

CENTRAL SWINDON NORTH PARISH COUNCIL

CiLCA Qualification Expansion (Chairman)

1. Recommendation for Finance & General Purposes Committee

It is recommended that the Finance & General Purposes Committee approves:

1. The Chairman enrolling on the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA).
2. Funding £600 for the CiLCA qualification from Training & Development.
3. The Chairman contacting Ian Nockolds at the Wiltshire Association of Local Councils (WALC) prior to enrolment to arrange preliminary support and guidance with an accredited CiLCA trainer.

2. Report Details

Introduction

This report seeks approval for the Chairman to undertake the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA), the nationally recognised professional qualification for the local council sector.

CiLCA provides a comprehensive understanding of local council governance, law, finance, administration and community leadership, enabling councillors to perform their duties more effectively and support the Council in delivering high standards of governance and public accountability.

The next SLCC enrolment period commences on 3 October 2026. Following enrolment, candidates have 12 months to complete and successfully submit all required modules and portfolio evidence. Completion must be finalised by 2 October 2027.

Background

CiLCA is recognised across England and Wales as the benchmark qualification for local council administration and governance and is currently held only by the Clerk. It is awarded by the sector's recognised awarding body Ascensis and is widely regarded as the highest standard of professional development available to local councils.

The qualification is assessed through the completion of a portfolio of evidence rather than examinations. Candidates are required to demonstrate competence through practical examples drawn from our own council business and activities.

Whilst CiLCA is one of the qualification requirements for eligibility under the General Power of Competence when held by a suitably qualified Clerk, a Chairman or Councillor holding CiLCA does not enable a Council to qualify for the General Power of Competence.

However, the qualification still provides substantial benefits through improved governance knowledge, leadership skills and understanding of council administration.

Qualification Content

The qualification covers a range of subjects relevant to the effective operation of local councils.

Core Roles and Responsibilities

- The legal framework governing local councils.
- The powers and duties available to local councils.
- The respective roles of councillors, chairmen and officers.
- Democratic accountability and public service.

Law and Procedures

- Local government legislation.
- Proper conduct of council meetings.
- Standing Orders and procedural requirements.
- Decision-making processes.
- Transparency and publication requirements.
- Managing legal and procedural risks.

Finance and Resource Management

- Budget preparation and monitoring.
- Financial regulations and internal controls.
- Internal and external audit requirements.
- Procurement and contract management.
- Asset management.
- Risk management and insurance.

Governance & Ethical Standards

- Principles of good governance.
- Councillor Code of Conduct.
- Registering and managing interests.
- Accountability and public confidence.
- Data protection and information governance.

Community Leadership and Engagement

- Community consultation and engagement.
- Working with residents and stakeholders.
- Partnership working.
- Strategic planning.
- Supporting community projects and initiatives.

Management and Continuous Improvement

- Policy development and implementation.
- Performance management.
- Service delivery.
- Organisational effectiveness.
- Continuous improvement and best practice.

Benefits to the Council

A Chairman holding CiLCA would provide several benefits to the Council.

Governance and Legal Compliance

- Improved understanding of local government legislation.
- Greater awareness of statutory duties and responsibilities.
- Enhanced scrutiny of reports and recommendations.
- Better informed and legally compliant decision-making.

Financial Oversight

- Increased understanding of council finances.
- Improved ability to scrutinise budgets and expenditure.
- Greater awareness of audit requirements and financial controls.
- Strengthened financial governance.

3. Summary

The Chairman obtaining CiLCA would strengthen the Council's governance capability, financial oversight, legal understanding and leadership capacity.

The qualification would provide the Chairman with a recognised and comprehensive understanding of local council administration and best practice, supporting effective decision-making and good governance across the Council.

Although the qualification cannot be used to satisfy the General Power of Competence (GPC) qualification requirement when held by a councillor or chairman, it nevertheless represents a valuable investment in the Council's leadership and governance arrangements.