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## REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

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### 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 19 July 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.

#### Issues

##### Multi-Location meetings

3. The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 requires Local Authorities to develop arrangements for "holding meetings in multiple locations". The Constitution Committee considered a report on this issue at its meeting in June 2021 and is due to receive a further report at its next meeting in December 2021. [Interim Guidance for Local Authority Multi-Location Meetings](#) has been provided by the Welsh Government which will provide directions for how meetings can be held whether fully remotely, face to face or as hybrid meetings.
4. The authority received funding from the Digital Democracy Fund to develop a hybrid meeting system and some progress has been made in developing this functionality. The Democratic Services Team has been heavily involved in a number of hybrid meeting demonstrations that have been held with officers, members and Committee Chairs. The feedback has assisted in providing an understanding of the current system capabilities, its limitations and to assist in development of the requirements for the new conferencing system which is currently being procured.
5. The new conferencing system will be able to primarily operate in the three main

Council venues, Committee Room 4, County Hall Council Chamber and City Hall Council Chamber. The system will include new wireless microphones, displays, translation facilities and support for the hard of hearing. There will be meeting control software which will support: electronic voting for committee members (remote and in person attendees), speaker queues, camera control and will integrate with our existing webcasting provider.

6. Once the procurement is finalised, there will be a significant period of development which the Democratic Services Team and other stakeholders will need to undertake. This is hoped to include members of the Democratic Services Committee to test configurations, possible procedures and the effectiveness of guidance for Councillors in the use of the systems.
7. To assist in development of the hybrid meeting facilities, the meeting of the Democratic Services Committee on 29 November will have the Chair and the supporting officers using the hybrid technology from Committee Room 4, with the remaining members of the Committee joining the meeting remotely. This will be the first public meeting where the whole of the Committee meeting will take place using this new technology.

#### Webcasting

8. A significant majority of the Council's public meetings are recorded or streamed to the Council's webcasting website with only those meetings which contain primarily exempt information not being streamed or uploaded.
9. The following table displays the webcasting views of meetings in Quarter 2 in 2021-22.

Committee	Actual duration	Total length of viewing	All views	Live views	Archive views
Council	8:25:21	235:50:24	655	341	314
Cabinet	3:11:15	94:56:28	663	102	561
Scrutiny	22:29:50	221:11:21	640	127	514
Planning	7:36:39	255:07:26	679	173	506
Audit	4:10:57	52:04:09	189	24	165
<b>Totals</b>	<b>45:54:02</b>	<b>859:09:48</b>	<b>2826</b>	<b>767</b>	<b>2060</b>

Other	16:39:17	114:38:50	448	119	329
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<b>Grand Totals</b>	<b>62:03:33</b>	<b>743:50:08</b>	<b>3238</b>	<b>776</b>	<b>2372</b>
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10. The corporate webcasting target for 2021-22 is 7,500 views. The following table shows the progress made in Q1 and Q2 in achieving this target. The total views to date equates to 86.48% of the annual target total.

	<b>Actual duration</b>	<b>Total length of viewing</b>	<b>All views</b>	<b>Live views</b>	<b>Archive views</b>
Q1	66:41:46	982:24:04	3248	860	2389
Q2	62:03:33	743:50:08	3238	776	2372
<b>Grand Totals</b>	<b>128:45:19</b>	<b>1726:14:12</b>	<b>6486</b>	<b>1636</b>	<b>4761</b>

11. The Democratic Services Committee on 19 July 2021 was viewed 87 times with 17 live and 70 archived views.

#### Member Development

12. At its last meeting the Committee confirmed that a number of Member Development topics would be progressed.

a. Completed Learning:

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

<b>Serial</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Numbers Attended</b>	<b>% Attended</b>
1.	06-Sep-21 09-Sep-21	Unconscious Bias in Decision Making	24	32.00%
	28-Sep-21	Covid-19 Mass Immunisation Update	20	26.60%
2.	Various	Childs Rights in Practice Part A	64	85.33%
3.	Various	Childs Rights in Practice Part B	60	80.00%
4.	29-Jun-21 08-Jul-21 29-Jul-21 07-Sep-21	Code of Conduct Refresher (Mandatory) (See Note 1)	64	85.33%
5.	Various	Safeguarding (See Note 2)	59	78.67%
6.	01-Nov-21	Drop-in session (IRWP draft report)	7	9.33%
7.	04-Nov-21	Personal Safety & Security Refresher	9	12.00%

Note 1: The completion of this learning is being followed up with individual Members.

Note 2: The completion of this E-Learning module is being followed up by officers with Political Group Whips.

b. Planned Learning:

Delivery of the following learning topics have been identified:

- i. Biodiversity and Natural Resources - This was identified from a scrutiny recommendation and initial discussions with the Head of Planning to support the use of 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.
- ii. Social Housing and Section 106 - Initial planned dates deferred due to the delivery of LDP being prioritised.

