



# Complete Agenda

**Democratic Service**  
Swyddfa'r Cyngor  
CAERNARFON  
Gwynedd  
LL55 1SH

Meeting

**DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE**

Date and Time

**10.30 am, TUESDAY, 17TH NOVEMBER, 2020**

Location

**Virtual Meeting**

Contact Point

**Natalie Lloyd Jones**

**NatalielloydJones@gwynedd.llyw.cymru**

(DISTRIBUTED 09/11/20)

# **DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE**

## **MEMBERSHIP (15)**

### **Plaid Cymru (8)**

Councillors

Annwen Daniels

Olaf Cai Larsen  
Edgar Wyn Owen

Annwen Hughes  
Linda Ann Jones  
Judith Mary Humphreys  
Mair Rowlands

### **Independent (5)**

Councillors

John Brynmor Hughes  
Dewi Wyn Roberts  
Eryl Jones-Williams

Anne Lloyd Jones  
Hefin Underwood

### **Llais Gwynedd (1)**

Councillor Anwen J. Davies

### **Gwynedd United Independents (1)**

Councillor Dewi Owen

### **Ex-officio Members**

Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council

# **A G E N D A**

## **1. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR**

To elect a vice chair for this committee for 2020/21.

## **2. APOLOGIES**

To receive any apologies for absence.

## **3. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST**

To receive any declaration of personal interest.

## **4. URGENT ITEMS**

To note any items that are a matter of urgency in the view of the Chairman for consideration.

## **5. MINUTES**

5 - 9

The Chairperson shall propose that the minutes of the last meeting of this committee held on 19/11/2019, be signed as a true record.

## **6. REMUNERATION FOR ELECTED MEMBERS**

10 - 16

To seek the observations of the Committee in order to respond to the (draft) Annual Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales for 2021/22.

## **7. ADOPTERS ABSENCE**

17

To discuss the consultation on changes to the adoption absence for Local Authority Councillors.

## **8. DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT FOR MEMBERS DURING THE COVID PANDEMIC AND IN FUTURE**

18 - 23

To submit an update for members on the developments that have been recently taking place in the background.

## **9. LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROVISION FOR MEMBERS**

24 - 28

Provide an overview of the Learning and Development provision for Members, highlighting successes, challenges and developments.

## **10. DIVERSITY IN DEMOCRACY**

29 - 33

To submit an update on the work that has been underway thus far and the future plans.



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## DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE, TUESDAY 19 NOVEMBER 2019

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**PRESENT:**

Anne Lloyd Jones (Vice-chair)

**Councillors:** Annwen Hughes, Charles Wyn Jones, Linda Ann Jones, Edgar Wyn Owen, Eryl Jones-Williams and Mair Rowlands

**OFFICERS:** Geraint Owen (Head of Corporate Support), Vera Jones (Democracy and Language Service Manager) and Sian Ellis Williams (Civic and Democratic Services Officer)

**ALSO PRESENT for Items 10 and 11**

**Carey Cartwright, Nia Meleri Edwards, Sam Angel and Cara Williams (Learning and Development Team)**

**1. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR**

RESOLVED: To elect Councillor Anne Lloyd Jones as vice-chair of this Committee for the year 2019/20.

**2. APOLOGIES**

Councillors Annwen Daniels, Anwen Davies, John Brynmor Hughes, Judith Humphreys and Dewi Owen.

**3. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST**

No declarations of personal interest were received.

**4. URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items

**5. MINUTES**

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 4 April 2019 as a true record.

**6. ELECTED MEMBERS' REMUNERATION**

The Democracy and Language Service Manager presented her report, and noted that the Annual Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (February 2020) had been published in draft form on 15 October 2019. She asked the Democratic Services Committee to submit observations upon which to form a response to the draft

consultation by the Panel. There was a need to respond to the consultation by 10 December 2019.

The following specific points arose from the discussion:

- It was important that everyone was aware that the Panel was responsible for setting the salary level, not the Council.
- They were in keeping with the level of increase noted in the draft report.
- That promoting the reimbursement of care costs for those eligible was not an easy task, and it was recognised that it would take time to raise awareness, and that it would not happen immediately. Nevertheless, it was important for the availability of the reimbursement to be promoted prior to the elections in order to encourage diversity among candidates. It was noted that this was a national problem, and was not unique to Gwynedd. Officers were asked to consider different methods of raising awareness of the care reimbursement among members.

The report was accepted.

## **7. COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY**

The Democracy and Language Service Manager presented a report that had been jointly submitted by her and the Senior Information Technology Manager.

She reported that the Council had made progress with its use of technology, but there was room for further improvement, and the Democratic Services Committee had a specific function in assisting with this.

It was noted that it would be necessary to consider the bigger picture when identifying the way forward, and to approach this in a rational way that was in keeping with relevant developments. To this end, a joint project Group between the Finance Department and the Corporate Support Department had recently been established to take this work forward. It was noted that the project Group would provide an update report to the Democratic Services Committee in due course.

It was reported that improvements would continue to be sought within the current provision in the meantime, including trialling the use of video conferencing and Skype, gathering evidence about user experience, and endeavouring to eliminate barriers to making the best use of the current provision.

Furthermore, work would be undertaken with the Learning and Development Service to develop training for chairing such meetings, and similar work in other Councils would be examined in order to learn from their experiences.

It was also noted that the members' portal had been given attention over recent months, and it was reported that many comments had been submitted on the practicality of the portal, and ideas had been put forward. In short, the portal could be made more user-friendly, but it contained very useful information - especially for new Members. These comments had led to the development of the 'new look' portal, which was far easier to use and had been constructed from the perspective of the members who used it, rather than the staff who designed it. A pilot site had been created, with the aim of sharing the portal with all members soon. The Democratic Services Committee was requested to identify three or four members who would be willing to be introduced to the portal and to use it for a period of time in order to feed comments back to the officers.

