

Democratic Services Committee Annual Report 2023-2024

City & County of Swansea



**Democratic Services Committee Annual Report 2023-2024
(18 May 2023 to 15 May 2024)**

Table of Contents	
1	Foreword by the Chair of the Democratic Services Committee
2	Membership of the Democratic Services Committee
3	Dates of the Democratic Services Committee Meetings
4	Democratic Services Committee - Terms of Reference
5	Activities of the Democratic Services Committee
6	Member Development
7	Democratic Services Team 2023-2024
8	General Information

1. Foreword by the Chair of the Democratic Services Committee

- 1.1 The Democratic Services Committee met three times during the municipal year 2023/24 and reviewed several topics; producing reports for adoption by Swansea Council.
- 1.2 The Committee produced a Councillor Development Strategy to complement the Councillor Training Programme. It also reviewed the guidance to Councillors on the production of their annual reports, the use of the Council Logo and Remote Meetings.
- 1.3 I would like to extend my thanks and appreciation to the whole Committee for their time, dedication and support during the year.
- 1.4 I would like to thank the Democratic Services Team for their work over the year and for the advice and guidance they have given to Councillors, Statutory Co-opted Members, Officers and the public.
- 1.5 Several 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 whole Democratic Services Team for their support and professionalism.

Councillor Lynda James
Chair of Democratic Services Committee

2. Membership of the Democratic Services Committee

2.1 The membership of the Democratic Services Committee for the Municipal Year 2023-2024:



Councillor Lynda James
Chair



Councillor Mair Baker



Councillor Patience Bentu



Councillor Adam Davis



Councillor Kevin Griffiths



Councillor Joe Hale



Councillor Matthew Jones



Councillor Wendy Lewis
Vice Chair



Councillor Peter May



Councillor Brigitte Rowlands

2.2 Councillor Lynda James was re-elected Chair of the Democratic Services Committee at Annual Council on 18 May 2023.

3. Dates of the Democratic Services Committee Meetings

3.1 The Democratic Services Committee met on the following dates in 2023-2024:

31 July 2023	13 November 2023
18 March 2024	

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 2023-2024 the Democratic Services Committee considered the following:

5.2 What is the Democratic Services Function?

- 5.2.1 The Head of Democratic Services outlined the role of the Head of Democratic Services and the Democratic Services Committee.

5.3 Democratic Services Committee Annual Report 2022-2023

- 5.3.1 The Committee approved the Annual Report for 2022-2023.
- 5.3.2 The report was presented to Council "for information" on 7 September 2023.

5.4 Review of Councillors Guidance for Attending Remote Meetings

5.4.1 The Committee reviewed the Guidance for Attending Remote Meetings.

5.5 Councillors Annual Report

5.5.1 The Committee were reminded of the process to enable all Councillors to complete an Annual Report of their activities during the previous year.

5.6 Review of Councillors Handbook

5.6.1 The Committee reviewed Section C “Protocols” in the Councillors Handbook.

5.6.2 An additional section on guidance in respect of the “Use of the Councillors Logo by Councillors” was adopted by Council on 7 December 2023.

5.7 Councillor Development Strategy

5.7.1 The Committee approved Councillor Development Strategy to complement the Councillors Training Programme.

5.7.2 The Draft Councillor Development Strategy was recommended to Council for adoption in May 2024.

6. Member Development

6.1 The following member training was provided in 2023-2024:

Date	Training
1 June 2023	Chief Officer Job Evaluation Scheme (Member Briefing)
13 June 2023	Co-production Member Development Opportunity
4 July 2023 & 23 October 2023	Swansea Bay Strategy Workshop
24 July 2023	Telecommunication Mast Presentation
9 & 10 October 2023	Scrutiny Chairing Skills
31 October & 1 November 2023	Questioning Skills for Scrutiny
9 November 2023	Chief Fire Officer Presentation
21 November 2023	Cyber Ninjas Training
24 January 2024	SPF Business Grants (Member Briefing)
30 January 2024	Swansea Replacement LDP (Member Briefing)
2 & 16 February 2024	Training Session for NPA and AONB JAC Members: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
13 & 26 March 2024	Anti-Racism Training (WLGA)

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 2023 – 2024

7.1 The Team Structure for Democratic Services and Scrutiny for the period 2023-2024 is 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	Gareth Borsden
Democratic Services Officer	Allison Lowe
Democratic Services Officer	Jeremy Parkhouse
Democratic Services Officer	Samantha Jenkins
Democratic Services Support Officer	Caroline Davies

7.2.1 The Democratic Services Team supports 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, Governance & 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 and West Glamorgan Archives 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, 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, Governance & Audit Committee, Gower Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership Steering Group, Local Pension Board, Planning Committee, Pension Fund Committee, 5 x Service Transformation Committees, Scrutiny Programme Committee, Statutory Licensing Sub Committee, Swansea Bay City Region Joint Committee, Swansea Public Services Board and West Glamorgan Archives 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

