

---

# PORTFOLIO GUIDE

JULY 2022

---

A handbook for students, trainers and assessors in England and Wales

Certificate in Local Council Administration



NATIONAL IMPROVEMENT  
STRATEGY FOR PARISH  
& TOWN COUNCILS



---

Published by the National Association of Local Councils and the Society of Local Council Clerks on behalf of the Improvement and Development Board (for local councils in England) and the National Training Advisory Group (for local councils in Wales)

The National Association of Local Councils  
109 Great Russell Street  
London WC1B 3LD  
Tel: 0207 637 1865 | [www.nalc.gov.uk](http://www.nalc.gov.uk)

The Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC)  
8 The Crescent  
Taunton  
Somerset TA1 4EA  
Tel: 01823 253646 | [www.slcc.co.uk](http://www.slcc.co.uk)

NTAG, c/o One Voice Wales  
24c College Street  
Ammanford  
SA18 3AF  
01269 595400

Every effort has been made to ensure that the contents of this publication are correct at time of printing. The Improvement and Development Board cannot accept responsibility for errors, omission and changes to information subsequent to printing.

© *Improvement and Development Board 2021 (3rd Edition)*

*All rights reserved.*

---

## Contents

<b>Section One</b>	<b>Setting the Scene</b>	<b>3</b>
	What lies ahead?	3
	What is CiLCA?	3
	Where has CiLCA come from?	3
	What is Level 3?	3
	Who can take CiLCA?	3
	Who manages and administers CiLCA?	4
<b>Section Two</b>	<b>Preparing for CiLCA</b>	<b>5</b>
	How does CiLCA work?	5
	How can you learn what is required?	5
	How do you get started?	6
	How long does CiLCA take?	6
<b>Section Three</b>	<b>Building the Portfolio</b>	<b>7</b>
	How do you construct your portfolio?	7
	What is the policy on word limits?	8
	How do annotations work?	8
<b>Section Four</b>	<b>Assessing CiLCA</b>	<b>9</b>
	How does assessment work?	9
	How is the integrity of CiLCA assured?	10
	What is cheating?	11
	How can you complain and appeal?	11
<b>Section Five</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Section Six</b>	<b>The Occupational Standards</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Section Seven</b>	<b>CiLCA</b>	<b>18</b>
	Unit One Core Roles in Local Council Administration	19
	Unit Two Law and Procedures for Local Councils	23
	Unit Three Finance for Local Councils	33
	Unit Four Management for Local Councils	40
	Unit Five Community Engagement	43

This guide explains everything you need to know about CiLCA and answers most of your questions. Learners are advised to find out what information is provided and where. Trainers should know the handbook well and help learners find their way around.

**Section One** notes the background to CiLCA; it introduces Level 3 and suggests who might take CiLCA; it explains who manages CiLCA.

**Section Two** describes the structure of CiLCA, the importance of training and the number of hours involved.

**Section Three** provides guidance on compiling the portfolio; it explains word limits and annotations.

**Section Four** explains how assessment works and its integrity is protected. It includes policies to handle cheating, complaints and appeals.

**Section Five** suggests some resources that you might find useful.

**Section Six** contains the nationally agreed occupational standards which provide a basis for the five units of CiLCA.

**Section Seven** is the most important assessment plan. It includes the tasks to complete and additional guidance.

---

## Section One: Setting the Scene

What lies ahead?

Excellent - you have decided to take the CiLCA challenge. Your task is to demonstrate that you have the core knowledge and skills for working with a local council. This guide explains what CiLCA is, where it comes from and how it works. You are asked to read it with care and refer to it often.

What is CiLCA?

CiLCA is a foundation qualification for local council officers and others working with local councils. It's a Certificate in Local Council Administration awarded at Level 3 of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) where it is worth 20 credits<sup>1</sup> and it equips people for moving on to a Level 4 qualification<sup>2</sup>. CiLCA is owned and managed by the Improvement and Development Board (IDB) working on behalf of local councils in England and the National Training Advisory Group (NTAG) representing local councils in Wales<sup>3</sup>. Local councils in this instance are parish, town, community and neighbourhood councils. CiLCA is administered by the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC).

Where has CiLCA come from?

CiLCA was created by the sector bodies in England as a foundation qualification in 2001 and accredited and quality assured by the AQA as part of a new National Training Strategy. In 2003 the Monitoring and Verification Board (M&VB) took over responsibility on behalf of the sector bodies and CiLCA Wales was launched in 2010. CiLCA has been updated from time to time and was then refreshed in 2015 to position it at Level 3 of the NQF making it transferable outside the sector. CiLCA also has its roots in a set of occupational standards for the chief

officers or clerks of a local council approved in 2012 following consultation across the sector. The standards indicate to employers the potential scope of the chief officer's work.

What is Level 3?

Familiar qualifications at Level 3 are AS/A-levels, NVQs Level 3 or BTEC Nationals. At Level 3 you describe relevant knowledge in some detail and demonstrate skills and understanding by using that knowledge in a professional setting and in a broad range of different activities. Assessment includes written explanations that show an accurate and detailed understanding and examples of relatively complex work undertaken in the workplace.

Who can take CiLCA?

CiLCA is suitable for all officers working with local councils. Officers new to the sector are advised to take CiLCA after their first year in post. Councillors and officers of advisory bodies can also take CiLCA which is flexible enough to suit candidates from diverse local councils. Learners must join an introductory session with a training needs assessment. This helps you and your trainer decide whether you are ready to take CiLCA.

When a council's chief officer has CiLCA, they are qualified for the purposes of the general power of competence and in England for the Local Council Award Scheme (Quality and Quality Gold). A CiLCA qualified officer can also be a Principal Member of the Society.

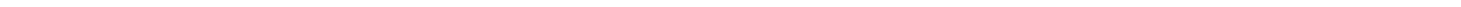
CiLCA should be equally accessible to all but you need access to council documents and permission from the officers responsible to use them for CiLCA. If you are not linked to a

<sup>1</sup> As an NQF-aligned award, CiLCA can be assessed *only* by the IDB and NTAG.

<sup>2</sup> A university-accredited advanced qualification is delivered by the SLCC called the Certificate of Higher Education in Community Governance.

<sup>3</sup> Members of the IDB represent the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), the SLCC, chief officers of county associations of local councils (CALCs), the Local Government Association and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Members

of NTAG represent the SLCC, NALC, One Voice Wales, the Welsh Government and the Welsh Local Government Association.



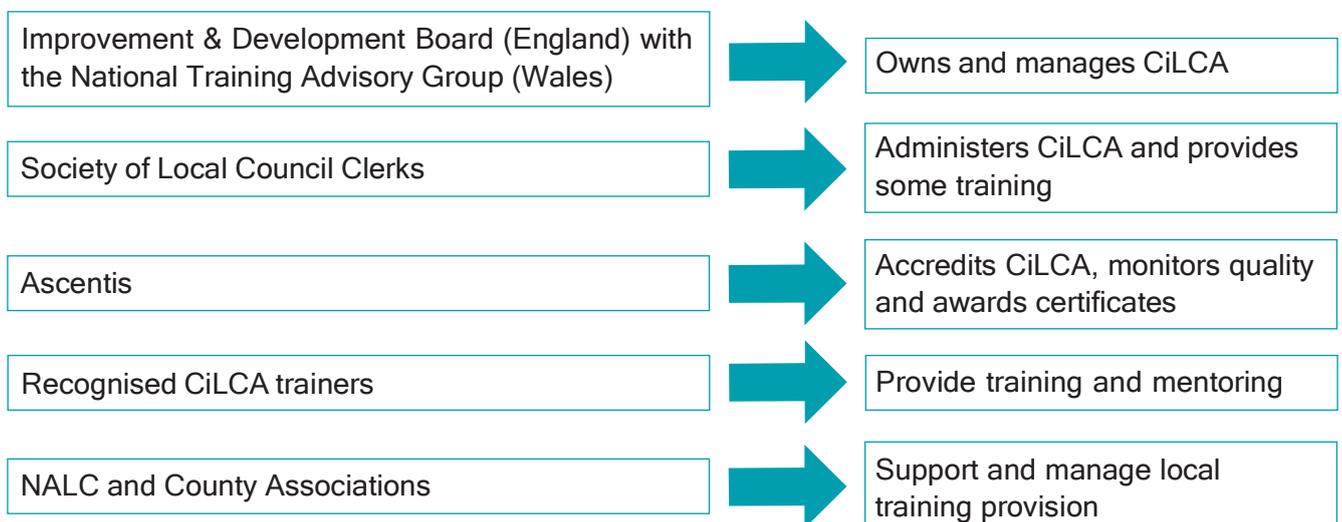
specific council you are advised to find a council willing to provide appropriate documents. If you have a registered condition (such as dyslexia or visual impairment) that might affect your ability to create your portfolio, you should notify the CiLCA Administrator who identifies advice or support. For example, a candidate with visual impairment could provide an audio commentary for the portfolio.

