

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO COUNCIL

21 JULY 2021

REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To receive and note the Democratic Services Committee Annual Report for the period May 2020 to May 2021. The report outlines the work of the Committee during that period.

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**:-
1. **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 for all people in the county.
 2. **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.
 3. **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 well-being objectives.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 requires each council to establish a Democratic Services Committee. The Measure prescribes the functions of the committee and requires the committee to make a report at least annually to the Council.
- 3.2 The Democratic Services Committee cannot discharge any other functions or perform any dual role.
- 3.3 The Committee approved the Annual Report at its meeting of 24 June 2021.

4. Current situation/proposal

4.1 Councillor E Venables was originally elected Chair of the Democratic Services Committee at the Annual Meeting of Council in May 2018 and has been re-elected annually ever since.

4.2 The Committee is serviced by the Head of Democratic Services.

4.3 **Membership of the Democratic Services Committee**

4.3.1 The Membership of the Democratic Services Committee for the period May 2020 to May 2021 is as follows:

Councillor	Councillor
Cllr E Venables (Chair)	Cllr G Thomas
Cllr S Aspey	Cllr SR Vidal
Cllr RM Granville	Cllr MC Voisey
Cllr DG Howells	Cllr A Williams
Cllr RM James	Cllr B Sedgebeer
Cllr SG Smith	

4.3.2 Following the Annual Meeting of Council on 19 May 2021, Cllr R Young replaced Cllr RM Granville on the Committee.

4.4 **Dates of the Democratic Services Committee Meetings**

4.4.1 The Committee met on these dates during May 2020 to May 2021:

- 4 November 2020
- 25 March 2021

4.5 **Democratic Services Committee Terms of Reference**

4.5.1 The remit of the Democratic Services Committee is set out under the Local Government (Wales) Measure and is to:

- 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;
- Determine whether or not the Councillors period of family absence should be cancelled in accordance with Regulation 34 of the Measure;
- Determine whether nor to withhold a Councillor's Remuneration should they fail to return following a period of family absence on the date specified in the notice provided.

4.6 **Activities of the Democratic Services Committee for the period May 2020 to May 2021**

- 4.6.1 In November 2020, the Committee considered the draft Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) Annual Report and provided a draft response which was considered by Council prior to submission to the IRPW.
- 4.6.2 The Committee undertook a review of the Elected Member Learning and Development Strategy and endorsed its submission to Council for approval.
- 4.6.3 The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) has urged all Democratic Services Committees across Wales to take steps to encourage and facilitate greater use of the Costs of Care provision so that Members are not financially disadvantaged. A report was presented to the Committee on 21 March 2021 and the Committee recommended the promotion of the CPA provision throughout the Authority with this work beginning with the IRPW Annual Report presented to Council on 10 March 2021 and the report of the Committee on 21 March 2021.
- 4.6.4 A report was presented to the Committee on 21 March 2021 outlining the performance of Member Referrals. A Member Referrals Project Board was established to consider whether the current system is fit for purpose. In pursuance of this, an online Councillor Portal and built in member referral process will be rolled out to a pilot group of Members including those Members sitting on the Committee.
- 4.6.5 Throughout the year, the Committee considered the Member Development Programme and identified topics, briefings and e-learning topics for inclusion in the programme and prioritised them accordingly.

4.7 Democratic Services Team for the period May 2020 to May 2021

4.7.1 The current Structure for the Democratic Services Team is set out below:

- Democratic Services Manager (with the statutory post of Head of Democratic Services) (Grade 12)
- Senior Democratic Services Officer – Committees (Grade 10)
- Democratic Services Officer – Committees x 2 (Grade 6)
- Senior Democratic Services Officer – Scrutiny (Grade 10)
- Scrutiny Officer x 2 (Grade 9)
- Senior Democratic Services Officer – Mayoral Support (Grade 10)
- Democratic Services Assistant x 2 (Grade 4)
- Democratic Services Officer – Leadership, Members and Mayoral (Grade 7)
- Chauffeur (Grade 5)
- Casual Chauffeur x2 (Grade 5)

4.7.2 The provision of staff, accommodation and other resources by the Council is adequate to discharge the statutory requirements in relation to decision making, democratic administration and Scrutiny as they currently exist. However, the impact of any changes in statutory requirements, or the needs of Members, will need to be kept under review by the Committee.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

5.1 There will be no effect on the policy framework and procedure rules.

6. Equality Act 2010 implications

6.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act 2010, 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.

7. Well-being 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.

8.1 Financial implications

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

9. Recommendation

9.1 To receive and note the Democratic Services Committee Annual Report.

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July 2021

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Background documents: None