



Plaid Cymru
Tŷ Gwynfor
18 Park Grove
Caerdydd
CF10 3BN

May 2006

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the review of the Electoral Commission. We believe it an appropriate point to review arrangements as they have now been in place for some five years in some shape or another.

We have worked closely with colleagues in the Electoral Commission and have found them to be very helpful and cooperative. In particular I would like to highlight the excellent work done by the Welsh Office under the direction of Kay Jenkins and the Registration and Compliance team led by Chris Welford. In terms of elections in Wales, the Electoral Commission's office in Wales has played a very important role in seeking to secure consistency and efficiency in Electoral Administration and practice. It has also ensured (albeit more recently) a focus on the statutory requirements for bilingualism in Electoral Administration. There remains much work to be done on this score but the initial work bodes well in this regard.

We have also worked closely with Registrations and Compliance and our finance and accounting procedures have improved considerably. I do not believe however at the moment that sufficient resources are made available to smaller parties such as ourselves to facilitate compliance. There is in this regard what some might term a double irony. We expend considerable efforts and resources on securing compliance and are praised for our work in this regard by the Electoral Commission. The larger UK parties adopt apparently a far more cavalier attitude to Electoral Commission guidance even though they have far greater resources available at their disposal.

Plaid Cymru has also benefitted significantly from the Policy Development Grant scheme administered by the Electoral Commission. This scheme has for the first time in the party's history provided significant resources for the development of effective and costed policies. These resources are evident in the professionalism and effectiveness of our manifesto proposals.

Overall therefore our assessment of the Electoral Commission and the work completed thus far is positive. Our concern however lies in their power and desire to impose a level playing field on the political parties in the UK and in Wales. We have noted the cooperative way in which the Commission has sought to deal with even serious breaches of the guidance issued and we feel that the enforcement powers of the Commission should be enhanced and utilised. In recent months we have witnessed Welsh Labour apparently disappearing in order to circumvent Electoral Commission guidance on reporting transparency, a huge donation made to the Liberal Democrats apparently from an ineligible source and the continuing cash for peerages controversy. These are all issues that the Electoral Commission

can and should tackle and we would support giving the Commission sufficient powers to do so. We would also wish to see the Commission utilising the powers already at their disposal to deal with UK parties seeking to obscure their financial transactions in Wales.

Yours sincerely



Dafydd Trystan
Chief Executive



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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dafydd Trystan', written in a cursive style.

Dafydd Trystan
Chief Executive