



Report of the Head of Democratic Services

Council - 20 September 2018

Democratic Services Committee Annual Report 2017-2018 (25 May 2017 – 23 May 2018)

Purpose:	To provide the Democratic Services Annual Report for the period 19 May 2016 to 24 May 2017. The report outlines the work of the Committee during that period.
Policy Framework:	None.
Consultation:	Access to Services, Finance, Legal.
Report Author:	Huw Evans
Finance Officer:	Ben Smith
Legal Officer:	Tracey Meredith
Access to Services Officer:	Rhian Millar
For Information Only	

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 Black was appointed Chair of the Democratic Services Committee by Council on 19 May 2016.
- 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. Equality and Engagement Implications

2.1 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.

3. Financial Implications

3.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

4. Legal Implications

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

Background Papers: None.

Appendices:

Appendix A Democratic Services Committee Annual Report 2017-2018 (25 May 2017-23 May 2018)

**Democratic Services Committee Annual Report 2017-2018
(25 May 2017 to 23 May 2018)**

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1. Foreword by the Chair of the Democratic Services Committee

- 1.1 During 2017-2018, the Democratic Services Committee focussed its work on technology and its potential to assist Councillors in their work. It also reviewed the allowances on offer to assist Councillors in carrying out their duties.
- 1.2 The “Councillor ICT - May 2017 and Beyond” report led to a wider discussion at Council prior to it being adopted by Cabinet. This report set out the allowances for Councillors in relation to ICT together with the other allowances available to Councillors.
- 1.3 The big innovative lead from the Democratic Services Committee during the period was the drive for Councillors to take up the mantle of the Sustainable Swansea – Fit for the Future programme and to embrace the Self-Service model. Following a recommendation from the Committee, Council adopted this policy meaning that Councillors now submit their allowance and expenses claims via the Oracle system.
- 1.4 Councillor Annual Reports are another area on which the Committee has focussed its attention. It is pleasing to note the steady progress in the number of Councillors making use of the facility.
- 1.5 During the year, we examined how to make greater use of digital technology with an aim to assisting Councillors in their roles. This meant the standardisation of the use of Modern.gov software for all agendas and minutes including those of scrutiny.
- 1.6 The committee also reviewed the training and induction programme put in place for Councillors after the May 2017 elections and made a number of suggestions as to how this might be improved next time.
- 1.7 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.
- 1.8 A number of officers have helped considerably with the work of the Committee. In particular, I would mention Huw Evans, Head of Democratic Services, Allison Lowe, Democratic Services Officer and the Democratic Services Team.

Councillor P M Black
Chair of Democratic Services Committee

2. Membership of the Democratic Services Committee

- 2.1 The membership of the Democratic Services Committee for the period 25 May 2017 to 23 May 2018:

Councillor	Councillor
Peter Black (Chair)	Irene E Mann
Nick J Davies	Sam Pritchard
Mike Durke	Christine Richards
Louise S Gibbard	Kelly M Roberts
Kevin M Griffiths	Brigitte J Rowlands
Joe A Hale	Gloria J Tanner
Susan M Jones	Linda J Tyler-Lloyd
Erika T Kirchner	Lesley V Walton
Wendy T Lewis (Vice Chair)	

3. Dates of the Democratic Services Committee Meetings

- 3.1 The Democratic Services Committee met 4 times in 2017-2018:

25 July 2017	30 January 2018
7 November 2017	16 April 2018

4. Democratic Services Committee - Terms of Reference

- 4.1 The remit of the Democratic Services Committee is set out in **Section 11 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011** and is to:
- 4.2 Exercise the function of the local authority under section 8(1)(a) Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 (designation of Head of Democratic Services).
- 4.3 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.
- 4.4 Make reports and recommendations to the authority in relation to such provision.
- 4.5 It is for a Democratic Services Committee to determine how to exercise those functions.

- 4.6 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.
- 4.7 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.

