



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1477  
Ein cyf/Our ref JB/10236/24

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair - Petitions committee

02 December 2024

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter about Petition P-06-1477 A new Senedd Act to Recall Local Government Councillors.

Councillors in Wales are expected to uphold the highest standards of conduct to maintain public trust and confidence. They should act with integrity, honesty, and transparency, ensuring their actions are always in the best interest of the community. This includes adhering to the Code of Conduct, which outlines principles such as selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership. Councillors should also avoid conflicts of interest and ensure they do not use their position for personal gain. Effective communication, respect for others, and a commitment to equality and diversity are also crucial aspects of their role.

When a councillor's behaviour falls short of these standards, the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales investigates complaints about breaches of the Code of Conduct. If a breach is found, actions such as training, mediation, or in severe cases, suspension or disqualification from office can be implemented.

Councils have their own standards committees that are expected to pro-actively promote and report on maintaining high standards of conduct. The Committees are chaired by and include lay members to ensure the Committees have a suitable level of independence from the council. These measures help maintain the integrity of local government.

There is also an extensive legislative framework relating to the disqualification of membership from local government. This includes disqualification for those in office found guilty of serious criminal offences.

The issue of elected members behaviour was discussed as part of recent debates during the passage of both the Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Act 2024 and the Elections and Elected Bodies (Wales) Act 2024.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

In the case of the Senedd, in light of the wider context of reform, a commitment was made to introduce a recall regime. However, as set out above, local government already has a robust ethical framework. This was recently the subject of an independent review which found no serious causes for concern. This is not therefore a matter that has recently been the subject of detailed discussion with local government or a wider consultation with the public. Taking this forward would need consideration of what mechanisms could be put in place which would work with this framework and the existing scheme of disqualification.

It is important to note that any changes in this area would require primary legislation. I look forward to hearing the views of the Committee.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jayne". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Jayne Bryant AS/MS**

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Lywodraeth Leol a Thai  
Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government