



DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

9.30 AM – 11:30 AM - THURSDAY, 1 FEBRUARY 2018

COMMITTEE ROOMS 1/2 - PORT TALBOT CIVIC CENTRE

PART 1

1. To receive any declarations of interest from Members
2. Minutes of the last meeting on 19 October 2017 *(Pages 5 - 10)*
3. To receive the Report of the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services re: Member Scrutiny Champion - Update Report *(Pages 11 - 16)*
4. To receive the Report of the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services re: Review of Staffing Structure - Democratic Services *(Pages 17 - 20)*
5. To receive the Report of the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services re: Welsh Language Standards Update *(Pages 21 - 28)*
6. To receive the Report of the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services re: Member Annual Personal Development Review (PDR) Process *(Pages 29 - 48)*
7. To receive the Report of the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services re: Member Annual Report Scheme *(Pages 49 - 60)*
8. To receive the Report of the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services re: Members' IT Reference Group *(Pages 61 - 66)*

9. To receive the Report of the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services re: Submission of apologies for Council Meetings (*Pages 67 - 76*)
10. To receive the Report of the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services re: Outcome of Members Survey on Timing of Council Meetings (Follow-Up Survey) (*Pages 77 - 86*)
11. Democratic Services Committee Work Programme (*Pages 87 - 88*)
12. Any urgent items at the discretion of the Chairman pursuant to Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972

S.Phillips
Chief Executive

Civic Centre
Port Talbot

25 January 2018

Committee Membership:

Chairperson: Councillor J.D.Morgan

**Vice
Chairperson:** Councillor M.Harvey

Councillor: S. ap Dafydd, S.K.Hunt, S.Miller, M.Protheroe,
S.Purseley, S.Renkes, A.J.Richards, A.J.Taylor,
R.L.Taylor and A.Llewelyn

**Invited
Councillor:** A.N.Woolcock

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DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

(Committee Rooms 1/2 - Port Talbot Civic Centre)

Members Present:

19 October 2017

Chairperson: Councillor J.D.Morgan

Vice Chairperson: Councillor M.Harvey

Councillors: S. ap Dafydd, S.Miller, M.Protheroe, S.Pursey,
S.Renkes and A.J.Taylor

Officers In Attendance R.J.George, A.Manchipp, D.Michael, C.Griffiths,
S.Lewis, J. Woodman-Ralph

1. **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING ON 27 JULY 2017**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the 27 July 2017, be noted.

2. **FEEDBACK FROM THE MEMBER SUPPORT OFFICER MEETING HELD ON 7 SEPTEMBER, 2017 (VERBAL)**

Members received a briefing on the Member Support and Development Lead Members and Officers Network meeting which the Chair attended on the 7 September 2017. The meeting provided guidance and best practice information, particularly in relation to the introduction and implementation of new legislative requirements. Some of the items discussed in the meeting were the Welsh Government White Paper on reforming local government and the consultation on electoral reform, further detailed reports would be published by the Welsh Government in late Spring 2018. In addition, the network discussed the national report on the findings of the exit survey for Councillors, experiences and challenges in relation to the member induction process and e-learning opportunities available for Members.

RESOLVED: That the briefing be noted.

3. **ACCESS TO MEETINGS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

Members received an overview of the rules in respect of access to meetings and reports which apply to all meetings of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council convened under the Local Government Act 1972 as detailed in the circulated report.

During the discussions it was confirmed that the Access to Meetings information does form part of the Members Induction Training and that today's report be circulated to all Members as a reminder.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and circulated to all Members.

4. **CIVIC BUILDINGS - ACCESSIBILITY SURVEY**

Members received an update on the outcome of the accessibility survey of Neath and Port Talbot Civic Centres and The Quays as detailed in the circulated report.

It was highlighted that Neath Civic Centre, which was built in 2005, and the Quays completed in 2009 both comply with Part M of the Building Regulations and were designed to be fully accessible. With regard to Port Talbot Civic Centre, which was constructed in 1987 prior to the introduction of any significant legislation to improve access for disabled people, a number of areas were identified as needing improvement.

Members asked if further views could be gathered from Members of the Public on how they felt improvements could be made and any difficulties they have had in accessing the public areas. It was agreed that a request would be made to the Local Disability Network Action Group to undertake an assessment of Port Talbot Civic Centre to highlight areas for improvement and for a report to be prepared for consideration at the next meeting of Democratic Services Committee.

In addition it was proposed that, the Chair write to all Members asking them to identify any access issues that they felt needed to be addressed and to forward them to the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That arrangements be made for the Local Disability Network Action Group to undertake an assessment of Port Talbot Civic Centre and that a report to be prepared identifying the issues for consideration at the next meeting of Democratic Services in February 2018;
 2. That access arrangements for elected Members be kept under review.

5. **OUTCOME OF MEMBERS' SURVEY ON TIMING OF MEETINGS**

Members received an update on the outcome of the Members' Survey on Timings of Council Meetings, as detailed in the circulated report.

It was highlighted that under Section 6 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 requires the Council to undertake a survey of Members regarding the timing, frequency and location of meetings at least once during the term of that administration.

Discussion took place on the difficulties that some Members experienced but noted that the survey suggested that the current arrangements were satisfactory for a significant number of Members with the main preference being for morning and afternoon meetings.

Members asked that a canvas of individual committees take place to establish if there was an overall consensus to mornings and afternoons or a combination of both and that the outcomes be brought to the Democratic Services Committee in February 2018.

Members also discussed whether there was a need to have an end time to meetings to enable working Members to manage their diaries. Members agreed that this would be put on the agenda for the next meeting of Chairs and Vice Chairs meeting for consideration.

The Democratic Services Committee asked that after consultation with the whole committee via the survey and if agreement was received from the majority of the Committee that the next meeting in February start at 9.30am and to end two hours later. If any items on the agenda were not considered in that time an additional meeting was to be arranged. Members of the Committee were also asked to

submit any questions prior to the meeting to assist in the running of the meeting.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That arrangements be made to canvas the views of individual Committees Members on their preference for the convening of Committees and a report be brought back to the Democratic Services Committee in February for consideration;

6. **DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

Members agreed that the following items would be added to the Work Programme for the February 2018 meeting:

- Councillor A.N.Woolcock, Scrutiny Champion to be invited to the meeting;
- Consider re-convening the Members I.T. Reference Group to look at arrangements that might be useful to Members;
- Review of the use of the Welsh Language Standards in regard to the publishing of agendas and minutes;
- Review of Timings of Meetings (follow-up survey)

Items to be added to the Work Programme for future meetings:

- Local Government Reform – Draft Bill expected to be published by Welsh Government in late Spring 2018.

7. **URGENT ITEM**

Because of the need to deal now with the matter contained within Minute No. 8 below, the Chairman agreed that this could be raised at today's meeting as an urgent item pursuant to Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972.

Reason:

Due to the time element.

8. **INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL**

Members received a verbal update on the recent publication of the draft annual report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales which recommended an increase of £200 or 1.49% effective from April 2018 for the basic Members salary resulting in a salary of £13,600. No increase was proposed for senior salaries but would receive the increase in their basic salary element.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

CHAIRPERSON

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NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

1 February 2018

Report of the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services - K. Jones

Matter for Information

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Member Scrutiny Champion - Update Report

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Members with an update from the Member scrutiny champion following the conclusion of recent observations of various scrutiny committee meetings.

Background

2. Following the conclusion of the adjourned Annual Meeting held on 31 May 2017 Cllr. the role of Scrutiny Member Champion has been undertaken by Cllr. Arwyn Woolcock (Lower Brynamman).

3. The position requires the incumbent to engage with elected Members and assist in advocating and promoting best practice in relation to sound scrutiny arrangements as part of the Council's corporate governance processes.
4. Between 14 September and 1 December, 2017, the Scrutiny Member Champion attended various scrutiny committees in an observational role.
5. Following the conclusion of this process, a short report was prepared by the Scrutiny Member Champion outlining his findings and making a number of recommendations for consideration by the Chairs and Vice Chairs forum (see Appendix 1).
6. Members are asked to consider the Member Scrutiny Champion's report and discuss how the Democratic Services Committee may assist in moving the recommendations forward.

