

Public Document Pack

Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr

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. Rhowch wybod i ni os mai Cymraeg yw eich dewis iaith.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh. Please let us know if your language choice is Welsh.



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, 19 June 2025

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/ Remotely via Microsoft Teams on **Thursday, 26 June 2025 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 - 12

To receive for approval, the minutes of the 13/06/2024 and the 21/11/2024

4 **Member Development Programme Update**

13 - 38

5 **Research Support and Services for Elected Members – Protocol**

39 - 46

By receiving this Agenda Pack electronically you will save the Authority approx. £1.16 in printing costs

6	<u>Democratic Services Committee Annual Report</u>	47 - 52
7	<u>Democratic Services Committee Forward Work Programme</u>	53 - 58
8	<u>Urgent Items</u>	

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 would like to view this meeting live, please contact cabinet_committee@bridgend.gov.uk or tel. 01656 643148 / 643694 / 643513 / 643159.

Yours faithfully

K Watson

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

Councillors:

S Aspey

H T Bennett

P Ford

RM Granville

D T Harrison

M L Hughes

RM James

I M Spiller

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, 13 JUNE 2024 AT 10:00

Present

Councillor T Thomas – Chairperson

H T Bennett

RM Granville

E D Winstanley

Present Virtually

P Ford

M L Hughes

I M Spiller

G Walter

Apologies for Absence

RM James

Officers:

Rachel Keepins
Oscar Roberts

Democratic Services Manager
Democratic Services Business Administrative Apprentice

Declarations of Interest

None

10. Approval of Minutes

Decision Made	That the minutes of a meeting of the Democratic Services Committee dated 08/02/2024 be approved as a
---------------	--

	true and accurate record.
Date Decision Made	13 June 2024

Democratic Services Committee Annual Report

Decision Made	<p><u>Resolved:</u> The Committee received and noted the Annual Report for submission to Council for information, subject to the following additions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• That details of the Committee's attendance at Democratic Services Committee meetings be added to the report at paragraph 3.3;• That any further detail be provided as to the meetings of the Sub-Committee to deal with Member Family Absence at paragraph 3.6;• That an indication of hours, whether full time or part time be provided for the Democratic Services staff listed in the report.
Date Decision Made	13 June 2024

12. Member Development Programme Update

Decision Made	<p><u>Resolved:</u> The Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Noted the report and appendices;b) Requested that additional training be provided to Members on the Corporate Joint Committee and also that the Democratic Services Manager (DSM) explore whether the Media training identified for Cabinet members could be expanded out for other Members;c) Requested that any future records of training attendance published in future or provided for Freedom of Information Requests highlight what training is mandatory and what isn't;d) Requested more frequent reminders to Members on their mandatory e-learning modules.
Date Decision Made	13 June 2024

Democratic Services Committee Forward Work Programme

Decision Made	<p><u>Resolved:</u> The Committee noted the proposed items for the Committees FWP.</p> <p>Members queried whether the Committee could receive a future report on how the requirement for voter identification has impacted on recent election turnouts. The DSM clarified that this did not necessarily fall within the remit of this Committee but that this could potentially be provided as an information briefing paper for all Members and she would look into this.</p> <p>The Committee also requested that the DSM explore how the Communications team were planning on publicising this requirement in the upcoming elections.</p>
Date Decision Made	13 June 2024

14. Urgent Items

Decision Made	None
Date Decision Made	13 June 2024

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

The meeting closed at 10:46

This page is intentionally left blank

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD REMOTELY VIA TEAMS ON THURSDAY, 21 NOVEMBER 2024
AT 10:00

Present Virtual

Councillor T Thomas – Chairperson

H T Bennett
I M Spiller

RM Granville
G Walter

M L Hughes
E D Winstanley

RM James

Apologies for Absence

P Ford
Rachel Keepins

Officers:

Laura Griffiths
Michael Pitman
Nimi Chandrasena

The Group Manager - Legal and Democratic Services
Technical Support Officer – Democratic Services
Democratic Services Officer - Support

Declarations of Interest

None

17
Page 8
Independent Remuneration Panel For Wales Draft Annual Report
2025/26

Decision Made	<p>The Group Manager - Legal and Democratic Services presented the report, providing the committee with an update on the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) draft Annual Report for the municipal year 2025/26 .</p> <p>Discussions took place regarding the following aspects mentioned in the report :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work of a Councillor was based on assessment of a 3 day week. The assessment was undertaken in 2021 and may require a review within the current working patterns.• More guidance to be provided on job shares• The members felt that the existing Panel did not reflect diversity and would like due regard and understanding that councils operate in diverse communities.• There was insufficient information on the IRPW website and members would like supplementary information to be readily available.• A member asked for clarification on the remuneration of the members of the joint Overview Scrutiny Committee.• Members would like further information regarding how the new Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru would exercise the functions of the Panel moving forward.• Members suggested that a letter to the Chair expressing their thanks for the work done by the outgoing Panel is sent.• A member agreed with Deputy Leader's comments made during a previous meeting regarding no remuneration for RPB and PSB, members would like this raised as they felt the boards undertook a massive amount of work. <p>RESOLVED : The committee noted and discussed the content of the report . It was agreed that a response would be provided in respect of the IRPW Draft Annual Report 2025/26. They agreed that any response of the Committee be submitted to the IRPW and the WLGA by the deadline of 29 November 2024.</p>
Date Decision Made	21/11/2024

Democratic Services Committee Forward Work Programme

Decision Made	<p>The Group Manager - Legal and Democratic Services presented the report for the Committee's consideration and further development.</p> <p>She invited members to put forward their suggestions for future development and also mentioned that the Portal Working group was ongoing and requested members to express their interest should they wish to be part of the group.</p> <p>Members inquired about a progress update from the Portal Working Group and it was agreed that this is to be expected at the next meeting scheduled in June 2025</p> <p>RESOLVED : Members considered the proposed draft Forward Work Programme for the Democratic Services Committee attached at Appendix A and provided comments and suggestions for further items for the Committee to consider at its future meetings.</p>
Date Decision Made	21/11/2024