- iii. Rights of a Child in Practice Part B – a final date for the outstanding completion of Part B before the end of the year is being sought.
- iv. Rights of a Child follow on sessions – To support the achievement of Cardiff becoming a Child Friendly City, UNICEF have offered follow up sessions to highlight the activities to support children and young people that are in place in Cardiff and the good practice of other child friendly cities which could be implemented in Cardiff. Dates for these follow on sessions are to be determined.
- v. WRAP & SAVE Training (Prevent) – this learning has been deferred until the Member induction following the 2022 Local Government Elections
- vi. Covid-19 in Schools Update Briefings – these sessions have been scheduled monthly until March 2022.
- vii. Member Mentoring – to provide Elected Members nominated by their political group with appropriate training for becoming a Member Mentor in accordance with the WLGA guidance on mentoring.
- viii. E-Learning – The following E-Learning topics are available for completion and guidance is sought from the Committee on which topics should be prioritised.
  - a. Dementia Friendly
  - b. Corporate Parenting
  - c. Fraud Awareness
  - d. Cyber security – This is the new cyber security module that was provided following the Digital Democracy grant funding bid.
- c. Group Whips have requested that Member Development activities should be focused on mandatory topics until after the Local Government Elections in 2022. The views of the Committee are sought regarding this request.

#### Elected Member Personal Safety and Security

- 13. Following the tragic death of Sir David Amess, the Chief Executive directed that a proactive approach be developed to support the Personal Safety and Security of Elected Members. This led to the provision of a Personal Safety and Security Refresher session which outlined the simple actions which could be taken by Elected Members to protect themselves when working in their communities. In addition, the session advised attendees of how to access the Council's ALERT system and of the implementation of the "Peoplesafe" app for all Elected Members.
- 14. At that time, the Authority was in the final stages of the procurement of "Peoplesafe" services which was intended to enhance the minimum level of lone working protection not only for Elected Members but for all of the Council's lone workers. Democratic Services are working with the Corporate Security Manager and the project lead to deploy the app to all Elected Members who would like to use it, as a matter of urgency. The cost of the licenses is being met corporately.
- 15. Elected Members were recommended to have the "Peoplesafe" app installed on their smartphones to enable the device to become a lone working device. Once installed

and registered the app can be used to support Elected Members when working in their community by providing direct connection to a 24-hour Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC) who are able to escalate issues directly to the emergency services.

16. As at 22 November 2021, 23 Elected Members have had their details uploaded to “Peoplesafe”. Nine Elected Members have authenticated their user information with five members actively using the app. Initial feedback has been positive, but a number of inadvertent SOS activations have taken place and the settings on the users device have been adjusted to prevent a recurrence of these incidents. Further work is planned to provide training on the use of the app to all members.
17. The second stage of the implementation is the provision of additional information to enhance the effectiveness of the app. This will include gaining consent for personal information to be included with the app i.e. blood group, health issues, duress words etc which will be available to the Democratic Services Team who will be managing the Members “Peoplesafe” portal and to the “Peoplesafe” ARC who will access this information in an emergency.

#### Demographic Profile Survey

18. To support the progression of becoming a Diverse Council a demographic profile survey has been circulated to all Elected members to identify a baseline in respect of Councillor diversity. To date 63 responses (84%) have been received and work has been ongoing since July with Group Whips to increase the response rate. One last effort to encourage all members to complete the survey will be made before the end of November prior to the data being analysed.

#### Democratic Services Team - additional activities

19. In addition to their normal activities, the Democratic Services team has been involved in a range of activities which have been necessary to fulfil its supporting role for Elected and Committee Members. These have included:

- a. General

- (1) Supporting the **development of Hybrid meetings arrangements.**

- (2) Supporting **Member Briefings**

- b. Committees and Member Services Team

- (1) Delivery of the recommendations of the **Internal Audit of Members Remuneration** which included the revision of remuneration processes and forms. All Elected, Co-opted and Independent members were informed of the changes to these arrangements and all queries that were raised by Members were followed up and responded to accordingly.

- (2) Supporting the administration for the **recruitment of Independent Members** of the Standards and Ethics Committee and an Independent Member of the Governance & Audit Committee. This included the:

- updating and translation of application forms, advertisements and other key documents,

- the creation of a new council webpage to host the recruitment and additional information for potential independent member candidates
- arranging publication of key documents on the Councils website
- receiving applications from candidates
- co-ordinating shortlisting meetings and interviews
- providing letters to unsuccessful candidates and managing any queries arising from them.
- co-ordination of inductions for newly appointed Independent Members.

(3) Initial development and **implementation of Peoplesafe.**

(4) Providing supporting information for a **complaint from the Welsh Language Commissioner**

(5) Supporting the **procurement of the new conferencing system.**

(6) Supporting the **procurement of Zoom** to facilitate simultaneous Welsh translation.

