

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT TO THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE
12 SEPTEMBER 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 June and 31 August 2013 and the percentage of the total number of referrals that each Directorate/Department receives:

Department	Referred	Department %	Directorate Totals
Chief Executive	1	0.12%	0.12%
Children's	59	6.88%	6.88%
Communities	29	3.38%	67.44%
Communities::Regeneration & Development	77	8.98%	
Communities::Streetscene	472	55.08%	
LARS	1	0.12%	6.88%
LARS::Legal	3	0.35%	
LARS::Public Protection	55	6.42%	
Resources	3	0.35%	4.67%
Resources::Technology, Property and Customer Services	27	3.15%	

Department	Referred	Department %	Directorate Totals
Resources::HR & OD	3	0.35%	
Resources::Electoral Services	1	0.12%	
Resources::Finance & Procurement	6	0.70%	
Wellbeing	23	2.68%	2.68%
Member Referrals	4	0.47%	0.47%
External	12	1.40%	
External::Environment Agency	1	0.12%	
External::Groundwork	1	0.12%	
External::Network Rail	1	0.12%	
External::Others	11	1.28%	
External::SW Police	8	0.93%	
External::V2C Maintenance	39	4.55%	
External::V2C Management	16	1.87%	
External::Wales & West Housing	2	0.23%	
External::Janice Gregory AM	1	0.12%	
External::Madeleine Moon MP	1	0.12%	
Totals:	857		100.00%

4.1.3 The following table shows the completion rates of Member Referrals raised between 01 June – 31 August 2013.

Month	Referred	Completed	Percentage Completed
June	300	280	93.33
July	310	272	87.74
August	247	134	54.25
Totals:	857	686	80.05

4.1.4 At its last meeting the Committee was advised that the reports regarding Member Referrals were being checked for accuracy and consistency. A significant amount of work has been undertaken to confirm the data returned by the reports that had been developed. The accuracy has been improved but minor amendments are still required to enhance the content and production of reports.

4.1.5 It was intended to undertake an assessment of the type of referrals that had generally taken longer than the 10 day target for the completion of referrals. It was hoped to develop a categorisation system for referrals to provide a more realistic target time for more complex referrals. Due to the work undertaken to confirm the accuracy of the reports this assessment has not been undertaken as it was determined that the priority was to ensure that the reporting tools were working accurately and effectively.

4.1.6 The following tables shows the times taken to complete referrals over the period between 01 June – 31 August 2013.

Internal Departments

Directorate	Total Referred	Total 10 Days	% In 10 Days	Total 20 Days	% In 20 Days	More Than 20 Days	Total Completed	Total % Completed
Chief Executive	1	1	100.0	1	100.0	0	1	100.00%
LARS	1	1	100.0	1	100.0	0	1	100.00%
LARS::Legal	3	3	100.0	3	100.0	0	3	100.00%
Resources::Electoral Services	1	1	100.0	1	100.0	0	1	100.00%
Resources::Finance & Procurement	6	4	80.0	4	80.0	1	5	83.33%
Member Referrals	4	3	75.0	3	75.0	0	3	75.00%
Communities::Regeneration etc.	77	40	71.4	54	96.4	2	56	72.73%
Resources	3	2	66.7	3	100.0	0	3	100.00%
Resources::HR & OD	3	2	66.7	2	66.7	0	2	66.67%
LARS::Public Protection	55	26	57.8	37	82.2	8	45	81.82%
Children's	59	33	56.0	41	69.5	9	50	84.75%
Communities::Streetscene	472	143	37.7	295	77.8	84	379	80.30%
Wellbeing	23	8	34.8	17	73.9	2	19	82.61%
Resources::Technology etc.	27	8	29.6	16	59.3	5	21	77.78%
Communities	29	8	27.6	11	37.9	9	20	68.97%
Totals:	764	283	37.0%	489	64.0%	120	609	79.71%

External Organisations

Directorate	Total Referred	Total 10 Days	% In 10 Days	Total 20 Days	% In 20 Days	More Than 20 Days	Total Completed	Total % Completed
External::Wales & West Housing	2	1	100	1	100	0	1	50.00%
External::Madeleine Moon MP	1	1	100	1	100	0	1	100.00%
External::Others	11	4	80.0	4	80.0	10	5	45.45%
External::V2C Management	16	11	78.6	14	100	0	14	87.50%
External	12	8	66.7	9	75.0	3	12	100.00%
External::V2C Maintenance	39	16	45.7	26	74.3	9	35	89.74%
External::SW Police	8	2	25.0	6	75.0	2	8	100.00%
External::Environment Agency	1	0	0.0	1	100	0	1	100.00%
External::Groundwork	1	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0.00%
External::Network Rail	1	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0.00%
External::Janice Gregory AM	1	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0.00%
Totals	93	43	46.2%	62	66.7%	12	77	82.79%

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.

