



Complete Agenda

Democracy Service
Swyddfa'r Cyngor
CAERNARFON
Gwynedd
LL55 1SH

Meeting

DEMOCRACY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Date and Time

2.00 pm, THURSDAY, 16TH MARCH, 2023

Location

Cyfarfod Rhithiol / Virtual Meeting

For public access to the meeting, please contact us

Contact Point

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01286 679018

(DISTRIBUTED 08/03/23)

DEMOCRACY SERVICES COMMITTEE

MEMBERSHIP (15)

Plaid Cymru (9)

Councillors

Annwen Hughes
Olaf Cai Larsen
Gwynfor Owen
Arwyn Herald Roberts
Vacant Seat - Plaid Cymru

Linda Ann Jones
Edgar Wyn Owen
Llio Elenid Owen
Beca Roberts

Independent (5)

Councillors

Anwen J. Davies
Eryl Jones-Williams
John Pughe

Anne Lloyd-Jones
Dewi Owen

Liberal/Labour (1)

Councillor Stephen Churchman

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

4 - 10

The Chairman shall propose that the minutes of the last meeting of this committee held on 15 November 2022, be signed as a true record.

5. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRACY SERVICES

11 - 17

To submit the report of the Head of Democracy Services.

6. SUPPORT FOR COUNCILLORS AND COUNCILLOR SAFETY

18 - 20

To submit the joint report of the Democratic and Language Service Manager, the Assistant Head of Corporate Support and the Members' Training Officer.

7. LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROVISION FOR MEMBERS

21 - 30

To submit the report of the Organisational Learning and Development Manager.

8. SUPPORT FOR COUNCILLORS - PERFORMANCE OF THE DEMOCRACY SERVICES TEAM

31 - 34

To submit the report of the Democracy and Language Service Manager and the Democracy Services Team Leader.

9. REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES

35 - 42

To submit the report of the Democratic and Language Services Manager.

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE TUESDAY, 15 NOVEMBER 2022

PRESENT:

Councillors:

Dewi Owen (Chair), Stephen Churchman, Anwen J. Davies, Anwen Hughes, Eryl Jones-Williams, Anne Lloyd-Jones, Linda Ann Jones, Olaf Cai Larsen, Edgar Wyn Owen, Gwynfor Owen, Llio Elenid Owen, Arwyn Herald Roberts, John Pughe, Beca Roberts and Menna Jones (Cabinet Member for Corporate Support).

Officers: Vera Jones (Democracy and Language Services Manager), Geraint Owen (Corporate Director), Ian Jones (Head of Corporate Support Department), Annes Sion (Democracy Team Leader) and Sioned Mai Jones (Democracy Services Officer)

Present for item 6: Siôn Gwynfryn Williams (Communication and Engagement Manager).

Present for item 8: Carey Cartwright (Organisational Learning and Development Manager) and Cara Williams (Member Development Officer).

1. APOLOGIES

No apologies were received.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received.

3. URGENT ITEMS

No urgent matters were raised.

4. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee, held on 5 July 2022, as a true record.

5. HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

DECISION

To appoint Ian Jones, Head of Corporate Support to the statutory post of Head of Democratic Services.

The Chair of the Committee expressed his gratitude to the former Head of Democratic Services for his work over the past seven years and wished him a successful future in his new post as Corporate Director.

The Corporate Director thanked the chair for the kind words and conveyed his appreciation to both the present and past members of this Committee for the joint-working over the years. He noted his thanks to the Chairs over the years and to the Democracy and Language Services Manager and the team for their support.

It was explained that it was necessary to appoint a new Head of Democratic Services as it was a statutory role.

It was reported that Ian Jones had now been appointed as the Head of Corporate Support Department and it was proposed to accept the recommendation that Ian Jones be appointed as Head of Democratic Services. Committee members expressed their confidence that the Head of Corporate Support would undertake this function with due respect.

Following a unanimous vote, the Head of Corporate Support was welcomed to the role. He expressed his thanks for the support on his appointment as the Head of Democratic Services and reported that it was an honour to undertake the role. He reported that he looked forward to working together and support the Members in their work over the next few years.

There were no further observations.

6. SUPPORT FOR COUNCILLORS

RESOLVED:

To note the observations and accept the information.

The report was presented reporting on the results of the questionnaire that was sent to all the Members in October 2022.

It was noted that the first part of the questionnaire queried Members about the timing of Council meetings. The results were reported, noting that 42 members had answered the questionnaire in full. It was noted that the results showed a willingness to adjust some of the timings of Council meetings, such as moving the start time of the Full council from 1:00pm to 1:30pm. The results showed that members were keen to continue with the current timings of the Scrutiny Committees but some had expressed a desire to change the time of the Planning Committee to begin at 10:00am. It was added that this change could cause difficulties in conducting sites visits.

It was reported that the results would be used as the basis for the 2023/24 meetings calendar. It was confirmed that further discussions and work was required in considering the start time of the Planning Committee before reaching a conclusion. It was reported that the questionnaire had highlighted the need for a timely break during Committees; it was noted that this would be addressed and discussed with the Chairs of different Committees.

It was noted that the second part of the report referred to the Members' satisfaction with the Democracy Services team and the comments noted in the report were referred to. It was reported that the third part of the report dealt with communication matters and the unit's aim of conveying messages in a timely and convenient manner to Members. It was noted that the results were satisfactory overall.

To close, it was noted that comments had been presented such as praising the informal Women who are Councillors sessions, noting that these sessions encouraged collaboration amongst female Councillors and raised their confidence. Positive comments had been received on the training programme as well as comments on Councillors' safety.

During the discussion the following observations were made:

- A member expressed their wish to continue with the current time of the Planning Committee. It was believed that holding the Committees in the afternoon worked well and enabled site visits to easily take place on the morning of the Committee. It was noted that it would be more costly to the Council should site visits have to be conducted on another day.

