



# Democratic Services Committee Annual Report 2019-2020

## City & County of Swansea



**Democratic Services Committee Annual Report 2019-2020  
(9 May 2019 to 30 September 2020)**

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**1. Foreword by the Chair of the Democratic Services Committee**

- 1.1 During 2019-2020, the Democratic Services Committee focussed its work on providing advice and guidance to Councillors on the work of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales via their Annual Report for 2020-2021 including the importance of Councillors utilising the Reimbursement of Costs of Care to assist them to carry out their role as a Councillor.
- 1.2 Frequency of meetings for the 2019-2020 Municipal Year were 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 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 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 9 May 2019 to 30 September 2020:



Councillor Peter Black – **Chair**  
(Until 4 June 2020)\*



Councillor June Burtonshaw



Councillor Nick Davies



Councillor Mike Durke



Councillor Louise Gibbard



Councillor Joe Hale



Councillor Lynda James (from 4 June 2020 & **Chair** from 2.7.2020)\*\*



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 It should be noted that on 4 June 2020 Councillor Peter Black\* ceased to be a member of the Democratic Services Committee and was replaced by Councillor Lynda James\*\*.

2.3 Councillor Lynda James\*\* was elected Chair of the Democratic Services Committee at Council on 2 July 2020, however the Committee did not meet between July and the end of the Municipal Year (30 September 2020).

### 3. Dates of the Democratic Services Committee Meetings

3.1 The Democratic Services Committee met on these dates during 2019-2020:

16 July 2019	6 November 2019
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3.2 Two meetings scheduled for 21 April 2020 and 13 July 2020 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 2019-2020 the work of the Democratic Services Committee was greatly reduced due to the Coronavirus pandemic. The Municipal Year was also extended until September 2020. However in that time the Committee did consider:

### **5.2 Democratic Services Annual Report 2018-2019.**

5.2.1 The Head of Democratic Services presented the Democratic Services Annual Report 2018-2019 which outlined the work of the Committee during that period.

### **5.3 Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) - Draft Annual Report 2020-2021 - Consultation**

5.3.1 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.

5.3.2 In addition, The Committee agreed that the reimbursement of costs of care could assist those Councillors and Co-opted Members with caring responsibilities, which in turn might help to increase diversity in democracy by encouraging people to stand as candidates as the caring responsibility barrier was removed.

## **6. Member Development**

6.1 The following training / briefings were provided in 2019-2020, however opportunities were significantly reduced due to the Covid-19 pandemic:

11 June 2019	National Approach to Statutory Advocacy – Implementation
18 June 2019	Ash Dieback presentation
13 August 2019	Financial Management & Accounting (for Audit Committee Members)
8 October 2019	Review of Audit Committee Effectiveness (for Audit Committee Members)
10 December 2019	Risk Management Training (for Audit Committee Members)
17 March 2020	Covid-19 briefing / training

6.2 All Councillors were provided with 1-2-1 training by the Digital Change Co-ordinator in the use of the “Microsoft Teams” platform in order to enable Committee meetings to be held remotely.

6.3 In addition, all Councillors are encouraged to complete various e-learning training, including mandatory Safeguarding training via the Learning Pool platform.

## 7. Democratic Services Team 9 May 2019 – 30 September 2020

7.1 The Team Structure for Democratic Services and Scrutiny for the period 2019-2020 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 of its Committees and the formal decision-making and good governance of the Council. This includes the preparation and publication of agendas, minutes & report packs using the Modern.Gov committee administration system and booking rooms for meetings and pre-meetings. Support is provided to the following meetings.

- Council, Cabinet & External Funding Panel
- 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, Planning, Audit, Scrutiny Programme Committee and Swansea Bay City Region Joint Committee.
- 7.2.4 Since March 2020 the team have developed the use of remote meetings and successfully delivered a remote meeting capability, including the live streaming of many meetings. This brings additional administrative and preparatory work including placing a recording on our website once each meeting has concluded.
- 7.2.5 From July 2020 the live streaming of meetings expanded to include: Pension Fund Committee, 5 x Policy Development Committees, Statutory Licensing Sub Committee, Swansea Public Services Board Joint Committee and Gower Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership Steering Group.

## 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](http://www.swansea.gov.uk/democracy)
- 8.2 Further information can be provided by Democratic Services: [Democratic.Services@swansea.gov.uk](mailto:Democratic.Services@swansea.gov.uk) or on 01792 636923

