

# International Framework for the Sixth Senedd

September 2022

“Being a respected international actor is an important part of being a national legislature, contributing to and benefiting from knowledge exchanges, finding allies, and enhancing the influence that the Senedd can have through scrutiny and representation”

<https://senedd.wales/media/wm3i5kqr/cr-ld14323-e.pdf>

## **Vision**

The Senedd continues to be an innovative parliament, excelling in areas such as bilingualism, gender equality, utilising technology to enhance parliamentary business and young people’s participation.

Our vision is that support for international activities showcases these strengths and links directly to our policy, procedural and corporate interests. It looks outwards to enhance awareness of the Senedd by promoting its work and identifies opportunities to exchange knowledge and collaborate on an inter-parliamentary basis in the interests of the people of Wales.



# 1. Introduction and Purpose

This framework is to provide accountability, clarity and direction to the international parliamentary activity resourced by the Senedd Commission, and supports the corporate delivery plan and annual performance reporting. It will serve as the foundation for organising priorities and initiatives and enable the Commission to demonstrate how the organisation is working towards the achievement of identified outcomes. A summary diagram is included at Annex A.

The framework seeks to ensure that work to support this activity is relevant and constructive to the various interests of the Parliament and proportionate to the anticipated outcome. It will facilitate the effective coordination of resources to support the Senedd's needs and the Commission's strategic aims and priorities.

## Principles of the International Framework

This framework is based on the principles that our international activities will:

- 1.** Be focused on Parliamentary business, enabling the Senedd to deliver its core function of representing the interests of Wales and its people by enhancing the exchange of knowledge, ideas and experience; and
- 2.** Recognise the value and importance of building the institutional and international reputation of the Senedd through engagement and collaboration, whether it be Member or Committee-led, official level or Parliament to Parliament.

This framework does not conflict with any international work which individual committees undertake as part of their policy work or legislative scrutiny. It is intended to complement that activity, and sometimes will provide additional avenues through which MS can develop policy knowledge and gather evidence and information to help inform their scrutiny of the Welsh Government and public bodies in Wales.

## Objectives

To achieve the outcomes to which these principles relate, the objectives of the framework are that the support provided for International activity should:

- 1. Share & Acquire** - best parliamentary practice internationally.
- 2. Raise the Senedd's Profile** - on the international stage.

### 3. Influence – understand and influence external decision-making.

#### **What we will do**

We will identify, plan and programme activities with key organisations, networks and other parliaments, countries/regions, illustrate why these are strategically important to the Senedd and tell our many stories of impact.

We will build on existing work, such as the Knowledge Exchange Strategy and make links to Senedd Business when promoting activities for networks the Senedd is part of. We will ensure added value for money by facilitating the cross-over and feedback mechanisms between international activity undertaken under this framework and Senedd Business, including the work of Committees and individual members.

We will develop a longer-term planned approach to bi-lateral engagement and relations. This will include identifying opportunities to host high profile activities on the Senedd estate; examining collaboration opportunities with Welsh Government in countries and regions where the Welsh Government are building relationships with the respective governments and where the Senedd may wish to develop links with the legislatures.

We will promote the Senedd, its practices and processes as an accessible, innovative and pioneering legislature amongst other parliaments and international organisations. We will develop a package of resources to enhance other Parliaments' understanding of the Senedd and the Commission, and their ability to access information about our procedural and corporate good practice.

We will also promote the work of the Commission in areas such as sustainability, equality, bilingualism, digital innovation and citizen engagement, including the Welsh Youth Parliament, showcasing and developing the Senedd's reputation and capitalising on opportunities to exchange knowledge and experience.

We will identify, promote, and facilitate opportunities for Members to participate in special international opportunities such as Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) programmes as well as to meet with parliamentarians from visiting international delegations.

We will provide opportunities for the continuous professional development of MS and Commission staff, developing their policy, procedural and corporate knowledge.

We will provide opportunities for Members to understand and influence external decision-making that affects the work of the Senedd, (including international obligations the Senedd has a responsibility to implement) and raise issues on an international stage that have a material impact on everyday lives of the people of Wales.