Financial Impact

7. There are no financial impacts associated with this report.

Equality Impact Assessment

8. A screening assessment has been undertaken but a full equality impact assessment is not required.

Workforce Impacts

9. There are no workforce impacts associated with this report.

Risk Management

10. There are no significant risks associated with this report.

Consultation

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

Recommendation

12. That the Committee consider the Member Scrutiny Champion's report.

Appendices

13. Appendix 1 - Report of the Scrutiny Champion - Cllr. A. Woolcock

List of Background Papers

14. None.

Officer Contacts

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Democratic Services Committee

Report of the Scrutiny Champion – Cllr. A. Woolcock

I have visited the following scrutiny committees to observe proceedings:

- Education, Skills and Culture Scrutiny Committee
14 September 2017
- Regeneration and Sustainable Development Scrutiny Committee
22 September 2017
- Social Care, Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee
5 October 2017
- Streetscene & Engineering Scrutiny Committee
1 December 2017

Generally, the meetings were good and all Members wishing to make a contribution were given the opportunity to do so.

There was evidence of good scrutiny on several occasions. There is, of course, room for improvement – including within the Policy and Resources and Policy and Resources/ Cabinet Scrutiny Committee – but I'm confident that will develop during the course of the 'new' Council.

I also believe that it would be useful to hold further training sessions e.g. chairing skills that could assist in the development of scrutiny. Additionally, Members may wish to consider visits to other authorities to observe proceedings and possibly adopt good practice.

Recent research by the Centre for Public Scrutiny, commissioned by the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE), shows that Wales is one of the areas that has invested heavily in reforming and improving scrutiny.

Data from the survey shows that Councillors and officers in Wales are almost twice as likely to perceive scrutiny as more effective compared to the national average across the devolved area. I believe that scrutiny in Neath Port Talbot fits in well with that description.

I have always maintained that if scrutiny is to be effective, we also need to consider, when required, the scrutiny of outside bodies, particularly

those groups that the Council provides funding. That is one area that should be developed. Additionally, it may be helpful to consider some task and finish work in some areas.

I have been asked about Members being allowed to continue questioning after the initial question has been answered during scrutiny. Standing Orders state that each Member is allowed to speak for five minutes, and only speak once.

However, in my opinion, scrutiny is different to the old Committee based structure, and if a Member wishes clarification by asking a supplementary question(s), then I believe that the Chair can be flexible. When the same Member wishes to speak again, after other Members have spoken, I believe that it may be allowed, but only if Members who haven't contributed to the debate have been given an opportunity to speak. When that situation is exhausted, it may be acceptable to allow Members to make a further contribution.

Whether that particular situation requires a change to the Council's constitution, or the matter is left to the Chair's discretion, is a matter that the Democratic Services Committee may wish to consider.

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

1 February 2018

Report of the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services – K.Jones

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Review of Staffing Structure – Democratic Services

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek approval for the staffing structure required to support the Council's democratic services functions.

Background

2. Committee received an interim report in 2017 highlighting implications for the staffing structure that supports the Council's democratic functions arising from:
 - the ongoing requirement to find further budget savings;
 - a shift in approach indicated by the new administration; and
 - the need to respond to new legislative demands.
3. It was agreed that a further report would be provided to the Democratic Services Committee in early 2018 setting out the conclusions reached by the statutory head of democratic services as to the staffing requirements for supporting the democratic arrangements of the Council. This report discharges that commitment.

4. Members are reminded that matters related to the staffing of Democratic Services functions fall within the purview of the Democratic Services Committee and Council, not the Personnel Committee (Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011).

Changes Proposed

5. The Democratic Services Committee, at its meeting on 27th July 2017, endorsed changes to the democratic services staffing structure, as advised by the Head of Democratic Services.
6. The establishment of an Executive Officer to support the Council's Executive has proven to be effective. The Job Description, Person Specification has now been finalised and graded through the Council's Job Evaluation Scheme. The post was been filled on a temporary basis following a recruitment process ring-fenced to the existing complement of staff. It is proposed that if the structure is approved that the individual who has filled the post on a temporary basis be confirmed in post.
7. The only other change that is being proposed to the structure now is that the Democratic Services Assistant report to the Snr Scrutiny and Member Development Officer to ensure there is an appropriate balance of resources allocated between scrutiny, member development and committee administration.

Financial Impact

8. The financial cost of the structure is contained within the proposed budget allocation for 2018/19. A saving of £19,000 has been identified from the changes reported in July 2017 as a result of reducing and rationalising transport arrangements.

Consultation

9. All staff directly affected by these proposals and their trade union representatives have been consulted about these changes and there is no objection to these proposals being progressed.

Recommendation

10. That the Democratic Services Committee approves the structure set out in Appendix 1 and commends this to Council.

11. That, subject to the above recommendation being approved, the officer who has filled the Senior Executive Officer role on a temporary basis be confirmed in post.

Reason for Decision

12. To support the Council's democratic services functions.

Implementation of Decision

13. The decision is proposed for immediate implementation.

Appendices

14. Appendix 1 - Proposed structure chart – January 2018

List of Background Papers

15. None.

Officer Contacts

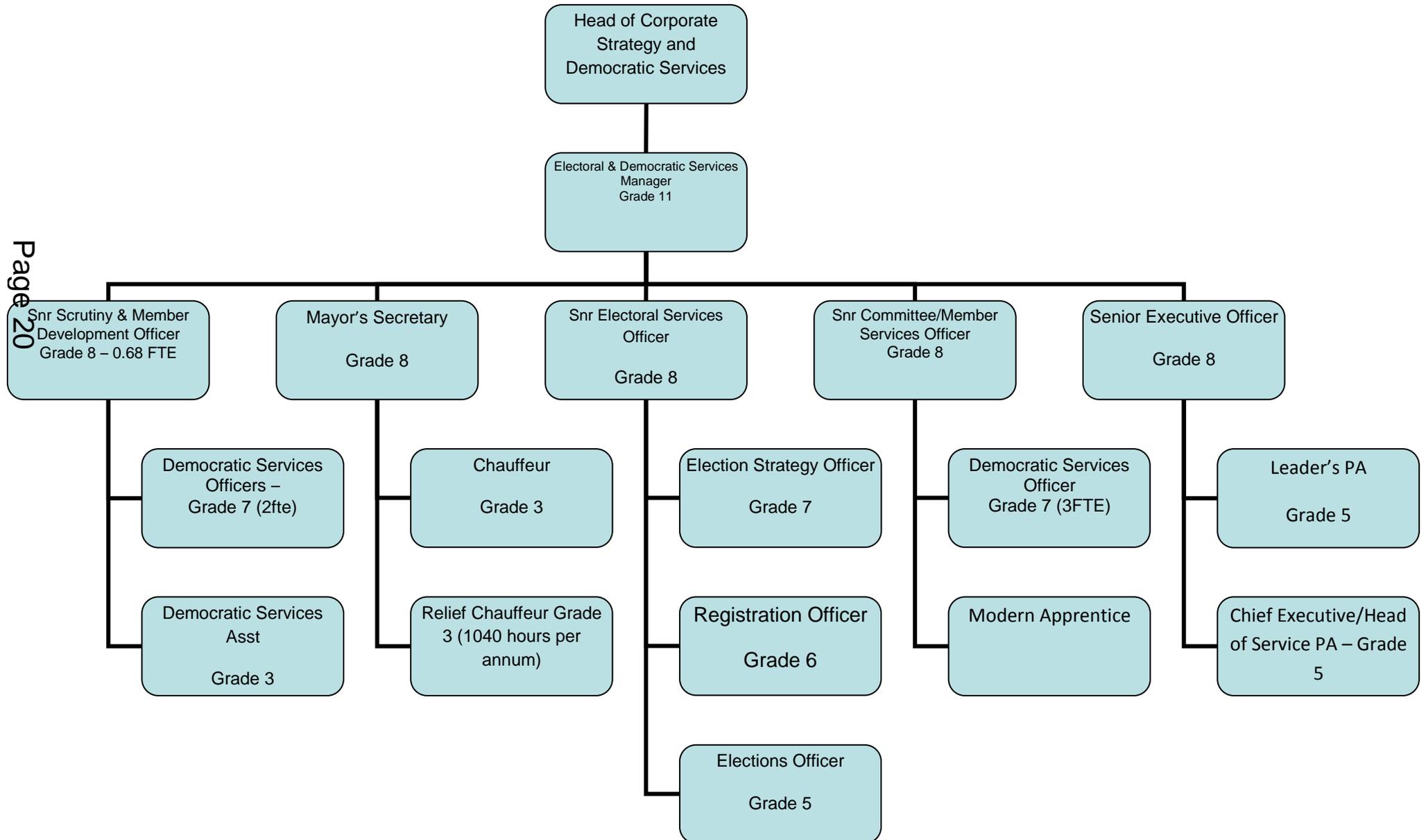
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Proposed Electoral and Democratic Services – January 2018

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NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

1 February 2018

Report of the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services - K. Jones

Matter for Information

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Welsh Language Standards Update

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Members with an update in relation to the current position regarding the Council's Welsh Language Standards and the work being undertaken to prepare for the implementation of bilingual agendas and minutes.

