
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