



Association of  
Democratic Services  
Officers

# A GUIDE TO THE DIPLOMA IN LOCAL DEMOCRACY

For  
Learners and Assessors

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## CONTACTS

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## INTRODUCTION

This is a guide for Learners and Assessors about the ADSO Diploma in Local Democracy. It is a distance learning programme with rigid deadlines for completing the modules that enables learners to demonstrate their knowledge against a set of learning outcomes and assessment criteria which have been developed by experienced practitioners.

The Diploma is being run on behalf of the Association of Democratic Services Officers by South West Councils. We are delighted to be working in partnership with them.

This Guide sets out a detailed summary of the qualification and a timetable for completion of the programme – we hope you find it useful.



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## Guide to the Diploma in Local Democracy

The Diploma comprises seven knowledge modules covering all aspects of Democratic Services, broken down into:

- 4 foundation modules
- 1 research planning module
- 1 dissertation
- 1 reflective learning and evaluation module

Each learner will be assigned an Assessor to support them through their programme. In order to achieve the modules, learners will be required to write an assignment for each module which they will submit through an e-portfolio and which will be signed off by their Assessor before quality assurance and certification.

There is no formal training required but ADSO provide a range of resources to support learners to help with research and guidance on completing their assignments. Learners are also entitled to attend ADSO training courses directly relevant to their programme free of charge.

### Target Audience

There are no formal entry requirements for undertaking the Diploma but a learner would ideally possess an in depth knowledge of the main democratic functions and have a number of years' experience of working in the sector.

## PLANNING FOR THE DIPLOMA

### Workplace Mentor

It is important that learners are fully supported by their organisation when they embark on this programme. The Diploma in Local Democracy is a significant investment of resources over a significant amount of time. For this reason, learners must identify a workplace mentor when registering for this programme. The role of the mentor is to support and guide the learner throughout the full term of the programme and should be someone with good knowledge of Democratic Services who can offer encouragement and advice as well as identify resources or opportunities that may help the learner successfully complete their assignments. This could be, for example, a line manager or a more senior manager working in Democratic Services.

### Networking

Learners are also encouraged to talk to other experienced colleagues and managers to obtain the knowledge they need to complete each of the modules that make up the Diploma in Local Democracy. These could be both inside and outside their own authority. Learners are also encouraged to make the most of any networking opportunities and relevant learning.

Learners can also access a closed Facebook group – just search for “ADSO Study Group”



## Induction

Learners will initially take part in an induction, providing the information they need to start the programme. This is a mandatory part of the programme. After induction is complete learners will be registered onto the programme and will be given access to the web-based assessment portal. The assessment portal hosts the assessment process for both assessors and learners as well as providing access to a range of resources to support learner research and the preparation of assignments. Guidance can be found later in this guide.

## Additional Learning

The ADSO programmes are designed to be achieved without having to undertake any additional training courses - the modules each have a Knowledge Bank document or specific guidance which provides tailored research and self-study on each topic. We strongly recommend that you complete these Knowledge Bank documents. Although ADSO currently provide free places for learners on programme related courses, they are not mandatory to attend.

## ASSESSMENT

### Assignments

Assignments focus on the module subjects and involve a description of the key knowledge areas to be included. As part of the assignment, learners will be asked to include examples from their own area of work to show local knowledge and understanding and how this is put into practice within their own authority. They will also need to demonstrate an understanding of governance arrangements in other regions and countries.

Once an assignment has been completed, the learner will submit this electronically via the assessment portal to their Assessor. The Assessor will then mark the assignment in line with the relevant mark scheme and assessment criteria, highlighting any areas that require further work.

### Professional Discussions

Whilst ADSO provide a word count for each assignment, it is highly unlikely that learners will fully meet the assignment requirements within the word count range. This is intentional.

Any further work required to meet the requirements of the assignment should be carried out in a professional discussion (PD). This planned, two-way recorded conversation is an effective way of checking learner knowledge, understanding and, importantly, authenticity. **The qualification will not be signed off without at least one PD taking place.**

Where further work required is minimal, the assessor may exercise discretion and ask the learner to provide further written work instead.



The PD will be carried out within an agreed timescale after which the Assessor will finalise assessment.

### **Internal Quality Assurance**

SW Councils will internally quality assure the work of all assessors – this means that they will sample the assessors work to ensure it meets the required standards of assessment.

## **MODULES**

The Diploma comprises the following modules:

**1. Foundation Modules** – these modules aim to provide contextual knowledge and understanding. Complete *all of the following*:

1. Structures and Functions of Local Government
2. Role of Council and its Governance Arrangements
3. Members and Officers in Local Government
4. The Development and Impact of Local Democracy Legislation

Supported by the following documents:

- Module outline and assignment task: what needs to be done
- Knowledge Bank Documents: to guide learner research (modules 1-3)
- Guidance document (module 4)

**2. Research Planning Module** - enables the learner to consider how they will research and present their chosen subject area in the Pathway dissertation stage.