This way forward was approved, and Councillors Anne Lloyd-Jones, Charles Wyn Jones

and Mair Rowlands were nominated to assist with trialling the new look Members' Porth.

## 8. ELECTED MEMBERS' ANNUAL REPORTS 2018/19

The Democracy and Language Service Manager reported that local authorities, under the provisions of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, must make arrangements for:

- each person who is a member of the authority to make an annual report about the person's activities as a member of the authority during the year to which the report relates,
- each person who is a member of the authority's executive to make an annual report about the person's activities as a member of the executive during the year to which the report relates, and
- the authority to publish all annual reports produced by its members and by the members of its executive.

The number of Elected Members who chose to publish annual reports over recent years was noted:

2012/13	8 reports (pilot arrangements)
2013/14	26 reports (using the template for the first time)
2014/15	39 reports
2015/16	29 reports
2016/17	No reports were produced
2017/18	16 reports
2018/19	17 reports

It was reported that Members of the Democratic Services Committee has discussed the annual reports on many occasions, with the continuing aim of producing reports which were visually attractive, trying to simplify the process by which they were produced, whilst keeping within the guidelines for the reports.

This year's timetable was much tighter than it had been in the past, with the aim of ensuring that reports were published bilingually on the website before the summer. It had been decided to further simplify the process, by asking Elected Members to answer two questions via e-mail, as follows:

- What were your main electoral and community activities during the period 4 May 2018 to 3 May 2019?
- Which meetings did you attend during the period 4 May 2018 to 2 May 2019 in addition to those noted in your attendance statistics on the website?

The process of producing the 2018/19 reports this year had been far smoother for Members and Officers. It was believed that the reasons for this were:

- There was no template to complete, instead two questions needed the attention of the Members
- There was no work in transferring from one computer programme to another
- Many unnecessary steps were deleted from the background processes, steps that did not add value
- The work was prioritised by officers so that it could be completed in a timely manner

The value of publishing the annual reports was questioned, and the Manager agreed to look at the numbers reading / viewing the reports on the website. She suspected that

those figures increased during an election period. It was also reported that there would be an imminent amendment to the Local Government Measure, and that it was expected that this would include an update on the annual reports.

The report was accepted.

## **9. DIVERSITY SUB-GROUP**

It was reported that the sub-group had recommenced its work over recent months, and had been pleased to welcome new members to the group. Progress had been made in three specific areas: raising awareness of unconscious bias, undertaking a pilot event to increase awareness of democracy arrangements among young people, and establishing a further work programme.

The committee noted that "Unconscious Bias" - training that arose originally as a request from the Democratic Services Committee had been extremely successful and everyone was encouraged to attend the course.

It was reported that a group of 85 young people from six primary schools in the Dyffryn Nantlle catchment area visited the Council Chamber in July this year. The purpose of the session was to try to raise the children's awareness of the Council's democracy arrangements. They experienced a discussion in the Chamber and they were given an opportunity to question some Councillors on different topics.

In approving the work programme, it was noted that the impact of extending the vote to 16-17 year olds needed to be added to the terms of reference and work programme when the measure came into force.

The proposal to establish a national fund to assist disabled people who needed practical help to stand in elections was welcomed.

## **10. LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROVISION FOR MEMBERS**

The Organisational Learning and Development Manager presented his report, noting that a comprehensive development programme was offered, which included 'traditional' face-to-face training, and elements such as workshops, coaching and e-learning. Also, a programme was provided to develop Leadership.

It was reported that the programme included key/core titles (which were identified by Officers mainly) and developmental titles which provided Members with an opportunity to consider their own personal learning and development needs and take increasing responsibility for the content of the programme.

The Committee noted that there was a need to consider how to ensure that all members attended relevant training.

The Committee was invited to consider the current programme and to contact the Learning and Development Team to suggest additional areas/titles for inclusion.

The report was accepted.



## 11. INTIMIDATING BEHAVIOUR AGAINST COUNCILLORS

The Democracy and Language Service Manager presented a report that had been jointly submitted by her and the Communications Officer - Members and Staff.

It was reported that an increasing number of people involved in democracy (at a national or local level) noted that they had suffered intimidation, and that the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) had updated its guides for Councillors. They included practical steps that Councillors and candidates could consider for their personal safety.

The Head of Democratic Services noted that the good practice guidelines for Council staff were also relevant to Members, and that arrangements would be made to ensure that they were easily accessible to Members.

Two main points arose from the discussion:

**technology** – relating to security on social media e.g. releasing addresses, e-mail addresses and personal telephone numbers on websites and social media

and

**personal resilience** – given the traditional perception and expectation that politicians in public roles should expect and accept some comments and disagreement from people, the guidelines should consider how to cope mentally with such incidents.

It was agreed that training for the two areas outlined above should be considered.

The meeting commenced at 10:30 and concluded at 12:10

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**CHAIR**

# Agenda Item 6

<b>MEETING</b>	DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE
<b>DATE</b>	17 NOVEMBER 2020
<b>SUBJECT</b>	REMUNERATION FOR ELECTED MEMBERS
<b>PURPOSE</b>	To seek the observations of the Committee in order to respond to the (draft) Annual Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales for 2021/22.
<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	Members of the Committee are asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consider any responses they wish to submit as a response to the consultation on financial remuneration</li><li>• Consider how to promote the process of care reimbursement claims and respond to the requirements of the care principles noted in Appendix 1.</li></ul>
<b>AUTHOR</b>	Vera Jones, Democratic Services and Language Manager

## BACKGROUND

1. The annual report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (February 2021) was published in draft form on 28 September 2020. A summary of the report is submitted to the Democratic Services Committee in order to receive the observations of the members, which will form a response to the draft consultation by the Panel. There is a need to respond to the consultation by 23 November 2020. A link to the full report can be viewed via the link below.

[Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Draft Annual Report - February 2021](#)

## 2. MAIN MATTERS

- 2.1 The main points that derive from the report are as follows:

**The basic salary in 2021/22 for elected members of principal councils will be £14,368 and it will be operational from 1 April 2021 (an increase of £150 from the 2020/21 basic salary of £14,218).**

- 2.2 The Panel has noted the below considerations (amongst others) when coming to the conclusion on the increase:
- 2.3 To put this into the context of other Welsh elected members, between 2013 and 2020, the basic salary for elected Members in a Local Government increased by 7.9% (£13,175 to £14,218), whilst the salary of a Senedd Cymru Member increased by 31.1% (£53,852 to £70,625), and the salary of a UK Parliament Member increased by 23.4% (£66,396 to £81,932).

- 2.4 Therefore, the salaries of the back bench members have significantly fallen behind any reasonable measure of inflation.
- 2.5 When elected roles are undertaken, a level of personal commitment is expected towards the community which goes beyond the defined hours for which financial remuneration is given.
- 2.6 The duties delivered should enable all members to complete their core non-operational responsibilities to govern their council and to represent the people living in their ward.
- 2.7 The situation expressed overall by councillors and officers is that the basic work load delivered by every elected member is substantial and is more than three days a week".
- 2.8 It is also noted that the Panel, like every other year, clearly notes that the salary will be paid by every principal authority in Wales from 1 April 2021 to all of its elected members unless any individual member will personally, and in writing, opt to receive a lower sum.
- 2.11 The levels of higher salaries in 2021/22 for elected members of principal councils are noted below, and they will be operational from 1 April 2021**

<b>Roles in Gwynedd</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2020/21</b>
Leader	£49,974	£49,450
Deputy Leader	£35,320	£34,950
Executive members	£30,773	£30,450
Committee Chairs (who receive financial remuneration)	£23,161	£22,918
The Leader of the largest Opposition party	£23,161	£22,918

- 2.12 The Panel has noted that higher salaries will increase at the same rate (1.06%) as basic salaries.
- 2.13 Additionally, it is noted that Executive members work hours equating to full-time of around 40 hours a week, although it is acknowledged that this may not necessarily be 9 to 5.
- 2.14 The salary for the Head of the Civic Department is £23,161 and the deputy head of the Civic Department has been set on £18,108 and is operational from 1 April 2021.**
- 2.15 The above increase will also increase at the same rate (1.06%) as basic salaries.

### 3. THE REIMBURSEMENT OF CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS NECESSARY CARE COSTS

**3.1 All relevant authorities must provide for the reimbursement of necessary contributions for the necessary care of dependent children and adults (provided by informal or formal carers) and for personal assistance needs as follows:**

- **Reimbursement of formal care costs (registered with Care Inspectorate Wales) in full.**
- **Reimbursement of informal care costs (unregistered) up to the highest rate equal to the Real Living Wage at the time the costs were incurred.**

3.2 The panel notes that the number of people who claim a reimbursement for personal costs or care costs remain very low, and the Democratic Services Committee is encouraged to promote the provision.

3.3 Furthermore, additional expectations have been placed on local authorities, under the guidance of the Democratic Services Committee, in the context of promoting care reimbursements, see Table 7 in Appendix 1.

3.4 The guidance of the Democratic Services Committee is sought with regard to the relevant actions.

#### **4 RECOMMENDATION**

Members of the Committee are asked to:

- Consider any specific observations in response to the consultation
- Consider how to promote the process of making care reimbursement claims.

**APPENDIX 1**

Table 7

The principles of the Panel in terms of personal care and support and advice on how to do this.

<b>The minimum the Authorities should do</b>		<b>How to do this</b>	<b>Gwynedd actions</b>
1. Clearly note who the care is for	<p>Members who have the main responsibility for caring for a child or adult and/or who have personal support needs where these are not supported under a statutory provision or any other provision.</p> <p>For personal support. This may also include a short-term condition or a recent condition not relevant to the Equality Act 2010, access to work, Personal Payments, insurance or other provision.</p>	<p>A confidential annual review of the needs of individual members and when circumstances change.</p>	<p><i>Consider sending another reminder (see 2 below) in the form of an e-mail, to include offering every member a confidential review of their needs with the Head of Democratic Services.</i></p>
2. Improve awareness	<p>Ensure that prospective applicants, applicants and current members, are aware that a Reimbursement of Care Costs is available to them if their current or future circumstances require that.</p>	<p>Ensure that clear and easily accessible information is available on the website and in materials relating to elections and appointment, in shadowing sessions and in the welcome sessions, and in the members' handbook.</p> <p>Remind current members via e-mail and/or training. Refer to the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales leaflets on Payments to Councillors.</p>	<p>Information on the website explains that a reimbursement of care costs is available to members - through the 'Payments to Councillors' IRPW form.</p> <p>An annual e-mail to all members to inform them of the salary change in April and to raise their awareness of the element with regards to the reimbursement of care costs (see</p>

