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TUESDAY, 22ND FEBRUARY, 2022

TO: ALL MEMBERS OF THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

I HEREBY SUMMON YOU TO ATTEND A **VIRTUAL MEETING** OF THE **DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE** WHICH WILL BE HELD **AT 1.30 P.M. ON MONDAY, 28TH FEBRUARY, 2022** FOR THE TRANSACTION OF THE BUSINESS OUTLINED ON THE ATTACHED AGENDA

Wendy Walters

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Democratic Officer:	Michelle Evans Thomas
Telephone (direct line):	01267 224470
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Wendy Walters Prif Weithredwr, *Chief Executive*,
Neuadd y Sir, Caerfyrddin. SA31 1JP
County Hall, Carmarthen. SA31 1JP

**DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE
MEMBERSHIP – 5 MEMBERS**

PLAID CYMRU GROUP 3 MEMBERS

1. Councillor Tyssul Evans [Vice-Chair]
2. Councillor Emlyn Schiavone
3. Councillor Dai Thomas

LABOUR GROUP 1 MEMBER

1. Councillor Rob James [Chair]

INDEPENDENT GROUP 1 MEMBER

1. Councillor Irfon Jones

A G E N D A

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**
2. **DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS.**
3. **TO APPROVE AND SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 26TH NOVEMBER 2021** 5 - 10
4. **DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE TASK & FINISH GROUP FINAL REPORT - *DEMOCRATIC PROCESS - NEW WAYS OF WORKING*** 11 - 26
5. **DIVERSITY IN DEMOCRACY ACTION PLAN** 27 - 42

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Democratic Services Committee

Friday, 26 November 2021

PRESENT: Councillor R. James (Chair)**Councillors:**

W.T. Evans, E.M.J.G. Schiavone and D. Thomas

The following Officers were in attendance:

L.R. Jones, Head of Administration and Law

G. Morgan, Head of Democratic Services

N. Daniel, Head of ICT and Corporate Policy; Interim Head of Planning

J. Williams, ICT Operational Delivery Manager

H. Daniels, Learning & Development Advisor

S. Rees, Simultaneous Translator

E. Evans, Principal Democratic Services Officer

K. Evans, Assistant Democratic Services Officer

E. Bryer, Democratic Services Officer

Virtual Meeting - 10.00 am - 11.05 am**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor H.I. Jones.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS.

There were no declarations of personal interest.

3. TO APPROVE AND SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 23RD MARCH 2021

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd March, 2021 be signed as a correct record.

4. CARMARTHENSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S SCRUTINY FUNCTION - ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

The Committee considered a report providing an overview of the Council's Scrutiny Function and the respective Scrutiny Committees' work during the 2020/21 municipal year.

The Council had five Scrutiny Committees which normally met on a six weekly basis. The report provided an overview of the Council's Scrutiny Function and made specific reference to the work of the 5 Scrutiny Committees:-

- Policy & Resources
- Community & Regeneration
- Education & Children
- Environmental & Public Protection

- Social Care & Health

Councillor Giles Morgan (Chair of the Chairs & Vice-Chairs of Scrutiny Forum) advised that the committees had spent a considerable amount of time reviewing covid related issues. Thanks were expressed to Democratic Services for facilitating the changes that enabled meetings to continue.

It was asked how much travelling costs had been saved by having virtual meetings. The committee was advised that the exact figure would be circulated to the committee.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received.

5. MEMBERS ICT PROVISION

The Democratic Services Committee were asked to comment on the provision of Members IT equipment following the Local Government elections in May 2022.

The Head of ICT and Policy advised that it was proposed to continue providing a laptop, an iPad and BYOD facility for mobile devices. It was noted that the Authority also proposed to introduce Soft phones software to allow telephone calls over the internet and to remove the Authority provided broadband line.

The Committee was also asked to consider if the £20 communication allowance was a sufficient contribution towards the Council related business costs for broadband and telephone usage.

The following questions/observations were raised on the report:

- Reference was made to members purchasing their own kit, and it was stated that it would be beneficial to investigate this option. The Head of ICT and Policy advised that having Authority issued laptops and iPADS would make the provision of support much easier and he emphasised that members would no longer benefit from in-house IT support if they were to procure their equipment from an external provider.
- It was asked what was considered to be the minimum Mbps required for working remotely. The Committee was advised that around 30 Mbps was considered the benchmark. It was stated that some rural areas experienced connectivity issues and that the IT department was encouraging members to review their current broadband packages.
- The Committee agreed that the £20 communication allowance was a sufficient contribution towards the cost of broadband, and noted that there would be an opportunity for elected members to discuss with the IT division questions regarding connectivity requirements.

RESOLVED that the report be received.

6. INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES (IRPW) DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT - FEBRUARY 2022

In accordance with the requirements of Section 147 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, the IRPW had published its draft Annual Report setting out its determinations for the municipal year 2022/23.

The Democratic Services Committee considered the report, in accordance with its Terms of Reference on the implementation of reports issued by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales.

