

**National Assembly for Wales**  
Annual Report 2011–2012



Cynulliad  
Cenedlaethol  
Cymru

National  
Assembly for  
Wales

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## Presiding Officer's foreword



As Presiding Officer of the National Assembly for Wales, I am very pleased to write this foreword to an annual report that looks back on our achievements during the first year of the Fourth Assembly. May I start by saying it is an honour and privilege to serve the people of Wales in this important position. In particular, could I thank everyone across Wales whom I have met over the past year, whether you've been welcoming me to your school council meeting, attending an Assembly event or simply meeting me on the Assembly's outreach bus.

Understanding the needs of communities across Wales, and increasing participation in the work that we do in holding the Welsh Government to account and making new Welsh laws, are two of my core strategic objectives as Presiding Officer. It is essential that we gain the trust and enthusiasm of the Welsh people for devolution. That's why I have been visiting different communities, projects, schools and agricultural shows around Wales to hear what you have to say. I've also been using these opportunities to promote the work we are already doing, in particular our petitions system which is now seeing the first laws coming through as a result of individuals and organisations submitting petitions.

For example, we now have a charge on plastic bags and the Government has just published a white paper on creating more safe cycle routes across Wales, all outcomes which started as innovative ideas submitted as petitions to the Assembly.

I have led a series of seminars in different parts of the country, to discuss the role of women in public life in Wales. This will end with a national conference in the autumn of 2012. We have a good record on gender representation here at the Assembly, but when you look at Wales's boardrooms and other areas of public life, the numbers aren't so encouraging. I hope that these seminars will encourage more women in Wales to get involved in public life and effect real change.

I have made significant changes to the way we do business in the Senedd. This has led to more backbench legislation and debate that better reflects the desires of various communities and interest groups across Wales.

So far, we have had four pieces of suggested legislation coming from Assembly Members, three of which will now go forward to Bill stage, which is already more than in the whole of the Third Assembly. We now have proposed new laws that will provide for continued care for our most vulnerable adults; better regulations for caravan parks; and a law that will allow people to reclaim medical expenses incurred as a result of asbestos related conditions.

Following scrutiny through Committee, the Assembly has passed the Local Government Byelaws Bill, the first to be passed since the Assembly received enhanced law-making powers, and continues to scrutinise Welsh Government legislation on school standards and food hygiene.

It has been a busy and productive year. Finally, I would like to thank all the staff at the Assembly who work tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure that everything is in place for Members to carry out their very important work.

**Rosemary Butler AM**

Presiding Officer and Chair of the Assembly Commission

## Introduction from the Chief Executive and Clerk of the Assembly



This first year of the Fourth Assembly has been another year of change and transition at the National Assembly for Wales, with a new Presiding Officer and Deputy, 23 new Assembly Members and of course enhanced law-making powers.

With these enhanced powers, the institution has become even more of a focal point of Welsh civic and public life, and with that comes the responsibility and pressure of providing an outstanding parliamentary service that provides all 60 Members with the tools to perform their roles to a standard that will make people in Wales proud of the National Assembly.

It has also been a year in which we have significantly changed the way that business operates, through the work of Plenary and our Committee structures.

In particular, we have introduced a new Committee structure that we believe strengthens scrutiny in the National Assembly for Wales. The structure includes five committees which have a dual role of looking at both policy and legislation.

This means that individual Members are able to build a more detailed subject knowledge which they can bring to bear on the scrutiny of legislation as well as government policy.

We also want to make it easier for the people of Wales to engage with the Assembly's proceedings and to ensure that smaller organisations are able to get involved in the Assembly's work so that it better reflects the interests and needs of Welsh voters.

Following the thorough scrutiny of the Assembly Commission's budget strategy by the Assembly's Finance Committee, the Commission agreed with the Committee's recommendations to phase our budget strategy over three years. To achieve this phasing, we secured a further £100,000 worth of savings during this current financial year. The goal at the heart of the budget strategy is the delivery of an outstanding parliamentary service that will deliver for the people of Wales during the course of this fourth Assembly.

All of us in the Assembly Commission are here to serve the National Assembly, to help make it a strong, accessible and forward-looking democratic institution and legislature. I am grateful to all those who work here for their contribution and commitment over the last year and look forward to working with them to achieve the Commission's ambitions during the remainder of the Fourth Assembly.

**Claire Clancy**

Chief Executive and Clerk of the Assembly

## The National Assembly Commission

The Assembly Commission serves the National Assembly to help make it a strong, accessible and forward-looking democratic institution and legislature that delivers effectively for the people of Wales. Its role is to provide the National Assembly with the staff, property and the services required to fulfil this role.

The Commission consists of the Presiding Officer and four Assembly Members, one nominated by each of the four party groups represented in the Assembly.



### **Angela Burns AM (Welsh Conservatives)**

Commissioner with responsibility for budget, governance, including Audit Committee membership, and links with the Remuneration Board. Angela also has responsibility for the improvement of services to Assembly Members, employment support and professional development for Members and their staff.



### **Peter Black AM (Welsh Liberal Democrats)**

Commissioner with responsibility for ICT, broadcasting and e-democracy, the Assembly estate, facilities and sustainability, and the Commission's role as employer.



