



DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE – 3RD JULY 2019

SUBJECT: ANNUAL REPORT FOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

REPORT BY: INTERIM HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to present the Democratic Services Committee with the annual report of the Head of Democratic Services which includes details of the current and planned services and support provided to Elected Members.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The annual report of the Head of Democratic Services sets out the current services and support provided to Members. It also provides an overview of how the resources within the Democratic Services Team are being maximised in the provision of the support, and the conclusion is that adequate arrangements are currently in place. An additional part time committee services officer post has been created in order to support the additional scrutiny committee agreed by Council in April 2019.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that Democratic Services Committee note the contents of the report and provide any comments on the support provided during 2018/2019.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The Annual Report of the Head of Democratic Services sets out how the statutory duties under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 have been met.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 Democratic Services has several different functions to support members; Committee services, Members training and development, Scrutiny, Cabinet support, Civic Office and all types of day to day procedural/administrative support for Members.

Committee Services

- 5.2 There have been 171 committee meetings arranged between the annual meetings of Council in 2018 and 2019; these included a number of special scrutiny meetings to consider the medium term financial plan. All meetings were properly advertised, with agendas and minutes produced on time. The committee services officers have significant work pressures with no capacity to take on any additional commitments. The nature of the work means that deadlines for publishing committee papers cannot be missed otherwise meetings would have to be

cancelled. The following table illustrates the number of meetings held during the past year:

Type	Committee	Number of Meetings
Council	Council	10
Cabinet	Cabinet	22
	Rights of Way	1
	Cabinet as Trustees of Blackwood Miners Institute	3
Scrutiny	Education for Life Scrutiny Committee	9
	Health Social Care & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee	8
	Partnerships Scrutiny Committee	2
	Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee	7
	Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee	9
Regulatory	Appeals Panel	3
	Appointments Panel	1
	Audit Committee	4
	Caerphilly Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education	3
	Democratic Services Committee	4
	Licensing and Gambling Committee	3
	Licensing and Gambling Sub Committee	6
	Non Domestic Ratepayers Committee	1
	Pensions Compensation Committee	6
	Planning Committee	12
	Standards Committee	3
	Taxi and General Committee	5
	Taxi and General Sub Committee	12
Advisory	Bargoed Town Centre Management Group	2
	Blackwood Town Centre Management Group	2
	Caerphilly Town centre Management Group	2
	Newbridge Town Centre Management Group	0
	Risca Town Centre Management Group	2
	Ystrad Mynach Town centre Management Group	2
	Caerphilly Homes Task Group	7
	Caerphilly Local Access Forum	3
	Community Council Liaison Sub-Committee	3
	Corporate Health and Safety Committee	3
	Grants to the Voluntary Sector	3
	Joint Consultative Committee	0
	Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal – Crumlin Arm Working Group	3
	River Rhymney Task Group	0
	Scrutiny Leadership Group	2
	Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee	4
Statutory	Investigating and Disciplinary Committee	1
	Total	171

- 5.3 Following discussions with Democratic Services Committee and approval at Full Council, Electronic Voting has now been fully implemented at Full Council. The Democratic Services team arranged several training sessions for Members in readiness for its implementation and

this was introduced on a phased basis. A record of decisions notice is published on the council website following each meeting and since being implemented on 5th June 2018, 33 agenda items have been voted by use of the electronic voting system.

- 5.4 The decision to carry out electronic voting and webcasting requires that two committee services officers are present at every meeting of Council, one member of staff to minute the meeting the other to operate both the webcast and the electronic voting system. It would not be possible for one person to undertake both functions, as the systems are complex and require the operator to continually respond.

Webcasting

- 5.5 Democratic Services team have implemented and are operating the webcasting system for full Council meetings since January 2016. In order to webcast each Council meeting an additional member of staff will attend in order to operate the webcast system. The Democratic Services team monitor the number of meetings viewed both live and from archive. The following table shows the number of views up to March 2019. An IP address identifies an individual viewer instead of the number of views.

