



National Training Programme for Community and Town Councils in Wales

New Councillor Induction – Only available at Election time and Bespoke sessions

This session covers the following topics:

- What town and community councils do
- How they serve their communities
- The changing world of councils
- What makes a good council
- Your role as a councillor
- Your commitment and the Code of Conduct
- Fulfilling your duties and responsibilities
- Being the voice of the community

Module 1 - The Council

The Council as a Corporate Body

The “Team” of Members and Staff

The Council’s Role

Working with Unitary Authorities

Building Partnership Working

During the presentation we will cover the council as a corporate body, the ‘team’ of members and staff, the council’s role, working with unitary authorities, and building partnership working with a wider group of organisations. By the end of this presentation you should have a good understanding of the range of responsibilities of community and town councils as well as their changing role in serving local communities in Wales today.

Module 2 - The Councillor

The Councillor and their Commitment

Register of Interests

Code of Conduct and Ethical Behaviour

Monitoring Officers and Standards Committees

Debating and Making Decisions

Representing Your Electorate

Building Bridges

During the presentation we will cover the councillor and their commitment to the office of councillor, the Register of Members Interests, the Code of Conduct and ethical behaviour expected of a councillor, the role of the Monitoring Officer and the Standards Committee, the rules of debating and making decisions, how you represent on your electorate, and the need to “build bridges” between yourself, the council and other interested parties.

Module 3 - The Council as an Employer

Contracts of Employment

Role and Person Specification

Recruitment and Retention

Discipline, Grievance and Appeals

Health and Safety

Training and Development

Sources of Advice

During the presentation we will explore the role of the council as an employer. We will cover contracts of employment and how these define the employment relationship, the role and person specification, you may know the role specification as the ‘job description’, recruitment and retention, what you should do if things are going wrong, health and safety, and perhaps the most important of all getting the best out of everyone to help serve your local community, through training and development. Employment law and best practice is a complicated area, so lastly, we will finish by looking at some sources of advice.

Module 4 – Understanding The Law

Statutory duties and powers

Ultra Vires

The Powers of Delegation

Welsh Language Act

The duty to promote Equal Opportunities

Data Protection and FOI Act

Sources of advice

During the presentation we will cover a range of legislation and legal duties that affect community and town councils. We will cover statutory duties and powers, the principle of ‘ultra vires’, the powers of delegation, the Welsh Language Act, the duty to promote equal opportunities and the main statutes and regulations in this area data protection and Freedom of Information act and finally, sources of advice.

Module 5 - The Council Meeting

Calling meetings

Types of meetings

Standing Orders

Agendas

Conducting the meeting

Passing resolutions

Recording proceedings

During the presentation we will cover the different aspects of council meetings. We will talk about calling meetings, the different types of meetings including Annual Statutory Meetings, Extraordinary Meetings and Ordinary Meetings, the importance of Standing Orders setting and using agendas, conducting the meeting, passing resolutions, and recording proceedings.

Module 6 - Local Government Finance

The Role of the Responsible Finance Officer

Accounting and Strategy Guidance

Financial Regulations and Risk Assessment

Budgets and Precepts

Internal and External Audit

Insurance

Income and Expenditure Powers

Other Sources of Income

During the presentation we will review all the important areas in overseeing local government finance. We will cover the role of the Responsible Finance Officer, some of the general principles of accounting, the main financial regulations and, most importantly how to assess the risks involved, setting budgets and precepts, putting robust internal and external audits in place, the insurance requirements of the Council, the income and expenditure powers of the Council, and finally other sources of income.

This is a large agenda, and financial management can sometimes appear daunting, but the aim of the session is to provide you with an understanding of the financial framework of the Council, the core information you need to know and the sources of more detailed information that you should refer to when you need to.

Module 7 - Health & Safety

To explore the legal obligations of Councils and to highlight the processes and procedures that need to be in place to ensure compliance.

Module 8 - Introduction to Community Engagement

The aim of this introductory module is to explore what is meant by the term 'community engagement' and how councils and councillors can improve how they engage with the communities they serve. Using an interactive approach, the module explores why, how and where councillors currently engage with their communities. The session includes a short overview of key public policy in relation to community engagement and covers the key elements and terminology of community engagement. There is an opportunity for councillors to share and learn from their personal experiences and the session ends with a community engagement planning exercise.

Module 9 - Code of Conduct

A highly interactive and informative module that enables participants to understand the Nolan principles of public life and develop a more in depth knowledge of the Code of Conduct and how it applies to local councillors.

