

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT TO THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

2 OCTOBER 2014

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE – LEGAL & REGULATORY SERVICES

SERVICE AND PERFORMANCE UPDATES

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Democratic Services Committee of the performance and updates in relation to the services provided to Elected Members.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities

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

3. Background

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

4. Current situation / proposal

4.1 Member Referrals

4.1.1 Service Performance – Member Referrals

4.1.2 The following table details the number of Member Referrals completed during the period 01 May 14 to 31 August 2014

Month	Referred	Completed	Ongoing	Percentage
May	166	143	23	86.14
June	201	182	19	90.55
July	241	198	43	82.16
August	173	145	28	83.82

4.1.3 The average 5 and 10 day completion rates during this period are 53.91% and 78.10% respectively. This is an increase in performance compared to the 41.01% and 72.96% that was achieved over the previous year.

4.2 **Member Development Programme**

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

4.2.2 Pre council Briefings

4.2.3 The following Pre-Council briefings have been planned and scheduled:

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|-----------|--|
| 15 Oct 14 | - Support for Transgender People in Bridgend |
| 12 Nov 14 | - MTFS. update |

4.2.4 The following topics are being planned as Pre-Council briefings:

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|-----------|--------------------------------------|
| 10 Dec 14 | - Highways issues |
| 21 Jan 15 | - Young Carers in the County Borough |
| 18 Mar 15 | - Dementia |

4.2.5 The following topics have been requested to be provided as Pre-Council Briefings:

- Permanence strategies for looked after children
- Rotherham and its impact for Bridgend
- Elective Home Education
- Bridgend Says End Bullying Project
- MTFS Update – Possible second update
- Facilities at the Waterton Depot

4.2.6 The Corporate Management Board have indicated that the pre-Council briefings will provide the most appropriate opportunity to provide elected members with updates regarding the significant changes that are taking place within the Authority. Therefore the Democratic Services Committee has been requested to be flexible in respect of prioritising topics and the delivery dates of any pre-council briefings that are arranged.

4.2.7 The Democratic Services Committee is requested to review the potential pre-Council briefings listed in paragraphs 4.2.5 – 4.2.6 or propose additional topics which they wish to be provided between December 2014 and April 2015. It is proposed that the Committee prioritise 3 topics which should provide sufficient flexibility in the programme for the Corporate Management Board to insert any Corporate topics which may arise. The progress of the 3 prioritised topics will be reviewed at the next meeting of the Committee in February 2015.

4.2.8 The Committee is requested to determine how the other topics initially requested to be delivered as a pre-Council briefing can be provided to all elected members. Options may include:

- As a briefing note
- A single topic (or a linked group of topics) being delivered as a repeated Member development session

- A number of topics delivered in a “Round Robin” session which could be repeated.

4.2.9 Member Development Activities

4.2.10 The following Member Development event has been scheduled:

21 Oct 14 Budget Workshop

4.2.10 The following member development activities have been requested to be scheduled:

- Give Racism the Red Card
- MTFS – different to the session held on October
- Equalities and Diversity

4.2.11 The Committee is requested to identify additional topics for possible inclusion in the member development programme and to prioritise those topics as necessary.

4.3 Improving Attendance at Member Development events

4.3.1 The attendance at member development events is recorded as part of the evaluation of the programme. The Committee will be aware of the survey that was undertaken in 2012 to determine the most appropriate timings for the delivery of development activities.

4.3.2 Elected Members have a number of roles and commitments which can often conflict with attending Member Development activities. In order to maximise attendance at member development activities the Committee is requested to consider which of the following options could be used to improve the levels of attendance at these activities:

Option 1

Review the timings at which Member Development activities are scheduled to better reflect the needs of all elected members. This may include arranging sessions to be held later in the day to allow those members who work to attend more frequently.

Option 2

Request that Council determine a number or percentage of Member Development activities that each elected member is expected to attend.

Option 3

Improve the process for informing Elected Members of Member Development activities and raise greater awareness of the benefits and importance of attending these sessions.

Option 4

Review the process for the confirmation of attendance at events and if there is insufficient support then events will be cancelled.

