

Report of the Head of Democratic Services

Council – 26 January 2017

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 19 MAY 2015 – 18 MAY 2016

Purpose:	To provide the Democratic Services Annual Report for the period 19 May 2015 to 18 May 2016. The report outlines the work of the Committee during that period.
Policy Framework:	None.
Consultation:	Access to Services, Finance, Legal.
FOR INFORMATION ONLY	
Report Author:	Huw Evans
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 19 May 2015 – 18 May 2016

**Democratic Services Annual Report
19 May 2015 – 18 May 2016**

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1. Foreword by the Chair of the Democratic Services Committee

- 1.1 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.
- 1.2 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 year, we examined how to make greater use of digital technology with an aim to assisting Councillors in their roles. This will play out as part of the Councillors Self-Serve from May 2017.
- 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, Democratic Services Officer and the Democratic Services Team.

Councillor Paul M Meara

Chair of Democratic Services Committee (until 18 May 2016)

2. Membership of the Democratic Services Committee

- 2.1 The membership of the Democratic Services Committee for the period 19 May 2015 – 18 May 2016:

Councillor	Councillor
Bob Clay	Andrea S Lewis (up to 10.03.16)
Anthony C S Colburn	David J Lewis
J P Curtice	Keith E Marsh
Nick J Davies (Vice Chair)	Paul M Meara (Chair)
J Hale (from 10.03.16)	Geraint Owens
Jeff W Jones	Lesley V Walton
Erika T Kirchner	

3. Dates of the Democratic Services Committee Meetings

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

16 June 2015	15 December 2015
16 October 2015	15 March 2016

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	3	75%
A C S Colburn	4	4	100%
J P Curtice	4	2	50%
N J Davies	4	4	100%
J Hale	1	0	0%
J W Jones	4	4	100%
E T Kirchner	4	2	50%
A S Lewis	3	1	66%
D J Lewis	4	2	50%
K E Marsh	4	4	100%
P M Meara	4	4	100%
G Owens	4	0	0%
L V Walton	4	4	100%

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 2015-2016 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 Training – Discussion with Standards Committee

- 6.2.1 Members of the Standards Committee were invited to meet with the Democratic Services Committee in order to assist in increasing attendance at Councillor Training Sessions.

6.2.2 The discussions resulted in the Committee agreeing to a number of recommendations including:

- Attendance reports be forward to relevant Political Group Leaders / Whips,
- Sessions be time-tabled for both daytime and evening sessions to encourage better attendance
- Successful training sessions be adapted into e-learning programmes wherever possible in order to compliment the Councillors Training Programme.

6.3 Councillor's Training Needs Analysis 2015-2016

6.3.1 The Committee reviewed a new Training Needs Analysis (TNA) for 2015-2016. The results (together with any training needs identified in Councillors Personal Development Reviews) would assist in creating a Councillor Training Programme for 2016-2017 based on those needs identified by Councillors.

6.3.2 In addition, the Committee recommended labelling several sessions as mandatory.

6.4 Democratic Services Committee Annual Report 8 May 2014 to 18 May 2015

6.4.1 The Chair presented the second Democratic Services Committee Annual Report.

6.4.2 It was noted that there had been a decrease in the number of Annual Reports received for the 2014-2015 period. The Chair encouraged all Councillors to ensure reports were submitted by the deadline.

6.5 Scrutiny Annual Report 2015-2016

6.5.1 The Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee and Scrutiny Manager were invited to the Democratic Services Committee to provide a report on the work of scrutiny for the municipal year 2014-2015.

6.6 Discussion on future ICT provision for Councillors from 2017

6.6.1 The Committee discussed the various options regarding the future ICT provision following the Local Government Election 2017.

6.6.2 As a result, further consultation was arranged via drop in sessions in order that all Councillors views were established.

6.7 Councillor Training and Development 2016-2017

6.7.1 The Committee considered the responses of the Councillors / Co-Opted Member Training Needs Analysis (as outlined in 6.3.1 above) in order to devise the Councillor Training and Development 2016-2017 programme. This report was adopted by Council on 28 January 2016.

6.7.2 As a result, the Head of Democratic Services in consultation with the Chair of the Democratic Services Committee would prioritise the courses that would form the Councillor Induction Programme and which ones would initially be added to the additional training programme.

6.8 Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales – Annual Report February 2016

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

6.9 Councillor Induction 2017

6.9.1 The Committee considered an early draft of the Councillors Induction Programme which had been devised by the Welsh Local Government Authority (WLGA) in conjunction with Democratic Services officers in the 22 Welsh Local Authorities.

6.9.2 The response to the WLGA suggested that the Councillor Induction Programme 2017 should be available to all Councillors, not just new members and that training immediately following the election should be on a light-touch basis and repeated in the months following the election, around September / October time.

7. Work Programme 2016-2017

7.1 The Committee will consider the following issues:

- Councillor Induction Programme 2017;
- Councillors ICT,
- Councillors Broadband and Telephone Allowances;
- Councillors Self-Serve via Oracle Software System.

8. Democratic Services Team 19 May 2015-18 May 2016

8.1 The Team Structure for Democratic Services and Scrutiny for the period 2015-2016 are set out below. The Posts are all 1 Full Time Equivalent (fte) unless otherwise stated.

8.2 On 11 October 2015 the Member Support Team were combined with the Democratic Services Team. As a result several job descriptions and job titles were amended as outlined in 8.3 below.

8.3 Democratic Services Team

Job Title	Officer Name	Notes
Head of Democratic Services	Huw Evans	-
Democratic Services Officer	Samantha Woon	-
Democratic Services Officer	Gareth Borsden	-
Democratic Services Officer	Jeremy Parkhouse	-
Democratic Services Officer Councillor Support Officer	Allison Lowe	From 12.10.2015 Up to 11.10.2015
Democratic Services Support Officer Councillor Support Assistant	Caroline Davies	From 12.10.2015 Up to 11.10.2015
Democratic Services Assistant Administrative Assistant	Karen Thomas	From 12.10.2015 Up to 11.10.2015
Democratic Services Support Assistant	Diane Clatworthy	From 12.10.2015
Democratic Services CCMS Support Assistant	Suzanne Mort	From 24.03.2016

8.4 Scrutiny Team

Job Title	Officer Name	Notes
Scrutiny Manager	Dave Mckenna	-
Scrutiny Coordinator	Brij Madahar	-
Scrutiny Officer	Delyth Davies	-
Scrutiny Officer (0.8 fte)	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