

WELSH LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION CONSULTATION

MEMBER SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT SELF-ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

(July 2023 Consultation)

CYNGOR GWYNEDD'S RESPONSE

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the consultation on the development of the old Charter to support Councillors development with the self-assessment that is now advised.

We see eye to eye with the general principles that it is timely to review and update the old Charter, by reflecting new legislative requirements and especially the reduced capacity and the financial challenge that faces every Council.

We are extremely glad to see a shift from the old bureaucratic procedure of collecting evidence and to prove what had been accomplished by authorities towards equipping the authorities themselves to self-evaluate, to recognise their own improvement priorities, and aim towards the changes that will bring the most benefit to the individual authorities. We welcome that this will give freedom to authorities to work step-by-step through the self-evaluation, rather than the emphasis on completing it all at once.

However, we have a certain amount of concern regarding the content and scope of the Framework itself. It is a long list that reflects an ideal world and there is a worry that it could be misinterpreted as specific requirements or rights of Members. Some of the requirements are beyond the responsibility boundaries of local Councils and abuts on political groups' responsibilities (e.g. in the context of prospective applicants, the role of political group leaders to maintain standards) or the Corporate Joint Committee (to support Councillors on the joint committee), other partnerships such as Welsh Local Government Association (supposed to explain the role and responsibilities of Members of Parliament, Councillors and town and community councillors) or the Councillors themselves in terms of their work in the wards. WLGA are asked to take into consider if there is a way to differentiate between the minimum requirement within local authority responsibilities and other requirements.

In addition, we must ensure a correct translation of the document as there are differences in meaning and/or vagueness between the Welsh and English in some places (e.g. an appropriate level of support to officers in the Welsh version, an appropriate level of support from officers in the English version).

Overall, we welcome this movement if it's possible to ensure in detail that the self-assessment is voluntary, and that it is not possible for every authority to fully attain each of the success criteria.