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MONDAY 5 JUNE 2023

TO: ALL MEMBERS OF THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

I HEREBY SUMMON YOU TO ATTEND A MEETING OF THE **DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE** WHICH WILL BE HELD IN THE **CHAMBER - COUNTY HALL, CARMARTHEN. SA31 1JP AND REMOTELY AT 10.00 AM ON FRIDAY, 9TH JUNE, 2023** FOR THE TRANSACTION OF THE BUSINESS OUTLINED ON THE ATTACHED AGENDA

Wendy Walters

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Democratic Officer:	Martin S Davies
Telephone (direct line):	01267 224059
E-Mail:	MSDavies@carmarthenshire.gov.uk
This is a multi-location meeting. Committee members can attend in person at the venue detailed above or remotely via the Zoom link which is provided separately.	
The meeting can be viewed on the Authority's website via the following link:- https://carmarthenshire.public-i.tv/core/portal/home	

Wendy Walters Prif Weithredwr, *Chief Executive*,
Neuadd y Sir, Caerfyrddin. SA31 1JP
County Hall, Carmarthen. SA31 1JP

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

PLAID CYMRU GROUP - 2 Members

Cllr. Hazel Evans (Committee Member)

Cllr. Tyssul Evans (Committee Member)

LABOUR GROUP - 2 Members

Cllr. Lewis Davies (Chair)

Cllr. Philip Warlow (Committee Member)

INDEPENDENT GROUP - 1 Members

Cllr. Fiona Walters (Committee Member)

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 8TH SEPTEMBER 2022** 5 - 8
- 4. MEMBER ENQUIRY REVIEW** 9 - 40
- 5. UPDATE ON MEMBER INDUCTION PROGRAMME & ANNUAL PLAN** 41 - 54
- 6. COUNCILLORS' ANNUAL REPORTS** 55 - 66
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- 8. DEMOCRATIC SERVICES FUNCTION** 73 - 80
- 9. DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PLAN** 81 - 86

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DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE**8 SEPTEMBER 2022****PRESENT (In Person):** Councillor L. Davies (Chair)**Councillors (Virtually):**

W.T. Evans, F. Walters, P.T. Warlow and
Councillor K.V. Broom – Substitute for Councillor H.A.L. Evans.

The following Officers were in attendance (In Person):

G. Morgan, Head of Democratic Services;
S. Rees, Simultaneous Translator;
J. Owen, Democratic Services Officer [Minute taker].

The following Officers were in attendance (Virtually):

H. Daniels, Learning & Development Advisor;
M. Evans Thomas, Principal Democratic Services Officer.
J. Owens, Democratic Services Officer;

Chamber, County Hall, Carmarthen and remotely – 10:00am - 10:21am**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor H.A.L. Evans and Linda Rees Jones, Head of Administration and Law.

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 28TH FEBRUARY 2022

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 28th February, 2022 be signed as a correct record.

4. DEMOCRATIC SERVICES FUNCTION

The Head of Democratic Services presented a report on the role and function of the Democratic Services Committee to Members. The report provided information in regard to the statutory framework within which the Democratic Services Committee functions together with the remit and powers available to the Committee.

In addition to the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and the specific Sections 8 to 21 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure, the report highlights that the Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013 had added section 11A which provides that the Democratic Services Committee may, at the request of the authority, review any matter relevant to:

- (a) the support and advice available to members of that authority, and
- (b) the terms and conditions of office of those members.

The report seeks the Committee to note its role and function and to re-affirm the appointment of Chair of the Committee as the Council's Member Development Champion, who would work closely with the Member Development lead for the Executive and officers of the Learning and Development Team on identifying and promoting member development issues.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED

4.1 that the role and function of the Democratic Services Committee be noted.

4.2 that the appointment of Chair of the Democratic Services Committee as the Authority's Member Development Champion be reaffirmed.

5. UPDATE ON MEMBER INDUCTION PROGRAMME 2022

The Committee received a report which provided information in respect of the member Induction Programme 2022.

The Learning & Development Advisor in presenting the report informed the Committee that the Programme which was launched on the 18th May 2022 contained total of 40 developmental sessions which were divided into sessions for all members, sessions specifically for Cabinet members and panel members sitting on relevant committees.

In addition to the programmed schedule, many sessions had been recorded enabling members to watch at their leisure via the Councils eLearning platform.

In order to ascertain if the Induction Programme had been effective, the report proposed to seek feedback from members by way of focus groups.

Members expressed their sincere gratitude to the Democratic Services Unit and Learning Development department for their hard work in preparing, facilitating and providing a varied programme which had been beneficial for Members both new and re-elected.

In response to a query regarding gaining Member feedback, the Learning & Development Advisor suggested that focus groups to gain an understanding of what did and did not go well in regard to the Member Induction Programme be arranged in due course.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that:

5.1 the Member Induction Programme to date be noted;

5.2 focus groups with all members at the end of November be arranged in order to seek feedback of the Induction Programme.

6. MULTI-LOCATION MEETING POLICY

The Committee received a report which appended a draft Multi-location Meeting Policy. The draft policy had been considered by the Constitutional Review Working Group at its meeting on 20th July, 2022 where it was recommended to the Democratic Services Committee that the policy be endorsed.

Since the introduction of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 the Welsh Government provided Councils with the power and freedom to convene multi-location meetings enabling a greater accessibility and public participation in local government decision making.

The report provided information in respect of what constituted multi-location, also referred to as 'Hybrid'. For all meetings, participants must be able to speak to and hear each other. In addition, meetings which were required to be broadcast participants must also be able to see and be seen by each other.

In relation to a substitute attending a meeting remotely, a query was raised if they would also be required to be in attendance by the commencement of the meeting? It was added that there may be times whereby the technology would prevent an individual to be present before the start of the meeting. The Head of Democratic Services confirmed that in accordance with CPR 4 (12)(c) substitutes attending both physically and remotely would have to be present by the commencement of the meeting. However, it was recognised that elements of the CPR's may require a review following the introduction of multi-location attendance and that CRWG would be considering this during the course of the year.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL that the draft Multi-location Meeting Policy be approved.

7. TIMING OF MEETING SURVEY

The Committee received a report which provided the findings of the survey undertaken following the recent local government elections.

The Council, in accordance with the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, carried out a survey seeking Members preference in respect of the times and intervals at which meetings of a local authority were to be held.

Members noted that 53 members responded to the Timing of Meetings Survey which was open to all Elected Members to complete between 19th May 2022 and 30th May 2022.

Committee members considered the results of the survey appended to the report which signified that the majority of members would prefer meeting arrangements to remain as at present.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL that the Councils meeting arrangements remain as at present.

8. DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received and considered a suggested Forward Work Programme for the 2022/23 municipal year.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Democratic Services Committee 2022/23 Forward Work Programme be adopted.

CHAIR

DATE

Democratic Services Committee June 9th 2023

Member Enquiries Review

Recommendations / key decisions required:

To approve the recommendations made.

Reasons: Following feedback from elected Members the Chief Executive requested a Review of Member enquiries to be conducted to establish whether the administration and procedures in place are working effectively and to investigate what improvements can be made.

Cabinet Decision Required	No
Council Decision Required	No

CABINET BOARD MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER:- Cllr Linda Evans

Directorate: Chief Executives

Name of Head of Service &
Report Author :

Noelwyn Daniel

Designations: Head of ICT &
Corporate Policy

Tel Nos.

Email Address:

NDaniel@sirgar.gov.uk

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MEMBER ENQUIRIES REVIEW

BRIEF SUMMARY OF PURPOSE OF REPORT.

1. Background.

Elected Members of Carmarthenshire County Council make on average 5,000 enquiries per year via what is known as the DSU Member Enquiry Process. Following feedback from elected Members the Review of Member enquiries will investigate whether the administration and procedures in place are working effectively and to investigate what improvements can be made. The Terms of Reference for the review were approved by the Chief Executive on November 25th 2022

Key Objectives of the Review were :

1. To investigate perceived difficulties with Member's enquiries and identify underlying problems.
2. To identify current standards laid down and performance against these.
3. To investigate Member Enquiry performance issues within and across different departments.
4. To investigate how matters can be improved for officers and consult with officers in high demand services areas
5. To find out if different kinds of Member enquiries have different performance issues.
6. To investigate and take into account Member contact with the Contact Centre.

To put forward recommendations to improve the Member Enquiries process.

2. Recommendations

Recommendations	Responsible Officer	Date
Recommendation 1 – Implementation of an Online Members Portal	Ben Grice for development of Online Portal.	One month post approval of recommendation.
	Gaynor Morgan to ensure successful roll-out.	
Phase 2 – Enhance the Member Portal to include ward level dashboards displaying key ward data to elected members, access to online consultations and feedback from public consultations which would eventually act as a 'One Stop Shop' for Members.	Rachel Clegg	January 1 st 2024

<p>Recommendation 2 - Introduce a pro-active rolling programme of Member service awareness sessions</p> <p>Recommendation 3 - Inform Members of Planned Works per ward</p> <p>Recommendation 4 – Improve Officer response to Member Enquiries</p> <p>Recommendation 5 – Introduce Standard Replies To Member Queries</p> <p>Recommendation 6 – Re-design of email template used to respond to Member Enquiries.</p> <p>Recommendation 7 - Progress with pace the implementation of key Digital systems to enable ‘Closing the Loop’ on all Member enquiries</p> <p>Recommendation 8 - Role & Responsibility of Democratic Services Unit / Service Department</p>	<p>Gaynor Morgan overall responsibility supported by Jackie Edwards (Place & Infrastructure) & Adele Lodwick (Communities)</p> <p>Jackie Edwards</p> <p>Deina Hockenhull to lead and supported by Departmental leads.</p> <p>Jackie Edwards</p> <p>Gaynor Morgan & Deina Hockenhull</p> <p>Jackie Edwards</p> <p>Gaynor Morgan</p>	<p>September 1st 2023</p> <p>September 1st 2023</p> <p>From September 1st</p> <p>July 1st 2023</p> <p>July 1st 2023</p> <p>Implementation underway with 1st modules live from October 2023</p> <p>July 1st</p>
<p>DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED ?</p>	<p>YES</p>	

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: Noelwyn Daniel

Head of ICT & Corporate Policy

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
NONE	NO	NO	YES	NONE	NONE	NONE

4. ICT

ICT will need to dedicate resources towards further development of the online Member portal.

CONSULTATIONS

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

Signed: Noelwyn Daniel

Head of ICT & Corporate Policy

Please specify the outcomes of consultations undertaken where they arise against the following headings)

1. Scrutiny Committee request for pre-determination	N/A
If yes include the following information: -	
Scrutiny Committee	
Date the report was considered:-	
Scrutiny Committee Outcome/Recommendations:-	

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

Member Enquiries Review

June 2023

carmarthenshire.gov.wales



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Appendix 4 - Key service officer feedback summary	

Purpose of Review

Carmarthenshire County Council has 75 elected Members of the Council, Their role is to govern the Council through policy making and to represent the interests of their constituents both individually and collectively. Members are the lynchpin of local democratic accountability, the link between the users of community services and the Council. In fulfilling their role as policy makers and community representatives, Members need to interact with Council departments to find out information about services, to make enquiries on behalf of their constituents and to report problems with services on the ground.

