



SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT FOR THE PROVISION OF SERVICES TO MEMBER COUNCILS 2020/21

Objectives

This Service Level Agreement sets out the arrangements for the servicing, promotion and representation of member councils by the Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils (GAPTC). It also defines the working relationship between the Association and the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) in providing services to member councils.

This SLA is based on three key objectives: -

1. Ensuring the highest standards of service to member councils
2. Effective promotion and representation of the parish and town councils of Gloucestershire
3. Effective partnerships with other bodies including principal councils and government agencies to deliver information and training in a variety of formats.

Service provision

1. GAPTC will provide guidance, information and support to member councils.
2. GAPTC will deliver legal and procedural advice in a variety of formats including publications and training on changing legislation affecting parish and town councils.
3. GAPTC will provide a framework for consultation and develop suitable arrangements for the effective representation and promotion of local councils at local, regional and national levels.

GAPTC provide a well-resourced office and trained staff able to support member councils. The normal office hours are Monday – Friday, 9.00am – 5.00pm. At the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer, GAPTC may provide additional out of hours' service to support member councils via telephone and/or email.

Legal Services

1. In the first instance, legal queries from member councils should be addressed to GAPTC. The organisation offers a 'ticket' system service through our website to register queries; you can also telephone and email for initial legal advice and interpretation.
2. In the case of more complex queries, GAPTC may consult NALC (there is a 15-working day response time) or other appropriate organisations.
3. NALC updates and legal briefings will be circulated to member councils as appropriate so that they can develop their own database of information. They will also be available on the membership restricted part of our website.
4. VAT service – we have an SLA with Steve Parkinson Ltd who can provide professional advice on VAT queries.

Planning

GAPTC will ensure that national information and guidance on planning matters is conveyed to member councils and will provide advice and support to member councils in accordance with that guidance and local knowledge.

Policy development support

1. GAPTC will consult with member councils as needed on issues of national concern and on government consultative documents by circulating papers and initiating discussion through its membership and committees.
2. GAPTC will take an active part in the development of county, regional and national policy, to represent the interests of parish and town councils in Gloucestershire.

Council development

1. GAPTC will offer guidance and support to member councils and councillors to develop their role in the community.
2. GAPTC will offer specific support and guidance on the implementation of the Local Council Award Scheme. (There will be a charge for this service, which shall be agreed in advance.)

Employment support

1. GAPTC will offer support and guidance on matters relating to the recruitment and ongoing employment of staff.
2. On referral, GAPTC provide two free hours to an independent HR person.
3. GAPTC will provide basic mediation for councils. (There will be a charge for this service, which shall be agreed in advance.) We have two qualified mediators who councils can appoint independently to support them through the process.

Training development and support

1. GAPTC will organise a comprehensive programme of training provision for member councils, including both staff and elected members.
2. GAPTC will deliver tailor-made training events to individual member councils to address local needs. (There will be a charge for this service, which shall be agreed in advance.)
3. GAPTC will provide mentoring for clerks undertaking the CiLCA qualification. (There will be a charge for this service, which shall be agreed in advance.)

Financial support

GAPTC will provide member councils with local support and guidance on accounting and audit requirements.

Loan application process

GAPTC is the body responsible for the checking and submission of Loan Sanction Approvals by all parish and town councils in Gloucestershire.

1. GAPTC will advise parish and town councils on the submission of loan sanction applications.
2. GAPTC will check applications for compliance with government requirements.
3. GAPTC will submit applications directly to the Ministry of Housing for Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) for approval.
4. GAPTC will ensure that current criteria and implementation information is available to all councils.

Internal audit service

GAPTC offers an internal audit service. There is a team of trained auditors that will undertake a robust audit that will help to inform good practice of the council. (There is a charge for this service, which shall be agreed in advance.)

Relationship with NALC

GAPTC is the formal link between NALC and Gloucestershire parishes and has a representative on its national council. A portion of member subscriptions is forwarded to NALC to pay for its services.

The weekly update from the NALC CEO will be posted on our website newsfeed.

Officer support and attendance

The Chairman of the Association and Officers are available to attend, by invitation, a meeting of a member council, ceremonial occasions and other events to further the profile of parish and town councils in Gloucestershire.

GAPTC will always endeavour to provide a correct and timely response to its members and welcomes comments from its members and suggestions on how it can improve its service.

Chairman – Cllr Bernard Barton-Ancliffe

Chief Executive Officer – Alison Robinson

Senior Advisor – Susan Creswick

Communications and Support Officer – Anita Sach

Administrator – Shirley Godsall

Contacts

- For advice to member councils and information on LCAS - info@gaptc.org.uk
- For information on GAPTC finance and Independent Audit Service – comms@gaptc.org.uk
- For training including CiLCA and subscriptions - training@gaptc.org.uk
- To contact the CEO – ceo@gaptc.org.uk

Address: GAPTC, Cranham House, Falcon Close, Quedgeley, Gloucester GL2 4LY

Telephone: (01452) 883388; **Website:** www.GAPTC.org.uk; **Twitter:** glosAPTC