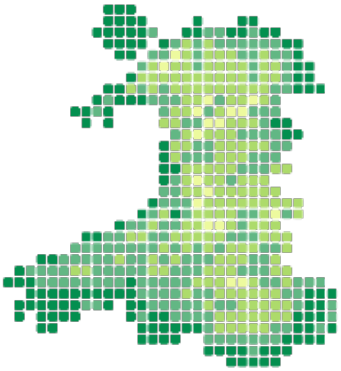
DEMOCRACY AND BOUNDARY COMMISSION CYMRU



Comisiwn Democratiaeth a Ffiniau Cymru

Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru

ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2025/2026

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CHAIR'S FOREWORD

I am pleased to present the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru's Annual Report and Financial Statements for 2025/26. This was a significant year for the Commission, as we continued to deliver our established boundary and community review responsibilities while embedding important new functions that strengthen our role in supporting democracy in Wales.

The Commission made significant progress in the procurement and development of Wales' first national electoral information platform ahead of the May 2026 Senedd election. Supported by robust governance, technical assurance and stakeholder engagement, the Welsh Elections Information Platform will provide voters with accessible, impartial and authoritative information.

A further important milestone was the transfer of responsibility for remuneration arrangements from the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales to the Commission on the 1 April 2025. During 2025/26, the Commission established the governance, research and engagement arrangements required to support transparent, evidence-based remuneration decisions and published its first Annual Remuneration Report for 2026/27.

The Commission also agreed its 2025–2030 Corporate Plan, which provides a clear strategic framework for the years ahead and reflects its commitment to fair boundaries, effective electoral coordination, transparent remuneration decisions and public trust.

Looking ahead, 2026/27 will be another important year. The Commission will continue to support the delivery of the 2026 Senedd election, further develop the Electoral Management Board and the Welsh Elections Information Platform, progress its review programme, and refine its approach to remuneration determinations.

I would like to thank my fellow Commissioners, the members of the Governance and Audit Committee, the Chief Executive and all staff for their professionalism, commitment and resilience during a year of major change. I also thank our partners across Welsh Government, local government, the electoral community and wider civic society for their constructive engagement and support.

This Annual Report explains how the Commission has used the Grant-in-Aid allocated by Welsh Government and delivered against its statutory responsibilities during 2025/26.

Karen Jones
Chair
7 October 2026

PERFORMANCE REPORT
for the year ended 31 March 2026

OVERVIEW

This section gives a summary of the Commission's purpose, corporate objectives, the key risks to the achievement of its objectives and how it has performed during the year.

Chief Executive's Statement on the Performance of the Commission

The Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru (the Commission)'s Remit Letter of 22 July 2025 issued by the Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government set out the Commission's objectives for the financial year 2025-26. A subsequent operational plan setting out how the Commission would achieve its objectives was submitted to Welsh Government.

I consider that the Commission has delivered against the objectives set out in the Remit Letter. This is considered in more detail under the Performance Analysis and Review of Activities sections of this report, found on pages 3 to 9.

Statement of Purpose and Activities

The Commission is a Welsh Government Sponsored Body (WGSB). The Commission was established in 1974 under the terms of the Local Government Act 1972 as the Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales and renamed under the terms of Section 2 of the Local Government (Democracy)(Wales) Act 2013 (the 2013 Act). Following the passing of the Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Act 2024, the Commission was renamed as the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru under the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru etc. Act 2013. The provisions of the 2013 Act in respect of the Commission replace those of the 1972 Act.

The purpose of the Commission is to:

- monitor areas and electoral arrangements relevant to local government in Wales for the purpose of considering whether it is appropriate to make or recommend changes. In carrying out its duties the Commission must seek to ensure effective and convenient local government.
- keep under review the boundaries of the Senedd constituencies for the election of Members of the Senedd.
- co-ordinate the administration of Welsh elections and referendums (Senedd Cymru elections, local government elections in Wales and devolved referendums) through the Electoral Management Board.
- set the levels and arrangements for the remuneration of elected and coopted members of Principal Councils, County and County Borough Councils, Community and Town Councils, National Park Authorities, Fire and Rescue Authorities and Corporate Joint Committees.

Corporate Objectives

The Commission's Corporate Objectives agreed in January 2026, are:

- **Deliver fair and effective boundaries across all tiers of democracy in Wales.**
- **Coordinate Electoral Management in Wales**.
- **Provide transparent and evidence-based remuneration decisions.**
- **Build Trust Through Engagement, Openness, and Organisational Excellence.**

Risks and uncertainties

The 2025-26 financial year was the first full year in which the Commission implemented its new statutory functions as the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru. This represented a significant period of organisational and legislative transition, with the Commission moving from its previous remit to a wider statutory role covering its established boundary review responsibilities and two significant new functions: the establishment and operation of the Electoral Management Board which includes the development and maintenance of the Welsh Elections Information Platform, and responsibility for the remuneration framework for elected and co-opted members. The principal risks and uncertainties faced by the Commission during the year therefore related to implementing these new functions effectively, building the necessary capacity and capability, embedding appropriate governance and assurance arrangements, and maintaining stakeholder confidence in the integrity, independence and quality of its work.

The Commission manages these risks through an integrated risk management framework comprising its Corporate Risk Register, Operational Risk Register and a series of function-specific registers, including those relating to ICT, pensions and programme delivery. The Corporate Risk Register captures the strategic risks most likely to affect delivery of the Commission's corporate objectives, including financial sustainability, workforce capacity, governance effectiveness, cyber and information security, business continuity, stakeholder engagement, reputational risk and delivery of statutory obligations. Operational and functional registers provide more detailed management oversight of risks linked to individual areas of work, including the delivery of electoral and community review programmes and, in particular, the first-year implementation of the Electoral Management Board, the Welsh Elections Information Platform and the remuneration function. These registers also support oversight of research activity, Welsh language compliance, equality considerations and information governance.

During 2025-26 particular attention was given to first-year implementation risks arising from the new functions. For the Electoral Management Board, these included establishing effective operating arrangements, clarifying roles and responsibilities, supporting delivery of the work programme and maintaining confidence across the electoral community and development of the Welsh Elections Information Platform. The Platform has its own set of key risks related to developing and maintaining a secure, resilient and compliant digital service in advance of the May 2026 Senedd election, including cyber security, supplier management, data protection, business continuity and technical assurance. For the remuneration function, risks centred on establishing a robust evidence base, ensuring transparent and timely determinations, managing stakeholder expectations, and maintaining independence and fairness in decision making. Across all functions, the Commission also monitored risks relating to workforce capacity,

specialist skills, budget provision, governance, health and safety, fraud, financial control, procurement, Welsh language compliance and equality duties.

Risk registers are reviewed through the Commission's governance structure, with strategic risks considered at each Commission meeting and all relevant registers reviewed by the Governance and Audit Committee. The Senior Management Team keeps operational and functional risks under active review, escalating matters where controls require strengthening or where risks may affect delivery of the Commission's objectives. The Commission's internal auditors provide independent assurance on the effectiveness of internal controls, and the recommendations arising from internal audit reports are considered by the Governance and Audit Committee and implemented through agreed management actions. The Commission also maintains a Business Continuity Plan which is reviewed and tested regularly to support organisational resilience.

The Commission recognises that effective risk management is an integral part of good governance and successful delivery. Its approach is designed to ensure that risks are identified early, assessed consistently, managed at the appropriate level and reported transparently, while enabling the Commission to take proportionate decisions in support of its statutory functions and corporate objectives. Further details of the Commission's risk management and control framework are set out in the Governance Statement on page 24.

Going Concern

These accounts are prepared on a going concern basis. To the best of my knowledge I am satisfied that the net current liabilities will be financed from resources provided by the Welsh Government (Grant-in-Aid) in the future.

Performance Summary

During 2025-26 the Commission worked to deliver the objectives set out in the Remit Letter issued by the Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government on 22 July 2025. The year represented the first full year of implementing the Commission's expanded statutory remit following the Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Act 2024 and the Elections and Elected Bodies (Wales) Act 2024. The Commission focused on maintaining business as usual while establishing and embedding its new functions, including elections co-ordination and the remuneration function. The Commission considers that it made effective progress against the Remit Letter objectives, as set out in the Performance Analysis below.

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

For 2025-26, the Remit Letter issued on 22 July 2025 set out the following expectations for the Commission, namely to:

- To continue to work with Welsh Government and key stakeholders to deliver the policy and operational intentions of the provisions of the Elections and Elected Bodies (Wales) Act 2024 and the Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Act 2024.
- To maintain the Electoral Management Board and ensure effective delivery of its work programme.
- To establish and maintain an Elections Information Platform in line with Regulations, in advance of the Senedd election in May 2026.
- To explore the potential for a national council size policy for community and town councils in Wales and make recommendations.
- To consider the need for resettlement payments and provide briefing to officials for the consideration of any regulations that may be required.

- To work with the Welsh Government and local government to deliver the next review programme, reviewing timetables as necessary.
- To continue to support principal councils, where possible, in taking forward community reviews across Wales.
- To participate in the recruitment of members in line with timetables agreed with Ministers to ensure members are in place, with the requisite skills and experience to enable the Commission to deliver its functions.
- To identify and deliver on a program of research and a communications strategy.
- To review the Framework and Methodology for Remuneration of Senior Roles in Principal Councils, Community and Town Councils and Corporate Joint Committees.
- To review the benchmark link to the Annual Survey of Hourly Earnings and an assessment of members' workloads.

The Commission's operational plan set out how it would deliver the Minister's requirements. The following table provides a summary of the actions taken and the extent to which the Remit Letter objectives were fulfilled during 2025-26:

To continue to work with Welsh Government and key stakeholders to deliver the policy and operational intentions of the provisions of the Elections and Elected Bodies (Wales) Act 2024 and the Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Act 2024.	The Commission worked closely with Welsh Government officials and key stakeholders throughout the year to support implementation of the 2024 Acts. This included engagement on policy development, operational planning, governance arrangements and the practical transition to DBCC's expanded remit. The Commission continued to participate in the Senedd Electoral Reform Delivery Group, leading on areas of work related to boundaries and elections co-ordination.
To maintain the Electoral Management Board and ensure effective delivery of its work programme.	The Electoral Management Board for Wales focused on establishing itself as the statutory national body responsible for coordinating the administration of devolved elections in Wales. Its work centred on preparing the Welsh electoral community for the 2026 Senedd election, including implementation of significant electoral reforms, strengthening collaboration between Returning Officers, promoting consistency of electoral administration, supporting national operational planning and risk management, and working with partners to improve voter information and electoral registration. The Board also supported preparations for automatic voter registration pilots and developed the governance and operational arrangements necessary to provide strategic leadership for the delivery of future devolved elections across Wales.

To establish and maintain an Elections Information Platform in line with Regulations, in advance of the Senedd election in May 2026.	The Commission undertook a significant procurement exercise to secure the specialist technical support required to establish and maintain the Elections Information Platform in advance of the May 2026 Senedd election. Consultants were engaged to support the development and design of the platform, working with the Commission to translate the regulatory requirements into a practical, secure and user-focused digital service. A dedicated steering group was established to provide strategic oversight of delivery, supported by programme governance arrangements, risk management, supplier management and regular reporting to ensure effective control of the project. Information governance arrangements were also put in place for the platform, including consideration of data protection, access controls, cyber security, resilience and business continuity requirements. User testing was undertaken to inform development, test functionality and support operational readiness. This work was designed to ensure that the platform would be capable of supporting voter information requirements and wider electoral administration needs ahead of the Senedd election.
To explore the potential for a national council size policy for community and town councils in Wales and make recommendations.	The Commission established a steering group to oversee work to explore the potential for a national council size policy for community and town councils in Wales, with membership including One Voice Wales to ensure sector insight and practical experience informed the work. A specialist research company was procured to support the development of the evidence base and provide independent research expertise. A questionnaire was developed to gather views and evidence from relevant stakeholders, with distribution scheduled after the Senedd election to take account of the pre-election period and ensure appropriate engagement..
To consider the need for resettlement payments and provide briefing to officials for the consideration of any regulations that may be required.	The Commission undertook research into resettlement payment arrangements, including consideration of approaches used across the UK and internationally. This work informed an assessment of potential scheme options and the issues that would need to be addressed if resettlement payments were to

	be introduced. Following this work, the Commission wrote to the Cabinet Secretary seeking clarity on whether Welsh Ministers intended to lay regulations in relation to resettlement payments, to ensure that any further work by the Commission could be appropriately aligned with the Welsh Government's legislative intentions.
To work with the Welsh Government and local government to deliver the next review programme, reviewing timetables as necessary.	The Commission worked with Welsh Government officials and local government to deliver the next review programme, including reviewing and updating timetables to reflect the capacity available within Welsh Government to consider final recommendations. Appropriate adjustments were made to the review timetable to ensure that the programme remained deliverable, proportionate and aligned with wider electoral planning requirements. During the year, the Commission undertook three electoral reviews as part of the programme.
To continue to support principal councils, where possible, in taking forward community reviews across Wales.	The Commission continued to provide expert advice and support to principal councils undertaking their own community reviews, helping to promote effective, consistent and legally compliant review activity across Wales. This included providing guidance on process, statutory requirements and good practice where councils were developing proposals for changes to community boundaries or electoral arrangements. The Commission also considered community review submissions made by principal councils, made decisions on those reviews in accordance with its statutory responsibilities, and passed the relevant Orders to give effect to approved changes.
To participate in the recruitment of members in line with timetables agreed with Ministers to ensure members are in place, with the requisite skills and experience to enable the Commission to deliver its functions.	The Commission participated in member recruitment activity in line with timetables agreed with Ministers, supporting appointments that would provide the skills, experience and capacity required to deliver the Commission's expanded statutory functions. During the year, a new Chair was recruited and appointed, providing continuity of leadership following the conclusion of the