The Committee was advised that the Panel had taken the opportunity to reset the salaries of elected members to align with the average earnings in Wales. It was noted that given the Local Government Elections in May 2022, the Panel has determined that the new salary determinations would be effective from 9 May 2022 on this occasion.

The following questions were raised on the report:-

- It was stated that the proposed pay increase should not be supported and that an increase in line with inflation would be more reasonable. Concern was expressed that the proposed IRPW pay rise would be sending out the wrong message at a time of austerity.
- In response to a question regarding if members could opt out of the proposed increase in salary, the Head of Legal Services advised that members could decide not to take the full allowance. However, it was noted that members were encouraged by IRPW to take up the full entitlement.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that:

- **the report be received and**
- **that as part of the consultation process, representations be made by the Chair to the IRPW that a pay increase in line with the rate of inflation would be more appropriate.**

7. DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE - ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

The Head of Democratic Services presented the report which outlined the work of the committee during the 2020-21 municipal year and noted that due to the impact of Covid19 it had not been possible to hold the full cycle of Committee meetings for the year.

Whilst the schedule of meetings for the Committee had been reduced this year, the Committee had focussed its work on ensuring that the needs and requirements of Members were addressed and that appropriate arrangements made to support Members in their duties.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOVLED that the report be received and made available to members of Council for information.

8. DEMOCRATIC SERVICES FUNCTION

The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 requires the Council to designate one of its officers to the statutory post of Head of Democratic Services and provide that officer with sufficient resources to discharge the associated statutory functions.

The Committee considered a report detailing the staff, accommodation and other resources made available to the Head of Democratic Services in order to discharge those functions.

The Committee was asked to determine whether the services provided were adequate to deliver the democratic process for the forthcoming year.

.The following questions were raised:-

- The Committee noted the additional resources required for Hybrid meetings and it was stated that it would be more appropriate to have additional staff within Democratic Services as opposed to relying on assistance from other departments. The Head of Democratic Services advised that whilst the growth bid for additional staff had not been successful, appointments had now been made to the two vacant posts within the unit and the offer of support from other parts of the departments should be sufficient however resources would need to be kept under review.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received.

9. UPDATE ON MEMBER DEVELOPMENT TOOLKIT

The Democratic Services Committee received an update on the Member Development Toolkit, a dedicated page on the Democracy Pages which would support the Member Development Plan for 2021/22.

The following questions/observations were raised:

- It was stated that there was a significant amount of training that members attended, however this was not detailed on the Council website. The Head of Democratic services confirmed that the publication of training attendance data on the Council website was being considered and would likely be available post May 2022.
- It was asked when the Development Toolkit would be made available to Members. The Corporate Development Advisor advised that Phase 2 of the toolkit would be available in January for Members to comment and feedback their observation. It was anticipated that the full system would be live by May 2022.
- It was stated that attending daytime meetings and training events was difficult for some members who worked full time. The Head Administration and Law advised that the Authority had a statutory duty to survey all Councillors regarding the timing of meetings and that this would be undertaken after the election.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to:-

- **Receive the Toolkit of learning to support the Member development Programme.**
- **Agree a series of demonstration workshops for all members.**

CHAIR

DATE

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DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE28TH FEBRUARY 2022**DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE TASK & FINISH
GROUP FINAL REPORT*****DEMOCRATIC PROCESS - NEW WAYS OF WORKING*****Recommendations / key decisions required:**

- To consider the report and recommendations of the Task and Finish Group on New Ways of Working
- To refer the recommendations to Council for consideration.

Reasons:

- At its meeting on 23rd March 2021, the Democratic Services Committee agreed to **establish** a Task and Finish Group of 10 politically balanced members (which would automatically include the members of the Democratic Services Committee) to review members' requirements in order to determine the needs of elected members in driving the new way of working for the democratic services function.
- The recommendations contained within the report have been formulated by the Group following the consideration of a range of evidence over a series of meetings held between April 2021 and February 2022

Scrutiny committee consulted Not Applicable

Cabinet Decision Required NO

Council Decision Required YES

Cabinet Member Portfolio Holder: N/A

**Chair of the Task & Finish
Group:**
Cllr. Jeff Edmunds

Tel Nos. / E-Mail Addresses:

01267 224028
Jedmunds@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

TBC

Democratic Services Committee Task & Finish Group Final Report

Democratic Process - New Ways of Working

At its meeting held on the 23rd March 2021 (Minute 3 refers) the Democratic Services Committee established a Task and Finish Group to consider new Ways of Working for the democratic services function.

The Task and Finish Group were tasked with reviewing members' requirements in order to determine the needs of elected members in driving the new way of working for the democratic services function.

The work of the Task and Finish Group was partly superseded by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 which introduced a legal requirement for local authorities to make and publish arrangements for the purpose of ensuring that Local Authority meetings could be held by means of any equipment or other facility which means that multi-location meetings (a mix of physical and remote attendance) must be held and this is reflected in the report.

The Group met a total of 4 meetings between May 2021 and February 2022. In addition, the Chair and Vice Chair invited each political group to meet with them to discuss initial thoughts and obtain the views of elected members.