### **Sandy Mewies AM (Welsh Labour)**

Commissioner with responsibility for education services, front of house, catering and security. She also has responsibility for the Commission's statutory equality functions and Freedom of Information.



### **Rhodri Glyn Thomas AM (Plaid Cymru)**

Commissioner with responsibility for citizen engagement and communications and national and international outreach. He is also responsible for the Commission's Welsh language functions and policy.

## Independent Advisers to the Commission

### **Mair Barnes**

Mair Barnes advises and mentors a number of Board directors across a variety of sectors in addition to being a non-executive director of a global business. She is the former Chair of Vantios plc and Managing Director of Woolworths plc. She has held non-executive directorships at the Department of Trade and Industry and the Cabinet Office.

### **Richard Calvert**

Richard Calvert rejoined the Department for International Development (DFID) in August 2009 as Director-General for Finance and Corporate Performance after two and a half years at the Food Standards Agency (FSA), where he held the post of Director of Strategy and Resources. Richard's last role in DFID, before moving to the FSA, was as Director of Finance and Corporate Performance. Richard is a qualified Management Accountant, and has held a number of non-executive roles within the public sector.

### **Tim Knighton**

Tim Knighton is currently Business Solutions Delivery Director at Companies House. Before joining Companies House in 2007 as Director of Finance, Tim spent ten years with Tesco plc in a variety of finance roles, latterly being responsible for their UK shared services operation. Prior to this he was an Executive Director with Goldman Sachs in their Capital Market Division.

### **Professor Robert Pickard**

Professor Robert Pickard has held a large number of public appointments, many in the field of health and wellbeing. Among his current appointments, he is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine. He is a scientist by background.

The Commission met eight times in 2011-12. Attendance details were as follows:

<b>Committee Member</b>	<b>No of meetings attended 2011-12</b>
Rosemary Butler AM (Chair)	8
Angela Burns AM	8
Peter Black AM	8
Sandy Mewies AM	8
Rhodri Glyn Thomas AM	7

## **An Assembly fit for the future**

**The first half of 2011 was an exceptionally busy time for the National Assembly for Wales.**

**The Assembly had to be prepared for the result of a referendum on additional legislative powers; arrangements needed to be in place for the dissolution of the Third Assembly; concurrent preparations were underway to welcome new Members to the Senedd after the election on 5 May. In addition, the Assembly was getting ready to welcome Her Majesty The Queen to officially open the Fourth Assembly in June.**

### **Bringing the Third Assembly to a close**

In March 2011, the people of Wales voted 'yes' in a referendum that gave the National Assembly for Wales additional law-making powers. The result meant that the National Assembly is now able to make laws on all matters in the 20 subject areas for which it has powers, without needing the UK Parliament's agreement.

Following the referendum, the Assembly approved an Order that brought Part Four of the Government of Wales Act into force following the election on 5 May.

The referendum on 5 March was followed by two other opportunities for the people of Wales to vote in 2011. The Assembly election was held on 5 May, the same day as a referendum on the voting system for UK parliamentary elections. To ensure people were aware of the opportunities to vote, the National Assembly had run the Vote 2011 campaign, designed to provide unbiased and impartial information on the implications of the referendum and the Assembly election for the Welsh public.

Work related to the result of the referendum all happened at the same time as preparations for the Assembly election in May, which differed significantly from preceding elections. Previously, Assembly Members had remained in office until the night before the election. However, under the Government of Wales Act 2006, the Third Assembly ended at midnight on 31 March 2011, and was followed by a four-week period of dissolution.

Assembly Members therefore ceased to be Members at the start of dissolution, ensuring that those standing for re-election would be competing on a similar footing to other candidates during the election campaign period.

The new approach required detailed planning, in particular ensuring that practical implications for Members were addressed. Assembly Members needed to be prepared that during dissolution, they would not be able to use their offices on the Assembly estate, that their security access to the Assembly building would be suspended and that they would need to make special arrangements for the use of Assembly ICT equipment.

The effective closure of the Third Assembly was achieved through extensive consultation with Members and their staff in advance of dissolution, to ensure that their work on behalf of their constituents was not compromised during this period.

## Preparing for the Fourth Assembly

At the same time that the work to bring the Third Assembly to a close was taking place, detailed planning was underway to ensure that new and returning Members could start work immediately after they were sworn in as Members following the Assembly election on 5 May.

A detailed induction process for all recently-elected Assembly Members was put in place. A key element was the creation and early distribution of detailed, well-presented briefings for Members, prepared in close consultation with staff from the party groups.

Experience had suggested that post-election office accommodation and technology could potentially offer logistical challenges, especially given the likelihood that a high proportion of Members would be new. However, a supportive and flexible approach by Assembly staff and contractors ensured this was as trouble-free as possible, allowing Members to start promptly on their work.

Assembly staff had also volunteered to become guides for new or returning Members, welcoming and steering them through an intensive first few days. Having a dedicated member of the Assembly's staff as a single point of contact for all queries proved a useful way of helping Members settle into their role.