	previous Chair's term. Welsh Government also agreed extensions to the terms of existing members to support stability and maintain the Commission's operational resilience during a period of significant transition. In addition, a further recruitment exercise was undertaken towards the end of 2025-26 to enable a full complement of members to be in place during 2026-27, ensuring that the Commission has the necessary governance capacity and collective expertise to deliver its statutory responsibilities effectively.
To identify and deliver on a program of research and a communications strategy.	The Commission identified and delivered a structured programme of research during 2025-26 to strengthen evidence-based decision making across its expanded statutory functions. The research plan focused on key areas of strategic importance, including the potential development of a national council size policy for community and town councils, research to inform the design and roll-out of the Welsh Elections Information Platform, and evidence work relating to the remuneration framework and resettlement payments. This programme provided a clear basis for supporting Ministerial decision making, informing operational delivery and strengthening the Commission's ability to meet its statutory obligations. In relation to communications and engagement, the Commission established a framework of communications and engagement principles to provide a consistent foundation for how it communicates with stakeholders, partners and the public. Rather than operating as a single standalone communications strategy, the framework now informs the development of tailored communications plans for each programme of work and project. This ensures that communications activity is proportionate, audience-focused, bilingual, accessible and aligned to the specific objectives, risks, milestones and stakeholder needs of each area of delivery.
To review the Framework and Methodology for Remuneration of Senior Roles in Principal Councils, Community and Town Councils and Corporate Joint Committees.	The Commission reviewed the Framework and Methodology for Remuneration of Senior Roles in Principal Councils, Community and Town Councils and Corporate Joint

	Committees to support a transparent, consistent and evidence-based approach to remuneration decisions. This included undertaking research to assess the operation of the existing framework, consider the evidence base for senior salary levels and role responsibilities, and identify areas where the methodology may require refinement. Engagement was undertaken with the Welsh Local Government Association and elected members to ensure that the review was informed by practical experience, sector insight and an understanding of the demands placed on elected representatives. The findings from this work will be reflected in the Commission's remuneration work for 2026-27, supporting future determinations that are robust, proportionate and aligned with the realities of public service in local government.
To review the benchmark link to the Annual Survey of Hourly Earnings and an assessment of members' workloads.	The Commission reviewed the benchmark link to the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings and considered evidence relating to members' workloads as part of the wider evidence base for remuneration decisions. Research and engagement were undertaken to explore alternative benchmark options and to assess how different approaches could support a fair, transparent and sustainable basis for future determinations. The outcomes of this work will be considered as part of the Commission's 2026-27 determinations, ensuring that any future approach is informed by evidence, stakeholder insight and the practical realities of elected member workloads.

The Commission agreed its 2025-2030 Corporate Plan in January 2026. The Plan sets out the Commission's vision for an inclusive democratic system that reflects the communities of Wales, and its mission to deliver effective reviews, fair remuneration and electoral coordination that strengthens Welsh democracy. It also sets out the Commission's values of independence, inclusion, evidence-based decision making and collaboration, which underpin delivery across all areas of its expanded statutory remit.

The Plan is structured around four strategic objectives.

The first, to deliver fair and effective boundaries across all tiers of democracy in Wales, reflects the Commission's responsibility to ensure that electoral and administrative boundaries are fair,

effective and meaningful to the people they serve, taking account of local identities, community ties, geography and projected demographic change.

The second objective is to coordinate electoral management in Wales. Through the establishment and leadership of the Electoral Management Board, the Commission will support the delivery of devolved elections and referendums with integrity, professionalism and public confidence. This includes promoting best practice, issuing guidance and directions, strengthening collaboration across the electoral community and supporting consistent electoral administration across Wales.

The third objective is to provide transparent and evidence-based remuneration decisions. The Corporate Plan confirms the Commission's commitment to ensuring that remuneration arrangements for elected members are fair, transparent and support a diverse and representative democracy. Determinations will be informed by research, stakeholder engagement and comparative analysis, and will be designed to reflect the realities of public service while supporting participation and retention in elected office.

The fourth objective is to build trust through engagement, openness and organisational excellence. This objective recognises that a trusted democratic system relies on genuine engagement, transparent decision making and strong organisational governance. The Commission will prioritise accessible and bilingual engagement, operate openly and transparently, manage risk effectively, and invest in the people, systems, digital capability and organisational resilience required to deliver its statutory functions.

Taken together, these objectives provide the framework against which the Commission will monitor and report performance over the life of the Corporate Plan. They also align the Commission's annual delivery, governance, engagement, research, Welsh language, equality and digital work with its long-term statutory responsibilities and its wider contribution to strengthening Welsh democracy.

Review of Activities during 2025-26

Delivering Our Statutory Functions

The Commission exists to strengthen democracy in Wales through independent, evidence-based decision making and the effective delivery of its statutory responsibilities. During 2025-26, we continued to deliver our established programme of electoral and community reviews while successfully embedding significant new statutory functions following the commencement of the Elections and Elected Bodies (Wales) Act 2024.

This was a transformative year for the Commission. Alongside maintaining delivery of our core review functions, we assumed responsibility for remuneration determinations for principal councils, community and town councils, fire and rescue authorities, national park authorities and corporate joint committees, established and supported the Electoral Management Board for Wales, and developed Wales' first national electoral information platform. These new responsibilities have significantly broadened the Commission's role in supporting democratic governance and electoral administration across Wales.

Throughout the year, the Commission remained committed to its core principles of independence, transparency, collaboration and evidence-based decision making, ensuring that all aspects of its work contributed to maintaining confidence in democratic institutions across Wales.

Electoral Reviews
The Commission continued to progress its programme of electoral reviews of principal councils to ensure that electoral arrangements remain fair, effective and reflect changes in local communities and electorates.

Each review was undertaken in accordance with the statutory criteria, balancing the need to achieve electoral equality with maintaining community identity and securing effective and convenient local government. Reviews involved extensive analysis of demographic and electoral data, detailed mapping work, and engagement with principal councils, elected members, political groups, community and town councils, public bodies and local residents.

Consultation remained central to our approach, enabling stakeholders to contribute local knowledge and ensuring that recommendations reflected both quantitative evidence and the interests of communities.

The Commission continued to make recommendations to Welsh Ministers that will help ensure local democratic representation remains robust, equitable and responsive to future population change.

Community Reviews
Supporting principal councils in reviewing community boundary arrangements remained an important element of the Commission's statutory responsibilities.

During the year, the Commission considered community review reports submitted by principal councils and exercised its statutory functions where required. This work ensured that community boundaries and electoral arrangements continue to reflect local identities, patterns of development and changing communities.

Alongside formal decision making, the Commission continued to provide advice and guidance to local authorities undertaking community reviews, promoting consistency, transparency and good practice throughout Wales.

Preparing for Future Senedd Boundary Reviews
The Commission also continued preparations for its future responsibilities relating to Senedd constituency reviews.

Throughout the year, work focused on developing the methodologies, governance arrangements, analytical capability and digital systems necessary to undertake future statutory boundary reviews. This included further investment in geographic information systems, data management and review processes, ensuring that the Commission is well positioned to deliver future reviews efficiently, transparently and in accordance with the statutory timetable.

Remuneration Determinations
A significant milestone during 2025/26 was the Commission's assumption of responsibility for determining the remuneration of members of principal councils, community and town councils, fire and rescue authorities, national park authorities and corporate joint committees.

Following the transfer of these functions from the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales, the Commission established new governance arrangements, developed supporting policies and procedures, and undertook a comprehensive programme of stakeholder engagement.

The Commission published its first annual remuneration determinations, providing clarity and certainty for the organisations affected while ensuring that the principles of fairness, accountability, value for money and support for democratic participation remained at the heart of its decision making.

This work represented a significant expansion of the Commission's statutory remit and was successfully delivered within challenging implementation timescales.

Electoral Management Board for Wales
During the year, the Commission established and provided the secretariat for the Electoral Management Board for Wales, creating a new national forum to support the effective delivery of devolved elections across Wales.

Working closely with Returning Officers, Electoral Registration Officers, the Electoral Commission, Welsh Government and other key partners, the Board began coordinating preparations for the 2026 Senedd election and supporting the implementation of the most significant programme of electoral reform in Wales for a generation.

The Board focused on developing consistent approaches to election planning, identifying and managing national operational risks, supporting resilience across electoral services and facilitating collaboration between electoral administrators throughout Wales.

By bringing together electoral professionals from across Wales, the Board has strengthened national coordination and laid the foundations for consistent and effective delivery of future devolved elections.

Electoral Information Platform
The Commission also led the development and delivery of Wales' first national electoral information platform.

The platform has been designed to provide voters with accessible, impartial and authoritative information about elections in Wales, supporting greater public understanding of electoral processes and improving access to information ahead of future polls.

During 2025-26, significant progress was made in developing the platform's governance, technical infrastructure, content strategy and partnership arrangements. The Commission worked closely with Welsh Government, local authorities and other stakeholders to ensure the platform provides accurate, consistent and trusted information for voters across Wales.

The platform will play an increasingly important role in supporting democratic participation as further electoral reforms are implemented.

Delivering Organisational Change
Successfully delivering our statutory responsibilities during 2025-26 required the Commission to manage a significant period of organisational transformation.
The introduction of substantial new statutory functions required the Commission to establish new governance arrangements, recruit additional expertise, develop new operational policies and procedures, implement new digital systems and strengthen organisational capacity, while continuing to deliver an ambitious programme of statutory review work.
The Commission's ability to balance business-as-usual activity alongside large-scale organisational change reflects the commitment, professionalism and resilience of Commissioners and staff throughout the year.

Corporate Governance

Strong governance arrangements continued to underpin all aspects of the Commission's work. The Board maintained oversight of organisational performance through regular monitoring of strategic objectives, financial performance, programme delivery and corporate risks. Our corporate risk register was reviewed throughout the year to ensure that emerging risks associated with new statutory functions, organisational growth and major programmes were appropriately identified, managed and mitigated.

Internal control arrangements continued to be strengthened through regular review of governance processes, internal audit activity and assurance reporting, supporting effective decision making and continuous improvement across the organisation.

Welsh Language Standards

The Commission remains committed to ensuring that the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language in the delivery of its services.

Throughout 2025-26, we continued to comply with our statutory Welsh Language Standards across all aspects of our work, including public consultations, publications, correspondence, digital services and stakeholder engagement. Consideration of the Welsh language was embedded throughout our policy development, communications and service delivery, ensuring that our services remained fully bilingual and accessible to the people of Wales.

We continued to monitor compliance, support staff in meeting the Standards and promote opportunities to increase the use of Welsh within the organisation.

Boundary Commission for Wales

The Commission continued to provide a Secretariat to the Boundary Commission for Wales during 2025-26, for which the Commission received funding for expenditure directly from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. The 2025-26 funding relating to the Boundary Commission for Wales was £185,000 (2024-25; £229,757), as disclosed in Note 4 to the accounts on page 52.

Future Developments

As the Commission enters the next phase of its development, it is well positioned to deliver an increasingly diverse portfolio of responsibilities that support democracy throughout Wales.

The coming year will see continued support for principal councils undertaking community reviews, implementation of the Commission's remuneration functions, further development of the Electoral Management Board, continued enhancement of the electoral information platform and preparations for the first Senedd election under the new electoral arrangements.

Building on the foundations established during 2025-26, the Commission will continue to strengthen its capability, embrace innovation and work collaboratively with partners to ensure that democratic arrangements in Wales remain fair, effective, transparent and trusted.

Financial Results

The net expenditure for the year amounted to £1,989,778 (2024-25; £1,198,936) and this has been transferred to the general reserve. Grant-in-Aid received from the Welsh Government amounted to £1,529,000 (2024-25; £1,280,000) and £761,010 for the Welsh Elections Information Platform (2024-25; zero) has been credited direct to the general reserve.

Payment of Creditors

The Commission's payment policy is to pay all invoices within 30 days of receipt. This policy is in accordance with the requirements laid down in the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998 and follows the Better Payment Practice Code issued by the Department of Trade and Industry. In 2025-26, the Commission received 444 invoices and paid 100% of these within 30 days and 85% within 10 days (2024-25, received 329 invoices and paid 99% of these within 30 days and 94% within 10 days).

Environmental, Social and Community Issues

The Commission is actively pursuing polices that will seek to reduce the impact the Commission's operations have on the environment. Whilst the Commission will undertake a number of initiatives to reduce environmental impact, such as ensuring all members of staff receive sustainable development training, the main delivery will be achieved through the Commission's sustainable procurement policies. The Commission has developed a Sustainable Procurement Policy and Strategy and has achieved level three of the Sustainable Procurement Assessment Framework in the key areas.

