

MEETING	THE COUNCIL
DATE	4TH OCTOBER, 2012
SUBJECT	Support for Members
PURPOSE	To submit the latest information regarding support for members.
Authors	Councillor Dewi Owen, Chair Democratic Services Committee
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1. The Council aims to ensure “The best for the people of Gwynedd today and tomorrow”. We all have a role to ensure this, especially as elected members within the Council. Ensuring that we all understand and know of the support that is available for elected members to fulfill their role is vital. As a consequence of the recent changes to Gwynedd Council's constitution, it is crucial that we establish a clear procedure for the support that is available for all members of the Council. It is the responsibility of the Democratic Services Committee to ensure that the support offered is suitable for all members.
2. Under the new Local Government 2011 measure, the Democratic Services Committee is responsible for ensuring sufficient and appropriate support to all members to fulfill their role. The Committee has already identified areas which need to be improved, and areas where work is already ongoing.
3. In its meeting on the 11th of September, 2012, the Committee decided that it would be beneficial to report to all Council members outlining the support available, and the improvements that are currently ongoing. It is vital to communicate this information, especially as we are at the beginning of a new Council term. The main changes that we currently have are
 - Changing to Cabinet system due to the new Measure
 - A number of newly elected members following the May 2012 elections.
4. The following table outlines the current arrangements, along with the developments which have been identified to develop member support further.

A. What is the support available to ensure effective communication?

Ref	What to expect?	How?	By whom?	By when?
Information Strategy for Members <i>(Note that all these elements need to be considered in the context of the future of the Area Committees.)</i>				
1	<u>Surgeries</u> - One-to-one meetings with Cabinet Member	It is intended to hold a pilot to assess whether the idea of	The Cabinet Team will be responsible for	The pilot will be running shortly. Frequency of

Ref	What to expect?	How?	By whom?	By when?
	so that members are given the opportunity to raise questions and receive updates.	surgeries will improve communication between Members of the Cabinet and non-executive members.	arranging the surgeries and appointments. The Cabinet Member will be responsible for recording any action issues arising from the meeting.	surgeries to be determined following the pilot.
2	<u>Information /Consultative Workshops</u> on specific subjects for members with an interest in the field.	An opportunity to submit information and /or engage with elected members on specific subjects.	The Cabinet – Cabinet Member with assistance from the Heads of Service.	As required
3	<u>Champions</u> – there is a job description for champions.	The Cabinet has received a standard job-description for the role of a Champion and has appointed three champions, with the remainder to be appointed before the end of September.	A Cabinet Member to appoint a non-executive member.	Some have been implemented – others to receive further attention soon.
4	<u>Electronic information for elected members</u> Ensure that elected members are able to easily receive information electronically by means of a portable tablet.	a) Pilot of a portable provision – tablet – to be held for a period by Cabinet members. Members will be able to receive e-mails, access to their calendar and access to public documents on the internet. Access to confidential documentation via e-mail. b) The work of developing the information portal that would be a place to 'store' all the relevant information has to be amended as a consequence of	Responsibility of the Democratic Services Committee. Input on the technical side by the Senior IT and Business Transformation Manager. Input in terms of needs and information to be coordinated by the Strategic and Improvement Department.	The pilot to be completed by the end of September and action taken on the result of the pilot by the end of October .

Ref	What to expect?	How?	By whom?	By when?
		recent difficulties.		
5	<u>Information Bulletins by Cabinet Members</u> – short bulletins. The focus will be on developmental work.	a) Information bulletins by the Cabinet as a body on a monthly basis to provide an update for all members on what the Cabinet has achieved. b) Information Bulletins by individual Cabinet Members summarising what has happened in a particular field as required.	a) The Cabinet Team will assist in terms of information and administration. b) Responsibility of the individual member with administrative assistance and assistance in terms of information coming from the Head of Service.	a) to be confirmed, probably Monthly (b) Occasionally
6	<u>Cabinet Members' Reports to the Council</u>	Three Cabinet members reporting at every meeting of the Council.	Cabinet Members with the assistance of the Delivery Managers	March 2013
7	<u>Meetings between Scrutiny Chairs and the Cabinet</u>	A protocol on the nature of the relationship to facilitate interaction and discussions is being discussed. Meetings will be held bi-annually between members of the Scrutiny Chairs Forum and the Cabinet.	Meetings between Scrutiny Chairs and the Cabinet	Commencing October 2012 and subsequently every 6 months.

B. What is the specific support available for elected members to undertake their specific duties?

Support for Local Members to fulfill their role.				
Ref	What to expect?	How?	By whom?	By when?
8	<u>Timely information regarding</u>	Cabinet Member and Heads of Service to	Cabinet Member, Head	Constantly

	<u>developments or consultations on issues within the local member's ward.</u>	identify when specific work or developments are in the pipeline in a Local Member's ward and to contact the member to raise awareness in a timely manner.	of Service, or any Project leader.	
9	<u>Respond to queries or complaints by Local Members.</u>	Local Members should contact the relevant service in the first instance to request a response. If the response is inadequate, then the matter should be addressed to the relevant Cabinet Member to ensure a response.	Responsibility lies with the local member to follow the relevant steps to ensure a response.	Constantly
10	<u>Local Member's role in Cabinet meetings.</u>	Cabinet meetings are public meetings, therefore Individual Members are permitted to be present. Local Member's are invited to be present on local matters. The Cabinet Programme is circulated to all members by an e-mail link.	Cabinet Team's responsibility to identify local members for local matters, and local member's responsibility to ensure that they are aware of the contents of the Cabinet's programme.	Yn gyson.