We will develop an approach which connects the support for the different strands of Interparliamentary Relations (Intra-UK and European engagement) so that these structures and relationships can be coordinated and supported in a way that maximises the scope for informed political choices and enables Members to effectively pursue the interests of the people of Wales.

We will work as an integrated team across service areas to improve our internal communications and knowledge exchange, and enable a strategic approach to coordinate and align the international work with the agreed principles and objectives.

## **Promoting, Reporting and Outcomes**

We will communicate regularly about the international activity undertaken, to increase awareness and share knowledge and information more widely through flexible approaches to internal and external engagement, such as improved visit reports, guest blogs and articles.

There will be a continued expectation on Members when undertaking international activity to provide reports and engagement tools such as vlogs to profile the work being undertaken. The Commission will publish each outward visit report, setting out any action/learning points.

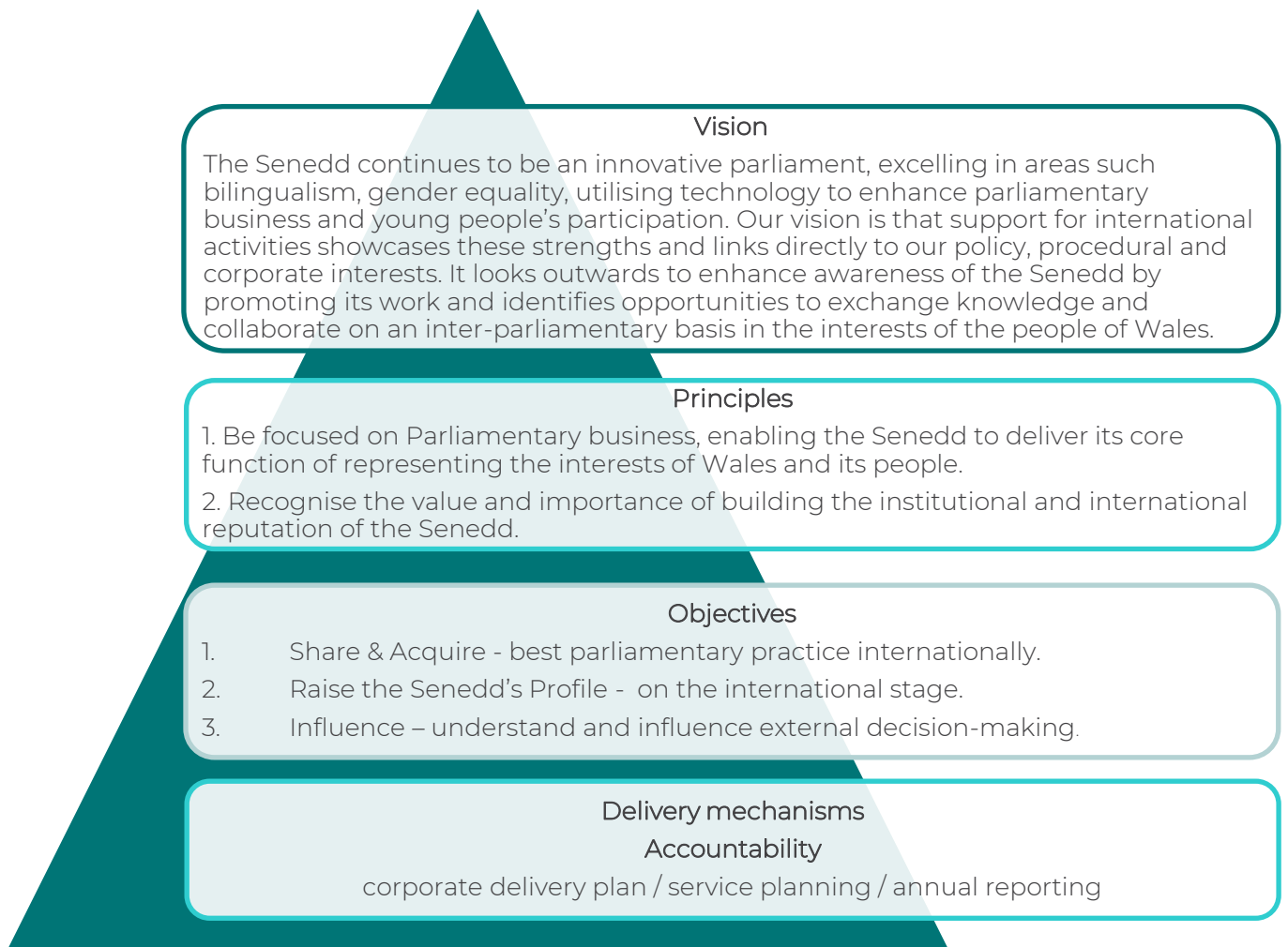
We will ensure that there are coordinated processes for reporting back in meaningful ways on activities undertaken to inform Senedd Business and to raise the profile of our international work with external organisations and stakeholders.

