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Bridgend County Borough Council



Swyddfeydd Dinesig, Stryd yr Angel, Pen-y-bont, CF31 4WB / Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB

*Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg.
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**Cyfarwyddiaeth y Prif Weithredwr / Chief
Executive's Directorate**

Deialu uniongyrchol / Direct line /: 01656 643148 /
643694 / 643513

Gofynnwch am / Ask for: Democratic Services

Ein cyf / Our ref:

Eich cyf / Your ref:

Dyddiad/Date: Thursday, 6 June 2024

Dear Councillor,

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Democratic Services Committee will be held Hybrid in the Council Chamber Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB on **Thursday, 13 June 2024 at 10:00.**

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
To receive apologies for absence from Members.
2. Declarations of Interests
To receive declarations of personal and prejudicial interest (if any) from Members/Officers in accordance with the provisions of the Members' Code of Conduct adopted by the Council from 1 September 2008.
3. Approval of Minutes 3 - 14
To receive for approval, the minutes of the 08th February 2024
4. Democratic Services Committee Annual Report 15 - 20
5. Member Development Programme Update 21 - 32
6. Democratic Services Committee Forward Work Programme 33 - 38
7. Urgent Items
To consider any item(s) of business in respect of which notice has been given in accordance with Part 4 (paragraph 4) of the Council Procedure Rules and which the person presiding at the meeting is of the opinion should by reason of special circumstances be transacted at the meeting as a matter of urgency.

Note: This will be a Hybrid meeting and Members and Officers will be attending in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Angel Street Bridgend / Remotely via Microsoft Teams. The meeting will be recorded for subsequent transmission via the Council's internet site which will be available as soon as practicable after the meeting. If you have any queries regarding this, please contact cabinet_committee@bridgend.gov.uk or tel. 01656 643148 / 643694 / 643513 / 643696

Yours faithfully

By receiving this Agenda Pack electronically you will save the Authority approx. £00.76 in printing costs

K Watson

Chief Officer, Legal and Regulatory Services, HR and Corporate Policy

Councillors:

S Aspey
H T Bennett
P Ford
RM Granville

Councillors

D T Harrison
M L Hughes
RM James
I M Spiller

Councillors

T Thomas
G Walter
E D Winstanley

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD HYBRID IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND, CF31 4WB ON THURSDAY, 8 FEBRUARY 2024 AT 10:00

Present

E D Winstanley

Present Virtually

S Aspey
RM James
M Williams

RM Granville
R J Smith
P Ford

D T Harrison
I M Spiller
M Jones

M L Hughes
G Walter

Apologies for Absence

T Thomas

Officers:

Laura Griffiths
Oscar Roberts
Nimi Chandrasena

Group Manager - Legal and Democratic Services
Business Administrative Apprentice - Democratic Services
Democratic Services Officer - Support

Invitees

Cllr Jane Gebbie
Cllr Amanda Williams

To Appoint Chairperson for the Meeting

Decision Made	Councillor Ian Spiller was nominated as Chairperson for this particular meeting, however a second nomination was made in favour of Councillor Elaine Winstanley, agreed unanimously by all members as Councillor Spiller was experiencing technical difficulties.
Date Decision Made	8 February 2024

2. Apologies for Absence

Decision Made	Councillor Tim Thomas
Date Decision Made	8 February 2024

3. Declarations of Interests

Decision Made	None
Date Decision Made	8 February 2024

4. Approval of Minutes

Decision Made	That the minutes of a meeting of the Democratic Services Committee dated 26/10/2023 be approved as a true and accurate record
Date Decision Made	8 February 2024

