

**Draft Local Government (Wales) Bill**  
**Additional information from SOLACE**

As you would expect from a range of different perspectives, there is no one definitive answer to your question; however, I have done my best to summarise the responses below.

- The key issue is that larger, merged councils will give rise to an increased remoteness from residents, and by default will require a new, second tier of some sort; this gives rise to a danger of duplication leading to increased confusion, costs and structures. There is a risk, therefore, that saving money and making local services more accessible will fall by the wayside.
- There is a general concern that the proposed Community Area Committees would add another layer of time-consuming and expensive bureaucracy; at the same time just reverting to a previous model of County and District Councils is not seen as a particularly helpful or cost effective way forward.
- A model where the County Council has the power to delegate a range of functions to Community Councils that are strengthened and given greater capacity to deliver services at a very local level was generally felt to be worth developing. I understand that there are some models of this already happening in Powys under the badge of “Community Delivery” that may be worth further exploration.

- We would suggest that service design and procurement stays at the county level, otherwise the potential to reduce cost by working in larger counties will be diminished. PSBs will have a clear role in multi agency strategic planning that can then be translated to local needs – for example the PSB might work up some strategies around children and young people that will be translated through community focused schools locally.

- We would support localised needs identification matched with stakeholder / partnership led solutions on population bases of around 50,000 – although this number would depend on geography and rurality.

- We do not see Community Councils as the only vehicle for the delegation of local delivery, and feel that there should also be an ability to delegate to third sector organisations, housing associations and community and resident groups. There could also be some interesting models around local health and wellbeing linked to GP clusters.

- There are a range of services that could come within the scope that would be of a local, non-specialist, environmental nature. The list below gives a flavour, but is not exhaustive:

- Open space management – such as parks and sports grounds
- Community transport
- Community buildings and assets
- Roadside verges and minor highway repairs
- Street cleansing
- Gully and pipe clearing
- Snow clearing
- Litter

- Fly tipping
- Dog fouling
- Public toilets
- Community safety

I hope that this is helpful. We are of course open to any future conversations that may be taken forward, and I would also draw your attention to the SOLACE formal response to the consultation, which is a more comprehensive document than the evidence that we produced to the committee.