



DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

2.00 PM MONDAY, 4 SEPTEMBER 2023

***HYBRID MEETING
COUNCIL CHAMBER AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS***

All mobile telephones to be switched to silent for the duration of the meeting

This meeting may be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's Internet Site. By participating you are consenting to be filmed and the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes.

PART 1

1. Declarations of Interest
2. Minutes of Previous Meeting (*Pages 3 - 6*)
3. Forward Work Programme (*Pages 7 - 8*)

PART 2

4. Democratic Services Annual Report 2022-2023 (*Pages 9 - 22*)
5. Draft Member Training & Development, and Seminar Programme (*Pages 23 - 40*)
6. Local Democracy Week (*Pages 41 - 46*)
7. Urgent Items
Any urgent items at the discretion of the Chairperson pursuant to

Section 100BA(6)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

K.Jones
Chief Executive

Civic Centre
Port Talbot

Tuesday, 29th August 2023

Committee Membership:

Chairperson: **Councillor S.Rahaman**

Vice
Chairperson: **Councillor N.Goldup-John**

Councillors: W.Carpenter, J.Hale, M.Harvey, J.Henton,
A.R.Lockyer, A.Lodwig, P.A.Rees, P.Rogers,
C.Williams and S.Thomas

Democratic Services Committee

(Multi-Location Meeting - Council Chamber, Port Talbot & Microsoft Teams)

Members Present:

17 April 2023

Chairperson: Councillor S.Rahaman

Vice Chairperson: Councillor

Councillors: J.Hale, M.Harvey, J.Henton, A.R.Lockyer, P.A.Rees, P.Rogers and S.Thomas

Officers In Attendance C.Griffiths, S.Curran and A.Thomas

1. **Declarations of Interest**

There were none received.

2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th February 2023 were approved as an accurate record.

3. **Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Final Report 2023/24**

Members were presented with Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Final Report 2023/24 as detailed within the circulated report.

Members noted the report.

4. **Assessment of Resources to support the Democratic Services Function**

Members were presented with information relating to the assessment of resources to support the Democratic Services function, as detailed within the circulated report.

The Head of Democratic Services provided a summary of the report. The workload and demand placed upon the Democratic Services Team is consistent and increasing due to the duties placed upon them by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. Officers also outlined the democratic services support provided to the corporate and joint regional committees.

Officer advised members to take note that the Team are currently working to capacity and their flexibility to undertake further duties would be extremely difficult.

It was noted that the Head of Democratic Services has a statutory duty to report annual on this matter, however given the upcoming workload, members were advised that a report would be provided half yearly.

Resolved: That the Democratic Services Committee endorse the Democratic Services structure set out in Appendix 1 and note the report.

5. **Forward Work Programme**

Officers outlined the current member survey that is being undertaken and that the committee will be able to consider the outcomes from this.

A forward work programme session will be held early in the new civic year so that members can consider items they wish to look at next year.

Members noted the report.

6. **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

CHAIRPERSON

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Democratic Committee Services
Forward Work Programme 2023/24

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Type	Contact Officer
<u>4th September 2023</u>	Forward Work Programme Consideration	Discussion	Craig Griffiths/Stacy Curran
	Draft Training Programme for Members	Decision	Craig Griffiths/Stacy Curran
	Democratic Services Committee Annual Report 2022/23	Information	Craig Griffiths/Stacy Curran
	Local Democracy Week 2023	Decision	Craig Griffiths/Stacy Curran
<u>27th November 2023</u>	Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Draft Annual Report – February 2024	Information and comment	Craig Griffiths/Stacy Curran
	Member Annual Reports	Decision	Craig Griffiths/Stacy Curran
	Member PDRs	Decision	Craig Griffiths/Stacy Curran
	Harassment and Intimidation	Decision	Craig Griffiths/Stacy Curran
	Diversity in Democracy	Decision	Craig Griffiths/Stacy Curran/Rhys George
	Annual Review of E-Petitions/Public Speaking	Decision	Craig Griffiths/Stacy Curran

	Assessment of Resources for Democratic Services (REQUESTED 6 MONTHLY)	Information	Craig Griffiths/Stacy Curran
<u>4th March 2024</u>	Annual member survey and Timing of Meetings	Decision	Craig Griffiths/Stacy Curran
	IRPW Final Report (If available)	Information	Craig Griffiths/Stacy Curran
<u>8th April 2024</u>	Assessment of Resources for Democratic Services	Information	Craig Griffiths/Stacy Curran
	Democratic Services Committee Annual Report 23/24	Decision	Craig Griffiths/Stacy Curran

2023/2024

- Annual Review of E-Petitions/Public Speaking
- Review Diversity in Democracy Action Plan
- Draft Protocol for research & member support (WLGA)
- Draft charter (WLGA)
- WLGA Democracy Handbook

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

4th September 2023

Report of the Democratic Services Chairperson- Cllr S Rahaman

Matter for Information

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Annual Report of the Democratic Services Committee 2022/23.

