



Ein cyf/Our ref: MA/FM/0162/26

Delyth Jewell MS
Chair
Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport,
and International Relations Committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1SN

27 January 2026

Dear Delyth,

Thank you for the Committee's report on the 2026-27 Welsh Government Draft Budget, published on the 15 December 2025, outlining 21 recommendations for the Welsh Government.

We acknowledge the work undertaken by the Committee on their scrutiny of the Draft Budget and welcome this report. Please find enclosed the Welsh Government response to recommendations 18-21, relating to International Relations, in advance of the vote on the Final Budget on 27 January.

Responses to the other recommendations have been provided by the relevant Ministers separately.

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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.



Welsh Government Response to the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations (CCWLSIR) Committee's Report: Scrutiny of the Welsh Government Draft Budget 2026-27

Chapter 4: International Relations

Summary

This report sets out the Welsh Government response to the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations (CCWLSIR) Committee's Report on the Scrutiny of the Welsh Government Draft Budget 2026-27.

It provides responses to recommendations 18-21 which fall under Chapter 4 – International Relations.

A further two separate reports will be provided in relation to Chapter 2 – Culture, Communications and Sport (recommendations 1-11) and Chapter 3 – Welsh Language (recommendations 12-17) section of the report.

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1. Introduction

The Welsh Government Draft Budget for 2026-27 was published in two stages. The outline draft budget 2026-27 was published on 14 October 2025 with the detailed draft budget 2026-27 published on 3 November 2025. It set out revenue and capital spending plans for the period April 2026 to March 2027.

As part of the budgetary process written evidence was provided by the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language to inform scrutiny of the Draft Budget 2026-27. This paper provided information to the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations (CCWLSIR) Committee on budget allocations relevant to the international relations activity.

Oral evidence sessions were held on the 19 and 27 November 2025 where the CCWLSIR Committee took evidence from the Minister for Culture, Skills and Social Partnership and the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language.

The Committee published its report on Scrutiny of the Welsh Government Draft Budget 2026-27 on 15 December. We thank the Committee for the report.

The Welsh Government has considered the Committee's report and responds to recommendations 18-21 in relation to International Relations below.

2. Recommendation 18

The Welsh Government should:

In line with our previous recommendations and the principle of Welsh Government accountability to the Senedd, the Welsh Government must ensure that, where requested by the relevant committee, the Minister with responsibility for International Relations appears in person for oral evidence sessions on future Draft Budgets

Response: Reject

When responsibility for International Relations came into the First Minister's portfolio it was decided that the First Minister would attend one scrutiny session annually on the basis that there are multiple opportunities for ministerial scrutiny throughout the year, as evidenced by the First Minister's appearance at the Committee for the Scrutiny of the First Minister in December 2024 which focussed on international activity and in March 2025 which focussed on international affairs. The position on First Minister attendance has not changed, but the new Government in May may wish to consider the Committee's request again in more detail once decisions are made on the new ministerial portfolios.

Until then, the First Minister will continue to provide written evidence on the draft budget allocation and follow up in writing as required.

3. Recommendation 19

- The Welsh Government should provide information on outcomes and deliverables relating to International Relations for 2024-25 and 2025-26.
- Provide information on out-turns, outcomes and deliverables relating to International Sustainable Development for 2024-25 and 2025-26
- Explain how the budget allocation for 2025-26 has been used to deliver the International Delivery Plan so far in the current budget cycle, and what there remains to deliver during the Sixth Senedd.
- Provide more information on the planned Overseas Network Review, including the rationale behind the decision, the review process, its scope, timings and resourcing

Response: Accept

The outcomes for both International Relations and International Sustainable Development for 2024/25 are set out in the 2024/25 Annual Report, which can be found here - [International relations annual report 2024 to 2025 | GOV.WALES](#).

The outturn for 2024/25 and the forecasted outturn for 2025/26 are set out below.

