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**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE AND LEGAL  
SERVICES**

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**MEMBER SERVICES: SUPPORT FOR MEMBERS**

**Reason for this Report**

1. To update the Committee on the provision of staff, accommodation and other resources made available to support members.

**Background**

2. The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 requires the Council to appoint a Democratic Services Committee. The Committee's duties include keeping under review the provision of staff, accommodation and other resources made available to support elected Members when carrying out their representational roles.
3. The Committee and Members Services team of 5 officers led by the Committee & Member Services Manager, provide a politically impartial service to all Members of the Council. They support, inform and record the work of the council and committees. They make the Council's meetings and information about those meetings accessible to the general public, and they maintain a public record of all Member level decisions and documents in trust for the public. The service also supports the Member Development Strategy, Members' ICT and provides a limited degree of personal support for Members in dealing with case work correspondence and other Governance related tasks.
4. Improved accommodation to support the work of Members at County Hall has been put in place over the last 18 months. The Scrutiny and Equality teams have been co-located alongside Committee room 4 and Scrutiny Committee Chairs' rooms to ease communication and joint working. Offices are provided for all the Scrutiny Committee Chairs and the Chairs of Planning and Regulatory Committees. Private offices are also provided for each of the political groups represented on the Council. A new office has been made available for the use of the independent Chairs of the Audit Committee and the Standards and Ethics Committee. Additional and improved work stations have also been provided in the Members' Lounge and Library at County Hall.

5. Improved accommodation is also being made available for Members at City Hall. The current Members' Business Office is being moved to be co-located with a new Training room for Member Development events. Plans have been discussed and agreed with the Political Group Whips. This will create additional business space for Members in City Hall and also release the current Members' Business' office as a bookable space that can attract revenue from conference and business space bookings.
6. The Members Handbook sets out details of the support services for elected members. The current edition needs updating to reflect the reduced resources now available

### Resources 2014/15

7. Budget savings of £454,000 for the whole of the Democratic Services Directorate for 2014/15 were agreed representing 29.9% of the net controllable budget. These savings have now been fully implemented resulting in significantly reduced resources for member services and general support for the current year 2015/16.
8. They included £246,000 in Scrutiny Services reflecting the deletion of four vacant posts together with an increased income target. Savings of £183,000 were also agreed in Committee and Member Services including deletion of vacant posts, acceptance of voluntary severance applications and a restructure of management responsibilities, clerking fewer meetings and more efficient use of ICT.
9. Further savings of £16,000 were also required with the removal of committee general expenditure budgets and £9,000 from the removal member refreshment budgets and the budget for Council Year Books.

### Resources 2015/16

10. This pattern of reduced spending continued into the current year. Further savings of £218,000 from Democratic and Member Support budgets were required in 2015/16 as set out below.

	<b>Mini restructure to reduce administrative, legal and protocol support to County Clerk &amp; Monitoring Officer</b> - reduction of 4.5 FTE posts.	£181k
	<b>Reduce Member Expenses and Support Services</b> - by removing Dictabank services, reduction in training and mayoral expenses.	£37k

11. These savings have now been fully realised resulting in reduced administrative support to the Lord Mayoralty and all non-executive Members. It is now no longer possible to provide dictation and Word Processing Facilities for Members. Similarly officers can no longer provide support to create Ward Newsletters and/or Ward Surgery

notices. There are also limits on the amount of photocopying and casework assistance that can be provided. A range of stationery, including headed notepaper and envelopes continues to be provided to each Member as required.

