

Agenda – Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee

Meeting Venue:

Tŷ Hywel

Meeting date: 9 January 2019

Meeting time: 09.15

For further information contact:

Naomi Stocks

Committee Clerk

0300 200 6565

SeneddCommunities@senedd.wales

Pre-meeting (09.45 – 10.00)

1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

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

(09.30 – 10.30)

(Pages 1 – 13)

Nick Bennett, Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

Chris Vinestock Chief Operating Officer and Director of Investigations

Katrin Shaw Director of Policy, Legal & Governance

[Public Services Ombudsman for Wales: annual report and accounts 2017/18](#)

3 Inquiry into diversity in local government: evidence session 6

(10.30 – 11.45)

(Pages 14 – 32)

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

4 Paper(s) to note

(Page 33)



- 4.1 Letter from the Llywydd to the then First Minister in relation to Brexit-related legislation**
(Pages 34 – 35)
- 4.2 Letter from the then Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public Services in relation to the Welsh Government Draft Budget 2019–20**
(Pages 36 – 37)
- 4.3 Letter from the then Minister for Housing and Regeneration in relation to the Welsh Government Draft Budget 2019–20**
(Pages 38 – 40)
- 4.4 Correspondence between the Chair and the then Leader of the House and Chief Whip in relation to pregnancy, maternity and work**
(Pages 41 – 47)
- 4.5 Letter from the Llywydd in relation to Assembly reform: Electoral Commission financing and accountability**
(Pages 48 – 50)
- 5 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 (vi) to resolve to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting**
- 6 Scrutiny of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual Report and Accounts 2017/18: consideration of the evidence received**
(11.45 – 11.50)
- 7 Inquiry into diversity in local government: consideration of the evidence received**
(11.50 – 12.10)
- 8 Inquiry into devolution of welfare benefits: consideration of approach to the inquiry**
(12.10 – 12.25) (Pages 51 – 58)

- 9 Inquiry into the Blue Badge Scheme in Wales: Eligibility and Implementation: consideration of approach to the inquiry**
(12.25 – 12.40) (Pages 59 – 65)
- 10 Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Bill: Order of Consideration – agreement in principle ahead of Stage 2 proceedings**
(12.40 – 12.45) (Pages 66 – 71)

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Agenda Item 3

By virtue of paragraph(s) vi of Standing Order 17.42

Document is Restricted

- 1.1 The Welsh Government believes that diversity in the council chamber is more than a matter of simple social justice. We believe a council membership which better reflects the communities it serves will tend to increase pluralism in decision-making, and to improve the levels of engagement between councillors and those they represent.
- 1.2 The effects of such increases in the quality of democracy may be hard to measure. We do not believe it would be realistic to expect them to lead immediately and directly to improvements in the quality, availability or cost of council services, for instance. Nonetheless, they are still vital. That is all the more important given the difficult decisions all local authorities face, and will continue to face following Brexit. Such decisions need to be grounded in the best possible evidence about community needs and priorities, and sustained by a high level of trust in local government.
- 1.3 Accordingly, the Welsh Government has long been committed to broaden and increase participation in local government and has commissioned research to understand the barriers and disincentives to standing for election to local councils. As a result of this research it has subsequently passed legislation to help remove the barriers and funded initiatives to address the disincentives.
- 1.4 However, there are clear limits to the effectiveness of such initiatives. They can only facilitate greater diversity; they cannot mandate it. Parties, candidates and electors have roles which are beyond the reach of any legislation.