A total of 5 recommendations are placed before the Democratic Services Committee for its consideration and recommendation to Council.

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?	Yes- Task and Finish Report
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IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report.

Signed: Linda Rees-Jones Head of Administration & Law

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
NONE	YES	YES	YES	NO	NOT AT THIS STAGE	YES

Legal

The legal requirement for meetings of Principal Councils are set out in the Local Government and Elections Wales (Act) 2021 and previous legislation.



Finance

There are potential revenue and CO2 savings to working remotely, as members have an option to attend meetings in person or online and make use of accommodation closer to home.

ICT

Equipment and systems will be put in place to meet the needs of members in accordance with relevant policies.

Physical Assets

The Accommodation Strategy will take into account the report to make best use of assets to support the Democratic Process.

CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below:

Signed: Linda Rees-Jones Head of Administration & Law

1. Scrutiny Committee N/A
2. Local Member(s) – All members have had the opportunity to contribute to the review either through political groups or a member survey.
3. Community / Town Council – N/A
4. Relevant Partners – N/A
5. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations – N/A – Democratic Process only.

**Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information
List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

THESE ARE DETAILED BELOW:

Title of Document	File Ref No. / Locations that the papers are available for public inspection
Democratic Services Committee 23 rd March 2021	https://democracy.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=152&MId=4247&Ver=4

Democratic Services Committee Task and Finish Group Report

New Ways of Working



Contents

<i>Section</i>	<i>Page</i>
Chair's Foreword	3
Members of the Task and Finish Group	4
1.0 The Task & Finish Review	5
1.1 Objectives and Scope	5
1.2 Background	5
1.3 Work of the Group and its Approach	6
2.0 Key Findings	7
2.1 Budget & Resources	8
3.0 Conclusions	8
4.0 Recommendations	9 - 10
5.0 Relevant Legislation/References	10
Appendix – Meeting Dates & Attendance	11

Chair's Foreword

I am pleased to present the final report of the Task and Finish Group which has been seeking the views of elected and co-opted members on their preferred way of working for the Democratic Services function moving forward.

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 introduced a legal requirement for Local Authorities to **make and publish arrangements** for the purpose of ensuring that Local Authority meetings can be held by means of any equipment or other facility which means that multi-location meetings (a mix of physical and remote attendance) must be held and this has therefore pre-empted any decision the Group may have made in regard to formal meeting attendance. The Task and Finish Group would, however, wish to encourage members to attend the Annual General Meeting in person if possible and also to attend in person after the Local Government elections in May 2022 as this will benefit members through personal interaction.

This report covers the views of members in terms of what accommodation needs are required going forward.

It is with great sadness that the Vice-Chair of the Task and Finish Group, Councillor Mair Stephens sadly passed away before this report was placed before the Democratic Services Committee and Council. Mair was instrumental in the work of the group, and she will be sadly missed.

I would like to thank members of the Task and Finish Group and officers from Democratic Services and the Better Ways of Working project team for their advice and support and their contribution to the review.

Cllr. Jeff Edmunds
Chair of the Task and Finish Group

Members of the Task and Finish Group

		
<p>Cllr. Jeff Edmunds (Chair) New Independent Group</p>	<p>Cllr. Tyssul Evans Plaid Cymru</p>	<p>Cllr. Irfon Jones Independent</p>
		
<p>Cllr. Jean Lewis Plaid Cymru</p>	<p>Cllr. Mair Stephens (Vice-Chair) Independent</p>	<p>Cllr. Dai Thomas Plaid Cymru</p>
		<p>** Councillors Rob James and Dot Jones were originally appointed to serve on the Task and Finish Group but stood down from the Group at its first meeting. Therefore, the Group continued with 8 members.</p>
<p>Cllr. Emlyn Schiavone Plaid Cymru</p>	<p>Cllr. Elwyn Williams Plaid Cymru</p>	

1.0 The Task & Finish Review

1.1 Objectives and Scope

The Democratic Services Committee (DSC) is required to periodically review the level of support provided to members to carry out their duties and bring forward proposals to full council as to what is required.

At its meeting held on the 23rd March 2021 (minute 3 refers) the Democratic Services Committee agreed to establish a Task and Finish Group to consider new Ways of Working. The decision to establish the Task and Finish Group arose as the Authority had transformed its way of working due to the Covid19 pandemic and it was necessary to consult with elected members on how the Authority would operate its democratic process going forward.

As a result of the Covid19 pandemic the way the Authority convened democratic meetings changed significantly, as did the way the Authority provided support to elected members in their Councillor role.

Whilst the Authority has been holding all democratic meetings virtually, it was now time to consider how the democratic process will operate in the future, be that a hybrid approach or a continuance of virtual meetings only. It was also necessary to identify what support elected members require and how this can be delivered going forward (to include office administrative space and locations required).

Following its first meeting, the Group agreed that its main objectives for the review would be:

- To report to Council on member opinion on how the democratic function will operate in the future, to include member accommodation needs and how meetings will be convened going forward;
- To set an example and support the Council's initiatives i.e. carbon agenda, best use of resources etc;
- To take into account how the Authority's proposals compare with arrangements at other Local Authorities throughout Wales, being mindful that one size does not fit all.