19. 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 activitiesb) Request the Committee to identify any further topics for inclusion in the Member Development Programme. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Members suggested that it would be beneficial that a reminder is sent out to all Members stressing the importance of completing e-Learning modules. It was suggested that this was also raised at next Group Leader's meeting so they can encourage their members to complete training.• Members would like to explore the ability to put training completion on the website to ensure transparency with the public.• Further 'drop in' sessions to be arranged to help Members complete e-Learning modules• Clear identification to be given as to whether sessions were mandatory – Members preferred a distinction being made for development sessions and e-Learning sessions that were mandatory
---------------	--

	<p>and discretionary as they had sometimes undertaken similar courses were within their employment which they considered as a duplication if they had to complete the BCBC courses too.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reminders for Member Development training and e-Learning were too generic, members requested that they were more specific. • Members stated they would like a briefing on the current position of the Mod.Gov application and requested that there were more sessions introduced to bring all members up to date prior to the 'go-live' date. • Suggestions were made for future development sessions to be undertaken to educate members on anti-extremism, minorities, extremist ideologies, DWP for cost of living and information briefings with V2C. <p><u>RESOLVED</u> : The Committee agreed to note the report and appendices. They identified additional Member development topics and briefings for inclusion in the Member Development Programme and made suggestions for completion and transparency of Learning and Development undertaken.</p>
Date Decision Made	21/11/2024

20. Research Support and Services For Councillors - Protocol

Decision Made	<p>The Group Manager - Legal and Democratic Services presented the report to update members on the existing research support available to Elected Members and to seek direction for the development of a Research Support and Services Protocol for Elected Members.</p> <p>She stated that an initial assessment undertaken had been attached at Appendix A, and invited members views on how a protocol can collectively be put together. She stressed that while some local authorities had dedicated research officers who undertake detailed external research for members, BCBC had limitations on resource and capacity. The Group Manager - Legal and Democratic Services stated that though the statutory guidance was not provided within the meeting documents, this could be provided if required.</p> <p>Members made the following observations and discussed :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They would like more financial and budgetary info shared. It was noted that only those members on BREP were privileged to the information.
---------------	--

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Members mentioned that it was not easy to locate information on the current Portal• Member noted the Local Government Information Unit was a very useful resource facility for Cllrs but apparently came at a cost. They suggested consideration being given to cost / benefit.• It was suggested that a monthly email / briefing was sent out advising Members on resource and information available and at their disposal as it would be useful to signpost. <p><u>RESOLVED</u> : Members noted the content of the report as the basis for developing a Research Support and Services Protocol for Elected Members including the initial assessment attached at Appendix A. They provided suggestions and comments on how information could be made more accessible to Members, for consideration and inclusion in the Protocol.</p>
Date Decision Made	21/11/2024

21. Urgent Items

Decision Made	None
Date Decision Made	21/11/2024

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

The meeting closed at 10:55

This page is intentionally left blank

Meeting of:	DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	26 JUNE 2025
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 November 2024 and sets out the process for informing and planning the future programme. • The report also highlights the results of a Member Support Survey undertaken. • Members are 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:

- Provide the Committee with an update on the delivery of the Council's Member Training and Development Programme and related activities;
- 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 21 November 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 Social Services briefings, some requested by Officers, others following a request from the relevant Scrutiny Committee, which was opened up to, and benefited, all Members.

3.3 There have also been a series of sessions for Members on the new Mod.Gov App to train Members in its use. It is hoped that this App will assist with a new online voting system for Committee meetings. Over 90% of Members have attended one of these sessions and now frequent weekly sessions are being held to enable Members to practice and familiarise themselves with using the system with the aim of going live with it for any potential votes in June's Council.

Development Control Committee Training Sessions

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

- 23 January 2025 - Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance
- 6 March 2025 - Retail and Commercial Development Supplementary Planning Guidance
- 16 April 2025 - Outdoor Recreation Facilities Supplementary Planning Guidance
- 29 May 2025 - Rights of Way

Council Briefings

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

- 20 November 2024 – Presentation by Halo Leisure
- 15 January 2025 - Presentation by South Wales Fire & Rescue Service
- 25 June 2025 – Presentation by V2C

Future Member Development

- 3.6 Attached at **Appendix B** is a schedule for continued training over the next few months and includes some external training as a result of recommendations from the Scrutiny Review undertaken earlier this year. It also includes a training/briefing session on the new South-East Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) which could be a combined session with other Local Authorities involved in the CJC. Member Briefings have also been requested by Scrutiny Members as well as the Corporate Management Board and there are ongoing sessions related to Member Personal Safety.

E-Learning

- 3.7 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.
- 3.8 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.
- 3.9 At the time of drafting this report, 38 Members have accessed the Learning and Development site and commenced their e-learning modules but only 28 Members have completed all nine mandatory modules.
- 3.10 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.'

- 3.11 Members are therefore encouraged to re-visit the e-learning website and undertake these additional modules if not yet completed.

Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) Training

- 3.12 The WLGA have run a series of 'Progressive Community Leadership' Training for Councillor programmes throughout 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 aimed at exploring the barriers to successfully leading communities and offering strategies for overcoming them. It includes practical methods and techniques for public

engagement, participation, and empowerment with a step-by-step framework to build sustainable and resilient communities. These places have been generally limited to 2 places per Local Authority for each set of sessions with extra spare places sometimes offered. So far 10 Bridgend Councillors have signed up and completed this training over 2023/24 and 2024/25. This training has been revised for 2025 with it now being specifically designed to be more accessible for Councillors with limited availability. The key difference is that it will take place on a single day, offering a more concentrated format compared to the previous three separate dates. Unfortunately no Bridgend Members expressed an interest in attending June's workshop but hopefully further dates will be available and advertised soon.

- 3.13 Some Members have also attended the WLGA Leadership Programme which is the flagship leadership development support for Councillors in Wales. It also provides the WLGA with intelligence on the key issues facing local government. Recently feedback from participants has focused on the need to build resilience within the local government leadership and the need to succession plan for developing new leaders. As a result of this, and the restricted places per Local Authority, for 2024 and 2025 the WLGA has tried to encourage a focus on Executive Members or potential future Executive Members. 8 of our current Members have attended this training and 2 more are booked in for the upcoming Programme in 2026 as well as one reserve.