2. To understand key barriers to attracting a more diverse pool of candidate for local government elections

- 2.1 To understand the issues, the Welsh Government, commissioned expert work to make recommendations to the Welsh Government. *Are we being served* - the report of the Councillor Commission Expert Panel in Wales headed by Sophie Howe - was submitted to the Welsh Ministers in February 2009. More recently, *On Balance* - the report of the Expert Group headed by Laura McAllister - was submitted to Welsh Ministers in 2014.
- 2.2 The terms of reference for the Expert Panel were to respond to the recommendations made by the Councillors Commission¹ and to also consider any other issues relevant to widening participation in local government.
- The terms of reference for the Expert Group were to consider the response to the initial survey of councillors introduced by the Local Government Measure 2011 and to develop an action plan to help design policy aimed at increasing diversity.
- 2.3 Both reports noted the available data on the make up of councillors have consistently shown the under-representation of certain groups, specifically women, BME groups and younger people. An analysis of the evidence collected by both the Expert Panel and the Expert Group suggested the reasons for this under-representation included the time commitment, the financial commitment, the limited support within the council for non-executive members and negative portrayal in the media.
- 2.4 The Expert Panel report, amongst other recommendations, called on the Welsh Government to legislate for: diversity monitoring of councillors and candidates; the training and development of serving councillors; flexible working for councillors and administrative support for councillors.
- 2.5 The Expert Group report amongst other recommendations, called on the Welsh Government to improve diversity by improving the Candidates Survey (discussed at para 4.4) and to establish a mentoring scheme.
- 2.6 The Welsh Government has accepted both sets of recommendations and sought to implement them.

¹ The independent Commission on the role of local councillors, reported to Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. The Commission's report 'Representing the future' was published on 10 December 2007.
<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20080906032823/http://www.communities.gov.uk/councillorscommission/publications/representingthefuture/>

3. To explore areas of innovation and good practice that may help increase diversity in local government

The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011

- 3.1 As part of its response to the Expert Panel report, the Welsh Government introduced (and the Assembly passed) the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011. The Measure contained provisions designed to address the concerns identified by the Expert Panel report. Some of the provisions are addressed to councils, to promote more flexible working and some are addressed to councillors to improve the experience of being a councillor.
- 3.2 As a result of the Measure:
- councillors in Wales are now entitled to take a period of family absence for reasons of maternity, paternity, adoption and caring for children;
 - Councillors are entitled to record their development needs and to receive training;
 - Councils are under a duty to canvass their members on the location and timing of meetings and to put into effect the results;
 - Councils have powers to introduce remote attendance for their meetings so that councillors do not have to be present in person but are able to contribute from another location.
- 3.3 The purpose of these provisions is to promote a culture within local government that better supports councillors and to recognise that without specific support that recognises the other commitments councillors have, many potential councillors would not be able to consider standing. That includes those with caring requirements in particular.

The Candidates Survey

- 3.4 The 2011 Measure also introduced the Candidates Survey. Local authorities are under a duty to survey all candidates standing for election to principal authorities and to community and town councils. The aim is for data to be gathered to enable equality monitoring of all candidates over time.
- 3.5 The first survey was conducted following the local government elections in May 2012 and the second was conducted following the local government elections in May 2017. Following the recommendations in the report of the Expert Group, the Welsh Government reviewed the legislation and the methodology to incorporate the improvements in time to take effect for the second survey, in May 2017. The principle changes were to allow the survey to be answered electronically on-line, introducing amendments into the legislation to allow for the survey to be conducted both before and after the

election and for local authorities to make arrangements for another body to conduct it.

- 3.6 The Local Government Data Unit conducted the survey on behalf of local authorities and the Welsh Government published the data. In spite of the improvements to the form and content of the survey, it was disappointing to note the response rate to the survey in 2017 was 24% for county candidates and 17% for community and town candidates. The survey is not mandatory and the Welsh Government is not minded to make it compulsory.
- 3.7 The 2017 Survey showed the following characteristics of councillors and candidates
- **Gender** - 67 per cent of county councillors were male, a similar proportion of unelected county candidates were also male (72 per cent). Among community councillors and unelected community candidates 65 per cent were male.
 - **Age** - Nearly half (47 per cent) of county councillors were aged 60 or above compared to 39 per cent of unelected county candidates. There were similar proportions of community councillors and unelected community candidates who were aged 60 or above, 55 per cent and 47 per cent respectively.
 - **Ethnicity** - Among county councillors 1.8 per cent were non-white compared to 2.3 per cent of unelected county candidates. Among community councillors 1.2 per cent were non-white compared to 1.9 per cent of unelected community candidates.
 - **Religion** - 66 per cent of county councillors stated they were Christian compared to 56 per cent of unelected county candidates. Around two thirds of community councillors also stated they were Christian. This compared to 61 per cent of unelected community councillors.
 - **Sexual orientation** - among county councillors 7.1 per cent stated they were lesbian, gay or bisexual compared to 6.9 per cent of unelected county candidates. The proportion of community councillors and unelected community candidates who reported being lesbian, gay or bisexual were 3.7 per cent and 3.3 per cent respectively.
 - **Health and disability** - the proportion of county councillors who considered themselves to have a disability was 12 per cent, compared to 16 per cent of unelected county candidates. Among community councillors 15 per cent considered themselves to have a disability compared to 18 per cent of unelected community candidates. Physical health was reported to be good or very good for 89 per cent of county councillors and 85 per cent of community councillors.
 - **Education** - two thirds (66 per cent) of county councillors and community councillors had a qualification equivalent to NVQ Level 4 or above. The proportion of unelected county candidates with a similar level of education was 73 per cent compared to 63 per cent of unelected community candidates.
- Employment** - 31 per cent of county councillors were retired compared to 24 per cent of unelected county candidates. Among community councillors 42

