

WLGA Continuing Professional Development for Councillors 2014/15

Competency Framework

This competency framework describes the range of skills and knowledge required by members and a set of associated effective behaviours. It has been developed by the WLGA working with members and officers across Wales and is intended to be used by members when considering their need for professional development or reviewing their performance. It also provides a “curriculum” for authorities when developing local strategies for member development. The Framework includes a range of generic competencies required by all members and separate sections for specific roles on the council.

1. Fundamentals: A range of generic skills required by all members

Requirement	Knowledge and Skills	Effective Behaviours
Understanding of the role of councillor	The extent and limits of a councillor's individual responsibilities and powers and responsibilities in corporate governance. Also corporate responsibilities such as corporate parenting and safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.	Undertakes their role effectively in the council, the community and with partner agencies. Understands when it is and is not appropriate to act for the ward or in the interests of the area as a whole. Acts proactively to deliver outcomes within corporate responsibilities.
Understanding the role of the council	Understanding of the services delivered, both statutory and discretionary and the policies, procedures, plans and strategies which underpin them.	Is able to describe the work of the council to the public and where these responsibilities lie with other agencies such as community and town councils, voluntary sector or the Welsh Government. Contributes to the development of council plans and strategies and takes decisions in the light of these.
Balancing commitments	An understanding of time management principals including prioritisation and delegation	Maintains an effective work/life balance, managing the time available to concentrate on the issues with the most significant outcomes.
Information management	Understanding of the legal requirements of Data Protection and Freedom of Information legislation. Understanding and interpreting information and data. Ability to handle data in the format provided by the council	Receives information and data from a variety of sources and is able to store share and use it effectively and where possible electronically. Does not keep records about people without seeking their agreement. Responds promptly and appropriately to FOI requests.
Using ICT and social media	Skills in all 'Office' applications such as word processing, presentation and spreadsheets. And communication and social media applications including email, tweeting, blogging and personal website management.	Conducts all council business electronically Communicates with the community electronically and through social media where appropriate. Maintains an effective, positive and ethical online presence.

Meeting preparation and participation	Understands standing orders, protocols and rules of debate. Skills in public speaking, debating, asking questions.	Prepares effectively for meetings by reading papers, analysing data, undertakes personal research and participates in any pre meetings. Contributes to positive meeting outcomes by seeking tangible decisions or actions. Effectively contributes to meetings making points clearly and succinctly Remains focussed on the business in hand Understands and applies meeting 'rules' Seeks guidance from officers and group leaders before meetings as appropriate.
Working with the media	Skills in building relationships with the media and being interviewed on TV radio and for the press.	Is a recognised source of credible information for the media. Speaks confidently, authoritatively and appropriately in interviews. Enhances the reputation of the council when appearing on screen or in print.
Self promotion	The ability to develop a profile in the community through local activities and effective communication and consultation.	Writes an annual report on achievements and activities. Is highly visible in the ward. Maintains a high standard in both personal reputation and that of the council.
Working with officers	Understanding and skills in acting as a corporate employer. Understanding of the appointments process and interviewing skills. Understanding the role of officers and the 'rules' they need to abide by.	Maintains professional relationships with officers, recognising appropriate boundaries. Acts as an effective member of an appointment panel applying sound HR and equality and diversity principles to secure the best candidate.
Health and safety	Understanding of Health and safety legislation in the work of the council. Understand how to assess risks and ensure personal safety and that of others.	Promotes and ensures the health and safety of everyone in the council. Ensures personal safety when working in the council and when in groups or alone in the community.
Equalities and respect	Understanding Equalities and Diversity law relating to the work of the council and the role of the councillor. Understanding of the need for and what constitutes respectful behaviour towards others	Applies appropriate equalities legislation and demonstrates equalities values in personal behaviour and council decisions. Treats everyone with respect at all times when acting as a councillor whether in the Council, community, or political group.

Continuing and development	professional personal	Ability to identify personal development needs and to participate in development activities	Undertakes regular personal development reviews taking account of role descriptions and competency frameworks. Takes responsibility for developing personal skills and knowledge, attends learning and development activities seeking tangible outcomes.
Conduct		Understanding of the ethical framework governing the work of councillors, specifically the Code of Conduct. Understanding of the role of the monitoring officer. Personal skills in demonstrating respect for others regardless of sex, race, religion, age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity .sexual orientation.	Abides by the code of conduct at all times. Always declares and defines interests. Seeks advice from the monitoring officer when appropriate. Treats others with respect in all settings. Demonstrates integrity. Values others. Listens. Stays calm in difficult situations
Financial capability		Understanding of the way councils and services are funded. Understanding and skills in budget setting. Personal financial capability. Understanding the impact of welfare reform and the austerity agenda.	Engages effectively in the budget setting process. Is prepared to take hard, evidence based decisions. Demonstrates skills in numeracy when interpreting data and asking questions.
Interpersonal skills		Self-awareness, and skills in self management, "good manners" emotional intelligence, listening. Negotiation and mediation skills.	Acts in a professional and respectful manner to all people and in all places.
Sustainable development		Understanding of issues that impact on future generations such as health and wellbeing, financial security and the environment.	Takes decisions based upon the needs of future generations as well as the current population.

