

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

28 NOVEMBER 2022

Present: Councillor Cowan(Chairperson)
Councillors Ash-Edwards, Davies, Derbyshire, Goodway, Lay,
Palmer, Jackie Parry, Simmons and Thomson

41 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Naughton

42 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest

43 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2022 were approved by the Committee as a correct record and were signed by the Chairperson.

44 : CYBER SECURITY - PASSWORDS, MULTIFACTOR AUTHENTICATION (MFA) AND MOBILE DEVICE PROTECTION

The Chair welcomed the Head of ICT to present the report, which provided an update on some of the Cyber Security controls in place around Cardiff Council systems and data.

Members were advised that the Council has reviewed the operation of Multi-factor Authentication (MFA), having received feedback regarding the frequency of prompts. Retaining weekly reauthentication is considered appropriate as there is a cost involved in using additional protection.

Members were advised that there are risks involved in allowing Members and officers to use their own devices for accessing Council systems. Some personal devices such as smartphones and tablets are allowed to be used to access Council email services. Mobile application management allows the Council to control applications to give people access to Council systems securely, and remove data and applications remotely.

Members were advised that the Council is seen as a good target for ransomware attacks due to its size and the funds it controls. LA's have been subject to ransomware attacks in earlier years and have taken years to recover, with some data never recovered.

Members sought clarification on the difference between a personal mobile phone and another personal device such as a Mac. Officers advised that the operating systems

of mobile phones and tablets differ from other devices. The Council has the tools to control applications on smartphones and tablets, but not other devices.

Members were advised that the Welsh Government and Assembly have access to additional security tools. Other organisations use different security tools such as geospatial tracking. The Council hopes to be able to put additional security measures in place when its Microsoft agreement is renewed in 2024. This could allow security policies to be reviewed.

Members discussed various issues around Multi-factor Authentication, including random prompts and poor signal strength when using Council mobiles. Officers advised that methods of authentication had been reviewed and biometric methods found to be too complex. Giving users a choice of 2nd stage authentication method was found to be most suitable. Members were advised that the authenticator app should use Wi-Fi as well as mobile network signal. Wi-Fi can also be used for telephony as well as data. The Council is aware of pockets of no coverage on the EE network. There is an opportunity for Councillors to switch their mobile phones to the O2 network.

Members expressed frustration at the inability to use the copy and paste facility on mobile phones. Officers advised that it was considered necessary to restrict this facility for information management purposes. The advice from the Information Commissioner and information governance is not to allow information to be copied and pasted out of Council-controlled systems into uncontrolled applications. It was pointed out that it was possible to circumvent this sort of restriction. Officers advised that this had been discussed with information governance and the advice was that it was better to have some controls in place than none. It is considered particularly important to retain control of Council data. Similar restrictions are not necessary on Council laptops as they are Council-controlled devices.

Members questioned why it was necessary to have separate passcodes for mobile phone and Outlook login. Officers advised that the Council cannot control mobile phone passcodes but can control application passcodes. It is considered good practice to have multi-layered security on devices.

Members discussed the possibility of moving to fortnightly reauthentication. Officers advised that MFA worked more smoothly when users logged on daily. Different devices need to be synchronised which can take a few moments.

Members discussed their inability to log on to different Microsoft email accounts on their laptops. Officers advised that this was due to Microsoft policy and discussions had been undertaken regarding it. Microsoft was taking steps to address the issue, for example in relation to email accounts in English and Welsh.

Members were advised that the Standards and Ethics Committee had recommended that the Members' ICT protocol be reviewed.

Members were interested in hearing the feedback from the consultation. Officers advised that a number of key concerns had been raised, including the copy and paste facility and authentication. Members had queried why it was not possible to use Apple devices on the Council network. Officers advised that the Council's IT was

Microsoft-based and there was a cost implication to using Apple devices in addition. There were problems in the interface between softwares, and there would be additional pressure on IT support resources. Standardisation on one system makes it easier for the Council to support users.

During the consultation Members had also raised the issue of using Zoom. Officers advised that Members were not prevented from using Zoom through their browser.

RESOLVED:

To note the report.

45 : INFORMATION GOVERNANCE UPDATE

Ian Allwood, Head of Finance presented the report, which was to provide a response to the queries that were raised by the Democratic Services Committee on 5 September 2022 in respect of the mandatory Information Governance and Data Protection session provided as part of the Member Induction Programme.

