



A Development Framework for Councillors in Wales 2021

April 2021

Welsh Local Government Association

The WLGA's primary purposes are to promote a better local government, its reputation and to support authorities in the development of policies and priorities which will improve public service and democracy.

It represents the 22 local authorities in Wales with the 3 fire and rescue authorities and 3 national park authorities as associate members.

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This framework outlines the knowledge and behaviours required by Councillors in Unitary Councils in Wales.

It has been developed by Councillors and officers working with the WLGA.

It will be useful for Councils when providing support and training for members and for Councillors to identify their priorities for continuing personal and professional development.

It is not intended to be exhaustive or prescriptive, it can also be locally adapted to reflect the priorities of different councils. The competencies described reflect those that councillors will develop within the role rather than those required to stand for office.

The Framework fits with the *Wales Charter for Member Support and Development*. The Charter provides Councils with a structure for local self-assessment and provision of member development, this framework provides a suggested content for that development.

The framework also fits with the WLGA model role descriptions and the induction curriculum for new members. It takes account of legislative requirements for members including those set out in the Local Government (Wales) measure 2011 and the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

Using the Framework

The Framework includes a range of generic competencies required by all Councillors and separate sections for specific roles on the Council.

For each theme, the framework sets out the information that Councillors need to know, understand, and be able to do (knowledge and skills), together with examples of how they should act (behaviours).

Part A will be useful for all councillors. **Part B** should be used selectively depending on additional specialist roles.

Part A - relevant to all councillors

Fundamentals: A range of general skills required by all members

REF	Requirement	Knowledge and Skills	Effective Behaviours
A1	Understanding the role of the Councillor	The extent and limits of a Councillor's individual responsibilities, and the powers and responsibilities required for governing the Council.	Undertakes the member role effectively in the Council, the community and with partner agencies. Acts proactively to deliver outcomes. Understands when it is and is not appropriate to act for the Ward or in the interests of the whole area.
A2	Understanding the role of the Local Authority	The services delivered by or on behalf of the Council both statutory and discretionary, and the policies, procedures, plans and strategies which underpin them. The division of responsibility between the different tiers of government, the voluntary and health sectors. Collaboration between Local Authorities, different sectors, organisations, and the public.	Works within the scope of the work of the Council and represents this appropriately to the public. Contributes to the development of council plans and strategies and takes decisions in the light of these. Works collaboratively with other public service delivery agencies and the public.
A3	Conduct	The ethical framework that Councillors must work to. The Code of Conduct. The role of the Monitoring Officer, Standards Committee, Local Resolution Protocol. the role of and guidance from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.	Always abides by the Code of Conduct. Always declares and defines interests when necessary. Seeks advice from the monitoring officer when necessary.
A4	Corporate Governance	The principles of good corporate governance. How the Council understands and meets the needs of the community ethically, responsibly, and efficiently. The Council's Code of Corporate Governance and approach to risk. The Public Participation Duty to encourage local people to participate in decision making. The decision-making and accountability structure of the Council, including the role and value of Scrutiny. The role of, and relationships between, Cabinet, Scrutiny, Full Council, Regulatory and other committees. Joint working between Councils and sectors. Structures including Growth Deals and Corporate Joint Committees.	Acts effectively across a range of council roles, supporting good corporate governance through seeking the views of the public, taking or scrutinising decisions ethically, and ensuring services are delivered responsibly and efficiently.