Councillor Portal Working Group Update

Decision Made	<p>The Group Manager - Legal and Democratic Services welcomed the Deputy Leader, Councillor Jane Gebbie and Councillor Amanda Williams who were invitees for this particular item and made the committee aware of their presence.</p> <p>She went on to present the report, the purpose of which was to present the Committee with an update on the work of the Councillor Portal Working Group, for the Committee to note, including actions from the most recent meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Chairperson invited comments from Cllr Walter, Chairperson of the working group <p>The Chairperson of the working group stated that he found the report to be a very comprehensive summary. He stated that when meeting with officers over the three or four meetings there had been some robust challenge which had been met with detailed explanations in relation to issues highlighted.</p> <p>He stated he felt the working group had done the best they could do given resource constraints, both financially and human resource and therefore had nothing more to add.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A member stated that he too was a member of the working group, and that the Portal system was far from perfect, but was the only system available and users need to ensure that it is maximised in usage for the purpose it is required for. He stated he had noticed some feedback; in terms of any cases he had put forward where they had been reallocated and he had been kept informed of that which was positive to note. He mentioned that on a number of occasions, Officers corresponded outside the Portal via email and members saved those responses and re-input them into the portal in order that all related correspondence was kept together. He stated there was no interrelation between the Portal and the Council's website that would facilitate members in understanding how best to put a case forward.• A member stated that he had made an observation which may be a financial constraint as he was not aware if Granicus, which was named on the bottom left hand corner of the Portal system, had provided the Authority with an "off the shelf product" that the Authority had paid for and inquired how much control the Authority had and if the developers were able to be able to amend some of the aspects that caused members issues. <p>He suggested that the user interface could have improvements which could eliminate the loop that users seem to go round. He asked if the working group could investigate these financial restraints because he was unsure if the costs relating to improvements lie with Granicus or an internal team.</p>
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The Group Manager - Legal and Democratic Services responded that she understood it to be an off the shelf product that is used in other local authorities, though not in Wales but possibly in England. She stated that the understanding was that there would be a cost attached to any changes/improvements as that would mean that there would be work that Granicus would have to undertake.

- The same member asked if it was possible to have sight of the contract with Granicus and for the committee to be provided with the costs.

The Group Manager - Legal and Democratic Services confirmed that she would obtain the information requested and feed this back through the Committee.

- A member queried information in the report around SLA's, asking if current individual service area data in relation to SLA's were available prior to making any proposed changes to these SLA's. He stated that there needs to be an understanding whether what is proposed is feasible and intends to provide a service that is realistic.

The Group Manager - Legal and Democratic Services responded that she did not have the current SLA data but her understanding was that the majority of the delays lay within communities. She accepted that it would be sensible for the committee to have the current data so that they could consider the proposed changes to the SLA. She reminded the committee that only some of the service areas were seeking an extension beyond the current SLA of 10 days.

- The Deputy Leader stated that she was a returning Cabinet member and was accustomed to the previously utilised member referral system (OTRS). Therefore, from a cabinet perspective, real difficulties had been experienced with the portal and this has been represented within the Portal Working group. As a positive, she stated that she found the "report it" function to be excellent, particularly as any member of the public can make use of it wherever they were reporting from. She stated that she had significant difficulties utilising the "Portal System" because of its limitations in its functionality.

The Deputy Leader corrected a previous comment made in that there were two member referral systems, one being the Portal and the other being OTRS which was currently in use to manage

MS/MP referrals and Cabinet Communications with external parties. She stated that within OTRS, she was able to address a referral to more than one person and one department.

The Deputy Leader stated that the Portal was not equipped to manage complex referrals and she had significant concerns around breaching GDPR with the use of the portal despite officer reassurances.

The Deputy Leader stated all members operate in a political capacity. There were political nuances to various responses that may need to be sent. She stated that there was a deliberate reason for that. It was because she needed to ensure that the Council is following policy. Should there be an issue, how do members investigate that prior to providing appropriate response.

Cabinet and Members intend to resolve issues in a timely and appropriate manner as that would be the best representation for the Authority.

The Deputy Leader referred to the 'redirection option' within the Portal system, stating there was no ownership. As an example, she stated that if referral required input from two departments, it could only go to one on the portal. An officer in the first department was then expected to take responsibility and ownership to refer it on to the next department. She stated that this functionality was not working very well because officers do not understand the back end of the Portal system. Further, there does not appear to be ownership once a referral has been redirected. The Deputy Leader referred to OTRS, previously used by all members and currently by Cabinet for MS/MP and external referrals, stating that there was a range of external referrals to many agencies which are all recorded and correspondence data to all parties was retained in one place under one unique referral system number.

She compared this function to the Portal stating that such a function was not possible because once the referral went to one recipient and it was closed as their individual task was complete, the referral remained closed to all parties.

She stated that on OTRS, a case can be re-opened if required because matters had escalated or the resolutions that we put forward did not work.

The Deputy Leader informed the committee that a function of 'Merging', was possible on OTRS but not possible within the Portal.

