

Report To: County Council

Date of Meeting: 14th April 2015

Lead Member / Officer: Leader

Report Author: Head of Legal, HR and Democratic Services

Title: Welsh Government White Paper - Reforming Local Government: Power to Local People

1. What is the report about?

1.1 The report is about the Welsh Government's White Paper entitled Reforming Local Government: Power to Local People ("the Paper").

2. What is the reason for making this report?

2.1 To seek Council's approval of a draft consultation response to the Paper to be submitted on behalf of the Council before the deadline of 28th April 2015

3. What are the Recommendations?

3.1 That Council considers the draft consultation response attached as Appendix 4 to this report and approves its submission to the Welsh Government.

4. Report details

4.1 The Paper was published on 3rd February 2015 by the Minister for Public Services. The Paper was published in three versions, the Full Version, the Everyday (summary) version and the Young People version. The Full version is attached as Appendix 1 to this report. The other two versions can be accessed via the following link <http://gov.wales/consultations/localgovernment/power-to-local-people>

4.2 The Paper is extensive, consisting of nine chapters and includes a number of clear policy proposals, a reiteration of previous policy commitments (such as mergers, links to Future Generations Bill etc.) but also includes a number of open ended questions seeking views on policy options. The Paper is accompanied by a consultation survey, a copy of which is attached as Appendix 2 to this report.

4.3 Some of the proposals and policy options are complex but the White Paper offers limited detail around how proposals would be implemented.

- 4.4 The Paper runs to approximately 100 pages with the consultation response survey covering an additional 30 pages. It is not therefore possible to set out all of the proposals being made in this document. A copy of the briefing note summarising the main points of the Paper was provided to the Council Workshop on 26th March and is attached as Appendix 3. Further detail is available from the reports to Democratic Services Committee on 13th March and the Corporate Governance Committee on 25th March.
- 4.5 The Consultation Survey is, as referred to above, lengthy and contains a mixture of questions and tick box response requests to indicate agreement or otherwise with specific statements. It is proposed that the Council submits a narrative response to the Paper which attempts to address all of the issues covered by the Consultation Survey. The response should, in addition, set out the issues which appear to the Council to be the most important for the success of the newly merged authorities and those which the Council believes are less important or are likely to hinder the new authorities from high levels of performance and improvement.
- 4.6 The draft response is set out at Appendix 4 to this report and seeks to set out the main issues which the Council welcomes and provide constructive criticism where appropriate. In addition the response sets out those issues which the Council disagrees with and believes may restrict the ability of newly merged authorities to perform well and improve. A detailed reply to each of the survey questions is attached to the response.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

- 5.1 The decision does not impact directly on corporate priorities.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

- 6.1 Responding to the consultation will not incur any additional costs.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) undertaken on the decision? The completed EqIA template should be attached as an appendix to the report.

- 7.1 There is no requirement for an assessment.

8 What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

- 8.1 The Paper has been discussed by the Chairs and Vice Chairs of Scrutiny, the Democratic Services Committee, the Corporate Governance Committee and a Council Workshop.

9 Chief Finance Officer Statement

- 9.1 There are no additional costs involved in responding to the consultation. Any proposals emerging thereafter through either legislation or government

guidance would need to be considered individually to assess the cost and organisational implications.

10 What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

10.1 The risks of not responding to the consultation is that the Council's view will not be taken into account when Government considers the legislation that will be enacted in respect of the proposals contained within the Paper.

11 Power to make the Decision

11.1 Section 111 Local Government Act1972.