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PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIAT FOR
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITIES

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM

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FOREWORD BY HON DR OWEN BONNICI, MINISTER FOR JUSTICE, CULTURE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT



As for practically anything else, policies and administrative set-ups have to undergo a process of renewal. It is for this reason that we are launching a reform to renew Local Government on the occasion of its 25th anniversary. We envisage an extensive reform, as proposals are being made to ensure that Local Government answers to today's needs. The White Paper for Local Government reform sets out measures intended to improve Council administration. In the last instance this would ensure that each and every citizen in any city or village receives a better service. Not only that. We want each citizen in our country to have a say in the administration of his or her locality. Central Government is fully and seriously committed to Local Government. The strengthening of Local

Government does not only result in more democracy at the local level, but also in recognition of the citizen.

FOREWORD BY HON SILVIO PARNIS, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITIES



The 25th anniversary of Local Government offers the appropriate opportunity to undertake an in-depth assessment of the sector and to embark on a reform built on decentralisation and greater autonomy for our Local Government.

Citizen expectations have grown, as is only to be expected after 25 years. Therefore, the main objective of the present reform is to give Local Government the tools to meet these expectations.

The process leading to the present reform involved an objective assessment of the Local Government set-up, which enabled us to determine which aspects of the system were functioning properly and which failed to meet citizen expectations. Proposals were subsequently drawn up with a view to addressing the shortcomings identified.

These proposals include the strengthening of the structures now being referred to as Regional Councils which, it is hereby proposed, would be given the necessary resources to complement and assist their respective Local Councils. Moreover, the Regional Councils would assume additional responsibilities in relation to several sectors that are not properly catered for by the present administrative set-up.

The aim of the present reform is therefore to strengthen both Local and Regional Councils. The reform is expected to deliver in the social sphere, so that no person is denied the opportunities or the services offered. In this regard, the reform is to secure an improvement in the quality of life for everyone, including senior citizens and persons with special needs. We also need to deliver more, in terms of both quality and quantity, in relation to cultural events, sport and education, thereby ensuring that no one is excluded. This reform will therefore give Malta a Local Government system delivering service excellence.

I believe that this is the right time for us to register significant progress in terms of the quality of services rendered. This will ensure that Local Government will continue building on past achievements and, above all, that it will continue making a real difference in the lives of residents.

INTRODUCTION

For an Effective Reform of Local Government

**A more efficient
administration for the
benefit of our citizens**

The effectiveness and efficiency of our administrative structures can only be enhanced if we keep in view the current state of play, whilst taking into consideration our point of departure and our vision for the future. This is precisely the scope of the present document and the accompanying legislative proposals.

Over the last 25 years Local Councils have gained importance in the lives of citizens. For this reason it has to be ensured, today more than ever, that the services rendered by Local Councils are efficient. Moreover, we have to ascertain that financial resources are utilised responsibly and diligently in the provision of the required services, thereby preventing waste and squandering of such resources. The principle of accountability is required with a view to building a sustainable future for Local Councils. The present White Paper was drawn up with reference to the following questions:

- **Can our citizens receive a better service from Local Councils?**
- **What can be done to bring the Local Councils closer to the resident?**

It is evident that those Local Councils that kept ongoing contact with their residents were in a better position to understand the needs of the locality. This enabled them to identify those measures and initiatives that would improve citizens' quality of life and the environment. These Local Councils made better use of financial resources and performed better than other Local Councils as their projects yielded better results.

The present reform must make our Local Government system more efficient, whilst ensuring a better quality of life for residents. The proposals in this White Paper are intended to bring

the residents closer to their Local Councils. This will enable the localities to better address the challenges they face. Therefore, the proposals in this White Paper are intended to strengthen the social fabric of our communities. These proposals relate to: recognition of voluntary work, social measures, information about new legislation, a better quality of life for senior citizens and persons with special needs, consultation and reactions to complaints and suggestions by citizens, integration and social inclusion, as well as more information relating to services rendered by Local Councils, Government Departments and Public Authorities. Citizens should also be more actively involved in the drawing up of the local Action and Business Plan.

