

## Report of: Democratic Services Manager

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### Subject: Wales Member Support Self Evaluation Framework for National Park Authorities

**Decision Required: Yes / No**

**Recommendation:**

The Authority is recommended to

- a. Endorse the Wales Member Support Self Evaluation Framework for National Park Authorities
- b. Establish a task and finish group to consider implementation of the Framework in the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority

### 1. Key Messages

This framework aims to provide a mechanism for National Park Authorities to assure themselves that they have all the support possible in place for their members, and that it is relevant, accurate and comprehensive.

### 2. Background

Members of the former People Services Committee will be aware that this Framework is based on the WLGA's Wales Councillor Support Self Evaluation Framework and replaces the Wales Charter for Member Support and Development in National Park Authorities. It reflects the sector-led approach taken with the wider programme for improvement and self-assessment in Wales.

Use of the Framework is entirely voluntary. The extent to which National Park Authorities are able to implement the practice described will depend on the local resources and priorities and the needs and priorities of Members. The suggested questions should be adapted to fit different authority approaches and positions.

A report has recently been received from Welsh Government regarding development of an accountability framework for all members of NPAs; this is in response to a recommendation in the Audit Wales report "Governance of National Park Authorities". As the Framework includes themes of Member support and accountability, it would seem appropriate for the Task and Finish Group to consider the Welsh Government report as part of its remit. Suggested Terms of Reference can be found at Appendix B.

### 3. Consultation

The Democratic Services Managers from the three Welsh National Park Authorities have worked with the WLGA to produce the document and Members of the People

Services Committee had an opportunity to comment on a draft of the document at their meeting in January 2025.

#### **4. Strategic Policy Context**

The information and recommendation(s) contained in this report are consistent with the Authority's statutory purposes and its approved strategic policy context.

Ensuring that Members have the necessary skills to operate the organisation is an important aspect of governance and is embodied within Principle 5 of the Authority's Code of Corporate Governance.

#### **5. Financial Considerations**

There are no resource or financial implications arising from the proposal. While there is a cost to any training or development provided for Members, whether that is officer time or the cost of external training providers, this framework is not prescriptive and allows the Authority to develop a Member support and development framework that is appropriate to its needs and resources.

#### **6. Risk and Compliance Considerations**

Failure to support and provide training to Members carries the risk that they do not have the necessary skills and knowledge to make good decisions.

#### **7. Impact on our Public Sector Duties**

##### **7.1 Integrated Assessment Completed: No**

##### **7.2 Equality, Socio-Economic, Health and Human Rights Impacts**

Outcomes of the Framework include Members who represent, and provide a voice for, the diversity of people who use the National Park.

##### **7.3 Welsh Language Impacts**

The Framework encourages the Authority to consider use of the Welsh language in meetings and Member learning and development which could include opportunities to learn or develop Welsh language skills.

##### **7.4 Section 6 Biodiversity Duty and Carbon Emission Impacts**

A key outcome of the Framework is that Members understand their role, responsibilities and accountabilities, which will necessitate learning and development on biodiversity and carbon emission impacts which are key tenets of the Authority's work.

##### **7.5 Well-being Goals for Wales and 5 Ways of Working (Sustainable Development Principles) Impacts**

The Framework will support the Authority in working to achieve the Well-being Goals for Wales and the Sustainable Development Principles.

#### **8. Conclusion**

The Wales Member Support Self Evaluation Framework for National Park Authorities provides an ambitious but pragmatic national framework of good practice in Member support which recognises legislative requirements, statutory and other guidance, the expressed needs of Members and widely accepted examples of what works.

Members are asked to endorse the Framework and to consider how it can be implemented by the Authority.

**9. List Background Documentation:**

[Wales Councillor Support Self Evaluation Framework - WLGA](#)

Arrangements for Evaluating Individual Member Performance in Welsh National Park Authorities – Stage 1 report

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Rhaglen Welliant  
Improvement Programme

# Wales Member Support Self Evaluation Framework for National Park Authorities



CLILC  
WLGA



**Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru**  
**Welsh Local Government Association**

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CF10 5BF  
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One Canal Parade Dumballs  
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**The role of a member of a national park authority is uniquely rewarding and challenging. Park authority members are provided with the information, guidance, and development they need to undertake this role by their authority, and in the case of elected members, this builds on the support provided to councillors in their unitary authority.**

This Self Evaluation Framework provides a mechanism for national park authorities to assure themselves that they have all the support possible in place for their members. The Framework has been developed by the WLGA and national park authority democratic services officers and members. It provides an ambitious but pragmatic national framework of good practice in member support. It is based on the [Wales Councillor Support Self Evaluation Framework - WLGA](#) and also recognises legislative requirements, statutory and other guidance, the expressed needs of members and widely accepted examples of what works.

The Framework also reflects the sector-led approach taken with the wider programme for improvement and self-assessment in Wales and enables sharing of good practice between national park authorities.

