

Agenda – Llywydd's Committee

Meeting Venue:	For further information contact:
Hybrid – Committee room 4, Ty Hywel and video conference via Zoom	Meriel Singleton Committee Clerk
Meeting date: 6 November 2025	0300 200 6565
Meeting time: 09.30	SeneddLIC@senedd.wales

Pre-meeting

(9.15 – 9.30)

- 1 **Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest**

- 2 **Scrutiny of the Electoral Commission financial estimates 2026/27**
(9.30 – 11.00) (Pages 1 – 43)
Dame Elan Closs Stephens CBE – Electoral Commissioner, Wales
Vijay Rangarajan – Chief Executive, Electoral Commission
Rhydian Thomas – Head of Electoral Commission, Wales
Niki Nixon – Director of Communications, Electoral Commission
Chris Pleass – Director of Finance, Electoral Commission

- 3 **Motion under Standing Order 17.42(vi) to resolve to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting**

- 4 **Scrutiny of the Electoral Commission financial estimates 2026/27:
Consideration of evidence**
(11.00 – 11.30)

- 5 **Paper to note**

5.1 **Letter from the Chair of the Finance Committee**

(Pages 44 – 45)

Document is Restricted

David Rees MS
Chair, Llywydd's Committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

29 September 2025

Dear Chair,

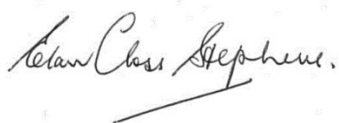
Electoral Commission Annual Estimate for 2026-27

We are pleased to enclose the Electoral Commission's Annual Estimate for the 2026-27 financial year for consideration by your Committee. This includes apportioned core business, direct event costs and our Corporate Plan project work, totalling £3.609m. This is slightly below the projected figure of £3.9m which we included in the UK Corporate Plan 2025-30 discussed with you and your Committee last year.

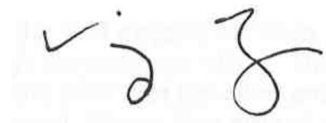
This letter describes how we have calculated our Estimate, and we look forward to discussing it with you on the 6 November. We have considered the Committee's previous feedback on presentation and trust that this format provides additional clarity on allocation of core business versus direct event costs, and variance.

Please contact Rhydian Thomas, Head of the Electoral Commission, Wales if we can help before that meeting.

Yours sincerely,



Professor Dame Elan Closs Stephens CBE
Electoral Commissioner, Wales



Vijay Rangarajan
Chief Executive and Accounting Officer

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1. Financial overview

Fig. 1 – Budget comparison 2025-26 – 2026-27

Wales	2025-2026 £k	2026-2027 £k	Variance
Core	£1,315	£1,443	£127k
Event	£1,216	£1,860	£644k
Corporate Plan	£211	£306	£95k
Total	£2,742	£3,609	£867k

Core costs

The 2026-27 estimate for core costs attributable to the Senedd (calculated using the 4.6% population share) is £1,443k.

This is a 9.7% increase compared to 2025-26, driven by the increased number of staff working on UK-wide issues as set out in our UK Corporate Plan, such as mis and disinformation, voter information, and candidate abuse and intimidation. Much of this work will benefit the May 26 elections and work thereafter. Despite a post UKPGE boost in electoral confidence, our Annual Public Attitudes survey revealed that just 30% of the public in Wales are satisfied with the way democracy works in the UK and concerns about the integrity of elections remain.

Event costs

The 2026-27 estimate for event costs attributable to the Senedd is **£1,860k (53.0% increase)**.

The focus of the Commission's work in Wales is to effectively support the delivery of the Senedd election in 2026 and the Local Government elections in 2027. Further detail about those budget lines where there is an increase are below (figures included combine event and core costs in each work area).

Corporate Plan costs

The 2026-27 estimate for costs attributable to the Senedd for relevant activity in the second year of the Corporate Plan is **£306k**. A report on progress on the Corporate Plan is included in section 3.

Automatic Voter Registration

As the implementation of automatic voter registration (AVR) in Wales for the May 2027 local elections is not yet confirmed, nor the form it will take, we have not included figures in this estimate to cover any potential associated costs. When this policy has been clarified by Welsh Government, and in particular how it will interact with any UK-wide AVR system later, we should be able to assess the impact and will return to the Committee with a supplementary bid if required.