		Single IP address		Multiple visits by an IP address	
		Live Viewers	Total viewers (live and archive)	Live Views	Total Views (live and archive)
Webcast title	Live date				
Council	17/04/18 18:30	35	105	40	165
Council	10/05/18 18:00	6	59	6	94
Council	05/06/18 17:00	12	108	24	166
Council	17/07/18 17:00	13	92	20	141
Council	31/07/18 17:00	9	65	9	86
Council	09/10/18 17:00	16	125	21	195
Council	13/12/18 17:00	39	119	57	188
Council	22/01/19 17:30	14	58	15	80
Council	21/02/19 17:00	57	149	61	194
Council	05/03/19 17:00	17	68	24	124
	TOTALS	218	948	277	1433

Support for Youth Champion

- 5.6 The Caerphilly Youth Champion, Cllr Mark Evans has continued to promote the role of the Youth Champion and has significant involvement with the work of the Youth Forum. Since the very successful Caerphilly Youth Question Time Event in April 2018, the Youth Champion has afforded a school the opportunity to use the Council Chamber in order to hold their School Council meeting.
- 5.7 Since May 2018, the Social Media presence on Twitter and Facebook has been maintained, the Facebook page is followed by 12 users and Twitter by 177. Social media posts include updates and pictures from county borough wide meetings, updates on local projects and features of interest such as the annual Operation Santa event, Dementia Friends Training events, re-tweets promoting the Welsh Youth Parliament and Youth events promoting health and wellbeing and democracy.
- 5.8 Following a report to Full Council, where it was agreed that a Democratic Election Process be

undertaken for the 3rd term for the position of Caerphilly Youth Champion, as a result, the next election is due to take place in November 2019.

Members Training and Development

- 5.9 A detailed report to review Member Training and Development will also be presented to the meeting of Democratic Services Committee on 3rd July 2019. The Democratic Services Team receive additional support from the Business Development Officer in Legal Services who has developed the member development programme 2018-2020 and oversees the training arrangements therein.
- 5.10 During the 2018/19 municipal year the following training courses were arranged and offered to Members:

Month	Training	Type	Dates	Attendees	Attendance
May	Regeneration & Environment Scrutiny Cttee	Recommended Annual Refresher	15/5/18	Committee Members	9/16
	Education for Life Scrutiny Cttee	Recommended Annual Refresher	22/5/18	Committee Members	10/16
	Planning	Recommended Annual Refresher	23/5/18	Committee Members	12/19
	Policy and Resources Scrutiny Cttee	Recommended Annual Refresher	29/5/18	Committee Members	7/16
	Licensing	Recommended Annual Refresher	31/5/18	Committee Members	9/16
June	Civil Parking Enforcement Seminar	Recommended	6th June 2018	All Councillors	33/73
	Health Social Care & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee	Recommended Annual Refresher	19/6/18	Committee Members	5/16
	Vol Sector Liaison Committee	Recommended Annual Refresher	20/6/18	Committee Members	5/15
	Planning - Policy & Tech Advice Notes	Recommended	20/6/18	Committee Members	12/19
	Unconscious Bias in Decision Making	Recommended	25/6/18	Chairs/Vice Chairs and Cabinet	12/19
	Corporate Health & Safety Committee	Recommended Annual Refresher	25/6/18	Committee Members	4/8
	Audit Committee	Recommended Annual Refresher	28/6/18 & 5/7/18	Committee Members	12/12
July	Sport & Active Recreation Strategy Seminar	Recommended	9th July 2018	All Councillors	24/73

