

WLGA ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

Purpose

1. To present the WLGA's Annual Report 2020-21.

Background

2. The WLGA's Annual Report bears testament to a year like no other experienced by local government. The 1st April 2021 also marked the 25th anniversary of the establishment of our 22 unitary authorities and the WLGA.
3. Whilst councils and the WLGA would have ordinarily marked this occasion with some celebration, that would not have been appropriate in the circumstances. At a time when communities and residents across our nation are still suffering due to the pandemic, it has been a time for recognition rather than celebration.
4. The WLGA recognises the vital contribution councils have made to our communities and to our country. The hundreds of thousands of jobs councils have created or saved. The generations and hundreds of thousands of young people councils have educated and trained. The tens of thousands of the most vulnerable in our communities whom councils have cared for or have housed. The communities the length and breadth of Wales councils have regenerated. The several hundred services councils have provided to all in our society, every single day for each of those 25 years.
5. Even more importantly, we recognise and give thanks to local government's greatest asset: its people. Councillors and the many thousands of our committed, hardworking workforce who this year have gone above and beyond the call of duty and have been on the front line of the COVID response.
6. Our councils reprioritised and restructured services and thousands of the workforce were redeployed overnight, many of whom voluntarily changing roles to help the collective response to the pandemic.
7. The government and our communities have turned to us and relied on Wales' local authorities like never before. Without local government's incredible workforce, none of this would have been possible. Our councils are uniquely placed at the heart of our communities. They are the first port of call for the most vulnerable or those in need of support or assurance. In responding to the crisis, they have demonstrated councils' ability to respond irrespective of scale or challenge and reaffirmed the WLGA's stance on the importance of subsidiarity and localism, with elected members and the workforce rooted in local communities.
8. As we reflect on the past 25 years of Welsh local government, we recognise the commitment and leadership of the elected members who have represented, served and supported their communities across Wales and we are proud of and pay tribute to our workforce, for their compassion, dedication, professionalism and public service

particularly during the past 12 months - the most challenging period our communities and country has faced in generations.

Summary – the past 12 months in numbers

9. We have responded to or submitted evidence to 33 Welsh Government consultations, Senedd Committee or Parliamentary Inquiries.
10. We have championed, defended and promoted the cause of local government in the media, **responding to over 250 press enquiries** and **issuing 30 press releases**. We have **gained almost 400 twitter followers** over the past 12 months (with a total Twitter following of 9,995).
11. During the COVID-19 pandemic we have sought to ensure members are informed of the latest development and provided with guidance and our leadership is regularly engaged with Ministers on decision-making:
 - We introduced a COVID-19 e-bulletin circulated to all members, initially on a daily basis but latterly on a weekly basis, providing latest data, information and guidance to councillors. The WLGA also produced a COVID-19 Councillors Guide;
 - Although Covid has meant that many councils have not requested training this year, we have delivered 16 remote training and coaching sessions in local authorities to 39 members this year, all with positive feedback. We were also able to deliver the final module of the Leadership Academy as virtual sessions for the first time to the 25 programme participants in partnership with the LGA and Academi Wales.
 - Despite the disruption to 'business as usual' and impact on councils' planned democratic schedule, the WLGA has sought to engage regularly and extensively with executive members to keep them informed of COVID-19 developments and the implications on local authorities. The WLGA convened weekly leaders' meetings throughout 2020-21 (which were initially daily at the outset of the pandemic) ensuring leaders were able to meet with Ministers on a regular basis. WLGA Cabinet Member networks also met regularly throughout the pandemic, often with Ministers to discuss concerns, pressures or to shape emerging policy.
 - The WLGA has also reinitiated the implementation of organisational changes that were begun before the pandemic, which sought to reform and refresh the organisation in preparedness for the establishment of the new Association for the new municipal term from May 2022. The WLGA is in the process of relocating to a new, smaller office location in Cardiff which will provide opportunities for efficiencies, a reduced carbon footprint and a more agile and collaborative approach to work. As part of this process, the WLGA has started reviewing organisational and HR policies and commissioned new WLGA branding to be introduced in 2021-22 alongside a new website to support our communications and public affairs activities.

12. The WLGA published a bold 'Manifesto for Localism' and a separate Rural Manifesto ahead of the Senedd Elections, which articulated the local government's core policy priorities:

- Promotion of well-being and encourage healthy, sustainable and vibrant communities
- improving outcomes for children and young people and learners
- delivering good quality and sustainable social care services for the future
- creating good quality homes and safer communities for people to live and work, and
- supporting sustainable, inclusive growth and a green post-COVID recover

13. The Manifesto also promoted our core principles calling for mutual respect and the concept of subsidiarity. Most of the main political parties' manifestos recognised the contribution of local government during the pandemic and included several pledges which aligned with some of the WLGA's core aims.

14. The WLGA's Annual Report for 2020-21 is included in **Annex A**.

Recommendations

15. Members are recommended to note the WLGA's Annual Report 2020-21.

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Introduction

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Whilst councils and the WLGA would have ordinarily marked this occasion with some celebration, that would not have been appropriate in the circumstances. At a time when communities and residents across our nation are still suffering due to the pandemic, it has been a time for recognition rather than celebration.

The WLGA recognises the vital contribution councils have made to our communities and to our country.

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The generations and hundreds of thousands of young people councils have educated and trained.

The tens of thousands of the most vulnerable in our communities whom councils have cared for or have housed.

The communities the length and breadth of Wales councils have regenerated.

The several hundred services councils have provided to all in our society, every single day for each of those 25 years.

Even more importantly, we recognise and give thanks to local government's greatest asset: its people. Councillors and the many thousands of our committed, hardworking workforce who this year have gone above and beyond the call of duty and have been on the front line of the COVID response.

Our councils reprioritised and restructured services and thousands of the workforce were redeployed overnight, many of whom voluntarily changing roles to help the collective response to the pandemic.

The government and our communities have turned to us and relied on Wales' local authorities like never before. Without local government's incredible workforce, none of this would have been possible. Our councils are uniquely placed at the heart of our communities. They are the first port of call for the most vulnerable or those in need of support or assurance. In responding to the crisis, they have demonstrated councils' ability to respond irrespective of scale or challenge and reaffirmed the WLGA's stance on the importance of subsidiarity and localism, with elected members and the workforce rooted in local communities.

As we reflect on the past 25 years of Welsh local government, we recognise the commitment and leadership of the elected members who have represented, served and supported their communities across Wales and we are proud of and pay tribute to our workforce, for their compassion, dedication, professionalism and public service particularly during the past 12 months - the most challenging period our communities and country has faced in generations.