A Mobile App will also be launched to draw the citizen closer to the Local Council. The app would enable Local Councils and the Local Government Division to receive complaints and suggestions in real time.

The Local Government Division will also be strengthened in order to ensure better monitoring of Local Government operations, thereby increasing accountability further to securing better value for money. Such strengthening will also enable the Division to offer increased support to both Local as well as Regional Councils. The reform will also address cooperation with the Office of the Auditor General so as to secure the necessary improvements in Local Council operations, thereby ensuring compliance with the recommendations made by this Office.

The proposals also entail strengthening of the Regional Councils, so as to enable them to assist Local Councils, as well as to deliver better services to citizens. For this purpose, it is hereby being proposed that Regional Councils would be allocated sufficient financial resources to enable them to fulfil their obligations and responsibilities. The Regional Councils will not be taking over any responsibilities from Local Councils.

The reform also seeks to deliver staff related measures, so that staff members are aware of services offered and that synergies between Local Councils, Regional Councils, Government entities and departments as well as Central Government are improved. The reform is therefore expected to assist the citizen by ensuring that staff members are able to provide the required information on the spot.

The Reform is expected to result in increased operational efficiency, as well as more transparent processes, accountability and good governance with due regard to citizen expectations. For this reason investment in education and training is necessary. Training programmes will be formulated for elected councillors and clerical staff at Local and Regional Councils with a view to further improving the knowledge and skills of the officials concerned.

This reform should therefore ensure that Local Councils commit themselves to the social sphere. No individual should be denied the opportunities or the services provided. Moreover, the quality of life should improve for everyone, including for senior citizens and persons with special needs. We should also benefit from more cultural initiatives, coupled with sport and education, as well as initiatives promoting integration, thereby ascertaining that no one is excluded.

Finally, the overarching objective of this Local Government reform is to tailor the services provided by Local Government to the needs of the Citizen.

You are therefore encouraged to read the proposals in this White Paper and to send us your comments and suggestions by e-mail on **riforma.localgov@gov.mt** or by post on **Parliamentary Secretariat for Local Government and Communities, 230, Casa Gaspe, Republic Street, Valletta.**

1 The Regions

2 The Social Aspect, Education & the Community

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THE REGIONS

INCREASED RESPONSIBILITIES AND RESOURCES FOR REGIONAL COUNCILS

The Regional Committees were set up by SL 363.160, issued on 5th August 2011. These regulations established five Regional Committees (South, South East, Centre, North and Gozo). Each region is made up of an average of 14 Councils.

It is being proposed, as part of the Local Government Reform, that the Regions would be allocated specific roles and increased responsibilities, as well as the necessary resources to carry out their functions. The proposals being made in relation to Regional Committees include: a change in nomenclature from Regional Committees to Regional Councils, the identification of the Regional Council as another level of Local Government, the transfer of certain responsibilities from Central Government to Regional Councils and the allocation of additional resources to Regional Councils to enable them to function effectively.

1.1 From Regional Committees to Regional Councils

The change in nomenclature from Regional Committees to Regional Councils is being proposed in view of the allocation of additional responsibilities foreseen by the present reform, coupled with the recognition of these structures as an integral component of Local Government.

1.2 From 5 Regional Committees to 6 Regional Councils

The present Local Government structure is made up of 5 Regional Committees, each comprising of an average of 14 local councils. The present reform foresees an increase in the number of regions from 5 to 6 in order to

ensure a more equitable distribution of local councils within each region. Each region would be made up of an average of 11 councils, with the exception of Gozo, which would comprise 14. The composition of the 6 regions as proposed is as follows:

Region 1: Mellieħa, Imġarr, Mosta, Naxxar, St Paul's Bay, Attard, Balzan, Lija, Iklın.