Supported by the following documents:

- Module outline and assignment task: what needs to be done
- Handbook: to guide learner research
- Mapping/Self certification tool: to be completed by the learner and submitted with the assignment

**3. Specialist Dissertation Pathway** – these enable the learner to develop their knowledge in their chosen specialist area. It is an in-depth piece of work and learners will need to research extensively outside their authority. There is also an international element to each pathway.

**Each pathway is supported by the following documents:**

- Pathway outline and assignment task: what needs to be done
- Handbook: to guide learner research
- Mapping/Self certification tool: to be completed and submitted with the dissertation

***Learners will select one of the Pathways listed below.***

**Civic Support** - learners must demonstrate their understanding of:

- the historical context of the role of the Civic Head
- the legal precedence and protocol of the Civic Head
- the process and issues relating to a councillor becoming the Civic Head
- the role of the Civic Head for a Local Authority and its communities
- how the civic support function operates in other parts of the world



**Ethical Framework** - learners must demonstrate their understanding of:

- the key features of an Ethical Framework within a system of corporate governance
- the behaviours necessary to underpin the ethical framework
- the outcomes of good ethical governance
- the impact of ethical governance
- how ethical governance operates in other parts of the world

**Governance Arrangements** - learners must demonstrate their understanding of:

- key features of the options for governance arrangements which operate in local government
- the nature of the Leader and Cabinet model of Governance in local government
- the nature of the Elected Mayor model of Governance in local government
- the nature of the Committee based system of governance in local government
- how Executive and Committee based forms of Governance operate in different countries in the UK
- the differences between different models of Governance in local government
- how Governance in local government operates in other parts of the world

**Member Development** - learners must demonstrate their understanding of:

- the principles underpinning the development of learning and development programmes for members
- how arrangements for providing learning and development for councillors have changed across local government
- the differing roles of elected members and associated training needs
- the importance of a framework for providing learning and development for councillors
- how to effectively provide and deliver learning opportunities for members
- how to evaluate and improve development programmes for councillors
- how member development operates in other parts of the world

**Member Support** - learners must demonstrate their understanding of:

- the support required by councillors in their role as community representatives
- the support required by councillors in their role in the leadership, management and scrutiny of the Council
- the political, financial and cultural context within which councillors work and the impact on member support
- the support requirements to ensure all elected members have equal access to office
- the systems in place to support councillors in their roles
- how member support operates in other parts of the world

**Overview and Scrutiny** - learners must demonstrate their understanding of:

- the key features and functions of Overview and Scrutiny in the public sector
- the differences, opportunities and challenges posed by internal and external scrutiny
- the political context of Overview and Scrutiny
- the techniques and lines of enquiry that can be used in undertaking Overview and Scrutiny
- the differences, similarities and relative benefits between Overview and Scrutiny at a local and national level
- the benefits that Overview and Scrutiny can provide for the community and the public sector
- how Overview and Scrutiny in local government operates in other parts of the world



**Partnership Working and Community Engagement** - learners must demonstrate their understanding of:

- the factors which influence councils' approaches to community engagement in their local democratic arrangements
- how the framework for local governance interacts with community engagement
- evaluate the effectiveness of community engagement in political and operational terms
- how the pattern of community engagement in English local authorities compares with practice in other areas of the UK and elsewhere
- the development of partnership working in local authorities and its relationship to local democratic arrangements
- how different forms of partnership working have influenced local democracy
- how the pattern of partnership working in English local authorities compares with experience and arrangements in other areas of the UK and elsewhere

**Regulatory Framework** - learners must demonstrate their understanding of:

- the origins of a democratic area of the regulatory framework within local government
- the quasi-judicial nature of the regulatory framework in local government
- the implementation of regulatory functions within the wider political management framework of local government
- the practical operation of regulatory framework within local government
- how the public and stakeholders interact with the regulatory framework in local government
- how the regulatory framework operates in other parts of the world

#### **4. Reflective Learning and Evaluation Module**

This stage enables the learner to reflect on their learning needs and objectives from the dissertation and assess and evaluate their recommendations and conclusions.