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3. During the COVID-19 pandemic we have sought to ensure members are informed of the latest development and provided with guidance and our leadership is regularly engaged with Ministers on decision-making:
 - We introduced a COVID-19 e-bulletin circulated to all members, initially on a daily basis but latterly on a weekly basis, providing latest data, information and guidance to councillors. The WLGA also produced a COVID-19 Councillors Guide.
 - Although Covid has meant that many councils have not requested training this year, we have delivered 16 remote training and coaching sessions in local authorities to 39 members this year, all with positive feedback. We were also able to deliver the final module of the Leadership Academy as virtual sessions for the first time to the 25 programme participants in partnership with the LGA and Academi Wales.
 - Despite the disruption to 'business as usual' and impact on councils' planned democratic schedule, the WLGA has sought to engage regularly and extensively with executive members to keep them informed of COVID-19 developments and the implications on local authorities. The WLGA convened weekly leaders' meetings throughout 2020-21 (which were initially daily at the outset of the pandemic) ensuring leaders were able to meet with Ministers on a regular basis. WLGA Cabinet Member networks also met regularly throughout the pandemic, often with Ministers to discuss concerns, pressures or to shape emerging policy. The WLGA has also reinitiated the implementation of organisational changes that were begun before the pandemic, which sought to reform and refresh the organisation in preparedness for the establishment of the new Association for the new municipal term from May 2022. The WLGA is in the process of relocating to a new, smaller office location in Cardiff which will provide opportunities for efficiencies, a reduced carbon footprint and a more agile and collaborative approach to work. As part of this process, the WLGA has started reviewing organisational and HR policies and commissioned new WLGA branding to be introduced in 2021-22 alongside a new website to support our communications and public affairs activities.

Supporting councils' response to COVID 19

What we sought to achieve for our membership	What we have done in 2020-21
<p>Ensure the political leadership of the WLGA and local government is engaged in and influences the Welsh Government's and collective public service COVID 19 response and any future recovery and reconstruction planning. Refocus and reprioritise organisational resources and priorities to support the aims of the political leadership and the collective needs of local government's COVID 19 response, including remote working and ongoing review of WLGA accommodation needs.</p> <p>Seek to ensure local government funding is prioritised by Welsh Government and UK Government, making the case for additional funding to cover additional pressures and responsibilities and any lost income.</p> <p>Working with professional groups, to engage and inform emerging Welsh Government policy announcements and the development of urgent guidance or regulations as they develop in response to the changing crisis.</p> <p>Seek to maintain responsive and urgent communications and engagement channels and sharing of information and intelligence within local government and between Welsh Government and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The WLGA, through the political leadership and all 22 leaders, has played a key role in Wales' collective COVID-19 response. Political engagement has been extensive and has been a unique feature of Wales' approach to the pandemic response:<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ The Leader and Spokespersons have engaged regularly with the Welsh Government Cabinet and Ministers.➤ Senior Spokespersons held weekly bilateral meetings with Welsh Government Ministers and stakeholders, including unions.➤ Leaders met weekly (initially daily) with Ministers throughout the pandemic. The Minister for Housing and Local Government and Minister for Health and Social Services regularly attended these weekly meetings.Despite the disruption to 'business as usual' and impact on councils' planned democratic schedule, the WLGA has sought to engage regularly and extensively with executive members to keep them informed of COVID-19 developments and the implications on local authorities. The WLGA convened leaders' meetings throughout 2020-21 initially daily at the outset of the pandemic, and then weekly - ensuring that leaders were able to meet with Ministers on a regular basis. WLGA Cabinet Member networks also met regularly throughout the pandemic, often with Ministers to discuss concerns, pressures or to shape emerging policy. The WLGA has introduced Zoom for meetings during the latter quarter of 2020-21 to ensure simultaneous interpretation is fully integrated.

<p>national partners and local authorities.</p> <p>Champion and promote councils' community leadership role and responsiveness and encourage and facilitate shared learning in 'real-time', working with partners such as Audit Wales as appropriate, to ensure innovative practice and lessons are shared to shape councils' response to the pandemic.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The WLGA has participated in 6 Senedd COVID 19 Inquiry sessions, evidencing the significant impact on council finances, service delivery, in particular housing and social services, and communities and demonstrating how councils have been relied upon and have led a flexible and innovative front-line response to the crisis. WLGA facilitated a collective and sustained effort in providing Personal Protective Equipment to front line services. A procurement action group comprising senior officers from Local Government, Welsh Government and NHS was convened to share information about PPE supply, identify actions needed and coordinate responses. A daily e-mail communicated this information to a much wider stakeholder network of around 120 lead individuals in Local Authorities. The effect was to minimise disruption and ensure quick, targeted responses to emerging issues. WLGA represented Local Government on DMET - the industry facing response group led by Deputy Minister Lee Waters and provided the means for on-shoring of manufacture for PPE to Wales. WLGA established the provision of PPE through NHS Shared Services, supported by a Service Level Agreement; the first of its kind. This arrangement resolved many of the earlier issues associated with supply management of PPE at scale and continues to provide pandemic supply to front line care providers. WLGA secured Welsh Government funding and made innovative procurement arrangements to supply common high quality and re-usable three layer face mask manufactured in Wales; to protect pupils in High Schools. The protection afforded by these re-usable masks exceeded the minimum requirements at the time; a decision since justified by our emerging knowledge of the pandemic and which was
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welcomed by Parents, Staff and Trade Unions.

- Over 2,000 'Taxi Packs' of PPE and Cleaning Materials were provided to support local transport infrastructure. The funding and logistics were supported by innovative procurement arrangements. This was organised through Welsh Government with Local Government by WLGA and used the resources of a Private Sector supplier to deliver the provision without further burden on public services.
The WLGA has collated and promoted '[good council practice](#)' during COVID-19 via the WLGA website, publishing over 60 case studies and sharing learning through cabinet member and officer networks.
- The WLGA worked closely with councils, the Welsh Government and the WCVA, to provide support for those required to self-isolate , initially for people on the shielded patients list and other vulnerable and at-risk groups and latterly for those who tested positive for COVID-19 as part of the Protect workstream. The WLGA has ensured that council views are represented in national evaluations and on-going improvements of the provision. The WLGA will continue to work with public and third sector partners to ensure positive new models of service delivery and relationships will be sustained in the future.
- We have continued to work successfully with senior civil servants and lawyers to shape and review Coronavirus restrictions regulations, ensuring Public Protection teams, Registration Services, Emergency Planning teams, and Cemetery and Cremations teams can work efficiently and effectively when applying new rules to protect public health.
- Wider references to WLGA's activity to support councils' COVID-19 response, notably around workforce, schools, social care and funding are referenced throughout the following sections.