Feedback from Members on the induction arrangements was positive. As part of an ongoing commitment to improving procedures, the Assembly has also commissioned the Hansard Society to undertake independent research that will provide an in-depth look at new Assembly Members' experiences of office during their first year.

This, along with other feedback gathered, will be used to inform plans for the Fifth Assembly. Following the election, two newly-elected Assembly Members were found to be disqualified from office due to their membership of organisations listed in the National Assembly (Disqualification) Order 2010. This meant they were ineligible for election, an issue that was discovered after they had been sworn in.

The Members concerned were both Welsh Liberal Democrats elected from regional lists, John Dixon and Aled Roberts. The Assembly had the power to disregard the disqualification and after consideration of a report prepared by the Assembly's Standards Commissioner, Gerard Elias QC, it agreed to exercise that power in relation to Aled Roberts. John Dixon's vacant place was then filled by the next candidate on the regional list for the Welsh Liberal Democrats, Eluned Parrott.

## The start of the Fourth Assembly

With Assembly Members sworn in, one of the first duties of the inaugural meeting of the Fourth Assembly on 11 May 2011 was to elect a new Presiding Officer and Deputy Presiding Officer.

Rosemary Butler AM was elected Presiding Officer, and David Melding AM was elected as her Deputy.

These votes were followed by the nomination of Carwyn Jones AM as the First Minister to lead the new Labour Welsh Government. The nomination was transmitted by e-mail to Her Majesty the Queen, who makes the appointment. Members also paid tribute to the late Brynle Williams, the former Welsh Conservative Assembly Member for North Wales who died in March 2011.

The Assembly's Business Committee was formally established on 18 May 2011, and Plenary business was soon underway again, with four Commissioners appointed on 25 May 2011. The Commissioners' portfolios were split between Angela Burns AM (Welsh Conservatives), Peter Black AM (Welsh Liberal Democrats), Sandy Mewies AM (Welsh Labour) and Rhodri Glyn Thomas AM (Plaid Cymru).

Although the Deputy Presiding Officer is not formally a member of the Commission, it was agreed that David Melding AM would support the Commission by focusing on the Pierhead as a centre for Assembly development and debate and the future location of the Wales Governance Centre.

The Commission's priorities, outlined in the strategy for the Fourth Assembly, are to provide outstanding parliamentary support to the Assembly, engage effectively with the people of Wales, promote Wales and use our resources wisely.

This strategy was informed by comments and feedback from Members and party groups. It is also based on the Commission's corporate and constitutional responsibilities.

In order to implement the strategy successfully, a priority for the Commission was to agree its budget for 2012-13 and its indicative budget for 2013-14. The planning to inform the budget strategy took into account the need to operate within a climate of restrained public sector spending while also repaying the faith shown by voters in providing the Assembly with increased law-making powers.

Delivering value for money on all the services to be delivered is at the heart of the Commission's strategy. At the same time, it must adhere to its constitutional and corporate responsibilities of ensuring that Assembly Members are fully equipped to undertake their scrutiny, legislative and representational roles on behalf of the people of Wales.

In addition, the Assembly will continue to ensure that the people of Wales will have many more opportunities to gain a better understanding of the Assembly and its work. A key goal for the Commission is to have more people engage with Assembly Committees' work of making laws for Wales and holding the Welsh Government to account.

Other immediate priorities for the Fourth Assembly included improving the Commission's ICT services, introducing the National Assembly for Wales Official Languages (Wales) Bill and agreeing the Assembly Commission Equality Plan 2012-16.





## The Royal Opening

In accordance with established tradition, Her Majesty The Queen attended the official opening of the Fourth Assembly on 7 June 2011, the fourth time she has done so since 1999.

To mark the significance of the event, on the eve of the Royal Opening, different faiths, cultures and communities from across Wales had also come together in a Celebration of the Mace in the Wales Millennium Centre. This was a multi-faith ceremony that marked Wales's cultural diversity and called for greater understanding between all sections of society throughout the country.

On the morning of 7 June 2011, Her Majesty The Queen addressed Assembly Members and representatives of communities from across Wales at the Senedd to mark the official opening of the Fourth Assembly. Her Majesty was accompanied by HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, Their Royal Highnesses The Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall.

During her address, the Queen noted that the new Fourth Assembly marked a significant development in the history of devolution in Wales, with the Assembly having evolved into a legislature that had been entrusted with the authority to make laws in all matters contained within the twenty devolved subject areas.

The opening ended with a luncheon held at the Wales Millennium Centre, which was attended by almost 300 guests, including the representatives of the Welsh judiciary and the Supreme High Court, Assembly Members' guests, representatives from Welsh civil society, Welsh local government and diplomatic representatives.

## Refining business in the Fourth Assembly

With Assembly Members elected, a new Presiding Officer and Commission in place, and with a Commission strategy for the Fourth Assembly outlining clearly the priorities for the future, work began on refining the Assembly's ways of working in a new constitutional era for Wales.

Plenary meetings are central to the Assembly's democratic role. This is where Members hold the Welsh Government's policies and actions to account, where they scrutinise and agree laws, and where Members raise issues of importance on behalf of the people they represent. Plenary meetings take place in the Siambr each week on Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons, and are chaired by the Presiding Officer or the Deputy Presiding Officer. From the start of the Fourth Assembly in May 2011 to March 2012, 57 Plenary meetings have been held.