Purpose of the Report

To update Members on the work undertaken by the Democratic Services Committee for the civic year 2022/2023 and to endorse and commend the report to Council.

Background

To provide an overview of the work of the Democratic Services Committee for 2022/23.

Financial Impact

No impact.

Integrated Impact Assessment

There is no requirement to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment as this report is in relation to administrative matters only.

Workforce Impacts

No impact.

Risk Management

No impact.

Legal Powers

Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 (S.7)

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2011/4/contents>

Valleys Communities Impacts:

There are no specific impacts for valley communities arising from this report.

Consultation

There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

Recommendation

That the Democratic Services Committee note and endorse the Annual Report 2022/23 attached at Appendix 1 and commend the same to Council.

Reason for decision

To note and endorse the Annual Report 2022/23 of the Democratic Services Committee.

Implementation of Decision

Immediate.

Officer Contacts

Cllr S Rahaman - Chair of the Democratic Services Committee.

e-mail: cllr.s.rahaman@npt.gov.uk

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Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council



NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNCIL DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT

2022-2023

Chair's Foreword

It was my privilege to take forward the role as Chair of the Democratic Services Committee through this important inaugural year for the Democratic Services Committee, following the Local Government Elections in May 2022 and it is with great pleasure that I present this report for the Democratic Services Committee covering the period from June 2022 to May 2023

The election welcomed 19 new Members within the Council and the role of this Democratic Services Committee has been more important than ever, to ensure that we support all new and returning Members to undertake their role.

The publication of the report is an attempt to provide an element of good practice for Members in addition to the production of an appropriate yardstick with which to approach the generation of future reports.

The Democratic Services Committee's forward work programme is agreed by members on a rolling basis. Whilst the Democratic Services Committee takes decisions and provides direction for the Council on several key matters relating to member support and associated issues, Members remain mindful that it is the cabinet and ultimately Council that has overall responsibility for all strategic and far reaching decision making on behalf of Neath Port Talbot Council.

However, Members are also mindful that they are charged with the duty of carrying out all of the statutory requirements provided for this committee under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011. In this respect, I am delighted to report on the success of the Democratic Services Committee during this period.

The work and support of the Council's Democratic Services Section should not go unnoticed through the Member Induction Programme and beyond, with the support and advice, training and the provision of technology to assist members. This appreciation was clearly visible through the results of the Members Survey results and our thanks go to the Head of Democratic Services and the dedicated team who continue to go over and above to support all elected members.

We have embraced a dynamic approach as a Democratic Services Committee, being fortunate to build upon the strong foundations of the previous Committee and its former Chairs. We will continue to champion areas previously progressed, in particular the diversity in democracy agenda that the former Democratic Services Committee passionately highlighted through its working group arrangements, but also focus on areas of addressing member intimidation and harassment to ensure all members feel safe in their roles and are supported in various forums. The public perception of the role of the elected member also needs to be built on to encourage anyone in the community to put their name forward as a candidate should they wish to contribute their communities.

As a new Democratic Services Committee Membership there are many areas and opportunities we have committed to take forward over the next Municipal Year to ensure

that each and every Member is given the best opportunity to deliver for their residents and will look to produce a robust forward work programme in the new municipal year to achieve this aim.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank my Vice Chair, Councillor Nathan Goldup-John for his support and advice during my first year as Chair of the Democratic Services Committee and to each of the Members for their attendance, input and positive challenge brought to each and every meeting.

I would also like to place on record my thanks for continued hard work and dedication of the Democratic Services Team.

Cllr Saifur Rahaman (Chair of the Democratic Services Committee)

Members of the Democratic Services Committee

2022-2023

Cllr Saifur Rahaman	Chair
Cllr Nathan Goldup-John	Vice Chair
Cllr Jo Hale	
Cllr Mike Harvey	
Cllr James Henton	
Cllr Alan Lockyer	
Cllr Andy Lodwig	
Cllr Peter Rees	
Cllr Chris Williams	
Cllr Sarah Thomas	

The Democratic Services Committee formally met four times during 2022/23 and meetings were held on a hybrid basis, in the Council Chamber and over the Microsoft Teams platform.