The minimum the Authorities should do		How to do this	Gwynedd actions
			the above April 2021 improvement action).
3. Promoting a positive culture	Ensure that all members understand the reason for the Reimbursement of Care Costs and support and encourage others to claim if required.	Encouragement within and across all parties in the Relevant Authorities to support members to claim. Agree not to publicise or announce any individual decisions not to claim.	<p>The awareness of the political Leaders has been raised, and they have been asked to raise their members' awareness (March 2020 Business Group meeting)</p> <p>The decision of the Democratic Services Committee not to publicise the names of those who claim.</p>
4. Outline the duties approved for the reimbursement of care costs	Meetings - formal (the meetings that the Authority calls) and those that are necessary to the work of the members (to deal with matters of the electorate but not the party matters) and personal development (training and evaluations). Travel - in relation to attending meetings. Preparation - reading and administration is part of the member's role. For some meetings and committees, there is need to do a great deal of reading, analysis or drafting work before or after the meeting.	The approved duties are usually a matter of fact. An interpretation of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Regulations is noted in the Annual Report. "Any other duties approved by the authority, or any duty from an approved class, and undertaken for the purposes of delivering the authority functions or any of its committees or in relation with their delivery."	The guidance may be adapted for travelling costs expenses claims and for maintenance costs expenses claims to strengthen this element of claiming the reimbursement of care/personal care costs in the self-service system.

The minimum the Authorities should do	How to do this	Gwynedd actions	
	The members with higher salaries, and additional duties, may have higher costs.		
5. Be as flexible as possible in terms of the various types of support that may be claimed	<p>Members should not lose out subject to the limit set in the Annual Report.</p> <p>Care models and needs vary.</p> <p>Members may use a combination of a number of care options.</p> <p>Care patterns may vary over the civic and academic year.</p> <p>All care is not based on hourly rates (or part of an hour)</p> <p>If a whole session must be paid for, the full cost must be reimbursed even if only part of the session was needed.</p> <p>Members may need to do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>order and pay for sessions in advance</li> <li>commit to a block contract: week, month or term</li> <li>pay for sessions that were cancelled at the last minute.</li> </ul> <p>If the need for care is carried forward to the second session, the cost of both sessions should be reimbursed.</p>		
6. Hold a simple and effective claims process	<p>The members should know how to claim.</p> <p>The claim process should be clear, commensurate and auditable.</p>	<p>Ensure that members understand how to claim and that it is easy to do so</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flexibility to receive paperless invoices</li> <li>On-line form</li> </ul>	<p>We use the same system as the system to claim travelling and sustenance expenses used by members.</p>

<b>The minimum the Authorities should do</b>		<b>How to do this</b>	<b>Gwynedd actions</b>
		The same form or a similar form to the one used for travelling expenses claims	There is room to improve the arrangements and clarity to members on how to claim. Work to be undertaken by the Democratic and Language Manager and the Support Services Manager.
7. Comply with the rules of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales in terms of publicising	The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Framework notes: "In relation to publishing care costs reimbursements, the Panel has decided that the relevant authority should only give the total reimbursed during the year. It will be a matter for each authority to decide on its response to any Freedom of Information requests that it receives. However, there is no intention to reveal the details of any individual claims."		Gwynedd Council has acted on this matter since the option became optional. The Council was progressive in pushing this element in order to promote the reimbursements in their discussions with the Panel.



# Agenda Item 7

<b>MEETING</b>	DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE
<b>DATE</b>	17 NOVEMBER 2020
<b>SUBJECT</b>	ADOPTERS ABSENCE
<b>PURPOSE</b>	To discuss the consultation on changes to the adoption absence for Local Authority Councillors.
<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	Members of the Committee are asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consider any response they wish to submit as a response to the consultation on changes to adoption absence for local authority Councillors.</li></ul>
<b>AUTHOR</b>	Vera Jones, Democratic Services and Language Manager

1. Welsh Government opened a consultation on the changes to adoption absence for Councillors on 3<sup>rd</sup> of November, 2020. The consultation period is for 8 weeks only, with responses to be made by 29<sup>th</sup> December, 2020.
2. The consultation is in regard to changes to adoption absence from 2 weeks to 26 weeks for Councillors. Please find a link to the full consultation below.

<https://gov.wales/adoption-absence-local-authority-councillors>

3. All members have received a copy of the consultation via email in order to reply directly should they wish to do so.
4. Members of the Democratic Services Committee are asked to consider any responses they wish to submit as a response to the consultation on changes to adoption absence for local authority councillors.

# Agenda Item 8

<b>MEETING</b>	DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE
<b>DATE</b>	17 NOVEMBER 2020
<b>SUBJECT</b>	DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT FOR MEMBERS DURING THE COVID PANDEMIC AND IN FUTURE.
<b>PURPOSE</b>	To submit an update for members on the developments that have been recently taking place in the background.
<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	Members of the Committee are asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• consider whether any further support is required to assist elected members in their role</li><li>• support the direction for webcasting and voting</li><li>• Note any observations with regards to shape and format of future meetings</li></ul>
<b>AUTHOR</b>	Vera Jones, Democratic Services and Language Manager

## WHAT HAS BEEN HAPPENING?

1. Back in March 2020, everything changed due to the arrival of the lockdown in light of the Covid-19 crisis. With it came new demands for everyone. It has resulted in new demands on you in your role as elected members, and a new way of working for you and the Council officers who support you.

### **Elected members.**

2. At the beginning of the crisis, a number of you noted that you had prioritised your limited time to assist residents within your wards and ensure that they received the services that they needed.
3. The pandemic has been challenging for everyone's well-being, and every member has been under significant strain and remain under pressure. Geraint Owen, Head of Democratic Services has contacted all members to offer support if your mental health is under pressure. It is also important to note that support is available on the Welsh Local Government Association website and others (see the contact links in **Appendix 1**).
4. Recently, the demands in terms of your work with the Council have also recommenced. In order to assist members with this, a number of training sessions were held (general sessions and sessions for each specific committee) in order to give members an opportunity to practice on Teams and Zoom prior to the committee itself. Guidelines were created for chairing virtual meetings and tips to remember when

taking part in virtual meetings. It was a pleasure to see so many in the Council's first virtual meeting - all members now have the technology available to virtually connect.

