

Queries & Responses From Council On 28 March 2019

On [28 March 2019, Council](#) approved the Democratic Services Annual report and the Elected Member Learning and Development Strategy. A number of queries were raised and the Democratic Services Committee was requested to review some key concerns as part of its ongoing work programme. The following is a summary of the queries that were raised and the plans to progress these matters.

1. Personal Safety and Security of Elected Members

It is acknowledged that Elected Members have high profile public roles and continually interact with the residents of their community. These interactions may lead to Elected Members being subjected to verbal, written or online abuse.

It is important that all Elected Members be mindful of the potential risks when carrying out their duties. The simple measures in the Members Personal Safety & Security Guidance provide some of the considerations all Elected Members should be making to minimise any risks to their personal safety.

To address these concerns and to remind Elected Members of the practical measures they can use to keep themselves safe, the Democratic Services Committee have agreed to include Personal Safety briefings as part of the ongoing Member Development Programme.

However, if, you have any concerns about your safety or you feel you are at risk, you should initially contact the Head of Democratic Services, Gary Jones or the Committee and Member Services Manager, Gill Nurton. They can liaise with the Corporate Security Manager to arrange for a risk assessment to be undertaken. The assessment will identify any necessary measures which should be provided to address specific safety concerns.

When supporting your communities, the majority of people are friendly and considerate but this may not always be the case. Elected Members should always take sensible steps to minimise any risks to their personal safety and inform the relevant officers if you need additional support.

2. Promoting Democratic Engagement

Elected Members expressed their concerns that greater efforts were needed to promote democracy across the city. One of the methods to achieve this was the increase in the webcasting contract to enable 200 hours of content to be broadcast. This facility was extended beyond the Council Planning and Scrutiny committees to include the webcasting of Cabinet and Audit Committee meetings.

The Democratic Services Team also facilitates schools visits at formal meeting and has undertaken liaison with the Youth Council.

The Children and Young Peoples Scrutiny Committee is attended by a youth representative and there are youth representatives on the current task and finish group. It is hoped that the participation of Youth representative a can be extended to all scrutiny committees.

This year's National Democracy Week will start on Monday 14th October 2019 and the Democratic Services Team is hoping to provide events and activities to promote Democracy across the City of Cardiff.

3. **Annual reports**

The completion and publication of Annual Report will be included in the Democratic Services – Activities & Service Support Matters report

4. **Learning and development**

- How are individual Member supported in their personal and professional development

In accordance with the intentions of the Elected Member Learning and Development Strategy the Democratic Services Committee has agreed to develop the process for the implementation of a process to enable each Elected Member the develop their individual knowledge and skills as part as a programme of learning and support. This will require the creation of a personal review process which will provide an opportunity for discussions with a suitably trained peer to identify any appropriate individual training and support needs of an Elected Member.

- Can the Committee consider the use of the Co-operative College to provide modularised training qualification for elected members.

This is being investigated but currently no Council in Wales is undertaking this type of member development process.

- How can the challenge of becoming an effective Elected Member be eased following their election.

The strategy also identified the need for a Member Mentoring process where more experienced peers provide personal support to their newly appointed colleagues. This will enable newly elected members to be supported to adapt to the rigours of their new role.

Continual personal develop may lead to the nomination of an Elected Member to attend the Academi Wales Leadership programme. Although opportunities to provide an in house version of this personal development activity are available this would have a financial implication for the Authority and will not have the same networking opportunities as the Academi Wales version

- **A Councillors online profile does not have up to date training attendance information.**

The publication of the training attendance information is often delayed which is hoped to be improved in the future.

- **The use of external training providers should be utilised to enhance to potential outcomes of any learning and development activity.**

Usually a judgement is made by the Democratic Services Committee or between the Chair of the Committee and the Head of Democratic Services on whether a topic is suitable for in house providers to undertake or a specialist external provider is needed. Whenever a learning and development opportunity arises the Head of Democratic Services liaises with colleagues across Wales to identify appropriate facilitators for the topics.

There is also an opportunity if the relevant knowledge and skills are held by experienced Elected Members of the Council for them to be requested to support the learning and development of other Elected Members.

- **The need for a greater understanding of the role of Corporate parents is needed and should be considered as essential training**
- **Consideration of the Wellbeing of members**

The following were raised as examples of where elected Members needed greater support for their wellbeing.

- Councillors are at the front line of conveying bad news to constituents
- Supporting the transition from resident to councillor to ensure that their mental health is not affected during this difficult period
- Supporting those Councillors with young families the challenges they face and how the Care allowances can be used to support this challenge
- Informal arrangement casework, working with officers
- Occupational therapy

The support for Elected Members should be considered before their election and to prepare them for what they can expect if elected and the challenges that they may face.

Once elected the Councillor should be supported by an Elected Member mentor to assist them to adapt to the specific demands of the role of a councillor. This will initially be a quite demanding support mechanism but will quickly change as the newly elected member develops their knowledge and skills.

The personal review will identify where additional support is needed in terms of personal development. This is a mechanism to support each individual councillor.

The Council provides a confidential counselling support service should and individual Elected Member need additional wellbeing support.

The Democratic Services Team has a wide range of knowledge regarding the Council and the support mechanisms that are already in place which can be utilised by Councillors.

Health checks are provided to staff and this is being extended to Councillors should they feel that these would be beneficial to them. The next opportunity is before the Council meeting on 12 September in County Hall.

- **The use of Modern.gov should be improved.**

The Modern.gov app facilitates the use of a paperless office. However it is acknowledged that the App is not as robust as should be expected. Modern.gov are developing a new app that is more user friendly and robust which should address many of the concerns that Elected Members have. The new App is available for the iPad with the windows version expected to be rolled out before the end of the year.

Once the new app is available appropriate training sessions will be provided to elected members to ensure the improved functionality can be utilised as soon as possible.