

The Vale of Glamorgan Council

Cabinet Meeting: 26 March, 2018

Report of the Cabinet Member for Regulatory and Legal Services

The Council's Response to the Welsh Government Consultation: Creating a Parliament for Wales

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek Cabinet approval for the proposed response to the Welsh Government's consultation paper on Creating a Parliament for Wales (attached at the following link):
http://www.assembly.wales/NAfW%20Documents/About%20the%20Assembly%20section%20documents/ElectoralReformConsultation/ElectoralReform_Consultation_Eng.pdf

Recommendation

1. That the proposed response attached to this report at [Appendix A](#) is submitted to Welsh Government.

Reason for the Recommendation

1. So that the Council apprises Welsh Government of its views on the matters included in the consultation.

Background

2. On 1 April 2018 many of the provisions of the Wales Act 2017 come into force. A key part of the Act is that it gives the National Assembly powers in respect of the Assembly's electoral, organisation and internal arrangements, powers that previously rested with the UK Parliament. In November 2016 the Assembly Commission announced that it would explore how the new powers might be used to reform the Assembly, including measures to address the capacity of the Assembly. In February 2017 an Expert Panel was established to provide politically impartial advice on the number of Members the Assembly needs, the most suitable electoral system and the minimum voting age for Assembly elections.
3. The Panel published its report, "A Parliament that Works for Wales", in December 2017. The report makes a number of recommendations for change which the Panel believes should be implemented before the 2021 Assembly election.

Relevant Issues and Options

4. The attached Welsh Government consultation paper groups the Panel's recommendations into the following sections:
 - How many Members does the Assembly need?
 - How should Assembly Members be elected?
 - Who should be allowed to vote in Assembly elections?
 - Who should be able to be an Assembly Member?
 - Should the law relating to electoral administration be rationalised?
 - Should the Assembly have flexibility to decide on its internal arrangements?
 - What impact might these proposals have?
5. Appendix A details the responses to a list of questions on the above subjects and Cabinet is asked to consider the proposed responses set out to enable the Council to respond to the consultation paper.
6. The consultation period ends on 6 April 2018, and responses are required by then.

Resource Implications (Financial and Employment)

7. A key issue, which is covered in the proposed consultation response, is that changes to the voting system and increasing the number of Assembly Members may well have financial and resource implications. These would need careful consideration if progressed.

Sustainability and Climate Change Implications

8. None directly relevant to this report.

Legal Implications (to Include Human Rights Implications)

9. The consultation canvasses a number of possibilities, some or all of which may be enacted. Any legal implications arising will be addressed as legislation emerges.

Crime and Disorder Implications

10. None directly associated with this report.

Equal Opportunities Implications (to include Welsh Language issues)

11. Any proposals to change the electoral system will have potential impacts on the electorate. Such changes include extending the vote to 16 and 17 year olds and to prisoners.

Corporate/Service Objectives

12. None specific to this report, although the consultation on voting reform does link with the desire of this Council in positively engaging with communities and citizens.

Policy Framework and Budget

13. This is a matter for Executive decision by Cabinet.

Consultation (including Ward Member Consultation)

14. As the matters raised in the consultation cover the whole of the Council's services and areas, it is not appropriate for Ward Members to be consulted direct.

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

15. Corporate Performance and Resources

Background Papers

Consultation Paper: Creating a Parliament for Wales (12 February 2018)

Contact Officer

Huw Isaac, Head of Performance and Development

Officers Consulted

Debbie Marles, Head of Legal Services

Responsible Officer

Managing Director