Elected Members of Carmarthenshire County Council make on average 5,000 enquiries per year via what is known as the DSU Member Enquiry Process. Following feedback from elected Members the Review of Member enquiries will investigate whether the administration and procedures in place are working effectively and to investigate what improvements can be made. The Terms of Reference for the review were approved by the Chief Executive on November 25th 2022

Key Objectives of the Review were :

1. To investigate perceived difficulties with Member's enquiries and identify underlying problems.
2. To identify current standards laid down and performance against these.
3. To investigate Member Enquiry performance issues within and across different departments.
4. To investigate how matters can be improved for officers and consult with officers in high demand services areas
5. To find out if different kinds of Member enquiries have different performance issues.
6. To investigate and take into account Member contact with the Contact Centre.
7. To put forward recommendations to improve the Member Enquiries process to include.
 - a. Agree definition
 - b. Agree Process
 - c. Agree Guidance
 - d. Agree Digital Solution

Method and Scope

The Review Group will :

- Engage with
 - Elected Members
 - Directors and Heads of Service
 - Front line Operational staff
 - Democratic Services Unit
- Collate and analyse all relevant data associated with the performance of the current Member Enquiry Process since May 9th 2022
- Review best practise across Welsh Local Authorities and Welsh Government
- Review options for Digital solutions to facilitate and support the Member Enquiry process.

Engagement Feedback

The Review Group set out to engage with all Elected Members, Heads of Service and key officers. We also engaged with other Welsh Local Authorities to understand how they managed Member enquiries.

We provided all elected members with the opportunity to attend one of two workshops arranged. The first seminar was held on December 9th and was attended by 16 Members whilst the second seminar was held on December 13th and attended by 12 members. Feedback from these two seminars was collated and a summary report produced (**Appendix 1**) that themed the comments under the following headings :

- Democratic Service Unit Staff
- Delays in Response
- Following up with Officers
- Categorisation of requests
- Delta Wellbeing
- New Members
- Other Findings

All elected members were asked to complete a survey regarding Member enquiries and a total of 41 members took advantage of this opportunity to share their views with us. The survey responses have been analysed and a summary report produced of the findings that can be found in **Appendix 2.0**

We also review best practise across Welsh Local Authorities and Welsh Government. A total of 5 Local Authority's responded to the survey. They were Blaenau Gwent, Cardiff, Ceredigion, Swansea and the Vale of Glamorgan.

We asked all Heads of Service for their observations on the Member Enquiry process via teams meetings and it has to be recognised that the impact on Heads of Service varies significantly depending on the service. We know from our analysis of the Member enquiry data between May 5th 2022 and December 31st 2022 that 5 of the service areas receive 88% of all member enquiries.

We also engaged with key officers from these top 5 service areas in a collective face to face meeting in County Hall. This gave us an insight into how these service areas handled member enquiries and they also provided suggestions for improvement which we have incorporated into our recommendations. The feedback can be found in **Appendix 4**.

Enquiries by Service

The table below provides a breakdown of enquiries received by service area.

Service Area	Number of Enquiries	Proportion of Total Enquiries
Transportation and Highways	824	27%
Homes and Safer Communities	750	25%
Waste and Environmental Services	454	15%
Place and Sustainability	376	12%
Property	265	9%
Regeneration	102	3%
Leisure	61	2%
Corporate Services	60	2%
School Effectiveness	47	2%
Integrated Services	35	1%
Adult Social Care	16	0.5%
Access to Education	10	0.3%
Media and Marketing	10	0.3%
Property Maintenance	9	0.3%
ICT & Corporate Policy	6	0.2%
Children's Services	5	0.2%
People Management	4	0.1%
Administration & Law	4	0.1%
Curriculum & Wellbeing	3	0.1%
Electoral Services	2	0.1%
Education & Inclusion Services	1	0.03%
Performance, Analysis & Systems	1	0.03%
Revenues & Financial Compliance	1	0.03%

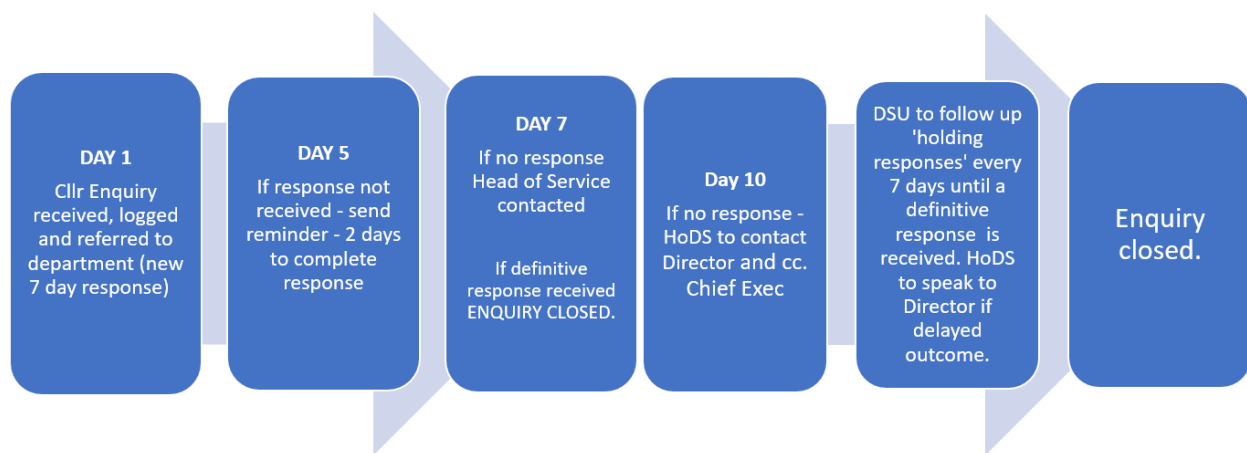
The objectives of this review were set out in an agreed Terms of Reference and can be found on Page 3 of this report.

Objective 1 – “To investigate perceived difficulties with Member's enquiries and identify underlying problems.”

Significant Engagement was carried out and this has been set out above under ‘Engagement’ heading. The findings and feedback has been articulated and analysed within the attached Appendices 1 & 2

Objective 2 - “ To identify current standards laid down and performance against these”

The current standards in place for handling Member Enquiries are as follows :



It has been possible to establish performance against Member Enquiries for the period analysed between May 9th 2022 and January 30th 2023. A total of 3,046 enquiries were logged with 87% of these enquiries were addressed on time. It has not been possible to analyse the quality of these responses and whether they were deemed to be satisfactory with Elected Members.

Objective 3 - “ To investigate Member Enquiry performance issues within and across different departments”

In terms of reviewing actual performance against Member Enquiries this aligns with the findings of Objective 2.

Our engagement with elected Members also allowed us to identify key areas of concern for them with the process and performance. The detailed analysis can be found in Appendix 1 & 2 attached but the key findings were based on 41 members responding to the electronic survey disseminated via the Councillor Newsletter and 27 Members attended one of the two seminars organised to discuss Member Enquiries are as follows :

Of the 41 member survey responses :

- No members reported that they are ‘very dissatisfied’ with the response received to enquiries raised.
- Only two members reported dissatisfaction which translates to 5% of the 41 responses received.
- The largest proportion indicated either ‘satisfied’ (41%) or very satisfied (32%). A further 9 members (22%) indicated that they are ‘neither satisfied nor dissatisfied’.

In addition and analysed from comments made via the survey and from the Member engagement seminars these key areas were raised regarding process and responses received :

- Closing the Loop - Several members made comments relating to the process and its efficiency in terms of ‘closing the loop’. A source of frustration is the difficulty in following up or clarifying something in an original enquiry.
- Members indicated issues with the fact that they are unable to keep a log of the enquiries that they have raised and which of those have been actioned or closed. In some instances, ‘actioned’ could suggest that a ‘holding email’ has been sent by an officer within the 7-day window which would translate in the system as a ‘closed’ enquiry. This creates issues for members but also for DSU, as it results in increased ‘chasing’ and frustration.
- Members noted that a lack detail in the response is a further issue as members normally receive a 1-line response.
- Trying to manage all member enquiries made via email or phone was hugely problematic for many members and not being able to view in one place.

Objective 4 – “To investigate how matters can be improved for officers and consult with officers in high demand services areas”

Detailed analysis can be found in Appendix 4 attached – the key findings from the engagement with officers was :

- **Triaging** - Officers raised issues regarding the lack of information received for triage at the first point of entry i.e. when a member enquiry is logged via the Democratic Services Unit
- **Content of Enquiries** - Officers highlighted that some enquiries lack sufficient content and context which makes some difficult to address. This causes additional pressure for the officers and makes it more challenging to effectively deal with the request within the mandatory 7-day window.
- **Member Awareness and Understanding** - It is felt that some members lack an awareness and understanding of the policies and procedures different service areas are governed by and must adhere to. Many of the policies and procedures ultimately affect the way that enquiries are responded to and the outcome.
- **Mandatory 7 day response** - The 7-day window for responses is a further source of frustration for several officers. The lack of consistency between the 10-day response time for public enquiries was specifically raised.

- **Working Relationship with Members** - A positive working relationship with members was noted as being of importance by officers and Heads of Service. Further work can be done to build these positive relationships between Officers and Members.

Objective 5 – “To find out if different kinds of Member enquiries have different performance issues.”

Due to the way the data is captured and responses recorded it has not been possible to establish other than by listening to anecdotal comments whether different kinds of Member enquiries have different performance issues.

It was noted that in some instances where Members acknowledge the complexity of their enquiry they are also willing to accept following discussion with the officer that it will be answered outside of the 7 day response timescale. Enquiries that were multi-faceted and required a co-ordinated response from several service areas were also noted to often fall outside the 7 day response timescale.

Objective 7 – “To investigate and take into account Member contact with the Contact Centre”

The contact centre itself has very little engagement with elected members as the majority of enquiries do go through to the DSU. The DSU staff will then determine whether the Member Enquiry should actually be classed as a ‘Service Request’ and these could relate to missed bins collections, potholes, fly tipping etc... These service requests are then emailed to the Contact Centre who log as a service request and then forward to the relevant service area to action.

These service requests are dealt with by the service area but at present there is no feedback provided to the Member on most service requests with the exception being on bulky waste and potholes as the service area has an IT system in place that allows them to close the loop and keep elected members informed together with members of the public. Failure to close the loop on the other service requests does result in the DSU receiving numerous requests from Members for follow up.

It is pleasing to note that with the current implementation of the new ALLOY system within the Place & Infrastructure department will ensure that all service requests from elected members and residents will be actioned and feedback provided as to when the request has been completed. This will significantly improve the experience for elected members and address a number of the issues raised throughout our engagement with them.

Recommendations

Our recommendations are being proposed in light of all the evidence gathered via the extensive engagement carried out as part of this review

Recommendation 1 – Implementation of an Online Members Portal ([Councillor Links](#)) ensuring that within six months of being launched that all Member Enquiries are logged via this online portal.

The Democratic Service Unit officers would advise and support elected members in this transition which would eventually allow these officers to provide greater support to members and add value. Currently these officers have to transcribe member enquiries received via email or phone into online forms and emails that are then forwarded. The existing on-line system is rarely used.

