

Pecyn Dogfennau Cyhoeddus

Penallta House,
Tredomen Park,
Ystrad Mynach,
Hengoed CF82 7PG

Ty Penallta,
Parc Tredomen,
Ystrad Mynach,
Hengoed CF82 7PG



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Am unrhyw ymholiad yn ymwneud â'r agenda hwn cysylltwch â Emma Sullivan
(Rhif Ffôn: 01443 864420 Ebst: sullie@caerphilly.gov.uk)

Dyddiad: Dydd Mercher, 13 Medi 2023

I bwy bynnag a fynno wybod,

Cynhelir cyfarfod aml-leoliad o'r **Pwyllgor Gwasanaethau Democrataidd** yn Nhŷ Penallta, a thrwy Microsoft Teams ar **Dydd Mercher, 20fed Medi, 2023** am **5.00 pm** i ystyried materion a gynhwysir yn yr agenda canlynol. Gall cynghorwyr ac aelodau'r cyhoedd sy'n dymuno siarad ar unrhyw eitem wneud hynny drwy wneud cais i'r Cadeirydd. Mae hefyd croeso i chi ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg yn y cyfarfod, mae angen o leiaf 3 diwrnod gwaith or rybudd os byddwch chi'n dymuno gwneud y naill neu'r llall. Bydd gwasanaeth cyfieithu ar y pryd yn cael ei ddarparu ar gais.

Gall aelodau'r Cyhoedd neu'r Wasg fynychu'n bersonol yn Nhŷ Penallta neu gallant weld y cyfarfod yn fyw drwy'r ddolen ganlynol: live via the following link: <https://civico.net/caerphilly>

Bydd y cyfarfod hwn yn cael ei ffrydio'n fyw a bydd recordiad ar gael i'w weld drwy wefan y Cyngor, ac eithrio trafodaethau sy'n ymwneud ag eitemau cyfrinachol neu eithriedig. Felly, bydd delweddau/sain yr unigolion sy'n siarad ar gael yn gyhoeddus i bawb drwy wefan y Cyngor: www.caerffili.gov.uk

Yr eiddoch yn gywir,

Christina Harrhy
PRIF WEITHREDWR

A G E N D A

Tudalennau

1 I dderbyn ymddiheuriadau am absenoldeb

A greener place Man gwyrddach



2 Datganiadau o Ddiddordeb.

Atgoffi'r Cynghorwyr a Swyddogion o'u cyfrifoldeb personol i ddatgan unrhyw fuddiannau personol a/neu niweidiol mewn perthynas ag unrhyw eitem o fusnes ar yr agenda hwn yn unol â Deddf Llywodraeth Leol 2000, Cyfansoddiad y Cyngor a'r Cod Ymddygiad ar gyfer Cynghorwyr a Swyddogion.

I gymeradwyo a llofnodi'r cofnodion canlynol:-

3 Cynhaliwyd y Pwyllgor Gwasanaethau Democrataidd ar 14 Mawrth 2023. 1 - 4

I dderbyn ac ystyried yr adroddiad(au) canlynol:-

4 Adroddiadau Blynyddol i Wasanaethau Democrataidd. 5 - 14

5 Ymgynghoriad ar y cynnig i ddisodli Siarter Cefnogi a Datblygu Aelodau Cymru. 15 - 26

6 Arolwg Cefnogi a Datblygu Aelodau/Amseroedd Cyfarfod – Canlyniad ac Ystyriaeth. 27 - 44

Cylchrediad:

Cynghorwyr D.T. Davies, A. Farina-Childs, Mrs C. Forehead, A. Hussey, M.P. James (Cadeirydd), L. Jeremiah, C.P. Mann, C. Thomas, G. Ead, A. McConnell, L. Phipps (Is Gadeirydd), Mrs D. Price, J.A. Pritchard, A. Whitcombe a J. Winslade

A Swyddogion Priodol

SUT FYDDWN YN DEFNYDDIO EICH GWYBODAETH

Bydd yr unigolion hynny sy'n mynychu cyfarfodydd pwyllgor i siarad/roi tystiolaeth yn cael eu henwi yng nghofnodion y cyfarfod hynny, weithiau bydd hyn yn cynnwys eu man gweithio neu fusnes a'r barnau a fynegir. Bydd cofnodion o'r cyfarfod gan gynnwys manylion y siaradwyr ar gael i'r cyhoedd ar wefan y Cyngor ar www.caerffili.gov.uk. ac eithrio am drafodaethau sy'n ymwneud ag eitemau cyfrinachol neu eithriedig.

Mae gennych nifer o hawliau mewn perthynas â'r wybodaeth, gan gynnwys yr hawl i gael mynediad at wybodaeth sydd gennym amdanoch a'r hawl i gwyno os ydych yn anhapus gyda'r modd y mae eich gwybodaeth yn cael ei brosesu.

Am wybodaeth bellach ar sut rydym yn prosesu eich gwybodaeth a'ch hawliau, ewch i'r Hysbysiad Preifatrwydd Cyfarfodydd Pwyllgor Llawn ar ein gwefan <http://www.caerffili.gov.uk/Pwyllgor/Preifatrwydd> neu cysylltwch â Gwasanaethau Cyfreithiol drwy e-bostio griffd2@caerffili.gov.uk neu ffoniwch 01443 863028.



DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MULTI-LOCATIONAL MEETING HELD IN PENALLTA HOUSE AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON TUESDAY 14TH MARCH 2023 AT 5:00PM

PRESENT:

Councillor L. Phipps - Vice-Chair (Presiding)

Councillors:

C. Forehead, A. Hussey, L. Jeremiah, C.P. Mann, C. Thomas, G. Ead, A. McConnell, D. Price, J.A. Pritchard, A. Whitcombe and J. Winslade.

Together with:

L. Lane (Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer), E. Sullivan (Senior Committee Services Officer), J. Lloyd (Committee Services Officer), A. Jones (Committee Services Officer)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors T.D. Davies, M. James (Chair), A. Farina-Childs, and J. Sadler.

In the absence of the Chair, Councillor L. Phipps Vice-Chair presided.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

3. DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD ON 17TH MARCH 2022

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 17th March 2022 be approved as a correct record.

4. MEMBERS SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

Consideration was given to the report which provided feedback to Members on the 2022 Induction Programme for Elected Members, sought the views of the Democratic Services Committee on the next stages of Members Support and Development and asked for Members endorsement for the circulation of the Training Needs Questionnaire.

Members complimented Officers on the composition of the 2022 Induction Programme, in particular the Directorate Market Place event was considered to be a high point. Clarification was sought as to how the 2017 Programme had been used to inform the 2022 Programme from a lesson learned perspective.

Officers confirmed that feedback from the 2017 had very much driven the 2022 Programme. Changing from a more theoretical programme to one that was much more interactive, and service based. The Market Place and individual Directorate presentations being the major change. However there was still need to sure that Member's received both Mandatory and Recommended training e.g. Code of Conduct, Equalities and Diversity.

Members recognised the improvements and changes particularly in terms of technology and hybrid systems but felt that the induction period should be structured over a longer period giving newly elected councillors more support time. Members requested that another Showcase or similar event be held in order to provide an opportunity for more face to face interaction between Councillors. Officers agreed to feedback to Corporate Directors and Heads of Service as to whether it would be possible to run a further event of this type.

In terms of technology Members discussed equipment and support and particular reference was made to the Maas 360 app, which would allow Members to access Council accounts on their personal phones and if it would be possible for an app to be developed, similar to that used in Blaenau Gwent Council, that would allow Members to report issues, request services, upload photographs on the go.

Officers confirmed that IT Services were currently reviewing the Maas 360 app and the Head of Democratic Services agreed to follow-up and email Members on the current position and she would also reissue an email survey in relation to whether Members would like a second phone purely for Council business. A Member expressed the view that for many a smart phone was more useful than a laptop and felt it important that Councillors be given a choice.

