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AGENDA

Committee	DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE
Date and Time of Meeting	TUESDAY, 15 OCTOBER 2019, 5.00 PM
Venue	COMMITTEE ROOM 4 - COUNTY HALL
Membership	Councillor Jones-Pritchard (Chair) Councillors Burke-Davies, Bowden, Goddard, Goodway, Kelloway, Lay, McKerlich, Naughton, Keith Parry, Sandrey and Wong

1 **Apologies for Absence**

To receive apologies for absence.

2 **Declarations of Interest**

To be made at the start of the agenda item in question, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct.

3 **Minutes** (*Pages 3 - 10*)

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting.

4 **Democratic Services - Resources and Challenges** (*Pages 11 - 30*)

5 **Democratic Services - Activities and Service Support** (*Pages 31 - 40*)

6 **Urgent Items (if any)**

7 **Date of Next Meeting** 13 January 2020.

Davina Fiore

Director Governance & Legal Services

Date: Wednesday, 9 October 2019

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DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

22 JULY 2019

Present: Councillor Jones-Pritchard (Chairperson)
Councillors Bowden, Goodway, Lay, McKerlich, Naughton,
Keith Parry, Sandrey and Wong.

1 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Burke-Davies, Goddard and Kelloway.

2 : APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR & COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

It was noted that the Council, at its annual meeting on 23 May 2019 appointed Councillor Mike Jones-Pritchard as Chairperson of this Committee and the following Members to this Committee:

Councillors Bowden, Burke-Davies, Goddard, Goodway, Jones–Pritchard, Kelloway, Lay, McKerlich, Naughton, Keith Parry, Sandrey and Wong.

3 : TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Council, at its annual meeting on 23 May 2019, agreed the following Terms of Reference:

- To carry out the local authority's function of designating the Head of Democratic Services.
- To keep under review the adequacy of provision of staff, accommodation and other resources made available to discharge the democratic services functions of the Authority.
- To make reports, at least annually, to the full Council in relation to these matters.

4 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations for interest for this meeting.

5 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

6 : LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT - OFFICE 365

The Chair welcomed Phil Bear, ICT Service Manager and David Butler, ICT Project Manager from Digital Services who were in attendance.

The Chair referred to the Head of Democratic Services report on Learning and Development Item 7, paragraph 10 pages, 27 and 28 and the roll out of Office 365 cloud-based software to the whole of the authority planned to be completed by April 2020.

The Head of Democratic Services detailed the work undertaken so far with an Office 365 pilot group of Elected Members and in particular to the technical issues encountered with Elected Members who have other roles with regional and national government. These matters required further investigation it was therefore not possible for these Members to participate in the initial pilot. The pilot would run in July and August to enable lessons learned to be resolved prior to the main roll out to Elected Members from September to December 2019.

Feedback was provided from Members involved in the initial briefings and were particularly affected by the dual role issue. Members reported on their experiences in managing their Office 365 account in multiple roles, using Office 365 on personal devices and in particular the ability to use the log on anywhere facility. The Council's offer seemed only to be based on the Council's own infrastructure and managed devices, and this did not mirror the security arrangements for regional and national government, and appeared to inhibit the way Elected Members work.

The ICT Service Manager referred to Council Acceptable Usage Policy, the authentication processes for users, security data for Elected Members as Data Controllers and processor and the importance of maintaining Council data security in accordance with national requirements. Elected Members using their own personal devices without Blackberry Works to process data was not in accord with the Council's policies.

The Head of Democratic Services confirmed that the pilot would be used to find workable solutions for Elected Members. He was keen that Members of this Committee also joined the pilot and confirmed that bespoke training would be arranged in small groups for Elected Members during the transition period. In addition, Members would be required to complete the E. Learning Cyber Security modules.

A Member referred to the role of an Elected Member as prescribed by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales and wellbeing concerns in relation to the accessibility of Members who through advances in technology are accessible 24/7 and 365 days of the year with continuous pressures to respond to queries immediately because of the requirements of instant messaging. The Chair recognised that the personal well-being and support to Elected Members was an important role of this committee and that sessions and information to support members would be provided in the early autumn.

The ICT Service Manager explained the cost benefits to the Council of the migration to Office 365 platform that was already in progress and the future implications for the Council.

RESOLVED – That

1. Councillors Bowden, Lay, McKerlich and Sandrey be included in the pilot project being taken forward in July and August;
2. The arrangements for Member sessions for the roll out of the project from September to December were noted;

3. All Elected Members be required to complete the Cyber Security Essential learning sessions in tandem with the roll out.

7 : ELECTED MEMBER ROLE DESCRIPTIONS

The Head of Democratic Services submitted the second tranche of Member Role Descriptions for consideration:

- Audit Committee Member
- Audit Committee Chair
- Standards and Ethics Member
- Standards & Ethics Chair

The role descriptions had been prepared in consultation with the Chairs and Members of the Audit and Standard and Ethics Committees and were recommended for adoption by the Committee and then Council.

A list of the other role descriptions to be completed were detailed in Appendix E to the report and the Head of Democratic Services requested an extension to the timeline for completion of the schedule from May 2020 to July 2020.

The Chair highlighted some amendments to the Audit and Standard and Ethics Committees role descriptions as propose, in particular removal of gender specific references and avoidance of duplication of details already in the Elected Member Role Description approved by Committee on 14 January 2019 (Min No 20).

A number of matters were raised including: -

- A separate role description for Independent Members appointed to Committees be produced;
- The requirement of a legal opinion on how individual Committee Member role descriptions are accountable to Full Council.
- The prescriptiveness of role descriptions and how Members will be held accountable, and to whom, as the role of a Councillor was not a job, but a commitment to serve the citizens of the City in a public office.
- Newly Elected Members role descriptions would be useful tool to set out what is expected of a member on a particular committee.

RESOLVED – That

1. the role descriptions for

- Audit Committee Member
- Audit Committee Chair
- Standards and Ethics Member
- Standards & Ethics Chair

be revised to include the amendments detailed by the Chair at the meeting.

2. The Head of Democratic Services seek legal advice on accountabilities described in the Committee Member Role Descriptions, in particular the accountability to Full Council;

3. Subject to recommendation 1 and 2 the Role Descriptions be submitted to Council for approval and adoption in accordance with the schedule.
4. A separate Role Description be prepared for Independent Members of Committees.
5. The schedule of other Role Descriptions under preparation was noted.
6. The change of the timescale of reporting all Role Descriptions to Full Council from May 2020 to July 2020 was noted.

8 : LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The report provided information on the Member Learning and Development programme and potential options for inclusion in the programme from September to December 2019.

The Council on 28 March 2019 approved the Elected Member Learning and Development Strategy and the Committee's Annual report from which a number of matters were identified for consideration by the Committee including Personal Safety and Security of Elected Members; Members Well-being and work life balance; Mentoring; personal development; and support in the use of Modern.Gov.

The Head of Democratic Services drew attention to the sessions held in the last 6 months and the level of attendance at each event. He reported that the sessions on the Elected Member Role as Corporate Parent had been deferred to coincide with the relaunch of Children's Services policies.