Phase 1 would see the implementation of a specific Members Intranet landing page that would include access to a general Member Enquiry online form together with the following 'service request' forms that already exist for members of the public. These forms could be adapted to allow elected members to log enquiries on behalf of their ward residents :

- Report Missed Bin Collection
- Report Fly Tipping
- Report an abandoned vehicle
- Report a Litter Problem
- Report a Faulty streetlight
- Report a Problem on the Road
- Report a breach of planning
- Request a Repair

In addition there would be a link to Delta Wellbeing Out of Hrs emergency and general enquiries.

Phase 2 – Enhance the Member Portal to include ward level dashboards displaying key ward data to elected members, access to online consultations and feedback from public consultations which would eventually act as a 'One Stop Shop' for Members.

Benefits of this portal to the Councillor

- **24/7 Self-Service Access.**
- **Personalized Portal.** Giving access to Ward specific and their Committee information.
- **One-Stop-Shop for access to all Councillor Services.**
- **Single View of all their Interactions.**
- **Track their Cases & Outcomes.** The ability to raise & track cases on behalf of their constituents or on behalf of themselves).

- **Ability to create and access Councillor specific processes** i.e. consultations, feedback, surveys, forms targeted at councillors etc.
- **Champion Online Services and help drive Channel Shift** towards Digital Service Delivery and transition away from costly and inefficient channels such as telephone and email.

Recommendation 2 - Introduce a pro-active rolling programme of Member service awareness sessions

Improved communication with elected members is critical to ensure we pro-actively keep them well informed regarding the services we deliver. These could be used to inform Members of the work taking place in their wards, the service challenges being faced from both a financial and human resource perspective.

Initially the 5 service areas that receive 88% of all Member enquiries to establish these sessions to commence from **April 1st 2023**

Recommendation 3 - Inform Members of Planned Works per ward

A significant amount of planned works take place within the wards of Carmarthenshire. The Members Ward profiles would include but not limited to :

- Planned Highways works e.g gully cleaning, road re-surfacing, pot holes, grass verge cutting, weed spraying.
- Waste Environment Services e.g street cleansing rounds, updated recycling scheme informations.
- Planning – Members already informed of any planning applications within their wards but this could be provided directly from the Planning system and updated into the Member Portal ward profiles.
- Police & Crime data per ward.

Recommendation 4 – Improve Officer response to Member Enquiries

To address the observations made by elected member regarding the quality of responses provided by officers it is recommended that key officers attend training sessions facilitated by the Media & Marketing team on how to construct appropriate responses to member enquiries and how to engage pro-actively with Members ensuring they are kept informed of service matters.

Recommendation 5 – Introduce Standard Replies To Member Queries

It is accepted that certain Member Enquiries relate to areas whereby there are statutory process in place that officers have to adhere by and a standard consistent response should be provided. It is recommended that enquiries made regarding the following areas receive a standard response from the Democratic Services Team.

Standard Replies to :

- School transport entitlement requests and school admission appeals for provision outside CCC policy and statutory requirements
- Speeding – this is the responsibility of enforcement agencies I.e. Police and Go Safe
- Parking offences. The Traffic Management Act make clears that Members must not interfere with the statutory process.
- General requests for service where a decision has been made to reduce or remove a service as part of the budget setting process.
- Adoption of highways where developer has chosen not to enter into a Section 38 agreement , the road servicing the residential development is not public highway .

Recommendation 6 – Re-design of email template used to respond to Member Enquiries.

Although recommendation 1 looks to move away entirely from the use of emails for member enquiries it has to be accepted that if approved there will be a transition period. In the meantime there is a need to review and simplify the wording of the email used. This will be re-designed between Media and Marketing and Democratic Service Unit.

Recommendation 7 - Progress with pace the implementation of key Digital systems to enable 'Closing the Loop' on all Member enquiries

As previously stated 88% of all Member enquiries relate to 5 service areas. Currently there are two ICT systems that are being implemented and when completed it will be possible for all service requests and member enquiries logged to be informed when the work will be and has been completed.

ALLOY is being implemented within the Place and Infrastructure department and once completed will transform the way the services are delivered and on their ability to keep customers informed.

TOTAL CONNECT is being implemented within Property Maintenance for both Housing and non Housing works. This new system will once again transform the way customers and Members interact with the service and will ensure all customers are kept informed on planned works and housing repairs.

Recommendation 8 - Role & Responsibility of Democratic Services Unit/Service Department

- DSU Responsibility to educate, encourage and support Members on the use of online forms and the revised Member Portal. This includes encouraging members to provide sufficient detail in their enquiry in order for Member Enquiries and Service requests to be triaged and responded to correctly.
- DSU will only process Enquiry/ 'Service Request on behalf of a member if all relevant information is received as per the on-line form.

- DSU to take ownership for follow ups with officers.
- Service departments to quality assurance officer responses prior to response being provided to Members.
- Service Department/Marketing and Media to provide DSU with the standard replies for their respective service areas as per recommendation 5.
- Service Department to update DSU of any re-organisation or re-allocation of responsibilities so that enquiries are triaged correctly.
- Service Departments to re-direct enquiries within 1 day if they have been triaged incorrectly.

Members Enquiry Workshop

Review of Member enquiries that will investigate whether the administration and procedures in place are working effectively and to investigate what improvements can be made.

Key Themes

1. Democratic Service Unit Staff

- Members praised the DSU staff for being exceptional and for providing outstanding and ongoing support for members, with nothing ever being too much for them.
- During the workshop members addressed the problems that have occurred over the years mainly regarding the timeline of response within the Service. Even though members underlined that the DSU staff shouldn't be blamed for lack of response as the unit play a valuable role and assist members in every way possible.
- Members are grateful that the Services provides full traceability and that the DSU staff are more than happy to talk members through any updates about their enquiry or what stage it's at, and what steps can be taken next.

2. Delay in response

- During both workshops, time of response was the issue that raised most concern for members and the issue that needs most improvement. Members added that a lack detail in the response is a further issue as members normally receive a 1-line response.
- Members expressed that officers respond on average around 5 days with a 'basic' holding response and then must wait 6-7 months for a full response, although identified that some enquiries can take longer and can be more complex.
- Members noted that if a full response is not possible in 7 days, the department should let members know via progress report where they members can then keep in touch with the individual that reported the problem. However, it is essential that the issue must be followed up if the original target is not met.
- From a different perspective, other members believed that there shouldn't be a strict template for responses as they will all be different, with the speed of response varying depending on the size of the enquiry / problem.

3. Following up with officers

- Above, comments were made regarding delay in response. Several members within the workshop brought attention to the fact that they would contact the officers immediately when the problem is an emergency that needs to be dealt with within the day or if there is an ongoing problem. If the problem is not an emergency, then members will go through the DSU (as per member training).

- Members also stated that once they have contacted officers several times, they create and build a long – term relationship with them which then leads to contacting officers directly as for convenience as they are certain they will receive a high-speed reply from officers direct whereas members highlighted that the DSU is not so successful in obtaining a fast response.
- Although some members did raise concern over the amount of officers’ time that is being taken up dealing with escalations and the potential effect that this can have on public services when officers needed to prioritise a member enquiry over other duties.

4. Categorisation of requests

- Within every group during both 2 sessions the idea of traffic lights categorising system was put forward by members. For example, with red representing all emergency and danger enquires to the safety of the public, with green standing for problem and enquires that can be dealt with over a longer period and doesn’t need to be done immediately.
- A proposal was made by members for an officer to have the role of reading through the emails to categorise in order as mentioned above, although members predict that everyone will log their problems as red (urgent / emergency).
- Another meaningful suggestion made by members was the possibility of filtering the service required. For example, Priority 1 (P1) or P2 basis with reason. Standards would need to be written for all members to understand, with the DSU then being able to categorise them. Furthermore, members also suggested the possibility to access to the system of this categorisation request as it would allow them to receive an overview of what category their request has been put in and when it will be dealt with. The main reason behind this suggestion by the members is as for currently a large quantity of the members are having to keep a personal record of every enquiry regarding which officer is dealing with, what action has been taken and when the enquiry has been delt with and the loop is closed.

5. Delta Wellbeing

- Many members highlighted that not all members are aware of Delta wellbeing, especially the newest ones. Members noted the need for reinforcement that it can be used on weekends. Delta Wellbeing staff are trained to know what can be actioned on a weekend and are there to give members advice on how to reduce the level of danger of the enquiry / problem and any action that can be taken until officers are able to deal with it on the next working day.
- To add, many members also weren’t aware of ‘Fix my street’ and ‘My Area’. Members mentioned the possibility of having a resource available with all the contact numbers / emails that can be used on weekend / bank holiday if an emergency arises that cannot wait until the next working day.

6. New Members

- New members noted that they report everything through the DSU as per member training, with further comments made that the newest members were not aware until the workshop that other members contact officers directly instead of DSU when a problem occurs.
- New members mentioned that having conversations with officers would be beneficial to widen their understanding of how the system works and to ask questions that would clear any queries they have.
- New members underlined that they are extremely grateful to DSU for the training and programming that they provided, with the DSU offering to catch up on Zoom which new members greatly appreciated.

7. Other findings

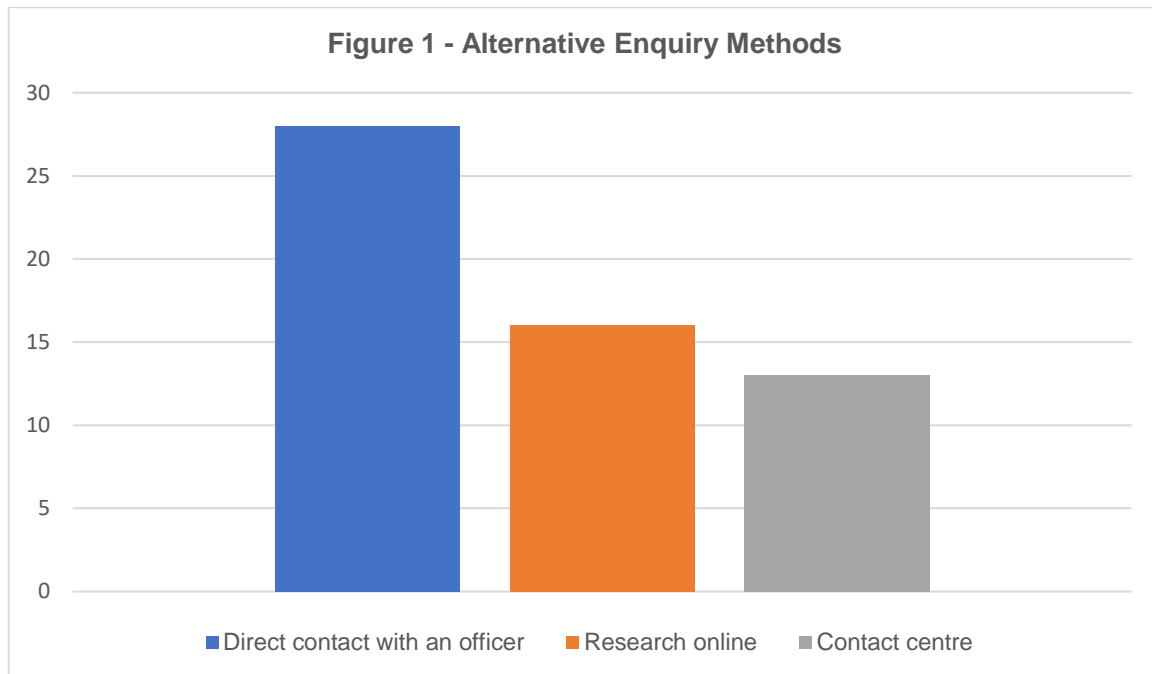
- Several members noted the lack of consistency in reference numbers between the DSU reference and Contact Centre reference. The description on the Contact Centre response is often poor, needing a further request to understand which response the enquiry is for, particularly when there are several similar enquiries in progress.
- Members addressed a newly challenge that appeared mostly in December which was contacting the authority on the phone. The highest percentage of complaints members received was from the public trying to contact the authority and having to wait on the line for a long time before being spoken to.

