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## **REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

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### **SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMPARISON AGAINST THE WELSH LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION (WLGA) CHARTER FOR MEMBER SUPPORT & DEVELOPMENT**

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#### **1. Purpose of Report.**

- 1.1 To consider the support provided to the Elected Members of the Authority in comparison with the support and services required to achieve the WLGA Charter for Member Support & Development.

#### **2. Background.**

##### **2.1 What is the Charter?**

- 2.1.1 Elected Members today face increasing challenges. Under the modernisation agenda, there are heightened expectations on them to undertake a diversity of roles ranging from that of community leader to their special responsibilities within the Council. Throughout Wales, authorities are striving to provide the best possible support for their members to enable them to meet these challenges. This takes the form of skill and knowledge development, support facilities, and support services.
- 2.1.2 The Welsh Local Government Association has a long history of working with authorities to help them develop these activities. To provide structure to the national programme of support, the Wales Charter for Member Support and Development was developed collaboratively by the Association, Elected Members representing each of the political groups and member support officers from each authority.
- 2.1.3 The Charter aims to provide a broad framework for local planning, self-assessment, action and review together with networking and comparison amongst authorities and the sharing of good and innovative practice. Its wide adoption has raised the overall amount and standard of support given to members in Wales.
- 2.1.4 There are 2 levels of award with the first level normally requiring to be achieved before progressing to the next level:
1. (Standard) Charter Award
  2. Advanced Charter Award
- 2.1.5 The following local authorities currently hold the Charter and Advanced Charter awards:

(Standard) Charter Award

1. Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority
2. Snowdonia National Park Authority
3. Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
4. Caerphilly County Borough Council
5. Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority
6. Powys County Council
7. Gwynedd Council

Advanced Charter Award

1. Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
2. Brecon Beacons National Park Authority

- 2.1.6 The Charter is awarded for a period of three years after which an authority is able to relinquish, maintain or improve its charter status.
- 2.2 The Good Practice and Innovation Award for Member Support and Development is an award which seeks to recognise and share excellent or innovative practice in member support and development. The award aims to recognise activities that have demonstrably improved practice in Wales. The following Authorities achieved the Good Practice and Innovation Award:
- Caerphilly County Borough Council - 2016
  - Bridgend County Borough Council - 2013
  - Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council – 2013
- 2.3 The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 introduced legislative requirements for corporate governance and member support and development. Therefore, the Charter criteria were further developed to enhance and enable these legal requirements.
- 2.4 The (Standard) **Charter Award** is a self-assessment undertaken by the Authority, documented and submitted to the WLGA, who will review the submission and determine whether to make the award. The (Standard) Charter Award is designed to establish that an essential range of support and development arrangements are in place, monitored and recorded.
- 2.5 The **Advanced Charter Award** is a further self-assessment, documented and submitted to the WLGA in the same way as the (Standard) Charter Award submission. It is further underpinned by a peer assessment including a site visit undertaken by officers, and member peers from Wales and England. The Advanced Charter is designed to recognise that the arrangements required for the Charter are working effectively.
- 2.6 There are two primary benefits of achieving the WLGA Charter:
1. The Auditors, Inspectors, Regulators (AIRs) have acknowledged that a Council which has achieved the Charter has Elected Members who are aware of key topics, are provided with development opportunities to broaden their knowledge and skills, have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities and are more likely to make more informed decisions.

2. That all Elected Members of the Authority have the confidence that the support and development provided to them is of a high standard when measured against a nationally recognised standard.

### 3. Issues

- 3.1 An assessment has been undertaken for each of the main criteria which form the standard WLGA Charter award to determine how the support currently provided to Elected Members of this Authority compares with the support and services required to achieve the WLGA Charter for Member Support & Development. Each criteria has been categorised as follows:

- Green - Few or minimal changes from the established processes.
- Amber - Some changes with an element of significant change to existing processes and activities.
- Red - Significant change to existing processes and activities or the introduction of new processes or activities.

