
REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES – ACTIVITIES & SERVICE SUPPORT MATTERS

Reason for this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to inform the Democratic Services Committee on the performance of the Council's Democratic Services.

Background

Role of the Democratic Services Committee

2. The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, Part 1, Chapter 2, <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2011/4/part/1/chapter/2> requires local authorities to appoint a Democratic Services Committee to oversee the Democratic Services functions of the Council, ensure that the work is adequately resourced and report to the full Council accordingly. The Democratic Services functions include Members' Services, Committee Services and Scrutiny Services, but not Cabinet Support Services.

Issues

Head of Democratic Services

3. The Democratic Services Committee on 25 May 2018 met to designate the Head of Democratic Services as required by the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 following the Appointment Committee process which concluded on 29 March 2018.
4. Mr Gary Jones was designated as Head of Democratic Services with effect from 2 July 2018.

Members Services

5. An appointment to the vacant Members Services Support Officer post was made in July 2018, and Georgina Jones took up the role on 9 July 2018.
6. One of the key services support provided by the Members Services team is operational responsibility for the Members Enquiry System (MES). Table 1 provides an update on the number and method of reporting Member Enquiries:

Table 1

Enquiry Type	Q4 2017/18	Q1 2018/19	Q2¹ 2018/19
Total Enquiries	1362	1533	1387
Member Self-serve	643	695	673
Logged by Officer	719	838	714
Time taken to close in days.	12.9	15.1	11.4

¹ Until 18 September 2018

7. Currently 70 out of 75 Councillors use the MES. The MES is an important tool to effectively deal with the issues raised by residents with their Councillor. Logging enquiries provides senior managers with data on the key service issues, logging frequency and trends. The complexity and multi-service nature of some enquiries means that response times can exceed the 10 calendar days.
8. As part of the Community Council Charter Members Services are also providing the MES service to the Clerks of the six Community Councils on a pilot basis for 3 months from 1 August 2018. So far there has been a positive response from the Clerks to the service being provided and the team have been commended for their work.
9. The Members Services team is constantly monitoring MES and responses for Councillors and chasing or escalating matters as necessary. The team liaise closely with agents in Directorates and regularly meet with teams to deal with specific issues in particular in relation to Requests for Service.
10. The Members Services Support Team also provide assistance to Councillors:
 - As the first point of access for Members ICT/Telephone; allocation of IT equipment; and early stage troubleshooting support;
 - For general administrative support i.e. handling correspondence; typing, scanning, mail merges etc.;
 - For maintaining an electronic record of Members Surgeries; preparing data for publication on website; and preparing surgery notices;
 - By supporting members in arranging room bookings for meetings relating to ward matters; with constituents or outside body representatives
 - When arranging welsh translation in accordance with the statutory requirements of the Welsh Language Standards;
 - Providing content for the Members' weekly brief
 - Providing stationery and office supplies; and
 - Overseeing Members' business offices including offices for Chairs of Committees and communal members areas;

Committee Services

11. The Committee Services team provide administrative support to Council and all Committees of Council which includes preparation of agendas, minutes & reports packs using Modern.Gov; publishing; booking rooms for meetings

and pre-meetings; support to Lord Mayor as Chair of Council; Chairs of Committees. To date 94 formal meetings of Council and Committees have been held.

12. In addition to Committee administration the team carry out the following functions:

Council Governance: custodians of the:

- Constitution;
- Declaration of Acceptance of Office;
- Cardiff Undertaking;
- Register of Political Groups.

Member Governance: maintain up to date records of:

- Register of Individual Member Interests;
- Conference and Events Register;
- Hospitality Register;
- Outside Bodies Membership administration of Register and notification;
- Attendance & Apologies Register
- Arrange welsh translation in accordance with the statutory requirements of the Welsh Language Standards;
- Provide guidance and support in the preparation, publication & translation of Members Annual Reports and Member Information.

Public Engagement support given to:

- Public questioners at Council;
- Hosting attendees and visitors;
- Petitioners & public at Committee meetings.

Liaison with Members and External Bodies

- Produce & issue the Members Diary;
- Issuing of Member Electronic Briefs
- Members of Parliament and Assembly Members;
- Welsh Local Government Association Networks & projects;
- Report to & liaise with Independent Remuneration Panel;
- Wales Audit Office with inspections; providing information & reports; & at meetings;
- Liaise with a range of Outside Bodies.

Corporate Support

- Emergency Management on call on a rota basis;
- Representing Committee & Members Services at corporate meetings such as Welsh Language Co-ordinators

Management and development of systems

- Modern.Gov;
- Conference System;
- Webcasting
- Facebook Live

Members ICT

13. Elected Members were provided with IT provision to support their role as Councillors. The 2017 offer for new and returning Members included:

- Dell Laptop E5470 – Windows based or
- Dell latitude Tablet – Windows based and
- Android Samsung Galaxy S7 with Blackberry Works or
- Blackberry Works on Councillors personal Smartphone

Some returning Members preferred to remain with existing IT provision which was still within contract and included

- iPad – various models generally 2 years plus old
- Apple iPhone 7 Plus – also 2 years plus old with Blackberry Works

14. At recent meetings with Party Group Whips a number of issues have been raised relating to:

- Access to power points in meeting rooms to plug in or charge devices;
- Wi-Fi connectivity in Council and City Hall at meetings;
- Automatic updates;
- Resetting of passwords and number of passwords to access the variety of services available to Members
- Screen saving and timing out of documents
- Accessing Member Enquiry Systems on smartphones and iPad.

