



Report of the Head of Democratic Services
Democratic Services Committee - 31 July 2023

What is the Democratic Services Function?

Purpose:	To provide context to the Democratic Services Function, the Head of Democratic Services & the Democratic Services Committee.
Policy Framework:	Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.
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For Information	

1. Introduction

1.1 The Democratic Services Committee and the role of Head of Democratic Services stem from the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.

2. Head of Democratic Services

2.1 The Head of Democratic Services is Huw Evans.

2.2 The Head of Democratic Services (HoDS) must discharge the Democratic Services functions as set out in the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011. The functions state that the Head of Democratic Services must:

- a) Provide support and advice to the authority in relation to its meetings.
- b) Provide support and advice to committees of the authority,
- c) Provide support and advice to any joint committee which a local authority is responsible for organising and the members of that committee.
- d) Promote the role of the authority's overview and scrutiny committee or committees.

- e) Provide support and advice to the:
 - i) Authority's overview and scrutiny committee or committees and the members of that committee or those committees.
 - ii) Authority's democratic services committee and the members of that committee.
- f) Provide support and advice in relation to the functions of the authority's overview and scrutiny committee or committees to each of the following:
 - i) Members of the authority.
 - ii) Members of the executive of the authority.
 - iii) Officers of the authority.
- g) Provide support and advice to each member of the authority in carrying out the role of member of the authority.
- h) Make reports and recommendations in respect of any of the following:
 - i) The number and grades of staff required to discharge democratic services functions.
 - ii) The appointment of staff to discharge democratic services functions.
 - iii) The organisation and proper management of staff discharging democratic services functions.
- i) Such other functions as may be prescribed.

3. Democratic Services Committee

3.1 The Chair of Democratic Services is Councillor Lynda James.

3.2 A Local Authority must appoint a Democratic Services Committee (DSC) to:

- a) Exercise the function of the local authority under section 8(1)(a) (designation of head of democratic services) of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.
- b) Review the adequacy of provision by the authority of staff, accommodation and other resources to discharge democratic services functions.
- c) Make reports and recommendations to the authority in relation to such provision.

3.3 It is for a Democratic Services Committee to determine how to exercise those functions.

4. Terms of Reference of the Democratic Services Committee

4.1 The Terms of Reference of the Democratic Services Committee are set out within the Council Constitution. www.swansea.gov.uk/constitution

(Section 11 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure):

- a) Exercise the function of the local authority under section 8(1)(a) Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 (designation of Head of Democratic Services).

- b) Review the adequacy of provision by the authority of staff, accommodation and other resources to discharge Democratic Services functions, including:
 - i) Achievement of the Welsh Local Government Association's (WLGA) Member Support and Development Charter.
 - ii) Councillor Training.
 - iii) Improvements and innovations such as electronic voting, web casting etc.
- c) Make reports and recommendations to the authority in relation to such provision.
- d) It is for a Democratic Services Committee to determine how to exercise those functions.
- e) 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.
- f) 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.
- g) At the request of the Local Authority, the Democratic Services Committee may review any matter relevant to:
 - i) The support and advice available to Members of the Authority.
 - ii) The terms and conditions of Office of those Members.

Background Papers: None

Appendices: None