Background

2. The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 established a new framework in relation to compliance with legal standards relating to the Welsh Language.
3. These new standards replaced the Council's previous Welsh Language Schemes established under the Welsh Language Act 1993.

4. Between January and April 2014 a standards investigation was undertaken by the Welsh Language Commissioner, the conclusions of which were reported to Welsh Government.
5. Following further consultation the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015 were given royal assent in March of that year.
6. With the introduction of the new regulations the Welsh Language Commissioner issued the Council with a draft compliance notice in June 2015.
7. In response to the notice the authority outlined in detail which standards it felt would require a longer period of transition to achieve full compliance, as well as those it was currently unable to comply with.
8. Subsequently, a final compliance notice was issued by the Welsh Language Commissioner in September 2015 which indicated which standards would be applied to the Council.
9. As a result of the notice and, following authorisation from Members, a challenge was submitted to the Welsh Language Commissioner in relation to 55 standards, 54 of which were subsequently considered as a valid challenge by the Commissioner's office.
10. The remaining 122 standards were considered achievable by the authority as they mirrored, or were very similar to, the commitments made in the Council's existing Welsh Language Scheme.
11. In June 2016 the Council received correspondence which detailed the Commissioner's initial consideration of the challenge to the 54 standards that had been included in the Council's compliance notice.
12. During July 2016, the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee and the Cabinet Board gave detailed consideration to the issues raised by the Commissioner resulting in some changes being outlined in the subsequent formal response.
13. A further response from the Commissioner's office was received in October 2016 with the Chief Executive meeting with the Commissioner later that month to discuss the issues around compliance with the standards.

14. Further follow-up meetings were also arranged between officers and the Commissioner's representatives to try and agree a resolution during November and December 2016, with Cllr Arwyn Woolcock attending the latter meeting.
15. After additional review the Council submitted an exchange of correspondence with the Commissioner in February 2017. In this latest response the Council accepted a number of standards, some with modifications, including extended imposition dates, while a significant number still remained subject to challenge, with supplementary evidence provided.
16. As of September 2017, a total of nine challenged standards remained outstanding with further consultation required.
17. A further meeting between officers and representatives to continue discussions has been tentatively arranged for February 2017.
18. It should also be noted that where standards are challenged the imposition date is postponed until such time as the Commissioner makes a determination or the Council's right of appeal is exhausted. Consequently the Council's compliance notice has been modified to reflect the changes since 2016.

Bilingual Agendas and Minutes

19. In order to comply with Welsh Language Standards (Nos.41 and 48) preparatory work is currently being carried out by officers to assess what adjustments will be required to the Council's current committee document management system (Modern.Gov) to enable regular production of bilingual agendas and minutes for future council meetings.
20. In the interim, arrangements are currently available to allow for the manual translation and availability of individual agendas and minutes prior to the activation of the new bilingual semi-automated process.
21. Based on the advice provided by officials from other local authorities, as well as guidance from specialist software developers, it is estimated that the time required to design, draft and deliver the necessary framework to enable a bilingual system to operate effectively will take between 3-5

months, depending heavily on the level of staff resource devoted to the project.

22. Initial work has already begun to scope the project and it is hoped that the system will be ready for initial testing in March/April 2018 with a tentative 'Go Live' date currently scheduled for the start of the new civic year on 26 April 2018.

Financial Impact

23. The introduction of new Welsh Language standards and the requirement for increased volumes of translation will inevitably result in an increased pressure on current budgets. The basic translation charge will be £65 per 1,000 translated words with an average set of minutes being around 2,000 - 3,000 words. Additional monitoring will be required following the implementation of any new administrative arrangements.

Equality Impact Assessment

24. A screening assessment has been undertaken but a full equality impact assessment is not warranted.

Workforce Impacts

25. Due to the requirement for the introduction of additional administrative system arrangements there will be some workforce impacts associated with this report although it is currently unclear how significant this impact will be. Additional monitoring during the transition period will be required.

Legal Powers

26. Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2011/1/contents>

Risk Management

27. There are no significant risks associated with this report.

Consultation

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

Recommendation

29. That the Committee note the report.

Appendices

30. Appendix 1 - Welsh Language Standards (Extract)

List of Background Papers

31. None

Officer Contacts

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**COMPLIANCE NOTICE –
SECTION 44 WELSH LANGUAGE (WALES) MEASURE 2011**

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

Standard 41 - Service Delivery

If you produce the following documents you must produce them in Welsh – (a) agendas, minutes and other papers that are available to the public, which relate to management board or cabinet meetings; (b) agendas, minutes and other papers for meetings, conferences or seminars that are open to the public.

You must comply with standard 41(a) in every circumstance, except:

- **Other papers that are available to the public, which relate to management board or cabinet meetings**

You must comply with standard 41(b) in every circumstance, except:

- **Other papers for meetings that are open to the public.**

Standard 48 - Service Delivery

If you produce a document in Welsh and in English (whether separate versions or not), you must not treat any Welsh language version less favourably than you treat the English language version.

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NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

1 February 2018

Report of the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services - K. Jones

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Members Annual Personal Development Review (PDR) Process - Update

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Members with an update in relation to the Annual Development Review (ADR) process and seek the Committee's support in establishing a focus group to review the current scheme.

Background

2. Section 7 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 requires local authorities to ensure the provision of reasonable training and development opportunities for its Members.

3. Each Member should have the opportunity to have a review of their training and development needs on an annual basis. However, it should be noted that these provisions do not apply to the executive Leader of an authority which operates a Leader and Cabinet Executive.
4. In July 2016, the Democratic Services Committee considered a report of the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services in relation to the Annual Personal Development Review (PDR) arrangements for elected members.
5. The original scheme outlined that reviews wherever possible should be undertaken by elected Members for elected Members.
6. A small cohort of Members from across the political groups were trained by officers from the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) on how to undertake a review. In addition, the Senior Scrutiny and Member Development Officer and two Democratic Services Officers also underwent relevant training.
7. The submitted responses from Members who completed the personal development review exercise were classified as confidential and securely archived. Nevertheless, the information obtained did help to inform the annual training and development programme.
8. Despite initial early enthusiasm in the review scheme (originally introduced in December 2012) interest from Members in undergoing an individual review on an annual basis declined over the next four years with Members feeling that the exercise did not add any value in conducting their individual roles and responsibilities.
9. Reflecting this general consensus, the Committee agreed that the current PDR process was not overly beneficial and an alternative method for conducting individual member reviews should be considered in due course.
10. In addition, Members emphasised the importance for ensuring 'political buy in' from the various Group leaders to assist in maintaining the process on an annual basis.

Further Development

11. To assist in identifying the requirements of Members and to further develop the current scheme arrangements, the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services, proposes that a focus group to take a 'fresh look' at the Scheme and help devise a new model that would encourage greater take up from elected Members generally be established to report back to the Democratic Services Committee with recommendations.

Financial Impact

12. There are no financial impacts associated with this report.

Equality Impact Assessment

13. A screening assessment has been undertaken but a full equality impact assessment is not warranted.

Workforce Impacts

14. There are no significant workforce impacts associated with this report.

Legal Powers

15. Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 (S.7)
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2011/4/contents>

Risk Management

16. There are no significant risks associated with this report.

Consultation

17. There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item. However, the authority must ensure that the review includes an opportunity for an interview with someone who they regard as 'suitably qualified' individual.

Recommendation

18. That the committee approve the establishment of a focus group to work with the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services to develop a new Annual Personal Development Review (PDR) process.
19. That the committee consider the membership of the focus group.

Reason for Decision

20. Welsh local authorities are required to have regard to any guidance issued by Welsh Ministers.
21. To allow for the further development of the Member Annual Personal Development Review process.

