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**EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE  
CORPORATE RESOURCES  
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
HELD ON 20 FEBRUARY 2003**

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CROS. /03 REGIONAL GOVERNMENT: GUIDANCE ON SEEKING SOUNDINGS

Further to Executive Decision EX.008/03, the Committee were being asked for their views on the Government consultation document on the level of interest in holding referendums on elected regional assemblies and the draft guidance on local government reorganisation in areas which have referenda.

The Committee had available for consideration the Chief Executive's report (CE.01/03) which had been considered by the Executive. The report stated that the decision as to which region(s) should be invited to hold a referendum rests with the Secretary of State, but there would be no compulsion as it is up to each region to demonstrate that there is sufficient support for regional Government and for a referendum to be held.

The Bill also required that any Region permitted to progress to a referendum would be subject to a review of local government in that Region to establish a wholly Unitary pattern of local government. The review would be carried out by the Boundary Committee of the Electoral Commission. That Committee would be independent and could recommend any form of unitary authorities appropriate in a region. The report contained a number of specific points which had been made by the Electoral Commission and the Commission's Boundary Committee.

During discussion, it was stressed that the Committee were being consulted on whether a referendum should be held and on the proposed process for and **not** on whether Regional Government is supported or otherwise.

After discussion and voting, it was

**RESOLVED** – That the following views of the Committee be forwarded to the Executive for onward transmission to the City Council:

- (1) The **fullest** local consultation should be carried out.
- (2) A referendum should be held in the North West of England.
- (3) The Committee note and think that it is important that the Boundary Committee have stated that no criteria have been established for minimum or maximum population size.
- (4) The Committee note and are supportive of the Boundary Committee being asked to

consider County functions being carried out by smaller units.

- (5) The Committee notes that the proposals do not state the extent to which new authorities can cross district and county boundaries within a region.