5. Members of the committee are asked to consider whether any further support is required to aid elected members in their role. So far, only a few members have responded to the note sent by the Head of Democratic Services.

#### **Developments in the Council.**

6. Below is a brief outline of the main developments made by the Council over the past months.
7. Prioritising resources. At the beginning of the crisis, resources needed to be prioritised to deal with the crisis across the Council, which meant that some services were not being provided. The committees held also needed to be prioritised, and this was done in regular consultation with the Business Group. A virtual meeting of the Cabinet was successfully held in April 2020, and it was recorded for broadcast to the public. Gwynedd was one of only three Councils to successfully hold a virtual meeting so early on during the crisis.
8. In order to assist the Council to respond to the crisis, eight members from the Democracy and Language Service transferred to the Community Resilience team, and I would like to thank them for being so flexible. I am also very grateful to the remaining small core group who worked so diligently to develop the Council arrangements to enable us to hold virtual meetings, including a simultaneous translation service over the period.
9. Meetings of the Council have been prioritised to be held in four phases as noted in **Appendix 2** and we are now commencing stage 4, which is to hold all Council committees virtually.
10. Below is a summary of the recent key developments.
  - ✓ Development of simultaneous translation arrangements on Zoom and Teams.
  - ✓ Training held for members and others who participate in committees on Zoom and Teams - a total of 23 sessions have been held.
  - ✓ Holding the first virtual meeting in April, and managing to hold every virtual meeting in both languages.
  - ✓ Recording and publishing meetings in both languages - usually published within 24 hours
  - ✓ 28 formal committees held during the period up to the end of October.
  - ✓ 30 informal meetings with elected members held during the same period.
  - ✓ 98% of members have taken part in a virtual committee meeting.
  - ✓ Development of the skills of the Democracy and Translation Team staff to use the new provision and train others on their use.

- ✓ Adjusting working arrangements to ensure the continuation of the service virtually.
  - ✓ Publishing a decision notice for every decision made at the committees held over the period in accordance with the requirements of the Covid-19 regulations, which is a new requirement for the majority of committees.
  - ✓ Publishing meeting minutes as soon as possible on the website.
11. Clearly, we are continuing to learn from every experience and there are also specific fields that need to be developed further.
12. Live Webcast. We have managed to hold a pilot of a live webcast of a virtual Cabinet meeting successfully. Over the coming weeks, we will continue to pilot by webcasting Cabinet meetings in order to learn lessons from the experience. Our intention is to return to a situation of webcasting the committees that used to be webcast previously - Cabinet, Full Council, scrutiny committees and planning committee. The Committee is requested to support this direction.
13. Voting. Covid regulations requirements mean that a decision notice of each committee meeting must be published within five working days. As part of the decision notice, the numbers who have voted in favour/against/abstained must be recorded in all our committees.
14. We have trialled arrangements to enable voting, have listened to observations made by members and officers and, having learned from experience, we have reached the conclusion that the following arrangements meet the requirements at present.
- Meetings of 10 members or fewer - voting by raising a virtual hand in favour/against/abstaining.
  - Meetings of 10 members or more - voting by a roll call and members stating if they are in favour/against/abstaining.
  - Full Council - electronic vote
15. We accept that the arrangements are not perfect, and possibly slightly frustrating at times for elected members, especially the roll call process. Whilst it feels slightly clumsy, it does allow us to report the vote accurately - which is something we are not entirely confident we can do by raising a virtual hand only. We will continue to work on possible solutions and developments over the coming period and will ask for the committee's support to the direction and potential developments.
16. Operating Framework for meetings. As noted several times already, we have learned and developed a lot over the past months, and some of the lessons are matters that are to be kept and sustained to the longer term. To this end, it is important to consider the format of holding meetings (formal and informal) to the future.

17. Council officers have already discussed some of the benefits, disadvantages and lessons which have become clear over the past months, and have developed an operating framework for internal meetings in order to ensure that we do not lose any of the clear benefits and slip back to old ways without thinking.
18. Similarly, it is intended to develop such a framework for elected members also. Committee members are asked for their opinion about the format of holding meetings from now on, on the basis of what has become apparent during the past months. We will feed in the comments of the Democratic Services Committee to the discussions that are to be held shortly with Cabinet Members.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **USEFUL MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT:**

The following sites may be useful:

- The WLGA workbook on managing stress and personal resilience is available [here](#).
- NHS guidelines on stress and anxiety can be found [here](#).
- A [webinar](#) (and [slides](#)) by the Local Government Association on 'maintaining your own resilience as a councillor' – 14 September.
- Also by the Local Government Association, an [E-learning Module](#) on 'Stress Management and Resilience'.
- Academi Wales has resources on resilience and Covid [here](#).

If members are threatened or harassed, the following guidelines on the WLGA website might also be useful:

- online personal safety and abuse guidelines [here](#).
- guidance on dealing with threats [here](#).
- and "don't feed the trolls" by the Centre for Countering Digital Hate [here](#).

