

# LISKEARD TOWN COUNCIL

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[www.liskeard.gov.uk](http://www.liskeard.gov.uk)



3/5 West Street  
Liskeard  
PL14 6BW

19 April 2023

Mrs Sheryll Murray MP  
The Parade  
Liskeard  
Cornwall PL14 6AF

Dear Sheryll,

Liskeard Town Council has recently been considering the requirements for vetting Town and Parish Councillors. Whilst a large Unitary Authority like Cornwall Council is capable of DBS checking all elected Members upon their election, it is far more difficult for small town and parish councils. There appears to be a worrying lack in requirements for town and parish councils to vet their councillors.

The Town Council did note the new legislation Local Government Disqualification Act [2022] that recently gained Royal Assent. This appears to be a welcome improvement, but it is limited in it only prohibits candidates standing for election if they have a criminal record for sexual offences. The Council feel there is a gap that may permit candidates putting themselves forward for election when they may not be a fit or proper individual for the role, or there is important information that should be disclosed to the council.

Whilst the Town Council could develop its only policy of a basic DBS check for all councillors, there appears to be no legal basis to enforce this. Even if all councillors were willing, there is no guidance on how a small town or parish council might manage any unsavoury information that transpired from a DBS check. One of the practical issues is what to do with the information that a DBS check picks up, the council cannot ask for a councillor to resign, or to not undertake certain activities.

Liskeard Town Council would be grateful if you could raise this matter with the relevant government department, to see what more can be done to ensure all town and parish councillors are fit and proper people for the role; appropriately vetted and a clear process laid out for dealing with any matters that might arise from a DBS check.

We note the disqualification criteria from the Electoral Commission to stand as an election candidate, but given the Unitary Council still recognises a need for their elected members to have a DBS check, it raises the question about all town and parish councillors in Cornwall too.

Yours sincerely,

**Nick Craker**

Liskeard Town Councillor

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