Officers were made aware of a form of 'case work' app for Councillors being developed and would feedback to IT and provide further information at the next meeting.

Members felt that they would also benefit from a frequently asked questions and answers facility on such common issues such as parking, traffic, neighbour nuisance, housing etc. Officers agreed to look into this as a possibility and emphasised the use of the CRM system to report issues and service requests.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officer's report: -

1. The Training Needs Analysis Questionnaire be approved for circulation to All Councillors.
2. The update on the Members Induction Programme 2022 be noted.

5. TIMING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS SURVEY

Consideration was given to the report which sought Members approval for a questionnaire to be circulated to all Councillors to establish their preference in terms of meeting arrangements and timings as required by Section 6 of the Local Government Wales Measure 2011.

Members requested that the preferences of Voluntary Sector and Community Councils partners also be sought in relation to the Voluntary Section Liaison Group and Community Council

Liaison Committee meetings and Officers agreed that this would be arranged. It was noted that the questionnaire would also be circulated to Lay Members of the Governance and Audit and Standards Committee and Co-opted Members of Scrutiny.

Following consideration and discuss, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations contained in the Officer's report be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officer's report the questions outlined in the survey be endorsed.

The meeting closed at 17:40.

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any corrections made at the meeting held on 20th September 2023.

CHAIR

Gadewir y dudalen hon yn wag yn fwriadol



DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE - 20TH SEPTEMBER 2023

SUBJECT: ANNUAL REPORT FOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR EDUCATION AND CORPORATE 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.

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 2022/23.

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, Leader and Cabinet support, Civic Office and all types of day to day procedural/administrative support for Members.

Committee Services

5.2 There have been 125 committee meetings arranged between the annual meetings of Council in 2022 and 2023. There were several cancelled meetings in September 2022 due to the period of national mourning following the death of her Majesty the Queen. The following table illustrates the number of meetings held during the past year:

Type	Committee	Number of Meetings
Council	Council	9
Cabinet	Cabinet	18
	Cabinet Rights of Way	1
	Cabinet as Trustees of Blackwood Miners Institute	3
Sub Total		31
Scrutiny	Education Scrutiny Committee	5
	Environment & Sustainability Scrutiny Committee	7
	Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee	5
	Partnerships Scrutiny Committee	4
	Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee	7
	Social Services Scrutiny Committee	7
	Joint Scrutiny Committee	5
Sub Total		40
Regulatory	Appeals Panel	0
	Appointments Committee	3
	Governance and Audit Committee	5
	Caerphilly Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education	3
	Democratic Services Committee	2
	Licensing and Gambling Committee	0
	Licensing and Gambling Sub Committee	4
	Non Domestic Ratepayers Committee	1
	Pensions Compensation Committee	0
	Planning Committee	10
	Standards Committee	2
	Taxi and General Committee	1
	Taxi and General Sub Committee	11
Sub Total		42
	Caerphilly Local Access Forum	2
	Community Council Liaison Sub-Committee	2
	Corporate Health and Safety Committee	3
	Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal – Crumlin Arm Working Group	2
	Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee	3
Sub Total		12
	Total	125

Along with the formal committees detailed above, committee services have also supported a few informal meetings such as the Bryn Engagement Group and SACRE RVE training and support events for its Members.

Petitions

- 5.3 Committee Services have progressed 12 petitions submitted between May 2022 and May 2023, co-ordinating responses from Corporate Directors/Heads of Service to Lead Petitioners in line with the Council's constitution. Work is also planned to implement an electronic system whereby petitions can be submitted electronically (e-petitions) in addition to paper and email format.

Members Stationery Requests/Support Request

- 5.4 Committee Services co-ordinate Members requests and deliveries of stationery, reformatting of digital agenda packs, sourcing screen filters, magnifiers, guidance on the 'read alone' function and offering digital solutions and support with basic IT queries, particularly on accessing information, joining meetings on line, the use of cameras and microphones.

Hybrid Meetings

- 5.5 Members will be aware that in 2020, as a result of the Covid pandemic the legislation surrounding in person meeting arrangements was amended so that council meetings could be held on a wholly remote basis. The Local Government and Elections Wales Act 2021 included provisions to continue with these arrangements and also included the requirement for Council's to hold meetings on a multi-location basis (commonly termed hybrid meetings). This meant that members could attend remotely or from the Council Offices at Penallta House. In addition, for certain meetings, legislation specifies that they must be broadcast live.
- 5.6 To facilitate these changes Council at its Annual Meeting in May 2022 adopted a Multi-Location Meetings Policy as part of the changes to the Constitution and can be found in Part 5.
- 5.7 In order to implement the above provisions new hardware and software has been installed in the core meeting rooms namely the Chamber, Sirhowy, Ebbw and Rhymney rooms. All meetings are currently held on a hybrid basis with the Chamber currently being the room utilised for the livestreaming of the meetings (except for exempt items).
- 5.8 Work is ongoing to develop the functionality of the Sirhowy Room which it is anticipated will also facilitate the livestreaming of hybrid meetings in the coming months.
- 5.9 The requirement to provide hybrid meetings has created significant demands on Democratic Services staff resources to both support members who attend either in person and from a remote location as well as managing the voting and live streaming of the meeting. This is in addition to the co-ordination and publication of agendas, decision notices and minute taking.

Pre/Post Election Member Induction

- 5.10 Prior to the Elections last May a significant amount of preparation work was undertaken by the whole of the Democratic Services team to ensure a seamless transition in to the new council for those members returning and to ensure that new members were equipped with the knowledge and understanding of processes and procedures they required to function effectively as a member. This included providing laptops to new members and providing training on the meeting platform.
- 5.11 In the days and weeks which followed the start of the new council, the Democratic Services team facilitated the induction programme which had been endorsed by Council and ran from 9th May to 6th June 2022 (albeit there were some changes to the way the training was delivered due to the ongoing works to transform the meeting rooms into hybrid facilities).
- 5.12 Democratic Services staff have been on hand to assist members with any queries or any requirements they may have in order to facilitate their work as a councillor.

Member Training and Development

- 5.13 Democratic Services Committee received a report providing an overview of the training and development at its meeting on the 14th of March 2023 and the member training needs analysis questionnaire is the subject of a separate report on this agenda.

Seminars

- 5.14 In addition to the Members Induction Programme, Democratic Services has also supported 15 Members Seminars from May 2022 to May 2023. Topics included Members Safety, Introduction to the Police and Crime Commissioner, the Local Development Plan (LDP) – Preferred Strategy, Ukraine, Introduction to the South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority, Grass Cutting Regimes and Biodiversity, 20mph Zones, Renting Homes (Wales) Act, Housing Solutions and Caerphilly Homes Landlord Functions, Houses of Multiple Occupancy, Developments of National Significance, Draft Corporate Plan Wellbeing Objectives for 2023-2028, City Deal and Treasury Management.

Seminars are held on a Teams' only basis and utilising this platform has seen an improvement in attendance figures with most seminars achieving 70% attendance.

Scrutiny

- 5.15 Members of the Democratic Services Team have provided support and advice to the Council's scrutiny committees during 2022/23. There has been a total of 35 scrutiny committee meetings plus 5 joint scrutiny committee meetings in the past year.

Education Scrutiny Committee

- 5.16 Education Scrutiny Committee met on 5 occasions and considered 13 agenda items and received 10 information pack items. The committee scrutinised items such as Update Report on the Curriculum for Wales, Shared Ambitions Strategy 2019- 2022, Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, Report 2022-2027, Safeguarding, Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme - Trinity Fields School Expansion Update, Early Years - Expansion of Flying Start and Capital Programme, and Formalising the Youth Service Model.

