



AGENDA

For a meeting of the Association to be held on
Friday 17th April 2026 at 10.30am
by Zoom

1. Welcome by the chair

To receive a welcome from the chair.

2. Record of attendance

To record attendance.

3. Declarations of interest

To record any declarations of interest.

4. Minutes of the last

To consider and approve the minutes of the last Executive meeting held in January 2026

5. Actions taken since last meeting

Ref	Item	By
1	Prepare and circulate minutes of the meeting	Secretary
2	Take up with TFW the emergency procedure with regard to the Shotton incident.	Secretary
3	Letter to be sent to Welsh Government regarding the Fire and Rescue services proposals.	Completed
4	Arrange Holyhead port and rail companies meeting.	Secretary
5	Arrange meeting venue for 17 th April meeting – possibly Colwyn – now confirmed	Completed

6. Finance and governance

To consider the following:

6.1 Financial report

To receive a financial report.

6.2 Membership

To receive an update on membership.

7. Welsh Government consultation on unpaid carers

To consider the Welsh Government consultation with regards unpaid carers including the eight priorities set out below:

1. Recognition and awareness – This means we want to make sure more people know about unpaid carers.

2. Access to services – Unpaid carers need support too. They need to know their rights and are assessed for their needs.

3. Young carers – they need support through education and community services. They also need regular assessments for support.

4. Financial hardship – this means unpaid carers often don't have enough money. They need support to access benefits.

5. Paid employment – unpaid carers need support to stay in work and return to work. Employers need to support unpaid carers.

6. Respite and breaks from caring – respite means taking a break. There needs to be more options to support people.

7. Mental health and wellbeing – check services and support groups work well.

8. Carers and care planning – make sure carers are fully involved in having a say about those they care for. For example, care planning and leaving hospital

The link to the full consultation is

[Draft national strategy for unpaid carers 2026 | GOV.WALES](#)

8. A55 and meeting with Welsh Government Highways

To discuss any matters arising from the zoom meeting with Welsh Government at the last quarterly meeting. See notes attached at appendix **A**.

9. Concerns of residents in north and mid Wales

Residents in North and Mid Wales are strongly opposing plans to close rural Air Ambulance bases and merge the Welshpool and Caernarfon operations into a new base along the A55. Campaigners fear the changes could slow access to critical care in rural areas, potentially putting lives at risk. There are also concerns that reducing local services could weaken public support for the charity and negatively impact rural communities that rely heavily on emergency air services.

Members are asked to consider if they wish to express a view.

10. What are the current issues for Welsh government and local councils in north and mid Wales?

To consider if the Association wishes to make representations to each political party standing at the Senedd Elections regarding:

Funding Pressures Facing Councils in North and Mid Wales

Local authorities across North and Mid Wales are facing severe and escalating financial pressures that threaten the sustainability of essential public services. The situation reflects long-term structural challenges as well as immediate budgetary constraints.

Under-investment

Years of sustained under-investment have left councils struggling to deliver the level and quality of services that residents expect. This cumulative funding gap has reduced resilience within local government and limited the ability to respond effectively to growing demand.

Funding Challenges

Councils in Mid and North Wales are operating “on the edge of a precipice,” having received below-average funding increases compared to other areas. This has forced authorities to confront extremely difficult decisions, including potential service reductions and significant council tax increases.

Extraordinary Financial Pressures

Councils face estimated budget pressures of approximately £559 million next year alone. Education accounts for nearly £120 million of that total, reflecting rising costs, increasing demand, and statutory obligations that leave limited flexibility within budgets.

Health and Social Care Imbalance

There remains a structural imbalance between health and social care funding. Insufficient investment in social care shifts pressure onto local authorities, which are required to absorb rising costs to protect vulnerable residents and maintain statutory services.

Public Health Responsibilities

While there is broad agreement that public health responsibilities should be more closely integrated with local authority decision-making, meaningful reform cannot succeed without substantial additional investment from central government. Without this support, structural changes alone will have limited impact on outcomes for communities.

Revision of long-distance trains for Wales

To bring forward replacement trains to the class 197 along lines where they have a tourism base (i.e. Cambrian and North Coast) in 2033 – trains with windows which give visibility for tourists to enjoy the landscape).

Road improvements A55 Aston Hill

To seek an action plan and implement in the next electoral period improvements to Aston Hill.

Possible conclusion

These challenges collectively demonstrate the urgent need for increased and sustained investment from the Welsh Government. Without decisive action, councils in North and Mid Wales will face continued financial instability, undermining the delivery of essential public services and placing further strain on communities.