Implementation of Decision

22. That the decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

Appendices

23. Appendix 1 - Personal Development Review Scheme
24. Appendix 2 - Personal Development Review - Member Template

List of Background Papers

25. None

Officer Contacts

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Annual Member Development Scheme

1. Definition

Personal development review (PDR) is a way for a member and the Council to mutually assess a member's personal development needs. The review should be set within the context of the role of the member, his/her aspirations for what s/he hopes to achieve, the purpose and aspirations of the Council and the needs of the community.

2. Purpose

PDR schemes enable members to build confidence, develop skills and knowledge and improve their own performance and contribution to the council and the community. They can provide:

- a) Clarity for members about the expectations and accountabilities placed upon them;
- b) Understanding of and support for the individual and collective development needs of members;
- c) Support for members in preparing for new roles (succession planning);
- d) An understanding and ownership of organisational goals;
and
- e) Support for improved member performance.

3. Statutory Provisions

The Local Government Measure 2011 introduced a new requirement on councils to make available to all members (except the Leader of Council) the opportunity for a development review on an annual basis.

The statutory guidance on personal development reviews that has been issued by Welsh Government provides that:

3.1 Annual Review

- a) Every local authority member, other than an executive leader, must be offered the opportunity to have their training and development needs reviewed on an annual basis. It is recommended that much of the training and development needs of local authority members are identified by such reviews;
- b) The review must include an opportunity for a pre-planned interview between the member and a suitably qualified person. The interview could include a review of the training and development received by the member over the last year (or appropriate period if the local authority member has only been recently elected);
- c) Local authorities may wish to consider detailing the outcome of the interview in an agreed plan which sets out training and development needs, if any, identified for the year ahead. It is recommended that this personal development plan is provided for the member and signed by both member and

reviewed. This is a private document which is not expected to be published by the authority or member, although a member is free to publicise in his or her annual report any training and development undertaken if he or she so wishes.

- d) Authorities can apply for Charter status. In achieving the standard required for the Charter, local authorities will need to adopt role descriptions for the posts of leader, deputy leader, executive member, scrutiny member, chair of scrutiny and chairs of statutory and area committees; and
- e) The review is an assessment of training and development needs. A local authority may wish to consider making it clear to members that the review is not a performance review or an assessment of how well or how badly a member has conducted their duties. That is not a statutory requirement and is a matter for the electorate to judge at the ballot box.

3.2 Suitably Qualified

- a) It is for the local authority to determine who could be considered a suitably qualified person to conduct the interview with local authority members to discuss their training and development needs a part of their annual review. This responsibility could be allocated the Democratic Services Committee within the authority. In most cases, this may not be a question of naming individuals, but of describing a post or office holder. It would probably be neither suitable nor desirable for a single person to be made responsible for conducting all interviews;

- b) Some local authorities already carry out various practices in relation to the review of the training and development needs of its members. Practices include group leaders conducting interviews with their members or interviews being conducted by the leader and the executive members. Both these practices are perfectly acceptable methods of complying with the requirements of the Measure.
- c) Authorities may prefer, however, to divest the duty with their human resources officers. If this is the preferred option, local authorities may consider making the Head of Democratic Services responsible for co-operating with human resources officers for this part of their work. If the Head of Paid Service was selected as a suitably qualified person to conduct an interview it would not be expected that they would work under the supervision of the Head of Democratic Services;
- d) Some authorities may prefer to hire external consultants or peers to conduct interviews, which is also acceptable. Local authorities are encouraged to appoint a Member Development Champion from amongst its councillors;
- e) It is recommended that there should be no surprises in the system and that individual members know who they can expect to conduct their interview. Local, authorities may wish to consider including an option in their arrangements for members to make a request to the Head of Democratic Services to arrange for a different person to conduct their interview if there is a good reason for so doing; and
- f) Finally, authorities must ensure that anyone conducting an interview must themselves have received suitable training in how to do this and are advised to liaise with the WLGA to

ensure the provision of this. Therefore, even if the authority has chosen to allocate the duty of conducting reviews to a post, rather than an individual, that post holder should have receive the necessary training before conducting reviews.

Executive Leader of the Local Authority

Section 7 of the Measure does not apply to the executive leader (or elected mayor) of an authority. However, there may, of course, be occasions where the leader wishes to receive training or development and there is no suggestion that, by excluding them from the provisions of the Measure, they should not be able to receive training, nor, indeed an annual review or an interview with a suitably qualified person.

4. Methodology

In developing an approach to Member Development Review, the Democratic Services Committee has considered the provisions of the Local Government Measure 2011, the guidance issued by the Welsh Local Government Association and approaches being adopted by other councils across Wales. The Democratic Services Committee proposes an approach based on the guidance issued by WLGA, supported by the following principles:

- a) The personal development review **is not** a performance appraisal but a means of supporting and developing members;
- b) The scheme is available to all members of the council;

- c) The scheme will be Member-led with professional support to be provided by the Head of Democratic Services, in co-operation with the human resources department;
- d) The development needs identified from the process will inform the creation of the member development programme for the following period;
- e) The development needs of members will be linked to the roles performed by members (the role descriptions to be based on those published by the WLGA, albeit those roles are not considered to be prescriptive and are intended for guidance only. See Appendix 2 for details);
- f) All member development must provide value for money and be affordable;
- g) The personal development review will be based on a self-assessment conducted by the reviewee, using the prescribed template. (See Appendix 1);
- h) The personal development review will be undertaken by a “suitably qualified” person. The “suitably qualified” person may be an experienced member (ie a Member who has served in a previous administration) or a Member considered suitable for other reasons;
- i) Members wishing to participate in the scheme may identify up to three “suitably qualified” persons to undertake their review ensuring choice for reviewees and equitable distribution of workload for reviewers;
- j) Reviews will, generally, be carried out between the annual meeting of Council and the August recess;

- k) All “suitably qualified” persons will be required to undertake the relevant training to ensure consistent application of the scheme;
- l) The administration of the scheme will be the responsibility of the Head of Democratic Services;
- m) The development needs identified and recorded from the process will be confidential to the reviewee. The details of individual member development needs will not be for public disclosure, unless the member wishes to provide details, eg in his/her annual report. However, the member development programme overall will be accessible by the public;
- n) Access to individual member development records will be controlled by the Head of Democratic Services;
- o) The impact of development activity and the scheme as a whole will be evaluated and reviewed on a two yearly basis, or at other intervals, should the Head of Democratic Services consider this to be appropriate.

5. Implementation

The scheme will be trialled in the first instance with a small group of members to ensure it is fit for purpose. The trial will be evaluated and a final scheme, supported by an implementation plan, presented to Council for adoption prior to the annual meeting of Council 2013.

6. Resources

There are no additional resources available to the Council support the introduction of the annual personal development reviews.

Consequently, the introduction of the scheme and the programmes developed to respond to training and development needs identified from each personal development reviews will need to be met from within existing resources.

7. Evaluation and Review

An evaluation of the trial will be carried out to inform the development of the final scheme. Thereafter, it will be for the Head of Democratic Services, in consultation with the Democratic Services Committee to ensure the scheme is regularly reviewed on at least a two yearly basis to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

Framework for a Personal Development Review.

Guidance for Reviewers

Before conducting your review (s) you may find it useful to consider the following:

1. Purpose of the Review

The purpose of your meeting will be to provide your reviewee with an opportunity to review their role generally, identify any specific tasks for the year ahead, consider the areas where they feel confident and identify areas where they will be more challenged and may need support and development. Their learning and development needs together with the usefulness or otherwise of previous development will then be fed back to the Head of Democratic Services to create development programmes.

2. Preparation

You may want to familiarise yourself with the role description of the person whose review you are conducting and consider some of the questions that you will ask to help the review meeting explore their role and needs. Your reviewee will contact you to plan a time and place convenient to you both where you can have a confidential undisturbed conversation. The meeting should take no longer than an hour and a half.

3. Undertaking the Review

Please remember that the conversation you have with your reviewee needs to be kept confidential.

Your role is to help the reviewee consider his/her role/contribution, strengths/weaknesses and training needs. You should act as an objective sounding board in this exploration.

Your role is not to give your own feedback on the performance of your colleague.

Use the template as the basis for your discussions.

It is the responsibility of the reviewee to undertake any actions resulting from the conversation, keep any documentation and discuss any emerging development needs with the Head of Democratic Services.

