

Report of the Head of Democratic Services

Democratic Services Committee – 6 October 2015

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 8 May 2014 – 18 May 2015

Purpose:	To provide the Democratic Services Annual Report for the period 8 May 2014 to 18 May 2015. The report outlines the work of the Committee during that period.
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
Access to Services Officer:	Phil Couch

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 originally established the Democratic Services Committee.
- 1.2 Councillor P M Meara was appointed Chair of the Democratic Services Committee by Council on 6 January 2015.
- 1.3 The Democratic Services Committee is serviced by the Head of Democratic Services, Huw Evans.
- 1.4 The Democratic Services Annual Report is attached as **Appendix A**.

2. Format of Annual Report

- 2.1 Councillors are asked to comment on the style and format of the Annual Report informally to the Head of Democratic Services as he 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 8 May 2014 – 18 May 2015
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**Democratic Services Annual Report
8 May 2014 – 18 May 2015**

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1. Foreword by the Chair of the Democratic Services Committee

- 1.1 I was appointed to chair the Democratic Services Committee in January 2015. My term of office so far has seen the move from the Civic Centre to the Guildhall, with the disruption that the move entailed, and the loss of members of staff in the Democratic Services section. Despite the reduction in staff, I am assured that software developments and a realignment of staffing will soon address the issue.
- 1.2 As in previous years, the Democratic Services Committee has focussed its work mainly in the area of Councillor Training. The Committee is concerned that take up of training by Councillors is still relatively low, despite our use of a Learning Styles Analysis and a Training Needs Analysis, the formulation of a Councillors' Learning and Development Strategy and an extensive Councillors Training Programme. This year we have put in place a system of Councillors' Personal Development Reviews which we hope will assist with the process of formulating the Councillors Training Programme.
- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 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.
- 1.5 This has been a busy period for the Democratic Services Committee. I would like to extend my thanks and appreciation to the Committee for their time, dedication and support.
- 1.6 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 Paul M Meara
Chair of Democratic Services Committee

2. Membership of the Democratic Services Committee

- 2.1 The membership of the Democratic Services Committee for the period 8 May 2014 – 18 May 2015:

Councillor	Councillor
Bob Clay	Erika T Kirchner
Anthony C S Colburn	Andrea S Lewis
Ann M Cook (up to 03.03.15)	David J Lewis
J P Curtice (from 30.09.14)	Keith E Marsh
Nick J Davies (Vice Chair)	Paul M Meara (Chair from 06.01.15)
Robert Francis-Davies (up to 30.09.14)	Geraint Owens (from 03.03.15)
Jeff W Jones (from 03.03.15)	Lesley V Walton
Mary H Jones (up to 03.03.15, Chair until 08.12.14)	

3. Dates of the Democratic Services Committee Meetings

- 3.1 The Democratic Services Committee met 4 times during this period.

16 July 2014	3 December 2014
11 September 2014	11 March 2015

4. Attendance Figures by the Members of the Democratic Services Committee

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

Councillor	Possible	Actual	Attendance by Percentage
B Clay	4	4	100%
A C S Colburn	4	4	100%
A M Cook	3	2	67%
J P Curtice	2	1	50%
N J Davies	4	4	100%
R Francis-Davies	2	0	0%
J W Jones	1	1	100%
M H Jones	3	3	100%
E T Kirchner	4	2	50%
A S Lewis	4	3	75%
D J Lewis	4	2	50%
K E Marsh	4	3	75%
P M Meara	4	3	75%
G Owens	1	0	0%
L V Walton	4	3	75%

5. Democratic Services Committee - Terms of Reference

The remit of the Democratic Services Committee is set out in **Section 11 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011** and is to:

- 5.1 Exercise the function of the local authority under section 8(1)(a) Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 (designation of Head of Democratic Services).
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 Make reports and recommendations to the authority in relation to such provision.
- 5.4 It is for a Democratic Services Committee to determine how to exercise those functions.
- 5.5 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.
- 5.6 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.

6. Activities of the Democratic Services Committee

- 6.1 During the municipal year 2014-2015 the Democratic Services Committee has undertaken a range of activities. The activities are listed below together with a brief synopsis of the work.
- 6.2 **Councillor Consultation on City & County of Swansea Future ICT Services**
 - 6.2.1 The Committee was provided with an updated on the feedback received as a result of the termination of the ICT Capgemini contract. The responses would help to mould and reform future services once the services come back "in-house".

