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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Peredur Owen Griffiths MS
Chair
Finance Committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

1 February 2024

Dear Peredur

Thank you for your Report on the Financial implications of the Elections and Elected Bodies (Wales) Bill published on 26 January.

I am grateful to the Committee for its considered Stage 1 scrutiny. I have carefully considered the Committee's report and I am happy to accept all of the recommendations. Please see my response in Annex 1 to the set of recommendations in advance of the Stage 1 General Principles Debate.

Yours sincerely

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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.

Annex 1: Response to Finance Committee's report on the Elections and Elected Bodies (Wales) Bill

Recommendation 1. The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government commits to providing full and robust Regulatory Impact Assessments to accompany any relevant subordinate legislation made under this Bill.

Accepted. We have committed to this within the Regulatory Impact Assessment for the Bill.

Recommendation 2. The Committee recommends that the Minister provides further information on costs relating to changes to the Electoral Management Systems as they become clear; including details on how the cost effectiveness of individual pilots will be assessed.

Accepted. We will provide further information on costs as it becomes clear. A full and robust evaluation of all pilots will take place including the financial implications and the implications for EMS services. This will be a requirement of any pilot proposals presented to the Electoral Management Board and it will be required to report on the financial implications of proposed pilots in its evaluation.

Recommendation 3. The Committee recommends that the Minister updates the Committee on costs associated with work being undertaken to increase the accessibility of elections to disabled voters.

Accepted. We will set out further information in the Regulatory Impact Assessments accompanying the secondary legislation.

Recommendation 4. The Committee recommends that the Minister provides information on the outcomes of the research it intends to commission to promote diversity in persons seeking elected office including how that information is captured and collated; and how the Welsh Government intends using that information to make targeted interventions.

Accepted. We will provide the outcome of the research undertaken when it is completed. This will primarily focus on barriers to participation in local democracy because of socio-economic circumstances. In broader terms we will continue to work with others to identify barriers to participation for individuals within under-represented groups through engagement, lessons learned from existing initiatives and feedback through wider reports and studies. This approach will inform future interventions and initiatives targeted at barriers identified through this work.

Recommendation 5. The Committee believes that the introduction of an affordability assessment, such as the one provided in this Bill, serves as a good practice model for future legislation and we recommend that the Welsh Government continues with this new approach

Accepted. We are grateful for the Committee's comments.