Along with anything else members wish to add.

A suggested list of items to be sent to all candidates for the Senedd election asking for their views.

11. The Senedd elections in May 2026

To receive a short presentation on how the elections to the Senedd work in details, including how the six seats in each area are selected.

12. Audit Wales Warns of Governance and Financial Failures in Community and Town Councils

Community and town councils across Wales are increasingly failing to meet basic financial and governance standards, according to a new report from Audit Wales.

The report, *Financial Management and Governance – Lessons from Audit for Community and Town Councils in Wales*, raises serious concerns about councils not submitting annual returns in line with proper practices, maintaining inadequate accounting records, and failing to publish information they are legally required to make available.

Wales has 735 community and town councils, which operate as the first tier of local government. In recent years, many unitary authorities have transferred assets and services to these councils, significantly increasing their responsibilities. Audit Wales stressed that this shift makes it “vital” for councils to have robust financial management systems and strong governance arrangements in place.

Inaccurate Returns and Legal Non-Compliance

To note that Welsh Government is looking into audit arrangements as part of the Town and Community Council review. To note the following statements from the Audit Office.

The report found that 30% of audit submissions for 2023–24 were inaccurate, leading to a rise in qualified audit opinions. One of the most frequent issues identified was councils failing to publish information required by law.

Auditors also reported widespread problems with incomplete and inaccurate accounting records, describing some submissions as falling “far below” expected standards.

In some cases, councils had lost significant sums of public money — losses that Audit Wales said could have been avoided had systemic weaknesses been addressed earlier.

Concerns Over Taxation and Financial Oversight

The Auditor General also expressed concern that some councils were not acting lawfully in how they raised local taxes, noting that “many councils [are] continuing to raise excessive sums in local taxes.”

The report highlights the growing importance of sound financial controls, particularly as councils take on additional services and assets from principal authorities.

Recommendations for Improvement

Audit Wales recommended that councils formally adopt *Governance and Accountability for Local Councils in Wales: A Practitioners’ Guide*, which is recognised by the Welsh Government as proper accounting practice.

Councils were also encouraged to use the *Finance and Governance Toolkit for Community and Town Councils*, which provides practical guidance to address common weaknesses in governance and financial management.

Auditor General Adrian Crompton said:

“Our audit work continues to play a vital role in identifying governance and financial management weaknesses.

Town and community councils need to learn from the challenges raised in our report and use the guidance and support that is readily available to them.”

The findings underline the need for improved accountability and stronger oversight within Wales first tier of local government.

13. Any other business

To discuss any other business notified to the Chair or Secretary prior to the start of the meeting.

14. Date of next meeting

To note the dates of future meetings as follows:

Annual meeting at Connah's Quay in person as by zoom – Friday 24th July 2026

Quarterly meeting in person and by zoom – Friday 24th July 2026

Executive meeting by zoom – Friday 12th June 2026

North Coast Rail meeting by zoom – Friday 10th April 2026

Joint Cambrian/North Coast Rail meeting by zoom – Friday 3rd July 2026

All meetings start at 10.30am

APPENDIX A

Visiting representative from the Senedd regarding North Wales

To receive a visiting speaker from the Trunk Road Agency for North Wales. The main points raised are set out overleaf.

A494 Bridge replacement

Details of the replacement bridge have been published. It is hoped that this scheme can progress without the need for a public inquiry.

Wrexham western gateway Improvements are planned for the Ruthin – Wrexham junction to improve capacity.

Brittania Bridge

The repairs to this bridge are almost complete. It is hoped that this will improve resilience. Consideration is being given to wind deflectors to aid the effects of the weather. Welsh Government is working with Network rail on a survey of the bridge. Variable speed limits are used on this bridge as required. Network rail own the bridge and it is also listed.

Transport A55/A494/A483 - review Work is being done to see what the needs of these roads are along with looking at the assets supporting this. This will take around 6 months and the results considered by the next Welsh Government.

Aston Hill

There are plans for more improvements and new drainage.

Red route A494 – A55 (River Dee crossing)

It was pointed out that 2 lanes were not enough for this area of road. It was confirmed that the road is wide enough to take 3 lanes in the future. The question was asked 'why not now' as the need is acknowledged. The review will include this item.

Better use of the Flintshire Bridge would be an option to aid the traffic congestion. Accidents on the A55 The number of accidents on the A55 on a daily basis was highlighted.

This is also to be part of the review. Members felt this situation should be considered urgently.