Region 2: Gżira, Pembroke, St Julians, San Ġwann, Sliema, Swieqi, Ta' Xbiex, Birkirkara, Hal Ġharghur.

Region 3: Hamrun, Żebbuġ, Imsida, Qormi, Siġġiewi, Rabat, St Venera, Dingli, Imdina, Imtarfa.

Region 4: Birgu, Bormla, Isla, Fgura, Floriana,

Kalkara, Marsa, Santa Luċija, Paola, Pietà, Valletta, Xgħajra, Żabbar, Tarxien.

Region 5: Birżebbuġa, Għaxaq, Kirkop, Luqa, Marsaskala, Marsaxlokk, Imqabba, Qrendi, Safi, Gudja, Żejtun, Żurrieq.

Region 6: Rabat (Citta Victoria), Fontana, Għajnsielem, Għarb, Għasri, Kerċem, Munxar, Nadur, Qala, San Lawrenz, Sannat, Xagħra, Xewkija, Żebbuġ.

The proposed layout of Regional and Local Councils is considered preferable to the current set-up from a geographical perspective. This would facilitate the work of regional contractors and the Regional Councils themselves, thereby enabling better management. At the same time, the revised set-up is also expected to increase flexibility when applying for funding under EU programmes.

1.3 Gozo Regional Council

Regional Councils in Malta will be coordinating with several Ministries, Departments and Entities. The Gozo Regional Council will also be liaising with the Ministry for Gozo and with the Gozo Regional Development Authority with a view to avoiding duplication of functions.

1.4 The Region as another level of the Local Government Structure

Regional Councils will enjoy recognition among Government departments, entities and other institutions, in line with SL 363.160. For this reason the Office of the Regional President will play a major role in consultation processes launched by national regulatory authorities required to liaise and work with Local Councils, so as to make sure that interests of local citizens are safeguarded.

1.5 The Appointment of the Regional President

The candidature for Regional President will be extended to registered voters in the Region. It is hereby proposed that the existing procedure whereby the Regional President would be appointed by the councillors elected from the region would be retained. The candidate elected President of the Region

will not be allowed to retain office in a Local Council.

1.6 Waste collection on a Regional Level

We face significant challenges in the field of waste management. These challenges must be addressed in order for a better service to be delivered in line with citizens' demands for cleaner localities.

A number of measures are required to guarantee the provision of a better service. Contracts have to be managed more effectively, whilst standards have to be raised. At the same time services rendered must offer value for money. It is hereby being proposed that waste management contracts would be managed at the level of the Regional Council. Regional Councils would therefore be responsible for the drafting of contracts, the publication of tenders, the selection of bidders, as well as contract management. These measures should enable the authorities to reach the objectives for waste management set out in the national strategy.

The implementation of these proposals is expected to ensure the delivery of a service that would better meet the requirements of citizens, further to curbing abuse. This would result in cleaner localities.

1.6.1 Waste separation in Schools

It is being proposed that Regional Councils, along with the Education Division, would set up small-scale bring-in sites within schools pertaining to the respective regions. These sites would be set up in conjunction with a scheme for the management of recyclable waste and an educational campaign for students. This should serve as a model for other educational campaigns.

1.7 Social Responsibilities

In view of the fact that Local Government is the public authority closest to citizens and that the services it provides are of direct interest of citizens, it is considered advisable to entrust Regional Councils with coordination in the social sphere, along with the pertinent specialised entities. The Regional Councils will work closely with voluntary organisations active in the social sphere within the Region.

Assistance and support will be given to these organisations.

The Regional Councils will facilitate regular meetings involving school authorities, Local Councils, social workers, Church authorities, the Police and representatives of minority groups. Such meetings would address such matters as prevention and measures to address abuses, bullying, social exclusion and poverty, in particular among children and vulnerable persons.