Local Leadership, Freedom and Flexibility

Councils are respected, empowered and have the freedom and flexibility to respond to local needs

What we sought to achieve for our membership	What we have done in 2020-21
<p>Champion the role of councillors and council leaders, promote and defend the reputation of local government and drive positive opinion and recognition of councils and their contribution with national partners and with the public.</p> <p>Embed constructive engagement with the Welsh Government and the Senedd, seeking to influence policy and manifesto development ahead of the Senedd elections in 2021 and building relations, awareness and understanding of local government priorities with new Ministers and Members of the Senedd following the election.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The WLGA published a bold 'Manifesto for Localism' and a separate Rural Manifesto ahead of the Senedd Elections, which articulated the local government's core policy priorities:<ul style="list-style-type: none">➢ Promotion of well-being and encourage healthy, sustainable and vibrant communities➢ improving outcomes for children and young people and learners➢ delivering good quality and sustainable social care services for the future➢ creating good quality homes and safer communities for people to live and work, and➢ supporting sustainable, inclusive growth and a green post-COVID recover• The Manifesto also promoted our core principles calling for mutual respect and the concept of subsidiarity. Most of the main political parties manifestos recognised the contribution of local government during the pandemic and included several pledges which aligned with some of the WLGA's core aims;○ The WLGA, through weekly leaders' meetings and dialogue thorough officials, has contributed to and influenced emergency coronavirus regulations and guidance and fed into the 21 day Reviews of Restrictions.• We responded to the Welsh Government consultation on <i>A Framework for Regional Investment in Wales</i>, calling for funds to be devolved to local authorities working

	<p>together regionally (and appeared before the Welsh Affairs Committee on the Shared Prosperity Fund).</p>
<p>Continue to engage and lobby the Welsh Government and Senedd on the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill, and co-producing guidance and regulations to ensure maximum flexibilities and powers for councils.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WLGA successfully worked with Welsh Government and Lawyers in Local Government to shape the Welsh Government's emergency Coronavirus meeting regulations, which relaxed requirements on authorities, introduced flexibility in digital meetings and remote attendance and relaxed timings of AGMs and the '6-month rule' for members. The flexibility around remote meetings was also made permanent in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. • Through its engagement and lobbying around the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, the WLGA has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ resisted prescription and promoted flexibility and building on good practice; ○ promoted the track-record of council collaboration, supported voluntary CJC but has rejected the concept of mandation; ○ secured some concessions and amendments in the Bill, including 'job sharing' and extended family absence provisions for councillors and removal of contentious chief executive performance management arrangements.
<p>Promote collaborative local public service reform and ensure that the governance of regional services is democratically accountable and streamlined wherever possible.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting mutual aid and a collective local government and partnership response to the COVID-19 pandemic. • Through engagement between Welsh Government, leaders and professional groups, the WLGA has sought to ensure that CJC regulations and guidance are not prescriptive and allow maximum local/regional discretion and flexibility re functions, governance and democratic oversight.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The WLGA has established a sector-led improvement support programme, funded by Welsh Government grant, to embed peer support and challenge within and across the sector.
<p>Establish a new sector-led improvement and support programme and digital collaboration programme, focusing on digital transformation, innovation, supporting good governance, coordinating peer support and a programme of peer challenge and review.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of a new sector-led improvement programme funded by Welsh Government for 2021-22, to provide a universal offer available to all councils – focused on building strong corporate capacity and capability with councils under four interdependent priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> COVID-19 Pandemic Recovery; Local Democracy and Member Development; Corporate Governance and Performance; and Corporate Capability. and a targeted offer for those councils who need more intensive and dedicated support. Co-production of draft Welsh Government guidance around proposed new duties of self-assessment and panel assessment and development of draft frameworks for local authorities. Provision of advice and improvement support to several authorities facing corporate or service challenges. Working with LGA in developing and promoting peer challenge offer. Facilitated good practice exchange through the transformation network, including commissioning of research on the role of volunteering during the pandemic (with WCVA) and support for the community empowerment research led by New Local. Chief Digital Officer for Local Government appointed Nov 2020, and commenced building a small, specialist team. Extensive digital training programme launched across local authorities has been attended by approximately 100 local government officers since February 2021. Four trailblazer digital projects have been taken forward with groups of local authorities from across Wales covering

	Education, Libraries, Democracy and Training.
<p>Encourage a vibrant local democracy, promoting greater diversity and enhanced democratic engagement and supporting councillors' development and training through an expanded sector-led improvement programme.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production of COVID 19 guide for councillors and circulation of a weekly COVID-19 e—bulletin to all councillors (daily during the early period of the pandemic). Support and guidance to councils and councillors around remote attendance and digital meetings. WLGA Council endorsed the work of the cross party member 'diversity in democracy' working group to address barriers and promote action and improvement in diversity, making bold commitments around increasing diversity ahead of the next local elections. The WLGA has updated the https://www.beacouncillor.wales/ with councillor case studies. Ongoing contribution to the UK Civility in Public Life campaign, with LGA, COSLA and NILGA, including production of the joint WLGA/LGA Councillors' Guide on Handling Intimidation and 'Digital Citizenship' resources for members. Extensive engagement and involvement in Welsh Government convened COVID BAME work, including participation in the BAME Advisory Group and Socio-Economic Sub Group and the audit of statues and monuments. The WLGA has also participated in the Race Equality Action Plan steering group and has signed (and coordinated all 22 local authorities signing) the #ZeroRacismWales pledge Supported the development of Welsh Government guidance and resources around the Socio-Economic Public Sector Equality Duty. supported local authorities through the Member Development networks and continued to promote and provide member development and support to councils: offered coaching and wellbeing support to leaders and support and advice to new leaders elected during the past year;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provided 16 remote training and coaching sessions in local authorities to 39 members this year, all with positive feedback; • We were also able to deliver the final module of the Leadership Academy as virtual sessions for the first time to the 25 programme participants in partnership with the LGA and Academi Wales.
<p>Support authorities to effectively manage their workforce through our role as the Employers' Organisation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The context of Covid 19 has brought into sharper focus the role of the workforce in delivering essential public services. The activity required at all levels has intensified and the WLGA has sought to ensure local authorities are properly supported. • The WLGA has represented local authorities at strategic meetings of the Workforce Partnership Council and Shadow Social Partnership Council, ensuring effective communications with Welsh Government Ministers and officials. • Meetings of the Joint Council for Wales and in particular its Executive Committee have been facilitated to support effective social partnership working between local authorities and trade unions, to develop solutions to the numerous issues emerging as a result of the pandemic. • Provided support for the HR Directors Network. • Workforce advice, guidance and information has been provided regularly to all local authorities, including acting as a link to the LGA's Employment Team. • The Schools Social Partnership Forum has been established to enable schools and local authority employer representatives to discuss schools' workforce matters directly with trade unions and Welsh Government officials. • Many of the foregoing mechanisms have been supported by WLGA Spokespersons. • Worked with Academi Wales and SOLACE to offer a programme of coaching and mentoring support to chief executives.

