

**DEMOCRACY AND BOUNDARY COMMISSION CYMRU MEETING
HELD AT 10:00 AM ON 10th DECEMBER 2025 AT CP2 and via Teams**

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

DBCC Officers attending: Shereen Williams (Chief Executive); Tom Jenkins (Head of Reviews); Mark Pascoe (Head of Democratic Health); Roger Ashton-Winter (Senior Democratic Health Policy Manager); Rhydian Fitter (Senior Communication and Engagement Manager) Ellie Chapman (Democratic Health Policy Officer); Michal Harris-Edwards (Team Support Officer)

Apologies:

Time Started: 9:30

Time Finished: 11:00

1. Declarations of Interest

1.1. None

2. Chair's Briefing

- 2.1. The Chair briefed about attending the Public Chairs forum, **noting** that the induction arrangements for the incoming Senedd administration has begun. It was **noted** that this will be on the agenda for February.
- 2.2. The Chair briefed that the remuneration for chairs and board members has been increased with effect from the 1st January.
- 2.3. The Chair briefed on social partnership and the implications this has on the Board. This will be part of a self-assessment carried out early next year.
- 2.4. The Chair briefed that the Senior Governance and Finance Manager role has been filled and they will start at the beginning of February.
- 2.5. The Chair briefed that the EMB had been invited to give evidence to the Senedd Committee on the recall bill where a discussion took place on extending the remit of the EMB to cover recall polls.
- 2.6. The Chair briefed that term extensions for FC, DB and MI are being considered. There are currently 3 commissioner vacancies and the roles

will be advertised next week.

3. Minutes of the Commission meeting held on 26th November 2025

- 3.1. It was **Resolved** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 26th November 2025 as a correct record of the matters considered.

4. Risk Register

- 4.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 4th December by the Chief Executive.
- 4.2. It was **noted** that a workshop was held back in October which has been filtered into 5 key risk themes and 11 key risks.
- 4.3. A discussion was held on risk 1 and removing the latter half of the sentence to reflect that it may be more than just compressed timelines impacting the Commission.
- 4.4. A discussion was held on risk 2 and the reputational impact of how the Commission communicates to enable people to understand it's functions better. A discussion was held on this being two risks to reflect that it's also a legal challenge as well as reputational.
- 4.5. A discussion was held around the Commission making a number of politically sensitive and high visibility determinations.
- 4.6. A discussion was held on risk 3. It was **noted** that the structure should reflect that this is a small organisation but ensure that everyone is flexible and there is good training in place.
- 4.7. A discussion was held on risk 4 and the high turnover of Commissioners whose terms are almost up. It was **noted** that Commissioners appointed through fair and open competition can be extended without application. It was **agreed** to remove this risk.
- 4.8. A discussion was held on the risk around the appointment of the new EMB Chair. It was **noted** that there is a vice chair and there are only 3 meetings between now and the Senedd election. It was **agreed** to remove this risk.
- 4.9. A discussion was held around risk 6 and the small amount of staff involved. It was **agreed** this will remain a risk until the organisation grows.

- 4.10. A discussion was held on risk 7 and the complexity and inter-dependency of the functions being carried out. It was **noted** that Commissioners and staff should have an overview of all the work being done.
- 4.11. A discussion was held on risk 8 and being compliant with the Public Duty Equality Act with relation to the Platform. It was discussed to broaden this to the rest of the Commission and the Welsh Language standards and view this as a training awareness rather than a high level risk.
- 4.12. A discussion was held on risk 9 and the platform not being in line with expectations. It was suggested to tweak the wording to reflect there is a compliance risk due to legal duties.
- 4.13. A discussion was held on risk 10 and the IT support that is currently in place with Qualification Wales. It was **agreed** to keep this risk, **noting** that there are mitigating actions being developed.
- 4.14. A discussion was held on risk 11 around the visibility of work undertaken and potential cyber-attacks. It was **noted** that the wording will be tweaked to reference that this is a whole Commission risk and not just specific to elections. A discussion was held on there being a risk around new staff and needing relevant training in place.
- 4.15. **ACTION:** SW to map mitigations that are already in place with each risk, to be brought back to February meeting.

5. Reviews

- 5.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 3rd December 2025 by the Head of Reviews and it was **noted**.
- 5.2. It was **noted** that Llandow will be retained with its existing boundaries due to opposition. It was **noted** that this will have a 28% variance in the number from the recommended county average.
- 5.3. It was **noted** that in the Carmarthenshire review there have been changes to place names.
- 5.4. It was **noted** that the only change in options from the Carmarthenshire draft stems from opposition to combining Llandeilio with Llanfihangel Aberbythych. The final recommendation is to combine Llanfihangel Aberbythych with Gorslas as this doesn't split the community.

5.5. It was **noted** that the Commission did not receive a representation from Carmarthenshire County Council.

5.6. The changes were **agreed**.

6. Remuneration

6.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 4th December by the Senior Democratic Health Policy Manager.

6.2. It was **noted** that the Committee met on the 3rd December to discuss the consultation feedback around the 6.4% increase linked to ASHE.

6.3. It was **noted** that the Committee recommends maintaining the link to ASHE but will review this next year and look at other indices.

6.4. It was **noted** that the Committee decided not to change the approach as it was not consulted on.

6.5. It was **agreed** to maintain the increase, **noting** that there is a commitment to review the indices used.

6.6. It was **noted** that the report will not be released before Christmas but will be published in January.

7. EMB

7.1. It was **noted** that one of the EMS suppliers has provided a text export for testing.

7.2. It was **agreed** to invite the Project Lead to a future Commission meeting to provide a full overview of the Platform.

7.3. It was **noted** that an assurance process has been progressing to ensure the co-ordination of elections and support for returning officers. It was **noted** that there is assurance from Royal Mail who will be attending the Board meeting in February.

7.4. It was **noted** that the Police and Crime Commissioner role has been disbanded however there could still be some by-elections taking place should there be any vacancies.

8. Budget Report 2025/26

- 8.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 4th December by the Chief Executive.
- 8.2. It was **noted** that after meeting with Sponsor Division, the Commission will surrender £200,000 back.
- 8.3. The budget was **agreed**.

9. Calendar of Events

- 9.1. The Commission **noted** the calendar.

10. AOB – Communications Framework

- 10.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 4th December by the Senior Communications and Engagement Manager.
- 10.2. A discussion was held around the equality objectives and whether the plan is reaching different characteristic groups.
- 10.3. A discussion was held around tweaking the language to reflect that media attention is not guaranteed.
- 10.4. A discussion was held on cross-working and reflecting this in the framework and developing plans that can work for each function.
- 10.5. **ACTION:** RF to make necessary changes and bring it back to the next Board meeting.

Date of Next Meeting: 28th January 2026