All activity linked to the framework will be evaluated consistently and formally recorded in the way the activities support the Commission corporate delivery plan and annual reporting.

The Senedd website will host a page which will act as hub for relevant International work. It will include details of Member activities, including reports as well as providing an overview of international activities across the Commission's services.

## 2. Annex A – Summary diagram

*“Being a respected international actor is an important part of being a national legislature, contributing to and benefiting from knowledge exchanges, finding allies, and enhancing the influence that the Senedd can have through scrutiny and representation”*



## 3. Annex B - Delivery Mechanisms

### **European Engagement and Post-Brexit structures**

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Post-Brexit new structures have emerged to facilitate on-going dialogue and relationships with EU countries, regions and institutions. These new structures and organisations are in their early stages and will evolve throughout the course of this Senedd. These activities represent new areas of work for our Members and the Senedd Commission.

These structures include, amongst others, the Committee of the Regions-UK Contact Group and the UK-EU Parliamentary Partnership Assembly (PPA)

This work and any requirement to support Members to engage directly with the EU's institutions will be supported by the Senedd's Brussels office.

The Senedd, its Committees and Members supported by the Senedd Commission have built up close working relationships with the EU which it will maintain in areas which deliver on the objectives of this framework. The Senedd works closely with other Welsh organisations based in Brussels and the Welsh Government's Brussels office to build a reputation as a constructive and valuable partner.

### **Support for Member and official representatives on international and interparliamentary networks:**

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Through these organisations, Members and Commission staff can learn from the common experiences of other parliamentarians thereby supporting their continuous professional development.

#### **The Commonwealth Parliament Association (CPA)**

The Senedd has an active Branch of the CPA. Our Membership of the Association offers opportunities for Members of the Senedd as well as Commission officials and young people. Activities include serving on the Association's International Executive Committee and subject specific committees, hosting conferences and significant International meetings.

The Association's Networks and core annual conferences:

- The (International) Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC)
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- The British Islands and Mediterranean Regional (BIMR) Conference
- The BIMR Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) - Conference
- The Commonwealth Youth Parliament (CYP).
- The Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities (CPwD)

British Irish Parliamentary Assembly (BIPA) – The Deputy Presiding Officer Chairs the Senedd’s involvement in the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly and will lead the Senedd’s delegations to BIPA’s twice-yearly Plenary Meetings. The Senedd’s nominated BIPA Members will participate in designated committees.

## **Llywydd & Deputy Presiding Officer**

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As figureheads of the Senedd, the Llywydd and DPO play an ambassadorial and important protocol role in hosting visits, meetings and flagship events, for instance with Ambassadors, High Commissioners, Speakers and other international guests to the Senedd. Flagship events could include hosting a BIMR conference following the success of events and conferences early in the Sixth Senedd.

They may also lead on outward visits and participate in conferences and programmes where there is a clear focus on learning of, and exchanging best parliamentary practice, in noted areas of interest and strategic priorities to the Llywydd, DPO and the Commission.

## **International Visits**

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Under this framework, proposals will be presented for strategically focused outward visits during the Sixth Senedd and inward visit programmes with a clear parliamentary focus and where there is also an opportunity for the Senedd to benefit from the engagement.

**Outwards visits** - it is important that our visits are clear in terms of their purpose and benefit, and they should be evaluated both as part of the development of any proposals and for success following each visit. This would include

- Visits as part of our membership of international networks;

- Proactive visits to countries and parliaments of particular interest to the Senedd, with a view to learning of best policy and practice elsewhere as well as taking advantage of the opportunity to raise awareness of Wales, the Senedd and our work as a democracy; and

- Capacity building in developing countries.

