

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT TO THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

25 MARCH 2021

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

MEMBER REFERRALS

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Democratic Services Committee on the performance of Member Referrals.

2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives / other corporate priorities

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:-
- **Smarter use of resources** – ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council’s wellbeing-objectives.
 - **Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient** - taking steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services. Supporting individuals and communities to build resilience, and enable them to develop solutions to have active, healthy and independent lives.
 - **Supporting a successful sustainable economy** – taking steps to make the county borough a great place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focused on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions of all people in the county borough.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Democratic Services Committee has the following functions and is supported by the Head of Democratic Services as necessary:
- Review the adequacy of provision by the Authority of staff, accommodation and other resources to discharge Democratic Services functions, and
 - Make reports and recommendations to the Authority in relation to such provision.

4. Current situation/proposal

- 4.1 A referral is a complaint / request / query which a Councillor has received from their constituent which the Democratic Services Team forward to the relevant department

/ external organisation for attention. This process is carried out so that each part of the referral process is logged and to ensure that a response is received by an agreed deadline.

- 4.2 The following table shows the number of referrals made per month between 1 March 2020 and 28 February 2021:

Referrals 1 Mar 20 to 28 Feb 21

Month	Referred	Completed	Ongoing	Percentage
March	348	227	121	65.23
April	348	123	225	35.34
May	258	247	11	95.74
June	245	242	3	98.78
July	304	293	11	96.38
August	395	365	30	92.41
September	422	396	26	93.84
October	366	334	32	91.26
November	396	336	60	84.85
December	364	286	78	78.57
January	312	237	75	75.96
February	259	202	57	77.99
Totals:	4017	3288	729	81.85%

- 4.3 The Committee should note that there has been a significant increase in the number of referrals made than in the corresponding period for the previous year (2789 referrals). At the meeting of Council on 20th January 2021, the Chief Executive provided Members with an update about how council services are faring under the pressures of the ongoing pandemic. He also advised that there had been over a thousand more member referrals to deal with during the pandemic (March to December 2020).
- 4.4 The table attached as **Appendix 1** shows the number of referrals made between 1st March 2020 and 28th February 2021 per Directorate. The table also shows the totals and percentages of referrals completed within 10 and 20 days timescales.
- 4.5 A Member Referrals Project Board was established to consider whether the current system is fit for purpose and to explore any opportunities to improve the referral process. In pursuance of this, an online Councillor Portal and built in member referral process is being trialled with members of the Democratic Services Team which will then be rolled out to a pilot group of Members. A revised Member Referrals Protocol will also be drafted and sent to all Members. Additionally, in order to support Members in making referrals, training sessions will be put together and made available to Members.
- 5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules**

5.1 There is no effect upon policy framework and procedure rules.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 There are no equality implications arising from this report.

7. Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications

7.1 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.

8. Financial implications

8.1 There are no financial implications in respect of this report.

9. Recommendation

9.1 The Committee is recommended to note the contents of the report.

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8 March 2021

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Background documents: None