1.2 Background

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 places a duty on Local Authorities to encourage local people to participate in decision-making by principal councils. Carmarthenshire has maintained its previous procedure in allowing the public to ask questions at Council, Cabinet and Scrutiny and to also make representations at relevant Committees i.e. Planning and Licensing, albeit virtually. Whilst not within the scope of this review, the Authority will produce a Public Participation Strategy for participation in the democratic process (comes into force in May 2022).

1.3 Work of the Group and its Approach

The Task and Finish Group's membership was as follows:

Group of 10 members on a politically balanced basis 5:2:2:1 (to include the 5 Democratic Services Committee members)

Cllr Tyssul Evans (PC)	Members of the Democratic Services Committee
Cllr Rob James (L)	
Cllr Irfon Jones (I)	
Cllr Emlyn Schiavone (PC)	
Cllr Dai Thomas (PC)	
Cllr Jeff Edmunds (NI)	Political Group Nominations
Cllr Dot Jones (L)	
Cllr Jean Lewis (PC)	
Cllr Mair Stephens (I)	
Cllr Elwyn Williams (PC)	

Councillor Jeff Edmunds was appointed Chair of the Group and Councillor Mair Stephens appointed as Vice-Chair of the Group. Councillors Rob James and Dot Jones stood down from the Group at the first meeting and these positions were left unfilled.

The Democratic Services Unit, based in the Chief Executive's Department, provided research and general support to the Group.

The following officers provided specialist advice and support during the Group's review:

- Mark Howard – Project Manager Better Ways of Working
- Linda Rees Jones – Head of Administration and Law
- Gaynor Morgan – Head of Democratic Services
- Michelle Evans Thomas – Principal Democratic Services Officer

The Group received a report from the Project Manager for Better Ways of Working on the work being undertaken by the Authority which included work to ensure that the Authority's accommodation strategy aligned with the Better Ways of Working proposals

The Task and Finish Group held a total of 4 meetings between May 2021 and February 2022. In addition, the Chair and Vice Chair invited each political group to meet with them to discuss initial thoughts and obtain the views of elected members on:-

- what accommodation Councillors felt was needed by them to fulfil their County Councillor role;
- suggestions for how meetings should be held going forward;
- what administrative, ICT and member development support was required and how this should be delivered.

Co-opted members were also approached by email to ascertain their views.

Following the sessions with the political groups the Chair and Vice Chair fed back to the Task & Finish Group who then met to agree and set questions for their all member surgery which was made available to both elected members and co-opted members in September 2021 and sought their views on how the democratic process should operate going forward.

2.0 Key Findings

The Group considered what had been the main positive and negative impacts of the Covid pandemic on members and staff involved in the democratic process, specific impacts on their roles and what aspects of the New Ways of Working should be embedded into future democratic functions. In addition, it discussed what has worked well and facilitated good new work practices.

The Group's main findings were:

- Feedback from both elected members and co-optees was generally consistent – everyone felt that democratic meetings and virtual contact with elected members had been working well. The work undertaken by Democratic Services, I.T. and Learning & Development was commended as it had taken a significant amount of training for both members and officers in order to move into the virtual meeting environment.
- Additional support was provided by the Democratic Services team for Chairs of Committee as for the first time a number of meetings were not only virtual but broadcasted live via the Authority's website.
- There was a general feeling that physical meetings allowed personal interaction, which was lacking in the virtual environment and new members in particular would benefit from meeting other members in person.
- Weekly communication with elected member via Democratic Services had been an excellent communication tool and well received.
- One major point stressed was that meeting remotely freed up time to enable those who have other work to do to join meetings; helping the carbon footprint and saving on travelling costs was also a major benefit.
- Some co-opted and elected members felt that there was a lack of personal interaction at virtual meetings.
- There were some issues regarding connectivity, and it was noted that members were and had been able to access council buildings to attend meetings if their broadband connection was poor or had developed a temporary fault.

- Some members felt that there was a need for both members and officers to be smart in their appearance at virtual meetings as it was noted that the dress code in some instances was very casual.

2.1 Budget & Identified Resources

The Authority has successfully procured WG grant funding for a hybrid solution in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Carmarthen and a new upgraded kit for the Democratic Services Committee Room at County Hall. This kit was installed in July 2021 and the Authority has been testing the functionality with Cabinet Members. However, the on-going Covid19 pandemic and new variants thereof has delayed the roll out of multi-location (hybrid) meetings, therefore virtual meetings will continue until further notice.

A proportion of the travelling budget for the democratic process has been submitted as an efficiency saving in view of virtual rather than physical attendance.

The Group recognised that both the virtual and a multi-location meeting environment placed additional pressure on the Democratic Services team as does the decision to webcast all formal meetings. The ongoing challenges and changing roles will mean that staffing resources to support the democratic process needs to be kept under review with additional support provided from other divisions if needed.