Supported by the following documents:

- Module outline and assignment task: what needs to be done
- Handbook: to guide learner research
- Mapping/Self certification tool: to be completed by the learner and submitted with the assignment



## TIMETABLE

All modules must be completed and assessed to the following deadlines:

DATE	TASK
w/c 04 Oct 2021	Induction to programme – Learners & Assessors
06 Dec 2021	Deadline for Assignment 1: <b>STRUCTURES &amp; FUNCTIONS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT</b>
20 Dec 2021	Assessor to have marked assignment and provided feedback
10 Jan 2022	Written Q& A or PD (if required) to be complete
21 Feb 2022	Deadline for Assignment 2: <b>ROLE OF COUNCIL AND ITS GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS</b>
14 Mar 2022	Assessor to have marked assignment and provided feedback
28 Mar 2022	Written Q& A or PD (if required) to be complete
09 May 2022	Deadline for Assignment 3: <b>MEMBERS AND OFFICERS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT</b>
30 May 2022	Assessor to have marked assignment and provided feedback
13 Jun 2022	Written Q& A or PD (if required) to be complete
25 Jul 2022	Deadline for Assignment 4: <b>APPLYING LEGISLATION IN A DEMOCRATIC ENVIRONMENT</b>
15 Aug 2022	Assessor to have marked assignment and provided feedback
29 Aug 2022	Written Q& A or PD (if required) to be complete
07 Nov 2022	Deadline for <b>RESEARCH PLANNING MODULE</b>
05 Dec 2022	Assessor to have marked assignment and provided feedback
19 Dec 2022	Written Q& A or PD to be complete
10 Apr 2023	Deadline for first draft of <b>PATHWAY</b> dissertation
01 May 2023	Assessor to have looked at draft and provided feedback
24 Jul 2023	Deadline for final version of <b>PATHWAY</b>
21 Aug 2023	Assessor to have marked dissertation and provided feedback
18 Sep 2023	Written Q& A or PD to be complete
02 Oct 2023	Deadline for <b>REFLECTIVE MODULE</b>
23 Oct 2023	Assessor to have marked module and provided feedback
06 Nov 2023	Written Q& A or PD to be complete



## WORD COUNT

### Foundation

- Structures and Functions of Local Government **(2500-3000)**
- Role of Council and its Governance Arrangements **(2500-3000)**
- Members and Officers in Local Government **(2500-3000)**
- The Development and Impact of Local Democracy Legislation **(3000-3500)**

### Research Planning **(3000-3500)**

### Specialist Pathway **(12000 – 14000)**

### Reflective Learning and Evaluation **(2500-3000)**

## GUIDANCE NOTES FOR LEARNERS IN COMPLETING ASSIGNMENTS

The purpose of these guidance notes is to assist learners with the planning, completion and submission of their assignments. There are additional notes for the completion of the pathway dissertation.

### Writing up the assignment

A good assignment will answer the question which has been set. Straying from the point is likely to mean that the assessment criteria will not be met and the assignment will be over the word count. Learners should take time to analyse and understand the question and what they are being asked to do. The assessor will assess individual assignments against the Assessment Criteria described in the module outlines – if it doesn't meet these, the work will be returned for further input, usually in the form of a Professional Discussion.

The Knowledge Bank documents that support the first three modules are a useful tool to guide research, explore and consider relevant information that is likely to be useful. Learners can share Knowledge Bank documents with the assessor to check that research is along the right lines. Please note Knowledge Bank documents should not be submitted to the assessment portal as they are **not part of the assessment process**.

When writing Assignments, learners must reference all quotations or copied work to avoid unintentional plagiarism. They must also include a comprehensive bibliography, listing all publications, websites and resources used (see further guidance below).

Once all the research has been done, it may be helpful to prepare an outline plan, eg.

- Introduction (no more than a couple of sentences)
- text that responds to the individual assessment criteria
- conclusion
- bibliography

**NB: An introduction and conclusion need only be included in the assignment if relevant but can be omitted if they do not add anything to the content.**



Make brief notes of what needs to go in each section, noting relevant references – much research will have been done and relevant materials will have been collated but it is important to be focused about what to include. Identify the main points from reading material and note also how evidence drawn from experience or research may illustrate the issue being considering.

In deciding how to approach the task, the following points may be of some help or guidance:

- Write as if for an intelligent lay reader
- Do not use jargon for the sake of it but also do not be afraid to use professional language where this expresses ideas or arguments most clearly
- Have a clear, strong conclusion that draws together and re-states the argument or findings
- Major points in the argument should be supported by reference to relevant material. Quotations must be attributed but must not be included in the word count
- Referencing of quotations and other written material used should be in consistent form and inserted in the appropriate point within the text eg. in brackets

Having completed a draft, have a very critical read and check the following:

- Is the structure clear?
- Has the question been addressed?
- Are you within the word limits?
- Does it meet ADSO's formatting requirements?
- Is the bibliography complete and comprehensive?
- Have relevant references been identified and noted?
- Does the assignment satisfy the Assessment Criteria

### Presenting the assignment

High standards of presentation for an assignment are both important and appropriate. Learners **must** therefore ensure that their assignment is presented as follows:

- The title of the work, your name and the date should be included at the top of the first page
- Spacing – at least one and a half line spacing in the main text. Indented quotations can be single line spaced
- Font size must be Arial, point 12
- Pages should be numbered consecutively at the bottom right hand side of each page
- Tables and figures – to be numbered consecutively, either throughout the document or within each chapter



- The length of the assignment must be within the word count excluding any quotation references (not the quotation itself) and the bibliography
- All sources of reference used should be shown in the work
- The number of words must be stated at the end of the assignment eg 'Word count: 2,855
- Word count excludes bibliography and references
- The document should be submitted to the Assessor through the assessment portal.

