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## **REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

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### **DEMOCRATIC SERVICES - SERVICE AND PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW**

#### **Reason for this Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to inform the Democratic Services Committee of the current structure, services and performance of Democratic Services Team.

#### **Background**

##### Role of the Democratic Services Committee

2. The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, 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 or electoral services, as the Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer (the Chief Executive) is responsible for electoral services, although the Electoral Services team do report into the Head of Democratic Services.

#### **Issues**

##### Structure

3. The current structure of Democratic Services is shown at Appendix A
4. In the structure there is one vacancy for a Committee Services Assistant (Welsh essential) which is being currently being recruited. This is the third time this post has been advertised and hopefully this will be successful on this occasion. In addition, Cardiff Council is likely to be the host authority for a new National Adoption Service Joint Committee consisting of the 22 Welsh Authorities. A Service Level Agreement has been drafted to ensure the full costs of supporting the Joint Committee are met by the National Adoption Service Budget, as happens with the other Joint Committees the team support, for example Glamorgan Archives, and Project Gwyrd.
5. Additional funding has been provided for the Committees Team to reinforce the capacity of this team to deliver the essential services necessary to support multi-location meetings and the additional requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, for example to support the development and implement a Public Participation Strategy. Initial attempts to recruit temporary staff members from Cardiff Works to bolster the capacity of the team in the short term have been

unsuccessful. However temporary recruitment opportunities will continue and the possibility of secondments are being considered.

6. Current and future requirements of the team are being assessed with the intention to create new posts which will support the effective delivery of support to the governance arrangements of the authority.
7. It is also worth noting that the service has been asked to identify potential savings for the current financial year 22/23 and the next financial year 23/24. As the majority of the budget other than member allowances relates to staff costs these may include holding posts vacant or the deletion of posts. As the team is currently working at full capacity any requirement to deliver savings will necessitate identifying work which will no longer be carried out.

#### Welsh Local Government Association Charter Member Support and Development.

8. On 27 January 2022, Council approved the Diverse Council Declaration which identified that as part of the support provided to councillors to discharge their responsibilities effectively the Council would:

“Achieve the Wales Charter for Member Support and Development to demonstrate the highest possible standards of support and development for our elected members to assist them in meeting the challenges and expectations of their diverse roles ranging from of community leader to their special responsibilities within the Council.”

9. The Charter aims to provide a broad framework for local planning, self-assessment, action and review together with networking and comparison amongst authorities and the sharing of good and innovative practice. Its wide adoption has raised the overall amount and standard of support given to members in Wales.
10. The initial Charter Award is a self-assessment undertaken by the Authority, documented and submitted to the WLGA, who will review the submission and determine whether to make the award. The (Standard) Charter Award is designed to establish that an essential range of support and development arrangements are in place, monitored and recorded.
11. The criteria which are assessed to achieve the Charter include:
  - Members are supported with role descriptions.
  - Members are supported in undertaking their duties according to high standards of conduct.
  - Members are supported in understanding their roles and responsibilities as set out in the Constitution.
  - A member learning and development strategy has been adopted.
  - Arrangements are in place for all members to be offered a PDR.
  - A development programme for councillors is in place with a mechanism for its annual review. All councillors are made aware of, guided to and are able to access the development activities equally.
  - Prospective candidates, candidates and new members are informed of their role and responsibilities.
  - Development activities are relevant and of high quality.

- There is a clear responsibility for leading the programme, driving the strategy and monitoring the outcomes.
  - Resources are identified and provided for member development.
  - Members are offered the opportunity to be mentored by Member peers.
  - Officer support is provided for member development, support and scrutiny.
  - Arrangements made for the business of the Council are flexible and enable members to participate fully regardless of personal circumstances
  - Contact management and communication
  - Annual reports
  - Personal support for members
  - All members are provided with adequate access to ICT.
  - Information resources are provided
  - Facilities for members to work in the Council are available.
12. A full assessment of the evidence to support each of these criteria is planned to be presented to the next meeting of the Committee in October 2022.