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Member Enquiries Consultation – Summary Report

41 members responded to the electronic survey disseminated via the Councillor Newsletter. All 41 indicated that they currently use the member enquiry process.

Of the 41, 34 (83%) members also indicated that they request information in other ways. A breakdown of this is provided below¹;



The largest proportion indicated that make direct contact with an officer (either in person, via email or through a phone call). 16 members indicated that they research online and 13 indicated that they log enquiries directly via the contact centre.

Quantity of Enquiries

The majority of members (19) indicated that they raise between 4 and 7 enquiries per week. At a minimum this translates to 16 per month, per member to a maximum of 28 per month, per member. On a monthly basis this totals a minimum of 304 across the 19 members to a maximum of 532 across the 19 members.

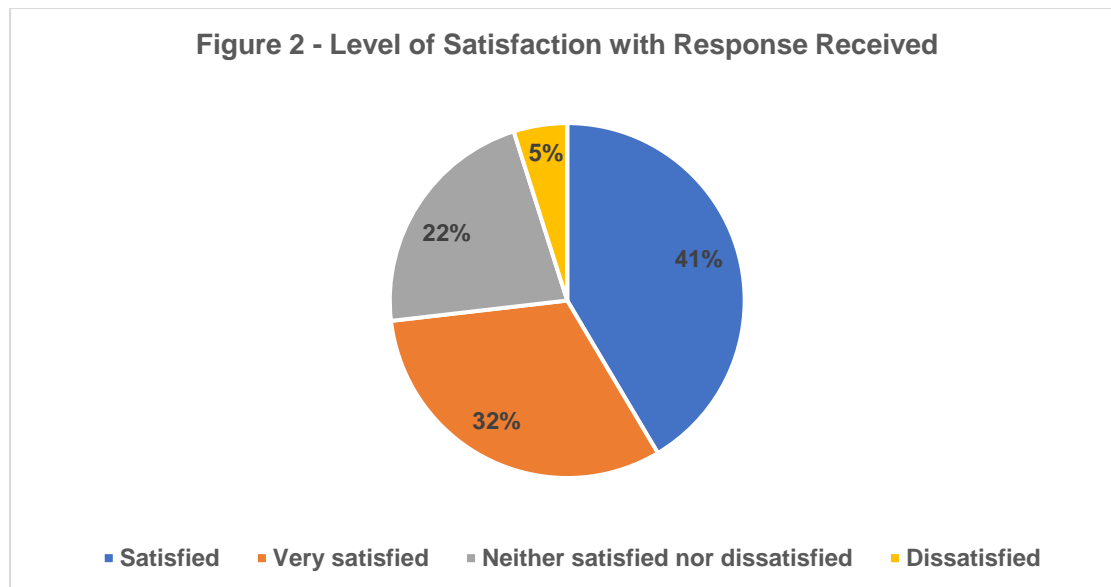
A further 6 indicate that they raise between 8 and 10 enquiries per week and an additional 4 members estimate that they raise 11 or more.

13 members indicated that they raise between 1 and 3 enquiries on a weekly basis.

¹ Members were able to select multiple answers for this question

Satisfaction with Response Received

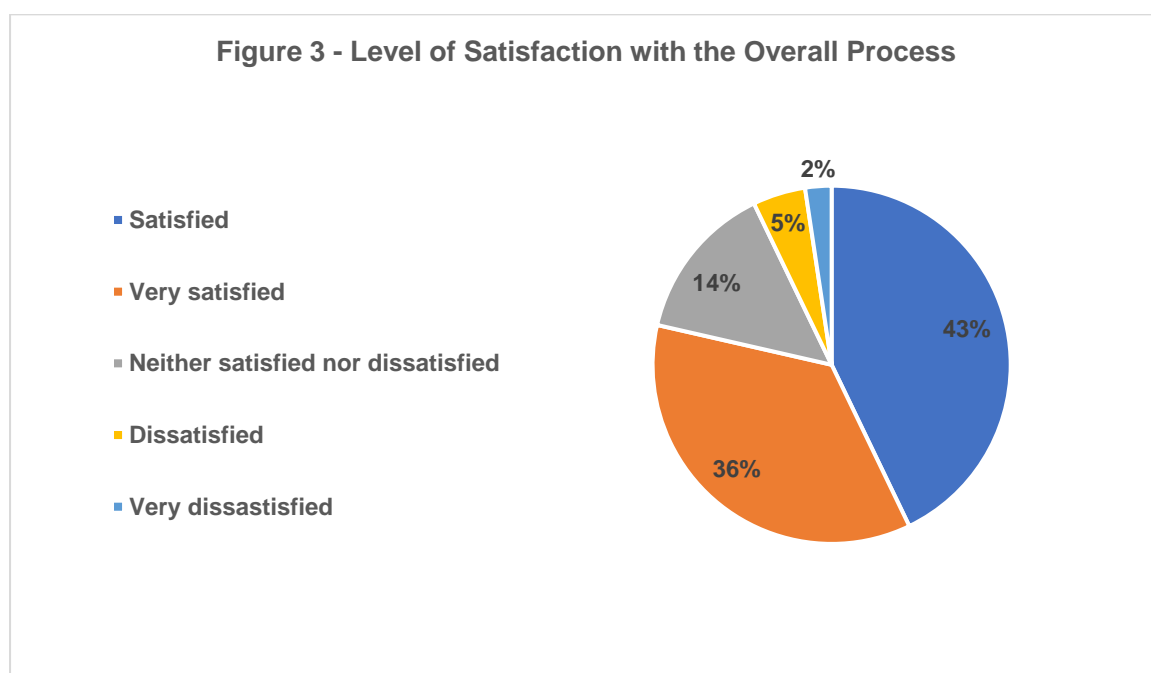
In the main members are satisfied with the responses received to enquiries raised. A breakdown of this is provided below;



Positively, no members reported that they are 'very dissatisfied' with the response received to enquiries raised. Only two members reported dissatisfaction which translates to 5% of the 41 responses received. The largest proportion indicated either 'satisfied' (41%) or very satisfied (32%). A further 9 members (22%) indicated that they are 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied'.

Satisfaction with the Overall Process

Overall, the members which responded are satisfied with how the current democratic member enquiry process works. A breakdown is provided below;



18 (43%) members indicated that they are satisfied with how the current process works. This is followed by a further 15 (36%) members who state that they are 'very satisfied' with the process. 6 members are 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied'. Furthermore, 2 members (5%) are dissatisfied, and one member is 'very dissatisfied'.

Additional Comments

Members were asked if they would like to make any additional comments about the member enquiry process, to which 34 responded. The main themes are explored below;

Democratic Services Unit (DSU) Staff

Several members made positive comments regarding the support received from staff within the Democratic Services Unit. The service they provide is noted as being of a high quality. This is consistent with feedback received from members during the Member Enquiries Workshop sessions.

"I cannot give DSU enough praise for the work they do and their politeness and efficiency."

"I have no complaints, always courteous, even when I make mistakes."

One member suggested that an explanatory message to indicate when the Democratic Services Unit are unable to answer the phone would be helpful.

Turnaround Time

In some instances, members feel that the mandatory 7-day window in which to respond to enquiries is too long. This is noted as being particularly frustrating if the enquiry is deemed by the members as requiring an immediate response.

In this regard the DSU was praised once again for their role in chasing up updates.

"Sometimes important queries need immediate answers and not 7 days."

"Sometimes departments don't get back or wait until the last day to respond. In time sensitive cases this can be very frustrating."

"Most of the time the requests are dealt with in a timely manner, but DSU staff do, 15% of the time have to chase up requests which should be unnecessary."

One member referred to having not received any response to some of their enquiries. Reference is made to whether this is then escalated.

"When you don't get a response within the timeframe is it followed up by the CE as some of my queries are awaiting a response for months. Some are responded to in part but then nothing is heard even though the DSU keep asking. I think the DSU are fantastic, it is not their fault some do not respond."

Closing the Loop

Several members made comments relating to the process and its efficiency in terms of 'closing the loop'. A source of frustration is the difficulty in following up or clarifying something in an original enquiry. Whilst the 7-day window applies to the initial enquiry it would appear that this doesn't necessarily apply to follow-ups. In this regard, members suggested that officers could be more proactive in following up with updates.

“The current process works well for the first enquiry for officers to reply as DSU send out reminders. However, once the first reply has been received by Councillors, officers do not follow up with updates.”

“The only real problem I have with the existing system is that you sometimes have to go so far as to raise a new enquiry to follow up on the response you receive from officers regarding the original query. Queries have to be answered within 7 working days but if I want to then clarify something in the response or ask a follow up question, it doesn't seem that a response within 7 working days is mandatory for that follow up. I've actually got an existing query chase up that I've asked DSU about and it's been nearly 3 weeks since I first asked for an update, and I had to send another email this week to ask again for an update.”

“No follow up when enquiries go adrift after initial response. Should be logged until member is satisfied that all reasonable steps have been undertaken or reasons for inaction e.g. due to funding constraints.”

Members indicated issues with the fact that they are unable to keep a log of the enquiries that they have raised and which of those have been actioned or closed. In some instances, 'actioned' could suggest that a 'holding email' has been sent by an officer within the 7-day window which would translate in the system as a 'closed' enquiry. This creates issues for members but also for DSU, as it results in increased 'chasing' and frustration.

This is sure to create a 'bottle-neck' effect whereby in some instances new enquiries are logged by members which relate to previous enquiries. Whilst this creates additional pressure for DSU, the officers dealing with the enquiry and the members themselves it is also important to note that this will have an effect from a data capturing perspective.

Members indicate that this is also hampered by the different/ lack of reference numbers allocated to enquiries which then makes it difficult to monitor which have been addressed and which are still open.

In addition, specific reference was made to the frustration around not knowing if an enquiry directed to the contact centre has been actioned or not.

This is consistent with feedback received via the Member Enquiries Workshop Sessions.

“The DSU staff are an asset to the county, and I've always found them to be very helpful, going out of their way to try to resolve any issues. The issue for me is when an enquiry goes to the Contact Centre. The response is "you raised a report of an obstruction in a road". There is no reference to which one I have reported (I might have sent 5 that week). I can't marry it up with my enquiry. I also don't receive a response that it has been done when we used to in the past. This causes more work for officers as I and no doubt others are asking for updates.”

“Depending on the nature of the complaint I receive I very often report directly via the website direct online facility. Whilst the complaint is always acknowledged most complaints referred to services this way do not result in any update or confirmation that the issue has been addressed.”

