



Democratic Services Committee Annual Report 2020-2021

City & County of Swansea



**Democratic Services Committee Annual Report 2020-2021
(1 October 2020 to 19 May 2021)**

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1. Foreword by the Chair of the Democratic Services Committee

- 1.1 During 2020-2021, the Democratic Services Committee provided advice and guidance to Councillors on the work of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales via their Annual Report for 2021-2022.
- 1.2 Frequency of meetings for the 2020-2021 Municipal Year were again severely affected due to the Coronavirus pandemic.
- 1.3 Whilst the Democratic Services Committee did not meet as frequently as anticipated, I would like to extend my thanks and appreciation to the former Chair, Councillor Peter Black and the whole Committee for their time, dedication and support during this difficult period.
- 1.4 A number of officers have helped considerably with the work of the Committee. In particular, I would like to thank Huw Evans, Head of Democratic Services, Allison Lowe, Democratic Services Officer and the Democratic Services Team for their support and professionalism.

Councillor L James
Chair of Democratic Services Committee

2. Membership of the Democratic Services Committee

2.1 The membership of the Democratic Services Committee for the period 1 October 2020 to 19 May 2021:



Councillor Lynda James
Chair



Councillor June Burtonshaw



Councillor Nick Davies



Councillor Mike Durke



Councillor Louise Gibbard



Councillor Joe Hale



Councillor Susan Jones



Councillor Erika Kirchner



Councillor Wendy Lewis
Vice Chair



Councillor Brigitte Rowlands



Councillor Gloria Tanner



Councillor Linda Tyler-Lloyd



Councillor Lesley Walton

2.2 Councillor Lynda James** was elected Chair of the Democratic Services Committee at Council on 2 July 2020 and re-elected Chair at the Annual Meeting of Council on 1 October 2020.

2.3 The Democratic Services Committee did not meet between 2 July and 1 October 2020.

3. Dates of the Democratic Services Committee Meetings

3.1 The Democratic Services Committee met remotely via Microsoft Teams on the following date in 2020-2021:

14 October 2021	
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3.2 Two meetings scheduled for 9 November 2020 and 1 March 2021 did not take place due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

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 2020-2021 the work of the Democratic Services Committee was once again affected by the Coronavirus pandemic. However the Committee did consider:

5.2 Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) - Draft Annual Report 2021-2022 - Consultation

5.2.1 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 to the IRPW.

6. Member Development

6.1 The following member training was provided in 2020-2021, however opportunities were significantly reduced due to the Covid-19 pandemic:

Various dates in January 2021	E-voting training by the Head of Democratic Services
24 & 25 February 2021	Members Webinar on the ONS Census
29 & 30 March 2021	Member Briefing on Socio-Economic Duty by the Equality & Human Rights Commission

6.2 All Members are encouraged to complete various e-learning training, including mandatory Safeguarding training via the Learning Pool platform.

7. Democratic Services Team 1 October 2020 – 19 May 2021

7.1 The Team Structure for Democratic Services and Scrutiny for the period 2020-2021 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
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

7.2.1 The Democratic Services Team supports Full Council and all its Committees and the formal decision-making and good governance of the Council. This includes the preparation and publication of agendas, minutes & reports packs using the Modern.Gov committee administration system and booking rooms for meetings and pre-meetings. Support is provided to the following meetings.

- Council and Cabinet
- Regulatory: Planning, General and Statutory Licensing Committees including Sub Committees;
- Governance: Appeals & Awards Committee, Appointments Committee, Audit Committee, Chief Executive's Remuneration & Appraisal Committee, Constitution Working Group, Corporate Parenting Board, Democratic Services Committee, Pension Fund Committee, Standards Committee;
- Joint Committees: Local Pension Board, Swansea Bay City Region Joint Committee, Swansea Public Services Board Joint Committee;
- Other: Armed Forces Covenant Signatories Panel, Community / Town Councils Forum, Corporate Briefing, Development Advisory Group, Gower Area Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership Steering Group, Joint Consultative Committee, Sustainable Development Fund Panel and Trustees Panel.

7.2.2 The Democratic Services Team arrange suitable dates, prepare agendas, co-ordinate report approval, circulate documents, draft minutes, record decisions and attendances and publish appropriate information on the various websites.

7.2.3 The team also co-ordinates the delivery of the audio visual and webcasting facilities for Cabinet, Council, Audit Committee, Gower Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership Steering Group, Planning Committee, Pension Fund Committee, 5 x Policy Development Committees, Scrutiny Programme Committee, Swansea Bay City Region Joint Committee, Swansea Public Services Board Joint Committee.

7.2.4 All of the above meetings are streamed live and a recording placed on the Council's website once each meeting has concluded.

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/democracy

8.2 Further information can be provided by Democratic Services: Democratic.Services@swansea.gov.uk or on 01792 636923