**Inward Visits** - present an opportunity for the Senedd to welcome international delegations to Cardiff Bay as well as virtually, to showcase the Senedd, provide an opportunity to learn more of the Senedd as an innovative and pioneering parliament and for the Llywydd, Commissioners and Members of the Senedd to meet with international counterparts and to discuss parliamentary good practice.

### **Collaboration with Welsh Government**

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The Senedd will, where practical and appropriate, work in partnership with the Welsh Government on joint international visit programmes; recognising opportunities that are mutually beneficial and cohesive in promoting Wales and Welsh democracy.

### **Knowledge Exchange Strategy**

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Rigorous and impartial research evidence is essential for effective scrutiny and good law-making. This strategy aims to broaden, deepen, and diversify the evidence available to the Senedd, to:

- improve the quality of scrutiny and
- increase the impact of research.

One of the Knowledge Exchange Strategy's strategic objectives is to diversify the evidence used by the Senedd. This is to be achieved by creating a 'knowledge network', with wider and more formal partnerships to increase the pool of experts to which the Senedd has access, including internationally.

There will also be a strategic drive towards making the most of internal expertise, skills, and experiences and elements of these will have been built on international experience.

The Commission will aim to share our internal expertise, skills and experience with other parliaments, students, and new staff. We will contribute to the academic literature on the Senedd and parliamentary studies, and use our



knowledge exchange relationships for staff learning and development through reverse fellowships and secondments.

### **External and Constitutional Affairs, Strategic Transformation Service, Policy and Legislation Committee Service, Chamber and Committee Service, Senedd Research**

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These services provide opportunities for Members, officials and others to understand and influence external decision-making that affects the work of the Senedd, (including international obligations the Senedd has a responsibility to implement) and raise issues on an international stage that have a material impact on everyday lives of the people of Wales.

Intelligence gathered via the international networks in which Members participate can feed into Senedd committee scrutiny.

The Senedd currently has four committees within which international policy and activity feature as significant areas of their remit in the Sixth Senedd. The requirement for the Senedd to engage in areas of international activity such as the adoption of new international trade agreements has increased considerably post-Brexit. These agreements and new areas of work provide new engagement opportunities and the potential for new relationships but also increase the drive to ensure that there is synergy and coordination between the Senedd's participation in external networks and international activity and the work of its Committees and individual members. Mechanisms developed under this framework will ensure that opportunities are maximised.

Commission officials participate in and have links with various international networks such as **Society of Clerks at the Table**, The Australia and New Zealand Association of Clerks-at-the-Table (**ANZACATT**), Association of Clerks-at-the-Table in Canada (**CATS**), American Society of Legislative Clerks and Secretaries (**ASLCS**) etc. In addition, bi-lateral relationships continue to be developed where parliamentary practice is exchanged, often with developing countries to assist in improving parliamentary scrutiny and practice more generally.

### **Communications and Engagement**

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The Commission's external communications and engagement serves to enhance the reputation and demonstrate the impact of the Senedd at the heart of Welsh democracy. The Communications and Engagement teams will play an important role in reflecting our work on the international front to further

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enhance our reputation as a forward thinking and innovative parliament. This is reflected in the Commission's Communications and Engagement Strategy for the Sixth Senedd.

These teams will also contribute directly to this work, for instance in working to promote innovation in engagement, including digital and the Welsh Youth Parliament. Opportunities for international participation are afforded young people via the Senedd's parliamentary networks and this will be facilitated by the Commission with the young people representing Wales and acting as ambassadors for the Senedd.

## **Corporate**

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There are Commission services which underpin the front facing innovation and parliamentary good practice, without which the Senedd would not be able to profile.

The international framework enables all services to assess and bench mark the way in which services are delivered with a view to quality assuring the delivery of the agreed Commission priorities for the Sixth Senedd. This extends far beyond providing parliamentary support in a front facing context. Whether it be putting sustainability at the heart of all that we do, developing the workforce and equipping them with technology, financial and project management or effective governance. There are opportunities across the Commission services to exchange knowledge and experience whether it be to share or acquire expertise.