The Welsh Government's strategic agenda is set out in the Programme for Government. It emphasises the outcomes that Welsh Government are working towards: healthy people living productive lives in a more prosperous and innovative economy; safer and more cohesive communities, with lower levels of poverty and greater equality; a resilient environment with more sustainable use of our natural resources and a society with a vital sense of its own culture and heritage. The Commission acknowledges and supports the commitment of the Welsh Government to develop more inclusive and cohesive communities across Wales and will endeavour to take account of that commitment in making any recommendations.

Long Term Expenditure Trends

The Commission's funding and expenditure are linked to the delivery of its statutory functions, including electoral and community review work, electoral management responsibilities, remuneration determinations and the ongoing development and maintenance of the electoral information platform. It is expected that the Commission's level of expenditure during 2026-27 will remain broadly similar to the previous year. This reflects the fact that the staffing structure established to support the Commission's expanded remit is expected to remain stable, providing continuity in organisational capacity and delivery. In addition, expenditure associated with the electoral information platform will continue as the platform moves forward with further development, refinement and operational support to meet the Commission's statutory responsibilities and support future electoral events.

SHEREEN WILLIAMS
Accounting Officer
7 October 2026

ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT
for the year ended 31 March 2026

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE REPORT

Commission Members, Chief Executive and Senior Staff

The Commission Members throughout 2025-26 were:

Beverley Smith	(Chair – April to November 2025)
Karen Jones	(Member - April to November 2025)
	(Chair – December 2025 to March 2026)
Michael Imperato	(Deputy Chair)
Frank Cuthbert	(Member)
Dianne Bevan	(Member)
Ginger Wiegand	(Member)
Bethan Price	(Member)
Frances Duffy	(Member)

Independent Members of the Governance and Audit Committee throughout 2025-26 were:

Andrew Blackmore	(Chair)
Kalwant Grewal	(Deputy Chair)
Jassa Scott	(Independent Member)

Senior Managers throughout 2025-26 were:

Shereen Williams	(Chief Executive and Accounting Officer)
Tom Jenkins	(Head of Reviews)
David Burley	(Head of Business)
Mark Pascoe	(Head of Democratic Health)

The appointment of Beverley Smith as Chair was for a term of 3 years 10 months running from 1 February 2022 until 30 November 2025.

The appointment of Member Karen Jones was for a term of 4 years from 1 December 2024 until 30 November 2028. Following her appointment to Chair in December 2025, her appointment as chair will run until 30 November 2029

The appointment of Member Michael Imperato was for a term of 3 years from 1 March 2022 until 28 February 2025. The term of appointment was extended by Welsh Government until 30 September 2030.

The appointment of Frank Cuthbert was for a term of 3 years from 1 April 2022 until 31 March 2025. The term of appointment was extended by Welsh Government until 30 September 2030.

The appointment of Member Dianne Bevan is for a term of 4 years from 1 June 2022 until 31 May 2026. This term of appointment was extended by Welsh Government until 31 May 2027.

The appointment of Member Ginger Wiegand is for a term of 1 year and 10 months from 1 June 2023 until 31 March 2025. The term of appointment was extended by Welsh Government until 30 September 2030.

The appointment of Member Bethan Price is for a term of 4 years from 15 October 2024 until 14 October 2028.

The appointment of Member Frances Duffy was for a term of 1 year from 1 April 2025 until 31 March 2026.

The appointment of the Independent Governance and Audit Committee Chair, Andrew Blackmore, is for a term of 4 years from 18 March 2025 to 17 March 2029.

The appointment of the Independent Governance and Audit Committee Deputy Chair, Kalwant Grewal is for a term of 3 years from 1 January 2024 until 31 December 2026.

The appointment of the Independent Governance and Audit Committee Member Jassa Scott is for a term of 4 years from 1 June 2025 until 30 May 2029.

Register of Interests

A register of any company directorships and other significant interests is maintained and held at the Commission's offices in Cathays Park, Cardiff and is available for inspection by the public on request. Alternatively, the register can be accessed from the Commission's web site at: Register of Commissioners' Interests 2025-26 | DBCC. An annual reminder is sent regarding the need to update this information. Arrangements are also in place for both members and officers to declare interests in respect of decision making at the start of each Commission and Governance and Audit Committee meeting.

Personal Data Management

The Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru takes all reasonable measures to protect the personal data obtained from its stakeholders and employees during the course of its business activities. Data management controls include password protection on all databases holding personal and sensitive data, restricting access to data, holding manual data in locked cupboards and ensuring data handling protocols are in place.

Although personal data handled by the Commission is largely limited to that relating to the Commission's employees, information security obligations are treated seriously. Protecting Information training has been undertaken by all staff and all personal data files are kept in locked cabinets. The Commission operates its own ICT system and Commission members of staff were required to comply fully with the Commission's IT data security rules and procedures.

There were no data security incidents during 2025-26 (2024-25: no data security incidents).

Appointment of Auditors

The accounts of the Commission are audited by the Auditor General for Wales under Section 19 of the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru etc. Act 2013. Audit fees are disclosed in Note 3 to these accounts.

Governance and Audit Committee

The Governance and Audit Committee met on 8 occasions during the year 2025-26. The Committee was chaired by Andrew Blackmore. Dianne Bevan and Bethan Price served as members of the Committee and Kalwant Grewal and Jassa Scott served as the Committee's

Deputy Chair and Members respectively. The Governance and Audit Committee's main duties are to consider the effectiveness of the Commission's overall internal control and risk management systems and to ensure adequate processes and mechanisms are in place for the assessment and management of risk. It considers the scope of audit coverage and adequacy of management responses to the audit recommendations and advises the Chief Executive on audit and compliance matters.

Financial Instruments

Details of Financial Instruments are given at Note 8 to the accounts on page 53.

Information

The Commission's Code of Practice on Public Access to Information requires all requests for information covered by the Freedom of Information (FoI) Act to be met within 15 working days. In 2025-26 there were 18 requests for information covered by the FoI Act, 100% of which were provided within 20 working days of receipt of the request. This compares to 2024-25 where there were 19 requests for information,100% of which were provided within 20 working days of receipt of the request.

The Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru has complied with the cost allocation and charging requirements set out in HM Treasury and Office of Public Sector Information guidance.

Ministerial Directions

As a Welsh Government Sponsored Body we are subject to non-statutory instruments, containing appropriate directions. No Ministerial Directions were issued to the Commission during 2025-26.

Gifts and Hospitality

A register of Gifts and Hospitality is maintained for members and staff. The Commission's Gifts and Hospitality Policy requires members and staff to declare offers of gifts of a value of £5 or above and hospitality of a value of £20 or above, whether accepted or declined and whether directly related to Commission business or not. The Gifts and Hospitality Register and declarations are considered at every Governance and Audit Committee meeting. During 2025-26 three offers of gifts and hospitality was received and accepted. One was a 75cl bottle of wine worth approximately £10 from a supplier which was accepted as it was not considered cost effective to return. The other was for the Chief Executive to attend Ethnic Minority Welsh women of Achievement Awards dinner estimated value of £35. This was accepted as it is in line with the Commission's role in promoting the WG Anti-Racist Action plan. Third was a dinner with the Electoral Commission Wales CEO estimated cost £40, which was accepted by the EMB Chair. (2024-25: two offers of gifts of hospitality worth £210).

Complaints Procedure

The Commission has a Complaints Procedure whereby complaints may be made (by letter, e-mail or telephone) by contacting the Commission. The Commission's Complaints Policy is reviewed every 3 years and was last reviewed in June 2024. Information on how complaints are handled can be found within the Commission's Complaints Procedure document, which can be viewed on the Commission's web site (www.dbcc.gov.wales) or can be obtained from the Commission's offices at the following address:

The Chief Executive
DBCC
4th Floor
Welsh Government Building
Cathays Park
Cardiff CF10 3NQ

The work of the Commission comes within the remit of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. All members of staff are required to attend training on complaints handling. The Commission did not receive any complaints during 2025-26 (2024-25: 1 complaint received).

Welsh Language Standards

The Commission has appointed a Welsh speaking permanent staff member as Welsh Language Champion. They have an open remit to work with the Commission staff to raise and improve our use of the Welsh Language. The Commission issues annual reports giving details of how it has complied with the Welsh Language Standards as imposed in the Welsh Language Commissioner's 2016 Final Compliance Notice to the Commission. A copy of the 2025-26 report will be supplied on request or may be accessed on the Commission's web site.

Statutory Reporting

The Commission is required to meet a range of statutory reporting obligations which help support transparency, accountability and public assurance by ensuring that key information on the Commission's performance, governance, financial stewardship, equality duties and Welsh language compliance is published or submitted to the relevant bodies within required timescales. The table below summarises the principal statutory reporting requirements applicable to the Commission and the position during 2025/26.

Statutory reporting requirement	Recipient / publication route	Frequency or deadline	Position for 2025/26
Commission's Annual Report and Financial Statements	Published by the Commission following External Audit.	Annually, by 31 December each year.	Prepared as part of the Commission's annual statutory reporting cycle.
Senedd Boundary Review final determinations	Submitted to Welsh Government.	Final report submitted by 1 April 2025.	Final determinations were required to be submitted in accordance with the statutory timetable.
Strategic Equality Plan annual report	Equality and Human Rights Commission.	Annually by the 31 March of each year. The first annual report covers 2024/25 has been published. The 2025/26 report is due to be published by 31 March 2027.	Reported as part of the Commission's wider statutory compliance framework.
Welsh Language Standards annual report	Welsh Language Commissioner.	Annually.	Prepared to demonstrate compliance with the Welsh Language Standards.

The Commission remained aware of its statutory reporting obligations during 2025/26 and maintained arrangements to monitor relevant publication and submission deadlines. No significant issues of non-compliance with statutory reporting requirements were identified during the year.

Statement of the Commission's and the Accounting Officer's Responsibilities

Under the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru etc. Act 2013, Welsh Ministers have directed the Commission to prepare for each financial year a statement of accounts in the form and on the basis determined by the Welsh Ministers. The accounts are prepared on an accruals basis and must give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Commission and of its income and expenditure, Statement of Financial Position and cash flows for the financial year.

In preparing the accounts, the Accounting Officer is required to comply with the requirements of the Government Financial Reporting Manual and in particular to:

i) observe the accounts direction issued by the Welsh Ministers including the relevant accounting and disclosure requirements, and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis;
ii) make judgements and estimates on a reasonable basis;
iii) state whether applicable accounting standards as set out in the Government Financial Reporting Manual have been followed, and disclose and explain any material departures in the financial statements;
iv) prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis; and
v) confirm that the Annual Report and Accounts as a whole is fair, balanced and understandable and take personal responsibility for the Annual Report and Accounts and the judgements required for determining that it is fair balanced and understandable.

The Welsh Government has appointed the Chief Executive as Accounting Officer of the Commission. The responsibilities of an Accounting Officer, including responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances for which the Accounting Officer is answerable, for keeping of proper records and for safeguarding the Commission's assets, are as set out in the Accounting Officers' Memorandum and Managing Welsh Public Money published by the Welsh Government.

As the Commission's Accounting Officer, I have taken all the steps that I ought to have taken to make myself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Commission's auditors are aware of that information. So far as I am aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the auditors are unaware.

SHEREEN WILLIAMS
Accounting Officer
7 October 2026

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

2025/26

1. INTRODUCTION

The Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru ("the Commission") is a statutory body that is sponsored by the Welsh Government and, as such the Commission is required to operate a robust system of corporate governance. The Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales was constituted under, and operates in accordance with, the Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013. It was renamed as the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru under the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru etc. Act 2013.

The Commission is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently, and effectively. The relationship between the Commission and Welsh Government is defined in a Framework Document.

This Governance Statement is to provide evidence of how the Accounting Officer has managed and controlled the resources used in his or her organisation through the course of the year in line with the principles set out in HM Treasury's Corporate Governance Code[1].

2. THE PURPOSE OF THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

The governance framework comprises the committees, systems and processes, cultures and values, by which the Commission operates and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with and reports to the community. It enables the Commission to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.

The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Commission's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

The Commission's overall conclusion for 2025/26 is that the level of governance throughout the year has been sound. Our Governance Framework has evolved over the period in recognition of the Commission's expanded responsibilities and critical/politically sensitive deliverables achieved during the period. The Governance and Audit Committee's annual self-assessment exercise for 2025/26 indicated that there was overall compliance with good practice. We will continue to review and evolve of governance arrangements to ensure they remain fit for purpose considering the operational priorities for 2026/27.

[1] http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/psr_governance_corporate.htm

3. GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

3.1 Welsh Government Framework Document, Operational Plan and Remit Letter

The respective roles of the Welsh Government as Sponsor Department and the Commission are set out in a Framework Document. The Framework Document sets out the broad framework within which the Commission operates and details the terms and conditions under which the Welsh Ministers provide Grant-in-Aid to the Commission. This includes the requirement for the Commission to produce an annual Operational Plan.

The Commission's annual Operational Plan is agreed between the Commission and the Welsh Government and sets out the main work of the Commission for the coming financial year and how this work will be financed. The Operational Plan is produced following the receipt of a Remit Letter from the Welsh Government Minister which sets out its policy aims, the notification of the allocated grant-in-aid to the Commission with related budgetary control and guidance on specific requirements in relation to business planning for the coming year.

