Civility Action Plan

Key theme	Activity underway and planned	Responsible partner(s)	Timescale	Notes
Evidence, Research and Learning	Engagement on good practice with LGA, WLGA and NILGA through UK Forum partnership	COSLA	Ongoing	Civility leads from COSLA, LGA, NILGA and WLGA meet quarterly to share learning and good practi
	Develop and deliver webinar series for elected members on topics related to civility in public life across 4 nations	COSLA	Early 2027	
	Undertake research on civility in public life	Ethical Standards Commissioner	Currently underway	
	Research and polling on community	SPA	Currently	

	cohesion issues including trust in policing		underway	
	Participation in the Debate not Hate survey of councillors on 4 nations basis	COSLA	Completed for 2026	Survey results and report for 2026 available here. Survey to be done on annual basis
	Gather demographic data from Complainers and Responders	Ethical Standards Commissioner	Work underway	
	Explore undertaking research and data gathering as part of local government elections 2027 to gather information on why people choose not to seek re-election.	COSLA/Scottish Government/Elect Her	In advance of May 2027	Anecdotal evidence tells us that many women and those from underrepresented groups are standing down (or intending to stand down) due to incivility, culture and conduct in politics. Evidence would be helpful to show how these issues are impacting retention. Funding required to undertake research
	Creation of a good practice hub that identifies and platforms good practices around inclusive and feminist policy and governance in councils	Engender, Improvement Service, Elect Her	In early development	Being funded by Engender
	Monitoring of deepfake sexual abuse towards MPs - consider adopting recommendations for local government	Jo Cox Foundation	Currently underway	Project underway monitoring deepfake sexual abuse towards MPs however there will be learning for councillors and local government
	National demographics database for councillors including current/existing makeup of	COSLA/Scottish Government/IS	In advance of May 2027 and ongoing	

	councillors as well as capturing the demographic data of who is standing for election			
Safe, Respectful and Inclusive Political Participation	Continue to deliver Operation Ford briefings to share good practice and advise on personal safety for elected members	COSLA/Police Scotland	Ongoing. Briefings being planned for candidates in Jan/Feb 2027 and for new councillors post election	
	Support elected members raising an incident to Police Scotland and work to ensure better support to elected members that raise an incident	COSLA/Police Scotland	Ongoing	
	Lobby UK and devolved governments and Police for additional resources for councillor safety, including the provision of personal safety alarms for councillors at risk	COSLA	Ongoing	
	Continue to deliver Digital Safety and Self Care Training (Elect Her) and work to promote this to elected members in Scotland	Elect Her/COSLA	Ongoing	
	Train Elected Members in Trauma Informed Practice and Approaches	Resilience Learning Partnership	Ongoing	Could deliver some of this through current resource- may require funding if large number of delivery was required.
	Joint resources commissioned with UK Forum LGAs on healthy debate for Councils	COSLA	Resources published summer 2026, need for ongoing publicising and sharing with Councils	

	Development of a COSLA Civility Charter	COSLA	Action complete	
	Work to strengthen standards and the ethical standards framework, including reviewing/updating the 2000 Local Government Act.	Standards Commission, Ethical Standards Commissioner, COSLA	Work underway	
	Jointly write to political parties ahead of 2027 LG election to set expectations for behaviour and conduct	Standards Commission, Ethical Standards Commissioner, COSLA	In advance of May 2027	
	Support the Online Safety Act Networks' proposal for an amendment to the UK Government Representation of the People Bill which would develop a code of practice for social media platforms to address potential harms during the electoral process	Jo Cox Foundation, COSLA, Electoral Commission, Elect Her	Ongoing	
	Representation of the People Bill advocacy to make candidates and agents addresses private by default	Jo Cox Foundation, Elect Her	Ongoing	Bill currently at committee stage in the House of Lords
	Engage with Ofcom to explore how media initiatives could be delivered at a local level and to raise awareness of platform's responsibilities ahead of the 2027 local election	COSLA	In advance of May 2027	
	Create an enhanced package of pre election induction and training for elected members	IS, COSLA	An online course ('Preparing for Elected Office to Scottish Local Government') has been developed by	Inclusion of Civility in Public Life section included in IS/OU course

			IS with the Open University - Course now live	
Diverse and Representative Democracy	Implementation of SLARC recommendations to reduce barriers to office, including introduction of a severance scheme for elected members	COSLA, Scottish Government	Ongoing	Severance scheme will not be in place for 2027, COSLA continues to lobby for this and will push for early progress for 2032 implementation
	Run webinars to encourage people from underrepresented groups to stand as candidates for local government	COSLA, IS, Inclusion Scotland, BEMIS, Elect Her	Series of webinars run through Autumn 2026	
	Work to encourage Councils and public bodies to undertake a gender sensitive audit	COSLA, Engender, Elect Her	Ongoing	City of Edinburgh Council piloting a gender sensitive audit
	Promotion of Access to Elected Office fund for disabled candidates	COSLA, IS, Inclusion Scotland	Ongoing	
	Continue to deliver online GatHERings for women councillors	Elet Her, COSLA	Ongoing	Next gatherings scheduled for November and January
	Access to Politics initiatives (workshops and resources for DPOs/disabled people) to encourage disabled people's civic participation	Inclusion Scotland	On rolling basis	
	Equal Representation in Politics Charter to promote women's and more diverse representation	Engender and the Equal Representation Coalition	Charter and toolkit now live	Equal Representation in Politics
	Host workshop on Strengthening Women's Political Leadership in Scotland	Scottish Government, COSLA, Elect Her	In diary for 7 December	Several other partners attending including Engender, Women 50:50, CEMVO
	Develop and launch Access to Politics Charter to promote and support best	Inclusion Scotland	Launched 5 November,	

	practice for disability inclusion in political parties		implementation ongoing	
Democratic Culture, Trust and Public Discourse	Work with BBC to strengthen use of BBC Bitesize resource to reach children and young people about politics and local democracy	COSLA	December 2026 - March 2027	
	Peruse pre election with BBC and other media outlets on coverage highlighting abuse and intimidation of councillors and candidates	COSLA	In advance of May 2027	
	Develop and launch resources for councillors to talk to children and young people in school settings about the role of Councils, councillors and local democracy	COSLA	Resources published summer 2026, need for ongoing socialisation with Councils	resources available here
	Continued involvement in Festival of Politics programme in events exploring abuse of politicians, community cohesion, local democracy and other relevant subjects	COSLA	Festival takes place yearly in August	Vice President spoke on panel about social media abuse towards women as part of August 2026 event
	Promote the importance of leading by example and awareness raising of issues via training and promotional work, events and adjudicatory role.	Standards Commission	Work ongoing	
	Explore parliamentary exhibition focused around local democracy	COSLA	2027	
	Youth takeover of COSLA Board	COSLA	In advance of May 2027	
	Support the creation and delivery of a Scottish Democracy Festival (akin to Danish Folkemodet)	All partners	Festival confirmed for 28/29 May 2027 in Perth	further information available here

	Strengthen school curriculum around democratic literacy including introduction of new social studies curriculum	Education Scotland	Implementation August 2028	Draft published November 2026, Education Scotland currently collating feedback
	Increase diversity of Boards by producing a new strategy. Highlight where recommendations may read across to elected office	Ethical Standards Commission	2027-01-01 00:00:00	Strategy will be subject to change following wider consultation exercise
	Continue resourcing lived experience panels to inform policy and practice	Resilience Learning Partnership	Ongoing	
	Continue to tackle community cohesion issues, including through the National Taskforce	COSLA/Scottish Government/Police Scotland/Scottish Police Authority	Ongoing	