

DEMOCRACY AND BOUNDARY COMMISSION CYMRU

GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 18 FEBRUARY 2026 VIA MS TEAMS (10:00 – 10:45)

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

MIAA Representative Present: Gary Baines

DBCC Officers Present: Shereen Williams (Chief Executive), Mark Pascoe (Head of Democratic Health), David Burley (Head of Business), David Carr (Finance Manager), Cher Cooke (Review Manager)

1. Apologies for Absence

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Dianne Bevan (Member) and Julie Rees (Audit Wales).

2. Declarations of Interest

2.1 There were no declarations of Interest.

3. Minutes of Meeting held on 21 January 2026

3.1 The minutes of the Committee meeting held on 21 January 2026 were agreed and adopted.

4. Chief Executive's Update

4.1 Shereen Williams gave a verbal update on the current situation with DBCC:

- The main issue was testing the Welsh Elections Information Platform (WEIP) which had gone well. Although there were some bugs, they had not been significant. It was noted that this issue would be dealt with more fully under agenda item 7.
- The electoral review work was ongoing and some Orders were due to be passed shortly.
- Preparation work for the next Senedd review was underway and the DBCC Chair had already held discussions with the Senedd Commission on what the DBCC can do in terms of supporting the induction of new Senedd Members.

4.2 The Chair thanked Shereen Williams for her report.

5. Issues Arising from Previous Meetings.

- 5.1 The Committee noted the issues arising from the meetings held on 21 January 2026 that had been actioned and those that were not yet completed.
- 5.2 In respect of the outstanding issue of ICT Security training for members, it was reported that a date of 24 March had been set for members to undertake the training.
- 5.3 In respect of the outstanding issue of Indemnity Insurance, Shereen Williams reported that she had made enquiries with other Welsh Government ALB's who had confirmed that they did not have insurance. The Committee noted the guidance contained in Managing Welsh Public Money which recommended that a cost benefit analysis on taking out insurance be carried out.
- 5.4 Shereen Williams said that she was currently in discussion with the DBCC's legal advisor regarding undertaking scenario planning to cover all the key decisions made by the DBCC and what the legal liability was for them within the coming weeks and that a report on the outcome should be available for the Committee's March meeting. It was **agreed** that the Chief Executive would update the DBCC on the position at their next meeting.
Action: Chief Executive **By:** 03/03/26
- 5.4 In respect of the outstanding issues of reviewing the GAC Self-Assessment exercise it was reported that this was currently being considered by MIAA and Gary Baines said that it should be completed by the Committee's March meeting.
Action: Finance Manager **By:** 03/03/26

6. Internal Audit: WEIP Checkpoint One Follow-Up Report

- 6.1 Gary Baines presented the Follow-Up report which addressed points raised in the Checkpoint One assurance report on the WEIP published in September 2025. He said that follow up had been satisfactory and that there were no specific points he wished to draw the Committee's attention to.
- 6.2 It was reported that, due to the time critical nature of the WEIP project, MIAA were currently working on assurance checkpoints two and three with the intention of producing an interim report to inform the go/ no go live decision, and it was expected that this report would be completed by the end of the week.
- 6.2 Following the WEIP go live decision, MIAA would then do a second piece of work soon after around the governance process and that would be reported to the Committee's March meeting.
- 6.3 The Chair thanked Gary Baines for his report which was noted by the Committee.

7. EMB Welsh Elections Information Platform (WEIP) Project Progress.

- 7.1 The Committee noted the update report on the current status of the WEIP project and the likelihood of it going live as planned. The decision on whether the WEIP would go live lay with the WEIP Project Steering Group who were due to meet in

order to make that decision on 25 February 2026. It was **agreed** that the Steering Group's go/no decision would be notified promptly to the Committee.

Action: Head of Democratic Health **By:** 25/02/26

- 7.2 At the current time the project status had gone from amber to green and it was deemed to be highly likely that the WEIP would go live on the intended date of 2 March 2026. It was reported that all required contracts were now in place, the advertising had been recently signed off by the EMB, guidance for returning officers published on the DBCC website and an independent IT health check had been completed the previous week. The platform testing was expected to be completed by the end of the current week with the few remaining bugs being dealt with.
- 7.3 Although there were still some problems at the administration side of the platform, the user side was complete and all intended deliverables had been achieved and would be available for platform users. It was not expected that the additional platform administration requirements would impact on staff resources significantly.
- 7.4 The Committee wished to record their gratitude to the DBCC Democratic Health Team staff for all their hard work in meeting the tight WEIP deadlines.

8. GAC Chair's Draft Annual Report

- 8.1 The Committee noted the GAC Chair's Annual Report for 2025-26, which would be further reviewed for completeness and accuracy after the financial year end.
- 8.2 It was noted that the Committee's Terms of Reference at Appendix 1 to the report stated that the Committee will meet at least three times a year, but the number of meetings had significantly exceeded that during the current year. It was considered that this had been due to the level of risk associated with the various projects the DBCC had undertaken during the year, but that the norm should be four main quarterly meetings plus any ad-hoc meetings required and that this should be adopted for subsequent years.
- 8.3 It was agreed that the report would be updated and tabled at a Committee meeting after the financial year end before being passed to the DBCC meeting for review and endorsement.

9. Review of Corporate Risk Register.

- 9.1 The Committee considered the latest version of the Corporate Risk Register which had been reviewed by the Senior Management Team to determine the appropriate mitigating actions and risk owners.
- 9.2 It was noted that Risk 2 mitigating action should include Plain Welsh documentation as well as Plain English. It was **agreed** that this would be amended.
Action: Finance Manager **By:** 25/02/26
- 9.3 The Committee queried the mitigating action for Risk 9 regarding IT and Qualifications Wales (QW) undertaking any requirements additional to the business as usual service they provided. Shereen Williams explained that this was not a

standard procedure but only a possible option if there were a need for an expansion of services provided by QW, in which case DBCC could ask QW whether they could undertake the additional work and, if so, provide a quote for it.

- 9.4 The Chair said that it had been previously agreed that DBCC members would have a more direct involvement with risk ownership but that this had not been reflected in the updated Corporate Risk Register. Shereen Williams said that this was something that would need to be discussed with DBCC members further at their February meeting and it may be a combination of risk owners with a board member and reporting officer being joint risk owners.

10. Complaints.

- 10.1 The Committee noted the 'Nil' report on complaints received during 2025-26 to the end of January 2026.

11. GAC Workplan 205-26

- 11.1 The Committee noted the Governance and Audit Committee Workplan for 2025-26.
- 11.2 It was noted that, due to the current internal audit work on the WEIP, the Internal Audit Annual Report and associated documents would need to be deferred until the first GAC meeting in the next financial year.

12. Any Other Business

- 12.1 There was no other business.

Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting will be 3 March 2026 at 09:30 a.m.