1.8 Regional Council support for Local Councils

The Regions will assist Local Councils. Such assistance should be delivered in conjunction with the services offered by servizz.gov. Regional Councils will therefore be required to keep abreast of developments relating to the several services offered.

1.9 The Regional Councils will be geared to assist Local Councils in making use of EU funds

It is hereby being proposed that an EU Fund Officer should be recruited by each Regional Council, so that support would be delivered to Local Councils to benefit from EU Funding Programmes.

1.10 Regional Council sponsorship of research on matters relating to the Region

Regional Councils should support studies and research relating to the region conducted by MCAST and University of Malta students, as well as students from other Universities and other educational institutions.

1.10.1 Scientific Research and Feedback from the Citizen

Regional Councils shall conduct scientific research from time to time with a view to assessing residents' level of satisfaction with services offered by the respective Local Councils. This will ensure that the residents' active involvement and the enhancement of operational efficiency. The surveys conducted, excluding any personal data, would be submitted to the Association for Local Councils and the Ministry responsible for Local Government.

1.11 Regional Council and Local Council Coordination of Sport and Physical activities to promote and incentivise a healthy lifestyle

Another task that should be assigned to Regional Councils is the coordination of sport activities in partnership with the Local Councils and Sport Associations. Such an initiative would promote and incentivise a health lifestyle amongst our citizens. Qualified Sport Coordinators should therefore be assigned to each Regional Council.

Cooperation with the Ministry responsible for Health will be enhanced in order to coordinate and organise activities and initiatives promoting a healthy lifestyle for citizens.

1.12 Health Clinics in the Regions

The Regions and the Ministry for Health will formulate a regulatory framework in order to strengthen and better manage Health Clinics in the localities. Our objective is to ensure that these Clinics are more accessible and that they offer a better environment to the public making use of them.

1.13 Regional Council and School Administration coordination to ensure that school premises would be available for use by the community after school hours

It is also being proposed that Regional Councils should contribute towards the maintenance of school facilities, further to liaising with schools in order to ensure that state-run school facilities would be open and available for use by the community after school hours. Formal agreements will therefore be concluded between Regional Councils and the Principals for the College of Schools in the respective regions.

1.14 Regional Councils to be responsible for the maintenance of the monuments that are not designated national monuments

At present no entity is entrusted with the maintenance of monuments that are not designated as national. It is hereby being proposed that the maintenance of these monuments should be entrusted to the Regional Councils. This would ensure that the monuments in question are kept in good condition.

1.15 A direct financial allocation for Regional Councils

The Regional Councils would require adequate financial allocations to be able to fulfil the functions set out in this document. For this reason it is being proposed that the Local Government Act should make specific provision in this regard.

1.16 Collection and Compilation of Information about abandoned Government properties and sites in the localities

Regional Councils will collect and compile information about abandoned Government properties and sites, which information shall be handed over to the Lands Authority.

1.17 Regional Council responsibility for zones abutting Housing Estates

At present certain zones abutting Government Housing Estates neither fall under the responsibility of the Housing Authority nor the Local Councils. It is therefore being proposed that these areas should fall under

the responsibility of the Regional Councils. The Regional Councils will be required to ensure that these sites are properly maintained and embellished as necessary, including by way of landscaping projects.

1.18 Cooperation with the Police and LESA

Regional Councils will actively cooperate with the Police Force and LESA by means of an arrangement. The Regional President will liaise with a senior official within the Police Force to organise, inter alia, regular meetings addressing issues of concern that require high-level decisions and long-term action. This would contribute towards more security and peace of mind for residents.





THE SOCIAL ASPECT, EDUCATION AND THE COMMUNITY

The Local Council is the authority closest to the citizen. It is therefore important for local councils to embark on initiatives that most closely affect the daily lives of citizens. Local Councils should offer the best possible service whilst supporting and assisting citizens, particularly in the social and educational spheres, such as through lifelong learning initiatives. Such initiatives strengthen the sense of community. For this purpose, a series of proposals are being made in relation to these sectors.

