

PRESS RELEASE

Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) Welcomes Key Recommendations to Strengthen Community Councils in Wales

SLCC welcomes the conclusions of the recent report on the role, governance, and accountability of community and town councils in Wales. The Senedd's Local Government and Housing Committee has published its report following an investigation which started in July 2024. As the professional body representing clerks across Wales, we have actively contributed to the inquiry and are pleased to see a focus on improving support structures, professional development, and governance frameworks for clerks and councils alike.

Key findings and recommendations

The report acknowledges the vital role that community council clerks play, highlighting their essential contributions to the smooth functioning of local democracy. Among the key recommendations are:

- **A new audit system:** The report calls for a revised, proportionate audit system that reduces administrative burdens, particularly for smaller councils, while maintaining financial accountability.
- **Mandatory code of conduct training:** To enhance professionalism and mitigate conflicts within councils, the report recommends introducing mandatory training for community councillors.
- **Greater support for clerks:** Recognising the challenges clerks face, the report urges increased access to professional qualifications and financial support for training.
- **Improved dispute resolution mechanisms:** The report highlights the difficulties small councils experience when resolving disputes and recommends exploring better local resolution methods.
- **Access to HR, legal and IT support:** A proposal for closer collaboration between community councils and principal authorities to provide additional HR, legal and IT support services is a positive step toward ensuring clerks are adequately resourced.

SLCC's response

We support the conclusions drawn by the committee and are pleased to see that it is recommending to the Welsh Government, and to the sector as a whole, improvements to the implementation of the standards and audit regimes in Wales, as well as a review of the model charter between principal and community councils, which might lead to better networked resources available to town and community councils, and to a more consistent approach to principal council led boundary reviews.

Rob Smith, SLCC Chief Executive, acknowledges that the report makes some welcome recommendations for clerks in Wales.

‘Clerks are the backbone of local councils, and it’s great to see recognition of their need for proper training and support.

‘We’re pleased that the committee has concluded that it would like the Welsh Government to do more, in conjunction with the sector, to raise awareness of the CiLCA bursary and encourage more clerks to study for it. We strongly believe that staff should be trained from the outset, and we are keen to work across town and community councils to improve take-up of the available funding and training.

‘Too many clerks work in isolation under immense pressure – it’s important we give them the protection and backing they deserve.’

Next steps

SLCC urges the Welsh Government and relevant stakeholders to move swiftly in implementing these recommendations. We look forward to working collaboratively to develop these proposals further, ensuring that clerks and councils receive the resources, training, and governance structures they need to serve their communities effectively.

For further information or media inquiries, please contact: **Michael King, Head of Policy and External Communications**, Michael.king@slcc.co.uk

The report is available on the following links:

[CR-LD17034 - Adroddiad gan y Pwyllgor Llywodraeth Leol a Thai: Rôl, llywodraethiant ac atebolrwydd y sector cynghorau tref a chymuned](#)

[CR-LD17034 - Report by the Local Government and Housing Committee: Role, governance and accountability of the community and town council sector](#)