As part of the Presiding Officer's commitment to making the Assembly better reflect the needs of the people of Wales, Rosemary Butler AM has been keen to look at new opportunities for Members to raise important issues that affect their constituents and to bring them to the attention of the Assembly and to seek a response from the Government.

She has introduced regular slots for Individual Member Debates (debates tabled by an Individual Member, rather than on behalf of a political group). These are motions that have the support of Members from at least three parties, and are selected by the Business Committee for debate once every half term.

The introduction of this initiative was possible through amendments made to Standing Orders, the Assembly's procedural rules, as part of the Third Assembly's Review of Standing Orders. The new Standing Orders came into force at the start of the Fourth Assembly.

In the Fourth Assembly, the Presiding Officer has also introduced a specific slot during Questions to the First Minister for Leaders' Questions. Each of the Leaders of the opposition groups (Welsh Conservatives, Plaid Cymru and the Welsh Liberal Democrats) are called in turn by the Presiding Officer to ask up to three questions without notice. This allows them the freedom to ask any question to the First Minister on matters within the Welsh Government's responsibilities.

During the period of the report, 454 questions were tabled to the First Minister. Questions to other Ministers, the Counsel General and the Assembly Commission are taken as the first items on Wednesdays.

Members are randomly selected to table questions two weeks in advance of the session, and 15 questions to Ministers usually appear on the order paper. Other Members may request to be called to ask related supplementary questions of the Minister in the Siambr.

This is a breakdown of where Oral Questions were directed:

	Number of Oral Questions Tabled
First Minister	454
Minister for Business, Enterprise, Technology and Science	115
Minister for Education and Skills	116
Minister for Environment and Sustainable Development	113
Minister for Finance	106
Minister for Health and Social Services	102
Minister for Housing, Regeneration and Heritage	114
Minister for Local Government and Communities	121
Counsel General	33
Assembly Commission	57

## Statements and Debates

The remainder of Tuesday sessions is taken up by Government Statements and debates, including any Government legislative business.

Members hold the Government to account by responding to their statements and questioning them on their policy strategies and decisions. At a special weekly slot, they can also request to the Leader of the House that the Government makes a statement on any particular issue or bring forward a matter for debate in Plenary.

There are normally three hours of debates on Wednesdays, dedicated to Assembly business (any business other than Government business). This includes debates on Committee reports, proposals for legislation by backbench (non-Government) Members, the new Individual Member Debates and time for opposition parties to debate subjects of their choosing.

During the first year of the Fourth Assembly, the majority of Assembly time on Wednesdays was allocated to opposition party debates. This was, to a degree, inevitable in the early part of an Assembly, given that it takes several months before a regular flow of committee reports emerges and their conclusions can be debated by the Assembly.

Wednesday plenary sessions close with a 30 minute Short Debate, during which an Assembly Member may speak on any topic they choose and a Minister responds on behalf of the Welsh Government. The Member is selected through a ballot which is held by the Presiding Officer. In the Fourth Assembly, the names of the successful Members and the provisional dates of their debates are published on the Assembly's website well in advance of their debate.

### Who decides what business takes place in Plenary?

It is the role of the Business Committee to comment on and determine the business of the Plenary meetings. It meets early in the Assembly week – 8.30am every Tuesday. It is chaired by the Presiding Officer and its members are the Government's Minister responsible for business, the Leader of the House, Jane Hutt AM, and the Business Manager for each political party: Peter Black AM (Welsh Liberal Democrats), Jocelyn Davies AM (Plaid Cymru), and William Graham AM (Welsh Conservatives).

The Committee discusses any last-minute changes to Plenary business for that week, and notes what business the Government has decided to schedule for the three weeks ahead and formally agrees what other items of business will be discussed in the following three weeks, such as Opposition debates. The outcome appears in the weekly Business Statement Announcement made by the Leader of the House after First Minister's Questions each Tuesday.

At 10.30, the Plenary clerks meet with the Presiding Officer to go through the agenda for the afternoon's meeting. This is usually when the Presiding Officer decides on any requests for Urgent Questions. These are allowed if the Presiding Officer is satisfied that they are both urgent and of public importance. Eleven Urgent Questions were allowed during this reporting period.

### Who decides who speaks in Plenary?

All Members may request to speak in Plenary meetings and are called at the discretion of the chair.

The political groups hold their weekly meetings at the end of Tuesday mornings. Here, amongst other matters, they discuss their participation in Plenary business that week.



## A more efficient Committee system

Robust and effective scrutiny of the Welsh Government lies at the heart of the National Assembly for Wales's work. This is done in a number of ways, including asking oral, written and urgent questions of Ministers in Plenary meetings. However, the majority of the Assembly's scrutiny work is undertaken by the Assembly's Committees.

Committees recommend ways in which Government policies could be more robust and its expenditure more effective and efficient. Assembly Committees are able to engage proactively and innovatively with individuals and organisations which provides invaluable feedback on the effect the Government's actions is having on the lives and experiences of the people of Wales.

At the start of the Fourth Assembly, significant changes were made to the structure of the Assembly's Committee system.

