

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT TO THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

11 JULY 2013

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE – LEGAL & REGULATORY SERVICES

SERVICE AND PERFORMANCE UPDATES

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Democratic Services Committee of the additional information requested at the previous meeting of the Committee and to advise of the performance and updates in relation to the services provided to Elected Members.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities

2.1 The support provided by the Democratic Services team to Elected Members at all levels assists in the achievement of all Corporate Priorities.

3. Background

3.1 At the previous meeting of the Democratic Services Committee a number of queries were raised regarding the provision of support to Elected Members. These queries were passed to the relevant departments and organisations for clarification and provision of information.

4. Current situation / proposal

4.1 Member Referrals

4.1.1 Service Performance – Member Referrals

4.1.2 The following table details the number of members referrals made to Directorates/Departments between 1 March and 31 May 2013 and the percentage of the total number of referrals that each Directorate/Department receives:

Directorate/Department	Mar	Apr	May-	Total	%
Children's	8	6	22	36	5.01%
Communities	4	3	28	35	4.87%
Street Scene	138	152	129	419	58.36%
Regeneration	15	17	24	56	7.80%
Wellbeing	8	6	9	23	3.20%
Legal and Regulatory	1	1	0	2	0.28%
Legal	0	1	1	2	0.28%
Public Protection	14	18	7	39	5.43%
Chief Executive	0	0	0	0	0.00%

Directorate/Department	Mar	Apr	May-	Total	%
Performance	2	2	5	9	1.25%
Performance: ICT & Property	3	6	4	13	1.81%
Performance: Finance & Procurement	4	4	3	11	1.53%
External (V2C etc)	21	29	21	71	9.89%
Totals	218	245	255	718	100.00%

4.1.3 The following table shows the completion rates of Member Referrals raised between May 2012 – 30 April 2013.

Month	Referred	Completed	Ongoing (Including Pending)	%
May	258	256	2	99.22
June	284	277	7	97.54
July	313	308	5	98.40
August	206	201	5	97.57
September	251	248	3	98.80
October	183	182	1	99.45
November	186	185	1	99.46
December	144	140	4	97.22
January	314	309	5	95.89
February	252	244	8	96.83
March	218	207	11	94.95
April	245	230	15	93.87
Totals	2854	2787	67	97.65

4.1.4 At its last meeting the Committee requested that 10 day completion figures for referrals be provided. The Democratic Services reporting tools were ineffective in the production of this information, therefore the ICT department have created reports which are able to automatically generate the relevant performance information as requested. An assessment of the accuracy of this data is still being undertaken.

4.1.5 It should be noted that all referrals received an initial response within the 10 day period. The initial data indicates that 60% of referrals were completed within 10 working days with over 80% completed within 20 working days. This corresponds with the summary of completed referrals over month long periods which have been reported previously.

4.1.6 This has highlighted the complexity of some referrals which are unlikely to be completed within the 10 day period. Referrals relating to pot-hole filling, derelict houses, traffic calming measures, trading standards or environmental health investigations will take longer than 10 days to complete. Many departments

prioritise Member Referrals and have a rapid completion rate for those referrals that can be completed quickly.

4.1.7 The 10 day completion rate is adversely affected when:

- the initiating member does not close the referral after an appropriate response is provided. Elected members and officers are very busy people and if the department provides the response within the 10 day period but the member does not close it before the deadline, the target will be missed
- additional information is requested after the original response is provided. This in effect is a new referral but because it continues on the same “ticket” it will be unlikely to meet the 10 day target.
- the department is unable to provide the outcome expected by an Elected Member to a referral. These referrals are logged as “pending” and kept open until further discussions with the originator and the respective department are held to address the issue or to gain a better understanding of why the referral cannot achieve the expected outcome.

4.1.8 It has been suggested that a form of categorisation of referrals could be achieved where those referrals that should be legitimately be completed within the 10 day period are identified differently to those that are likely to take a significantly longer period to complete.

4.1.9 It is proposed that the reporting tools for the 10 day completion rate be confirmed for accuracy and that further assessment of the details of referrals that are taking longer than 10 days to complete be undertaken. This will be reported to the next meeting of the Committee for further consideration.

4.2 Member Development Programme

4.2.1 As identified in the Elected Member Learning and Development Strategy the topics for inclusion in the member development programme are anticipated to include regional or national topics. Members are requested to consider the following member development opportunities and:

- identify any regional or national topics for inclusion in the programme that would benefit all members.
- prioritise the following pre-Council briefings and member development activities that have not yet been scheduled

4.2.2 Pre council Briefings

4.2.3 The following Pre Council briefings have been arranged:

- 03 Jul 13 Bridgend Lifesavers Credit Union
- 24 Jul 13 Independent Professional Advocacy
- 18 Sep 13 to be confirmed
- 16 Oct 13 to be confirmed
- 13 Nov 13 MTFS Update (following the Provisional Budget Settlement)
- 11 Dec 13 to be confirmed

4.2.4 The following topics have been requested to be considered as potential pre-council briefings:

- South Wales Fire & Rescue Service – Fire Cover Review (Sep)
- Housing & Community Regeneration - Private Rented Sector (Sep)
- The ADHD Bridgend Group
- Y Bont

4.2.5 Member Development Activities

4.2.6 The following Member Development topics have been planned:

- 18 July - Understanding Hate Crime
- 25 July - Rota Visiting for New Members (and refresher)
- 30 July - Code of Conduct for New Members (and refresher)
- Sep – Dec - School Performance 1
- Jan – Mar - School Performance 2
- Nov - Understanding Equalities and Diversity

4.2.7 The following topics have been identified for possible inclusion in the member development programme:

- Dealing with Conflict (possible regional event)
- Working in your ward
- Media Training for Members
- Supporting People Programme
- Dementia Awareness Training
- Risk Management (How the Council Manages its Risks)
- Performance Management
- Public Engagement (possible regional event)

4.3 Development Control Training Sessions

4.3.1 The following training sessions for the Development Control Committee have been confirmed. These sessions are primarily for members of the Development Control Committee but there is an open invitation for all members if they wish to attend.

