



Working together to support councils on local democracy

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 has just received Royal Assent.

As well as permitting 16 and 17 year olds to vote in Welsh elections for the first time, the Act will also make some changes to the governance landscape in local authorities.

The Welsh Government has identified this as an opportunity to revisit all the existing guidance on local democracy produced by WG, and others, over the years. The ultimate aim is to revisit and review this guidance and to bring it together in the form of a “Democracy Handbook” – a suite of material which will provide a one-stop resource for councillors and officers, but also local people seeking to better understand their rights and how councils work.

We have been commissioned by Welsh Government to assist in the first phase of this project. Between now and March, we will be reviewing the primary legislation, statutory instruments and guidance which apply to councils on matters relating to democracy, and setting out a roadmap for how the Handbook can be developed. We will also be leading on the drafting of a piece of substantive guidance on local authority meetings, which will ultimately form a part of the Handbook.

In doing this work we recognise the importance of working closely with the local government sector. We are planning three stakeholder events at the end of February and the beginning of March to understand what people’s expectations for a Handbook might be. We will be following this up with individual conversations with those who need it. This will begin a process of wider engagement which will continue through to future phases of this project.

These particular events are all being delivered remotely, and are invite-only. This is because in the first instance we are focusing our engagement on councils’ Heads of Democratic Services and Chairs of Democratic Services: we want to make sure that an officer and a councillor from each authority has an opportunity to contribute to this exercise. However, if councils want to substitute other individuals or send different or additional people who are likely to have particular insights, please get in touch.

Event 1: for national bodies: 24 February, 11am – 1pm

Event 2: for councillors: 26 February, 11am – 1pm

Event 3: for officers: 1 March, 11am – 1pm

If there are particular issues you want to highlight with regard to the guidance, please let us know in advance so that we can build this into the sessions. Please also let us know if you would prefer to participate using the Welsh medium, as simultaneous translation can be provided.

Those signing up will receive full joining instructions and an agenda prior to the meeting.

For more information please contact ed.hammond@cfgs.org.uk.

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