3.0 Conclusions

Following commencement of the review, the Task and Finish Group was advised that the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 had introduced a legal requirement to hold multi-location meetings from 1st April 2021. This, however, corresponded with the findings of the consultations with the political groups and the all member survey, where a majority of members had expressed a preference for the hybrid approach.

The Group acknowledged the challenges of multi-location meetings for Committee Chairs and the support staff at both Democratic Services and IT.

4.0 Recommendations

The Task and Finish Group recommends to the Democratic Services Committee and full Council that:

Recommendation One

It notes the legal requirement under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 that a Local Authority must make and publish arrangements for the purpose of ensuring that Local Authority meetings are able to be held by means of any equipment or other facility which enables persons who are not in the same place to attend the meetings. The Group therefore supports a move to a multi-location meeting environment as per the Act.

The Task and Finish Group does however encourage all members to attend physically for the Annual Meeting, the member induction launch and the first formal meeting of the Council in an election year.

Recommendation Two

That elected members (as is the case for officers) be permitted to book meeting spaces at both buildings owned by the Authority and at partner agency buildings. This would allow members to hold meetings with their constituents/hold surgeries in an office environment.

(The Group notes that the Cabinet can put in place its own arrangements)

Recommendation Three

That facilities for members be provided at the Authority's main administrative building as per existing arrangements i.e. Members' Lounge, Offices for Cabinet Members, Chair of Council and the Leader of the largest Opposition Group. The Members' Lounge should be bigger than the existing room with additional IT facilities provided. These arrangements to be reviewed regularly to ensure that the accommodation provision remains fit for purpose. Increasing or decreasing space based on usage as required.

Recommendation Four

The Group would encourage Chairs and Vice-Chairs to attend meetings in person in order to benefit from direct support from Democratic Services. This recommendation is made due to the complexity of running two systems (physical and remote) side by side in one meeting.

Recommendation Five

Notes the findings of the timing of meetings survey and acknowledges that a further survey will be undertaken once the new Council has been elected in May 2022.

5.0 Relevant Legislation/References:-

Reference	Link/Location
Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asc/2021/1/contents/enacted
Democratic Services Task and Finish Group Survey Findings	Democratic Services Unit, County Hall, Carmarthen
Better Ways of Working Strategic Group	Transform, Innovate and Change, St Davies Park, Carmarthen.

6.0 Appendices

Appendix A - Task & Finish Group meetings and attendance

Appendix A – Task & Finish Group meetings and attendance

Meeting	Councillors Present	Officers Present
9 a.m. 21 st May 2021 Virtual Meeting	Cllr Jeff Edmunds (NI) Cllr Tyssul Evans (PC) Cllr Rob James (L) Cllr Dot Jones (L) Cllr Irfon Jones (I) Cllr Jean Lewis (PC) Cllr Emlyn Schiavone (PC) Cllr Mair Stephens (I) Cllr Dai Thomas (PC) Cllr Elwyn Williams (PC)	Linda Rees Jones Mark Howard Gaynor Morgan Michelle Evans Thomas Siwan Rees
10 a.m. 8 th September 2021 Virtual Meeting	Cllr Jeff Edmunds (NI) Cllr Tyssul Evans (PC) Cllr Irfon Jones (I) Cllr Jean Lewis (PC) Cllr Emlyn Schiavone (PC) Cllr Mair Stephens (I) Cllr Elwyn Williams (PC)	Mark Howard Gaynor Morgan Michelle Evans Thomas Siwan Rees
2 p.m. 23 rd November 2021 Virtual Meeting	Cllr Jeff Edmunds (NI) Cllr Tyssul Evans (PC) Cllr Jean Lewis (PC) Cllr Emlyn Schiavone (PC) Cllr Mair Stephens (I) Cllr Elwyn Williams (PC)	Mark Howard Gaynor Morgan Siwan Rees
10 a.m. 11 th February 2022 Virtual Meeting	Cllr Jeff Edmunds (NI) Cllr Tyssul Evans (PC) Cllr Irfon Jones (I) Cllr Jean Lewis (PC) Cllr Emlyn Schiavone (PC) Cllr Dai Thomas (PC) Cllr Elwyn Williams (PC)	Mark Howard Gaynor Morgan
Political Group Sessions with Chair & Vice Chair of T&F Group	Independent Group & Unaffiliated Member – 30 th June 2021 New Independent Group – 30 th June 2021 Plaid Cymru Group – 28 th June 2021 Labour Group – not accepted.	
Co-opted Member Correspondence	15 th July 2021	

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE 28TH FEBRUARY 2022

DIVERSITY IN DEMOCRACY ACTION PLAN

RECOMMENDATIONS / KEY DECISIONS REQUIRED:

That the Diversity in Democracy action plan be approved.

REASONS:

Council at its meeting held on the 14th July 2021 resolved to commit to being a 'Diverse Council' and endorsed the WLGA Council Diversity in Democracy declaration. In addition Council agreed to tasked the Democratic Services Committee with developing an Action Plan in advance of the 2022 local government election.

