

Mark Drakeford AM/AC
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyllid a Llywodraeth Leol
Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-706
Ein cyf/Our ref MD/05211/16

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
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12 August 2016

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your letter dated 4 August asking for my views on Petition no. P-05-706 *Keep our Councils Rejuvenated by Introducing a Fixed Term*.

The issue of limiting terms for elected members was considered by the previous Minister in the fourth Assembly administration as part of series of consultations on local government reform. The consultation on the White Paper '*Reforming Local Government: Power to Local People*' ran for a 12 week period ending on 28 April 2015. It sought views on limiting the number of terms elected members, leaders and elected mayors may serve. The proposal was to limit elected members to five terms and limit leaders, executive members and elected mayors to two terms.

This particular proposal was not universally favourably received, and there was strong opposition in some quarters. The summary of consultation responses notes that specific arguments put forward against term limits for elected members were that they would restrict the pool of candidates, reduce the level of experience in local authorities, disregard the valuable contribution of current elected members, provide a barrier to diversity by discouraging younger candidates seeking a long-term commitment to their communities and would not be beneficial for democracy.

In his Written Statement, published on 17 July 2015, the previous Minister announced he had decided against taking forward this particular proposal, and the draft Local Government Mergers and Reform Bill, published in the autumn for consultation of 2015 did not contain it.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

I published the consultation responses to the draft Bill on 12 July. There is no clear consensus on what the future organization of local government in Wales should be. I am taking the time over the summer to talk to all stakeholders and reflect on the options.

With regard to term limits for elected members: I do not think the evidence for adopting this proposal is strong enough for this issue to be reopened. It would put a limitation on the electorate's choice and this limitation does not apply to other levels of government. I support the need to encourage diversity amongst councillors but there are other methods to do so, which do not impinge on the right of voters to elect whom they chose.

Best wishes,

Mark

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