<p>Deliver an EU Transition Support Programme to local authorities and continue to engage with the other local government associations and Welsh and UK Governments to ensure local government interests are heard and met. Produce materials and information to assist local authorities in preparing for change at the end of the transition period</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further round of funding secured to enable network of EU Transition officers in local authorities to continue for another year (c£45K per local authority) • Funding also secured for further round of support for food poverty grants. • Ongoing liaison with Home Office, Welsh Government, local authorities and support groups over take-up of EUSS • Various materials published on WLGA website to assist local authorities with transition, including a report on trade implications, updated 'exposure' dashboards for each local authority, a Transition readiness toolkit, and a report on the new relationship with the EU and what it means for Welsh local government • Regular meetings of Local Government (EU) Preparedness Panel (joint Welsh Government and local authority senior level officer group). • Spokesperson attendance at Welsh Government's EU Advisory Group meetings and LGAs' combined meetings with MHCLG.
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Finance

Financial reform and fair funding for local services

What we sought to achieve for our membership	What we have done in 2020-21
<p>Lobby for fair and sustainable funding for local public services including evidenced pressures and new responsibilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Built on last year's excellent settlement outcomes with an uplift of £172m (3.8%) in core grant and specific grants protected.• Established one of the most generous COVID funds in the UK, working with Treasurers and the Welsh Government to establish £660m Hardship Fund up to April 2021.• Secured an additional £206m worth of funding for covid-related pressures and associated income loss that will run until September 2021.• Obtained an extra £22.5m to assist with the shortfall in Council tax collection plus an additional £11.5m in support for extra claims to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.• Worked with Business Wales, Welsh Government, SWT and several officer groups to deliver various packages of financial support as a result of the pandemic. This included an initial round of emergency grants to businesses on the rating list, a specific scheme for Child Care Providers, Start Up Grants, Freelancer Fund and cultural sector support.• Further enhancements for rated properties due to the firebreak and December restrictions resulted in Local Authorities administering over £1.35 billion pounds of support in 2020/21.• Secured around £5m for additional enforcement capacity for Covid compliance work.
Promote greater financial freedoms and flexibilities for councils within a longer-term financial framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continued pressure on Welsh Government to address multiyear settlements.

<p>including a move towards multiyear settlements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indication from new Finance Minister is that this may be addressed in the next Spending Review. Joint approach with LGA, COSLA and NILGA on medium-term financial planning. Potential Joint Finance Event planned for Autumn 2021.
<p>Continue to work towards the incorporation of all specific grants into the core grant and timely financial announcements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over £5m in specific grant funding was transferred into the settlement relating to in relation to teachers pay and the coastal risk management programme.
<p>Seek greater powers for councils to explore other sources of income, including new sources of taxation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensured local government input into work on reviewing local taxation. Working with Wales Fiscal Analysis (WFA) on wider issues of fiscal devolution. WFA now make regular contributions to the Finance Cabinet Members' Network and Treasurers meetings.
<p>Lobby the UK Government and support authorities to ensure that welfare reforms are fair on our communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing work with DWP and Welsh Government on Universal Credit. Worked with Welsh Government on the Oversight Group to produce 'Impact of Universal Credit on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and rent arrears in Wales'.

Schools, Skills and Lifelong Learning

National education standards delivered at a local level

What we sought to achieve for our membership	What we have done in 2020-21
Supporting councils' response to COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to support local authorities with the provision of free school meals provision during the school holidays.• Continued with the bilateral and cabinet member meetings with the Education Minister to discuss COVID-19 related issues including qualifications and exams for 2020 and 2021.• In July 2020, the WLGA set up the Schools Social Partnership Forum (SSPF) which includes representation from Welsh Government, ADEW, Elected Members and schools' trade unions to discuss COVID-19 related issues including qualifications and exams for 2020 and 2021.
Ensure that local government plays a full role working with partners on the national mission to raise standards in schools and improve outcomes for learners, including the new national curriculum for Wales.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue with the engagement through a number of strategic groups set up with the Welsh Government, primarily the Change Board and Strategic Education Delivery Group: These have involved a number of partners from schools, colleges and higher education, local authorities (through ADEW), Estyn, the Education Workforce Council, bodies managing examinations and others.• Continued discussions with Welsh Government has secured £1.5 million for the continuation of Music Education in Wales to support local authorities' music services and includes £100,000 to support the National Youth Arts Wales.
Working with the WJEC, Qualifications Wales and the Welsh Government to make sure the qualifications framework during	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continuous discussion through bilateral and cabinet meetings with the Minister, WJEC and Qualifications Wales has assisted qualifications being awarded on Centre

<p>COVID 19 is fit for purpose and places learners at the heart of the system.</p>	<p>Determined Grades based on content that has already been taught.</p>
<p>Continue to support investment in the 21st Century Schools programme, and contribute towards refining the model.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 21st Century Schools Programme is a major partnership between the WLGA, local authorities and the Welsh Government. • Band A of the 21st Century Schools and Education Programme represents a £1.4 billion investment over the five year period ended 2018/19. • All 22 local authorities have benefitted from this major schools improvement programme, which has supported the building and refurbishment of over 150 schools and colleges. • The programme is jointly funded by Welsh Government using a combination of capital and revenue funding. At the outset of the, programme authorities were required to provide 50% of the funding but the WLGA has lobbied successfully to reduce the local authority contribution for Band B to 35% and to increase the Welsh Government contribution to 65%. • The WLGA has also represented local authority interests in the development of the revenue funded Mutual Investment Model (MIM) with an 81% - 19% funding split. • Strategic Partnering Agreement signed on 30th September 2020. Pathfinder MIM projects in Flintshire and RCT are being progressed as Net Zero Carbon in operations.
<p>Continue to make the case for education to be funded through local authorities through the RSG ensuring full flexibility and local determination for their own and schools' budgets.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The WLGA has always argued for schools to be funded through the RSG and for a reduction in specific grants so as to provide as much flexibility as possible in school funding. • During this period the WLGA has continued to lobby the Welsh Government and Senedd on these issues and focused on the work of the <i>Children, Young People and Education Committee</i>'s inquiry into the sufficiency of school funding in Wales.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WLGA provided evidence to the Committee in partnership with ADEW, and following the publication of its report in July 2019 has worked closely with the Committee and the Welsh Government in taking the recommendations forward. • WLGA contributed to the Welsh Government review of school spending across Wales.
<p>Prioritise social partnership in working with the Welsh Government, trade unions and other bodies to influence the determination of teachers' pay and conditions in Wales.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Input of regular educational and HR expertise into the devolved processes for determining teachers' pay in Wales. • Provided written and oral evidence to the Independent Welsh Pay Review Body on Teachers Pay Report 2020
<p>Seek to work with and guide Welsh Government in its desire to support schools causing concern, by encouraging each part of the system - schools, local authorities and consortia – to play an appropriate role in schools making and sustaining progress.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively working with partners to expand this discussion and debate how best to identify the roles played by all involved – schools, local authorities and their regional services, and Estyn – and ensure that each partner understands the roles they play, and work together to avoid duplication of effort and wasting resources. • In the case of schools causing concern, that partnership has begun to shift so that the school itself is involved in plans and actions to move it forward, and • The involvement of elected members is acknowledged as a key one. <p>In the case of schools causing concern, that partnership has begun to shift so that the school itself is involved in plans and actions to move it forward, and the involvement of elected members is acknowledged as a key one.</p>
<p>Promote and support equalities and diversity and pupil wellbeing as a priority for schools and local authorities through initiatives such as hate crimes in schools programme, period poverty work, healthy eating and school holiday enrichment programmes, as well as</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the School Holiday Enrichment Programme (SHEP) 2020 being suspended on a temporary basis and funding was repurposed to allow free school meal provision over the summer holiday. Funding also supported local authorities to provide engaging and enriching activities to help participating children and young people from economically deprived areas re-