#### Who manages and administers CiLCA?

The IDB and NTAG are responsible for strategic oversight with operational review in the hands of a group representing both England and Wales (the Ops Group). The IDB's secretariat is provided by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) while One Voice Wales (OVW) provides support for NTAG. The SLCC is approved as a delivery centre for CiLCA by Ascentis - the awarding body that accredits CiLCA. Ascentis monitors quality assurance to protect the integrity of CiLCA and awards certificates. The IDB and NTAG have worked with Ascentis to develop CiLCA as a Level 3 qualification worth 20 credits. The qualification complies with Ascentis's approved framework.

CiLCA is administered by officers at the SLCC. The Head of Conferences, Training and Education manages the education and administrative team including the Academic Leader, the Internal Quality Assurance Verifier (the IV) and the CiLCA Administrator. The Academic Leader advises on the academic integrity of the qualification. The Internal QA Verifier manages the CiLCA assessment process and the assessors who mark the portfolios. The CiLCA Administrator liaises with candidates and assessors, manages EMMA, the e-portfolio facility and keeps all records.

Training for the CiLCA qualification is provided by recognised CiLCA trainers (look for the 'recognised trainer' logo). The SLCC is responsible for the quality of training although many CiLCA courses and mentors are provided independently through the SLCC and CALCs nationwide. Recognised CiLCA trainers are experienced in the subject; they are expected to have an appropriate training or teaching qualification or comparable experience and to have been trained in CiLCA portfolio-building by the SLCC.

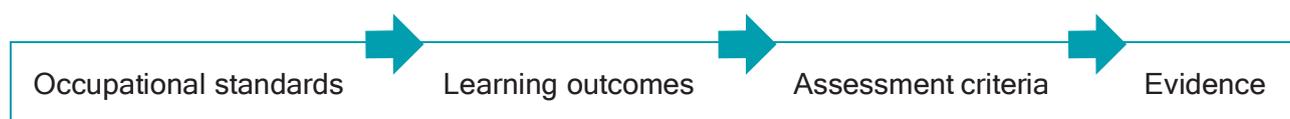


## Section Two: Preparing for CiLCA

How does CiLCA work?

The occupational standards agreed in 2012 provide a framework for CiLCA consisting of five units matching the five areas of work in the standards. The units identify the outcomes of learning or what a council officer needs to understand, know or be able to do. Each outcome is assessed against related

criteria. You show that you can meet the assessment criteria by providing evidence in a portfolio. Assessors check your performance against the assessment criteria. This guide provides additional guidance to help you – and trainers and assessors – check what is needed.



How can you learn what is required?

In order to complete CiLCA you will benefit from:

- a working knowledge of local councils usually gained through experience as a council officer or councillor.
- the introductory session including a training needs analysis
- training in the basic knowledge for clerks before starting CiLCA (eg ILCA<sup>4</sup> or a local induction course)
- training in how to build the CiLCA portfolio.

This guide explains what a CiLCA qualified officer needs to learn. There is a model training course based on this curriculum which trainers adapt to meet local needs. You are a learner until you submit your work and then you become a candidate.

Training will help you to take responsibility for your own learning so that you become a more confident practitioner (there are no model answers). Trainers and mentors are experienced and knowledgeable. You do not have to be a member of the training organisation to benefit from their training which is available to everyone who needs it.

Training organisations employ ‘recognised trainers’ and sign a Service Level Agreement (SLA) annually. The SLCC monitors the performance of both trainers and candidates and suggests improvements. It encourages trainers to share issues and good practice through an annual forum for trainers.

Trainers help you remain motivated and manage your time. They may ask you to enter into a learning agreement setting out the expectations of trainer, learner and employer. They may agree to review selected elements of the portfolio. Trainers are not responsible for suggesting that a unit is ready for approval by an assessor. The purpose of reviewing drafts is to advise you whether you are on the right track.

Trainers have no contact with the assessors or the Internal Quality Assurance Verifier but can seek advice through the CiLCA Administrator at the SLCC. Learners are not expected to communicate directly with CiLCA officers except when registering formal complaints (see below).



### How do you get started?

You apply and pay for CiLCA via the SLCC website. The CiLCA Administrator confirms your application. You are then registered with Ascentis and EMMA at the next bi-monthly registration date.

### How long does CiLCA take?

You have one year to submit your portfolio from the date of registration. You should not apply for CiLCA until after your introductory training session. Depending on the state of your council's documents and the provision of training, your portfolio could take from six months to a year to complete. As an example, if you do one learning outcome a week, it will take seven months. You are required to submit all units of your portfolio within one year of registration and to pass all units within fifteen months. You can seek a three-month extension if you have a sound reason (such as illness). You apply by e-mail to the CiLCA Administrator. If you still cannot complete, you must re-register and pay an additional fee. It is essential to have a final deadline.

Your council should support your studies. It can pay for training and CiLCA fees and offer study time where possible. The council as an employer can be a party to the learning agreement. The council is advised to monitor your workload and limit new projects during this time. CiLCA is awarded to you and not to your council although the council benefits significantly.

You cannot claim credit for qualifications, or parts of qualifications, relevant to elements of the portfolio as the aim is to apply existing knowledge to a specific council.

Ascentis requires CiLCA to take about 200 hours so that the qualification can carry 20 credits. It comprises five units listed in the table below. Each unit carries a number of credits depending on the work involved. Credits and hours include training, research, writing and time at work. As an example (see the table), up to 70% of the 200 hours may be part of your paid work with 20% spent on research and writing and 10% on training and group support. Over a year, 200 hours is about four hours a week but up to three hours can be part of your normal work.

Unit title	Credit value	Total Hours	Paid work	Writing	Training
Core Roles in Local Council Administration	3	30	21	6	3
Law & Procedure for Local Councils	5	50	35	10	5
Finance for Local Councils	5	50	35	10	5
Management for Local Councils	2	20	14	4	2
Community Engagement	5	50	35	10	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>20</b>

Each unit has three to nine learning outcomes and related assessment criteria. You provide evidence that you have met the criteria to an expected standard. The tasks include pieces of work written specifically for the portfolio and council documents that you annotate to show knowledge and understanding. This must be your own work.

You cannot create documents for an invented council but you can suggest amendments to genuine documents to demonstrate understanding. There is sometimes a word limit as this reinforces the important professional skill of writing concisely. Guidance on word limits and annotations is provided in Section 3.

## Section Three: Building the Portfolio

How do you construct your portfolio?

You provide evidence to meet the numbered assessment criteria for each of the 30 learning outcomes. It is expected that you submit your portfolio via EMMA where your work is marked unit by unit.

EMMA is very easy to use. You follow instructions given to you in an e-mail when you register. A short video (available via the SLCC website) demonstrates how EMMA works. You write and then upload documents

including council documents as required by each task. All portfolios begin by submitting a completed copy of your personal statement. This is available on EMMA (see below for details).

Your personal statement is followed by all the evidence required. The box below provides a checklist to help you format your portfolio so that assessors and verifiers can find their way quickly through your documents. This formatting is required by Ascentis.

All portfolios are uploaded to EMMA

The personal statement comes at the start of the portfolio. It provides your details and confirms that it is clear throughout the portfolio which work is/is not your own. It also explains to the assessor the context in which you are working, your organisation(s) and your role(s) and confirms that you have attended training. It is the first task with a word limit (400 words) and an early opportunity to see if you follow instructions on writing concisely. It is *essential* that you complete the introduction on the personal statement.

Every page of work that you produce yourself should include (either at the top of the page or as a header) your name and numbers of the relevant Unit and learning outcome (LO). If your name is not on a page, it is assumed that it is *not* your own work.

It must always be clear whether or not you wrote any accompanying or annotated council (or other) document. All annotated documents must state your perspective or role in relation to the document (see the guidance on annotations).