As an example, she stated that Members belonging to the same ward can be copied in on the same issue and to avoid duplication for Members and Service areas these referrals were usually

	<p>merged within OTRS, this functionality is not possible within the Portal system.</p> <p>The Deputy Leader stated a wider discussion on the operating system was required. She stated that the Portal was reliant on officers understanding not just their own department but operation of other directorates within the system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A Member referred to the discussion on SLA's and stated that the working party identified that some referrals were more urgent than others and that maximum SLA's would not be suitable in these instances. It was suggested that the urgency was mentioned in the title of the referral.• Cllr A Williams stated that, following comments made by the Deputy Leader previously, a number of issues had been raised within their Group Leader meetings in relation to the Portal System. As an example, she stated that referrals on the Portal system were closed down without a reason being provided and a request had been made to add a closure reason. She stated that members tend to log an issue as a referral on the Portal system as opposed to a 'Report it' as they are answerable to the public and at present they were not receiving answers that they could thereafter share. Cllr Williams stated that they had been advised that there were technical difficulties in providing answers and the Group Leaders had put forward suggestions which she hoped to have an update on within the next Group Leader meeting. <p>The Invitees left the meeting.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED</u> : It was agreed that the Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Noted the update provided in the report on the work of the Councillor Portal Working Group;b) Provided comments on the proposed response times attached at Appendix A;c) Provided any comments, queries or suggestions regarding the Councillor Portal which they would like the Working Group to explore further as part of their work.
Date Decision Made	8 February 2024

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Member Development Programme Update

Decision Made	<p>The Group Manager - Legal and Democratic Services presented the report the purpose of which was to :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Provide the Committee with an update on the delivery of the Council's Member Training and Development Programme and related activities;b) Request the Committee to identify any further topics for inclusion in the Member Development Programme <p>She stated that training requests had been regularly forthcoming from both members and officers, which has been welcomed and encouraged because it enabled the programme to be specifically targeted to needs.</p> <p>Discussing attendance, the Group Manager - Legal and Democratic Services gave a verbal update to the committee advising that there was a correction to Appendix B to confirm that Cllr M Williams was in attendance at the Data Protection training session dated 15/09/23.</p> <p>The Group Manager - Legal and Democratic Services stated that several queries had been raised as to whether there were circumstances when Members could be exempt from attending some of the e-learning training modules or training sessions where there was duplication . She confirmed that the Democratic Services Manager, will be making enquiries with the Learning and Development Team for guidance around training that is classed as mandatory.</p> <p>She stated that there would also be communication sent out to all Members advising that the democratic services team will be conducting in-person sessions where Members can come in and get assistance navigating or completing the e-learning training modules.</p> <p>She stated that at a recent Governance and Audit committee meeting held in November 2023, during consideration of a monitoring report on corporate complaints, members of that committee highlighted that they sometimes experience issues on the subject when engaging with their local constituents. The Governance and Audit Committee therefore recommended that Members may possibly benefit from having some additional training on handling complaints, potentially some challenging situations involving constituents in respect to that complaint process. This has been added to the Governance and Audits committee action record that was considered by the committee in January of this year and had been put to the Democratic Services Committee to consider whether it was to be included in the future.</p> <p>The Group Manager - Legal and Democratic Services went through attendance statistics for mandatory</p>
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e-learning modules and reminded Members that during an internal audit, it was reported to the Audit committee that Elected Members were to be encouraged and reminded to complete all of their code of conduct and mandatory e-learning module training.

She encouraged Members to revisit that e-learning website and undertake those additional modules.

- A Member expressed concerns over duplication of member development sessions and stated such duplication had an impact on both member and officer time. He cited examples such as Safeguarding training and 20 minute town training which members had already undertaken as part of other training/briefing sessions.

He suggested the possibility of sending members periodic reminders of mandatory training so that members were prompted to undertake these.

He also asked, in relation to the Welsh Language awareness whether it was a necessity for those members who were educated in Wales and have a GCSE qualification in Welsh to still undertake the training.

The Group Manager - Legal and Democratic Services responded to state that his comments will be fed back to the Learning and Development department for advice as to whether exemptions can be given in such circumstances.

- A Member welcomed the suggestion of a member session where they could be offered assistance in the navigation of e-learning modules. He also inquired about the possibility of linking their one to one meetings with Group Leaders that forms a sort of appraisal.
- Another Member agreed with the suggestion of receiving assistance to navigate e-learning modules as he currently found the system to not be very user friendly.
- A member suggested that members should receive calendar appointments with an alert or a more visual reminder for mandatory training sessions. He suggested that there is an escalation if training is then not undertaken. He also suggested that the Democratic Services team consult members prior to scheduling training as members tend to prioritise their meetings in relation to their ward over member training.
- The Chairperson stated that she would prefer training to be organised on one day of the week as opposed to being scattered across the week as this would enable management of personal schedules better.
- A member suggested the possibility of categorising training, for example as discretionary or

