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Secretary: Robert A Robinson FRICS AILCM

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23rd April 2015

Reforming Local Government
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

Dear Sir

Reforming Local Government (Power to Local People)

I write to enclose the response to the above consultation on the form provided and set out below additional information.

The Association represents approx. 36 Town and larger Community Councils in Mid and North Wales. The document and proposals were discussed with a presentation at their meeting held on 17th April 2015 in Rhyl and the document represents the views of the membership and their respective Councils.

The following additional comments are made in the spirit of being helpful:

Principle authorities (2.1)

The Association is in support of a common name for the new authorities but feels that the old County names should remain as separate identities. The new authorities should be referred to as 'regional' thus allowing the separate identities to be retained in each area.

Release of staff to be Councillors (3.46)

The Association is concerned that such releases for staff will be a tax on business. There needs to be consideration as to how this might work, maybe an exemption for smaller companies for example.

The Association does not support the idea of employees of an authority being able to be Councillors with that same authority.



Welsh Government (general note)

The Association is of the view that any reform, organisation, setting governance and tests of competency should be carried out by Welsh Government (via perhaps the Boundary Commission where appropriate) and not any principle authority.

Terms of Office (Councillors and Leaders) (3.1 to 3.13)

The Association does not support limits on terms and feels strongly that the electorate should decide who should represent them.

Combining or enlarging Town or Community Councils (4.15)

The Association is concerned that combining Town or Community Councils will be difficult with the cultural and local issues affecting each. The Association feels that a form of Clustering would be better keeping Local Councils intact. However, for this to work there would need to be legislation to enable this to take place with set guidelines.

Town and Community Councils (general note)

It is difficult to assess most aspects of the Town and Community Council questions without knowing what duties are likely to come with any new administrations at this level.

Test of competency(4.19)

The test of competency whilst supported should only include the Welsh Language in a balanced way and also should not include any requirement to be a member of any organisation (ie this Association or One Voice Wales etc)

Town and Community Council Meetings (4.28)

The Association supports members of the public attending meetings and also to ask questions. However, the recording of meetings including using social media is not accepted.

Town and Community Council (setting aims and objectives) (4.28 and 4.29)

There appears to be a lack of understanding of how Town and Community Councils work here. Any setting of targets for the Town Clerk should be completed by the Council and any annual report should be that of the Council.

In law no individual Councillor has any authority at Town or Community Council level. There are only three decision makers as follows:

- i) The Full Council acting together.
- ii) A Committee with specific delegated power from the Full Council.
- iii) The Town Clerk within agreed limits.



Financial penalties (7.29)

The Association does not agree to financial penalties due to the fact that the cost is only passed onto the Council Tax payer. This is wrong in principle.

Impact Assessments

The impact assessments set out should be simple and not create more and extensive red tape unnecessarily.

I confirm that the Association is willing to attend to give oral evidence to any relevant committee if you felt that would be of value.

Yours faithfully

R A Robinson FRICS MILCM
Secretary to the Association