Each piece of work that you produce yourself should state the date of completion but if you submit your work more than six months after completing it, you should update it.

Assessors review presentation skills throughout the portfolio. If submissions show weak communication or word processing skills, they will be referred for further work. Trainers can guide you on page layout, the use of font styles and sizes, grammar, spelling, punctuation, proof reading and concise writing. They can provide templates for six LOs early in the portfolio to help with layout.

In submitting a portfolio, you take full responsibility for its contents. You are also agreeing that the SLCC, OVW, your CALC or training partnership will create and maintain records containing your personal data. These records will be used for administration and monitoring statistics as required. The application explains to whom your contact details may be disclosed in line with the General Data Protection Regulations. You can

ask the SLCC for its privacy policy. The contents of your portfolio are treated in confidence by all concerned. Portfolios are stored securely on EMMA and are frequently backed up. It is the SLCC's responsibility to ensure that all portfolios and records are

secure. As required by Ascentis, portfolios are archived three years after a completion date or end date (if a portfolio is not completed). You should download or print anything you wish to keep for reference.

---

What is the policy on word limits? Some activities have a word limit to ensure that you write concisely. You can exceed the word limit by up to 10%. A word limit of 400 words means a maximum of 440. If you under-use the word limit by more than 10% you might have missed vital items of information. If no word limit is given, you still write concisely and keep to the point.

- You can use bullet points to be more concise; ensure that they are properly formatted and fit the stem sentence appropriately.
- Footnotes can be used to expand on a point as long as substantive information required as a significant element of the task is included in the main body of the text.
- References to legislation are not counted; they can be put in footnotes. Note that legislation includes name, date, section, sub-section, schedule, paragraph or regulation.
- You should note the word count on any written work with a word limit. Headings and footnotes are not included in the word count.

#### How do annotations work?

Annotations are notes attached to a document. They can be written into a document using highlighting, comment boxes, footnotes or endnotes or can be put into an accompanying document. In fact it is helpful to the assessor if you introduce your annotated documents with an uploaded sheet of notes laid out in the standard format; they should also cover the bullet points below. You are not expected to write everything you know in annotations but to select key points that demonstrate exactly what is required. In addition to any annotations specified in the task, you include (if relevant in each case):

- your perspective (did you create, amend, oversee, use or simply study the document); it must be crystal clear to the assessors and verifiers whether you are annotating documents created by yourself or someone else
- a note of how the council or councillors use the document
- important legal references
- a note of how the document might be improved.

All candidates seeking CiLCA Wales, should make sure that their documents, explanations and annotations demonstrate a proper understanding of the Welsh Language Act. Welsh candidates should also note that the word 'national' can refer to Wales, England or the UK as appropriate.

If you work for more than one council, you can use documents from different councils but do make this clear. If you are not a member or employee of a specific council you should link up with a council that will share documents with you. If you need help in identifying a supportive council you ask your training provider to help.

---

## Section Four: Assessing CiLCA

How does assessment work?

You are expected to use EMMA (the e-portfolio) for submitting your work. When you have been registered for CiLCA you are given access to EMMA and receive instructions on how to use it. At the same time you are allocated to an anonymous assessor. Your portfolio is assessed one unit at a time (in any order). You should read the assessment criteria and guidance with care and then complete the work for your chosen unit. You write explanations or annotations and upload all necessary documents. Check that you have included all the evidence required before clicking the submit button. Your unit is then available for your assessor. You will receive feedback unit by unit. If you have a strong reason for not using EMMA, you can apply to submit the whole portfolio in a different format.

To avoid any conflict of interest your portfolio is allocated to an assessor from another county. Portfolios cannot be anonymous as the documents submitted belong to specified councils.

Assessment is objective and gives all candidates an equal chance of achieving CiLCA. The aim is to be flexible and allow for the diversity of councils. CiLCA qualifies all candidates to work with councils undertaking a range of activities so trainers advise officers of less active councils on how to provide suitable evidence when necessary.

Assessors are selected for proven subject knowledge and assessment practice and qualifications. They are supported through induction and receive training. Assessors hold two meetings a year to share ideas, address concerns and participate in standardisation activities to ensure consistent assessment practice.

If advice for trainers emerges from assessment, the Internal QA Verifier issues a training briefing via the CiLCA Hub for trainers and e-mail.

Ascentis's policy is that candidates must submit all required evidence and achieve all the assessment criteria to an adequate standard. Misunderstandings, minor errors and points for improvement are noted in feedback but do not always require further work. Candidates are asked to do further work and re-submit sections of the portfolio where evidence is omitted, significant points are missed or errors show that the understanding of the law or accepted good practice is less than sufficient, especially where the council might be put at risk. Exemplary work is often noted.

The contents of a portfolio are always treated in confidence by officers at the SLCC responsible for education and the administration of CiLCA, by the assessor team and representatives of Ascentis. Trainers cannot discuss the contents of a portfolio outside the specific training team unless a candidate gives permission. You can, and should, discuss your portfolio and feedback with your trainer.

Assessors may take up to three weeks to assess each unit. You receive feedback within three to six weeks of submission depending on whether the marking is verified by the Internal QA Verifier. While you are waiting for the results of one unit, you continue to prepare your next unit. You would not be wise to submit your units all at once. Your assessor provides feedback on each unit via EMMA and you receive an e-mail when the feedback is ready. There are two possible results for each learning outcome.

---

1. You have provided all the required evidence and achieved the assessment criteria (excellent).
2. The learning outcome is referred for further work. The assessor provides feedback suggesting what you need to do. You re-submit your work as soon as it is ready. This is your first referral – and it is free of charge.

If your work is referred a second time, you cannot make another attempt on that unit until you have finished all five units. Additional submissions are still marked. You find the required referral payment form on the SLCC's CiLCA web pages. You then pay a fee to unlock the referred units. When the payment has been received the Administrator unlocks the units. You respond to the feedback and re-submit your work as soon as possible.

Remember, you must submit all five units for the first time by the one-year deadline. You have another three months from this date in which to complete and pass all referred work. This includes the time taken to mark referred work.

When you have passed all five units, you celebrate. You will receive your certificate when your result has been processed by the SLCC and Ascentis.

Multiple referrals: If an assessor finds that you have more than ten first referrals or more than five second referrals you may be asked to stop submitting work until you have consulted a trainer or a mentor. If you are required to re-apply, there will be a fee. You will not automatically have any fourth attempts following third referrals without permission. For up-to-date information, see the SLCC website.

Furthermore, if you have twice been unable to complete CiLCA by your deadline you will not be permitted to apply a third time unless you can explain exceptional circumstances.

#### How is the integrity of CiLCA assured?

Confidence in the integrity of CiLCA as a qualification is vital. All parties commit to maintaining this integrity through the quality assurance process. The Internal QA Verifier is responsible for assessment and the internal quality assurance of CiLCA. Ascentis is the external body that accredits CiLCA; its External Verifier monitors quality assurance by reviewing the work of the assessors and verifier once a year.

Ascentis advises the Internal QA Verifier on training for assessors and provides access to training. New assessors are guided through

an induction and training process which includes monitoring by an experienced assessor. The process continues until the Internal QA Verifier is satisfied that the assessor is achieving the expected standard.

The Internal QA Verifier checks at least a 25% sample covering all assessors and all units (or a minimum of 5) and trains assessors to ensure consistency. The Internal QA Verifier keeps a record of all meetings and issues discussed with assessors. Assessors identify advice for trainers emerging from assessment. If there is any concern that an appropriate standard of marking is not being maintained,

this is raised with the national committee<sup>5</sup> which investigates the matter and acts on its findings.

Ascentis expects the IDB and NTAG to monitor the numbers and performance of candidates from different regions to identify good practice for the benefit of trainers across the country. If trainers wish to make a complaint regarding the administration of CiLCA or an example of unfair treatment, they follow the complaints procedure that follows.

How can you complain or appeal?

- You make a complaint if a serious problem with the administration of CiLCA is identified.
- Trainers can make a complaint if they identify an example of unfair treatment.
- You can appeal against an assessment decision related to any element of the portfolio.

All complaints and appeals must be put in writing with evidence to support the case and sent to the CiLCA Administrator who notifies the Head of Conferences, Training and Education (CTE) at the SLCC, the Chief Executive and Ascentis. The Head of CTE deals personally with complaints about administration but sends appeals and complaints suggesting unfair treatment to the Internal QA Verifier who is responsible for the assessment process.