per cent were retired compared to 32 per cent of unelected community candidates

The full report can be found here:

<https://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/local-government-candidates-survey/?lang=en>²

Diversity in Democracy Programme

3.6 In response to the Expert Group report, the Welsh Government launched the Diversity in Democracy Programme. The programme aimed to increase the diversity of candidates standing for election to local authorities in the election of May 2017.

3.7 The Diversity in Democracy programme ran from October 2014 to March 2017 and offered a mentoring scheme for people from under-represented groups, and paired them up with existing councillors to prepare them to stand as candidates in the local government elections of May 2017.

A total of 65 councillors registered as mentors during the life of the project, and 51 people from under-represented groups signed up as mentees. 16 of the 51 mentees stood as candidates in the election in May 2017 and 4 were successfully elected.

- The demographic breakdown of mentees who participated in the programme was:
 - Female = 37
 - Young people = 20
 - BME = 10
 - Disabled = 7
 - LGBT = 5
 - Traveller/Gypsy = 1

- The demographic breakdown of mentees who expressed an intention to stand for election following their participation in the programme was:
 - Female = 16
 - Young people = 8
 - BME = 7
 - Disabled = 3
 - LGBT = 1

² It is important to note that the survey response rate was low, varied by local authority and the figures cannot be said to be fully representative of the profile of local government. The second caveat is that the survey data has not been weighted accordingly because we do not know the current profile of the population we are looking to measure. This means that confidence intervals have not been calculated for the relevant populations we are looking to measure and they will be unknown margins of error in the population data. However, the findings are broadly consistent with the current evidence base.

The programme closed in March 2017 and an evaluation of the programme has been commissioned by Welsh Government and is due to report its findings shortly

4. To explore the potential impact of the proposals in the Welsh Government's Green Paper, Strengthening Local Government to increasing diversity in Council chambers.

- 4.1 In July 2018, the Welsh Government announced that it would not be pursuing a programme of compulsory mergers at this time but would work with local government through the Working Group on Local Government to develop a shared agenda for reform, including voluntary mergers.
- 4.2 The Green Paper set out a vision for local government for strong and empowered councils which provide bold, determined and focused leadership for their areas. It recognised the importance and value of local democracy and the critical role of councillors. It suggested that the Welsh Government would work with local government to champion the role of the elected member and help communities understand and value the important part councils play in their lives. We are currently scoping this work as part of our plans to raise awareness and promote the value of voting in advance of the local elections in 2022. This will be an extension of our work with 14, 15, 16 and 17 year olds in the run up to the extension of the franchise.
- 4.3 The Green Paper did not cover issues from previous consultations which will form part of the Local Government and Elections Bill to be introduced in the new year. These proposals include matters which are intended to support diversity in local government such as job sharing for executive members, the appointment of assistants to members of the executive and duties on group leaders to promote appropriate standards of conduct amongst their members.
- 4.4 We will be currently evaluating the Diversity in Democracy programme and once we have the report of the formal evaluation, we will consider, together with other relevant research, how to develop a further programme aimed at the 2022 elections.