2. Local Leadership. A range of skills required by all councillors in their role as community leaders

Working with the community	<p>Knowledge of community groups and leaders.</p> <p>Understanding of community issues and concerns.</p> <p>Ability to seek the views of all relevant parties.</p>	<p>Understands the needs of the local community and secures action from the council on behalf of local people.</p> <p>Communicates with the community, individuals and the council to ensure engagement and understanding of all parties.</p>
Consultation engagement and	<p>Understands the different levels of engagement ranging from communication to co-production set out in the national principals of engagement for Wales. (see appendix)</p>	<p>Demonstrates positive outcomes as a result of effective engagement.</p>
Voluntary sector	<p>Understands the role and responsibilities of the voluntary sector in the area.</p>	<p>Builds effective relationships with the voluntary sector and communicates and works with them when appropriate</p>
Local issues	<p>Understands the issues of importance to people locally and throughout the council area.</p> <p>Knows which council plans will impact on local issues.</p>	<p>Works with the community and the council to find solutions to local problems.</p> <p>Secures funding for local initiatives.</p>
Working with community and town councils	<p>Understanding of the responsibilities of community councils and their forward work programmes.</p>	<p>Works with community councils to deliver outcomes for the community.</p> <p>Maintains positive relations and active communication with the community council and clerk.</p>

3. Casework

Being accessible to the public	<p>Understanding of and ability to arrange and publicise opportunities to discuss casework with the public.</p>	<p>Makes themselves available through the most appropriate means to connect with the greatest number of people. Uses surgeries, street surgeries, informal settings, home and social media as appropriate.</p>
Managing casework	<p>Ability to use case management techniques and software and communicate and monitor progress.</p>	<p>Promises only that which can be delivered.</p> <p>Keeps the people on who's behalf they are working informed of progress.</p>

		Monitors progress of cases after they have been referred to officers or other agencies. Uses the established referral schemes within the council.
Signposting	Knowledge of sources of information and advice within and outside the council.	Makes links between members of the public and the appropriate source of help in the council.

4. Political environment

Party Policy	Awareness of values and manifestos both nationally and locally.	Effectively balances the requirements of people, party, group and council.
Liaison with National Government WG and NAFW	Understanding of the functions of WG and means of engagement.	Liaises with local MPs and AMs. Brings local issues to the attention of the WG when appropriate.
Group membership	Rules and constituency group structure and policies.	

5. Scrutiny

Understand the role and potential of scrutiny for driving improvement	Understanding of the characteristics of effective scrutiny (appended).	Contributes to the work programme. Acts in a non-political and non-parochial manner when reviewing policy or monitoring performance. Prioritises the areas of work where scrutiny can make a difference. Promotes the work of scrutiny within the council.
Policy development	Understanding of the area of service or council function for which the committee is responsible	Makes evidence based recommendations.
Performance monitoring	Ability to understand complex data, financial information, risk, reports from audit, inspection and regulatory bodies. and other information required for performance measurement.	Identifies and challenges poor performance based on evidence.
Meeting skills	Ability to prepare thoroughly for meetings. Ability to understand and	Listens actively and effectively Makes appropriate use of pre meetings to plan a questioning

	<p>contribute to the questioning strategy. Ability to listen and question effectively throughout the meeting.</p>	<p>strategy. Focuses on meeting outcomes using meeting processes as a means to an end.</p>
Engaging with the public in scrutiny	<p>Raising public awareness of scrutiny and work programmes. Ability to engage with individuals and organisations especially those traditionally excluded.</p>	<p>Encourages the public to become involved in the policy and decision making process through scrutiny.</p>
Joint scrutiny	<p>Understanding of the role, remit, terms of reference and powers of any joint scrutiny committee and the role of the individual member on that committee. To understand the role and responsibilities, priorities of regional bodies, partnerships and organisations outside the council that the committee may need to scrutinise.</p>	<p>Demonstrates a commitment to working jointly with scrutiny members from other authorities, partnerships and organisations.</p>