Members wished to know whether it would be possible to roll out the e-training across all mandatory sessions for those who have not completed it in person or hybrid. Officers advised that further face-to-face sessions had been scheduled for Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting, and there were some outstanding attendees for Code of Conduct. The intention is to finish face to face modules, and any subsequent attendance to complete mandatory would be done via e0learning. It is preferable for members to attend face to face sessions as they are Cardiff-focused while the eLearning modules are generic. Officers advised that mandatory sessions had been arranged around Members' convenience and there had been many opportunities for Members to attend.

Members expressed a hope that Members who had not attended mandatory sessions had been drawn to the attention of the Whips.

Officers advised that there were no legal sanctions for non-compliance with mandatory training sessions. Other possible sanctions had been discussed with political group leaders, but none had been agreed.

Officers advised that there was a Welsh Government white paper out for consultation which included proposals on mandatory training for elected members,

Members raised the problem of members being unable to attend sessions due to work commitments. Officers expressed understanding of councillors' outside commitments. The point was made that councillors receive payment for their position and there is a responsibility to undertake the necessary commitments. Councillors were advised to contact officers if they had difficulties.

Members expressed gratitude for the written guides.

RESOLVED:

To:

- a) Approve the circulation of the Information Governance: Guide for Elected Members and the Information Governance – Quick reference guide for Elected Members to all Elected Members.
- b) Approve that the Information Governance for Elected members 2022 E-Learning module becomes the vehicle for all Elected Members who were unable to attend the IGDP in-person session to complete this training.
- c) Approve that a request be sent to all Elected Members who have yet to complete their IGDP session to do so using the Information Governance for Elected members 2022 module by the 31st of January 2023.
- d) Receive an update from the Head of Democratic Services on the progress made in the completion of the IGDP Mandatory training at its next meeting.

46 : MEMBERS ENQUIRY SERVICE (MES) UPDATE

Gary Jones, Head of Democratic Services, introduced the report, which was to inform the Committee of the current performance of Member Enquiries System (MES) and the progress being made to develop the use of the system.

Members were advised that service areas had not been able to achieve the 10 working day SLA due to the increased level of enquiries since the Covid pandemic.

Additional tools are being developed for the HALO reporting system. The basic system is expected to come online later in 2023. Aspirations for more advanced tools were unlikely to be realised before 2024-26.

Work is continuing to improve the system, and these will be rolled out following testing.

Members expressed frustration that issues persisted with accessing the content of enquiries, Officers advised that some of the issues were due to the changeover to the HALO system, and these would be resolved shortly.

Members expressed frustration that it was difficult to identify particular officers that were dealing with complex enquiries. Officers advised that an effort would be made to make it easier for councillors to identify a named officer dealing with complex enquiries.

Members discussed the procurement of the system and why a system with the required reporting tools had not been procured. Officers advised that there is reporting software in the Halo system, but it needs further development. It may be possible to acquire data from service areas for display in relation to matters which councillors wished to be informed on.

Members expressed their gratitude for the work of the Democratic services team in dealing with Members enquiries.

Members expressed a desire for an automatic system for chasing up responses within the allotted time. Officers advised that the Member Services team receive a reminder within 10 days if there has been no response. Officers will investigate a reminder system for Members.

Members expressed dissatisfaction that members of the public receive responses from named officers but Members do not. Officers advised that the provision of named responses from Oms would be investigated.

Members expressed frustration that it was necessary to open a new enquiry in order to follow up an existing one.

Officers advised that a 2-stage reporting process had been investigated, which involves a 10-day SLA to confirm an enquiry had been logged and would be responded to, with a following report on completion, with the enquiry remaining open until completion. There were concerns about the administrative work involved in ensuring that responses were updated by service areas using their own software systems in addition to HALO.

Officers confirmed that individual officers are named as signatories to email responses to enquiries within the email trail. The possibility of team leaders being named in final responses will be investigated.

Members wondered whether the Cardiff app could be developed to allow minor enquiries. Officers advised that the app had been developed to allow members of the public to log reports. It does not necessarily issue a response. It feeds into service area systems but does not feed into the MES. Officers will investigate whether the app can be enhanced to facilitate this.