Agenda Item 4

Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee

9 January 2019 – papers to note cover sheet

Paper no.	Issue	From	Action point
ELGC(5)-01-19 Paper 2	Brexit-related legislation	The Llywydd	Letter to the then First Minister in relation to the role of the Assembly and its committees in scrutinising Brexit-related legislation
ELGC(5)-01-19 Paper 3	Welsh Government Draft Budget 2019-20	The then Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public Services	Response to the Committee's request for information following the scrutiny session on 15 November 2018
ELGC(5)-01-19 Paper 4	Welsh Government Draft Budget 2019-20	The then Minister for Housing and Regeneration	Response to the Committee's request for information following the scrutiny session on 15 November 2018
ELGC(5)-01-19 Paper 5	Inquiry into pregnancy, maternity and work	The then Leader of the House and Chief Whip	Response to the Committee's letter dated 14 November 2018 which sought clarification on issues raised during the plenary debate on 26 September 2018
ELGC(5)-01-19 Paper 6	Assembly Reform	The Llywydd	Letter providing information on the Electoral Commission financing and accountability

Rt Hon Carwyn Jones AM
First Minister of Wales
Welsh Government
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

Your ref:
Our ref: EJ/CE

4 December 2018

Dear Carwyn

At the Chairs' Forum meeting, on 28 November 2018, we discussed the role of the Assembly and its committees in scrutinising Brexit-related legislation. Chairs raised an emerging concern about the role of the Assembly in the process of legislating for Brexit.

Chairs reported that the Welsh Government has sought delegated powers for Welsh Ministers in a number of Brexit-related UK Bills, rather than bringing forward its own Bills for scrutiny by the Assembly. In terms of the subordinate legislation needed to correct the statute book ahead of leaving the European Union, I understand that you have agreed to a significant proportion of this legislation being made by UK Ministers, using concurrent powers on behalf of Welsh Ministers.

Whilst I, and the Chairs' Forum, understand that you have made these decisions on the grounds of efficiency for the governments involved in the process, the concern expressed by Chairs is that this comes at a cost of the Assembly's role and therefore Members' ability to effectively represent the interests of the people of Wales in the process of legislating for Brexit.

In representing the views expressed to me by Chairs, and acting in the interests of the Assembly's position in the Brexit process, I have concerns that the cumulative effect of these Welsh Government decisions is an inadvertent bypassing of the Assembly's role.

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



Elin Jones AC, Llywydd

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru

Elin Jones AM, Presiding Officer

National Assembly for Wales

I am sure that you would agree that the scrutiny of legislation that falls within the competence of the Assembly or Welsh Ministers, particularly relating to important areas of policy affecting citizens, benefits from far greater Wales-specific scrutiny when considered by the Assembly.

The limited opportunity for scrutiny offered by legislative consent conventions and associated procedures is incomparable with the Assembly's full legislative scrutiny processes.

Further, legislative scrutiny by the Assembly offers a more accessible and transparent process for Welsh stakeholders and the public, and also ensures the law is made in both of our official languages.

Just as you have striven to ensure a role for the Welsh Government in the Brexit process, I must ensure that the Assembly, and its Members, are enabled to play the full role they were elected to perform.

I understand that Assembly committees are planning to undertake further work in this area and I am sure that they will continue to raise issues with you and the Welsh Ministers.

In the meantime, I ask that you consider the concerns that have been raised and I would be grateful for your thoughts on how you might ensure that the Welsh Government does all it can to enable the Assembly to play its full part in legislating for Brexit.

I have copied this letter to Chairs of the Assembly's committees, the Leader of the House, and the Cabinet Secretary for Finance (in light of his role in the Brexit process).

Yours sincerely

Elin Jones AM
Llywydd

Agenda Item 4.2

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Lywodraeth Leol a
Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus
Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public
Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref

John Griffiths AM
Chair
Equalities, Local Government and Communities Committee

06 December 2018

Dear John,

Thank you for your budget scrutiny committee report, which I will respond to in due course. A number of questions were raised in the committee session I attended and I agreed to write with some clarification information.

Firstly, you asked for a note on how the government is driving the agenda to ensuring that local authorities are working to improve value for money in the context of the highways budget.

