



# **Protocol for Councillors Representing Multi-Member Wards**

**April 2023**

## **Introduction**

The Welsh Government Statutory and Non-Statutory Guidance for Principal Councils in Wales stipulates that if functions are delegated to councillors within the same ward, councils may wish to produce guidance and support aimed at ensuring decisions undertaken in wards are co-ordinated and complementary in improving outcomes for local people.

## **Ceredigion Multi-Member Wards**

There are currently 34 electoral wards in Ceredigion, represented by 38 councillors. The following wards are represented by two Councillors:

- Aberporth and Y Ferwig
- Aberystwyth Morfa a Glais
- Aberystwyth Penparcau
- Beulah and Llangoedmor

## **Collaboration between councillors representing the same ward**

Those representing multi-Member Wards may be from the same or different group; however all elected members have the same status when it comes to representing their wards, and members should not identify themselves as the sole representative for that ward.

An individual constituent has the right to approach either or both the elected members representing their ward, and there may be circumstances where Members may decide to work together when campaigning or lobbying on ward-specific matters, to share ideas or concerns regarding issues and to ensure a unified approach to the public. They may also decide to share the workload, and to provide an element of mentoring for newly elected Members. This can be done informally by means of regular meetings or conversations. It can also reduce the potential of duplication of effort especially where the same matters could be referred to an appropriate Council Service twice. Alternatively, Members of multi-Member wards may wish to refer cases to each other due to a conflict of interest, or to cover each other during absences such as holidays or illness.

There may be circumstances where Members are unable to work together on specific matters due to political differences; however they may wish to contact each other as a matter of courtesy when dealing with major local matters.

## **Legislation relating to the disclosure of personal information**

Members should however be aware of legislation which governs the sharing of information. The Information Commissioner's Office 'Advice for elected and prospective councillors: Data Protection Act' states that:

*'The councillor will only be allowed to disclose to the other ward councillor the personal information that is necessary:*

- *To address the resident's concerns;*
- *Where the particular issue raises a matter which concerns other elected members in the same ward; or*

- *Where the resident has been made aware that this is going to take place and why it is necessary.*

*If a resident objects to a use or disclosure of their information, their objection should normally be honoured.*

*The councillor should not pass on personal information which is not connected to the resident's case.'*

<https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/The%2BGeneral%2BProtection%2BData%2BRegulation%2B%28GDPR%29%2B-%2BGuidance%2Bfor%2BMembers.pdf>

### **Considerations as to which Member takes a lead on any matter**

From time to time, there may be circumstances where a decision will have to be made as to which of the two local members takes a lead on a particular matter, such as a representative on a School's Governing body, or other local external body representation.

In most circumstances, this will have been pre-determined as a result of a member of the public or organisation contacting the Member of their choice; however where this has not be pre-determined, elected members within a particular ward should agree amongst themselves to allocate such responsibilities in a fair and equal matter, and on the basis of the subject matter and interest or expertise.

### **Communication by Council Officers**

Any Councillor is entitled to take an interest in or take up a matter affecting their ward, and as such Officers will send copies of all general correspondence relating to that Ward to both Members, and invite both Members to any meetings arranged to discuss a general ward issue.

This will include items, but is not limited to:

- a) Considering requests received for alternative temporary or partial use of County Council owned car parks, in consultation with the relevant Corporate Lead Officer and Cabinet Member (excepting applications for complete closure of a "Pay and Display" car park): *Ceredigion County Council Constitution Part 3.5F;*
- b) The short-listing of applications for advertised farms, their letting and serving of Notices to quit, in consultation with the relevant Corporate Lead Officer and Cabinet Member: *Ceredigion County Council Constitution Part 3.5H;*
- c) Notification of petitions: *Ceredigion County Council Constitution Part 5, Document O;*
- d) Representation at Aberaeron, Aberystwyth and New Quay Harbour Users Committee: *Ceredigion County Council Constitution Part 7.*

Where a Member has been involved in a private matter affecting an individual resident or household, Officers will only notify that individual Member, unless the resident has given permission for the information to be share with both.

Contact details of all Councillors are provided on the Ceredigion County Council website, and members of the public who request details of their local representative will be given contact details for both Members in alphabetical order by surname in line with the information publicly available on the Council website.