

**DEMOCRACY AND BOUNDARY COMMISSION CYMRU MEETING
HELD AT 10:00 AM ON 25 SEPTEMBER 2024 VIA MS TEAMS**

Present: Bev Smith (Chair), Michael Imperato (Deputy Chair) Dianne Bevan, Frank Cuthbert and Ginger Wiegand.

DBCC Officers attending: Chief Executive; Review Officer; Review Manager; Team Support Officer and Team Support Officer.

Guest: Bethan Williams Price (Observer)

Apologies: Finance Manager; Head of Policy and Programmes.

Time Started: 10:00

Time Finished: 11:28

1. Declarations of Interest

1.1. No Declarations of Interest were made.

2. Chair's Briefing

- 2.1. The Chair briefed that the Transition Implementation Board is due to meet on Thursday and there have been no further updates from Welsh Government regarding this.
- 2.2. The Chair updated the board that the Commission has had a successful recruitment process and that two candidates have been informally informed of their successful interviews. The Chair welcomed Bethan Williams Price, one of the successful candidates, as an observer to the meeting and confirmed that Bethan is due to officially commence her term in October. The Chair confirmed that the second successful candidate is due to join the Commission in December and will chair the EMB.
- 2.3. The Chair informed the board that the recent WECB meeting was attended by both herself and the CE. The meeting was positive, and time was spent looking at the lessons learned from the last General Election, which will be pulled together into a document to help inform preparations for the Senedd Elections in 2026. The Chair briefed that the CE will pick up later on her joint-presentation at the meeting with the Chair of the WECB.

- 2.4. The Chair provided an update on the preparations for a more formal induction programme for the two new Commissioners and confirmed that work is being done alongside the FM to complete the draft induction programme within the next few of weeks.

3. Minutes of the Commission meeting held on 31 July 2024

- 3.1. It was **Resolved** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 28 August 2024 as a correct record of the matters considered subject to minor amendments.

4. Issues Arising

- 4.1. It was **Resolved** to accept the Report noting any issues for later discussion in the meeting, and updated progress was noted on the following issues:
- 4.2. **(Issue 1)** It was **noted** that the Commission received 1 FOI request between 21 August 2024 and 18 September 2024. Discussion was held on the possibility of future FOI requests regarding representations received during the Senedd Review and the scope for discussion with WG regarding public education on future reviews.
- 4.3. **(Issue 2)** It was **noted** that the Commission is currently undertaking Community Reviews for Ceredigion, Swansea and Pembrokeshire. Further details are included in a separate agenda item.
- 4.4. **(Issue 3)** It was **noted** that the lease has been received and the physical move to the new Welsh Government premises has commenced. We are awaiting confirmation from Welsh Government regarding amendments to the lease, which can be signed once confirmation is received. Welsh Government security are currently preparing passes for Commission staff. The move to CP2 will happen before the lease expires at the current premises. All Commission meetings will continue to be held online until further notice.
- 4.5. **(Issue 4)** It was **noted** that there has not been a response or follow up to the complaint in relation to the Vale of Glamorgan review and this has now been closed.
- 4.6. It was **noted** that the Commission has been contacted by the Welsh Language Commissioner who are looking to open an investigation into the 'Head of Democratic Health' role after a receiving a complaint from a member of the public that the role is not 'Welsh essential'. It was **noted** that the Commission will responded accordingly.

5. Transition Programme (for discussion)

- 5.1. There was no update on the Transition Programme as the meeting is not until Thursday.

6. Future Work Programme

- 6.1. Consideration was given to the Future Work Programme Report dated 18 September 2024 by the CE.
- 6.2. It was **noted** that the Commissioner recruitment exercise has concluded with the 1st Commissioner starting their term on the 1st October 2024 and the 2nd Commissioner (also Chair of the EMB) will start on the 1st December 2024.
- 6.3. It was **noted** that the recruitment for Head of Democratic Health is currently on-going and has been advertised for the Civil Service Jobs and AEA websites. Advertisement for the role will conclude at 11:59 tonight.
- 6.4. It was **noted** that the Elections and Elected Bodies (Wales) Bill received Royal Assent on the 9 September 2024. The CE is in contact with Elena from WG regarding the commencement date. It was **noted** that the audit committee for the new EMB will be called the Governance and Audit Committee (GAC) and will commence work in January. A recruitment exercise will be held for a new independent Chair of this committee.
- 6.5. It was **noted** that at the recent WECB meeting, the Chair of the WECB and the CE of the Commission delivered a joint-presentation on the next steps in setting up the EMB. It was **noted** that the presentation was well-received and the Chair of the WECB confirmed that there has been no negative feedback regarding the proposed set-up of the EMB. Discussion was held regarding the transition to the EMB.