3.2 Accounting Officer

The Welsh Government designates the Commission's Accounting Officer (normally the Chief Executive). The Accounting Officer's responsibilities are set out in the Welsh Government's publication Managing Welsh Public Money.

The Commission's Chief Executive, Shereen Williams, was designated as Accounting Officer by Welsh Government on 7 January 2019.

3.3 The Senior Leadership Team

The Senior Leadership Team meets monthly and normally comprises the Chief Executive, Head of Reviews, Head of Business, Head of Democratic Health and the Senior Governance and Finance Manager. Other officers are called on for their professional expertise as required.

3.4 Committee Structure

The Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru etc. Act 2013 requires that the Commission shall consist of a 'chairing member' (Chair), a 'deputy to the chairing member' (Deputy Chair) and at least one but not more than seven other members. The quorum for meetings of the Commission is three members. During 2025-26 the Commission maintained a quorate of three members present at all meetings as stipulated in the Commission's Terms of Reference and thereby meeting the requirements of the legislation. In general, the Commission meets once per month but may meet more or less frequently depending on the flow of work.

In order to support the Commission in respect of issues of risk, financial propriety, internal control and governance and associated assurance a Governance and Audit Committee was appointed. The Governance and Audit Committee comprised an independent Chair, an independent Deputy Chair, an Independent member and two members of the Commission (not the Commission Chair or Deputy Chair). The Governance and Audit Committee is scheduled to meet at least four times a year. The Chair of the Governance and Audit Committee may convene additional meetings as they deem necessary. A representative of the Commission's Welsh Government sponsor division may attend Governance and Audit Committee meetings should they consider it necessary to do so.

The Senior Leadership Team attends the Commission and Governance and Audit Committee meetings. Other officers are called on for their professional expertise as required. Representatives of Internal and External Audit attend the Governance and Audit Committee meetings.

3.5 The Commission

The Commission is responsible for the strategic direction and management of the organisation. The role of the Commissioners is to make key decisions on corporate policy and the formulation of the Corporate and Operational Plans. They also promote high standards of public finance, upholding the principles of regularity, propriety and value for money and ensure that the Commission's activities are conducted efficiently and effectively.

During 2025/26 the Commission commenced its new function relating to remuneration. It also prepared and published its Operational Plan, the 2030 Corporate Plan, as well as its Strategic Equality Plan. The Commission also reviewed the Risk Register and received updates on Welsh Language Standards.

The Commission completed the electoral reviews of Caerphilly, Vale of Glamorgan and Carmarthenshire whilst also assisting a number of Local Authorities in carrying out community reviews of their own authority area, the Commission is the implementing authority for these community reviews and during 2025-26 the Commission made Implementation Orders for community reviews carried out by Rhondda Cynon Taf and Carmarthenshire.

The EMB approved its governance documents early in 2025/26, providing a clear framework for its activities and decision-making as well as clarifying the relationship between the DBCC and EMB. A strategic risk register and forward plan was developed, as well as an operational risk register covering activity related to the 2026 Senedd election. The Board issued two sets of legally binding directions to Returning Officers (ROs) and Electoral Registration Officers (EROs), in October and December.

The EMB's forward work plan focussed on the co-ordination of the Senedd elections in 2026 and the Welsh Elections Information Platform (WEIP) project. The Board has prioritised collaboration, providing a forum for Returning Officers (ROs) and Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) to discuss risks, share good practice, and ensure consistency of approach across Wales. This has included regional meetings and two all-day workshops in October, with a focus on key risks, cross-boundary working, and the new voting system for Senedd 2026. Detailed work has been carried out by the Board's Elections Planning Group (EPG) and the Board has provided a series of 'practice notes' to ROs and their teams.

A significant amount of the Board's resource has gone into the WEIP project, with work needing to take place at pace to deliver vote.wales in time for the 2026 Senedd election. The EMB has taken a proactive approach to risk in regard to the project, requiring stop/go decisions at key project milestones and additional assurance through independent audits. The website was launched, to schedule, early in March.

The Commission also published its first Annual Remuneration Report for 2026/27, and sets out the Commission's decisions regarding the remuneration, expenses, and benefits

applicable to elected and co-opted members across Wales' principal councils, community and town councils, fire and rescue authorities, and national park authorities.

The Commission met 11 times during 2025/26 to discharge its responsibilities. Commission Members attendance at these meetings is set out below:

Commission Meetings 2025/ 26		
	Meetings held during period of appointment	Meetings attended
B Smith (Chair) [1.] [4.]	8	7
K Jones (Member / Chair) [2.] [5.]	11	10
M Imperato (Deputy Chair) [3.]	11	10
F Cuthbert (Member)	11	11
D Bevan (Member)	11	11
G Wiegand (Member) [6.]	11	10
B Price (Member)	11	11
F Duffy (Member) [7.]	11	8

[1.] 1 April 2025 to 30 November 2025
[2.] Member 1 April 2025 to 30 November 2025, Chair 1 December 2025 to 31 March 2026
[3.] M Imperato did not attend the May 2025 meeting due to a prior commitment.
[4.] B Smith did not attend the September 2025 meeting due to a prior commitment.
[5.] K Jones did not attend the January 2026 meeting due to a prior commitment.
[6.] G Wiegand did not attend the February 2026 meeting due to a prior commitment.
[7.] F Duffy did not attend the September 2025, October 2025 and January 2026 meetings due to a prior commitment.

3.6 Governance and Audit Committee

During 2025/26 the Committee scrutinised the Corporate Risk Register and risk management arrangements together with the Assurance Framework, internal controls and governance arrangements and provided assurance to the Commission that the systems, processes and behaviours that exemplify good governance and effective operation are in place. The Committee received all audit reports and monitored the progress of audit recommendations raised.

The Governance and Audit Committee produce an Annual Report which provided positive feedback to the Accounting Officer on the completeness and reliability of the assurances obtained by the Commission on its risk management and internal controls.

The minutes of the Commission's Governance and Audit Committee are published on the Commission's website.

The Governance and Audit Committee met 8 times during 2025/26 to discharge its responsibilities on 17 June 2025, 28th July 2025, 10th September 2025, 17th October 2025, 28th November 2025, 21st January 2026, 18th February 2026 and 3rd March 2026. Committee Members' attendance at these meetings is set out below: Additional meetings were held due to the increased risk associated with the delivery of the Welsh Elections Information Platform (WEIP) project.

Governance and Audit Committee Meetings 2025/ 26		
	Meetings held during period of appointment	Meetings attended
A Blackmore (Independent Chair - GAC)	8	8
K Grewal (Independent Deputy Chair – GAC)[1]	8	6
J Scott (Independent Member – GAC)	8	8
B Price (Member - GAC)[2]	8	7
D Bevan (Member – GAC)[3]	8	7

[1.] K Grewal did not attend the September and October 2025 meeting due to a prior commitment.
[2.] B Price did not attend the October 2025 meeting due to prior commitment
[3.] D Bevan did not attend the February 2026 meeting due to prior commitment

3.7 Challenges During the Year

During 2025/26, the Commission operated within a particularly challenging delivery environment as it assumed a range of new functions alongside its established responsibilities. The key challenge throughout the year was balancing delivery at pace with the establishment of the EMB and maintenance of strong governance arrangements, while also building effective relationships with key stakeholders.

This required extensive engagement with a wide range of partners, including Returning Officers and Electoral Registration Officers, the Electoral Commission, Welsh Government and the UK Government, to support shared understanding and effective implementation of the Commission's new functions.

A key priority was the need to establish in-house elections expertise to underpin these expanded functions, and this led to a change in the staff structure. The Commission also undertook its largest and most complex procurement exercise to date, placing additional demands on organisational capability and governance processes within tight timescales. In parallel, the EMB exercised its powers of direction for the first time, doing so with appropriate consultation and legal assurance to mitigate the risk of challenge.

The year also involved managing the transition of responsibilities for the remuneration of elected members from the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) to the Commission. This required careful handling to ensure continuity, clarity, and confidence among stakeholders during the transfer of functions, including clear communication of roles, processes, and expectations.

Significant operational complexity was also encountered in the delivery of the Welsh Electoral Improvement Programme (WEIP), where timelines, resource pressures, constraints within the legislative framework, and the need for procurement and independent assurance all required careful management. These factors necessitated strong programme management, clear prioritisation, and robust governance oversight to ensure that the Commission was able to deliver effectively and maintain confidence in its work.

As stated in the Annual Report under Review of Activities for 2025-26 (page 9), the main challenge faced by the Commission during the year was implementing the Welsh Elections Information Platform.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

The Commission is committed to the regular identification and assessment of risk and has a Risk Management programme which is aimed at identifying, managing and monitoring all risks, Corporate, Operational and those risks specific to undertaking review work, the administration of the pension scheme and the ICT system. The Commission aims to ensure that, in discharging its responsibilities to the Welsh Government, the likelihood of failing to deliver its Operational Plan and Strategic Objectives is minimised by means of anticipating and controlling known risks. The Chief Executive and senior management will establish and deliver the Risk Management Programme securing the recognition, assessment, regular review and amelioration of all risks. The Corporate Risks are presented to members in the form of a Corporate Risk Register. The Governance and Audit Committee considers the Corporate Risk Register at every meeting to provide assurance to the Commission's Risk Management process.

The Commission's risk management arrangements are aligned with the principles of HM Treasury's Orange Book (Management of Risk – Principles and Concepts). The Principles are:

- Risk management shall be an essential part of governance and leadership, and fundamental to how the organisation is directed, managed and controlled at all levels.
- Risk management shall be an integral part of all organisational activities to support decision-making in achieving objectives.
- Risk management shall be collaborative and informed by the best available information.
- Risk management processes shall be structured to include:
    a. risk identification and assessment of risks to determine and prioritise how the risks should be managed;
    b. the selection, design and implementation of risk treatment options that support achievement of intended outcomes and manage risks to an acceptable level;
    c. the design and operation of integrated, insightful and informative risk monitoring; and
    d. timely, accurate and useful risk reporting to enhance the quality of decision-making and to support management and oversight bodies in meeting their responsibilities.
- Risk management shall be continually improved through learning and experience.

The Commission complies with these principles by the consideration of its risk appetite and monitoring of existing risks identified together with consideration of its corporate objectives and operational plan and work programme timetables and deadlines in order to identify additional emerging risks.

The Commission reviews its Corporate and Review Work Programme risk registers at every meeting and updates the risks and mitigating actions as necessary. The Commission's Senior Leadership Team review's the Commission' Operational, ICT and Pensions risk registers. The Governance and Audit Committee receives reports on the Commission's risk management activity and risk management policy at every meeting.

During 2025/26 the main risks identified and managed by the Commission were:

Risk Identified
There is potential that the Commission has not fully considered and planned for the politically sensitive and highly visible work output (such as its recommendations and determinations) being mis-understood or rejected by those impacted.
Within the context of a very small organisation with mission critical short-term deliverables, there is a risk that operational expertise and key business relationships rests solely with one or two key officers.
There is a risk of the Commission not having the capacity nor capability to respond effectively to calls for unanticipated, additional resources (financial, operational and people) to allow each of the functions to deliver efficiently, effectively and in a timely manner.
There is a risk that the Welsh Elections Information Platform will not be operational in line with regulatory and stakeholder expectations resulting in improved levels of 'convenience' (as represented by the availability of a centralised repository of a range of electoral information) not being achieved.
There is a risk that given the Commission's pivotal and politically sensitive role in respect of the democratic process our IT systems may be targeted by malicious actors resulting in material disruption which potentially undermines public confidence in the democratic process.

The Commission is reducing the risk of misunderstanding or rejection of politically sensitive work by implementing a communications and engagement plan for key outputs and stakeholders. As well as providing plain English and plain Welsh summaries alongside formal determinations, maintaining transparency through publication of methodologies, minutes and guidance. The communications plan will be evaluated together with the new remit letter to confirm that it remains current.

The risk of the commission relying solely on one or two key officers for operational expertise and key business relationships to meet short term deliverables is actively being managed by maintaining strong working relationships with key stakeholders, assigning deputies when key staff are unavailable to attend meetings, and ensuring training for all staff development. Implementing scenario planning to address potential loss of internal expertise will enable the organisation to identify and adopt necessary measures, thereby reducing any impact.

The risk of the commission's capacity or capability to respond effectively to unforeseen additional resources is currently being managed by ongoing engagement with the Sponsor Division on resource requirements to utilise secondments and short-term loans to address gaps where necessary. Senior Leadership conducts monthly reviews of the operational functions to ensure effective oversight.

To reduce the risk the Welsh Elections Information Platform not being operational in line with regulatory and stakeholder expectations, a contingency website has been prepared and DBCC are ensuring there is sufficient staff for deployment. Governance Arrangements are also in place to oversee the delivery of the platform. To further improve our controls, any outstanding deliveries will be tracked for the Senedd Elections as well as developing a project plan for the next phase to ensure timely improvements for the Local General elections. Maintaining ongoing communication with the Welsh Government ensures the platform remains current regarding regulatory updates.

To manage the risk to the Commissions IT systems from malicious actors there are several controls in place. A high-level contingency plan is in place in the event of termination of the SLA, external contractors for any systems beyond business-as-usual requirements. There is continuous engagement with IT support partners to scope and price additional support as required. The Commission has Cyber Essentials Plus and

IASME level 1 accreditation in place and will be working towards IASME level 2 accreditation in 2026/27. Public facing systems hosted externally have undergone penetration testing and security checks, and internal and external platforms are hosted separately. Regular cyber-security training should focus on decision-making, communications, and escalation during live incidents. Testing organisational readiness through desktop exercise that align with business continuity further strengthens these controls.