### **Investment in Technology**

12. To mitigate the impact of these savings, a strategy was agreed with the Committee based on an all Member survey to introduce new more efficient ways of working with more reliance on technology and supporting Members to become more independent in dealing with correspondence, case work and meeting management.
13. There has been significant investment in the office systems and processes for Democratic Services with the introduction of the modern.gov software in May 2015. This has led to a much improved service for Members and the public in accessing committee papers on the website and maintaining an accurate public record of all decisions. It has also transformed the working practices of the committee support officers. There are more benefits to be realised now that the system is in place which will be reported to the Committee in due course.
14. The Committee has also sponsored the recent Members ICT project reported elsewhere on the Agenda. This has allowed Members to become more self-sufficient in managing their case work, correspondence and diaries. Members are entitled to a council phone and many have migrated to mobile devices and tablets. This has resulted in savings on direct line rental phones. Many Members have also installed private Wi-Fi and broadband at home enabling them to cease council funded broadband services. This has also resulted in a significant reduction in printing costs which is monitored on a monthly basis for the directorate performance information.
15. We have also introduced in 2015 a new Member On Line Information Service to improve the library, research and information services and resources elsewhere available in Cardiff and across Wales and the UK. There is more to do in developing this service to meet Members' needs which can form part of the Committee Work Plan for the remainder of the year.
16. The Committee has also reviewed the Member Enquiry System which provides dedicated officer support during the working day in C2C for members' casework and tracks member enquiries and the time taken to respond.

### **Members Support Services 2015/16**

17. Annex A sets out in summary form details of the support services that can continue to be offered to all Members by the current staff group alongside statutory committee work.

## Posting and Copying Services

18. The Committee is requested to form a view, in the light of the reduced staffing, on continuing the historic services for posting and copying documents. Previously usage guidelines have been agreed with Group Whips. We have only been able to maintain this service into 2015/16 by employing a temporary officer on a part time basis. However there is no permanent funding for the role. Most Members do not in fact make use of the service. All Members are set up to use 'Printsmart' copiers at City and County Hall.
19. Previously on a monthly basis, Members could claim Ward related correspondence in moderate amounts as individual or copied to no more than 10 households (otherwise subject to prior agreement and workload) by franked mail paid. It is recommended that this service cease and Members do their own copying.
20. Members could also claim up to 250 photocopies of a document, each document not to exceed 4 sides of A4 (2 sheets) of A4 (with a maximum per calendar month of 500) for self-distribution. It is recommended that this copying service cease with Members doing their own copying.
21. Additionally Members could claim 50 duplicated letters/documents to be posted per Member by 2nd class post, each job not to exceed four sides of A4 sheets (2 sheets) (with a maximum per calendar month of 100). Any letters or documents over and above this allocation may be processed for the elected Member to deliver themselves up to a maximum of 250. It is recommended that this service continue on the basis Members arrange their own photocopying.
22. Annually, Members are entitled to claim 2nd class stamps for use on Council business related correspondence- up to £50 value 2nd class stamps per year, upon submission of a claim form. It is recommended that this service continue.

## Legal Implications

The use of resources by Elected Members is governed by two principle factors:

1. the use of Council resources must comply with the Members Code of Conduct.

Rule 7 paragraph (b) of the Members Code of Conduct includes the following requirements:

You must **not** use, or authorise others to use, the resources of your authority:

- (i) imprudently;
- (ii) In breach of your authority's requirements;
- (iii) Unlawfully;

- (iv) Other than a manner which is calculated to facilitate, or to be conducive to, the discharge of the functions of the authority or of the office to which you have been elected or appointed;
  - (v) Improperly for political purpose; or
  - (vi) Improperly for private purpose
2. the overall use must be within the current available resources of Committee & Members Services

Council resources are provided to assist members in performing their functions as an Elected Member, but those functions need to be distinguished from party political or personal activities. Council resources are not available for the latter activities.

### **Financial Implications**

*There are no direct new financial implications arising from this report.*

### **Recommendations:**

That the Democratic Services Committee:

1. Notes and agrees the position for 2015/16 in relation to the provision of staff, accommodation and other resources made available for Democratic Services as set out in the report and annex A
2. Considers the proposed service reductions to the postage and copying services set out in paragraphs 18-22.
3. Authorises the officers to update the Member Handbook and inform all Members of the revised service provision for member support.