4.3.3 Members are requested to identify additional options which will assist to improve attendance at these events.

4.4 WLGA Leadership Academy

- 4.4.1 A cross party group of 13 elected members have completed their first module of the Leadership Academy. This Academy is being held in Bridgend with subsequent modules taking place in October and November.
- 4.4.2 There are also 6 elected members who are eager to participate in the National Academy which commences in January 2015. Unfortunately, there are only 3 places available and the political groups have been requested to prioritise their attendance accordingly.

4.5 Annual Reports and Personal Development Reviews (PDRs)

- 4.5.1 Following the Annual Meeting of Council the Democratic Services Team have provided support to Councillors to assist them complete their Elected Members Annual Reports for the period covering May 2013 – May 2014.
- 4.5.2 Last year over 96% of Elected Members completed and published their Annual Reports. It was hoped that with this additional support the number of completed reports would be exceeded and that all Annual reports would be published by 30 September 2014.
- 4.5.3 To date 22 (40.7%) of Elected Members have completed and submitted their Annual Reports for publication. A further 8 reports are being finalised which when completed would take the completion level to 55.55%.
- 4.5.4 Elected Members have also been circulated templates for the PDRs for completion as part of a peer review process. It is hoped that all PDRs will be completed by 30 September 2014.
- 4.5.5 Last year 78% of members completed their PDR. Several completed PDRs have been received by the Head of Democratic Services. Members are reminded to ensure that completed copies of individual PDRs are passed him at the earliest opportunity.

4.6 Town & Community Council (TCC) Website Grants

- 4.6.1 Democratic Services is currently facilitating the administration of a Welsh Government Grant of £500 to each Town and Community Council (TCC) within the County Borough to develop their web presence.
- 4.6.2 To date nine TCC's have completed the grant agreement and 4 have submitted claims which have been paid.
- 4.6.3. All TCCs will be encouraged to make appropriate claims for the available funding before the deadline of 31 March 2015.

4.7 Armed Forces Day (AFD) Forces Community Covenant (AFCC) Event – 28 June 2014

- 4.7.1 The Democratic Services Team played a key role in facilitating the AFD event that

was held on 28 June 2014. The event was intended to raise awareness of the covenant and the support that can be provided to the veterans and their families within the County Borough of Bridgend.

4.7.2 Even though the grant application to provide additional funding for the event was unsuccessful the event was considered a success and achieved the following outcomes:

- Over a 10% increase in footfall in Bridgend Town Centre for the event
- 187 local residents signed the AFCC at the event
- 16 of the 20 Town and Community Councils signed the covenant at the event with the remainder arranging to sign after the event.
- 42 veterans requested further service information
- Feedback from the veterans support organisations regarding the event was very positive.

4.8 Agile Working Update

4.8.1 As part of the Agile working programme the Committee is requested to note that:

- The Scrutiny Section is located in the Innovation Centre
- The Committee Section is located in Sunnyside House (ICT Building)
- No change to the Members and Mayoral Section in Civic Offices.

4.8.2 The Democratic Services Team's contact details have not changed and the services they provide should be unaffected.

4.8.3 The building works are progressing and it is anticipated that Scrutiny and Committee sections will return to the Civic Offices by 31 March 2015.

4.9 Social Media Protocol.

4.9.1 It was agreed at the previous meeting of the Committee that following the Social Media training an assessment would be undertaken to consider the value of progressing further social media activity for Elected Members. There are only 4 Elected Members who have expressed an interest in the using social media from their BCBC equipment. It is considered that without greater levels of usage to assess its effectiveness the current Social Media Protocol is considered to be sufficiently detailed and therefore is proposed that no further Elected Member activities relating to Social media will be progressed

5. Effect upon Policy Framework& Procedure Rules

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

6. Equality Impact Assessment

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

7. Financial Implications

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

8. Recommendations

8.1 The Democratic Services Committee is recommended to note the contents of the report and to:

- Prioritise the delivery of 3 topics for pre-Council briefings;
- Identify the method of providing information to all Elected members for those topics not prioritised as pre-Council briefings
- Identify any additional member development topics for inclusion in the Member Development programme
- Determine the member development topics to be delivered.
- Identify the preferred options for improving attendance at Member development events

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24 September 2014

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Background documents – None