

RENEWING LOCAL DEMOCRACY: THE NEXT STEPS

SUMMARY OF ISSUES AND RESPONSES RECEIVED

Issue	Summary of Consultation Responses
No review of council boundaries or reduction in the number of councils in the foreseeable future.	19 respondents support (+2 favour increasing number of councils, 1 changing boundaries)
No reduction in the number of councillors.	30 respondents support (+2 favour reducing numbers, 2 increasing))
Removing Barriers	
Discuss with CoSLA, local authorities and other bodies ways in which progress with making councils more representative of communities they serve can be stimulated.	6 respondents - all supportive.
Bring the age for standing as a councillor (21) into line with the voting age (18) when a suitable legislative opportunity arises.	Majority support (4 out of 44 respondents who commented were against)
Repeal the legislation establishing a salary threshold for politically restricted posts within local authorities.	Majority support package of changes to political restrictions (7 out of 60 respondents who commented were against)
Amend legislation dealing with requirement for council employees to resign on nomination as candidate, when suitable legislative opportunity arises.	As above
Intend to draw up non-statutory guidance providing advice on, and establishing criteria for, defining 'posts providing policy advice' to ensure a consistent approach in future.	As above
Remove the existing restrictions on the use which councils can make of electronic communications for arranging and conducting meetings.	Only 11 respondents commented – all were supportive.
Views on the restrictions which apply to former councillors who wish to seek employment with the council after their period of service comes to an end.	<p>9 respondents proposed that there should be no change.</p> <p>3 suggested extending the period during which former councillors cannot take up employment with the council.</p> <p>44 respondents were in favour of reducing or abolishing that period.</p> <p>9 respondents suggested that the posts affected should be limited.</p>
Views on whether the political restrictions relating to other groups of public sector employees are also artificially restricting the field of candidates for election and, if so, whether public bodies should be encouraged to adopt a similar approach to that proposed for council employees.	Almost universal support for a review of the political restrictions on other public sector employees (1 respondent out of 41 who commented was against).
Electoral System	
First Past the Post	39 respondents support
AMS	1 respondents support
STV	960 respondents support (708 of these were received as part of a pre-printed postcard campaign)

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AV+	3 respondents support
Support PR (unspecified)	21 respondents support
Remuneration	
Allowances/salaries (committed to change)	<p>57 respondents support overhauling current system.</p> <p>62 respondents support paying salaries to some or all councillors, but 15 against.</p> <p>No clear view on level of pay. Small number suggested role should be evaluated to determine amount paid. Others suggested specific amounts – with basic salary ranging from level in Wales/Kerley to around £20k.</p> <p>Majority in favour of tiered approach with basic salary for all councillors and (small) number of additional tiers (whether salary or allowances) for those with additional responsibilities.</p> <p>25 respondents agreed that MSP’s salary provided suitable comparator. 7 against – some thought MSP’s salary too low, others suggested alternative group eg council employees.</p> <p>15 respondents suggested an allowance for those with caring responsibilities.</p> <p>Consultation Meetings: councillors in particular support salaries, using MSPs as comparator.</p>
Establish some form of pension provision for councillors.	<p>26 respondents supported pension provision without specifying how this should be done. (5 respondents were against provision in principle)</p> <p>8 respondents thought that provision should be made through salary; 31 (including 17 councils) support access to LGPS (with an opt out), 8 suggested alternative approaches – usually private provision.</p> <p>Some council employees are concerned about effect which giving councillors access to LGPS may have.</p> <p>Flavour of consultation meetings was very much in favour of pension provision but no clear view on how.</p>
Introduce local or national committees in future, independent of councils?	<p>47 respondents in favour of national committee but 3 against. 4 in favour of local committees. 12 (mainly councils) said national committee should leave room for local flexibility.</p> <p>Consultation Meetings: very much in favour of decision being taken out of councillors’ hands.</p>

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Should the salary paid vary according to size of the council area, or should amounts be standardised across Scotland?	46 support payment of standard amounts – only 1 against. Consultation Meetings: views tended to vary with location. Some measure of agreement that basic salary should be same across Scotland.
Views on the issue of severance pay?	46 respondents were in favour of severance pay. 20 respondents against. Flavour of consultation meetings was very much in favour of severance pay (Welsh and Irish examples were frequently cited, as was the position of MSPs). Some confusion over what is meant by severance pay - lump sum on standing down as councillor no matter what circumstances (seen by some as bridge to pension entitlement – so short-term), or one-off scheme to encourage long-serving councillors to stand down.
Power, Resources and Structures	
Abolish the existing system of local authority capital consents.	26 respondents support change. 2 against. 17 respondents suggest change should extend to housing capital. Consultation Meetings: similar outcome.
Should there be an improvement service and is there an obvious lead body (or bodies) to provide it?	13 respondents in favour of creating new body to provide improvement service (4 against this approach) 26 respondents thought service should be provided by 1 or more existing bodies, such as CoSLA, Audit Scotland, Quality Scotland and the IdeA (2 against this approach) 7 respondents suggested that local authorities should carry out this function by themselves.
Should a new body be created to provide such a service?	See above
Would a partnership or consortium of existing agencies be the best way forward?	See above
If so, which agencies should be involved in such a partnership?	See above
Should individual providers be asked to bid for work to be carried out as a result of the provision of such a service?	Limited support for this approach – it depended on the respondents views on who should provide the service.
Possible options for continuing the Leadership Advisory Panel process?	15 felt that more work was required, although not too soon. 16 argued that no further action was needed. Some of both groups argued that follow-up to LAP could be taken forward as part of improvement.
The timing of such further work?	As above
Best practice in joint officer/ member training?	Some examples of best practice.

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Ways in which groups of people, such as young people, can be involved in the work of the council?	Again, councils tended to quote examples of eg youth fora in their area.
Any possible implications for the co-option of non-elected members to the new decision making structures which councils are adopting as a result of the LAP process?	Respondents tended not to answer the question. Overall 12 respondents in favour of co-option, 14 against. No strong view in favour of change.
Other Issues raised during consultation	
Voting age	A small number of respondents suggested that the voting age should be reduced to 16.
Age of standing for community councils	This came up at one of the consultation meetings.
Requiring employers to give employees paid time off work to allow them to undertake council duties (or compensating them for doing so).	15 respondents have suggested citizenship legislation to require all employers to give employees paid time off work to carry out their duties as a councillor would encourage more people to stand. Some respondents have also suggested that a compensation scheme for employers might make this more palatable. Need for legislation also raised during consultation meetings.