Members sought further information on the extent of the investigation into possible software systems for the MES. Officers advised that an available system had been inherited, due to its low start-up cost. This had developed into the HALO system, which was a good system in terms of what it was trying to achieve. Bespoke case management software is available, including caseworker systems. These have been investigated, however licence costs were high. However, the additional functionalities of these systems had been identified and discussions were taking place with HALO to have these developed within the MES. Further enhancements suggested by Members could be raised with HALO for incorporation.

RESOLVED:

To note the content of the report.

47 : MULTI-LOCATION MEETING CONFERENCING SYSTEM UPDATE

Gary Jones, Head of Democratic Services, introduced the report, which was to provide the Committee with an update on the use of the Council's multi-location meeting arrangements and the performance of the Council's conferencing system.

Members were advised that the integration of face-to-face and remote attendees was challenging, and the previous conferencing system was not able to meet the

requirements of multi-location meetings under the Local Government and Elections Act (Wales) 2021. The EasyConf Connect system provides a single integrated platform with all the required functionalities.

A need for further training of Members has been identified, and an ICT refresh has allowed Members to be provided with up-to-date devices able to meet the technological requirements of multi-location meetings. Issues that have arisen during use include unfamiliarity with the software; diversity of devices; and inability to establish or maintain a connection.

It is planned to deliver improvements including an upgrade to the existing conferencing system; a conferencing equipment upgrade allowing the use of Microsoft Teams as a backup; addition of a chat facility; a software upgrade for all Members; and in-person training for Members and Committee chairs. The performance of the system will continue to be monitored over the succeeding 3-6 months.

Appreciation was expressed for the patience of Members in bearing with the challenges and frustrations of adapting to the new system.

Members expressed some scepticism about the system but also hope that the remaining problems would be resolved.

Members enquired as to what could be done to address connectivity issues in the use of the system related to the Council's broadband capacity. Officers advised that some of the connectivity breakdowns had been due to downloads of Microsoft security updates. A portion of bandwidth has now been reserved for committee meetings and the situation will be kept under review.

RESOLVED:

To note the content of the report and the actions that are being taken to improve the use of the council's multilocation meetings.

48 : DIVERSE COUNCIL DECLARATION DRAFT ACTION PLAN

Gary Jones, Head of Democratic Services, introduced the report, which requested consideration of a draft action plan for the delivery of the Diverse Council declaration approved by Council on 27 January 2022.

Members were advised that it had been intended to implement the declaration in time for the 2022 Local Government elections; however, this had not proved possible and it was now intended to develop a programme leading up to the 2027 elections. A number of actions for improving representation and diversity have been identified. Any measures undertaken must be met from within existing resources.

The plan integrates with the following item, achievement of WLGA Charter, and the two will be subsumed within the Participation Strategy under development by Cabinet.

Members wished to know whether areas of weakness in Member representation had been identified. Officers advised that consultation had been carried out with communities and hard to reach groups to better understand why there is a lack of engagement and participation. Results will be linked into the Diversity Survey and mapped against census and other data to assess the equitability of representation.

RESOLVED:

a) To note the content of the report and appendices.

To receive a report back on the results of the consultation with communities and hard to reach groups and the Diversity Survey before recommending the submission of the draft Diverse Council Declaration Action Plan for approval to Council.

49 : ACHIEVING THE WLGA CHARTER FOR MEMBERS SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

Gary Jones, Head of Democratic Services, introduced the report, which was to consider the requirements necessary to achieve the WLGA Charter for Member Support & Development.

Members were advised that an action plan has been developed of the key actions that will be necessary to be achieved before applying for the WLGA Charter, including actions to ensure that arrangements are in place for all members to be offered a Personal Development Review (PDR); prospective candidates, candidates and new members are informed of their roles and responsibilities; members are offered the opportunity to be mentored by Member peers; and information resources are provided.

Members were advised that the Charter would be reviewed and updated in April 2023.

Members sought information on the resource implications of achieving the Charter. Officers advised that discussions would have to take place with Human Resources regarding the PDR process and the possibility of streamlining it. One of the criteria for the Charter is for all senior salary holders to undertake a PDR, with the exception of the Leader; although some LA's had identified persons such as leaders of other councils with whom the Council Leader could carry out a PDR.

Members expressed concern that the role of a councillor was being identified as employment, and noted that employees have protections that councillors do not. The view was expressed that the special character of elected office ought to be recognised, noting that elected members are 'employed' by their electors rather than the Council. Officers advised that for newly elected Cabinet members, an annual development discussion with an experienced colleague might be beneficial.