	Topic	Standard	Clarification	Status
A1	Members are supported with role descriptions.	<p>Role descriptions are adopted for the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leader</li> <li>• Deputy Leader</li> <li>• Cabinet Members</li> <li>• Scrutiny Members</li> <li>• Scrutiny Chairs</li> <li>• Scrutiny Co-optees</li> <li>• Chairs of statutory committees</li> <li>• Chairs of area committees</li> <li>• Chair of the Audit Committee</li> <li>• Members of Audit Committee</li> <li>• Chair of Democratic Services</li> <li>• Member of Democratic Services</li> <li>• Ward Member, including community, leadership and case work</li> <li>• Chair of Standards committee</li> <li>• Member of Standards Committee</li> <li>• Leader of the Opposition</li> <li>• Member Champion</li> </ul>	<p><b>What does adopted mean?</b></p> <p>Role descriptions exist and have been formally adopted for all the roles listed. There is no need at this level for members to evidence that they perform the roles outlined in the descriptions but they should understand what their role is and what is expected of them.</p> <p>What can be defined as a role description? See:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the WLGA model role descriptions for Welsh Authorities and</li> <li>• the WLGA document <i>The Role of Councillors in Collaboration</i> and</li> <li>• The Model Role description for a Scrutiny Co-optee Appendix A Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011</li> </ul>	<p><b>AMBER</b></p> <p>Role Descriptions currently exist but a review of them maybe required prior to submission to Council for approval and adoption.</p>

	Topic	Standard	Clarification	Status
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guidance is provided to members on their role on outside bodies.</li> </ul>	<b>Outside Bodies</b> Where members are responsible for formally representing the Authority or making decisions that could impact on the Authority or have legal obligations as - for example trustees of an organisation, they should be provided with a role description. In all instances members should be provided with guidance on their role on the outside body. Officers should secure (where available) terms of reference from outside bodies.	The WLGA provides general guidance for appointment to outside bodies.  Role descriptions for responsibilities as representatives on Outside Bodies needs to be developed and agreed
A2	Members are supported in undertaking their duties according to high standards of conduct.	All members are provided with training and development in the detail of the Members Code of conduct, taking into account any changes in the model or local codes as they emerge.	<b>What can be interpreted as training and development?</b> Any activities which help members understand what the code is and how they need to work within it. This could include written guidance, induction sessions, workshops, Q&A sessions.	<b>GREEN</b>  All Members completed Essential Code of Conduct training with the Monitoring Officer as part of their Induction. The Ethics and Standards Committee issues regular newsletters highlighting certain issues, and does an annual report to Council.
A3	Members are supported in understanding their roles and responsibilities as set out in the Constitution.	All members have received training on and understand the contents of the Constitution, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the roles, responsibilities and limits to the roles of committees</li> <li>the role of individual members and officers</li> <li>Member/officer protocols</li> <li>Meeting practice</li> <li>Standing orders</li> <li>Rules of debate</li> </ul>	Training has been made available to all members and take up of this has been high. The Constitution sets out the roles and responsibilities of every committee and broadly the role of the key players at each committee, for example chairs, support officers and regular/key participants.	<b>AMBER</b>  Members are provided with an overview of the Council its Constitution and meeting practices. Members who sit on Regulatory and Quasi-Judicial Committees complete Essential Training before they can sit and participate in Committee.

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			Role descriptions may be in the Constitution or as a separate document but should be formally adopted and valued.	Induction training is also provide to Scrutiny Committee Members. Refresher or additional briefings and guidance notes may need to be provided.
B1	<b>A member learning and development strategy has been adopted.</b>	<p>A local member development strategy is in place. The strategy sets out the approach that the Authority and the Democratic Services Committee takes to member development. It includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a commitment to and methodology for undertaking development needs analyses through a Personal Development Review scheme or Training Needs Assessment for those members not requesting a PDR, which identifies the local and national, collective and individual development needs of all members.</li> <li>• a commitment to and methodology for developing members according to the needs of the organisation.</li> <li>• a commitment to and methodology for creating personal development plans for all members.</li> <li>• a methodology for responding to the development needs of members identified in their personal support and development reviews or TNAs.</li> </ul>		<p><b>RED</b></p> <p>No Elected Member Learning and Development Strategy has been adopted by this Council administration. If created it should be reported to Council for approval and adoption.</p> <p>The process providing for personal development plans and analysis of training needs requires review and adoption by the Council</p>