Strategic frameworks

This Estimate is underpinned by our five-year [Wales Corporate Plan](#) on devolved Welsh functions. The current plan runs from 2022-23 to 2026-27. A new Welsh Corporate Plan will be drafted, consulted on and laid following the 2026 Senedd election.

Our aim remains to play our part to ensure the resilience of the electoral system and build a stronger Electoral Commission to achieve that. Our strategic framework reflects the differing requirements of the Parliaments who fund us, but many of the overarching themes in each plan are consistent.

Our work programme in the financial year 2026-27 covers two electoral events in Wales - the Senedd election in May 2026 and the Local Government elections in 2027. These events mean that the budget estimate for 2026-27 represents a peak, but the figures will reduce again in the following years when there are no elections.

The main driver for an increase in our core costs in 2026-27 (£60k) is costs associated with growing the Commission. There is also an increase in the Senedd's contribution towards the second year of the UK Corporate Plan where we will see an expansion of the work, a larger proportion of roles in place and projects in full operation.

The figure for 2026-27 is 7% lower than the figure in the [UK Corporate Plan](#) we published last year. This is due in part to reductions we have made to the expected event costs for both sets of elections as specific requirements have become clearer, some projects changing funding stream and some smaller projects being superseded. Our estimate follows the Statement of Funding Principles noted in 2021 by each of the three funding bodies which requires that the directly attributable costs of elections, and of other separately identifiable activities under the powers of each legislature, should be funded by that body, while expenditure that is not directly attributable is to be shared on a population basis in each nation.

The funding formula for the estimate has been adjusted year-on-year to more accurately reflect the population sizes of each of the three parliaments using ONS data. The Commission's core costs for shared activity – such as the ongoing support to voters, administrators and the regulated community, as well as the corporate costs necessary for the operation of the Commission – are allocated on a formula based on population

estimates using ONS population statistics. The allocation to Wales is 4.6%, with 8.1% allocated to Scotland and 87.3% allocated to Westminster. Where there is a specific demand for additional work solely impacting Welsh stakeholders, i.e. the May 2026 and 2027 elections, these costs are 100% allocated to the devolved parliament under event costs.

2. Key investment drivers

Below is an explanation of the key investment drivers for our activity to support the delivery of a well-run Senedd election in 2026 and Local Government elections in Wales in May 2027. This is analysed according to the budget lines in the Estimate table. All figures below include the Committee's contribution to both the core and event costs in each area of activity.

Devolution Governance and law [£133k – 8k increase]

Wales [£48k – 9k increase]

- The Commission's Wales Team will manage programmes of work to engage with stakeholders from across the electoral community. In 2026-27 this will include providing advice, guidance and support to Returning Officers /Electoral Registration Officers (ROs/EROs), the Electoral Management Board, parties, candidates and agents and police force Single Points of Contact.
- The team will also support the implementation of further legislative changes from the Welsh Government's programme of electoral reform in Wales, including the introduction of a Bill to strengthen member accountability in the Senedd and updates to the local election rules ahead of the May 2027 elections.
- We will support the integrated bilingual voter registration and information campaign ahead of the May 2027 elections and continue to run a bilingual programme of voter engagement and education work with young people, under-registered and disengaged groups.
- We continue to manage the Commission's Welsh Translation Unit, ensuring all relevant material is translated into Welsh and continuing to comply with Welsh Language Standards set by the Welsh Language Commissioner.
- Increased investment in the Wales office for 2026-27 will enable us to recruit two new staff members to support development of the Wales Corporate Plan and associated schemes of work.

Legal [£59k - £5k increase]

- The Commission's legal team will continue to advise on proposals for electoral reform in Wales in 2026-27, as well as providing general and on-going legal advice on Welsh legislation and support of the Commission's functions as they relate to Wales (including registration, regulation, policy, electoral administration, governance and compliance with Welsh Language Standards).
- In 2026/27 the external legal advice and support budget has been increased slightly in line with inflation.

