



DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE – 31ST MAY 2017

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, the conclusion is that adequate arrangements are currently in place.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 requires the Council to provide support to Members and for the Democratic Services Committee to monitor the support.
- 3.2 The Democratic Services Annual Report 2017 contributes to the well-being goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2016 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 and 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

THE REPORT

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

Committee Services

- 4.2 There have been 193 committee meetings arranged between the annual meetings of Council in 2016 and 2017. This includes a number of special scrutiny meetings to consider the medium term financial plan. All meetings were properly advertised, with agendas and minutes produced.
- 4.3 There have been 5 members' seminars organised during the past year, on a wide range of issues, as follows:
- Medium Term Financial Planning
 - Rent Smart Wales
 - Corporate Parenting Handbook
 - City Deal Programme
 - Treasury Management
- 4.4 Committee services successfully implemented the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards in respect of public meetings. The standards require that all agendas for public meetings are published in Welsh and that Cabinet minutes are also available in Welsh.

Members Training and Development

- 4.5 A number of Member training and support sessions have also been held as part of the training and development programme (including mandatory training, annual refresher training, and recommended training and requested training). A full review covering the review of the programme will be presented to the Democratic Services Committee in September 2017.

Scrutiny

- 4.6 Members of the Democratic Services team have provided support and advice to the Council's 5 Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings in 2016/17, including special scrutiny meetings to consider the Medium Term Financial Plan. A special Health Social Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee meeting was also held to consider Public Spaces Protection Orders for Dog Control, where external witnesses were given the opportunity to speak on the proposals. The support and advice at Scrutiny committee meetings is provided by the Scrutiny Manager, Scrutiny Officer and Solicitors who attend all meetings.
- 4.7 During 2016/17 Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee set up a task and finish group to consider Operation and Management of Council Owned Car Parks. The review group has met on 4 occasions and carried out site visits, the group agreed to reconvene following the local government elections to consider their findings and make recommendations.
- 4.8 The Scrutiny Review 2015 was carried out in response to the Wales Audit Office report 'Follow-up of the Special Inspection and Reports in the Public Interest', dated January 2015. The outcome of the review resulted in 22 recommendations that were reported to Council in October 2015. The Scrutiny Manager completed the implementation of the recommendations during 2016, which reduced the number of agenda items at Scrutiny Committee meetings to a maximum of four. Protocols for Cabinet Member Written Statements at Scrutiny, Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programmes and Report Requests have also been developed and are available on the Members Portal. These changes were in place from May 2016.
- 4.8.1 An evaluation of the impact of the changes has been completed, consisting of a self-evaluation and a peer review. The self-evaluation questionnaire for Members and senior officers was based on the 'Characteristics of Good Scrutiny' which is a recognised standard for measuring the effectiveness of scrutiny.
- 4.8.2 Scrutiny Leadership Group members took part in a peer evaluation with both Monmouthshire and Newport Councils during March to April 2017. Members were asked to observe two

meetings at each council and answer the questions used in the earlier questionnaire, insofar as they were able in respect of the meeting being observed. A report on the findings will be reported to the first meeting of Scrutiny Leadership Group following the AGM.

Civic Support

- 4.9 Members will be fully aware of the activities of the Civic Office as the Mayor gives regular updates at each full Council about the engagements attended. During the civic year for 2016 - 2017 a total of 196 engagements were attended. Members of the Democratic Services team provided continuous support to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor in all of their duties including organising the Civic Service and Christmas concert.
- 4.10 The Council Chauffeur provides chauffeuring service to the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Council Leader and other senior Councillors. In addition he provides support to Legal Services Team by delivering documents and liaising with Court and Legal Chambers.

Cabinet Office

- 4.11 During 2016, the PA to the Leader and Deputy Leaders decided to retire and it was agreed to advertise the position of PA to Leader, Deputy Leader and Cabinet. Subsequently the Cabinet support officer applied for and was promoted to the position. A decision was then made to delete the substantive position in order to make a contribution to the MTFP budget savings for Corporate Services. In order to ensure that Cabinet members have support when the PA is absent or unavailable the Mayors Assistant was relocated to the cabinet office. These arrangements have worked successfully, the wider team can provide additional support if required.

