



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE **Launch of the consultation on the Promoting Local Democracy White Paper**

DATE **17 May 2012**

BY **Carl Sargeant, Minister for Local Government and Communities**

On 12 July 2011, the First Minister made a statement on the Legislative Programme for the Welsh Government. In that statement he announced that there would be a Bill focusing on local democracy.

Today, 17 May 2012, I am issuing a White Paper to seek views on proposals for the Local Democracy (Wales) Bill, together with other proposals designed to make improvements in relation to local democracy.

The Bill will be intended to redesign the rules within which the Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales operates and make reforms to the structure and functions of the Commission. These changes will address the recommendations from the Mathias review of the Commission's programme of electoral reviews undertaken in 2010, as detailed in my statement on 25 January 2012.

The White Paper also makes proposals aimed at:

- improving access to information about Town and Community Councils
- enhancing the operation of the Local Government ethical framework to enable a more local approach to the resolution of low-level complaints, without immediate resort to the full investigatory role of the Ombudsman.
- improving the effectiveness of electoral management in Wales, in terms of its organisation and funding, as well as encouraging high rates of voter registration;
- strengthening the scrutiny function of local government, to ensure it provides robust public accountability and drives public service improvement both locally and regionally;
- ensuring councillors receive improved levels of training and development, both in terms of their local leadership ability and their ability to act as effective community representatives when participating in local democratic processes.

The consultation will end on 3 August 2012 and I will be considering responses in determining the final shape of the legislation. I expect to introduce the Bill to the National Assembly for Wales in autumn 2012.