

16 November 2020

Dear

### **ATISN 14527 – reviews of Local Government in Wales**

Thank you for your request which I received on 21 October 2020 about costs associated with the 'Strengthening Local Government' Green Paper consultation in 2018 and the Local Government Working Group in 2019. You also asked for information relating to the outcome of these reviews. The information you requested is enclosed.

#### **'Strengthening Local Government' Green Paper consultation**

The 'Strengthening Local Government' consultation was launched on the Welsh Government website on 20 March 2018.

The costs associated with this consultation were in relation to making the consultation accessible to all:

- Youth Friendly version - £4,074
- Easy Read version - £3,720

Staff costs associated with drafting the consultation paper and analysing the consultation responses were part of the normal running costs of the Welsh Government.

One consultation event was held between the Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public Services and local government Leaders and senior Cabinet Members.

The associated costs for that event were:

- Venue: Metropole Hotel, Llandrindod Wells - £3,234
- Independent Chair of event - £1,500

The summary of responses to the 'Strengthening Local Government' consultation was published on the Welsh Government website in June 2018.

<https://gov.wales/strengthening-local-government-delivering-people>

On 17 July 2018 the Cabinet Secretary announced the findings from the consultation and his intention to establish a new group to take forward the reform programme which would enable councils to merge voluntarily and would design new structures and ways of working to deliver on the new vision for empowered local government. This was named the Working Group on Local Government.

<https://gov.wales/next-steps-strengthen-local-government-announced>

## Working Group on Local Government

This Working Group on Local Government was chaired by a Member of the European Parliament and there were no costs incurred to the Welsh Government for his time or expenses. The members of the Working Group were the Leaders of six local authorities in Wales; the Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public Services; the Chair of the CBI; a Trade Union representative and a Third Sector representative. None of these were paid.

Staff costs associated with preparing papers and providing the secretariat to the Group were part of the normal running costs of the Welsh Government.

The only costs incurred in the running of the Working Group were refreshment costs, as below:

<b>Working Group</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Venue &amp; Catering Cost</b>
28/09/2018	City Hall, Cardiff	Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) had a number of rooms booked in City Hall for a Council meeting and allowed the Working Group meeting to take place in one of those rooms at no extra cost. Catering £20
30/11/2018	Novotel, Atlantic Wharf, Cardiff	WLGA had a number of rooms booked in Novotel for a day of meetings and allowed the Working Group meeting to take place in one of those rooms at no extra cost. Catering £45.20
21/05/2019	Ty Hywel, Cardiff Bay	Ty Hywel is part of the Welsh Government estate and therefore no venue costs were incurred. £70.20

The outcome of the Working Group on Local Government was a Recommendations Report, at the link below:

<https://gov.wales/working-group-local-government-recommendations>

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit,  
Welsh Government,  
Cathays Park,  
Cardiff,  
CF10 3NQ

or Email: [Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales](mailto:Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales)

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely