
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 24 May 2021.

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.

Committee Services

3. Filling the vacancies in the Committee & Member Services Team has been progressed and a temporary appointment from Cardiff Works has been made to support the team particularly with the note-taking at Education Appeals. A further recruitment from Cardiff Works is actively being undertaken to enhance the teams capacity to support and develop the services for Elected Members.

Multi-Location meetings

4. The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 requires Local Authorities to develop arrangements for "holding meetings in multiple locations". Guidance from the Welsh Government is being developed which will provide guidance on how meetings can be held whether fully remotely, face to face or as hybrid meetings.
5. A suite of procedures and support will be needed for developed fora Multi-Location Meetings Policy which will require a significant resource from Democratic and other services. This will include the development of the software, hardware, meeting procedures and subsequently provide appropriate training to Elected Members and Officers to ensure that the intentions of the legislation are met.'
6. An appropriate engagement process for seeking the views of Elected Members,

other meeting participants and members of the public will also be needed to enable Officers to prepare draft proposals, reflecting the views expressed, which will be presented to the Constitution Committee for further consideration, prior to making recommendations for approval by full Council.

7. To progress the development of Multi-location meetings phased approach is being undertaken.

Phase 1a - Developing the hybrid meeting functionality for CR4.

8. This will enable us to determine how the hybrid meeting equipment can be integrated and optimised with our existing meeting systems. This will allow the identification of any changes necessary to the existing remote meetings procedure for participants of multi-location meetings. It is expected that this new type of meeting will pose challenges particularly when managing and co-ordinating attendees in multiple locations and providing necessary displays and control measures within the physical part of the meeting.
9. The Democratic Services Team are working to utilise a small number of hard wired microphones in CR4 to develop our meeting capability. Initial testing has begun in Committee Room 4 using Microsoft Teams and supported by Public-I, our webcasting provider. Initial testing has identified a number of changes to the equipment and procedures are necessary to facilitate a single language public meeting. A screenshot of one of the initial tests is shown at figure 1.

Figure 1



10. The capacity of CR4 is currently limited to a maximum of 12 socially distanced people with this number including any essential operators and support staff. These meetings will only be possible in a single language as the hard wired microphones and Microsoft Teams do not support simultaneous translation and transmission of the dual language to the remote attendees.
11. This initial phase does not have any conference control systems. Therefore the existing meeting processes and procedures would have to be maintained. Voting at meetings would continue to use the roll call procedure until a suitable digital alternative could be developed.

Phase 1b – Extending the Multi-Location meeting Capability to County Hall Council Chamber (CHCC)

12. Once the hybrid systems and the relevant procedures are operating effectively in CR4, the capability could be transferable to the CHCC. The cameras and other infrastructure elements are already in place and this would enable CHCC to be used as a larger meeting room, enabling more attendees to participate in the physical part of a multi-location meeting.
13. The CHCC has been identified as suitable for up to 25 people with a managed entry and exit procedure. However the limitation at this stage may be dependent on the number of hard wired microphones available and the span of the existing cables.
14. The display facilities will require enhancement to enable physical attendees to see and hear the remote participants and the essential meeting management control i.e. speaker queues.
15. Voting at formal meetings would continue to use the roll call procedure until a suitable digital alternative could be developed. Meetings would also have to be undertaken in a single language.

Phase 2 – Development of the Conferencing System Capability

Phase 2a – Developing Dual Language functionality (Zoom/Teams)

16. Microsoft indicated that a dual language version of its Teams software would be available at the end of June. This has failed to materialise therefore the Democratic Services Team will be using its 10 trial licenses of Zoom to adapt the existing meeting procedures using Zoom. This will provide the authority with a bi-lingual remote meeting capability. Funding has been provided by the Welsh Government as part of its Digital Democracy Grant and the formal procurement of Zoom licenses for 1 year is underway.
17. Once the basic procedures for Zoom are developed they will need to be tested to ensure that public meetings can be held appropriately. Microsoft Teams will continue to be used as the corporate standard with Zoom only being used for formal committee and public meetings. Public events which require a dual language capability could also utilise Zoom as necessary.

Phase 2b - Wireless Microphone and Conferencing Systems

18. An appropriate conference system which provides wireless microphones with bi-lingual functionality and which will utilise the existing systems and displays in CR4, CHCC and City Hall Council Chamber is being procured. Once procured and installed these systems will support the ongoing development of the processes and procedures for multi-location meetings with a dual language capability.
19. The wireless microphones will also be supplemented by a portable infra-red system which will provide the public with headphones which can access the amplified sound, integrate with hearing aid technology and the dual language capability. The provision

of a conference system could also provide meeting management and voting facilities which can be used to supplement or replace the use of Teams/Zoom.