	<p>mandatory so that they can prioritise accordingly and make attendance more achievable.</p> <p>The Group Manager - Legal and Democratic Services responded to state that some of the sessions, if they were recorded, could be saved on the website for members to watch back. She stated that she would then explore the possibility with Learning and Development of counting this 'viewing' towards attendance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members agreed that in response to the recommendation from the Governance and Audit Committee, they would benefit in a training session where they could learn to handle complaints particularly those of a difficult vexatious nature. • A member inquired why service areas had stopped notifying customers of work to be carried out in their respective wards as knowledge of these works could assist members in dealing with residents. He cited the example of a member who suffered online abuse in relation to this. The member confirmed that he had brought this to the attention of the relevant Cabinet Member. Another member agreed that the consequences faced by ward members due to service areas not keeping them informed has also resulted in issues in his ward. <p><u>RESOLVED</u> : The Committee agreed to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Note the report and its appendices and the verbal amendment to Appendix B; b) Identified any additional Member development topics or briefings for inclusion in the Member Development Programme and prioritised them accordingly.
Date Decision Made	8 February 2024

7. Democratic Services Committee Forward Work Programme

Decision Made	<p>The report was presented by the Group Manager – Legal and Democratic Services the purpose of which was to present Members with a proposed Forward Work Programme (FWP) for the Democratic Services Committee for consideration and further development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A member inquired after the possibility of reviewing the Constitution as part of the committee's FWP based on historical discussions.
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	<p>The Group Manager – Legal and Democratic Services responded that a review of the Constitution was not a function of the Democratic Services Committee and that the Constitution specifically references how changes can be made, in particular, following a proposal from the Monitoring Officer. When the Committee previously undertook the full review of the Constitution, it was following the introduction of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and it was agreed that this Council would adopt the All Wales Model Constitution making it local to Bridgend. At that time it was agreed that a Working Group would be established via the committee to fully review the Constitution. She advised the Committee that the Monitoring Officer has received further suggested amendments in relation to the Constitution and is currently considering the same. She stated that it was a very long and timely exercise and it would not be practicable to review the Constitution on an annual basis because of constraints on officer and Members resources. She confirmed that Members were welcome to feedback comments on suggested amendments to the Constitution, to the Monitoring Officer who will thereafter be able to give the committee direction with regard to setting up another a working group. Following discussions, Members noted that a review of the Constitution was not within their remit but recommended that the Monitoring Officer consider establishing another Working Group to review the Constitution.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED</u> : Members considered the proposed draft Forward Work Programme for the Democratic Services Committee attached at Appendix A and provided comment or suggestions for further items for the Committee to consider at its future meetings.</p> <p>The committee recommended that the Monitoring Officer consider establishing a Working Group via the committee to review the Constitution.</p>
Date Decision Made	8 February 2024

8. Urgent Items

Decision Made	None
Date Decision Made	8 February 2024

To observe further debate that took place on the above items, please click this [link](#)

The meeting closed at 11:15.

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Meeting of:	DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	13 JUNE 2024
Report Title:	DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
Responsible Officer:	RACHEL KEEPINS DEMOCRATIC SERVICES MANAGER
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules
Executive Summary:	<p>The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 requires the Democratic Services Committee (DSC) to make a report at least annually to the Council covering the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Membership of the DSC • Dates of meetings of the DSC • DSC Terms of Reference • Activities of the DSC for the period May 2023 to May 2024 • The Structure of the Democratic Services Team covering May 2023 to May 24

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide the Democratic Services Committee with the Annual Report for the period May 2023 to May 2024. The report outlines the work of the Committee during that period.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 requires each council to establish a Democratic Services Committee. The Measure prescribes the functions of the committee and requires the committee to make a report at least annually to the Council.

- 3.2 The Democratic Services Committee cannot discharge any other functions or perform any dual role.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 Councillor Tim Thomas was elected Chair of the Democratic Services Committee at the Annual Meeting of Council in May 2023.
- 3.2 The Committee is serviced by the Democratic Services Manager. The role also has the responsibility of being the Head of Democratic Services.