The specific grants we now allocate to local highway authorities include a condition to produce an annual summary of their asset management plan. This will provide an overview of the condition of the road network across Wales and can inform developing consistency in the way highways are maintained. Grant funding allocated to local highway authorities also requires them to follow the Welsh Transport Appraisal Guidance (2017), to inform their investment decisions. This Guidance follows the Treasury five-case model so that authorities appraise the economic, transport, financial, commercial and management cases prior to delivery of their work. The toolkit requires authorities to monitor the benefits expected from their investments. By evaluating the planned benefits against those achieved post construction, it will be possible to assess whether the investment has delivered value for money. More generally, of course, it is the responsibility of local authorities to ensure the value for money of their expenditure across the range of their responsibilities. Scrutiny through elected members and the work of Wales Audit Office are part of the system of accountability to support this.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Gohebiaeth.Alun.Davies@llyw.cymru
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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Secondly, you asked for clarity on the additional £20 million for social care, provided for in the Revenue Support Grant (RSG). The £20 million of funding identified in the provisional local government settlement for 2019-20 is in recognition of the important role local authorities play in delivering core social services and the preventative approach at the heart of delivery. This funding is in addition to the commitment made in the 2018-19 budget to prioritise funding for social care through the 2018-19 and 2019-20 settlements.

Finally, you asked for a note on the proportion of the budget used for the purpose of preventative spending. As we discussed in committee the definition of prevention that Welsh Government published in the detailed draft budget is multi-layered and recognises the broad range of funding and services we deliver, covering all our expenditure. It is intended to aid policy decisions while recognising that not everything we do can be aimed at primary prevention, but over time, we can move towards a focus on preventing difficulties before they arise.

We recognise that pressure on resources and the very real need of public services to provide restorative interventions means that not all funding can be directed towards prevention. However where there is additional money we are aiming to focus this on the early primary and secondary stages of prevention wherever possible. We spoke in the committee session about the integrated package of £130m revenue funding that has been made available to health and social care regional partnerships throughout Wales. This is allocated across three main areas, £50m to the Integrated Care Fund, which aims to reduce pressure on the hospital and social care system by helping to prevent unnecessary hospital admissions, inappropriate admissions to residential care, and delayed hospital discharges; £30 million to be allocated through the regional partnership boards to support the delivery of *A Healthier Wales*; and £50 million for the Transformation Fund, which will be allocated to programmes endorsed by regional partnership boards, to take forward the development and implementation of new models of care.

On 13 November, the Minister for Children, Older People and Social Care announced that £15 million of the £30 million allocated to Regional Partnership Boards would be used to progress our shared ambition of reducing the need for children to be in care. Local authorities, third sector organisations and health boards should work together to use this fund flexibly and creatively across their regions. The remaining £15m was announced this week to help increase joint working between local authorities and health boards to support adults with care needs in their homes, avoiding unnecessary hospital admissions, or ensuring they can return as soon as possible after hospital admission.

Overall, this funding provided to local government is either un-hypothecated or with broad grant conditions which means that we do not hold the information centrally to fully classify spend against each of the four categories in the published definition. However I look forward to working with the sector, alongside the Future Generations Commission, to explore preventative spend in the local government context.

Yours,



Alun Davies AC/AM

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Lywodraeth Leol a Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus
Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public Services

Agenda Item 4.3

Papur 4 / Paper 4

John Griffiths AM
Chair
Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee

12 December 2018

Dear John,

During my attendance at the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee on Thursday 15 November 2018, I agreed to provide further information in relation to some of the questions raised and this is detailed below:

Credit Unions

I fully recognise that in order to deliver long term sustainability, credit unions need to increase their levels of lending to provide the capital needed to be able to continue to reinvest in the provision of ethical financial services across our communities.

Credit unions are working hard to promote their services across Wales, using the Credit Unions of Wales brand, to raise their profile collectively and promote their responsible lending ethos. This promotional work is being supported by a social media marketing campaign, funded by Welsh Government until 2020, to improve awareness of credit unions, and to help credit unions develop their own localised marketing campaigns. This will help credit unions promote their affordable lending services and attract new members. As a result, this two year social media marketing campaign, whilst promoting the credit union brand nationally, is also increasing awareness of credit unions at a local community level.

The social media drive complements significant Welsh Government funding made available to credit unions, with £844,000 funding in place over the next two years to take forward a variety of local projects, including a project undertaken by Cambrian Credit Union to promote the credit union as an alternative lending solution to high cost credit. All of these projects are intended to help credit unions increase their reach and attract new savers and borrowers.

