LOCAL DEMOCRACY AND BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES MEETING HELD AT 11 AM ON 15 DECEMBER 2022 AT HASTINGS HOUSE AND VIA MS TEAMS

Present: Mrs Bev Smith (Chair); Mr Michael Imperato; Mrs Dianne Bevan.

LDBCW Officers attending: Mrs Shereen Williams (Chief Executive); Mr Tom Jenkins (Head of Policy and Programmes); Mr Dave Carr (Finance Manager); Miss Carys Vaughan (Review Officer).

External attendees: Jorren Knibbe (No5 Chambers) joined at 11:17, left at 12:18.

Apologies: Mr Frank Cuthbert.

Time Started: 11:07
Time Finished: 12:38

1. Declarations of Interest

1.1. No Declarations of Interest were made.

2. Chair's Briefing

2.1. The Chair briefed the Commission on the meeting 14 December 2022 with Lisa James from the Commission's Sponsor Division in Welsh Government (WG):

- The Chair informed the meeting that the two 'Diversity in Democracy' events held last week were a success. Some of the information from the events will feed into the Commissions White Paper response. The CE will chair a further event on 17th January 2023. Elaina will use information from this event for the Commissions White Paper response. The Minister will release a statement in January 2023 on Diversity in Democracy to stimulate interest.
- The current budget position has been confirmed, and the Commission will receive an extra £150,000 for the 2023- 24 budget.
- The job description and personal specification for the fifth Commissioner and IRP position have been revised and will be advertised in the new year. The Chair will share the final version with Commissioners. It was **noted** that the IRP position is open to current Commissioners.
- The programme board for the IRP met again this week and discussed potential research projects. Items discussed included student accommodation and tourism. There are funds in the budget to start the research in the new year.

- The Chair asked Lisa for an update on job evaluation and is awaiting a response.
- A letter has been received from the Public Bodies Unit for a tailored review in 2026. The Commission will ask for the review to start at the beginning of 2026 to avoid any impact on the Senedd Review. Lisa is in agreement with the request and the CE will also inform the Chair of the IRP.
- The Chair will share documents on the Effectiveness Review with Commissioners. The documents set out the current position and the proposals for the IRP. The CE will add the Effectiveness Review as an agenda item for the Away Day in January.
- The CE has received contact from WG regarding the Commission's domain name. The CE agreed to discuss this with Lisa.
- **Action:** The CE to inform the Chair of the IRP that the Commission will ask for a start date in early 2026 for the Public Bodies Unit tailored review.
- **Action:** The CE to add the Effectiveness Review as an agenda item for the Away Day in January.
- **Action:** The CE to discuss the Commissions domain name with Lisa.
- **Action:** The Chair to share the final version of the job description and personal specification for the fifth Commissioner and IRP position with Commissioners.

3. Minutes of the Commission meeting held on 16 November 2022

3.1. It was **Resolved** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2022 as a correct record of the matters considered.

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 9) –** The CE reported that the Commission had a positive recruitment exercise for the role of Team Support Officer (permanent) and has made an offer to the successful candidate. Subject to satisfactory checks and references, it is anticipated the postholder will be in place by mid-January. There was also another outstanding candidate, an offer of a fixed-term 12 months contract has been made to them.

4.3. **(Issue 6)** – The CE has sent comments to WG mainly regarding Welsh Language names. It was **agreed** that the Commission will decide on names and send to the Welsh Language Commissioner for approval. It was **agreed** that due to time restraints the Commission will not run a consultation on names.

4.4. **(Issue 7)** – The Commission viewed the newly renovated top floor for public bodies at CP2 last week and are currently awaiting more information on the premises. The Commission has requested that barriers be put in place as the space is currently open plan. Also, for civil servants to not be permitted in the area with access restricted to Public Bodies only. The Commission are waiting for a briefing pack and plan. The Chair informed the Commission that this matter was raised with Lisa in the meeting yesterday. It was **agreed** that the Commission needed more detail to make an informed decision and that the CE should send an email to WG asking for the required information and copy in Elaina and Lisa.

The Commission are waiting to hear back from Ethical Property after a paragraph in relation to arbitration has been added to the Commissions current lease.

Action: The CE to send an email to WG asking for the required information on CP2 and copy in Elaina and Lisa.

5. Budget Report 2022-23

5.1. Consideration was given to the report by the FM and the budget position to the end of November 2022 was **noted** and **approved**.

5.2. The Commission **noted** the virements between Bottled Water and Staff Care Hire budgets to address a small overspend in the former.

5.3. It was **noted** that the underspend was £115,927 at the end of November, mainly due to additional staff being recruited later than intended. The Secretariat had identified areas of expenditure where some of the underspend can be used including £8,000 on Surface Pros and £2,500 for procurement of a new Franking Machine. The Chair said that she had informed Sponsor Division that some of the underspend will be used for research projects in the new year.

6. Risk Management

6.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 23 November 2022 by the FM.

6.2. It was **noted** that there had not been any changes to the Corporate Risk Register since the last meeting. It was considered that no changes to the current risk register were necessary at this time.

6.3. It was **agreed** to review the Risk Appetite at the Away Day in January 2023.

7. Welsh Government Handy Assessment Risk Tool (HART)

7.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 17 November 2022 by the FM.

7.2. As **agreed** in the last meeting, the FM had cross referenced the Commission's Corporate and Operational Risk Registers with the risks on the HART Risk Register. Risks considered not applicable to the Commission had been removed from the HART risk register whilst those considered relevant to the Commission, albeit with low likelihood, had been added to the Operational risk register.

7.3. It was reported that the Welsh Government had condensed the HART risk register to one Risk Assessment Table rather than two, and the new risk register had been populated with the original identified risks except for those risks deemed not to be applicable to the Commission as noted in paragraph 7.2 above.

7.4. The Commission considered that the risks and risk scores on the HART risk register were accurate. It was **agreed** that the Commission would share individual risks and risk scores for each risk area with the Sponsor Division at the liaison meeting in early December.

8. Report on ARAC Meeting held 11 November 2022

8.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 18 November 2022 by the FM and the Commission **noted** the outcome of the Audit Committee.

8.2. The Commission **agreed** to identify areas for deep dive research at the Away Day in January 2023 before deciding whether the Commission or the ARAC would be responsible for the research.

8.3. It was **noted** that the ARAC considered the Internal Audit Report on the audit of Key Financial Controls and a Substantial Assurance rating had been given with no audit recommendations raised.

9. Discussion on WG White Paper

9.1. The Chair welcomed Jorren Knibbe to the meeting and Commission Members gave introductions to their roles.

9.2. A discussion was had on the Commissions response to the White Paper, and it was **agreed** that minor amendments would be made by the Chair and CE before the final version is shared with Commissioners.

9.3. **Action:** The Chair and CE to make minor amendments to the response to the White Paper and share final version of the response with Commissioners.

10. Calendar of Events

10.1. The Commission **noted** the Calendar.

10.2. It was **noted** that the Away Day will be held in January 2023. The CE **agreed** to draft an agenda for the Away Day and asked for Commission Members to send through potential agenda items for the event. It was **noted** that the Effectiveness Review and Risk Register were included on the draft agenda.

10.3. **Action:** Commission Members to send potential agenda items for the Away Day to the CE. The CE to draft an agenda for the Away Day.

11. Any Other Relevant Business

11.1. There was no AOB for discussion.

Date of Next Meeting: 18 January 2023