Instead of having separate legislative and scrutiny Committees, from the beginning of the Fourth Assembly, the Assembly Committee structure performed a dual role of scrutinising both policy and legislation. As a result, Members with expertise in specific policy areas could apply that knowledge to legislation, and could understand the practical effects this legislation would have.

The change was also designed to make it easier for people to engage with the Assembly's scrutiny process. Under the new system, they could contact one Committee that looked at both policy and legislation, rather than having to switch between separate Committees and groups of Members.

An additional advantage of this approach was that it gave the Committees flexibility to deal with new parts of the legislative process such as white papers, draft bills, and bills.

The streamlining of the Committee system has resulted in a total of 11 committees, including five policy committees looking at legislation and policy areas.

These are the Children and Young People Committee, the Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee, the Enterprise and Business Committee, the Environment and Sustainability Committee and Health and Social Care Committee.

The Assembly also has a number of other committees including the Finance Committee, Public Accounts Committee, Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee and the Petitions Committee.

The change in the number of the Assembly's Committees gives each Committee the flexibility and time to undertake more in-depth work. Over the past year, Committees used this flexibility in new and innovative ways, including the establishment of task and finish groups, either to look at a subject in detail over a long period of time, or to allow a small number of Committee members to be able to undertake short, tightly-focused inquiries on specific issues.

For example, in the past year, the Environment and Sustainability Committee established two Committee sub-groups to look at the EU proposed changes to the Common Fisheries and Common Agricultural policies.

In addition, a number of Committees met with groups of stakeholders to hear what they believed Committees' priorities should be. Committees have also explored a number of different approaches to get the public's views, including using online surveys, focus groups and visits to communities to hear local people's views.

In November, there was a round-table discussion between representatives of the north Wales's Citizen Advice Bureaux, selected Assembly Members and Committee clerks. Facilitated by the Assembly's outreach team, the aim was to provide Bureau advisers, social policy representatives, managers and trustees with a better understanding of a devolved Wales as well as allowing them to understand how to effectively engage with the Assembly.

### **Participation in the Arts in Wales**

When the Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee heard concerns from a number of organisations that budget cuts in the arts sector might be having a negative effect on participation in the arts among some groups of people, it established a Task and Finish Group to undertake a short inquiry on this issue.

In order to ensure the Group's inquiry would target the right audiences, the Assembly's outreach team met with the Black Voluntary Sector Network, Voluntary Arts Wales and Disability Arts Cymru to discuss the inquiry and to ask them who they thought we should speak to about this issue.

They suggested a wide variety of groups to work with, ranging from Cofio, Rhondda Cynon Taff Community Arts group; a reminisce dance theatre production involving older adults; and Prometheus, a Caernarfon based arts group for young adults with learning difficulties. In this two week period we spoke with over 190 people from various backgrounds, abilities, ages and sex.

The sessions gave participants the opportunity to have their say and discuss issues such as:

- why they took part in arts activities;
- the availability of opportunities for arts participation in their area; and
- what would help them take part in more arts activities in the future.

Leanne Rahman, Arts Development Officer at BVSNW said: "Our network was delighted to have been considered with regards to this consultation. Taking a little extra time to meet directly with the people that are affected by local and national decisions means a lot especially when many barriers may stand in the way of them participating. The focus groups were diverse and responsive and were held at the heart of communities. People who took part have fed back how pleased they were at being able to communicate their feelings and were encouraged by the knowledge that those feelings and suggestions could influence future decisions for the better.

"Focus groups such as these would be a very welcomed occurrence when ever possible in our networks."

In addition to focus groups, we produced questionnaires in a wide variety of formats including easy read as well as an online version. From these questionnaires, the inquiry received responses from 42 organisations and 20 individuals, which was in addition to the 195 people consulted at the focus groups.

### **Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009**

The Children and Young People Committee wanted to assess the impact the implementation of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure was having on young people aged 14 to 19 years old.

The Assembly's outreach team assisted with two evidence-gathering methods for this inquiry: firstly through an on-line questionnaire posted on the National Assembly website, and secondly through work the outreach team and the education service undertook with groups across Wales.

Five focus groups were held with youth clubs and associations across Wales. This gave young people the chance to have their say on the Measure, and how it has affected them. A total of 67 young people took part in these sessions. The Education Service saw 42 schools and colleges with pupils within the relevant age range, and there were six tours of the Senedd with relevant groups at that time. As a result, 1,721 young people were made aware of the inquiry and their ability to take part in the consultation, resulting in 790 questionnaire responses.

## Engaging with Wales

The Assembly Commission's strategy states its commitment to effective engagement with the people of Wales and the promotion of Wales's achievements internationally. The objective is to create an environment that encourages interest in and understanding of the Assembly's work of legislating, scrutiny and representation.

The National Assembly's Outreach bus acted as a focal point for the Presiding Officer as she undertook a tour of Wales over the course of the year. She met a number of rural and environmental stakeholders at the Royal Welsh show, and also met a range of visitors when she visited the Urdd Eisteddfod in Swansea, the National Eisteddfod in Wrexham, Cardiff Mardi Gras and the Monmouth county show.