It had been agreed that Members sessions on Personal Safety and Security would be delivered in Party Group meetings and this had been offered to all Groups. All Members had also been invited to have a Personal Safety Risk Assessment with the Council's Security Manager. The outcomes of this assessment are feed back to the Member and Head of Democratic Services for any actions.

The Head of Democratic Services detailed the two options for the delivery of Charing Skills sessions for newly elected and potential future Committee Chair and deputies. In addition, he referred to the Welsh Government E-Learning module for Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence, which will be made available through the Council's e-learning portal, along with the Cyber Security E-Learning modules.

Following discussions with the Cardiff Academy Elected Members would be able to participate in the Welsh Language sessions provided for staff in the autumn.

The Committee was also advised that the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, Councillor Thorne had been approached by the Home Office to run events with all Elected Members on the Governments Prevent Strategy as well as workshops on identifying persons vulnerable to radicalisation.

Members commented on the report and the learning opportunities and discussed

- the Personal security and the assessment process. The Committee was keen to have feedback on how many Members felt that they were at risk and whether there was a pattern of issues emerging.
- Members who had received a security risk assessment commended the process as it provoke thought and understanding of potential risks and how to mitigate for them.
- It was noted that eleven Members had undertaken the assessment and four Members had been issued with the safety device connected with the response centre.
- Members discussed training needs assessments and how these would be undertaken and whether this was for political groups to complete with their Members or whether there was a formal process and how Independent Elected Members could receive an assessment. The Head of Democratic Services explained that the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 allows for each Member to have an annual review by a *suitably qualified person or persons* of their training and development needs. It was recognised that for all 75 Members to have an annual review, it would require a significant resource with capacity and the qualification to undertake these task. It was suggested that this matter be referred to Whips.
- Members also discussed arrangements for Mentoring and political party arrangements and whether there are gaps that need to be addressed. This was particularly important with new Councillors being elected mid-term. It was suggested that this matter be discussed with Group Whips.
- Members also manage their own personal development and accessing courses or resources outside of the Council often paid for by the individual.
- The timing and attendance at sessions was discussed particularly Essential sessions and what recourse there will be for Members who do not attend. It was agreed that Members required at least 4 to 6 weeks lead in time and that a range of times be offered for sessions. It was reported that sessions over the 'lunch' period and after 5.00pm were better attended than morning or mid-afternoon sessions.
- A Member queried why Leadership sessions were restricted to the limited offer available in Wales and whether the LGA or other bodies such as Warwick and Birmingham Universities ran relevant developmental courses.

The Head of Democratic Services sought approval from the Committee to undertake the all Member Annual Survey before December 2019. In order to analyse trends the majority of the survey questions would remain the same with some updating of the learning and development questions to relate to the current learning and development offer as the 2017 survey concentrated on feedback on the Member Induction.

RESOLVED – That

1. the programme of Member Learning and Development be prepared for September to December based on the following priorities:

(a) Chairing Skills

The WLGA be approached to provide a specific Chairing Skills Session for newly elected and potential chairs which can be supplemented by mentoring support and shadowing from current or experienced

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Members who have proven Chairing skills.

- (b) Welsh Language
Cardiff Academy sessions be circulated to all Members as soon as the programme is available for September. For those Members unable to sign up to these sessions any alternative session such as Adult Learning be considered on a case by case basis.
 - (c) PREVENT Strategy
Further details of the PREVENT sessions be agreed in consultation with the Cabinet Member and lead officer for inclusion in the programme.
 - (d) Corporate Parenting
An Essential session on Members role and responsibilities as a Corporate Parent be schedule in conjunction with the policy relaunch.
 - (e) Follow up Essential Sessions be programmed for
 - Children's Rights in Practice Part 1 & Part 2
 - Corporate Safeguarding
 - (f) Cardiff Academy Essential E-Learning modules be made available to Elected Members to include
 - the Welsh Government E-Learning module for Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence;
 - Cyber Security Modules 1 to 3.
2. The Group Whips be requested to consider a consistent process for Elected Members annual learning and development assessments;
 3. The provisioning of Mentoring for Elected Member be further discussed at Group Whips.

9 : DEMOCRATIC SERVICES - ACTIVITIES & SERVICE SUPPORT MATTERS

The Service report including information on performance since the last meeting 14 January 2019 was presented for information and feedback.

The report included data on the use by Members of the Members Enquiry System, and the number and methods of reporting. Clarification was given on the increase in volume of enquiries logged by officers. These figures included officers in Directorates as well as the Members Services support officers.

Members asked if cases could only be closed by the Member once they are satisfied with the response. Members were advised that cases can be re-opened or linked so that there is a case history and audit trail of response.

Members noted the additional Webcasting contracted hours and the proposed allocation that would include Cabinet meetings and 2 out of 5 most appropriate Audit Committee meetings. Members expressed concerns about webcasting of Audit Committee meetings as meetings regularly included exempt items.

The Committee was reminded that the deadline for Elected Member Annual reports was 31 July 2019. Four individual and two ward based reports had been received to date.

The Chair referred to the remit of this Committee to review the adequacy of resources available to discharge the democratic functions of the Council and in particular to support requirements for the roll out of Office 365. The Head of Democratic Services had also advise the Chair of additional demands on the service in the next quarter which involved moving over to the Sharepoint platform; updates and development of Modern.Gov and support to Education Appeals process. It was proposed that the Head of Democratic Services prepare a report for review by the Committee on the provision of resources.

RESOLVED – That

1. The activities and service report be noted and feedback from the Committee on the Members Enquiry system be included as part of an ongoing review of the system;
2. The Head of Democratic Services present a report to an additional meeting of the Committee to enable it the review the adequacy of resources as part of the 2020/21 budget process.

10 : FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Committee received and noted the proposed Work programme for 2019 – 2020, which would be updated to incorporate an additional meeting as requested by the Committee to review resources.

11 : URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

12 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED – That following discussions about work programming that

1. An additional meeting of the Committee be scheduled in the autumn to review resources for democratic services;
2. The scheduled meeting in January 2020 be altered to 13 January 2020 at 5.00pm to avoid a clash with the Group Whips and to allow for timely consideration of the Committee's Annual Report for submission to the January Council meeting.

The meeting terminated at 7.10 pm

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REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES – RESOURCES AND CHALLENGES

Reason for this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to inform the Democratic Services Committee of the current status of Democratic Services and the challenges facing the service.

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. Electoral Services are part of the Democratic Services Team but only for management and administration purposes.