### Things to avoid

Some of the common errors in preparing and/or submitting an assignment are listed below.

- not following the above guidance as to presentation
- not including the bibliography
- submitting the knowledge bank document as the assignment
- inaccuracies in the list of contents, bibliography and appendices
- spelling, punctuation and syntax errors in the text
- copying or plagiarising the work of others
- failure to make the connection between references and the text
- poorly or illogically presented narrative
- underestimating the time required to complete the assignment

Once submitted, assignments will become the property of ADSO and copyright in the work will vest in ADSO. By submitting the assignments, learners are deemed to have agreed to this condition.

### Referencing and Bibliography

**Referencing** of quotations and other written material used should be in consistent form and inserted in the appropriate point within the text eg. in brackets.

The work from which the reference is taken should be stated. A standard form of referencing in use in academic works is set out below:

*Taylor, H and Upton, D (2008), "Knowles on Local Authority Meetings – A Manual of Law and Practice Fifth Edition,"7 (152 – 153)*

The above reference indicates that the quotation is taken from pages 152-153 of Chapter 7 of the book referred to.

Some variations on this would be where the published work is a periodical where the volume or edition number will also need to be referred to and where the named person is an editor rather than an author in which case add "(Ed)" after the name.



Please note that Wikipedia is not viewed as a reliable source of information and should not be used in assignments.

**A bibliography** is a list of all of the sources used (whether referenced or not) in the process of researching the assignment. In general, a bibliography should include:

- the authors' name
- the titles of the works
- the names and locations of the companies that published copies of the sources used
- the dates the copies were published

The learner should also include the following information for any websites used:

- the company or organisation who posted the webpage
- the Web address for the page (called a URL)
- the last date the learner looked at the page

## **DIPLOMA DISSERTATION GUIDANCE**

### **Purpose of the dissertation**

The dissertation encourages learners to explore areas that have not been investigated previously, ideally incorporating legislative implications or a democratic scenario that have important organisational implications. More specifically, the dissertation aims to provide the learner with experience in handling data in an organisational setting and in applying relevant concepts and theories appropriate for the democratic environment. Information and data are collected, analysed and interpreted in such a way that final conclusions are both reliable and valid. The learner should use reasons to evidence and support a standpoint but be clear about their own perspective. It is anticipated that the dissertation findings will be shared across the sector to assist Authorities in identifying best practice and interpreting legislation. Therefore, a learner's arguments should be capable of persuading others.

### **Nature of the Dissertation**

Learners will be required to submit a practical project, not simply a theoretical dissertation based entirely on existing resources and literature. It is likely that the dissertation will take an organisational project approach where the learner will apply theoretical and legislation knowledge to a particular democratic strand (considering particular organisation problems or issues.) The learner will be required to investigate workplace / organisational issues through collecting primary data, which may be qualitative or quantitative in nature. This could be through visits, telephone conversations with officers and members etc.

Throughout, the emphasis is on conducting an analytical investigation, combining existing legislation and case law (as relevant to the pathway area) with primary research and existing literature where existing. Particular attention needs to be paid to the reliability and validity of the approaches used.



### **Planning for the Dissertation**

The learner will be required, to agree in advance their pathway area, to enable an appropriate Assessor to be allocated. By undertaking the Research Planning Module, the learner will create a comprehensive research plan and identify their research methods. They should ensure that prior to commencing the pathway and associated research, that they have received final sign off from their Assessor regarding their proposal.

### **Learning Outcomes**

Each of the pathway modules (including the research planning module) has a set of specific learning outcomes and assessment criteria. The learner, in planning for their dissertation must ensure that all of the learning outcomes and assessment criteria listed within the pathway modules will be covered. The learner should refer to the pathway guide for their chosen pathway which provides the requirements for each element, plus suggestions regarding the type of research which could be gathered and / or analysed.

### **Dissertation Layout**

- Title Page
- Contents page (including section titles and page numbers)
- List of tables and figures (as appropriate)
- The main body (the number of chapters will depend on the research design and topic)
- Conclusions and Recommendations (summary of key points)
- Bibliography (alphabetical order by family name and inclusive of all detail)
- Appendices (appropriate support to the main text)

### **Dissertation Format**

For consistency certain requirements are placed on dissertations being submitted for the Diploma and these are listed below.