2.1 Strengthening the Customer Care Unit of the Local Government Division

It is hereby being proposed that the Local Government Division's Customer Care Unit should be strengthened. The Unit should have the necessary resources to address the queries, complaints and suggestions made by local government operators as well as citizens. The Unit will also be required to reply to queries within a stipulated timeframe. Moreover, a monitoring system should be set up whereby updates on the status of individual complaints would be readily available.

2.2 Extension of additional Local Council services for citizens

One of the most frequent difficulties encountered by residents is that they often need Local Council services after office hours. For this reason it is being proposed that assistance should be made available to residents after office hours.

2.3 Better environment for our localities

Educational initiatives and actions such as the removal of asbestos tanks and hazardous or unsightly materials, as well as aerials from rooftops, will be undertaken in cooperation with the Ministries and authorities responsible, including the Planning Authority, the Environment and Resources Authority.

2.4 Information about citizen rights

Regional Councils and Local Councils will provide information relating to citizens' rights, including information concerning social benefits and other schemes. Such assistance will, in particular, be beneficial to senior citizens and other persons who find it difficult to fill in forms or to apply for certain schemes. Such initiatives will be undertaken in cooperation with servizz.gov and Local Councils.

2.5 Availing ourselves of the skills and experience of senior citizens

Senior citizens have skills and experiences to offer which, if properly availed of, would be beneficial to other citizens in our localities. It is thereby being proposed that Local Councils should avail themselves of the services of senior citizens for the benefit of the locality and its citizens.

2.6 Assistance relating to the regeneration of squares

Local Councils will be assisted in the process to apply for existing funds in order to embellish and regenerate the squares in their localities. The possibility of setting up a special fund for the benefit of those Councils that embarked upon such initiatives is being considered. This would enable such Councils to conduct ongoing maintenance as necessary.

2.7 Integration of Migrants within the communities

Migrants' understanding of the norms and rules in their host society and country is an important part of the process of integration. It

is very important for Local Councils to organise activities focusing on mutual respect between migrants and local residents. Educational initiatives and information campaigns should also be launched in collaboration with the pertinent Ministries in order for everyone to understand his or her role in the locality.

2.8 Embellishment of localities

Local Councils will be provided with endemic plants and trees by the Ministry responsible for the Environment. These will be planted in the locality and as part of the implementation of capital projects. Fishing villages will be provided with palm trees to be planted in areas identified for the purpose by the competent Local Council.

2.9 Community Officers working closer to our citizens

Community officers will be working closer to our citizens. They will be regularly posted in the localities where they will provide information to our citizens. To this end, educational and information campaigns will be launched in order to reduce the number of contraventions.



3

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEES

FUNCTIONS OF ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEES TO BE REINVESTED IN LOCAL COUNCILS

The Administrative Committees were established in 2010 by means of Subsidiary Legislation issued under the Local Councils Act (L.S.363.149). 16 Administrative Committees were established in order to deal with the interests of the communities of Marsalforn, Xlendi, Santa Luċija (Gozo), Paceville, Kappara, Madliena, Bubaqra, Fleur-de-Lys, Tal-Virtù, Hal Farruġ, St. Peter's, Swatar, Burmarrad, Baħrija, Baħar iċ-Ċagħaq and Gwardamagia. It is hereby being proposed to reinvest the functions of the Administrative Committees in the respective Local Councils. The respective Administrative Committees would be dissolved.

3.1 Termination of Administrative Committees

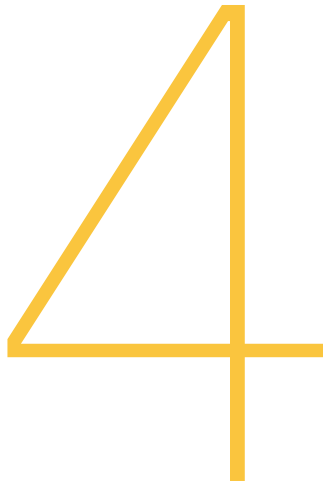
An analysis of the operations of the Administrative Committees over the last eight years revealed that these Committees lack an effective function. Even if the Chairpersons of these Committees are entitled to attend Council meetings and to take part in discussions, they have no role to play in the decision making process and they do not vote.