Scrutiny Committee consulted	Not applicable
Cabinet Decision Required	NO
Council Decision Required	YES

Relevant portfolio holder:- Cllr Emlyn Dole (Leader and WLGA Council representative); Cllr Ann Davies

Directorate Name of Head of Service: Linda Rees Jones Report Author: Gaynor Morgan	Chief Executive's Designations: Head of Administration & Law Head of Democratic Services	Tel Nos. 01267 224012 LRJ 01267 224026 GM E Mail Addresses: gmorgan@cararthenshire.gov.uk
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

DIVERSITY IN DEMOCRACY ACTION PLAN

Council at its meeting held on the 14th July 2021 (Minute 5 refers) resolved to commit to being a 'Diverse Council' and endorsed the WLGA Council Diversity in Democracy declaration. In addition Council agreed to task the Democratic Services Committee with developing an Action Plan in advance of the 2022 local government election.

A Draft Diversity in Democracy Action Plan is set out in **Appendix A**. The objectives within the Action Plan are based on those suggested by the Welsh Government. However, others can be added if so desired.

The Local Government and Elections Wales (Act) 2021 includes a number of provisions promoting diversity in local government including:

- An entitlement to Job sharing for executive members and committee chairs.
- A duty on principal councils to produce a Public Participation Strategy encouraging people to participate in decision making and promoting awareness of how to become a member of the council.
- A duty on political group leaders to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members of their group.
- Electronic broadcasting of full Council meetings.
- The ability to have multi-location attendance at council meetings including physical, hybrid and remote attendance.
- Provisions enabling the maximum period of absence for each type of family absence for members of local authorities to be specified within regulations and for adoptive leave to reflect that which is available to employees.

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?

Appendix 1 – Draft Action Plan
Appendix 2 - Letter from WLGA dated 15th April 2021

IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report :

Signed: Linda Rees Jones, Head of Administration & Law

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
YES	NONE	NOT AT THIS STAGE	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities

The Local Government and Elections Wales (Act) 2021 includes a number of provisions promoting diversity in local government

The Diversity in Democracy Plan will also contribute towards the objectives of the Council's Strategic Equality 2020-2024:

- Being a leading employer
- The needs and rights of people with protected characteristics shape the design of services
- Safe and cohesive communities that are resilient, fair and equal
- Improving access to our services and access to our environment

Finance

Not at this stage. However the WLGA Diversity in Democracy Programme suggests resettlement grants for senior salary holders which if laid before Welsh Government may have financial implications for the Authority.

CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below

Signed: Linda Rees Jones, Head of Administration & Law

1.Scrutiny Committee Not applicable

2.Local Member(s) Not applicable

3.Community / Town Council Not applicable

4.Relevant Partners Not applicable

5.Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations Not applicable

**Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information
List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

THESE ARE DETAILED BELOW:

Title of Document	File Ref No.	Locations that the papers are available for public inspection
Local Government & Elections Wales Act 2022		https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asc/2021/1/contents/enacted`
Council Meeting – 14 th July 2021		https://democracy.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=155&MIId=4394&Ver=4
WLGA Council – 5 th March 2021		http://www.wlga.wales/council-special-meeting-diversity-in-democracy

Carmarthenshire County Council
Diversity in Democracy Draft Action Plan

	Objective	What we have done/aim to do:-	By when:-	Which Officer(s) will lead
1	Increase understanding of different tiers of government in Wales, the role each plays in society and how they operate.	Distribution and promotion of Welsh Government Guidance/ educational resources to accompany the extension of the franchise to 16 and 17 year olds in Wales.	Resources have been developed by WG and have been distributed to schools	Elections Manager/ Comms Team
		Overview of the Council website page https://www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/home/council-democracy/councillors-ams-and-mps/ that includes the 'Becoming a Councillor' page to be reviewed and promoted.	November 2021	Head of Democratic Services/Elections Manager
		Undertake a communications campaign with general and targeted messaging. We will specifically target Women, BAME, Disabled, LGBTQ+ & Young People.	Early 2022	Marketing and Media Manager/Engagement Officer
		Work with key stakeholders and representative organisations to ensure qualifying citizens are aware of their right to vote in certain elections and their right to stand as a Candidate in certain elections.	Early 2022	Electoral Services Manager

	Objective	What we have done/aim to do:-	By when:-	Which Officer(s) will lead
2	Increase engagement with the public to raise awareness of the role and activities of the Council, and how the public can better inform local decision making	Promote Council Constitution Guide as per the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. The full Council Constitution is available at https://www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/home/council-democracy/the-council/councils-constitution/	March 2022	Monitoring Officer / Head of Democratic Services
		Develop Public Participation Strategy Scheme for compliance with duty under the 2021 Act, which will link in with the Consultation and Engagement Strategy. (WG Guidance awaited)	February/March 2022	Monitoring Officer / Head of Democratic Services
		Introduce a petition scheme and e petition facility on the Authority's website.	May 2022	Head of Democratic Services
		Continue to 1) webcast meetings as specified under the 2021 Act, 2) provide facilities for members of the public to make representations/ask questions at Council/Committees in person or via remote attendance	In place	Head of Democratic Services