<p>aspects of youth support service work.</p>	<p>engage with education over the summer holidays, for which the WLGA provided administration support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following the submission of a WLGA business case in November 2020, Welsh Government approved a proposed budget for SHEP 2021 totaling £4.85M, with the aim of providing 14,000 places on the programme. WLGA will resume its responsibility to co-ordinate the planning, delivery and evaluation of the programme. Produced report <i>Healthy eating implications of school break times for 11 to 19-year-olds in Wales</i>. Maintained termly Regional Special Diets in Schools Working Group meetings. Recruited National Dietitian for Special Diets in Schools. Established and maintained termly Regional Food in Schools Meetings to discuss food in schools issues and share information. Continued to support and advise local authorities and schools regarding healthy eating in schools and provided certificates for compliance with the regulations. Supported and promoted various healthy eating initiatives and campaigns. Established regular online Food in Schools meetings to discuss COVID-19 free school meals responses and recovery of the school catering service in Wales. Supported local authority catering services with COVID-19 related issues. Worked with Welsh Government officials on introducing increased flexibilities (as a result of Covid) to the Youth Support Grant. Participated on the Whole School Approach Stakeholder Group. Contributed to discussions regarding themes and content for the Welsh Government's Youth Work Newsletter and worked with local authorities to submit case studies for the WLGA Covid-19 Good Practice section of the website.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Represented the Youth Service on the T4CYP Early Help & Enhanced Support work-stream. Commissioned 3 Trauma Recovery Model courses from the Trauma Recovery Academy, contributing to a trauma informed Youth Workforce. Worked with the ACE Hub on delivering ACE's training (and developing accredited modules) to the youth workforce. Worked with Wales Youth Service in regard to the well-being standard in the revised Youth Work National Occupational Standards (NOS). Drafted and submitted PYOG responses to Mind Over Matter and the Whole School Approach Consultations. The Hate in Crime in Schools programme restarted in September 2020 with an additional £180,000 to allow for a further 50 schools to participate with the programme. Online and digital delivery materials were developed for schools to use remotely.
<p>Continue to monitor and scrutinise legislation and funding in relation to children with additional learning needs (ALN).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly raised ALN funding at meetings with Welsh Government, at political and official level; engaged through the Distribution Sub Group on the transfer of post-16 specialist funding to local authorities under the ALN Act; maintained regular dialogue with partners on the detail of implementation of the Act.
<p>Promote the Welsh Language, culture and the arts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produced and endorsed the Welsh Language Standards Annual Reports 2018-2019 and 2019-2020. Positive engagement with the Welsh Language Commissioners office. Recruited a policy officer that has oversight of the Welsh Language Standards and promotion of the Welsh Language within WLGA. Submitted a response to the consultation, 'Draft Code of Practice for the Welsh Language Standards Regulations (no.2) Local authorities continued to fund, through top-slice funding through the WLGA, the

	National Eisteddfod, Urdd Eisteddfod and Royal Welsh Show, ensuring these critical events are sustained and supported throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.
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Health and Social Care

Ensuring good quality and sustainable social care services for the future

What we sought to achieve for our membership	What we have done in 2020-21
<p>Support local authorities in responding to the stabilisation and reconstruction of social care in light of COVID-19, as well as implementing Ministerial priorities for social services, including rebalancing the care market to improve its resilience and sustainability and safely reducing the number of Looked After Children in the care of local authorities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Produced briefings on COVID-19 and social care related issues for Elected Members.Provided written and oral evidence on the impact of COVID-19 on social care to the Senedd Health, Social Care and Sport Committee.Provided written evidence on the impact of COVID-19 on children and young people to the Senedd Children, Young People and Education Committee.Responded to a rapid consultation on amendments made to the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act by the Coronavirus Act.Contributed to the Rapid Review of Care Homes undertaken by Welsh Government.Contributed to the rapid development of COVID-19 guidance and processes, e.g. on funding, testing, PPE and care home visits.Represented the views and shared the experiences of local authorities on how the pandemic is impacting on social care related issues with Welsh Government and partners.Held regular bilaterals and cabinet member meetings with the Minister for Health and Social Services and Deputy Minister for Social Services to discuss both COVID-19 related issues as well as wider Ministerial priorities such as reducing the number of children in care and Welsh Government's White Paper on Rebalancing Care and Support.Secured funding for additional expenditure through the Hardship Fund for Social Care.Cabinet Members workshop arranged and supported to enable the sharing of good practice across authorities in relation to

