

Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill – still be passed

Five Year Terms - The Bill changes the electoral cycle of principal councils and community councils from four to five-year terms.

Allowing council staff to stand for their own council - The Bill provides that council officers and employees, other than those holding politically restricted posts, will be entitled to stand for election to their own council. They will only be required to resign their paid employment with the council if they are elected. This will widen the pool of potential candidates while ensuring there is no conflict of interest once the candidate is elected.

Notices: The Bill also makes provision in relation to notices of principal council and community **Council meetings**. Provision is therefore made to amend the law relating to meetings in order to modernise the rules governing the meetings and proceedings of principal councils and community councils. For example, notices of meetings may be published electronically.

Community Council Annual Reports. The recommendations included that all community councils should be required to report annually on their work. These may be in electronic format.

Conduct of members - Training of members and staff of community councils - The Bill requires community councils to consider and address the training needs of members and staff. This can be undertaken in a proportionate way, recognising the current variation in the scope of what individual councils are responsible for.

Abolition of community polls - The 1972 Act (as amended by the 2011 Measure) provides that a community poll can be held if one is demanded at a properly convened community meeting.

The Bill provides for the abolition of community polls, and implementation of a system of petitions in their place.

Removal of the restriction on having community council meetings in licensed premises - This will enable community councils to hold meetings in licensed premises.

Electoral Qualifications – serving on more than one council - Consideration of whether an elected member of a principal council should be able to serve on a Community Council, or a community Councillor should be able to serve more than one community council, will form part of the review of the community council sector.

Strengthening Democracy - Reducing the voting age so as to include 16 and 17 year olds should increase and maintain engagement with young people, leading to a greater interest in democratic politics.