Support for Scrutiny Members and to various other committees				
Ref	What to expect?	How?	By whom?	By when?
11	<u>Advice and independent guidance</u> for Chairs and members of Scrutiny Committees.	Advise Scrutiny Committees on their work programmes, hold preparatory meetings and provide	Head of Democracy Services, Senior Corporate	Now

		advice on the live work programme including challenging progress and hold the Cabinet to account and ensure that scrutiny adds value.	Commissioning Service Manager and the team within the Strategic and Improvement Department.	
12	<u>Administer and take the minutes at meetings</u> (scrutiny and others) and publish the minutes	Organize and produce brief minutes of the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee on the issue in question to be submitted to the relevant Portfolio Leader. Brief minutes of other committees also.	Members of the relevant Scrutiny Committee with support from the Strategic and Improvement Department.	Now – adapting to the new type of minutes.
13	<u>Scrutiny Investigations</u> to examine the impact of policies at grass roots level (an in-depth examination of a specific subject). Start and Finish approach.	A series of meetings within a specific period with members of the investigation to programme and undertake the detailed investigation (by means of research and visits) and to submit specific recommendations to the Cabinet Member. An investigation must be completed before commencing the next.	Members of the Scrutiny Committees supported by the Democratic Service Unit and the Performance and Efficiency Unit within the Strategic and Improvement Department	In accordance with the agreed work programme, each Scrutiny Committee will undertake one investigation at a time.

Support for all members – administrative, practical and developmental

Ref	What to expect?	How?	By whom?	By when?
14	<u>Administrative support for political groups</u> , such as arranging meetings, taking minutes, a service for typing letters, photocopying and coordinating response of the	Political Assistants are available to the three main parties for specified hours per week in accordance with the decision of the Full Council on 17/05/2012.	Political Assistants and further support from the Strategic and Improvement Department (by arrangement with Gareth	Now

	supported party.		James, Members' Manager – Support and Scrutiny.	
15	<u>Administer, process and pay salaries and travelling expenditures</u> of all members in a timely manner.	Travelling expenses claim forms already distributed. New clear and simple guidelines are now being developed.	Strategic and Improvement Department coordinating the work.	Now
16	<u>Annual Reports</u> by elected members	Section 5 of the Local Government Measure (2011) noting the need to submit annual reports. Further guidance is expected in relation to members annual reports, but current understanding is that the Council is required to ensure adequate support in place to help elected members to produce annual reports.	All members (to be confirmed) with the assistance of officers from the Strategic and Improvement Department. It is recommended that elected members keep a record of their achievements.	March 2013.(again, further guidance will confirm exact requirements).
17	Training – a comprehensive programme of training – a general programme available to all and a more specialist and developmental programme available depending on a member's post.	A series of programmed training sessions provided in-house or externally. Continuous adaptation of the programme in accordance with requirements of the members.	Developments for the Cabinet under the guidance of the Cabinet Member. Democracy Services Committee to consider the developments of a training programme to the remainder of members. A questionnaire will be sent to elected	Now

			members to gather views on the arrangements and nature of the training programme – it will be discussed by a sub-group of the Democratic services Committee.	
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B. What is the specific support available for Cabinet members to undertake their specific duties?

The support available or which is in the process of being prepared is currently as follows:

Specific support for the Cabinet and individual Cabinet Members				
18	Commissioning Priorities (namely developing and recommending the ambition and contents of the Strategic Plan).	A series of meetings for the Cabinet to consider which matters to prioritise, which solutions to commission. Annual reviews of any new issues or adapt plans.	Chief Executive and Corporate Director. Head of Strategic and Improvement Department and the Corporate Commissioning Team within Strategic and Improvement Department.	Now
19	Achieve priorities (namely achieve the pledges in the Strategic Plan).	Meetings of the Delivery Panel at least every two months. Cabinet Members to consider progress on implementing the pledges and to respond as required.	Individual Cabinet Members to receive support by means of a "Delivery Panel". Cabinet Member, Corporate	Now

			Director and relevant Heads of Service.	
20	<u>Secretarial support</u> for the Cabinet as a body	Arrange formal and informal meetings, work programme, taking the minutes etc.	The Cabinet Team	September / October
21	<u>Support for individual members</u> to undertake their day-to-day work.	Reply to correspondence, prepare reports, release press statements, prepare information for back-bench members etc. Diary keeping, arrange meetings and photocopies etc.	Secretarial officers in relevant departments.	As soon as possible