Credit unions continue to engage with employers to encourage them to help support their employees' financial well-being, which can have positive benefits in terms of improved productivity and reduced sickness absence. Credit unions can provide responsible financial services to employees, including affordable loans, which in many cases can be at lower rates than they might be able to secure from other providers. This can help prevent employees accessing higher cost credit providers, which can push people into a spiral of debt.

The Welsh Government's £1m financial transactions capital funding for credit unions over the next two years will also help credit unions expand their lending levels. This funding is supporting credit unions across Wales with their growth and expansion plans, which includes increasing lending levels to a wider range of customers. This funding is helping to put credit unions on a firmer footing as they develop their business plans, so more people are able to benefit from their range of ethical loans and savings products, which will make credit unions more sustainable as a result.

Affordable Housing

In reference to your question regarding the number of homes in the overall government target of 20,000 affordable homes which fall under the traditional definition of affordable housing, I can confirm that 13,500 of the overall 20,000 target fall under the traditional TAN 2 definition of affordable housing. Within the Housing Pact, this breaks down further with Registered Social Landlords committing to delivering 12,500 and Local Authorities committing to 1,000. Our overall target captures multiple housing tenures to reflect the needs of the wider population.

The 20,000 affordable homes target also includes our existing Help to Buy – Wales scheme, together with two new initiatives we launched this year; Rent to Own – Wales and Shared Ownership – Wales. Help to Buy Wales is committed to delivering 6,000 of the target and is on target to achieve this, with 4718 completed so far in this Assembly term.

We continue to work closely with a wide range of partners including Local Authorities, RSLs, the Homebuilders Federation and the Federation of Master Builders to achieve this target.

Tenant Participation

The Regulatory Board for Wales (RBW) is currently undertaking a strategic review seeking to understand the current landscape for tenant participation, to understand what positive tenant participation looks like, including what works in different contexts.

The review is being overseen by a steering group which manages the review on behalf of the Regulatory Board. Membership of the group includes stakeholders from across the

sector. The steering group have listened to a number of speakers both within the housing sector and beyond, these have included TPAS England, the Housing Quality Network, Dwr Cymru and Merthyr Valleys Homes. Further presentations are planned for the new year. The next stages of the work will involve the full range of sector stakeholders, getting input from tenants is a priority. A very useful workshop has already been held with tenants at the recent TPAS Cymru annual conference and further work with tenants will take place in the new year.

A desk-based review of current approaches to tenant involvement in the UK and beyond is also underway. It will also look outside of the housing sector for examples of innovative approaches to engaging customers or citizens. Overall the review is seeking to identify examples of positive practice and to understand what works, and why. The aim is to develop a tool, which can be used by tenants and landlords, to support the further development of effective approaches to tenant involvement. The review is intended to conclude by June 2019 with the findings to be published shortly afterwards.

I trust these address the additional points raised.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca Evans". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rebecca Evans AM
Minister for Housing and Regeneration

Ein cyf/Our ref MA(P)JJ/4286/18

6 December 2018

Dear John,

Thank you for your letter dated 14 November seeking clarification on issues raised by Committee members during the plenary debate on 26 September.

Please find the further information you requested in the attached annex.

Yours sincerely



Julie James AC/AM
Arweinydd y Tŷ a'r Prif Chwip
Leader of the House and Chief Whip

Number	Requested Information	Response to the request
1	Further information on how the Welsh Government will encourage public sector organisations to follow its example of providing flexible working options.	The Equality and Human Rights Commission is currently completing a review of the Welsh public sector's compliance with the public sector equality duty. We must consider flexible working as part of our wider objectives under the duty if we want to see real change in Wales. Once we have considered the findings from the EHRC's review, we will engage with Public Sector organisations regarding their approach to delivering the duty.
2	Clarification on when the recruitment guidance for school governing bodies will be reviewed and updated, following the acceptance of recommendations 5 and 6;.	<p>The Independent review of teachers' pay and conditions considered the current School Teachers Pay & Conditions Document and the plethora of guidance supporting it - they came to the conclusion that these are convoluted and complex and "very few people, especially teachers themselves, have a clear understanding of the document." They have recommended a new coherent "Career, Conditions and Pay Framework for Teachers in Wales" be written and this should ensure a 'fresh start' for clarity and accessibility.</p> <p>I am currently considering steps to ensure governors are fully engaged and supported in the transformational education reform that is currently under way. As part of that, I anticipate a refresh of the Governors Guide to the Law as well as a review of broader support and training. I would expect this work, which would include the section noted in the report, to be completed prior to the summer recess in 2019.</p>
3	The Welsh Government to ensure that businesses accessing its financial support are offering flexible working, by making this a key requirement of the economic contract.	As we have made clear, we are taking an iterative approach to the implementation of the Economic Contract and we have committed to undertaking periodic stocktakes of its operation. The first stocktake is currently underway and we expect this to be concluded by the end of the year. We will use learning from the stocktake to inform any future changes to the Economic Contract. We are also committed to revisiting the Economic Contract when the Fair Work Commission reports in the Spring. This will provide the opportunity to review and consider expanding the current four provisions of the Economic Contract, whilst recognising the balance between adding further provisions and the risk that the Economic Contract becomes an unwieldy list of specific requirements.
4	Commitment to providing a further, more detailed	See no 3 above.