The Framework covers support and development for members in the widest sense. It includes but is not limited to support from democratic services, legal, digital, communications, learning and development teams, and directorates in their support for both elected members and those appointed by the Welsh Government.

**The Framework is divided into three broad areas which represent the different aspects of a member's work and responsibilities. Democracy, Community Engagement, and Learning and Development. Each area has a set of outcomes that national park authorities and members may be seeking to achieve and some suggested questions that can be asked to help draw out approaches and actions in each area.**

Use of the Framework is entirely voluntary. The extent to which national park authorities are able to implement the practice described will depend on the local resources and priorities and the needs and priorities of members. The suggested questions should be adapted to fit different authority approaches and positions.

Park authorities may wish to use the Framework flexibly in whole or in part over time or as a foundation for peer review and are invited to share notable practice emerging from the use of the Framework with each other.

The Framework will be reviewed periodically to ensure that it is still fit for purpose and accurately reflects current legislation.

<h1>Democracy</h1>	<p><b>Outcomes sought:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Members understand their role and undertake it effectively and ethically.</li> <li>○ All members can participate equally in the business of the authority.</li> <li>○ Members are presented with the support, information and resources they need.</li> <li>○ Members represent the diversity of the people who use the national park.</li> <li>○ Members are safe and protected from harm.</li> </ul>
Theme	Suggested questions
<p>Members and prospective members</p>	<p>Does the authority provide comprehensive information to prospective and new members about the role of the member, the authority, and any associated responsibilities and benefits?</p> <p>Are the approaches to the outreach to and information for prospective members made according to the need to encourage diversity in members?</p> <p>Does the authority signpost prospective members to information about the role?</p> <p>Does the authority encourage councils to use the guidance from WG and WLGA about appointing their councillors to the NPA? <a href="#">National Parks - WLGA</a></p> <p>Are prospective members informed of the expectations placed on them to take part in and prepare for meetings, and induction and continuing professional development, some of which will be mandatory?</p>



<p>Members understand their role, responsibilities, and accountabilities</p>	<p>Do all members fully engage with and participate in the business of the authority?</p> <p>Are all members, when being selected for a specialist position, provided with information and guidance about all aspects of their role?</p> <p>Are all members provided with a competency framework to understand the skills and knowledge required of them?</p> <p>Have role descriptions (see WLGA models for examples) been formally adopted by the authority and agreed by individual members?</p> <p>Have members serving on the outside bodies been provided with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Guidance on their role and responsibilities?</li> <li>○ Legal information such as their accountabilities and interests?</li> <li>○ An explanation of the expectations placed on them by their nominating park authority?</li> <li>○ Requirements for communication with and reporting back from the outside body?</li> </ul>
<p>Standards of conduct</p>	<p>Do all members understand their responsibilities in adhering to the local code of conduct? Have they received local guidance and the information on the Code of Conduct provided by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales?</p> <p>Do standards committees and chairs understand their particular roles and responsibilities?</p> <p>Have all members formally committed to undertake all aspects of their role with civility and respect towards each other, the public and officers in all settings and media?</p> <p>Are instances of bullying, harassment and intimidation dealt with quickly and effectively?</p>

Governance arrangements	<p>Do all members understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The roles, responsibilities, and limits to the roles of committees?</li> <li>○ The role of individual members and officers?</li> <li>○ Member/officer protocols?</li> <li>○ Meeting practice?</li> <li>○ Standing orders?</li> <li>○ Schemes of delegation?</li> <li>○ Rules of debate, public engagements?</li> <li>○ Roles on the authority where member training is deemed mandatory?</li> </ul>
Officer support	<p>Does every committee, panel, forum etc. have an appropriate level of officer support?</p> <p>Are members supported adequately in their collaborative and joint work with councils and external organisations, for example on corporate joint committees?</p> <p>Are all members proactively and also in response to specific requests, provided with information, data, briefing and training relating to their decision making?</p> <p>Has the nature of any support or information including research services been clearly explained to all members?</p>
Equality of access	<p>Are arrangements made for the business of the authority flexible and do they enable members to participate fully regardless of personal circumstances?</p> <p>Do meeting times, modes and venues reflect the expressed needs of members wherever practical?</p> <p>Are members provided with protocols or guidance on the conduct of multi-location meetings?</p> <p>Are appropriate meeting breaks provided?</p> <p>Do members have equal access to meetings regardless of any protected characteristics?</p> <p>Do the arrangements for multi-location meetings meet the needs of the members?</p> <p>Are members and other meeting participants able to use both Welsh and English in meetings?</p>