	Objective	What we have done/aim to do:-	By when:-	Which Officer(s) will lead
		Encourage each Political Group to create a Diversity Champion to ensure that Councillors from under-represented groups are represented whenever possible in high profile, high influence roles.	March 2022	Political Group Leader / Head of Democratic Services
3	Increase awareness of the role of Councillors, the contribution they make to society and how to become a Councillor	<p>Overview of the Council website page includes the 'Be a Councillor' page to be reviewed and promoted and to include references to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What being a Councillor entails. • Salary & Allowances • Promoting / facilitating processes. • The Training available to Councillors. <p>https://www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/home/council-democracy/councillors-ams-and-mps/</p> <p>Link to any training / informative materials available with the WLGA, WG etc.</p>	In place and ongoing	Head of Democratic Services / Marketing and Media Manager
		<p>Engage with Town and Community Councils to promote the 'Be a Councillor page' or create their own</p> <p>https://www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/home/council-democracy/councillors-ams-and-mps/how-to-become-a-councillor/#.YY5oyYj7TIU</p>	January-March 2022	Town & Community Council Forum/HoDS/Marketing & Media

	Objective	What we have done/aim to do:-	By when:-	Which Officer(s) will lead
		Seek the participation of Political Group Leaders to champion the diversity expectations within the selection processes of their Political Parties. To encourage Political Group Leaders to promote the advice available to future candidates or individuals considering standing for office at the earliest opportunity.	January – March 2022	Chief Executive / Head of Democratic Services
4	Greater respect & support for those standing for and securing elected office in Wales	Promote duty on Political Group Leaders to promote high standards of conduct.	January – March 2022	Political Group Leaders / Monitoring Officer
All Councillors & Co-opted Members required to have mandatory Code of Conduct Training. Refresher at least once during a term of office and also if the Code is amended.		Summer 2022	Monitoring Officer / Head of Democratic Services	
Standards Committee to monitor compliance in relation to standards of conduct and provide training.				
		Promote the Welsh Government's fund for Access to Elected Office to assist disabled people to stand for elected office at the 2022 Local Elections.	Ongoing - Comms message has already been circulated.	Political Group Leaders / Head of Democratic Services

	Objective	What we have done/aim to do:-	By when:-	Which Officer(s) will lead
5	Comprehensive training and awareness programme available through a variety of routes available for Councillors to support them in their role as Councillors.	Review the Member Induction Programme and the ongoing Member Development Programme. Encourage Member to attend all training sessions, E-Learning and make use of the All Wales Training Materials for Councillors - led by the WLGA.	In Place and Ongoing	Head of Democratic Services / Democratic Services Committee/ Learning and Development Advisor
		Encourage returning Councillors to provide mentoring / shadowing for first time Councillors and those that request it and to undertake Personal Development Reviews for their members with assistance from Learning and Development, as required.	Ongoing	Political Group Leaders/ Head of Democratic Services/Learning and Development Advisor
6	Improve the safety of Councillors and their families when undertaking their Council duties	Comply with the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 by ensuring that official addresses are published on Council website and in the Register of Interest.	May 2022	Monitoring Officer / Head of Democratic Services
		Include Personal Safety and Lone Working training in the New Member induction programme to ensure members' safety. Promote the Lone Working Policy and guidance.	May 2022	Head of Democratic Services/Learning and Development Advisor.
		All Councillors to have identity cards to allow secure access to Council buildings	In place.	Head of Democratic Services
		Social Media Safety training to be delivered to members through the Councillor Induction & Training Programme and built upon during their term of office.	May-September 2022	Marketing and Media Manager

	Objective	What we have done/aim to do:-	By when:-	Which Officer(s) will lead
		Promote the WLGA's advice and support service to individual Councillors who receive online abuse.	In place and ongoing	Head of Democratic Services
7	Maximise opportunities for individuals to work in ways that enable them to achieve a work / life balance which protects their welfare and wellbeing and allows them to manage any caring / dependency relationships.	Introduction of a Multi-Location Meetings Policy encouraging remote and physical attendance at meetings.	Early 2022	Monitoring Officer /Head of Democratic Services
Comply with the requirements of the Local Government and Elections(Wales) Act 2021 in relation to the promote job-sharing by Executive Leaders and other Office holders.		Constitution amended May 2021 and ongoing as elements of the Act come into force.	Monitoring Officer/ Head of Democratic Services	
Promote <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Absence provisions for Councillors. • Allowances and Contribution Towards Costs of Care and Personal Assistance available to Councillors and Co-opted Members as appropriate. • Take up of allowances and expenses 		January - July 2022	Monitoring Officer. Head of Democratic Services	

	Objective	What we have done/aim to do:-	By when:-	Which Officer(s) will lead
		Review Council, Cabinet & Committee meeting times to ensure flexibility to suit Committee Members.	To be undertaken following LG Election in May 2022 and undertaken at least once per term of office.	Head of Democratic Services.
8	Assess the effectiveness of the provisions in 2011 Measure in relation to data collection, and in relation to other candidate data that could be collected in order for Political Parties to support diverse candidates at elections	Undertake a diversity and inclusion survey with Members which will provide a benchmark for future elections and allow feedback to Political Group Leaders.	Summer 2022	Policy Team / Head of Democratic Services

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Dyddiad /Date:
Gofynnwch am/Please ask for:
Llinell uniongyrchol/Direct line:
Ebost/Email:

15 April 2021
Daniel Hurford
029 20468615
daniel.hurford@wlga.gov.uk



To:
Group Leaders
Chairs of Councils
Chairs of Democratic Services Committees

cc WLGA Council, Chief Executives & Heads of Democratic Services

Dear colleagues,

Diversity in Democracy

As attention understandably focuses on the Senedd elections in a little over a month's time, it is important we look ahead and begin planning for the local elections in May 2022.

