



Community and Town Councils - Welsh Government Areas for Action

Theme	Immediate Action	Further Consideration
Clarifying the role of the sector	<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.
Increasing democracy and participation	<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.
Building capacity	<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.