	Topic	Standard	Clarification	Status
B2	Arrangements are in place for all members to be offered a PDR.	<p>Personal support and development reviews which are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• based on role descriptions</li> <li>• contribute to personal development plans</li> <li>• are conducted by senior members or other deemed suitably qualified as set out in the Measure guidance</li> <li>• are made available for all members and <b>must</b> be undertaken by members in a receipt of a senior/civic salary.</li> </ul> <p><b>Note</b>, although the Measure does not require the Leader to undertake a review, the Charter does. The Charter requires that all members in receipt of a senior salary undertake this. The Measure is voluntary but for all members.</p>	<p><b>What is a PDR?</b> An opportunity for a member to discuss with any senior member or other suitably qualified person their own requirements for training and development. This <b>should</b> include some examination of current duties as set out in the role descriptions listed above and <b>may</b> include some self or supported reflection on current performance as a starting point. The outcomes of the discussion <b>should</b> feed into a personal development plan held by the member with the required development activities and also be recorded by the Authority so that development activities can be arranged to support every members needs.</p> <p>The WLGA document 'Guidance for Authorities Planning to Implement Personal Development Reviews for Member' provides guidance in this area. Anyone conducting reviews should have received training in their purpose and methodology.</p>	<p><b>RED</b></p> <p>A suitable process needs to be developed and adopted by Council either as part of the Strategy or as a process for Elected Members. The approved process should be used by all Senior/Civic Salary Holders</p>
B3	A development programme for councillors is in place with a mechanism for its annual review. All councillors are made aware of, guided to and are able to access the	<p>An annual development programme informed by the Member Development Strategy is in place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The annual development programme is planned and publicised in advance.</li> </ul>	<p>The timings and settings of activities are varied to enable equal access by all, including those members who are working, are carers or have child care responsibilities.</p>	<p><b>AMBER</b></p> <p>The member development programme is updated by the Democratic Services Committee on a regular basis and circulated to all</p>

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	development activities equally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members are made aware of development opportunities provided in response to their needs.</li> </ul>	<p>There is an annual programme of events and learning opportunities for members both collectively and individually. This programme is informed by the organisational priorities set out in the strategy and in any requirements identified in the personal development plans which emerge from PDRs and TNAs.</p> <p>The programme should be developed by relevant officers and members for example the DSC/MDWG/ MD Champion, DS/HR officers and directors/service heads.</p> <p>The programme includes 'specialist' areas of development reflecting the needs of members in developing skills and understanding in both corporate governance and thematic or service areas.</p> <p>The programme is provided to members giving sufficient notice for attendance. Members are notified of specific events in which they have expressed an interest.</p> <p>The programme is designed to offer choice or variety of opportunities to attend.</p>	members for information. It is a rolling programme which includes at least the next 3 months of activities to ensure that the programme has an element of flexibility.

	Topic	Standard	Clarification	Status
B4	<b>Prospective candidates, candidates and new members are informed of their role and responsibilities.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Council uses the national guidance and support materials available for candidates and prospective candidates.</li> <li>All new or returning members are provided with a programme of induction.</li> </ul>	<b>What is the national Guidance?</b> This refers to the materials provided by the Association and others, to people in the community (not just those who have decided to stand) to encourage them to stand for office and to those who have already declared their intention to stand. These will be different for each election and at different times in the political calendar. The Association will have an overview of what is available.	<b>RED</b>  Prospective councillor sessions have not been established. WLGA Guide on Being a Councillor was made available for potential Candidates prior to the 2017 Election and Councillors were involved in Diversity in Local Government Mentoring Scheme.
			<b>What constitutes an induction programme?</b> This will vary between authorities but should at the base level be any activity that introduces new members to their roles both within and outside the council and the work of the authority generally. Use is made of the national induction materials provided by the WLGA.	<b>GREEN</b>  An Induction Programme was approved by the Democratic Services Committee and all Members participated in the Induction Day and received Induction packs immediately after they are elected
	<b>Development activities are relevant and of high quality.</b>	Learning activities are provided in appropriate styles and settings based on the learning needs and styles of individuals and committees. The Authority has a systematic and effective approach to commissioning, developing, providing and evaluating its training and development activities. This could include internal, external and collaborative arrangements.	<b>What are appropriate styles and settings?</b> A mix of for example formal/informal group/individual, interactive/passive working environment/away day The authority would need to demonstrate an effective selection process for commissioning training. This might include working with the WLGA and should include working	<b>AMBER</b>  The Democratic Services Committee identifies appropriate learning activities. The Head of Democratic Services works with partners to determine whether the activities can be delivered locally regionally or nationally and monitors the evaluation of



