

**DEMOCRACY AND BOUNDARY COMMISSION CYMRU MEETING  
HELD AT 10:00 AM ON 28 JANUARY 2026 AT CP2 AND VIA TEAMS**

**Present:** Michael Imperato (Deputy Chair); Frank Cuthbert; Bethan Price; Ginger Wiegand; Dianne Bevan; Andrew Blackmore.

**DBCC Officers attending:** Shereen Williams (Chief Executive); Tom Jenkins (Head of Reviews); Dave Carr (Finance Manager); Mark Pascoe (Head of Democratic Health); Roger Ashton-Winter (Senior Democratic Health Policy Manager); Rhydian Fitter (Senior Communication and Engagement Manager); Carys Vaughan (Review Manager); Ellie Chapman (Democratic Health Policy Officer); Michal Harris-Edwards (Administrative Assistant).

**Apologies:** Karen Jones (Chair); Frances Duffy

**Time Started: 10:33**

**Time Finished: 11:50**

**1. Declarations of Interest**

1.1. None

**2. Chair's Briefing**

- 2.1. The Deputy Chair **briefed** on the Commissioner vacancies, there have been 21 applications received for the three vacancies. Eight applicants have been shortlisted and interviews will take place when the Chair is back.
- 2.2. The Deputy Chair **briefed** on induction meetings, documenting themes that have emerged and will be discussed at the February board meeting. An immediate change has been to involve the Deputy Chair in the agenda planning meetings.
- 2.3. The Deputy Chair **briefed** on the meeting that was held between the Chair and Senedd Commission officials to discuss the way that newly elected members will be inducted.
- 2.4. The CE **noted** that there have been further discussions on the induction of new Senedd members and the role of the DBCC in that process, which will be discussed at the February Board meeting.

### 3. Minutes of the Commission meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2025

- 3.1. It was **resolved to approve** the minutes of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2025 as a correct record of the matters considered, subject to minor amendments.

### 4. Issues Arising

- 4.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 21<sup>st</sup> January 2026 by the Chief Executive.
- 4.2. It was **noted** that an updated version of the Corporate Plan has been circulated which looks in depth at elections. It was **approved**, subject to minor amendments.
- 4.3. **ACTION:** CE to make necessary amendments to the Corporate Plan.
- 4.4. A discussion was held on the Boundaries Scotland Review to see whether the recommendations put forward are relevant and/or useful to the DBCC.
- 4.5. A discussion was held on the exploring the option of automaticity for local authority review following the Senedd elections.

### 5. Reviews

- 5.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 21<sup>st</sup> January by the Head of Reviews and it was **noted**.
- 5.2. It was **noted** that the Vale of Glamorgan community review will be published tomorrow following a briefing with council officials this morning.
- 5.3. It was **noted** that the Carmarthenshire community review will be published on Friday following a briefing with council officials tomorrow.
- 5.4. It was **noted** that the Torfaen community review will take place after the meeting, and this will be brought to the next Commission meeting.
- 5.5. It was **noted** that the Caerphilly community review meeting had taken place, and there are two recommended changes.

- 5.6. It was **recommended** to retain the existing arrangements in the Aber Valley ward despite the -20% variance because of a new housing estate that will alleviate this.
- 5.7. It was **recommended** to retain that arrangements in wards of Crosskeys and Ynysddu because of opposition received through representations.
- 5.8. It was **recommended** that the wards of Risca East and Risca West be combined into one electoral ward, Risca.
- 5.9. It was **recommended** that the town ward of Park of the Community of Aberbargoed and Bargoed is transferred to the Community of Gilfach. It was noted that this would result in a variance in the Gilfach ward of 17% above the recommended county average, in Aberbargoed and Bargoed of 8% above the recommended county average. It was **noted** that this option is recommended over the option to merge the two Communities due to local opposition.
- 5.10. It was **agreed** to adopt these changes.
- 5.11. It was **noted** that the quality assurance process is being currently undertaken, with the aim of publishing the Caerphilly community review by the end of February, dependant on translators.

## 6. Remuneration

- 6.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 28<sup>th</sup> January by the Senior Democratic Health Policy Manager.
- 6.2. It was **noted** that the Annual Report is completed and will be finalised for publication along with a press release. The representations and the research report will be published alongside this.
- 6.3. It was **noted** that the report will be sent out to all of the councils, principal councils, park authorities, and fire and rescue authorities and will come into force from the 1<sup>st</sup> April.
- 6.4. It was **noted** that the Remuneration Chair met with WG officials in December to discuss resettlement papers. A consultation on two options will take place.
- 6.5. It was **noted** that as part of the consultation process, a questionnaire will be sent out to WLGA and others about senior roles, and there will also be

a workshop organised with WLGA.

