

**P-06-1477: Advocating for a Recall Mechanism for Local Government Councillors, Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 13 January 2025**

Dear Petitions Committee,

I am writing to provide further context and support for Petition P-06-1477, which calls for the introduction of a Senedd Act to establish a recall mechanism for local government councillors in Wales. The petition garnered 686 signatures from constituents across all Welsh constituencies within a notably short timeframe, underscoring the widespread public support for this initiative.

Currently, the mechanisms in place to address councillor misconduct or neglect are limited to breaches of the Code of Conduct or the commission of serious criminal offences. While these safeguards are essential, they do not encompass situations where councillors neglect their public duties without overtly violating the Code or engaging in criminal activity.

For instance, the Local Government Act 1972 mandates that councillors must attend at least one meeting within a six-month period—the so-called “six-month rule.” However, this requirement can be circumvented by councillors who attend a single meeting just before the six-month deadline, thereby resetting the attendance clock without genuinely engaging in their duties. Such practices enable councillors to receive allowances while minimally participating in council activities and neglecting constituent communications throughout their term.

Moreover, there are instances where councillors fail to engage with their constituents throughout their entire elected term. This lack of engagement undermines the principles of representation and accountability that are fundamental to local governance.

The absence of a recall mechanism means that constituents have no recourse to address such neglect until the next election cycle, which occurs every five years. This lack of accountability can lead to diminished public trust in local governance and a sense of disenfranchisement among voters.

Implementing a recall mechanism for local government councillors would align their accountability measures with those already in place for Members of Parliament, as established by the Recall of MPs Act. This would empower constituents to take action when a councillor fails to fulfill their duties, ensuring that elected officials remain responsive and responsible to the communities they serve.

I urge the committee to consider the merits of this petition and the potential benefits of introducing a recall mechanism to enhance the integrity and accountability of local government in Wales.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely, Russell Spencer-Downe