It has also transpired that a number of these Committees do not attract a sufficient number of candidates when elections are held, meaning that some of them have not been convened for a long time.

In view of the above, it is hereby being proposed that the Administrative Committees should operate only until such time as the upcoming election is due. No fresh elections for these committees would be held.

3.2 Responsibility for Communities

The representation of communities listed in the ninth schedule to the Act, as well as any other communities identified by the Local Council, will be ensured through the mandatory allocation of responsibility for such representation to a Local Councillor. The Local Councillor responsible for the Community will be required to appoint a sub-committee, which sub-committee will convene before the Local Council's meeting so that the Councillor responsible may submit proposals during the Local Council meeting. This sub-committee will appoint a Secretary from amongst its members. In view of this proposed arrangement, no amendment of the Ninth Schedule to the Local Councils Act, which lists these sixteen communities, is presently envisaged. The Local Council, however, will be free to appoint Councillors to represent other communities not listed in the Ninth Schedule.



PERMITS ISSUED BY LOCAL COUNCILS

PERMITS BY LOCAL COUNCILS FOR ACTIVITIES WITHIN LOCALITIES

Permits issued by Local Councils for the organisation of activities are regulated by SL 441.04, the Activities requiring Permit by Local Councils Regulations. These Regulations fall under the Trading Licences Act (Cap.441 of Laws of Malta). Over the years the need to amend these regulations has been felt, particularly with a view to simplifying procedures and ensuring uniformity in the application of the relevant provisions by Local Councils. Moreover, it is necessary to make better use of Information Technology in processes whereby permits would be requested and issued online.

The process whereby permits are issued by local council for activities held within the locality is regulated by a Legal Notice published in 2002 under the Trading Licenses Act. Over the years the need to amend these regulations has been felt, particularly with a view to simplifying procedures and ensuring uniformity in the application of the relevant provisions by Local Councils. Moreover, it is necessary to make better use of Information Technology in processes whereby permits would be requested and issued online.

The Regulations in question should be amended with a view to:

- (i) Ensuring clarity in interpretation;
- (ii) Charging reasonable fees in rounded figures;
- (iii) Consolidating existing laws;

(iv) Simplifying the application process. In this regard, the online system for the submission and processing of applications shall be improved, particularly by providing information to the permit holder concerning the conditions attaching to the permit. Notices will also be shown or affixed to indicate that the client has obtained the required permit from the Local Council.

The services in question will therefore be more readily accessible to citizens and user friendly.

5

THE OFFICE OF MAYOR

FULL TIME MAYORS AND A MAXIMUM TERM OF OFFICE FOR THE MAYOR

The Mayor is the head of the town or village, who is considered the leading citizen of the locality. Whatever the size of the locality, the functions of the Mayor remain the same. The role of the Mayor is to monitor the Council's operations. Together with the Executive Secretary, he or she is also the legal representative, as well as the President during the Local Council's meetings. We should consider the possibility of laying down a maximum term of office of three legislatures for the Mayor.

5.1 Full-time Mayors

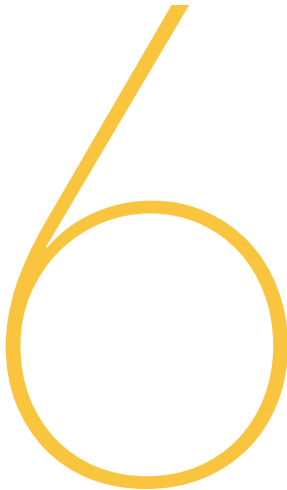
The function of Mayor is clearly a very important one, as attested by the very nature and functions attaching to this office. These functions require the holder of office to dedicate a lot of his or her time to the Council.