Topic	Facilitator	Date	Time
Economic Regeneration	Ray Pearce - BCBC Regeneration Team	22 Aug 13	12.15
"Conservation and listed buildings"	Claire Hamm - BCBC Regeneration Team	TBC	
"Use of the Planning Portal"	Planning Portal	TBC	

4.4 Evaluation of the Member Induction Programme

4.4.1 On 3 July 2013 the WLGA facilitated a focus group with Elected Members to evaluate member induction programme that was undertaken following the Local Government Election in 2012. The WLGA have agreed to report their findings and

any recommendations that arise as a result of the evaluation. Details will be provided to the Committee at its next meeting.

4.5 Scrutiny Updates

4.5.1 WAO Improvement Study.

4.5.2 The pan Wales Improvement Study carried out by the Wales Audit Office (WAO) aimed at improving standards of scrutiny has now been completed. Analysis of the outcomes is being undertaken and a report is expected to be released by the WAO later this year. The Committee will be informed of the content of the report and any recommendations that impact on the provision of Scrutiny within this Authority.

4.6 Scrutiny Development Fund

4.6.1 Discussions at officer level are progressing for the joint proposal between Bridgend and Swansea scrutiny sections to assess and address the likely impact of Welfare Reform. Consultation is on-going with a specialist researcher regarding the scope of the bid. The Committee will be updated with any progress that is made.

4.6.2 The proposed SDF bid with 5 other local Authorities and the CfPS for developing a model for the joint scrutiny of the Central South Consortium (formerly ESIS) is anticipated to be finalised by September. The agreed terms of reference of this Joint Scrutiny Committee will be presented to Council on 24 July for approval. It is anticipated that Bridgend will undertake the role as the lead authority, subject to agreement of appropriate funding for the bid. Further updates will be provided to the next meeting of the Committee.

4.7 Ministerial Visit - Scrutiny

4.7.1 Cabinet Members, Scrutiny Chairpersons and Officers provided a presentation for the Minister for Local Government and Government Business, Lesley Griffiths AM in respect of the Resourcing, Delivery and Benefits of Effective Scrutiny in Bridgend. The Minister welcomed the “professional and Informative” briefing which indicated that:

- Senior member and officer support for the scrutiny function, and an appreciation of its value - resulting in a level of resource to deliver an effective function;
- Effective, open and mature relationships between scrutiny and the Executive, with a mutual understanding of value;
- Excellent relations between Scrutiny Chairs;
- An open mind on the future direction of public service scrutiny, and a commitment to engage effectively with it.

4.8 Local Service Board (LSB) Scrutiny Panel

4.8.1 The Head of Democratic Services and the Senior Democratic Services Officer – Scrutiny presented a report to the LSB requesting the support for the re-establishment of the LSB Scrutiny Panel. The proposal was welcomed by the LSB and potential members of the scrutiny panel from the lead organisation would be identified. A report will be presented to the Community Safety and Governance Overview and Scrutiny to update them in more detail but it is anticipated that the LSB scrutiny panel will have its first meeting in late September.

4.9 WLGA Charter Submission Update

4.9.1 Preparations for the submission of a bid for the WLGA Charter for Member Support and Development are progressing as planned. Officers are currently drafting the submission documents and identifying evidence to support a successful bid.

4.9.2 Member Development sessions in respect of Personal Development Reviews (PDRs) have now been completed and some copies of the completed PDR have already been received by the Head of Democratic Services. A reminder will be sent to members that all Senior Salary Post Holders need to complete their PDRs by 26 July with all other members requested to complete their PDRs by 30 August 2013. Copies of the completed PDRs need to be provided to the Head of Democratic Services for assessment and reference.

4.9.3 One final training session for Annual Reports will be held during July. Fifteen members have already submitted their draft annual reports and it is hoped that more will be submitted by the end of the month. Delays to the submission of Annual Reports may affect the publication date of reports which is currently planned for September.

4.9.4 Officers from the departments compiling the submission documents are meeting to review the finalised drafts in early August. It is proposed that the Chairperson of the Democratic Services Committee review the finalised charter documents to ensure completeness prior to their submission in September.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework& Procedure Rules

5.1 There is no effect on the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 There are no equalities implications in respect of this report.

7. Financial Implications

7.1 All activities described in this report will be met from existing budget provisions.

8. Recommendations

8.1 The Democratic Services Committee is requested to:

1. Note the referral statistics and that Democratic Services Officers will work with other Directorates and Departments to confirm the accuracy of the member referrals reporting tools and assess the types of referrals that are taking longer than 10 days to complete
2. Consider the member development opportunities shown in paragraphs 4.2 – 4.2.7 and:
 - identify any regional or national topics for inclusion in the MemberDevelopment Programme that would benefit all Members,
 - prioritise the pre-Council briefings and member development activities that have not yet been scheduled.
3. Note the Scrutiny and WLGA Charter Submission updates

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Background documents – None