4.2.2 Pre council Briefings

4.2.3 The following Pre Council briefings have been arranged:

- 18 Sep 13 ICT and MTFS Update
- 16 Oct 13 Private Rented Sector
- 13 Nov 13 MTFS Update (following the Provisional Budget Settlement)
- 11 Dec 13 Independent Professional Advocacy (for Children)
-

4.2.4 The following topics have been requested to be considered as potential pre-council Briefings and could be scheduled accordingly:

- Y Bont
- Advocacy for Older People

4.2.5 Member Development Activities

4.2.6 The following Member Development events have been scheduled:

- 05 Sep (15:00 -18:00) - Welfare reform Workshop
- 11 Sep (10:00 - 13.00) - Welfare reform Workshop
- 30 Sep (10:00 - 13:00) - School Performance 1
- 28 Oct (14:00 - 17:00) - School Performance 1
- 10 Oct (10:00 - 13:00) - Budget Workshop
- 24 Oct (14:00 - 17:00) - Budget Workshop

4.2.7 The following member development activities are planned to be scheduled:

- Jan – Mar - School Performance 2
- Nov - Jan - Understanding Equalities and Diversity

4.2.8 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
New permitted development regulations	Jonathan Parsons – BCBC Development & Building Control Manager	19 Sep 13	12.15pm
Review of planning decisions in Porthcawl	Jonathan Parsons – BCBC Development & Building Control Manager	2 Oct 13	TBC
The Planning Portal	Kris Hawkins – Planning Division, Welsh Government	17 Oct 13	12.15pm
"Conservation and listed buildings"	Claire Hamm - BCBC Regeneration Team	TBC	TBC

4.4 Scrutiny Updates

4.4.1 WAO Improvement Study.

4.4.2 The WAO are hosting an event in Cardiff on 28 November 13 which will develop on the work undertaken as part of the study. This all day event will include briefings and workshops on a range of topics including:

- Role of the networked councillor in scrutiny - Practical knowledge of how social media enables Councillors to fulfil their leadership role
- Public engagement in scrutiny - Understanding how public engagement can enhance the role of scrutiny
- Evidencing the impact - Getting a return on investment in scrutiny
- Taking the fear out of budget scrutiny - How to undertake the scrutiny of finance more effectively
- Use of information/ evidence based scrutiny - Smarter use of the right evidence to ask smarter questions at scrutiny committees
- Doing collaborative scrutiny - Reflections from practice

4.4.3 Bridgend County Borough Council has been initially allocated 10 places at the event. It has been agreed that the Chief Executive, Cabinet Member for Resources, Scrutiny Chairs, the Head of Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officers will be attending. Additional places may be available after the initial allocation has been completed.

4.4.4 Scrutiny Development Fund (SDF)

4.4.5 The draft SDF bid for the provision of a Joint Education Scrutiny Co-ordinator (JESC) post is being considered by the Finance department. It is hoped that the bid will provide funding to support to a pathfinder project regarding the establishment of the Joint Overview & Scrutiny Education Committee (JOSEC) and the delivery of a regional model for collaborative scrutiny. It is hoped that Bridgend County Borough

will lead and host the support for this 18 month project. It is planned that once financial approval is received the formal submission of the bid can commence. It is hoped that the bid will be fully funded from the Scrutiny development fund and that recruitment can begin as soon as funding is agreed.

4.4.6 Preparatory work is also being undertaken by the scrutiny unit from Swansea as part of a joint SDF bid relating to Community Capacity and resilience in response to the changes in welfare reform. A specialist researcher is being consulted and the bid will continue to be developed with the assistance of CPfS.

4.4.7 Staffing

4.4.8 A temporary Scrutiny Officer has been recruited to restore the Scrutiny Team to its full complement of staff. The Democratic Services Team is striving to meet its requirement in relation to the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and the significant savings that will be needed to meet the targets that have been set.

4.5 WLGA Charter Submission Update

4.5.1 Preparation for the submission of a bid for the WLGA Charter for Member Support and Development are progressing. The compilation of the submission document is taking longer than expected due to the level of detail required to explain and evidence the activities that fulfil the charter requirements. There is no WLGA deadline for submission for the charter award. Work will continue until the documentation and evidence have been completed to a standard necessary to achieve the WLGA Charter award.

