

# **CITY OF CARDIFF COUNCIL CYNGOR DINAS CAERDYDD**

## **DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE: 25 MARCH 2015**

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### **REFORMING LOCAL GOVERNMENT: WHITE PAPER**

### **REPORT OF THE COUNTY CLERK AND MONITORING OFFICER**

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#### **Reason for this Report**

1. To consider Chapter 3 of the 'Reforming Local Government' White Paper issued by the Welsh Government.

#### **Background**

2. In April 2013, the Welsh Government announced the establishment of the Commission on Public Service Governance and Delivery, chaired by Sir Paul Williams (also known as the 'Williams Commission'), to examine all aspects of governance and delivery in the devolved public sector in Wales. The Williams Commission published its report on 20 January 2014, which made 62 recommendations, including proposals for local government reorganisation in Wales through the merger of local authorities.
3. The Welsh Government published its response to the Williams Commission's recommendations, entitled 'Devolution, Democracy and Delivery – Improving Public Services for People in Wales', on 8 July 2014. This report included a summary of actions to be taken forward by the Welsh Government.
4. On the same date, the Welsh Government also published a White Paper, entitled 'Devolution, Democracy and Delivery – Reforming Local Government'. The White Paper set out proposals for local government in Wales in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and focused mainly on future legislation to support the proposed merger of local authorities in Wales. The Council's response to this White Paper was approved by Cabinet on 9 October 2014.
5. The Welsh Government published a second White Paper, entitled 'Devolution, Democracy and Delivery – Reforming Local Government: Power to Local People', on 3 February 2015. The deadline for the submission of responses to the Welsh Government consultation on the White Paper is 28 April 2015.

## Issues

6. Cabinet will be considering the Council's formal response to the consultation at its meeting on 2 April 2015
7. This White Paper addresses many of the previous recommendations of the Williams Commission and sets out proposals to improve the democratic leadership, diversity and governance of local authorities and to improve the performance of councils.
8. Chapter 3 of the White Paper "Renewing Democracy" deals with the following matters which may be of particular interest to the Democratic Services Committee :
  - Local Government elections (pages 25-26)
    - 5 year cycles/
    - Phased by thirds?
  - The roles & responsibilities of Leaders, Cabinet Members and Elected Members (pages 26-30)
    - 5 Term limit for elected members
    - Defined roles in legislation
    - Annual report to be produced
    - Should not be AM/Community Councillor
    - Should all have email/social media
    - Mandatory training in finance, corporate governance and communications
  - Diversity of Elected Members (pages 31-33)
    - Duty to ensure diversity with coherent anti-bullying and harassment policies
    - 40% target for women candidates in winnable seats
    - Information campaign to encourage more diverse candidates
  - Remuneration of Elected Members (pages 33-34)
    - Remuneration to be reviewed and similar to rest of UK
  - Number of Elected Members (page 34)
    - Number to be reduced/limited
  - Restrictions on Elected Members and Electoral qualification (pages 34-36) to allow non-politically restricted officers to stand for election
  - Recall of Elected Members (page 35)
    - If sanction imposed for breach of Code
    - Failure to perform effectively
9. Chapter 8 of the White Paper –"Strengthening the Role Of Review" states that the Welsh Government intend to remove the requirement that the Monitoring Officer may not also be the Head of Democratic Services. The Chapter ( at page 79) states: "The evidence we received suggested

this prohibition is unnecessary and, indeed, that there is a great deal in common between the two roles.”

### **Reason for Recommendations**

10. To consider what comments if any to refer to the Cabinet in drawing up the City of Cardiff Council’s submission in response to the Welsh Government consultation on the ‘Power to Local People’ White Paper.

### **Financial Implications**

There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of the report

### **Legal Implications**

There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of the report

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

11. Democratic Services Committee is recommended to consider what response if any to recommend to Cabinet in formulating the council’s response to Chapter 3 and Chapter 8 of the ‘Reforming Local Government’ White Paper issued by the Welsh Government.

**Marie Rosenthal**  
**County Clerk and Monitoring Officer**  
17 March 2015

*The following background papers have been taken into account:*

Devolution, Democracy and Delivery White Paper Reforming Local Government: Power to Local People 3 February 2015.

Report of the Commission on Public Service Governance and Delivery (‘Williams Commission’)

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/improvingservices/public-service-governance-and-delivery/report/?lang=en>

Devolution, Democracy and Delivery – Improving Public Services for People in Wales

<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dpsp/publications/140708-response-to-commission-en.pdf>

Devolution, Democracy and Delivery White Paper –

Reforming Local Government: Power to Local People

<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dsjlg/consultation/150203-power-to-local-people-full-en.pdf>