

Dear colleague,

Inquiry into electoral systems and boundaries: invitation to respond to consultation

The **Committee on Assembly Electoral Reform** was established in September 2019 to examine the recommendations of the Expert Panel on Assembly Electoral Reform in respect of the size of the Assembly and how Members are elected. We are seeking written evidence to inform our inquiry into electoral systems and boundaries. The deadline for submissions is Wednesday 19 February 2020.

Expert Panel on Assembly Electoral Reform

The Expert Panel on Assembly Electoral Reform recommended an increase in the size of the Assembly, and indicated that achieving this would require reform of the way in which Members are elected. The Panel recommended three electoral systems which could be suitable for use in Wales. Its preferred option, if candidate gender quotas are integrated, was the Single Transferable Vote (STV). It identified Flexible List Proportional Representation as a viable alternative, and noted that Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) could be a practical status quo option.

Reform of the electoral system could have significant implications for the areas Assembly Members represent. In its examination of the Assembly's boundaries the Expert Panel took as its starting point the existing electoral and administrative boundaries in Wales, and identified three possible boundary models for use: the current model which could be used for MMP, and two multimember constituency models which could be used for either STV or Flexible List PR.

Furthermore, the Expert Panel highlighted Wales' anomalous position in having no boundary review mechanism for Assembly boundaries. The Panel recommended that



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regardless of whether its proposals are implemented, legislative action should be taken to put in place boundary review arrangements.

Invitation to contribute to the inquiry

Building on the Expert Panel's work, the Committee is investigating the potential implications of changing the system used to elect Members and reforming the constituencies and regions Members represent. We are aiming to consolidate and add to the existing evidence base, to inform and engage the public, and to outline a roadmap for reform to inform political parties' consideration of their policy positions and manifestos for the 2021 Assembly election.

To inform our inquiry the Committee would welcome written submissions from people and organisations with an interest in these issues.

Terms of reference

The terms of reference of the inquiry are to examine the recommendations of the Expert Panel on Assembly Electoral Reform relating to electoral systems and boundaries, and the principles underpinning them, by:

- Examining the implications of the electoral systems and boundaries recommended by the Expert Panel for democratic representation in Wales, and considering how the principles identified by the Expert Panel might be weighted to ensure that the Assembly's electoral arrangements are appropriate to the Welsh context;
- Exploring public sentiment and understanding of the Assembly's current electoral arrangements and boundaries and the options recommended by the Expert Panel;
- Considering the implications for political parties in Wales of changing the electoral system and boundary models;
- Exploring the principles and practicalities of establishing boundary review arrangements for Assembly electoral areas;
- Considering the cost and resource implications of reforming the electoral system and Assembly boundaries.

It would be helpful if you could use the terms of reference above to frame your response.

Submissions should arrive **by Wednesday 19 February 2020**. If you wish to submit evidence, please send an electronic copy of your submission to:

SeneddReform@assembly.wales.

Providing Written Evidence

Submissions should be no longer than five sides of A4, with numbered paragraphs, and should focus on the terms of reference.



If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please provide a brief description of the role of your organisation.

Please see the **[guidance](#)** for those providing evidence for committees.

Bilingual policy

The National Assembly for Wales has two official languages, Welsh and English.

In line with the Assembly's Official Languages Scheme, the Committee requests that documents or written responses to consultations intended for publication or use in National Assembly proceedings are submitted bilingually. When documents or written responses are not submitted bilingually, we will publish in the language submitted, stating that it has been received in that language only.

We expect other organisations to implement their own standards or schemes and to comply with their statutory obligation.

Disclosure of information

You can find further details about how we will use your information at **www.assembly.wales/inquiryprivacypolicy**. Please ensure that you have considered these details carefully before submitting information to the Committee.

Contact details

Should you wish to speak to someone regarding this consultation, please use the below contact details:

Committee on Assembly Electoral Reform
National Assembly for Wales
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Email: **SeneddReform@assembly.wales**

Telephone: 0300 200 6565

Yours sincerely,



Dawn Bowden AM
Chair, Committee on Assembly Electoral Reform

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