The Chair is a member of and attends regular meetings of the All Wales Network for Member Support and Development where best practice is discussed and useful relationships are formed.

The remit of the Democratic Services Committee

The functions of the Democratic Services Committee are:-

- To exercise the functions of the Council under Section 8(1) (a) Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 (designation of Head of Democratic Services) (as more particularly described in Section 9(1) of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011);
- To review the adequacy of provision by the Council of staff, accommodation and other resources to discharge democratic services functions (including but not limited to councillor training, Improvements and innovations to Council democratic practices)
- To make reports and recommendations to the Council in relation to such provision;
- To determine whether or not the Councillors period of family absence should be cancelled in accordance with Regulation 34 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.
- To determine whether or not to withhold a Councillor's Remuneration should they fail to return following a period of family absence on the date specified in the notice provided
- It is for the Democratic Services Committee to determine how to exercise these functions however the Democratic Services Committee may not exercise any functions other than the functions set out above unless approved by Full Council

The work of the Democratic Services Committee in 2022-2023

Member Induction and Member Development

The Member Induction Programme saw the most extensive programme of training to newly elected and returning Members, over and above the prescribed mandatory training requirements.

During the course of the first municipal year, further general and bespoke sessions were delivered both externally and internally.

The training sessions were undertaken both virtually and through the hybrid approach and at various times to accommodate Members with their personal and business commitments. Where Members were unable to attend, individual 1-1 sessions were arranged.

The Democratic Services Committee is responsible for the training and development opportunities provided to Members by the Council Democratic Services Section and the rest of the Council. Therefore the Democratic Services Committee were keen to embark on a Members Survey to obtain feedback from Members in respect of the Induction programme to ascertain the relevance/length/content of the sessions and where, if any, improvements could be made for future induction training programmes. It was pleasing to note that overall, Members said they were satisfied with the delivery, timings and content of the training.

It is appreciated that for a few Members the programme was difficult to accommodate and the Council Democratic Services team were appreciative of the feedback, to allow them to refine the induction programme for the benefit of future Members.

Going forward, it is important to build on the training foundations of the Induction Programme to ensure Members are further equipped with the skills and further knowledge base to undertake their role and the Committee have supported the Personal Development Review Process undertaken by the members within their political groups but also provide Members with the opportunity to take forward private discussions to establish any additional training needs and also the opportunity to discuss general wellbeing, which as a Committee, we feel is just as important. Members were reminded that, wherever possible, members can have an opportunity to review their training and development needs on an annual basis should they wish to undertake this. Members noted that the Head of Democratic Services would communicate with Group Leaders to consider training for members to undertake personal development reviews with their peers and then invite and encourage wider members to complete a Personal Development Review should they so wish.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Following the Local Government elections, training on the roles and responsibilities of the Democratic Services Committee was given to the committee.

Multi Location Meeting Policy

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 statutory guidance required the Council to develop a policy around multi location meetings. The Democratic Services Committee considered some key issues including; determination of meeting types, standards of behaviour and etiquette. The policy was later ratified at Full Council.

The Democratic Services Committee have been heavily involved in the implementation and roll out of the hybrid meeting system since initial discussions in 2019 with the Democratic Services Committee being pleased to see that members can choose to attend meetings either via attendance at the Council Chamber or through the MS Teams platform. The live streaming / webcasting of full Council meetings is a further approach to engaging with the public, allowing members of the public to watch meetings as they happen from their own setting, rather than having to attend the Council Chamber, which has previously been recognised as a barrier for public participation. The Democratic Services Committee welcomes to uploading of meetings on Youtube as well for individuals to watch.

Other benefits achieved through include:

- A positive demonstration of accountability and transparency;
- Encouraging engagement and debate, by creating more opportunities for the public to access meetings
- Accuracy of recording of meetings including recording of decisions, voting and attendance;
- The opportunity to raise the profile of the work of Councillors, and the discussions behind the decisions of Council and its committees

Councillor Safety and Wellbeing

The welfare and mental health of Members is crucially important and Members need to be aware of the support that is available to them.

The Democratic Services Committee were updated on ongoing issues in relation to Councillor safety and wellbeing, in particular the Local Government Associations' 'Debate not Hate' programme.