Other Support

- 4.12 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 2017.

Webcast title	Live date	Single IP address		Multiple visits by an IP address	
		Live viewers	All viewers	Live views	All views
Council	Thu, 12th May 2016 - 6:00 pm	16	61	18	81
Council	Tue, 7th Jun 2016 - 5:00 pm	6	49	10	68
Council	Tue, 19th Jul 2016 - 5:00 pm	41	155	50	238
Council	Wed, 28th Sep 2016 - 5:00 pm	4	28	4	45
Council	Tue, 11th Oct 2016 - 5:00 pm	31	88	38	127
Council	Tue, 22nd Nov 2016 - 5:00 pm	12	66	13	120
Council	Tue, 24th Jan 2017 - 5:00 pm	17	89	20	123
Council	Tue, 31st Jan 2017 - 5:00 pm	21	69	25	98
Council	Wed, 22nd Feb 2017 - 5:00 pm	20	88	24	130
Council	Tue, 7th Mar 2017 - 5:00 pm	10	51	22	98

- 4.13 The Council was one of the only Councils in Wales to publish 100% of Annual Reports for all Members in 2013/14, 2014/15 and 2015/16. This was due to the support provided by the Democratic Services Team in preparing these reports and templates. The team are due to start assisting with the preparation of these for 2016/2017 shortly.
- 4.14 The Council had 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 review of their training needs. Should any Member have any specific requirements such as specialist software to access reports, Democratic Services Team will assist.
- 4.15 Members who have access to their own or council provided surface device can also download the Modern.Gov application. This allows the user to select Caerphilly Council 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. Democratic Services Team can assist any Members who would like further information or advice on this service.
- 4.16 Democratic Services Committee considered the options for new IT equipment to be purchased following the local government elections 2017. This was considered in order to provide more flexibility for those Members needing access to email away from home. The committee were informed that Members could opt for a smaller laptop and a swivel token device (when using their own broadband provision), which allows access through any WiFi to the council email etc. This has been offered to new and returning councillors during the Member Induction, and will be implemented for new members in the first instance.
- 4.17 The Democratic Services Team made all the arrangements for the Member Induction and Training arrangements for the period following the local government election in May 2017. The induction commenced with a Presentation and a Marketplace event to give Members the opportunity to find out more about the Councils' services and meet with senior officers and other Councillors.
- 4.18 The induction timetable also included mandatory training such as code of conduct and information governance and data protection. Recommended training on safe and smart working practices which included how to work safely in the community. In addition specific training was arranged on individual committees and panels.

Staff and Resources in Democratic Services

- 4.19 In March 2016, the Democratic Services Committee designated the Scrutiny Manager as the Interim Head of Democratic Services. The Interim Head of Democratic Services has overall responsibility and statutory duties under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and manages the Democratic Services team.
- 4.20 Each member of the Democratic Services Team provides specific support in the areas mentioned above. In particular, the Senior Committee Clerk coordinates all committee services and manages the 3 Committee clerks and a temporary administrative assistant.
- 4.21 The Interim Head of Democratic Services (Scrutiny Manager) also manages the scrutiny function and oversees the temporary Scrutiny Officer, who coordinates the forward work programmes and deals with member/public requests as well as attending the scrutiny officers' network meetings. The Scrutiny Manager and Scrutiny officer attend meetings of Scrutiny Leadership group and attend all Scrutiny Committee meetings to discuss the forward work programmes, further support is provided at scrutiny meetings by the wider Legal Services team.

WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

- 5.1 This report contributes to the well-being goals as set out in links to strategy above. It is consistent with the five ways of working as defined within the sustainable development principle in the Act to ensure that councillors and co-opted members are supported take into account the wellbeing goals when making decisions, reviewing services and policies and consider the positive and negative impacts upon future generations, long term community resilience and economic, environmental and social capital.

6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

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

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no direct implications from this report.

8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

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

9. CONSULTATIONS

- 9.1 There are no consultations that have not been included in the report

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 It is recommended that Democratic Services Committee note the contents of the report and provide any comments about support for 2017/2018.

11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 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.

12. STATUTORY POWER

- 12.1 This report has been prepared following the Statutory Guidance relating to the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011; Chapter 3 Section 16: Democratic Services Committee.

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