

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

<p>SUBJECT: LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND ELECTIONS (WALES) BILL MEETING: DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE DATE: 10th February 2019 DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: N/A</p>

1. PURPOSE:

To provide members with an overview of the proposals contained within the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill.

2. KEY ISSUES:

On the 18th November 2019, Welsh Government published a draft version of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill which proposes a number of changes to the way in which Local Government operates and elections are administered in Wales. The bill is a significant and substantial piece of legislation and full details of it are available on the following link.

<http://senedd.assembly.wales/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?Ild=26688>

Amongst other proposals, the bill includes provisions for;

- Reforming electoral arrangements including 16 and 17 year old allowed to vote in local elections and Foreign nationals allowed to vote in local elections
- A general power of competence for principal councils and community councils
- Encouraging public participation in local democracy
- Reforming leadership arrangements with the appointment of a Chief Executive and encouraging greater diversity and opportunity within the executive arrangements.
- Changes to Family Absence rules prescribed in the Local Government Measure 2011.
- Abolition of Community Polls and strengthening of Council petition schemes.
- Proposals for statutory regional collaboration and establishing Corporate Joint Committees (CJC).
- Provisions for voluntary council mergers
- Stronger self-assessment process for council performance and support/intervention powers for Ministers.

It is anticipated that the bill will receive Royal Assent by the end of summer 2020. Some of the provisions within the bill, such as family absence changes, will commence immediately due to the need to keep pace with current legislation. Other sections of the bill will commence in 2022 at the commencement of the new term of office.

Given the Bill is very detailed and not all aspects of the bill necessarily sit within the remit of the Democratic Services Committee, a simple overview of the provisions is attached at Appendix A for information and the committee may wish to discuss certain aspects in further detail or look at specific sections at future meetings.

3. REASONS:

To ensure members are aware of the forthcoming changes and details of the provisions.

4. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

There are no resource implications as a direct result of the draft bill being published. The full resource implications will be considered following publication of the supplementary guidance from Welsh Government as to how the provisions should be implemented.

5. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS:

None

6. SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS:

None

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