	<p>approaches focussed on improving outcomes for children and young people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responded to the Welsh Government White Paper on Rebalancing Care and Support • Membership of a number of key Welsh Government groups, including their Social Care Planning & Response Group, Reconstruction and Stabilisation Group, the Vulnerable Children and Young People External Advisory Group, and the Social Care Recovery Group.
<p>Enable local government's input and contribution to Welsh Government's research and policy development on how best to secure long-term sustainable funding for social care services in Wales.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The WLGA Spokesperson and officers key members in the Welsh Government Paying for Care group, established to look at the long-term and sustainable funding of social care in Wales. • Provided regular updates and briefings from officers to cabinet members and spokespeople, with 'paying for care' a frequent agenda item for discussion with Ministers both in bilaterals and through the WLGA's Social Care & Wellbeing Cabinet Members Network. A focused session was held with Welsh Government Officials to facilitate a technical briefing from Welsh Government and an update on progress of the Inter-Ministerial Group on Paying for Social Care, enabling members to help influence and shape the agenda and priorities.
<p>Continue to support implementation of <i>A Healthier Wales</i> as part of the approach to reconstruction and stabilisation of social care, aimed at transforming and increasing the pace and scale of integration across social care and health, and including other relevant local government services such as housing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued our membership of and contribution to the Transformation Board overseeing the implementation of <i>A Healthier Wales</i>, although the Group's activities have been affected by the Pandemic. • WLGA Spokespeople and Cabinet Members for Social Services are in regular, on-going dialogue with Welsh Government Ministers through the WLGA Social Care & Wellbeing Cabinet Members Network, aimed at supporting local political leadership in taking forward the plan and transforming services. They are supported by regular updates and briefings produced by officers.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WLGA Spokesperson for Health and Social Care chairs the <i>Building a Healthier Wales</i> Programme Board, aiming to focus on preventative measures and addressing the wider determinants of health.
<p>Work with Public Health Wales in highlighting local government's contribution to addressing the wider determinants of health through <i>Building a Healthier Wales</i> and the provision of preventative services provided by local authorities, and continue to convene Cymru Well Wales which aims to tackle the issues that contribute most towards poor health.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued to work with Public Health Wales to address the wider determinants of health, with key links made and regular meetings between WLGA and PHW officers. Joint leadership is demonstrated with <i>Building a Healthier Wales</i>
<p>Work closely with our social care partners and professional groups (Solace Cymru, Association of Directors of Social Services in Wales (ADSS Cymru) and Social Care Wales to strengthen the voice of local government and to identify and highlight common issues of concern and/or improved ways of working.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ADSS Cymru represented at WLGA Social Care & Wellbeing Cabinet Members Network. Social Care Wales a key partner that is invited to provide regular updates through the Cabinet Members Network. Joint submissions to consultations and inquiries as necessary to help identify and highlight common issues of concern and/or improved ways of working.

Housing and Community Safety

Creating good quality homes and safer communities for people to live and work

What we sought to achieve for our membership	What we have done in 2020-21
<p>Support the work of local authorities in tackling and preventing homelessness and rough sleeping and ensuring that those brought into temporary accommodation during the pandemic are supported into permanent housing while transforming current and future temporary accommodation provision and homelessness services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Contributed to the rapid development and ongoing amendment of guidance covering a wide range of emerging housing and homelessness issues reflecting the changes to Covid-related regulations e.g. Managing Challenging Behaviour in Temporary Accommodation.Provided briefings on housing and homelessness issues for elected members and officers and facilitated meetings of the WLGA's Housing Cabinet Members Network.Presented evidence to the Senedd Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee on the impacts of the pandemic on housing and homelessness.Regular dialogue with Minister and Cabinet Members through bilaterals and the Housing Cabinet Members Network on a range of homelessness and other housing issues.Contributed as a member of the Homeless Action Group, which produced reports and recommendations which focussed on short and longer-term actions to tackle and prevent rough sleeping, and the framework of policies and approaches needed to end homelessness in Wales. Following acceptance of the HAG recommendations, working to prioritise actions and develop implementation plans for the transformation of homelessness services.Represented the views and shared the experiences of authorities on how the pandemic is impacting on community safety related issues to Welsh Government and partners.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worked with local authorities, National Trading Standards and partners in highlighting the threat from scams during the pandemic. Contributed to the development and dissemination of a guide published by the Older People's Commissioner's Office providing guidance to local authorities and partner agencies on how to protect older people from abuse during the pandemic.
<p>Continue to work with local authorities and Welsh Government in implementing relevant recommendations from the <i>Independent Review of Affordable Housing Supply</i> in Wales, including supporting and enabling increased plans for building council houses across Wales to meet housing need, and as part of the pandemic recovery activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participated in workstreams established to develop detailed implementation arrangements for Affordable Housing Supply Review recommendations, including revised Social Housing Grant arrangements which have made grants available directly to local authorities to support the delivery of new homes. Supported the establishment and operation of Council Housing Development Forum, which supports Welsh councils to build new council homes at pace and scale, which contributed towards the overall achievement of the target of 20,000 additional affordable homes during the previous Senedd term as set out in the <i>Housing Pact</i> agreed between WLGA, Welsh Government and Community Housing Cymru. Negotiated and agreed additional conditions for social landlords, which supported the announcement by Welsh Government of a 5 year rent policy for social housing from 2020/21 onwards.
<p>Contribute to the development and implementation of plans for the decarbonisation of existing homes in Wales, focusing initially on the social housing stock and identifying likely overall resource implications.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participated as a member of the Decarbonisation of Homes Implementation Group, established by Welsh Government to take forward the recommendations of the independent review on decarbonising Welsh homes focussing, initially on the retro-fitting of the social housing stock in Wales by a target date of 2030.

<p>Continue to contribute to on-going work to improve building safety following the findings of the Hackitt Review and work with local authorities and other partners in implementing the findings and recommendations of the Building Safety Expert Group following Welsh Government's anticipated White Paper which will set out changes to the law in relation to Housing, Building Regulation and Fire Safety.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributing to Welsh Government led review examining and developing options around how a Joint Building Safety Inspection team with multiple disciplines (Building Control, Environmental Health and FRS) could work in Wales, with associated benefits and risks.
<p>Support the development of a Safer Communities Network for Wales through the WLGA hosting the team and developing its workplan. The WLGA will also continue to play an active enabling role in the Safer Communities Board that has been established in partnership with Policing in Wales to ensure there is effective strategic leadership of community safety and that there is collective discussion and collaborative actions to address shared national priorities, as well as support the work of CSPs and partners at local and regional levels as appropriate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Wales Safer Communities Network has been established and is hosted by the WLGA. Officers are now in post and work has commenced at pace to develop and commence the Network's work plan. The Network also provides support to the Safer Communities Board (SCB) where a revised work programme has been agreed. The WLGA continues to co-Chair the SCB alongside the police in Wales. A new Network for cabinet members with a community safety lead has been established by the WLGA, with the aim of sharing best practice and a forum to discuss local government views on policy Continued to support Community Safety Officers through regular updates on community safety related issues. Provided additional support to the Wales Association of Community Safety Officers through its newly established Executive Group. WLGA participates and contributes to the Policing Partnership Board for Wales
<p>Work with the Fire and Rescue Authorities and Welsh Government to consider any further proposals aimed at improving their current governance, financial and performance management arrangements of FRAs and to participate in discussions on any</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued to facilitate the WLGA Fire and Rescue Forum as an opportunity to discuss a range of shared priorities, fire and building safety, and finance pressures. Represented local government at Ministerial Fire and Rescue Meetings.