### Mentoring

13. The WLGA Guidance for Member Mentors was approved for adoption by Council on 25 November 2021. Prior to the Election a number of Elected Members attended the WLGA Member Mentoring training. ten councillors successfully completed the Mentoring training were re-elected. They have expressed their interest in acting as a Member Mentor.
14. No specific formal offer of mentoring has been made to newly Elected Members although each of these mentors indicated that they would be willing to mentor any elected members regardless of political party, and informal mentoring arrangements are often in place.
15. It is uncertain how many of the 28 newly elected members would wish to be formally mentored but if all of these members did want a mentor the current number of Mentors would be insufficient to support this potential requirement.
16. The 28 newly elected Members will be consulted about whether they wish to have a Member Mentor, and they could identify a suitable mentor from those qualified members and a mutual agreement to participate in a mentoring contract could be put in place. Some measures would need to be put in place to ensure that the mentors do not have more mentees than they can manage.
17. Simultaneously, experienced members could be consulted and those who would like to become a member mentor could be provided with training by the WLGA increasing the available pool of Mentors.
18. Trained mentors could not only undertake mentoring of newly elected Members but could in the future be able to support wider mentoring opportunities for potential candidates or other suitable mentoring scheme being requested by other organisations e.g. Diversity in Democracy, Wen Wales.

19. The Committee is requested to provide its views on how the mentoring should be delivered in the next 6 months and for future opportunities for participating in wider mentoring schemes.

#### Multi-location Meetings

20. The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, local authorities are required to put in place, and publish, arrangements for multi-location meetings, to ensure that all Council, Cabinet, Committee, Sub-Committee and Joint Committee meetings may be attended remotely by persons who are not in the same place. On 10 March 2022 Cabinet approved Cardiff Council's Multi-location meetings policy.
21. It was necessary to replace the out-dated conferencing system and a list of key requirements was identified which included:
  - a. to be used in the key meeting locations in City Hall Council Chamber, County Hall Council Chamber and Committee Room 4.
  - b. To support the provision of Multi-Location meetings i.e. remote attendance
  - c. To meet the requirements of the Council's existing Welsh Language Standards and to facilitate simultaneous translation of Welsh at public meetings.
  - d. Provision of an electronic voting system.
22. Microsoft Teams was unable to support these requirements and therefore Easy Conference Connect system was procured as part of the new conferencing system. This software has been made available to Council devices and is publicly available. The new system was implemented in May 2022 with the Annual Meeting of Council being the first multi-location meeting held by Cardiff using the new policy.
23. Although there have been some teething issues during the early days of implementation, most of these have now been addressed and the system appears to be working well. A development and improvement process has been agreed with the contractor to continue to develop the functionality and use of the system.
24. The system was demonstrated to the WLGA and to Carmarthenshire Council representatives with the possibility of the WLGA using City Hall and the Cardiff Council's conferencing system for its full council meetings.
25. Work is ongoing to enhance the Data Protection Impact Assessment and Cloud Impact assessment to enable other Council's across Wales to have the Easy Conference Connect software installed on their networks to aid in the facilitation of Joint Committee and other regional meetings.

#### Member Development / Induction

26. The Member Induction Update report considered earlier in the meeting describes the current state of play with the Member Induction Programme. It is proposed that the Induction Programme continue, and repeats of the mandatory topics be scheduled over the remainder of the financial year or until they are completed.

## Mandatory Session Repeats

a. What Councillors need to know – Decision Making, Code of conduct and more

The Monitoring Officer has arranged for outstanding attendees to be consulted on suitable dates to maximise attendance with the following dates being identified for the delivery of repeat sessions.