The possibility of having Mayors serve on a full-time basis should therefore be considered.

5.2 Maximum term of office

The possibility of setting out a maximum term of three legislatures for the same person to hold the office of Mayor should be considered. If this option is positively considered, it would have to be decided whether these terms would have to be consecutive in order for the candidate in question to be ruled out of contention. Such a measure may bring in new blood and fresh ideas to Local Councils.





LOCAL COUNCILLOR RESPONSIBILITIES

In order for Councillors to perform effectively within a Local Council they should be assigned responsibility for matters falling within the ambit of the Local Council. For this purpose it is being proposed that relevant legislation should indicate areas of operation that would fall under councillors' responsibility.

The Mayor would be required to assign responsibility to Councillors for specific matters in the meeting following the elections, so as to ensure that each councillor is actively contributing to the Local Council and the locality. Apart from other matters that the Mayor may wish to allocate to councillors, the following could be laid down in legislation:

- (a) cleanliness
- (b) environment
- (c) youth
- (d) sport and physical activities
- (e) innovation

- (f) infrastructure
- (g) projects
- (h) the elderly
- (i) education
- (j) culture
- (k) communities listed in the Ninth Schedule of the Local Council's Act, if applicable
- (l) social aspects.



INCREASED YOUTH PARTICIPATION

INCREASED YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Efforts are being made to ensure wider participation in Local Government. Now that youths aged 16 or more have been granted the right to vote in Local Elections, they may also be given the opportunity to contest these Elections.

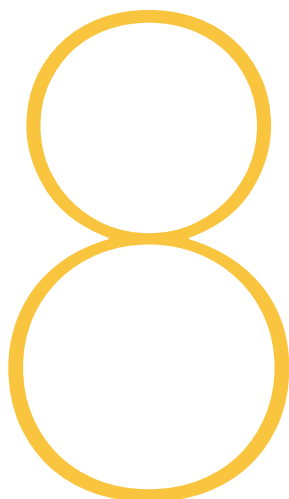
7.1 The right to contest Local Elections for youths aged 16 or more

Now that youths aged 16 or more have been granted the right to vote in Local Council elections, they should also be given the opportunity to contest local elections.

This is the second step towards giving youths a voice in Local Councils by means of direct participation in their localities.

7.2 Mayorship for youths elected in Local Council elections

Should agreement be reached on the proposal to give youths aged 16 or more the opportunity to contest Local Council elections, we would have to consider whether youths should also be eligible for the office of Mayor if they are elected with the largest number of votes.



INCREASED LOCAL CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

INCREASED LOCAL CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN DECISIONS AFFECTING THE LOCALITY

It is being proposed that citizens should be invited to contribute to the Work Plan during the first three months of the new legislature of a local council in order to strengthen and enhance effective local citizens' participation in Local Government.

8.1 Residents' participation in the Local Council's Work Plan

The participation of local citizens in decision making on matters that closely affect them is a very important element in the proper functioning of the principle of subsidiarity.

With a view to strengthening the effective participation of local citizens in their local council, it is hereby being proposed that by not later than three months from the commencement of the new legislature of a local council, a public meeting would be called so that the residents of a locality would have the opportunity to contribute to the drawing up of the Local Council's Work Plan.

8.2 Presentation of Local Councils' Budgets before the start of year

It is hereby being proposed that Local Councils would be required to have the

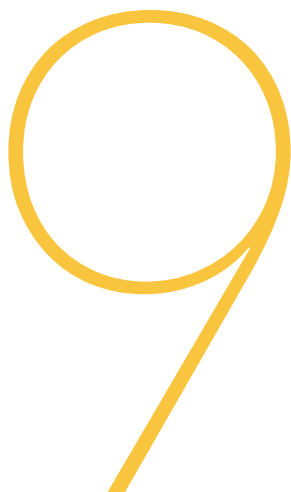
annual budget presented by not later than mid-December, so that any parties interested would be informed of the Council's plans for expenditure during the course of the following year.