Membership of the Democratic Services Committee

- 3.3 The Membership of the Democratic Services Committee for the period May 2023 to May 2024 is as follows:

Councillor	Councillor
Cllr Tim Thomas (Chair)	Cllr Malcolm James
Cllr Steven Easterbrook	Cllr Rob Smith
Cllr Paula Ford	Cllr Ian Spiller
Cllr Richard Granville	Cllr Graham Walter
Cllr David Harrison	Cllr Elaine Winstanley
Cllr Martin Hughes	

Dates of the Democratic Services Committee Meetings

- 3.4 The Committee met on the following dates during the period May 2023 to May 2024:
- 8 June 2023
 - 16 October 2023
 - 8 February 2024

Democratic Services Committee Terms of Reference

- 3.5 The remit of the Democratic Services Committee is set out under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and is:
- Designate an officer as the Head of Democratic Services;
 - Review the adequacy of provision by the Authority of staff, accommodation and other resources to discharge Democratic Services functions;
 - Make reports and recommendations to the Authority in relation to such provision;
 - At the request of the Authority review any matter relevant to the support and advice available to members of the Council, and the terms and conditions of office of those members.
- 3.6 There is also a Sub-Committee of the Democratic Services Committee which consists of a Panel to deal with Member family absence under the Family Absence for Members of Local Authorities (Wales) Regulations 2013.

Activities of the Democratic Services Committee for the period May 2023 to May 2024

- 3.7 **Member Annual Report Process** - Following a review of the Elected Member Annual Report Process in June 2023, templates and guidance were issued to all Members and 39 were received, translated and published on the Council's website. The report template has been reissued and Members are encouraged to complete and return them by 30th June 2024 for translating and publishing by 1st September 2024.
- 3.8 **Member Development** - On the subject of Member Development, regular updates have been received by the Committee who have provided valuable comments and suggestions. These include a request for further exploration into the methods of delivery and timing of training, particularly in relation to the future Member Induction. In-person support sessions were also proposed to assist Members to access their e-learning training and also the suggestion to survey all members on what topics they would like to include in their training programme. As referenced in the Member Development Update report of 13th June 2024, a survey is proposed for all Members to seek views on numerous aspects of the Member Development Programme to help inform it going forward, and sessions are currently being arranged with the Learning and Development and Democratic Services teams to support any members in undertaking their e-learning.
- 3.9 Many of these suggestions above followed the Committee's consideration of the Welsh Government Statutory and Non-Statutory Guidance for Principal Councils in Wales at its October 2023 meeting, where Members also made proposals relating to Member privacy as well as some for improved collaboration and methods of engagement for Scrutiny. It is further proposed that consideration be given to the development of a Member Research Protocol later in the year.
- 3.10 **Multi-location Meetings Policy and Elected Member Personal Safety Protocol** - At its meeting in October 2023 the Committee undertook a review of the Council's Multi-location Meetings Policy and received a draft of the Council's Elected Member Personal Safety Protocol. On the former, the Committee were very supportive of keeping cameras on in meetings and recommended as such to Full Council when the review was presented in November 2023. Members highlighted that this was particularly significant when it came to contributing to discussions and important meetings involving votes. This was an issue of transparency and accountability.
- 3.11 As part of the review of the Multi-location Meetings Policy the Committee also briefly discussed the flexible nature of hybrid meetings and whether some committees could go fully remote by default, with specific exceptions, broadly supporting the practice followed by Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council, where Members were canvassed in advance about whether they would be attending a meeting in person or remotely. The recommendation was presented to full Council on 15th May 2024 for consideration but not approved.
- 3.12 Following the Committee's consideration of the draft Elected Member Personal Safety Protocol, which was developed in consultation with the Corporate Health and Safety Unit and Officers from South Wales Police, the protocol was presented and approved by Council in March 2024 and is now available on the Council's intranet site.

- 3.13 **Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Draft Annual Report 2024/25 and the Councillor Portal Working Group** – the Committee considered the draft Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Draft Annual Report 2024/25 and provided feedback to the Panel and has also undertaken work via a small Working Group on the Councillor Portal, providing regular feedback to the Committee on this. The Portal Working Group was established to take forward the development of the Member Portal, and throughout 2023/24 has met on four separate occasions where a series of issues and actions were created, discussed and monitored at each meeting of the Group.
- 3.14 As part of this work, recommendations were presented that highlighted the need to develop dashboards within the Portal in order for both Members and Officers to monitor referrals effectively and improve response rates with a specific recommendation for dedicated staff within the Communities Directorate to assist with Member referrals. Unfortunately, as reported in October 2023, due to the financial constraints across the Authority it was concluded by the Committee that there was a need to address what realistically could go forward in terms of the Portal and these recommendations may not be able to be progressed at this time. However, there was general agreement that issues with member referrals, especially the timeliness of responses, needed to be addressed. At a further meeting in February 2024 the Committee considered an update from the Working Group and Members expressed concerns about the financial constraints related to the Portal against the corresponding need for it to be developed further. Whilst Members agreed the ‘Report it’ function of the Portal was an excellent and positive development, there were still issues that needed resolving in relation to Member Referrals and without further investment this would not be possible.
- 3.15 At its meeting in November 2023 the Working Group agreed to meet again in approximately 6 months, to enable time for further work to be undertaken by the Experience and Improvement team. The Group is scheduled to meet again in June 2024 and, at the request of the Committee, will consider the financial constraints and what potential there is for any further development.

