

Local Government and Public Services Committee

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Meeting date: Wednesday 7th March 2007

Venue: Committee Room 2, Senedd, National Assembly for Wales

Title: Towards the Commission for Equality and Human Rights

1. This short report sets out a number of key developments in the progress being made towards establishing the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights by October 2007.

2. The fundamental objective of the Commission, as summarised in the Equality Act 2006, is to support the development of a society where:

- There is respect for the dignity and worth of every individual;
- There is respect for and protection of each individual's human rights;
- People's ability to achieve their potential is not limited by prejudice or discrimination;
- Every individual has an equal opportunity to participate in society; and
- There is mutual respect between groups based on understanding and valuing diversity and on shared respect for equality and human rights.

3. Dr Nicola Brewer was appointed the CEHR's first CEO in December 2006. She will take up her appointment on 5th March. She is currently Director General Europe at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

4. The CEHR Board chaired by Trevor Phillips have had initial discussions of the vision, mission and ways of working for the new Commission. The organisational design will reflect these. A transition team is currently gathering the information needed to make the necessary series of decisions. Dr Neil Wooding the Commissioner for Wales is involved in discussions on the best way to reflect the important role of Wales in the organisational structure.

5. The process for recruitment to the statutory Scotland, Wales and Disability Committees is being worked out. The Wales Committee will be responsible for overseeing the work of the CEHR in Wales, deciding the strategy of the CEHR in relation to promoting equality and human rights in Wales and for advising the Board on the way in which its policies and programmes may affect people living in Wales. The Wales Committee will be chaired by the Wales Commissioner and will provide

an informed and balanced perspective on a range of issues in relation to the broader equality and human rights agenda in Wales. It will need to work closely with a number of Welsh institutions including the Welsh Assembly Government and the National Assembly for Wales.

6. The main CEHR office will be in Cardiff however no decision has been made with regard to the exact location. The arrangements for the Commission's regional presence will be subject to discussion by the Board.

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