Handling Harassment Abuse and Intimidation

The Role of an Elected Member is integral to the running of the Council and as such an important role of an Elected Member is to keep in touch with their residents and communities, which includes communication via telephone, email, social media, virtual meetings and face to face contact with constituents, for example, by holding ward surgeries, making visits to people's homes, or when receiving people at their own homes.

A range of safety provisions available to Members were outlined at the Democratic Services Committee in April and it is important to recognise the effects on Members wellbeing, when a victim of any personal or cyber attack.

The Democratic Services Committee were updated on the Councillor's Guide to Handling Harassment, Abuse and Intimidation led by the Local Government Association (LGA). I wrote to the Chair of the WLGA expressing the committee's concerns, and desire to be part of any working groups going forward.

Annual Survey of Members

The Democratic Services Committee endorsed the content and process of the annual survey of members, which was undertaken in Spring 2023. The findings of which help to determine focus and resource and training for the next Civic Year.

Public Participation Strategy

The Democratic Services committee were asked to be part of the consultation on the Council's Public Participation Strategy, with particular focus on the requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 which requires councils to encourage local people to participate in their decision making. The Public Participation Strategy was later ratified at Council.

Democracy is something to be valued and nurtured. At a local government level this means a commitment to listen to all voices, for those voices to be heard and to work together with our communities to explore and resolve issues of concern, promote and recognise achievements and face new challenges together.

Our council is strongly committed to fostering a culture of partnership with local people and communities, encouraging and supporting them to participate in our decision making, and keeping them informed about how their participation has influenced decisions.

The Democratic Services Committee looks forwarding to supporting the positive work being undertaken in this area.

Independent Remuneration Panel Wales Draft Annual Report

The committee considered the Draft Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales. The committee discussed the proposed changes to be implemented in 2023/2024 and agreed to make a brief response to the consultation.

Members' Annual Report Scheme

Members were reminded of the current policy to support the production of annual reports by members of the Council. Members received and noted the Members' Annual Report Scheme.

Assessment of Resources for the Democratic Services Committee

Following consideration of a report on the outcomes of an assessment of the adequacy of resources within the Democratic Services Team, Members were in support of the recommendations contained within the report.

Diversity in democracy

Members also noted the requirement to promote Diversity in Democracy and how this can be achieved. Members agreed to support further work in these areas and to consider the Diversity in Democracy programme on their Forward Work Programme.

Future Priorities

The Democratic Services Committee regularly reviews its forward work programme and has identified the following priority areas for consideration in 2023-2024 in amongst the standing items that we will receive.

- Overseeing a draft training programme for elected members following the recent survey work undertaken;
- Commenting and developing strategies to correspond with Local Democratic Week 2023 and onwards
- Continuing to undertake work to look at harassment, intimidation and the support that can be provided to elected members in this regard
- Diversity in Democracy and how we can do more as a Committee and Council to encourage greater diversity in our candidates for future elections
- Reviewing of participation work such as our E-Petition Schemes and Public Speaking at Council meetings
- Consider the development of a protocol for member support through the work undertaken by the Welsh Local Government Association.
- Further implementation of the Welsh Local Government Association Democracy Handbook

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

4th September 2023

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES- Mr Craig Griffiths

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Draft Members' Development, Seminar and Training Programme 2023-2024.

Purpose of Report

To update the Committee on the Draft Members' Development and Training Programme for 2023/24 and the Member Seminar Programme for 2022/23 as contained in Appendix 1.

Background

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 requires local authorities to ensure the provision of relevant training and development opportunities for its members.

Members were surveyed in April 2023, and were asked:

- How would you rate any training that you have been offered or received over the last 12 months? Please provide examples.
- Would you like to identify any topic areas you would like to see in the Member Training programme for the next Civic Year?
- Would you like to identify any topic areas you would like to see in the Member Seminar programme for the next Civic Year?

The feedback to the above questions have informed the draft Member Development and Training Programme as at Appendix 1.

At the same time, a series of other questions relating to the democratic processes were asked, which have assisted in officers in framing the draft Member Development and Training Programme and also afforded members the opportunity to identify topic areas they would like to see in the Member Seminar programme for the next Civic Year.

The responses of which have been shared with officers, and built into the Seminar Programme for 2023/24 as attached at Appendix 1.

It is to be noted, that from time to time officers will request topical issues be raised with members throughout the year and the seminar programme will adapt to accommodate these requirements.

The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) also offer a full programme of support and development, which the Council will utilise to complement our Member Development and Training Programme, the details of which can be found at Appendix 2.