Communications policy and research [£2080k - £655k increase]

Campaigns and Corporate Identity [£1708k – £596k increase]

- Our campaigns budget peaks in 2026-27 as it covers the costs of the second year of the registration campaign for the 2026 Senedd election and year one campaign costs for the Local Government Elections in 2027.
- Senedd election campaign costs include advertising from 1 April 2026 to the registration deadline on 20 April and post-campaign tracking research to help us evaluate our campaign performance
- Part one of the May 2027 local election cost includes producing/updating the campaign creative, advertising costs up to 31 March 2027, pre-campaign tracking research to establish baseline data, and voter information resources such as posters and social media graphics.
- The budget also covers the costs of any necessary changes to voter-facing forms throughout the financial year due to legislative change.

Digital communication and voter engagement [£184k - £13k increase on 2025-26]

- We will continue to deliver a detailed programme of education work in 2026-27. This will include our Youth Voice programme delivered by Children in Wales, digitising our teacher and youth practitioner training and developing education resources.
- We will continue to deliver projects supporting under-registered groups ahead of the 2027 Local Government elections, including foreign nationals. We will make further improvements to our resources for voters with accessibility needs and provide support to voters who register anonymously. We will adapt this work to account for automatic registration if required.
- The Digital Communications team will develop and maintain our bilingual website, digital tools, and social media channels. There will be a greater focus on producing content for Wales and in Welsh language ahead of May 2026 elections and support for teams across the Commission to publish information in English and Welsh for our stakeholders, including voters, electoral administrators and campaigners.

External communication [£74k- £8k increase on 2025-26]

- The External Communications team will provide media relations and public affairs support to the Wales team ahead of the 2026 and 2027 elections and respond to legislation arising from the Government's electoral reform programme.
- The increase in cost is driven by hiring temporary bilingual public information staff based in the Cardiff office to provide support and guidance to voters via phone and email ahead of the 2026 and 2027 elections.

Research [£74k - £34k increase on 2025-26]

- This budget covers the cost of gathering evidence and data from voters, candidates and campaigners and electoral administrators to inform the report we will make on the Senedd elections. The report will consider the impact of changes to the electoral voting system as well as making specific recommendations for wider improvements to elections.

- We will also undertake regular research activities including our annual public opinion tracker survey, and our survey of children and young people's attitudes to democracy and politics.

Policy [£39k - £4k increase on 2025-26]

- This represents the Committee's share of policy activities, including work to support the Welsh Government and Senedd to consider new policy proposals and legislation arising from the UK Government's electoral reform programme including planned pilot schemes of electoral registration without application for reserved elections.

Electoral Administration and Regulation [£222k - £17k increase]

Registration Compliance [£59k - £11k increase on 2025-26]

- This covers our work relating to the statutory financial reporting required by registered political parties in Wales. This includes our quarterly donation and loans reports, and annual Statement of Accounts submission. It also represents that share of the costs relating to the annual renewal of registered party details and any changes to registration details made throughout the year.

Regulatory Action & Enforcement [£61k - £5k increase on 2025-26]

- This covers the costs that are associated with compliance and enforcement work arising from parties and campaigners in Wales. This includes monitoring the campaign activity of parties and campaigners in Wales. Our monitoring work helps us to identify campaigners who may need our support to come into compliance. It also supports our intervention and enforcement work, if it is required.
- We will use the Senedd Parties Panel to engage with the larger political parties represented in the Senedd to support them and their candidates in the best way possible to deal with the growing challenges they face. We will also continue to engage with smaller parties in Wales and independent candidates providing advice and guidance tailored to Welsh needs, publication of details of donations, loans and annual party accounts and monitoring and enforcement of compliance with political finance law.

Regulatory support [£46k - £4k increase on 2025-26]

- This represents the costs associated with developing guidance for parties, candidates and agents for Welsh Local Government polls in 2027. It also includes supporting the programme of electoral reform in Wales and updating our core guidance resources in light of legislative changes or feedback. We also provide a year-round advice service to parties and campaigners which answers their queries and provides tailored and targeted support through webinars and advice surgeries. We will also deliver bespoke training packages tailored to each party. This ensures the regulated community understands the laws, their obligations and aims to support high levels of compliance.

