

NORTH AND MID WALES ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

Title

The Local Government Reform (Power to local People) White Paper

Introduction

This paper sets out the main points covered in the White Paper which directly affect Town and Community Councils. Once these subjects have been addressed a questionnaire can be completed for approval at the next meeting.

Local Government (Wales) Bill

The paper issued on this subject relates to the timetable for local government re-organisation and the number of County Councils and the possible number of Town and Community Councils and should be read alongside, not in replacement of.

The White Paper 3rd February 2015

The White Paper issued requires consultation responses by 28th April 2015 from all in the public and private sector (including individuals). The plan is to have an Act in place soon after the May 2016 elections of the Welsh Assembly.

Things to ponder

The following are the main subjects for consideration by Town and Community Councils:

County Councils

The Welsh Government is seeking to reduce the number of County Councils, how many do you think there should be?

The suggestion is that the 12 proposed in the Williams report should be taken forward.

County Council manifesto

Should County Councillors have to issue a manifesto at election time?

The paper suggests that maybe there should be.

Should the leader or potential leader of a Council be required to put forward a manifesto before the election takes place?

The paper suggests there should be.

County Councillor representation (numbers and duties)

How many County Councillors should there be?

The paper suggests a reduction.

Should there be a legislated set of duties for all County Councillors?

The paper suggests there should be.

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Recall of County Councillors

Should there be a method of the public recalling a County Councillor who is not performing thus provoking a by election?

The paper suggests there should be?

Number of Cabinet Members

What should be the number of Cabinet Members (currently 10)?

The paper suggests there should be a limit.

Councillors

Should County Councillors be able to stand for election as Town/Community Councillors?

The paper suggests that they should.

Should Town and Community Councillors be able to serve on more than one Town or Community Council?

The paper suggests that they should not.

Limits on periods of office

Should there be a limit on periods of office for County Councillors and if so how long?

The paper suggests a limit of 5 terms.

Should there be a limit on periods of office for Leaders/Cabinet Members and if so how long?

The paper suggests 2 terms.

How often elections should be held

How often should elections be held?

The paper suggests 5 years.

Youth Councils

County Councils generally do not have Youth Councils; neither do Town or Community Councils.

It is proposed that these should be mandatory.

Review of Town and Community Councils

Should local councils be enlarged or combined?

The paper suggests there are too many and should be reduced in number.

Timescale for a review of Town and Community Councils

A timetable has been set for review, when should this be completed by?

The paper suggests a review by 2022.

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Competency and taking over of services (incl elections)

The idea of a level of competency by a Town or Community Council is suggested including qualified clerks, financial regulations etc.

The paper suggests that at least 2/3 of Town and Community Councils should be elected.

The paper suggests that there should be a level of competency before a Town and Community Council can take over services.

Annual reports and targets by the Mayor/Chair

The paper suggests that the Mayor should have to issue a report each year on this activities and achievements?

The paper suggests that the Mayor should set targets for the Clerks?

The law requires the Council to act as one, it is suggested that the Council as a whole should set and be responsible for targets and achievements.

Council Tax

Is the current method and levels of Council tax right?

The paper suggests that maybe a review is needed in both taxation and allocation of funds to Local Authorities.

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