

Leighton Andrews AC / AM  
Y Gweinidog Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus  
Minister for Public Services



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-674  
Ein cyf/Our ref LA -/00014/16

William Powell AM  
Chair - Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Ty Hywel  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

[committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk)

21 January 2016

*Dear William,*

Thank you for your letter of 11 January regarding a petition received by the Petitions Committee from Mr Aaron Davies in respect of the Welsh Government's proposals for the merger of existing Local Authorities in west Wales.

Plans to reform Local Authorities in Wales are set out in the Draft Local Government (Wales) Bill, which was published for consultation in November. The proposed new areas are based on mergers of existing local government areas. Mergers are very much less disruptive for Local Authority staff, continuity of service, property and continuing liability issues than any other form of structural change. Our proposals are to reform Local Government and extend well beyond boundaries. They are about the nature of local government itself, its relationship with the communities it serves, the role of elected members and how it manages its performance. A merger between Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire would, for example, help the integration of health and social care in the Hywel Dda Local Health Board area and bring together an area which has some significant common features in terms of rurality, local economy and, in much of the area, use of the Welsh language.

Doing nothing is not a viable option. The scale of the financial challenge combined with an aging population and increased public demand and expectations mean we are beyond the point where collaboration and shared services on their own could deliver sustainable local government and services. Transformation is the only viable option.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
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English Enquiry Line 0300 0603300  
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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The consultation on the Draft Local Government (Wales) Bill closes on 15 February 2016. Comments made by signatories of the petition presented to the Petitions Committee will be noted and will be taken into careful consideration, along with all other responses, as part of the consultation process.

The consultation will present the next Welsh Government with the opportunity to make an early decision on how it wishes to proceed. This will be with the benefit of a developed legislative proposition, assisted by a full understanding of the views of stakeholders.

*Best wishes,*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Leighton Andrews', written in a cursive style.

**Leighton Andrews AC / AM**

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