Strengthening the Electoral Commission through investment in core functions [£868k - £91k increase]

- We continue to strengthen the Commission through investment in our staff and in resilient IT, finance and other support functions. With the Commission growing by over 50% over the course of 25-26 and 26-27, as set out in the 25-30 Corporate Plan, costs to support the Commission have grown in line with this substantive growth.
- Our additional core costs in 2026-27 cover pay increases and higher National Insurance costs; improved accommodation provision to support the growth of the organisation (in the form of higher depreciation, interest and VAT costs under IFRS16); and increased IT costs due to continued threats, inflationary pressure and growing the Commission size. Strengthening the Electoral Commission in this way will enable us to continue to deliver our regulatory, guidance, evaluation, research, campaigns and communications work to support the delivery of the May 2026 Senedd and May 2027 Local Government elections in Wales.
- We will invest in IT equipment for our staff and focus on modernising technology. We will continue to improve our IT security and ensure we maintain our cyber essentials plus certification as well as recruiting additional IT support staff.
- In Finance, we will address any gaps in capacity and capability to help the Commission meet its reporting requirements. We will also invest in procurement specialists to help drive best practices and search for efficiencies. In HR we are strengthening our team to ensure we employ the best possible candidates from across the UK, including from Wales and allow for development within the Commission.
- In addition to the figures above to support Core activities, we have £306k allocated for the UK Corporate Plan, which is £95k higher than in 2025-26. This figure is lower than previously provided, as seen in section 5, and further details on corporate plan spend are provided in section 3 below.

3. Corporate Planning

Progress on the UK Corporate Plan

Earlier this year we shared our UK Corporate Plan 2025-2030 with you setting out five strategic objectives that have an impact on elections delivered in Wales:

- Supporting voters and increasing participation
- Modernising the electoral system
- Safeguarding and protecting the system
- Leading an informed debate about the future of elections
- Strengthening the Electoral Commission

The first year of the new UK plan is well under way. We have set up a portfolio of four programmes which together represent an ambitious programme of change designed to help us deliver on these five strategic objectives:

- Legal modernisation: consideration of how electoral law might further be modernised
- Digital modernisation: we are exploring the uses of AI and machine learning to drive efficiencies as part of a wider strategy of continuous improvement. Cybersecurity sits at the heart of this work
- Thought leadership: we are investing significantly in our capacity to act as a trusted independent authority
- Systems transformation: we are investing in new financial, procurement and performance tracking systems to improve efficiency and effectiveness

This represents a significant piece of change management for the organisation. We have put in place project arrangements to help us manage that growth proactively and ensure it provides a firm basis for the further changes likely to be forthcoming in the UK Government's Electoral Reform Bill.

Next steps for Wales Corporate Plan

As mentioned previously, a new Welsh Corporate Plan will be drafted, consulted on and laid following the 2026 Senedd elections. This will very much reflect the strategic objectives of the Commission as a whole but take account of the priorities and plans of the new Welsh Government that is formed after the 2026 election. We have already begun scoping work on the Wales Corporate Plan for 2027/28 – 2031/32, which we will submit to the Llywydd's Committee with our Estimate in September 2026.

4. Measuring performance

As set out in Section 3, we have undertaken an ambitious programme of change through our UK Corporate Plan. Demonstrating the benefits of these changes and the improvements we expect to see in our efficiency and effectiveness is crucial. We have invested in our benefits tracking capacity so that these benefits are built into all our programmes and can be clearly identified.

We assess the success of our delivery in two ways. The first is through a set of Key System Indicators, both for the UK and for its constituent parts. These are annual indicators which measure the overall health of the electoral system. This is of course a system in which there are many players, both at organisational and individual level. These indicators do not measure our success as an organisation. But they provide crucial information to assess the health of the electoral system and guide future decision making.

We assess our own delivery through a range of Key Performance Indicators which are assessed at UK and national level and largely measured quarterly. We met 22 out of 25 targets in the last year. Where we did not meet our target, at least some of the variance was due to a very small number of cases where delays had a large impact on the figures. Where we have identified delivery issues in our processes, we have taken mitigating action, for example by recruiting more staff.

5. Value for money

The Commission's ability to demonstrate value for money hinges on our ability to optimise procurement practices, manage contracts efficiently, manage risks, monitor and improve performance, and make informed decisions about resource allocation through effective prioritisation, while ensuring financial and IT controls are in place and working effectively. We will seek to ensure that we are not only fulfilling our objectives but are doing so in a cost-effective and efficient manner, ultimately driving gains in public value.