Any additional support required from the Council may also be identified and fed into the organisation as appropriate.

Guidance for Reviewees

Before undertaking your review you may find it useful to consider the following guidance.

1. Purpose of the Review

The purpose of your meeting will be to provide you with an opportunity to review your role generally, consider any specific tasks for the year ahead, consider the areas where you feel confident and identify areas that you might find challenging and may need support and development. You will have an opportunity to identify learning and development needs which you will then be able to feed back to the Head of Democratic Services to organise development programmes.

2. Preparation

Before your meeting you will need to complete the template. This will, help you to think about your role, specific tasks for this year and any support that you might need. You'll also find it useful to review your role description and person specification.

Make contact with your reviewer and plan a time and place convenient to you both where you can have a confidential undisturbed conversation. The meeting should take no longer than an hour and a half.

3. Undertaking the Review

Please remember that the conversation you have with your reviewer needs to be kept confidential to yourselves.

Use the template as a basis for your discussions.

Your reviewer will help you consider your role/contribution, strengths/weaknesses and training needs. They will act as an objective sounding board in this conversation.

Their role is not to give their own feedback on your performance.

Please note that it is your responsibility to undertake any actions resulting from the conversation, keep any documentation and discuss any emerging development needs with the Head of Democratic Services.

Any additional support required from the Council may also be identified and fed into the organisation as appropriate.

TEMPLATE FOR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT REVIEWS

Please complete this pro forma and bring it to the meeting, this form is confidential to you and the person who is conducting your review except for the final sheet which will be used by member support officers for your personal development plan and to prioritise activities for the Authority's training programme.

1. What are my current roles and responsibilities? (e.g. the council executive/cabinet portfolio, overview and scrutiny member, chair, member of a statutory committee such as planning, licensing etc. In the community, ward member/community leader)

2. What Learning and Development have I undertaken this year?

3. What additional learning and development would be useful, use the table below.

Areas that I would like to develop are:	Preferred method of development (e.g. visits to other authorities, peer networking, practical workshops, e learning etc.)
Skills (e.g. meeting management, questioning techniques, media interviews,	
Knowledge (e.g. the code of conduct, equalities, the planning process, local policy etc.)	

My learning and development needs for this year (please discuss this section of your pro forma with your member support officer, it will be used to create development plans and training programmes)

Area for Development	How	Priority
<i>example How to Chair scrutiny meetings effectively</i>	<i>I'd like to observe meetings in other authorities A workshop on chairing skills would be handy I'd like to receive some written guidance for scrutiny chairs</i>	1
<i>example Understanding of the planning system to answer constituents enquiries</i>	<i>A workshop on all the planning basics would be useful A meeting with planning officers on specific issues raised by people in my community about planning permission</i>	3
<i>example Local Government Finance, how do I contribute to the budget setting process?</i>	<i>I'd like to have discussions with finance officers and some mentoring from Cabinet member for Finance and Resources as this is an area I'd like to move into.</i>	2
<i>example Training in the use of social media</i>	<i>A meeting with someone who can explain how to use Twitter safely to publicise what I do and encourage the public to contact me.</i>	4

My evaluation of the training I have already received

Training undertaken	What difference has this made to the way I work as a member
<i>example Council induction programme on the work of the council and who's who.</i>	<i>Has given me a good refresher of how the council operates which has enabled me to explain this to people attending my surgeries and know who the appropriate officers are to speak to. It also highlighted areas where I need further training.</i>
<i>example media skills training</i>	<i>Helped me represent the council more effectively at a radio interview last week</i>
<i>example attended the Leadership Academy</i>	<i>Helped me understand my own leadership style and how it differs from other I am now working more effectively with other Cabinet members I also had help on a personal leadership challenge.</i>

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

1 February 2018

Report of the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services - K. Jones

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Member Annual Report Scheme

Purpose of the Report

1. To consult with Members on the current policy to support the production of annual reports by Members of the Council.

Background

2. The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 introduced a number of statutory requirements to strengthen democracy in Wales. One of the requirements concerned making arrangements for every elected member to provide an annual report at the end of each civic year.
3. The detail of the legal requirement can be found in Section 5 of the 2011 Measure, which states:-

1. A local authority must make arrangements for:
 - a) each person who is a member of the local authority to make an annual report about that 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 a 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 Members of its executive.
2. The arrangements may include conditions as to the content of a report that must be satisfied by the person making it.
3. A local authority must publicise its arrangements.
4. In exercising its functions under this section a local authority must have regard to any guidance issued by ministers.

Current process

4. In order to support Members in producing their annual reports at the end of the civic year, the content of such reports follows a standard template form.
5. In designing the scheme it was hoped that this would enable Members to strike the right balance between providing information that would be relevant and interesting for their electorate, whilst avoiding the risk that the annual reports became political in nature.
6. The scheme also proposed that annual reports would be published in PDF format on the Councillors' profile page accessed via the corporate website.
7. In a similar vein to the introduction of the Annual Personal Development Review (PDR) scheme, despite initial early interest from Members in completing an annual report this has subsequently declined rapidly over the past four years, with no annual reports being prepared by Members for 2016/17.

8. To assist in the development of the annual reports scheme, it would be of assistance to have an understanding from the Committee of their view of the current process and on how it could be further improved or enhanced.
9. In addition, it must also be pointed out to Members that Welsh Government will, in the new year, publish their proposals on the future reform of Local Government. This will likely take the form of a draft Local Government Bill which may well contain a provision to make the completion of annual reports compulsory for all elected members.

Financial Impact

10. There are no financial impacts associated with this report.

Equality Impact Assessment

11. A screening assessment has been undertaken but a full equality impact assessment is not warranted.

Workforce Impacts

12. There are no workforce impacts associated with this report.

Legal Powers

13. Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 (S.5)
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2011/4/contents>

Risk Management

14. There are no significant risks associated with this report.

Consultation

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

Recommendation

16. That the Committee engage with the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services as part of a focus group arrangement to review the current Members Annual Report Scheme.

Reason for Decision

17. Welsh local authorities are required to have regard to any guidance issued by Welsh Ministers.
18. To assist with the facilitation of the consultation process in relation to the review of the Members Annual Report Scheme.

Implementation of Decision

19. The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call-in period.

Appendices

20. Appendix 1 - Member Annual Report Guidance
21. Appendix 2 - Member Annual Report Submission - Overview Summary

List of Background Papers

22. Democratic Services Committee Papers - 12 December 2012

Officer Contacts

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Elected Member Annual Reports

1. Definition

An annual report will enable elected Members to highlight to the electorate the work that they have undertaken or been involved in during a specific civic year.

2. Background

The Local Government Measure 2011 introduced a number of new statutory requirements to strengthen democracy in Wales. One of the requirements is concerned with making arrangements for every elected Member to provide an annual report at the end of each municipal year.

The details of the statutory requirements are found in section five of the Measure:

- i) A local authority must make arrangements for
 - a) each person who is a member of the local authority to make an annual report about that 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 a 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 Members of its executive.
- ii) The arrangements may include conditions as to the content of the report that must be satisfied by the person making it.
- iii) A local authority must publicise its arrangements.
- iv) In exercising its functions under this section a local authority must have regard for any guidance issued by ministers.

3. Approach

In order to support Members in producing their reports at the end of a municipal year, it has been agreed that the content of such reports follow a simple standard form. This will allow for the right balance between providing information that will be relevant and interesting for the electorate, whilst avoiding the risk that the annual reports become political in nature. The annual reports will be published in PDF format on the Councillors' pages of the Council's corporate website.

It has been agreed that any Annual Report by an elected Member should be concise and limited to two A4 sides. To assist elected Members in preparing an annual report five suggested headings have been agreed to assist in focussing the report:

- Role and Responsibilities;
- Community Activity;
- Initiatives and Special Activities;
- Learning and Development; and
- Other Activities and Interests.

Some examples of information that can be included under each heading are outlined below.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Democratic Services Unit will provide accurate information on the attendance of members at full Council and all other Council committees.

Individual Councillors will be expected to provide information on any external bodies that they sit on, including levels of attendance which must be recorded personally. Examples of external bodies/committees could include:

- School Governing Bodies;
- Local Town/Community Councils;
- Local Authority Consortium Committees; and
- Special Interest Groups

This list is indicative and not exhaustive.

Community Activity

This is an opportunity for Councillors to highlight the work they have undertaken on behalf of their local constituents. It should not include details of specific cases. It could include details of regular surgeries they have held and any relevant outcomes. The Democratic Services Unit will not provide any information within this section.

Initiatives and Special Activities

This is where Councillors have the opportunity to describe any major initiatives or special projects that they have been associated with on behalf of Neath Port Talbot Council.

Learning and Development

Councillors can highlight in this section what Personal Development activities they have undertaken over the previous civic year. Examples can include events such as Council seminars or official training courses. In the future this information will mirror what a Councillor has included within section two of their Personal Development Review.

Other Activities/Interests

This is a general heading for Councillors to provide any information on themselves that they believe will be of interest to their constituents. It can be the opportunity to show the 'personal' aspect of your role as a Councillor.

The Head of Democratic Services, the Senior Committee Services Officer and the Senior Scrutiny and Member Development Officer will be available to read the reports to offer advice on whether any of the content is inappropriate. We anticipate that many Members will wish to produce the content themselves without the need for administrative support, however, should any Members need assistance then please make contact with the Electoral and Democratic Services Manager

who will be pleased to help. Should there be demand, training can also be arranged.

The Democratic Services Committee will evaluate this scheme in Autumn 2013 to ensure that the process is fit for purpose.

Guidelines

As with any publication that is in essence linked to the Council there are a number of areas that must be considered when writing annual reports. The next section ensures that elected Members are made aware of potential issues that can or cannot be included within Annual Reports.

In 1986 Parliament imposed controls on Local Authority publicity prohibiting what was described as “political publicity” which appeared to be designed to affect public support for a political party. Also the law made provision for a statutory code of recommended practice to which Local Authorities must have regard in undertaking any publicity. The current Code of Practice for Local Authorities in Wales was issued by the National Assembly for Wales in October 2001.

Officers do not wish to be seen as censors of Members’ publications but we have to ensure that anything that is published using public money complies with the Code.

In considering the subject areas of the annual reports, the following matters will be important:-

- i. the reports should be relevant to the functions of the authority;
- ii. it should not duplicate unnecessarily publicity produced by central government, another local authority or another public authority

Comment should be objective, balanced, informative, and accurate and issues must be presented clearly and as fairly as possible.

The reports may include information about individual Councillors only where this is relevant to their position and responsibilities within the

Council and all content should be objective and explanatory. It is important that annual reports are not liable to misrepresentation as being party political.

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**Submission of Annual Member Reports by
Elected Members – Overview Summary**

MEMBER	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17
Councillor 1	X	X			
Councillor 2	X	-			
Councillor 3	X	-			
Councillor 4	X	X			
Councillor 5	X	X		X	
Councillor 6	X	-		X	
Councillor 7	X	-	X		
Councillor 8	X	-			
Councillor 9	X	-			
Councillor 10	X	X	X		
Councillor 11	X	-			
Councillor 12	X	X	X	X	
Councillor 13	X	-			
Councillor 14	-	X			
Councillor 15	X	X	X	X	
Councillor 16	-	-	X	X	
Councillor 17	-	X			
Councillor 18	-	X			
Councillor 19	X	-			
Councillor 20	X	-			
Councillor 21	X	-			
Councillor 22	X	X	X	X	
TOTALS	18	10	6	6	0
% of Council	28%	16%	9%	9%	0%

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NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Democratic Services Committee.

1 February 2018

Report of the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services - K. Jones

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected: All Wards

Members' IT Reference Group

Purpose of the Report

1. To consult and agree with the Democratic Services Committee the future role for the Member IT Reference Group.

Background

2. In 2014 the Democratic Services Committee resolved to set up a Members IT Reference Group.
3. The main purpose of the Group was to provide an opportunity for Members to consider the extent to which ICT equipment, support and training met Members' needs. It was also set up to shape the use of the new committee document management system (Modern.Gov).

4. For reference, Members agreed a new Members ICT Scheme in March 2017 which aims to respond to the Welsh Government's requirement for local authorities and Councillors to embrace e-government.
5. Following on from the May 2017 local elections and the establishment of the new Council, members of the committee have expressed support for reconvening the Members IT Reference Group and in that regard the specific terms of reference previously approved by the Committee have been attached for discussion.
6. It is hoped that the Members IT Reference Group will offer a forum to discuss and potentially trial new types of equipment and software as they become available, and, further assist Members in carrying out their duties and responsibilities.

Financial Impact

7. There are no financial implications associated with the continuation of the Group should that be supported by the Committee. However, any proposals to change future ICT arrangements would need to be costed and developed with planned budgets in mind.

Equality Impact Assessment

8. There are no equality impacts associated with the continuation of the Group, however, Members are asked to note that ICT facilities can play an important role in assisting Members who may need reasonable adjustments to be made, particularly in relation to certain disabilities.

Workforce Impacts

9. The continuation of the Group can be supported within the existing workload of the Democratic Services and ICT teams, however, workforce implications of changing future Member ICT arrangements will need to be considered by the Group.

Legal Impacts

10. The work outlined in this report can be progressed under provisions contained within the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.

Risk Management

11. There are no risk management issues associated with this report.

Consultation

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

Recommendations

13. That Members of the Democratic Services Committee consider:
 - a.) Whether the existing terms of reference remain appropriate.
 - b.) To nominate a member of the committee to chair the group.
 - c.) To nominate members to participate in the group.

Reasons for Proposed Decision

14. To ensure Members are able to consider the adequacy of ICT facilities made available to them in their role as councillors and to put forward suggestions for consideration

Implementation of Decision

15. The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

Appendices

16. Appendix 1 - Terms of Reference for Member ICT Group

List of Background Papers

Members ICT Scheme - March 2017

<https://democracy.npt.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=159&MId=7082&Ver=4>

Officer Contacts

17. Karen Jones- Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services

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18. Rhys George - Electoral and Democratic Services Manager

Tel: 01639 763719 e-mail: r.j.george@npt.gov.uk



Members' IT Reference Group Terms of Reference.

Previous Membership – (2012-2017)

Cllr Lella James
Cllr Mrs C Morgans
Cllr Ceri Golding
Cllr E E Jones
Cllr Rob Jones
Cllr Arwyn Woolcock
Cllr J D Morgan
Cllr S Hunt
Cllr Andrew Jenkins

Purpose:

- To provide a structured and focussed opportunity for Members to consider the extent to which the ICT equipment, support and training meets Members' needs.
- To provide a structured mechanism to shape the use of the Committee Administration System Modern.Gov to best suit Members' needs.

Support Arrangements:

- Support will be provided by the Democratic Services Team and officers from the ICT section where appropriate.

Reporting Arrangements:

- The Group will report to the Democratic Services Committee.
- The focus, membership and objectives of the Group will be reviewed as required.

THIS IS NOT A DECISION MAKING GROUP

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NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

1 February 2018

Report of the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services - K. Jones

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Submission of apologies for Council meetings

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide an update in relation to the system for recording Member meeting absences, and, to consult with Members on the potential option to amend the current apologies submission policy.

Background

2. In May 2017, a policy outlining the approach to be taken in relation to the submission of Member apologies for absences from formal meetings was approved by Council.
3. Currently there are three standard categories:-

General Category Apologies - Members are not expected to confirm their reason for absence unless they wish to (i.e. holiday, illness etc.)

Apologies Due to Council Business - Members may use this category where clashes with Council and external meeting occur. Members representing the Authority will be expected to highlight the reason so that it is recorded correctly.

Absence without notification - Where apologies are not received then the Member will be listed as absent and this will show in the attendance record.

4. The standard rules also state that when a Member is unable to attend a meeting they must submit their apologies prior to or during a formal meeting, communicating with Democratic Services staff to ensure that the apology has been correctly recorded and the relevant meeting remains quorate.
5. Any apologies submitted after a meeting has concluded are not recorded.

Progress

6. With the introduction of the Modern.Gov document management software system, functionality is now available which automatically transfers a Councillor's attendance from the minutes of a specific meeting to an information summary located on the Council's corporate website and intranet.
7. Following the conclusion of the May 2017 local elections ,and the establishment of the new Council, the system was activated and has been utilised to record and publish the attendance of all elected members in relation to formal council meetings.
8. Due to the development of the functionality available within the Modern.Gov system it is now possible to include additional information detailing the reason for a Members potential absence from formal meetings.
9. Once recorded the additional detail automatically appears in the attendance section of each Member's profile page, located on the corporate website and intranet.