Learning and Development Website

- 3.14 All Members have been provided with the link to the Learning and Development (L&D) website with instructions on how to access the e-learning training. Members can now also click directly onto the icon for the L&D page from their homepage when they open Microsoft Edge on their laptops which should make access much easier.

In addition to accessing e-learning modules, all recordings and associated power point presentations of hybrid or remote training have been uploaded to this site, available either as refresher training for Members or simply for those who may have been unable to make the session.

Member Development and Support Survey

- 3.15 Members will recall that a Member Development and Support survey went out to Members on 13 September 2024, which asked questions of Members on their views on past and future training as well as the support they receive including such things as
- The frequency of training sessions;
 - Preferred methods and format for training;
 - Quality of training information provided;
 - Satisfaction over topic choices;
 - Suggested topics for future training
 - Support provided by Democratic Services;
 - Digital Support provided to Members.

- 3.16 23 responses were received from the survey with a summary of responses attached at **Appendix C**. These responses will be used to inform future training including the future Member Induction following the 2027 election.

Some of the highlights are listed below:

3.16.1 **Member Induction**

- 70% respondents preferred a 10am start for Member training though some Members also asking for a repeat 4pm session possibly due to work commitments;
- Overall Member Induction training met expectations but Members commented that some could be more interactive with more question and answer or workshop sessions;
- Mixed views regarding in person and hybrid or virtual training though some Members stated that in person would be better for Induction training to enable Members to get to know their fellow colleagues;
- More IT training as well as training on key policy topics and challenges facing the Local Authority.

3.16.2 **Continued Member Development**

- Met all respondents expectations with 92% of respondents stating the quality met or exceeded their expectations. For those who it didn't there wasn't much clarification other than some difficulties with online training;
- Mixed views again on timing and whether in person or online, but with recognition that this will vary for all Members. One suggestion of set days possibly for Member training;

3.16.3 **E-Learning Modules**

- The majority (95%) of respondents stated the e-learning models met or exceeded their expectations however some Members stated they did not;
- Issues include them being time consuming, complex and fussy, less engaging, difficult to navigate and at times repetitive of other training undertaken. Some Members stated that they would prefer that as these modules are mandatory that they be in person or online, not via e-learning;
- Other comments included that they found them very useful topics, that they liked being able to undertake them in their own time, and that whilst some minor issues were experienced at first, once support was provided, they were able to complete them;

3.16.4 **Future Member Development**

- Varied views on preferred timings but overall still the majority of respondents requesting 10am;
- 57% preferring hybrid training, with 35% asking for 'in person'. Members stated that whilst they would prefer to attend in person training the online option with hybrid enables participation if there are diary constraints. Others raised the point that remotely the training is easier to hear, provides more flexibility, is more convenient at times and saves on travel expenses. Other Members found in person training more interactive easier to engage and learn from one another in group work.

3.16.5 **Topic Suggestions**

- Planning:

- Enforcement
- Section 106
- Strategic planning Guidance
- Changes in Planning Laws
- Good Practice Guidance about casework and liaising with the public sector organisations and Registered Social Landlords
- IT
- Key policy challenges briefing sessions with Q&As
- Budget – to improve Member’s understanding of the Council’s finances
- Constitution training – voting, points of order, Declarations of interests, debate rules etc

3.16.6 Methods of Training

- A general request for more workshops rather than being ‘talked at’
- More case study examples and role play scenarios
- Different method requirements for different sessions
- Briefings with a Q&A or group discussions to make them more interactive
- e-learning also mentioned by a small number of members
- Quizzes to review understanding of training session

3.16.7 Other comments

- PowerPoint training to be short and sharp to assist in Members being able to absorb the information
- Forward annual planning of ‘core’ and ‘optional’ training
- Needs to be a recognition of skills, knowledge and training that Members may already have
- Suggestion for refresher Courses
- More training from external partners

3.16.8 Democratic Services Support

Overall satisfaction and positive comments over support services provided by Democratic Services

3.16.9 Digital Support

- Mixed views on how comfortable Members feel using their Council devices and similarly in using systems such as the Councillor Portal, Outlook and the Mod.Gov App
- Issues sometimes locating Learning and Development page
- Suggestion of more training for those who are not fully computer literate
- Suggestion also for BCBC Systems training is provided early on in induction

3.16.10 Overall comments were positive. Some examples include....

“I am pleased about the training and support which has been provided from the outset.”

“Member development is satisfactory and one has to also 'learn on the job'.”

“Councillor support is generally very good.”

“The support that councillors require is there and delivered if needed.”

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 and Nature Implications

- 6.1 There are no climate change and nature 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.

Background documents

None

This page is intentionally left blank

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2024/25

Date and Time	Delivery	Facilitator	Development Session
03/12/2024 15:00-17:00 11/12/2024 15:00-17:00 19/12/2024 9:00-11:00	Council Chamber	BCBC Officers	Modern.Gov App Rollout Sessions
04/12/2024 10:00-12:00	Hybrid	WLGA	Workshop session with WLGA Chief Executive
5/12/2024 15:00 – 17:00	Hybrid	BCBC Officers	Member Briefing - Elimination of Profit for Social Care
07/01/2025 15:00 – 17:00	Hybrid	BCBC Officers	Member Briefing - Part 9 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014
22/01/2025 14:00 – 15:30	Hybrid	BCBC Officers	Declaration of Interest training

23/01/2025 12:30-14:00	Council Chamber	BCBC Officers	Affordable Housing SPG
29/01/2025 13:00 – 15:00	Hybrid	BCBC Officers	Member Briefing - Day Opportunities Review & Accommodation Based Service Review
31/01/2025 9:30-11:30	Hybrid	BCBC Officers	Member Development – Social Services - Elimination of Profit in Social Care
05/02/2025 14:00-15:30	Hybrid	BCBC Officers	Pension Briefing
10/02/2025 All day	Hybrid	APSE	Carbon Literacy Training
11/02/2025 14:00-16:00	Hybrid	External Provider	Local Authority Decision-Making Arrangements
27/02/2025 13:00-15:00	Hybrid	External Provider	Local Authority Decision-Making Arrangements

