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# **The Future Role of the Community and Town Council Sector in Wales**

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# Commissioning a Review

Independent review set up in 2017 to consider the future role of Community and Town Councils

Cross-party panel, with wider expertise/experience drawn in

Given a year to:

- explore the potential role of local government below Local Authority councils, drawing on best practice
- define the most appropriate model(s)/structure(s) to deliver this role
- consider how these models and structures should be applied across Wales. This will include consideration of any situations in which they would not be necessary or appropriate



# Undertaking the Review

Extensive engagement and evidence gathering:

- Regular Panel meetings including taking evidence
- Wide range of oral and written evidence from stakeholders – gathering as many views as possible through a range of engagement activity
- Consideration of wider evidence (data, reports, research etc)
- Newsletters updating on progress and opportunities to engage



# Findings and recommendations

Panel set out views on:

- What Community and Town Councils are
- What Community and Town Councils do
- How Community and Town Councils do it
- How Community and Town Councils are held to account

Final Report submitted October 2018



# Continuing the conversation

Written statement issued 30 November setting out Welsh Government's policy approach:

- Encouraging and enabling change to happen naturally
- Providing an element of choice about how far, and how fast, a council decides to move
- Creating an environment for councils to expand their activities where they feel they could/should

# Welsh Government Areas for Action

- Areas where we can, and will, take action immediately...
- Areas that require further consideration and consultation...

Theme	Immediate Action	Further Consideration
<b>Clarifying the role of the sector</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake a campaign to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ confirm important role of sector;</li> <li>○ raise awareness of the work of community council (including in areas which don't have them);</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Encourage community councils to reflect on what is required locally, in terms of the kinds of services they could deliver.</li> <li>• Raise awareness of the benefits of establishing new community and town councils.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alongside raising awareness of the benefits of establishing new community councils, explore other models which could provide a focus for communities in urban areas.</li> <li>• Consider further the usefulness of a 'place based services' distinction, the appetite for change and the pace that it could be sustained</li> <li>• Consider consulting on the merits of retaining 'dual hatted' councillors.</li> </ul>
<b>Increasing democracy and participation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use existing powers to ensure Community Reviews are conducted on a regular basis.</li> <li>• Establish better understanding of use of social media by community and town councils to engage their community; and facilitate sharing of good practice.</li> <li>• Undertake a campaign to encourage more people to stand for election.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider and potentially consult on the need for a comprehensive review of community council boundaries, recognising any action in future would require a different legislative vehicle</li> <li>• Consider whether to ensure that elections should be held regardless of whether seats are contested - balancing stimulating the democratic process with cost.</li> <li>• Explore what more can be done to promote diversity amongst councillors.</li> <li>• Allow the lower minimum voting age of 16 years to embed (if it goes ahead) before considering whether to lower the minimum age to stand as a community council candidate to 16 years.</li> <li>• Consider how local engagement and public participation has been affected in England following the introduction of the duty on Parish Councils to hold at least one public meeting per year.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">...</p>



## Next Steps

- Start of a conversation, not end...
- Will be a chance to engage, and offer views, on the areas for further consideration (starting today)
- Watch this space!!