Attendance for Education Scrutiny for Councillors was 72 out of a possible 80, or 90%.

Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee

- 5.17 Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee met on 7 occasions and considered 10 agenda items and 8 information pack items were circulated. There were also 4 Notices of Motion discussed on the following; Section 99 of the Environmental Protection Act; B 4251 Ynys Ddu to Wyllie Highway; Fuel Poverty and Ty Llwyd Quarry.

The scrutiny committee scrutinised items such as Marriage and Civil Partnership Fees - Registration Service; Public Protection Enforcement, Consumer Advice, and Covid-19 Response 2021/22; Implementation of Green Infrastructure Strategy - Progress Report; Street Lighting Review; Caerphilly Biodiversity Report 2022; Grass Cutting Regimes; Local Toilet Strategy and the Update on Decarbonisation Action Plan and future Approach.

Attendance for Councillors who sit on Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee was 100 out a possible 112, which is 89%

Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee

- 5.18 Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee met on 5 occasions and considered 10 agenda items and 12 information pack items were circulated. The scrutiny committee scrutinised items that included Enforcement and Compliance of Minimum Energy Efficiency standards in Private Rented Domestic Properties procedure; Renting Homes Wales Act 2016; HRA Rent Review Policy; Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessment; Private Sector Empty Homes Strategy and the Caerphilly Town 2035.

Attendance was 66 out a possible 80, which is 82%

Partnerships Scrutiny Committee

- 5.19 Partnerships Scrutiny Committee met on 4 occasions and considered 9 agenda items. The committee scrutinised items including Gwent PSB Response; Job Growth & Employment Action Area; PSB Annual Report; Regional Scrutiny of Gwent PSB; Caerphilly Cares Action Area; Update on Enabler Areas Wellbeing Plan and the Final Report of the Caerphilly PSB.

Attendance was 50 out of 64 which is 78%.

Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee

- 5.20 Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee met on 7 occasions and considered 14 agenda items and 8 Information pack items were circulated. The scrutiny committee scrutinised items that included Workforce Capacity; Agile Working; Cash Collection; Community Hubs; Procurement reform; Agile Policies; Wales Audit Office Spring Forward; Cap Strategy and Treasury Management.

Attendance was 98 out of 112, which is 87%.

Social Services Scrutiny Committee

- 5.21 Social Services Scrutiny Committee met on 7 occasions and considered 19 agenda items and 1 Information pack items were circulated. The scrutiny committee scrutinised items that included Corporate Safeguarding; Complaints; Budget; Hospital Discharges; Regional Market Stability; Myst; Directors Annual report; Youth Justice; Day Services and Regional Partnership Board. The committee also considered a Notice of Motion regarding Foster Family Friendly Employer.

Attendance was 88 out of 112 which is 78%.

The scrutiny committee received the final report of the Task and Finish Group on Tackling Potential Mental Health Issues Post Pandemic at the September 2022 meeting. The group was established to examine how Caerphilly County Borough Council works with partners to tackle any potential mental health issues post-pandemic. The report made 6 recommendations which were subsequently considered by Cabinet and fully agreed.

Joint Scrutiny

- 5.22 There were 5 Joint scrutiny committee meetings during the year which considered 6 agenda items. The items considered included; Corporate Performance Assessment; Self-Assessment; Budget for 2023/24; Proposed Voluntary Termination of the Caerphilly CBC School PFI Contract and the Waste Strategy presentation.

Attendance was 193 out of 219 which is 88%.

The Car Parks Task and Finish Group was jointly established by Environment and Sustainability and the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee. The review made 4 recommendations with suggested options on parking charges and budget to the joint meeting on 28th July 2022. The scrutiny committee selected option 1 and made an additional recommendation to Cabinet, these recommendations were subsequently agreed by Cabinet subject to confirmation that the charges would be delayed and budget would be met from earmarked reserves.

Civic Office

- 5.23 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 2022-23 a total of 120 engagements were attended and 15 gifts of flowers were organised for people celebrating special events such as 100th birthdays. 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.

The Council Chauffeur provides a chauffeuring service to the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Council Leader and other senior Councillors all of whom on occasions may be accompanied by officers including those senior officers who form part of the Corporate Management Team. The Chauffeur is also available to drive any council officers for council related business when it is a more cost-effective transport solution. In addition, he provides support to Legal Services by delivering documents and liaising with Court and Barristers Chambers. There is also a relief chauffeur available to cover periods of absence and when there are multiple events, however this is limited and there has been difficulty recruiting additional relief resource.

Leader and Cabinet Office

- 5.24 During 2022/23 the PA to Leader and Deputy Leader and the PA to the Cabinet have continued to provide support which includes dealing with complaints, correspondence, diary management, organising appointments and engagements.

Additional resources were made available to allow the PA to Cabinet post to be made permanent in May 2022. This resulted in the recruitment of a new Mayors Assistant, who took up the position in September 2022. Following these changes, the support to the Cabinet is now working well with both PA's able to provide cover for each other and also support the new Mayors Assistant.

Gwent Police and Crime Panel

- 5.25 The Gwent Police and Crime Panel is hosted by Caerphilly County Borough Council on behalf of the 5 Gwent Local Authorities, the Panel is classed as a stand-alone body and not a joint committee. All costs are funded from the Home Office Grant provided to CCBC every year.

The Panel has a statutory responsibility to hold the Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner to account and meets on average 5 times per annum. The Scrutiny Manager and Scrutiny Officer support the Panel and organise Panel meetings. The support to the Panel includes advice and guidance as well as managing the Panel website, administration and complaints.

Staff and Resources in Democratic Services

- 5.26 The Democratic Services Team is managed by the Head of Democratic Services and each member of the Democratic Services Team provides specific support in the areas mentioned above.

The Senior Committee Services Officer oversees the committee services function and supervises the 4 Committee clerks. The Scrutiny Manager manages the scrutiny function and oversees the Scrutiny Officer, the PA to the Leader, and Deputy Leader, the PA to the Cabinet, the Mayors Assistant, and the Chauffeur and relief Chauffeur.

5.27 **Conclusion**

This report summarises the support provided by Democratic Services during the 2022-23 municipal year.

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. **SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 This is an Information Only report therefore an IIA is not necessary.

8. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no direct financial implications from this report and the function is managed within the allocated budget.

9. **PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 There are no direct personnel implications as a result of this report.

10. **CONSULTATIONS**

- 10.1 The views of the consultees have been reflected in this report.

11. **STATUTORY POWER**

- 11.1 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.

Authors: Lisa Lane Deputy Monitoring Officer and Head of Democratic Services
Catherine Forbes-Thompson Scrutiny Manager and Emma Sullivan Senior Committee Services Officer

Consultees: Christina HARRY, Chief Executive
Dave Street Deputy Chief Executive
Richard Edmunds, Director of Education and Corporate Services
Rob Tranter, Head of Legal and Monitoring Officer
Mark S. Williams Corporate Director – Economy and Environment
Councillor M James Chair Democratic Services Committee
Councillor L Phipps Vice Chair Democratic Services Committee
Councillor Nigel George, Cabinet Member Corporate Services and Property

Background Papers:

Democratic Services Committee 14th March 2023 – [Agenda Item 4 Member Support and Development.](#)

Multi Location Meetings Policy link – [Please click](#)

Gadewir y dudalen hon yn wag yn fwriadol



DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE – 20TH SEPTEMBER 2023

SUBJECT: CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSALS TO REPLACE THE WALES CHARTER FOR MEMBER SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consult with the Committee on the proposals to replace the Wales Charter for Members Support and Development with a Voluntary Self Evaluation Framework as described in Appendix 1 to this report. The views of the Committee will be conveyed to the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) following this meeting.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 To provide feedback to the WLGA on the proposals to replace the Wales Charter for Member Support and Development.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Members are asked to consider and comment the consultation document at Appendix 1 to this report in order to provide feedback to the WLGA.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To respond to the formal consultation of the WLGA.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 The Council has always recognised the importance of supporting Members' many and varied roles through a programme of targeted training and development. Indeed, the Council was the first in Wales to be awarded the WLGA's Wales Charter for Member Support and Development in 2007. The last award was received in 2019 and expired in 2022.

