

DEMOCRACY AND BOUNDARY COMMISSION CYMRU

GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 17 JUNE 2025 VIA MS TEAMS (10:00 – 10:40)

GAC Members Present: Andrew Blackmore (Independent Chair), Kalwant Grewal (Independent Member), Jassa Scott (Independent Member), Dianne Bevan (Member), Bethan Price (Member)

MIAA Representative Present: Paula Fagan

DBCC Officers Present: Shereen Williams (Chief Executive), David Burley (Head of Business), David Carr (Finance Manager)

1. Apologies for Absence

1.1 There were no apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of Interest

2.1 Jassa Scott declared that she dealt with Qualifications Wales staff as part of her role in Estyn, but not in relation to ICT matters. The Committee considered that this did not constitute a conflict of interest.

3. DBCC Provision of ICT Support Services

3.1 Shereen Williams outlined the main points in the paper. She said that the current Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Qualifications Wales (QW) had worked well and met the DBCC's needs in the past before the requirement to develop and maintain the Welsh Elections Information Platform (WEIP). She pointed out QW's ICT support did not cover the DBCC's web sites or consultation portals which were maintained by external contractors. Cyber Security and IASME certification were also provided by third party organisations, but QW assisted the DBCC in achieving these certifications.

3.2 The paper gave three options for the future provision of ICT support services:

- Option 1 – continue with the existing arrangements with QW providing day to day ICT support together with other providers handling portal and platform builds, maintenance and upgrades.
- Option 2 – develop an in-house ICT team within DBCC and retain other providers handling portal and platform builds, maintenance and upgrades.
- Option 3 – continue with the existing arrangements with QW until 2026-27 and review the suitability of the arrangements following the build of the WEIP (assumed to be in early 2026).

3.3 Kalwant Grewal enquired whether the risk to the WEIP under the current arrangements outlined at Option 1 had been recorded as a risk on the DBCC risk registers, and if so, what the mitigating actions were. It was **agreed** that the DBCC

risk register would be reviewed to ensure that the risks to the WEIP in respect of continuing with the current ICT support arrangements were covered.

Action: Finance Manager **By:** 30/06/25

- 3.4 in respect of the option to develop in-house DBCC ICT services it was considered that this would require additional funding from Welsh Government and depend on the recruitment of qualified ICT staff. This would be subject to the risk of a possible skills shortage and the resulting inability to recruit suitable staff. Jassa Scott said that she could ask Estyn's Head of their in-house ICT arrangements to discuss the option with the DBCC. It was **agreed** that Jassa Scott would pass Estyn's Head of ICT's details to Shereen Williams.

Action: Jassa Scott **By:** 31/07/25

- 3.5 It was noted that the DBCC currently had cyber liability insurance cover of £25,000 but that this could be increased to £250,000 for a relatively small increase in premium costs. It was **agreed** that the DBCC should increase their cyber security insurance cover to £250,000.

Action: Head of Business **By:** 30/09/25

- 3.6 There was discussion regarding the legal aspects of the current SLA with QW and whether it was legally binding that QW must provide a service to the DBCC without terminating it at short notice. There was also a question of liability in the event of a data breach etc. It was considered that any legal aspects of the SLA needed to be more clearly defined. It was **agreed** that DBCC should send the SLA to their legal advisor to be reviewed, including any advice on how the legal side could be strengthened if possible.

Action: Chief Executive **By:** 31/07/25

- 3.7 It was considered that the QW SLA should also be reviewed by DBCC to determine whether it was still fit for purpose in light of the changes to the DBCC's ICT requirements. It was **agreed** that the DBCC would internally review the SLA and send a copy to Paula Fagan for MIAA to review.

Action: Head of Business **By:** 30/06/25

- 3.8 The Committee **agreed** that Option 3, to continue with QW until the WEIP platform was built and then review the suitability of the ICT support arrangements, possibly utilising the WEIP funds for staffing costs to recruit inhouse ICT staff, presented the best way forward. It was considered that this decision would be with the proviso that the existing ICT support arrangements be reviewed and tightened if possible in the meantime.

4. **Any Other Business**

- 4.1 there was no other business

5. **Date of Next Meeting**

5. The date of the next meeting was 28 July 2025 at 9:30 a.m..