- 6.6. It was **noted** that the Remuneration Committee are in the process of planning next year's Annual Report.
- 6.7. It was **noted** that another workshop will be organised with underrepresented groups to see what role Remuneration might have in trying to encourage them to stand
- 6.8. It was **noted** that the Committee will be meeting next week.
- 6.9. A discussion was held on the wording around resettlement payments and it being a short notice for local authorities.

## 7. EMB

- 7.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 21st January by the Head of Democratic Health.
- 7.2. It was **resolved to approve** the minutes of the last meeting, held in December, as a correct record of the matters considered, subject to minor amendments.
- 7.3. It was **noted** that the Platform is progressing well and the project status has been reduced from red to amber due to progress with the EMS suppliers taking place.
- 7.4. It was **noted** that external auditors have shared a brief checkpoint report and are happy with substantial assurance being provided.
- 7.5. It was **noted** that the ISP is out with ROs for signatures.
- 7.6. It was **noted** that testing for the Platform will take place on the w/c 2<sup>nd</sup> February.
- 7.7. It was **noted** that guidance consultations for ROs, and Candidates and Agents have been completed and that the guidance will be published soon.
- 7.8. It was **noted** that engagement sessions with EAs have been held with regards to what they need to do with the platform.

- 7.9. It was **noted** that media resources have been provided by Storm and Shelter and will go to the Steering Group for approval.

## 8. Budget Report Q3

- 8.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 28<sup>th</sup> January by the Finance Manager.
- 8.2. It was **noted** this takes into account the £200,000 surrendered back to WG.
- 8.3. It was **noted** that there is still a possible underspend of £80-85,000.
- 8.4. It was **noted** that the StormID costs for the WEIP will be drawn down in advance to prevent a cash flow problem.

## 9. GAC Meeting Report

- 9.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 28<sup>th</sup> January by the Finance Manager.
- 9.2. It was **noted** that two meetings took place, one on 28<sup>th</sup> November and the other on 21<sup>st</sup> January.
- 9.3. It was **noted** that the key items included the risk register for the Remuneration function and the review progress updates for the EMB and the WEIP.
- 9.4. It was **noted** that two additional internal reports are being considered in respect of risk management and key financial controls.
- 9.5. It was **noted** that there are still questions over the position on indemnity insurance and it was highlighted that additional investigative work is being done before bringing a report to the Commission for a decision.
- 9.6. A discussion was held on the personal risk for Commissioners and needing to clear on the risk for either the Commission or individual Commissioners that take personal responsibility for decisions they are involved in.
- 9.7. It was **noted** that enquiries have been made with other public bodies with regards to their coverage and the responses will be collated for the

Commission.

## 10. Corporate Risk Register

- 10.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 28<sup>th</sup> January by the Finance Manager.
- 10.2. A discussion was held around the use of AI and will be put into mitigation for a policy position.
- 10.3. It was **agreed** to accept the risks in the Corporate Risk Register, with some small changes to wording, and details will be developed based on the risks identified.

## 11. Calendar of Events

- 11.1. A discussion was held on the Inter Commission Meeting taking place in Cardiff on the 13<sup>th</sup> March.
- 11.2. A discussion was held on the frequency of in person Commission meetings, noting that 6 in person meetings have been budgeted.

## 12. AOB – Social Media Use

- 12.1. It was **noted** that because of the recent controversies linked with X's Grok AI, Ofcom and the EU have opened investigations into the matter.
- 12.2. The Senior Communication and Engagement Manager **recommends** that the DBCC does not post new content on X, until a decision is by Ofcom or the Government.
- 12.3. The Senior Communication and Engagement Manager **recommends** that if there is no decision by the 2<sup>nd</sup> March, the Commission will put a single post up to announce the launching of the WEIP and to follow the Commission on other platforms.
- 12.4. The Senior Communication and Engagement Manager **does not recommend** the deletion of the DBCC's X account, awaiting further guidance from Ofcom or the Government.
- 12.5. It was **agreed** to accept these recommendations.

**Date of Next Meeting: 25<sup>th</sup> February 2026**