- 5.2 However, as members training provision has developed and evolved since the introduction of the Charter, it has become clear that there is now a need for a different framework which reflects a more progressive approach to sector led improvement, recent WG legislation, statutory and other guidance and which recognises the increasingly limited resources available in councils.
- 5.3 Members will be aware from a separate report on this agenda that targeted Member Training and Development will continue in the interim, however views are now sought on the replacement voluntary self-evaluation framework for councils to use to assess the effectiveness of the support they provide for councillors. This framework is a modernisation of the former Wales Charter for Councillor Support and Development which it replaces.
- 5.4 The views of the committee will be fed back to the WLGA following this meeting. Following the conclusion of this consultation, the WLGA intends to issue the framework as a shared support resource to all councils to use as they consider appropriate.

5.5 **Conclusion**

Members views are sought on the consultation document set out at Appendix 1 to this report.

6. **ASSUMPTIONS**

- 6.1 No assumptions have been made in relation to the content of this report.

7. **SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 As this is a response to a consultation document no integrated impact assessment is required.

8. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no specific financial implications arising from this report. Member training and development will be met from existing budgets.

9. **PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 There are no personnel implications arising from this report.

10. **CONSULTATIONS**

- 10.1 The views of the consultees are reflected within the report.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Local Government Wales Measure 2011

Author: Lisa Lane Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer

Consultees: Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
Christina Harray, Chief Executive
Dave Street, Deputy Chief Executive
Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director Education and Corporate Services
Mark S. Williams, Corporate Director Communities and Economy
Steve Harris, Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer
Emma Sullivan Senior Committee Services Officer
Cath Forbes-Thompson, Scrutiny Manager
Councillor M James Chair Democratic Services Committee
Councillor L Phipps Vice Chair Democratic Services Committee
Councillor Nigel George, Cabinet Member Corporate Services and Property

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Consultation Document.

**From Charter to Self-Assessment, the Evolution of the Wales Charter for Member Support and Development
Consultation July 2023
Background**

Twenty years ago, support and development for councillors in Wales was less well established than it is today. In 2002, the first improvement team at the WLGA (then Syniad), worked with every council and a cross party group of councillors to identify what further support and training opportunities councillors would find useful. Councils requested that good practice in this area should be agreed, described, and disseminated.

In response to this request, and in line with wider UK practice, the Wales Charter for Member Support and Development was co- developed by the WLGA and councils to:

- provide a framework for good practice across Wales,
- be an incentive for councils to provide their councillors with the support and development they needed, and
- provide assurance to councillors that they were being given the best support possible.

Over the last 20 years, the Charter has been further developed and instrumental in both enabling and recognising local good practice. The majority of councils, national parks and fire and rescue authorities have been awarded the Charter, whilst others have used it as a framework to identify good practice and check that they have effective support mechanisms in place.

Since the inception of the Charter, the local government landscape has changed significantly. The role of councillors has become even more challenging and wide ranging. Resources are scarce and ways of working post Covid radically different. Councils now have more sophisticated and well-established approaches to councillor support. The Welsh Government has introduced legislation with statutory guidance for councillors and democratic services. The improvement landscape has also evolved. In 2021-22 a new Improvement Programme was launched to support sector-led improvement across local government in Wales. Leaders and chief executives have expressed a commitment to sector-led improvement, underpinned by peer challenge, support and mutual aid.

Against this backdrop, the Charter has been reviewed by the WLGA and councils represented by their Heads of Democratic Services. We recognise that although the Charter provided a framework for good practice, impetus for, and recognition of councillor support in the past, there is now a need for a different framework which reflects a more progressive approach to sector led improvement, recent WG legislation, statutory and other guidance and which recognises the increasingly limited resources available in councils.

A Councillor Support Self-Assessment Framework.

Proposal

We propose that the existing Charter be replaced by a voluntary self-assessment framework that focusses on the support provided for councillors to deliver the outcomes needed by their communities. The framework aims to cover all aspects of good practice in councillor support. However, as priorities and resources differ between councils, it would be for councils to decide locally how much of the framework to use and which sections should be prioritised.

The framework would be developed according to the following principles:

1. Aims of the framework

- To provide assurance to councils that councillors are provided with the support, information, guidance, and development needed to enable them to secure the best possible outcomes for their communities.
- To provide an ambitious but pragmatic national framework of good practice which recognises legislative requirements, statutory and other guidance, the expressed needs of councillors and widely accepted examples of what works.

2. Principles for development

- To develop the framework collaboratively with councils, WLGA and other stakeholders to ensure that it meets needs and reflects national aspirations.
- To develop a framework which works with the wider programme for improvement and self-assessment in Wales with a potential to develop as part of the peer review programme if required. Councils may decide that this self-assessment should be led by democratic services committees.
- To develop a framework that reflects the needs of all councillors regardless of political party or independent status.
- To provide opportunities for practice sharing between councils.

3. Scope of the framework

The framework would cover:

- support and development for councillors in the widest sense to incorporate support provided by the whole council. Including, but not limited to, for example, democratic services, legal, digital, communications, learning and development teams, and directorates in their support for scrutiny, the executive and frontline councillors,
- the needs of all councillors before election, as new members and as experienced politicians,
- all councillor roles both within the council and in the community,
- the personal and 'professional' support to councillors within the influence of councils and
- the expectations placed on councils, officers, and councillors themselves.

4. Context

The framework will take account of, for example: the [Local Government and Elections \(Wales\) Act 2021](#), the [Electoral Administration and Reform White Paper](#),

the [WLGA Exit Surveys](#), the [WG survey of councillors](#), the [Civility in public life initiative](#), the [WG Guidance for Principal Councils](#) and the emerging local government improvement and self-assessment framework.

5. An example framework for discussion

The framework below is based on the proposed aims and principles and offered as a starting point for discussions between all stakeholders. Councils are invited to comment on the suitability of the framework as a shared, national foundation document that councils can use to develop their own approach to self-assessment recognising their local needs and priorities.

Democracy	Outcomes sought: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People are encouraged and enabled to stand for office. • Councillors understand their role and undertake it effectively and ethically. • Councillors can participate equally in council business. • Councillors are provided with the support, information, and resources they need. • Councillors represent the diversity of the people they serve. • Councillors are safe and protected from harm.
Theme	Questions to ask
Candidates and prospective candidates	<p>Does the council provide comprehensive information to prospective and official candidates about the role of the councillor, the council and any associated responsibilities and benefits?</p> <p>Are the approaches to the outreach to and information for prospective candidates made according to the need to encourage diversity in candidates and informed by the council's Diversity Declaration?</p> <p>Does the council signpost prospective candidates to information provided by the WG, WLGA, Electoral Commission and other organisations providing information for candidates?</p> <p>Do councillors, the council and local parties promote fair and respectful campaigning initiatives?</p> <p>Are prospective candidates informed about support for standing such as the Access to Elected Office fund?</p> <p>Are prospective candidates informed of the expectations placed on them to take part in induction and continuing professional development some of which will be mandatory?</p>
Councillors understand their role, responsibilities, and accountabilities.	<p>Are all councillors, when elected or when being selected for a specialist position, provided with information and guidance about all aspects of their role?</p> <p>Are all members provided with a competency framework to understand the skills and knowledge required of councillors?</p> <p>Have role descriptions (see WLGA models for examples) been formally adopted by the council and agreed by individual councillors?</p>

