

Date/Dyddiad:
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30th September 2010
Steve Thomas
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WLGA • CLILC

Dr Dai Lloyd AM
Chair, Legislation Committee No. 3
National Assembly for Wales
Legislation Office
Cardiff Bay
CARDIFF
CF99 1NA

Dear Dai,

Consultation on proposed Local Government (Wales) Measure

Thank you for your letter and the opportunity to respond to the above consultation.

As you will be well aware, the Measure is a substantial piece of legislation with 172 Sections and is one of the largest yet introduced in the Assembly. The sections also vary considerably in breadth and scope, from the timing of local authority meetings to the complexities of collaboration.

Overall, the WLGA supports the broad policy principles behind the Measure as the Assembly Government is seeking to strengthen local democracy and support and empower councils and councillors in their community leadership roles. However, there is a general concern that the Measure as currently drafted is too restrictive and prescriptive, and therefore would undermine the Assembly Government's objectives, effectively curtailing local autonomy, discretion and flexibility.

Given the number and breadth of sections contained in the Measure, rather than respond to each of your consultation questions in turn, the WLGA's response includes a general overview introduction, with comments on specific sections of the Measure. Many of the comments on sections refer to the issues you raise in your questions around whether the Measure will achieve its intended objectives, the impact on authorities, potential financial implications and potential barriers.

With regards your core question however, whether there is a need for a proposed Measure to deliver the Assembly Government's stated objectives, our view is that a Measure is required to address only some aspects of the Assembly Government's objectives. Some proposals, such as those covering executive and scrutiny functions and community and town councils, would require legislative change. However, many of the Assembly Government's stated objectives

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(such as those seeking to promote local democracy, supporting member development or scrutiny) do not require legislation, as many are already being achieved through existing practice. Indeed, the WLGA argues that legislating for such aspects is not only unnecessary but will also have a detrimental impact, undermining local discretion and flexibility. There is a broad concern within local government therefore that the Measure is overly prescriptive, particularly regarding matters of council administration, structure and staffing which the WLGA argues should remain within the preserve of local decision-making processes.

Should you have any further queries with regards the WLGA's response, please do not hesitate in contacting me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Thomas', written in a cursive style.

Steve Thomas
Chief Executive