6. Chairing

Meeting management	<p>Understanding of meeting protocols and the rules of debate. Ability to manage the agenda, contributions and time. Ability to engage with the public and press and viewers in the case of webcast meetings.</p>	<p>Chairs clearly and authoritatively, enforcing the rules and encouraging fair participation. Manages the agenda by introducing items, summarising debate, focussing on outcomes and limiting contributions which do not contribute to the outcomes. Ensures that the public feel welcome, understand the meeting purpose and how they can contribute.</p>
Committee leadership	<p>An in depth understanding of the role of the committee and its scope. Ability to liaise with relevant officers, members and agencies. Commitment to enabling</p>	<p>Works with the committee outside of meetings to develop its effectiveness and that of participating individuals. Communicates with members and officers with an interest in committee proceedings.</p>

	all committee members to develop skills and participate effectively in meetings.	Builds relationships with the relevant Heads of service/ directors to ensure that the work of the committee is relevant, well informed and provides the outcomes needed.
Work programme development and management	Understanding of the subjects within the scope of the committee and how these interact with council policies generally and the roles of other committees. Ability to develop a balanced work programme for the committee and clear terms of reference and outcomes for any sub groups.	Works with officers and committee members to develop the work plan taking account of the fit with the work of other committees. Ensures that the work programme takes account of national regional and local plans, policies and the expressed needs of the community for services. Makes sure that the committee also takes account of inspections or reports from audit, inspection and regulation bodies.
Resourcing	Ensuring that the committee has the staffing, information and finances to function effectively	Negotiates the support required by the committee

7. Statutory/Regulatory

Planning	Understanding of planning law generally. Understanding of how to apply the code of conduct to planning issues. The declaration of interests as this relates to planning matters. Understanding of the Local Development Plan. Understanding of the 'rules' for Development Management. Understanding of Sustainable Development principals and legislation including environmental, welfare and design considerations.	Demonstrates objectivity by taking independent decisions based on evidence and the legal responsibility placed on members acting in a semi judicial role. Transparently adheres to the Code of Conduct. Seeks appropriate advice, development or briefing before taking decisions.
Audit	Ability to scrutinise financial performance. An understanding of	

	risk management and internal and external audit arrangements.	
Licencing	An understanding of Licensing regulations and Licensing policy. Understanding of local policies which impact in this area such as the Community Plan and wider considerations for sustainability.	
Democratic services	An understanding of the legislative requirements for a DS committee. Understanding of the requirements for member support and development. Liaison with the Head of Democratic services and Lead member for member support and development. Promoting diversity in local government.	
Standards	Understanding of the law and constitution in relation to Conduct. Ability to advise and train members of both principal and community councils in relation to the Code of Conduct	

8. Cabinet

Portfolio lead	A thorough knowledge of relevant service areas. An ability to build relationships with relevant officers and scrutiny chairs. Ability to work collaboratively to develop a vision for the service area.	Provides political direction to officers in the portfolio area Is accountable for communication, policy and performance in the portfolio area. Actively seeks and values the input of scrutiny to policy development and performance monitoring. Works with officers to consider issues, priorities and take decisions.
Collective responsibility	Ability to handle information and take decisions after full	Takes responsibility as a cabinet member for strategic council decisions.

	<p>consultation and consideration of the issues.</p> <p>Ability to prioritise issues of most importance to the authority.</p> <p>Ability to work with other authorities and agencies to secure services for the Council</p>	
Taking decisions under delegated responsibilities	<p>Understanding of the scheme of delegation.</p> <p>Ability to take responsibility for decisions taken under the scheme</p>	

9. Strategic Leadership

Manage the reputation of the council	<p>Ability to act as an ambassador for the authority</p>	<p>Effectively represents the council at all levels ensuring that information about the council and its services and citizens is communicated positively and with integrity.</p>
Leadership of area/region/place	<p>Ability to develop a vision for the area/region/locality</p>	<p>Works with the council and the public to collaboratively develop and communicate a local vision that is clear, supported by the public and understood by the Council.</p>
Develop, communicate and lead a vision for the council	<p>Ability to develop a vision for the work of the council</p>	<p>Works with the council to collaboratively deliver the local vision</p>
Maintain a successful relationship with the Chief Executive and Senior Management team	<p>Ability to communicate effectively with the Chief Executive and senior officers.</p> <p>Understanding of the performance appraisal process and personal skills in conducting reviews setting objectives and giving feedback.</p>	<p>Meets and communicates openly and regularly.</p> <p>Makes expectations clear and provides political leadership.</p> <p>Undertake performance reviews with senior officers as appropriate.</p>
Leadership of the Council	<p>Promote and support good governance in the council</p> <p>Manage performance</p>	

10.Partnership and representation

Work on outside bodies	Understanding of the role of the outside body. Understanding of the role of the councillor on the outside body whether as council representative, locality representative, or as an individual.	Reports to and from the council and outside body as appropriate. Represents the views of the council, personal views or that of the community effectively and appropriately according to the setting.
Joint committees		
Working as a school governor	Understanding of education policy and school organisation	Oversees the school performance. Challenges the school management as a critical friend. Takes part in governor training.
Working as a member of a community or town councillor	Understanding of the role of the community council and its limits	One Voice to supply thoughts
Working as a Co-optees	Understanding of the role and limits of the role of co-optees on committees	Shares expertise with committee impartially