It is considered that this proposal would contribute to the process of decentralisation, whilst the Local Government's operations would become more inclusive and transparent. This is also in line with the principles of good governance.

8.3 Another avenue for communication between the citizen and the Local Council

In recognition of the technological innovations affecting our daily lives, a Mobile App will be launched as a tool to bring the citizen closer to his or her Local Council. This will result in a more efficient and effective service for the citizen.



HUMAN RESOURCES

Investment in human resources will be required in order for Regional Councils and Local Councils to function more efficiently and effectively. Regional Councils and Local Councils would have to be given greater autonomy with regard to the number of employees they recruit. Employees should have opportunities for promotion; an incentive to perform better knowing that the quality of their work is being acknowledged.

9.1 Greater autonomy for Local Government in the recruitment of personnel

Investment in human resources will be required in order for Regional Councils and Local Councils to function more efficiently and effectively. Regional Councils and Local Councils would have to be given greater autonomy with regard to the number of employees they recruit.

9.2 Career opportunities for Local Government employees

Employees should have opportunities for promotion; an incentive to perform better knowing that the quality of their work is being acknowledged. For this reason it is being proposed that only employees of the Local Council in question would be eligible for the post of Deputy Executive Secretary. It is important for Local Council employees to attend courses of instruction in line with the principles outlined herein.



10

A NAME CHANGE FOR THE ACT

FROM LOCAL COUNCILS ACT TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT

It is proposed that the Local Councils Act should be renamed Local Government Act in recognition of the importance given to the concept of Local Government.

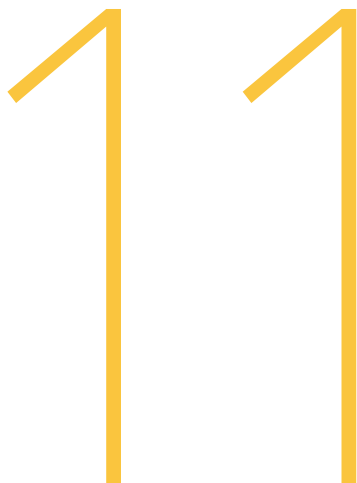
The Local Council system is in need of a reform now that it has been in place for 25 years. The reform will enable Local Councils to meet the legitimate expectations of local citizens.

The proposals foresee a system made up of Regional Councils and Local Councils. This means that the Maltese Local Government

system will be made up of two tiers.

It is proposed that the Local Councils Act should be renamed Local Government Act in recognition of the importance given to the concept of Local Government





AMENDMENT TO THE MALTESE CONSTITUTION

In 2001 a new Chapter was added to the Maltese Constitution, the highest law of the country, which recognises Local Councils as a form of Local Government in our country. It is hereby proposed that this clause should be amended to reflect the concept of Local Government which will be composed of two levels – the Regional and the Local.

In 2001, Parliament introduced a new Article 115A in the new Chapter XA of the Constitution, entitled 'Local Councils'. This chapter introduced local government, in terms of which Maltese territory was to be divided into a number of localities as outlined in pertinent legislation from time to time. It is now being proposed that this Chapter should be named 'Local Government'.

It is being proposed that after the words 'The State shall adopt a system of local government whereby the territory of Malta shall be divided into such number of localities as may by law

from time to time be determined, each locality to be administered by a Local Council elected by the residents of the locality and established and operating in terms of such law as may from time to time be in force', there will be added the words 'which includes two levels – a Regional and a Local.'

It is also being proposed that a new sub-article 115A(2) should be added, as follows: 'Each Region will be managed by a Regional Council which will include a number of local councils as determined by the law in force from time to time.'