- The title of the work, your name and the date should be included at the top of the first page
- Spacing – at least one and a half line spacing in the main text. Indented quotations can be single line spaced
- Font– text to be Arial 12, or equivalent
- Numbering – pages to be numbered consecutively at the bottom right hand side of each page
- Tables and figures – to be numbered consecutively, either throughout the document or within each chapter
- Word count **12000–14000**
- The number of words must be stated at the end of the dissertation  
eg. Word Count 12,435
- Word Count excludes bibliography, table of contents and appendices
- The Dissertation will be submitted to Assessors through the assessment portal



### Example layout of assignment

We thought it might be helpful to let you have sight of an assignment that is an example of good practice in terms of layout, referencing and bibliography.

The example is **not from an assignment that is part of the Diploma** but it will give a clear idea of layout.

The learner has included a brief introduction, used the learning outcomes and individual assessment criteria as headings, helping to organise their work and helping the assessor to see where the assessment criteria have been met. Referencing is in the footer of each page and the bibliography is a good account at the end of the document.



Name: .....

Date: .....

Module 1: Understand your own Authority and its Working Environment

**Describe the key features of your own local working environment and demonstrate a general understanding of the governance arrangements within which they operate.**

ABC Borough Council (ABC) is an atypical local authority in many ways. Its boundary encompasses the UK's second-busiest airport; its town welcomes over 24,000 net in-commuters daily<sup>1</sup>; and it is one of only three councils in xxxx currently under the control of the Labour Party, of 67 in the area. Its priorities and objectives therefore differ to those nearby, making it a unique authority both to live under and work for.

**1. Understand the key features of your local working environment.**

**1.1 In relation to the local government administrative area in which your organisation operates, describe the following key features:**

Geographical

ABC Town was assigned 'new town' status by the Government in 1947. New towns were designated areas surrounding London developed as places of residence and employment for those displaced during the Second World War. ABC Town covers over 17 square miles and has 14 neighbourhoods, each with its own individual and specialised amenities. The district became a borough in 1974.

Environmental

The UK's second largest airport, Gatwick, has a unique impact on the town's environment and its carbon emissions, yet in 2019 ABC Town's air quality was described as 'mainly good', noting one air quality management area due to high levels of nitrogen dioxide<sup>2</sup>. The Full Council declared a climate emergency in July 2019.

Economic

In 2018, 101,000 jobs were recorded in ABC Town. Job density (1.39%) is more than one and a half times the national figure (0.86%)<sup>3</sup>, and the town sits at the heart of the Gatwick Diamond business area. There are three main employment areas across the town:

<sup>1</sup> "Census Bulletin," ABC County Council, 2011. Accessed 07.04.20. [https://www.ABCcountycouncil.gov.uk/media/4622/censusbulletin\\_traveltowork.pdf](https://www.ABCcountycouncil.gov.uk/media/4622/censusbulletin_traveltowork.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> "2019 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR)," ABC Town Borough Council, 2019. Accessed 26.03.20. <http://www.ABCTown.gov.uk/pw/web/PUB354366>

<sup>3</sup> "Labour Market Profile – ABC Town: Jobs density (2018)," Office for National Statistics via Nomis, 2018. Accessed 23.03.20. <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157342/report.aspx#tabjobs>



- London Gatwick airport, offering over 24,000 jobs;
- The Business District, providing over 30,000 jobs across 600 businesses;
- ABC Town centre - which in 2019 became a business improvement district (BID).

Unemployment in ABC Town is 3.6%, higher than the South East average of 3.1% but lower than the national average of 3.9%<sup>4</sup>. Average pay of female full-time workers in ABC Town is notably lower than the equivalent national average, but for males, is slightly higher than the national average<sup>5</sup>.

### Social

ABC Town's population was last estimated by the Office for National Statistics in 2018 at 112,400<sup>6</sup>. 36.9% of residents have higher education qualifications of NVQ level 4 and above; lower than the national figure of 39.3%<sup>7</sup>. ABC Town sits roughly halfway, at #170 of 326 local authorities in England, in terms of deprivation (IMD score) with 18.9% of children in relative poverty – compared to 15% in the South East and 20.6% in England<sup>8</sup>. Data from the 2011 Census in ABC Town shows:

- The median age of residents is 35 years (39 years nationally)<sup>9</sup>.
- 5.8% of ABC Town residents logged their country of birth as an EU member state (compared to 3.6% nationally), and 13.7% as a non-EU country (7.7% nationally)<sup>10 11</sup>.
- 27.9% of residents do not have a white: British ethnicity – a significantly higher proportion than elsewhere in ABC County<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> "Labour Market Profile – ABC Town: Employment and unemployment (Oct 2018-Sep 2019)," Office for National Statistics via Nomis, 2018. Accessed 23.03.20.