5. Activities of the Democratic Services Committee

- 5.1 During the municipal year 2017-2018 the Democratic Services Committee has undertaken a range of activities. The activities are listed below together with a brief synopsis of the work.

5.2 Democratic Services Committee - Overview

Due to the Local Government Elections in May 2017 and the influx of new Councillors on the Committee, the Head of Democratic Services provided an overview of the role, terms of reference and work involved in the Democratic Services Committee.

5.3 Democratic Services Annual Report 2016-2017.

The Head of Democratic Services presented the Democratic Services Annual Report 2016-2017 which outlined the work of the Committee during the period 19 May 2016 - 23 May 2017.

5.4 Councillor Training

The Committee received an overview presentation of the current structure and changes to Organisational Learning, Training and Development and a summary of the e-learning training available.

5.5 Review of Councillor Induction Programme 2017.

The Committee reviewed the Councillor Induction Programme 2017, which had been organised to inform both newly elected and returning Councillors of their roles and the services provided by the Council. It suggested that future programmes should include an element of training focussing on skills as well as improving understanding of the council's procedures and statutory functions.

5.6 Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales - Draft Annual Report 2018-2019 - Consultation

The Committee considered the draft Annual Report published by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales and provided a draft response, which was considered by Council prior to submission.

5.7 Review of Councillors Handbook

The Committee reviewed the Councillors Handbook in order to streamline its content and to move towards a digital only version. Repetitive elements were removed and its content was simplified, aiming at making it more user friendly for Councillors and Co-opted Members alike.

5.8 Timing of Council Meetings - Survey

The Committee considered a report on the outcome of the Councillors Survey on Timings of Council Meetings.

5.9 Councillors' Annual Reports 2016-2017

The Committee received information on the number of Annual Reports submitted. The content of the reports related to activities undertaken during the 2016-2017 Municipal Year.

5.10 Councillor Pledge on Standards

The Committee received details on the number of forms completed.

5.11 Councillor-v-Councillor Local Dispute Resolution Protocol

The Committee received details on the number of forms completed.

5.12 Review of Councillors Annual Report Template

The committee reviewed the Councillors Annual Report template in order to ensure that it remained fit for purpose and removed any duplication of duty.

6. Work Programme 2018-2019

6.1 The Committee will consider its work programme at its first meeting.

7. Democratic Services Team 25 May 2017- 23 May 2018

7.1 The Team Structure for Democratic Services and Scrutiny for the period 2017-2018 are set out below. The Posts are all 1 Full Time Equivalent (fte) unless otherwise stated.

7.2 Democratic Services Team

Job Title	Officer Name	Notes
Head of Democratic Services	Huw Evans	-
Democratic Services Officer (0.5 fte)	Samantha Woon	-
Democratic Services Officer (0.5 fte)	Kate Jones	-
Democratic Services Officer	Gareth Borsden	-
Democratic Services Officer	Jeremy Parkhouse	-
Democratic Services Officer	Allison Lowe	-
Democratic Services Support Officer	Caroline Davies	-
Democratic Services Administrative Assistant	Karen Thomas	-
Democratic Services Support Assistant	Diane Clatworthy	-

7.3 Scrutiny Team

Job Title	Officer Name	Notes
Scrutiny Manager	Dave Mckenna	Up to 30.06.2017
Scrutiny Coordinator	Brij Madahar	Post changed to Scrutiny Team Leader (effective 01.05.2017) due to Scrutiny Manager's planned departure (30.06.2017) and deletion of post.
Scrutiny Officer	Michelle Roberts	-
Scrutiny Research Officer (0.6 fte)	Jenna Tucker Selma Abdalla	Until 31.07.2017 From 21.11.2017
Scrutiny Officer	Liz Jordan	-
Scrutiny Officer	Bethan Hopkins	-

8. General Information

- 8.1 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
- 8.2 Further information can be provided by Democratic Services: Democratic.Services@swansea.gov.uk or on 01792 63 6923