4.5.2 Personal Development Reviews (PDRs) have been undertaken by Elected Members. The Head of Democratic Services has received 22 of the possible 54 PDRs. It is a WLGA Charter requirement that all Senior/Civic Salary holders undertake the PDR process. Currently the Head of Democratic Services has only received 13 of the 19 PDRs from Senior/Civic Salary holders. Individual Senior/Civic Salary holders and Group Leaders have been contacted to request that any outstanding PDRs are completed and the relevant documentation submitted to the Head of Democratic Services at the earliest opportunity.

4.6 WLGA Good Practice and Innovation Award

4.6.1 The Head of Democratic Services has been notified that Bridgend County Borough Council is the first council to receive the WLGA Good Practice and Innovation Award for its work in developing and piloting annual reports for councillors, enabling councils across Wales to introduce this new requirement of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.

4.6.2 The Good Practice and Innovation Award seeks to recognise and share specific examples of good and/or innovative practice in member support and development to improve practice in Wales. This practice should be over and above that required for the advanced level of the Charter or outside the scope of that award.

4.6.3 BCBC has been successful in achieving the award because Bridgend has made a significant contribution to the ability of councils across Wales to introduce annual reports before any official guidance was available, through interpreting legal

requirements, researching, developing, road testing and sharing good practice in this area. The work was innovative, inclusive and timely and will contribute to the following national outcomes:

- A greater understanding of the role and work of elected members by the electorate providing opportunities for better informed engagement and voting.
- Opportunities for members to reflect upon their work and see examples of the work of other members during the year.
- Opportunities for potential candidates to see what the job entails which may lead to increased or at least more informed levels of candidacy in the next elections.
- Opportunities for officers to develop a broader understanding of the work of elected members.

4.6.4 The review team noted the following good practice in the work undertaken by Bridgend and would wish to commend it to other authorities:

- The openness and honesty demonstrated by BCBC in the 'warts and all' approach to sharing both what worked and potential pitfalls in their approach, in the interest of helping other authorities move forward.
- The sharing of good practice and models with other authorities via Networks, individuals and the Community of Practice.
- The partnership working between Democratic Services and Organisational Development departments to develop the approach.
- The involvement of members from political groups in developing the methodology for producing and publishing the annual reports.

4.6.5 The Chairperson of the Democratic Services Committee and the Head of Democratic Services have been requested to attend the Member Development Joint Network and present an update in respect of the Good Practice and Innovation award.

4.7 Elected Member Annual Reports 2012-13 Update

4.7.1 A total of 30 draft Elected Member Annual Reports for the 2012 – 13 period have been received by Democratic Services. These reports have been formatted and key information including Member Development activities, attendance information and referrals data has been added. These draft reports are still to be reviewed by the Head of Democratic Services.

4.7.2 These tasks have taken significantly longer than anticipated and it is hoped to publish these documents to the BCBC website as soon as possible.

4.8 Elected Member ICT Forum

4.8.1 As part of the on-going development of ICT facilities and support for Elected Members a cross party working group has been established. It is planned that this group will meet regularly and be supported by the Head of Technology, Property and Customer Services and the Head of Democratic Services. The group will assist in the development of options to improve and enhance the support and facilities currently provided to Elected Members.

4.8.2 Any outcomes from these meetings will be presented to the Democratic Services Committee for consideration and comment. An initial outcome of the first meeting was to provide Members with an update of the ICT support currently provided and the initial improvements that are planned in the near future. These include:

- Introduction and allocation of support engineers
- Planned visits to all Members to check the operation of their ICT equipment and to address any problems
- Notification to changes of security to reduce log-ins when using VPN
- Advanced notification of password changes
- Possibility of switching from laptops to Citrix

4.9 **Member Development Joint Network**

4.9.1 The Member Development Joint Network is being held on 11 September 13 and an update will be provided to the Democratic Services Committee regarding the outcomes of the meeting. The topics will include:

- National Updates
- Information sharing about the different activities being undertaken by DS Committees
- Co-ordination of member development activities

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. Consider the member development opportunities shown in paragraphs 4.2 – 4.3.1 and:
 - identify any regional or national topics for inclusion in the Member Development Programme that would benefit all Members,
 - prioritise the pre-Council briefings and member development activities that have not yet been scheduled.
2. Note the of the report

P A Jolley
Assistant Chief Executive – Legal & Regulatory Services

05 September 2013

Contact Officer: Gary Jones
Telephone: (01656) 643385

E-mail: Gary.Jones@Bridgend.gov.uk

Postal Address Democratic Services,
Civic Offices
Angel Street
Bridgend.
CF31 4WB

Background documents – None