

What is the difference between community and town councils and county or county borough councils?

County or county borough councils (also known as local authorities) have a legal responsibility to provide services such as education, environmental health, social services and town and country planning for their whole county.

Community and town councils represent individual communities or towns within a county. They have legal powers to deliver some services, but fewer duties. Community and town councils work closely with the county or county borough council in the area, representing the interests of their communities.

County or county borough councils and community and town councils must work in partnership, to ensure the best services and outcomes for citizens. This may mean that county or county borough councils allocate funds to community and town councils to enable them to deliver a service at a local level. Charter agreements can provide a very good means of underpinning the relationship between county or county borough councils and community and town councils.

What powers do community and town councils have?

Community and town councils have the scope to deliver many services, depending on the size of the community they represent and their budget. Examples of services provided by community and town councils include:

- public information signs and noticeboards
- public seating and bus shelters
- war memorials
- community centres and indoor recreation facilities.

Community and town councils work closely with the county or county borough council in the area, representing the interests of their communities. They can also work in partnership with other organisations (including other community or town councils in the area) to deliver services. By offering support, including funding, equipment or premises, community and town councils can also help other bodies to provide services, such as child care, services for the elderly, environmental initiatives and arts and sports activities.

The Good Councillor's Guide 2017, gives more detail about the powers available to community and town councils.

Who can become a community or town councillor?

To become a community or town councillor, you must be over 18 and a British national or qualifying citizen of the Commonwealth or European Union.

Community and town council seats are awarded either through election or by co-option. Co-option is when the council chooses from a list of volunteers if there are not enough candidates at election time or the electorate does not call for an election when a seat falls vacant.

Community and town councillors can represent a political party or be politically independent.

I'm under 18 – how can I contribute?

Community and town councils have a duty to consider the views of everyone in their community, including young people. A law, the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 ss.118-121, gives community and town councils the power to appoint up to two youth representatives (aged 16 to 25) to join the council to represent the interests of young people who live, work or receive education or training in the area. Some councils have set up a youth council, or committee of young people, to listen to young people's views. If your council does not have youth representatives or a youth council or committee, you can write to them to ask that they consider these options, or even raise it in a council meeting, if your council allows this.

You can also contact your community or town council to express your views on a subject, and take part in consultation exercises run by the council.

How can I tell my community or town council my views?

Community and town councils have a duty to consider the views of everyone in their community, and should seek the views of both electors and those who cannot vote, such as young people.

To do this, your council may run a variety of consultation exercises throughout the year, in which you can give your view on a particular matter or in general about the community. The council may also call a meeting of the community or town, at which electors can discuss the work of the council and what is going on in the area. Such a meeting can also be called by the electorate itself, if 10% or 50 electors, whichever is fewer, ask for one.

Meetings of the council and its committees and subcommittees, are open to the public, except when very sensitive matters are being discussed. The Welsh Government encourages community and town councils to invite public participation and some have a dedicated time in council meetings in which members of the public can express their views or ask questions.

You can also write to your community or town council at any time or email, if your council has this facility. If you cannot find contact information for your community or town council, your county or county borough council can help you.

From here, you can access more detailed information, in publications about community and town councils and their work, and guidance for community and town councillors, as well as the latest information about relevant legislation and consultations.

Where can I find out about Welsh legislation?

You can find copies of Acts, Bills and Measures, as well as subordinate legislation, on the [National Assembly for Wales website](#), along with agendas and transcripts of committee and plenary meetings in which the legislation was discussed.