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157342/report.aspx#tabempunemp>

<sup>5</sup> "Labour Market Profile – ABC Town: Earnings by place of residence (2019)," Office for National Statistics via Nomis, 2018. Accessed 23.03.20. <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157342/report.aspx#tabearn>

<sup>6</sup> "Labour Market Profile – ABC Town: Total population (2018)," Office for National Statistics via Nomis, 2018. Accessed 23.03.20. <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157342/report.aspx#tabrespop>

<sup>7</sup> "Labour Market Profile – ABC Town: Qualifications (Jan 2018-Dec 2018)," Office for National Statistics via Nomis, 2018. Accessed 23.03.20. <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157342/report.aspx#tabquals>

<sup>8</sup> "ABC County Life report: 8. Deprivation and Need," ABC County Council, 2013. Accessed 30.03.20. [https://www.abccountycouncil.gov.uk/media/3075/8\\_deprivation.pdf](https://www.abccountycouncil.gov.uk/media/3075/8_deprivation.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> "ABC Town Local Authority – Local Area Report: Age Structure," Office for National Statistics via Nomis, 2011. Accessed 30.03.20. [https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=E07000226#section\\_6\\_1](https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=E07000226#section_6_1)

<sup>10</sup> "ABC Town Local Authority – Local Area Report: Country of birth," Office for National Statistics via Nomis, 2011. Accessed 30.03.20. [https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=E07000226#section\\_6\\_4](https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=E07000226#section_6_4)

<sup>11</sup> "6.5% of the EU population are foreigners and 9.4% are born abroad," Vasileva, K. 2, (Eurostat Statistics in Focus no 34/2011.) Brussels: Eurostat (2011). [https://web.archive.org/web/20120128101046/http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY\\_OFFPUB/KS-SF-11-034/EN/KS-SF-11-034-EN.PDF](https://web.archive.org/web/20120128101046/http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-SF-11-034/EN/KS-SF-11-034-EN.PDF)

<sup>12</sup> "ABC Town Local Authority – Local Area Report: Ethnic group," Office for National Statistics via Nomis, 2011. Accessed 30.03.20. [https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=E07000226#section\\_6\\_4](https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=E07000226#section_6_4)



The diversity of ABC Town's population is a significant contributor to its unique nature. It is a necessity for ABC COUNCIL to consider the range of individuals residing in the borough; balancing its priorities to ensure that all are equally represented.

### Political

36 councillors make up ABC COUNCIL's Full Council. Currently, there is one vacant seat. Of the 35 sitting councillors, 18 are Labour and 17 are Conservative. The current political make-up reflects the pattern in recent history of slim majorities and changes in party control. The council operates alongside a Conservative county council and a Conservative Member of Parliament – meaning ABC Town as a whole is not tied to one political party.

### **1.2 Identify the responsibilities and functions of the authority in which you work.**

ABC COUNCIL is a district council, and is the lower tier of a two-tier system with ABC County Council the responsibilities of which are laid out under section 2.4. Although the majority of local authority functions lie with xxx (which receives 78% of Council Tax), xxx is responsible for a number of matters in the town, financed by 11.5% of Council Tax<sup>13</sup>. ABC COUNCIL is divided into nine broad services: Economy and Planning, Legal, Democratic and HR, Corporate Finance, Communications, Digital and Transformation, ABC Homes, Strategic Housing, Community Services, and Major Projects and Commercial Services. It executes functions including housing, local planning and development, licensing of establishments, council tax collection, and administration of elections among others - as set out in the Local Government Act 2000 and the Localism Act 2011.

### **1.3 Describe the aims, objectives and priorities of the authority in which you work and assess how these impact upon work within the area of democracy support.**

ABC COUNCIL's corporate priorities for the period 2018-2022 are as follows<sup>14</sup>:

- Delivering value for money and modernising the way we work;
- Delivering affordable homes for ABC Town and reducing homelessness;
- Improving job opportunities and developing the local economy;
- Creating stronger communities;
- Providing high quality leisure and culture facilities and supporting health and wellbeing services;

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<sup>13</sup> "Council Tax for 2020-21," ABC Town Borough Council, 2020. Accessed 26.03.20. [http://www.ABC Town.gov.uk/pw/Council\\_Tax\\_and\\_Benefits/Council\\_Tax/CouncilTaxfor2019-20/index.htm](http://www.ABC Town.gov.uk/pw/Council_Tax_and_Benefits/Council_Tax/CouncilTaxfor2019-20/index.htm)

<sup>14</sup> "Corporate Priorities 2018-2022", ABC Town Borough Council, 2018. Accessed 09.04.20. <https://ABC Town.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/PUB352323.pdf>



- Protecting the environment.

Decisions made by the Full Council and committees often reflect these corporate priorities; a recent example is the development of a new town hall building and facilities. Falling under the first corporate priority, this will aid Democratic Services in embracing technology to deliver the service more efficiently. The second corporate priority details the need for ABC COUNCIL to support partner agencies to help those who are homeless. Democratic Services thus needs to ensure it sufficiently supports councillors who sit on homelessness-related bodies (e.g. ABC Town Open House Management Committee) to facilitate effective participation.