	<p>Have councillors serving on outside bodies been provided with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • guidance on their role and responsibilities, • legal information such as their accountabilities and interests, • an explanation of the expectations placed on them by their nominating council, • requirements for communication with and reporting back from the outside body?
<p>Standards of conduct</p>	<p>Do all councillors understand their responsibilities in adhering to the local code of conduct? Have they received local guidance and any information provided by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales?</p> <p>Do standards committees and chairs understand their particular roles and responsibilities?</p> <p>Do political group leaders promote and maintain high standards of conduct and cooperate with the standards committee?</p> <p>Have all councillors formally committed to undertake all aspects of their role with civility and respect towards each other, the public and officers in all settings and media?</p> <p>Are instances of bullying, harassment and intimidation dealt with quickly and effectively?</p>
<p>The constitution</p>	<p>Do all councillors understand the constitution including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the roles, responsibilities, and limits to the roles of committees, • the role of individual councillors and officers, • councillor /officer protocols, • meeting practice, • standing orders, • rules of debate, • public engagement, • roles on the council where councillor training is deemed mandatory?
<p>Officer support</p>	<p>Does every committee, panel, forum etc. have an appropriate level of officer support?</p> <p>Are councillors supported adequately in their collaborative and joint work with other councils or organisations, for example on corporate joint committees?</p> <p>Are councillors supported in their community and case work?</p> <p>Are all councillors provided with the information and research they are entitled to according to the requirements of the statutory guidance issued under section 8 (1A) of the Local Government Wales Measure 2011.</p> <p>i.e. All councillors are proactively and also in response to specific requests, provided with information, data, briefing and training relating to their decision making, committee work and community and casework.</p> <p>This service is:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provided equitably to all members according to a published protocol which includes standards and response times, • exclusive of information for party political use, • provided confidentially where necessary and with due regard to data protection and other information law, • undertaken by the council or external agencies, • proportionate and provided within available resources. <p>Democratic services committees ensure that the service is effective and adequately resourced.</p> <p>Do overview and scrutiny committees have dedicated support from officers who can provide impartial research, support, and advice?</p> <p>Has the nature of any support information including research services has been clearly publicised and explained to all councillors?</p>
Equality of access	<p>Are the arrangements made for the business of the council flexible and do they enable councillors to participate fully regardless of personal circumstances?</p> <p>Do meeting times, modes and venues reflect the expressed needs of councillors as closely as possible?</p> <p>Do councillors have equal access to meetings regardless of any protected characteristics?</p> <p>Do the arrangements for multi-location meetings meet the needs of councillors?</p> <p>Are councillors and other meeting participants able to use both Welsh and English in meetings?</p> <p>Do council recess times reflect the needs of councillors with, for example, caring responsibilities?</p> <p>Are job share arrangements for cabinet members supported so that the workload is clear and appropriate?</p> <p>Are occasional physical spaces available for informal meetings on request?</p>
Support for councillors' rights, safety, and wellbeing	<p>Are councillors provided with guidance on their rights and benefits. For example, salaries, family absence, job sharing for members of the executive/cabinet, allowances, tax and benefits, pensions, indemnities, data protection and freedom of information?</p> <p>Are councillors actively encouraged to take up the salaries and allowances they are entitled to and is foregoing allowances and salaries actively discouraged?</p> <p>Does the council have an informal duty of care in place which demonstrates a proactive commitment to protecting councillors' health and wellbeing? Is this recorded and available for members to view? Does it set out the nature of any support available to councillors for example counselling and health checks and those responsible for helping councillors access this support?</p> <p>Are councillors provided with guidance on maintaining their wellbeing and personal safety? For example, lone working, bullying and harassment?</p>

	Does the council act proactively to support councillors who experience bullying and harassment, including liaison with the police if appropriate?
Diversity	Has the council's Diversity Declaration been agreed by the Full Council? Is it monitored? Does the Diversity Declaration set out the actions that the council takes to ensure that councillors from underrepresented groups are actively encouraged to stand and given positions of responsibility wherever possible? Are councillors with special access requirements supported in their work in the council and community?
Digital	Have all councillors been provided with the equipment or funding to buy equipment, software, apps and connectivity required to undertake their role in the council offices, at home and when travelling in the council area? Does this include smart phones and laptops/tablets? Has full training been provided in the use of equipment and packages? Is technical support available? Are councillors sufficiently supported in their attendance at multilocation meetings? Are councillors supported in the use of social media through guidance on its use and online safety?

Community	Outcomes sought: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillors lead, represent, advocate for, and enable their communities. • Councillors make sure that local resources are available and maximised. • Councillors encourage citizen participation and innovation. • Councillors work with communities to make them sustainable and resilient.
Theme	Questions to ask
Public awareness	Does the council ensure that the public understand the role and responsibilities of councillors and of local MSs', MPs and community and town councillors? Do people know which tier of representative should be contacted for different local issues? Does the council publicise and promote the value of councillors to the community?
Communities contacting councillors	Are systems in place for local residents and community groups to contact their local ward councillor, and/or councillors with specific roles, if appropriate? Are these systems and standards for their application clearly articulated and publicised to the public and councillors?
Surgeries and community meetings	Is the support provided by the council for councillors to organise surgeries and community meetings adequate? Do the relevant officers attend community meetings when requested by councillors where appropriate?

	Is the extent of the support available to councillors clearly articulated to all councillors?
Community engagement, leadership, and co-production	<p>Are councillors informed, supported and resourced to enable their communities to be sustainable and resilient through, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • formal and informal community consultation • joint working with community leaders to meet needs at a local level, • co-production with local people of policies and actions which lead to successful communities? <p>Is this support for councillors clearly articulated to all councillors?</p>
Casework support	<p>Are adequate systems in place to support councillors in their casework?</p> <p>Is this support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provided equitably to all members according to a published protocol, • exclusive of party-political activities, • provided confidentially where necessary and with due regard to data protection and other information law, • proportionate and provided within available resources. <p>Are councillors provided with guidance on managing casework. Through, for example casework management systems?</p>
Oversight and safety	<p>Does the council have clear protocols in place for protecting the personal safety and wellbeing of councillors which are clearly articulated to councillors and the public?</p> <p>Are the expectations and access of the community managed so that councillors are not contacted inappropriately?</p> <p>Are councillors provided with information and guidance on managing their relationships with the public and maintaining appropriate boundaries?</p>

Learning	Outcome sought: Councillors have the skills and knowledge to deliver what local people need.
Themes	Questions to ask
The Councillor Development Strategy	Does the council have an effective and defined approach to councillor development which includes the expressed needs of every councillor and the needs of the organisation and community?
Personal development reviews	Does the council provide all councillors with useful personal support and development reviews undertaken by people competent to do so?
A learning and development Programme.	Does the council have an annual learning and development programme fully promoted to councillors? Can all councillors access the programme equally?