06/03/2025 10:00-11:30	Hybrid	BCBC Officers	Development Control Committee Training - Retail and Commercial Development Supplementary Planning Guidance Note
07/03/2025 10:00-12:00	Hybrid	External Provider	Local Authority Decision-Making Arrangements
12/03/2025 10:00-12:00	Teams	External Provider	Chairing Skills
07/04/2025 10:00-11:30	Teams	BCBC Officers	Rights of Way Member Training
16/04/2025 14:00-15:30	Hybrid	BCBC Officers	Outdoor Recreation Facilities Supplementary Planning Guidance
23/04/2025 14:00-15:00 29/04/2025 13:00-14:00 08/05/2025 9:00-10:00	Hybrid	BCBC Officers	Modern.Gov Voting System Tests
22/05/2025 10:00-11:00	Hybrid	BCBC Officers	Update on progress of remodelling BCBC internal day services for adults

28/05/2025 13:30-15:00	In Person	BCBC Officers	Website Orientation
---	-----------	----------------------	----------------------------

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2025/26

Date and Time	Delivery	Facilitator	Development Session
26/06/25 10:00-12:00 (Cabinet) 13:30-15:30 (All members)	In Person	External Provider	Social Media Training
04/09/25 13:00-15:30 OR 08/09/25 10:00-12:30	Hybrid	BCBC Officers and External Audit	Governance and Audit Committee Training
TBC	In person	BCBC Officers	UK Shared Prosperity Fund – Member Briefing
TBC	Hybrid	BCBC Officers	Fraud, Tax and Money Laundering Awareness
TBC	TBC	BCBC Officers	Budget Briefings

TBC	Hybrid	Simon Butler	Bridgemaps
TBC	TBC	BCBC Officers	Constitution Training
TBC	TBC	WLGA	Questioning Skills
TBC	Hybrid	BCBC Officers	Member Briefing - Governing Body Support and Funding
TBC	TBC	External provider	Personal Safety - Drug/alcohol guidance for Elected Members
TBC	TBC	WLGA	Introduction to the Equality Act
TBC	TBC	CJC Officers	Corporate Joint Committees - Regional Responsibilities and Wellbeing of Future Generations


TBC	TBC	BCBC Officers	Porthcawl Regeneration Update
TBC	TBC	BCBC Officers	Highways Infrastructure Delivery

This page is intentionally left blank

Responses Overview Active


Responses

23




Average Time

12:41



Duration

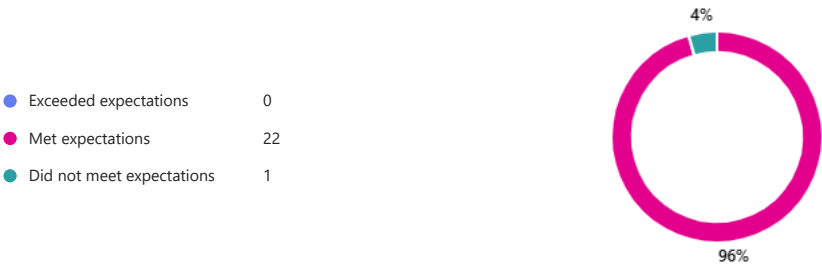
259 Days



1. Preferred timings for Member Induction sessions?



2. Topic choices and content covered in Member Induction?



3. Quality of Member Induction training?



4. Views on external providers used for Member Induction?



5. Views on methods of delivery used for Member Induction

23
Responses

Latest Responses

"only that online is causing issues for those with eye sight problems"
"good that it is hybrid"
"IN PERSON"
...

5 respondents (22%) answered person for this question.



6. Additional comments on Member Induction training (e.g. on timing, topic choices, content, quality or training providers)

18
Responses

Latest Responses

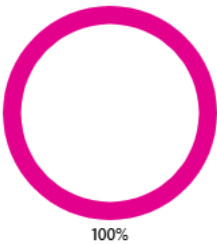
"PLANNING ENFORCEMENT"
...

6 respondents (33%) answered training for this question.



7. Member Development topic choices and content covered?

● Exceeded expectations	0
● Met expectations	23
● Did not meet expectations	0



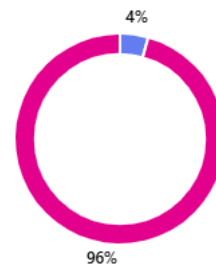
8. Quality of training provided?

Exceeded expectations	2
Met expectations	19
Did not meet expectations	2



9. Views on External providers used?

Exceeded expectations	1
Met expectations	22
Did not meet expectations	0



10. Views on methods of delivery used

15
Responses

Latest Responses

"Again online training is extremely difficult to manoeuvre"

"PREFER ONGOING IN PERSON"

...

3 respondents (20%) answered training for this question.



11. Additional comments (e.g. on timing, topic choices, content, quality or training providers)

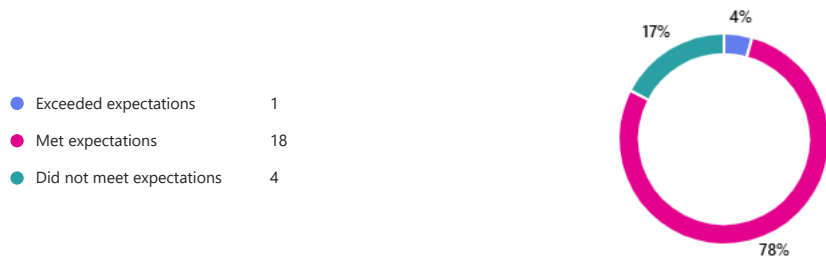
11
Responses

Latest Responses
...

5 respondents (45%) answered training for this question.



12. Mandatory E-Learning Modules?

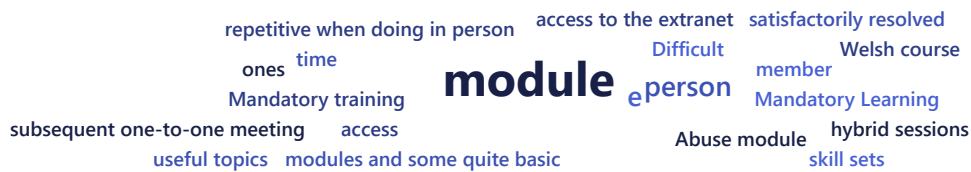


13. Additional comments

16
Responses

Latest Responses
"Some pages are extremely difficult to navigate. Also repetitive when doing in per... "
...

