

## FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Tuesday, 24 October 2023
<b>Report Subject</b>	New consultation: Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Bill
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Governance)

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Welsh Parliament's Reform Bill Committee are currently scrutinising the [Senedd Cymru \(Members and Elections\) Bill](#).

As part of their work, they are undertaking a consultation that runs until 3 November 2023, to seek views on the changes the Bill proposes.

This report therefore draws attention to that consultation and provides details of how responses can be submitted to the Committee.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Council considers the consultation on the Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) (Wales) Bill and provides views which will be collated to form the council's response to the consultation.
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### REPORT DETAILS

<b>1.00</b>	<b>EXPLAINING THE NEW CONSULTATION: SENEDD CYMRU (MEMBERS AND ELECTIONS) BILL</b>
1.01	On 18 September 2023, the <a href="#">Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Bill</a> was introduced in the Senedd.
1.02	In summary, the Bill seeks to:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the size of the Senedd to 96 Members.</li> <li>• Decrease the length of time between Senedd ordinary general elections from five to four years.</li> <li>• Increase the maximum number of Deputy Presiding Officers from one to two.</li> <li>• Increase the legislative limit on the size of the Welsh Government to 17 (plus the First Minister and Counsel General), with power to further increase the limit to 18 or 19.</li> <li>• Require candidates to, and Members of, the Senedd to be resident in Wales (by disqualifying candidates and Members who are not registered to vote in a Senedd constituency).</li> <li>• Provide a mechanism for the Seventh Senedd’s consideration of job-sharing of offices relating to the Senedd (by requiring the Llywydd in the Seventh Senedd to propose the establishment of a Senedd committee to review specified matters).</li> <li>• Change the Senedd’s electoral system so that all Members are elected via closed list proportional representation, with votes translated into seats via the D’Hondt formula.</li> <li>• Repurpose and rename the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales; provide the renamed Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru (DBCC) with the functions needed to establish new Senedd constituencies and undertake ongoing reviews of Senedd constituency boundaries; and provide instructions for the DBCC to follow when undertaking boundary reviews.</li> <li>• Provide for review of the operation and effect of the new legislative provisions following the 2026 election (by requiring the Llywydd after the election to propose the establishment of a Senedd committee to review specified matters).</li> </ul>
1.03	<p>Accompanying the Bill is the <a href="#">Explanatory Memorandum incorporating the Regulatory Impact Assessment and Explanatory Notes</a> document.</p> <p>This document provides the background to the Bill, what it aims to achieve, impact assessments, and includes an assessment of the Bill’s financial Implications.</p>
1.04	<p>It is currently at Stage 1 (of 4) of the legislative process and will be scrutinised by the Welsh Parliament’s Reform Bill Committee.</p>
1.05	<p>The Committee will consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The general principles of the Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) (Wales) Bill and whether there is a need for legislation to deliver the Bill’s stated policy objectives.</li> <li>• Any potential barriers to the implementation of the Bill’s provisions, and whether the Bill and accompanying Explanatory Memorandum and Regulatory Impact Assessment take adequate account of them.</li> <li>• Whether there are any unintended consequences arising from the Bill.</li> <li>• The Welsh Government’s assessment of the financial and other impacts of the Bill.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The appropriateness of the powers in the Bill for Welsh Ministers to make subordinate legislation.</li> <li>• Matters relating to the competence of the Senedd including compatibility with the European Convention on Human Rights.</li> <li>• The balance between the information contained on the face of the Bill and what is left to subordinate legislation.</li> <li>• Any matter related to the quality of the legislation.</li> <li>• Any other matter related to the constitutional or other implications of the Bill.</li> </ul>
1.06	As part of their considerations, the Committee is undertaking a consultation to seek views on the proposals. The consultation opened on 21 September 2023 and runs until 3 November 2023.
1.07	To provide views on the Bill, submissions can be emailed to <a href="mailto:SeneddReform@senedd.wales">SeneddReform@senedd.wales</a> or by post to Reform Bill Committee, Welsh Parliament, Cardiff, CF99 1SN.
1.08	<p>Members can make their own submission direct to the Reform Bill Committee, as can political groups from within council.</p> <p>Alternatively/in addition, the Democratic Services Manager will compile a response based on discussion at the Council meeting and submit it to the Senedd Committee.</p>

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	<p>Contained within the <a href="#">Explanatory Document</a> that accompanies the Bill, reference is made to a £60,000 'transitional cost' for Local Authorities (page 126).</p> <p>The same section (page 126) of the document also indicates that ongoing cost savings for Local Authorities amounting to £751,000 have been identified up to 2030.</p> <p>An explanation of the costs and savings for Local Authorities are provided from page 153 of the document.</p>

<b>3.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT</b>
3.01	This report introduces the consultation being undertaken by the Welsh Parliament's Reform Bill Committee.

<b>4.00</b>	<b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
4.01	Not required as this is a consultation from Welsh Parliament.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	None.

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	<p><a href="#">Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Bill Explanatory Memorandum</a></p> <p><b>Contact Officer:</b> Steven Goodrum, Democratic Services Manager  <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 702320  <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:Steven.Goodrum@flintshire.gov.uk">Steven.Goodrum@flintshire.gov.uk</a></p>

<b>7.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
7.01	<p><b>Welsh Parliament:</b> The Welsh Parliament is the democratically elected body that represents the interests of Wales and its people. Commonly known as the Senedd, it makes laws for Wales, agrees Welsh taxes and holds the Welsh Government to account.</p> <p><b>Reform Bill Committee:</b> The Committee's role is to consider Bills referred to it by the Senedd's Business Committee. The Committee comprises four members from different political groups represented in the Senedd.</p>