



# Complete Agenda

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

Meeting

**DEMOCRACY SERVICES COMMITTEE**

Date and Time

**2.00 pm, THURSDAY, 17TH FEBRUARY, 2022**

Location

**Zoom**

**FOR PUBLIC ACCESS, CONTACT US**

Contact Point

**Ffion Bryn Jones**

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(DISTRIBUTED 09/02/22)

# **DEMOCRACY SERVICES COMMITTEE**

## **MEMBERSHIP (15)**

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

Councillors

Gwynfor Owen  
Annwen Hughes  
Olaf Cai Larsen  
Edgar Wyn Owen

Annwen Daniels  
Linda Ann Jones  
Judith Mary Humphreys  
Mair Rowlands

### **Independent (4)**

Councillors

Anne Lloyd Jones  
Eryl Jones-Williams

Hefin Underwood  
Vacant Seat

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

Councillor Anwen J. Davies

### **Individual Member (1)**

Councillor Dylan Bullard

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

Councillor Dewi Owen

### **Ex-officio Members**

Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council

# **A G E N D A**

## **1. APOLOGIES**

To receive any apologies for absence.

## **2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST**

To receive any declaration of personal interest.

## **3. URGENT ITEMS**

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

## **4. MINUTES**

To Follow

The Chairman shall propose that the minutes of the last meeting of this committee held on 16 November 2021, be signed as a true record.

## **5. UPDATE ON THE MAY 2022 ELECTIONS**

4 - 9

To submit an update on the preparations for the Local Government Elections, May 2022.

## **6. DIVERSITY IN DEMOCRACY**

10 - 11

To present an update of the actions to the Committee.

## **7. UPDATE ON HYBRID MEETINGS**

12 - 13

To present an update on meeting arrangements in accordance with Part 3 of the aforementioned Act - Hybrid meetings.

## **8. MEETING CALENDAR**

14 - 16

To recommend the calendar of committee dates for 2022/23 to the Full Council.

## **9. FINANCIAL REMUNERATION FOR ELECTED MEMBERS - SENIOR SALARIED FOR 2022/23**

17 - 19

The Democratic Services Committee is asked for observations on the recommendation for roles to receive senior salaries in 2022/23.

## **10. DEMOCRATIC SERVICES TEAM PERFORMANCE REPORT**

20 - 21

To update the Committee on the Teams' Performance.

# Agenda Item 5

<b>MEETING</b>	Democracy Services Committee
<b>DATE</b>	17 February 2022
<b>TITLE</b>	Local Government Elections May 2022
<b>PURPOSE</b>	To submit an update on the preparations for the Local Government Elections, May 2022
<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	Accept the report and note the information.
<b>AUTHOR</b>	Annes Sion Democracy Team Leader

## FOREWORD

1. We are all aware that Local Government elections are to be held in May 2022. As a result, there are considerable preparations to be made - by you as elected members, by the political groups, and by us as officers.
2. As you know, the work has already commenced, and this report provides an update of the draft plans already in place and the further work which is to be achieved over the coming months to prepare for the Election in May and the period immediately afterwards.
3. Sessions for prospective candidates  
We have previously conducted a raising awareness campaign as part of the preparations for the election and we will run the campaign again at the end of February. We will also conduct 2 sessions for prospective candidates which will be an opportunity for them to receive information regarding the nomination process as well as receiving information on the role of a Councillor. These informal sessions that are being held at the end of February are an opportunity for anyone who is interested to ask questions. There will be an opportunity for the Election Sub-group to give their opinion on the information that will be shared with the prospective candidates before conducting the sessions.
4. Welcome Day  
The initial arrangements have been made to create a timetable for the welcoming Councillors day. The draft arrangements have been prepared as a result of the comments received by you as Councillors following the Welcome days held in 2017. The timetable in brief can be seen below:

Morning: Welcome and introductions on the Council, Support for Councillors and an explanation of the Council's Democracy arrangements

Afternoon: Sessions in smaller groups on the code of conduct and signing to accept the post, picture taking and information technology equipment.

At the moment, it is proposed to conduct the welcome days in the week following the election. They will be programmed over two days in order to split members to comply with Covid regulations.
5. A draft programme of further induction and training for the first year can be seen in **Appendix 1.**

6. Election Sub-group

Members' Handbook

In 2017, it was decided not to give an information pack to Councillors during the induction days in order to strengthen the message that Gwynedd Council is working towards being a paperless Council. The Council has declared a climate emergency and continues to aim to be paperless, however, in reflecting on the lessons learned from 2017 and having listened to Councillors' comments, we believe that it would be beneficial to create a short handbook for Members at the beginning of their term. The type of handbook in question will serve as a directory which provides the necessary information about the Council, Committees, salaries and useful contacts, referring the Councillors to where to find more information.

