**Objection to the proposal to name the new Senedd constituencies only in Welsh.**

1. The Welsh Language Measure 2011 grants legal parity to both the English and Welsh languages in the work of public bodies in Wales. This was designed to protect and promote the Welsh language by affording those who would prefer to interact through the medium of Welsh the legal right to do so, but it cuts both ways. *The English language is also protected under the Measure*. It may be potentially illegal therefore for public bodies to insist on Welsh-only names (for constituencies, for National Parks etc), where formerly there was not a tradition of Welsh-only naming, without allowing English speakers access through the medium of English. The obvious pathway to avoid discrimination is to use bilingual names (both the English and the Welsh rather than one name in either English or Welsh). This is important in the case of the National Parks where there was formerly a tradition of English-only naming and those names have now been erased in favour of Welsh only names, and is a point of fundamental principle to establish in the naming of newly created Senedd constituencies for 2026.
2. I cannot think of many more actions that could be taken that would have the potential that this one does for decreasing political inclusion and participation at a stroke. The vast majority of the Welsh adult population does not speak Welsh to any degree of fluency, or at all (this is confirmed by census statistics amongst other things). The proposal to use only the language of the minority (for that it is) in naming the new Senedd constituencies and not allow the language of the majority at all, not even as an option, and not even where there is a concentration of English-only speakers, is perverse and runs counter to the stated aims of inclusion and affording the right for all in Wales to use their language of choice that the Welsh Language Measure was designed to achieve. Most people in Wales will no longer recognise any part of the name of the Senedd constituency to which they are supposed to feel they belong. ‘Monmouthshire’ for example has completely disappeared. For the machinery of state to be actively party to discriminating and withdrawing rights in this way is breathtaking.
3. The insistence on Welsh-only naming has a legal fragility in itself, then. However, it smacks of more sinister intent and goes to the very heart of what it is ‘to be Welsh’. Sadly, for some people this is a status defined by anti-Englishness and the insidious creep, unopposed, of Welsh-only in a country where c.80% of the population do not speak Welsh is a potential instrument of discrimination, even repression - something that campaigners for Welsh parity were vociferous in opposing when Welsh was the victim over centuries (in less inclusive and enlightened times) but which they now seem prepared to wield as an weapon against the English language, maybe even English-ness. Ideally we would learn lessons from the past, not repeat its mistakes.
4. This is not an academic sideshow of little importance, then. It goes to the very heart of what society Wales wants to be in future – an inclusive, encouraging one where cultural diversity and differences are celebrated and give depth, colour and substance to our public life, or one where only those born in Wales who speak Welsh are considered truly ‘Welsh’ and all others are treated as inferior, not welcomed, not made to feel they belong? The obvious solution all along has been to use both Welsh and English names.