## **APPENDIX 2 – PRIORITIES OF COMMITTEES TO MEET DURING THE PANDEMIC**

<b>PHASE</b>	<b>TIMETABLE</b>	<b>COMMITTEES</b>
PHASE 1 - Return priority 1	April, May and June 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cabinet</li> <li>• Planning</li> <li>• Licensing Sub-committee</li> <li>• North Wales Economic Ambition Board</li> <li>• GwE</li> <li>• Public Services Board</li> <li>• Business Group</li> </ul>
PHASE 2 - Return priority 2	July 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audit and Governance</li> <li>• Employment Appeals Committee</li> <li>• Pensions Committee</li> </ul>
PHASE 3 - Return priority 3	First committees following the summer break September and October 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full Council</li> <li>• Scrutiny Committees</li> <li>• Joint Planning Policy Committee</li> <li>• Transport sub-group (NWEAB)</li> <li>• Schools Budget Forum</li> <li>• Central/General Licensing Committee</li> </ul>
PHASE 4 - return priority 4	As soon as practically possible in light of setting up the above - November 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Democratic Services Committee</li> <li>• Standards Committee</li> <li>• SACRE</li> <li>• Language Committee</li> <li>• Advisory Joint Committee</li> <li>• Porthmadog Harbour Consultative Committee</li> <li>• Pwllheli Harbour Consultative Committee</li> <li>• Aberdyfi Harbour Consultative Committee</li> <li>• Barmouth Harbour Consultative Committee</li> <li>• Local Joint Consultative Committee</li> <li>• North Wales Residual Waste Joint Committee</li> <li>• Traeth Iafant</li> <li>• Dwyfor Area Committee*</li> <li>• Meirionnydd Forum*</li> <li>• Gwyrfai Forum*</li> <li>• Ogwen Forum*</li> <li>• Cambrian Coast Railway Conference</li> </ul>

\*There are sessions per Cabinet Member for all Council members to receive an update on the developments over the period of the pandemic and to ask any questions have been arranged instead of area forums. Nine sessions have been arranged for November.

# Agenda Item 9

<b>MEETING</b>	Democratic Services Committee
<b>DATE</b>	17 November 2020
<b>TITLE OF REPORT</b>	<i>Learning and Development</i> provision for Members
<b>PURPOSE</b>	Provide an overview of the <i>Learning and Development</i> provision for Members, highlighting successes, challenges and developments
<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	The Committee is invited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consider virtual ('remote') training arrangements and suggest any additional support that would enable Members to take advantage of developmental opportunities</li><li>• Consider the programme for 2020/21 and offer suggestions for additional areas / titles for inclusion.</li></ul>
<b>AUTHOR</b>	Carey Cartwright ( <i>Learning and Organisational Development</i> manager)

## 1. **OVERVIEW**

It has been noted in previous reports that a comprehensive development programme is offered, which includes 'traditional' face-to-face training, and elements such as workshops, coaching and e-learning, as well as a Leadership development programme.

However, due to the Covid crisis, 'traditional' training has not been possible for some time, and it has been necessary to develop alternative methods e.g. virtual ('remote') training for the future.

With this in mind, we are putting together a training programme for 2020/21, striving to maintain a range of relevant and high quality titles. The programme includes key/core titles (mainly identified by Officers) and developmental titles that give Members the opportunity to consider their own personal learning and development needs.

## 2. **SUCCESES**

### 2.1 **Feedback following sessions**

A number of titles were offered in the run up to the lockdown in March, and a range of comments and feedback were received such as: -

*"Beneficial to me as a New Councillor"*

*"Eye opening"*

*"Original and Relevant"*

*"An opportunity to voice my opinion"*

*"An opportunity to ask questions"*



## **2.2 One to one Coaching**

1: 1 Coaching sessions are available to all Members should they wish like to take up the opportunity.

An example of feedback from one Member about the coaching sessions: -

*"I believe that the coaching sessions I received from the WLGA have played a pivotal role in my development as a Cabinet member and Councillor. I would go so far as to say that I couldn't have achieved what I have without them. "*

## **3. CHALLENGES**

### **3.1 Developing alternative methods to provide Training**

It is a priority for the Learning and Organisational Development Service to provide training and developmental opportunities through effective means, while maintaining quality and standards. One new approach is to use technology to deliver a virtual 'remote' programme.

It must be acknowledged that the new approach to virtual ('remote') learning is not to everyone's taste, and that some prejudices exist for digital learning - often based on bad experiences of using 'old' technology. We must address this by providing valuable and good experiences.

However, we have received very positive feedback in terms of 'remote' coaching: -

*"Over the lockdown period, we have continued with coaching sessions, and if anything, the technical element has been an improvement. It's easier to organise sessions, and saves time and travel. I don't think that it has changed the dynamic of the coaching relationship, and Zoom / Teams is most effective when communicating 1: 1. I'd like to continue with the digital sessions when things change back to 'normal'. "*

It must also be noted that different behaviours need to be nurtured in the virtual training world, and that we will emphasise this and encourage Members to take responsibility for their own learning.

It is important to remember the evidence gathered from Members who did not access the learning programme in the past, and what obstacles prevented them from doing so. Examples of comments received include:

- *"Between day-to-day working and all the Committees, I have to prioritise"*
- *"I have to travel for an hour to attend the training"*
- *"A major obstacle I have is having to take 'unpaid leave' for training held in my working time"*
- *"Smaller groups are better because there is a better opportunity to contribute to discussions"*

### **3.2 Response from the Learning and Organisational Development Service**

We will: -

- Continue to gather evidence of obstacles to development opportunities for Members

- Continue to seek and develop a range of alternative approaches to learning
- Develop user-friendly learning systems for virtual ('remote') learning
- ADoB (*Amgylchedd Dysgu o Bell* / Distance Learning Environment) scheme addresses this using 'Teams' software mainly (but also other systems such as 'Zoom')
  - Systems are already in place, with new ADoB titles e.g. *Ffordd Gwynedd programme* currently being piloted for Council staff (with a very positive response so far)
- Supporting Members to develop the skills required to easily access learning through technology
- Develop exciting and fresh Learning / training materials

It is an opportunity to change thinking and dispel prejudices, and we will address this by offering and providing positive learning experiences.