Wales	26/27 New £k	26/27 5YP £k	Var £k	Var %
Core	1,443	1,391	£ 51	3.7%
Event	1,860	2,091	-£ 231	-11.1%
CP	306	395	-£ 89	-22.5%
Total	3,609	3,878	-£ 269	-6.9%

The table above highlights any movements between this Estimate and figures published recently in our five-year Corporate Plan. Following submission of the 5-year plan alongside the 25/26 budget, the Electoral Commission strives to maintain Estimates in line with the 5-year view as far as possible. As such we have delivered a budget that is 7% below previous estimates, highlighting our drive to deliver value for money. Core costs have increased, though this is in line with inflation (which was not included in the 5-year plan figures), while Event costs and Corporate Plan costs have decreased following continued review of planned items and alignment to delivering value for money.

Following lessons learnt from previous finance cycles, the rebuilt budget models have allowed for additional time for further scrutiny of the figures and numerous rounds of internal challenge to ensure costs are robust and delivering value for money, allowing us to identify savings where we can within the Commission.

Despite continued high inflationary pressure, particularly on IT spend, impacting Commission pay and non-pay costs for the past three years, we will continue to seek to mitigate inflation wherever possible. Cost as an average per member of population in Wales, within Core, has increased from **42p to 46p**, equivalent to 24-25 spending levels.