**MARIE ROSENTHAL**  
**DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE AND LEGAL SERVICES**  
**23 September 2015**

**DEMOCRATIC SERVICES: SUPPORT FOR MEMBERS 2015/16**

Democratic Services is a part of the Governance & Legal Services Directorate and administers the following services for Members.

Council Governance: custodians and maintenance of

- Constitution;
- Cardiff Code of Conduct;
- 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.

Support to All Members

- First point of access for Members ICT/Telephone/Broadband allocation of equipment; link to ICT and early stage troubleshooting support;
- Administration & maintenance of Modern.gov – Management System –includes election results; Member profile pages; attendance records; interests declared at meetings etc.;
- Responsibility for the Webcasting contract; booking webcasts, operation of webcasting at Council and Planning Committees;
- Supporting Scrutiny Research with Members information on the Online Library Information Service;
- Administration of the Member scheme of Allowances and expenses in accordance with the requirements of the Independent Remuneration for Wales Panel;
- Administer & monitor the Members Taxi Account;
- Administer & upload queries for Members on the Member Enquiry System;
- Typing; mail merging; despatching of Members general correspondence;
- Maintaining an electronic record of Members Surgeries; preparing data for publication on website; capital times;& preparing surgery notices;
- Supporting Members in arrange room bookings for Meetings relating to ward matters; with constituents or outside body representatives
- Arrange Welsh Translation in accordance with the statutory requirements of the Welsh Language standards;
- Produce & issue the Members Diary;
- Provide guidance and support in the preparation, publication & translation of Members Annual Reports;

Support to Non-Executive Members

- First Point of contact – signpost for Members;
- Administer and monitor Members Postage Stamp Allowance;
- Braille Translation;
- Supply of stationery; office supplies;
- Oversee Members Business offices including offices for Chairs of Committees and communal Members areas;
- Oversee Health and Safety of Members including provision of personal evacuation plans; advice on lone working etc.;
- Fire wardens at County Hall for Members facilities and at Committee meetings.

### Member Development

- Members Development Strategy;
- Member Development Annual Programme;
- Arranging /Liaising with Trainers/ Speakers;
- Arranging rooms & technology;
- Member Development course material;
- Issue notification of Member briefings, information & signposting.

Provision of Secretariat Support: including preparation of agendas, minutes & reports packs using Modern.Gov; publishing; printing as required; and booking rooms for meetings and pre-meetings; support to Lord Mayor as Chair of Council; Chairs of Committees. Support is provided to the following meetings.

- Full Council;
- Regulatory: Council Appeals, Planning, Planning (Policy), Public Protection and Licensing and Licensing Sub Committees;
- Governance: Appointment, Audit, Constitution, Corporate Parenting, Democratic Services, Employment Conditions, Standards and Ethics Committees – including Standards & Ethics Hearing Panels; Bilingual Cardiff & Local Authority Governor Panels;
- Scrutiny: Economy and Culture, Environmental, Children and Young People, Community and Adult Services and Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committees;
- Joint Committees: Glamorgan Archives; Prosiect Gwyrdd & Joint Pension Board;
- Officer Meetings: Senior Management Team, Organisational Development Board, Investment Review Board, Joint Partnership Board (Trade Unions), Election Project Tea;
- Minute taker & support to Panel Members for School Admission and Exclusion Appeals;
- Ad hoc meetings.

### Public Engagement support given to

- Public questioners at Council and support the roll out of Public Question time at Scrutiny Committees;
- Hosting attendees and visitors;
- Petitioners & public at Committee meetings.

### Liaison with External Bodies

- 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.
- Schools and Universities.

### Corporate Support

- Emergency Management on call on a rota basis;
- Representing Democratic Services at corporate meetings as Welsh Language Co-ordinators, Sustainability Advocates, Health & Safety

### Project Management

- Members ICT Project – Agile Working;
- City Hall Conference System;
- Standard and Ethics Conference
- Ongoing with Modern.Gov
- Roll out of Webcasting to Committee meetings.