



**Elin Jones AC, Llywydd**

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru

**Elin Jones AM, Presiding Officer**

National Assembly for Wales

Llyr Gruffydd AM  
Chair of the Finance Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

08 October 2019

Dear Llyr

**Senedd and Elections (Wales) Bill: Further response to committee recommendation on the publication of election expenditure**

I am writing to provide an update on the Assembly Commission's consideration of Recommendation 7 in your committee's report on the financial implications of the Senedd and Elections (Wales) Bill.

In the report, you recommended that:

**Recommendation 7.** The Committee recommends this Bill should be amended to provide on the face of the Bill provisions to ensure that Assembly elections expenditure is published as soon as possible following Assembly elections and referendums.

I stated in my initial response to you, in my letter of 13 August, that I would be seeking further assurances from the Counsel General on the Government's intentions to publish such data by means other than primary legislation. This was following the indication he made in this regard during the plenary debate on the general principles of the Bill.

I subsequently received further information from Government officials on how the Welsh Government aims to routinely publish expenditure on Assembly elections and referendums. This information is detailed below:

**Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru**

Bae Caerdydd, Caerdydd, CF99 1NA

Llywydd@cynulliad.cymru

www.cynulliad.cymru

0300 200 7403

**National Assembly for Wales**

Cardiff Bay, Cardiff, CF99 1NA

Llywydd@assembly.wales

www.assembly.wales

0300 200 7403



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## **Open data**

Under the wider aims of its open data project to improve transparency, the Welsh Government will publish the costs of Assembly elections and referendums on its website. I understand that the first output of this work will be the imminent publication of costs in relation to the 2016 Assembly election.

The published costs will be those incurred by returning officers in the running of elections, including staff costs, printing and hire of premises, and the costs of the mailshot to which all candidates are entitled. The published costs will not include candidates' expenses to which the Welsh Government has no access.

From 2021 onwards the Welsh Government intends to publish the costs of Assembly elections and referendums as soon as possible after their event. The length of the period between those elections and the publication of costs in relation to them will vary, dependant on several factors such as the level of queries in relation to the data, and the availability of staff both in the Welsh Government and in local authorities to complete the returns.

The Welsh Government does not intend to publish costs in relation to principal council and community council elections as they are a responsibility of the 22 principal local authorities. However, it will encourage them to publish those costs as open data.

The Welsh Government considers that publishing elections expenditure in this way is a more flexible, cost effective and proportionate approach than placing a duty on it to do so in legislation.

I discussed this information with Assembly Commissioners. On the basis of the Welsh Government's commitment to ensuring the routine publication of data, which is in line with the aim of your committee's recommendation, the Assembly Commission does not intend that I table an amendment to give effect to Recommendation 7.



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National Assembly for Wales

I am copying this letter to the Minister for Housing and Local Government.

Yours sincerely

**Elin Jones**

Llywydd

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.