7. A draft version of the handbook has been developed over the past few months, and a discussion regarding its content was held in the Election Sub-group. By now, the amendments presented during the discussion have been incorporated in the handbook, and it will be distributed to all members during the Welcome days.

8. Election Sub-group items for the future

Over the coming months the Sub-group will continue to meet to discuss some of the matters below:

- Slides for the prospective candidate sessions
- Welcome Page on the Members Intranet for the period immediately after the election
- Any other element of the preparation work where we feel we need Councillor input.

9. **DECISION SOUGHT**

- **Accept the report and note the information**



## Member Training - Titles for the forthcoming year (May 2022)

When?	Title	Work field	Medium	Relevant to:-
FIRST DAYS	INDUCTION	Welcome to the Council: A brief presentation about Gwynedd Council including reference to Ffordd Gwynedd and the Role of the Welsh Language.	Presentation (virtual or face-to-face).	
		Introduction to Gwynedd - Simple quiz	As above	
		Code of Conduct - Overview and Signing	As above	
		How the Council Works	As above	
		Support for Members	As above	
		Practical issues (salaries, Self-service, Members' Intranet etc.)	As above	
		During the day there will also be an opportunity to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have support for IT/choose their devices</li> <li>• sign to accept the post,</li> <li>• join a political group,</li> <li>• take a photograph,</li> <li>• ask for more information from the Democracy Team and the Learning and Development Team, how to use the translation service and committee etiquette</li> </ul>	As above	
FIRST MONTH	INTRODUCTION TO THE COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES	— what to expect — how to prepare	Virtual / Face to Face	New Members
	WHAT MAKES A GOOD COUNCILLOR?	E-learning module or presentation Experienced members to talk about their experiences and any problems / difficulties. Tips for communicating with Constituents, how to communicate through social media etc.	Virtual / face to face / E-learning module Recording sessions and place them on the Intranet	
	PRESENTATION BY COUNCIL HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS	Overview of Departments' responsibilities and an opportunity for Members to ask questions	Virtual / face-to-face Recording sessions and place them on the Intranet	
	PLANNING / STANDARDS / LICENSING COMMITTEES	Planning Committee - committee members	Virtual / face-to-face	Members of the Committee

		The Planning Process - A session for Members who have items arising in Committees shortly	Virtual / face-to-face	Specific members
		Introduction to Planning - A session for all Members	Virtual / face-to-face	All Members
	WORKSPACE ASSESSMENT	Assessing the workspace in the home through a questionnaire/module	Virtual	Available to all, and immediately
	DEALING WITH INFORMATION ABOUT PEOPLE : YOUR RESPONSIBILITY AS A MEMBER	Understanding the legal implications of the GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 Understanding the requirements of the Act Understand how to comply with the Act	Virtual / face-to-face / E-module	New Members and any Member who hasn't completed title
FIRST THREE MONTHS	CODE OF CONDUCT	A more detailed session following the presentation/summary in the Induction	Virtual / face-to-face	All Members
	CHAIRING MEETINGS (Leading and Contributing to Effective Committee)	Training for Chairs and Vice-chairs	Virtual / face-to-face	Chairs and Vice-chairs
	PERSONAL SAFETY	Lone Working	Virtual / face-to-face	All Members
	INTRODUCTION TO GWYNEDD	Understanding information and facts about the County	Video on the Members' Intranet	All Members
	SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELL-BEING ACT	Understanding the implications of the Act for Gwynedd	Virtual / face-to-face	New Members and returning Members are welcome
	THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT	Understanding the requirements of the Act and understanding specific requirements of the Act from your perspective as a Councillor	Virtual / face-to-face	New Members and returning Members are welcome
	COMMITTEES	Scrutiny, Audit, Licensing Committees Training	Virtual / face-to-face	Committee Members
	1: 1 Chat New Members together	Chance for an informal chat for all new members – a chance to ask questions and to share experiences so far	Virtual / face to face	New Members
	THE COUCIL'S BUDGET	Understand the principles of finance, financial management and accounting in a local authority  Understand financial terms, budgetary / financial techniques, and officer / Member role in Gwynedd Council		

