

REPORT OF THE INTERIM HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

**MEMBERS SERVICES – ACTIVITIES & SERVICES SUPPORT
MATTERS**

Reason for this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to inform the Democratic Services Committee on the performance of services provided to Councillors.

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.

Current Position / Issues

Head of Democratic Services

3. This Committee at its meeting on 10 October was consulted and approved the role profile for the Role of Head of Democratic Services for consideration by the Employment Conditions Committee.
4. The Employment Conditions Committee met on 22 November 2017 (Min No 6) approved the role profile specifying the duties of the new Senior Management posts recommended by Cabinet 16 November 2017 which included the permanent appointment of a Head of Democratic Services, which is a statutory post.
5. The Head of Democratic Services post was placed for advert on 8 January 2018 with a closing date of 29 January 2018. An Appointment Committee of five Members has been established in accordance with the requirements for this statutory appointment and will meet in early February to longlist candidates before following through the assessment process and shortlisting of candidates for interview at the end of March.

6. The Appointment Committee is made up of the Lord Mayor, Cllr Derbyshire, Councillor Weaver as Cabinet Member Finance, Modernisation and Performance; Councillor Patel as Chair of Scrutiny; Chair of Democratic Services Committee, Councillor Mike Jones-Pritchard as Conservative nomination and Councillor Joe Carter as Liberal Democrat nomination
7. The Appointments Committee must make the appointment. However, the Democratic Services Committee is required to designate a Head of Democratic Services to discharge the democratic services functions of the Council. In accordance with the Statutory Guidance on this matter (issued under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011), it is proposed that the Appointments Committee's decision on appointment should be made subject to designation of the proposed appointee by the Democratic Services Committee. The Democratic Services Committee will then be asked to agree the designation of the Head of Democratic Services at its first meeting after the Appointments Committee has considered this matter

Members Services

8. Feedback from the Member Survey Autumn 2017 detailed in Agenda Item 6 on this agenda has been positive about the support provided by the enhanced Member Services team established since May 2017.
9. One of the key services within the responsibility of this team is operational responsibility for the Members Enquiry System (MES) and the team wished to share with Committee some key performance data and trends.
10. Familiarisation sessions on the Member Enquiry System have been held to support Councillors in navigating and reporting issues on the MES, and following feedback in the Member Survey further one to one or group sessions are being arranged.

Member Enquiry System (MES) Data

11. The table below provides an update on the number and method of reporting Member Enquires made during the months specified Table 1 below:

Table 1

Enquiry Type	Oct 17	Nov 17	Dec 17
Total Enquiries	455	405	302
Member Self-serve (%)	47%	48%	47%
Logged by Officer (%)	53%	52%	53%
Closed in the month	514	393	312
Time taken to close in days. Median (mean)	8.0 (11.2)	7.0 (9.2)	7.2 (10.9)

12. The system provides useful data on numbers of cases by directorates and their services and it is important that enquiries are logged on this system to give an accurate analysis of issues and trends that are reported to Senior Managers on a monthly basis.
13. Attached as **Appendix A** is data by Quarter on the total number of enquiries received by service and average days taken to close. Three services (Table 2 below) receive the most enquiries and have a support resource that regularly monitor and respond to enquiries. Those services that have few enquiries tend to take longer to respond. The complexity and multi-service nature of queries does mean that response times can exceed the 10 days but the Members Services team are constantly monitoring responses and chasing or escalating as necessary.

Table 2

Service	Types of Enquiries
Highways, Traffic and Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road Safety matters – including traffic calming measures; double yellow lines; road markings; sign posts; • Reporting potholes; • Drainage • Street lights
Neighbourhood Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fly-tipping; • Litter • Leaf clearing • Bins •
Parks Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overgrowth • Fallen trees • Repairs to parks/play areas •

14. Regular meetings are held with City Operations that has responsibility for most of the above services currently to discuss and ensure that Councillors are receiving the information that they request and to highlight any specific issues in particular in relation to Requests for Service.
15. Meetings with Regulatory Services, Leisure and Facilities Management are planned in the next few weeks.

Modern.Gov

16. All Members have the Modern.Gov App on their device and a programme of support for those Councillors who wish to gain experience and confidence to work electronically is ongoing.
17. In addition the Committee team are working on further improvements to Modern.Gov and users guides to support Members with agile working and self-service.

Webcasting

18. Data on the number of live webcasting hits of Council, Planning and Scrutiny are a Performance indicator measure as part of the Directorates Service Plan and objective to encourage public engagement and democratic and accountable decision making processes. Table 3 below set out the number of live hits per quarter in 2017/18.