It should also be noted that learning through ADoB can provide an excellent solution to the many obstacles identified in the previous section, transforming the learning approach to be 'anywhere' (and even 'any time'), as well as for small groups. It is also 'cost effective' and 'green'.

In terms of the learning programme, we will: -

- Ask Members if there are 'gaps' in Learning provision
- Tailor learning programmes to the needs of individuals and groups
- Offer a choice of dates for titles
- Look to the future in providing Mentor development sessions to support their fellow members

The Committee is invited to consider virtual (remote) training arrangements and suggest any additional support that would enable Members to take advantage of developmental opportunities, and encourage them to take responsibility for their own learning.

**The Committee is invited to consider virtual ('remote') training arrangements and suggest any additional support that would enable Members to take advantage of developmental opportunities, and encourage them to take responsibility for their own learning.**

#### **4. TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR 2020/21**

4.1 The training programme for 2020/21 continues to evolve. (Appendix 1). The titles in the programme are based on: -

- Suggestions from Officers and Departments for their specialist areas
- Suggestions from Members (areas for personal development as well as groups)

**The Committee is invited to consider the current programme and offer suggestions for additional areas / titles for inclusion.**



# RHAGLEN DATBLYGU AELODAU ETHOLEDIG 2020/21

## ELECTED MEMBERS' DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2020/21

Dyddiad ac amser / Date and time	Digwyddiad / Event	Dull Dysgu / Learning Method	Arweinwyr / Leaders
21 September - 9 October	Hyfforddiant Robeco (maes Buddsoddiadau / Pensiynau) <i>Robeco Training (Investment / Pensions)</i>	Teams	Delyth Wyn Jones-Thomas
Hydref / October	Hyfforddiant Caffael <i>Procurement Training</i>	Modiwl e ddysgu e-learning module	Huw Griffiths
Hydref / October Pryddeb 27 Manylion i'w cadarnhau Details to be confirmed	Eglurder o rôl a chyfrifoldebau'r Adran Addysg a GwE (gan gynnwys atebolrwydd ysgolion yn sgil y drefn newydd o beidio cyhoeddi canlyniadau yn unol â chyfarwyddyd LIC) <i>Clarifying the role and responsibilities of the Education Dept. and GWE (including accountability of schools under the new arrangement of not publishing results in accordance with Welsh Government directive).</i>	Teams / Zoom	Garem Jackson a GwE
Tachwedd 10 November (14:00 – 15:00)	Y pandemig: Perspectif merched sy'n Gynghorwyr/ <i>The pandemic: Women Councillor's Perspective</i>	Teams / Zoom	Vera Jones a Nonn Hughes
Tachwedd 11 November (16:00 – 17:00)	Y pandemig: Perspectif merched sy'n Gynghorwyr/ <i>The pandemic: Women Councillor's Perspective</i>	Teams / Zoom	Vera Jones a Nonn Hughes
Rhagfyr 1 December (14:00 – 16:00)	Hyfforddiant Polisi Cynllunio ar y cyd / <i>Joint Local Development Plan (Gwynedd &amp; Anglesey)</i>	Zoom	Gareth Jones Rebeca Angharad Jones Cara Owen Rhun ap Gareth
Rhagfyr 2 December (14:00 – 16:00)	Hyfforddiant Polisi Cynllunio ar y cyd / <i>Joint Local Development Plan (Gwynedd &amp; Anglesey)</i>	Zoom	Gareth Jones Rebeca Angharad Jones Cara Owen Rhun ap Gareth

Rhagfyr 4 December (10:00 – 11:00)	Syndrom Dieithryn / <i>Imposter Syndrome</i>	Zoom	Mari Evans
Ionawr / January Manylion i'w cadarnhau <i>Details to be confirmed</i>	Sesiwn briffio: Deddf Anghenion Dysgu Ychwanegol a'r Tribiwnlys Addysg (Cymru) 2018. <i>Briefing Session:</i> <i>Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Act (Wales) 2018</i>	Teams / Zoom	Ffion Edwards Ellis
Ionawr / January Manylion i'w cadarnhau <i>Details to be confirmed</i>	Delio efo Cwynion – Rôl Llywodraethwyr <i>Dealing with Complaints – Role of Governors</i>	Teams / Zoom	Buddug Mair Huws
Chwefror / February			
Mawrth / March			

# Agenda Item 10

<b>MEETING</b>	DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE
<b>DATE</b>	17 NOVEMBER 2020
<b>SUBJECT</b>	DIVERSITY IN DEMOCRACY
<b>PURPOSE</b>	To submit an update on the work that has been underway thus far and the future plans.
<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	Members of the Committee are asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Accept the report and support the direction of the work programme</li></ul>
<b>AUTHOR</b>	Vera Jones, Democratic Services and Language Manager

## BACKGROUND

1. Members of the Committee will remember that the Diversity in Democracy sub-group has been meeting regularly since before the elections in 2017 in order to attempt to encourage more people from different backgrounds to stand as a Councillor. The group's terms of reference is noted in **Appendix 1**, for information. The group is examining three specific fields, namely Young People, Women and People with Disabilities.

