costs represent an increase of £150k (or 49%) in cash terms when compared to the 2023-24 Estimate. These costs are related to back office costs such as rent, rates, cleaning and utilities for the Cardiff office, ICT, finance, HR and management costs. The Committee voiced particular concern about the lack of information in relation to the office move taking place next February.

41. Shaun McNally committed the Commission to sighting the Committee in real time about both the pay negotiations and the office move, as well as providing detailed information on the decision-making process in relation to the latter:

I will commit the organisation to ensure that you are sighted in real time and apprised of the ongoing pay negotiations and also kept up to date with regards to the office move.²⁰

42. The Committee welcomes this commitment, but may give consideration to holding an additional mid-year meeting to ensure regular dialogue is taking place with the Commission.

Revised Estimate 2024-25

43. Following the Committee's consideration of the initial Estimate, the Committee concluded that it was unable to support the Commission's request for £1.658 million, an increase of 17 per cent compared to the Estimate for 2023-24.

44. Whilst the Committee considered this request on its own merits and noted the comments in relation to historic underfunding, we also noted the large

¹⁹ RoP, 7 November 2023, paragraph 126

²⁰ RoP, 7 November 2023, paragraph 129

difference between this increase and the increases agreed for other directly funded bodies by the Finance Committee. The Committee also noted the negative consequential in relation to the Electoral Commission at the 2021 Spending Review, and the potential pressure on the Welsh Consolidated Fund if a 17 per cent increase were agreed.

45. Therefore, the Committee wrote to the Commission on 8 November to ask it to reflect on its funding priorities and consider where changes to the initial Estimate would be made.

46. The Committee considered a revised Estimate from the Commission outside of a meeting. The revised Estimate requested £1.56 million, an increase of 11% compared to the previous year.

47. The revised Estimate did not include the following, which had been removed from the initial Estimate:

- £10k through restructuring translation services;
- £22k through streamlining support from the legislation team, reducing the Welsh split of the team's time from 20% to 10%; and
- £62k through reallocation of a post that had been incorrectly allocated to the Senedd.

48. A significant part of the revision was down to an error in the initial Estimate, which is not the standard that the Committee expects from the Commission.

Reports from the Electoral Commission

49. During the last financial year, the Commission produced reports on the accuracy and completeness of the electoral registers, including a specific section on the December 2022 electoral registers in Wales, and on the May 2023 local elections in England and Northern Ireland.

Report on May 2023 local elections

50. Overall, the Commission found that the elections were well run and voters had confidence in the system. However, the report also identified several challenges for voters, administrators and campaigners.

51. The report specifically highlighted the effects of the voter-ID requirements on the elections. The Committee noted the report.

Report on the accuracy and completeness of the electoral registers

52. The report shows almost 400,000 people across Wales are either missing or incorrectly registered to vote, meaning they don't have a voice in elections. Some specific groups of people are significantly less likely to be correctly registered, particularly young people, private renters, and those who have recently moved home.

53. The Committee asked how the Commission were addressing this issue. Rhydian Thomas outlined the work the Commission was doing, particularly in relation to younger people:

I think it's about education, it's about getting to people and to voters at an early age and talking to them about democracy, and then hoping that that message will stay with them as they get to a voting age.²¹

The Electoral Commission Corporate Plan

54. The Corporate Plan highlights the performance indicators the Commission will use to measure performance against its strategic objectives. It notes the Commission will measure how well it realises these improvements over the period of the Corporate Plan, using a range of indicators for Wales and across the UK.

55. The Commission submitted its assessment of its performance in 2022-23 against its corporate performance indicators for 2022-23 alongside its Estimate for 2024-25.

²¹ RoP, 7 November 2023, paragraph 138

56. The Committee asked how the performance indicators fed into the Commission's Estimate. Shaun McNally highlighted that reviewing the campaigns the Commission had undertaken enabled them to learn from their impact and see which areas needed to be strengthened.

The Committee's view

57. Whilst the Committee noted the various pressures on the Electoral Commission – including inflation, pay claims and the need to address historic underfunding – it remained concerned that the Commission was out of step with other directly funded bodies. In its report on the estimate for 2023-24, the Committee urged “the Commission to think bigger in terms of efficiency savings it may be able to make over the forthcoming years.” The Committee is concerned that the Commission has been going in the opposite direction.

58. The Committee noted the comments about historic underfunding, and events such as the cyberattack show the serious implications of this. However, we are unable to support the request of the electoral commission to address this at the detriment of all other directly funded bodies in Wales. The Committee is of the view that such adjustments would need to be made over a number of years, and may not be achievable to the level request by the Commission under the current funding settlement.

59. Whilst we were unable to support the initial Estimate we are grateful to the Commission for revising its Estimate in line with the Committee's wishes.