5 respondents (31%) answered module for this question.



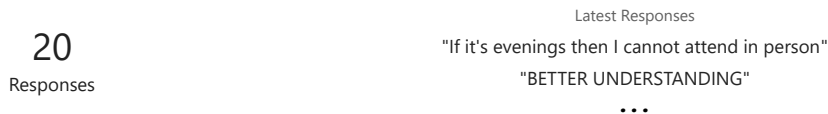
14. Preferred timing for future Member Development sessions?



15. Personal preference for attendance at Member Development training sessions?



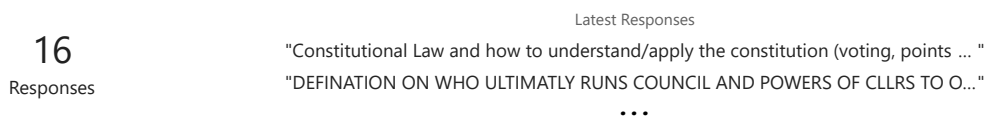
16. Preference for specific training to be hybrid, in person or remote? (Please explain why)



11 respondents (55%) answered person for this question.



17. Topic suggestions for future Member Development (please include brief description)



4 respondents (25%) answered members for this question.



18. Preferred methods of delivery for learning and development? (e.g. Briefings, e-learning, group discussions, powerpoint, question sessions, activities, workshops etc)

18
Responses

Latest Responses
"ALL"
...

8 respondents (44%) answered Workshops for this question.

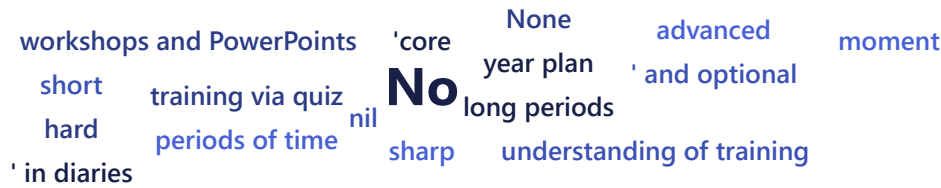


19. Any other comments on future Member Development?

10
Responses

Latest Responses
...

2 respondents (20%) answered No for this question.



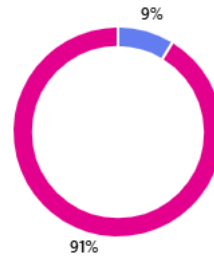
20. Are you happy with the facilities provided at the Civic Offices?

Exceeded expectations	2
Met expectations	20
Did not meet expectations	1



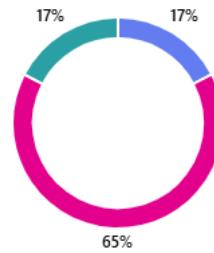
21. Overall are you happy with the level of training provided to date?

Exceeded expectations	2
Met expectations	21
Did not meet expectations	0



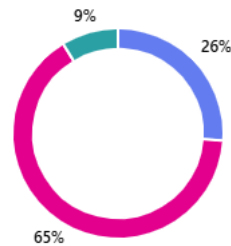
22. Are you happy with the level of information you receive as circulated by Democratic Services and other central service sections? (e.g. Communications, ICT etc)

Exceeded expectations	4
Met expectations	15
Did not meet expectations	4



23. Are you happy with the level of support provided to you so far by Democratic Services?

Exceeded expectations	6
Met expectations	15
Did not meet expectations	2



24. Any other comments on support provided by Democratic Services?

13
Responses

Latest Responses

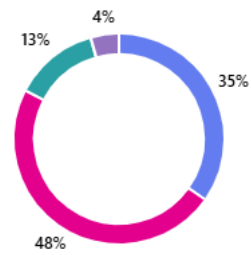
"The timeliness of communications could be improved but I expect its simply dow... "
...

3 respondents (23%) answered Democratic Services for this question.

understanding of the structure business cards Happy with the support
 Services are always supportivemandatory core staff to be most friendly Training is good
 excellent job **Democratic Services** helpful
 knowledge or skills Services staff Evening sessions development session councillors
 absolute clarity timeliness of communications certain subject better understanding
 assistance from DS

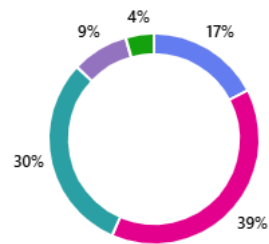
25. How comfortable and confident do you feel in using your Council device(s)?

Very comfortable	8
Somewhat comfortable	11
Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable	3
Somewhat uncomfortable	1
Very uncomfortable	0



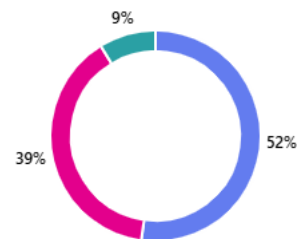
26. How comfortable do you feel using the Councillor Portal?

Very comfortable	4
Somewhat comfortable	9
Neutral	7
Somewhat uncomfortable	2
Very uncomfortable	1



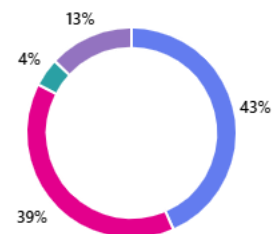
27. How comfortable do you feel using Microsoft Teams?

Very comfortable	12
Somewhat comfortable	9
Neutral	2
Somewhat uncomfortable	0
Very uncomfortable	0



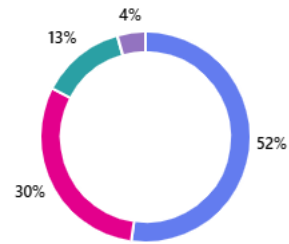
28. How comfortable do you feel using Zoom (when required)?

Very comfortable	10
Somewhat comfortable	9
Neutral	1
Somewhat uncomfortable	3
Very uncomfortable	0



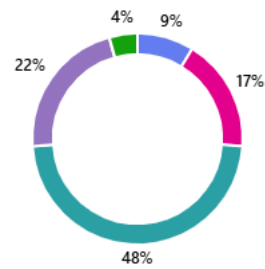
29. How comfortable do you feel using Microsoft Outlook?