International Relations BEL	2024-25 Outturn	2025-26 Forecast
Budget	£8,093,000	£8,193,000
Budget after 1 st supp transfer	n/a	£8,168,000
Total	£7,903,106	£8,168,000

International Sustainable Dev. BEL	2024-25 Outturn	2025-26 Forecast
Budget	£1,050,000	£1,050,000
Budget after 1 st supp transfer	£1,050,000	£1,100,000
Total	£1,055,273	£1,100,000

Deliverables against the International Relations budget for 2025/26

A significant programme of activity was delivered throughout the 2025–26 financial year, with the Wales and Japan Year representing a major highlight. Over the course of the year, the Welsh Government and its partners deepened cultural, economic and diplomatic ties through high-profile events and activities in Wales, Japan and London. This included an extensive cultural programme comprising 21 collaborative arts projects and Wales's participation in Expo Osaka 2025, which contributed to strengthened governmental links and long-standing people-to-people relationships.

The International Relations budget also supported a small network of strategic partners, enabling the promotion of Welsh culture, values and the Welsh language internationally. This included support for the formulation and distribution of the Urdd's 2025 Peace and Goodwill Message, which was translated into 50 languages and shared globally.

The budget additionally supported partner activity at major international events such as the UEFA Women's Championships in Switzerland, where Wales's participation generated 8 million digital impressions and 3.5 million video views. On-the-ground activity included the largest fan walk in the tournament's history, involving 8,000 participants, alongside 17 events delivered with 67 partners, artists and organisations. International Relations funding also facilitated Wales's participation in UNESCO's MONDIACULT conference in Barcelona, where Wales and the Welsh language were prominently represented at an internationally renowned.

Domestically, the International Relations budget funded activity to host and engage international audiences, supporting the promotion of Wales, Welsh culture and the economic opportunities that exist here. Notable activity included hosting a delegation of 14 European writers at Tŷ Newydd Writing Centre and subsequently showcasing their work at the Hay Festival, further enhancing Wales's international profile.

The budget also supported the Welsh Government's bilateral partnerships, including the latest iteration of the Wales–Québec joint funding call, which provided seed funding for new and existing collaborations between Welsh and

Québec institutions. It further supported the First Minister's visit to the Basque Country and Catalonia to formalise partnerships with both regions and enabled the delivery of a targeted diplomatic reception for priority international contacts at Wales's foremost technology event, Wales Tech Week.

Deliverables against the International Sustainable Development budget for 2025/26

In 2025/26 the Welsh Government has made two donations to the Disasters Emergency Committee, £100k was given for the DEC Myanmar Appeal in April 2025 and a further £250k given towards the DEC Middle East Humanitarian Appeal in October 2025. We continue to receive regular reports on the impact of our donations and on the sums raised in Wales.

Two rounds of the heavily oversubscribed Wales and Africa Small Grants Scheme have been held. Round 1 received a record 70 applications and 7 grants of up to £25k, have been awarded to a diverse range of Welsh groups. Details can be found here – [Wales and Africa Round 1 Grant Awards.pdf](#). Round 2 received 48 applications and will be awarded in January 2026. This round includes £50k for inclusion projects resulting from the 2025 budget deal.

Seven highly successful International Learning Opportunities placements have taken place so far with a further two planned. Opportunities are now advertised on the Hub Cymru Africa website – reflecting our desire to be more demand led. [Opportunities in the sector | Hub Cymru Africa](#)

Hub Cymru Africa (HCA) has been supporting partnerships between Wales and Africa with one-to-one support, mentoring and networking. Hub Cymru Africa delivered five training sessions on fundraising and safeguarding during this period. HCA also ran the Global Health Partnerships Cymru conference in Cardiff in September with 130 people attending and speakers featured from Somaliland, Lesotho and Gaza. The Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing spoke at the event. HCA Promoted equality and inclusion through a Gender Community of Practice, work with African diaspora communities, Disabled People's Organisations and promotion of the Hub Cymru Africa Anti-Racism Charter. More than 40 members of the African diaspora in Wales attended diaspora-led events in Cardiff and Bangor to discuss partnership projects.

The 2025 Fairtrade Fortnight took place in September-October with 50 local events and at least 3000 people directly engaged across Wales. Jenipher Sambazi of Jenipher's Coffi visited Wales and spoke at several events.