A5	Equalities and Diversity	<p>Respect for others and taking decisions based on the principles of equality. Unconscious Bias. The need to take account of the protected characteristics of individuals, - sex, race, religion, age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity and sexual orientation, in all aspects of council and community work.</p> <p>The needs and views of those who are socio economically disadvantaged. Equalities and diversity law relating to the work of the Council and the role of the Councillor.</p>	<p>Demonstrates equalities values in personal behaviour and Council actions. Takes account of the needs of all members of society. Acts within equality and diversity law.</p> <p>Challenges inappropriate behaviour. Acknowledges and compensates for personal bias.</p>
A6	Civility	<p>Respectful behaviour and what constitutes abuse, harassment, and bullying.</p>	<p>Always treats everyone, officers, members of the public and other members with absolute respect, whether in the Council, community, or political group. Both face to face, in correspondence and on social media.</p> <p>Challenges inappropriate behaviour in others. Supports those suffering abuse, harassment, or bullying.</p>
A7	Balancing Council and community expectations and responsibilities	<p>The distinct responsibilities of a councillor as a member of a corporate body and as a representative of a Ward.</p>	<p>Takes decisions relating to the Council or Ward ethically. Manages both community and council expectations through effective communication.</p>
A8	Audit inspection and regulation	<p>The role of the Audit, Inspection and Regulatory bodies and associated Council processes.</p>	<p>Engages effectively with the audit, inspection and regulatory process within the council, using this information to take decisions, monitor performance, constructively challenge and support the affected services.</p>
A9	Work life balance	<p>Time management principles including prioritisation and delegation. Management of information.</p>	<p>Maintains an effective balance between council, personal life, and other work commitments. Managing the time available for Council work to concentrate on the issues with the most significant outcomes.</p>

A10	Self-Care	Well-being, including stress management and personal resilience.	Maintains an awareness of the impact that being a councillor can have on wellbeing. Seeks support and assistance before pressures become stress.
A11	Information and data handling and management	Understanding and interpreting information and data. Handling confidential information. Freedom of Information legislation. Understanding the role of a Councillor as a data handler or controller.	Uses and interprets data to take decisions and monitor and assess performance. Acts competently as a data controller or data handler in different contexts when acting on behalf of the council or in a community leadership role.
A12	ICT skills	Ability to use all 'Office' applications. Email, Word, PowerPoint, Excel. Proficiency in remote working and attending meetings electronically. Standard IT troubleshooting.	Conducts council business and community engagement electronically and remotely as a default approach. Using face to face when possible or more appropriate.
A13	Social media skills	Ability to use Social Media through different platforms and Apps. Appreciation of what content is appropriate. Council Social Media Use policy. Guidance from Council comms teams.	Maintains an effective, positive, and ethical online presence in line with the Council's Social Media Policy.
A14	Meeting preparation and participation	Multi-location meetings, remote, hybrid or face to face. Standing Orders, meeting protocols and etiquette, rules of debate. Public speaking, debating, and asking questions.	Participates effectively in formal and informal meetings both remotely and face to face. Prepares effectively for meetings by reading reports and analysing data. Undertakes personal research and participates in any pre meetings. Contributes to positive meeting outcomes by seeking tangible decisions or actions. Effectively contributes to meetings making points clearly and succinctly. Remains focussed on the business in hand. Understands and applies meeting 'rules'. Seeks guidance from officers and Group Leaders before meetings as appropriate.

A15	Working with the media	Building relationships with the Media Interview skills for TV, radio, the press and online media.	Is a recognised source of credible information for the Media. Speaks confidently, authoritatively and appropriately in interviews. Enhances the reputation of the council when appearing on screen or in print.
A16	Self-promotion	Developing a profile in the community through local activities and effective communication and consultation.	Reports on achievements and activities. Is highly visible in the community. Maintains a high standard in both personal reputation and that of the Council.
A17	Working with officers	The role of officers generally and the 'rules' they need to abide by including a deeper understanding of the role of senior officers such as the Chief Executive, Senior Management Team, Monitoring Officer and Heads of Finance, Legal and Democratic Services. Skills in acting as a corporate employer. Understanding of the appointments process and interviewing skills.	Maintains professional relationships with officers, recognising boundaries and abiding by the Member Officer Protocol. Acts as an effective member of an appointment panel, applying sound HR and equality and diversity principles to make appointments.
A18	Personal safety	How to protect yourself in the Council, in the community, when travelling and at home and online. Including when lone working, in surgeries or meeting with residents.	Acts proactively to take necessary safety measures. Does not put themselves in harm's way. Asks for support from the Council or Police whenever necessary.
A19	Support for members	The importance of continuous learning. The sources and materials for Councillors' professional development available from the Council. Salaries and allowances. Job sharing opportunities. Family absence.	Proactively seeks out learning and development opportunities. Receives personal development reviews. Identifies support and development needs. Participates in all relevant learning opportunities. Claims allowances and salaries to which they are entitled.
A20	Financial capability	Where Council funding comes from. Financial planning and budget setting. Personal financial skills. The impact of Welfare Reform, Brexit, Austerity and Covid including the vulnerable and those with protected characteristics.	Engages effectively in the budget setting process. Is prepared to take hard, evidence-based decisions. Demonstrates skills in numeracy when interpreting data and asking questions.

