

Future Relationships with Welsh Local Government

Summary

1. *This report updates the General Assembly on discussions which have been taking place with the WLGA on a new relationship between Welsh local authorities and the LGA.*

Recommendations

2. *That the Assembly endorse the principles of the new relationship described in paragraph 4, that discussions with the WLGA continue and that a further report, incorporating any constitutional changes which may be necessary, be submitted to the next meeting of the Assembly on 15 December 2004.*

Background

3. *Discussions with the WLGA on a new relationship between local authorities and the LGA began at last year's Annual Conference. The review was prompted by the impact of devolution on local government in Wales, in particular the fact that the WLGA itself, and individual authorities, dealt with the Welsh Assembly on a range of significant issues. Options which were considered included complete withdrawal and it was recognised throughout that some change was necessary.*
4. *Work on developing the options and their consequences continued during the autumn and there were a series of consultations with Welsh local authorities. This resulted in a proposal for a new category of membership for Welsh authorities, with reduced representational rights, coupled with a range of services provided by the LGA, agreed and paid for under a service level agreement. This approach recognises the devolution settlement, but would continue to provide Welsh local government with a service on non devolved matters, and the benefits of access to a wider base of information and experience.*
5. *This approach has been endorsed by the WLGA Coordinating Committee, and approved by the LGA Executive. The majority of individual authorities in Wales (who have the membership relationship the LGA) have given protective notice of withdrawal from 31st March 2005, while making it clear that the notice will not be acted upon if an amended relationship was agreed.*
6. *It is intended to work on the details in conjunction with the new, post election leadership of the WLGA, and to report further, with constitutional amendments, to the next meeting of the General Assembly in December.*