

Report of the Head of Democratic Services

Democratic Services Committee – 3 December 2014

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 24 May 2012 - 30 April 2014

Purpose:	To provide the Democratic Services Annual Report - 24 May 2012 to 30 April 2014 outlining the work of the Committee.
Policy Framework:	None.
Reason for Decision:	For Information Only
Consultation:	Access to Services, Finance, Legal.
Report Author:	Huw Evans - Head of Democratic Services
Finance Officer:	Carl Billingsley
Legal Officer:	Tracey Meredith

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 required each Principal Council to establish a Democratic Services Committee. The Annual Meeting of Council held on 24 May 2012 established the City and County of Swansea, Democratic Services Committee.
- 1.2 The Annual Meeting of Council on 24 May 2012 also appointed Councillor M H Jones as the Chair of the Democratic Services Committee.
- 1.3 The Democratic Services Committee held its first meeting on 11 July 2012 where it appointed the Head of Democratic Services. The Head of Democratic Services being Huw Evans.
- 1.3 This is the Committees first Annual Report hence the lengthy period of time that it covers (May 2012 - 30 April 2014). However, this will now become an Annual Report in the true sense with an aim to present it in September - October each year. The Annual Report is appended as **Appendix A**.
- 1.4 The Democratic Services Annual Report is used to:
 - a) Highlight the work carried out by the Democratic Services Committee;
 - b) Show how the Democratic Services Committee has made a difference;
 - c) Support continuous improvement for Councillors.

2. Format of Annual Report

- 2.1 Councillors are asked to comment on the style and format of the Annual Report, as the Head of Democratic Services is keen to ensure that it becomes an informative, easy to read report.

3. Equality and Engagement Implications

- 3.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening process took place prior to the consultation period. The outcome indicated that it was low priority and a full report was not required.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 There are no legal implications other than those set out in the body of the report.

Background Papers: None.

Appendices:

Appendix A	Democratic Services Annual Report 24 May 2012 - 30 April 2014
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**Democratic Services Annual Report
24 May 2012 - 30 April 2014**

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Foreword by the Chair of the Democratic Services Committee

It has been a privilege to chair the Democratic Services Committee over this period. The Committee is still relatively new and it continues to establish itself as a model of best practise and innovation. My vision is for Democratic Services in Swansea to be valued as such a service.

The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 required each County and County Borough Council to establish a Democratic Services Committee. The City and County of Swansea established its Democratic Services Committee at its Annual Meeting on 24 May 2012; however the Committee did not meet until 11 July 2012.

During this 2 year term, the Democratic Services Committee has focussed its work mainly in the area of Councillor Training. To this end a Learning Styles Analysis and a Training Needs Analysis was put in place which led to the formulation of a Councillors Learning and Development Strategy and a Councillors Training Programme. The Councillors Personal Development Reviews also assists with the process of formulating the Councillors Training Programme.

Councillor Annual Reports are another area that the Committee has focussed its attention. It is pleasing to note the steady progress in the number of Councillors making use of the facility.

The Committee continues to work towards achieving the Welsh Local Government Association's (WLGA's) Member Support and Development Charter.

During the coming year, I intend examining how we can make greater use of digital technology with an aim to assisting Councillors in their roles.

This has been a busy period one for the Democratic Services Committee. I would like to extend my thanks and appreciation to the Committee for their time, dedication and support.

A number of officers have helped considerably with the work of the Committee. In particular, I would mention the Huw Evans, Head of Democratic Services, Allison Lowe, Councillor Support Officer and the Democratic Services Team.

Councillor Mary H Jones
Chair of Democratic Services Committee

Membership of the Democratic Services Committee

The membership of the Democratic Services Committee for the period 24 May 2012 - 30 April 2014:

Councillor	Councillor
Ann M Cook	Erika T Kirchner
Anthony C S Colburn	Andrea S Lewis (née Harrington)
Bob Clay (<i>from 30.07.2013</i>)	David J Lewis
Nick J Davies (Vice Chair)	Keith E Marsh
W John F Davies (<i>until 30.07.2013</i>)	Paul M Meara
Robert Francis-Davies	Lesley V Walton
Mary H Jones (Chair)	

Dates of the Democratic Services Committee Meetings

The Democratic Services Committee met 15 times during this period.

11 July 2012	6 March 2013	2 October 2013
5 September 2012	3 April 2013	13 November 2013
3 October 2012	22 May 2013	8 January 2014
31 October 2012	10 July 2013	19 February 2014
9 January 2013	4 September 2013	2 April 2014

Attendance Figures by the Members of the Democratic Services Committee

The attendance figures for each member of the Democratic Services Committee are set out below.