5. INTERNAL AUDIT

The review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control and governance arrangements is informed by the work of the Internal Auditors and their reporting to the Commission. This work is undertaken by appointed auditors who structure their work based on an annual audit programme. The terms of reference for internal audit require that work is conducted in accordance the Global Internal Audit Standards.

As part of the Commission's corporate business cycle the Commission's Internal Auditors, MIAA Ltd., draws up an internal audit programme which is approved by the Governance and Audit Committee. The audit process uses the standard GIAS auditing guidelines and other best practices with the aim of identifying potential weaknesses in controls. Each of these potential weaknesses is then assessed jointly with the auditors to consider the likely risk and scale of impact, and the alternative controls and potential improvements within the resources of the Commission.

The Internal Audit Opinion on Internal Control 2025/26 has been produced by MIAA Ltd. with the objective of supporting the Annual Governance Statement by giving an opinion on the level of internal control based on the internal work outlined below. The Head of Internal Audit's Annual Opinion for 2025/26 states:

'MIAA gave an overall Substantial Assurance, that there is a good system of internal control designed to meet the organisation's objectives, and that controls are generally being applied consistently'.

Mid-Year Audit Report 2025/26

Audit Area	Date Released	Weakness Identified				Assurance Level
		Critical	High	Medium	Low	
Key Finance Transactions	October 2025	-	-	2	2	Substantial
Risk Management	October 2025	-	-	2	3	Substantial

Year End Audit Report 2025/26

Audit Area	Date Released	Weakness Identified				Assurance Level
		Critical	High	Medium	Low	

Corporate Governance	March 2026	-	-	2	1	Substantial
Senedd Review	February 2026	-	-	-	1	High

The mid-year audit provided Substantial assurance ratings for Key Finance Transactions and Risk Management, with nine audit recommendations being raised.

The year-end audit provided Substantial assurance ratings for Corporate Governance and High assurance for the Senedd Review, with four audit recommendations being raised.

These findings provide assurance that the DBCC's arrangements are reducing its exposure to risk. The Committee noted the thoroughness of the audit work, practicality of recommendations and the open and positive response of DBCC management.

The 2025/26 Follow Up audit report gave a positive assessment of progress in implementing recommendations, with most outstanding actions completed and the remaining recommendations partially implemented.

6. EXTERNAL AUDIT

The Auditor General for Wales is the Commission's statutory auditor who audit the Commission's annual financial accounts in line with established practice.

The Audit conclusions for the 2025/26 financial year were reviewed at the October 2026 meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee. An unqualified opinion was given on the 2025/26 Accounts, and two audit recommendations were raised which were accepted by the Commission. The recommendations were:

- The accounts production processes and quality assurance arrangements are reviewed to improve the quality of draft financial statements.

- The fixed asset register is updated to include leasehold improvements.

7. BOARD EFFECTIVENESS

7.1 Induction, Development, Training and Performance Appraisal

New Commissioners and Governance and Audit Committee members are provided with an induction session which covers how the Commission's review work is conducted, the relationship between the DBCC and Parliamentary BCW and how the joint secretariat for the two bodies operates and the Commission's financial arrangements. As part of the Commissioners and Governance and Audit Committee members induction training is provided in respect of the process of carrying out an electoral review. An induction pack for independent Governance and Audit Committee members who are not Commission members is also provided.

Commissioners are encouraged to build links with members of other bodies that have interests in common with the Commission. There is a well-established arrangement of annual meetings between the various UK Boundary Commissions and there are also periodic meetings between the Commission Members and the Welsh Local Government Association, One Voice Wales and other stakeholder bodies. The Commission will also consider providing training opportunities for specific areas of expertise that have been identified to be of benefit to the Commission.

The Commission Chair's performance is appraised annually by the Deputy Director of the Commission's Welsh Government Sponsor Division. Commission Members' performance is appraised annually by the Commission Chair. For 2025-26 the hair concluded that the performance of all Commission Members was fully satisfactory.

7.2 Board Information

- Terms of Reference for Commission meetings have been adopted.
- A Work Plan for Commission meetings has been adopted.
- A standard format for reports has been adopted. This ensures consistency and requires consideration of issues such as risks and legal implications;
- Authors of reports are encouraged to draw on available and reliable sources of information such as Welsh Government, principal authorities, other Boundary Commissions, government departments etc.;
- A standard format for meeting agendas and minutes has been adopted. Standard agenda items to include, declarations of interest, issues arising, risk management, budget report and a calendar of events. The minutes of the Commission meetings are published and available on the Commission's website;
- Commission members have continued to use laptop computers for storing and viewing meeting papers and other documents relevant to their duties which has continued to reduce stationery costs associated with printing and copying meeting papers.

7.3 Board Performance Evaluation

The Board performance assessment scheduled for 2025/26 was deferred in recognition of a significant transition period, including the appointment of a new Chair, the establishment of new committees and the recruitment of additional members. This approach was intended to allow the revised governance arrangements to operate for a full year and to enable the Board to embed delivery of the Commission's expanded functions, thereby supporting a more robust and evidence-based reflection and feedback process. In early 2026/27, the Board effectiveness questionnaire will be reviewed and refreshed to ensure it remains fit for purpose in light of the Commission's expanded remit, and the Board performance assessment will then be completed.

The Governance and Audit Committee carried out their annual self-assessment review of its effectiveness by members completing the revised questionnaire during March 2026. Overall, the findings of these evaluations were positive during 2025/26 and concluded that the vast majority of the indicators of effectiveness and compliance with good practice had been met. Areas identified for improvement are captured in action plans and addressed during the following year. In respect of the Governance and Audit Committee evaluation there were no previous year's action points to be addressed. The Governance and Audit Committee are currently in the process of reviewing their

performance effectiveness self-assessment process with the assistance of their internal auditors (MIAA ltd) and expected to be completed during 2026/27.

8. CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

The Commission's arrangements comply with the principles of the Corporate Governance Code in all material respects.

9. QUALITY OF REPORTING TO THE BOARD

Following the standardisation of the format of reports and a system of checking the information contained in the reports, the Commission now finds the quality of data acceptable and will strive for further improvements in standardised review reporting to the Board.

10. MEETINGS WITH SPONSOR DEPARTMENT

The Commission Chair and Chief Executive hold regular meetings with the Commission's Welsh Government Sponsor Division and there is frequent contact between members of the Secretariat and members of the Sponsor Division on operational issues. In addition, the Commission's Secretariat hold liaison meetings with representatives of the Commission's Welsh Government Sponsor Division to discuss progress on review work, corporate governance issues and any other issues arising regarding the operation of the Commission.

11. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

A performance management system is in place to ensure that members of staff understand what they are doing and why, and how their work links with what the Commission is trying to achieve. Using the Clear Review software all managers are required to set objectives for their staff which are then reviewed throughout the year and updated as necessary. This includes a full career and job-related development and training plan to aid the development of staff.

The performance of Commission members is assessed by the Commission Chair annually and the performance of the Commission in undertaking its duties is monitored at Commission meetings.

12. ICT DATA SECURITY

The Commission receives ICT Security reports from their ICT support officers provided by Qualifications Wales. These reports are considered at each A Governance and Audit Committee meeting. During the reporting period the Commission undertook their annual Cyber Security audit. The Commission also completed and passed IASME Level 1 and is working towards achieving IASME Level 2 during 2026-27.

13. WHISTLEBLOWING AND FRAUD

The Commission operates Whistleblowing and Fraud Policies which are made available to staff through the Commission's intranet and Commission Members as part of the induction packs issued to them following appointment. The Commission's Whistleblowing arrangements, together with a report of any instances of whistleblowing

and fraud, are considered at every Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meeting. There were no instances of whistleblowing or suspected fraud during 2025/26 (2024/25 – no whistleblowing incidents).

SIGNED _____ DATE 7 October 2026
Karen Jones
Chair

SIGNED _____ DATE 7 October 2026
Shereen Williams
Chief Executive and Accounting Officer

Remuneration and Staff Report

Service Contracts

The Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 requires Civil Service appointments to be made on merit on the basis of fair and open competition. The Recruitment Principles published by the Civil Service Commission specify the circumstances when appointments may be made otherwise.

Unless otherwise stated below, the officials covered by this report hold appointments which are open-ended. Early termination, other than for misconduct, would result in the individual receiving compensation as set out in the Civil Service Compensation Scheme.

Further information about the work of the Civil Service Commission can be found at www.civilservicecommission.org.uk

Remuneration Policy

Powers to make remuneration to Commission Members are set out in Section 2 Provision 4 of the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru etc. Act 2013. This function was transferred to the National Assembly for Wales under SI 1999 Transfer of Functions Order No 672. Increases to the remuneration of Chairs and Members of WGSBs are authorised by the First Minister.

The Commission also has responsibility for paying the remuneration for Boundary Commission for Wales (BCW) members at daily rates set by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and approved by HM Treasury. The cost of this remuneration is met from the funding provided by Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government described on page 12 and disclosed in the staff costs table on page 37.

Annual increases in salary are applied in accordance with those agreed for staff of the Welsh Government and no performance bonuses are applicable.

The information contained within this report is subject to audit with the exception of the figures regarding staff composition and sickness absence.

Remuneration (including salary) and pension entitlements

The following sections provide details of the remuneration and pension interests of the most senior management and board members of the Commission.

Commission Members' Remuneration (subject to audit)

	2025-26	2024-25
Name	Fees £'000	Fees £'000
Beverley Smith (Chair DBCC)	5 - 10	5 - 10
Michael Imperato (Deputy Chair DBCC)	5 - 10	5 - 10
Frank Cuthbert (Member DBCC)	5 - 10	5 - 10
Dianne Bevan (Member DBCC)	5 - 10	0 - 5
Ginger Weigand (Member DBCC)	0 - 5	0 - 5

Bethan Price (Member DBCC)	10-15	0 - 5
Karen Jones (Member / Chair DBCC)	10 - 15	0 - 5
Frances Duffy (Member – DBCC)	5 - 10	-
Andrew Blackmore (Independent Audit Committee Chair – DBCC)	5 - 10	0 - 5
Kalwant Grewal (Independent Audit Committee Deputy Chair – DBCC)	0 - 5	0 - 5
Jassa Scott (Independent Audit Committee Member – DBCC)	0 - 5	-
Huw V Thomas (Member – BCW)	0 - 5	0 - 5
Sam Hartley (Member – BCW)	0 - 5	0 - 5

The Commission members' remuneration related entirely to fees for services rendered during the year. Pension contributions are not payable.

The Speaker of the House of Commons is the ex-officio Chairman of the BCW. The BCW Deputy Chair, who presides over the meetings, is a High Court Judge: Mrs Justice Jefford DBE. The post of BCW Deputy Chair is unpaid with only expenses being covered.

Senior Managers' Salary and Pension Entitlements (subject to audit)

Single total figure of remuneration						
Official	Salary (£'000) [1]		Pension Benefits (to nearest £1,000) [2 3]		Total (£'000)	
	2025-26	2024-25	2025-26	2024-25	2025-26	2024-25
Mrs S Williams (Chief Executive)	85-90	80-85	34,000	36,000[5]	120-125	115-120
Mr D T Jenkins (Head of Policy & Programmes)	70-75	70-75	29,000	28,000	100-105	95-100
Mr D Burley (Head of Business)	70-75	65-70	72,000	65,000	145-150	130-135
Mr M Pascoe (Head of Democratic Health) [4]	60-65	10-15	24,000	4,000	80-85	10-15

[1] There were no payments made in respect of bonuses and Benefits in Kind.

[2] The value of pension benefits accrued during the year is calculated as (the real increase in pension multiplied by 20) plus (the real increase in any lump sum) less (the contributions made by the individual). The real increases exclude increases due to inflation or any increase or decreases due to a transfer of pension rights.

[3] Accrued pension benefits included in this table for any individual affected by the Public Service Pensions Remedy have been calculated based on their inclusion in the legacy scheme for the period between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022, following the McCloud judgment. The Public Service Pensions Remedy applies to individuals that were members, or eligible to be members, of a public service pension scheme on 31 March 2012 and were members of a public service pension scheme between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022. The basis for the calculation reflects the legal position that impacted members have been rolled back into the relevant legacy scheme for the remedy period and that this will apply unless the member actively exercises their entitlement on retirement to decide instead to receive benefits calculated under the terms of the Alpha scheme for the period from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2022.

[4] From 14 January 2025. FTE / FYE salary £55 – 60k.

[5] The prior-year pension benefits disclosed for the Chief Executive have been revised as a member who has transitioned from (classic/classic plus/premium) to alpha scheme. The benefits are based on pensionable pay and length of service and therefore may increase from one year to the next by virtue of any pay rise during the year.

The value of pension benefits is calculated by MyCSP (Capita), the organisation responsible for administering the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme on behalf of the Civil Service. The Commission has no influence over the calculation or the reported amount. This is not an amount which has been paid to an officer by the organisation during the year; it is a calculation which uses information from the pension benefit table. These figures can be influenced by many factors e.g. changes in an officer's salary, whether or not they choose to make additional contributions to the pension scheme from their pay and other valuation factors affecting the pension scheme as a whole.