Contact Centre Calls

Two members referred to the long wait times they and their constituents face when contacting the Council via the contact centre.

“If I want to contact X, I phone reception, 20 mins later the call is answered. I ask to be put through to X, they do but X does not answer the phone, I put the phone down, and try phoning reception again, 20 mins later it is answered, etc. A totally unacceptable level of service, the same service members of the public think is also unacceptable. As for the DSU, they have helped me so often, diolch byth.”

“Y gwyn barhaol rwyn dderbyn wrth aelodau'r cyhoedd yw ei methiant i gael ateb ar y ffon pan yn treial cyslltu a'r Cyngor Sir./ The constant complaint I receive from the public is that they are unable to get an answer when they contact the Council on the phone.”

Quality of Responses

Reference was made to the varying degree of quality with regards to responses received. However, there is some recognition that officers are under pressure and may not always be able to respond to enquiries as comprehensively as required in the time frame. It was also noted by one member that the seriousness with which the member enquiry function is regarded varies between officers.

“The quality of some officers’ responses is awful whilst others have obviously put in a lot of effort into their response. I usually highlight these to the Head of Service as a way of thanking those officers for the help they've given me.”

“Some Officers seem to take the Enquiry System more seriously than others while DSU staff and Cabinet Members are more supportive.”

Direct Contact with Officers

One member expressed frustration with regards to planning committee members not being able to contact officers directly to discuss planning applications.

Changes to Current Process

Although one member noted that they find the process easy and simple to use, and another six utilised the comment box to thank staff for their service, others made suggestions with regards to changes that could be made, these include;

- Strengthening the relationship between what comes in/or is logged via the contact centre with the member enquiry process.
- Sharing with members the nature of the calls coming in from residents via the contact centre.
- The development of a system which allows members to keep track of the enquiries that they have logged and the resulting action.
- The development of a system which would allow members to ‘flag’ or escalate/prioritise enquiries. This extends to categorising enquiries.
- The development of a cloud-based system rather than an email system.
- Removal of the requirement for some enquiries to be logged via the contact centre in favour of enquiries being directly sent to the relevant officer.
- Removal of the need for DSU to be copied into responses which would limit the number of emails members receive in relation to an enquiry.

- Ensuring that officers aren't deciding what enquiry is a 'priority'. There is a fear that this could lead to an accusation that some members are being favoured over others. They expand to say that the current process is fair.

Other Points of Note

One member indicated that training on the Geodiscover system would be beneficial.

Member Enquiries – Officer Engagement Session and Heads of Service Feedback Summary

Triaging

Officers raised issues regarding the perceived lack of triaging which takes place at the first point of entry i.e. when a member enquiry is logged via the Democratic Services Unit. These sentiments were also echoed by Heads of Service who provided feedback. It is felt that an improved triaging system would serve many purposes and have many benefits;

- To ensure that enquiries are directed to the right department/service area, which would in turn limit the number of enquiries which are re-directed. This is especially pertinent when an enquiry may require the involvement of more than one department/service area.
- Increased signposting to resources already available on the corporate website which would (in some instances) limit the requirement for enquiries to be passed onto departments.
- To categorise what is a member enquiry and what is a service request. This would ensure that service requests are logged via the contact centre and enquiries rightly continue through the member enquiry process.
- To determine the nature of the enquiry through more direct sense-checking at the point of entry. This would determine whether an enquiry is already in the system and therefore being dealt with or whether an enquiry has already been dealt with, but the outcome has not met the member's expectations and is therefore being raised again.

Content of Enquiries

Officers highlighted that some enquiries lack sufficient content and context which makes some difficult to address. This causes additional pressure for the officers and makes it more challenging to effectively deal with the request within the mandatory 7-day window. This is another example of where improved triaging could have a positive effect, with enquiries being checked for completeness at the point of entry.

In addition, on many occasions one enquiry may contain several different queries which relate to a number of different service areas. Enquiries of this nature require co-ordination across teams which adds a further layer of complexity. Effective triaging at the point of entry would serve to limit this occurrence.

Member Awareness and Understanding

It is felt that some members lack an awareness and understanding of the policies and procedures different service areas are governed by and must adhere to. Many of the policies and procedures ultimately affect the way that enquiries are responded to and the outcome. If members had an increased understanding it would serve to manage the expectations of both the member and (in some cases) the resident.

Heads of Service also indicated that members on occasion question the statutory processes in place and that certain service areas are governed by legal statutes which effects how enquiries are dealt with. This extends to a perceived lack of understanding from members regarding consent and what information can and can't be shared.

It was felt that increased signposting or information sharing could alleviate some of these issues. This would include strengthening the website and the information held on it to ensure that members have access to up-to-date information.

In addition, greater signposting to the 'Report an issue' function would serve to reduce the volume of enquiries received, as on occasion there is duplication.

Volume of Enquiries

Sentiments regarding the volume of enquiries received were mixed. In the main, the volume of enquiries received is not unmanageable, however there needs to be an appreciation that the complexity of some enquiries means that it is not possible to address them within the mandatory time frame.

Forward Planning/Work Programmes

Similarly to proposed increased signposting to policies and procedures, it was felt by some officers that it would help to share forward work programmes and schedules of work with members. This could be done at ward level. It was noted, however, that some service areas would find it challenging to produce these and colleagues working in the cleansing team indicated that members are not always receptive to a response referencing a schedule of works.

Where appropriate and possible this increased transparency would help to reduce the number of enquiries received as members would be more informed. This would also serve to reassure members that in many instances officers are already aware of some of the issues raised through enquiries and there are already plans in place to address them.

Specific reference was made to a new system which will allow the cleansing team to plan works far more proactively. In addition, there was an appreciation from officers that more seamless links between gully cleaning and street cleansing would be of benefit to planning works in a more collaborative way.

Working Relationship with Members

A positive working relationship with members was noted as being of importance by officers and Heads of Service. What this looks like varies between service area. Colleagues in housing for example regard members as being a further resource 'on the ground' and officers meet with members monthly to build relationships.

Heads of Service noted that keeping members updated and informed with regards to enquiries is something that works well. It is also the case that in some instances Heads of Service will discuss extensions to the mandatory time frame in which to deal with enquiries directly with members and this also works well.

Reference was made to members making direct contact with officers to log enquiries and bypassing the process entirely. This is also the case for some Heads of Service who indicate that members come through directly to them. Whilst this is arguably an important element of building those working relationships, this unstructured demand can be challenging to manage. The degree to which members' expectations can be managed in this respect is an important consideration. In addition, reference was made by a Head of Service to the sometimes-inappropriate contact junior officers receive from members on certain matters.

A suggested approach to developing working relationships was having regular scheduled meetings between service areas and members. Whilst this was welcomed by the majority, reference was made to the need for this to be managed appropriately to ensure that members see them as information sharing sessions and not as an additional route in which to raise enquiries.

There are examples highlighted by Heads of Service where this approach currently works well. In some services development sessions are held for members and they are introduced to officers. However, there was indication that more regular member sessions should take place as member training is key.

With this being said, it is also clear that meetings between members and staff would not be appropriate for every service area given the nature of the work conducted. Heads of Service in this position have stated that meetings would need to be directed through them if required.

Designated Officer Support

The system reminders are a source of frustration for many officers. It was suggested that allocating a dedicated officer to deal with specific enquiries could be useful. This would provide the member with a direct point of contact of whom they could ask questions and reduce the need for further enquiries to be logged which are merely chasing up previous enquiries. This would also support in building positive working relationships between members and officers. Whilst this would work in some services, there wasn't unanimous agreement to this.

Mandatory 7-day Response Time

The 7-day window for responses is a further source of frustration for several officers. The lack of consistency between the 10-day response time for public enquiries was specifically raised. Colleagues in the Public Health team raised that it is incredibly difficult to respond and fully address enquiries in this time frame.

Consistency

Officers expressed that on occasion they feel undermined by the process and their respective senior team members. Officers stated that whilst they have adhered to the policies and procedures in place when dealing with enquiries, if the response is not to the member's satisfaction it is then escalated to the point where the initial response is disregarded. This undermines the officer, process and policies and procedures in place.

Further Points of Note

Officers raised the need for further guidance around requests which are received 'out of hours' and are therefore recorded as emergencies. In many instances, these requests are not emergencies, and they should not be recorded as such simply because they are not logged within standard working hours.

Some Heads of Service noted that not all enquiries need to go through the current DSU process. This specifically relates to enquiries of an urgent nature which would be better placed going through processes in place with Delta.

In addition, Heads of Service highlighted or showed support for the following areas for consideration;

- FAQ pages for members relating to the most common themes of enquiries logged,
- Development of a member's portal,
- Themed information for members for some service area functions,
- More on-site visits for members (where appropriate),
- Rotate locations of Cabinet/Pre-cabinet,
- Post scrutiny briefing sessions or full council sessions,
- Updating the asset register.

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Democratic Services Committee

Date: 9 June 2023

UPDATE ON MEMBER INDUCTION PROGRAMME & ANNUAL PLAN

Purpose: To update the committee on the evaluation of the Member Induction programme and proposed Annual Development Plan 2023/2024.

To consider the implementation of a Mentoring Programme for Councillors.

To make Councillors aware of the new Learning Management System (LMS) that will host members' Digital Learning and which will be available in the autumn.

Recommendations / key decisions required:

- To provide the Committee with an evaluation report of the Member Induction Programme
- To obtain the Committee's views on the Annual Development Plan and to update any proposed areas for development identified to date and invite the views of the Committee on any additions, deletions, or amendments to proposal.
- To decide on the implementation of a Mentoring Programme.
- To raise awareness of the Learning Management System due to be launched in the autumn

Reasons: To contribute to Member Development Plan 2023-24

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Cabinet Decision Required	NA
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Council Decision Required	NA
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CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER:- N/A – Chair of Democratic Services (Member Development Champion)

Directorate: CEX

Hayley Daniels

Tel Nos. 01267 246186

Name of Head of Service: Paul R Thomas

Designations: Lead Business Partner (Future Workforce)

E Mail Addresses:
HMDaniels@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

Report Author: Hayley Daniels

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Members Induction Programme 2022

The Member Induction Programme was launched on the 18th of May 2022.

The objectives of the launch were to inform new and returning members of:

- An outline of the main functions of the Council and of the responsibilities of each service.
- An overview of the organisation and its key functions.
- An understanding of the principal strategies and the vision for service delivery for Carmarthenshire.
- Further information on the arrangements for the Induction/Refresher Programme for Councillors.

The Induction Programme contained a total of 40 developmental sessions which were divided into sessions for all members, sessions specifically for Cabinet members and panel members sitting on relevant committees.

Members have had the opportunity to attend most sessions either remotely via Zoom or physically in County Hall, Carmarthen.

Where some sessions have been recorded on Zoom, members have been able to watch the recording via the eLearning Platform following the session.

A breakdown of the attendance to each development session is attached.

Evaluation

To establish if the Induction Programme had been effective in providing members with sufficient knowledge and understanding, three focus groups were held during January & February and a survey was sent out to all members in February to seek feedback on the following:

- What worked well at the 2022 Member Induction?
- What aspects of the 2022 Member Induction could have been better?
- Next steps – Member Development Programme 2023/24

Detailed responses can be found on the attached report.