7. Budget Report 2024-25

- 7.1. Consideration was given to the Budget Monitoring Report dated 25 September 2024 by the FM which showed the budget position to the end of August 2024.
- 7.2. It was **noted** that the Commission is still awaiting confirmation of what the pay award will be. It was **noted** that the Commission only budgeted for a 3.7% award but should be able to cover a potential 5% pay award due to projected underspend on the Senedd Review and should not need the additional 1.3% offered by Welsh Government.
- 7.3. It was **noted** that the Commission is still awaiting the final office move costs but that the office move should be completed within budget.

8. Risk Management

- 8.1. Consideration was given to the DBCC Risk Register dated 25 September 2024.
- 8.2. The Commission considered that no changes were required to the risk register as it reflected the current situation. The Risk Register was **noted** and **agreed** by the Commission.

9. DBCC Future Work Programme Risk Register

- 9.1. Consideration was given to the DBCC Future Work Programme Risk Register dated 25 September 2024.
- 9.2. Discussion was held regarding the scope for items moving from the Future Work Programme Risk Register to the actual Risk Register.
- 9.3. Discussion was held regarding the Remuneration Panel Risk Register.
- 9.4. The Future Work Programme Risk Register was **noted** and **agreed** by the Commission.
- 9.5. **Action:** CE to contact Chair of Remuneration Panel to discuss Remuneration Panel Risk Register.

10. Reviews Progress Report

- 10.1. Consideration was given to the Reviews Progress Report dated 18 September 2024. It was **noted** that the Commission is currently undergoing Community Reviews in Ceredigion, Swansea and Pembrokeshire.
- 10.2. It was **noted** that Carmarthenshire has submitted their Community Review documentation and the Commission will make a decision at the next meeting on whether it accepts those proposals, with the Order making process to follow after that.
- 10.3. It was **noted** that the initial consultation period for the Senedd Review closes on Monday 30th October. Consideration was given to the number, quality and content of representations submitted thus far during the consultation period. It was **noted** that the Options Paper for the secondary consultation period is currently being prepared, and that a Secretariat meeting will be held on 15th October to discuss the revised options. These revised options will be taken to the October Commission meeting, with the aim to publish the revised proposals in December.
- 10.4. Discussion was held on possible revisions to the Senedd Options.

- 10.5.** It was **noted** that the consultation period for the Pembrokeshire Draft Proposals will close on 2nd September 2024
- 10.6.** It was **noted** that the Ceredigion Final Recommendations Report is due to publish next month. Discussion was held on a date for the Ceredigion Leaders Briefing.

11. Pembrokeshire Community Review – Final Report

- 11.1.** Consideration was given to the Pembrokeshire Community Review – Final Options paper dated 18 September by the RO. The Chair thanked the Secretariat for its work on the Review.
- 11.2.** Discussion was held on the Council Size Policy and the restrictions that this has placed on the review process. The worthwhile and effective work on amending boundary anomalies within this Review was **noted**.
- 11.3.** Discussion was held on the lessons learned from the review process for the Pembrokeshire Community Review.
- 11.4.** Consideration was given to the options for the Llawhaden, Clunderwen and Llandissilio West Community Review. **Option 4** was chosen by the Commission from the Final Options Paper (please refer to Decision Making Standard templates for further information).
- 11.5.** Consideration was given to the options for the Llangwm, Freystrop, Hook and Merlin’s Bridge Community Review. **Option 4** was chosen by the Commission from the Final Options Paper (please refer to Decision Making Standard templates for further information).
- 11.6.** Consideration was given to the options for the Rosemarket and Burton Community Review. **Option 1** was chosen by the Commission from the Final Options Paper (please refer to Decision Making Standard templates for further information).
- 11.7.** Consideration was given to the options for the Haverfordwest, Johnston, the Havens, Tiers Cross, Herbrandston and Tiers Cross Community Review. **Option 4** was chosen by the Commission from the Final Options Paper (please refer to Decision Making Standard templates for further information).
- 11.8.** Consideration was given to the options for the Camrose and Nolton and Roch Community Review. **Option 4** was chosen by the Commission from the Final Options Paper (please refer to Decision Making Standard templates for further information).

