

Local Government and Public Services Committee

LGPS(2)-13-06(p.3)

Date: Wednesday 4 October 2006

Venue: Committee Room 2, Senedd, National Assembly for Wales, Cardiff Bay

Title: Electoral Arrangements in Wales – Response to Consultation and next steps

Purpose

1. To provide members with an analysis of the results of a written consultation exercise on Electoral Arrangements in Wales and to invite the Committee to consider next steps for the scrutiny project.

The Consultation

2. The written consultation ran from 2 June until 4 September. The mailing list included community and town councils, electoral administration officers and election practitioners – a list of consultees is at annex A.

3. An e-consultation is also being conducted to canvass the views of young people on electoral arrangements in Wales. The launch of the online discussion forum was publicised with a press release to schools, youth organisations and targeted media. The e-forum runs from 28 August – 30 September and a full report of the results will be provided to the Committee separately.

4. 68 organisations and individuals responded to the written consultation. This included 35 community councils, 15 town councils, the North Wales Association of Town and Community Councils, One Voice Wales, 5 electoral practitioners, the Electoral Commission, the Office of the Children's Commissioner for Wales, MENCAP Cymru, CEWC Cymru and the Ceredigion Green Party. An analysis of the key issues emerging is provided at annex B of this paper, and a summary of the responses to consultation is attached at annex C.

Next Steps

5. The Committee's consultation was informed by oral evidence from a number of organisations and individuals and visits to other European countries to compare electoral arrangements.

6. Welsh Assembly Government officials have been invited to attend the Committee's next meeting on 19 October to discuss with Members how politics, the democratic process and citizenship is

currently taught in schools in Wales.

7. The Committee is asked to note the summary of written responses and identify any other information it would like to receive before completing the evidence gathering process.

8. To allow time for the Assembly Government to respond to the Committee's final report before the end of the 2nd Assembly, in accordance with agreed protocol, a suggested timetable would be:

Action	Proposed date
Final report agreed in Committee	By 23 November
Bilingual report launch and report laid for plenary debate	On or by Wed 13 December
Plenary debate of report	Tuesday 23 January 2007
Written Cabinet Statement	By Tuesday 27 February 2007
Minister's Oral Statement	By 6 March 2007
Final Government Response agreed	By 6 March 2007
Committee considers final Government response at its last meeting of the 2 nd Assembly	Thursday 22 March 2007

Recommendations

9. The Committee is invited to:

- a) note the results of consultation
- b) consider whether any further information or evidence should be sought before making a final report on the scrutiny project.
- c) agree a timetable for reporting.

Members' Research and Committee Services

Annex A

List of consultees

- AWEMA
- Citizens Advice Bureau Cymru

- Commission for Racial Equality
- Community Councils in Wales
- Council for Education in World Citizenship Cymru
- Disability Rights Commission
- Disability Wales
- Electoral Commission
- Equal Opportunities Commission
- MENCAP Cymru
- One Voice Wales
- Plaid Cymru
- Roger Morris
- Scope
- SOLACE
- The Pollen Shop
- Town councils in Wales
- Stonewall Cymru
- Unitary Authorities in Wales – electoral officers
- Welsh Conservative Party
- Welsh Consumer Council
- Welsh Labour Party
- Welsh Language Board
- Welsh Liberal Democrats
- Welsh Local Government Association