

Meeting of:	DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	26 OCTOBER 2023
Report Title:	WELSH LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION'S COUNCILLOR SUPPORT SELF-EVALUATION FRAMEWORK
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
Responsible Officer:	RACHEL KEEPINS DEMOCRATIC SERVICES MANAGER AND HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the policy framework and procedure rules in respect of this report.
Executive Summary:	This report sets out the Welsh Local Government Association's (WLGA) proposal for a new voluntary self-evaluation framework for Councils to use to assess the effectiveness of the support they provide for councillors. This framework replaces the former Wales Charter for Councillor Support and Development. This report asks for the Committee's comments to be reported back to the WLGA as part of the consultation surrounding the new framework.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Welsh Local Government Association's (WLGA) draft 'Councillor Support Self Evaluation Framework' and provide an opportunity for the Committee to provide feedback to the WLGA on the Framework as part of their consultation process.

2. Background

- 2.1 In 2002, the WLGA (then Syniad) worked with every Council and a cross party group of councillors to identify what further support and training opportunities councillors would find useful. In response to this request the Wales Charter for Member Support and Development was co-developed by the WLGA and Councils to:

- provide a framework for good practice across Wales,
- be an incentive for Councils to provide their councillors with the support and development they needed, and

- provide assurance to councillors that they were being given the best support possible.

2.2 Over the last 20 years, the Charter has been further developed and instrumental in both enabling and recognising local good practice. The majority of Councils, national parks and fire and rescue authorities have been awarded the Charter, whilst others have used it as a framework to identify good practice and check that they have effective support mechanisms in place.

2.3 Following discussions with Heads of Democratic Services from across Wales and a recognition that the local authority culture has now changed quite drastically with different ways of working post-Covid pandemic and resources now being ever more challenging, a new voluntary self-evaluation framework for Councils has been developed, modernising and replacing the former Wales Charter for Councillor Support and Development.

3. Current situation / proposal

3.1 It is intended that the new Self-Evaluation Framework, attached at **Appendix A**, will be used by Councils to assess the effectiveness of the support they provide for councillors.

3.2 The framework reflects a more progressive approach to sector led improvement, recent Welsh Government (WG) legislation, statutory and other guidance as well as recognising the increasingly limited resources available in Councils.

3.3 WLGA have requested that the draft framework proposal be presented to Local Authority Democratic Services Committees for discussion, so that any comments and suggestions can be provided back to them for consideration. Following this consultation, the WLGA propose to issue the framework as a shared support resource to all Councils for them to use as appropriate.

3.4 It is highlighted in the attached that whilst the framework focusses on the support provided for councillors to deliver the outcomes needed by their communities and aims to cover all aspects of good practice in councillor support, as priorities and resources differ between Councils, it would be for Councils to decide locally how much of the framework to use and which sections should be prioritised.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. This is an information report, therefore it is not necessary to carry out an Equality Impact assessment in the production of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

5. Well-being of Future Generations Implications and Connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

5.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there is no significant or unacceptable impact upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.

6. Climate Change Implications

6.1 There are no Climate Change implications as a result of this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 There are no Safeguarding or Corporate Parent implications as a result of this report.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 There are no direct financial implications arising out of this report however should the Council determine to undertake the voluntary self-assessment in the future, any costs associated will have to be met from the existing budgets.

9. Recommendation

9.1 It is recommended that the Committee consider the proposed 'Councillor Support Self-Evaluation Framework' attached at **Appendix A** and provide any comments or suggestions to be subsequently fed back to the WLGA, recognising local needs and priorities.

Background documents

None