60. The Committee urges the Commission to keep lines of communication open over the next year. We are concerned that the Commission has made decisions such as procuring a new office and making up for chronic underfunding without telling the Committee in advance. Presenting these costs once they have already been agreed or even paid does not sit well with the Committee. The Committee understands that the Commission is a UK-wide organisation and some of its spending decisions are made outside of Wales, however those that are made in Wales should be discussed with the Committee as soon as they are known about.

61. The Committee also urges the Commission to inform us as soon as it knows it requires additional funding through a supplementary budget.

Conclusion 1. The Committee is satisfied with the assurances provided by the Commission that all direct costs included in the revised financial estimate for 2024-25 relate to the Commission's work on devolved Welsh elections and should be attributable to the Welsh Consolidated Fund.

Conclusion 2. In general, the Committee is satisfied the revised financial estimate for 2024-25 is consistent with the economical, efficient and effective discharge by the Commission of its functions in relation to devolved Welsh elections and devolved Welsh referendums.

Conclusion 3. The Committee is concerned that the forecast pay increase does not correspond with the pay demand of the PCS national executive and that this may result in the Commission bringing forward a further supplementary budget next year.

Conclusion 4. The Committee is concerned that the Commission has made decisions on capital costs such as an office move in Cardiff without providing details on its decision-making to the Committee.

Recommendation 1. The Committee recommends that the Electoral Commission includes actual and projected outturns when submitting its Main Estimate to the Committee, in a way that is clear and easy to understand.

Recommendation 2. The Committee recommends that the Electoral Commission continues to develop a set of measurements to evaluate whether the increased investment in regulation offers value for money.

Recommendation 3. The Committee recommends that on matters relating to spending in Wales, the Electoral Commission keeps in closer and more regular contact and provides detailed information on decision making in real time.

Annex A: The Financial Estimate for 2024-25.

Senedd Costs	2023-24 (£000s)	2024-25 (£000s)	Variance (£000s)	Variance (%)
Direct Costs (pay and non-pay)				
Legislation (Electoral reform programme)				
	0	44	44	-100%
Revised estimate	0	22	22	-100%
Commentary				
This represents the resources that will be needed:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to manage the coordination of new legislation being reviewed and feed back to ensure workable legislation for electoral administrators, voters and political parties and campaigners - to develop, coordinate, and manage detailed implementation and delivery plans that the EC will have to do as a result of electoral reform in Wales. - to work with Welsh Government and key stakeholders to identify and monitor project delivery risks and issues. 				
Electoral Administration				
Wales	366	365	-1	0%
Revised estimate	366	293	-73	-20%
Commentary				
This represents the Committee's share of the costs of supporting the development of forthcoming legislation, both primary and secondary, in relation to electoral and Senedd reform including providing expert opinion on the three bills, taking into account the views of the electoral community across Wales. We will also support the development of online guidance and resources for candidates and agents, Returning Officers/Electoral Registration Officers and electoral administrators; respond to queries for advice and guidance received by phone and email; use our performance standards in our engagement with EROs in Wales to support and challenge them on their delivery of registration activity including the annual canvass in 2024 and local by-elections elections; work closely with the electoral community in Wales				

Senedd Costs	2023-24 (£000s)	2024-25 (£000s)	Variance (£000s)	Variance (%)
<p>through the various stakeholder groups we manage or sit on, for example the Senedd Parties Panel and the Wales Electoral Coordination Board; work closely with the Welsh Government to provide advice and expert opinion on the draft Conduct Order for the Senedd elections in 2026 and any further electoral modernisation reforms that are developed; support the regulated community in Wales to meet their statutory requirements; prepare a Code of Practice for non-party campaigners; prepare new Codes of Practice on election spending for parties and candidates ahead of the Senedd elections in 2026.</p> <p>We will also continue to fulfil our statutory responsibility by meeting the Welsh Language Standards set by the Welsh Language Commissioner and will lead and support the wider Commission to ensure that our commitments to the Welsh Language are upheld. As part of this we will manage the translation process of all relevant material into Welsh.</p> <p>We will also support the development and delivery of public awareness information, working with partner organisations supporting under-registered groups in Wales to promote voter registration; we will continue to develop our democratic education resources for teachers and learners in Wales, working with schools, youth organisations and other key partners to promote them; and we will gather input from young people via our youth voice network to ensure our education resources effectively meet their needs. We will also lead on the accountability arrangements to the Senedd and Llywydd's Committee ensuring all information is provided and statutory deadlines are met, keeping key partners in the Senedd and Welsh Government involved at each step.</p>				
Support and improvement	18	18	0	-2%
Commentary				
This represents the Committee's share of the costs associated with supporting the monitoring and support of EROs and ROs in the delivery of their statutory electoral services. It also includes keeping the Performance standards for EROs and ROs under review to ensure that relevant legislative changes are reflected in the performance standards frameworks				
Guidance	45	45	0	-1%