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			collaboratively where appropriate with other authorities to share intelligence or undertake joint procurement. Internal training, (rather than briefing) should be designed and provided with the support of training/OD professionals in addition to member support or policy/service officers.	activities to ensure that they are of a high standard. The Head of Democratic Services also works with Officers and partners to enhance the quality and availability of e-learning facilities.
B6	<b>There is a clear responsibility for leading the programme, driving the strategy and monitoring the outcomes.</b>	The Authority has clearly defined the arrangements for developing, implementing and monitoring its strategy for member support and development. Individual members and officers have clear roles in leading and championing this area. The needs of all political groups and independent members are taken into account regardless of political affiliation.	This role should be undertaken by the Democratic Services Committee and its chair or other appropriate such as a member support and development working group. Individual member(s) and officer(s) have clear overall responsibility for developing, implementing and monitoring the strategy and progress of the programme.	<b>AMBER</b>  The Democratic Services Committee and its Chairperson supported by the Head of Democratic provides the direction for Member Support and Development activities.
B7	<b>Resources are identified and provided for member development.</b>	Dedicated resources are identified and provided for member development activities. The Authority provides the "reasonable level" of development required by the Measure.	<b>How dedicated is dedicated?</b> Resources are specifically put aside and used for member development. The development activity can be very widely interpreted but should not be the usual business of the council. It could include traditional briefing, workshops or seminars handbooks, e-learning, induction activities. Resources should also include staff time, shared where possible between authorities.	<b>GREEN</b>  Dedicated Resources are in place for Member Development

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B8	Members are offered the opportunity to be mentored by Member peers.	The Authority is exploring the needs of members to be mentored. Any member who has requested a mentor is provided with one. Mentors are trained in mentoring skills.	The Authority is speaking to members about the concept and benefits of mentoring to gauge interest. Mentoring might include member to member or working with member or officer "buddies". The Authority should be exploring the need to provide Leadership mentoring for the Leader and Cabinet if requested.	<b>RED</b>  No mentoring process has been adopted by this administration. A Mentoring Scheme was used in 2012-2017
C1	Officer support is provided for member development, support and scrutiny.	<p>Every member committee, panel, forum etc. has officer support provided. Members are also supported in their casework.</p> <p>Overview and Scrutiny committees have dedicated support from officers who can provide impartial research, support and advice.</p> <p>The nature of the support has been clearly articulated to members</p>	<p>Officer support should be provided for every council meeting and committee.</p> <p>Systems should be in place to support members in non-Party Political case and community work whether from member support or other service areas. Support for collaborative governance arrangements such as joint committees and commissioning boards should also be evidenced.</p> <p>There needs to be a resource (dedicated or otherwise) in the authority who can provide members with advice in relation to the discharge of the authority's scrutiny function, and support for scrutiny members or committees by impartially researching information. This should be in direct response to the needs of members when they are undertaking their legitimate scrutiny role.</p>	<b>GREEN</b>  Officer support is provided in committees and Members are supported in their casework.  The Authority has dedicated scrutiny support.

	Topic	Standard	Clarification	Status
C2	<b>Arrangements made for the business of the Council are flexible and enable members to participate fully regardless of personal circumstances</b>	<p>A review of the arrangements for council business has taken place and as a result, meeting times, arrangements and venues reflect the needs of members as closely as possible.</p> <p>Members have been involved in developing the approaches to remote attendance as set out in the standing orders as/when required by the Measure.</p>	<p>Authorities should have undertaken a review in line with Measure guidance i.e. at least once every term, preferably shortly after the new council is elected which at least measures whether daytime or evenings are preferred and if particular times cause problems for individual members. Individual committees should be able to define what is convenient for members of that committee. What should be demonstrated is an awareness of the restrictions placed on members by holding council meetings at certain times and some evidence of flexibility in meeting arrangements as a result.</p>	<p><b>GREEN</b></p> <p>A survey of meeting times has been undertaken and the outcomes implemented</p> <p>The Constitution reflects the councils position on remote attendance</p>
C3	<b>Contact management and communication</b>	<p>Systems are in place to enable members to liaise with council officers regarding services provided both within and outside the authority. Community groups and individuals are also assisted in contacting local members. Members are able to contact stakeholders.</p>	<p>These systems should include agreed standards for response times, complaints procedures and processes to support community and casework. Members should be provided with information regarding which officers to contact regarding complaints and casework relating to any service delivered by or on behalf of the council.</p>	<p><b>GREEN</b></p> <p>The Member Enquiry System covers this requirement and advice can be sought from officers regarding stakeholder contacts</p>
C4	<b>Annual reports</b>	<p>The Authority makes arrangements for all members to be able to publish annual reports, according to the guidance in the measure.</p> <p>Members are provided with support and</p>		<p><b>GREEN</b></p> <p>This process is in place and individual or groups of Ward Members have submitted for publication</p>

