

LGF (S20) 26
Bil Cyllid Llywodraeth Leol (Cymru)
Local Government Finance (Wales) Bill
Ymateb gan: Scott Wood
Response from: Scott Wood



TINDLE NEWSPAPERS LIMITED

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The proposal, put forward within the Local Government Finance Bill, Wales, to remove the requirement for councils to publish council tax changes in local newspapers must be dismissed, if approved it puts local newspapers at threat of survival and risks large parts of the Welsh community being disengaged.

Local newspapers are essential part of ensuring the landscape of Wales are connected and informed with what happens in their communities. Local newspapers remain a critical medium for the public, particularly the elderly, those living in rural areas and those on lower household incomes. These products provide critical, essential information that fundamentally impacts their lives and decisions they make.

It should not be lost the impact of such a decision to remove, in the first instance, council tax notices from newspapers. Tindle newspapers prides itself on it remains a local publisher across numerous Welsh communities, employing local journalists, in local high street offices. This vital stream of revenue will almost certainly force us, to change this business model, closing offices and therefore no longer sufficiently report on local issues. Local issues which are important to both Welsh Government and the many local communities they represent.

The industry hasn't been complacent either, it has come together in the last year to launch the Public Notice Portal, utilising its strong digital audience. Giving further evidence that we are looking to provide Government with relevant, effective platforms to enable them to message its residents.

The UK government in Westminster has publicly acknowledged the vital importance of local newspapers in communicating public notices and pledged to keep the requirement for councils to publish them in local papers. We now urge the Welsh government to stand up for transparency and accountability and do the same.

Yours sincerely

Scott Wood
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