15. These matters are impeding a Councillor's ability to work electronically and support the reduction on reliance of paper and have been drawn to the Digital Manager's attention and a response is awaited.

Modern.Gov

16. Modern.Gov is the Committee Management System used by the Democratic Services team to co-ordinate the production of agenda, minutes, Forward Plans and programmes and provides a dual language website with an array of information.
17. The Democratic Services webpages created with Modern.Gov keeps Members up to date on all information relating to the decision making process and provides links for the public to view the activities and outcomes of formal meetings.
18. The Modern.Gov App is available for all Members devices and provides access to those with appropriate permissions to public and exempted meeting information. This enables the authority to provide a paperless solution to the production and circulation of reports, minutes and agenda. There is an ongoing programme supported by the Committee Services team to provide training on how to effectively use the App to annotate their meeting documents and how to access exempted papers. The benefits for Members of the Mod.Gov App are that it supports the service in making efficiencies in its printing and postage budgets.
19. In addition, the Committee team are working on further improvements to Modern.Gov and users guides to support Members with remote access and greater options for self-service.

20. A representative of the team has also been invited to participate in the focus group for the new version of the Modern.gov App which will have improved functionality and performance.
21. The team actively participate in the South Wales Modern.Gov User Group which provides free training and opportunities to network with up to 13 of the 19 other Local Authorities in Wales who use Modern.gov.

Printing

22. The provision of IT and the Modern.Gov platform to Members and officers has significantly supported the reduction in reliance on hard copy papers at meetings. It is recognised that Members have individual requirements and adjustments are made to accommodate those Members.
23. The Table 2 below demonstrates the efficiencies that have been achieved with the support of Elected Members by Committee & Members Services since 2013/14 when the Members technology was updated.

Table 2

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Q1	£12,067.25	£6,723.24	£5,484.18	£3,097.30	£2,265.60	£2,121.69
Q2	£10,506.46	£5,436.43	£5,979.68	£4,161.19	£2,844.59	£755. ²
Q3	£9,219.48	£3,771.17	£2,437.77	£2,570.25	£2,206.46	£0.00
Q4	£11,723.87	£5,889.20	£4,153.48	£3,112.57	£4,644.91	£0.00
Total	£43,517.06	£21,820.04	£18,055.11	£12,941.31	£11,961.56	£2,876.85

² September data to be included

Webcasting

24. The Council has a contract for 100 hours of webcasting per year for broadcasting live streaming of Council, Planning and Scrutiny Committees.
25. The Directorate Plan has a Performance Indicator to measure public engagement activity and ability to access the decision making processes of Council. Table 3 below set out the number of hits per quarter in this municipal year.

Table 3

Key Performance Measure	Full Year Target	3 Month Target	2018/19			
			Q1 Result (Adjusted)	Q2 Result ³	Combined total / Combined target	RAG Rating
The total webcast hits: Full Council	2,500	625	231(41)	308	580/1250	46.4%
The total webcast hits: Planning Committee	2,000	500	245(46)	166	457/1000	45.7%
The total webcast hits: Scrutiny	500	125	284(40)	69	393/250	157.2%

³ Figures as at 21 September 2018

26. The number of hits from all of the webcast meetings is continually monitored. During Q2 a number of additional hits were achieved on the archived meetings in Q1 and these are the figures shown in brackets in the Q1 Result (Adjusted) column.

Scrutiny Services

Overview and Scrutiny – Fit for the Future?

27. The Scrutiny Team has received the final report following the Wales Audit Office review entitled Overview and Scrutiny – Fit for the Future? The report identifies that “the scrutiny arrangements are well-developed and supported by a culture that makes them well-placed to respond to current and future challenges, but the Council could be more innovative in how it undertakes scrutiny activity”.
28. The report made five proposals for improvement which could enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the scrutiny function to make it better placed to meet current and future challenges. These proposals are currently being considered by the Scrutiny Team who are forming an action plan which will be considered by the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee on 3rd October 2018.

Scrutiny Committee Work Programming

29. The work programmes of the Scrutiny Committees are being finalised in preparation for publication on the Cardiff Council website. It is hoped that this will assist in promoting the activities of the scrutiny committees, identify those meetings which are being webcast and encourage engagement and participation in the scrutiny process.

Corporate Apprenticeship – Democratic Services

30. The Democratic Services Team (Members\Committees\Scrutiny) submitted a successful bid for a Corporate Apprentice who is expected to undertake the apprenticeship role with the team in 2019. The Team are now progressing the recruitment of a suitable apprentice and are hoping to use an event scheduled during Local Democracy Week to provide potential applicants with an opportunity to meet representatives of the Team and to gain further information of the Corporate Apprenticeship Democratic Services role.

