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

Claire Germain
Head of Local Government Partnerships
Welsh Government

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
Clarifying the role of the sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake a campaign to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ confirm important role of sector; ○ raise awareness of the work of community council (including in areas which don't have them); • Encourage community councils to reflect on what is required locally, in terms of the kinds of services they could deliver. • Raise awareness of the benefits of establishing new community and town councils. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alongside raising awareness of the benefits of establishing new community councils, explore other models which could provide a focus for communities in urban areas. • Consider further the usefulness of a 'place based services' distinction, the appetite for change and the pace that it could be sustained • Consider consulting on the merits of retaining 'dual hatted' councillors.
Increasing democracy and participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use existing powers to ensure Community Reviews are conducted on a regular basis. • Establish better understanding of use of social media by community and town councils to engage their community; and facilitate sharing of good practice. • Undertake a campaign to encourage more people to stand for election. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • Consider whether to ensure that elections should be held regardless of whether seats are contested - balancing stimulating the democratic process with cost. • Explore what more can be done to promote diversity amongst councillors. • 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. • 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. <p>...</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!!