

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.