Number	Requested Information	Response to the request
	response to recommendations 9, 12, 28 and 34, once the Fair Work Commission has reported.	
5	An immediate review of how Business Wales provides advice and support. We believe that our report made the case for the review to happen urgently.	<p>Under the Chairmanship of Robert Lloyd Griffiths (Director Wales - Institute of Directors), the Business Wales Strategic Board (Board) oversees the Business Wales Service to inform the delivery of the service and provide strategic advice on the needs of entrepreneurs and SMEs in Wales to ensure continuous development and improvement.</p> <p>Under the direction of the Board, a Female Entrepreneurship Panel (Panel) has undertaken a review of the position of female entrepreneurship in Wales and has made ten recommendations to help better support entrepreneurially women in Wales, including the need to further tailor business support services to ensure they are gender focussed.</p> <p>The Panel's Report and associated Good Practice Guide will be launched in January 2019. In response to the Report the Welsh Government will publish an Action Plan which will include the provision of additional gender awareness training to Business Wales advisors and other relevant staff who work with women entrepreneurs, including gender-neutral recruitment, including unconscious bias.</p>
6	A further response to recommendation 28, which was calling on the Welsh Government to increase the provision of specialist advice to employees, including how Business Wales provides advice to employees.	<p>Business Wales provides business support, advice and information to entrepreneurs and SMEs in Wales. Business Wales does not provide advice directly to employees.</p> <p>Under the Chairmanship of Robert Lloyd Griffiths (Director Wales - Institute of Directors), the Business Wales Strategic Board (Board) oversees the Business Wales Service to inform the delivery of the service and provide strategic advice on the needs of entrepreneurs and SMEs in Wales to ensure continuous development and improvement. Under the direction of the Board, a Female Entrepreneurship Panel (Panel) has undertaken a review of the position of female entrepreneurship in Wales and has made ten</p>

Number	Requested Information	Response to the request
		<p>recommendations to help better support entrepreneurially women in Wales, including improving access to Business Support information sources.</p> <p>The Panel's Report and associated Good Practice Guide will be launched in January 2019. In response to the Report the Welsh Government will publish an Action Plan which will include the development of a specific page on the Business Wales website that highlights information sources available to women entrepreneurs. In addition, Business Wales Advisors will continue to provide advice to SMEs on pregnancy, maternity and employment issues where appropriate.</p>
7	<p>Clarity on when the review of the public sector equality duties will be complete, and a commitment to providing an update on progress and decisions by the end of 2018.</p>	<p>The Equality and Human Rights Commission is finalising its review of the Welsh public sector's compliance with the public sector equality duty. The Welsh Government will consider the EHRC's findings as part of the review of the public sector equality duties, including strengthening the reporting. The publication of the EHRC's monitoring report has been slightly delayed and is now expected in December. Engagement with listed public bodies on these issues will start early in the new year, linked to development of our equality objectives for 2020-24.</p>
8	<p>Further, more detailed explanation for the rationale behind the decision to make the childcare offer, and other childcare schemes, available to children aged between two and four alone.</p>	<p>The Childcare Offer for Wales will provide 30 hours per week of early education and childcare to the working parents of 3-4 year olds, for up to 48 weeks per year. When we've spoken with parents about returning to work, childcare is one of the most commonly cited barriers. Parents, and particularly mothers, tell us they have to wait until their child is in school before they can return to work. The rationale of aiming this offer at children who are three is that we are bringing that point forward by a year.</p> <p>This Offer will deliver against a manifesto commitment. We have other programmes in place to support parents such as Flying Start.</p> <p>In addition, the Minister recently wrote to the Children, Young People and Education Committee about other support programmes in place designed specifically for parents in</p>

