

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

7 March 2019

Report of the Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Digital Officer

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected: All wards

Staffing Structure – Democratic Services and the Remodelling of Scrutiny Support

Purpose of the Report:

1. To provide Members of the Democratic Services Committee with the current structure of the Democratic Services Team and an update on the work being undertaken to remodel the support provided to Scrutiny Committees.

Background:

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

Current Structure of the Democratic Services Team

3. The organisational chart in Appendix 1 sets out the current structure of the Democratic Services Team.

Remodelling of Support provided to Scrutiny Committees

4. To ensure the Council's scrutiny committees receive the necessary support to undertake their role and to enable a better balance between different ways of undertaking scrutiny, the allocation of the work supporting scrutiny committees undertaken by the Democratic Services Team is being remodelled.
5. Previously, scrutiny officers were responsible for administering the scrutiny meetings. This role included the recording, drafting and preparation of the final minutes which is administratively burdensome both during and following the meeting.
6. To release the scrutiny capacity from the above administrative work, officers from the Committee / Members Services section of the Democratic Services Team are now responsible for the administration of the minutes of the scrutiny meetings. This will enable the scrutiny officers to provide more support to chairs during the meeting and to have the capacity to undertake other pieces of work to support the work of the scrutiny committee outside of the meeting.
7. To enable the scrutiny officers to undertake the above role and to develop a wider set of scrutiny skills, they are currently receiving training and development support from Dave McKenna. Dave is a scrutiny practitioner with ten years' experience and was previously the manager of Swansea Council scrutiny team. Dave has presented at national conferences in Wales and has hosted workshops at the Centre for Public Scrutiny annual conferences.
8. The impact of the re-allocation of work on the Committee / Members Services Team is being monitored as the model is further rolled-out.

Financial Impact:

9. The financial costs of the support and development work have been met within the budget allocation for scrutiny development during 2018/2019.

Equality Impact Assessment:

10. No impact.

Workforce Impact:

11. The impact on the capacity of the Committee / Members Services Team will be kept under review as the model is further rolled out.

Risk Management:

12. No impact.

Legal Powers:

13. Local Government (Wales) – Measure 2011

Consultation:

14. All staff directly affected by the remodelling have been involved and continue to be involved in the process.

Recommendations:

15. That the Democratic Services Committee notes, the structure set out in Appendix 1.
16. That the Democratic Services Committee notes the progress made on the work being undertaken to remodel the support provided to Scrutiny Committees.

Reason for Decision

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

Implementation of Decision:

18. The decision is proposed for immediate implementation.

Appendices:

19. Appendix 1 – Current structure chart – March 2019

List of Background Papers:

20. None

Officer Contact:

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