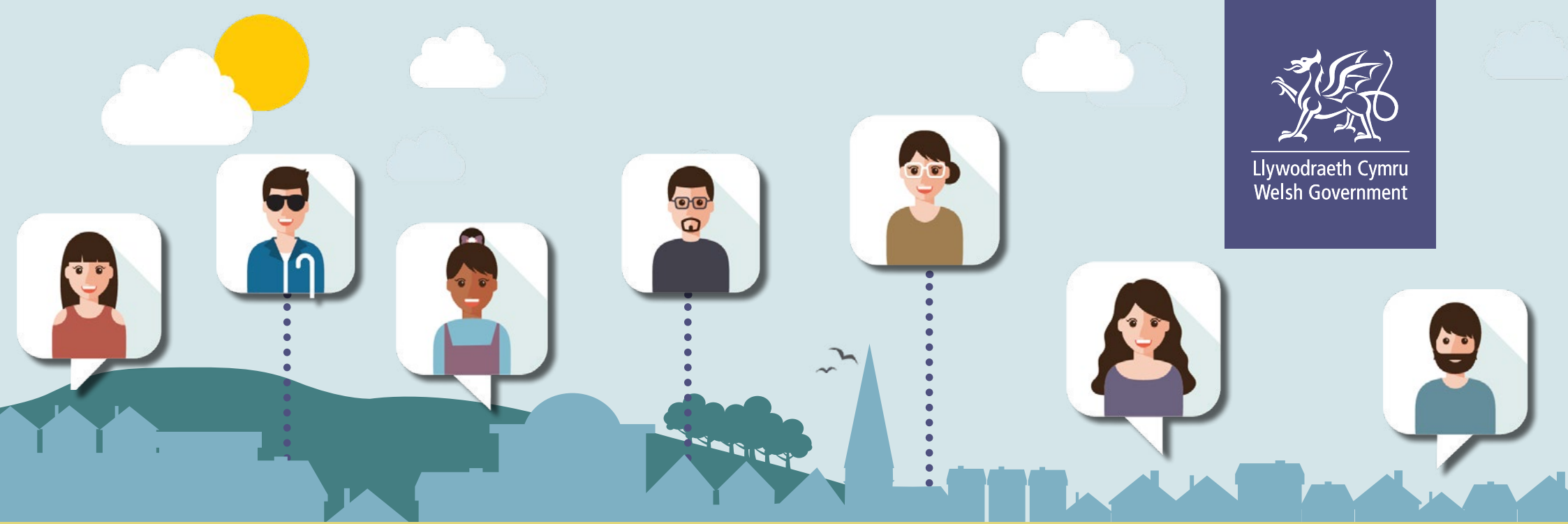
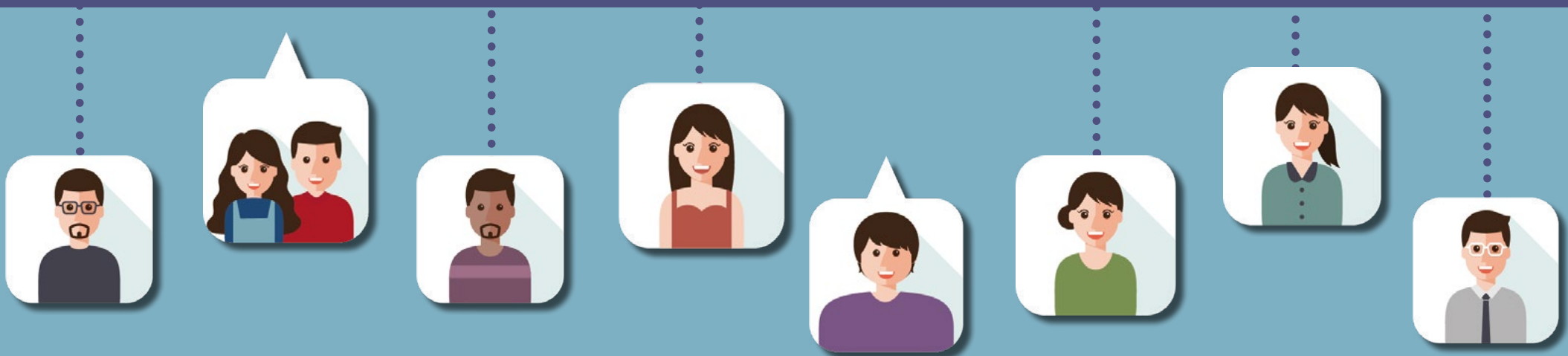




Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Strengthening Local Government – Delivering for People



A consultation



Hello

In Wales there's the **Welsh Government** and there's **Local Government**.

Sometimes people call Local Government the Local Authority or the Council.

Welsh Government

We make decisions for Wales:

- we set budgets and give money to all Local Authorities
- we develop new policies and laws
- we support and improve the lives of everyone across Wales.

We also support Local Authorities.

Local Authorities

A Local Authority has control over an area. They look after lots of different services which you might use:

- housing
- schools
- social services
- libraries, leisure and tourism
- planning
- environmental health, refuse and recycling
- transport.

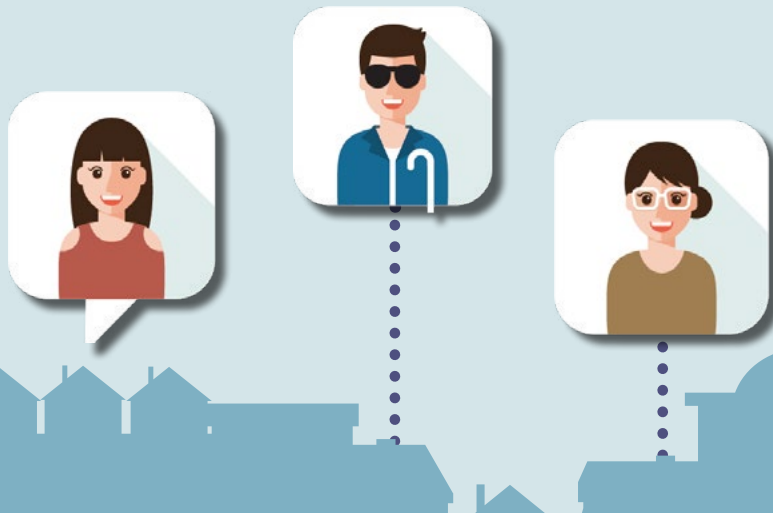
Wales is changing. We have to plan better for the future. We've looked at Local Authorities:

- how they work
- how they listen to people
- how they meet people's needs
- how they spend money
- how they deliver services
- how they plan for the future.

We think Local Authorities need to change.

There are 22 Local Authorities in Wales. We think some need to join together to make larger, stronger Authorities.

This tells you about the changes – we want to know what you think.



Our Vision

We want bigger, stronger and more powerful Local Authorities who are able to take Wales forward.

Why do we need change?

This is not about:

- changing lines on a map
- taking power from Local Authorities or communities
- stopping people getting involved or being heard
- making more cuts to funding
- stopping services.



This is about democracy

Democracy is made up of two old words:

- **'demo'** – means people
- **'cracy'** – means rule.

It's a belief in freedom and that all people are equal. Our government systems are based on this.

We want all kinds of different people to get involved and have a say.

This is about people

We want communities to be better represented by their Councillors.

Each Local Authority has councillors. Communities vote for who they want to represent them.

We want more people from different backgrounds to think about becoming Councillors.

Councillors should represent everyone in their area. No-one should be excluded because of age, race, religion, background, or any other reason.

This is about how we use the funding available

We want to use funding and resources better.

All Local Authorities are facing challenges:

- there's less money
- more people are using services
- people expect more from services.

Funding must be used well because we need sustainable services that continue in the future.