Member Annual Development Plan 2023-24

Comments made by members at the focus group as well as on the survey have been considered and have informed the Annual Development Plan 2023-24. Comments are welcomed regarding any programmes added, deleted, or prioritised.

As part of the 2023/24 Development Programme it has been proposed that the introduction of a Mentoring Programme would be an effective form of development. Details of the programme can be found in the attached report.

In order to make better use of learning resources the Authority will be implementing a new Learning Management System (LMS) in the autumn. A presentation will be made to the Committee outlining the steps that will be involved, the implications and providing the opportunity to ask any questions.

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?	YES
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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: **P.R. Thomas** **Assistant Chief Executive**

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities NONE	Legal NONE	Finance NONE	ICT NONE	Risk Management Issues NONE	Staffing Implications NONE	Physical Assets NONE
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CONSULTATIONS

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

Signed: **P.R. Thomas** **Assistant Chief Executive**

(Please specify the outcomes of consultations undertaken where they arise against the following headings)

1. Scrutiny Committee: N/A

2. Local Member(s)

Individual Members consulted as part of 1-1 Personal Development Meeting with Group Leaders or Deputy Group Leaders.

3. Community / Town Council – N/A

4. Relevant Partners – N/A

5. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations – N/A

Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information

List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

THERE ARE NONE (Delete as applicable)

Title of Document	File Ref No.	Locations that the papers are available for public inspection

Democratic Services Committee

9 June 2023

MEMBERS DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

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The objectives of the launch were to inform new and returning members of:

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A breakdown of the attendance to each development session is attached. **(Appendix A)**

Evaluation

To establish if the Induction Programme had been effective in providing members with sufficient knowledge and understanding, three focus groups were held during January & February and a survey was sent out to all members in February to seek feedback on the following:

- What worked well at the 2022 Member Induction?
- What aspects of the 2022 Member Induction could have been better?
- Next steps – Member Development Programme 2023/24

8 Members attend the 3 focus groups which were help online via Zoom.

14 Members completed the evaluation survey.

Some of the responses captured from the focus group and survey are recorded below.

What worked well at the 2022 Member Induction?

- Excellent launch of the Induction Programme in Y Ffwrness, enjoyed meeting other elected members, Chief Executive, Directors, and officers.
- Programme was flexible and interactive, enjoyed catching up on sessions I missed via recorded sessions.
- Option of Hybrid made it easier to attend sessions.
- Support from IT and Democratic Services was excellent.
- Fairly intensive range of different induction subjects were covered, over a fairly long period. Think it has given new councillors a good insight into the diverse and complicated nature of the Local Authority and its many responsibilities.
- The in-person session worked well. The in-person sessions provided an opportunity for Councillors to meet and discuss ward issues with the relevant officers after the sessions.
- I particularly liked the Climate Change, mitigation, and de carbonisation training, very informative.
Code of Conduct with Linda was interesting too. I also enjoyed Corporate Parenting & Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. The Violence Against Women & Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Act was very powerful and informative.
- Very informative sessions. Many of the sessions encouraged participation through activities which was good. Councillor handbook very useful. Option of joining meetings online and in the chamber gives members more opportunities to be able to attend.
- Thank you to the team for all your support and work during the induction programme.

What aspects of the 2022 Member Induction could have been better?

- Shorter sessions, more interactive as new members didn't get chance to ask questions in some seminars. Too many sessions difficult to fit in if member is working.
- Think maybe a follow up with more in depth training for councillors who elected to join various committees. The training being tailored towards the relevant committee and its duties and processes.
- I would have liked a little more time on Mod.gov. More time on Constitutional Matters and Meeting Prep would be nice too.
- Access to recordings and clear guidance on which were deemed essential.
- Shorter sessions, I'm aware from discussions with colleagues that they found the information a lot to learn in such a short space of time although completely understand flexibility and demands on Officers.
- Maybe have a couple in the late afternoon, so more can attend if they are working.

Next Steps - Member Annual Development Plan 2023-24

Comments made by members at the focus group as well as on the survey have been considered and have informed the Annual Development Plan 2023-24. Comments are welcomed regarding any programmes added, deleted, or prioritised. **(Appendix B)**

Next Steps – Member Mentoring in Carmarthenshire

The role of the elected member is a complex and challenging one. All members, from the newly elected to the more senior and experienced, can benefit from support and development in reacting to new or personally challenging situations. Our members are provided with a range of essential support and development activities, but these cannot always cater for some of their individual and immediate needs. Mentoring is another approach that members can use for personal development which can meet these needs as and when required. Traditionally, members have made informal mentoring arrangements amongst themselves, sometimes with the support of officers or political groups. Members have now expressed a wish to formalise these arrangements so that any member requesting a mentor can be matched with someone with the necessary skills and experience.

What is Mentoring?

Mentoring is a confidential one to one relationship where a mentee works with a mentor to explore issues or situations where they need to develop an approach, a second opinion or the benefit of someone else's experience. The mentee sets the agenda and takes responsibility for their learning within the relationship. The mentor helps the mentee to learn through asking questions and sharing their experience without being directive, and enables the mentee,

through discussion, to learn new information, or discover their own solutions to challenging situations. Mentoring should take place in confidential locations within the council offices. Usually a meeting will last from 1-1.5 hours and a typical mentoring relationship would last for about 3 meetings, although different members will have different needs.

The following are just some examples of when members could find mentoring useful:

- as a new member getting to “know the ropes” coping with time management, workload challenges or understanding political and officer relationships.
- as an existing member taking on a new role such as that of leader, chair, portfolio holder or champion.
- when facing a particular political, community or leadership challenge.
- when needing to build new skills such as community engagement or media relations; or
- when considering a change of role or wishing to advance in a political career.

The Authority’s Approach to Mentoring

The Authority will provide support in line with the ‘Guidance for Member Mentor’ produced by the WLGA (as attached):

[Guidance](#)

The Democratic Services Team will support by

- making a list of members who are trained and willing to be mentors available to all members.
- ensuring that members offering their services as mentors do so according to appropriate standards as identified in the Guidance.
- providing confidential venues where mentoring can take place, together with room booking services.
- If members need assistance or require a mentor from beyond the authority, officers will facilitate matches based on, for example, political party, gender, role and experience. If members require a mentor from beyond the authority, they can do this individually via political groups or through the WLGA.

The Learning and Development Team will provide support to members wishing to act as mentors by:

- providing mentors with initial and ongoing support and training as required.
- Ensuring that the Guidance for Member Mentors is available when required via the Learning Management System.

Member Induction Programme 2022 – Attendance Details

Date	Module Title	Lead Officer	Zoom	Physical	Watched Video	Total in attendance
13/05/22	Introduction & Overview of Zoom	Hayley Daniels	16	n/a		16
16/05/22	Introduction & Overview of Modern.Gov	Martha Clampitt	33	n/a	2	35
17/05/22	Code of Conduct, Ethics, Standards, Legal Duties	Linda Rees Jones & Robert Edgecombe	29	10		39
20/05/22	Introduction & Overview of Modern.Gov	Martha Clampitt	10	n/a		10
23/05/22	Constitutional Matters & Meeting Preparation	Linda Rees Jones, Robert Edgecombe	28	3	2	33
26/05/22	Local Government Finance	Chris Moore, Randal Hemingway	34	4	1	39
27/05/22	Members of the Planning Committee	Rhodri Griffiths	9	4		13
06/06/22	Members of the Standards Committee		n/a	2		2
06/06/22	External Regulators	Noelwyn Daniels, Gwyneth Ayres	33	5	1	39
09/06/22	Scrutiny in Carmarthenshire	Lisa Smart CfGS	35	n/a	1	36
10/06/22	Climate Change	Rhodri Griffiths	30	5	1	36
15/06/22	Planning for non-planning members	Rhodri Griffiths	27	3	1	31

Member Induction Programme 2022 – Attendance Details

Date	Module Title	Lead Officer	Zoom	Physical	Watched Video	Total
16/06/22	Equalities & Diversity	Gwyneth Ayres	29	2		31
17/06/22	Cabinet Member Scrutiny Training	Lisa Smart	8	n/a		8
21/06/22	Members of the Licensing Committee	Robert Edgecombe, Emyr Jones, J Power	10	2		12
22/06/22	Members of the Appeals Committee	Robert Young, Lindsey Evans, Steve Murphy	9	n/a		9
27/06/22	Cabinet Media Training	Deina Hockenhull	n/a	10		10
30/06/22	Appointments Panel Training	Hayley Daniels	13	n/a		13
05/07/22	Carbon Literacy	APSE	7	n/a		7
08/07/22	Members of the Governance & Audit Committee	Chris Moore	3	6		9
12/07/22	Corporate Parenting & Safeguarding	Rebecca Copp, Cathy Richards	29	3	1	33
14/07/22	Carbon Literacy	APSE	8	n/a		8
18/07/22	Personal Safety & Self Care	Eddie Cummins, Erin Mason-George	21	1	1	23

Appendix A

22/07/22	Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence	Mwenya Chimba, Dirk Neuman	29	n/a		29
01/09/22	Cyber Security	Dyfed Powys Police	25	n/a	1	26
22/09/22	Armed Forces	Hayley Edwards	20	3		23
03/10/22	Corporate Complaints Policy	Gwyneth Ayres	27	n/a	1	28
05/10/22	Carbon Literacy	APSE	7	n/a		7
07/10/22	Introduction to Transformation	Paul Thomas & Jon Owen	34	3		37
24/10/22	Council Owned Properties	Robert Edgecombe	24	1		25
02/12/22	Dyfed Pension Fund		17	3		20
End of Induction Programme						

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Member Annual Development Plan 2023-2024

Topic	Target group	Lead person	Delivery	Date
Geo Discoverer	All Members	Julia Harris	Online	
Code of Conduct refresher	All Members	Linda Rees Jones	Hybrid	24/04/23
Overview of Delta Wellbeing	All Members	Samantha Watkins – Delta	tbc	
KPI Overview	All Members	tbc	tbc	
Section 106	All Members	tbc	tbc	
Mod.gov refresher		L&D	Online	
Communication Skills – dealing with the public	All Members	WLGA	eLearning	
Disability Awareness	All Members	tbc	tbc	
Mental Health & Wellbeing	All Members	Wellbeing Team	Hybrid	
Overview of Crimestoppers Wales	All Members	Hayley Fry – Crimestoppers Wales	Online	
Scrutiny Refresher	All Members	WLGA	Online	
Corporate Joint Committees	All Members	Linda Rees Jones	Hybrid	
Equalities & Diversity / Introduction into Racism	All Members	WLGA	Online	
Mentoring	All Members	WLGA	tbc	

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DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE 9TH JUNE 2023

COUNCILLORS' ANNUAL REPORTS		
RECOMMENDATIONS / KEY DECISIONS REQUIRED:		
To confirm the Councillors' Annual reports template for the current 2023-24 onwards, as detailed within Appendix 1 of the report.		
REASONS:		
The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 requires all local authorities to make arrangements for each person who is a member of the authority to make an annual report about the person's activities as a member of the authority during the year to which the report relates.		
Cabinet Decision Required	NO	
Council Decision Required	NO	
Relevant portfolio holder:- N/A		
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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

COUNCILLORS' ANNUAL REPORTS

The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 states that local authorities must make arrangements for:

- a) each person who is a member of the authority to make an annual report about the person's activities as a member of the authority during the year to which the report relates,
- b) each person who is a member of the authority's executive to make an annual report about the person's activities as a member of the executive during the year to which the report relates, and
- c) the authority to publish all annual reports produced by its members and by the members of its executive.