Democratic Services Team for the period May 2023 to May 2024

- 3.16 The current structure for the Democratic Services Team is set out below:
- Democratic Services Manager (with the statutory post of Head of Democratic Services)
 - Senior Democratic Services Officer – Committees
 - Democratic Services Officer – Committees (Vacancy)
 - Democratic Services – Technical Support Officer
 - Senior Democratic Services Officer – Scrutiny
 - Scrutiny Officer x 2
 - Senior Democratic Services Officer – Support
 - Democratic Services Assistant
 - Democratic Services Officer – Support
 - Democratic Services Officer – Leadership, Members and Mayoral
 - Chauffeur
 - Business Administrative Apprentice

3.17 The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 places the responsibility on the Authority itself to ensure that the Head of Democratic Services (HDS) is provided with sufficient staff, accommodation and other resources as are, in the Council's opinion, sufficient to allow the HDS's functions to be discharged. The Democratic Services team have worked tirelessly to ensure that all of the expected outcomes have been achieved despite a number of vacancies and the service being required to find savings as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

5. Well-being of Future Generations Implications and Connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

5.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there is no significant or unacceptable impact upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.

6. Climate Change Implications

6.1 There are no climate change implications as a result of this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 There are no safeguarding or corporate parent implications as a result of this report.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. There are no specific costs associated with the running of this Committee other than those involved in the cost of administration of this and other Council functions within the democratic process.

9. Recommendation

9.1 To receive and note the Annual Report for submission to Council for information.

Background documents

None

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Meeting of:	DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	13 JUNE 2024
Report Title:	MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME UPDATE
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
Responsible Officer:	RACHEL KEEPINS DEMOCRATIC SERVICES MANAGER
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon Policy Framework and Procedure Rules
Executive Summary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is the role of the Democratic Services Committee to develop a Member support and development strategy and ensure Members have access to a reasonable level of training and development and sufficient budget to do so. • This report provides an update on the Member Development Programme since February 2024 and sets out the process for informing and planning the future programme including Member Performance and Development Reviews. • Members are also asked to put forward suggestions for inclusion in the programme and prioritise accordingly.

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- a) Provide the Committee with an update on the delivery of the Council's Member Training and Development Programme and related activities;
- b) Request the Committee to identify any further topics for inclusion in the Member Development Programme.

2. Background

2.1 Following the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, local authorities were directed to place more emphasis on Member Development. Members are

encouraged to identify their own development needs and participate fully in learning and development activities.

2.2 Under the Council's Constitution part of the role description of a Member on the Democratic Services Committee is:

- developing the Authority's member support and development strategy;
- ensuring that members have access to a reasonable level of training and development as described in the member development strategy and the Wales Charter for Member Support and Development;
- ensuring that the budget for member development is sufficient;
- ensuring that members have access to personal development planning and annual personal development reviews.

3. Current situation / proposal

3.1 **Appendix A** details the training and development sessions that have taken place as part of the Member Development Programme since last reported to the Democratic Services Committee on 8th February 2024.

3.2 Training requests continue to be regularly forthcoming from both Members and Officers which has been extremely welcomed and encouraged as it enables the programme to be specifically targeted to needs. Examples of this include 'Personal Safety for Members' and 'Anti Racism' training, both of which have been requested by Members and also 'Local Government Finance' following the 2023-24 Budget consultation process.

Development Control Committee Training Sessions

3.3 The following Development Control Committee training sessions have been provided since the last update to the Committee:

- 22nd February 2024 - Green Infrastructure Statements
- 6th March 2024 - Local Development Plan (training extended to all members)
- 15th May 2024 - Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust

Council Briefings

3.4 The following Local Authority partners have also attended Full Council meetings to provide update briefings to all Members on the services they deliver:

- 17th April 2024 – Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations

Future Member Development and Member Personal Development Reviews

3.5 Attached at **Appendix B** is a schedule for continued training over the next few months. The Council's Complaints Procedure and Department for Work and Pensions briefing are examples of training requested for Members by the

Governance and Audit Committee. 'Climate Change', 'The New Estyn Inspection Framework' and 'Safeguarding' training have been requested by officers to update Members on changes and assist them in their various roles and responsibilities.