The busy summer schedule provided an opportunity for the Presiding Officer to share her vision for making the Assembly a more accessible and reactive legislature. It also provided an opportunity for Mrs Butler to set out a clear agenda to encourage more women to take an active role in civic life in Wales.

Throughout the summer of 2011, the bus also acted as an important presence at many national and regional events across Wales, allowing people to gain a better understanding of the Assembly and its work.

The Petitions Committee used the bus to hold drop-in sessions at the National Eisteddfod and the Royal Welsh Show in Builth Wells, while the Environment and Sustainability Committee held a public meeting at the Royal Welsh followed by an informal discussion on the issues facing rural Wales over the next five years.

The Assembly's Outreach and Education teams have also been working with a range of organisations to help ensure more people become engaged in the democratic process. Work has been underway with the Prince's Trust in Ceredigion and Carmarthen to develop an "Active Citizen" programme.

Designed and piloted over a period of 12 months, the objective was to develop a suite of learning modules suitable for young adults who have not completed a formal education. These modules will be used across Wales when working with young adults to encourage them to engage in the work of the Assembly.

In north Wales, the outreach team held a number of workshops in partnership with Communities First and the Local Voluntary Council, where participants received information about raising issues with their Assembly Members and engaging with the Assembly through channels such as the Assembly's Petitions Committee.

Other notable work with stakeholders included an initiative with the Cardiff and Vale Mental Health Development Project. Two workshops were held to provide information on engaging with the Assembly, where the group learned about the role of the Assembly and its Members. As a result of these sessions, the group has now submitted a petition to the Assembly about mental health services in Wales.

## **Opening up the Senedd and the Pierhead**

Closer to home, the Senedd and the Pierhead also acted as hosts to a number of high-profile events aimed at bringing democracy to life for those who attended.

October saw the second in a series of events that the Assembly delivered in partnership with the Hansard Society. Titled Politics vs Young People, the event focused on an expert panel made up of Assembly Members and youth representatives who debated a variety of issues affecting young people and their relationship with politics and the political system.

The Assembly celebrated International Women's Day in partnership with the Institute of Welsh Affairs, the Equality and Human Rights Commission, the Women's Institute and the British Council.

The day began in the Pierhead with a breakfast round table meeting, hosted by the Presiding Officer, and continued with discussion groups and workshops in the Pierhead hosted by the Women's Institute and a lunchtime lecture delivered by Tori James, the youngest British and the first Welsh female to climb Mount Everest.

The month of March illustrated the truly democratic nature of the National Assembly. Within a week, the Assembly had hosted a public lecture by Dr Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury on the subject of what makes a society a community. Only seven days prior to that, the building had echoed to the triumphant roars of over 8,000 rugby fans who had turned up to give a hero's welcome to Wales's Grand Slam-winning national rugby team when they attended an official reception hosted by Presiding Officer Rosemary Butler.

## Taking the Assembly to the world

The Assembly Commission has a stated ambition to make the most of opportunities in the UK and abroad to promote Wales and the work of the Assembly and to play a part in the development of parliamentary democracy elsewhere in the world.

As a result, the National Assembly has continued to engage with other legislatures over the past year, exchanging best practices and showcasing Welsh democracy on the international stage.

We have welcomed international dignitaries, Ambassadors, High Commissioners and parliamentary delegations representing many countries and organisations, including Australia, Turkey, the Czech Republic, Russia, Lesotho, Canada, Denmark, Flanders, Singapore, Israel, Brazil and the British Council.

In addition, the Assembly has been represented by individual Members and delegations at a broad range of international meetings, seminars, conferences and other outward visits, including the British Irish Parliamentary Assembly Plenary Conferences in Cork and Brighton and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association annual conference in London, the Canadian Parliamentary Seminar and CPA Wales-sponsored visit to South Africa.

The Assembly has also hosted a number of notable international events over the course of the past year, designed to showcase the Assembly's achievements. Deputy Presiding Officer David Melding hosted a reception in the Senedd to mark the beginning of the Danish Presidency of the Council of the EU in the Company of the Danish Ambassador Anne Hendensted Steffensen.

Another event of note was the CPA Wales branch-sponsored Young People's International Debate which saw over 50 young Welsh and international students come together to discuss the year's Commonwealth theme of "Connecting Cultures".

For more detailed information and reports on the Assembly's International Relations, please visit our International Relations pages.

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In January 2012, the Senedd welcomed its millionth visitor since the building was officially opened by Her Majesty the Queen on St David's Day in 2006. Samantha Hailes from Cardiff was greeted by Rosemary Butler AM, Presiding Officer of the National Assembly for Wales, and presented with a certificate and given a tour of the building.

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### The year in figures

**89,231**

The number of visitors to the Senedd between April 2011 and March 2012

**5,249**

The number of visitors that have attended Plenary during the same period

**982**

The number of visitors that have attended Committee meetings

**4,846**

The number of impromptu tours given to visitors to the Senedd

**188**

The number of events hosted on the Assembly's estate

**13,381**

The total number of guests welcomed to events

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## A new approach to governance and audit

The Governance and Audit Service was formed at the start of 2011 to develop, support and monitor good governance within the Assembly. By the end of the Fourth Assembly, it is intended that key governance principles and sound procurement, contract and project management processes will be embedded across the organisation.