The module specifically covers the following:

The Nolan Principles

What Councillors must do and must not do

Personal/Prejudicial interests

Predetermination & Predisposition

How the Code is Policed

The learning will be reinforced through practical exercises and a DVD of the Ombudsman explaining his role will be featured.

Module 10 - Chairing Skills

To explore the role of the Chair and to consider the associated issues and highlight effective approaches to effective chairing of meetings.

Module 11 – No Longer included in the programme

Module 12 – Creating a Community Plan

To provide Councils with the knowledge and skills to create community plans and better understand strategy and forward budgeting.

Module 13 - Community Engagement Part II (Tools & Techniques)

To provide an insight into the way in which Councils can build on community engagement approaches and provide real leadership to help their communities and towns grow and thrive.

Module 14 - Equality & Diversity

Providing Councils with a better understanding of equality law and the Welsh Language Act and assisting Councils to promote equality and avoid unfair discrimination.

Module 15 - Information Management

To provide Councils with a better understanding of the legislation relating to Data Protection and Freedom of Information.

Module 16 - Use of IT, Websites & Social Media

To provide Councils with a greater knowledge of the benefits of reaching out to their communities through electronic communication.

Module 17 - Making Effective Grant Applications

To enable Councils to better understand the type of grant schemes available and to put together effective applications to support capital projects.

Module 18 – Managing Your Staff

To provide an insight into the ways in which Councils can arrange for the effective management of their staff.

Module 19 – Devolution of Services / Community Asset Transfer

Devolution of services is currently an important topic in Wales and the challenges and opportunities it presents are / or will be of concern to most Community and Town Councils.

The training module provides a highly interactive experience for Councillors and Clerks and covers the following key areas:

Models for asset transfers

Understanding lease issues and freehold transfers

Models for and approaches to Service Devolution

Policy Drivers

Opportunities, Pitfalls and Planned outcomes

Due Diligence Arrangements

Asset Management Responsibilities

Important role of Councillors

Community Engagement approaches

Module 20 – Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015 / Sustainability

This course will explain the principles of Sustainable development and relate these principles to the needs and aspirations of the communities you serve, identify relevant policies (e.g. Well Being of Future Generations Act 2015) and relate them to the powers and duties of local councils ensuring readiness to lead a process of Sustainable development planning and reporting.

Module 21 – Understanding Local Government Finance – Advanced

This course is aimed at building on the knowledge gained from attendance at Module 6 – Local Government Finance. It will appeal especially to Chairs, those serving on Finance Committees and to any Councillor who wishes to learn more about the governance and accountability framework in which councils are required to operate.

This Module covers the following areas:

Governance and Accountability

Roles and Responsibilities

The Annual Governance Statement

The Statement of Accounts

Internal Controls and their Review

Compliance with the Law

The Rights of Electors

Risk Assessment

Internal Audit

Liabilities and Commitments

Trust Funds

Reserves and Provisions

Investments

Module 22 - Understanding Mediation – Not available remotely, unless on a bespoke basis.

Module 23 – Community Asset Transfer

To provide Community and Town Councils with a practical ‘step-by-step’ guide to taking on a Community Asset Transfer project and to raise awareness of some of the common issues that might arise and how these might be overcome. It will also highlight some of the skills that will be required and the tools that you can use to help make your CAT project successful.

Module 24 – Finance and Governance Toolkit

To help Community and Town Councils operate within a framework of law and good practice and to see how the Toolkit helps Councils to meet legal requirements and achieve good practice and understand that operating professionally gives the Council, Officers and Community confidence that the Council is competent in all aspects of financial management, governance and service delivery.

Module 25 – Biodiversity basics Part 1 and Module 26 Part 2

A 2-part course teaching Councils the basics of biodiversity, nature recovery and ecology need to make good decisions and effective Biodiversity Action plans. It follows the same ‘*5 pillars of biodiversity*’ as introduced in the guidance document. After attending this course Councils will be better placed to write robust BAPs and Section 6 Reports and meet that Section 6 duty of biodiversity and ecosystem resilience.

Module 27 – Nature Project Management

A course delivered over 1 session that demonstrates the basics of project management in the context of nature and environmental projects. Handouts will include a project checklist for Councils to help them manage projects in line with Biodiversity principles, on time and in budget. It is hoped that all Councils that attend this course will have already attended the *Biodiversity Basics* Course first

