



Community and Town Councils - Welsh Government Areas for Action

Theme	Immediate Action	Further Consideration
<p>Clarifying the role of the sector</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake a campaign to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ confirm important role of sector; ◦ raise awareness of the work of community council (including in areas which don't have them); • Encourage community councils to reflect on what is required locally, in terms of the kinds of services they could deliver. • Raise awareness of the benefits of establishing new community and town councils. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alongside raising awareness of the benefits of establishing new community councils, explore other models which could provide a focus for communities in urban areas. • Consider further the usefulness of a 'place based services' distinction, the appetite for change and the pace that it could be sustained • Consider consulting on the merits of retaining 'dual hatted' councillors.
<p>Increasing democracy and participation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use existing powers to ensure Community Reviews are conducted on a regular basis. • Establish better understanding of use of social media by community and town councils to engage their community; and facilitate sharing of good practice. • Undertake a campaign to encourage more people to stand for election. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider and potentially consult on the need for a comprehensive review of community council boundaries, recognising any action in future would require a different legislative vehicle • Consider whether to ensure that elections should be held regardless of whether seats are contested - balancing stimulating the democratic process with cost. • Explore what more can be done to promote diversity amongst councillors. • Allow the lower minimum voting age of 16 years to embed (if it goes ahead) before considering whether to lower the minimum age to stand as a community council candidate to 16 years. • Consider how local engagement and public participation has been affected in England following the introduction of the duty on Parish Councils to hold at least one public meeting per year.
<p>Building capacity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide access to the general power of competence to eligible community councils (through the Local Government and Elections Bill). • Call on community councils to prepare for the introduction of GPoC by working towards the satisfying the three eligibility criteria. • Support the establishment of joint delivery arrangements • Provide guidance, and share good practice, on different delivery models. • Raise awareness of existing sources of funding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore how community councils could be encouraged to consider moving to / expanding service delivery. • Explore widening access to new sources of funding for community and town councils, for example eligibility for grants and (through the general power of competence) the power to trade. • Facilitate a conversation within local government about how services are funded and sustained • Explore scope for sharing back office functions.



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<p>Building capability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify core training for councillors and consider the practicalities of introducing a core package of training. • Continue to provide a bursary scheme for councillors and clerks to undertake training. • Encourage an increase in the number of qualified clerk - as a condition for exercise of GPoC, and through support to undertake training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the establishment of a “network” of community council clerks in Wales • Consider how desirable, and possible, it is to go towards appointing clerks from a national list (including workforce implications) • Consider options for provision of expert advice and support for the sector, within the context of the wider work supporting improvement in local government • Consider whether, and how, core training for councillors should be made mandatory • Explore with WAO what further support could be provided to smaller community councils to help them fulfil audit requirements.
<p>Improving relationships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate work to strengthen key relationships between community councils and principal councils. • Add a representative from community and town councils in the area to the list of required ‘invited participants’ on Public Services Boards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore what else can be done to facilitate relationship building between both tiers of local government and consider whether there is a need to make structures mandatory • Explore support for councillor and employee relationships, when things go wrong • Consider how the Code of conduct and grievance procedures could be strengthened to address poor behaviour by councillors.
<p>Improving accountability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require community and town councils to publish an annual report • Continue to encourage community councils to follow a cycle of “engage, plan, undertake and report”. • Explore how digital mechanisms to engage, meet and share information are used, and could be used more extensively, by the sector. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the case for legislating to extend the ‘sustainable development principle’ to community and town councils • Consider the case for developing standards and principles for community engagement • Test the recommendation that councillors should not be able to be co-opted for more than one term on a consecutive basis • Explore issuing information about community council’s plans for the year with the precept notifications • Consider whether to legislate for appropriate support and intervention arrangements.