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# BWLETIN POLISI CYTÛN

## CYTÛN POLICY BULLETIN

### FEBRUARY 2014/ CHWEFROR 2014

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## Williams Commission

**First Minister Carwyn Jones has welcomed the publication of an independent report on Wales' public services.**

**The report has recommended major reorganization of local government in Wales, including the merging of unitary authorities, reducing their number from the current 22 to around a dozen.**

The First Minister established a commission, chaired by Sir Paul Williams, in April 2013 to independently review all aspects of Wales' public services to see how they are currently working and how they can be better improved in the future. The Commission on Public Service Governance and Delivery has spent eight months collecting evidence to produce a robust and honest report on the way public services are governed and delivered, and develop an optimal model of public service governance and delivery.

The First Minister said: *"I'd like to thank Sir Paul Williams and the Commission for their hard work in gathering wide-ranging evidence for this report, including from those who deliver and use public services. This report addresses many issues that are critical at a time when the need for public services is outstripping the resources available to provide them. I have always been clear that the status quo is not an option. People across Wales rely heavily on the vital services delivered by the public sector every day. Change is inevitable and essential so that our public services can become more efficient, effective, accessible and responsive. I will now take time to consider the report in detail and respond in due course."*

The Welsh Government, political parties and third sector organisations are currently considering the report and making contributions to the debate.

## £10 Million fund to tackle poverty

**A new £10 million capital fund to support community projects that contribute to the Welsh Government's ambition to reduce poverty across Wales has been launched.**

Community and voluntary groups, as well as social enterprises will be able to bid for capital grants of up to £500,000 to improve community facilities which provide services for people most in need in their local areas. Those applying for a grant will have to prove that their project will prevent and help to alleviate the effects of poverty.

Schemes that will reintroduce or prevent the loss of community services will also be eligible to apply.

The new Communities Facilities Programme aims to offer £10 million between now and the end of 2015.

***The programme opens for applications on February 3<sup>rd</sup> and further information is available [here](#).***

## **Legislation Currently Before the Assembly**

### **Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Bill**

A Government Bill, introduced by Gwenda Thomas, Deputy Minister for Social Services. The Business Committee has remitted the Bill to the Health and Social Care Committee.

About the Bill

The Bill will reform and integrate social services law for people and make provision for:

- Improving the well-being outcomes for people who need care and support, and carers who need support;
- Co-ordination and partnership by public authorities with a view to improving the well-being of people;
- Complaints and representations relating to social care and palliative care;
- Local authorities' social service functions and that of Welsh Ministers to intervene in a local authority's exercise of its social services functions; and connected purposes.

The Bill is currently at Stage 3. An explanation of the various stages of Assembly Bills can be found [here](#).

A Government Bill, introduced by Huw Lewis, Minister for Education and Skills. The Business Committee has remitted the Bill to the Children and Young People Committee.

### **Education (Wales) Bill**

The Education (Wales) Bill seeks to legislate in the following areas:

the Education Workforce Council including the registration and regulation of teachers and the wider workforce;

reform of the registration and approval of independent schools in respect of special educational needs;

post-16 assessment of educational and training needs and specialist Further Education (FE);

school term dates;

the appointment of HM Chief Inspector and HM Inspectors of education and training in Wales under section 19 of the Education Act 2005.

The Bill is currently at Stage 3.

A Government Bill, introduced by Alun Davies AM, Minister for Natural Resources and Food. An Emergency Bill is a Government Bill that needs to be enacted more quickly than the Assembly's usual four stage legislative process allows. A definition of an Emergency Bill is not provided in the Government of Wales Act 2006 ("the 2006 Act") or in the Assembly's Standing Orders, however Standing Order 26.95 states that:

"If it appears to a member of the government that an Emergency Bill is required, he or she may by motion propose that a government Bill, to be introduced in the Assembly, be treated as a government Emergency Bill."

As with all Assembly Bills, Emergency Bills must relate to one or more of the 20 Subjects contained in Schedule 7 to the 2006 Act in order for it to be within the scope of the Assembly's legislative powers.

## **Agriculture Sector (Wales) Bill**

A Government Bill, introduced by Alun Davies AM, Minister for Natural Resources and Food. An Emergency Bill is a Government Bill that needs to be enacted more quickly than the Assembly's usual four stage legislative process allows. A definition of an Emergency Bill is not provided in the Government of Wales Act 2006 ("the 2006 Act") or in the Assembly's Standing Orders, however Standing Order 26.95 states that:

"If it appears to a member of the government that an Emergency Bill is required, he or she may by motion propose that a government Bill, to be introduced in the Assembly, be treated as a government Emergency Bill."

As with all Assembly Bills, Emergency Bills must relate to one or more of the 20 Subjects contained in Schedule 7 to the 2006 Act in order for it to be within the scope of the Assembly's legislative powers. The Bill contains provisions that:

Preserve the current level of statutory protections;

Provide the Welsh Ministers with the power to make future Orders prescribing agricultural terms and conditions;

Provide Welsh Ministers with the power to establish an Agricultural Advisory Panel for Wales to carry out similar but more modified functions of the Agricultural Wages Board;

Enable the Agricultural Advisory Panel for Wales to carry out functions related to the operation of the agricultural sector, including promoting careers in agriculture and making recommendations to the Welsh Ministers to specify minimum terms and conditions; and

Assist the foundation for a resilient, sustainable and well-trained agricultural sector in Wales;

Promote upskilling in the agricultural sector.

A Government Bill, introduced by Carl Sargeant, Minister for Housing and Regeneration. The Business Committee has remitted the Bill to the Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee.

## **Housing (Wales) Bill**

The key purposes of the Bill are to:

Introduce a compulsory registration and licensing scheme for private rented sector landlords and letting and management agents;

Reform homelessness law, including placing a stronger duty on local authorities to prevent homelessness and allowing them to use suitable accommodation in the private sector;

Place a duty on local authorities to provide sites for Gypsies and Travellers where a need has been identified.

Introduce standards for local authorities on rents, service charges and quality of accommodation;

Reform the Housing Revenue Account Subsidy system;

Give local authorities the power to charge 50% more than the standard rate of council tax on homes that have been empty for a year or more; and

Assist the provision of housing by Co-operative Housing Associations.

The Bill is currently at Stage 1.

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