- Remote on MS Teams
  - 06-Sep-22 16:30 – 17:30
  - 13-Sep-22 14:00 – 15:00
  - 16-Sep-22 14:00 – 15:00
- In person - County Hall:
  - 28-Sep-22 12.30 – 1.30 Location to be confirmed

Requirement	Newly Elected Members	Experienced (Returning) Members
Legislative – Constitutional	Mandatory	Mandatory

b. Supporting Equality in Cardiff's Diverse Communities

This is a repeat of the mandatory member induction session and has been provisionally scheduled as follows:

- 12-Oct-22 16:30 – 18:00
- 26-Oct-22 16:30 – 18:00

Requirement	Newly Elected Members	Experienced (Returning) Members
Legislative – Constitutional	Mandatory	Mandatory

c. Other Mandatory sessions

Facilitators have been contacted to identify suitable dates for the delivery of repeat session of the other mandatory induction topics (Information Governance and Data Protection, Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting). These will be identified as soon as possible.

## Other Learning Opportunities

27. In addition to the mandatory topics there are further Member Development topics which have previously been identified to potentially be delivered from September 2022 and these include:

- What makes Effective Scrutiny
- Education Matters
- Neighbourhood Management Familiarisation of areas & services

- Biodiversity and Natural Resources
- Regeneration across the City
- Social Housing and Section 106
- Recovery following the Pandemic
- Community Leadership
- Welsh Language and the Council's Welsh Language Standards
- One Planet Cardiff
- PREVENT
  - WRAP (Workshop Raising Awareness of Prevent)
  - SAVE (Safeguarding Against Violent Extremism)
- Directorate/Service area briefings
- Charing Skills
- Rights of a Child to support Child Friendly Cardiff
- Duty to promote high standards of behaviour. (Group Leaders and Whips)
- Mediation skills
- Dealing with difficult people

28. Some of the sessions identified above i.e. PREVENT have secured funding for the delivery of learning before December 2022 whilst other topics may benefit Elected Members to develop their knowledge and understanding of key policies of the authority i.e. One Planet Cardiff and Regeneration across the city or to support their own personal development i.e. questioning skills for Members.

#### Provisionally Scheduled Learning Events

#### 29. Workshop to Raise Awareness of PREVENT (WRAP)

This is a specialist workshop, designed by HM Government to provide:

- An introduction to the Prevent strategy and an individual's role in safeguarding vulnerable people.
- An understanding of the Prevent strategy and your role within it.
- 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

This session has been provisionally scheduled for **5 October 2022 at 17:00** is primarily for new members or for a refresher for experienced members and has been categorised as follows:

Requirement	Newly Elected Members	Experienced Members
Auditors, Inspectors & Regulators, <b>Corporate Policy</b>	Recommended	Recommended

### 30. What makes Effective Scrutiny

This session is intended to build on the Council's induction programme and help councillors think about how scrutiny might become more effective. Outcomes include:

- Enhanced Scrutiny skills in questioning, listening and information handling.
- Ability to constructively contribute to policy development, policy review and performance monitoring
- Ability to constructively challenge decisions of the executive.
- Make informed, evidence-based recommendations.

This 2 hour session has been provisionally scheduled for **1 November 2022 at 16:30** and will be repeated on **2 November at 14:30**. It is suitable for new members or experienced members and has been categorised as follows:

Requirement	Newly Elected Members	Experienced Members	Committee Members	Executive Members / Chairpersons/ Group Spokesperson
Committee Specific	Beneficial	Useful	Recommended	Useful

### 31. Safeguarding Against Violent Extremism (SAVE)

This is a specialist workshop to improve awareness of:

- Violent extremism: what does this mean, what might it look like
- Wider history, context and community experiences
- Understanding to prevent: recruitment techniques and propaganda
- Processes of radicalisation and disengagement
- Identifying risk and vulnerabilities in individuals •
- Case studies – discussion

This session has been provisionally scheduled for **8 November 2022 at 17:00** and has been categorised as follows for new members and experienced members:

Requirement	Newly Elected Members	Experienced Members
Auditors, Inspectors & Regulators, <b>Corporate Policy</b>	Recommended	Recommended