	<p>Do authority recess times reflect the needs of members with, for example, caring responsibilities?</p> <p>Are occasional physical spaces available for informal meetings on request?</p>
Support for members' rights, safety, and wellbeing	<p>Are members provided with guidance on their rights and benefits. For example, salaries, family absence, allowances, tax and benefits, indemnities, data protection and freedom of information?</p> <p>Are members actively encouraged to take up the salaries and allowances they are entitled to and is foregoing allowances and salaries actively discouraged?</p> <p>Does the authority have an informal duty of care in place which demonstrates a proactive commitment to protecting members' health and wellbeing? Is this recorded and available for members to view? Does it set out the nature of any support available to members for example counselling and health checks and signpost members to those responsible for helping members accessing this support?</p> <p>Are members provided with guidance on maintaining their wellbeing and personal safety? For example, lone working, bullying and harassment?</p> <p>Does the authority act proactively to support members who experience bullying and harassment including liaison with the police if appropriate?</p>
Diversity	<p>Does the authority encourage people from underrepresented groups to participate in its work?</p> <p>Are members with special access requirements supported in their work in the authority?</p>
Digital	<p>Have WG members or members from councils who need additional equipment for their work on the park, been provided with the equipment, or funding to buy equipment, to undertake their role in the authority?</p> <p>Has full training been provided in the use of equipment and packages? Is technical support available?</p> <p>Are members sufficiently supported in their attendance at multilocation meetings?</p> <p>Are members supported in the use of social media through guidance on its use and online safety?</p>

## Community Engagement

### Outcomes sought:

National park authority members provide a voice for all park users, residents and visitors and encourage participation.

### Theme

### Suggested questions

#### Public awareness

Does the authority ensure that the public understand the role and responsibilities of the NPA?

#### Communities contacting members

Are systems in place for local residents and community groups to contact members and those with specific roles, if appropriate?

Are these systems for contacting members made public?

#### Community engagement

Are members supported in their work with the public?

Such work could include:

- Publicising the work and objectives of the NPA?
- Signposting people to opportunities provided by the NPA?
- Attending engagement activities?
- Taking account of formal and informal community consultation?

Is the extent of this support available to members clearly articulated?

#### Oversight and safety

Does the authority have clear protocols in place for protecting the personal safety and wellbeing of members which are clearly articulated to members and the public?

Are the expectations of the community and access to members managed so that members are not contacted inappropriately?

Are members provided with information and guidance on managing their relationships with the public and maintaining appropriate boundaries?

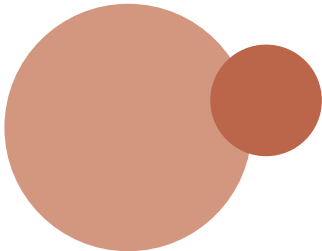
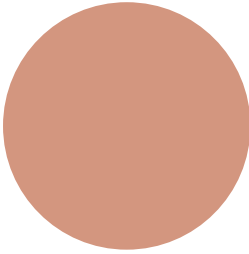


<b>Learning and Development</b>	<p><b>Outcomes sought:</b></p> <p>Members have the skills and knowledge to deliver National Park Purposes.</p>
Theme	<b>Suggested questions</b>
The Member Development Strategy	Does the authority have an effective and defined approach to member learning and development, set out in a published strategy, which includes responding to the expressed needs of every member and the objectives of the authority?
Personal development reviews	Does the authority provide all members with useful personal support and development reviews undertaken by people competent to do so?
A learning and development programme	<p>Does the authority have an annual learning and development programme fully promoted to all members?</p> <p>Can all members access the programme equally?</p> <p>Is the programme regularly monitored, evaluated and updated?</p> <p>Are members able to identify positive outcomes from the training such as improved understanding and performance and specific outcomes for the NPA?</p>
Induction	<p>Are all new or returning members provided with a comprehensive, prioritised, multi session programme of induction which enables members to participate effectively during their first year of office?</p> <p>Are new members offered the opportunity to be mentored by or "buddied" with existing members?</p>
Quality of development	<p>Do members believe that the learning activities are sufficiently stimulating, relevant and provided in progressive and appropriate styles?</p> <p>Does the authority have a systematic and effective approach to commissioning, developing, delivering and evaluating its training and development activities?</p>
Participation	<p>Do members attend all the development opportunities that are relevant to them?</p> <p>Is any non-participation addressed?</p>

Learning from others

Do members participate in shared regional and national development opportunities?

Are members encouraged and supported to collaborate with other authorities and national bodies to act as peers, mentors and in networks to share approaches to the role of members, identifying good practice and to contribute to sector led improvement?



## **Member Support Task and Finish Group**

### Role/purpose

- Recommend to the Authority a means of implementing the Wales Member Support Self Evaluation Framework for National Park Authorities in the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority
- Consider the recommendations set out in the Welsh Government Stage 1 report “Arrangements for Evaluating Individual Member Performance in Welsh National Park Authorities” and provide feedback to proposals emerging from Stage 2 of the process.

### Membership

To comprise:

6 Members of the Authority, on a 2:1 ratio of Pembrokeshire County Council (PCC) and Welsh Government (WG) Members.

The Chief Executive to nominate relevant officers.

Members to determine Chairmanship at the inaugural meeting.

The membership to last until the Task and Finish Group has completed its task.

### Quorum

To include at least two PCC and one WG Member.

### Accountability

The Task and Finish Group is of an advisory nature and will report its findings to the National Park Authority by the set deadline.

### Mode of operation

Meetings will be arranged as and when necessary.