<p>potential to widen the role of firefighter's roles, including identified implications.</p> <p>Continue to support Police and Crime Panels through regular engagement with Chairs, Vice Chairs and Lead Officers and to engage with Welsh Government to raise awareness of the role they play in holding Police and Crime Commissioners to account.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participated in Welsh Government's Working Group exploring the potential for broadening the role of firefighters. Continued to support the WLGA Police and Crime Panel Group enabling discussion between Panels; the sharing of information and good practice and providing a forum to raise and resolve issues of concern. Worked with PCPs to foster closer working between the WLGA PCP Group and Welsh Government.
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Regeneration and a Resilient Environment

Local councils supporting inclusive growth locally, regionally and nationally and promoting a resilient environment for future generations

What we sought to achieve for our membership	What we have done in 2020-21
Supporting councils' response to COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Worked with Welsh Government and Economic Development Officers in local authorities to co-ordinate various phases of support, allocating discretionary grants to local businesses throughout the pandemicWorking with officers in all four regions as Regional Recovery Plans are developed in response to Covid-19Worked with Welsh Government and local authorities on a Covid-19 waste stakeholders' group to ensure service continuity. Led on several task and finish groups looking at working practices considering emerging guidanceRaised practical issues with the roll out of Covid-19 infrastructure and ensured all relevant legislative planning issues were addressed to allow LPAs to take a pragmatic and proportionate position when introducing much needed facilitiesInput to various working groups on supporting public transport, including establishment of a Bus Member Group to provide political oversight and liaison with all local authorities over the introduction of the Bus Emergency Support (BES) 2 scheme.Engaged with Ministers and businesses around support for tourism businesses and the re-introduction of cultural activities and sporting events.
Continue to lobby for local government's role in regional development to be fully respected in	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Joint work with the Programme Offices for the four City Deal/Growth Deal regions to facilitate sharing of positions on national issues.

<p>any new funding and delivery arrangements introduced by the UK and/or Welsh Governments (including the Shared Prosperity Fund). This will require the bringing together of local and regional proposals with national objectives, building on the work of the City Deal and Growth Deal partnerships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing to lobby for one set of regional plans in each region, so Welsh Government's Regional Economic Frameworks are brought together with the plans of local authorities in each region. Secured WLGA agreement to Welsh Government's proposed Regional Investment Framework for Wales Developing links with the UKG departments leading on replacement funds – Community Renewal Fund and Levelling up Fund - and lobbying for input to the proposed Shared Prosperity Fund Evidence provided by Leaders to the Welsh Affairs Committee on the new funding arrangements The WLGA's continued involvement in the Skills Partnerships and management of the funding relationship between the Welsh Government and the Regional Skills Partnerships.
<p>Continue to work through the Rural Forum in championing the needs and priorities of Wales' rural communities, including the production of a rural vision and an associated rural recovery plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly meetings of the Rural Forum and meetings with rural stakeholders, including briefings on the impact of Covid on rural economy, and development of an agreed Manifesto for Rural Wales. Manifesto launch was in January 2021, with over 60 attendees online. It was supported by an extensive evidence base produced in association with Aberystwyth University Rural Task and Finish group submitted recommendations to the Minister for Housing and Local Government in March 2021 Ongoing engagement with Welsh Government officials in relation to economic policy, Welsh language and rural development to embed the key asks of the Rural Vision
<p>Supporting Procurement Reform</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-formed the officer practitioner group, the National Procurement Network to support social value and post-Covid economic recovery. Created a National Collaborative Contract Pipeline; the first of its kind in

	<p>Wales which identifies 149 collaborative contracts with a combined value of £2.2 Billion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified the means to deliver new and ambitious policies for economic and social value through the medium of procurement. Mapped the National Themes Outcomes and Measures to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act Goals, the first time that social value has been mapped to Government policy in this way, creating the 'Welsh TOMs' Hosted a two day online National Social Value conference to launch the Welsh TOMs with 650 virtual attendees, 1500 unique hub visitors, 1200 content views. Hosting a cross-sector National Social Value Task Force with multiple pilots active in six Welsh Local Authorities, also in Health Boards, the National Procurement Service and Voluntary &Community Service Organisations. Supported the Wellbeing of Future Generations Commissioner in her Section 20 review of procurement in Wales. The Commissioner has provided a case study "Procuring Wellbeing" which outlines how WLGA is helping Local Authorities to implement the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act through procurement. Through the Local Government Association's National Advisory Group advised UK Government on the proposed post-Brexit reforms to procurement rules and advised same to Welsh Government.
<p>Influence the development of Welsh Government's Circular Economy Strategy including the next iteration of statutory recycling targets and plans for new facilities to deal with waste/resources within Wales.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Represented local authorities' views to inform thinking in 'Beyond Recycling' strategy launched in March 2021 Led on discussions on future regional infrastructure beginning in North Wales to ensure that any future investment in the circular economy meets the specific needs

<p>Support the regional political structures linked to the Ministerial Waste Programme Board in feeding into these matters.</p>	<p>of the region, including resources from Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Created a working group to look at future recycling/Circular Economy targets in light of likely significant changes in what households put out for collection after EPR/Deposit Return Schemes (DRS) and will continue to work with Welsh Government on how decarbonisation is prioritised in waste services Continued to support regional political meetings feeding into the above Worked with WRAP on '<i>Be Mighty</i>' - a major behaviour change campaign
<p>Work with local authorities to collate and model costs of handling packaging waste and managing litter, so they are well-placed to push for full cost recovery under Extended Producer Responsibility proposals expected by 2023. Also, participate in the Defra working group reviewing Deposit Return Schemes (DRS) and facilitate pilot work on DRS at home to promote the use of kerbside services within DRS.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participated in Welsh Government working group looking at potential impact on local authorities and data requirements to allow an informed discussion at regional MPBs so Members are fully aware of the scale of the changes likely Participated in Defra groups and webinars on EPR and DRS Working with Conwy to explore potential to reward kerbside collections within DRS
<p>Continue to lobby for new ways of maintaining the highway network (including county, unadopted roads and active travel routes) through a long-term investment programme.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worked with County Surveyors Society to evidence the ongoing importance of long-term investment in the highway network, in response to consultation on Welsh Government's new Welsh Transport Strategy (WTS) Worked with Welsh Government and local authorities to secure £10.3m from end-of-year underspend, reallocated to local authority highway schemes Successful follow-up work to pilot work on tackling unadopted roads with a number of local authorities, following report production and submission to Welsh Government. £1.5m secured to progress these pilots Contributed to two task and finish group reports, on 20mph default speed limits and