Democratic Services

3. Democratic Services comprises the following service areas:
 - Electoral Services
 - Committee Services
 - Member Services
 - Scrutiny Services
4. The roles and responsibilities of each of these services is shown at **Appendix A**. The Democratic Services Team is currently established with 21 employees as shown at **Appendix B**.
5. The budget allocation in 2019-20 for the Democratic Services Team was as follows:

	Committees	Electoral	Members	Scrutiny
Total Budget	396,820	587,070	1,765,250	450,460
Projected Outturn	410,452	587,070	1,776,047	446,171

For the 2019-20 budget a number of savings were proposed and initially agreed. However, prior to the Council Budget meeting in February 2019 some of the individual budget savings targets were removed from budget determination as these were not considered feasible to Elected Members, however the quantum of saving still required delivery. These included the following savings which are still allocated to the relevant team budgets:

Narrative	Amount
Cease Democratic printing	13,000
Removal of County Hall Webcasting	6,000

6. The Democratic Services Team has the following reserves which are planned to be utilised for the Local Government Elections in 2022 and to facilitate the induction and equipment costs of the candidates successfully elected. These reserves will also be used to part fund a new conference and webcasting facility as outlined in paragraph 19 below.

Reserve	Balance
Committee, Members and Scrutiny Services	184,428
Electoral	326,974

Current Challenges

7. In addition to its existing roles and responsibilities the Democratic Services team is currently facing a number of ongoing challenges.
8. Education Appeals
- a. Support to provide a note-taker for education appeals was initially agreed to part-funded by the Education Directorate which provided a salary for a Grade 2 note-taker on annualised hours. Due to difficulties in recruiting to this role the Committee and Member Services teams have been allocated this budget to assist in undertaking the note-taking of education appeal hearings which have been currently scheduled until December.
 - b. A total of 398 admission appeals have been received, of which, 255 are expected to be held. Up to five admissions appeals are usually held on a single day with each appeal taking approximately one hour to complete although some appeals take considerably longer. This equates to approximately 51 days where a member of the team is supporting an appeal hearing. The note taker is required to complete the notes of the hearing to the necessary standard within 3 working days. Some agreements have been made which enables the note-taker to complete their notes more quickly than previously achieved but this may require an additional time commitment from team members.

- c. There have been four Exclusion Appeals held to date, with a team member committed to support each day-long appeal. The minutes of these meetings are more detailed and often require a significant amount of time to complete within the require timescales.
- d. The support to education appeals has been prioritised and is one of the factors that has led to the team being unable to achieve its 80% target for publishing draft minutes of committee meetings within 10 working days of the meeting. This performance indicator is currently being reviewed as the initial target set was not wholly within the control of the team.

9. Office 365

- a. Office 365 is the latest version of Microsoft Office which includes Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook. It utilises the benefits of “the cloud” to make savings in infrastructure costs which includes a reduction in server space, the removal of license costs for “Blackberry Works” which is no longer required and provides more collaborative features which should enable users to work more effectively.
- b. The Authority is currently migrating to Office 365 and it is planned that all Elected Members will be converted by December 2019. The migration of Democratic Services to Office 365 was completed by 31 August 2019.
- c. However, the initial plans for a pilot for Elected Members was delayed following early meetings which identified technical challenges for those Elected Members who already had a managed Office 365 account on their devices which prevented the Council’s Office 365 software from being installed. These technical issues are being addressed but this has resulted in the timescales for the roll out being compressed to meet the migration deadlines.
- d. It is expected that at least one team member will be required to support the Office 365 team and the ICT Department with the migration for Elected Members. This will include liaison with the relevant teams should there be any initial issues experience by Elected Members once their migration has occurred.

10. Implementation of Microsoft SharePoint

- a. Microsoft SharePoint is a browser-based software system which supports collaborative document management. It enables departments to set up a protected space for document sharing using cloud technology. The Authority is progressing the corporate implementation of SharePoint with Governance and Legal Services being the latest directorate undertake the transfer to this new system.
- b. The first stage of this process is to “cleanse” the data currently held on the team’s drives before the transfer to SharePoint takes place. This entails the review of thousands of files to ensure that only necessary and relevant information is retained. This is a time consuming process and the teams are making slow but steady progress to meet the deadline of the end of October to complete the cleansing process.
- c. During this period, new SharePoint websites have to be created to reflect the data storage and collaboration needs of each of the teams and to enable the cleansed

data to be transferred into SharePoint. New processes have to be developed to support the effective provision of existing services and the ongoing operation of SharePoint in the future.

- d. Following the October deadline, any outstanding work to transfer to SharePoint will have to be undertaken without the support of the SharePoint team from the ICT department increasing the burden on Democratic Services to achieve this task quickly
- e. Conversion to SharePoint will eventually lead to better collaboration and data sharing with only a single version of a particular file being stored but able to be shared more widely across the authority. This outcome will not be achieved without a significant volume of work, collaboration and innovation to streamline processes and procedures for use with the SharePoint facility.

11. Personal Safety for Elected Members

- a. Awareness of Elected Members receiving online, verbal and other forms of intimidation and abuse has increased. This has required the establishment of processes and procedures to ensure that any personal safety concerns which a Councillor may have can be reported and assessed, with appropriate actions taken to mitigate these concerns. This is an ongoing role requiring liaison and co-ordination with Democratic Services, Elected Members, the Corporate Security Manager and the Police.

12. Printing

- a. Printing is one of the costs which Democratic Services is able to influence. The team has access to a centralised printing service which is able to provide a fast and effective service for the larger and more complex printing needs of the team including committee reports and members letters. This service can provide significant cost savings compared to Printsmart facilities and the teams have been directed to maximise the use of this facility. Total Printsmart costs in 2018-19 for Democratic Services were £19,049.
- b. With the increased use of the print service a review of the printers funded by the Democratic Services teams has been undertaken. It was found that the printer in the Members Room in City Hall is being used regularly but the equivalent printer in County Hall has not been used since November 2018 although the contract charges are still being made. The larger printer used by Committee Services is underutilised in respect of the volume of printing expected for the cost of the contract in place. Options are being considered to potentially remove one of the Member's room printers and to change the larger printer to one which is more cost effective for the volume of printing. The potential savings are still being determined but the views of the Committee would be welcomed.
- c. Although, the overall volume of printing has significantly reduced over a number of years particularly for Committee papers it is considered that the further savings are achievable. All Elected Members are provided with ICT equipment and access to the Modern.gov app to enable committee papers to be viewed and annotated. Many Elected Members have struggled using this software to support paperless meetings either through lack of training, poor network facilities in the committee rooms or with the inconsistency of the app.

- d. Those Members identified as having a particular need and requiring access to a hard copy of committee papers are provided with them accordingly. However, a number of members request a hard copy of the papers prior to a meeting even though they may not have an identified need or have forgotten to bring their papers with them.
- e. Options to effectively identify those Elected Members with a need for printed copies of committee documents and to encourage those who are provided with hard copies to ensure that they bring them with them for meetings are being considered with the group Whips.
- f. In addition, the new Modern.gov app is currently available for IOS and it is hoped that the windows version of the app will be released imminently. The new app is being “beta tested” by members of the team and a significant improvement on the current version with greater stability, wider functionality and it’s easier to use. Once this new app is available it is hoped that it will automatically be downloaded to all Members and appropriate training will be provided to maximise its use and reduce the need for paper copies.
- g. It should be noted that with the delivery of all of these proposed print savings will not negate the £13,000 saving identified in paragraph 5 above. Members are asked to consider which printing options could be used to assist in meeting this savings target.