A21	Interpersonal skills	Self-awareness, and skills in self-management, “good manners” respect. Emotional Intelligence, listening, negotiation, conflict management and mediation skills.	Acts in a professional and respectful manner to all people and in all places. Is self-aware and able to develop and manage relationships both within and outside the Council. Brokers relationships and manages conflict in the community and Council and between the two.
A22	Corporate Parenting	The role and responsibilities of the Councillor as a Corporate Parent.	Takes appropriate corporate responsibility for the welfare of looked after children, actively seeking appropriate information on their situation and progress but not becoming involved in individual casework.
A23	Sustainability	The requirements of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. Including the goals for sustainability and the ways of working to meet them.	Works collaboratively and makes decisions with others to make sure that the needs of future generations as well as the current population, are considered. Seeks to prevent any problems happening in the first place.
A24	Safeguarding	The legal requirements, and the responsibilities placed on authorities and individual councillors to protect children and vulnerable adults at risk of abuse, including reporting mechanisms.	Is vigilant, and acts to make sure that children and vulnerable adults are protected from abuse, taking decisions and reporting incidents.

Local Leadership. A range of skills required by all councillors in their role as community leaders

REF	Requirement	Knowledge and Skills	Effective Behaviours
A25	Working with the community	Contacts for local community groups and leaders. Community issues and concerns. Council plans which impact on local issues.	Understands the needs of the local community. Makes sure that the Council acts on behalf of local people. Communicates with the community, individuals, and the council to ensure engagement and understanding of all parties. Works with the community and the Council to find solutions to local problems. Secures funding for local initiatives.

A26	Consultation and engagement	The Public Participation Duty. The local Public Participation Strategy. Different approaches to engagement ranging from communication to co-production set out in the national principles of engagement for Wales. http://www.participationcymru.org.uk/national-principles	Demonstrates positive outcomes because of their effective engagement. Uses a range of communication and consultation tools including social media to understand the needs and views of the community. Works within the national principles of engagement.
A27	The Voluntary Sector	The role, responsibilities, services provided and contacts for the voluntary sector in the area.	Works with voluntary sector organisations. Signposts local people to voluntary agencies who can help them.
A28	Working with community and town councils	The responsibilities of Community and Town Councils, the role of their members. contacts for the Clerk and their forward work programmes. Services transferred or to be transferred to community councils.	Works with community councils to deliver outcomes for the community. Fosters positive relations and active communication with the members of the Community Council and the Clerk.

Casework on behalf of the public

REF	Requirement	Knowledge and Skills	Effective Behaviours
A29	Being accessible to the public	Understanding of, and ability to arrange and publicise opportunities to discuss casework with the public.	Makes themselves available through the most useful means to connect with the greatest number of people. Uses surgeries, street surgeries, informal settings, and social media as appropriate. Takes steps to ensure personal safety. Promises only that which can be delivered.
A30	Managing casework	The availability and use of case management techniques and software. The officers that can help. Council procedures to support Members with casework.	Responds promptly to requests for help. Keeps the people on whose behalf they are working informed of progress. Monitors progress of cases after they have been referred to officers or other agencies. Uses the established referral schemes within the Council.
A31	Signposting	Sources of information and advice within and outside the council of use to all community groups.	Makes links between members of the public and the appropriate source of help in the council or in the community.