Financial Impact

The training programme will be need to be delivered through existing budgets or through learning activities that are at no additional cost to the Council.

Workforce Impact

The training programme will be delivered through existing staff resources in the Democratic Services Team, and other Council officers.

Integrated Impact Assessment

There is no requirement, as this report is in relation to administrative matters only.

Legal Powers

Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

Risk Management

By not providing training opportunities for members, the Council are not fulfilling its duties as set out in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

Consultation

There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item; however all Members were consulted during the Annual Member Survey in April 2023 and invited to complete a survey identifying their training needs.

Recommendation

That Members approve the Draft Members' Development and Training Programme (and Seminar Schedule) for 2023/24 contained in Appendix 1.

Reason for Decision

To determine the Member Training Programme for 23/24, under the requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

Implementation of Decision

Immediate

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Draft Member Training Programme and Seminar Programme 2023/24.

Appendix 2- WLGA Support and Training Programme 2023/24

Officer Contacts

Craig Griffiths – Head of Legal and Democratic Services
c.griffiths2@npt.gov.uk

Stacy Curran- Democratic Services Manager
s.curran@npt.gov.uk

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Members Training Programme 2023/24**Annually:**

TOPIC	DATE	TRAINER
Council Procedure Rules and Decision Making		Craig Griffiths
Code of Conduct		Craig Griffiths
GDPR		Craig Griffiths/Chris Owen
Budget		Huw Jones
Public Speaking		
Leadership Course	Cohorts allocated by WLGA.	WLGA

Market Place Event or refresher to be considered annually.

Committee Specific:

TOPIC	DATE	TRAINER
Performance	Dates have been allocated within the existing	Caryn Furlow Harris/ Shaun Davies

	committees' Forward Work Programme,	
Chairs of Scrutiny		
Lines of Enquiry and Questioning Skills		

Committee specific training for certain Committees is mandatory i.e. Planning and will be arranged and refreshed as necessary.

Topical:

TOPIC	DATE	TRAINER
Social Media		
Dealing with harassment, intimidation and confrontation.		
IT Equipment and Support		

Member Seminars 2023/24

Date	Time	Subject	Responsible Officer
7 Sept 2023	10.00am	Culture, Destination and Built Heritage Strategies	Chris Saunders
28 Sept 2023	10.00am	Bus Network	Dave Griffiths
12 October 2023	10.00am	Hate Crime Awareness	Elinor Wellington
26 October 2023	10.00am	State of Nature Report from the Local Nature Partnership	Vanessa Dale
9 November 2023	10.00am	Single Transferable Vote	Rhys George
23 November 2023	10.00am	Cyber Ninjas training for elected members	Viv Collins Cyber - Resilience Manager- Welsh Government
7 December 2023	10.00am	Council Procedure Rules Training	Craig Griffiths

18 Jan 2024	10.00am	Curriculum for Wales	Mike Daley
1 February 2024	10.00am		
15 February 2024	10.00am		
29 February 2024	10.00am		
14 March 2024	10.00am		
28 March 2024	10.00am	Regional Transport Plan	Dave Griffiths
11 April 2024	10.00am		
25 April 2024	10.00am		
9 May 2024	10.00am	Road Safety Strategy	Dave Griffiths
23 May 2024	10.00am		

To be built in:

Budget
Freeport
Capital Programme
Air Quality
Waste
Green energy
Income Generation
Member Safety

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Improvement Programme 2023-24

Overview of support available to Councils

May 2023



Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg

This document is also available in Welsh

**Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru
Welsh Local Government Association**

Un Rhodfa'r Gamlas
Heol Dumballs
Caerdydd
CF10 5BF
Ffôn: 029 2046 8600
wlga.cymru

One Canal Parade
Dumballs Road
Cardiff
CF10 5BF
Tel: 029 2046 8600
wlga.wales

Welsh Local Government Association - The Voice of Welsh Councils

We are The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA); a politically led cross party organisation that seeks to give local government a strong voice at a national level. We represent the interests of local government and promote local democracy in Wales.

The 22 councils in Wales are our members and the 3 fire and rescue authorities and 3 national park authorities are associate members.

We believe that the ideas that change people's lives, happen locally.

Communities are at their best when they feel connected to their council through local democracy. By championing, facilitating, and achieving these connections, we can build a vibrant local democracy that allows communities to thrive.

Our ultimate goal is to promote, protect, support and develop democratic local government and the interests of councils in Wales.