Number of Senior Managers

The Commission employed 4 senior managers during 2025-26 (2024-25: 4 senior managers), a Chief Executive, Head of Reviews, Head of Business and Head of Democratic Health. The Commission's Chief Executive is deemed to be the equivalent of the Welsh Government's Grade 6 and the Commission's Head of Policy and Programmes, Head of Business and Head of Democratic Health are deemed to be the equivalent of the Welsh Government's Grade 7.

Salary

'Salary' includes gross salary and overtime. One staff member received a 5% Recruitment and Retention allowance and one staff member received a 5% Accountancy allowance during 2025-26. No other payments were made in respect of performance pay or bonuses. This report is based on accrued payments made by the Commission and thus recorded in these accounts.

Fair Pay Disclosure

Reporting bodies are required to disclose the relationship between the remuneration of the highest paid director in their organisation and the median remuneration of the organisation's workforce.

The banded remuneration of the highest paid director in the financial year 2025/26 was £85-£90,000 (2024/25 = £80-85,000). This was 1.84 times the medium remuneration of the Commissions workforce which was £47,648 (2024-25: 1.84 times the median remuneration of the Commissions workforce, which was £44,852)

Total Pay and Benefits		
	2025/26	**2024/25**
25th percentile remuneration	36,115	33,748
25th percentile pay ratio	2.42	2.44
50th percentile remuneration	47,648	44,852
50th percentile pay ratio	1.84	1.84
75th percentile remuneration	58,286	50,009
75th percentile pay ratio	1.50	1.65

Salary Component of Total Pay and Benefits		
	2025/26	**2024/25**
25th percentile remuneration	36,115	33,748
25th percentile pay ratio	2.42	2.44
50th percentile remuneration	47,648	43,758
50th percentile pay ratio	1.84	1.89
75th percentile remuneration	55,473	49,210
75th percentile pay ratio	1.58	1.68

In 2025/26, no employee received remuneration in excess of the highest-paid director (2024/25 = no employee).

Remuneration ranged from £29,282 to £87,500 (2024/25: £29,657 to £82,500). Total remuneration includes salary, non-consolidated performance-related pay and benefits in kind. It does not include severance payments, temporary payments, employer pension contributions and the cash equivalent transfer value of pensions.

The percentage change from the previous financial year in respect of highest paid director was 3.7% (2024/25: 3.1%). The average percentage change from the previous financial year in respect of employees taken as a whole was 5.1% (2024/25: 14.3%).

Tax Assurance for Off-Payroll Employees

All of the Commission's directly employed staff and board members are paid through the Commission's payroll system and subject to the appropriate tax and National Insurance contributions. All staff on inward secondment to the Commission from other government departments remain on the payroll system of their parent departments. During 2025-26 the Commission made off-payroll payments to a consultant engaged to assist the Commission in the development of the Welsh Elections Information Platform.

Highly paid off-payroll worker engagements as at 31 March 2026, earning £245 per day or greater

Number (No.) of existing engagements as at 31 March 2026	1
Of which. No. that existed:	
Less than 1 year	-
For between 1 and 2 years	1
For between 2 and 3 years	-
For between 3 and 4 years	-
For 4 years or more	-

All highly paid off-payroll worker engaged at any point during the year ended 31 March 2026, earning £245 per day or greater

Number (No.) of temporary off-payroll workers engaged during the year ended 31 March 2026	1
Of which:	
Not subject to off-payroll legislation	-
Subject to off-payroll legislation and determined as in-scope of IR35	-
Subject to off-payroll legislation and determined as out-of-scope of IR35	1
No. of engagements reassessed for compliance or assurance purposes during the year	-

Pension Benefits (subject to audit)

Name	Accrued pension at pension age as at 31/03/26 and related lump sum	Real increase in pension and related lump sum at pension age	CETV at 31/3/26	CETV at 31/3/25	Real increase in CETV	Employer contributions to partnership pension accounts
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Mrs S Williams Chief Executive	20 - 25	0 – 2.5	295	260	18	-
Mr D T Jenkins Head of Policy & Programmes	15 - 20	0 – 2.5	208	183	14	-
Mr D Burley Head of Business	30 – 35 plus a lump sum of 80 - 85	2.5 – 5 plus a lump sum of 5 -7.5	797	711	70	-
Mr M Pascoe [2]	10 - 15	0 - 2.5	171	151	12	-

Head of Democratic Health						

. Accrued pension benefits included in this table for any individual affected by the Public Service Pensions Remedy have been calculated based on their inclusion in the legacy scheme for the period between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022, following the McCloud judgment. The Public Service Pensions Remedy applies to individuals that were members, or eligible to be members, of a public service pension scheme on 31 March 2012 and were members of a public service pension scheme between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022. The basis for the calculation reflects the legal position that impacted members have been rolled back into the relevant legacy scheme for the remedy period and that this will apply unless the member actively exercises their entitlement on retirement to decide instead to receive benefits calculated under the terms of the Alpha scheme for the period from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2022.

The prior year CETV pension benefit figures have been updated from last year's report to reflect more complete and accurate information. For S Williams, two transfer-in values were omitted from last year's results. The prior year PCSPS figures for T Jenkins and M Pascoe were understated, and D Burley's spouse's pension entitlement was also understated.

Civil Service Pensions

Pension benefits are provided through the Civil Service pension arrangements. Before 1 April 2015, the only scheme was the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS), which is divided into different sections - **classic**, **premium**, and **classic plus** provide benefits on a final salary basis, whilst **nuvos** provides benefits on a career average basis. From 1 April 2015 a new pension scheme for civil servants was introduced – the Civil Servants and Others Pension Scheme or **alpha**, which provides benefits on a career average basis. All newly appointed civil servants, and the majority of those already in service, joined the new scheme.

The PCSPS and **alpha** are unfunded statutory schemes. Employees and employers make contributions (employee contributions range between 4.6% and 8.05%, depending on salary). The balance of the cost of benefits in payment is met by monies voted by the UK Parliament each year. Pensions in payment are increased annually in line with the Pensions Increase legislation. Instead of the defined benefit arrangements, employees may opt for a defined contribution pension with an employer contribution, the **partnership** pension account.

In **alpha**, pension builds up at a rate of 2.32% of pensionable earnings each year, and the total amount accrued is adjusted annually in line with a rate set by HM Treasury. Members may opt to give up (commute) pension for a lump sum up to the limits set by the Finance Act 2004. All members who switched to alpha from the PCSPS had their PCSPS benefits 'banked', with those with earlier benefits in one of the final salary sections of the PCSPS having those benefits based on their final salary when they leave **alpha**.

The accrued pensions shown in this report are the pension the member is entitled to receive when they reach normal pension age, or immediately on ceasing to be an active member of the scheme if they are already at or over normal pension age. Normal pension age is 60 for members of **classic**, **premium**, and **classic plus**, 65 for members of **nuvos**, and the higher of 65 or State Pension Age for members of **alpha**. The pension figures in this report show pension earned in PCSPS or **alpha** - as appropriate. Where a member has benefits in both the PCSPS and **alpha**, the figures show the combined value of their benefits in the two schemes but note that the constituent parts of that pension may be payable from different ages.

When the UK Government introduced new public service pension schemes in 2015, there were transitional arrangements which treated existing scheme members differently based on their age. Older members of the PCSPS remained in that scheme, rather than moving to **alpha**. In 2018, the Court of Appeal found that the transitional arrangements in the public service pension schemes unlawfully discriminated against younger members (the "McCloud judgment").

As a result, steps are being taken to remedy those 2015 reforms, making the pension scheme provisions fair to all members. The Public Service Pensions Remedy is made up of two parts.

The first part of the remedy resulted in the closure of the PCSPS on 31 March 2022, with all active members becoming members of **alpha** from 1 April 2022. The second part of the remedy removes the age discrimination for the remedy period, between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022, by moving the membership of eligible members during this period back into the PCSPS on 1 October 2023.

The accrued pension benefits, Cash Equivalent Transfer Value and single total figure of remuneration reported for any individual affected by the Public Service Pensions Remedy have been calculated based on their inclusion in the PCSPS for the period between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022, following the McCloud judgment. The Public Service Pensions Remedy applies to individuals that were members, or eligible to be members, of a public service pension scheme on 31 March 2012 and were members of a public service pension scheme between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022. The basis for the calculation reflects the legal position that impacted members have been rolled back into the PCSPS for the remedy period and that this will apply unless the member actively exercises their entitlement on retirement to decide instead to receive benefits calculated under the terms of the **alpha** scheme for the period from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2022.

The **partnership** pension account is an occupational defined contribution pension arrangement which is part of the Legal & General Master trust. The employer makes a basic contribution of between 8% and 14.75% (depending on the age of the member). The employee does not have to contribute but, where they do make contributions, the employer will match these up to a limit of 3% of pensionable salary (in addition to the employer's basic contribution). Employers also contribute a further 0.5% of pensionable salary to cover the cost of centrally provided risk benefit cover (death in service and ill health retirement).
Further details about the Civil Service pension arrangements can be found at the website www.civilservicepensionscheme.org.uk

Cash Equivalent Transfer Values

A Cash Equivalent Transfer Value (CETV) is the actuarially assessed capitalised value of the pension scheme benefits accrued by a member at a particular point in time. The benefits valued are the member's accrued benefits and any contingent spouse's pension payable from the scheme. A CETV is a payment made by a pension scheme or arrangement to secure pension benefits in another pension scheme or arrangement when the member leaves a scheme and chooses to transfer the benefits accrued in their former scheme. The pension figures shown relate to the benefits that the individual has accrued as a consequence of their total membership of the pension scheme, not just their service in a senior capacity to which disclosure applies.
The figures include the value of any pension benefit in another scheme or arrangement which the member has transferred to the Civil Service pension arrangements. They also include any additional pension benefit accrued to the member as a result of their buying additional pension benefits at their own cost. CETVs are worked out in accordance with The Occupational Pension Schemes (Transfer Values) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 and do not take account of any actual or potential reduction to benefits resulting from Lifetime Allowance Tax which may be due when pension benefits are taken.

Real increase in CETV

This reflects the increase in CETV that is funded by the employer. It does not include the increase in accrued pension due to inflation, contributions paid by the employee (including the value of any benefits transferred from another pension scheme or arrangement) and uses common market valuation factors for the start and end of the period.

Pension liabilities

The Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS) and alpha are unfunded multi-employer defined benefit schemes but the Commission is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities. The scheme actuary valued the scheme as at 31 March 2020. You can find details in the resource accounts of the Cabinet Office:

Civil Superannuation Annual Report and Accounts 2023-24

Payment is made to the Paymaster General of such sums as may be appropriate as representing accruing liabilities of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme. Further details are included in the Staff report on page 35 and note 1.13 to the accounts.

For 2025-26, employers' contributions of £205,476 (2024- 25: £171,473) were payable to the PCSPS at the rate of 28.97% (2024-25: 28.97%) of pensionable pay, based on salary bands. The Scheme Actuary reviews employer contributions usually every four years following a full scheme valuation. The salary bands and contribution rates were revised for 2024-25 and will remain unchanged until 2028-29. The pay bands and contribution rates reflect benefits as they are accrued, not when the costs are actually incurred, and reflect the past experience of the scheme.

Employees can opt to open a partnership pension account, a stakeholder pension with an employer contribution. Employer contributions are age related and range from 8.0% to 14.75% of pensionable pay. Employers also match employee contributions up to 3% of pensionable pay. No officer employed by the Commission is a member of the partnership pension scheme.

No persons retired on ill health grounds during the year

Compensation for loss of office

No payments were made in respect of loss of office or termination during 2025-26 (and no payments were made during 2024-25).

Staff Numbers and Related Costs *(subject to audit)*

	2025-26 Permanently employed staff £	**2025-26 Commission Members £**	**2025-26 Total £**
Wages and salaries	**715,252**	**74,392**	**789,644**
Social security costs	**95,737**	**4,678**	**100,415**
Pension costs	**205,476**	**-**	**205,476**
Total Net Costs	**1,016,465**	**79,070**	**1,095,535**

Average number of persons employed
The average number of full-time equivalent persons employed during the year by these categories was as follows:

	No.	**No.**	**No.**
Directly Employed	**14**	**13.5**	**27.5**
Total Staff	**14**	**13.5**	**27.5**

Comparatives:

	2024-25 Permanently employed staff £	2024-25 Commission Members £	2024-25 Total £
Wages and salaries	598,256	40,959	639,215
Social security costs	65,838	751	66,589

Pension costs	171,473	-	171,473
	835,567	41,710	877,277

Average number of persons employed
The average number of full-time equivalent persons employed during the year by these categories was as follows:

	No.	No.	No.
Directly Employed	12.5	10.8	23.3
Total Staff	12.5	10.8	23.3

The above directly employed staff costs are partly offset by the set funding of £185,000 (2024-25; £229,757) received from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for maintaining the Boundary Commission for Wales during non-review years. Members' remuneration on behalf of the Boundary Commission for Wales was £1,011 (2024-25; £2,528).

Consultancy Costs

During 2025-26 the Commission paid £148,947 (2024-25: £2,544) to a consultancy firm engaged to assist the Commission in the development of the Welsh Elections Information Platform.