Complaints and appeals are investigated by the officer concerned who may discuss the evidence with the candidate, trainer or other parties. The officer then decides how to respond and writes a report justifying the decision and any action to be taken which is then sent to the candidate or trainer by the

CiLCA Administrator. If the response remains unsatisfactory, the complaint or appeal can be submitted to the IDB (England) or NTAG (Wales) who appoints two representatives to review the case. Their decision is final. The outcomes of all complaints and appeals are reported for monitoring to the IDB or NTAG, the Chief Executive of the SLCC and Ascentis. There is a fee for making an appeal to cover administrative costs but the fee is returned if the appeal is upheld (see the SLCC website).

What is cheating?

You must not give yourself an unfair advantage by plagiarism or syndication. Plagiarism is where a candidate uses or imitates someone else's words or ideas and passes them off as their own. In all qualifications this is unacceptable. When you write explanations and annotations, you must use your own words. You cannot use material from other sources unless you acknowledge that source in a reference. You don't have to use a specific style of referencing but someone should find the source from the information you provide. You must put direct quotes in quotation marks.

When you submit your portfolio you take full responsibility for its content. It must be clear which writing is your own work. Every document or page that you write and upload onto EMMA must be labelled with your name.

Syndication occurs when two or more people submit the same or closely similar words. To check that syndication has not taken place, candidates from the same council are normally assessed by the same assessor. Trainers, assessors and others can alert the Internal QA Verifier to possible incidents of cheating.

---

<sup>5</sup> This committee is contacted through the Academic Leader at the SLCC.

The SLCC is required to notify Ascentis of any allegations. The Internal QA Verifier notifies the candidate, reviews the evidence and

decides whether there is deception or not. There are two possible outcomes detailed below.

- There is no deception. The candidate is notified and the portfolio is assessed. The candidate is advised on how to avoid the charge of plagiarism or syndication in future.
- Deception is identified. The problem is explained to the candidate who cannot resubmit a portfolio for six months following the decision letter and pays a full fee for resubmission.

A written appeal against the Internal QA Verifier's decision can be submitted to the IDB (England) or NTAG (Wales) and their decision is final. Candidates have 28 days from the date of the Internal QA Verifier's decision letter in which to appeal. The IDB or NTAG appoints two representatives to assess the evidence and decide whether there is a clear case of deception. There are then three possible outcomes reported to the IDB or NTAG, the Internal QA Verifier, Ascentis and the candidate:

- There is no deception; the candidate is cleared and the portfolio can be assessed.
  - The Internal QA Verifier's decision is upheld and the sanction remains.
  - The representatives of the IDB or NTAG find that the case is less severe and advise the candidate of action to be taken to enable re-submission.
-

---

## Section Five: Resources

You should have access to the latest editions of the following general resources:

- Arnold-Baker on Local Council Administration originally written by Charles Arnold-Baker and more recently updated by Roger Taylor; published by LexisNexis (OVW, CALCs and SLCC sell copies at a discounted price)
- Local Councils Explained by Meera Tharmarajah, formerly of NALC, is useful if you have a copy. A new edition is awaited in 2021.
- Model standing orders are available in electronic form from CALCs.
- The booklet, The Good Councillors' Guide, is a useful introduction. There are separate editions for England and Wales. The booklet for England can be downloaded from [www.nalc.gov.uk](http://www.nalc.gov.uk) and hard copies are available from CALCs.
- The Clerk's Manual is published by the SLCC (see [www.slcc.co.uk](http://www.slcc.co.uk))
- The Parish Councillor's Guide is written by Paul Clayden; published by Shaw & Sons (normally available from your training provider)
- Councils that are members of NALC will have access to NALC's Legal Topic Notes and you should have access to the SLCC's advice notes if you are a member.

Specialist topics include:

- Being a Good Employer: a useful booklet available to download from [www.nalc.gov.uk](http://www.nalc.gov.uk) or in hard copy from CALCs. For specialist guidance on employment issues the website for ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service) is also useful.
- Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities In England: Practitioners Guide or Governance and Accountability for Local Councils in Wales: Practitioners Guide (latest editions) can be downloaded from the SLCC website. Each edition contains statutory proper practices and is essential for all councils.
- A Community and Town Councillors Handbook: The land use planning system in Wales is published by Planning Aid Wales and available from <http://www.planningaidwales.org.uk/about-planning/guidance-publications/>.
- Planning Help provides an 8-step guide on its web pages: How to comment on a planning application available from [www.planninghelp.org.uk](http://www.planninghelp.org.uk).

For any learner wishing to study Harvard referencing (especially in preparation for Level 4):

- Pears R & Shields G (latest) Cite them right: the essential referencing guide, Newcastle, Peartree Books
-

A central resource known as the CiLCA Hub is available for trainers. It contains examples of documents they can use; they should build a resource pack including local information or case studies. For example, you should be familiar with local development plans for your area and national planning policies for England or Wales as appropriate.

You should be aware of policies that reinforce the management of CiLCA. The SLCC keeps policies on public liability insurance, Health and Safety and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) on file. You can also ask to see the following SLCC policies required by Ascentis:

- Conflicts of Interest Policy
- Equality, Access & Reasonable Adjustments Policy
- Health & Safety Statement
- Internal Quality Assurance Policy
- Malpractice & Maladministration Policy
- A Risk Assessment

Other policies, and policies in brief, are set out in this guide:

- Management responsibilities
  - Assessment ethos and the assessment plan
  - Internal verification and quality assurance processes
  - The induction and staff development of assessors
  - Complaints and appeals procedures
  - GDPR policy (on application)
  - A confidentiality statement
  - The security of portfolios and records
- 

Other records are stored by the SLCC and kept indefinitely. Records of all IDB and NTAG meetings are kept by NALC or OVV while the SLCC is responsible for the CiLCA-related records of all other meetings. The CiLCA Administrator uses data produced by EMMA to report as required by the IDB and NTAG to show how many registrations are submitted and how many CiLCAs are achieved in Wales and across English counties. The CiLCA Administrator monitors all registrations and can identify registrations that expire without a submission or an extension after one year.

## Section Six: The occupational standards

Twenty two occupational standards provide a basis for the thirty learning outcomes contained in the assessment plan (Section 7). The five units of CiLCA correspond with the five themes of the standards. Some standards require more than one learning outcome while some standards are assessed in the Level 4 or 5 qualifications.

The role of proper officer, chief officer or clerk to a local council is a recognised profession. (These standards refer consistently to the clerk although CiLCA is available for a range of council officers.) The scope of work undertaken in the clerk's profession is diverse but all local councils operate within the same legal, financial and procedural framework and share the same purpose of democratically representing a local community. Differences depend on the size of the community served by the council and its level of its activity. The occupational standards, agreed by the sector bodies in 2012 following extensive consultation, provide a framework for the profession across the range of councils, levels of responsibility and functions.

“Occupational standards describe what a person needs to do, know and understand in their job in order to carry out their role in a consistent and competent way” (UK Standards 2009). They suggest best practice and the values of a job.

CiLCA tests your skills, knowledge and understanding for meeting these occupational standards at Level 3 of the NQF. Many council officers, such as the Responsible Financial Officer, have specific responsibilities that may not be covered by these standards.

A clerk is a valuable investment for the local council, especially when qualified. However,

a clerk is valued for many attributes in addition to qualifications. Three overarching values are resourcefulness, objectivity and integrity.

**Resourcefulness:** Clerks respond to questions and problems with a dynamic, ‘can-do’ attitude. They take the initiative and approach their work with enthusiasm, common sense and a vision for the future of the council and its community. They are resilient and flexible and adapt to changing circumstances. They are keen investigators who know where to go for advice, information and ideas.

**Objectivity:** Clerks maintain a professional detachment from specific views expressed by individual members of the council or in the community. They respect the legal framework and democratic processes within which councils operate and advise the council accordingly. The council can rely on their discretion and neutral, independent approaches to problems and on their professional, objective advice.

**Integrity:** Many characteristics contribute to the integrity and inherent strength of clerks. They are reliable, committed and consistent; they are honest, open and worthy of trust; they support their employing council as a corporate body. They are approachable, diplomatic and sensitive to the needs of others; they treat people fairly, equally and with respect for diversity. They are committed to their own and the council's excellence and pursue personal and professional development to underpin confidence in their actions. They take responsibility for their work and are accountable for their advice and the decisions they take.