UP TO FIRST 12 MONTHS	FFORDD GWYNEDD	Dafydd Gibbard (Chief Executive) Geraint Owen and Carey Cartwright	Virtual / Face to Face	All Members
	SOCIAL MEDIA	How to make social media work for Councillors, what sort of things to share, how not to behave on social media, bullying etc.	Virtual / face to face / E-learning module	New Members and any other Member who would wish to attend
	SAFE LEADERSHIP	Understand the legal requirements of the Council in terms of Health and Safety	Virtual / face-to-face	New Members and Members who haven't done the training
	EQUALITY	Your responsibility as an Elected Member in the area of equality when making decisions	Virtual / face-to-face	New Members and Members who haven't done the training
	SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND ADULTS	Your responsibility as a Member	Virtual / face to face / E-learning module	New Members and Members who haven't done the training
	CORPORATE PARENTING	Your responsibility as a Member	Virtual / face to face / E-learning module	New Members and Members who haven't done the training
	THE ROLE OF WELSH IN THE COMMUNITY	Improve the understanding and awareness of the Council's responsibility to promote the Welsh language across the County and what they can do to help that in their communities	Virtual / face-to-face	New Members and Members who haven't done the training
	DEALING WITH THE PRESS	A very hands-on session that gives Members experience of doing radio and television interviews. The more they know about the demands of the Media and what lies ahead, the better they will perform when it becomes real interviews.	Face to Face	Offer to all members. Will arrange for anyone interested.
OZ	IT TRAINING	One-to-one sessions	Virtual / face-to-face	For those who need it




	WORKSPACE ASSESSMENT	Assessing the workspace in the home through a questionnaire/module	Virtual	Available to all, and immediately
	SOCIAL MEDIA	How to make social media work for Councillors, what sort of things to share and not share, how not to behave on social media, bullying etc.	Virtual / face-to-face	Available for anyone who wishes to have a one-to-one session

# Agenda Item 6

<b>Date of meeting:</b>	17 February 2022
<b>Subject</b>	Diversity in Democracy
<b>Recommendation</b>	To present an update of the actions to the Committee.
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Vera Jones, Democratic and Language Services Manager

## Update.

1. The Committee has led in the field of trying to encourage more diversity in Democracy for some years by now, and work is continually proceeding in this field. Gwynedd Council's Diversity Statement was published in October 2021, and the work programme was adopted by the Full Council in December 2021.
2. Several elements of the work programme deal with the election preparations. One element is to encourage more people from various backgrounds to stand in the election, and another element is to look at the arrangements that are in place for the induction and to welcome new Councillors following the election. Another report has been submitted to the committee to update you of these elements.
3. Other matters that are currently receiving attention is to draft a diversity/equality Questionnaire. The questionnaire will be distributed to all current Council Members to gather data (anonymously) about diversity in the existing Council. The questionnaire will be repeated at the start of next term to ensure a firm data base from now on. This will provide an evidence base to any further work that needs to be undertaken. Completing the questionnaire will be voluntary but we encourage everyone to do so.
4. In addition, there is a great deal to learn from Councillors who decide not to stand again. In order to learn more about what has been successful, the motivation to stand as a Councillor in the first place, and the barriers and reasons why a Member will not stand again, it is deemed that there is a benefit to conduct an exercise here in Gwynedd. It is likely that we will gather the information in the form of a questionnaire, reporting on the lessons for Gwynedd that will again assist us to prepare for future Councillors.
5. For approximately 18 months now we have been working to hold specific sessions for Women who are Councillors. These informal sessions (chat over a cuppa) have offered a safe space where Councillors have had an opportunity to
  - support each other and compare experiences and learn from each other
  - discuss barriers or issues that concern them and offer solutions.

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6. All discussion took place in a safe and non-political environment. We have already reported to the Committee on some of the general matters raised by the group, matters that are being considered to improve the Council's arrangements. The main themes from the latest chat were
- Additional responsibilities on women who are Councillors eg preparations for Christmas tend to fall heavier on the shoulders of women, at a time when trying to continue with their responsibilities as a Councillor
  - Lack of public understanding and perception about the role of Councillors and the financial remuneration received
  - Opportunities to make a difference within communities eg grants available to hold events for ageing population and work with food banks and food distribution in the community
7. It is a sensible time to now consider if any benefit has come from these sessions and if we should continue to hold such sessions in the term of the new Council to offer the same type of support to women who are Councillors from May onwards. The initial response indicates that there is support for this.

