

## **Wales Office**

### **Future Electoral Arrangements for the National Assembly for Wales**

**Secretary of State for Wales (David Jones):** In May 2012, the Wales Office published “A Green Paper on future electoral arrangements for the National Assembly for Wales” (Cm 8357). It sought views on four issues: whether the link between parliamentary constituencies and constituencies for elections to the National Assembly for Wales, a link broken as a result of the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011, should be reinstated; whether the length of an Assembly term should be moved from four to five years; whether the prohibition on a candidate at an Assembly election standing in both a constituency and a region should end; and whether Assembly Members should not also be able to sit in Parliament.

A three month consultation on these proposals ended in August 2012, and the Wales Office published a summary of consultation responses in November. I am today announcing how the Government intends to proceed in light of the consultation response.

As a result of the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013, the four UK Boundary Commissions will now report in 2018 on their recommendations for new parliamentary constituencies. The boundaries of parliamentary and Assembly constituencies will remain the same until then, and there is no longer an immediate need to re-establish the link between the two sets of constituencies. The Government does not therefore intend to proceed with the changes to Assembly constituencies proposed in the Green Paper.

We do, however, intend to take forward the three other proposals in the Green Paper. First, we will move the Assembly from four to five-year fixed terms. The term of the current Assembly is, exceptionally, five years, but the Assembly is set to revert to four-year terms after the next Assembly elections in 2016. A permanent move to five-year terms would make a co-incidence between parliamentary and Assembly elections in 2020 (and every twenty years thereafter) less likely.

Second, we will end the prohibition on candidates at Assembly elections standing in both a constituency and a region at the same time. The Government believes that, in principle, candidates should not be barred from standing in a constituency and a region, and the current prohibition impacts disproportionately on smaller parties.

Third, we will prohibit Assembly Members from simultaneously sitting as Members of the House of Commons. The Government does not believe that one person can adequately serve two sets of constituents. This prohibition would not apply to members of the House of Lords.

The Government will bring forward legislation to effect these changes at the earliest opportunity.