

WRITTEN STATEMENT

Title: Assembly Reform Programme

Date: 13 June 2017

By: Elin Jones AM, Llywydd, as Chair of the Assembly Commission

In July 2016, the Assembly agreed unanimously that the name of the institution should reflect its constitutional status as a national parliament.

The Assembly now passes laws and agrees taxes, as well as holding the Government to account and providing a focal point for democratic discussions on issues that are important to the people of Wales.

To give effect to this decision, the Commission consulted the public between 8 December 2016 and 3 March 2017. I would like to thank the many people across Wales who took the time to tell us their views.

The Assembly Commission is today publishing a report which provides an analysis of the consultation responses. In total, we received 2,821 survey responses from people of all ages and from all across Wales.

The key findings were:

- 60 per cent of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that the role of the Assembly is well understood;
- 61 per cent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Assembly should change its name;
- the name that respondents felt best described the institution's role and responsibility was: Welsh Parliament/Senedd Cymru (73 per cent).



The Assembly Commission has considered the responses we received and how to respond.

We have agreed that we should, before the end of this Assembly, legislate to change the name of the institution to Welsh Parliament/Senedd Cymru. Members would be known as Welsh Parliament Members (WPM)/Aelodau o Senedd Cymru (ASC).

Some of those who responded to our consultation have concerns about the potential costs of any change of name. The Commission understands these concerns and will plan the change so as to minimise the cost. We intend, in time, to change just the Assembly's name, avoiding the need for any wholesale rebrand or a change to the logo. In the meantime this institution will continue to be officially known by its current statutory name, the National Assembly for Wales, in order to avoid confusion and to minimise cost and disruption.

The powers transferred by the Wales Act 2017 provide us with the opportunity to take forward a change to the name of the Assembly as part of a wider package of reforms, which will, together, ensure that the Assembly continues to be an accessible, forward-looking institution which serves the people of Wales effectively.

In particular, the Act confers competence on the Assembly over a range of its internal, organisational and operational arrangements. These include issues such as the rules on disqualification from membership of the Assembly, electoral administration, and the design of our committee system.

Members will also be aware that I have established an Expert Panel on Assembly Electoral Reform to provide impartial, independent, and expert advice on the exercise of some of these powers. The Panel, which is chaired by Professor Laura McAllister CBE, will report by autumn 2017. Once the Panel has reported, the



Commission will, next year, consider the full scope of our reform programme and the legislative proposals we intend to bring forward.

This will ensure that we take the opportunity not just for the important symbolic act of changing the name of the institution, but also for more fundamental reform of our electoral and internal arrangements. In leading this work on behalf of the institution itself, the Commission is aiming to maximise political consensus across all parties. Above all, we are aiming to deliver a parliament for Wales that commands the trust of those we serve, reflects the weight of responsibility that we carry, and equips our democratic system to address the challenges that we face as a nation.

I will continue to keep Members informed as this work progresses.

