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Legislation Committee No 3

Proposed Local Government (Wales) Measure

Response from Mr René Kinzett, Leader of the Welsh Conservative Group – City and County of Swansea

To whom it may concern.

This response is from Councillor René Kinzett, Leader of the Welsh Conservative Group on the City & County of Swansea. This submission is written in a personal capacity and without reference to either my Group or Party policy. However, I do believe that the proposal I am putting forward has widespread cross-party support amongst a growing number of elected members and Assembly Members across Wales.

In order for the Measure to achieve its objective of "strengthening the structures and working of local government in Wales at all levels", I propose that the Measure should include provision to prevent the Public Sector Ombudsman for Wales from being the investigative body in terms of complaints relating to breaches of the Code of Conduct for Members of Local Authorities within Wales. Similar powers exercised by the body "Standards for England" are being abolished by the Coalition Government in Westminster.

I do believe that a Code of Conduct for Members of Local Authorities should, if there is a need for one to be in place at all, be monitored through local arrangements, perhaps as part of an overall framework laid down by the National Assembly/Minister. However, the expense to the public purse and the frankly bizarre investigations carried out by the PSOW relating to complaints about breaches of the Code of Conduct, have left many wondering whether the original aim and intentions of the Code have been left some way behind.

The Committee should call for further evidence about this issue to ascertain the opinion of political parties, councillors and others.

Yours sincerely

Mr René Kinzett

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