13. Elections

- a. As Committee members will be aware, there have unfortunately been 3 unplanned casual vacancy by-elections and a short notice European Parliamentary Election this year. The cost of the by-elections have to be met by the Authority. This has an impact on the level of funding transferred into the Elections Reserve which is used to meet the cost of the next Local Government Election.
- b. These unplanned events have required additional work from the team which had scheduled other essential tasks during what was expected to be a non-election year. These tasks included engagement with the Local Government and Boundary Commission for Wales as part of the review of all electoral ward boundaries due to conclude in 2020, and completing a Polling District, Places and Stations review before the end of 2019.
- c. As part of its usual duties the team is also undertaking the annual canvass of 151,000 residential properties in the Cardiff area. Due to the likelihood of an unscheduled General Election being called in the near future, a significant percentage of the forms have been returned which require rapid processing in order to update the Electoral Register prior to the commencement of any election timetable. A series of reminders have been circulated and the physical canvass is due about to begin but this has required the recruitment and training of a large number of new canvassers.
- d. In addition, the fluidity of Brexit has created a number of challenges in terms of effective planning for a possible General Election. Without specific dates the identification of suitable venues to accommodate the verification and count for the

four Parliamentary Divisions covered by Cardiff Council is ongoing. The booking of 204 polling stations with only a few weeks' notice is also a matter of concern. Additional planning is also being undertaken to identify potential implications on Council business should a General Election be called based on estimates indicated by the most recent intelligence based predictions.

- e. Additional resources have been corporately provided to support the Elections Team but the impact of a potential fourth by-election and the possibility of a General Election will have wider implications for the Democratic Services Team including the co-ordination of any governance related matters relating during the pre-election period and the scanning and processing of postal votes for a General Election.

14. Staffing

- a. Since the last meeting of the Democratic Services Committee, two members of the Committee and Members team have left the Authority and recruitment exercises for both posts has been undertaken. This process has left these posts vacant for longer than anticipated and increased the workload for the Committee and Members Services Teams.
- b. The Members Services Officer post is currently being filled by an employee on a trial basis. Should this trial be successful the employee will permanently join the team. However, if the individual or the Head of Democratic Services decide that the trial was unsuccessful a further recruitment process will be commenced.
- c. The Committee and Member Services Manager post has been advertised with a closing date for applications of 11 October 2019. In the interim, an acting up opportunity and the recruitment a temporary employee are being progressed to ease the workload of the team.
- d. The Elections team have one team member on maternity leave and the post is being backfilled using acting up arrangements.
- e. One of the Principal Scrutiny Officers is currently being filled on a temporary/acting up basis until 31st December 2019. A recruitment process for a permanent employee is to be progressed shortly with the successful applicant expected to start in January 2020.

Future Challenges

15. The Democratic Services Team is continually looking at the likely demands being placed upon them in the forthcoming years.

16. New Legislation – Local Government and Elections Bill

As part of a new bill the Welsh Government has expressed its intention to introduce several requirements which will impact the provision of Democratic Services which include the introduction of:

- a requirement to broadcast all public meeting of Local Authorities.
- the reduction in voting age for welsh assembly elections from 18 to 16.

- A requirement to publish a scheme (a “petition scheme”) setting out how the council intends to handle and respond to petitions (including electronic petitions)
- A requirement to enhance the use of Remote Attendance.
- Statutory Joint Committees

A number of officer’s from across Wales including the Monitoring Officer, Head of Democratic Services and the Elections Manager from Cardiff have been involved in Welsh Government Working Groups on these matters. It is hoped that any initial expectations of the Welsh Government and the potential impact on local authority resources and budgets can be considered.

It should be noted that similar Electoral legislation from the UK Government will be required to enable all elections held in Wales to include 16-18 year olds. It is uncertain at this stage when this UK legislation will be progressed.

17. Budget Savings

The Budget Strategy 2020/21 sets out a budget gap of £25m for next financial year and a budget gap of £101m over the following four years (April 2020 to March 2024). To contribute to the £25m budget gap it has been proposed that the Council will make £18.5m savings through efficiency, transformation and growing income.

To meet these targets Governance and Legal Services have been asked to identify possible efficiency savings of 7.5% or £219,000, an additional £14,000 of income, and other service change and transformation opportunities. Democratic Services’ element of these savings make up £64,000, for which the Director has indicated that with current meeting levels, the service is unable to identify these savings. However, some options have been put forward for further consideration including a review of the meetings cycle and the scrutiny function. Without the possibility of holding fewer meetings and the level of staffing resources necessary to support them the savings targets are unlikely to be met.

18. Member Development

- The Democratic Services Committee has a key role to play in the provision and delivery of effective Member development including the prioritisation and designation of learning opportunities as either essential, advisory or optional.
- A since 2017 number of learning opportunities have been identified by the Committee and designated as essential. A number of recent essential sessions have been held with further sessions of each the following topics being planned:

Session	Number of councillors in attendance	Percentage of councillors in attendance	Remarks
Children's Rights in Practice, Part 1	46	61%	3 sessions
Children's Rights in Practice, Part 2	40	53%	2 sessions

Session	Number of councillors in attendance	Percentage of councillors in attendance	Remarks
Corporate Safeguarding Guide	35	47%	2 sessions
Corporate Parenting	23	31%	1 session and E-learning

- c. The designation of member learning and development as essential requires a significant commitment from the team to arrange a series of sessions to enable maximum participation. Opportunities to improve the number of Members attending each session and to reduce the volume of resources needed to arrange and administer each session are being considered. These include limiting the number of sessions provided, additional promotion of the sessions and the inclusion of attendance details at topics designated as essential as part of the overall members attendance figures. The view of the Committee on these proposals would be appreciated.

19. New Audio Visual Conferencing System and Webcasting Facilities

Cardiff Council is seeking to update a number of its electronic meeting systems used to facilitate its formal public meetings into an integrated system which will include the provision of:

- a. A robust network in its City Hall Council Chamber which will facilitate the use of the any electronic equipment necessary to support the requirements of a public meeting.
- b. An integrated control system to manage its associated components which will include: microphones, cameras, electronic voting, display screens, display a speaker list, display speaker timings, display voting results, agenda management, device charging facilities, support for welsh translation, audio enhancement and support for those with hearing impairments.
- c. The provision of a separate portable digitised meeting system which is capable of being set up in a variety of venues which have wi-fi access without the need for a significant level of technical expertise.
- d. An effective webcasting service which is able to utilise the outputs from the City Hall Council Chamber or the portable digitised meeting system to provide a dual language broadcast facility which can be live streamed and archived for later viewing.

The Head of Democratic Services taking the lead in the delivery of these facilities which is due to be completed by May 2020. Some funding from the reserve funds held by Democratic Services will be used to support the achievement of this project.