The standards represent what an experienced, qualified clerk should be able to do. Many standards involve giving advice, ensuring compliance with the law, managing diverse tasks and supporting the council. CiLCA qualified officers meet most of these standards at Level 3 as appropriate for their council. The standards are organised into five themes:

1. The core role Standards 1 to 5 relate to the general knowledge, activities and skills upon which the remaining standards depend
2. Law and procedures Standards 6 to 9 relate to the legal and procedural framework underpinning the council's statutory role
3. Finance Standards 10 and 11 refer to the financial management of the council. The standards apply to the clerk, whether or not that person is also the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO).
4. Management Standards 12 to 15 refer to the management of projects, services, assets, facilities and people enabling the council to fulfil its role whatever that may be.
5. Community Standards 16 to 22 relate to the council's role in the community including town and country planning, community engagement, community planning and partnership working.

#### The core role

- S1 Understand the roles, responsibilities and duties of the council and of the individuals involved in the work of the council
- S2 Carry out research so that the council is well-informed for making decisions
- S3 Manage the implementing of decisions for which the council is responsible
- S4 Organise and maintain effective administrative systems, processes, policies and records
- S5 Employ a variety of written and oral communication skills including the use of information and communications technology (ICT)

#### Law and procedures

- S6 Advise the council on its duties and powers
- S7 Ensure that all statutory requirements are observed including employment law, Health and Safety, Freedom of Information, Data Protection and Equality
- S8 Establish appropriate and lawful procedures for managing the meetings of the council and its committees
- S9 Advise the council on statutory requirements and other procedures for maintaining public confidence in the council

#### Finance

- S10 Advise the council on financial planning and reporting including the preparation and review of budgets, the management of risks to public money and funding applications
  - S11 Ensure compliance with proper financial practices including accounts, financial regulations, audit processes, VAT and procurement
-

## Management

- S12 Support the council in the planning, management, funding and review of projects, services, assets and facilities
- S13 Manage the employment, performance and development of council staff
- S14 Manage effective relationships with contractors and service users
- S15 Advise the council on its performance as a corporate body ensuring councillors have opportunities for training and development

## Community

- S16 Advise and support the council as it identifies and implements plans for the future of the community it represents
  - S17 Manage and administer the council's participation in the planning system according to current planning law, policies and procedures
  - S18 Demonstrate an awareness of all aspects of the community served by the council, recognising and respecting different interests and enabling cohesion
  - S19 Help provide all members of the community with opportunities for influencing decisions that affect their lives
  - S20 Facilitate the council's engagement with the community, managing public relations and ensuring that the council is transparent in all its actions
  - S21 Manage effective partnership working
  - S22 Advise and support the council as it facilitates community activity
-

## Section Seven: CiLCA

This section contains the learning outcomes and assessment criteria for CiLCA. Under the heading for each unit you see its credit value and the number of learning outcomes covered. Each learning outcome (LO) indicates what a CiLCA qualified officer is expected to know, understand or be able to do. The references to a 'CiLCA qualified officer' include the range of officers taking the qualification. Assessors seek assurance that you have the required knowledge, understanding and skills by checking your work against the numbered assessment criteria. Each LO sets out the evidence you must provide to show that you have met the criteria and provides guidance to help you appreciate what is expected. Do refer to the explanation of annotations above as it is not repeated in the guidance. Several words with specific meanings are used in the guidance:

- 'May' means that something is permitted
- 'Can' or 'could' mean that you have a choice
- 'Should' means that something is good or best practice
- 'Must' refers to something required by law.

You complete the appropriate version of LO7 for England or Wales. If you need to transfer CiLCA from Wales to England or vice versa, please ask for guidance.

To help you achieve CiLCA you should:

- follow instructions closely
- read the instructions several times and seek clarification if necessary
- keep to the point and avoid including material that isn't requested
- follow guidance on word limits and use a concise writing style

- name the council when asked to relate the task to a specified council
- note your role in relation to all council documents.

Your trainer's role is to:

- remind you that you are responsible for your own learning
- provide the basic knowledge required
- point you in the right direction
- provide guidance without saying precisely what to write
- help you stay on track by providing support and encouragement
- guide you on managing the support and expectations of employers
- help you to understand the tasks

You can claim up to 20 CPD points for time spent on CiLCA including training, mentoring, other support, learning at work, studying and writing. Points can be allocated to different years pro rata up to 20 points in total.

This guide is maintained in digital format so that it can be updated easily. Trainers are asked to notify the CiLCA Administrator at the SLCC if the guide requires modifying. Trainers and assessors will be notified of any changes.

This version of CiLCA was created in 2020 following a review of the 2015 edition. The IDB and NTAG monitor its progress as a matter of routine but will consider a major review after five years.

Good luck!

## UNIT ONE: CORE ROLES IN LOCAL COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION

Credit value: 3

This unit has 4 learning outcomes (LOs).

LO1 A CiLCA qualified officer understands the roles, responsibilities and duties of the council and of the individuals involved in the work of the council.

Assessment criterion: The assessors check that you can

1.1 explain, with reference to relevant legislation, the roles, responsibilities and duties of the council, clerk, Chair, a councillor and the responsible financial officer (RFO) at your named council.

### The evidence

For each of the five roles at your named council:

- Summarise the role and establish the basis of the role in statute
- Note relevant responsibilities
- Specify two statutory duties

1000 words

### Guidance

Check that each role is accounted for and make clear the differences between the council as a corporate body and the councillors as individuals and between the clerk and the RFO. One sentence provides an overview of each role. Identify the legislation that either permits or requires the role to be created. Another one or two sentences identify significant responsibilities (something for which the person or the council is responsible). For each role you also specify two statutory duties (actions required by law) and related legislation.

LO2 A CiLCA qualified officer can carry out research and make recommendations.

Assessment criteria: The assessors check that you can

- 2.1 research a topic for your named council and provide evidence of sources used
- 2.2 summarise findings
- 2.3 provide the council with options or recommendations as appropriate.

### The evidence

Submit a short report on any topic for your named council that

- summarises the findings of research
- provides evidence of sources used
- provides the council with options or recommendations as appropriate.

### Guidance

Officers are often asked to investigate a topic for their council. Any realistic topic for a named council is appropriate. Examples are extremely wide-ranging (eg play equipment, road closure rules, a planning application, a job evaluation, IT equipment, pensions).

A short report in a formal report-writing format addressed to a named council is required. There is no word limit but the writing must be concise and to-the-point; two pages would be sufficient. The report should be recent or current and dated. Your summary contains key points that councillors need to know to help them make a decision - not everything that has been discovered.

You include sources that were researched (eg websites, publications, experts) to indicate the reliability and credibility of the findings. A specific referencing format is not required but the information provided should help someone trace the source.

The council could be making a decision as a consequence of the research so you offer a choice between options or recommendations to be accepted or rejected. It should be clear to councillors what decision they need to consider.

LO3 A CiLCA qualified officer can identify a council's core documents and policies.

Assessment criterion: The assessors check that you can

3.1 provide a list of policies for a specific council identifying legal references and dates of approval and review.

#### The evidence

Provide a list of all the policies for which your named council is responsible. In each case, note appropriate legal references, the date when the document was (or will be) approved by council and the date when it is due to be reviewed.

#### Guidance

Policies include core documents such as standing orders, financial regulations, the Code of Conduct and a publication scheme. In addition, your named council may have a number of policies to guide activities. You do not need to refer to insurance policies. You need to be clear which policies are current and in place. It is also important to know when to review documents so you note the last date of approval and the date of the next review (including approval dates for documents that are still in draft form). Welsh candidates should also consider policies specific to Wales.

Some documents are required by law or are created as a consequence of legislation. Where possible relevant legislation should be noted. If legislation is not applicable note N/A. You should include all documents required by law.

LO4 A CiLCA qualified officer demonstrates professional writing skills and uses information and communications technology.

Assessment criterion: The assessors check that you can

4.1 use concise expression, accurate spelling and grammar and well-designed word processing.

#### The evidence

Your assessor comments on presentation at the end of every unit. You may be required to re-submit work that requires improved presentation.

Submit evidence of your ability to write and illustrate an article for a newsletter, bulletin or web page to raise the profile of the council.

