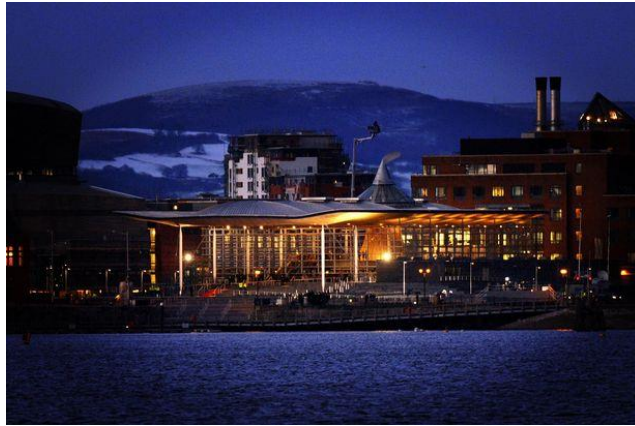




REPORT FOR THE MINISTERS OFFICE FOR PUBLIC SERVICES
WELSH GOVERNMENT



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The North and Mid Wales Association of Local Councils has been in existence for over 40 years and represents Local Councils in Mid and North Wales. A map showing the area and membership is set out at appendix A.
- 1.2 This document sets out an outline of the concerns and points for discussion with regard to future service delivery by Town and Community Councils.
- 1.3 The Association wishes to aid the process whereby a compromise can be reached so that services can be protected and the way forward for Town and Community Councils identified.
- 1.4 To date there are many very lengthy and complicated documents produced on the subject. However, to date the Local Councils are still awaiting what is to happen in the future when the subject has been discussed over a several years already.
- 1.5 The Association Members are trying to ascertain what the future is going to bring so that the planning process can be put in place to make such transmissions easier and to aid the taking over of public services with some certainty as to the future.



2. Aim and objective of this document

- 2.1. The aim of this document is to set the scene, set out some of the concerns of Town and Community Councils and to seek a way forward through discussion with the Office of the Minister for Public Services.
- 2.2 The concerns over 'how things are going' with regard to the future of Local Councils and the 'delivery of essential services to our communities' are very real and significant.



3. Setting the scene

3.1 The background that Town and Community Councils recognise is set out here:

Budget cuts by the principle authorities are extensive.

The services being removed or reduced are being offered to Town and Community Councils often with no funding, with little or inaccurate information and with limited time to respond.

There is a different approach by each principle authority with some being 'ruthless' and others being 'co-operative' with regard to Town and Community Councils.

The ability of even the larger Town and Community Councils on their own to deliver services is very difficult.

The clustering of Town and Community Councils to deliver services at this time is patchy at best and often just not happening.

Due to timescales whereby the principle authorities are cutting back before the Town and Community Councils are combined or enlarged service delivery is very difficult and the fear is that when services are lost they will never return.



4. Concerns of the Association Members

4.1 The main concerns of the Association Members are:

- i) The speed at which such cutbacks by County Councils are taking place.
- ii) The ability of Town and Community Councils to take the services needed is not present.
- iii) The ability of the existing Town and Community Clerks (in most cases) is not at a level where such services can be delivered.
- iv) The asset transfers to Town and Community Councils are not being completed on a fair and equal basis. They should be transferred at no cost to the Community – the public funds have already paid for them.
- v) The need is recognised for the Town and Community Council review being brought forward as a matter of urgency.

4.2 There are cases where Local Councils have taken on services and made it work, however in these cases the Clerk is a professional and often from management in private industry.

4.3 There are some cases which can be used to form a basis of a fair and equitable way forward.



5. Discussion points

5.1 The Association would like to discuss the following:

- a) The realistic timetable for the implementation of the proposed new County Councils as set out at appendix B.
- b) The timetable for Town and Community Council Reform including the relationship with the timetable for principle authority reform.
- c) The need for a common approach to transfer of services to Local Town and Community Councils.
- d) The need for a common approach to Asset Transfer arrangements.
- e) The ability of Town and Community Councils to deliver services taking into account the following:
 - i) Town and Community Clerks.
 - ii) Funding.
 - iii) Ability to manage such services.
 - iv) Public involvement.
- f) The duties that any new Town and Community Councils may have to take on board.



A Map of area of the Association Members



Members include:

Abergele, Argoed, Baguillt, Bangor, Conwy, Bay of Conwy, Connah's Quay, Caerwys, Caia Park Wrexham, Buckley, Denbigh, Flint, Hawarden, Llandudno, Llanfair Caereinion, Llandrino, Llanasa, Llanfairfechan, Llandysillio, Llangollen, Menial Bridge, Penmaenmawr, Prestatyn, Rhuddlan, Rhyl, Ruthin, St Asaph's, Shotton, Towyn and Kinmell Bay and Welshpool.



B Map of new principle authorities proposed