Very comfortable	12
Somewhat comfortable	7
Neutral	3
Somewhat uncomfortable	1
Very uncomfortable	0



30. How comfortable do you feel using Mod. gov App?

Very comfortable	2
Somewhat comfortable	4
Neutral	11
Somewhat uncomfortable	5
Very uncomfortable	1



31. Additional Comments on Digital Support?

14
Responses

Latest Responses

"Laptop issues and TEAMS issues where others can turn your mic on and put your ..."

3 respondents (21%) answered gov for this question.

Word cloud content:

- gov training
- portal
- Modern Gov
- Gov is a nuisance
- use of ModGov
- previous work
- computer literate
- Laptop issues
- present and more hassle
- contact with officers
- Systems training
- issues and TEAMS
- reset training
- mod
- hassle than the worth
- complaint/question
- Ideal to put the links
- items such as MAPS
- certain age

32. Please provide any other general comments or views you might have regarding Member Development or the support that you receive in your role as a Councillor.

10

Responses

Latest Responses

...

4 respondents (40%) answered support for this question.

courses and more training welcome improvement
previously mentioned training and support portal system referral system pleased about the training
referral section Councillor support training and member
extra support Councillor support referrals that is a disadvantage
services which is another disadvantage problems Member development closed referrals
sessions in person

Meeting of:	DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	26 JUNE 2025
Report Title:	RESEARCH SUPPORT AND SERVICES FOR ELECTED MEMBERS – PROTOCOL
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 in respect of this report.
Executive Summary:	<p>This report details the requirements for a Member Research Protocol following the statutory guidance issued under section 8(1A) of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.</p> <p>It provides a protocol based on the initial assessment received and discussed by the Committee at their last meeting in November 2024.</p>

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Democratic Services Committee with the Research Support and Service Protocol for Elected Members.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Statutory Guidance issued under section 8(1A) of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 states that “all elected members should be able to access a range of information and support” in order to undertake their roles effectively.
- 2.2 It is clear that Councils across Wales are already undertaking a range of research support activity to assist Councillors in fulfilling their duties, and it is anticipated this will mainly focus on signposting individual members to existing sources of information or available training, for example, brief prepared for scrutiny committee meetings or how to use research, statistical or legislative websites. It may also include targeted support for groups of members for example, leading a task and finish group investigation or support for individual members related to their role on the council, for example as chair of a committee.

- 2.3 The Statutory Guidance provides an opportunity for Councils to review this support and establish a clear commitment or protocol for research support and services, identifying areas for potential improvements within the resource constraints faced nationwide.
- 2.4 The guidance states that, as a minimum, it is recommended that Councils undertake an internal review / audit of the existing research support provided to Councillors and evaluate against the examples given within guidance. It is recommended that this is undertaken through the Democratic Services Committee.
- 2.5 In undertaking such a review, the following questions are proposed in the guidance for Members to consider:
1. Are background papers available to help all Councillors understand key decisions?
 2. Are all Councillors provided with regular performance management information, or is it readily available to them?
 3. Is demographic information readily available to all Councillors, including information on local services and their usage?
 4. Are Councillors signposted to useful sources of information?
 5. Are Councillors able to request specific research requests, and are the parameters clearly set out?
 6. Is there regular circulation of local and nation events which Councillors may be interested in?
- 2.6 The guidance also states that the service should not be solely reactive, the proactive provision of timely briefings on new policies, changes in the law or other matters that could impact on the work of members should form part of the service.

Accessing information

- 2.7 In terms of support in accessing information, Councils should:
- Frame councillor access to information procedure rules expansively – with a presumption in favour of the release of information to councillors unless a clear public policy reason exists not to;
 - Proactively provide councillors with management information and other data to ensure that they are kept informed about the business of the authority. Councils could produce an information bulletin or digest for councillors on a regular basis – subject to resources as suggested above;
 - Engage with members to better understand how and where their roles will require that they access certain information sources, and support them to gain that access. This may include negotiation with partners, and others who may hold information relevant to councillors' roles;

- Ensure mechanisms are in place to protect personal data in line with appropriate legislation.

Confidential Information

2.8 As far as possible Councils should specify publicly why a matter is exempt from publication or from discussion in a public forum – ideally providing more information than just the description given in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

2.9 Equally, Councillors should be made aware that Councils are frequently under legal obligations to others with regard to maintaining the confidentiality of certain information (in particular commercial information and personal information) and such releases could open up the Council to challenge.

3. Current situation / proposal

3.1 At the Committee's last meeting, Members were presented with an initial assessment of the proposed aspects the guidance asks it to consider when undertaking a review of existing support and arrangements.

3.2 The Committee made the following observations:

- They would like more financial and budgetary information shared. It was noted that only those members on the Budget Research Evaluation Panel (BREP) were privileged to the information.
- Members mentioned that it was not easy to locate information on the current Member Portal.
- Members noted the Local Government Information Unit was a very useful resource facility for Councillors but apparently came at a cost. They suggested consideration be given to the cost / benefit of access for Members.
- It was suggested that a monthly email / briefing was sent out advising Members on resource and information available and at their disposal as it would be useful to signpost.

3.3 Attached at **Appendix A** is a draft Research and Support Services Protocol that utilises the information from the self-assessment and provides guidance as well as sources for how and where Members can access information and support.

3.4 On occasion, some information requests submitted by Councillors will fall outside of existing information held by the Council and will require additional research or collation of information to be undertaken. It is important to acknowledge, however, that there will be additional resource implications for such requests. Guidance therefore suggests that each Council establish its own internal review system.

It is worth noting that some local authorities have dedicated Research Officers who can undertake detailed external research. Unfortunately, we do not have these roles in Bridgend and therefore the capacity for additional research is extremely limited.

- 3.6 Taking the above into consideration, there is a need for Members and Officers to recognise what already exists across the Authority and be realistic about what can be achieved in our own Research Protocol for Members, and to manage expectations carefully.

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 and Nature 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 as a result of this report.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 It is recommended that the Committee approve the Research Support and Services for Elected Members Protocol and its subsequent distribution to all Elected Members.

Background documents

None

RESEARCH SUPPORT AND SERVICES FOR ELECTED MEMBERS – PROTOCOL

The Statutory Guidance issued under section 8(1A) of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 states that “all elected members should be able to access a range of information and support” in order to undertake their roles effectively.