	Universal Credit Seminar	Recommended	19th July 2018	All Councillors	17/73
	Grants to the Voluntary Sector Panel	Recommended	25/7/18	Committee Members	7/15
August	Planning Rules & Procedures	Mandatory	15/8/18 & 12/9/18	Committee Members	19/19 (100%)
September	Licensing Committee	Mandatory	10/9/18; 11/10/18 & 25/10/18	Committee Members	16/16 (100%)
	Chairing Skills	Requested	17/9/18	Open to all Members	12
	Education - New Curriculum and Performance Indicators	Recommended	27/9/18	All Councillors	6/73
October	Planning - Nature Conservation	Recommended	10/10/18	Committee Members	14/19
	Holding Effective pre-meetings	Requested	15/10/18	Open to all Members	10
November	The Importance of Questioning Skills	Requested	12/11/198	Open to all Members	15
	SACRE	Recommended	14/11/18	Committee Members	3/6
	Blackwood TCMG	Recommended	23/11/18	Committee Members	2/6
	MTFP Seminar	Recommended	15/11/18	All Councillors	47/73
December	Rights of Way	Mandatory	3/12/18	Committee Members	4/5 (100% of those who attended meeting)
	Ystrad Mynach TCMG	Recommended	10/12/18	Committee Members	3/5
January	Corporate Safeguarding Briefing	Recommended	22/1/19	All Councillors	56/73
	Governance and the AGS	Recommended	29/1/19	Audit Committee Members	10/12
February	The Appeals Process	Recommended	20/2/19	Planning Committee Members	22/19
March	Gwent Police – Station Closures Seminar	Recommended	6/3/19	All Councillors	27/73
	Schools Causing Concern	Recommended	14/3/19	All Councillors	20/73
	Equalities & Diversity	Requested	18/3/19	All Councillors	12/73

	Admissions and Complaints	Recommended	21/3/19	All Councillors	12/73
April	Advanced Charing Skills	Requested	8/4/19	All Councillors	8

- 5.11 The Democratic Services Team has submitted the application to the WLGA to renew the Wales Charter for Member Support and Development and provided evidence to detail the considerable support provided to Members. The WLGA have confirmed that they would like to commend Caerphilly County Borough Council for our excellent submission for the renewal of the Wales Charter for Member Support and Development. They state that the information and evidence provided clearly demonstrate that all the necessary criteria have been met showing that the required arrangements for member support and development are in place.

Scrutiny

- 5.12 Members of the Democratic Services team have provided support and advice to the Council's 4 Overview and Scrutiny Committees (plus Partnerships Scrutiny Committee) in 2018/19. There have been a total of 35 scrutiny committee meetings during the year, including special scrutiny meetings to consider the Medium Term Financial Plan and the Draft Sports and Active Recreation Strategy Report.
- 5.13 The Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee have met on 9 occasions and considered 18 main agenda items and also received 13 information items. The scrutiny committee considered strategic reports such as the Draft Sports and Active Recreation Strategy 2019 - 2020, De-Criminalisation of Parking and also the Draft Regeneration Strategy.
- 5.14 The Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee Members also took part in 2 Cross Party Working Groups, which were set up to consider Street Scene and Waste Management Arrangements. In order for each of these to be successful the scrutiny officer provided significant support to organise the membership, arrange meetings dates and also attend meetings.
- 5.15 The Street Scene Working Group met on 4 occasions and concluded with a report to the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee in October 2018. There were six recommendation endorsed by the committee and a commitment to receive a further report at a later date.
- 5.16 The Waste Review Working Group met on several occasions and undertook a number of site visits to Household Waste Recycling Centres across the County Borough, and Waste Transfer sites in neighbouring Authorities. The group were presented with a "BluePrint" arrangement for Kerbside Recycling, as part of the Collaborative Change Programme (CCP) and following a complex review undertaken by Waste Resource Action Programme (WRAP). The Working Group presented their findings and recommendations to Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee in February 2019 and agreed that further detailed recommendation would be reported to Cabinet.
- 5.17 The Education for Life Scrutiny Committee have met on 9 occasions and considered 22 main agenda items and also received 13 information items. The committee held a Special Scrutiny Committee in December 2018 to consider the Medium Term Financial Plan, and a Special Scrutiny Committee in March to consider the EAS Business Plan and the Education Attainment Strategy. The committee also considered the Terms of Reference for the review of Post 16/ Single Sex and Surplus Places, for which it nominated and made recommendations to increase the number of scrutiny members, to sit on the review group.
- 5.18 Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee have met on 7 occasions and considered 22 main agenda items and also received 23 information items. The committee held a Special Scrutiny Committee to consider the Medium Term Financial Plan. They have considered a number of proposals of interest such as Increasing Council Housing Supply, an Electric Vehicle Strategy

and regular progress updates on the Wales Housing Quality Standards (WHQS), which is due to be completed by December 2020.