One of the Service's key roles is the work it does in support of the Accounting Officer's Governance Statement which accompanies the Assembly's accounts.

The statement details the mechanisms that provide assurances on compliance, awareness, understanding and effectiveness of the Assembly's internal controls. It also includes the processes that inform the preparation of the annual statement.

The Service also supports good governance through a range of other activities, including ensuring a well-embedded approach to risk monitoring and management.

Robust internal audit processes are also ways the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer can gain confidence in the way the organisation is carrying out its business. This provides an independent view and objective opinion on risk management, control and governance. This is done through carrying out independent investigations and evaluations of the Assembly Commission's effectiveness in achieving the organisation's agreed objectives.

The Commission has also established a Remuneration Committee which is an advisory body with no executive powers to consider and make recommendations on matters regarding the remuneration and terms of service of the Chief Executive and Clerk of the National Assembly for Wales. The Committee met three times in 2011-12 and there was 100 per cent attendance.

Further reassurance comes from the Assembly Commission's Audit Committee which comprises Angela Burns AM in her role as an Assembly Commissioner and three independent advisers: Richard Calvert (who is the Chair), Tim Knighton and Prof Robert Pickard. The Audit Committee provides independent advice, 'challenge' and support to the Chief Executive in her role as Accounting Officer. The Committee, which meets five times a year, considers a wide range of issues including the Commission's Internal Audit Plan, its approach to corporate governance and risk management and its counter-fraud and whistle-blowing policies. The Committee also provides assurances to the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer on the annual report and accounts.

There were five meetings of the committee held in 2011-12. Attendance details were as follows:

<b>Committee Member</b>	<b>No of meetings attended</b>
Richard Calvert (Chair)	5
Tim Knighton	5
Robert Pickard	4
William Graham*	1
Angela Burns*	3

\*William Graham was only a member of the committee at the time of one of the five meetings and Angela Burns was only a member for three of the meetings.

Alongside these activities which are directly related to governance, the Governance and Audit team is responsible for the operation of the Assembly's Investment Programme and the development of project management techniques and skills within the Assembly. It is also responsible for the development of Procurement and Contract Management within the Assembly.

The Service is also responsible for a number of other activities which support good governance. These include:

- Information Governance and Information Management;
- Freedom of Information and Data Protection;
- Assembly Performance Management;
- Managing the Assembly’s Investment Programme;
- Business Analysis, Procurement and Contract Management; and
- Equalities and Access.

## **Sustainability Report for the year ended 31 March 2012**

The National Assembly for Wales has a legal duty to pursue sustainable development in all of its work under Section 121 of the Government of Wales Act 2006.

As a leading public sector organisation, we also have a role to play in promoting sustainable development and minimising the environmental impacts of our operations. In 2009, the Assembly started working towards becoming a low carbon organisation by 2015. Our vision identifies our key ambitions for operational sustainability based on our significant impacts: 40 per cent reduction in energy emissions, 15 per cent reduction in business travel emissions, efficient buildings and a responsible work culture. As 76 per cent of our reported emissions are attributable to electricity and gas use, energy reduction forms the cornerstone of our sustainability strategy.

The Assembly is committed to being an open and transparent organisation and we have been publically reporting sustainability performance data since 2007/08. We measure and report our emissions of greenhouse gases through an Annual Environmental Report.

Over the last year, we have continued to make good progress against our sustainability targets through a combination of continued investment in our buildings, improved controls and greater awareness.

### **Sustainability awards**

We were voted as runner up in the ‘Most Sustainable Public Sector Organisation’ category of the Public Sector Sustainability Awards 2011.

### **Environmental management certification**

We were successful in retaining Level 5 (the highest level attainable) of the Green Dragon Environmental Management Standard for the fifth year running.

### **Our carbon footprint**

We have set an annual carbon emissions reduction target of 3 per cent. In the last four years, we have achieved an 8 per cent reduction in overall emissions. Allowing for improvements in data collation and the addition of new data sets this year, together with some increases in emissions as a result of changing business needs, we have still managed to achieve a 1 per cent reduction in our greenhouse gas emissions. The following information provides a summary of our headline achievements:

### **Carbon and energy**

We reduced our overall energy emissions by 9 per cent, exceeding our annual target of 8 per cent. This amounts to a cumulative reduction of 24 per cent over the last four years.

- We optimised the use of the biomass boiler in the Senedd to account for 89 per cent of the total resources required for heating.
- We have achieved gas emissions reductions of 48 per cent over the last four years.

## Travel

Business travel mileage has increased by 59 per cent however this figure includes Assembly Member Support Staff travel for the first time. This accounts for almost half of that increase.

- Despite this increase, we have achieved travel emissions reductions of 37 per cent in the period up to this year. We remain on target to achieve our goal of 15 per cent emissions reduction by 2015.
- We increased our use of public transport for business travel by 92 per cent on the previous year.
- We reduced the average emissions rating of our hire cars to 131g/CO<sub>2</sub>.

## Waste

Total waste has increased by 16 per cent compared to the previous year, however this is largely due to improved data collation systems.

