



Darren Millar AM
Chair of Public Accounts Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

9 November 2011

Dear Darren

Inquiry into the delivery of ICT services and ICT projects under the Merlin contract

I am writing in response to your letter of 27 October, which sought further evidence in connection with the above inquiry.

Your letter asked about the lessons learned by the Commission from the Merlin contract, which will help inform its decisions about procurement of ICT services and projects beyond 2014. The Commission currently receives its ICT services through the Welsh Government's Merlin contract and experience has shown that the priorities of the contractor are sometimes focused elsewhere. As a result of this, the Commission wants to be in a position where it can make independent decisions about ICT service provision and has a stronger role in governance and contract management. It will also be a priority for the Commission to be able to provide a tailored service for Assembly Members, which allows greater choice, but also provides demonstrable value for money.

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Croesewir gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg/We welcome correspondence in both English and Welsh

The Commission will consider its strategic approach to ICT at its November meeting, in particular the options it should pursue in respect of ICT service provision. Assembly staff are involved in the Welsh Government's project to consider the possible extension of the Merlin contract. The Commission will look further at all the options open to it before it decides how to take forward plans next spring.

The Commission is in a position to make its own arrangements for ICT provision after 2014 as a result of the creation of a new, freestanding ICT infrastructure, separate from that of the Government, which took place during 2010 (the UNO project). Steps are also being taken to enhance our capacity to take forward the Assembly's approach to ICT by strengthening our in-house capability. For example, we will be appointing a new ICT Director early in the new year, and he or she will be tasked with ensuring that the Assembly has the capacity to manage excellent ICT provision in the future.

Your letter also asked about how satisfaction with the Merlin contract was measured within the Commission. An annual survey is conducted by an independent organisation (Gartner) as part of the Merlin contract; the survey is managed by the Welsh Government. In January 2011, 75 Assembly users, including Assembly Members, support staff and Assembly staff were invited to take part in the survey, which was conducted on-line; the response rate was 57 per cent. The review of the data collected led Gartner to report that when compared to the Gartner IT Customer Satisfaction database the overall service and service characteristics satisfaction scores for Members, Members' support staff and Assembly Commission staff were higher than average. There were areas where satisfaction was low, most notably internet access and remote access. The overall survey results are shown in the graph appended to this letter, in which "DB Overall" reflects all organisations on the Gartner database and "DB Govt." reflects Government departments.

If you would like any further information, please do let me know.

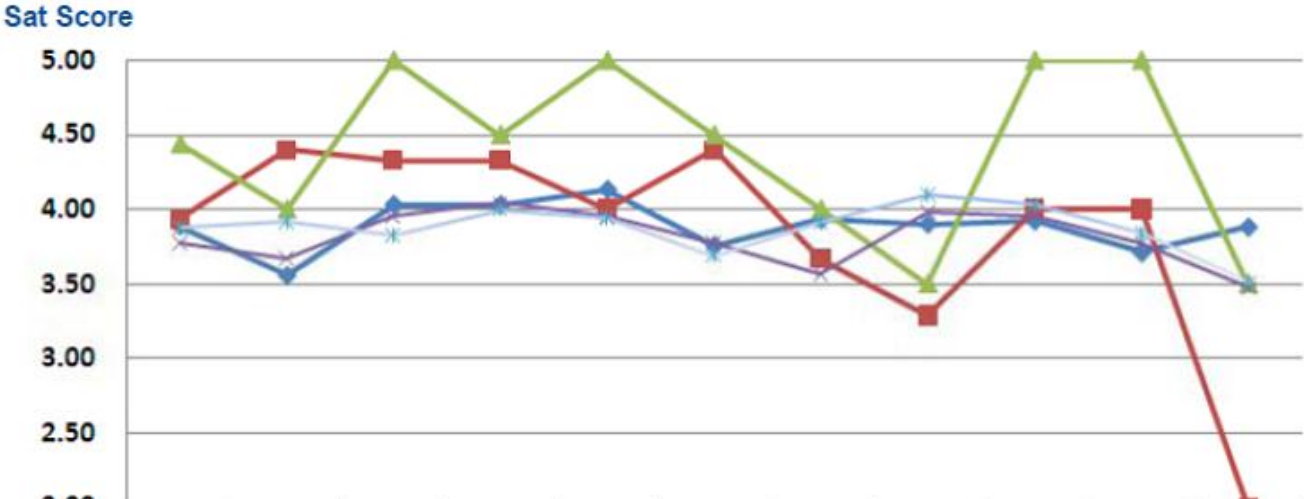
Yours sincerely



Claire Clancy

**Prif Weithredwr a Chlerc/Chief Executive and Clerk
Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru/National Assembly for Wales**

Annex A – Gartner satisfaction survey results (January 2011)



	OVERALL	Service Desk	Standard Desktop Apps	Email/Calendar	Desktop/Laptop Equipment	Print Services	Intranet Access	Internet Access	Telephone Communications	Desktop/Laptop Support	Remote Access
◆ Assembly Commission Staff	3.89	3.56	4.03	4.03	4.13	3.76	3.93	3.90	3.92	3.71	3.88
■ Assembly Members & AM Support Staff	3.93	4.40	4.33	4.33	4.00	4.40	3.67	3.29	4.00	4.00	2.00
▲ Siemens ICT Ops Staff (Assembly)	4.44	4.00	5.00	4.50	5.00	4.50	4.00	3.50	5.00	5.00	3.50
✕ DB Overall	3.77	3.67	3.95	4.04	3.95	3.77	3.57	3.98	3.96	3.78	3.47
✧ DB Govt	3.88	3.92	3.83	4.00	3.94	3.69	3.92	4.10	4.03	3.84	3.51