

By: Alex King: Cabinet Member for Localism and Partnerships & Deputy Leader

To: Policy Overview Co-Ordinating Committee – 9 September 2009

Subject: Strengthening Local Democracy: Consultation

1. Background

(1) The overriding theme of this consultation is that of the central – local Government relationship referred to in the recent House of Commons Communities and Local Government (CLG) Select Committee report - *The Balance of Power: Central and Local Government*.

Whilst the consultation deals with issues such as:

- Giving greater powers to the scrutiny function;
- The 'well-being' power; and
- Climate change.
- Sub-regional structures; and
- Placing the central - local Government relationship on a more formal footing.

It fails to include the back-bone issues of the local Government finance system; or councillor recognition.

(2) The Government would like this consultation to be the blue-print for local Government debate during the next five to ten years and some of the options will require primary legislation. Given the timescales though (this consultation will close on 2 October 2009) there is not time for any of this to be implemented prior to the forthcoming General Election. However, this consultation importantly provides the opportunity for the County Council to clearly set out its own views on how the central-local relationship might develop in future.

Proposed Response to the Consultation

2. Attached as an Appendix to this report is a suggested response.

Recommendation

3. The Policy Overview Co-Ordinating Committees views are sought on the proposed response before the response is signed off on behalf of the County Council.

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