This is about services

It's not just about money. It's about making sure everyone gets the same high-quality service wherever they live in Wales.

We can't have **22** Local Authorities, doing things **22** different ways, to different levels with **22** different outcomes.

This isn't fair. It doesn't give people what they need.

Timeline

What we've already done.

2014

2014 – the Williams Commission did a study of Local Authorities. Its report said that if some of them joined together then:

- services could improve
- they would face challenges better
- they could save a lot of money.

2015

2015 – we looked at ways to join Local Authorities together. Then, we asked people across Wales what they thought. Some people thought it was a good idea, others didn't.

2016

2016 – we talked with Local Authorities. We wanted to know how we could plan better for the future.

2017

2017 – we took everything Local Authorities had said and set out a new plan to help them work together more.

Some Local Authorities have been doing this really well – but it hasn't happened everywhere.

2018

These are the changes we think need to happen.



The changes

We think it's time that some Local Authorities join together to make larger Authorities.

There are three different ways to do this.



Option 1 – Local Authorities choose

Local Authorities choose if and when to join together on their own.

Then they work together and make decisions. But, this might not bring the changes that Wales needs.

We would give them support through this.

Option 2 – Do it in stages

Some Local Authorities would become larger Authorities first then the others would follow at a later time.

The Local Authorities who choose to join together, can do it sooner. We would give them support to join in 2022.

Other Local Authorities would have to join together by 2026.

This means some areas in Wales might get better services and make savings before others.

We would give them support through this.

Option 3 – A single action plan

All Local Authorities join and become larger Authorities at the same time.

Local Authorities become larger Authorities in 2022.

This sets out a single, clear way forward for every Authority to follow.

It may be a big change, but it deals with the challenges on services and money quicker.

We would give them support all the way through this.

Cost of change

Change takes time and money. But, the cost of doing nothing is bigger.



Which option would you choose?

1

2

3

Why?

What will the new larger Authorities look like?

We've listened to people and used that information to set out this plan. We think we should have fewer, larger Authorities. We've suggested how to do this.

