

Concise Minutes – Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 4 – Tŷ Hywel

Meeting date: Wednesday, 9 January
2019

Meeting time: 09.16 – 12.21

This meeting can be viewed

on [Senedd TV](#) at:

<http://senedd.tv/en/5173>

Attendance

Category	Names
Assembly Members:	John Griffiths AM (Chair) Gareth Bennett AM Huw Irranca-Davies AM (In place of Jayne Bryant AM) Mark Isherwood AM Jenny Rathbone AM Leanne Wood AM
Witnesses:	Nick Bennett, Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Katrin Shaw, Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Chris Vinestock, Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Julie James AM, Minister for Housing and Local Government Angharad Thomas-Richards, Welsh Government Lisa James, Welsh Government
Committee Staff:	Naomi Stocks (Clerk) Catherine Hunt (Second Clerk)



Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales

	Chloe Davies (Deputy Clerk) Osian Bowyer (Researcher) Hannah Johnson (Researcher) Megan Jones (Researcher)
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1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

1.1. The Chair welcomed Members and members of the public to the meeting.

1.2. Apologies for absence were received from Siân Gwenllian AM, Jack Sargeant AM and Jayne Bryant AM. Huw Irranca-Davies AM substituted for Jayne Bryant AM.

2 Scrutiny of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual Report and Accounts 2017/18

2.1 The Committee received evidence from:

- Nick Bennett, Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
- Chris Vinestock Chief Operating Officer and Director of Investigations
- Katrin Shaw Director of Policy, Legal & Governance

2.2 During the session the Public Services Ombudsman agreed to provide his response, if available, to the recent consultation on town and community councils, and how local complaints are handled.

3 Inquiry into diversity in local government: evidence session 6

3.1 The Committee received evidence from:

- Julie James AM, Minister for Housing and Local Government
- Lisa James, Deputy Director, Local Government Democracy, Welsh Government
- Angharad Thomas-Richards, Electoral Reform Programme Adviser, Welsh Government

3.2 During the session the Minister for Housing and Local Government agreed to provide:

- a briefing note on the progress of the new curriculum in pioneer schools, which includes a strand encouraging pupils to be a “healthy, involved citizen of Wales”;
- the leaflet produced by Bristol City Council on its work on diversity;

4 Paper(s) to note

4.1 Letter from the Llywydd to the then First Minister in relation to Brexit-related legislation

4.1.a The Committee noted the letter from the Llywydd to the then First Minister in relation to Brexit-related legislation.

4.2 Letter from the then Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public Services in relation to the Welsh Government Draft Budget 2019–20

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4.3 Letter from the then Minister for Housing and Regeneration in relation to the Welsh Government Draft Budget 2019–20

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4.4 Correspondence between the Chair and the then Leader of the House and Chief Whip in relation to pregnancy, maternity and work

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4.5 Letter from the Llywydd in relation to Assembly reform: Electoral Commission financing and accountability

4.5.a The Committee noted the letter from the Llywydd in relation to Assembly reform: Electoral Commission financing and accountability.

5 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 (vi) to resolve to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting

5.1. The Committee agreed the motion.

6 Scrutiny of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual Report and Accounts 2017/18: consideration of the evidence received

6.1. The Committee discussed the evidence received under item 2.

7 Inquiry into diversity in local government: consideration of the evidence received

7.1. The Committee discussed the evidence received under item 3.

8 Inquiry into devolution of welfare benefits: consideration of approach to the inquiry

8.1. The Committee considered and agreed its approach for the inquiry into devolution of welfare benefits.

9 Inquiry into the Blue Badge Scheme in Wales: Eligibility and Implementation: consideration of approach to the inquiry

9.1. The Committee discussed and agreed its approach for the inquiry into the Blue Badge Scheme in Wales: Eligibility and Implementation.

10 Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Bill: Order of Consideration – agreement in principle ahead of Stage 2 proceedings

10.1. The Committee agreed the order of consideration for the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Bill ahead of Stage 2 proceedings.