
REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

“POTENTIAL CANDIDATE” EVENT

Reason for this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the views and direction of the Democratic Services Committee regarding the provisional plans to provide a ‘Potential Candidate’ event, for anyone considering standing as a Cardiff Councillor at the Local Government Elections in 2022 or would like more information about Local Government, Cardiff Council and the role of Councillors.

Background

2. The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 places a duty on Councils to encourage local people to participate in decision-making and to produce a Public Participation Strategy (section 40 of the Act). This new legislation takes effect from 5th May 2022, but may be regarded as current good practice. The Strategy must include how the Council intends to promote awareness of:
 - the functions of the Council’s among local people,
 - how local residents can become a member of the Council and
 - the roles and responsibilities of an Elected Member
3. With the next Local Government Elections scheduled for 2022, the provision of a ‘potential candidate’ session in 2021 would support the achievement of these duties and provide an opportunity to develop options for inclusion in the Participation Strategy.
4. Local Democracy Week is held every year in October with the purpose of:
 - strengthening links between elected representatives and their communities
 - increasing participation in the democratic process
 - involving citizens in community affairs
 - increasing knowledge of local democratic institutions and processes.
5. This year’s Local Democracy Week (11-15 October 2021) would be an ideal time to begin preparations for the elections and to actively involve the electorate in the democratic process. However, given the current workloads and the complex co-ordination required to deliver this ‘Potential Candidate’ event, may not be achievable during that specific week, however it should be achievable before the end of the year.

Issues

6. It is proposed that Cardiff Council hold a “Potential Candidate” sessions before mid-December 2021 but preferably during Local Democracy Week which can be attended by any constituents of Cardiff.
7. The event would take approximately three hours and comprise three main parts. The first part would outline the tiers of government, an overview of Cardiff and of Cardiff Council. Part 2 would provide information about being a councillor, with Part 3 providing information on how an individual can become a candidate and the processes for being elected.
8. The session is planned to provide information and not to be political. If potential candidates require further information regarding political parties, they can be signposted to political representatives outside of this event.
9. The following topics are being proposed for inclusion at the event:

Part 1

a. Overview of the Tiers of Government.

This will take the form of a quiz which will pose questions in the form of a simple scenario with multiple choice answers. Attendees will have to identify which tier of Government is responsible for delivering the relevant services to support the given scenario. For example, which tier of government is responsible for the maintenance of the M4 between junctions 30 and 33. The possible answers may include UK Government, Welsh Government, Cardiff Council and Highways England. The correct answer would be identified and how Cardiff Council provides maintenance for the highways within its boundaries.

This section would also outline the various tiers of government and the influences they have in Wales and in Cardiff in particular.

b. An overview of Cardiff

This will be a short section describing Cardiff in respect of its residents, businesses, diversity, culture, and its role as the Capital of Wales.

c. Overview of Cardiff Council

A description of the organisation, the key services provided by the Council, its responsibilities, how it is funded and how Council determines its budget allocation.

Part 2

d. The role of a councillor

This part will outline the roles and responsibilities of a councillor and include:

- Ward work, representing and supporting their communities
- An overview of the decision-making processes of the Council
- An overview of the Code of Conduct
- The support provided to Elected Member

- Experiences of current Councillors (cross-party)

Part 3

- e. An overview of the Electoral roles and responsibilities in Cardiff.
- f. Standing for Election

- Qualification,
- Nomination,
- Uncontested Elections
- Restrictions and offences
- Sign posting for further information:
 - Electoral Services
 - Political groups
 - Electoral Commission
 - WLGA “Be a Councillor” handbook

10. The event is intended to be as interactive as possible in order to engage effectively with those attending and to aid their understanding of the subject matter.

Development and Support

11. Following direction from the Democratic Services Committee, the agreed elements of the session will be co-ordinated by the Head of Democratic Services and the Operational Manager Electoral Services in collaboration with key officers to ensure that the content is clear and concise and that appropriate arrangements are in place. It is hoped that additional support would also be provided at the event from:
- a. Cross party representation from existing councillors to utilise their “real-life” experience to bring the event to life for those attending.
 - b. Returning Officer, Deputy Returning Officer or appropriate representative.
 - c. Monitoring Officer, Deputy Monitoring Officer or a suitable representative
 - d. S151 Officer, Head of Finance or appropriate representative.
 - e. Media and Communications Officers to support social media activity

Promotion and Publicity

12. Initial discussions with the Communications & Media officers suggest that this event would stimulate positive interest from the constituents of Cardiff. Opportunities to publicise the event could be provided via the Councils website, press releases, and social media with the actual event being webcast not only for live streaming but for subsequent viewing on the Council’s website. The webcast views may also provide an indication of engagement with the event.
13. Partner organisations and other bodies including Community Councils could be informed of the event with the aim of attracting those individuals who may already be interested in or who have already planned to stand as a Councillor. Councillors will also be requested to promote the event to community and other groups using their own networks and communication channels. A full media plan will be developed to maximise participation and engagement for this event whilst making best use of resources.
14. The level of interest from the public to participate in the event cannot be gauged at this time. The publicity for the events would request that those wishing to participate, register

their interest in attending in the event and confirm if they were considering standing in the Local Government Elections in May 2021. This would assist in identifying the levels of engagement and participation for the event.

15. Supporting information would be made available on the Council's Democracy webpage. These webpages require some development to ensure that they act as suitable portal to house a variety of information and media as well as will signposting to other sources of information including but not limited to Welsh Parliament, Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), One Voice Wales, Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales and the Public Services Ombudsman.

Locations, and timings

16. It is anticipated that the event would be delivered as a remote event bi-lingual event with individuals being able to join the live event from their own homes using their own computer equipment. It is proposed that these sessions be held in the early evening starting at approximately 5.00pm. This will provide wider scope of access for those individuals interested in participating in these events who are currently working or have caring responsibilities to consider.

Views of the Democratic Services Committee

17. The views of the Democratic Services Committee will be essential to ensure that a suitable event is delivered which will achieve the requirements of the duty placed on the Council by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.
18. The Committee's views are sought on the following:
 - A suitable title for the event. The generic title "Potential Candidate" may not inspire interest. Alternative options for a suitable title for the event would be welcomed.
 - The proposed content of the event and any proposals for improvement.
 - How Committee members would like to be involved in the event?
 - How will the success of the event be measured? Attendance, views of the webcast, webpage hits, potential candidates standing for election, Potential candidates being elected.

Legal Implications

19. Relevant legal provisions are set out in the body of the report.

Financial Implications

20. There are no financial implications directly arising from this report. The development of this event and its associated activities and resources including: promotion, social media messaging, Democracy website improvement, simultaneous translations and translation of supporting material will be identified and found from within existing financial resources.

RECOMMENDATION

21. The Democratic Services Committee is recommended to:

- a. Consider the report and the proposals for the Potential Candidate event; and
- b. Provide direction to the Head of Democratic Services for the development of a public event which will meet the new legal duty of the Council (which takes effect from May 2022) to promote awareness of:
 - the functions of the Council's among local people,
 - how local residents can become a member of the Council and
 - the roles and responsibilities of an Elected Member

G JONES

HEAD of DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

13 July 2021

Background Papers:

[Local Government and Elections \(Wales\) Act 2021](#)