WALES ELECTORAL COMMISSION ANNUAL ESTIMATE TABLE 2026-27									
		2024-25 Actual outturn £000s	2025-26 Budget £000s	2026-27 Estimate £000s	2026-27 Estimate Core £000s	2026-27 Estimate Event £000s	Variance (25/26 vs 26/27) £000s	Variance (25/26 ch 26/27) %	Commentary
Direct Costs (pay and non-pay)									
DEVOLUTION GOVERNANCE AND LAW	Legislation Strategy and Coordination	21.9	10.7	6.1	6.1	0.0	-4.6	-43%	This represents the Committee's share of the costs that are associated with centrally managing and co-ordinating the delivery of changes arising as part of the government's programme of electoral reform in Wales; this includes ensuring that teams across the Commission are supported in planning for, and implementing any changes required in light of legislative changes. The costs have reduced for 26/27 given that the majority of the legislation was passed in 25/26 and we do not expect to coordinate this work to the same level in 26/27.
	Wales	270.3	39.5	48.0	42.0	6.0	8.5	22%	This represents the Committee's share of the costs associated with supporting the implementation of further legislative reforms, including the introduction of a Bill to strengthen member accountability in the Senedd and updates to the local election rules ahead of the May 2027 elections; supporting ROs/EROs, administrators through the delivery of advice, guidance and resources and delivering the performance monitoring framework; working with a Electoral Management Board and other stakeholder groups; supporting the regulated community in Wales to meet statutory requirements provide advice and guidance to candidates and agents; helping new political parties and non-party campaigners to register; and support political parties and deliver training sessions ahead of the elections in 2026 and 2027; launch a Cross-Party Group within the Senedd; translating website material into Welsh and continuing to comply with Welsh Language Standards set by the Welsh Language Commissioner; running an integrated bilingual voter registration and information campaign ahead of the May 2027 elections utilising paid advertising and promotional assets for local authorities and partners; continuing to run a bilingual programme of voter engagement and education work with young people, under-registered and disengaged groups.
	Legal	72.7	54.7	59.5	59.5	0.0	4.8	9%	This represents the Committee's share of the total cost of providing legal support to the Commission's advice, guidance and regulation functions; supporting the development of any policy recommendations, as well as providing general and on-going legal advice on Welsh legislation and support of the Commission's functions as they relate to Wales (including registration, regulation, policy, electoral administration, governance and compliance with Welsh Language Standards); advising on proposals for electoral reform in Wales and ensuring that the Commission fulfils its accountability obligations to the Senedd.
	Governance	29.1	19.6	19.2	19.2	0.0	-0.4	-2%	This represents the Committee's share of the total costs of providing corporate governance services across the Commission. This includes implementing the Commission's corporate governance framework and supporting the Commission Board with oversight and discharge of the Commission's governance responsibilities (the UK parliament meets the cost of Commissioner's fees).
	Sub-total		394.1	124.5	132.8	126.8	6.0	8.3	7%
ELECTORAL ADMINISTRATION AND REGULATION	Support and Improvement	17.6	15.6	13.5	13.5	0.0	-2.1	-13%	This represents the Committee's share of the total costs associated with the monitoring and support of EROs and ROs in the delivery of their statutory electoral services. It also includes managing the assessment of RO and ERO performance against the Performance standards throughout the delivery of the major electoral events in 2026, and the preparation for the May 2027 elections.
	Guidance	44.6	42.5	42.2	36.4	5.8	-0.3	-1%	This represents the Committee's share of the total costs associated with producing guidance for the Local Government Elections Wales in 2027, including updates following electoral reform; updating guidance for Electoral Registration Officers and providing expert advice in response to queries from Returning Officers/Electoral Registration Officers and electoral administrators; updating the remainder of our suite of core guidance and resources for electoral administrators and candidates and agents, as needed in light of feedback and/or legislative changes.
	Registration Compliance	76.9	48.6	59.4	59.4	0.0	10.8	22%	This represents the Committee's share of the total costs for the work relating to the statutory financial reporting required by registered political parties in Wales; compiling our quarterly donation and loans reports and annual Statement of Accounts submission; compiling the annual renewal of registered party details and any changes to registration details made throughout the year.
	Regulatory Action & Enforcement	72.6	55.3	60.5	60.5	0.0	5.3	10%	This represents the Committee's share of the total costs that are associated with compliance and enforcement work arising from parties and campaigners in Wales. This includes monitoring the campaign activity of parties and campaigners in Wales. Our monitoring work helps us to identify campaigners who may need our support to come into compliance. It also supports our intervention and enforcement work, if it is required. We also work closely with the Single Point of Contact (SPoC) within each Police Force area to provide advice and guidance during the election period.
	Regulatory support	55.9	42.6	46.3	46.3	0.0	3.7	9%	This represents the Committee's share of the costs associated with developing guidance for parties, candidates and agents for Welsh Local Government polls in 2027. It also includes supporting the programme of electoral reform in Wales and updating our core guidance resources in light of legislative changes or feedback. We also provide a year-round advice service to parties and campaigners which answers their queries and provides tailored and targeted support through webinars and advice surgeries. We will also deliver bespoke training packages tailored to each party. This ensures the regulated community has an understanding of the laws, their obligations and aims to support high levels of compliance.
Sub-total		267.7	204.6	221.9	216.1	5.8	17.3	8%	
COMMUNICATIONS POLICY AND RESEARCH	Campaigns & Corp Identity	46.2	1111.6	1707.9	47.9	1660.0	596.3	54%	This represents the Committee's share of total costs of advertising campaign costs for the 2026 Senedd elections and the 2027 Local Government elections in Wales. Our campaigns straddle two financial years, so this budget covers two campaigns: - Part 2 of May 2026 Senedd elections: Advertising costs (1 April- registration deadline) and post-campaign tracking research to help us evaluate our campaign performance - Part 1 of May 2027 local elections: Producing/updating the campaign creative, advertising costs (until 31 March), pre-campaign tracking research to establish baseline data, and voter information resources (such as posters and social media graphics). The budget also covers the costs of any necessary changes to voter-facing forms throughout the financial year due to legislation change.
	Digital Communication & Voter Engagement	77.1	171.0	184.0	63.0	121.0	13.1	8%	This represents the Committee's share of the total costs of work by the Commission's Digital Communications and Voter Engagement team; running a Youth Voice network for Wales working with young people across Wales who will provide their feedback and input on our education resources; building on our existing political literacy work by digitising our teacher and youth practitioner training; making further improvements to our resources for voters with accessibility needs and providing support to voters who register anonymously; scaling up projects to support under registered communities to engage in democracy including with housing association residents and foreign nationals living in Wales. We will adapt this work to account for automatic registration if required; developing and maintaining our bilingual website, digital tools, and social media channels; producing content for Wales and in Welsh language ahead of May 2026 and May 2027 elections; supporting teams across the Commission to publish information in English and Welsh for our diverse stakeholders, including voters, electoral administrators and campaigners.
	External communications	60.4	66.8	74.4	52.4	22.0	7.7	11%	This represents the Committee's share of business as usual external communications activities, including media relations and public affairs support for team in Wales as they prepare for the 2026 elections and respond to legislation arising from the Government's electoral reform programme. The Commission will also be delivering its public information function to provide support and guidance to voters ahead of the 2026 elections.
	Research	30.7	39.7	73.9	28.9	45.0	34.2	86%	This represents the Committee's share of the total cost of research activities such as our annual public opinion tracker survey and our survey of children and young people's attitudes to democracy and politics; research work that enables us to report effectively on May 2026 and May 2027 elections.
	Policy	53.4	35.8	39.4	39.4	0.0	3.7	10%	This represents the Committee's share of business as usual policy activities, including work to support the Welsh Government and Senedd to consider policy proposals and legislation, including any new proposals that may be brought forward following the May 2026 Senedd elections.
Sub-total		267.8	1424.7	2079.6	231.6	1848.0	654.9	46%	
Total Direct Costs		929.6	1753.8	2434.3	574.5	1859.8	680.5	39%	
Indirect Costs									