We'll achieve our vision by

- Promoting the role and prominence of councillors and council leaders
- Ensuring maximum local discretion in legislation or statutory guidance
- Championing and securing long-term and sustainable funding for councils
- Promoting sector-led improvement
- Encouraging a vibrant local democracy, promoting greater diversity
- Supporting councils to effectively manage their workforce

About the WLGA Improvement Programme

“Councils embracing the ethos of sector led improvement will be key to helping councils meet the increasingly difficult challenges that local government is, and will continue to face.”

Cllr Andrew Morgan OBE, Leader of Welsh Local Government Association and Leader of Rhondda Cynon Taf Council

The WLGA Improvement Programme demonstrates the shared commitment of the WLGA and Welsh Government to promoting, supporting, and resourcing sector-led improvement across local government in Wales.

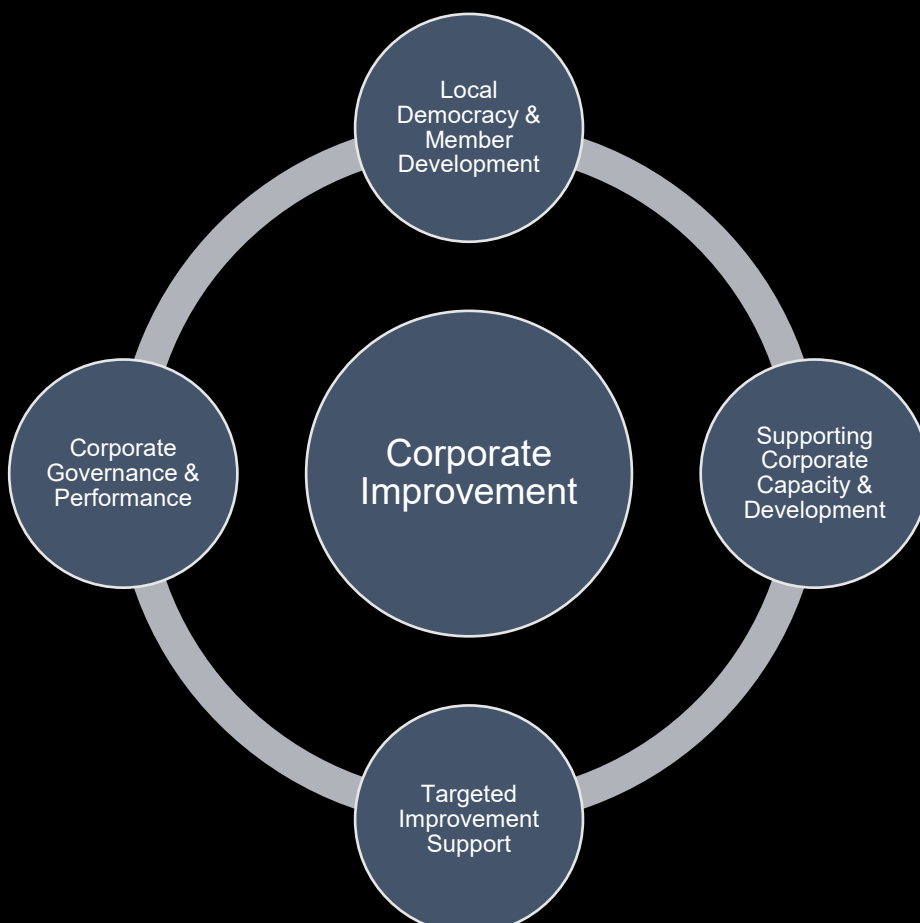
The Improvement Programme 2023-24 builds on the work undertaken over the last two years of the programme and has been informed by council self-assessments, which highlighted the following corporate themes:

- Equalities
- Scrutiny
- Data culture
- Risk management
- Public engagement and participation and community resilience
- Organisational culture
- Workforce planning
- Managing demand and capacity

In addition, we have engaged with councils and professional networks, to gain an understanding of expectations of the programme, priorities, and anticipated demand. Engagement has also been undertaken with the WLGA spokespersons and Welsh Government.

The overarching objective of the improvement programme for 2023-24 is ‘further developing enabling support around public engagement, participation and data and digital capabilities to ensure all councils engage and involve their citizens who have confidence in their performance.’

The programme is structured around the following workstreams:



This brochure provides an overview of the support available to councils across these workstreams. If you have any queries about accessing support, please contact the us at WLGA.Improvement@wlga.gov.uk.