20. Democratic Engagement

The guidance for the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 refers to two of the 'Making the Connections' principles:

- i. **Citizens at the Centre:** services more responsive to users with people and communities involved in designing the way services are delivered.
- ii. **Public Engagement:** every person to have the opportunity to contribute, and connect with the hardest to reach.

The role of local government scrutiny is integral to helping people feel they are able to influence what goes on in their locality. Better communication about local decision making processes and greater representative participation will help ensure more direct experiences of community life inform strategic thinking and operational practice. The Measure places a requirement on local authorities to make arrangements that enable all persons who live or work in the area to bring to the attention of the relevant overview and scrutiny committees their views on any matter under consideration by the committee.

Guidance for the Measure suggested that “Council’s may wish to adopt a multi-method communication strategy that may inform and be guided by FWP’s since some of the issues identified may be of little interest to the public at large and of great interest to relatively small groups of people. Use of the most appropriate forms of media and communication for different sections of the public may encourage wider engagement and participation in the work of overview and scrutiny committees.

Although the required arrangements are in place, including: a scrutiny website, publication of scrutiny work programmes and the introduction of webcasting for all Scrutiny Committees. However, the most recent Wales Audit Office report, Overview and Scrutiny - Fit for the Future, identified that “the Council recognises that it needs to do more to engage the public and other interested groups in its scrutiny activity”.

To progress this aim, the Fit for the Future Action plan included the an action to “Consider the development of a Scrutiny/Democratic Services social media account to promote democratic activity including the publication and promotion of the FWP.” Any social media account will also provide an opportunity to promote other Democratic Services activities to encourage the residents of Cardiff to participate in the decision making processes of the Council.

Some initial work has been done to link the Council webcasts to “Facebook live” to encourage more viewers to the webcasts. The options for the development of a Democratic Services Communications Strategy including the possibility of creating and maintaining a Democratic / Scrutiny social media presence are being progressed. Any options other than do nothing are likely to require some resources in terms of appropriate levels of initial funding and a time commitment for team members to manage and maintain any social media presence.

21. Democratic Renewal

The Welsh Government has recently confirmed that the next Local Government Elections will be held in 2022. The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) is already co-ordinating working groups which follow on from the Diversity in Democracy programme that was used to promote greater participation of the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities in the democratic processes.

It is hoped that in October 2020 and as part of Local Democracy Week that the Council invite representatives from across Cardiff to “Potential Councillor” sessions to increase awareness of the roles and responsibilities of Elected Members. It is hoped that these events will assist in engaging those from all communities of Cardiff who may be considering standing for election in 2022. The event will be non-political but could be used to signpost individuals to the next steps in standing for office as a councillor and representing their communities as a member of Cardiff Council.

22. Continuing Efficiencies

The Democratic Services Team are continually reviewing processes and procedures to ensure that they are fit for purpose and form a valued part of the services provided by the team. Every opportunity to identify service efficiencies is being made. Should any proposed efficiency change the delivery of services to Elected Members, consultation will be undertaken before the implementation of any change in service.

The Committee is requested to consider those services which they currently receive and any services or facilities which are no longer required or should be reviewed to make efficiency savings.

23. Development of Cost Information

It is acknowledged that the detailed cost projections for these challenges is still being developed. The committee’s direction on those challenges which they consider a priority can be developed further and reported back to the next meeting on 13 January 2020.

Legal Implications

24. Under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, Part 1, the Democratic Services Committee is responsible for overseeing the democratic services functions of the Council, ensuring this work is adequately resourced and reporting to full Council accordingly.

25. 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.

26. In determining how to exercise its functions, the Committee must have regard to the statutory guidance issued by the Welsh Ministers.
27. 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

28. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The budget position, and financial implications are contained within the body of the report, for which close financial monitoring will need to continue to inform decision-making and control.

RECOMMENDATION

29. The Committee is requested to consider the report and provide any feedback on the support and services provided to Councillors and in particular those relating to:
 - a. The printing facilities provided to Councillors (paragraph 9. b. refers),
 - b. The printing options which could be used to assist in the achievement of the savings target (paragraph 9. g. refers),
 - c. The identification of any services or facilities which are no longer required or should be reviewed to make efficiency savings (paragraph 22 refers).

GARY JONES
HEAD of DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
09 October 2019

Background Papers:

[Local Government \(Wales\) Measure 2011](#)
[Statutory Guidance from the Local Government Measure 2011](#)
[Cardiff Council – Overview and Scrutiny – Fit for the Future? - Wales Audit Office](#)

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DEMOCRATIC SERVICES – ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Electoral Services

The Council's Electoral Services team provides support to just over 243,000 electors and 43,000 postal voters spanning 4 parliamentary constituencies, 6 community councils, and a unitary authority comprising 75 members in 29 wards.

Fundamentally, the Electoral Services unit maintains a comprehensive effective and proactive electoral registration service in accordance with legislative requirements and, is responsible for organising, co-ordinating and administering all elections and referendums on behalf of the appointed Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer

At present, the team currently consists of six members of staff made up of two electoral services officers, two electoral administrators, one assistant and one Manager.

Electoral Registration

In order to be able to vote in election in the United Kingdom, a person's name must be included in a register of electors. Responsibility for compiling the register of electors lies with the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO).

In Wales, the appointment of the ERO is made by the county or county borough council. The current appointed ERO for Cardiff Council is the Chief Executive.

The ERO has a duty to maintain a register of Parliamentary electors and a register of Local Government electors, as well as other relevant registers. In addition, the ERO must also produce an edited (or 'open') version of the registers.

The open register contains only the names and addresses of those on the full register who have not taken the decision to opt out of their details appearing on the edited register.

As part of their legal responsibilities Eros are required to take all necessary steps to publish and maintain registers that are accurate and complete as possible.

This responsibility is supported by conducting an annual refresh exercise (often referred to as the Annual Canvass) where the staff of the ERO are obliged to carry out an audit approximately 151,000 residential properties within the County Council area, as well as undertaking various monthly update processes to the relevant Register of Electors.

The ERO also has the responsibility for the effective delivery of all relevant boundary reviews. This includes reviews of Polling Districts, Community Boundaries, Electoral Wards and Parliamentary Constituencies.

In undertaking the various administrative processes highlighted above the Electoral Services team provides full administrative support to the ERO to ensure the registration maintenance processes are appropriately completed according to legislation.

Electoral Administration

Every County and County Borough in Wales is required to appoint an officer of the council to undertake the role of Returning Officer (or Counting Officer for Referendums) for the various types of electoral events held within the county borough area.

The current appointed Returning Officer for Cardiff Council is the Chief Executive.

This includes:

- UK Parliamentary General Elections
- European Parliamentary Elections*
- National Assembly for Wales Elections
- Welsh Local Government Elections
- Police and Crime Commissioner Elections
- Referendums**

**subject to the UK's Membership of the European Union*

***subject to appropriate electoral legislation*

The core role of the Electoral Services team is to fully support the Returning Officer in conducting their statutory responsibilities in administering well-run electoral events, carrying out all necessary procedures and processes as prescribed by legislation.

