

WRITTEN STATEMENT

Title: Assembly Reform Programme: consultation on *Creating a Parliament for Wales*

Date: 12 February 2018

By: Elin Jones AM, Llywydd, as Chair of the Assembly Commission

The *Wales Act 2017* marks the start of a new phase of devolution in Wales, giving us the opportunity to make profound changes to our legislature. We now have the opportunity to forge the national parliament that the people of Wales deserve to champion their interests and hold the Welsh Government to account. A parliament that better reflects the people of Wales and of which they can be proud.

Following the unanimous agreement of the Assembly and a period of public consultation, in June 2017 I announced that the Assembly Commission had decided to introduce legislation to change the name of the institution to Welsh Parliament/Senedd Cymru.

This is an important first step towards ensuring that everyone in Wales understands what the institution does, and how it works for them and their communities. However, the *Wales Act 2017* also gives the Assembly the power to change the size, electoral system and internal arrangements of the institution, to make a parliament with the capacity and design to truly work for Wales.

Last year, the Assembly Commission established the Expert Panel on Assembly Electoral Reform to provide us with robust, impartial advice on the number of Members the Assembly needs, the most suitable electoral system, and the minimum voting age for Assembly elections. The Panel published a detailed report summarising its deliberations in December 2017. It made specific recommendations, including a clear message about this organisation's capacity to deliver for the people of Wales, and concluded that with only 60 Members the Assembly is too small to carry out its functions effectively.

These are fundamental issues which go to the heart of Wales's constitutional arrangements. Delivering the reforms which the *Wales Act 2017* makes possible, and which the Expert Panel states are necessary, would require wide political consensus both within the Assembly and more broadly across Wales.

Today, therefore, the Commission is launching a public consultation on the scope of the potential reforms which the *Wales Act 2017* makes possible. We want to hear from people from across Wales, members of the public, political and civic society, academics, organisations and other stakeholders. We want to hear from people who frequently engage with the Assembly and politics in Wales, and from people who would not normally do so.

This consultation is the beginning of a conversation with the people and communities of Wales about the institution that they want their Welsh Parliament to be. I look forward to hearing their views.

Further details about the consultation, and how to respond, are available on the Assembly's website at www.assembly.wales/futuresenedd.