ABC COUNCIL's scrutiny panels embody its current priorities. In 2017, the Government's social mobility report highlighted that ABC Town, as a relatively affluent area, was providing insufficient education, employment opportunities, and affordable housing for disadvantaged residents<sup>15</sup>. This sparked the creation of a social mobility scrutiny panel, which Democratic Services was responsible for clerking. The ongoing scrutiny panel on ABC COUNCIL's carbon emissions directly affects Democratic Services – the department is encouraging councillors to become paperless to help reduce ABC COUNCIL's carbon footprint.

A continuous aim of ABC COUNCIL is to protect its finances. The council's budget for 2019/20 saw a cut in revenue support from the UK Government of 89.7%, a reduction of £1.72m over the three years prior<sup>16</sup>. Despite this, ABC COUNCIL's budget for 2020/21 forecast a financial surplus - the budget strategy identified a portion of this surplus to be put into reserves in order to protect against any further cuts in the future. National cuts since 2010 have seen ABC COUNCIL focus on commercialisation by finding alternative funding sources - for instance, areas of the town hall building are to be let out to local businesses to generate funds. These strategies mean that ABC COUNCIL is perhaps not yet feeling the full force of Government cuts; the knock-on effects will likely be more evident over the coming years.

Etc etc.

**Word count: 2,795**

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<sup>15</sup> "Social mobility in Great Britain: fifth state of the nation report", UK Government, 2017. Accessed 14.04.20.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/social-mobility-in-great-britain-fifth-state-of-the-nation-report>

<sup>16</sup> "ABC Town council to spend £7m on property and use rent to fund services," Mackenzie, M. ABC County County Times, 2019. Accessed 14.04.20. <https://www.wscountytimes.co.uk/news/politics/ABC-Town-council-spend-ps7m-property-and-use-rent-fund-services-91459>



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**GLOSSARY – use this list to help understand what the assignment questions are asking for:**

**Account for** - an explanatory statement, giving an indication of all relevant circumstances and reasoning.

**Analyse** - study in depth, identifying and describing in detail the main characteristics.

**Argue** - put forward an issue to be considered, then illustrate it, discuss its significance and defend it against possible counter-charges. To present reasons for or against an issue.

**Assess** - examine closely, with a view to 'weighing up' a particular situation. Consider in a balanced way the strengths and weaknesses or points for and against a proposition. In conclusion, state the judgement reached clearly.

**Comment** - state clearly and in moderate fashion opinions on the issue in question. Support views and observations made with reference to suitable evidence, research or explanations.

**Compare** - look for similarities *and* differences between two or more things (including ideas, research, evidence etc).

**Contrast** - deliberately single out and emphasise the differences and dissimilarities between two or more things. To compare in order to show unlikeness with something else.

**Criticise** - give a judgement about a statement or a body of work; explore its implications, discussing all the evidence which is available.

*In relation to the terms 'critically analyse', 'critically assess', 'critically examine' or 'critically evaluate', then the second part of each instruction term should be defined as its original term (analyse, assess, examine or evaluate), but the instruction term 'critically' should be prefixed in relation to each definition with 'To judge or discuss the merits and faults of'.*

**Define** - set down the precise meaning of something. Be prepared to state the limits of the definition. Take note of multiple meanings if they exist.

**Describe** - give a detailed and comprehensive account of something.

**Discuss** - investigate and examine by careful argument. Explore the implications and the advantages or disadvantages. Debate the case and possibly consider any alternatives. This is probably the most common instruction term. It is inviting the learner to say something interesting in response to the topic in question, or the evidence/ research gathered.

**Evaluate** - make an appraisal of the worth of something in the light of its truth or worthiness. Emphasise the views of Authorities as well as a personal estimation. To judge or determine the significance of.

**Explain** - to make known in detail. To make plain, or account for. Clarify, interpret and spell out the material to be presented, giving reasons for important features or developments.



**Identify** - pick out what is regarded as the key features of something (an argument, evidence, piece of research etc), perhaps making clear the criteria to be used in doing so.

**Illustrate** - to make clear and explicit by the discussion of concrete examples. To make intelligible by drawing similarities and comparisons.

**Outline** - give the main features or the main aspects of something under discussion. This includes stating the general principles of a subject, omitting minor details and emphasising structure or arrangement.