This includes:

- Electoral Event Project Planning (incl. verification and count processes)
- Candidate and Agent Liaison
- Communications and Media Liaison
- Management and Booking of all Polling Stations
- Appointing all Presiding Officers and Poll Clerks (incl. staff training)
- Publishing all relevant Statutory Notices
- Print Production of all Electoral Stationery (incl. Poll Cards and Ballot Papers)

Committee Services

1. 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.
2. Committee & Members Services have also since April 2019 supported the Cardiff Council School Admissions Panels with the provision of minute takers at Panel Appeal and Exclusion Hearings.
3. In addition to Committee administration the team carry out the following functions:
 - (a) Council Governance: custodians of the:
 - Constitution;
 - Declaration of Acceptance of Office;
 - Cardiff Undertaking;

- Register of Political Groups.
- (b) 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.
- (c) Public Engagement support given to:
- Public questioners at Council;
 - Hosting attendees and visitors;
 - Petitioners & public at Committee meetings.
- (d) Liaison with Members and External Bodies
- Produce & issue the Members Weekly 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;
 - Internal Audit and Wales Audit Office with inspections; providing information & reports; & at meetings;
 - Liaise with a range of Outside Bodies.
- (e) Corporate Support
- Emergency Management on call on a rota basis;
 - Representing Committee & Members Services at corporate meetings
 - Supporting the Electoral Services team both at elections and in the use of Modern.Gov
 - Support to the Legal and Education School Admission Appeals process and the digitalising of the Panel Members packs on Modern.gov.
- (f) Management and development of systems
- Modern.Gov;
 - Conference System;
 - Webcasting
 - Facebook Live

Members Services

4. The Members Services Support Team assists all 75 Elected Member by:
- (a) providing face to face contact with Elected Members;
 - (b) allocating a dedicated Members Services Support Officer to support with enquiries concerning Council Services;
 - (c) tracking and monitoring Members Enquiries and chasing responses with agents;

- (d) providing general administrative and secretarial service to Elected Member including handling correspondence and emails; typing, scanning, mail merges etc.;
- (e) maintaining an up to date contact list of all 75 Elected Members;
- (f) maintaining an electronic record of Members Surgeries; preparing data for publication on website; and preparing surgery notices;
- (g) arranging room bookings for meetings relating to ward matters; with constituents or outside body representatives
- (h) arranging welsh translation in accordance with the statutory requirements of the Welsh Language Standards;
- (i) providing stationery and office supplies; and
- (j) overseeing Members' business offices including offices for Chairs of Committees and communal members areas;
- (k) the first point of access for Members ICT/Telephone; allocation of IT equipment; and early stage troubleshooting support;
- (l) provide signposting to other information and services relating to the role of Councillor
- (m) Co-ordination and development of the Nethelpdesk system used with Member Enquiries.
- (n) Support for the use of SNAP software for the provision of electronic surveys

Scrutiny Services

5. Within their terms of reference, Scrutiny Committees:-

- (a) Set their own work programmes and submit Annual Reports for consideration by the Council. Such reports will outline previous, and ongoing, investigations, and set out any known future work programme.
- (b) May make proposals to the Cabinet regarding policy and service development and scrutinise and review decisions made, or actions, taken in connection with the discharge of any Council functions.
- (c) May use the budgets allocated to them, relevant Council employees, advisers and assessors to assist them in fulfilling their role. They may go on site visits, conduct public surveys, hold public meetings, commission research and do all other things that they reasonably consider necessary to inform their deliberations. They may ask witnesses to attend to address them on any matter under consideration and may pay to any advisers, assessors and witnesses a reasonable fee and/or expenses for doing so. They must comply with the Council's procedures and keep within the budgets allocated to them in so doing.
- (d) As far as possible, will ensure that the objectives of any proposed business are set out in its programme.

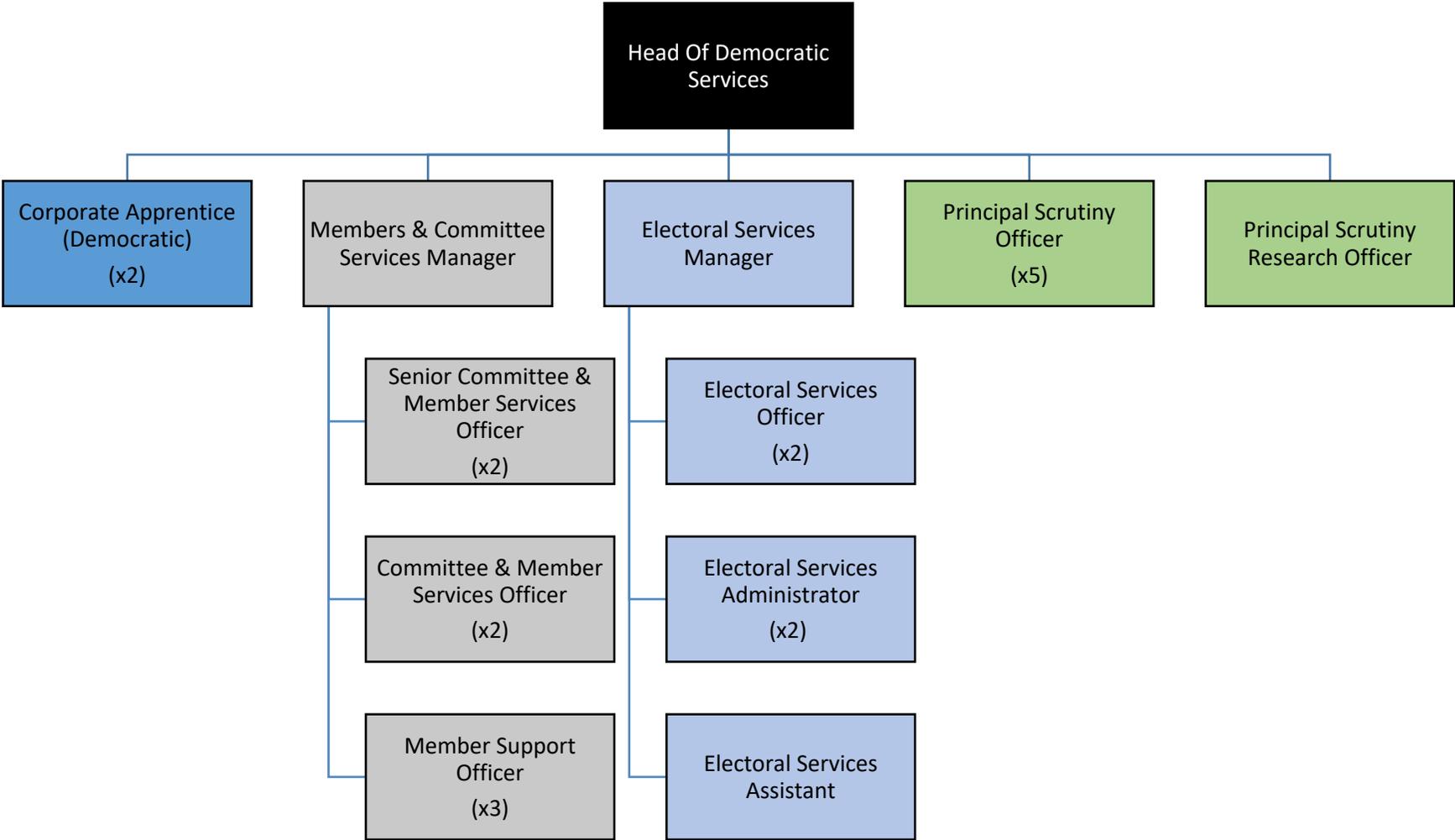
Scrutiny officers are available to provide support to Scrutiny Members. They help Members plan their scrutiny by developing an appropriate work programme. Scrutiny officers organise committee activities (such as meetings, visits, panels, listening exercises and task groups), carry out research, prepare committee papers, draft reports and letters and arrange witnesses. They are available to provide advice and assistance to help Members undertake their scrutiny role effectively, by providing

one-to-one support, explaining background context and issues and discussing training opportunities with Members.