- 11.9.** Consideration was given to the options for the Milford Haven, Neyland and Stadwell Community Review. **Option 2** was chosen by the Commission from the Final Options Paper (please refer to Decision Making Standard templates for further information).
- 11.10.** Consideration was given to the options for the Rudbaxton and Spittal Community Review. **Option 4** was chosen by the Commission from the Final Options Paper (please refer to Decision Making Standard templates for further information).
- 11.11.** Consideration was given to the options for the Marloes and St Bride's, Dale and St Ishmaels Community Review. **Option 2** was chosen by the Commission from the Final Options Paper (please refer to Decision Making Standard templates for further information).
- 11.12.** Consideration was given to the options for the Maenclochog and New Moat Community Review. **Option 2** was chosen by the Commission from the Final Options Paper (please refer to Decision Making Standard templates for further information).
- 11.13.** Consideration was given to the options for the Wiston, Martletwy, and Uzmaston, Boulston and Slebech Community Review. **Option 2** was chosen by the Commission from the Final Options Paper (please refer to Decision Making Standard templates for further information).
- 11.14.** Consideration was given to the options for the Manorbier and Penally Community Review. **Option 3** was chosen by the Commission from the Final Options Paper (please refer to Decision Making Standard templates for further information).
- 11.15.** Consideration was given to the options for the Pembroke Dock Community Review. **Option 2** was chosen by the Commission from the Final Options Paper (please refer to Decision Making Standard templates for further information).
- 11.16.** Consideration was given to the options for the Puncheston, Letterston, Cwm Gwaun, Scleddau, and Fishguard and Goodwick Community Review. **Option 3** was chosen by the Commission from the Final Options Paper (please refer to Decision Making Standard templates for further information).
- 11.17.** Consideration was given to the options for the Angle, Hundleton, Coshaston Pembroke and Stackpole and Castlemartin Community Review. **Option 6** was

chosen by the Commission from the Final Options Paper (please refer to Decision Making Standard templates for further information).

- 11.18.** Consideration was given to the options for the St Florence, East Williamston, Carew and Jeffreyton Community Review. **Option 3** was chosen by the Commission from the Final Options Paper (please refer to Decision Making Standard templates for further information).
- 11.19.** Consideration was given to the options for the St Davids and Solva Community Review. **Option 3** was chosen by the Commission from the Final Options Paper (please refer to Decision Making Standard templates for further information).
- 11.20.** Consideration was given to the options for the Narberth, Lampeter Velfrey, Llanddewi Velfrey, and Templeton Community Review. **Option 4** was chosen by the Commission from the Final Options Paper (please refer to Decision Making Standard templates for further information).
- 11.21.** Consideration was given to the options for the Amroth, Kilgetty/Begelly, Saundersfoot, St Mary Out Liberty and Tenby Community Review. **Option 4** was chosen by the Commission from the Final Options Paper (please refer to Decision Making Standard templates for further information).
- 11.22.** Consideration was given to the options for the Dinas Cross and Newport Community Review. **Option 3** was chosen by the Commission from the Final Options Paper (please refer to Decision Making Standard templates for further information).
- 11.23.** Consideration was given to the options for the Boncath, Manordeifi, Cilgerran, Crymych, Clydau, Eglwysrwr, and Nevern Community Review. **Option 6a** was chosen by the Commission from the Final Options Paper (please refer to Decision Making Standard templates for further information).
- 11.24.** Consideration was given to the options for the Hayscastle and Wolfscastle Community Review. **Option 2** was chosen by the Commission from the Final Options Paper (please refer to Decision Making Standard templates for further information).
- 11.25.** Consideration was given to the options for the Pencaer and Mathry Community Review. **Option 3** was chosen by the Commission from the Final Options Paper (please refer to Decision Making Standard templates for further information).

11.26. Action: Lessons learned from the Pembrokeshire Community Review to be added to the agenda for the meeting with the Cabinet Secretary.

12. Senedd Review - Draft Revised Proposals Report

12.1. Consideration was given to the Senedd Review Draft Revised Proposals Report dated 10 September 2024 by the HoPP.

12.2. The draft content and the structure skeleton of the Senedd Review Draft Revised Proposals Report was **agreed** by the Commission in principle. It was **noted** that the final version of the Report and the final decisions will be presented to the Commission in the October meeting.

13. Senedd Review – Update on the Initial Consultation Period

13.1. Consideration was given to the Senedd Review: Update on the Initial Consultation Period Report dated 18 September 2024 by the CEM.

13.2. Consideration was given to the number of responses that the Commission has so far received during the Senedd Initial Consultation Period. It was **noted** that political advertising restrictions on the advertising company meant that the Commission was unable to advertise on Instagram and Facebook. Advertising was carried out on Google instead. It was **noted** that advertisement on buses has also been successfully carried out. It was **noted** that on the day of publication, the Commission’s post on X received 140,000 views. It was **noted** that the Senedd Review received wide newspaper coverage across Wales.

13.3. Discussion was held on public education surrounding the Commission’s work and the scope for the EMB carrying this work out in the future.

14. Calendar of Events

14.1. Consideration was given to the Calendar of Events.

14.2. It was **noted** that meetings will continue to be held online while the Commission prepares to move premises to CP2.

15. Any Other Relevant Business

18.1 No other relevant business was noted.

Date of Next Meeting: 30 October 2024