10. For Members reference a copy of the Council's current policy for submitting apologies for Council meetings is shown at Appendix 1. In addition, The current extended category list of available 'reasons for absence' is detailed in Appendix 2.
11. Members are asked to consider the options outlined in the recommendation in relation to the current policy for the submission of Council meetings.

Financial Impact

12. There are no financial impacts associated with this report.

Equality Impact Assessment

13. A screening assessment has been undertaken but a full equality impact assessment is not warranted.

Workforce Impacts

14. There are no workforce impacts associated with this report.

Legal Powers

15. Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1972/70/content>
16. Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2011/4/contents>

Risk Management

17. There are no significant risks associated with this report.

Consultation

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

Recommendation

19. That Members considers whether they wish to make a recommendation to Council to amend the current member apologies submission policy.

Option 1:

Recommend to Council to amend the current policy for submitting Member apologies for all Council meetings to record the categorisation of absences in greater detail for public scrutiny.

Option 2:

Retain the status quo arrangements in relation to the submission of Members apologies as outlined in the current policy.

Option 3:

Propose an alternative arrangement.

Reason for Decision

20. To review the current system for recording Member meeting absences.

Implementation of Decision

21. The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

Appendices

22. Appendix 1 - Current Policy for submitting apologies for Council meetings
23. Appendix 2 - List of Additional categories to record Member absences

List of Background Papers

24. None

Officer Contacts

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Policy for submitting apologies for Council meetings

Background

Elected Members are expected to attend any meetings that they have been assigned as part of their role. However, there will be occasions when they are unable to attend due to various reasons.

The new Modern.Gov Committee Management System now allows the attendance to be recorded and also published on the Council's website.

To ensure that the record is accurate this policy sets out what Members should do to record their absence at specific meetings.

Policy

When a Member is unable to attend a meeting they must submit the apologies prior to or during the meeting to ensure they are correctly recorded and to ensure that the meeting will be quorate. Any apologies submitted after a meeting has been concluded will not be recorded.

The apologies should be communicated to staff within the democratic services unit.

There are two types of apology that can be recorded:-

Type	Comments
Apologies	General category - Members are not expected to confirm their reason for absence unless they wish to. (i.e. Holidays, Illness etc.)

Apologies due to Council Business	Where clashes with Council and external meetings occur, Members representing the Authority will be expected to highlight the reason so that it is recorded correctly.
Absence without notification	Where apologies are not received then the Member will be listed as absent and this will show in the attendance record.

Member Attendance

**Current list of available additional recordable absence categories
via the Modern.Gov committee document management system**

Accident	On Leave – Family Duties
Caring for Children	Outside Body Duties
Caring for Elderly Relatives	Town/Community Council Duties
Compassionate Leave	Religious Holiday
Council Business/Duties	Sabbatical
Disability	Industrial Action – Strike
Education, Training, School Leave	Suspension
Emergency - Bomb Scare	Temporary Layoff – Other Reasons
Emergency - Fire	Temporary Layoff – Seasonal
Emergency - Other	Unspecified
Extreme Weather Conditions	
Illness	
Lock-Out	
Long Term Sickness	
Maternity/Paternity Leave	
On Leave – Other Health Reasons	

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NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

1 February 2018

Report of the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services - K. Jones

Matter for Information

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Outcome of Members Survey on Timing of Council Meetings (Follow-Up Survey)

Purpose of the Report

1. To update Members of the Democratic Services Committee on the outcome of the follow-up survey on the timing of Council meetings.

Background

2. Section 6 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 requires the Council to undertake a survey of Members regarding the timing, frequency and location of meetings of the Council and its Committees at least once during the term of administration.

3. The original format and content of the survey was discussed and agreed by Members of the Committee at a meeting held on 27 July 2017.
4. Following analysis of the original survey results at the meeting of the Committee held on 19 October, 2017, Members requested that arrangements be made to provide additional data by canvassing the views of individual Committee Members.
5. In line with the Council's Digital By Choice - Channel Shift Strategy, both the original survey and the supplementary survey were compiled as online questionnaires.

Progress

6. Following the expiry of the supplementary survey deadline on 1 December 2017 a total of 41 out of 64 Members (64%) completed the questionnaire. A summary of the main findings is provided below with the detailed results outlined in Appendices 1A and AB.
7. As part of the survey Members outlined which committee meetings they attended and were asked the question:

'In general, are you content with the start times of meetings?'
8. A total of 32 Members (50% of membership) stated that they were content with the current arrangements, while nine Members (14% of membership) said that they were not content.
9. Members who were not content with the current timing of meeting arrangements were then asked to specify their reasons.
10. Comments made fell into two categories with seven Members requesting making a preference for afternoon meetings while two Members made representations for meetings to be held out of standard office hours.
11. Finally, Members were asked what their preferred start time(s) for meeting(s) would be if they had the choice.

12. In relation to this question opinion was split with five Members opting for early/late afternoon meeting start times, two Members making a preference for meetings commencing out of standard office hours, while one Member made representations for morning meetings and another called for further piloting of varying start times for different committees.
13. To conclude, while it was once again clear that there are no arrangements which suit all Members in relation to all formal meetings the majority of respondents outlined their support for the current cycle schedule.
14. Nevertheless, an underlying preference for early to late afternoon meetings was highlighted from those Members who submitted comments with one or two other Members also keen to consider greater flexibility on meeting start times primarily to help those Members with family or work commitments.
15. Further discussions will now be undertaken with individual committee chairs based on the data obtained by the surveys to assist in refining the various times for meetings.

Financial Impact

16. There are no financial impacts associated with this report. However, future changes to meeting times and/or venues locations, may have potential implications in relation to the costs associated with administering the governance arrangements of the Council.

Equality Impact Assessment

17. A screening assessment has been undertaken but a full equality impact assessment is not required.

Workforce Impacts

18. There are no workforce impacts associated with this report. However, changes to existing meeting arrangements may have implications for those officers who attend meetings of the Council.

Legal Powers

19. S.6 Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011

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

Risk Management

20. There are no significant risks associated with this report.

Consultation

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

Recommendation

22. That the Committee consider the findings in relation to the timing of council meetings (follow-up) survey.

Appendices

23. Appendix 1A - Follow-Up Survey on Timing of Council Meetings
24. Appendix 1B - (Detailed Summary)
25. Appendix 2 - Committee by Committee break-down summary

List of Background Papers

26. None.

Officer Contacts

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Committee Meetings - Timing



The feedback from the recent Member survey on the timings of meetings was considered at the Democratic Services Committee held on 19th October 2017.

As a result, the Committee has asked that I contact Members on a Committee by Committee basis to ascertain if they are happy with the timings (either morning or afternoon) and also whether the time slot within that period is satisfactory.

I therefore attach a further survey and would be grateful if you would respond by no later than 1st December 2017.

The survey should take no longer than a few minutes to complete.

Regards

Karen Jones

Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services

Please indicate which committee meetings you attend:

37	Council	11	Education, Skills and Culture Scrutiny Committee	6	Appeals Panel
7	Cabinet	7	Leisure and Culture Sub Committee	7	Audit Committee
0	Education, Skills and Culture Cabinet Board	11	Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee	8	Democratic Services Committee
8	Policy and Resources Cabinet Board	11	Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee	8	Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee
3	Regeneration and Sustainable Development Cabinet Board	11	Policy and Resources/Cabinet Scrutiny Committee	5	Licensing and Gambling Acts Sub Committee
1	Social Care, Health and Wellbeing Cabinet Board	11	Regeneration and Sustainable Development Scrutiny Committee	10	Personnel Committee
2	Streetscene and Engineering Cabinet Board	7	Social Care, Health and Well-being Scrutiny Committee	7	Planning Committee
7	Community Safety and Public Protection Sub Committee	7	Streetscene and Engineering Scrutiny Committee	8	Registration and Licensing Committee
				6	Special Appointments Committee
				3	Standards Committee

In general, are you content with the start times of meetings?

32 Yes

9 No

If no, please state reasons (please specify clearly which meetings you are referring to in your response):

9

What would be your preferred start time(s) for meetings? (Please specify clearly which meeting(s) you are referring to):

9

Thank you.