The Scrutiny Team has dedicated research capacity to support Cardiff Council's Scrutiny function taking responsibility for systematically collecting and analysing independent information by using various qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The research forms part of the evidence that is considered by Scrutiny Committees and helps inform their recommendations.

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STRUCTURE – DEMOCRATIC SERVICES 2018-19



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REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES – ACTIVITIES & SERVICE SUPPORT

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 since the last meeting 22 July 2019.

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.

Members Services

3. 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 working days.
4. It was agreed with Community Councils, following the adoption by Cabinet of the Community Council Charter on 13 December 2018, that Member Services would continue to provide the MES service to the six Clerks Community Councils and that this would be reviewed annually.
5. 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.
6. Members Services team have 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	Q1 2019/20	Q2 2019/20	Q3 2019/20	Q4 2019/20
Total Enquiries	1848	1975		
Member Self-serve	744	874		
Logged by Officer	1104	1101		
Time taken to close in days.	8.7	7.4		

7. The number of enquiries received by the team in the Q1 of the previous year has increased by 20.55% and the completion time has reduced from 11.2 days to 8.7 days. The figures for Q2 have also appear to have improved over the previous year's performance, but this will not be able to be confirmed until after the Democratic Services Committee meeting.

Scrutiny Services

8. Overview and Scrutiny – Fit for the Future?
The Action Plan developed following a report from the Wales Audit Office entitled Overview and Scrutiny – Fit for the Future? Is to be reviewed before November with any actions planned to be progressed by March 2020.
9. Scrutiny Committee Work Programming
The work programmes of the Scrutiny Committees have been 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 that are being webcast and encourage engagement and participation in the scrutiny process.
10. Audit of Scrutiny
An audit of Scrutiny is being finalised by the Internal Audit Service. The objective of the audit is to ensure that:

Scrutiny Committees demonstrate effective outcomes from Scrutiny activities that represent good value.

With a focus on outcomes, the audit has considered Scrutiny planning, delivery and performance, through discussions with Lead Scrutiny Members, Officers and via desktop review.

The Scrutiny Chairs and Officers have complete discussions with the Internal Auditor and it is anticipated that the completed audit will be will be available in November.

Electoral Services

11. Polling Districts and Stations Review
The Electoral Services Manager has finalised the review Polling districts and station with the report and recommendations being submitted to Council in October 2019.
12. Annual Canvas
The Annual Canvas has reached the second reminder stage and preparations are in place for the physical canvass to begin. Due to the likelihood of a General Election the level of responses is estimated as 87% which is higher than would be expected in a non-election year which is only 3% below the annual target of 90% with the physical

canvass still to begin. The responses from the canvass will enable the up-to-date Electoral Register to be published on 01 December 2019.

Corporate Apprentices – Democratic Services

13. The two Democratic Services Corporate Apprentices Caitlin Davies and Christina Lazarou have become familiar faces within in the Scrutiny and Committee & Members Services teams. They are progressing well with their Business Administration Level 2 Foundation Apprenticeship that they are undertaking in collaboration with Cardiff & Vale College.
14. The next round of corporate apprentice recruitments will begin shortly but due to the overlap with the existing apprentice cohort the Democratic Services team will be unable to support any apprentices in 2020/21.

Modern.Gov

15. 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.
16. 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.
17. An updated Modern.gov app is available for use with IOS systems with one of the team “beta testing” the new version of the app for windows. It is a significant improvement on the current version with greater stability, wider functionality and it’s easier to use. It is hoped that the roll out of the windows version of this app will be available for general release before Christmas.

Webcasting

18. The Council has a contract for 200 hours of webcasting per year for broadcasting of Council, Planning and Scrutiny Committees. Table 2 below displays the current allocation of the webcasting hours and the number of hours that have been used before 1 October 2019:

Table 2

	Number of meetings	Number of meetings webcast	Estimated Webcast Hours	Hours webcast to date
Council	9	5	36	12:27:08
Planning	12	6	36	16:54:32
Scrutiny	50	14	100	30:24:53
Audit (Pilot)	2	1	4	02:22:59
Cabinet (Pilot)	12	0	24	00:00:00
Total Webcasting Hours			200	62:09:32

19. 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 received between 1 April and 20 September 2019.

Table 3

Webcast title	Live date	All views	Live views	Archive views
Council	17-May-19	100	16	84
	23-May-19	247	26	221
	20-Jun-19	339	88	251
	18-Jul-19	347	142	205
	12-Sep-19	250	109	141
	Total	1,283	381	902
Planning Committee	17-Apr-19	120	18	102
	15-May-19	163	23	140
	19-Jun-19	352	89	263
	17-Jul-19	255	67	188
	14-Aug-19	337	122	215
	18-Sep-19	172	80	92
	Total	1,399	399	1,000
Scrutiny				
Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee	11-Jun-19	84	18	66
Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee	05-Jun-19	90	10	80
Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee	03-Jul-19	65	4	61
Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee	11-Sep-19	32	5	27
Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee	09-May-19	58	7	51
Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee	06-Jun-19	42	7	35
Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee	04-Jul-19	69	6	63
Environmental Scrutiny Committee	07-May-19	73	12	61
Environmental Scrutiny Committee	12-Jun-19	54	6	48
Environmental Scrutiny Committee	02-Jul-19	30	4	26
Environmental Scrutiny Committee	17-Sep-19	27	2	25
Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee	08-May-19	80	14	66
Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee	25-Sep-19	31	6	25
	Total	735	101	634
Audit Committee	10-Sep-19	95	37	58
	Total	95	37	58
	Grand Total	2,777	817	1,960
	2019-20 Target	5,500		
	Percentage	50.49%		

Councillor Annual Reports

20. 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 that 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.

