
REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

MEMBER SURVEYS IN 2024

Reason for this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Democratic Services Committee with and update on the plans for the member surveys planned for 2024 and to:
 - a. note the plans and intentions of the Behaviours Survey as approved by the Standards and Ethics Committee to be undertaken before the end of March 2024.
 - b. consider the draft Neurodiversity Survey planned to be undertaken in September 2024 and identify any changes that may be appropriate.

Background

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.
3. There has previously been an agreement for Member Surveys to be undertaken with questions supporting both the Democratic Services Committee and the Standards and Ethics Committee.
4. On 14 February 2023, the Standards and Ethics Committee approved a series of questions for a behaviours survey which was agreed to be launched in 2023-24 with the outcomes reported back to the committee. This survey provides to opportunity to identify if Members have experienced or observed any unacceptable behaviours and to confirm that the reporting mechanisms are understood and used appropriately.
5. On 21 September 2023, Council approved a motion which included:
 - Investigate providing training to all Councillors on neurodiversity to aid in their casework in recognising the growing impact of neurodivergent conditions on the issues they deal with on behalf of constituents.
 - To review and implement reasonable adjustments for our elected members, to ensure the role of Councillor is accessible to people with neurodivergent traits

and conditions and that the skills and talents of all people can be harnessed for the benefit of the citizens of Cardiff.

6. To determine the training and support arrangements for councillors regarding neurodivergence, a survey has been developed to provide the basis for determining any necessary requirements.

ISSUES

The Behaviours Survey

7. The Standards and Ethics Committee approved Behaviour Survey is attached at **Appendix A** with questions being divided into several sections which include a Member's:
 - a. Experience of Bullying
 - b. Experience of Harassment
 - c. Experience of Discrimination
 - d. Reporting of unacceptable behaviours,
 - e. Observations of or witnessing unacceptable behaviours
 - f. Knowledge of and confidence in reporting unacceptable behaviours

The Neurodiversity Survey

8. Following a period of research and discussions with a subject matter expert and the Members who proposed the Council motion, a series of questions was developed which were intended to explore the:
 - a. understanding of the characteristics and traits associated with neurodivergence.
 - b. benefits and challenges neurodivergent Members experience in their role with the Council
 - c. level and type of neurodivergence experienced by Members.
 - d. disclosure and diagnosis of neurodivergence.
 - e. support mechanisms that would assist existing Members experiencing neurodivergent traits.
 - f. provision of baseline information for use in wider corporate discussions regarding neurodiversity across the organisation.
 - g. development of our support in readiness for the potential councillors intending to stand at the next Local Government Elections in 2027.

9. The proposed questions for this survey are set out in **Appendix B**. Further advice and assistance will be sought from the subject matter expert to identify the best format for the undertaking the survey.

Survey Plan

10. The surveys are being prepared using the SNAP survey software which will enable the survey to be completed on a laptop, personal computer, or smartphone. Indications of the likely routing have also been included in the appendices to show how questions will progress depending on the response provided. This will also limit the number of responses required when the question is not relevant to the individual.
11. The survey also includes a series of monitoring questions at the end of the survey which will be used to identify protected characteristics of the respondents and the analysis of the completed survey.
12. The survey will be anonymous and Democratic Services will use proven practices to ensure that anonymity is maintained whilst providing an opportunity for maximise completions.
13. Hard copy versions of the survey will also be provided to those members preferring to complete the survey using this method. Anyone requiring additional support to complete the survey may seek assistance from Democratic Services Officers.
14. A detailed analysis of the completed Behaviours Survey will be undertaken with the outcomes being reported back to the Standards and Ethics Committee with the outcomes of the Neurodiversity Survey being reported to the Democratic Services Committee.

Timescales

15. The provision of the surveys and the time needed to collect the responses requires a high level of resources to administer and assess particularly with each of the surveys having a large number of questions.
16. The Political Group Whips were consulted to assist in determining if it would be preferable to merge the surveys rather than undertaking them independently. Due to the significant number of possible questions of a combined survey their preference was to deliver the surveys separately as follows:

	Survey Launch	Survey End	Analysis	Reporting
Behaviours	w/c 5 Feb 24	01-Mar-24	Mar-April	Jun-Jul
Neurodiversity	w/c 2 Sep 24	29-Sep-24	Oct - Nov	Jan-Feb

17. The level of responses will be monitored by Democratic Services Officers and if necessary, the whips will be requested to follow up with their respective groups to ensure that a suitable level of responses are provided. These proposed dates also provide some flexibility to extend the response window for the surveys.

Financial Implications

18. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The costs from Democratic Services activities and services support, to include identifying and providing any required training, are to be identified, monitored and contained within the existing Democratic Services funding sources and budgets.

Legal Implications

19. The Neurodiversity Survey falls within the remit of the Democratic Services Committee in so far as it assists the Committee to consider the support and advice available to each Member of the authority in carrying out the role of elected Member (as part of the democratic services functions of the authority).
20. The Behaviours Survey, as noted in the body of the report, falls within the statutory responsibilities of the Standards and Ethics Committee and is therefore being reported to the Democratic Services Committee for information only.
21. In considering this report, the Democratic Services Committee should have regard to the statutory guidance on the exercise of its functions: Statutory and Non-Statutory Guidance for Principal Councils in Wales – supporting provisions within the Local Government Act 2000, the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, Part 4, chapter 13.

RECOMMENDATION

22. The Democratic Services Committee is requested to:
 - a. Note the questions identified by the Standards and Ethics Committee set out in **Appendix A.**
 - b. Consider the proposed questions for the Neurodiversity survey as set out in **Appendix B.**
 - c. Approve the plans for the delivery of the surveys as outlined in paragraph 16 above.
 - d. Delegate the authority to make any subsequent amendments to the planned questions for the Neurodiversity survey to the Head of Democratic Services in consultation with the Chair of the Democratic Services Committee

GARY JONES
HEAD of DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

30 January 2024

Appendix A: Behaviours Survey 2023-24

Appendix B: Draft Neurodiversity Survey 2024

Background Papers:

[Revision of the Elected Member Survey](#) report to the Standards and Ethics Committee dated 14 February 2023.

[Minutes](#) of the Standards and Ethics Committee dated 14 February 2023

[Notice of Motion - 1](#) approved by Council on 23 September 2023