6.3 Amendments to the Council Constitution & to the Councillors Handbook

6.3.1 The Committee reviewed the following topics which are contained in the Council Constitution or the Councillors Handbook:

- Family Absence for Councillors;
- Remote Attendance at Meetings;
- Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor Protocol;
- Section C3 “Protocols” (of the Councillors Handbook).

6.4 Delivery of Agendas to Councillors

6.4.1 The Committee considered options on the delivery of agendas to Councillors in order to lower the cost of the weekly Courier Service. They recommended to Council that the Authority establish a Voluntary Opt out System whereby Councillors were encouraged to opt out of the Courier Service.

6.5 Councillors Annual Reports

6.5.1 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.

6.5.2 The Committee were updated on the number of Annual Reports that had been received and uploaded onto the Council’s Website.

6.6 Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011

6.6.1 The Committee discussed the role of and functions of the Head of Democratic Services, Democratic Services Committee and Scrutiny as outlined in the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.

6.6.2 As a result of issues raised the Committee agreed a number of additional measures in order to strengthen the links between the Head of Democratic Services and the Scrutiny Manager as follows:

- a) Democratic Services Committee Annual Report. This will include a section on Democratic Services and Scrutiny, Team Structures, Meetings, Training and associated issues. This will be presented to the Committee and Council annually;
- b) Quarterly Meetings between Chair and Vice Chair of Democratic Services, Chair and Vice Chair of Scrutiny Programme Committee, Councillor Support and Development Member Champion, Head of Democratic Services and the Scrutiny Manager;

- c) 2 x 6 Monthly Presentations to the Scrutiny Programme Committee by the Chair and Vice Chair of Democratic Services and Head of Democratic Services;
- d) 2 x 6 Monthly Presentations to the Democratic Services Committee by the Chair and Vice Chair of Scrutiny Programme Committee and Scrutiny Manager.

6.7 Democratic Services Committee Annual Report 24 May 2012 to 30 April 2014

6.7.1 The Committee received their first Democratic Services Committee Annual Report.

6.8 Devolution, Democracy and Delivery White Paper – Reforming Local Government: Power to Local People

6.8.1 The Committee considered and discussed matters listed in the Consultation Survey issued by the Welsh Government that had a direct impact on Councillors and Democratic Services. Their recommendations were included in a response sent via Council.

6.9 Councillor Training and Development

6.9.1 Following a review of the attendance at the various sessions arranged via the Councillors Training Programme 2014-2015, see **Appendix 1**, the Committee recognised the need to formally coordinate Councillor Development.

6.9.2 As such, a revised Training Needs Analysis form was circulated to all Councillors, which would lead to the creation of a new Councillors Training Programme for 2015-2016.

6.9.3 It should be noted that due to the withdrawal of the Improvement Grant from the Welsh Government, the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) have revised their Councillor Development and Support Services for 2015-2016, see **Appendix 2**.

6.10 Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales – Annual Report February 2015

6.10.1 The Committee reviewed the Annual Report published by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales.

7. Work Programme 2015-2016

7.1 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.

7.2 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.

8. Democratic Services Team 8 May 2014-18 May 2015

8.1 The Team Structure for Democratic Services and Scrutiny for the period 2014-2015 are set out below. The Posts are all 1 Full Time Equivalent (fte) unless otherwise stated.

8.2 Democratic Services Team

Job Title	Officer Name	Notes
Head of Democratic Services	Huw Evans	-
Democratic Services Coordinator	Jane Tinker	Left on 13 May 2015
Democratic Services Officer	Samantha Woon	-
Democratic Services Officer	Gareth Borsden	-
Democratic Services Officer	Jeremy Parkhouse	-
Democratic Services Assistant	Suzanne Collins	Left on 9 December 2014
Councillor Support Officer	Allison Lowe	-
Councillor Support Assistant	Caroline Davies	-
Administration Assistant	Karen Thomas	-

8.3 Scrutiny Team

Job Title	Officer Name	Notes
Scrutiny Manager	Dave Mckenna	-
Scrutiny Coordinator	Brij Madahar	-
Scrutiny Officer (0.8 fte)	Delyth Davies	-
Scrutiny Officer	Rosie Jackson	-
Scrutiny Officer	Michelle Roberts	-
Scrutiny Research Officer (0.6 fte)	Jenna Tucker	-

9. General Information

9.1 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 6923