- We increased our recycling rate by 25 per cent amounting to 73 per cent of the total waste generated. This is a continuing trend as we improve our recycling facilities and behaviours. Specifically, this includes an increase of 65 per cent in the volume of food waste composted.
- We reduced our waste to landfill by 6 per cent exceeding our annual reduction target of 5 per cent.

## Water

Mains water use has increased by 3 per cent over the past year largely as a result of a thorough clean to the brickwork of Tŷ Hywel. For the third year running, we have continued to successfully harvest rainwater to meet approximately 60 per cent of the water requirements of the Senedd.

## Environmental management system

The Assembly's certified environmental management system is used to manage and reduce our environmental impacts, capture and record all environmental data and acts as the principal driving force for reducing carbon emissions.

We continue to improve the internal controls, quality and accuracy of our data through ongoing reviews, internal and external audits and verification assessments by the Wales Audit Office.

## About our data

*The emissions figures contained in this report are calculated based on the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) 2011 Conversion Factors which are specific to the UK. For consistency, the current year and two preceding years' data have been updated with the 2011 conversion factors to allow for accurate comparisons of performance.*

*Each year, we strive to improve the quality and credibility of our sustainability performance data through the development of robust data collection mechanisms to demonstrate our commitment to transparent reporting of all our environmental impacts. During 2011, improvements in data systems enabled us to include Assembly Member Support Staff business travel for the first time. This data was not available in prior years. There have also been improvements in the data capture for waste and recycling.*



Greenhouse Gas Emissions		2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Non-financial indicators (tCO2e)	Total gross emissions scope 1	353	357	295
	Total gross emissions scope 2	2,061	1,908	1,766
	Total gross emissions scope 3	279	368	551
	<b>Total emissions</b>	2,693	2,633	2,612
	Expenditure on accredited offsets (eg Government Carbon Offsetting Fund)	£0	£0	£0
Financial Indicators (£)	CRC Gross Expenditure	N/A	N/A	N/A

Energy Consumption <sup>1</sup>				
Non-financial indicators (kWh)	Electricity (non-renewable) (kWh)	3,927,779	3,531,358	3,217,522
	Gas (kWh)	1,882,864	1,563,475	1,217,226
	Biomass (renewable) (kWh)	164,220	480,480	885,000
Financial Indicators (£)	<b>Total energy expenditure<sup>2</sup></b>	£467,799	£404,218	£451,835

Official Travel <sup>3</sup>				
Non-financial indicators (miles)	Business Travel	670,700	533,452	848,774
	Owned and leased vehicles	19,013	33,454	36,434
Financial Indicators (£)	<b>Expenditure on official business travel</b>	£242,074	£179,700	£307,271

Waste <sup>4</sup>				
Non-financial indicators (tonnes)	Total waste arising	47.5	133.3	154.6
	Landfill	15.9	42.6	6.1
	Recycled/Reused	32	91	114.6
	Incinerated/energy from waste	0	0	0
Financial Indicators (£)	<b>Expenditure on all waste disposal</b>	£4,716	£15,512	£32,847

Water Consumption <sup>5</sup>				
Non-financial indicators (m3)	Water consumption:			
	Supplied	7,918	7,446	7,669
	Harvested	788	737	747
Financial Indicators (£)	<b>Supply and sewerage costs</b>	£23,320	£21,922	£22,561

## Footnotes

The information contained above has been developed for our Annual Report and Accounts in accordance with HM Treasury's Sustainability Reporting Guidance for the 2011-12 financial year. Where available, emissions are reported for the core administrative estate only including the Colwyn Bay office, over which we have direct financial control. A full summary of our environmental performance can be found in the Assembly's Annual Environmental Report.

All emissions are calculated based on the most recent set of Defra Conversion Factors for Greenhouse Gas reporting 2011.

All activity data is converted into kilograms of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e) for reporting purposes. CO<sub>2</sub>e is a universal unit of measurement that allows the global warming potential of different GHGs to be compared.

<sup>1</sup>Includes estimated costs and consumption for gas and electricity from the Colwyn Bay office based on metered bills split equally between the tenants.

<sup>2</sup>Includes costs for electricity and air conditioning in offsite server farm from 2010 onwards.

<sup>3</sup>AMSS travel has been captured and included for the first time in 2011/12.

<sup>4</sup>Total waste figures for 2009/10 only represent 6 months of available data. Waste data is applicable to the Cardiff Bay estate only.

<sup>5</sup>Water data is applicable to the Cardiff Bay estate only.

## Looking ahead

As we work towards our 2015 targets, we will continue to strive to minimise the use of resources and reduce carbon emissions from our buildings, operations and travel. We will be open, transparent and innovative as we look to identify further initiatives that can contribute to improved performance, enhanced occupant engagement, optimised building controls and extended reporting to account for the performance of our supply chain. We will ensure sustainability is considered fairly in business decisions, considering risks and opportunities, delivering value and ensuring we continue to provide first class support services.

We aim to continue building on our existing success ensuring sustainable development remains a key theme within our work, embedding a resourceful culture that reflects our drive to be a sustainability leader and providing a clear direction to enable us to achieve our aspirational goals for 2015.