Number	Requested Information	Response to the request
		<p>training and education or for those who require support to return to work. A copy of the letter can be found on the following webpage:</p> <p>http://senedd.assembly.wales/documents/s81290/Letter%20from%20the%20Minister%20for%20Children%20Older%20People%20and%20Social%20Care%20the%20various%20schemes%20available%20t.pdf</p>
9	Examples of job-sharing appointments for public appointments, as outlined in recommendation 2.	<p>With the exception of a recently appointed a job share partnership to the role of National Advisor for Violence against Women, Gender-based Violence, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence job share roles in public appointments remain limited. The Welsh Government has recently established a Public Bodies Unit with responsibility for delivering the majority of public appointment campaigns centrally. This will be underpinned by development of a diversity strategy with the intention of making the appointment process more inclusive and improving the diversity of public appointments in Wales. As part of the strategy, opportunities for job sharing will be considered, along with options for improved engagement with protected groups and talent management initiatives to promote equality of opportunity. The strategy will be developed collaboratively with public leaders and key stakeholder groups across Wales.</p>
10	Further details on your commitment that the review of teachers' pay and conditions will take full account of flexibilities to support the working patterns required, outlined in the response to recommendation 6.	See number 2 above
11	The timescales for	We anticipate that this will be included in new arrangements following the review of the

Number	Requested Information	Response to the request
	implementing the requirement for organisations to publish maternity retention rates, alongside the review of the Public Sector Equality Duties.	PSED and engagement with listed public bodies outlined in number 7 above.
12	Further information of the service provided by the PaCE project to parents who are trying to access it. Sarah Rees gave an account of her own attempts to contact the project without receiving a response, as well as several accounts of others who have experienced the same difficulty.	<p>We are very sorry to hear that Sarah Rees and others have tried to contact the PaCE project with no response. This is not the standard of customer service we aspire to, and apologise for the lack of response.</p> <p>Welsh Government PaCE officials have conducted a thorough search of e-mails received in the PaCE Mailbox (PaCE@gov.wales) and it does not appear that we received an e-mail from Sarah Rees. So that we can explore this further with our network of over 45 advisers across Wales, it would be really helpful if Sarah Rees could provide information about how she tried to contact the project, whether that was via the PaCE mailbox or by contacting an individual adviser . Once we have established this detail, we can address any problems to ensure this does not happen again to anyone trying to contact PaCE.</p> <p>In addition, If Sarah Rees and others who tried contacting PaCE would like to share their contact details with Sue Ashcroft, PaCE Senior Operations Manager within Welsh Government, (sue.ashcroft@gov.wales), then Sue will ensure they are contacted promptly by a PaCE Adviser in their local area, and receive the standard of service they should have received at the first point of contact.</p>
13	any further update on if, and when, the Childcare Offer will be available to non-working parents.	The Childcare Offer is a manifesto commitment which is aimed at working parents. There are currently no plans to expand the Offer to non-working parents. The Offer is made up of both early education and childcare, with at least 10 hours of the total 30 made up of early education. The early education part of the offer will remain universal.

Agenda Item 4.5

John Griffiths AM
Chair
Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

Your ref:
Our ref: EJ/AD

6 December 2018

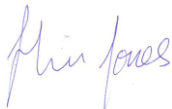
Dear John

Assembly reform: Electoral Commission financing and accountability

I would like to draw your attention, as Chair of the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee, to my letter to all Assembly Members of 12 November, specifically the proposals which the Commission is considering 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).

The Commission is exploring the opportunity of the Senedd and Elections (Wales) Bill which is due to be introduced in the new year to introduce these proposals. If you would like to meet with me to discuss the proposal and the approach to legislating on this matter, I would be happy to do so.

Yours sincerely



Elin Jones AM
Llywydd



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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Elin Jones AM, Presiding Officer

National Assembly for Wales

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

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Agenda Item 10

By virtue of paragraph(s) vi of Standing Order 17.42

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