	<p>Is the programme regularly monitored, evaluated, and updated?</p> <p>Are councillors able to identify positive outcomes from the training such as improved understanding and performance and specific outcomes for the community?</p>
Induction	<p>Are all new or returning councillors provided with a comprehensive, prioritised, multi session, programme of induction which enables councillors to participate effectively during their first year of office?</p>
Quality of development	<p>Do councillors believe that the learning activities are sufficiently stimulating, relevant and provided in progressive and appropriate styles?</p> <p>Does the council have a systematic and effective approach to commissioning, developing, delivering, and evaluating its training and development activities?</p>
Participation	<p>Do councillors attend all the development opportunities that are relevant to them?</p> <p>Is any non-participation addressed?</p>
Learning from others	<p>Do councillors participate in shared regional and national development opportunities?</p> <p>Are councillors encouraged and supported to collaborate with other councils and national bodies to act as political peers, mentors and in networks to share approaches to the role of councillor, identify good practice and to contribute to sector led improvement?</p>

Gadewir y dudalen hon yn wag yn fwriadol



DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE – 20TH SEPTEMBER 2023

**SUBJECT: MEMBER SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT/MEETING TIMES
SURVEY – OUTCOME AND CONSIDERATION**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND CORPORATE
SERVICES**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To report the outcome of the Members survey relating to Member Support and Development and the timing of meetings.
- 1.2 To present a draft Member Support and Development Programme for consideration and approval and to make recommendations to Council regarding the timings of council meetings.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 At its meeting on the 14th of March 2023, the Democratic Services Committee endorsed a Training Needs Questionnaire which was circulated to all 69 County Councillors, Co-opted and Lay Members. The views of Voluntary Sector representatives and Town and Community Councillors on meeting times, venues and platforms were also sought as part of this process.
- 2.2 As part of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 (the Measure), the Authority is required to periodically undertake a training needs analysis and develop a forward work programme of training and development. The Council's commitment to Diversity in Democracy along with the requirements of the Local Government and Elections Wales Act 2021 seek to identify barriers to participation and the survey will assist in this regard.
- 2.3 In addition, Section 6 of the Measure requires the Council to survey the views of its Members in relation to the calendar of meetings.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Members note the responses to the Training Needs Analysis Questionnaire and approve the draft Members Support and Development Programme as attached in

Appendix 1.

- 3.2 Members note and consider the responses to the meeting times survey and make a recommendation to Council as to the continuation or otherwise of the meeting times for council meetings.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To provide the Democratic Services Committee with the responses to the survey analysis and agree a draft Member Training and Development Programme for 2023-2025, which is key in discharging the Council's responsibility and commitment to support Members to carry out their roles effectively.
- 4.2 Approval of the draft Member Training and Development Programme for 2023-2025 will allow Officers to procure appropriate Facilitators, secure the most appropriate venue/platform and set dates and times in line with the preferences expressed within the survey.
- 4.3 To provide the Democratic Services Committee with the outcome of the Meeting times survey and to make appropriate recommendations to Council.

5. THE REPORT

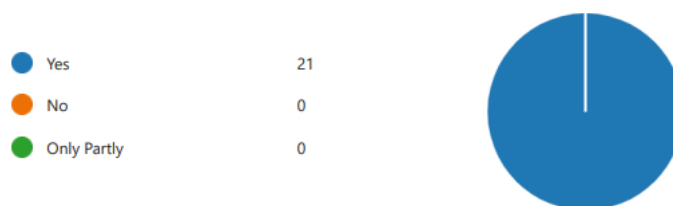
- 5.1 The Council has always recognised the importance of supporting Members' many and varied roles through a programme of targeted training and development. As Members training provision has evolved over time with a variety of platforms, e-learning and webinar options now readily available, training and development subjects can be delivered in a way that maximises attendance whilst minimising the demand on Members time, provide value for money and offer an enhanced learning experience.
- 5.2 The report seeks to provide an analysis of the responses received. The training and development programme arising from it sits alongside and builds on from the Members Induction process undertaken last summer and the continuing Members Seminar Programme which focuses on corporate and strategic matters. Together, both programmes provided Members with a good understanding of how the Council operates and the wider context in which local government is operating in the current challenging fiscal environment e.g. Treasury Management, Revenue Budget Management and Medium Term Financial Plan, Corporate Plan, Gwent Public Services Board, Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, Team Caerphilly Progress, Housing Act and the New Build Programme etc. This well established and comprehensive seminar platform in conjunction with the Induction and the Members Requested Programme will equip Members with the necessary tools needed in their ever changing and demanding roles.
- 5.3 Part of the Council's commitment to Diversity in Democracy is to understand barriers to participation and the survey specifically sought to identify why particular times or platforms might be difficult.
- 5.4 There were 21 responses received from Councillors giving a response rate of 31%. The Partner Questionnaire, which was circulated to Co-opted, Lay, Voluntary Sector Representatives and Town and Community Councillors generated a 27% response rate, this questionnaire specifically related to meetings times, venues and platforms

(hybrid, in person, remote).

5.5 Members Induction Programme Analysis

5.6 Questions 1-8 of the survey related specifically to the Members Induction Programme. 100% of responders felt that the Induction Programme provided them with a good introduction to the Council and the Councillor role. 90% of responders agreed that it was set at the right level, 20 of the 21 responders confirmed that they had felt well supported during the induction with 1 responded advising that they had not felt supported.

1. Did you feel that the Member Induction Programme provided you with a good introduction to the Council and Councillor role?



3. Was the Induction Programme set at the right level?



5. Did you feel well supported during your Induction?



Members who commented felt that more support was needed around the structure of full Council meetings; terms and references made during proceedings were not always clear in terms of meaning and impact on the meeting for newly elected Councillors. Members also commented that more ongoing support post induction was needed.

100% of responders confirmed that they found the Members Induction Handbook useful.

7. Did you find the Members Induction Handbook Useful



Additional comments on the overall Induction Programme also suggested more ‘face-to-face sessions with Councillors’ should be included and felt that ‘Councillors should be encouraged to come into the office environment more often as remote attendance might disadvantage them when it comes to career progression’. Members also felt that overall, ‘the Induction Programme was well put, easy to follow and extremely useful’.

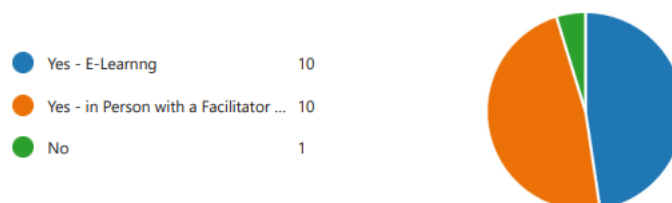
5.7 Training and Development Opportunities Analysis

Questions 9-21 provided suggested subject areas for Member Training and Development sessions and asked for Members to state their preference on the delivery of the session, through e-learning or in person with a facilitator, time and venue. The majority of responders expressed a preference for training to be delivered in person by a facilitator.

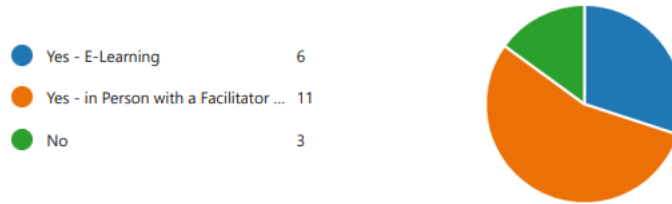
9. Ward Work and Surgeries (A blend of effective management skills for casework and a guide to resolving constituency correspondence and problems)



10. Community Leadership and Engagement (To provide members with an overview of the modern role of the Councillor being a Community Leader, working with Local Organisations, influencing Council decisions and policies and understanding the council's complex policy framework)



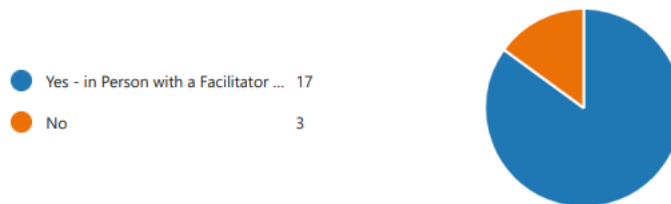
11. Information Technology - Outlook (Email), Word (Producing Letters and Documents), Teams (Provided by IT Training)