This Protocol provides guidance and information as well as sources, for how and where Elected Members can access information and support.

Access to Information

Section 15 of the Council's [Constitution](#) sets out clearly the Access to Information Procedure Rules that apply to all meetings of the Council, the Cabinet, Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Standards Committee, and Regulatory Committees.

Section 15 also includes details of where an item is deemed confidential and exempt from publication as well as the various categories of Exempt Information and the public interest test.

Section 19 of the Constitution, which covers the Code of Conduct for Members, furthermore addresses the legal obligation of all Elected Members in relation to maintaining the confidentiality of exempt information.

Papers and Reports

All Committee papers and reports are accessible via the Council's [Meetings, Minutes and agendas webpage](#) or via the Mod.Gov App. For Members that sit on a specific Committee, the agenda and papers are sent via email or a paper copy can be provided upon request.

The Council's corporate report template provides a section on background papers to allow Members access to any additional information which have been relied on to a material extent in the preparation of the report and are not already within the public domain.

Performance, Budget and Management Information

Quarterly performance and budgetary updates (backward looking) are provided to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee (COSC) for detailed monitoring and scrutiny of progress against the Corporate Plan. These reports are then also shared for information with all other Overview and Scrutiny Committees and subsequently reported to Cabinet for approval.

The Council's Self-assessment is reported annually to the Governance and Audit Committee (GAC) where the approach is determined. This is then followed by pre-decision Scrutiny of the draft Self-assessment by COSC and GAC prior to final consideration by Cabinet and Full Council for approval.

The development of the Corporate Plan Delivery Plan (forward looking) is reported to COSC at the start of its development process and again for pre-decision Scrutiny of the final version followed by further consultation on the targets.

Updates on the Performance Management Improvement plan, new Corporate Plans and updates to the Performance Framework are also led by COSC and reported to Cabinet and Council for final approval.

As well as quarterly budget updates, frequent Budget briefings are held for all Members to ensure that they are kept informed of the current budget situation as well as the key areas being considered for future budgets. This runs alongside a Scrutiny budget process which aims to assist in the development of the annual budget draft proposals with a concluding detailed public scrutiny of the resulting final proposals.

Local Demographic Information and Services

The Councillor Portal provides links to various information such as planning applications, roadworks, street crime statistics and Data Cymru's ward profile. The Portal also provides a link to [Dewis Cymru](#) which provides wellbeing information and links to other local organisations and services.

Local and National Events – Weekly Bulletin

A bulletin publication is sent out to all Elected Members (and Town and Community Council (TCC) Clerks for sharing with TCC Councillors) on a weekly basis. This contains a range of the Council's top news stories from the previous week, as well as details of local campaigns such as the Waste campaign or National campaigns such as Foster Care fortnight. Varied content is included from each directorate as well as partners.

Each story contains links or signposting so Members can get more information on each item if required. The links often direct Members to different sections of the BCBC website as well as the websites of partner organisations such as Awen, Halo, South Wales Police and South Wales Fire and Rescue.

The bulletin also reflects BCBC's Corporate Plan and objectives which demonstrates the range of strategic work taking place right across the council. For example, some stories demonstrate a one council approach (e.g response to severe weather), other stories show how the council works with partner organisations or how it protects the most vulnerable for instance through signposting to key benefits/grants.

There is a dual purpose to the bulletin, firstly to share news related information with members for information purposes and secondly for Members to use the information in the bulletin to share with their residents via their social media accounts, email updates, surgeries and face to face encounters etc.

Overview and Scrutiny

Scrutiny have their own process for research support and scoping out potential scrutiny items for their Forward Work Programmes, that focuses on impact, risk, performance, budget and community perception and considers a set criteria that looks at the following:

- Public Interest - the concerns of local people should influence the issues chosen for scrutiny;

- Ability to Change - priority should be given to issues that the Committee can realistically influence, and add value to;
- Performance - priority should be given to the areas in which the Council is not performing well;
- Extent - priority should be given to issues that are relevant to all or large parts of the County Borough, or a large number of the Authority's service users or its population;
- Replication - work programmes must take account of what else is happening in the areas being considered to avoid duplication or wasted effort.

More in depth processes are required for Research and Evaluation Panels when undertaken by any of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Additional Sources of Information

- Any relevant information received from the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), Data Cymru, Welsh Government Consultations, that are sent to the Democratic Services Manager are shared with all Councillors via email.
- Regular briefings and training are provided to all Members on relevant changes in policy or introduction of new legislation.
- Changes to performance requirements and the development of approaches to meet them (e.g. self-assessment and Panel Performance Assessment) are reported to COSC.
- The Councillor Portal provides links to Data Cymru's ward profile, Welsh Government's consultations as well as the aspects mentioned above.
- Useful sources of information across a range of different topics are also generally included as part of announcements from the Mayor, Leader and Chief Executive to meetings of full Council.
- In the event of a significant issue which warrants a wider update for Members e.g. preparations for the arrival of severe weather, a briefing note will be issued via email to all members to ensure they are aware and are supported in responding to enquiries from constituents.
- Briefing notes are produced when required for Cabinet Members on aspects such as serious case reviews, media interviews or background briefings on high profile issues.
- Weekly briefing meetings are held with the Leader and Cabinet Members with staff on aspects including news grid (media and social media) and campaign information is also provided such as the Budget Awareness Campaign.

Additional Information Requests

On occasion Members may request additional or alternative information to undertake their role. Any such requests will necessitate additional resource and as such will require consideration by the Head of Democratic Services who will evaluate in line with the following criteria:

- Is this information already available and accessible elsewhere, such as via the Council's website or Member Portal?
- Does the information request help toward the achievement of corporate priorities?
- Is the information request of a political nature?
- Would the information enable a Councillor to undertake their ward role to a higher standard, and would the information bring benefits to Councillors from more than one electoral ward?
- What are the budget and resource implications of the request?

The statutory guidance highlights that research provided to councillors should not be politically motivated or compromise officers' political neutrality.

It also states that a robust framework will be required to ensure decisions are reached based on merit rather than as a consequence of the individual Councillor they have been submitted by, which group the submission comes from, which ward of the Borough it may relate to etc.