- 5.19 Health Social Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee have met on 8 occasions and considered 18 main agenda items and also received 1 information item. The committee held a Special Scrutiny Committee to consider the Medium Term Financial Plan in December 2018. The Scrutiny Committee, following a Member request, invited the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board to attend the Committee to discuss GP Closures and, at a later meeting in April 2019 invited the Welsh Ambulance Service Trust to discuss Ambulance Response Times and Pressures. These meetings were opened up to all Members.

Scrutiny Review

- 5.20 The Scrutiny Leadership Group, considered the Wales Audit Office report 'Scrutiny Fit for the Future' in October 2018 and agreed workshops would be conducted with Members and Cabinet and CMT, alongside the already planned Scrutiny Self-Evaluation Survey. The findings of the workshops and the self-evaluation were then presented to Scrutiny Leadership Group and recommendations were then made to Council in April 2019 resulting in a number of changes to Scrutiny.
- 5.21 The support and advice at Scrutiny Committee meetings is provided by the Scrutiny Manager and Scrutiny Officer who manage the work programmes, deals with member/public requests as well as attending the Scrutiny Officers' Network meetings. The Scrutiny Manager and Scrutiny officer attend all meetings of Scrutiny Leadership Group and all Scrutiny Committee meetings.

Civic Support

- 5.22 Members will be fully aware of the activities of the Civic Office as the Mayor gives regular updates at each full Council of the engagements attended. During the civic year for 2018 - 2019 a total of 198 engagements were attended. The Mayors assistant provided continuous support to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor in all of their duties including organising the Civic Service and Christmas concert.
- 5.23 The Council Chauffeur provides chauffeuring service to the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Council Leader, other senior Councillors and the Corporate Management Team. In addition he provides support to Legal Services Team by delivering documents and liaising with Court and Legal Chambers.

Leaders and Cabinet Office

- 5.24 During 2018-19, the PA to the Leader, Deputy Leaders and Cabinet has continued to provide support to the Cabinet, which include dealing with complaints, correspondence, diary management, organising appointments and engagements.
- 5.25 In order to ensure that Cabinet members have support when the PA is absent or unavailable the Mayors assistant is also located within the Office. These arrangements continue to work successfully, with the wider team available to provide additional support if required.

Other Support

- 5.26 Previously this Council was one of the few in Wales to publish 100% of Annual Reports for all Members between 2013 and 2017. This was due to the support provided by the Democratic Services Team in preparing the reports and templates and also providing Members with exceptional assistance. However during the summer of 2018 there was less administrative support available to ensure that all reports for 2017/18 were returned by the 31st July 2018 deadline. Therefore for the year end 2017/18 a total of 52% was published on time with

additional reports being received after the deadline putting the total for the year up to 75%. The team have started assisting with the preparation of these for 2018/2019 and will provide Members with support to complete and publish their annual reports by 31st July 2019.

- 5.27 The Council has provided all Members, who required it, with broadband lines and IT equipment so that they are able to access online reports and Council email. Support is provided by IT Training Team and Members can request specific training during their PDR or during their annual performance review. Should any Member have any specific requirements such as specialist software to access reports, the Democratic Services Team will assist.
- 5.28 Members who have access to their own or Council provided tablet device can also download the Modern.Gov application. This allows the user to select Caerphilly Council as a publisher and other Modern.Gov users (up to a maximum of three) such as other local authorities or Welsh Government. The application allows users to select specific committees and download all papers whilst connected to the internet, these can then be used whilst offline to read, annotate, and highlight specific areas. The Democratic Services Team can assist any Members who would like further information or advice on this service.
- 5.29 Cabinet members have led the way in running a 'paperless cabinet' with each cabinet member issued with a tablet device with access to the modern.gov secure application. This has allowed cabinet meetings to be held without paper agenda packs. The senior committee services officer has provided support whilst this has been introduced. There have been some difficulties with the modern.gov application, and she has been in contact with Modern.Gov to resolve these issues. Once we are satisfied that it is working smoothly the next step will be to roll the offer out to other members to opt for a tablet device instead of hard copies of agenda packs.