#### Guidance

You must write and design an illustrated article that raises the profile of your named council. For example, the article could publicise the council's achievements. The assessor considers whether this work (and all work submitted in each unit) demonstrates

- good spelling, grammar, sentence construction and meaningful note form
  - concise writing, clarity and logical paragraph organisation
  - smart and accessible page layout, use of fonts, colour and design (including at least one graphic, photograph or image)
-

## UNIT TWO: LAW AND PROCEDURES FOR LOCAL COUNCILS

Credit value: 5

This unit has 9 learning outcomes.

LO5 A CiLCA qualified officer understands the requirements of data protection legislation for the council.

Assessment criteria: The assessors check that you can

5.1 identify data protection legislation and its key principles

5.2 explain the core documents and processes required for your named council

### The evidence

You write an explanation that:

- identifies data protection legislation including the primary statute and supplementary regulations
- summarises the key principles of data protection
- identifies the core documents required for your named council
- describes your named council's processes for implementing the legislation.

450 words

### Guidance

Provide the names and dates of the statute and the relevant regulations. Write a summary of the principles that inform the legislation (eg transparency). You write a list of the core documents required for your named council briefly noting the purpose of each document. Finally describe your named council's processes for putting the legislation into practice including, for example training, a data audit, website information, policy review and the data subject's rights.

LO6 A CiLCA qualified officer understands the difference between statutory duties and specific powers including s137.

Assessment criteria: The assessors check that you can

- 6.1 explain the difference between duties and powers
- 6.2 identify specific powers used for carrying out a council's functions.
- 6.3 explain the Local Government Act 1972 s137 and show how a council might use this power.

### The evidence

Write an explanation that identifies the difference between duties and powers. Provide four examples of powers used for specific functions.

Write an account that explains the Local Government Act 1972 s137 (1) and provide one example of using s137 (1). Examples cannot include the general power of competence or, until abolished, the power of well-being (Wales).

300 words

### Guidance

It is important to recognise that duties and powers are prescribed by law with different implications. The difference must be clear. The four examples chosen must be powers and not duties. Suggest a range of powers related to the specific functions, services or activities of your named council. Even the least active council employs an officer and pays for administrative materials. Provide the statutory reference and explain what it allows the council to do.

In explaining s137(1), attention should be drawn to important features of the power; for example, but not exclusively, explain the meaning of s137(1), the calculation of the annual allowance for your named council and the need for a separate account. Identify one example of a function, purchase or activity where s137 could be used.

LO7 A CiLCA qualified officer understands the general powers available to their council (other than s137).

Assessment criteria: The assessors check that you can

- 7.1 explain
- a. the general power of competence providing legal references
  - b. the criteria for eligibility
  - c. the process for confirming and reaffirming eligibility.
- 7.2 explain three activities that your named council might undertake using the general power of competence, identifying risks and restrictions relevant to each activity.

#### The evidence

Submit notes explaining what the general power of competence is and where it is found. Identify the criteria that councils must meet to be eligible to use the power (with the legal reference) and the process of confirming and reaffirming eligibility. Identify three activities that your named council might undertake using the power and explain risks and restrictions that might apply in each case. Make clear the difference between risks and restrictions.

250 words

#### Guidance

You specify the relevant legislation as a substantive part of the answer and explain what the general power of competence allows a council to do. The legal reference for the eligibility criteria is also required. It is not necessary to provide the details of relevant qualifications as long as both qualifications are recognised. The process by which the council regularly confirms eligibility is specified in law. Identified activities could be innovative or unusual but the general power of competence is a power of first resort so an eligible council can use it for most of its activities. Your named council does not have to be very active or eligible to use the power. This evidence includes activities that it might undertake if circumstances were different. For each of the three activities any risks or restrictions that might apply are identified. It is not essential to identify all the risks and/or restrictions in each case although the difference between risks and restrictions must be made clear.

LO8 A CiLCA qualified officer understands the implications of employment law and equality legislation for a local council

Assessment criterion: The assessors check that you can

8.1 explain the importance in law of the Written Statement of Employment Particulars and other statutory duties arising from employment and equality legislation.

The evidence
Annotate two documents, an employment contract and an equality policy for your named council, to show how employment law and equality legislation are relevant to your council.
Guidance
<p>The aim is to demonstrate an awareness of employment law and equality legislation. You select the two documents required and annotate them to explain</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>the importance in law of the Written Statement of Employment Particulars and of an employer's statutory duties such as minimum wage rules, statutory sick pay and holiday pay, working time rules, and the need for disciplinary and grievance procedures.</li><li>the statutory duties of the council and other responsibilities arising from equality legislation such as equal access for members of the public and equality in recruitment and in the management of employees, with reference to protected characteristics.</li></ul> <p>Remember to follow the standard guidance on annotations.</p>

LO9 A CiLCA qualified officer understands the implications of Health and Safety legislation for a local council.

Assessment criterion: The assessors check that you can

9.1 explain the clerk's role in response to Health and Safety legislation.

<b>The evidence</b>
Submit evidence that explains the clerk's role in response to Health and Safety legislation in a written explanation. <p style="text-align: right;">300 words</p>
<b>Guidance</b>
You demonstrate an understanding of the clerk's role including the day to day responsibility for Health & Safety. This can include <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● duties to employees, contractors, volunteers and others affected by the council</li><li>● the delegation of functions related to Health &amp; Safety where relevant</li><li>● reference to risk assessments relevant to Health &amp; Safety</li></ul> <p>There is no need to show a thorough knowledge of the legislation, but evidence should show how it affects your named council. This may include, for example, lone working, fire precautions, manual handling, COSHH, the safe use of equipment (eg display screens), trip hazards and first aid. You also recognise the implications for insurance provision.</p>

LO10 A CiLCA qualified officer can prepare for and support council meetings.

Assessment criteria: The assessors check that you can

- 10.1 produce agendas and minutes for full council meetings and the annual meeting of the council
- 10.2 explain good practice in the design of agendas and minutes
- 10.3 convene meetings lawfully
- 10.4 record lawful decisions.

#### The evidence

Submit a set of agenda and minutes for the annual meeting of your named council and one set for an ordinary council meeting. The documents are annotated to meet the assessment criteria and include legal references.

#### Guidance

Check that you submit exactly the agendas and minutes required. The annotations show an understanding of how to write a lawful agenda and appropriate minutes. They highlight good practice and make recommendations for change if necessary. The documents and related annotations identify good practice such as:

- Compliance with the law
- Convening meetings lawfully
- Clear 'business to be transacted'
- Appropriate handling of councillors' interests
- Appropriate handling of public participation
- Appropriate handling of confidential matters (if the documents don't include a confidential matter, you explain in your notes how to handle them)
- Concise minutes and clear, lawful decisions

Where possible, legal references are included in the annotations. Remember to check the standard guidance on annotations.

LO11 A CiLCA qualified officer knows how to advise a council on standing orders.

Assessment criterion: The assessors check that you can

11.1 explain how standing orders operate and are tailored to the needs of a council.

<b>The evidence</b>
Submit a copy of standing orders for your named council annotated to show how they work and explaining the purpose of four specific orders.
<b>Guidance</b>
In demonstrating how standing orders work, you might show, for example, how some standing orders reflect procedures set out in law or while others are tailored to suit a specific council. You comply with the standard guidance on annotations and choose four specific standing orders to explain their purpose. Note as an example, that the constituent parts of Model Standing Order 1 are separate orders.

LO12 A CiLCA qualified officer can advise a council on the different kinds of committee and delegation to the clerk.

Assessment criteria: The assessors check that you can

- 12.1 explain the benefits and disadvantages of committees with delegated powers, advisory committees and working groups
- 12.2 explain delegation to the clerk.

<b>The evidence</b>
Write notes to explain the benefits and disadvantages of committees. You note the differences between committees with delegated powers, advisory committees and working groups. You also explain delegation to the clerk in your named council. <p style="text-align: right;">400 words</p>
<b>Guidance</b>
It is important to explain the differences between committees with delegated powers, advisory committees and working groups. Some of the benefits and disadvantages to the council and to individual councillors in each case should be noted. You also provide guidance on the delegation of decision making to the clerk in your named council.

LO13 A CiLCA qualified officer understands a council's duty to uphold high standards of behaviour in public life.

Assessment criterion: The assessors check that you can

- 13.1 explain how a council fulfils its duty to uphold high standards of behaviour in public life with reference to the statutory duties of councillors and good practice for conducting meetings and protecting individuals.