### **Recommendation**

8. The Committee is requested to
- submit any observations on the update presented
  - give support to establish informal arrangements for Women who are councillors, following the May 2022 election

# Agenda Item 7

## GWYNEDD COUNCIL



<b>Committee:</b>	Democratic Services Committee
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	17 February 2022
<b>Title of Item:</b>	Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021
<b>Purpose:</b>	To present an update on meeting arrangements in accordance with Part 3 of the aforementioned Act - Hybrid meetings.
<b>Contact Officer(s):</b>	Geraint Owen, Head of Democracy Services and Vera Jones, Democracy and Language Manager

### Report to a meeting of the Democratic Services Committee

#### 1. THE DECISION SOUGHT

- It is recommended that the Democratic Services Committee accepts the report for information.

#### 2. DEVELOPMENTS

##### COUNCIL DECISION - 02/12/2021

1. The Full Council adopted arrangements for holding future Council meetings at its meeting on 2 December 2021. It was decided that meetings of the Full Council, Planning Committee and Scrutiny Committees would be held from a location (hybrid meetings), with the remainder remaining as virtual meetings. Cabinet meetings will also be held from a location (hybrid) - with the Cabinet making this decision at its meeting on 30 November 2021.
2. Responsibility for implementing and determining the implementation date was given to the Head of Democracy Services in consultation with the Monitoring Officer, Chair of Democratic Services Committee and Council Chair.
3. In addition, any arrangements needed to wait for Covid-19 restrictions to be lifted. During the first weeks of 2022 the situation in relation to Covid-19 restrictions has changed frequently and we have faced instructions not to attend the offices for some weeks. This led to a delay by a number of weeks as we were unable to go to

the chambers to test and learn about the new hybrid system whilst the restrictions were in place.

#### **TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS**

4. However, we have proceeded with technical developments, but have also faced challenges in this regard. The provision is in place and has been tested by the Head of Democracy Services who supports the solutions. This will mean that Councillors will be able to take part in hybrid meetings at the chamber or remotely.
5. One thing which has become clear having undertaken the trials to date is that the experience will be DIFFERENT to the arrangements pre-Covid. There is far more to consider when chairing hybrid meetings. Specific arrangements must be implemented and followed, and everybody on the floor of the chamber and joining remotely will have to respect those arrangements in order to allow a meeting to proceed without any problems.

#### **MEETINGS PROTOCOL**

6. In addition to the technical developments, the protocol for holding virtual meetings will be updated and a protocol for holding hybrid meetings will be developed. This is essential and needs to be in place prior to undertaking a hybrid meeting of one of the Council's committees.

#### **NEXT STEPS**

7. Trials to date have highlighted that considerable preparation is needed in order to ensure the best possible experience for all users in hybrid meetings. Further trials will need to be held of the hybrid arrangements, giving opportunities for officers (from the democracy team mainly) to learn about the new arrangements and familiarise themselves with them. In addition, the time spent trialling will be used to start training member and Chairs on the technical aspects of these meetings and good practice (soft elements that need to be considered). This will assist us to prepare for training new Councillors and chairs from May 2022 onwards.

# Agenda Item 8

<b>MEETING</b>	<b>Democratic Services Committee</b>
<b>DATE</b>	<b>17 February 2022</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>Committees Calendar 2022/23</b>
<b>PURPOSE</b>	<b>To recommend the calendar of committee dates for 2022/23 to the Full Council</b>
<b>AUTHOR</b>	<b>Annes Sion Democracy Team Leader</b>

## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The calendar of the Council's committee dates for 2022/23 is submitted for your consideration prior to being submitted to the Full Council on 3 March.
- 1.2 The calendar assists the Council, its Members and the public to plan ahead for the dates and times of the Council's principal meetings.
- 1.2 Note that these are the dates we have currently scheduled, but situations can arise where additional meetings may need to be arranged in order to implement Council business.
- 1.3 While every effort is made to avoid holding meetings during school holidays, this is not possible on all occasions if the continuation of Council service is to be ensured.
- 1.4 Relevant officers and Snowdonia National Park were consulted regarding the draft version of the committees calendar to ensure that there were no clashes with other meetings. In addition, we have sought to ensure that there is no clash with the dates of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board and North Wales Corporate Joint Committee meetings, though not all dates for 2022/23 are known yet.