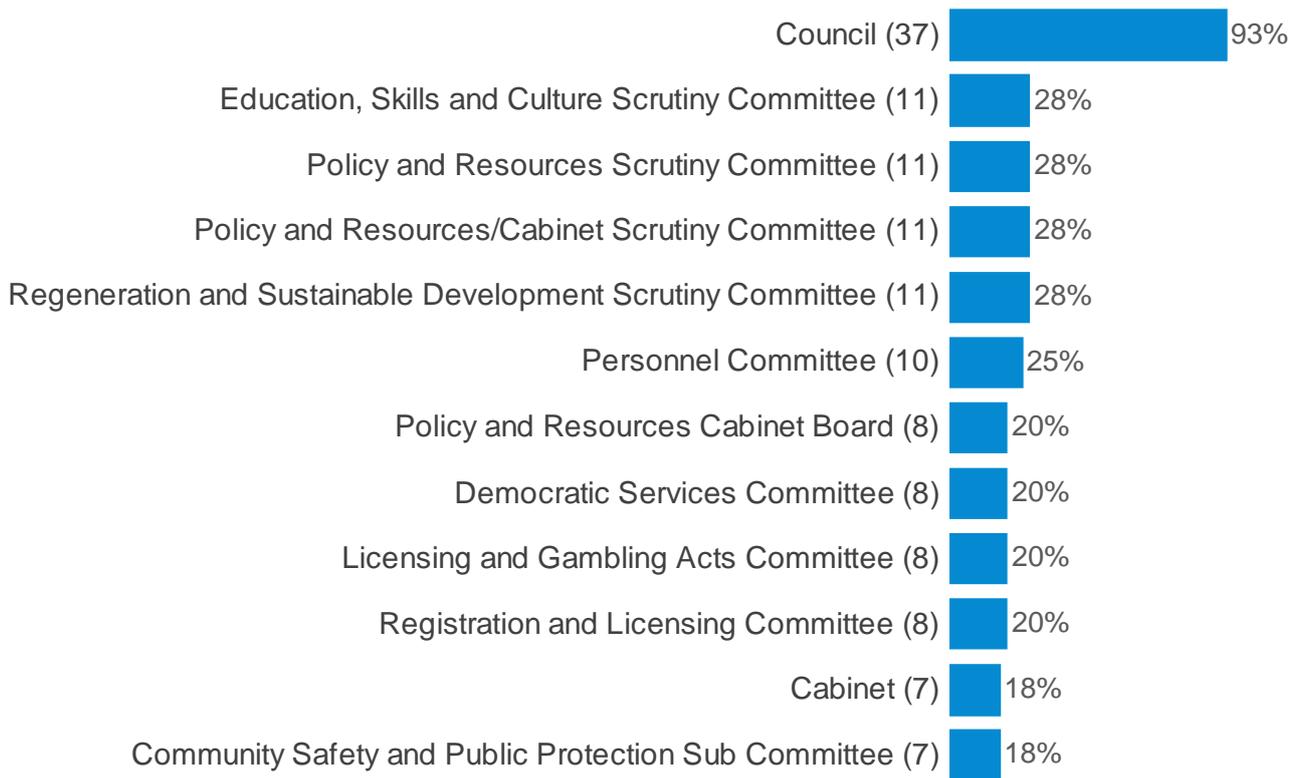
Please press submit to send your response.

Timing of Meetings

This report was generated on 04/12/17. Overall 41 respondents completed this questionnaire. The report has been filtered to show the responses for 'All Respondents'.

The following charts are restricted to the top 12 codes. Lists are restricted to the most recent 100 rows.

Please indicate which committee meetings you attend:



In general, are you content with the start times of meetings?



Timing of Meetings

If no, please state reasons (please specify clearly which meetings you are referring to in your response): (Please state reasons:)

Would prefer afternoon meetings as then you would finish work and attend meeting and not have to take time off e.g. to travel before and after the meeting.

Afternoon meetings are problematic for childcare as I never know whether they will be finished in time to pick up kids from school. At least if they are morning meetings then if it runs on it doesn't matter.

I would like to see meetings held outside office hours. Many members are in employment and I personally have had difficulty in getting time off work to attend council in spite of the Employment Act. Members who are retired would also be able to attend these meetings. I also feel that by holding meetings outside office hours it would encourage more people of working age to stand for Council

Some meetings starting at 4-5pm would be useful.

In relation to : -Policy and Resources;SCHW (which takes place in Neath) The above committtees have a considerable agenda and I feel that in order to maximise concentration and give due diligence it would be better for these to be later in the day other than a 9.30am start.

I would prefer all meetings to be scheduled for the afternoon

The engineering & streetscene scrutiny meeting is held in the morning at 9.30am. As a full time worker,I find it difficult to have leave from my employer,a meeting say at 2pm onwards would help my leave& attendance.

Not suitable for councillors with 9-5 jobs

For me, personally, the start times are OK. But, from the point of view of younger (working) members, and from the public's point of view, there could be more flexibility with meeting times - in order to maximise the chance for people to attend.

What would be your preferred start time(s) for meetings? (Please specify clearly which meeting(s) you are referring to):

230p.m.-all meetings. Also if the majority of the committee are from Neath why isn't that committee meeting held in Neath. It would cut down on expense mileage claims and therefore make savings.

9am

From 17:30 onwards

4-5pm

SCHW (no early morning) to begin early afternoon. Policy and Resources, no early morning and to begin late morning i.e. 11.30 or early or late afternoon.

2.30

Afternoon 2pm onwards

5:30pm (full council)

I would like to see further piloting of varying start times for different committees - and reflect on these after a set period of time.

Summary of Member comments in favour of afternoon meetings broken down by Committee membership

Council

- Council IIIIIIII (9) **14%**

Cabinet

- Cabinet

Cabinet Boards

- Education, Skills and Culture Cabinet Board
- Policy and Resources Cabinet Board
- Regeneration and Sustainable Development Cabinet Board
- Social Care, Health and Wellbeing Cabinet Board
- Streetscene and Engineering Cabinet Board

Scrutiny Committees

- Community Safety and Public protection Sub Committee I (1) **11%**
- Education Skills and Culture Scrutiny Committee I (1) **7%**
- Leisure and Culture Sub Committee
- Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee III (3) **19%**
- Policy and Resources/ Cabinet Scrutiny Committee III (3) **19%**
- Regeneration and Sustainable Development Scrutiny Committee III (3) **25%**
- Social Care Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee II (2) **15%**
- Streetscene and Engineering Scrutiny Committee I (1) **8%**

Regulatory Committees

- Appeals Panel III (3) **60%**
- Audit Committee III (3) **25%**
- Democratic Services Committee II (2) **17%**
- Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee I (1) **7%**
- Personnel Committee I (1) **8%**
- Planning Committee
- Registration and Licensing Committee I (1) **7%**
- Special Appointments Committee I (1) **9%**
- Standards Committee I (1) **13%**

NB: The vast majority of comments made by members focussed on a preference for afternoon meetings. This has been broken down further to reflect the current percentage of individual committees.

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**WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE**

MEETINGS TO START AT 9.30am AND FINISH AT 11.00am

DATE	Agenda Items	Type (Decision, Monitoring or Information)	Rotation (Topical, Annual, Biannual, Quarterly, Monthly)	Contact Officer/Head of Service
1 February 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member Scrutiny Champion – Update Report 	Information	Annual	Karen Jones/ Stacy Curran
1 February 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Staffing Structure for Democratic Services 	Decision	Biennial	Karen Jones/ Rhys George
1 February 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welsh Language Standards Update 	Information	Topical	Karen Jones/ Rhian Headon
1 February 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member Annual Personal Development Review (PDR) Process 	Decision	Annual	Karen Jones/ Stacy Curran

Version 6 – 17 January 2018

Head of Democratic Services to decide agenda size and if additional meetings are required

1 February 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members IT Reference Group – Terms of Reference 	Decision	Topical	Karen Jones/ Steve John
1 February 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Member Annual Reports Scheme 	Decision	Annual	Karen Jones/ Annette Manchipp
1 February 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apologies Policy – Current Scheme 	Decision	Annual	Karen Jones/ Annette Manchipp
1 February 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timing of Meetings – Follow Up Survey 	Information	Quinquennial	Karen Jones/ Annette Manchipp
TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Government Reform – Awaiting publication of Draft Bill 	Information	Topical	Karen Jones/ Rhys George

NB: Councillor A.N.Woolcock to be invited to meetings for Scrutiny issues

Version 6 – 17 January 2018

Head of Democratic Services to decide agenda size and if additional meetings are required