21. Elected Members were provided with template and guidance following Annual Council in May 2019 and the deadline for receipt of Annual Report was extended to 31 July 2019.
22. There is no legal requirement for Councillors to complete an Annual Report, only that the Council afford the Councillor the opportunity to publish one. It is one way that Councillors can promote greater understanding of the wide and varied role of a Councillor and showcase the different work Councillors undertake for local residents and communities in their Ward.
23. Group Whips have supported Democratic Services in encouraging Councillors to provide an Annual Report. Details of the number of Councillors publishing their Annual reports will be provided to the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales and a previous Welsh Government Minister for Local Government was collecting figures for all Welsh Authorities.
24. Councillors have the opportunity to prepare an annual report on an individual basis or by Ward and to date we have received two Ward and four individual Councillor Annual reports.

Office 365 Roll out for Elected Members

25. Office 365 is the latest version of Microsoft Office which includes Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook. It utilises the benefits of “the cloud” to make savings in infrastructure costs which includes a reduction in server space, the removal of license costs for “Blackberry Works” which is no longer required and provides more collaborative features which should enable users to work more effectively.
26. The Authority is currently migrating to Office 365 and the migration of Democratic Services to Office 365 was completed by 31 August 2019.
27. Ten Elected Members have already been migrated as part of the successful pilot. The roll out of Office 365 for the remaining elected members has commenced with the first tranche of conversion slots being made available from 15 October 2019 with further tranches being identified over the next few weeks. It is anticipated that all Elected Members will be converted to Office 365 by December 2019.
28. During the pilot some Elected Members were identified as already having a managed account on their existing devices. A managed account is an account with an organisation that exerts some degree of control over the data on the device, either through application management i.e. as used by the Welsh Assembly or full device management. It is not possible to have more than one such account on the same device. There is no restriction relating to unmanaged accounts, such as personal Office 365 accounts, or even business accounts where the organisation in question does not exert any control over the data on the device. There is nothing preventing a user having one or more unmanaged accounts on the same device as their Cardiff Council account.

29. Those Elected Members with other managed accounts on their devices will be requested to prioritise their Council devices for use with the Council's Office 365 account.

Member Development

30. E-Learning

The planned implementation of the Elected Members E-learning portal has been delayed but is expected to be operational by the end of October. Once operational all members will be informed and provided with the relevant links and guidance to complete the Cyber security and Violence against women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence e-learning modules which were designated as essential learning. Additional topics will also be available for completion and include:

- Managing Yourself and Your Time
- Managing Your Priorities
- Stress Awareness
- Personal Resilience
- Safeguarding Children Awareness Raising

31. Welsh Language

Cardiff Academy has provided free Welsh Language courses from September as follows:

- Beginner to advanced
- One morning a week for 30 weeks
- Option to gain a WJEC qualification
- Clear pathway to becoming bilingual (Level 3+)

Elected Members have been informed of these courses and how they can book onto the appropriate course.

32. Essential Member Learning sessions

The following topics were identified as essential learning for all Elected Members:

- Children's Rights in Practice Part 1
- Children's Rights in Practice Part 2
- Corporate Safeguarding

Repeats of these sessions are being planned but scheduling them is proving difficult. As soon as suitable dates are arranged those Elected Members who have yet to attend the sessions will be advised accordingly.

The launch of the Corporate Parenting policy is still to be confirmed and therefore the dates for the learning sessions have yet to be identified. This topic has also been designated as essential by the Committee.

33. Chairing Skills

The Head of Democratic Services is co-ordinating availability of the WLGA to deliver Chairperson training which can then be supplemented by mentoring support from experienced members with proven chairing skills.

34. PREVENT Awareness Sessions

At an initial meeting with manager responsible for PREVENT the following activities were identified:

- a. A Home Office PREVENT briefing consisting of a repeated session for all members to be held at a convenient time ideally in November and subject to Home Office availability to deliver the session.
- b. Channel Panel Workshops would be organised by the PREVENT Officers with elected Members being informed of the dates and venues. Individual members could attend these workshops which would be held in the community

Further discussion of the details and timings of these activities is awaited.

35. Wellbeing of Future Generations Act Awareness

The pilot of this topic was undertaken in January with the feedback being positive. The identification of suitable dates for the provision of this learning for all Elected Members was delayed to await clarification on an external challenge submitted to the Future Generations Commissioner's office.

This challenge has now been resolved and potential dates can be identified. The Future Generation's office has indicated that they are unable to meet all requests to support Local Authority development sessions but have provided their learning materials for the Council officers to use. The Head of Policy and Partnerships has confirmed that he would be able to support these sessions and to work with other officers to deliver the appropriate learning sessions.

36. Planning for Members

The Chair of the Planning Committee has requested that all members be provided the opportunity to attend one of three interactive Planning sessions to be arranged in the New Year with the following learning objectives:

- a. **How planning applications are assessed and determined**
 - Pre-application stage
 - Submission
 - Assessment- Balanced judgement based on consideration of material factors/consultation responses
 - Amended plans
 - Decision Report
 - Delegated decisions
 - Planning Committee
- b. **How Planning Committee operates**
 - Overview including Protocol & Code of Practice

- Order of business
 - Petitions
 - Site Visits
 - Speaking at Committee
- c. **How to view applications and make comments**
- Planning Portal- Viewing & tracking applications
 - Making comments on an application

These member development sessions would be beneficial for all Elected Members and therefore the Committee is requested to designate these sessions as essential.

Regional Scrutiny Network

37. The Head of Democratic Services has taken the lead with the South East Wales Scrutiny Officers Network (SEWSON) based on the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD) footprint. The intention for the network is to enhance the delivery and awareness of scrutiny across the region and to identify opportunities to deliver the positive outcomes which collaborative working can achieve.
38. Following the success of the training session held on 19 July 2019 it has been agreed that an interactive regional Scrutiny Training session will be developed for all Elected Members and officers in the CCRCD region which may include but not be limited to the following topics:
- a. Meeting dynamics
 - b. Analysing information
 - c. Unconscious bias
 - d. Questioning skills
 - e. Active meeting skills
 - f. Chairing skills
39. There will be some costs associated with the running of this event but it is hoped that some funding will be available from the WLGA and from participating Authorities. A further update will be provided in due course.

Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW)

40. The draft IRPW Annual Report 2020/21 is due to be published shortly. The Chair of the Democratic Services Committee and the Head of Democratic Services have been invited to meet the Panel on 29 October to discuss any proposed changes included in the draft report. Feedback from the Panel will be provided at the next meeting of the Democratic Services Committee.

Legal Implications

41. Under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, Part 1, the Democratic Services Committee is responsible for overseeing the democratic services functions of the Council, ensuring this work is adequately resourced and reporting to full Council accordingly. .

42. 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.
43. In determining how to exercise its functions, the Committee must have regard to the statutory guidance issued by the Welsh Ministers.
44. 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

45. There are no financial implications directly arising from this report, with any service and activity costs to be contained within the revenue budget.

RECOMMENDATION

46. The Committee is requested to consider the detail in the report and:
- a. note the content of the report.
 - b. provide any feedback on the Support Services provided to Councillors
 - c. approve the designation of Planning for Members as essential Member development for all Elected Members
 - d. Identify any matters it would wish to add to the Work Programme.

GARY JONES
HEAD of DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
09 October 2019

Background Papers: None

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