



Dear elected member,

Ahead of the conclusions of the National Assembly for Wales' Expert Panel on Electoral Reform being released, we wanted to take the opportunity to emphasise the need for a larger Assembly.

Since 1999 the powers and scope of the Assembly have expanded significantly. With four Wales Acts now bringing further devolution, alongside powers to legislate and new tax raising powers, it is clear that this is a very different institution to the one that was established nearly two decades ago, and an institution that will soon come further under pressure.

As a result, the Assembly's limited capacity is becoming increasingly evident and is directly impacting on Assembly Members' ability to properly scrutinise laws which themselves have a direct effect on the services provided to the people of Wales.

A prime example of this is the current issue where a piece of legislation is being scrutinised by a subcommittee of four Assembly Members - rather than the standard process of a whole committee being responsible for scrutinising legislation. This has come about as a direct consequence of an Assembly which has reached its capacity.

As new tax raising powers are implemented, additional legislation is due for scrutiny, and as powers come to the Assembly from Brussels following Brexit this situation will only get worse.

We must also remember that given our impending withdrawal from the EU we will shortly lose the four representatives for Wales within the European Parliament. The average cost of an MEP is £1,790,000¹ meaning that the equivalent cost of four MEPs works out as just over 27 Assembly Members².

There is never an easy time to introduce more politicians and now is no exception to this. There will be challenges, including engaging with the public properly on this issue and

¹ Hansard House of Lords, Questions to Lord Stoddart of Swindon, 8th January 2013. Available at: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201213/ldhansrd/text/130108w0003.htm#13010854002012>

² National Assembly for Wales, Budget 2016-17, p26. Available at: <http://www.assembly.wales/laid%20documents/cr-ld10426/cr-ld10426-e.pdf>

ensuring that reforms lead to greater diversity and gender balance, but there is no alternative.

A larger Assembly is fundamentally needed to deliver for the people of Wales.

Yours sincerely,

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