Local Democracy & Member Development

This workstream aims to support to councillors and leadership teams to develop the knowledge , skills and capabilities to deliver effective leadership, governance and community engagement.

Leadership Programme for Councillors

The Leadership Programme is an opportunity for leaders, and those in leadership positions, to explore the latest thinking in political leadership, and equip themselves with the knowledge and skills to be effective leaders. The programme is a combination of learning from experts in the field of leadership and from the experience of fellow political peers. In recognition of the challenges faced by newly appointed senior leaders, the improvement programme has funded a supplementary coaching offer which is open to participants on the programme.

For more information see: [Leadership Programme for Councillors - WLGA](#)

Councillor Workbooks for Personal Development:

Chairing Skills
Corporate Parenting
Child Sexual Exploitation
Facilitation and Conflict Resolution
Handling Casework
Influencing Skills
Making Sustainable Decisions
Safeguarding Adults
Stress Management & Personal Resilience
The Effective 'Ward' Councillor

Available at: [Member Development and Support - WLGA](#)

Other Online Resources:

Social Media and Online Abuse
Councillors Guide to Handling Intimidation
Personal Safety for Councillors
Personal Development Review schemes for councillors
Councillor Development (Competency) Framework
Councillor Role Descriptions
Planning Handbook a Guide for Councillors
Appointments to Outside Bodies: The Councillor's Role

Available at: [Member Development and Support - WLGA](#)

Online Training Workshops

Chairing Skills
Scrutiny Chairing Skills
Scrutiny Questioning Skills
Mentoring Skills
Joint Scrutiny
Introduction to the Equalities Act 2010
Community Leadership (3 modules) New: under development
Scrutiny of Performance (under development)
Introduction to Anti-Racism

Other Support

Peer Mentoring
Senior Leadership Development Workshops
Standards Committee Chairs Forum
Governance & Audit Committee Chairs Network
Scrutiny Self-Assessment Facilitation
Data 101 Training via Data Cymru

For more information on training or support, please contact WLGA.Improvement@wlga.gov.uk

We strive to ensure that our offer meets the development needs of councillors and is informed by the sector. If you have feedback on the resources available or suggestions for support , please let us know, so that we can consider as we evolve the programme. Please direct any suggestions to: WIGA.Improvement@wlga.gov.uk

Supporting Corporate Capacity & Development

Senior Leadership Teams

Top Team Development
Sessions

Solace Wales WLGA Funded
Coaching Offer (hs-sites.com).
Mentoring Support (on request)

Financial Sustainability

Bespoke peer
support/challenge tailored to
the requirements of the council,
delivered by former Directors of
Finance/Resources
(Section 151 Officers)

Workforce Support Commissioned via the LGA

Strategic

Strategic Workforce Planning for Senior Leadership Team (1.5hr-2hrs
virtual session)

Workforce Planning for Heads of Service/Managers (2.5hrs virtual
session)

Workforce Planning, Skills and Knowledge for HR/OD/HRBP teams (2
x 3hr virtual sessions)

In-depth

Deep dive people analytics

Bitesize Workforce Planning Series (5 x 2.5hr virtual sessions)

General Guidance

General power of competence
(under development)

Public engagement evaluation
toolkit (under development)

The Law of Consultation

Webinars

Recruitment & Retention: The
importance of the employer brand
(July 2023 date TBC)

General Power of Competence
(Autumn 2023 TBC)

*Further webinars will be developed and
hosted during the year.*

Corporate Governance & Performance

Self-Assessment

Establishing and facilitating a working group to develop good practice guidance and webinar in meeting the consultation duty.

Supporting further workshops to share learning.

Collating corporate improvement priorities to inform support priorities.

Equalities Support

Support with implementation of workforce aspects of the Anti-Racism for Wales Action Plan, including:

Positive Action training for HR teams.

Working with the Equalities Officers and Cabinet Leads to inform collective support needs.

Panel Performance Assessment (work in progress)

Finalising the Methodology
Councillor Peer Recruitment
Training for Peers

Peer Challenge and Support

Focus for 2023-24 has shifted to financial sustainability, but support will be sought for any corporate peer reviews or peer support.

Risk Management

Collating Council Strategic Risk Registers to inform the Risk Landscape for Local Government in Wales

Supporting Professional Networks

Equality Officers
Heads of Policy/Performance
Heads of Democratic Services
Risk Managers

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NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

4th September 2023

JOINT REPORT OF THE HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND HEAD OF PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Local Democracy Week 2023.

