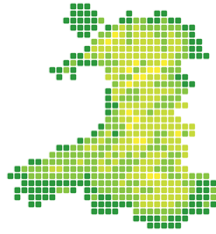


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19 March 2015

The Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales (the Commission) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Finance Committee's inquiry into the consideration of powers of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

The Commission considered the proposals and the Ombudsman paper that provided background information and details of the proposals. The Commission decided that there was only one proposal that it wished to comment on and that was in respect of the proposal to accept oral complaints.

Whilst the Commission considers it appropriate to expand the category of written evidence to include e-mails and online forms, we are of the view that there are difficulties when it comes to oral evidence. We consider that in order to ensure oral evidence accurately reflects the views of the complainant their needs to be some form of transcription or recording of the conversation. This will require additional resources. A complaint made orally by telephone or face to face may lack structure and accuracy and may lead to a misunderstanding of the nature of the complaint. In order to mitigate against this risk it will always require the additional step of setting the complaint out in writing and going back to the complainant to read this out for them to agree it. We consider that for those wishing to make a complaint who are not confident in making it in writing there is assistance available for them in the wider community.

Yours faithfully

Steve Halsall  
Chief Executive