Phase 2c – Preparing City Hall

20. Some essential maintenance work is needed in areas of City Hall. Survey and remedial work is needed before general access can be provided to the Council Chamber. Some installation work in City Hall will also be needed to provide an “interface” between the installed equipment and the new conference facilities. The cameras in City Hall will also be required to be upgraded and the availability of a high quality internet facility which will support the broadcast of meetings using the existing webcasting systems will need to be confirmed.
21. This should require minimal work to be undertaken in City Hall but when complete will support the full capability of existing hybrid meeting systems.

Phase 2c – Training Elected Members

22. All elected members will need to be trained in the use of the new systems to ensure they can fully interact at meetings. This will include the differences in processes and procedures when attending face to face, remote and hybrid meetings.

Phase 3 – Enhancing the existing systems

23. With an operational bi-lingual multi-location meeting system in CR4, CHCC and City Hall Council Chamber. The focus will change to upgrading the older facilities installed in these meeting venues which will improve display and the interaction of attendees at meetings.

Webcasting

24. A significant majority of the Council's public meetings were recorded or streamed to the Council's webcasting website with only those meetings which contained primarily exempt information not being streamed or uploaded.
25. The following table displays the views of the meetings that were webcast in Quarter 1 in 2021-22.

Committee	Actual duration	Total length of viewing	All views	Live views	Archive views
Council	4:20:49	108:00:29	728	261	467
Cabinet	3:31:24	208:51:39	898	131	767
Scrutiny	27:51:12	141:26:02	436	94	342
Planning	9:40:51	278:53:37	728	171	467
Audit	0:00:00	0:00:00	0	0	0
Totals	45:24:16	629:11:18	2790	657	2043

Other	16:39:17	114:38:50	448	119	329
Grand Totals	62:03:33	743:50:08	3238	776	2372

26. The Democratic Services Committee on 24 May 2021 was viewed 26 times with 3 live and 23 archived views.

Scrutiny Services

27. The Scrutiny Services Team currently have 4 Principal Scrutiny Officers (PSOs) due to the resignation of one of them in March 2021. A recruitment exercise has been undertaken and the new scrutiny PSO will be joining the team on 26 July 2021.
28. The PSO's have worked with the Scrutiny Chairs and the Scrutiny Committees to produce a new single Scrutiny Annual Report for the 2020-21 municipal year. This replaced the individual scrutiny committee annual reports and was presented to Council in June 2021.
29. This new style report was shared with the South East Wales Scrutiny Officers Network (SEWSON) and the National Scrutiny Network where it appears to have been well received. Other Local Authorities are looking to introduce similar Scrutiny Annual Reports which are intended to enhance the engagement and participation with the public.

Office Accommodation

30. The Democratic Services Team are current preparing to compress their office space. Electoral Services have moved into Room 263 with plans for Scrutiny, Committee and Member Services to share Room 283. These moves will be complete by 30 August 21.

Member Development

31. At its last meeting the Committee confirmed that a number of Member Development topics would be progressed. Initial discussions have been held to develop and deliver these sessions.

a. Completed Learning:

The following Member Learning sessions have been held and the attendance details have been included for information:

Serial	Date	Topic	Numbers Attended	% Attended
1.	25 May 21	Cardiff Replacement LDP	24	32.00%
2.	29 June 21 08 July 21	Code of Conduct Refresher	52	69.33%
3.	30 June 21	Cardiff Commitment Vision	20	26.67%
4.	05 July 21	Cardiff Youth Justice Service Update	24	32.00%

b. Scheduled Learning:

The following Member Learning sessions have been provisionally scheduled:

Day	Date	Time	Topic
Thu	02-Sep-21	17:00	Childs Rights in Practice Part A
Mon	06-Sep-21	16:30	Unconscious Bias in Decision Making: By the end of the session participants will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define unconscious bias • Recognize the science behind unconscious bias • Identify personal and business reasons to tackle unconscious bias • Assess the impact of organisational and individual biases • Identify strategies to minimize the impact of biases on key business and people functions • Create personal strategies to minimise the impact of our own biases
Thu	09-Sep-21	12:00	Unconscious Bias in Decision Making: By the end of the session participants will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define unconscious bias • Recognize the science behind unconscious bias • Identify personal and business reasons to tackle unconscious bias • Assess the impact of organisational and individual biases • Identify strategies to minimize the impact of biases on key business and people functions • Create personal strategies to minimise the impact of our own biases
Thu	09-Sep-21	17:00	Childs Rights in Practice Part A
Tue	14-Sep-21	17:00	Childs Rights in Practice Part A
Tue	21-Sep-21	17:00	Childs Rights in Practice Part B
Thu	23-Sep-21	16:00	Licensing Matters - Supporting your Community: To provide Elected Members with an understanding of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the procedures of the Licensing Sub-committee • how objections to Licensing applications are processed and considered supporting your community on Licensing matters
Mon	27-Sep-21	TBC	Social Housing and Section 106: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning objectives being developed
Wed	29-Sep-21	12:00	Childs Rights in Practice Part B
Mon	04-Oct-21	13:00	Licensing Matters - Supporting your Community: To provide Elected Members with an understanding of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the procedures of the Licensing Sub-committee • how objections to Licensing applications are processed and considered • supporting your community on Licensing matters
Thu	14-Oct-21	TBC	Social Housing and Section 106: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning objectives being developed
Tue	19-Oct-21	17:00	Social Housing and Section 106: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning objectives being developed
Wed	20-Oct-21	12:00	UNICEF Follow On
Thu	04-Nov-21	16:00	UNICEF Follow On
Wed	01-Dec-21	TBC	Workshop to Raise Awareness of PREVENT: WRAP is a free specialist workshop, designed by HM Government to provide an introduction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to the Prevent strategy and an individual's role in safeguarding vulnerable people. • An understanding of the Prevent strategy and your role within it.