#### The evidence

You submit an explanation showing how a council fulfils its duty to uphold high standards of behaviour in public life. You refer to the statutory duties of councillors and good practice for conducting meetings and protecting individuals.

300 words

#### Guidance

The council has a duty to uphold high standards of behaviour in public life. The legal reference for this duty should be noted. Councils fulfil this duty by adopting a Code of Conduct and by guiding councillors to comply with their statutory duties. The explanation should include non-statutory activities designed to help the council fulfil its duty such as ensuring councillors are trained, managing conflict, protecting individuals and avoiding breaches of the Code.

## UNIT THREE: FINANCE FOR LOCAL COUNCILS

Credit value: 5

This unit has 7 learning outcomes.

LO14 A CiLCA qualified officer can advise a council on the preparation and monitoring of budgets.

Assessment criteria: The assessors check that you can

- 14.1 prepare budget proposals comparing income and expenditure for the last, current and next financial year and calculate the next precept
- 14.2 prepare and present an appropriate budget monitoring document to the council.

### The evidence

Submit a budget proposal document comparing income and expenditure for the last, current and next financial years and calculating the precept. Also submit a budget monitoring document. Annotate the documents to show how they help your named council make sound financial decisions.

### Guidance

Two documents are required. They should be clear and transparent.

- A budget proposal is put to the council to help councillors decide the precept for the following year. It shows plans for expenditure and for income other than the precept. You also show how you calculate the precept to be demanded from the billing authority. The budget proposal often has four columns comparing the actual outcome for the last financial year, the budget and predicted outcomes for the current year (two columns) and plans for the next financial year. You can vary the model as long as good practice in making a comparison between years is recognised.
- A budget monitoring document is presented to councillors from time to time during the year so that they can assess progress against the planned budget for income and expenditure (or receipts and payments) to date. You select an appropriate document presented to councillors for their assessment at a meeting during the year.

Annotations follow the standard guidance to show how the documents help the council make sound financial decisions.

LO15 A CiLCA qualified officer understands how to prepare and explain a cash book and bank reconciliation.

Assessment criterion: The assessors check that you can

15.1 prepare or explain a cash book and bank reconciliation.

#### The evidence

Submit evidence of a mid-year extract from the cash book and related bank reconciliation (not the year-end) as required. Annotate the evidence to explain how the cash book works.

#### Guidance

The cash book records money as it is received or paid on a daily basis. Your daily account may be kept using a spreadsheet or computer software. If your daily record is kept using computer software, your annotations can include screenshots of an extract to show how the record works. You submit an extract from the cash book linked to a bank reconciliation. The extract and bank reconciliation are taken from any point in the year except the year-end (March). The bank reconciliation is a transparent calculation showing how the balances in the cash book are reconciled with the balance on a bank statement. There is no need to submit the bank statement.

Start by explaining the standard four bullet points on annotations. Relevant information is recorded in the cash book with appropriate analysis columns and accurate balancing of the account. There should be clear evidence of VAT and s137 payments as required by law (where relevant). You explain how the figures from the cash book, bank reconciliation and budget documents inform each other.

LO16 A CiLCA qualified officer understands risk assessment and the value of insurance for risk management.

Assessment criterion: The assessors check that you can

16.1 prepare a risk assessment covering all of the council's functions and showing the importance of insurance.

<b>The evidence</b>
Submit a risk assessment covering all your named council's functions, annotated to show understanding and good practice including the importance of insurance.
<b>Guidance</b>
Your risk assessment should include both your named council's policy for managing risk and the schedule of risks to public money relating to council property, activities and employees. Annotations should highlight the principles of risk management, levels of risk and ways of mitigating risks (eg insurance policies or regular inspections). The scheme should also be dated and include provisions for review. Annotations follow the standard guidance.

LO17 A CiLCA qualified officer can apply for grant funding.

Assessment criterion: The assessors check that you can  
17.1 complete a grant application.

<b>The evidence</b>
Complete and submit a grant application form, annotated to draw attention to three examples of good practice.
<b>Guidance</b>
You submit any genuine application for which you have been responsible in the last two years. If this is not possible, you can look for a suitable fund and generate an application for your council or a local community group. This can be a practice exercise rather than a genuine application. An example of a suitable fund is Awards for All. Using annotations, you identify three examples of good practice in making a grant application such as reflecting the objectives of the grant-awarding body. Annotations follow the standard guidance.

LO18 A CiLCA qualified officer can advise a council on financial procedures.

Assessment criteria: The assessors check that you can

- 18.1 explain how financial regulations help a council manage risks to public money
- 18.2 identify the council's arrangements for internal controls
- 18.3 identify a council's regulation for contracts
- 18.4 explain how the council manages the payment of its employee(s).

#### The evidence

Submit annotated extracts from your named council's financial documents to identify and explain the criteria above. Documents as appropriate can include financial regulations, standing orders, internal control procedures and payroll procedures.

If you need to write a short explanation of payroll procedures, you have 300 words.

#### Guidance

You can submit extracts rather than complete documents. Annotations follow standard guidance and provide additional information as required. For 18.1, you highlight at least four regulations to show how they protect your named council from risks such as error or loss through fraud, theft, bad debts (remember that 1a, 1b etc are separate regulations). In addition, for 18.2, highlight the regulation(s) that set out your council's internal control procedures or submit a separate internal controls policy. Councils must by law have a standing order specifying how they handle contracts. For 18.3, you highlight the correct extract.

If your named council has a document setting out procedures for paying employees, then this should be included for 18.4. If not, then you write a short explanation (maximum 330 words). Your explanation includes (as appropriate for the council):

- whether payroll is contracted out or done in-house
- which software is used (if any)
- arrangements for pensions
- the need for Real Time Information
- how rates of pay are decided
- authorisation of the payroll and payments by the council

LO19 A CiLCA qualified officer knows the implications of VAT legislation for a council.

Assessment criteria: The assessors check that you can explain

- 19.1 whether or not your named council is registered for VAT and if so, why.
- 19.2 the difference between business and non-business activities
- 19.3 the difference between taxable, zero-rated and exempt supplies
- 19.4 when it is not lawful for your named council to reclaim VAT

#### The evidence

Write an explanation that identifies and explains the four criteria above.

350 words

#### Guidance

The aim is to show an understanding of the basic concepts of VAT legislation for local councils. First you explain your council's VAT registration status (19.1). It is important to recognise whether an activity on which the council is spending money is a business or non-business activity and whether business supplies of goods or services made by the council are taxable or exempt supplies (19.2 and 19.3). You also need to recognise the circumstances under which it is unlawful for a council to reclaim VAT (19.4).

LO20 A CiLCA qualified officer understands the processes involved in the annual audit.

Assessment criterion: The assessors check that you can

20.1 explain the purpose and timing of annual audit processes and the duties and responsibilities involved.

#### The evidence

Write an explanation of annual audit processes and identify the timing, duties and responsibilities involved in complying with the relevant audit guidance.

400 words

#### Guidance

You explain the processes, timing and purpose of internal audit, preparation of accounts and end-of-year statements, external audit and exercising electors' rights. End-of-year statements include the annual governance and accountability return and/or other documents depending on the annual income or expenditure of your named council. In England, you refer to the appropriate transparency code for authorities if relevant. You identify the duties and responsibilities of your named council, the RFO, the clerk, the Chair, the internal and external auditors throughout the process.

## UNIT FOUR: MANAGEMENT FOR LOCAL COUNCILS

Credit value: 2

This unit has 3 learning outcomes.

LO21 A CiLCA qualified officer understands the range of activities involved in managing projects, services, facilities or assets.

Assessment criterion: The assessors check that you can

21.1 explain the work and responsibilities involved in managing a specified council project, service, facility or asset.

### The evidence

Submit annotated evidence from council documents or write an explanation (500 words) to meet the assessment criterion for one council function.

### Guidance

Select one project, service, facility or asset that is managed by your named council for consideration. If the council is not responsible for managing any project, service, facility or asset then a relevant function managed by another council or by a community organisation can be used. As a guide, examples include:

- a project to run a festival
- a project to promote the democratic process
- a library or grass-cutting service
- a village hall or playground
- ceremonial assets
- the purchase of computer equipment

You show how the chosen subject is managed. General elements of the management process can include legal powers, planning, budgeting, responsibilities, managing contracts, decision making, monitoring, review, problem solving, Health & Safety, risk assessment, insurance, sustainability, partnership working, community or user engagement and time management. You also outline specific work involved in the chosen activity.

