

**DEMOCRACY AND BOUNDARY COMMISSION CYMRU MEETING
HELD AT 10:00 AM ON 30 APRIL 2025 AT CP2 and via Teams**

Present: Bev Smith (Chair); Michael Imperato (Deputy Chair), Dianne Bevan, Frank Cuthbert, Ginger Wiegand, Bethan Williams Price, Karen Jones, Frances Duffy, Andrew Blackmore (Chair, Governance and Audit Committee)

DBCC Officers attending: Shereen Williams (Chief Executive); Tom Jenkins (Head of Reviews); Dave Carr (Finance Manager); Huw Blacker (Review Manager); Ellie Chapman (Team Support)

Guests: Osian Llywelyn (Deputy WLC)

Apologies: Roger Ashton-Winter (Senior Democratic Health Policy Manager), Mark Pascoe (Head of Democratic Health), Caitlin Lowry (Democratic Health Policy Officer)

Time Started: 10:02

Time Finished: 11:48

1. Declarations of Interest

1.1. No Declarations of Interest were made.

2. Chair's Briefing

2.1. The Chair's briefing was provided by the Chair. The Chair thanked Michael Imperato for chairing the Commission Meeting on 26 March 2025.

2.2. The Chair thanked the chairs who would be attending this afternoon's meeting.

2.3. The CE briefed that the Remit Letter from Welsh Government would be discussed this afternoon. The Draft Remit Letter is currently held but requires minor edits before agreement. It was noted that the Remit Letter would be agreed at the next meeting 29 May 2025.

2.4. The CE briefed that an update had been given to Sponsor Division on the Information Platform.

2.5. The CE provided an update on recruitment. Sponsor Division is looking at holding 1 recruitment session every 12 months, and that new appointments would need to be applied for in the generic way, with appointments not being extended or requested, going forward.

2.6. The Chair noted that a Self-Assessment Review exercise of arms-length bodies which contains a 100-question questionnaire for completion. The aim of the review would be to learn lessons and inform continuous improvement discussions going forward.

2.7. The CE raised the issue of delays in Community Review Orders being made by Welsh Government. The Vale of Glamorgan and Caerphilly Reviews are currently with the Minister and awaiting sign-off. Delays in Orders being made will affect the timescale of the ERP. The CE advised that the delays with Welsh Government are due to capacity within WG. However, it was noted that this is an issue for Welsh Government to resolve.

3. Minutes of the Commission meeting held on 26 March

3.1. It was **Resolved** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2025 as a correct record of the matters considered, subject to minor corrections.

4. Issues Arising

4.1. The CE provided an update on the recent Freedom of Information requests received. The CE also advised that monitoring of 'X' suggests that a group known as 'DOGE - or 'Senedd Waste' are sending FOI requests to Councils, Public Bodies and Government Departments asking about DEI initiatives.

4.2. The CE also provided an update on Recruitment for an independent Governance and Audit Committee member. The Commission had received 12 applications. 3 of these were unsuitable, however the other applicants all appeared to be strong. The candidates will be shortlisted on Friday 2 May and will be interviewed 22 May 2025.

5. EMB

5.1. The update was given verbally.

5.2. The First meeting of the EMB has been held with conversations taking place on the Board's priorities for the next 12 months. A discussion was held on the way in which the EMB has been established in law and the need to ensure that the DBCC Board has sufficient assurance as to the way functions are delivered.

- 5.3. It was noted that a Draft version of the Rules and Procedures document has been circulated. It was discussed that the heading of Resources would be amended to Governance and Resources.
- 5.4. A detailed discussion was held around the status of the legal entity of the Board and the responsibilities of the Board, ensuring that the DBCC board has sufficient assurance as to the way the functions are delivered. The Paper will be signed off at the next meeting by the Commission (Board), and the agreed governance documents will be received at the July Board meeting for information.

6. Remuneration

- 6.1. An update was provided on the work inherited from Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW).
- 6.2. Discussions to be held on the naming of the panel from 'Remuneration Sub-Committee' to 'Remuneration Committee'.
- 6.3. The committee also needs to clarify whether decisions made by the committee are simply recommendations or are final decisions.

7. Budget Monitoring Report 2024-25

- 7.1. The FM provided an update to the Budget Report 2024-2025. There had been several transfers of funds between budget categories at the year end to address some minor over and underspends and these were noted.
- 7.2. It was reported that all of the Commission's Grant in Aid allocation for 2024-25 had been drawn down to meet expenditure, with £4,970 being left unspent at the end of March 2025. It was noted that this was within the £20,000 yearend limit for the carryover of unspent funds set by Welsh Government.
- 7.3. It was **noted** that Resource expenditure was underspent by £32,000 due to several large prepayments being made at the end of 2024-25, the most notable of these being an advance 5 year licence for MapInfo mapping software and a training programme to be delivered during 2025-26 which had to be paid for in advance in order to secure it.
- 7.4. The Commission **noted** the budget report and position for the end of 2024-25.

8. Risk Management – Risk Register

- 8.1. Consideration was given to the DBCC Risk Register as agreed at the March meeting. It was noted that a separate risk register had been drafted for the EMB and a discussion was held on ensuring that the governance needed to support

the EMB is aligned with the DBCC governance arrangements to avoid risk of duplication.

- 8.2. The current Corporate Risk Register was **agreed** with no changes required at this time.

9. Reviews Progress Report

- 9.1. Consideration was given to the Reviews Progress Report dated 17 April 2025 by the HoR.
- 9.2. The Commission **agreed** the draft of the Carmarthenshire (Llangyndeyrn and Adjacent Communities) Order 2025 as drafted by the legal advisor. The Commission will publish the Order which will come into force the day after the Order is made.
- 9.3. The Commission **noted** the position of the other community review being carried out by the local authorities.
- 9.4. The Commission **agreed** the final version of the Policy and Practice document with the suggestions from the emails received since the last meeting included. The Commission discussed the publication of the document and the timetable in light of not yet receiving any decisions on community reviews from Welsh Government Ministers and agreed that the Policy and Practice document could be published, subject to minor amendments and some Welsh Language updates from Bethan.
- 9.5. The Commission **agreed** the slides and briefing script that would be used in the information sessions at the outset of the reviews.

10. Calendar of Events

- 10.1. Consideration was given to the Calendar of Events and it was **agreed**.

11. Any Other Relevant Business – Comms and social media

- 11.1. The Chair requested volunteers to attend the One Voice Wales conference on the Commission's behalf. Individuals will contact the chair separately to express interest.

Date of Next Meeting: 29 May 2025