DEMOCRACY AND BOUNDARY COMMISSION CYMRU ELECTORAL MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING

HELD AT 10:00 AM ON 10th April 2026 ON MICROSOFT TEAMS

Present: Karen Jones (Chair); Eifion Evans (Deputy Chair); Bethan Williams Price (Member); Beverly Owen (Member); Neal Cockerton (Member); Paul Orders (Member); Frances O'Brien (Deputising for Martin Nicholls); Ian Bancroft (DBCC Commissioner).

DBCC Officers attending: Shereen Williams (Chief Executive); Mark Pascoe (Head of Democratic Health); Michal Harris-Edwards (Business Support Officer).

Apologies: Martin Nicholls

Time Started: 10:00
Time Finished: 10:22

Closed session for EMB members and officials

1. **Live issues**

1.1. The Chair **briefed** the Board on the idea behind having closed sessions regularly.

1.2. It was **noted** that there have been significant concerns around the wording of the conduct order in relation to the ordering of political parties on the ballot paper and that this will need to be picked up with Welsh Government ahead of future elections.

1.3. It was **noted** that there have been some minor issues with the WEIP.

1.4. It was **noted** that a small number of candidates had gone to Royal Mail to obtain an approval code for their election address, noting that they did not want to physically post it. As a result, Royal Mail refused to issue a code. Officers advised these candidates to follow the Royal Mail process and to publish a small number of election addresses to obtain the code.

1.5. It was **noted** that the EMB had received an approval code from Royal Mail for an election address that it viewed as problematic due to the language used. Officers had gone back to Royal Mail, and Royal Mail

had not sought legal advice on the leaflet. Royal Mail subsequently did seek legal advice and asked the candidate to amend one line. Officers is still concerned about address, and are now seeking advice from a specialist chambers, who will review any such cases before publication on the WEIP.

1.6. The Chair **noted** that if Royal Mail has approved an election address, we should publish it. The regulations protect the EMB against legal challenge.

1.7. It was **noted** that the EMB does not have legal personality, and so any legal action taken against the Board would actually be against the DBCC.

1.8. It was **noted** that a process needs to be developed, with a clear flowchart of responsibility on who makes the call to publish.

1.9. It was **noted** that we have to prepare for the local elections next year, since Royal Mail is not involved in the approval of election addresses in those. It was **noted** that this should include a change to the legislation.

1.10. It was **noted** that the election address that uses offensive language has not been sent into us by the candidate, which is when we process it for publication. This is just preparing for that eventuality.

1.11. It was **noted** that there was a system error with the party emblems. This has now been fixed.

1.12. It was **noted** that a meeting took place between the EMB and Royal Mail about recent reports of parcels having priority. Royal Mail has said that there will be no problems were the election is concerned.

1.13. It was **noted** that the Electoral Commission's guidance for election observers has changed as a result of the family voting issue. It was noted that observers must now report on the spot. It was **noted** that Democracy Volunteers say that that is not in line with international election standards. It was also **noted** that 30-40 observers will be present in Wales, with at least one in every constituency.

1.14. It was **noted** that Democracy Observers would prefer to contact the election team itself, and not Presiding Officers, if they see any issues on election day.

1.15. It was **noted** that the WEIP will meet the minimum requirements set out in the legislation.

1.16. It was **noted** that more work will need to be done for the local government elections.

1.17. It was **noted** that practice notes have been issued for the election.

1.18. It was **noted** that there has been an offer for tutoring from Coleg Cymraeg, but no one has taken us up on that offer.

1.19. It was **noted** that we do not need to receive assurances from the Returning Officers on the issuing of these practice notes – it is down to the ROs, and the EMB just provides consistency.