

David Rees MS  
Deputy Llywydd  
Chair, Llywydd's Committee  
Senedd Cymru  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff, CF99 1SN

13 November 2023

Dear Chair,

**Pwnc | Subject: Evidence to the Llywydd Committee on the Electoral Commission's financial estimates 2024/25**

Thank you to the Committee for its careful consideration of the Electoral Commission's financial estimate for 2024/25. We understand your concerns regarding the impact our increased budget could have on directly funded bodies and recognise the inflationary pressure under which government departments are currently operating. We have considered your request and propose a reduction to our estimate of £94,000, equating to 5.67%. This would bring our revised overall Wales budget to £1,564,420.

The reductions we have identified are as follows:

- a) Restructuring translation services: We have identified potential savings in the domain of external translation services which can be met through the redistribution of internal resource. Whilst there is some risk of delay to publications and correspondence presented by this change, resulting from an increased workload for existing translation staff, we will work to mitigate this through additional planning and preparation work. We believe we can achieve savings of circa £10,000 without any significant impact on service quality.
- b) Streamlining support from the legislation team: The previous proposal was for the team's time to be split 20/20/60 between legislative work in Wales, Scotland and Westminster. In the pursuit of a more cautious allocation of resource to Wales, the ratio for Welsh legislation will be reduced to 10%. We will seek to carefully manage new and existing work commitments to enable proper consideration of Senedd legislation and coordination of our implementation activities within this limit. This will yield savings of £22,000.
- c) Allocation of funding for senior advisor posts: Upon detailed review, we identified that the two positions initially fully funded by the Senedd but now designated to be split between the Llywydd's Committee and the Speaker's Committee had not been properly reflected within the estimate. Proper allocation of these posts would reduce the Wales budget by circa £62,000. We apologise for this error – this is due to some of the significant

pressures we have been facing as a result of the historic underinvestment on some areas of the Commission's work, which includes finance. We are in the process of currently addressing these issues but this work will require the support which we alluded to at the scrutiny session. We will follow-up on this work with separate communications providing additional context, which will include the requested detail on estates and proposals for improved communications.

We hope the Committee will be satisfied with this proposal, which we are confident represents a proportionate and prudent set of steps to address the concerns raised, without risking unmanageable impacts on the important activity the Commission will be conducting over this period. Though without scheduled elections in this year, it will be an important period of activity to underpin the achievement of objectives for voters and for the wider democratic process, including support of the Welsh Government's reforms. We look forward to continuing our work with you and others in support of this important agenda.

Yours sincerely,



**Elan Closs Stephens DBE**  
**Electoral Commissioner, Wales**



**Shaun McNally CBE**  
**Chief Executive and Accounting Officer**