Employee Policy

The Commission maintains a core of directly employed staff consisting of the Chief Executive, Head of Policy and Programmes, Head of Business, Head of Democratic Health, Finance Manager, Communications and Engagement Manager, two Review Officers and two Business Support Officers. Directly employed staff have salary bands and terms and conditions of service analogous with Welsh Government staff of corresponding grades.

The Commission has an extensive range of policies which reflect current legislation, and aim to secure retention and motivation. These policies are reviewed regularly. All policies are equality checked before implementation. The Commission was first accredited with Investors In People standard in 2009. This was subject to a follow up review during 2024-25 which concluded that the Commission should retain IIP accreditation.

Staff Composition

The table below shows full time equivalent and headcount staff numbers for 2025-26 as at 31 March 2025.

Pay Band	Male				Female			
	FTE	%	Headcount	%	FTE	%	Headcount	%
Commission Member[1 2]	6	47	6	46	6.8	53	7	54
Chief Executive	0	0	0	0	1	100	1	100
Grade 7	3	100	3	100	0	0	0	0
SEO	2	80	2	50	0.5	20	2	50
Review Manager (HEO)	1	33	1	33	2	67	2	67
Review Officer (EO)	1	37	1	33	1.7	63	2	67

Team Support (TS)	0.3	100	1	100	0	0	0	0
Total	**13.3**	**56**	**14**	**56**	**12**	**47**	**14**	**50**
Prior year total	13.8	65	14	64	7.7	35	8	36
Variance	-0.47	0	0	0	+1.3	+3	+3	+6

[1] Includes 3 Parliamentary BCW Members.
[2] Headcount figures are used for FTE Commission Member numbers.

Equal Opportunities

The Commission is committed to a policy of equality of opportunity in its employment practices and aims to ensure that no potential or actual employee receives more or less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, disability, ethnic or national origin, gender, marital or parental status, nationality, political belief, race, religion or sexual orientation. The Commission ensures that appropriate facilities are available for disabled employees.

Sickness Absence

During 2025-26 six of the Commission's permanent staff were absent on sick leave for a total of 40 days (2024-25 – six of the Commission's permanent staff were absent on sick leave for a total of 46 days).

Health, Safety and Wellbeing

The Commission operates a Staff Health and Safety policy and Manual Handling policy and has an independent fire risk assessment and health and safety review carried out annually. The Commission also is accredited by the Small Workplace Health Award with the Bronze award.

SHEREEN WILLIAMS
Accounting Officer
7 October 2026

The Certificate and report of the Auditor General for Wales to the Senedd

Opinion on financial statements

I certify that I have audited the financial statements of Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru for the year ended 31 March 2026 under Paragraph 19 of Part 2 of the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru etc. Act 2013.

The financial statements comprise the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, Statement of Financial Position, Statement of Cash Flows, Statement of Changes in Tax Payers' Equity and related notes, including the material accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and UK adopted international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by HM Treasury's Financial Reporting Manual.

In my opinion, in all material respects, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru's affairs as at 31 March 2026 and of its net operating expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with UK adopted international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by HM Treasury's Financial Reporting Manual; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with Welsh Ministers' directions issued under the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru etc. Act 2013.

Opinion on regularity

In my opinion, in all material respects, the income and expenditure recorded in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by the Senedd and the financial transactions recorded in the financial statements conform to the authorities which govern them.

Basis for opinions

I conducted my audit in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing in the UK (ISAs (UK)) and Practice Note 10 'Audit of Financial Statements of Public Sector Entities in the United Kingdom'. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of my certificate.

My staff and I are independent of the body in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in the UK including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and I have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinions.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that the use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work I have performed, I have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the body's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

My responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Accounting Officer with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this certificate.

The going concern basis of accounting for Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru is adopted in consideration of the requirements set out in HM Treasury's Government Financial Reporting Manual, which require entities to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements where it anticipated that the services which they provide will continue into the future.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and my auditor's report thereon. The Accounting Officer is responsible for the other information in the annual report. My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in my report, I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. My responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If I identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, I am required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact.

I have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters

In my opinion, the part of the Remuneration and Staff Report to be audited has been properly prepared in accordance with Welsh Ministers' directions made under the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru etc. Act 2013.

In my opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of my audit:

- the parts of the Accountability Report subject to audit have been properly prepared in accordance with Welsh Minsters' directions made under the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru etc. Act 2013.; and
- the information given in the Foreword, Performance Report and Accountability Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and is in accordance with the applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which I report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the body and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not identified material misstatements in the Foreword, Performance Report and Accountability Report.

I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters which I report to you if, in my opinion:

- I have not received all of the information and explanations I require for my audit.
- proper accounting records have not been kept or returns adequate for my audit have not been received from branches not visited by my team;
- the financial statements and the audited part of the Accountability Report are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns;
- information specified by Welsh Ministers regarding remuneration and other transactions is not disclosed;
- certain disclosures of remuneration specified by HM Treasury's Government Financial Reporting Manual are not made or parts of the Remuneration and Staff Report to be audited are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- the Governance Statement does not reflect compliance with HM Treasury's guidance.

Responsibilities of the Accounting Officer for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Accounting Officer's Responsibilities, the Accounting Officer is responsible for:

- maintaining proper accounting records;
- the preparation of the financial statements and Annual Report in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view;
- ensuring that the Annual Report and financial statements as a whole are fair, balanced and understandable;
- ensuring the regularity of financial transactions;
- internal controls as the Accounting Officer determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements to be free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error;
- assessing Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Accounting Officer anticipates that the services provided by Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru will not continue to be provided in the future.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

My responsibility is to audit, certify and report on the financial statements in accordance with the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru etc. Act 2013.

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. I design procedures in line with my responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud.

My procedures included the following:

- Enquiring of management, Internal Audit and those charged with governance, including obtaining and reviewing supporting documentation relating to Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru's policies and procedures concerned with:
  - identifying, evaluating and complying with laws and regulations and whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance;
  - detecting and responding to the risks of fraud and whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud; and
  - the internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations.
- Considering as an audit team how and where fraud might occur in the financial statements and any potential indicators of fraud. As part of this discussion, I identified potential for fraud in the posting of unusual journals;
- Obtaining an understanding of Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru's framework of authority as well as other legal and regulatory frameworks that the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru operates in, focusing on those laws and regulations that had

a direct effect on the financial statements or that had a fundamental effect on the operations of Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru; and
- Obtaining an understanding of related party relationships.

In addition to the above, my procedures to respond to identified risks included the following:

- reviewing the financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with relevant laws and regulations discussed above;
- enquiring of management, the Governance and Audit Committee and legal advisors about actual and potential litigation and claims;
- reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance and the Commission; and
- in addressing the risk of fraud through management override of controls, testing the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments; assessing whether the judgements made in making accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluating the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business.

I also communicated relevant identified laws and regulations and potential fraud risks to all audit team members and remained alert to any indications of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations throughout the audit.

The extent to which my procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is affected by the inherent difficulty in detecting irregularities, the effectiveness of the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru's controls, and the nature, timing and extent of the audit procedures performed.

A further description of the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of my auditor's report.

Other auditor's responsibilities

I obtain evidence sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the expenditure and income recorded in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by the Senedd and the financial transactions recorded in the financial statements conform to the authorities which govern them.

I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

Report

I have no observations to make on these financial statements.

Catherine Mealing-Jones
Auditor General for Wales
8 October 2026

1 Capital Quarter
Tyndall Street
Cardiff, CF10 4BZ

The maintenance and integrity of Democracy and Boundary Commission Crymru's website is the responsibility of the Accounting Officer; the work carried out by auditors does not involve consideration of these matters and accordingly auditors accept no responsibility for any changes that may have occurred to the financial statements since they were initially presented on the website.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

DEMOCRACY AND BOUNDARY COMMISSION CYMRU

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE NET EXPENDITURE
for the year ended 31 March 2026

	Notes	2026 £	2025 £
Income	4	**(185,186)**	(296,159)
Total Operating Income		**(185,186)**	(296,159)
COSTS			
Staff costs	2	**1,095,535**	877,277
Other operating expenditure	3	**1,079,429**	617,818
Total Operating Expenditure		**2,174,964**	1,495,095
Net Operating Expenditure		**1,989,778**	1,198,936
Finance Costs		**5,755**	1,339
Comprehensive Net Expenditure for the Year		**1,995,533**	1,200,275

All activities are classed as continuing

The notes on pages 48 to 56 form part of these accounts.

DEMOCRACY AND BOUNDARY COMMISSION CYMRU
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
as at 31 March 2026

	Notes	31 March 2026	31 March 2025
		£	£
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Intangible Assets	5	**223,845**	-
Property, Plant and Equipment	6	**110,852**	106,909
Right of Use Assets	7	**102,822**	139,421
Prepayments	9	**14,287**	-
Total non-current assets		**451,806**	246,330
CURRENT ASSETS			
Trade and other receivables	9	**115,230**	71,076
Cash and cash equivalents	10	**38,003**	5,398
Total current assets		**153,233**	76,474
Total assets		**605,039**	322,804
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Trade and other payables	11	**(74,270)**	(55,086)
Right of Use Lease Liability		**(24,300)**	(26,620)
Total current liabilities		**(98,570)**	(81,706)
Total assets less current liabilities		**506,469**	241,098
NON CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Right of Use Lease Liability		**(68,599)**	(97,705)
Provisions	16	**(18,888)**	(18,888)
Total non current liabilities		**(87,487)**	(116,593)
ASSETS LESS LIABILITIES		**418,982**	124,505
FINANCED BY:			
General reserves		**418,982**	124,505
		418,982	124,505

The notes on pages 48 to 56 form part of these accounts.

The Accounting Officer authorised these financial statements for issue on 7 October 2026.

SHEREEN WILLIAMS
Accounting Officer
7 October 2026

DEMOCRACY AND BOUNDARY COMMISSION CYMRU

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
for the year ended 31 March 2026

	Notes	2026	2025
		£	£
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net operating costs		**(1,989,778)**	(1,198,936)
Adjustments for:			
Decrease / (Increase) in trade and other receivables		**(58,441)**	(33,128)
Amorisation Intangible Assets	5	**3,794**	-
Depreciation PPE	6	**43,014**	36,440
Depreciation on Right of Use Assets (incl initial costs)	7	**27,111**	61,182
Increase / (Decrease) in trade payables		**19,184**	(20,662)
Increase / (Decrease) in provisions		**-**	-
(Profit) / Loss on disposal of fixed assets		**-**	1,083
Net cash outflow from operating activities		**(1,955,116)**	(1,154,021)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	6	**(46,957)**	(109,864)
Purchase of intangible assets	5	**(227,639)**	-
Net cash outflow from investing activities		**(274,596)**	(109,864)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Grant in Aid from the Welsh Government		**2,290,010**	1,280,000
Right of Use lease payment		**(27,693)**	(59,004)
		2,262,317	1,220,996
Net financing			
Net increase /(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	10	**32,605**	(42,889)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the period	10	**5,398**	48,287
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period		**38,003**	5,398

The notes on pages 48 to 56 form part of these accounts.

DEMOCRACY AND BOUNDARY COMMISSION CYMRU

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN TAX PAYERS' EQUITY
for the year ended 31 March 2026

	General Reserve £
Balance at 31 March 2024	44,780
Balance at 1 April 2024	44,780
Changes in taxpayers' equity for 2024-25	
Grant in Aid from Welsh Government	1,280,000
Comprehensive Expenditure for the year	(1,200,275)
Balance at 31 March 2025	124,505
Changes in taxpayers' equity for 2025-26	
Grant in Aid from Welsh Government	2,290,010
Comprehensive Expenditure for the year	(1,995,533)
Balance at 31 March 2026	418,982

The notes on pages 48 to 56 form part of these accounts.

1. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING POLICIES

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the 2025-26 Government Financial Reporting Manual (IFRS based FReM) issued by HM Treasury. The accounting policies contained in the FReM apply International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) as adapted or interpreted for the public sector context. Where the FReM permits a choice of accounting policy, the accounting policy which is judged to be most appropriate to the particular circumstances of the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru for the purpose of giving a true and fair view has been selected. The particular policies adopted by the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru are described below. These have been applied consistently in dealing with items that are considered material to the accounts.

1.1 Accounts Direction

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Accounts Direction issued by the Welsh Ministers under the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru etc. Act 2013.

1.2 Accounting Convention

The accounts are prepared under the historical cost convention modified to account for the revaluation of property, plant and equipment, intangible assets and inventories.

1.3 Administration and Programme Expenditure

The Commission's funding received from both the Welsh Government and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is classed as funding for programme expenditure by both Departments. All income and expenditure figures shown on the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure are therefore deemed to be programme income and expenditure.

1.4 Valuation of Non-Current Assets

Non-current assets are capitalised at the cost of acquisition and installation where that cost exceeds £500. Property, Plant and Equipment are carried at fair value. Depreciated historic cost is used as a proxy for fair value for all classes of assets, as all have either short useful lives, low value, or both. All property plant and equipment are essentially grouped into one of two classes, IT assets or Fixtures, Furniture and Equipment (F+E). Where a number of identical significant items, with individual values below the capitalisation threshold, are purchased as a group and their aggregate value is above the capitalisation threshold then the Commission deems them to be capital assets.