Resource	530.9	647.8	703.9	703.9	0.0	56.1	9%	Increase driven by (1) IT increases associated with the overall growth in the size of the Commission, improving IT security and ensuring cyber security is resolute, additional roles required in IT, the full year effect of changes in 2025/26 and continued focus on modernising technology. (2) The impact of growth in a number of teams associated with addressing gaps in capacity and capability including Finance (Project Accountants to support the execution of the Corporate Plan and the reporting requirements), Procurement (Procurement Specialists to help drive best practices and search for efficiencies) and HR (Apprentices, Recruitment Costs, Talent Acquisition Team to ensure that we employ the best possible candidates from across the UK and allow for development within the Commission)
Depreciation	91.8	85.1	104.1	104.1	0.0	19.0	22%	Increase driven by adverse effects of attribution based on population and an increased number of Assets.
Pay Award		44.7	60.2	60.2	0.0	15.5	35%	Based on 3.6% inflation and 1.75% associated with the pay review implementation
Corporate Plan		210.8	306.1	0.0	306.1	95.4	45%	Second year of five year Corporate Plan sees an increase in projects well underway in the four programme areas - Legal modernisation; Digital modernisation, Thought Leadership and Systems transformation resulting in a larger proportion of roles in place and projects in full operation.
Total indirect Costs	622.7	988.4	1174.3	868.2	306.1	186.0	19%	
Total Contribution	1552.2	2742.1	3608.6	1442.7	2165.9	866.5	32%	

Jayne Bryant AS/MS
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Lywodraeth Leol a Tai
Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ref: PO/JB/508/2025

David Rees MS,
Chair
Llywydd's Committee
Senedd Cymru

seneddLLC@Senedd.Wales

16 October 2025

Dear David,

Thank you for your letter of 30 September to myself and the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language, regarding the Electoral Commission's financial estimate of £3.609m for 2026-27 relating to its work on devolved Welsh elections. I am replying as the Minister responsible for elections and, copying this letter to the Minister for Finance and Welsh Language given his interest in expenditure from the Welsh Consolidated Fund.

I note that the Electoral Commission has projected increased funding from that required in 2025-26 to support the delivery of the 2026 Senedd and 2027 Local Government elections. I recognise that the Commission are operating in a context of generally rising costs across the board, and that there is uncertainty around the financial implications of the automatic voter registration, as noted in the annual estimate.

I also recognise and take assurance from the decreasing budget in subsequent years, following the two forthcoming significant devolved elections.

I also note the disparity between the estimate presented to the Committee: the projection in the Electoral Commission's five-year plan for Wales of £1.79m, and the projected figure of £3.9m set out in the UK Corporate Plan 2025-30 and discussed last year. I assume this is something the Committee would discuss with the Electoral Commission on 6 November, in advance of considering the Welsh Corporate plan next year. I look forward to the presentation of the Commission's firm intentions and accompanying financial requests in the Welsh Corporate Plan.

It is appreciated that a large proportion of the increase in this estimate from the current year is attributed to communications and policy work. This includes the second year of the registration campaign for the 2026 Senedd election and the first year of the campaign for the 2027 Local Government Elections. The estimate outlines additional funding for campaign advertising, voter education, resources aimed at under-represented groups, accessibility

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

enhancements, and the recruitment of temporary bilingual staff to support public information initiatives. All of these represent anticipated and constructive measures. I trust the Committee will share these objectives and will want to hear from the Commission how they will make the most efficient and impactful use of this funding.