	Topic	Standard	Clarification	Status
		guidance on using the authority's systems.		2017/18 Annual Reports.
	<b>Personal support for members</b>	Members are provided with access to guidance on their rights and benefits as members.	Members are provided with general advice on what might be described as 'employment' rights and benefits relating to their role as councillors. This includes member salaries, family absence, allowances, tax and benefits, pensions, indemnities, data protection and freedom of information.	<b>GREEN</b>  HR and Democratic Services officers provide this support
<b>D1</b>	<b>All members are provided with adequate access to ICT.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members are provided with the equipment, or connectivity required to undertake their role.</li> <li>Basic training is provided in its use and help desk facilities are available.</li> <li>Members are able to communicate with the council and the public electronically.</li> <li>Members are supported in remote working through the use of remote access codes and Skype etc.</li> <li>Members are provided with support to enable them to remotely attend meetings according to the standards set out in the standing orders (when implemented through the Measure).</li> </ul>	<p>Members are provided with equipment for their individual use to undertake council business. They are shown how to use the equipment and packages. They are able to have assistance if they are experiencing problems with using the equipment or it is faulty.</p> <p>Members are advised on the use of mobile communications and digital and social media and have access to relevant social media sites, discussion fora and communities of practice such as is required to undertake their role.</p> <p>All council agendas and meeting papers are provided electronically.</p>	<b>GREEN</b>  This requirement is supported by the ICT department and some training is being provided.  The Constitution reflects the councils position on remote attendance
<b>D2</b>	<b>Information resources are provided</b>	A central collection of information dedicated to member needs is provided as part of the information and research support available to members.	An up to date and regularly revised collection of information resources is available specifically for members.	<b>AMBER</b>  Committee agenda minutes and report are available on the intranet/internet

	Topic	Standard	Clarification	Status
			This contains agendas, minutes, training opportunities, and links to web resources and access to performance data. Members are informed about the information that is available.	and on Modern.gov. A suitable portal is being determined for the provision of Member information
D3	Facilities for members to work in the Council are available.	<p>Member needs have been reviewed and where required the following are provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared areas for example for each political group.</li> <li>• Private rooms for meetings.</li> <li>• Offices for senior office holders.</li> </ul> <p>The needs of members must have been assessed.</p> <p>Rooms must be available but not necessarily permanently dedicated.</p>		<p><b>GREEN</b></p> <p>Elected Members are able to work in the Members Rooms in City and in County Halls.</p> <p>The Cabinet Members, Scrutiny Chairs and many Committee Chairpersons have dedicated offices</p> <p>The Political Groups have allocated office space</p>

- 3.2 The Democratic Services Committee is requested to consider the comparisons shown in paragraph 3.1 and within available resources to determine any reasonable and appropriate courses of action to develop the services and support provide to Elected Members in Cardiff.

#### 4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 Section 7 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 requires local authorities to secure the provision of reasonable training and development opportunities for its members. Each member should also have the opportunity to have a review of their training and development needs on an annual basis. If a member decides to have an annual review of their training and development needs, the authority must ensure that the review includes an opportunity for an interview with someone who they consider to be “suitably qualified” to advise about the training and development needs of a member.
- 4.2 In considering these requirements, regard must be had to the statutory guidance issued by the Welsh Ministers.

The guidance recommends that the Democratic Services Committee (DSC) has overall responsibility for deciding what should be regarded as reasonable training and development opportunities as part of its function of providing support to

members to carry out their functions. It also notes that 'The agreed, training and development opportunities could be contained within a published development strategy. The Welsh Local Government Association's Charter for Member Support and Development ("the Charter") could be used for guidance purposes by local authorities in developing their strategies. Local authorities may wish to consider the requirements to achieve the Charter when developing their strategies and programmes.' (Guidance paragraph 2.10).

- 4.3 The Democratic Services Committee has responsibility for overseeing the support services provided to Members, ensuring they are adequately resourced and reporting any recommendations to Council.

## **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications contained within the report.
- 5.2 Any service development work will need to be prioritised and delivered within existing resources.

## **6. Recommendations**

- 6.1 The Democratic Services Committee is requested to identify which services and support, if any, they consider necessary or appropriate for development and delivery within available resources; and to
- 6.2 Prioritise and schedule any service development as part of the committee's Forward Work Programme.

**GARY JONES**

**Head of Democratic Services**

25 September 2018

Background Documents:

Wales Charter for Member Support and Development - Criteria and Assessment Oct 2015