Members expressed concern that the process might give Cabinet members a false sense of protection, noting that Cabinet appointments are political and can be altered or rescinded by the Leader for political reasons and not due to underperformance in the role. Officers advised that the PDR process was not related to performance but was an offer of support for improvement in the role.

Members wondered why a formal process was necessary, rather than informal arrangements when desired. Officers advised that this could be considered in the review of the Charter.

Members expressed the view that while there was a case for new members and people newly into roles to have discussions about personal development, it should not be as part of a formal PDR process, which would suggest it was performance and employment related.

Members expressed the view that it might be appropriate for whips to discuss personal development with new members, but noted that whips are not salaried.

Members suggested that due to its greater size it might be more useful to compare Cardiff with some of the larger UK LA's rather than other Welsh ones. Officers advised that Swansea Council had not signed up to the Charter. However, Rhondda Cynon Taf Council which is of a similar size has had the Advanced Charter twice, and is seen as example of good practice.

Members expressed the view that the Charter should be abandoned. Officers advised that the Council had agreed to work towards the Charter, and that it would be necessary to amend the Equality Action Plan if this decision were reversed.

RESOLVED:

To consider the amended Charter after April 2023 and refer it to political groups for their consideration.

50 : SCHEDULE OF REMUNERATION 2023-2024

Gary Jones, Head of Democratic Services, introduced the report, which was to consider the proposals of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) ('the Panel') draft report 2023/24 with regard to the levels of Members' remuneration and allowances, and an addition to the approved duties contained within Cardiff Council's Members' Schedule of Remuneration.

Members were advised that the IRPW proposed an increase in the Members' Basic Salary from £16,800 to £17,600, and that Senior Salaries increase by the amount of increase in the Basic Salary.

Members were advised that the purpose of the proposed addition to the Members' Schedule of Remuneration was to equitably reflect remuneration of duties undertaken by elected Members appointed by the Council to duties such as Committee chair.

Members were advised that the deadline for responses was 1 December 2022, but that it would be possible to ask the IRPW for an extension to the consultation period.

Members expressed the view that it would be appropriate to refer the consultation questions to party groups for discussion.

Members sought clarification on whether it was possible for councils to decide to remunerate at a lower level than proposed by the IRPW. Officers advised that it was not, but that individual Members could elect to forego all or part of their remuneration or an increase in their remuneration.

RESOLVED:

- a) To refer the report of the IRPW with consultation questions to all Members for discussion and await responses from Members and groups'
- b) To request the Head of Democratic Services to collate and analyse the responses.
- c) To delegate authority to the Head of Democratic Services in consultation with the Chair to prepare appropriate responses and submit them to the IRPW.

To recommend the amended list of "Approved Duties" within Schedule 2 of the Members' Schedule of Remuneration 2022/23 to Council for approval and adoption.

51 : DEMOCRATIC SERVICES - ACTIVITIES AND SERVICE SUPPORT

Gary Jones, Head of Democratic Services, introduced the report, which was to inform the Committee on the performance of the Council's Democratic Services since the last meeting on 5 September 2022.

An update was provided on the level of completed member development sessions and on scheduled and planned member development sessions and topics. Potential future learning topics were suggested for consideration.

Members were advised that comparative data from the Demographic Profile Survey would be presented to the Committee at its next meeting in January 2023.

A number of proposals were put forward for achieving savings in the Democratic Services budget. Members expressed the view that the costs of democracy should be ringfenced.

RESOLVED:

- a) To note the information set out in the report.
- b) To prioritise the planned member development topics for delivery as is: Dementia Friendly Cardiff; Age Friendly Cardiff Awareness; Rights of a Child in Practice; and Fast Track Cities.
- c) To reserve the proposed possible future member development topics for consideration for scheduling unless other topics arise and take priority
- d) To approve the presentation of a comparative diversity survey report at its next meeting on 23 January 23

To note that budget savings may impact on services and identify any potential budget saving opportunities for Democratic Services.

52 : FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

Gary Jones, Head of Democratic Services, provided Members with an update on topics for inclusion in the Committee's Forward Work Programme.

RESOLVED:

To approve the Committee's Forward Work Programme

53 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

No urgent items were received.

54 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on 6 February 2023.

The meeting terminated at 7.05 pm