

Agenda item 5.a. To consider staff membership of Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC)

SLCC offers training to local council clerks and other staff. Annual membership of SLCC is £250 - £400 dependent on salary level. The main qualification offered is CiLCA (see below) but they also offer a number of introductory qualifications are available.

Local councils need to have a qualified clerk in order to gain the General Power of Competence (see below). Qualified means either a CiLCA qualification or a relevant degree.

Overview

CiLCA Portfolio Course

This is a CiLCA training course for clerks, deputy clerks and other council staff who wish to obtain their Level 3 qualification.

CiLCA training is now mandatory when undertaking your CiLCA qualification. This must be booked prior to registering for your CiLCA as you will be asked for details of your trainer when registering.

Candidates must register separately for the qualification, for which the fee is £495

Cost of training: Members – £350 + VAT, Non-members – £450 + VAT

Duration: 2 hours per session

100% Virtual: Sessions lead by a CiLCA trainer

General Power of Competence

The General Power of Competence (GPC) is a UK legal power (Localism Act 2011) allowing eligible local authorities in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland to do anything an individual generally can do, as long as it's not prohibited by law, replacing older, restrictive powers to give councils greater freedom to act for community benefit, like starting businesses or investing, provided they meet specific eligibility criteria, such as having a qualified clerk and a majority of elected members.

Key Aspects of the GPC

- **What it allows:** Councils can engage in activities individuals can (e.g., running a shop, forming a company, lending money).
- **Limitations:** It doesn't permit actions individuals can't (e.g., imprisoning people, raising taxes).
- **Purpose:** To remove the need for specific statutory powers, encouraging innovation and greater local action.
- **Eligibility:** For parish/town councils, it requires a qualified clerk and at least two-thirds of members elected (not co-opted).

- **Application:** It's a "power of first resort," meaning councils ask if an individual could do it before seeking other powers.

How it Works in Practice

- **Commercial Activity:** Councils can set up companies or invest commercially, but must follow rules, like using a registered company for commercial purposes.
- **Funding:** It's a power, not a source of money; councils must find funding through other means (grants, fees, etc.) but can earn income from GPC activities.
- **Scope:** Applies anywhere in the UK or abroad, for charge or free, for benefit or not (though benefits are usually sought).

In Summary

The GPC is a modern, broad power designed to empower local councils to be more proactive and innovative by granting them the legal flexibility of an individual, fostering more responsive local governance in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland.