



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE **Update on Senedd Reform**

DATE **04 April 2023**

BY **Mark Drakeford MS, First Minister of Wales**

In my previous statement issued just before Christmas, I committed to providing an update on the progress we are making in preparing legislation to take forward the recommendations of the Special Purpose Committee on Senedd Reform (SPC).

We continue to make good progress on the development of the policy detail needed to translate the SPC recommendations into legislative provisions as part of the Co-operation Agreement with Plaid Cymru. In doing so we are reflecting the conclusions reached by the Business Committee in its report published in December.

I want to take this opportunity to set out for Members the broad policy themes that have been taken forward since my last statement:

- The inclusion of integrated statutory gender quotas and mandatory zipping for party candidate lists.
- Repurposing and renaming the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales, providing the new Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru with the functions necessary to undertake ongoing reviews of Senedd constituency boundaries.
- The instructions the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru will follow to undertake their boundary reviews, both in respect of the streamlined review to pair constituencies in advance of the 2026 Senedd election, a full review in advance of the subsequent election, and ongoing periodic reviews.
- Measures in relation to the collection and publication of data on candidates seeking to be elected to the Senedd, and the publication by political parties of diversity and inclusion strategies.

- An increase in the limit on the number of Welsh Ministers from 12 to 17, with a power for this to be further increased to 18 or 19 with the approval of the Senedd.
- Increasing from 1 to 2 the maximum number of Deputy Presiding Officers who may be elected.

In the course of developing and preparing the Senedd reform legislation, we have also considered a number of related policies that did not form part of the SPC recommendations. Consequently, we are exploring whether to include provision for:

- A requirement on candidates to declare as part of their nomination any political party membership that they have held in the 12 months prior to an election, similar to the arrangements already in place for local government elections.
- A requirement for candidates to, and Members of, the Senedd to be resident in Wales.
- A review of the operation of the new legislative provisions following the 2026 election.

We continue to work closely with delivery partners in a number of fora to consider the implementation arrangements for these reforms and develop the necessary information for the supporting documentation to accompany the legislation. We are also progressing this work in conjunction with the reforms being taken forward following the consultation on the Electoral Administration and Reform White Paper.

I will provide the Senedd with a further update at the summer recess.

This statement is being issued during recess in order to keep members informed. Should members wish me to make a further statement or to answer questions on this when the Senedd returns I would be happy to do so.