Council documents such as a project management plan or management reports can demonstrate an understanding of management processes. If council documents are used, they should be annotated according to standard guidance. Alternatively, a written explanation of 500 words (maximum 550) can be submitted.

LO22 A CiLCA qualified officer can advise a council on responsibilities for managing staff and volunteers.

Assessment criteria: The assessors check that you can

- 22.1 prepare advice to a council on structures and processes for managing the clerk, additional staff and volunteers.
- 22.2 write a professional development plan.

#### The evidence

Write two papers. The first paper

- summarises your named council's role as an employer
- explains appropriate arrangements for managing the clerk, additional staff and volunteers

The second paper is a professional development plan for yourself.

500 words in total

#### Guidance

For 22.1 the role of your named council as an employer should be summarised briefly. It is not appropriate for the council as a whole to act as a line manager for staff; you therefore propose appropriate arrangements for delegating the management of the clerk, other staff and volunteers. These arrangements could include a committee and officer roles while processes and core documents relate to recruitment, performance management and continuous professional development.

For 22.2 write a short report for your council setting out professional development plan for yourself. This should include appropriate qualifications, training and continuous professional development and set out the benefits to the council.

LO23 A CiLCA qualified officer can write or review a training and development policy.

Assessment criterion: The assessors check that you can

23.1 prepare or review a training and development policy for councillors, staff and volunteers that helps a council achieve its objectives.

#### The evidence

Annotate your named council's training and development policy to show how training helps the council meet its objectives.

#### Guidance

The task is to demonstrate an understanding of the content and value of a training and development policy. The policy should be tailored to the needs of your named council and its staff. The policy can include references to:

- the reasons for the policy
- the training and development of councillors, all members of staff and volunteers
- connections between training, development and the council's objectives
- a training and development budget
- responsibilities for training and development processes
- a process for reviewing the policy

You also meet standard guidance on annotations.

## UNIT FIVE: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Credit value: 5

This unit has 7 learning outcomes.

LO24 A CiLCA qualified officer understands how to write an appropriate response to a planning application.

Assessment criteria: The assessors check that you can

24.1 describe a specific planning application

24.2 explain 'material considerations' relevant to the application including national and local planning policies

### The evidence

Identify a specific planning application. You write a description of the application, providing a reference, dates, its location and a note explaining what the application is for. You then explain the 'material considerations' relevant to the application. These include national and local planning policies and a reference, where relevant, to planning obligations.

### Guidance

Choose a planning application from your community or a neighbouring community. The application should be current or recent (within the last twelve months). You write an explanation providing the evidence required. You are expected to demonstrate that you understand the concept of 'material considerations'. These must include relevant planning law for England or Wales, national planning policies, your local planning authority's policies and, where relevant, a neighbourhood plan. There are many other 'material considerations' to be considered including the possible relevance of planning obligations such as s106 and/or the Community Infrastructure Levy. There is no word limit since the number of words depends on the application selected.

LO25 A CiLCA qualified officer understands diversity in local communities and fosters good community relationships.

Assessment criteria: The assessors check that you can

- 25.1 identify the diverse groups in a named community
- 25.2 suggest how a local council might take into account the needs of different groups in a community.

### The evidence

Write a short explanation of the diverse groups in a named community. Choose an example of different interests and explain how the council might take these into account when providing a service or facility.

400 words

### Guidance

Every community is diverse. There are different age groups, ethnic groups, people with different needs, skills and interests and people living or working in different localities. There are informal and organised community groups while some people join community activities and others do not. The task is to describe the diversity and differences in your community.

Diversity can mean that people have conflicting interests and perspectives but the council is responsible for treating them with equal respect. You choose one service or facility in your community and explain how your named council could take into account the needs of two different groups affected by that service or facility. For example, dog owners and people in wheelchairs think differently about a park; how would your council manage these different perspectives and why?

LO26 A CiLCA qualified officer understands the impact of positive community engagement.

Assessment criteria: The assessors check that you can

- 26.1 describe ways in which different groups in the community can be encouraged to influence decisions
- 26.2 suggest ways in which those who rarely join in can be encouraged to express a view.

#### The evidence

Submit proposals for community engagement that give different groups in the community, including those who rarely participate, the opportunity to influence decisions. This can be either an annotated council document or an explanation of 400 words.

#### Guidance

Modern local councils find ways in which people in the community can influence the council's decisions. Community engagement includes listening and finding out what people think about issues affecting the community. Proposals for community engagement should recognise the diversity of the local community and highlight ways in which people can communicate their ideas. Examples of such methods might include surveys, focus groups, workshops or social media. In particular you identify people who rarely participate (if ever) and show how they can be encouraged to express a view.

The council may have a document demonstrating these points. If so, you annotate it using the standard guidance and show how the criteria can be met. If there is no such document, you have 400 words (maximum 440) for an explanation covering all aspects of the task.

LO27 A CiLCA qualified officer advises the council on raising the council's profile and promoting the democratic process.

Assessment criteria: The assessors check that you can

27.1 list ways in which the council can raise its profile in the community

27.2 write an article promoting the democratic process to your local community.

### The evidence

Submit two documents (a list and an article) that show how the council can raise its profile and promote the democratic process.

### Guidance

The first document is a list identifying a selection of ways in which the named council can raise its profile, making sure that people across the community know what the council does. Examples include webpages, social media, signage or activities in the community.

Secondly you write an article promoting the democratic process. For example, the article may be appropriate for publication as a webpage or a newsletter. There is no word limit as a genuine article can be used. The writing should be concise and engage the readers' interest. In promoting the democratic process, the article might include, for example, a reminder that

- electors can identify potential councillors and nominate candidates for election
- candidates must meet the required criteria to be councillors
- people are encouraged to vote to elect councillors to represent their interests.

LO28 A CiLCA qualified officer ensures the transparency of a council's decisions and actions.

Assessment criterion: The assessors check that you can

28.1 recognise the implications of legislation and guidance that ensures the transparency of the council's decisions and actions.

#### The evidence

Annotate your council's publication scheme and one additional document to demonstrate transparency. Your annotations should make it clear how your council ensures the transparency of its decisions and actions.

#### Guidance

Community engagement is supported by the Freedom of Information Act, regulations and codes that require the council to be transparent about its activities. You annotate two documents to demonstrate transparency including the council's publication scheme explaining information available to the public. The council can adapt a model scheme from the Information Commissioner's Office. The process by which the council responds to requests, deals with vexatious demands and maintains records of the process must be clear, either in the scheme itself or in the separate supporting document.

Additional notes include the standard guidance on annotations related to the publication scheme and other actions ensuring transparency. Legislation, codes and guidance in England includes financial transparency, web accessibility, the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 and in Wales, requirements related to the Welsh language.

LO29 A CiLCA qualified officer can write or review a grant awarding policy.

Assessment criterion: The assessors check that you can  
29.1 write or review a grant awarding policy.

The evidence
Annotate a grant awarding policy document for your named council to explain key features.
Guidance
The focus here is about ways in which your named council engages with community organisations to support them in their work. The council needs a grant awarding policy that explains to community organisations how its grant scheme works. A scheme might include the aims and objectives of the council, its priorities for awarding grants, the amounts to be awarded, the criteria that an application should meet and details of the application and awarding process. If necessary, you write a grant awarding policy for your council. You annotate your council's grant awarding policy to explain its key features and to meet the standard guidance on annotations.

LO30 A CiLCA qualified officer can create an action plan for the council.

Assessment criterion: The assessors check that you can  
30.1 create a council's action plan for the year ahead.

The evidence
Annotate a council document including plans for your council's activities in the year ahead.
Guidance
<p>You are required to submit your council's plan for its activities over at least a twelve-month period. The plan can come in any format from a single page action plan to a strategic plan or long-term business plan. The plan sets out what your council aims to achieve. If the council already has an appropriate document that includes a plan for a twelve-month period, this can be used. Councils that are limited in their activities should still be clear about what they aim to achieve. As a minimum, your council's action plan should include an aim, objectives and actions indicating how those objectives are to be achieved.</p> <p>The annotations follow the standard guidance.</p>

**SLCC**  
For Local Council Professionals®

Un Llais Cymru  
  
One Voice Wales

**nalc**  
National Association  
of Local Councils