## 2. COMMITTEES CALENDAR 2022/23

- 2.1 See the appendix for the dates of Council Meetings in 2022/23
- 2.2 It is noted that all meeting dates have slipped slightly compared to a usual year as a result of the Local Government Election which will be held on 5 May 2022. Consequently, the first Council meeting will not be held until 19 May 2022. This will allow the Democracy and Language Service to arrange and hold welcome sessions for all Members prior to the Annual Full Council meeting.

- 2.3 In addition, please note that no meetings of any Council committees will be held in May. This will provide an opportunity to adopt the allocation of seats based on political balance, for the political groups to identify representatives to the various seats and for the members to receive any necessary training prior to the committees being held.

### **3. RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 The Democratic Services Committee is requested to recommend that the Full Council adopt the Committees Calendar for 2022-23.

2022/23	Meeting Time	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May
<b>FULL COUNCIL</b>	<b>pm</b>	<b>19*</b>	16				6		1			2		4*
Cabinet	<b>pm</b>		7 / 28	19		13	4	22	13	24	14	7/28	25	
Scrutiny Committee – Education and Economy	<b>am / pm</b>			14			20		8		2	23		
Scrutiny Committee – Communities	<b>am / pm</b>		23			15	27			19		9		
Scrutiny Committee - Care Governance and Audit Committee	<b>am / pm</b>			7		29		10			16		20	
Democracy Services Committee	<b>am / pm</b>						13	17			9			
Planning Committee	<b>am / pm</b>		6	4		5 / 26	17	7 / 28	19	16	6 / 27	20	17	
Joint Planning Policy Committee	<b>am</b>		17	22		23	21		2	20		17		
Central Licensing Committee	<b>pm</b>		27			19			5					
Standards Committee	<b>am</b>			11				21			13			
SACRE	<b>pm</b>			12				29				14		
Language Committee	<b>am</b>		20				10			30			24	
Local Joint Consultative	<b>am</b>			21										
Employment Appeals Committee	<b>am / pm</b>		10	8		16	14	18	16	27	17	24	21	
Pensions Committee	<b>pm</b>		27			12		24*		23		27		
Porthmadog Harbour Consultative Committee	<b>pm</b>						11					7		
Pwllheli Harbour Consultative Committee	<b>pm</b>						18					14		
Aberdyfi Harbour Consultative Committee	<b>am</b>						25					21		
Barmouth Harbour Consultative Committee	<b>am</b>							8				28		

\*Annual Meeting

Committees times (as required ) **am** – morning **pm** – afternoon **am/pm** – all day

*These are the current dates available, other meetings may be required in order to implement the Council's business.*



<b>Date of meeting:</b>	17 February 2022
<b>Subject</b>	Financial Remuneration for Elected Members - senior salaries for 2022/23
<b>Recommendation</b>	The Democratic Services Committee is asked for observations on the recommendation for roles to receive senior salaries in 2022/23
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Vera Jones, Democracy and Language Services Manager

## Update.


1. The draft report of the Independent Financial Remuneration Panel was presented at the committee meeting in November 2021. Observations were submitted to the consultation based on your observations.
2. I had intended to confirm the situation for 2022/23 at this meeting, however the final report will not be published by the Panel until the end of February (week commencing 22/02/22).
3. I intend to confirm the changes for 2022/23 in the newsletter published by the committee Chair following each meeting. This will enable us to raise the awareness of all Members of the decisions. We do not anticipate changes from the draft report which was presented in November 2021.

## Senior salaries.

4. This is the last meeting of the committee before the Local Government election in May 2022. Following the election, roles that are to receive senior salaries for 2022/23 will need to be confirmed. There has been no change to the list of roles that receive higher salaries for many years.
5. To remind you, senior salaries are currently paid as follows:

- Leader
- Deputy Leader
- up to 8 other Cabinet members
- The Leader of the largest Opposition\*
- Committee Chairs
  - Scrutiny Committee (x3)
  - Audit and Governance Committee
  - Planning Committee
  - Licensing Committee (Central and General counts as one Committee)
  - Pensions Committee

\* the Independent Financial Remuneration Panel is required to earmark a higher salary for the role

