



Democratic Services Committee Annual Report 2022-2023

City & County of Swansea



Democratic Services Committee Annual Report 2022-2023
(24 May 2022 to 17 May 2023)

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1. Foreword by the Chair of the Democratic Services Committee

- 1.1 The Local Government Elections in May 2022 saw a significant change in Council Membership. The Council size rose from 72 Councillors to 75 Councillors and 21 new Councillors were elected. Much of 2022-2023 was taken up with the Councillors Induction & Training Programme 2022. This programme was compiled by the Head of Democratic Services in consultation with the Democratic Services Committee.
- 1.2 Due to the Councillors Induction Training Programme taking time to deliver, the Democratic Services Committee only met twice. This Annual Report sets out its work during this period.
- 1.3 I would like to extend my thanks and appreciation to the whole Committee for their time, dedication and support during this very busy period.
- 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. I would particularly like to thank Huw Evans, Head of Democratic Services & Allison Lowe, Democratic Services Officer, for their support and professionalism.
- 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 2022-2023:



Councillor Lynda James
Chair



Councillor Patience Bentu



Councillor Adam Davis



Councillor Mike Durke



Councillor Kevin Griffiths



Councillor Joe Hale



Councillor Matthew Jones



Councillor Erika Kirchner



Councillor Wendy Lewis
Vice Chair



Councillor Peter May



Councillor James McGettrick



Councillor Brigitte Rowlands



Councillor Lesley Walton

2.2 Councillor Lynda James was re-elected Chair of the Democratic Services Committee at Annual Council on 24 May 2022.

3. Dates of the Democratic Services Committee Meetings

3.1 The Democratic Services Committee met on the following dates in 2022-2023:

11 July 2022	7 November 2022
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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 2022-2023 the Democratic Services Committee considered the following:

5.2 What is the Democratic Services Function?

5.2.1 Following the Local Government Elections in May 2022, 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 2021-2022

5.3.1 The Committee approved the Annual Report for 2021-2022.

5.3.2 The report was presented to Council “for information” on 7 September 2022.

5.4 Review of Councillors Induction & Training Programme 2022

5.4.1 The Committee considered the Councillors Induction & Training Programme following the 2022 Local Government Election.

5.4.2 Recommendations for improvement would be utilised to form the next Induction programme for 2027.

5.5 Timing of Council Meetings Survey

5.5.1 The Committee approved the Timing of Council Meetings Survey prior it being circulated to Councillors.

5.5.2 The results of the survey were reported to Council on 30 March 2023.

5.6 Councillors Annual Report

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

5.7 Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) - Draft Annual Report 2023-2024 - Consultation

5.7.1 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 In addition to the full Induction Programme, the following member training was provided in 2022-2023:

Date	Training
28 June 2022	Governance, Financial Management & Accounting, External Audit, Values of Good Governance (For Governance & Audit Committee)

26 July 2022	Corporate Complaints, Governance, Performance Management, Whistleblowing (For Governance & Audit Committee)
13 December 2022	Counter Fraud (For Governance & Audit Committee)
24 January 2023	Corporate Complaints, Cyber Security (For Governance & Audit Committee)
8 & 20 February 2023	Dementia Training
28 February 2023	Understanding Financial Statements (For Governance & Audit Committee)
29 March 2023	School Transport Appeal Training (For Appeals & Awards Committee)

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 2022 – 2023

7.1 The Team Structure for Democratic Services and Scrutiny for the period 2021-2022 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	Gareth Borsden
Democratic Services Officer	Allison Lowe
Democratic Services Officer	Jeremy Parkhouse
Democratic Services Officer	Samantha Woon
Democratic Services Support Officer	Caroline Davies
Democratic Services Administrative Assistant	Karen Thomas (up to 31.03.2023)

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 Delivery 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