The estimate also highlights notable staff and organisational expansion, including more than 50% growth by 2026–27, which will drive up core costs such as pay and National Insurance. Additional expenditure is also earmarked for improved accommodation and enhanced IT provisions, reflecting both organisational growth, inflation and the need for greater security. I assume the Committee will be ensuring that these increases represent value for money in terms of outcomes and efficiencies.

We are not aware of significant costs attributed to the Electoral Commission through the Members and Accountability Bill, and we assume that this work has not contributed to the estimate. The Committee may wish to satisfy itself on that point and note the Bill's timetable is set out incorrectly in the table. Introduction and passage are planned for the sixth Senedd (financial year 2025–26), with implementation in 2026–27, should the Senedd agree the Bill.

I can confirm the activities described by the Electoral Commission in the estimate for 2026-27 are in line with the Welsh Government's expectations. However, I note that costs relating to the implementation of Automatic Registration have not been included, which is counter to the current understanding that all realistic pay assumptions should be included in the estimate as considered by the Committee at its November meeting. However, I also acknowledge that a formal announcement cannot be made on the implementation of the pilots until the Commission's evaluation, expected in December, can be considered. The Committee may be required to consider a supplementary estimate at a later point. To ensure payments can be made promptly following Senedd consideration, it would be helpful if any supplementary estimate could be made available to the Committee in good time ahead of the Welsh Government's supplementary budget in 2026-27.

As ever, you have my assurance that, following the Committee's scrutiny of the Electoral Commission's proposals, my officials will work with the Electoral Commission to put in place a payment agreement to set out how the costs will be paid from the Welsh Consolidated Fund according to the budget agreed by the Senedd.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jayne Bryant". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jayne Bryant MS
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Lywodraeth Leol a Thai
Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government

Y Pwyllgor Cyllid Agenda Item 5.1

Finance Committee

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Chair, Senedd Commission

Adrian Crompton

Auditor General for Wales

Michelle Morris

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

Vijay Rangarajan

Chief Executive and Accounting Officer, Electoral Commission

24 October 2025

Dear Elin, Adrian, Michelle and Vijay,

Review of the Budget Process Protocol and Supplementary Budget Procedures

During the course of this Senedd, the Committee has written to you on a number of occasions seeking your views on proposed changes to the Budget Process Protocol and supplementary budget procedures as they relate to Directly Funded Bodies (DFBs).

I wrote to the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language on 1 July 2025 summarising the points you, and other DFBs, had raised seeking views on the proposed changes, including whether he would be supportive of making them in this Senedd, prior to dissolution next year.

The Cabinet Secretary responded on 22 July 2025, indicating general support for the proposals and for them to be adopted as a single, consolidated package of changes, but concluding that:

"I see no reason not to continue with such informal arrangements for the remainder of the Senedd term, not least because this flexibility may prove useful as we approach the forthcoming Senedd election."



In relation to the changes proposed by the DFBs to the supplementary budget procedures, the Cabinet Secretary also confirmed that:

"While we can see merit in formalising elements of the proposals, I do not believe it is essential to make any of the changes in advance of the more comprehensive package of changes to be considered by the new Senedd."

As a Committee we recognise that the proposed changes should be considered by the Senedd as a single package. We also understand that these are issues which the next Senedd will want to consider in detail.

Nonetheless, it is disappointing that the Cabinet Secretary has not engaged meaningfully with the Committee or the DFBs on these issues or provided clear views in response to the specific proposals you have submitted. Whilst this is frustrating, these issues will be reflected in our Legacy Report, and I will continue to press the Cabinet Secretary on these points in future scrutiny sessions, so your efforts in raising these matters are not lost and to ensure that they inform the developments of budgetary procedures in the Seventh Senedd.

Despite this outcome, I am grateful for your continued engagement and your dialogue has been invaluable in helping the Committee gain a better understanding of the pressures caused by the Senedd's budgetary procedures and the ways in which they can be improved.

I am copying this letter to the Llywydd's Committee, given that this issue also falls within their remit.

Yours sincerely,



Peredur Owen Griffiths MS, Chair of the Finance Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg. | We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.