International Delivery Plan

There is no separate dedicated budget to deliver the International Delivery Plan (IDP). The IDP sets out our remaining priorities out to the remainder of the Senedd term. Officials provide a quarterly report to the Committee, and the third report is due with the Committee at the start of February. It is not expected that this Plan will continue into financial year 2026-27.

Overseas Network Review

The overseas network is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that we have the right people in the right global locations in accordance with delivering our priorities. The current review is an internal process, and it would not be appropriate to share details at this early stage, but we aim to finalise the review during Summer 2026. This review is being carried out concurrently with the UK Government's Overseas Network Review, led by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), as outcomes from that review may have implications for our operations, given our involvement with the One HMG Overseas Platform.

4. Recommendation 20

- The Welsh Government should explain the rationale behind the international BEL's real-term cuts in light of overall revenue increases of 2.2 per cent.
- Detail what discussions took place between relevant Cabinet Secretaries/Ministers that resulted in the international BEL's real-term cuts.
- Provide allocations for the profiled planned spend for the IR BEL and explain why these were not shared with the Committee in the First Minister's written information.
- Explain why the Welsh Government transferred £3,000 from reserves, and why this was not mentioned in the First Minister's written information.
- Set out where the £3,000 transfer from reserves will be allocated in the three areas the IR BEL (International Engagement, Overseas Office: running costs, Overseas Offices: combined activity).
- Ensure that the International Strategy, four action plans and the International Delivery Plan is subject to an external evaluation process, (as with the Export Action Plan).

Response: Accept in Principle

The CSA MEG is receiving a revenue uplift in 2026/27. As the CSA MEG, which primarily funds the running of the WG through staff costs (DRC funded staff), Estates and IT, is forecasting pressures on central running costs in 2026/27, it was agreed, through discussions between the Permanent Secretary, CSFWL and the CSI Group Finance Director, that the revenue uplift should primarily be applied to the Staff Costs BEL to ease the significant forecasted pressures against that BEL. These funds will assist in moving towards making the DRC funded posts financially sustainable.

(To note the revenue uplift to the MEG was 2% and then subsequently a further 0.2% was given to the MEG in relation to the assumed pay award figure of 2.2% for 26/27 – this equated to the £3k uplift. In addition, the International Relations BEL received an £11k uplift in relation to the impact of 0.75% non-SCS and 0.25% SCS pay uplift).

A full breakdown of planned spending can be provided once the budget has been approved for 2026-27 and new international priorities have been agreed as part of the next government term.

The Welsh Government transfer of £3,000 from reserves to the IR BEL in 2026/27 corresponds to the additional 0.2% uplift to the baseline for Public Sector pay. This will be assigned to the Overseas Network running costs.

External evaluation is an important tool to understand and apply lessons learned and maximising value for money. We have used this tool before, commissioning external evaluations of our Wales in France year and our World Cup engagement activity (in addition to the Export Action Plan). The Committee will also be aware that officials have been reviewing progress against the International Strategy and associated action plans and have recently provided an update to the Committee on the 270 identified actions.

We will give consideration to an external evaluation for the International Strategy, the associated Delivery Plan, and the remaining four action plans.

5. Recommendation 21

- The Welsh Government should set out the Welsh Government's delivery partners for 2026-27.
- Set out when funding will be confirmed for all delivery partners, and how many have submitted engagement and delivery plans.
- Clarify what steps were taken to obtain key financial information from partners during the Draft Budget's development.
- Explain the Welsh Government's contingency plan if strategic partners report that the real term cuts described above are insufficient to deliver their responsibilities.

Response: Accept

The Welsh Government's delivery partners for 2026-27 are:

- Academi Heddwch
- Wales Arts International
- Urdd Gobaith Cymru
- The Office of the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales

All partners have returned funding application forms, along with their draft engagement and delivery plans.

The plans set out their proposed activities for 2026-27 and a comprehensive breakdown of spend. As part of their funding application, partners were asked to identify any risks that could have a negative impact on the delivery of their proposed activities and set out the mitigation measures that will be put in place.

The plans are being considered by officials and are subject to approval. We aim to confirm their funding as soon as is practicable when the Welsh Government's final budget has been agreed.