

MEETING	DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE
DATE	11 September 2012
SUBJECT	Support for Members – members’ observations
PURPOSE	To present the observations received by the Chair of the Democratic Services Committee from fellow-members regarding support for members.
AUTHOR	Cllr Dewi Owen Chair - Democratic Services Committee

- 1.1 It is the responsibility of the Democratic Services Committee to ensure that the support offered is suitable for all members.
- 1.2 In my role as the Chair of the Democratic Services Committee, I sent a letter to my fellow-members on 11 July, noting
 - This Committee’s main role
 - The current support available
 - The need to develop the area of communication and information sharing with members
- 1.3 In the letter I also asked my fellow-members to contact me if there were any issues that they wished for me and the Committee to consider and try to resolve on their behalf. (A copy of the letter is attached in **Appendix A**).
- 1.4 I received a relatively low number of responses, but at the meeting I will report verbally on the observations which I received.
- 1.5 The Democratic Services Manager, Vera Jones, has received some comments regarding the support received by elected members, and the areas of concern are as follows:
 - Information Technology – technical matters, issues regarding the timescale and issues with regards to the principles adopted
 - Travelling expenses, issues resolved
 - Training and requests for resources to attend courses

Dear Councillor

Some weeks have passed since the election and by- election, therefore it is timely for me to contact you in my role as Chair of the Democratic Services Committee to explain the role of the committee.

The Democratic Services Committee is a new committee within Gwynedd Council's constitution. The main role of the committee is to:

- Appoint the Head of Democratic Services - this was done in the inaugural meeting on 29th May 2012. Mr Geraint George, Head of the Strategic and Improvement Department has been appointed to this role.
- Review whether the provision of staff, buildings and other resources available to members are adequate to ensure that they are able to fulfil their role.
- Prepare reports to be submitted to the full council on the above

The current resources and support available to help elected members to fulfil their roles include:

Support for all members (administrative, practical and developmental)

- Confidential administrative support for the political groups,
- Administrate, process and pay wages and travelling expenses
- Training

Support for Scrutiny Members, and to various other committees

- Independent advice and guidance for the Chairs and members of Scrutiny Committees
- Administrate, record and publish minutes of the meetings
- Scrutiny inquiries to examine the effects of policies at community level

Specific Support for the Cabinet

- Commission priorities – i.e. to develop and recommend the ambition and the content of the strategic plan.
- Achieve the priorities, i.e. what has been pledged in the strategic plan.
- Administrate etc

However one area that needs urgent attention is communication and information sharing with all members. Ideas are being developed to ensure that clear information and timely messages are shared with members. It is also essential that members are given the opportunity to raise issues that are important to them and their electors with the relevant Cabinet Leader. It is clear that members are concerned about this issue and I will be asking the Head of Democratic Services to report on this to the next meeting of the Democratic Services Committee.

I'm sure that you have issues that you'd like the Committee to consider and seek to resolve on your behalf. Please feel free to contact me or any other member of the Committee to discuss any issues of concern (see membership list below).

Yours faithfully

Councillor Dewi Owen
Chairman of the Democratic Services Committee

Membership List for the Democratic Services Committee

Plaid Cymru

Selwyn Griffiths
Charles Wyn Jones
Dyfrig Jones
Linda Ann Jones
Dilwyn Morgan
Gareth Thomas
Mandy Williams-Davies

Independent

Lesley Day
Tom Ellis
Anne Lloyd-Jones
Dewi Owen

Llais Gwynedd

Endaf Cooke
Anwen Davies
Jason Humphreys

Labour

Sion Wyn Jones