Purpose of Report

To update the Democratic Services Committee on the Council's plans to mark Local Democracy Week 2023, and to seek input from the committee on other actions that could be included.

Background

Local Democracy Week is held every year in October with the purpose of:

- Strengthening links between elected representatives and their communities;
- Increasing participation in the democratic process;
- Involving citizens in community affairs; and
- Increasing knowledge of local democratic institutions and processes.

Additionally, the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 ("the Act") placed a duty on Councils to encourage local people to participate in decision-making and to produce a Public Participation Strategy (section 40 of the Act). This Council ratified its Public Participation

Strategy in April 2023 and it includes detail of how the Council intends to promote awareness of:

- The functions of the Council among local people,
- How local residents can become a member of the Council and
- The roles and responsibilities of an Elected Member

In order to discharge its responsibilities under the Act and to promote Local Democracy Week 2023 it is proposed that the below activities be undertaken:

Promotion of Voter ID for some elections

Voters in Wales now need to show photo ID at the polling station to vote in certain elections.

Currently this applies to:

- Police and Crime Commissioner elections
- UK Parliamentary by-elections
- Recall petitions

From October 2023 it will also apply to UK Parliamentary general elections.

Crucially, it is also important to highlight that electors will not need to show photo ID to vote at Senedd elections or local council elections.

Due to this change to the current voting arrangements we are aware that certain groups are more likely to experience barriers created by the voter ID requirement and may need further advice and support to access photo ID.

As such, the electoral services team are looking to work with local groups and organisations to help aid in raising awareness of the reforms and widen understanding of the new voter ID service, allowing any individual who does not possess an eligible form of ID to obtain a Voter Authority Certificate.

Review Citizen's Panel

Launched in January 2020, the NPT Citizens' Panel is made up of more than 400 residents from across the county borough. The aim is to involve Panel members in decision making at a very early stage, so they help shape proposals before these go out to wider public consultation.

The purpose of the Panel is to:

- make it easier for Neath Port Talbot residents to give feedback to the council on its work and to contribute to policy and service change.
- actively involve residents in decision making at a very early stage, so they help shape proposals before these go out to wider public consultation.
- provide a mechanism for obtaining quick and reliable feedback from residents about proposals and new ideas.
- help the council understand residents' perspectives and to inform decision making.

It is standard practice to review and renew a citizens' panel during its lifespan to ensure it remains active and representative of the population and to offer other residents the opportunity to give their views.

With the NPT Citizens' Panel now in its fourth year, a review of membership is due. This will involve contacting and removing members who are no longer active/no longer wish to be part of the Panel and recruiting new members. Local Democracy Week provides an excellent opportunity to launch a new recruitment drive as part of this review.

Promotion and Publicity

Local Democracy Week activities in Neath Port Talbot will be supported by a communications campaign with a focus on highlighting the political processes within the county borough.

This will include:

- Social media posts advertising upcoming Committee Meetings
- Social media posts and communication around how the public can be involved in decision making
- Videos of current Councillors discussing 'why they became a councillor' and 'day in the life.'

- Video of Youth Mayor/Youth Council about their roles and responsibilities

In addition, the campaign will promote the specific activities taking place throughout the week and highlight the many ways that individuals, groups and organisations can participate in council's decision-making.

We will make use of both owned and earned channels (internal and external) and tactics will include press releases, social media, video, posters, displays, staff newsletters, NPT News, the intranet and internet.

Financial Impact

The activities to mark Local Democracy Week will be delivered through existing budgets.

Workforce Impact

The activities to mark Local Democracy Week will need to be delivered through existing staff resources in the Democratic Services, Elections and Communications and Marketing Teams.

Integrated Impact Assessment

There is no requirement, as this report is in relation to administrative matters only.

Legal Powers

The Act placed a duty on Councils to encourage local people to participate in decision-making and to produce a Public Participation Strategy.

Risk Management

The Council could be seen as not fulfilling its duties as set out in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, and there could be reputational issues for not participating in Local Democracy Week.

Consultation

There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item; however members of the Democratic Services Committee are invited to comment and consider any additions to the proposals.

Recommendation

It is recommended that members note the current work programme to mark Local Democracy Week, and to consider any further activities as the Democratic Services Committee see fit.

Reason for Decision

To agree the Council approach to Local Democracy Week 2023.

Implementation of Decision

This decision is proposed for immediate implementation

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