(7) Procuring and **supporting Members ICT equipment** needs.

(8) Supporting the arrangements for a corporate **Complaints, Compliments and enquiries system.**

c. **Scrutiny Services**

(1) Development of the new **corporate performance processes** for scrutiny.

(2) Development of **Scrutiny Webpages**

(3) Preparation for **publication of Scrutiny Annual report** and Scrutiny Chairs videos.

**Staffing arrangements**

20. Currently, the authority is experiencing a significant increase in demand for its services as the pandemic continues. Services areas are managing new working arrangements and staff are taking outstanding leave. These factors have led to a general increase in workloads. Democratic Services is no different to other services areas and as previously advised at the meeting of the Democratic Services Committee on 30 November 2020, the level of resources of the Committee & Member Services Team necessary to support elected members and remote meetings has increased.

21. With the team progressing the additional activities identified above and the Head of Democratic Services prioritising the procurement of the new conferencing system, some of the planned tasks have been re-prioritised to maintain the essential services to Elected Members. The following activities have been delayed due to the current workload of the team:

- a. Recruitment of Committee Assistants
- b. Potential Candidate Session

- c. Development of Zoom
- d. Progression of the Member Induction Programme.
- e. Development of the Democracy website.
- f. Collaboration with Carmarthenshire for the provision of Digital Democracy videos.
- g. Development of a petition scheme including e-petitions. (to be reported to the Constitution Committee)
- h. Development of the meetings in multiple locations protocol. (to be reported to the Constitution Committee)

#### Support for All Party Council Groups

- 22. Discussions regarding the availability of support for All Party Council Groups have been held and it was identified that savings had previously been agreed which removed Democratic Service support for these groups.
- 23. The Cardiff Council Constitution identifies that All Party Council Groups must meet at least 3 times a year and that Officer support for these meetings shall be limited, due to resource constraints, to booking rooms for meetings, and will not cover clerking or other administrative support (such as agenda planning or minute taking). The decision to remove this support is currently under review, however there is currently no capacity within Democratic Services to reinstate this support.
- 24. In addition, the development and implementation of new technology and the necessary support essential to maintain effective services for Elected Members has provided a significant challenge to the resources of the team. Multi Location Meetings, new Members Enquiry Service software, development and delivery of the requirements of the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act all have resource requirements. When these requirements are combined, this will continue to have resource implications for the team even with the planned recruitment of the two Committee Assistants (expected Grade 4).
- 25. With the recruitment of the two Committee Assistants the workload of the more senior members of the Committees & Members Team could be assessed with the lower-level tasks such as recording meetings, updating registers and taking notes/minutes of some designated meetings could be re-assigned to the Committee Assistants. This would then leave the senior team members to focus on those duties more appropriate to their grade.
- 26. To provide the administrative support for the All Party Council Groups to undertake duties including room bookings, agenda planning and minute taking for up to 12 meetings a year it has been assessed that an additional Committee Assistant (with appropriate supervision) would be required. The support for All Party Council Groups would be shared between the Committee Assistants who would provide mutual support for each other during periods of leave and sickness but would also enable the skills of the Committee Assistants to be developed in the wider committee support role.
- 27. The Committees views on the current level of support and the proposals to support all Party Working Groups would be welcomed.

## Outcome of the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission Review

28. In November 2020, the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission published its recommendations following its review of electoral arrangements for the City and County of Cardiff. Its recommendations included the increase in the number of Elected Members in Cardiff from 75 to 79. On 01 October 2021, the Minister for Finance and Local Government accepted 19 of these recommendations and determined not to implement the recommendations in respect of the following areas Llanrumney, Pontprennau and Old St Mellons. However, the increase in the number of Elected Members remained unchanged. The Welsh Ministers have made the City and County of Cardiff (Electoral Arrangements) Order 2021, giving effect to the new electoral arrangements. All Elected Members have been advised of the publication of this Order and its content.
29. The increased cost to support an additional 4 Elected Members has been estimated as follows:

	Description	Cost per Member	Total Cost
a.	Correspondence costs	£1,090.00	£4,360.00
b.	Member Development	£80.00	£320.00
c.	ICT support/licences	£200.00	£800.00
d.	Annual smartphone costs	£120.00	£480.00
e.	Surgery venue costs	£200.00	£800.00
f.	General Printing & Stationery	£70.00	£280.00
	Total		£7,040.00