E-Learning

- 3.6 In addition to Member Development sessions Members are also asked to undertake several e-learning modules via the online Learning and Development website. These e-learning courses have been devised by the Council for all staff and Members to support their learning and development needs and gives Members the opportunity to undertake this learning remotely at a convenient time at their own pace.
- 3.7 The following mandatory courses below have been previously provided:
- Corporate Induction
 - UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
 - Display Screen Equipment
 - Fire Safety Awareness
 - ICT Code of Conduct
 - Safeguarding Children and Adults
 - Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence
 - New - Introduction to Equality and Diversity; and
 - New - Welsh Language Awareness.
- 3.8 At the time of drafting this report, 35 Members have accessed the Learning and Development site and commenced their e-learning modules but only 8 Members have completed all nine mandatory modules with 14 having completed the initial seven as listed above.
- 3.9 It is worth noting that following an internal Elected Members Audit, undertaken in 2022/23, one of the recommendations from the report which was subsequently reported to the Governance and Audit Committee stated:
- 'All elected Members are encouraged and reminded to complete their Code of conduct and mandatory e-learning modules training.'***
- 3.10 Members are therefore encouraged to re-visit the e-learning website and undertake these additional modules if not yet completed.

Learning and Development Website

- 3.11 All Members have been provided with the link to the Learning and Development website with instructions on how to access the e-learning training. The review of the Member Learning and Development site by the Democratic Services team is unfortunately on hold and whilst it is hoped that this can be developed in the near future, this will depend on resources available.

Member Development Survey

- 3.12 Following the local government elections in May 2022, a survey was undertaken to determine the timings of Member Development activities. This is soon to be

repeated, however it is planned that this survey will ask for more detail from Members on their views on past and future training. Suggested areas for consideration include:

- The frequency of training sessions;
- Preferred methods and format for training;
- Quality of training information provided;
- Satisfaction over topic choices.

3.13 The survey will also be used as an opportunity to ask all Members for suggested topics for future training and could also seek their views on how well-informed they feel over a list of prescribed subjects which might help identify key areas where further development is required.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

5. Well-being of Future Generations Implications and Connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

5.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there is no significant or unacceptable impact upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.

6. Climate Change Implications

6.1 There are no climate change implications as a result of this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 There are no safeguarding or corporate parent implications as a result of this report.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 Elected Member learning and development is resourced from the allocated Member Development budget. Reasonable allocation will be made as part of the annual budget round and applied with regard to the corporate needs of the Authority. The Head of Democratic Services will monitor appropriate spend on the budget. In-house training will be provided by Directorates if the topic relates to their service areas. The costs for this type of event will be met from within Directorate budgets and not from the Member Development budget.

9. Recommendations

9.1 The Committee is recommended to:

- a) Note the report and appendices;
- b) Identify any additional Member development topics or briefings for inclusion in the Member Development Programme and prioritise them accordingly; and
- c) Identify any further aspects for inclusion in the Member Development Survey.

Background documents

None

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BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MEMBER INDUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2024/25

Date and Time	Delivery	Facilitator	Development Session
05/02/2024 11:30-13:00	Hybrid	External Facilitator	Cardiff Capital Region briefing (All Members)
05/02/2024 2.30-4.00pm	In Person	Swansea University & Community Safety	StreetSnap Training for Councillors (All Members)
14/02/2024 14:00-16:00	Microsoft Teams	Climate Change Response Manager	Invasive Non Native Species (All Members)
19/02/2024 16:00-18:00	Council Chamber	Chief Officer - Legal & Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy	Code of Conduct for Community Councils
07/03/2024 10:00-12:00	Microsoft Teams	WLGA	Anti Racism (limited numbers)
18/03/2024 3pm-4pm	Microsoft Teams	South Wales Police	Personal Safety Presentation (All Members)

22/04/2024 10:00-12:00	In person	Experience Team / Democratic Services	New Member Portal Training Specific Members
03/05/2024 10am-11:30am	Hybrid	WLGA	Local Government Finance (All Members)
13/05/2024 10am-12noon	Council Chamber	Chief Officer - Legal & Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy	Member Code of Conduct Training / Refresher (For newly Elected Member / All Members)
30/05/2024 14:00-15:00	Hybrid	Sustainable Food Co-ordinator Partnership & CSP Manager	Sustainable food (All Members)

*Please note that these sessions are subject to change.