In other words, the authority must provide the facilities for Councillors to produce and publish an annual report and to publicise the fact that Councillors are expected to produce annual reports of their activities. Annual reports are not mandatory, and it is a personal matter for Councillors whether they wish to publish an Annual Report.

The purpose of this report is to seek the Committee's endorsement of the Annual Report template. If the Committee approves the attached template, Democratic Services will circulate the report template as a word document (Appendix 1) to each Elected Member and those Elected Members who wish to produce an Annual Report can then complete an initial draft of their report for the period 1st May of the previous year until May of the current year. Democratic Services will issue one reminder to all members. It will be assumed that any Elected Member not returning their initial draft report by the 31st July 2023 will not be completing an Annual Report for the period.

All published Annual reports are available to view via the Councillor pages on the website.

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?

**YES – Appendix 1 Councillors' Annual Report Template.
Appendix 2 – Statutory Guidance**

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	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE

Legal

In line with requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and the County Council's Constitution.

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

Please specify the outcomes of consultations undertaken where they arise against the following headings)

1. Scrutiny Committee request for pre-determination	N/A
If yes include the following information: -	
Scrutiny Committee	
Date the report was considered:-	
Scrutiny Committee Outcome/Recommendations:-	

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 (Wales) Measure 2022		https://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2011/4/contents

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Carmarthenshire County Council Councillor's Annual Report for the period _____

This annual report outlines the activities of the Councillor named below for the period May _____ to May _____ (the Council's Municipal Year). It is provided for the information of constituents, and for no other purpose. The views expressed in the report are those of the Councillor and do not necessarily reflect the views of Carmarthenshire County Council.

Councillor:	Electoral Division:
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Section 1: Role & Responsibilities

<i>Council Committees</i>	<i>Attendance Record</i>

Section 2: Constituency Activities

Description of duties undertaken within the ward – including issues raised via the Councillor Enquiry system. Details of surgeries held. Any major initiatives or special projects associated with relating to their ward.

Section 3: School Governing Bodies

<i>List of School Governing Bodies</i>	<i>Attendance Record</i>

Section 4: Outside Body Representation

<i>List of outside bodies</i>	<i>Attendance Record</i>

Section 5: Learning & Development

Opportunity to list any courses/learning sessions attended and any personal development undertaken.

Section 6: Other Activities and Issues

Opportunity to list anything else constituents would be interested in.

Signed by Councillor:

Date:



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

www.cymru.gov.uk

Statutory Guidance from the Local Government Measure 2011

Section 5 Annual Reports

May 2013

Annual Reports by Members of a Local Authority

Statutory Guidance made under Section 5 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011

Introduction

1.1 Part 1 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 (“the Measure”) contains provisions intended to strengthen local democracy. Chapter 1 of that Part concerns the support provided to members of a local authority and section 5 within that chapter provides for the production of annual reports for these members.

1.2 This statutory guidance is issued under section 5(4) of the Measure. The guidance relates to local authorities making arrangements for the production of annual reports.

What the Measure requires.

1.3 Section 5 requires county and county borough councils (local authorities) to ensure that all their elected members are able to make an annual report on their council activities during the previous year. This includes enabling any member of the council’s executive to be able to report on their executive activities also. Any reports produced by members of a county or county borough council must be published by that council.

A local authority is free to set conditions/limits on what is included in a report.

A local authority must publicise what arrangements it has for publishing annual reports and in drawing up these arrangements must have regard to this guidance in so doing.

Guidance

Duties of a local authority

1.4 A local authority must make the arrangements enabling its members to produce annual reports. This means it must tell its members how and by when to do this. The Measure, at section 8 *et seq*, provides for a Head of Democratic Services (HDS) to carry out democratic services functions as defined in section 9. This includes the provision of support and advice to members to assist them in the carrying out of their functions and organisation of the annual report process would fall within this. The Measure prevents the HDS from providing support and advice to a member of an executive in relation to the carrying out of that member’s executive functions, but production of an annual report, even if it made reference to the member’s executive activities, is not an executive function in itself.

Publication of reports

1.5 How a local authority decides to publish Members annual reports is a matter for that authority to decide upon. The minimum requirement would be for the authority to include a link to a member's annual report on that part of the authority's website which carries details of individual members. There is no requirement for any publicity beyond this, and authorities should be careful that, if they decide to provide any further publicity for the reports, the same provision is provided for all members. Therefore, should a member request that his/her report is given any greater publicity, that request should be declined unless carried out in respect of all members.

Local authorities should ensure also that their website includes information about the introduction of annual reports and how members of the public can access them.

Content of reports

1.6 The central purpose of the reports is for members of the public to find information about their local councillor's activity.

In considering its approach a local authority should have regard to the resource implications of supporting all local Members to prepare for publication of their annual report. In order to contain the scale of the task, an authority may wish to create a standard annual report template that acknowledges the need to strike a balance between resources and output, whilst taking into account the requirements of the Data Protection Act.

Local Authorities should ensure that Annual reports avoid promoting political achievements, are written in the past tense, and limit the report template to two sides of A4.

The template for Members Annual Reports might be expected to include; Role and responsibilities (membership of internal and external committees, panels, groups and organisations); Constituency Activity; Initiatives and Special Activities, Learning & Development; and Other Activities.

1.7 Local authorities may place their own restrictions on content in reports. Annual reports should include only factual information. In the main that would suggest information on meetings, events and conferences etc. attended, training and development received. While it might be acceptable to record information such as "made representations on behalf of the campaign to save the local hospital in the following ways", it would not be acceptable to say "succeeded in saving local hospital by my efforts on my constituents' behalf".

1.8 Similarly, care should be taken to avoid including in reports information concerning activities when the member concerned is not operating in the role of councillor. So, whereas it would be acceptable to include information concerning,

for instance, a speech made at a conference where the member was attending because of their council role, it would not be acceptable to refer to a speech made to, for instance, a Party conference, where the member was a delegate from their local party organisation.

1.9 Care should also be taken not to include information which could be interpreted as critical of another member. For instance, it would not be acceptable for a member to compare his/her attendance or activities with that of another member or members.

1.10 The following areas are proposed as standard items to be included:

- Role and responsibilities – to include details of membership of committees and outside bodies, attendance records for these and full council.
- Local activity – details of surgeries held, representations made on behalf of electors and the results of these
- Major projects – involvement in local, county or regional initiatives or projects.
- Learning and development – details of training and development events attended or undertaken, conferences and seminars attended.

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DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE 9TH JUNE 2023

THE JO COX COMMISSION ON CIVILITY		
RECOMMENDATIONS / KEY DECISIONS REQUIRED:		
To consider the report and provide any observations.		
REASONS:		
To canvass member opinion on the work of the commission and provide any observations.		
Cabinet Decision Required	NO	
Council Decision Required	NO	
Relevant portfolio holder:- N/A		
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

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE**

THE JO COX COMMISSION ON CIVILITY

The [Jo Cox Civility Commission](#) was launched on the 28th February 2023 and seeks to drive change in British democracy by working to find implementable solutions to make life safer for political representatives and candidates for office.

In the last seven years, two MPs have been murdered in their constituency and many more elected politicians have faced physical assaults and threats. The Commission has been established by The Jo Cox Foundation to raise awareness of the detrimental impact on individuals, democracy and society, of the current levels of abuse and intimidation in political life.

The report provides a summary of the Commission's progress and on how Councillors can engage with the Commission on its work.

The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) is submitting a response and the Authority can input or alternatively contact the commission directly.

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?

YES – Commission's progress report

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	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE

Legal

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

Please specify the outcomes of consultations undertaken where they arise against the following headings)

1. Scrutiny Committee request for pre-determination	N/A
If yes include the following information: -	
Scrutiny Committee	
Date the report was considered:-	
Scrutiny Committee Outcome/Recommendations:-	

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
Jo Cox Commission		https://www.jocoxfoundation.org/commission_launch

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The Jo Cox Commission on Civility

Background

Abuse and intimidation of elected political representatives, and violence towards them, in both local and national government, is one of the biggest threats to our democracy in the UK.

In the last seven years, two sitting MPs have been murdered as they meet their constituents. Before that, it had been over 25 years since an MP was killed in the UK. MPs are regularly reporting death threats and threats of serious sexual violence to the police, and most have panic alarms in their offices and homes. In 2021, 70% of Members of the Scottish Parliament reported that they had feared for their safety since being elected, rising to 90% among female MSPs. The problem is not just limited to national politicians. Research conducted by the Local Government Association in 2022 showed that seven out of ten of local councillors had experienced abuse and intimidation in the last year.

This situation is having a detrimental impact on the make-up of our elected leaders. It is forcing those already elected to consider their positions and sometimes stand back from politics, and it is having an impact on the pipeline of future politicians. It has a significant impact on representation, with female politicians and those from minority ethnic backgrounds suffering the most abuse.

“Nobody in any job should have to put up with threats, aggressive emails, being shouted at in the street, sworn at on social media, nor have to install panic alarms at home,” - Heidi Allen MP in a letter to her constituents explaining why she was not seeking re-election, 2019

About the Jo Cox Commission on Civility

The reasons behind this growing problem are complex and implementing solutions will require concerted action across a number of different sectors - including social media firms, political parties, government and police forces.

The Jo Cox Foundation wants anyone, regardless of their background, to feel able to participate in our political discourse and be treated with respect and we're committed to finding and advocating for solutions to the issue of abuse and intimidation.

Recognising that the solutions to this issue come from many different sectors, we are launching the Jo Cox Commission on Civility to find practical ways to address the problem. With Baroness Gabby Bertin and Lord Vernon Coaker acting as co-chairs, the Commission will gather proposed solutions to the issue from experts across numerous sectors.

The Jo Cox Commission on Civility will play a catalytic role in tackling abuse and intimidation in political life in order to:

- Develop a robust and evidenced set of recommendations to tackle the issue;
- Advocate for the adoption of these recommendations;
- Raise awareness of the detrimental impact of abuse and intimidation in political life on individuals, our democracy, and our society;
- Deliver positive and lasting change to our public life.

How will the Commission work?

Launching in February 2023, the Commission will have two main phases:

- **A solutions gathering phase.** Taking place until the summer of 2023, this phase will focus on gathering suggestions for how to address the issue of abuse and intimidation. Using an open call, public sessions, 1-2-1 and group interviews, we will hear from a wide variety of individuals, groups and organisations across a number of sectors about practical ways to address this issue. Once collected, this data will be analysed, and recommendations will be put forward, both grouped according to sector, and divided into immediate, medium and long term solutions.
- **An advocacy phase.** Once the recommendations are published, the advocacy phase will begin and The Jo Cox Foundation and the Commission co-chairs will actively work (with partners) to push for their



adoption. Beginning in late 2023, this phase will continue through 2024.

About The Jo Cox Foundation

Jo Cox was a passionate campaigner, activist and humanitarian; a proud Yorkshire lass and internationalist; and a devoted mum, daughter, sister, wife, friend and MP.