**Relate** - show how things are connected and how they possibly affect, cause, or resemble each other.

**Review** - make a summary of evidence, examining the subject critically. An inspection or examination of an issue.

**State** - present the main points in brief, clear form.

**Summarise** - give a concise account of the main points of a matter, omitting details and examples.



# VQManager Guide for Candidates

For the Diploma you will need to upload your completed assignments to the assessment portal VQ Manager which your assessor will then assess and provide feedback. You will be provided with a user name and password to get you started. You will upload:

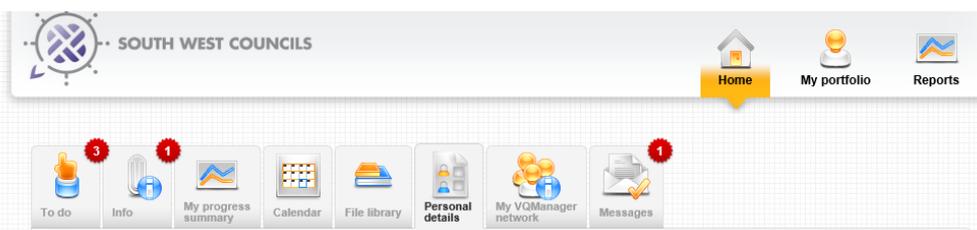
- Assignments 1-4
- Research Planning Assignment
- Draft Specialist Pathway - Dissertation
- Final Specialist Pathway – Dissertation
- Reflective Learning and Evaluation Assignment

VQ Manager also has a File Library containing all the documentation that supports this programme.

## Setting up notifications

If you would like automated emails from VQManager when your assessor has returned work to you or has signed off a module, you can set this up under Personal Details.

- Log in
- From the Home page, choose the Personal Details Tab on lower toolbar



- Scroll to the bottom of the web page
- Ensure your email address is added / correct
- Select the option you prefer from the drop down menu for the first two prompts (evidence assessed and units signed off)
- Press the SAVE button

Email \*

xxxxxxxxxx

Receive e-mail reminder for evidence assessed in the last seven days  
None

Receive e-mail reminder for units signed off in the last seven days  
None

Receive e-mail reminder for missed assessment plan target dates  
None

Receive e-mail reminder for missed progress review planned dates  
None

My e-mails sent to portfolio@vqmanager.co.uk go to:  
 my To Do page  my assessor's To Do page

Save Cancel



## Accessing Documents for this programme in the File Library

All documents and resources for this programme can be found in the File Library:

- Log in
- From the home page, choose the File Library tab on lower toolbar

## To upload an assignment

- 1 From the **My portfolio** menu, click on the **Log evidence** tab
- 2 Fill in the information about the evidence, such as the type of file (assignment, or work product or audio file) and the Summary description, eg "Assignment 1"

*Note: You can upload more than one document for each assignment but please submit each assignment on a separate evidence record.*

- 3 In the **Criteria met** section, navigate to the relevant unit of a qualification by using the + icons
- 4 Tick off the assessment criteria you think your evidence meets (usually this will be an entire unit)

*Note: You can use the 'Select all' icon to tick all checkboxes in a section. Similarly you can use the 'Deselect all' icon to uncheck all checkboxes in a section.*

- 5 Click on one of the following buttons:

<b>Submit to assessor</b>	<b>Save and continue later</b>	<b>Cancel</b>
Use this if your assignment is ready to be assessed. Once you have submitted the evidence you can no longer edit it	Use this if you want to work on the evidence later and are not yet ready to submit it for assessment	if you wish to cancel the uploading of your assignment

## To check the evidence has been submitted

- 1 From the **My portfolio** menu, click on the **Evidence List** tab

*Note: If you hover your mouse over the arrow button, a pop-up will tell you the last thing that happened with the evidence.*

## To edit a referred assignment

Assessors can return evidence to you for further action if you have not met all the assessment criteria. You can edit the assignment and resubmit it to the assessor.

- 1 Within the **Evidence** page find the evidence that has been returned for action. It will have the words **Edit/ Submit** in the arrow button. Alternatively, evidence waiting for action can be found on the **To Do** tab on your homepage
- 2 Read the comment to you written in the Assessor Comments field
- 3 Amend the assignment
- 4 Click on the **Submit to Assessor** button. This evidence is then sent back to your assessor

*Note: A full audit trail is kept in the system of the progression of the evidence.*



## To delete evidence

- 1 Find the item of evidence you want to delete
- 2 Click on the '**Delete evidence**' icon on the right hand side of the evidence summary
- 3 A confirmation message will appear. Click on **Yes** to confirm evidence deletion.

Note: You will only be able to delete evidence until such time as the evidence has been sent to your assessor for assessment. At this point the evidence is locked.

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## To reuse evidence

It is possible to reuse evidence from the evidence list view (for example, if you upload a coaching diary, you may want to use it in more than one assignment)

- 1 Find the item of evidence you want to reuse
- 2 Click on the '**Reuse evidence**' icon on the right hand side of the evidence summary
- 4 Edit the evidence and select the updated criteria
- 5 Save the evidence as normal

Note: The new evidence item is saved with a new evidence number. The original evidence item remains untouched.

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