	<p>on civil enforcement against pavement parking causing obstruction. Both reports approved by Welsh Government and in the Senedd</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued input to Welsh Government's Active Travel Group (including repurposing of highways during covid to encourage AT)
<p>Ensure local government input to the new Transport Strategy for Wales, bringing together regional proposals with national objectives and pressing the case for existing regional transport arrangements to form the basis for any move towards Corporate Joint Committees for transport. Ensure Members' views feed into proposals for reform of bus services in Wales.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint response prepared with CSS on the new WTS Arranged for Welsh Government to attend the four regions' transport meetings to discuss Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) proposals Agreement that CJs will be based on the current four geographic regions and build on existing partnership arrangements in each region
<p>Work with Welsh Government and other partners to assist employees to have more opportunities to work from home, or in a local office, more of the time, where it works for them and for their employer; this will complement the "Transforming Towns" vision and help to create new opportunities for regeneration and economic activity in our towns and communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued input via Spokesperson to the Ministerial Action Group looking at repurposing of town centres Promoted use of 'hubs' as part of the rural manifesto, to enable remote work and help increase footfall in rural town and village centres
<p>Engage with Welsh Government in understanding the changing impacts on town centres in light of the COVID crisis and ensure they remain relevant and sustainable environments, including support for reuse and repair services on high streets.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As above, input to Ministerial group Worked with Welsh Government on its Green Recovery Circular Economy Fund which included funding for high street facilities combining repair and reuse, reuse hubs and shops, volunteering in repair/reuse as well as high street recycling hubs for small items
<p>Develop a decarbonisation support programme to support authorities with their plans to reduce their own carbon emissions, in pursuit of the target of a carbon neutral public</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decarbonisation Strategy Panel established and meeting monthly, involving senior local authority representation, endorsed by Partnership Council. £200K secured from Welsh Government for first phase of support programme for local authorities

<p>sector by 2030. Continue to support local authorities in addressing biodiversity loss and work to ensure nature-based approaches and upholding of environmental standards are central to 'green recovery' efforts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tender issued and framework contract successfully established to provide expert support to the programme • £4.3m secured via Welsh Government and NRW for local authorities to undertake a range of Green Recovery projects aimed at tackling nature loss and improving biodiversity
<p>Continue to support local authorities in their work to respond and adapt to flood and coastal erosion risks and events, including efforts to ensure effective Sustainable Urban Drainage Schemes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worked with Welsh Government on offer of up to £95K per local authority for preparedness for winter flood risks • Work initiated to review the 3 Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management groups to improve their profile and effectiveness • Commissioned ARUP to undertake an evaluation of the SUDs legislation and impacts on councils and identify options for improvement • Secured ongoing Welsh Government funding for the Wales Coastal Monitoring Centre and signed an inter-authority agreement for managing the WCMC with Conwy, Gwynedd and the Vale of Glamorgan • Contributed to Welsh Government coal tip safety group, reviewing status and allocating funding to support remedial works
<p>Ensure the Senedd consultation on the National Development Framework reflects local planning authority concerns. Influence discussions on the Local Government Bill to ensure Corporate Joint Committee proposals in relation to strategic planning respond to local government concerns, especially around engagement and accountability. Continue to lobby for income from planning applications to meet appropriate costs of delivering the service.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worked with POSW to input to the Welsh Government consultation on the NDF • Worked closely with Welsh Government to ensure that the regulations brought forward for Strategic Development Plans meet LPAs' needs and that regional CJs will work for local people • WLGA adopted the placemaking charter and have encouraged local authorities to do likewise on a corporate level reflecting the multi- output aims of the charter • A 20% increase in fees for planning and related applications was approved by Welsh Government just before the start of this reporting period (in August 2020)

Public Protection, Emergency Planning, Registration Services, Cemetery and Cremation Services

Local councils preventing ill health, suppressing disease, planning for and responding to emergencies, and allowing legal celebration of life and death

What we sought to achieve for our membership	What we have done in 2020-21
Supporting councils' response to COVID-19	<p>Represented Councils on a number of Covid response meetings including: Test Trace and Protect oversight group; Vaccine delivery oversight group; RCG/SCG meetings; Public Health Wales Strategic Coordinating Support Group; Hospitality sector group; Events sector group; Health Protection Advisory Group; Morals and Ethics Advisory Group; Health and Safety Forum; Outbreak and incident policy development groups; Managing Covid in Care Homes; Mass Fatalities; Funerals, Burials and Cremations Group; Registration (Births and Deaths management); technical briefings; etc</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Worked with the Directors of Public Protection Wales (DPPW) in their critical role of protecting public health and wellbeing and advising and regulating businesses• Ensured the skill and knowledge of DPPW was brought to the fore, ensuring Welsh Government had access to specialists in regulatory public health matters whenever required• Established an online Officer forum for Covid collaboration and decision making to ensure consistency across Wales• Organised, provided the secretariat facilities and contributed to weekly Directors of Public Protection Wales Board Covid meetings• Organised, provided secretariat facilities and contributed to fortnightly/monthly all Wales Directors Covid meetings

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created a set of key enforcement data used by Welsh Government every three week Covid review cycle – includes data on advice to businesses, enforcement against businesses etc • Liaison and briefings with Emergency Planning Officers group • Support and advice to Registration Services during frequently changing regulatory environments • Support and advice to Cemetery and Cremation Services during frequently changing regulatory environments
<p>Assist Directors of Public Protection Wales to produce a workforce planning business case for reinvestment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide recognition that 10 years of austerity has left trading standards, licensing and environmental health services critically weak. Their admirable covid response has highlighted the central role they play within local government, but currently the services are under resourced.
<p>Worked in conjunction with Emergency Planning managers on Covid response</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The civil contingency function was fundamental in establishing and supporting the response structures at the local level together with enabling advisory capacity, support and coordination of internal local government response structures. • EP managers activity is fundamental to the local authority statutory contingency planning activity. • Work is ongoing to prepare the case for reinvestment in this particular workforce.
<p>Work with Welsh Government and local authorities to review success of and continue and expand the policy not to charge fees for burial or cremation of children in Wales</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three-year review of the initial MoU agreed between Welsh Government and WLGA was conducted, and found to be a compassionate, effective and efficient policy. Worked with partners to agree an extended policy including providing a financial grant to cover other funeral related costs for bereaved parents.

<p>Worked with Directors of Public Protection Wales and Food Standards Agency in terms of recovery of food law enforcement activity in Wales</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a result of significant resources being redeployed to the covid response, many other business as usual activities have all but stopped. This includes another vital public protection of regulating food businesses to ensure consumer safety. A (draft) recovery plan in place which provides a flexible framework for restarting risk based, covid safe interventions to fulfil statutory responsibilities.
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