Senedd Costs	2023-24 (£000s)	2024-25 (£000s)	Variance (£000s)	Variance (%)
Commentary				
This represents the Committee's share of the costs associated with providing advice in response to queries from Returning Officers/Electoral Registration Officers and electoral administrators throughout the year. It also includes the cost of supporting the programme of electoral reform in Wales and updating our suite of core guidance and resources for electoral administrators and candidates and agents as needed in light of feedback and/or legislative changes.				
Legal				
Legal	80	102	22	22%
Commentary				
This represents the Committee's share of the total cost of providing legal support to the Commission's advice, guidance and regulation functions. It also includes supporting the development of any policy recommendations, as well as providing general and on-going legal advice on Welsh legislation and support of the Commission's functions as they relate to Wales (including registration, regulation, policy, electoral administration, governance and compliance with Welsh Language Standards). This work includes advising on proposals for electoral reform in Wales and ensuring that the Commission fulfils its accountability obligations to the Senedd.				
Regulation				
Regulation and reporting	72	77	5	7%
Commentary				
This represents the Committee's share of the costs for the work relating to the statutory financial reporting required by registered political parties in Wales. The reports include quarterly donation and loans reports, and annual Statement of Accounts submission. It also represents that share of the costs relating to the annual renewal of registered party details and any changes to registration details made throughout the year.				
Monitoring and enforcement	65	73	8	12%

Senedd Costs	2023-24 (£000s)	2024-25 (£000s)	Variance (£000s)	Variance (%)
Commentary				
This represents the Committee's share of the costs that are associated with compliance and enforcement work arising from parties and campaigners in Wales. This includes monitoring the campaign activity of parties and campaigners in Wales. Our monitoring work helps us to identify campaigners who may need our support to come into compliance. It also supports out intervention and enforcement work, if it is required. We also work closely with the Single Point of Contact (SPOC) within each Police Force area to provide advice and guidance during the election period.				
Regulatory support	50	56	6	12%
Commentary				
This represents the Committee's share of the costs associated with developing and maintaining spending, donations and post-poll reporting guidance. We also provide a proactive and reactive advice and support service which is tailored to individual stakeholder needs. We do this to ensure understanding of the laws and high levels of compliance. We deliver our support service in a range of ways including publishing written guidance, responding to queries by telephone and email, providing bespoke training and running webinars.				
Communications, Policy and Research				
Campaigns and corp identity	41	46	5	13%
Commentary				
This represents the Committee's share of business as usual campaign and public awareness activities. This includes developing messages for campaigns which will be run in Wales over the coming years.				
Digital communication and voters	78	78	0	0%
Commentary				
This represents the Committee's share of the costs of the Commission's Digital Communications and Voter Engagement team based on our estimate of how their time will be spent. We will continue to run a Youth Voice network				

Senedd Costs	2023-24 (£000s)	2024-25 (£000s)	Variance (£000s)	Variance (%)
<p>for Wales, and our youth voice partner will continue to undertake consultancy work with young people across Wales, getting their feedback and input on our resources to ensure they are effective and fit for purpose. We will also continue to build on our existing political literacy work by creating resources that encourage under registered groups to register to vote and engage in democracy.</p> <p>This also covers our digital communications work. Our Digital Communications team develops and maintains our bilingual website and social media channels, supporting Commission-wide publication of information in English and Welsh for our diverse stakeholders, including voters, electoral administrators and campaigners.</p>				
External communications	68	65	-3	-4%
<p>Commentary</p> <p>This represents the Committee's share of the Commission's external communications costs. It covers public relations and public affairs support for the team in Wales. A priority will be to provide support to the team as they respond to new electoral reform legislation going through the Senedd, as well as communication with stakeholders and audiences in Wales on the publication of all Commission reports and research.</p>				
Research	47	31	-16	-35%
<p>Commentary</p> <p>This represents the Committee's share of business as usual research activities.</p>				
Policy	53	53	0	1%
<p>Commentary</p> <p>This represents the Committee's share of business as usual policy activities, including work to support the Welsh Government and Senedd to consider new policy proposals and legislation arising from the Government's electoral reform programme.</p>				
Total direct costs	983	1052	69	7%
Revised total direct costs	983	958	-25	-3%
Indirect Costs				

Senedd Costs	2023-24 (£000s)	2024-25 (£000s)	Variance (£000s)	Variance (%)
Resource	304	454	150	49%
Commentary 5% of back office costs. Facilities costs include rent, rates, service charges, cleaning and utilities for the office in Cardiff. ICT costs cover Software licenses for solutions such as Office365, Windows Desktop, Webex, Finance and HR solutions. Costs also include hosting costs to hold data in the Azure cloud. This also includes ongoing finance, HR and management costs				
Depreciation	127	92	-35	-28%
Commentary 5% of the depreciation for capital expenditure, including upgrading of the Political finance and other systems such as the Video conferencing equipment and laptops.				
Pay award 2024-25		61	61	-100%
Commentary 8% of the Total Pay Bill for the year.				
Total indirect costs	431	606	175	41%
Total contribution	1414	1658	244	17%
Revised total contribution	1414	1564	150	11%