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Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
Elin Jones AM, Presiding Officer
National Assembly for Wales

Jayne Bryant, AM
Chair
Standards of Conduct Committee
National Assembly for Wales

16 March 2018

Dear Jayne,

Thank you for your letter of 11 January and to you and the committee, and all contributors to the inquiry, for being involved in producing this interim report.

As requested, please find the Commission's response to the committee's recommendations below:

The Standards Committee's recommendations:

Recommendation 1. The Committee recommends that the Assembly Commission works with a group of Assembly Members to develop a pilot scheme of voluntarily disclosing AMs meetings with lobbyist and interest groups with an evaluation to be undertaken in 2020.

Accept. In support of the Standards Committee's aspiration to increase transparency and provide a greater insight into the work of an elected Member, the Commission will work with the four members of the Standards Committee, as the pilot group of Members, to facilitate the trial of voluntary publishing of Members' meetings with lobbyist and interest groups.

Recommendation 2. We recommend that the Assembly Commission ensure all National Assembly staff security passes are deactivated on their last day of employment. This would ensure that no lobbyist possess a National Assembly pass making it easier to maintain the reputation of the Assembly as an institution which allows fair and equal access to all.

Accept. No change is necessary. It is already the current practice to deactivate staff and Member passes promptly, as soon as they cease employment with the Commission or AM, or cease their role as a Member. This practice is very important to preserve the integrity of the estate.

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Recommendation 3. We recommend that information about all Assembly Member sponsored events held on the Assembly Estate and not just those events in public spaces is included within the Calendar. We feel this will ensure that the National Assembly is displaying its commitment to the utmost transparency, and enable the public to see what events are being held on the Estate.

Accept. The Assembly published Calendar is intended to be a useful source for anyone using the website to find out what activity is taking place. The system of publishing information in the Calendar on all Member sponsored events held in the public areas of the Assembly Estate (Oriol and Neuadd in the Senedd and the Pierhead) will be extended from Easter recess to include new bookings made for Member sponsored activity involving external guests in other bookable locations on the estate and meetings of Cross Party Groups.

Recommendation 4. We recommend that research is commissioned by the Assembly Commission, mapping out routes of influence to build an informed evidence base and consider alternative, and potentially more effective ways to increase transparency other than a Statutory register.

Each committee is free to seek the information it feels is necessary to undertake its inquiries. It is for the Committee to do this. The Commission provides budget to enable committees to receive the support they need, from Commission staff and to access external expertise if necessary.

Yours sincerely,

Elin Jones AM
Llywydd