

MEETING	DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE
DATE	29 MAY 2012
SUBJECT	HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
PURPOSE	TO NOMINATE AN OFFICER TO THE POST
AUTHOR	HARRY THOMAS, CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. Under section 8 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 the Council is required to nominate one of its officers to the new statutory post of “Head of Democratic Services”. The council is also required to provide support for the officer to do the job.
2. The appointment is to be made by the Democratic Services Committee on behalf of the Council.
3. The Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer and the Chief Financial Officer cannot be appointed Head of Democratic Services. The post is politically restricted in the same way as the other head of department posts (i.e. the postholder cannot take a prominent part in political activity).
4. The functions of the Head of Democratic Services are:
  - a) To provide support and advice
    - To the authority in relation to its meetings
    - To committees of the authority and members of those committees
    - To any joint committee
    - To members and officers in relation to the functions of the authority’s scrutiny committees
    - To each member of the authority in relation to his/her work
  - b) To promote the role of the scrutiny committees
  - c) To make reports in respect of the numbers and grades of staff required to discharge the functions
5. The above functions are currently divided between the Monitoring Officer and the Head of Strategic and Improvement. As the Monitoring Officer cannot continue to undertake the member support duties, as a result of the Measure, a restructuring exercise was carried out so that the duties all became the responsibility of the Head of Strategic and Improvement.
6. By now the structure of the Strategic and Improvement Department includes a section which deals solely with member support, under the leadership of a Member Manager – Democratic Services. This is the section which will provide support to committees, members and scrutiny.

7. Following a recommendation from the Members' Services Working Group and the Principal Scrutiny Committee it was decided by the Council on 15 December 2011, in order to provide strong support to backbench members, that there should be a clear division between the officers who support the Cabinet and the officers who support backbench members, scrutiny and other committees.
8. In order to implement this decision a separate team has been established to support the Cabinet, located within the Monitoring Officers's department.

#### RECOMMENDATION

9. The committee is asked to consider the arrangements, and if satisfied, to formally designate the Head of Strategic and Improvement to the post of Head of Democratic Services.