### Young People.

2. The change in legislation means that young people aged 16 and 17 years old can vote in Senedd Cymru elections from 2021 onwards, and in Local Government elections from 2022 onwards. The change in legislation has brought opportunities with it.
3. The Legal service is leading the work of the Electoral Team and the project, which has been funded by the Government, has been included in the Council's Plan. An operational group has been established to bring together a work programme which aims to increase registration among groups who are new to the voting franchise and also look at issues with regards to access to vote and promoting groups which are currently under-represented on the electoral roll to take part.
4. By working with the Council's elections team and the youth service, it is intended to tie in the work of promoting young people to take an interest in democracy with the practical work of aiding them to register to vote. The Electoral Team will use the grant money to employ a temporary officer who will proceed with this important work.
5. In light of the Covid-19 situation, there will be a need to work in different ways to the original intention of holding events (some sort of fairs) in schools and holding sessions in the Council's chamber. However, the work will build upon what has already taken place from engaging with young people in various schools.

## Women.

6. There are common factors between the work of promoting and encouraging women in democracy and the corporate project to promote women in leadership in Council jobs. The aim of the corporate Women in Leadership project is to boost the number of women who apply for and attain senior positions within the Council by reviewing the employment conditions, the work environment and encouraging women to undertake the work in future. Running alongside this is the diversity in democracy sub-group project, which attempts to promote people from different backgrounds to undertake a leading role as Councillor - and one of the target groups is women.
7. During the past year, workshops were held for women and men who work for the Council in order to present the project to the workforce and ascertain views on the subject. During the workshop, it was noted that opportunities for women to come together to discuss and mix in an informal environment would be useful. Consequently, we have arranged sessions for staff, and have also extended the sessions to you as Councillors.
8. A virtual 'cuppa and a chat' session will be held for female Councillors on 10 and 11 November, in order to learn from the past experiences of the Councillors, and to also provide an opportunity to consider whether the changes in light of the pandemic will provide additional opportunities to think about how to attract more women to stand in local elections.
9. In addition to this, a training session will be held at the end of November for all Council members on 'imposter syndrome'. This phenomenon or syndrome is a psychological pattern in which an individual doubts their skills, talents or accomplishments. This is the latest activity that has stemmed from the Women in Leadership project and it follows the success of the workshops held last year and the 'chat and cuppa' sessions in September this year.

## Work Programme

10. There are probably two main elements in the Diversity Sub-group's work programme. The first element is continuing with the work of encouraging more people to stand in the 2022 local government election. The emphasis of the work programme which is being developed is on coherent and frequent communication with the target groups and generally.
11. Secondly, with a little over 18 months until the Local Government elections in May 2022, it is timely to start planning and working on the necessary preparations. One of the lessons learned from 2017 was the need to start preparing early enough.
12. The main elements of the work programme are noted below:

### Encouraging people to stand in the 2022 Local Government elections

- Communicating simple, frequent messages - to the target groups (women, disabled people, young people) and generally to the people of Gwynedd
- Contacting Political Group Leaders to raise their awareness of the work that's happening and the need for the political groups to play their role
- Updating the website with information
- Holding "question and answer" sessions for prospective candidates

### Preparing for the 2022 Elections - practical arrangements

- Learning lessons from the 2017 and 2012 elections (speaking with Members and officers)
- Developing election day arrangements
- Developing the arrangements for new member induction - short and medium term, and identify and prioritise the necessary information, training, technical support and practical arrangements.

13. The committee is asked to support the direction of the work programme

## APPENDIX 1

### Terms of Reference

#### Diversity in Democracy (Sub-group of the Democratic Services Committee)

1. **Project group name:** Diversity in Democracy

2. **Purpose:**

The Council's Democratic Services Committee has recognised for some time that the Membership of Gwynedd Council's Elected Members does not reflect the society it represents. Specifically, there is an inconsistency between the proportion of elected members and the proportion of the population in the following fields:

- Women
- Young People
- Disabled People

In addition, Gwynedd Council's Equality Plan 2016-2020 has identified a specific Objective (Objective 3) which aims to "Create circumstances for people from different backgrounds to represent the people of Gwynedd by standing for election as an elected member". It is likely that this objective will also be prioritised for the 2020-2024 plan.

The Group was originally established to review arrangements when considering the 2017 elections. The purpose of the Group is to try to create the right conditions for people from different backgrounds to represent the people of Gwynedd by standing for election as an elected member.

The original work focused on:

- Identifying existing obstacles that prevented individuals from standing for local government elections
- Sharing information on a wider scale on how to stand and what this entails (a specific section was created on the website to answer questions in a clear and simple manner, and a video was created to explain the role of a Councillor and the work of the Council).
- Posting a series of messages via social media to raise the awareness of elections among Gwynedd residents and the need for more people from diverse backgrounds to stand
- Holding a series of open evenings to answer questions from prospective candidates as they consider standing

Furthermore, the group (under the guidance of the Democratic Services Committee) has:



- held a series of training sessions "to raise awareness of unconscious bias" among Elected Members
- piloted arrangements to hold sessions for primary school pupils to get a taste of democracy by visiting the Council Chamber

### **3. The Group's Objectives:**

The Group will continue to contribute to the endeavours to promote greater diversity from diverse backgrounds to stand in Local Government elections. Therefore, to this end, there will be a need to

- Draw up an action plan in an attempt to respond to the three priority fields

### **4. The Group's Constitution**

The Group consists of members from the Democratic Services Committee as follows:

Councillors:

Anne Lloyd Jones

Dewi Owen (Chair of the sub-group)

Cai Larsen

Annwen Daniels

Eryl Jones-Williams

Dewi Wyn Roberts

Mair Rowlands

Officers:

Sion Gwynfryn Williams (or member of the team)

Vera Jones

### **5. Operational arrangements of the Group**

- The project Group will be chaired by Councillor Dewi Owen, Chair of the Group;
- Group meetings will be held as required, by means of the video conferencing provision
- Group members are given an opportunity to add items for discussion on the agenda prior to each meeting
- Actions are noted and circulated following each meeting.