Partnership and representation

REF	Requirement	Knowledge and Skills	Effective Behaviours
A32	Work on outside bodies	The capacity in which Members are appointed. For example, Council representative, locality representative, or as an individual. Whether you are a trustee. The role of the outside body. Its status for example company, trust, charity, unincorporated association. The relationship between the Council and the body and any conflicts of interest.	Reports to and from the Council and outside body as appropriate. Represents the views of the Council, personal views, or that of the community effectively and appropriately according to the role. Engages in briefing and training provided by outside bodies. Operates within the relevant Code of Conduct.
A33	Working as a school governor	Education policy. School organisation. The remit of a governor. Principles of conduct for governors. See also School governance Sub-topic GOV.WALES	Oversees the school performance. Challenges the school management as a critical friend. Takes part in governor training.
A34	Working as a member of a community or town council	Community council governance. The role of the community council and its limits. Transfer of assets and services. Protocols between Community or Town Councils and Unitary Councils. See also The Good Councillors Guide - One Voice Wales	Contributes to the governance of the community or town council. Makes links between the Community Council and Unitary Council, Takes part in Community Council training.

Working in the Political environment

	Requirement	Knowledge and Skills	Effective Behaviours
A35	Party policy (if a party member)	Awareness of values and manifestos both nationally and locally.	Balances the needs of local people, Party, Group and Council
A36	Liaison with the UK Government, Welsh Government and the Senedd	Understanding of the functions of the different tiers of government and methods of engagement.	Liaises with local MPs and MS. Brings local issues to the attention of the WG when appropriate.
A37	Party Group membership	Party rules and constituency group structure and policies.	Works effectively and respectfully with Party Group members and officials.
38	Group discipline	Understanding of the behaviours and conduct required of a group member	Works according to the standards of behaviour required by the Group Leader.

Part B – relevant to councillors undertaking these specialist roles.

Scrutiny

REF	Requirement	Knowledge and Skills	Effective behaviours
B1	The role of Scrutiny	<p>The value of Scrutiny as an essential part of the Council's corporate governance.</p> <p>The role of the Scrutiny function in: Contributing to better outcomes - driving improvements in services.</p> <p>Better decisions - ensuring that democratic decision making is accountable, inclusive and robust.</p> <p>Better engagement – ensuring that the public is meaningfully engaged in democratic debate about the current and future delivery of public services.</p>	<p>Contributes to the development of forward work programmes.</p> <p>Selects topics where Scrutiny can have most impact.</p> <p>Promotes the work of Scrutiny within the council.</p> <p>Acts in a non-parochial and non-Party Political manner when undertaking Scrutiny.</p>
B2	Policy development and review	<p>General understanding of the policies, plans, services and functions in development or review.</p>	<p>Makes informed and evidence-based recommendations for policy development.</p>
B3	Holding the Executive to account	<p>Understanding of the remit of the Executive in general and items on the Executive Forward Work Programme.</p> <p>Processes for the constructive challenge of Executive decisions and when and how to use the power to call in decisions.</p>	<p>Monitors and constructively challenges the decision-making process of the Executive, in the best interests of the community.</p>
B4	Monitoring performance	<p>Interpreting data, financial information.</p> <p>Risk, reports from audit, inspection and regulatory bodies, and other information required for performance measurement.</p>	<p>Identifies and challenges poor performance based on evidence, to improve services.</p>
B5	Individual Scrutiny skills	<p>Data handling and research.</p> <p>Meeting preparation for formal and informal scrutiny meetings and groups.</p> <p>Contributing to questioning strategies and asking questions. Active listening.</p>	<p>Prepares thoroughly for every Scrutiny activity and meeting by reading reports, preparing lines of enquiry and undertaking personal research.</p> <p>Contributes to questioning strategies and asks relevant, effective questions. Actively seeks outcomes for every Scrutiny activity.</p>