The Jo Cox Foundation makes meaningful change on issues that Jo was passionate about. Like Jo, we believe that a kinder, fairer and more connected world is possible. Underpinning this belief is the understanding that we have more in common than that which divides us. As we work to make change, we follow Jo's example of collaborating with others and bringing people together to achieve more than we can alone.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES FUNCTION

Members will be aware of the requirement under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 ("the Measure") for the Council to establish a Democratic Services Committee. The Measure also 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 these statutory functions.

This report provides information on the provision of staff, accommodation and other resources made available to the Head of Democratic Services in order to ensure that services are adequate to deliver the Democratic Process.

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?

YES

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
 Gaynor Morgan Head of Democratic Services

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
NONE	YES	YES	NONE	NONE	YES	NONE

Legal

The Local Government (Wales) Measure requires a local authority to designate one of its officers to discharge the Democratic Services Functions and provide that officer with such staff, accommodation and other resources which in its opinion are sufficient to allow those functions to be discharged.

The Head of Democratic Services may arrange for the discharge of democratic services functions by staff prescribed under the Democratic Services Function.

Finance

No additional budgetary implications at this time, the existing staffing arrangements can be accommodated within the Division's existing budget.

Staffing Implications

The Local Government Wales Measure requires local authorities to include within their standing orders provisions concerning the management of staff provided to the Head of Democratic Services. Section 10 "Management of Staff" does not include the appointment of staff or dismissal of staff or the taking of other disciplinary action against staff.

CONSULTATIONS

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

Signed: Linda Rees Jones
Gaynor Morgan

Head of Administration and Law
Head of Democratic Services

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:

Title of Document	File Ref No.	Locations that the papers are available for public inspection
Local Government Wales Measure		http://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2011/4/contents/enacted

Report of the Head of Democratic Services

9th June 2023

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES FUNCTION

Head of Service & Designation. Linda Rees Jones Head of Administration & Law	Directorate Chief Executive	Telephone No. 01267 224010
Author & Designation Gaynor Morgan Head of Democratic Services	Directorate Chief Executive	Telephone No 01267 224026

Members will be aware of the requirement under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 ("the Measure") for each Local Authority to establish a Democratic Services Committee. The Measure also 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 these statutory functions.

The Head of Democratic Services has a statutory responsibility to organise the discharge of the "democratic services functions" in accordance with the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 which includes:- The production of reports, as required, on the number of staff required to support democratic services and how the staff should be organised to ensure the Council, the Cabinet and Committees receive high level support in the discharge of its democratic functions.

Democratic Services manages the Authority's decision-making process. The Council constitution sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. Some of these processes are required by the law, while others are a matter for the Council to choose.

Democratic Services Staffing Resources

Staffing resource to support the Democratic Service is split into three distinct teams:-

- a) Committee Support
- b) Civic & Member Support
(both under the management of the Head of Democratic Services)
- c) Cabinet support
(under the management of the Chief Executives' Business Support Manager)

In addition to myself, as Head of Democratic Services, the Democratic team comprises 2 Principal Democratic Services Officers 5 Democratic Services Officers, 1 Assistant Democratic Services Officer, 3 Member Support Officers, an Official Car Driver and 2 casual drivers called upon as and when necessary.

The Democratic team deals with a wide range of activities, which include, but are not limited to:

- Maintain and develop the Council's decision-making processes to include the preparation of agendas, reports and minutes, to ensure decision made are accountable and transparent.
- In accordance with the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 convening multi-location meetings (hybrid). This means that participants can joint either in person at County Hall, Carmarthen or remotely and the meeings are combined as one using a specialist piece of technology.
- Webcasting of all Council and Committee meetings – approximately 200 per annum./
- Managing and providing Scrutiny and Committee Services support to the Council and its various Committees.
- Support services to Elected Members, including maintaining and managing local councillor information on our website (includes information on declarations of interests; gifts and hospitality; Committee membership; remuneration etc) and providing a support service for enquiries and advice on the Council's Constitution and Members' Code of Conduct.
- Administer appeals relating to school admissions and school permanent exclusions.
- Servicing and hosting joint working arrangements namely, . Dyfed Powys Police and Crime Panel, Wales Pension Partnership Joint Governance Committee and Y Partneriaeth.
- Administering the Council's arm's length companies - Llesiant Delta Wellbeing Governance Group and CWM Environmental Ltd Shareholders Board.
- Managing internal meetings between Group Leaders, Constitutional Review Group, Cabinet member meetings with Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs, amongst others.
- Managing members' constituency casework via a Member Enquiry system, processing Member expenses and making arrangements for attending conferences and seminars. A report on a review of the Member Enquiry system is also agendaed for consideration at the meeting.
- Support to the Chair and Vice-Chair of Council in their civic duties.
- Developing and updating the Democracy web pages managing democratic room bookings/

The Chief Executive's Business Support unit supports the work of the Leader and the 9 Cabinet Members and comprises a small team of staff. The Cabinet Support Office provides professional advice, research and information gathering, prepares speeches, and manages day to day correspondence and diary coordination

Key Challenges and successes during the Year

Local Government Elections were held during the year, and following a review of electoral wards by the Local Government Boundary Commission the new Council was elected in May 2022. The Council now comprises 75 Councillors of which 47 are returning members and 28 are new. The team successfully managed the work involved in creating the new Council. This required a review of the political balance of the Authority, discussion with the new group leaders and unaffiliated members on political representations and the appointment to Committees of the Council, joint committees and external bodies, all within a very tight timescale.

In accordance with the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 a timing of meetings survey was undertaken, canvassing all members. The results of the survey were considered by the Democratic Services Committee and then a recommendation made to Council.

The Authority in accordance with the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 introduced multi-location meetings from its annual meeting in May 2022 allowing participants to attend the meeting either physical in the Chamber, County Hall or remotely via Zoom. A new hybrid kit was installed which allowed both the physical and remote meeting to be managed using a mix of a remote platform (Zoom) and physical presence in the Chamber at County Hall and merging into one meeting.

Working along side the Learning and Development Team a full and comprehensive Member Induction Programme was held for both returning and new members over a period of 6 months. Over 40 separate training sessions were convened for this purpose.

The service supported the Council approved change to the remits of the Scrutiny Committees in that each Scrutiny Committee was now responsible for the overview and scrutiny of specific Cabinet Portfolios and their respective service areas.

The Cabinet also agreed a move from systematic referral of Scrutiny reports to Pre-Decision Scrutiny. This allowed Scrutiny Committee members to decide which reports from the Cabinet Forward Plan that they wished to come before them, allowing them greater control of their own agendas by deciding on and agreeing content and prioritising the issues that each scrutiny committee examined. As per normal process, each Scrutiny Committees would also continue to identify their own topics and Cabinet could invite a Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise a decision which is in the pipeline

The service entered into new contracts for webcasting services with our webcasting provider Public-I in early 2022 and with our Committee Management System provider Civica Mod.gov in March 2023.

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 has had a direct impact on the workload of Democratic Services, for example additional resources are required to facilitate a combination of both physical and virtual meetings. The team has also suffered some long term staff absences during the year and work has been re-allocated between team members in order to maintain, as much as possible, statutory service requirements.

Key Challenges and Priorities for 2022-23

The priorities for the coming year involve continuing to build on the very firm foundations already in place.

We will examine and develop our scrutiny arrangements following the work of Audit Wales on the 'Overview and Scrutiny – Fit for purpose follow up review.

Manage the changes put in place in respect of the Member Enquiry process.

Administer any changes that come forward as a result of making of orders in the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and the Council constitution.

Having taking into account the extremely difficult (and ongoing) economic pressures facing the Council generally and the need for the service to continue to identify, deliver and contribute to further savings, the staffing structure (if provided with support from other teams within the department) is considered to be sufficient for current service demands, however this will need to be continually monitored as elements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act come into force, the team is asked to further develop and support the Scrutiny process and further joint working arrangements are introduced.

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE 9TH June 2023

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

Purpose: To ensure the Democratic Services Committee Agenda Items are appropriately planned

Recommendations / key decisions required:

To consider and identify a forward work programme for the Committee for 2023/2024

Reasons:

Annual Forward Work Programme to discuss with Members the expected Agenda Items for the 2023/24 Democratic Committee Cycle

Cabinet Decision

NO

Council Decision

NO

CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER:- N/A

Directorate:

Chief Executive's

Name of Head of Service:

Linda Rees Jones

Report Author:

Gaynor Morgan

Designations:

Head of Administration and Law

Head of Democratic Services

Tel No.01267224010

E Mail Address:
LRJones@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

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GMorgan@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

Democratic Services Committee Forward Work Programme

The purpose of this report is to inform the development of the Democratic Services Committee forward work programme for the period 2023/2024.. The development of a programme of work for the Committee will ensure that all appropriate Committees of the Authority have published up to date programmes which are owned by the Committee members.

A suggested work programme is attached for the Committee's consideration and comment.

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED ?

YES

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
Gaynor Morgan

Head of Administration and Law
Head of Democratic Services

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities NONE	Legal NONE	Finance NONE	ICT NONE	Risk Management Issues NONE	Staffing Implications NONE	Physical Assets NONE
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CONSULTATIONS

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

Linda Rees Jones
Gaynor Morgan

Head of Administration and Law
Head of Democratic Services

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 Wales Measure		http://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2011/4/contents/enacted

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FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE 2023/24

SUBJECT AREA AND BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF NATURE OF REPORT	LEAD DEPARTMENT	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	DATE TO DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE
ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE 2022/23 To consider a report outlining the work the work of the Committee during the 2022/23 municipal year.	Chief Executive	Head of Democratic Services	SEPTEMBER 2023
CARMARTHENSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S SCRUTINY FUNCTION ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23 To consider an overview of the Council's Scrutiny Function and the respective Scrutiny Committees' work during the 2022/23 municipal year.	Chief Executive	Head of Democratic Services	SEPTEMBER 2023
INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT To consider and comment on the draft report.	Chief Executive	Head of Democratic Services	NOVEMBER 2023
MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2022/23 To receive an update on the Member Development Programme for and identify additional training and development topics	Chief Executive	Learning & Development Manager/ Learning & Development Advisor	NOVEMBER 2023
PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT REVIEWS – UPDATE ON DISCUSSIONS WITH GROUP LEADERS To receive an update on discussion between Corporate Learning & Development and Group Leaders regarding annual development requirements for Members	Chief Executive	Learning & Development Manager/ Learning & Development Advisor	NOVEMBER 2023

<p>ANNUAL AND SUPPLEMENTARY REPORTS OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES To consider the implementation of reports issued by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales in respect of members allowances etc</p>	<p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>Head of Democratic Services</p>	<p>MARCH 2024</p>
<p>DEMOCRATIC SERVICES FUNCTION To receive the report of the Head of Democratic Services on the adequacy of provision by the authority of staff, accommodation and other resources to discharge democratic services functions</p>	<p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>Head of Democratic Services</p>	<p>JUNE 2024</p>
<p>MATTERS REFERRED FROM CRWG</p>	<p>Chief Executive's</p>	<p>Head of Administration & Law</p>	<p>AS REQUIRED</p>
<p>UPDATE ON THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND ELECTIONS (WALES) ACT 2021</p>	<p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>Head of Administration and Law/Head of Democratic Services</p>	<p>AS REQUIRED</p>