One of the key messages of the WLGA's Leadership Academy is that 'you need to be ordinary enough to be a councillor, but also extraordinary enough to be a councillor'.

There is no doubt that councillors have been extraordinary during the past twelve months of the coronavirus pandemic. But to be 'ordinary', councillors also need to be like the people they represent and reflect the diversity of the communities they serve. Despite previous action and campaigns, progress has been slow and we all recognise there remains a lack of diversity in our councils.

We need more women, more young people, more Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people, more disabled and LGBTQ+ candidates standing in 2022.

The WLGA has therefore committed to making a step change in local government diversity at the 2022 local elections. The WLGA Council endorsed the enclosed Diversity in Democracy report at a special meeting earlier this month. The report is the culmination of the work of a cross-party working group and builds on the action plans and ambitions of councils and partners.

The WLGA Council debate was passionate and progressive and there was unanimous support for concerted and collective action across the family of local government and within political parties.

Dr Chris Llewelyn
Prif Weithredwr
Chief Executive

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**Croesawn ohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg a byddwn yn ymateb i ohebiaeth yn yr un iaith.
Ni fydd defnyddio'r naill iaith na'r llall yn arwain at oedi.**

We welcome correspondence in Welsh and English and will respond to correspondence in the same language.
Use of either language will not lead to a delay.

The WLGA will take forward several actions nationally and we have already launched a beacouncillor.wales website. As Group Leaders, we will make representations to political parties to take action and make progress and we will also make the case to the Welsh Government and the Independent Remuneration Panel that councillors should be entitled to 'resettlement grants' (effectively redundancy payments) should they lose their seat at an election.

The Council recognised the diversity work already under way locally but called for concerted and ambitious local action. We would therefore be grateful if you could work with your political colleagues and prioritise action locally, promoting the take-up of members' allowances and progressing 'Diverse Council' declarations by the summer.

Members' allowances play a critical role in encouraging greater diversity; some councillors can be disproportionately affected if they are on low incomes or have caring responsibilities. Many councillors are dissuaded from claiming their full entitlements to allowances, such as reimbursements of costs of care or travel, due to peer or public pressure. The WLGA Council therefore unanimously agreed that we need to foster a culture where all councillors are encouraged and supported to claim any necessary allowances or expenses to which they are entitled, and we ask that you lead and encourage this culture locally.

The WLGA Council also unanimously agreed that all councils should commit to a declaration by July 2021 on becoming 'Diverse Councils' in 2022, to provide a clear, public commitment to improving diversity. The report includes an 'outline' Declaration to:

- Provide a clear, public commitment to improving diversity;
- Demonstrate an open and welcoming culture to all;
- Consider staggering council meeting times and agreeing recess periods to support councillors with other commitments; and
- Set out an action plan of activity ahead of the 2022 local elections.

Councils may however wish to undertake further action or commitments within their Declarations according to local priorities.

The WLGA Council discussed the merits of positive action and there was support for the use of voluntary quotas in local elections; this is a matter for local groups and parties but where such voluntary approaches have been adopted in the past, there has been significant progress in terms of gender balance. The WLGA Council also unanimously agreed that councils should set targets to be representative of the communities they serve at the next elections.

Councils' local diversity work will be supported by a national awareness raising, publicity and support through the WLGA and Welsh Government. WLGA officials will be meeting with Heads of Democratic Services in April to share ideas and approaches to develop local Diverse Council Declarations.

We are confident you will share the WLGA Council's commitment and look forward to working with you in promoting Diversity in Democracy and achieving our shared ambition to ensure our council chambers better reflect the diversity of the communities they serve following the 2022 local elections.

Yours sincerely,



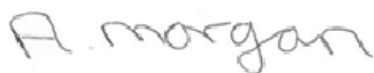
Cllr Huw David
WLGA Presiding Officer



Cllr Mary Sherwood
Joint WLGA Spokesperson for Equalities & Co-Chair of Working Group



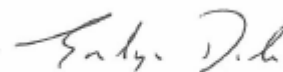
Cllr Susan Elsmore
Joint WLGA Spokesperson for Equalities & Co-Chair of Working Group



Cllr Andrew Morgan,
WLGA Leader



Cllr Hugh Evans
WLGA Independent Group Leader



Cllr Emlyn Dole
WLGA Plaid Cymru Group Leader



Cllr Peter Fox
WLGA Conservative Group Leader

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