Day	Date	Time	Topic
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ability to use existing expertise and professional judgment to recognise the vulnerable individuals who may need support. Local safeguarding and referral mechanisms and people to contact for further help and advice.

c. E-Learning - Safeguarding

The Democratic Services Committee agreed that the Safeguarding E-Learning module should be completed to meet the requirements of the safeguarding strategy which identified that 85% of Elected Members should complete the module. The following table shows the completion status to date:

Status	Number	Percentage
Completed	34	45.3%
In progress	6	8.0%

The completion of this E-Learning module is being followed up by officers with Political Group Whips.

d. Planned Learning:

Delivery of the following learning topics are being progressed:

- i. Dementia Awareness – This was identified from a scrutiny recommendation. Initial plans for providing access to the Dementia awareness E-Learning module on the Members portal have been agreed. Many Elected Members have undertaken the Dementia Friends course with their political groups and if this can be evidenced, it will be taken as completion of this learning.
- ii. Biodiversity and Natural Resources - This was identified from a scrutiny recommendation and initial discussions with the Head of Planning to support the use of an external facilitators Natural Resources Wales and Wildlife Trust to support the wider requirements with internal support being provided to provide the Council's perspective and activities. Any costs for the provision of this learning will be met from the Member Development budget.
- iii. Welsh Language – Elected Members have been made aware of the welsh language courses which are being provided by Cardiff Academy. Cardiff Academy is offering Welsh full courses FREE to staff/Elected Members via Microsoft Teams:
 - All levels - beginner, foundation intermediate, advanced, proficient
 - Focus on Work Welsh
 - Blended learning
 - Clear pathway towards becoming bilingual
 Sessions will run from September to April, **not including** school holidays and a summary of each course is below.

MYNEDIAD Welsh Level 1	From Friday 17 September	Weekly sessions 10-12pm
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For beginners, staff below level 1 Part of Level 1 Offer		2 hours independent learning
SYLFAEN Welsh Level 2 Foundation	From Thursday 16 September	Weekly sessions 10-12pm 2 hours independent learning
CANOLRADD Welsh Level 3 Intermediate	From Monday 13 September	Weekly sessions 10-12pm 2 hours independent learning
UWCH Welsh Level 4 Advanced	From Tuesday 14 September	Twelve sessions 10-12.30pm Weekly independent learning Three assignments
HYFEDREDD Welsh Level 5 Proficiency/refresher	From Wednesday 15 September	Twelve sessions 10-12.30pm Weekly independent learning Three assignments

- iv. Rights of a Child in Practice Parts A and B – dates identified with the UN providers of this learning

	Part A		Part B	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Completed	53	70.67%	50	66.67%

- v. Wellbeing of Future Generations – Following the initial pilot, officers are being consulted to provide a wider roll out of this learning which may be combined with the Socio-Economic Duty.
- vi. E-Learning – The following E-Learning topics are available for completion and guidance is sought from the Committee on which topics should be prioritised.
- Dementia Friendly
 - Corporate Parenting
 - Fraud Awareness

Financial Implications

- The body of the report provides details of the requirements for and sources of funding in respect of Democratic Services activities and services support. Sources of funding include the Digital Democracy Fund, Member Development Budget and the Democratic Services Reserve, with the agreement of the Director of Governance and Legal Services.
- Initial development of hybrid remote meetings and the associated costs have been met from the Digital Democracy Fund; however, the ongoing development of this system may require additional equipment. These costs could be met from the capital funding allocated for the procurement of a new conferencing system, as the hybrid facility will form a stepping-stone to achieving the requirements of the new conference system.
- All costs from Democratic Services activities and services support are to be monitored and contained within the respective funding sources and budgets, and any new costs will require an identified source of funding.

Legal Implications

35. 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.
36. 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.
37. In determining how to exercise its functions, the Committee must have regard to the statutory guidance issued by the Welsh Ministers: <https://gov.wales/local-government-measure-2011-guidance> (chapter 3)
38. 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.
39. Other relevant legal provisions, such as the new legislation relating to multi-location meetings, are referred to in the body of the report.

RECOMMENDATION

40. The Committee is requested to consider the detail of the report and note its content.

GARY JONES
HEAD of DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
13 July 2021

Background Papers:

[Democratic Services – Activities & Service Support](#) report dated 24 May 2021