

CABINET

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 19 January 2016
Report Subject	Welsh Local Government Association Manifesto <i>Localism 2016-21</i>
Cabinet Member	Leader of the Council
Report Author	Chief Executive
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) has recently published its Manifesto for local government, *Localism 2016-21*, in advance of the National Assembly for Wales's elections to be held in May, 2016.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Cabinet is invited to formally support the Welsh Local Government Association Manifesto <i>Localism 2016-21</i> ; and
2	The Council to engage with the Association and fellow councils in working with a newly elected Welsh Government in May to promote adoption of the Manifesto proposals in national policy and funding plans.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	MAKING THE CASE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT
1.01	<p>The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) periodically publishes a Manifesto which presents the case for policy and finance reform for local government in Wales. The WLGA has recently published the latest Manifesto. The Manifesto is timed to influence the commitments being made by the political parties in advance of the National Assembly for Wales's elections to be held in May, 2016.</p>
1.02	<p>The Manifesto, <i>Localism 2016-21</i>, calls for:-</p> <p>Clarity and commitment to partnership: clarity from the Welsh Government about the future of local government, its roles and its responsibilities, and clarity around the plans and timescales for reform. A restatement of a commitment to partnership governance in Wales is essential to ensure that local and national government are working together based on clear principles or mutual respect and understanding;</p> <p>Fair and flexible funding: councils need greater fiscal autonomy and flexibility to respond to local needs and priorities. Specific grants should be transferred into the settlement, and the Welsh Government should commit to multi-year financial settlements so councils can plan more effectively, and should fully cost and fund any new national initiatives or legislation; and</p> <p>Commitment to the principle of Subsidiarity: the Welsh Government should commit to the European Charter of Local Self Government and the principle of subsidiarity, where the presumption is that power is transferred to the level of government closest to the people. The Welsh Government has a clear national strategic role, but councils want to see momentum behind the devolution of powers beyond Cardiff Bay to local government and to local communities.</p>
1.03	<p>In launching the Manifesto alongside the announcement of the Welsh budget by the Welsh Government, the WLGA issued the following statement:-</p> <p><i>"The WLGA has only recently published its 'Localism 2016-21' manifesto, which offers a 40 point plan for public services in Wales. Key to our call was the need to refocus resources on the local public services that make such an important contribution to alleviating the build-up of costly pressures elsewhere in the system such as in our NHS, and also the need for councils to be offered far greater financial flexibility in the future. It is heartening to hear these points acknowledged so strongly by Welsh Government within today's draft budget announcement.</i></p> <p><i>We have been clear that there is a need to rewrite the rulebook on how our councils are funded if we are to avoid a similar situation to that in England, where local public services have been cut to the bone and a number of councils face the very real possibility of being unable to meet even their most basic statutory duties. Today's (budget) announcement offers a glimmer of hope that a different reality can be written for vital local public services in Wales."</i></p>

1.04	Localism 2016-21, is accessible by following the hyper link in the background documents table or by visiting the WLGA website.
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
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2.01	None directly.
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3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
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3.01	All member councils, including Flintshire, were consulted by the WLGA in the development and drafting of the Manifesto.
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4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
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4.01	None directly.
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5.00	APPENDICES
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5.01	None.
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6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
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6.01	<p><i>'Localism 2016-21' Manifesto of the Welsh Local Government Association.</i></p> <p>Contact Officer: Colin Everett Chief Executive</p> <p>Telephone: 01352 702101</p> <p>Email: chief.executive@flintshire.gov.uk</p>
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7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
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7.01	Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA): the representative body of principal councils, fire and rescue authorities, and the national parks in Wales.
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