12. Chairing Skills (Practical Training on Chair Meetings)



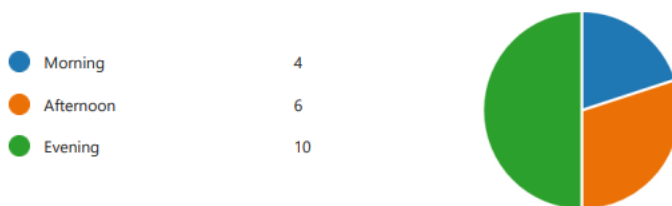
14. Question and Listening Skills for Scrutiny Committee Members (Practical advice on questioning and listening skills)



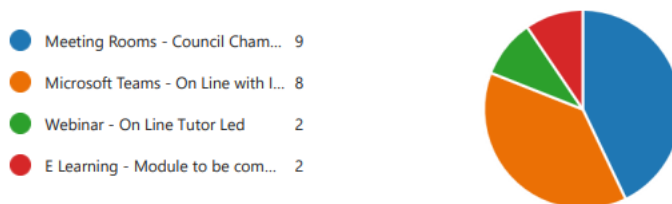
5.8 Suggested sessions on Information Technology, Chairing Skills (Practical Training on Chairing Meetings), Questioning and Listening Skills for Scrutiny received the highest number of responses and so these have been prioritised as the first sessions in the training programme. The Advanced Chairing Skills training session proposed in the survey has been brought forward and will take place on the 25th of September 2023. Invitations have been sent to Group Leaders and existing Chairs and Vice Chairs. A second session will also be scheduled to follow the Chairing Skills (Practical) for those Members aspiring to Chairing roles or wish to develop their skill set further having completed the initial training course. Public Speaking and Mentoring proved to be less popular options and considering the additional information provided by Members when asked what additional topics they would like to see on the programme, we will look to replace these sessions with ‘Challenging Chambers’ and additional Scrutiny training topics.

5.9 It is envisaged that training sessions will be 90 minutes in duration and in line with the preferences expressed by Members the sessions will be held at 5pm, through a mix of meeting room/in person provision and Microsoft Teams tutor led sessions. Officers will identify facilitators able to provide Teams/On-Line training for those subjects where the majority of responders expressed this as a preference.

20. Training Times - Please indicate which of the following times you would prefer?



21. Please indicate your preference for training provision.



5.10 Mentoring

17 of the 21 (80%) responders felt that Mentoring would be useful for both new and existing Members with 10 responders confirming that they would be willing to take on a Mentoring role.

Mentoring is usually organised by the political group with more experienced Members acting as mentors for newly elected Members. We will share this information with Group Leaders and can arrange for additional support from the WLGA on mentoring or for individual Members on request.

5.11 Meeting Times, Arrangements and Platforms.

Questions 22 to 36 sought Members preferences in relation to meeting times, platforms and current meeting arrangements (hybrid/multi-locational). The Local Government and Elections Wales Act 2021 stipulates that all Council meetings must be offered on a multi-locational basis. The technology required to support this has been challenging and through the survey Democratic Services wish to establish if Members found these arrangements satisfactory.

5.12 19 of the 21 (90%) responders agreed that current meeting arrangements were satisfactory with only 2 responders (10%) disagreeing. When asked about the duration and frequency of meetings again 90% of responders agreed that current arrangements were satisfactory.

22. Do you find the current arrangements for meetings satisfactory (i.e. hybrid where you can choose to attend in person or remotely)?



23. Do you find the current frequency and length of meetings satisfactory?



5.13 When asked to provide any additional information on meeting arrangements comments included:

'hybrid meetings lead to longer meetings'...
'the failure to remember to switch microphones on'... '
the general delays and often technical problems'... '
'In person meeting are far preferable for career development.'
'Reports are provided to read prior to the meeting so there is no need to go through them at the meeting'...
'A lot of time is taken up with questions already answered being asked again'...
'Some topics overlap with the Directorates and the introduction of all member Scrutiny meeting will cut down on duplication'...
'I have great concerns with the technology issues as some meetings feel disjointed and distant from fellow Councillors... I still haven't met all our new intake of Members from last year's election.'

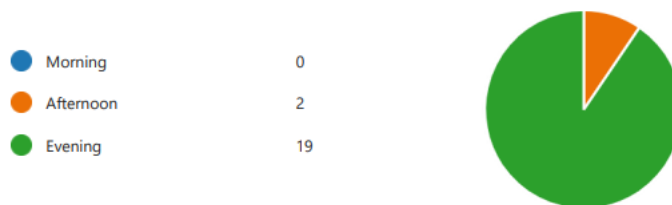
5.14 Questions 25-36 listed all the Council's formal committees and sought to establish preferences (for their personal committee membership only) on meeting times with a choice of morning, afternoon or evening. The majority of Cabinet supported the existing afternoon arrangements (*it should be noted that there was an additional response in relation to the timing of Cabinet Members - with 11 responses received in relation the 10 Cabinet places at the time of the questionnaire we have disregarded this anomaly for the purposes of the analysis). The outcome of the survey for the Appointments Committee and Licensing Committee on balance preferred alternative times to the existing arrangements with Appointments Committee members just favouring afternoon meetings, followed by evening meetings with morning meetings being the least favoured options. As meetings of the Appointments Committee are held on an ad hoc basis, officers will liaise with Committee members on meetings going forward to optimise the members requirements.

In terms of Licensing Committees the overarching full Licensing and Gambling and

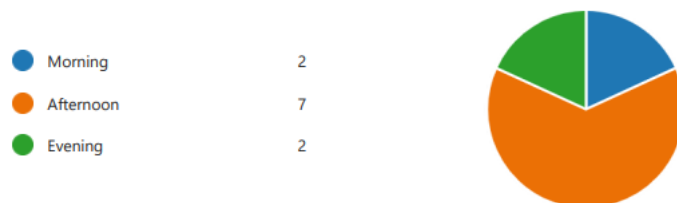
Taxi and General Committees are held on a much less frequent basis than the associated sub committees which have traditionally been held in the morning. On balance the outcome of the survey suggests that members would marginally prefer evening meetings followed by morning meetings. In general Sub Committees are convened as and when the business to be transacted requires, therefore it is not always possible to populate a timetable in advance. This in itself presents challenges in addition to the availability for evening meetings may be limited as Council, Planning Committee and Scrutiny Committees are already held in the evening. In addition, we must consider any resource implications for hosting and supporting evening meetings, together with any detrimental implications for participating public attendees (such as the impact on candidates for interview by the Appointments Committee or Taxi Drivers providing evidence to the Taxi and General Sub Committee whose main income may be generated during the evening)

The responses are illustrated below.

25. Full Council



26. Cabinet



27. Scrutiny Committees (including Joint Scrutiny)



28. Planning Committee

● Morning	0
● Afternoon	2
● Evening	11



29. Licensing Committee (Taxi and General and Licensing and Gambling)

● Morning	5
● Afternoon	1
● Evening	7



35. Appointments Committee

● Morning	2
● Afternoon	4
● Evening	3



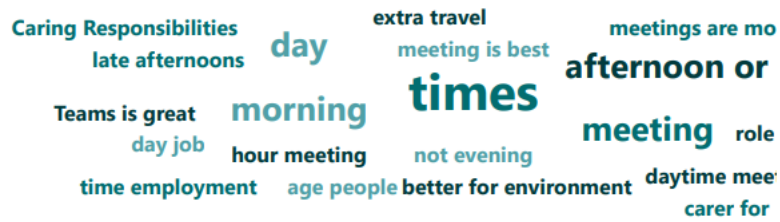
5.15 In order to aid Democratic Services Committee to identify barriers to participation, the final question of the survey asked Members to identify any time would be difficult.

33% of respondents noted caring responsibilities (older parent/children). 22% confirmed that due to full time employment daytime meetings would be difficult.

