

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HOUSING COMMITTEE

05TH MARCH 2003

Local Government Electoral Arrangements in Wales:

Consideration of recommendation to lower the voting age in local elections to 16 years.

LGH-05-03(p4)

Purpose

1. To inform the Committee of the advantages and disadvantages of a reduction in the voting age to 16, and the candidacy age to 18.

Recommendation

2. That the Committee considers the proposals from the Assembly Minister.

Background

3. The Committee was in general agreement at the December 11th meeting that a reduction in the voting and candidacy ages, as recommended by the Sunderland Report, warranted further consideration.
4. On the 28th January the Votes at 16 Campaign was formally launched at the House of Commons. Those attending included Lord Lucas, the Conservative peer whose private members' bill to lower the voting age is currently progressing through the House of Lords, NUS president Mandy Telford, and Liberal Democrat youth affairs spokesman Matthew Green.

Consideration

5. A report on the advantages and disadvantages of a reduction in the voting and candidacy ages is included at **Annex 1**.
6. The Bill currently under consideration in Parliament, 'Voting Age (Reduction to 16) Bill' is included at **Annex 2**.

Proposed Way Forward

7. I propose to report on all matters arising from the Sunderland Report to plenary on

March 19th.

8. I also propose, following plenary discussion, to approach the Secretary of State for Wales on the voting and candidacy matter.
9. I propose to report to Committee on April 2nd to inform on the progress of the Working Group established to look into the implementation of the recommendations of the Sunderland Report.