

## FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**REPORT TO:** **COUNCIL**

**DATE:** **14 APRIL 2015**

**REPORT BY:** **CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**SUBJECT:** **WELSH GOVERNMENT WHITE PAPER:  
DEVOLUTION, DEMOCRACY AND DELIVERY –  
REFORMING LOCAL GOVERNMENT: POWER TO  
THE PEOPLE**

### **1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.01 To invite a Council response to the Welsh Government White Paper.

### **2.00 BACKGROUND**

2.01 In July 2014 the Welsh Government (WG) published a trio of policy papers on the future of governance and the public services in Wales under the banner of Devolution, Democracy and Delivery.

2.02 The main policy paper was a white paper entitled *Reforming Local Government*. This set out the options for an intended reorganisation of local government.

2.03 This white paper led to an invitation to councils to propose voluntary mergers for consideration by WG. Following submissions by three couplets of councils WG aborted the voluntary merger programme and instead issued a Ministerial statement committing to the publication of a proposed structure for local government in June 2015. The proposed structure and proposed smaller number of larger councils for the future is colloquially known as 'the map' for local government.

2.04 In January WG published a further white paper *Devolution, Democracy and Delivery – Reforming Local Government: Power to the People*. Whilst avoiding presenting a proposed 'map' for local government the White Paper does address some fundamental issues such as democracy and governance, powers, finance and the role and value of Town and Community Councils as the lowest tier of government. The closing date for responses to the White Paper is 28 April. The White Paper can be accessed on the consultations page on the Welsh Government website

<http://gov.wales/docs/dsjlg/consultation/150203-power-to-local-people-summaryv2-en.pdf>

### **3.00 CONSIDERATIONS**

- 3.01 Given the significance of the White Paper which could be a defining moment in the modern history of local government in a devolved Wales, local authorities have united in making a shared response to Welsh Government. The collective response prepared by our representative body, the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) is attached at Appendix B. Council is invited both to add its support to the WLGA response and to submit the tailored corporate response at Appendix A, which explores a number of the big questions in more detail and advances a positive vision for the future role of local government.

### **4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.01 Council is recommended to (1) adopt the corporate response set out at Appendix A for submission to Welsh Government and (2) support the collective response of the Welsh Local Government Association attached at Appendix B.

### **5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.01 None directly.

### **6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

- 6.01 None directly.

### **7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

- 7.01 None directly.

### **8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 8.01 None directly.

### **9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.01 None directly.

### **10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

- 10.01 None directly.

### **11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

- 11.01 The Council Leader, Cabinet members, Group Leaders, Chief Officers and senior managers have been consulted informally in the preparation of this report.

## **12.00 APPENDICES**

Appendix A: Flintshire corporate response

Appendix B: WLGA collective response

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985** **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

None other than the White Paper of Welsh Government.

**Contact Officer:** Colin Everett

**Telephone:** 01352 702100

**Email:** [chief\\_executive@flintshire.gov.uk](mailto:chief_executive@flintshire.gov.uk)