30. This increase in costs has been agreed to be reflected in the annual base budget for Democratic Services.

## Draft Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Annual Report 2022-23

31. In October 2021, the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) published its draft Annual Report for consultation. The draft report identifies an increase in the basic salary for Elected Members from 9<sup>th</sup> May 2022 to £16,800 with senior salaries increasing respectively.
32. The overall increase in salaries for 79 Elected Members with the same level of Senior salary provision equates to approximately £226,224.22 for the 2022-23 financial year. These costs will be provided corporately and reflected in the Member Services budget.
33. A remuneration drop-in session was provided for all Elected Members on 01 November 2021 to enable them to share their views and concerns regarding the Draft IRPW Annual Report 2022-23. Feedback from that session discussed with the IRPW on 09 November 2021 at a consultation event with Chairs of Democratic Services Committees and Heads of Democratic Services Committees. The Chair of the committee will be writing to the IRPW to confirm the concerns and views of the Elected Members. A copy of the letter will be circulated to all committee members for



information and any additional comments can be added to a supplementary letter to the IRPW.

### Substitution of Senior Salary Roles

34. At the meeting of Council on 30 September 2021, Council approved a three month paid substitution for the family absence of the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group. The Leader requested that the Democratic Services Committee consider the substitution of senior salary posts for family absence and for the committee to set out the circumstances and time periods for which paid substitutions can be applied.
35. An outline of current provisions in respect of this issue is set out at **Appendix A** for discussion and consideration. The Committee is invited to give any views on this issue and ask the Head of Democratic Services to draw up proposals taking account of the views expressed. Any agreed outcomes may be shared with all Elected Members to seek their views.

### **Financial Implications**

36. 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.
37. Initial development of hybrid remote meetings and the associated costs have been met from the Digital Democracy Fund. However, the ongoing development of this functionality is linked to the procurement of the new conferencing system which is being met from the capital funding allocated for this purpose.
38. 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.
39. The costs associated with Elected Member personal safety and security, salaries and the increase in costs for the 4 additional elected members from May 2022 will be funded corporately and reflected in the Democratic Services budgets accordingly.

### **Legal Implications**

40. 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.
41. 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.

42. 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)

43. 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.

44. In considering proposals in relation to the substitution of senior salary posts for family absence, Members should note that:

- (i) Substitution is not permitted by law for Cabinet members or Planning Committee members;
- (ii) The appointment of any substitute should be approved by full Council or made in accordance with a procedure rule approved by full Council;
- (iii) The Appointment of Substitute Members Procedure Rule (Constitution Part 4) was approved by Council in March 2019 and sets out the criteria and procedure for the Monitoring Officer to approve a Member's request to appoint a substitute Committee member – this is not currently applicable to a senior salary post; and any suggested amendment will require the approval of Council;
- (iv) Members' entitlement to family absence is governed by the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, the Family Absence for Members of Local Authorities (Wales) Regulations 2013 and the Council's Family Absence Procedure Rules (found in Part 4 of the Constitution);
- (v) Members' entitlement to a senior salary is governed by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Regulations and Determinations set out in its Annual Report for the relevant year. Key points are set out in the Discussion Paper at Appendix A; and
- (vi) The Council must be mindful of its equalities duties under the Equality Act 2010; and consider an equalities impact assessment to identify the equalities implications of its proposed decisions.

45. Further legal advice will be provided as proposals are developed.

46. Other relevant legal provisions are referred to in the body of the report.

## RECOMMENDATION

47. The Committee is requested to:
- a. Note the information set out in the report.
  - b. Determine the Elected Member Learning and Development topics for delivery prior to the 2022 Local Government Elections.
  - c. Confirm that the current level of support for Elected Members is sufficient.
  - d. Approve the proposal to recruit an additional Committee Assistant to support All Party Working Groups and meet the additional resource requirements identified in paragraphs 20-25 above.
  - e. Note the increase in the number of Elected Members following the 2022 Local Government Elections and the additional funding that has been put in place to support them.
  - f. To determine an appropriate course of action regarding the Substitution of Senior Salary Roles.

**GARY JONES**  
**HEAD of DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**  
**23 November 2021**

Appendix A Discussion Paper - Substitution of Senior Salary Roles

Background Papers:

- [Local Government and Elections \(Wales\) Act 2021](#)
- [Constitution Committee report, 'Remote / Multi-Location Meeting Arrangements', 21 June 2021](#)
- [Local Authority multi location meetings: interim guidance](#)
- [Home - Cardiff Council Webcasting \(public-i.tv\)](#)
- [Democratic Services Activities and Performance Report](#) dated [30 November 2020](#)
- [Local Democracy and Boundary Commission Review Final Recommendations](#) dated [05 November 2020](#)
- [The City and County of Cardiff \(Electoral Arrangements\) Order 2021](#)
- [Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales: draft annual report 2022 to 2023](#) dated October 2021.
- [Substitution to Cover Family Absence](#) report to Council dated [30 September 2021](#)
- [Council report, 'Constitution Amendments', March 2019; and Constitution Committee report, 'Appointment of Substitute Committee Members', February 2019](#)