

Elin Jones AM
Llywydd

13 December 2017

Annwyl Llywydd,

Assembly Reform: Disqualification, Defamation, Contempt of Court and Assembly Privilege

Thank you for your letter of 26 October 2017 following previous correspondence and for providing the opportunity to comment on issues relating to disqualification from being an Assembly Member, defamation, contempt of court and Assembly privilege in advance of the Commission's development of Assembly Reform legislation.

We have discussed your correspondence at recent meetings and have decided that at this stage, we are not in a position to commit to undertake any detailed work on these issues.

This decision is partly influenced by the pressures on our work programme to which you alluded in your letter, and which would prevent us from doing justice to the issues you have raised.

Our predecessor committee spent some 5 months looking at the issues of disqualification and to thoroughly re-visit the issues raised would also take considerable time. We have however re-considered our predecessor Committee's 2014 report, *Inquiry into the Disqualification from Membership of the National Assembly for Wales* and believe it provides a sound basis for any consultation you propose to undertake.

In addition, the other issues—defamation, contempt of court and Assembly privilege—have great constitutional, legal and reputational significance. Any views about legislative reform in respect of them would have to be considered very carefully following detailed consultation and consideration by the Committee.



Aside from the time pressures, our approach is also mindful of our role in scrutinising legislative proposals that come before the National Assembly. We believe there will be scope for us to add value through our scrutiny of any draft Bill prepared by the Commission in due course, or of a Bill following its introduction.

Your sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mick Antoniw". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Mick Antoniw

Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