An intangible asset is an identifiable non-monetary asset without physical substance. Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru will capitalise intangible assets greater than £1,000 and with a useful life of five years or more. Amortisation is charged from the date the asset is available for use and applied on a pro-rata basis and reviewed annually.

The Welsh Elections Information Platform has been capitalised as an intangible asset

and considered to have a useful life of 5 years.

Annual renewal fees for cloud-based software are accounted for as revenue expenditure and are therefore charged in full when goods and services have been received.

1.5 Right of Use Assets

Leases are capitalised where the Commission receives the economic benefit of the use of that asset. Assets are capitalised at the value of the total payments over the course of the lease. Leases with a resultant value of less than £5,000 are not capitalised and are treated as operating leases. Property is depreciated to its residual value over the period of the lease on the basis of between 5 and 11 years.

1.6 Depreciation

Depreciation of non-current assets is calculated to write off their cost or valuation over their estimated useful lives. All non-current assets are depreciated over five or ten years depending on the estimated useful life of the asset. A full year's depreciation is charged in the year of acquisition and none in the year of disposal.

1.7 Provisions

A provision is recognised in the Statement of Financial Position when the Commission has a legal or constructive obligation as a result of a past event, and it is probable that an outflow of economic benefits will be required to settle the obligation.

1.8 Employee benefits

The cost of providing employee benefits is accounted for in the period in which the benefits are earned by employees. Annual leave is provided for over the period that the leave accrues. This accounting policy was introduced in 2009-10 in line with the requirement of IAS19, Employee Benefits.

1.9 Funding

The Commission receives Grant-in-Aid from the Welsh Government to fund its general revenue and capital activities. In accordance with the FReM this Grant-in-Aid is regarded as financing and is credited to the General Reserve on receipt.

1.10 Income

Receivables other than Grant-in-Aid from the Welsh Government are regarded as income rather than funding. The main source of income received is from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to meet the cost of maintaining a Parliamentary Boundary Commission for Wales Secretariat in Cardiff. During 2025-26 The Commission also received additional funding from Welsh Government for setting up the Welsh Elections Information Platform.

1.11 Inventories

The Commission does not hold any stock of material value.

1.12 Value Added Tax (VAT)

All expenditure is charged inclusive of VAT as the Commission is not registered for VAT

and therefore unable to recover recoverable VAT.

1.13 Pensions

Payment is made to the Paymaster General of such sums as may be appropriate as representing accruing liabilities of the Civil Service Pension in respect of pensions and other similar benefits for persons employed by the Commission and in respect of the administrative expenses attributable to the liabilities and their discharge. Past and present employees are covered by the provisions of the Civil Service Pension scheme. Further details are contained within the Remuneration Report.

1.14 Management of Financial Risk

The Commission has no borrowings and relies primarily on Welsh Government grants for its cash requirements. It also has no significant deposits and all significant assets and liabilities are denominated in sterling, so it is not exposed to interest rate risk or currency risk.

1.15 Impact of Standards not yet effective

Commission Members have considered the impact of Standards and Interpretations which have been issued but are not yet effective and which have not been adopted early by the Commission. Members anticipate that the adoption of these Standards and Interpretations in future periods will have no material impact on the financial statements of the Commission.

1.16 Financial Instruments

The Commission does not have any significant financial instruments. Short term instruments can include cash, trade debtors and trade creditors. Where applicable, the current value is the same as the fair value at the year end.

1.16.1 Trade and other receivables

Trade and other receivables do not carry any interest and are stated at their nominal value as reduced by appropriate allowances for estimated irrecoverable amounts.

1.16.2 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash in hand, short term deposits and other short term highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to a known amount of cash and are subject to an insignificant risk of changes in value.

1.16.3 Trade and other payables

Trade and other payables are not interest bearing and are stated at their nominal value.

1.16.4 Borrowings

There are no interest-bearing loans or overdrafts.

1.16.5 Impairment

The carrying value of the Commission's assets are reviewed at each balance sheet date to determine whether there is any indication of impairment. If such an indication exists, the assets recoverable amount is estimated. The recoverable amount of an asset is the

greater of its net selling price and value in use.

Financial Assets and Financial liabilities which arise from contracts for the purchase or sale of non-financial items are recognised when performance occurs, i.e. when receipt or delivery of the goods or services is made.

1.17 **Right of Use Lease Liabilities**

Leases are capitalised where the Commission receives the economic benefit of the use of that asset. The associated liability is recognised in the financial statements at the total of the payments over the course of the lease discounted at the Commission's underlying interest rate.

1.18 **Operating Leases**

Operating lease costs are charged to the operating cost statement in the year during which the costs are incurred.

2. STAFF COSTS

Staff costs for the year amounted to £1,095,535 (2024-25; £877,277) and were comprised of £789,644 (2024-25; £639,215) in salaries and wages, £100,416 (2024-25; £66,589) in social security costs and £205,476 (2024-25; £171,473) in pension costs. A more detailed breakdown of these costs is provided in the Remuneration Report on page 31.

3. OTHER OPERATING EXPENDITURE

	2026	2025
	£	£
Running Costs		
Travel and Subsistence Staff	**5,160**	3,722
Travel and Subsistence Commission Members	**3,251**	5,197
Course Fees and Staff Training	**23,894**	19,291
Auditor General for Wales – annual audit fee	**18,795**	19,937
Internal Audit Fees	**16,947**	9,266
Media and Advertising	**212,658**	106,186
Translation	**26,000**	44,964
Printing, postage, stationery and HR	**10,681**	7,964
Telephone and contracts	**-**	330
Accommodation costs	**63,058**	59,195
Legal and professional	**213,371**	40,702
Non-capital computer costs	**407,558**	200,046
Other	**4,137**	3,396
Non Cash Item:		
Amortisation	**3,794**	-
Depreciation of PPE	**43,014**	36,440
Depreciation on Right of Use Assets	**27,111**	61,182
Total	**1,079,429**	617,818

The above other operating expenditure costs are partly offset by the set funding of £185,000 received from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for maintaining the Boundary Commission for Wales during non-review years (2024-25; £229,757).

4. INCOME

	2026 **£**	2025 £
MHCLG Boundary Commission Wales	**185,000**	229,757
Reimbursed seconded staff costs	**-**	14,561
Community Review Costs	**-**	39,523
IRP Costs	**-**	12,100
Other reimbursements	**-**	83
Welsh Procurement Card rebate	**186**	135
	185,186	296,159

Grant-in-Aid is financing income and is credited directly to reserves. During 2025-26 the Commission received £185,000 in respect of funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to meet the cost of maintaining a Boundary Commission for Wales Secretariat in Cardiff (2024-25, £229,757). The decreased costs compared to the previous year were due to no review work being undertaken following completion of the 2023 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies in Wales.

5. INTANGIBLE ASSETS

	£
Cost or Valuation	
At 1 April 2025	-
Additions	227,639
Disposals	-
At 31 March 2026	227,639
Amortisation	
At 1 April 2025	-
Provided during the year	3,794
Eliminated on disposal	-
At 31 March 2026	3,794
Carrying Value at 31 March 2026	223,845

The intangible asset additions in 2025-26 relate solely to the development of the Welsh Elections Information Platform.

6. PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT

	IT Equipment £	**Furniture & Fittings £**	**Lease Hold**	**Total £**
Cost or Valuation				
At 1 April 2025	141,324	13,875	96,299	251,498
Additions	46,957	-	-	46,957

Disposals	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2026	188,281	13,875	96,299	298,455
Depreciation				
At 1 April 2025	112,550	12,779	19,260	144,589
Provided during the year	23,246	508	19,260	43,014
Eliminated on disposal	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2026	135,796	13,287	38,520	187,603
Carrying Value at 31 March 2026	52,485	588	57,779	110,852
Carrying Value at 31 March 2025	28,774	1,096	77,039	106,909

All Assets are owned by the Commission. The Lease Hold asset refers to improvements made to accommodation office space prior to commencement of new lease at Cathay Park.

7. RIGHT OF USE ASSETS

	Hastings House Lease £	Cathays Park Lease £	Office Equipment Lease £	Total £
Cost or Valuation				
At 1 April 2025	-	145,516	7,803	153,319
Additions	-	-	-	-
Other movements	-	(9,488)	-	(9,488)
Disposals	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2026	-	136,028	7,803	143,831
Depreciation	-			
At 1 April 2025	-	13,500	398	13,898
Charge for the year	-	25,531	1,580	27,111
Eliminated on disposal	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2026	-	39,031	1,978	41,009
Carrying Value at 31 March 2026	-	96,997	5,825	102,822
Carrying Value at 31 March 2025	-	132,016	7,405	139,421

The Cathays lease calculation was revised in 2025-26, resulting in adjustments to the right of use assets and lease liability balances, and the cumulative effect of this has been recognised in the current year as the error was assessed as immaterial.

8. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

As the cash requirements of the Commission are met through Grant-in-Aid provided by the Welsh Government, financial instruments play a more limited role in creating and managing risk than would apply to a non-public sector body. The majority of financial instruments relate to contracts to buy non-financial items in line with the Commission's expected purchase and usage requirements, and the Commission is therefore exposed to little credit, liquidity or market risk. IFRS 9 Financial Instruments is applied, as interpreted and adapted for the public sector. The principal impact of IFRS 9 adoption will be to change the calculation basis for bad debt provisions, changing from an incurred loss basis to a lifetime expected credit loss (ECL) basis. The Commission considered and assessed the new requirements of IFRS 9 and noted that there would be no impact on these accounts.

9. TRADE RECEIVABLES AND OTHER CURRENT ASSETS

	2026 £	2025 £
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Prepayments and accrued income	**115,230**	71,076
Amounts falling due more than one year:		
Prepayments and accrued income	**14,287**	-
Total	**129,517**	71,076

10. CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS

	2026 £	2025 £
Balance at 1 April	**5,398**	48,287
Net change in cash and cash equivalent balances	**32,605**	(42,889)
Commercial banks and cash in hand	**38,003**	5,398
Balance at 31 March	**38,003**	5,398

11. TRADE PAYABLES AND OTHER CURRENT LIABILITIES

	2026 £	2025 £
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Trade payables	**5,946**	4,288
Accruals	**38,340**	25,674
Holiday pay accrual	**29,984**	25,124
	74,270	55,086

12. SPECIAL PAYMENTS AND LOSSES

The Commission recorded losses totalling £0 during 2025-26 (2024-25: £1,284).

13. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

The Welsh Government is regarded as a related party. During the year, the Commission had material transactions with the Welsh Government in respect of expenditure for accommodation rent amounting to £88,375. The Commission has a total IFRS16 lease liability with Welsh Government of £86,990 in respect of the lease of office accommodation at Cathays Park (2024-25, £116,870). Grant-in-Aid received during the year amounted to £1,529,000, with a further £761,000 received in respect of the Welsh Elections Information Platform (2024-25, £1,280,000). At the end of the reporting period there was no outstanding balance with Welsh Government (2024-25: no outstanding balances).

The Secretariat of the Commission also acts as Secretariat to the Parliamentary Boundary Commission for Wales (BCW). The BCW is a Non-Departmental Public Body sponsored by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. The

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is regarded as a related party. During the year, the Commission has had no material transactions with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2024-25, no material transactions). During 2025-26 the Commission received £185,000 funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2024-25, £229,757). At the end of the reporting period there were no outstanding balances with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2024-25: no outstanding balances).

The Commission has not undertaken any transactions with entities in which members and key managerial staff hold an interest.

14. ANALYSIS OF NET EXPENDITURE BY SEGMENT

The Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure reflects the segments that the operating results of the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru are reported to the Commission. The Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru does not have separately identified segments and reports financial information to its Board as disclosed in Notes 2, 3 and 4.

15. CONTINGENT LIABILITIES AND ASSETS

There were no contingent liabilities or assets at the end of 2025-26 (2024-25: No contingent liabilities).

16. PROVISIONS FOR LIABILITIES AND CHARGES

	Dilapidations and reinstatement	**Total**
	£	**£**
Balance at 1 April 2025	18,888	**18,888**
Provided in Year	-	**-**
Provisions not required written back	-	**-**
Provisions utilised in the year	-	**-**
Balance at 31 March 2026	18,888	**18,888**

Discounting is applied where material. As the discounting on the estimated figure for dilapidations was not considered to be material no discounting has been applied.

Provisions are made for redecorating during the term of the lease and for dilapidations, to return the buildings back to their original condition, at the end of the lease term. These obligations may vary as a result of future information and events which may result in changes to the amounts which have been included, on the basis of the best estimate, at the end of the reporting period. These provisions have been reviewed and updated during the year as required by IAS 37.

Analysis of the expected timing of the future liability

	Dilapidations and reinstatement	**Total**
	£	**£**
Not later than 1 year	-	**-**
Later than 1 and not later than 5 years	18,888	**18,888**
Later than 5 years	-	**-**
Total	18,888	**18,888**

17. EVENTS AFTER THE REPORTING PERIOD

The Accounting Officer authorised these financial statements for issue on 7 October 2026. There were no significant post balance sheet events after the reporting period to disclose, which affect 2025-26. Moving forward into 2026-27 onwards the Commission will take on responsibility for the establishment of the Welsh Electoral Information Platform.