Local Democracy Week 2018 (15-19 October 2018)

31. “European Local Democracy Week” is an annual event with national and local events organised by participating local authorities in all Council of Europe member States. The purpose is to foster the knowledge of local democracy and promote the idea of democratic participation at a local level. While the week is overseen by the Council of Europe, it is each local and regional community which organises events.

32. The Democratic Services Team is hoping to provide 2 small events which will act as pilots for National Democracy Week being held in July 2019. One event will be led by the Electoral Services Team to encourage electoral registration with the Black and Minority Ethnic community. The second event will involve representatives from across the Democratic Services team to raise awareness of young people on the Democratic processes supported by the Council.
33. The full details of the events are still being developed but it is hoped that key ward and other Elected Members will be invited to attend and support the events. All Elected Members will be advised of the events, activities and details when they have been confirmed.

Members Annual Reports

34. The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 requires every Local Authority in Wales to make arrangements for all Councillors to make and publish an Annual report about their activities. The WLGA in consultation with Member Support Officer Group agreed a template which was adopted on an all Wales basis. As these reports are published on the Council Website and as with all Councillor profile related information, they need to meet the Welsh Language Standards and be published bilingually.
35. Members were provided with the opportunity to submit their report and so far 15 Members have submitted individual Annual Reports and 11 Councillors have submitted Annual reports as Ward Groups. These are currently in the process of being translated before being published on the Members profile page on the website.

Networks

Member Development Champions Network and Member Support Officer (MSO)

36. These networks aim to improve the services and member development opportunities provided to Councillors. The MSO is primarily for officers, with Councillors forming the Member Development Champions Network. The two networks have joint meetings on a regular basis to share views and ideas.
37. Since the last ordinary meeting of this Committee two joint meetings have been held 15 March and 3 July 2018. The key topics considered were:
- Feedback from the WLGA on its response to the Welsh Government [Green Paper on Strengthening Local Government Delivering for People](#)
 - Diversity in Democracy
 - Review of guidance documents and information in relation to the following:
 - Social Media : A Guide to Members;
 - On line abuse and Personal Safety
 - GDPR
 - WAO Scrutiny Study Fit for the Future – feedback
 - The re-establishment of Scrutiny Champions Network.

Resources

38. The Committee will be aware of the Budget Strategy report considered at Full Council on 19 July 2018. The report identified the projected budget gap and the requirement for a number of measures to be brought together to meet those challenges in 2019/20. Directorates have been asked to model for savings of 17.5% which in terms of Scrutiny, Committee & Member Services and Electoral Services equates to a saving target of approximately £167,000.
39. The Head of Democratic Services is currently liaising with all stakeholder groups including lead Cabinet Members; Scrutiny Chairs, Whips and managers on achievable savings and modelling of the services.

Legal Implications

40. Under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, Part 1, the Democratic Services Committee is responsible for overseeing the democratic services functions of the Council and the resources made available for these functions.
41. The Democratic Services functions (which must be discharged by the Head of Democratic Services) are defined as follows:
 - (a) to provide support and advice:
 - to the authority in relation to its meetings;
 - to committees of the authority and the members of those committees;
 - to any joint committee which a local authority is responsible for organising and the members of that committee;
 - in relation to the functions of the authority's scrutiny committees,
 - to members of the authority, members of the executive and officers;
 - to each member of the authority in carrying out the role of member of the authority (but excluding a member's role as an Executive member);
 - (b) to promote the role of the authority's Scrutiny Committees;
 - (c) to make reports and recommendations to Council in respect of the number and grades of staff required to discharge democratic services functions and the appointment, organisation and proper management of those staff; and
 - (d) any other functions prescribed by the Welsh Ministers.
42. In determining how to exercise its functions, the Committee must have regard to the statutory guidance issued by the Welsh Ministers.

Members' Annual Reports

43. Under Section 5 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, and the Statutory Guidance issued by Welsh Government on 16 May 2013, Local Authorities must make arrangements enabling Elected Members to produce Annual Reports on their Council activities during the previous year. This includes enabling any Cabinet member to report on their Cabinet activities during the year. The Council must also publicise information about these arrangements to both Members and the wider public. However, there is no mandatory duty on Members or Cabinet Members to make an Annual Report on their activities.
44. Any reports produced by Members must be published by the Council, but the Council may set conditions or limits on what is included in a report.
45. The Council must not publish any party political material, that is, anything which appears to be designed to affect public support for a political party (under section 2 of the Local Government Act 1986). The Statutory Guidance (paragraph 1.6) states that the report should contain only factual information relating to the work of the Councillor; should avoid promoting political achievements; be written in the past tense and be limited to two sides of A4.
46. The information set out in the body of this report enables the Democratic Services Committee to oversee the work of democratic services, ensure the work is adequately resourced and report to full council as appropriate.

Financial Implications

47. This report is for information and there are no direct financial implications.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is requested to note the detail provided in the report and provide any further feedback on the Support Services provided to Councillors.

GARY JONES
HEAD of DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
25 September 2018

Background Papers - None