1 respondent felt that to *'attract working age people to the role of Councillor we must utilise late afternoons/evenings...'*

Another commented *'work during the day... Evening much better to fit meetings in... Teams is great, no need to extra travel and saves fuel (better for the environment).'*

Further comments included *'it's the time it takes for the meeting a 2-3 hours meeting is best in the morning not evening'* and alternatively another respondent commented *'I can attend most times, morning, afternoon or evening, I am happy to go with the majority.'*



5.16 Meeting Times Partner Survey

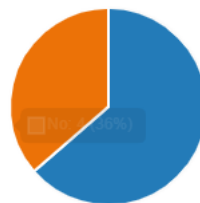
The meeting arrangements/times element of the survey was circulated to Voluntary Sector/Co-opted and Lay Members and Town and Community Councillors, which achieved a 27% response rate.

The majority of respondents found the current arrangements satisfactory and agreed that the current frequency and length of meetings was satisfactory.

1. Do you find the current arrangements for meetings satisfactory (i.e. hybrid where you can choose to attend in person or remotely)?

[More Details](#) [Insights](#)

● Yes	7
● No	4



2. Do you find the current frequency and length of meetings satisfactory?

[More Details](#)

● Yes	9
● No	2



Respondents to this survey commented that: -

'They should be more frequent and shorter... That suits me as I have no commitments on my time which may not be right for everyone.'

'Hybrid meetings are not effective; people need to be back in the room. The Chamber is not a good meeting place for partnership meetings where people need to mix, it makes it too confrontational to be sitting in rows facing the chair and screens...'

'No reason to continue with hybrid meetings now that Covid crisis is over...'

'Please can we meet in the Sirhowy Room again...'

'I think we need a minimum for 5 meetings per year to cover what is a comprehensive agenda...'

'CCBC and TCCLC Meetings are much better in person..'

'4 TCCLC meetings a year instead of 2 or 3 please'

When asked to identify any barriers that might prevent you from attending meetings at a certain time, respondents referenced *'caring responsibilities'*, *'school runs'* and for one responder preference for *'daytime rather than evening, reluctant to travel after dark due to infirmity...'* another responder referenced *'public transport'* and another referenced *'summer breaks'*.

dark Sep School
Summer breaks No reluctant infirmity
Public transport breaks Aug times
daytime rather than evening

5.17 Conclusion

The Members' survey is a valuable tool that provides insight into members requirements which in turn allows the Democratic Services team to align its arrangements to better support Members.

Member Training and Development Programme

The Member Training and Development Programme outlined in Appendix 1 will hopefully address the comments and feedback raised in respect of training opportunities for members. It is important that the development programme remains an adaptable "living" document which can change with the requirements of members individually and the Council as a whole. As such update reports will be brought to this committee to monitor the Programme and to ensure its delivery.

Timing of Meetings

The calendar of meetings is a decision for Council however Democratic Services will always strive to present a calendar that is accessible. Trying to achieve a Committee calendar which balances the numerous commitments taken forward by Members, plus a healthy work life balance, in addition to any work and or caring commitments is difficult. However, the opportunities and benefits which have arisen through multi location meetings has meant that some of the obstacles facing members can be overcome which in turn helps to promote diversity in democracy.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 No assumptions have been made in the report which is based on work undertaken

by the WLGA Charter for Members Support and Development and the requirements of the Local Government Measure (Wales) Act 2011 and the Local Government and Election Wales Act 2021.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 As the survey provided all members with the opportunity to submit their comments and suggestions both on their training and development needs and a platform to identify their meeting time preferences and any barriers to participation in Council business a specific integrated impact assessment has not been undertaken. The outcome of the survey will be used to employ a variety of topics, platforms and facilitators to mitigate these barriers and support Councillors roles as decision makers and scrutineers. A role that requires them to make decisions and recommendations that will impact the long and short term needs of Caerphilly County Borough Council residents; enable them to confidently scrutinise, challenge and hold to account, better assess appropriate interventions, and provide them with the skills required to work collaboratively and nurture their understanding of the importance of community involvement.
- 7.2 This report encourages the council to examine the way that business is conducted to ensure the equality of access and involvement of all Councillors.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The costs associated with the Member Development Programme will be met from the Council's existing Members' training budget provision.
- 8.2 There will be no financial implications associated with the calendar of meetings.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The administration of the Members Training and Support Programme means additional tasks for the Democratic Services staff, but these will be met through existing budgets.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 The report reflects the views of consultees.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 The Local Government Act 2000, Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, Local Government and Elections Wales Act 2021.

Author: Emma Sullivan, Senior Committee Services Officer

Consultees: Lisa Lane, Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer
Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
Christina Harray, Chief Executive

Dave Street, Deputy Chief Executive
Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director Education and Corporate Services
Mark S. Williams, Corporate Director Communities and Economy
Steve Harris, Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer
Cath Forbes-Thompson, Scrutiny Manager
Councillor M. James, Chair Democratic Services Committee
Councillor L. Phipps, Vice Chair Democratic Services Committee

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Draft Members Support and Development Programme 2023-25

Gadewir y dudalen hon yn wag yn fwriadol

DRAFT OUTLINE MEMBERS SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2023-2025

DATE AND TIME	VENUE/PLATFORM	FACILITATOR	COURSE OUTLINE
Monday 25 th September 2023 2pm – 3.30pm	In Person Sirhowy Room, Penallta House	David McGrath	<p><u>Advance Chairing Skills (Session 1)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of the Chair and meeting preparation. • Meeting procedures and processes. • Managing challenging behaviours and bringing meetings back on track. • Achieve robust decision making and recommendations. • Good Practice in Chairing Hybrid Meetings
Date To Be Confirmed 23 rd October 2023 30 th October 2023 5pm – 6.30pm	TEAMS	IT Training Unit	<p><u>Information Technology</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email and Calendar (Outlook) • Word – Documents and Letters • Teams • <u>Social Media</u>
Date To Be Confirmed December 2023 5pm – 6.30pm	In Person/Teams Sirhowy Room, Penallta House	David McGrath	<p><u>Challenging Chambers</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demystifying rules of procedure • Encouraging robust debate and civility in the Chamber • Chamber skills – improving your presence, impact, and effectiveness in the Council Chamber
Date To Be Confirmed February 2024	TEAMS	WLGA	<p><u>Being and Effective Scrutineer (Preparation and Pre-Meetings)</u></p>

5pm – 6.30pm			
Date to be Confirmed April 2024 5pm – 6.30pm	TEAMS	WLGA	<u>Questioning and Listening Skills For Scrutiny</u>
Date To Be Confirmed June 2024 5pm – 6.30pm	TEAMS	WLGA	<u>Managing Ward Work – Constituency Demands</u>
Date To Be Confirmed September 2024 5pm – 6.30pm	In Person/Teams Sirhowy Room, Penallta House	WLGA	<u>Chairing Skills (Session 1 – Practical Guide for New Chairs)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the role of the Chair • What makes a good Chair? • Preparation • Introduction to procedures and processes • Practical exercise and case studies
Date To Be Confirmed November 2024 5pm-6.30pm	In Person/Teams	David McGrath	<u>Advanced Chairing Skills (Session 2)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of the Chair and meeting preparation. • Meeting procedures and processes. • Managing challenging behaviours and bringing meetings back on track. • Achieve robust decision making and recommendations.
Date To Be Confirmed January 2025	Teams	Provider To Be Confirmed	<u>Community Leadership and Engagement</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to effectively engage with your community and encourage their engagement.

5pm – 6.30pm			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public/Constituency Meetings and the role of the Local Ward Member as Community Leader • Engagement and Participation techniques, tools, and skills.
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- Full details of course and dates will be provided once WLGA facilitators have been confirmed as courses are bespoke to the needs of the individual Council. The above programme provides an outline of the provision we hope to bring forward based on the responses from the Training Needs Analysis.

Gadewir y dudalen hon yn wag yn fwiadol