### Chairing Skills

32. Chairing skills training was provided to Scrutiny Chairs on 4<sup>th</sup> August 2022. Potential dates are being identified by the WLGA and plans are being developed to provide Chairing Skills for Committee Chairs and vice chairs (where appropriate). Elected Members are also likely to be requested to chair other informal or community

meetings and this session could include those who are interested in developing their Charing skills. This session has been categorised as follows:

Requirement	Newly Elected Members	Experienced Members	Committee Members	Executive Members / Chairpersons/ Group Spokesperson
Personal	Beneficial	Useful	Useful	Beneficial

### Welsh Language Skills

33. Details of the opportunities provided by the Cardiff Academy for Councillors to develop their Welsh Language skills have been circulated to all Elected Members. This is co-ordinated by the Academy and has not been included as formal member development.

### E-Learning

34. Cardiff Academy also offer a range of E-Learning Modules and any Member can log into the Cardiff Academy intranet website and undertake any of the following E-Learning courses:
- Chair Meetings Effectively
  - Community Leadership and Casework
  - Corporate Governance
  - Corporate Parenting
  - Effective Scrutiny
  - Equality & Diversity
  - Ethics & Standards
  - Introduction to Licensing
  - Local Government Finance
  - Public Speaking and Working with the Media
  - Social Media Awareness
  - Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014
  - Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
  - Welsh Language Standards
35. A monthly report is provided to the Head of Democratic Services to monitor the completion of any E-Learning modules by Elected Members. This facility will be vital if the Democratic Services Committee identifies any E-learning module as part of the Member Development Programme.
36. Direction is sought from the Democratic Services Committee to:
- a. identify the number of Member Induction or Member Development activities which should be scheduled each month; and
  - b. consider and prioritise the provision of Member Development topics whilst repeat induction session are being undertaken.



### Demographic Profile Survey

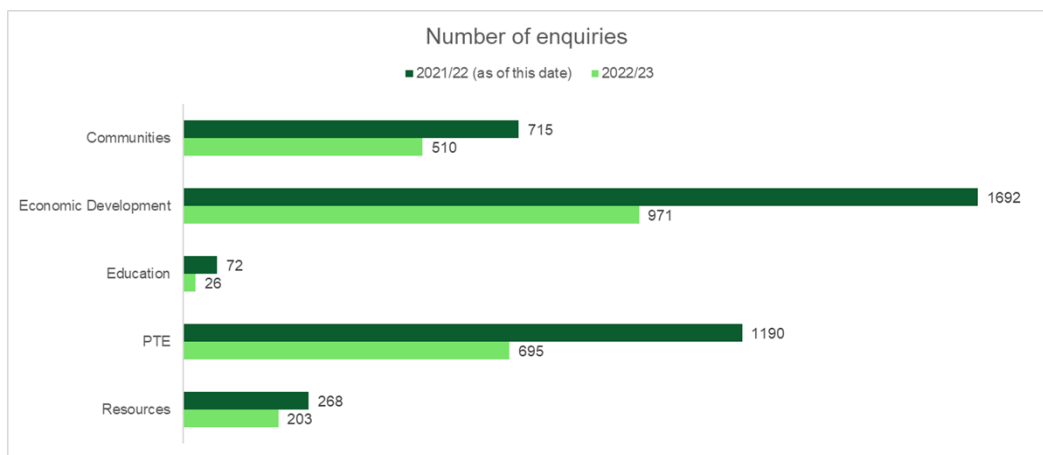
37. To support the progression of becoming a Diverse Council a demographic profile survey was undertaken in 2021. The responses were reported to the Committee in January 2022. As identified at that meeting it was planned that this survey be repeated to identify the new baseline following the Elections in respect of Councillor diversity.
38. This has been discussed with Group Whips and is planned to be launched electronically on Friday 15 July 2022 with hard copies being provided at the Council meeting on 21 July 2022. The electronic survey will be followed up with Group Whips and remain active until 31 August 2022. The outcomes of the survey and the comparisons with the previous Demographic Profile survey undertaken in 2021 initial outcomes will be provided verbally at the meeting with a detailed outcome report being presented to the next Committee meeting.