*Refresher training will be provided for all essential topics as appropriate.

Education Sessions

Social Services Sessions

Appendix B

Future Member Development

Date and Time	Delivery	Facilitator	Development Session
13/06/2024	Hybrid	Representatives from Department for Work and Pensions	Department for Work and Pensions Councillor Briefing (All Members)
Rescheduled – Dates TBC	In Person	WLGA	Media Training – Cabinet (Leader & Cabinet only)
June 2024 – Date TBC	TBC	Democratic Services	Delegated Powers Training (Cabinet Members)
TBC	TBC	<u>Barod Cymru</u>	Personal Safety - Drug/alcohol guidance for Elected Members (All Members)
TBC	TBC	Climate Change Response Manager	Climate Change and Flooding (All Members)
TBC	TBC	Democratic Services Corporate Training	E-Learning Drop in Sessions (All Members)

TBC	Microsoft Teams	HR/Learning & Development	Equality & Unconscious Bias Training 12 Members – workshop on Teams (several sessions)
TBC	TBC	Corporate Director - Education, Early Years & Young People Scrutiny	New ESTYN Inspection Framework (All Members)
TBC	Hybrid	Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing	Safeguarding Training (All Members)
TBC	TBC	ICT	Bridgemaps (All Members)
TBC	TBC	Consultation Engagement and Equalities Manager	SEP Objectives (All Members)
TBC	TBC	Information and Data Protection Officer	Complaints procedure (All Members)
TBC	TBC	WLGA	Cabinet & CMB Development (For Cabinet Members)

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Meeting of:	DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	13 JUNE 2024
Report Title:	DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
Responsible Officer:	RACHEL KEEPINS DEMOCRATIC SERVICES MANAGER
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the Policy Framework or Procedure Rules.
Executive Summary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, 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 full Council accordingly. • This report sets out the Committee’s remit and proposes items for its Forward Work Programme for the year. • The forward work programme is flexible and could be subject to change at each Committee meeting.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present Members with a proposed Forward Work Programme (FWP) for the Democratic Services Committee for consideration and further development.

2. Background

- 2.1 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 full Council accordingly.
- 2.2 As stated in the Council’s Constitution, the Democratic Services Committee have the following functions:

1. To review the adequacy of provision of staff, accommodation, and other resources to discharge democratic services functions, and
2. To make reports and recommendations to Council, at least annually, in relation to such provision.
3. At the request of the Council, review any matter relevant to the support and advice available to members of the Council, and the terms and conditions of office of those members.
4. To make reports and recommendations to the Council following a review.

2.3 In addition to this, as a member of the Democratic Services Committee, the role includes, (but is not exclusive to):

- a) developing the Authority's member support and development strategy;
- b) ensuring that members have access to a reasonable level of training and development as described in the member development strategy and the Wales Charter for Member Support and Development;
- c) ensuring that the budget for member development is sufficient;
- d) ensuring that members have access to personal development planning and annual personal development reviews.
- e) promoting and supporting good governance by the Council.
- f) understanding the respective roles of members, officers and external parties operating within the Democratic Services Committee's area of responsibility.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 Attached at **Appendix A** is a draft FWP for the Democratic Services Committee for 2024-25.
- 3.2 Reports such as the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Draft Annual Report and the Democratic Services Committee Annual Report will be regular items for the Committee to consider each year, as will Member Development updates.
- 3.3 It is for Members to consider whether there are any other items they wish to add to their FWP considering the role and remit of the Committee. This can then be revisited at each meeting so that Members have the opportunity to amend or add to the FWP throughout the year.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

- 4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

5. Well-being of Future Generations Implications and Connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

5.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there is no significant or unacceptable impact upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.

6. Climate Change Implications

6.1 There are no climate change implications as a result of this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 There are no safeguarding or corporate parent implications as a result of this report.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

9. Recommendation

9.1 Members are requested to consider the proposed draft Forward Work Programme for the Democratic Services Committee attached at **Appendix A** and provide any comment or suggestions for further items for the Committee to consider at its future meetings.

Background documents

None

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**DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME
2024/25**

Date of meeting	Item	Invitees/Further Detail
21 November 2024	Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Draft Annual Report 2025/26	
	Member Portal Working Group Update	
	Member Research Protocol	Final version of WLGA protocol and the Council's draft protocol
	Member Development Programme Update	To include information resulting from the Member survey

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