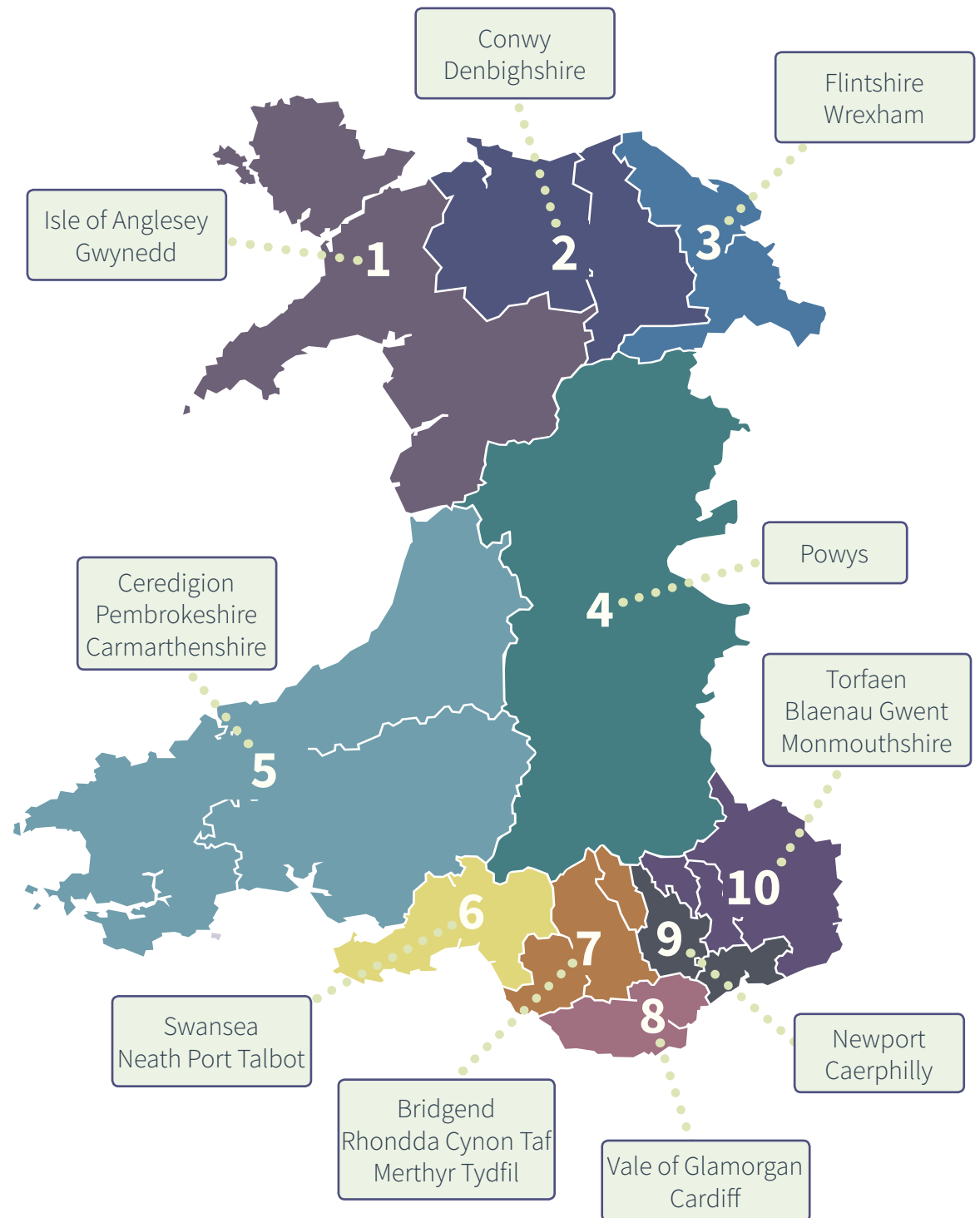
We know this won't be easy. There will be issues that each area has to deal with.

? Is having fewer, larger Authorities a good plan?
Yes **No**

What do you think of our ideas for the Authority areas?

Support through the changes

It's important that these changes happen in a way that is fair, open and clear. So, there'll be Transition Committees to give help and advice. Staff will also get the training and the support they need.



What difference will it make?

The new larger Authorities will:

Help to improve services

Larger Authorities will have:

- the ability to cope with more demand for services
- more resources and people with skills
- the opportunity to look at new ideas and develop new services
- new ways to meet people's needs, now and in the future.

Give people the power to make decisions

Local Authority leaders said they want to be able to make decisions to improve services and do what their area needs. They want to involve people in their communities and plan better for the future.

Support Councillors

Councillors work hard to improve life in their communities. They have to deal with cuts and difficult decisions. Often, they get criticism in the media, internet trolled and people complaining. This puts many people off becoming a councillor, even if they'd be good at it.

Change can be difficult. It can make people feel unsettled and worried. When these changes happen, there will be advice and support for staff and the people who deliver services.

We will make sure every area has the support they need.

? How can we get more people from different backgrounds to get involved and become councillors?



Other issues

We have a responsibility to:

1. **Protect the Welsh Language.** It's important that people can get services in Welsh and English.

? How do you think these changes will affect the Welsh Language?
Positively **Negatively** **Not much effect**

2. **Treat people equally and be fair.** Everyone should be able to take part in decisions that affect their community.

? How do you think the changes will affect how people are treated?
Positively **Negatively** **Not much effect**

3. **Protect Children's Rights.** We must think about children's rights when we make any decisions.

? How do you think the changes will affect Children's Rights?
Positively **Negatively** **Not much effect**

Is there anything else you want to say about these plans?

Thanks for reading this

We want to hear what you think.

Please send your answers to:
StrengtheningLocalGov@gov.wales

or to:

Strengthening Local Government
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

by 12th June 2018