Meeting of:	DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	26 JUNE 2025
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 2024 to May 2025 • The Structure of the Democratic Services Team covering May 2024 to May 2025

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Democratic Services Committee with the Annual Report for the period May 2024 to May 2025. 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.
- 2.2 The Democratic Services Committee cannot discharge any other functions or perform any dual role.
- 2.3 During last year's consideration of the Committee's Annual Report the following proposals were made:

- That details of the Committee's attendance at Democratic Services Committee meetings be added to the report at paragraph 3.3;
- That any further detail be provided as to the meetings of the Sub-Committee to deal with Member Family Absence at paragraph 3.6;
- That an indication of hours, whether full time or part time be provided for the Democratic Services staff listed in the report.

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 2024.
- 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 and attendance details for the Democratic Services Committee for the period May 2024 to May 2025 is as follows:

Councillor	13 June 2024	21 November 2024
Cllr Tim Thomas (Chair)	Present	Present
Cllr Sean Aspey	Not Present	Not present
Cllr Paula Ford	Present	Apologies
Cllr Richard Granville	Present	Present
Cllr David Harrison	Not Present	Not present
Cllr Martin Hughes	Present	Present
Cllr Malcolm James	Apologies	Present
Cllr Heidi Bennett	Present	Present
Cllr Ian Spiller	Present	Present
Cllr Graham Walter	Present	Present
Cllr Elaine Winstanley	Present	Present

Democratic Services Committee Terms of Reference

- 3.4 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.

- 3.5 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. The Panel's Terms of Reference are set out below:
- a) Determine a complaint made by a Member regarding cancellation of family absence by the authority;
 - b) The Sub-Committee may confirm a decision made or substitute its own decision as to the Member's entitlement to a period of family absence in accordance with the 2013 Regulations;
 - c) Determine a complaint made by a Member on maternity absence or parental absence regarding a decision made by the chair of the authority as to the Member attending any meeting or performing any duty;
 - d) The Sub-Committee may confirm the decision of the chair of the authority or substitute its own decision as to the Member attending any meeting or performing any duty;
 - e) The decision of the Sub-Committee is final.

Activities of the Democratic Services Committee for the period May 2024 to May 2025

- 3.6 **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 requests for additional information on the Cardiff Capital Region and the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee (SEWCJC), which the Democratic Services Manager is in the process of arranging with the Monitoring Officer for the Cardiff Capital Region. It also included a request for Media training for all Members which is now scheduled in for 26 June 2025. A survey has also been undertaken with Members, the results of which are helping to inform the future Member Development Programme. More frequent reminders as well as drop in sessions for Member e-learning modules have also been undertaken in the hope of getting more Members through their mandatory modules. This has resulted in 28 Members completing their modules, with 38 having accessed and started completing them. Additional training sessions have also been undertaken at the request of this Committee on the Mod.Gov App in readiness for it to go live for voting in future meetings.
- 3.7 **Research Support and Services Protocol** - At its meeting in November 2024 the Committee considered a report and initial assessment to evaluate the existing research support provided to Councillors with the aim of developing a Research protocol for Elected Members. Members provided detailed comments and suggestions which have been considered in the drafting of the final protocol.
- 3.8 **Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Draft Annual Report 2025/26** – the Committee considered the draft Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) Draft Annual Report 2025/26 and provided the following response back to the Panel:

- The Committee queried why there is no remuneration for Members that sit on the Regional Partnership Board (RPB) or Public Services Board (PSB), yet Members get remunerated for sitting on the Fire and Rescue Authority. Members also raised the point that generally female orientated roles (such as anything related to Social Services, for example the Regional Partnership Board) generally receive less remuneration which is creating a gender pay gap for Members. The Committee requested that these aspects be considered by the Panel as Members on both the RPB and PSB do a considerable amount of work.
- Members highlighted that the IRP Annual Report refers to the work of a Cllr based on assessment of a 3 day week, however this was assessed in 2021. The Committee proposed that this might be worth revisiting.
- Members asked for more guidance on the remuneration for Members in job share roles.

In addition to this, the Committee made the following comments:

- The makeup of the existing Panel does not reflect diversity. Members would like due regard and understanding that we live in a diverse community.
- Members highlighted that there was insufficient information on the IRPW website, in that it was a basic website and supplementary information should be readily available.
- Members requested further information and detail as to how the new Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru will exercise the functions of the Panel moving forward.

A letter from the Chair of the Democratic Services Committee was also sent to the Chair of the Panel thanking them for all their work.

Democratic Services Team for the period May 2024 to May 2025

3.9 During 2024/25, the Democratic Services Team underwent a restructure in order to make the approved Medium Term Financial Strategy savings for both 2024/25 as well as 2025/26. This led to a removal of the full time Chauffeur position as well as the part-time Democratic Services Officer – Committees post and an agreement for a reduction of hours for certain Members of staff. The current structure for the Democratic Services Team is therefore set out below:

- Democratic Services Manager (with the statutory post of Head of Democratic Services) (Full time)
- Senior Democratic Services Officer – Committees (Part-time – Flexible retirement 22.2 hours)
- Democratic Services – Technical Support Officer (Full time)
- Senior Democratic Services Officer – Scrutiny (Full time)
- Scrutiny Officer (Full time)
- Scrutiny Officer (Part-time – 30 hours)
- Senior Democratic Services Officer – Support (Full time)
- Democratic Services Assistant (Full time)
- Democratic Services Officer – Support (Full time)
- Democratic Services Officer – Leadership, Members and Mayoral (Full time)

- Business Administrative Apprentice (Full time)

3.10 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 the restructure and reduction in staff 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 and Nature Implications

6.1 There are no climate change or nature 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 To receive and note the Annual Report for submission to Council for information.

Background documents

None

This page is intentionally left blank

Meeting of:	DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	26 JUNE 2025
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 2025-26.
- 3.2 Reports such as the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru (DBCC) (formerly 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 and Nature 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

This page is intentionally left blank

**DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME
2025/26**

Date of meeting	Item	Invitees/Further Detail
20 November 2025	Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru (DBCC) Draft Annual Report	(formerly the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Draft Annual Report)
	Member Induction Programme Planning	To begin the process of reviewing the Member Induction Programme for 2027
	Member Development Programme Update	

This page is intentionally left blank