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6. The consultation by the Panel noted that there would be no change to the maximum number of senior salaries that can be determined in Gwynedd. However, there is a slight change for 2022/23 due to the membership and chairpersonship of the Governance and Audit Committee. In accordance with the requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, a lay member must be appointed as the Chair of the Governance and Audit Committee from May 2022.
  7. As a result of the requirement to appoint the Chair of the Governance and Audit Committee from among lay Members, this role will therefore not be included in the list of senior salaries that are remunerated by the Council. It is noted that the Chair will receive remuneration for the role in accordance with the requirements of the Independent Panel.
  8. Historically, the Democratic Services Committee has recommended any changes to the Full Council for adoption. In the current situation, it is likely that the most sensible recommendation to submit to the Full Council in May 2022 is to adapt the list of senior salaries and not include the Chair of the Governance and Audit Committee on the list. In other words, to include 17 roles for 2022/23 (as listed below).
  9. It would be rational for the Democratic Services Committee to review this list in full during 2022/23 to ensure that the right roles continue to receive the senior salary remuneration and to report any recommendation to the Full Council for the 2023/24 financial year.

## **Recommendation**

10. Members of the Democratic Services Committee recommend to the Full Council that the following roles receive a senior salary for 2022/23, and to ask the Democratic Services Committee to review the list for 2023/24.
  - Leader
  - Deputy Leader
  - up to 8 other Cabinet members
  - The Leader of the largest Opposition\*
  - Committee Chairs
    - Scrutiny Committee (x3)
    - Planning Committee
    - Licensing Committee (Central and General counts as one Committee)
    - Pensions Committee

# Agenda Item 10

<b>MEETING</b>	<b>Democratic Services Committee</b>
<b>DATE</b>	<b>17 February 2022</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>The Democracy Services Team's Performance Report</b>
<b>PURPOSE</b>	<b>To update the Committee on the Team's performance.</b>
<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	<b>The Democratic Services Committee is asked to note the observations and accept the report.</b>
<b>AUTHOR</b>	<b>Annes Sion Democracy Team Leader</b>

1. The team is eager to develop and ensure that the service available to Councillors is of the best standard. To do this, we look at performance and continually reflect on that.
2. We report on performance to the Cabinet Member as part of the Corporate Support department's performance challenge arrangements. However, we are of the opinion that this Committee has a role to receive an update on performance and have an opportunity to voice their opinion on the Teams's work.
3. One of the team's most important performance measures is to receive your feedback, which has been measured via a Satisfaction Questionnaire. I reported on the results and main themes arising from the last questionnaire at the October 2021 meeting. Usually, further questionnaires will be sent to all Members during September and March.
4. In addition to the opportunity to express your opinion by filling in a questionnaire twice a year, in October we noted out intention to adapt our arrangements and to talk to a selection of Councillors every month. We are of the opinion that open discussions such as these will provide us more information about the support available to you as Councillors.
5. We have started this some weeks ago, and the main themes that have been raised to date are as follows. Two Councillors were contacted specifically regarding their attendance and to remind them of the 6 months rule to ensure that they did not lose their seat inadvertently. The team was thanked for contacting them and one member noted that they had not realised that the 6-month rule was still relevant whilst meetings were still being held virtually.
6. Another theme which has come to the fore is the arrangements for saving e-mails about ward matters should a member be unsuccessful at the May 2022 election. This is an important matter and we have therefore started to create a simple guide for all members regarding this matter - in co-operation with the Research and Information team.

7. The team has been proactive regarding the situation of specific members, making arrangements for Councillors with poor internet connection to be able to go to rooms within the Council offices in order to be able to attend Committee meetings without problems. In addition, two councillors were contacted to make different Information Technology arrangements for them as they had mentioned that they were having problems.
8. As has happened regularly since we started holding virtual meetings, team members are available for members who have been having connection problems when joining virtual meetings.
9. It must be remembered that we serve the public also, and we have received some comments, as follows:
  - “Thanks both, much appreciated”
  - “So great to have these meetings livestreamed and available as recordings. great benefit to local democracy and holding our elected members to account. thank you”
10. Another important measure we have is the percentage of Decision Notices that have been published within 5 working days of a committee meeting. Publishing the Decision Notices enables the residents of Gwynedd to have written confirmation of the decisions quickly and is an improvement on the old system of waiting for the full minutes to be published in due course. Over the past three months, 28 decision notices were published, with a day's slippage in the timetable for 5 of these.
11. NEXT STEPS  
The team will continue to implement the new arrangements of having a conversation with Councillors to ask them for their observations, as well as sharing the questionnaire with all members. We will report regularly to the Democratic Services Committee.

## **12. DECISION SOUGHT**

**The Democratic Services Committee is asked to note the observations and accept the report.**