Staff and Resources in Democratic Services

- 5.30 Following the resignation of the former Interim Deputy Monitoring Officer in February 2016, the Democratic Services Committee designated the Scrutiny Manager as the Interim Head of Democratic Services at its meeting in March 2016. A report regarding the permanent designation of a Head of Democratic Services will be reported to the 3rd July 2019 meeting of Democratic Services Committee.
- 5.31 Each member of the Democratic Services Team provides specific support in the areas mentioned above. In particular, the Senior Committee Services Officer manages the 3 Committee clerks. In addition following the creation of an additional scrutiny committee at the meeting of Council in April 2019, an additional part time committee services officer post has been created, and arrangements to fill this post are in hand.
- 5.32 The Scrutiny Manager manages the scrutiny function and oversees the Scrutiny Officer, she also manages the PA to the Leader, Deputy Leaders and Cabinet the Mayors Assistant, and the Chauffeur.

5.34 Conclusion

The Democratic Services team has had another challenging year with pressures upon the team with some staff changes and some long term sickness absence. However the team is now fully staffed and following the outcome of the scrutiny review an additional part time committee services officer post will help to alleviate some of the work pressures upon committee services officers. In addition the appointment of a permanent scrutiny officer will provide additional resilience to the scrutiny function and help to develop and improve this area.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 The level of support provided to councillors and committees and the overall democratic

service must ensure that the Council can comply with legislative requirements, but should also be sufficient to take into account guidance and good practice and be able to support the governance arrangements set by Council.

7. LINKS TO RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES

7.1 Democratic services ensure that all meetings are held in accordance with relevant legislation and members are supported to scrutinise proposals and performance within the Corporate Plan which are listed below:

7.2 Corporate Plan 2018-2023.

Objective 1 - Improve education opportunities for all

Objective 2 - Enabling employment

Objective 3 - Address the availability, condition and sustainability of homes throughout the county borough and provide advice, assistance or support to help improve people's well-being

Objective 4 - Promote a modern, integrated and sustainable transport system that increases opportunity, promotes prosperity and minimises the adverse impacts on the environment

Objective 5 - Creating a county borough that supports a healthy lifestyle in accordance with the sustainable Development Principle within the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Objective 6 - Support citizens to remain independent and improve their well-being

8. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

8.1 The Democratic Services Annual Report 2018/19 contributes to the well-being goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 by detailing how members are supported to carry out their role. Councillors, require resources such as IT and support in order to carry out their role as community representatives. In addition the democratic process needs organisation support and guidance in order to make decisions, on budget, policy etc. and thereby contribute to the following goals:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 This report is for information purposes, so the Council's EqIA process does not need to be applied.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no direct implications from this report.

11. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no direct implications as a result of this report.

12. CONSULTATIONS

12.1 The views of the consultees have been reflected in this report

13. STATUTORY POWER

13.1 The Annual Report of the Head of Democratic Services sets out how the statutory duties under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 have been met.

Author: Catherine Forbes-Thompson Interim Head of Democratic Services
Consultees: Christina Harrhy, Interim Chief Executive
Richard Edmunds, Director of Education and Corporate Services
Rob Tranter, Head of Legal and Monitoring Officer
Dave Street Corporate Director – Social Services
Mark S. Williams Interim Corporate Director – Communities
Lisa Lane Corporate Solicitor and Deputy Monitoring Officer
Councillor Donna Cushing, Chair Democratic Services Committee
Councillor Gez Kirby, Vice Chair Democratic Services Committee
Councillor Barbara Jones Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Governance
Steve Harris Head of Business Improvement and S151 Officer
Stephen Pugh, Communications Manager
Liz Lucas, Head of Customer and Digital Services

Background Papers:

Report to Annual Council 10th May 2018 Agenda Item 14

Report to Full Council 10th October 2017 Agenda Item 8

Report to Full Council 25th July 2017 Agenda Item 7

Report to Democratic Services Committee 17th November 2016 Agenda Item 5

Report to Full Council 7 October 2014 Agenda Item 12

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Democratic Services Team Chart