B6	Engaging the public in Scrutiny	How the Public Participation Duty, to encourage local people to participate in decision making is supported by Scrutiny. Appropriate local individuals and organisations who can contribute to the work of Scrutiny, especially those traditionally excluded.	Raises public awareness of the work of Scrutiny and work programmes. Encourages the public to become involved in the policy and decision-making process through Scrutiny.
B7	Collaborative Scrutiny	Joint Scrutiny - Understanding of the remit and terms of reference of any joint Scrutiny committees. Scrutiny of joint arrangements - the role, responsibilities and accountability of regional bodies, partnerships and organisations outside of the Council which are subject to Scrutiny.	Seeks outcomes from effective joint working with scrutiny members from other authorities, partnerships, and organisations.

Chairing

REF	Requirement	Knowledge and Skills	Effective Behaviour
B8	Committee leadership	An in depth understanding of the role of the committee and its scope. Ability to liaise with relevant officers, members, and agencies. Commitment to enabling all committee members to develop skills and participate effectively in meetings.	Promotes the work and value of the committee in the Council and to the public. Works with the committee outside of meetings to make it work more effectively. Communicates with members and officers with an interest in committee proceedings. Builds relationships with the relevant Heads of Service/ Directors to ensure that the work of the committee is relevant, well informed and provides the outcomes needed.
B9	Work programme development and management	The subjects within the scope of the committee and how these interact with council policies generally and the roles of other committees. Any Council and community priorities which should inform the work programme.	Works with officers and committee members to develop the work plan. Ensures that the work programme takes account of The Executive Work Plan, risks to the Council, other committee programmes, national, regional and local plans and policies, and the expressed needs of the community for services.

			Makes sure that the committee uses reports from audit, inspection and regulatory bodies.
B10	Meeting preparation and management	Meeting management in a variety of settings and using different channels for physical, hybrid and remote meetings. Broadcasting. Meeting protocols and the rules of debate. Agenda management including fair contributions and time. Public and press participation.	Chairs act clearly and authoritatively to enforce meeting rules and encouraging fair and focussed participation. Manages the agenda by introducing items, summarising debate, focussing on outcomes and limiting contributions which do not contribute to the outcomes. Ensures that the public feel welcome, understand the meeting purpose and how they can contribute.
B11	Committee support	The support, appropriate level and variety of information and finances the committee needs to function effectively.	Negotiates and ensures the support required by the committee.

Serving on statutory/regulatory committees

REF	Requirement	Knowledge and Skills	Effective behaviours
B12	Planning	<p>Statutory role of the committee.</p> <p>Planning and rights of way law generally. How to apply the Code of Conduct to planning issues. Declaring interests in Planning.</p> <p>Local Development Planning. Development Management.</p> <p>Sustainable Development principles and legislation including environmental, welfare, future generations, and design considerations.</p> <p>The respective roles of Welsh Government and Local authorities.</p> <p>Environmental impact assessment in a planning context.</p>	<p>Demonstrates objectivity by taking independent decisions based on evidence and the legal responsibility placed on committees acting in a semi-judicial role. Transparently adheres to the Code of Conduct. Seeks appropriate professional officer advice, personal development or briefing before taking decisions.</p>
B13	Governance and Audit	<p>Statutory role of the committee.</p> <p>Effective Governance and performance management.</p> <p>The Council's and national performance reporting frameworks.</p> <p>Complaint handling in the Council.</p> <p>Scrutiny of financial performance. Risk Management and the local Risk Management Strategy. The Annual Governance Statement Internal and external audit arrangements. The relative roles of Audit and Scrutiny committees.</p>	
B14	Licensing	<p>Licensing regulations and Licensing policy. Local policies which impact in this area such as the Community Plan and wider considerations for sustainability.</p>	
B15	Democratic Services	<p>The legislative requirements for a Democratic Services committee.</p> <p>National and local requirements for member support and development.</p> <p>Role of the Head of Democratic Services/Monitoring Officer (if separate). Role of and collaboration with the Lead Member/Champion for member support and development.</p> <p>Diversity in Democracy.</p>	
B16	Standards	<p>The law and constitution in relation to conduct.</p> <p>Local resolution protocols.</p>	