Councillor	Possible	Actual	Attendance by Percentage
B Clay	6	6	100%
A C S Colburn	15	14	93%
A M Cook	15	14	93%
N J Davies	15	12	80%
W J F Davies	9	6	67%
R Francis-Davies	15	11	73%
M H Jones	15	13	87%
E T Kirchner	15	7	47%
A S Lewis	15	9	60%
D J Lewis	15	9	60%
K E Marsh	15	13	87%
P M Meara	15	11	73%
L V Walton	15	12	80%

Democratic Services Committee - Terms of Reference

(Section 11 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure)

- 1) Exercise the function of the local authority under section 8(1)(a) Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 (designation of Head of Democratic Services).
- 2) Review the adequacy of provision by the authority of staff, accommodation and other resources to discharge Democratic Services functions, including:
 - a) Achievement of the Welsh Local Government Association's (WLGA) Member Support and Development Charter;
 - b) Councillor Training;
 - c) Improvements and innovations such as electronic voting, web casting etc.
- 3) Make reports and recommendations to the authority in relation to such provision.
- 4) It is for a Democratic Services Committee to determine how to exercise those functions.
- 5) To determine whether or not the Councillors period of family absence should be cancelled in accordance with Regulation 34 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.
- 6) To determine whether or not 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.

Activities of the Democratic Services Committee

During the past 2 years the Democratic Services Committee has undertaken a range of activities. The following table highlights the activities and a brief synopsis.

1) Designating a Head of Democratic Services

The Committee designated Huw Evans as the Head of Democratic Services on 11 July 2012.

2) Review of the Councillor Induction Programme 2012;

Following the May 2012, Local Government Elections a full review of the Councillor Induction Programme was carried out. The review will assist in the preparation for the 2017 Councillor Induction Programme.

3) Councillor Training and Development

The Committee recognised the need to formally coordinate Councillor Development. As such, a Training Needs Analysis and Learning Styles Analysis was circulated to all Councillors. This led to the creation of the Councillor Learning and Development Strategy. The Committee reviewed the results of the Training Needs Analysis and created the Councillors Training Programme.

4) WLGA Member Support and Development Charter

The Committee discussed the Charter and addressed a few key points aimed at achieving the Charter Award. Progress on this is ongoing.

5) Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Annual Report

The Committee has carefully considered the draft Annual Reports sent out by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) and responded accordingly.

6) Personal Development Review (PDR) for Councillors

The Committee created and recommended to Council the process for conducting Councillor Personal Development Reviews. PDR's stem from the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.

7) Councillors Annual Reports

The Committee created and recommended to Council the proforma to be used when completing Councillor Annual Reports. Councillor Annual Reports stem from Section 5 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.

The Welsh Government states that it is mandatory for each Authority to offer support to any Councillor to complete an Annual Report in a bilingual capacity. It is not mandatory, however, for Councillors to produce Annual Reports. The reports are available online on the Council's Website.

8) Councillors ICT

The Committee discussed Councillors ICT on a number of occasions. These discussions led to a number of training sessions on "How to get the best out of your Tablet / Smart Phone" and a review of the Councillors ICT Allowance policy.

9) Councillors Microsite

The Committee received a presentation on the Councillors Microsite highlighting it as a one stop shop for information relevant to Councillors.

10) Review of Councillors Handbook

The Committee reviewed the Councillors Handbook with an aim of making it simpler and more user friendly. This led to many changes and amendments to the Councillors Broadband and Telephone Allowances.

11) Social Media Guidance for Councillors

The Committee considered the Welsh Local Government's "Social Media Guidance for Councillors" and passed comment accordingly.

12) Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) - Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committees - Remuneration

The Committee has carefully considered the consultation documents sent out by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) and responded accordingly.

13) Update from Frank Cuthbert, Head of Local Government and Democracy, Welsh Government

The Committee received an update from Frank Cuthbert relating to the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011. This assisted the Committee in planning its workplan.

Work Programme 2014-2014

The Committee will continue to monitor the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 as further guidance is issued and will continue to progress the work already ongoing.

The Committee will continue to keep its focus on Councillor Training and Development and seek to ensure that all non executive Councillors are fully represented and have the tools which they need to conduct their duties. Should any Councillor or indeed anybody have a suggestion that falls within the remit of the Democratic Services Committee then it shall be considered if appropriate.

General Information

The Democratic Services Committee is keen to see members of the public attending its Meetings. With the exception of confidential items, all business is held in public. All of the public papers are published online www.swansea.gov.uk

Further information can be provided by Democratic Services:
Democratic.Services@swansea.gov.uk or on 01792 63 6820