



**Elin Jones AC, Llywydd**

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru

**Elin Jones AM, Presiding Officer**

National Assembly for Wales

To: All Assembly Members

12 November 2018

Dear Member

### **Assembly Reform update**

On 10 October, Assembly Members voted to allow the Assembly Commission to introduce a Bill, early in 2019, to change the name of the Assembly, lower the voting age for Assembly elections to 16, amend the law on disqualification and make other changes to the Assembly's electoral and internal arrangements.

I am writing to update you on two matters discussed at the Commission meeting on 5 November 2018:

- Proposals for the financing and accountability of the Electoral Commission; and
- Changes to the Assembly's name and the way Members are described.

### **Proposals for the financing and accountability of the Electoral Commission**

As a result of the devolution of powers in the Wales Act 2017, the Electoral Commission has approached both me and the Welsh Government to propose that legislation is brought forward to make the Electoral Commission accountable to the Assembly, and financed by the Assembly Commission, in relation to devolved elections in Wales (i.e. local government and Assembly elections).

At the meeting on 5 November, Commissioners recognised the potential merit of the Electoral Commission being accountable to the Assembly for its work in Wales and noted the Welsh Government's support for the Electoral Commission's proposal. Similar proposals are being considered by the Scottish Executive.

Commissioners agreed to take soundings from their groups on the principle of the Electoral Commission being accountable to, and financed by, the Assembly.

The issue will be discussed further in the next Commission meeting, exploring how we consider the opportunity of the Senedd and Elections (Wales) Bill to introduce these proposals.

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

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## **Changes to the Assembly's name and the way Members are described**

Commissioners discussed the feedback provided by Members and political groups in response to my letter of 16 October as to the future titles or descriptors for Members and the name of the institution.

Commissioners discussed the options and agreed that I would determine the name and descriptors for inclusion in the Bill on introduction, as Member in Charge of the Bill.

You will be aware that to be passed, the Bill will require the support of at least 40 Members. I therefore intend to include in the Bill on introduction the name for the institution and the descriptors for Members that reflect the majority view of political groups in the Assembly at this time.

I have decided therefore that the name change introduced in the Bill should be the monolingual name "Senedd" and that Members will be referred to as "Aelodau'r Senedd / Members of the Senedd".

The short title of the Bill on introduction will be the Senedd and Elections (Wales) Bill.

The Bill will be subject to the Assembly's usual legislative scrutiny procedure. The Commission will consider carefully any recommendations made by Assembly committees at Stage 1, and any amendments which are brought forward, and which could attract the required political consensus.

### **Next steps**

The Senedd and Elections (Wales) Bill will be introduced early in the new year. In the meantime, my officials are arranging drop-in sessions for Assembly Members or support staff who would like to discuss the Bill or any other aspect of the Commission's Assembly reform work. The sessions will take place in the Cwrt during Plenary. The dates and times will be shared with Members shortly.

Yours sincerely

Elin Jones AM  
Llywydd