		Needs of both County Council and Town and Community Councils for Training in relation to the Code of Conduct. Member behaviour, dealing with reports from Group Leaders and annual reporting	
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Executive Members

REF	Requirement	Knowledge and skills	Effective behaviours
B17	Collective responsibility	Developing a collective vision for the Council. The Executive role in enabling public participation within the Public Participation Strategy. Information, good practice and evidence sourcing and handling. Taking decisions collectively. Prioritising issues of most importance to the Authority. Working with other authorities and agencies to secure services for the Council. Working effectively and constructively with the senior management team and Chief Executive.	Works collaboratively to develop the vision for the Council. Ensures the participation of the public in the decision-making process. Takes effective strategic decisions. Ensures the best possible performance of the Council. Guides and enables the performance of the Chief Executive and Senior Management Team.
B18	Portfolio lead	A thorough knowledge of local and national policy relating to the relevant service areas. Effective and respectful joint working with relevant lead officers and Scrutiny chairs. Developing a vision for the portfolio. Integrating the work of the portfolio with the wider Executive programme. High level media skills	Provides political direction to officers in the portfolio area. Is publicly accountable for communication, policy, and performance in the portfolio area. Works with officers to consider issues, priorities and take decisions. Represents the Council in the media
B19	Working with Scrutiny	Valuing and working constructively with Scrutiny, to ensure that the Executive is demonstrably accountable for decisions and takes and reviews decisions which have been rigorously scrutinised.	Actively seeks and values the input of Scrutiny to policy development and performance monitoring.
B20	Delegated responsibilities	The scheme of delegation and process for taking responsibility for decisions under the scheme.	Takes decisions after appropriate research and consultation.

Council Leadership

REF	Requirement	Knowledge and Skills	Effective Behaviours
B21	Promoting and managing the reputation of the council	Acting as an ambassador for the Local Authority.	Effectively represents the Council, ensuring that information about the Council and its services and citizens is communicated positively and with authenticity and integrity.
B22	Leading the vision for the area.	Development of a vision for the Council area or wider region.	Works collaboratively with the community, members, officers and Political Party (if a member) to create and communicate a shared vision for the area.
B23	Leading the Council	Develop a vision for the work, culture and outcomes sought by the Council. Senior Corporate Governance	Works collaboratively with the community, members, officers and Political Party (if a member) to create and communicate a shared vision for the Council. Oversees the delivery of effective corporate governance in the Council.
B24	Relationships with the Chief Executive and Senior Management Team	Advanced communication and relationship building. Understanding of and empathy for the work of the Chief Executive and Senior Officers. Performance management and appraisal of chief officers.	Meets and communicates openly and regularly. Makes expectations clear and provides political leadership. Undertakes performance reviews with senior officers as appropriate.

Civic Leadership

REF	Requirement	Knowledge and Skills	Effective Behaviours
B25	Chairing Full Council	Advanced chairing skills. In depth understanding of standing orders and rules of engagement. Remote, hybrid and physical meetings. Broadcast meeting skills.	Effectively and confidently chairs meetings of the full Council through a range of channels. Sets standards and expectations for appropriate behaviour.
B26	Representing the Council at Civic functions	Tact and diplomacy. Advanced public speaking Relationship building.	Demonstrates high level interpersonal communication, and social skills, appropriate to the context.