Table 3

Event	Q1 2017	Q2 2017	Q3 2017	Q4 2018
Council	193	260	246	0
Planning	103	175	280	0
Scrutiny	0	7	129	0
Total	296	442	655	

Members Annual Reports

19. The Local Government (Wales) Measure 20111 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 (attached as Appendix B) which 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.
20. Annual reports for 2017/18 cover the period from 8 May 2017 to 23 May 2018. Set out in Table 4 is the an updated schedule for publication:

Event	Date
Members Services to circulate report template to all Councillors	16 April 2018
Annual Report for 2017/18 to be returned to Members Services	31 May 2018
Reports to be finalised by Members Services and agreed with individual Councillor prior to sending for translation	29 June 2018
Member Services to ensure all Annual Reports received have been translated.	31 July 2018
Final publication date for Councillor Annual Reports 2017/18	10 September 2018

21. There is no legal requirement for Councillors to complete an Annual Report, only that the Council afford the Councillor the opportunity to publish one. Whips have in the past promoted the completion within Groups and 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 also collecting figures for all Welsh Authorities.

Networks

Member Support Officer (MSO) and Member Development Champions Network.

22. These networks aim to improve the services and member development opportunities provided to Councillors. The MSO is primarily for officers, with Councillors forming the Member Development Champions Network. The two networks have joint meetings on a regular basis to share views and ideas.
23. The second meeting since the election was on 5 December, and was attended by the Chair of Democratic Services. The following topics were considered:
- An update from the Welsh Local Government Association
 - Guidance for Local Authorities on the Scrutiny of Public Services Boards
 - Discussion on Engaging the Public in Scrutiny.
 - Consideration of the programme for the Welsh Audit Office event - The role of scrutiny in relation to the Wellbeing and Future Generations Act
 - Feedback from the Independent Remuneration Panel on the findings from their visits to authorities. Representatives from The IRP discussed the findings from their recent consultations
 - Initial findings from the Democratic Services Survey
 - Bullying and Sexual Harassment - an opportunity to discuss the support provided to elected members who may find themselves to be victims or perpetrators of bullying or sexual harassment.
 - Online Abuse - an opportunity to discuss the support provided to elected members who are subjected to abuse through social media.

Legal Implications

24. The Democratic Services Committee must:
- (a) designate the statutory Head of Democratic Services,
 - (b) review the adequacy of provision by the authority of staff, accommodation and other resources to discharge democratic services functions, and
 - (c) make reports and recommendations to the authority in relation to such provision
25. It is for the Democratic Services Committee to determine how to exercise those functions, but the Committee must have regard to any guidance from the Welsh Ministers.
26. 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.
27. The Appointments Committee must make the appointment of the Head of Democratic Services (under the Standing Orders Regulations, SI 2006/1275 the Employment Procedure Rules and the Appointments Committee's terms of reference). However, the Democratic Services Committee must *designate* the Head of Democratic Services (under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, section 11). The Statutory Guidance issued under the Measure 2011 clarifies the position, as follows:

3.21 When a new HDS is required, again the DSC could designate an existing officer or, if it felt there was no-one suitable, could agree with the Chief Executive or relevant member(s) that the post should be advertised externally, in which case the procedures for appointing staff described in the council's standing orders must be followed. It would be a sensible arrangement for the DSC to be consulted on the advertising, interview and selection process, even though it would be the authority, not the DSC, which would appoint as the employing body. The appointment could, however, be made subject to the DSC subsequently designating the selected person as HDS. [...]

Members' Annual Reports

28. Under Section 5 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, and the Statutory Guidance issued by Welsh Government on 16 May 2013, Local Authorities must make arrangements enabling Elected Members to produce Annual Reports on their Council activities during the previous year. This includes enabling any Cabinet member to report on their Cabinet activities during the year. The Council must also publicise information about these arrangements to both Members and the wider public. However, there is no mandatory duty on Members or Cabinet Members to make an Annual Report on their activities.
29. Any reports produced by Members must be published by the Council, but the Council may set conditions or limits on what is included in a report.
30. The Council must not publish any party political material, that is, anything which appears to be designed to affect public support for a political party (under section 2 of the Local Government Act 1986). The Statutory

Guidance on Members' Annual Reports (paragraph 1.6 of the guidance issued under section 5 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011) states that the report should contain only factual information relating to the work of the Councillor; should avoid promoting political achievements; be written in the past tense and be limited to two sides of A4.

31. 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

32. The new post of Head of Democratic Services is part of the revised Senior Management Structure and is proposed to be funded from existing resources.
33. Other services are provided within the 2017/18 budget allocation for this Directorate details of which are reported in the Quarterly Financial Monitoring reports.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is requested to note the detail provided in the report and provide any further feedback on the Support Services provided to Councillors;

GEOFF SHIMELL
Interim Head of Democratic Services
29 January 2018 V0.2

APPENDICIES

Appendix A - Quarter 1 – 3 Results on Total Enquiries received and Average days taken to close by Services
Appendix B – Councillor Annual Report Template

Background Papers