### Members Enquiries System (MES)

39. The following data relates to the Member enquires logged at the 31 July in the respective year:

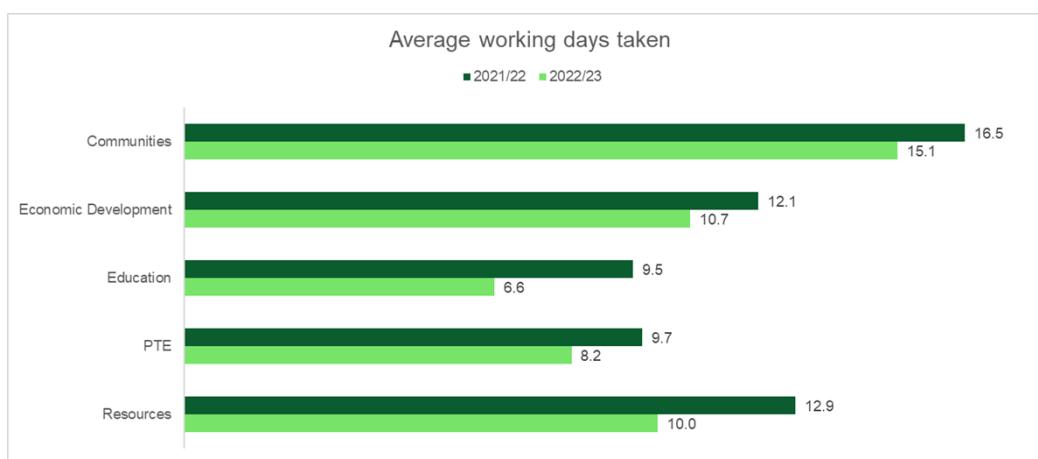
a. Total Number of Enquiries

The table shows a decrease in the number of enquiries logged compared to the same period in the previous year.



b. Average working days

This diagram shows that the average days taken to complete enquiries is improving.



c. Number of Self Serve Enquiries

This table shows the percentage of self-serve member enquiries from April – July 2022 which has decreased from the 45% self-serve that was achieved in 2021-22. This level is anticipated to improve with the implementation of the new MES capture form and subsequent training.

	Number of enquiries	Percentage of total
<b>Self serve</b>	<b>835</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>Logged with Officers</b>	<b>1570</b>	<b>65%</b>

40. The development of the MES software has been put on hold whilst the implementation of the Council’s Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Enquiries system is progressed with the pilot for the MES planned for the end of September. This corporate system is developed sufficiently enough to enable the Committee and Members team to continue development of the reporting facilities which will be used for the MES and improve the into service time for the updated application.

Peoplesafe

41. Only a few new members have requested access to the Peoplesafe service although the returning members who had signed up for the services prior to the election have maintained their access. All members will be encouraged to sign up to the service to enhance their personal safety and undertake appropriate training in the use of the application.

**Financial Implications**

42. 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**

43. 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.

44. 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.

45. 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)

46. 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.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

47. The Democratic Services Committee is requested to:

- a. Note the information set out in the report
- b. Provide direction to:
  - o identify the number of Member Induction or Member Development activities which should be scheduled each month.
  - o consider and prioritise the provision of Member Development topics whilst repeat induction session are being undertaken.
- c. Provide their views on how the mentoring should be delivered in the next 6 months and for future opportunities for participating in wider mentoring schemes.

**GARY JONES**  
**HEAD of DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**  
**05 August 2022**

**Appendix:**

A. Democratic Services Structure – 2022

Background Papers:

- [Diverse Council Declaration](#) report to Council dated 27th January 2022
- [Democratic Services Committee](#) dated 29 November 2021.
- [Elected Member Learning and Development Report](#) to Council dated 25 November 2021 including Appendix C [Guidance for Member Mentors](#)