- A member commented on Councillors' safety following an extraordinary meeting of the Full Council in August, and they wondered whether the Council's security arrangements needed to be reconsidered? It was reported that two Councillors had received serious threats in the aftermath of the meeting in question – it was questioned whether the Police should be present when controversial matters were discussed.
- It was believed that the political landscape had changed and there was concern that further such events would be seen in future. It was also noted that Councillors had a responsibility to be mindful of what they were conveying, and the language used.
- Members expressed appreciation that risk assessments were now being undertaken.
- It was noted that it was part of a Councillor's role to challenge, for example, members of the Scrutiny Committees and that there was responsibility to speak on behalf of the people they represented. It was added that it was important to consider the code of conduct when challenging.
- The service was thanked for its assistance.

In response to the observations:

- It was added that further considerations would be made in producing the 2023/24 meetings calendar and that reporting on the questionnaire's results was only the initial step. It was noted that consideration would be given to the suggestion of sending a further questionnaire to the Planning Committee members.
- The officer thanked members for their comments on staff and Councillors' safety and reported that specific steps had been taken since the meeting in August. It was reported that risk assessments were now undertaken before every hybrid Committee in order to avoid disruption of meetings and to reduce the risk to Members, the public and the Council's officers. It was added that the risk assessments were only one step, and that much work took place jointly with the Health and Safety Unit.
- It was reported that it would be reasonable to report on the progress with implementing risk assessments and to include it as an item for this Committee in future, so that the Members could see the progress made.

7. LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND ELECTIONS (WALES) ACT 2021

RESOLVED:

- a) To accept the report and to note the observations on the Petitions Scheme which will be recommended to the Cabinet.**
- b) To identify Councillors Dewi Owen, Beca Roberts and Stephen Churchman as members to assist with the work of developing a 'Research Support and Services for Councillors' protocol.**

The item was presented, setting out the context of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. It was explained that the report referred to three elements of the Act and provided the Committee with an update on the relevant actions and the work that had been carried out to date in accordance with the requirements of the Act. It was noted that an operational team from the Democracy and Language Services and the Legal Services had been established to undertake the work.

It was reported that the Act required Local Authorities to publish a Participation Strategy to identify the ways in which local people were encouraged to participate in the Council's decision-making process. It was noted that the operational team had been developing a draft strategy and that the strategy would be developed over time as good practices emerged. It was added that they were required to conduct a public consultation on the Strategy, and it was aimed to present the findings of the consultation in the final version of the strategy to the Full Council in March.

It was noted that another requirement in the Act was to produce and publish a Petitions Scheme. It was noted that this was nothing new to the Council, but there were no specific guidelines in place at present setting out the steps. It was added that the Scheme had been included in the report as an appendix, and after receiving the Committee's observations today the Scheme would be submitted to the Cabinet at the end of November, to be recommended for adoption by the Full Council in December. It was added that the Officers would be grateful to receive any comments by the Committee.

The final requirement was to address the guidelines on Research Support and Services for Councillors. It was noted that the document stated that that every Member should be able to access a variety of information and advice; this protocol was currently being developed. It was noted that the Committee was required to identify three Members to assist with this work so as to ensure input from Members.

During the discussion the following observations were made:

- Clarity was sought regarding the possibility of submitting a paper petition rather than on e-mail, and around the number of signatories on the petition. Concern was expressed that petitions with fewer than 100 names would be rejected, and it was believed that this would affect matters in small villages. A member asked that the wording be reconsidered.
- A member sought clarity regarding the point about members of the public being allowed to ask a question in the Full Council, and asked whether this necessitated a change to the Constitution?
- Reference was made to two cases where a Member had asked two Heads of Department for information; they had received a satisfactory from one Head, but believed that the response from the other Head was disappointing.
- It was questioned how useful petitions were, and noted that over 100 signatures could be collected easily – the member was concerned what topics could be brought forward. It was believed that it was important to be able to filter the petitions and to have robust guidelines in place regarding what was acceptable.
- The Petitions Scheme was welcomed which would give and explanation of the process to the public.
- Three names were proposed to assist with the work of Research Support and Services for Councillors.

In response to the observations:

- The officer thanked the members for their fair comments on the Petitions Scheme and noted that the relevant changes would be made in order to be clearer and more specific in the Plan. It was confirmed that the Council would have discretion to accept petitions with fewer than 100 signatories and that they would be considered.
- It was confirmed that the Constitution already referred to the right of members of the public to ask a question in the Full Council, and the aim was to highlight this right to the public. It was noted that there was a specific arrangement in place which included being notified in advance of the question.
- The comments and responses to Members' enquiries were welcomed, and the Members were encouraged to discuss individual examples with the Corporate Director who led the work of looking at how the Council responded to Members' enquiries.
- It was reported that there were different ways of responding to petitions - these included a direct response by the Cabinet Member or a discussion in the Cabinet or in a Scrutiny Committee. It was added that the Scheme would explain the procedure of submitting a petition to the Council as the public might possibly not be aware at present because there were no clear guidelines.

8. LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROVISION FOR MEMBERS

RESOLVED:

To accept the report, noting the observations submitted.

An overview of the Learning and Development Provision for Members was presented, highlighting successes, challenges and developments. It was reported that a choice of virtual and face-to-face training was offered in order to offer variety to the Members, but also to encourage less travelling.

It was added that the Learning and Development Unit would be grateful to receive comments on the provision so they could adapt and improve to try to respond to Members' requirements. It was noted that the Elected Member Development Programme was evolving, and was a combination of requests from the Council Officers and Members. The Members were encouraged to give their opinion on what they wished to see in the Programme.

During the discussion the following observations were made:

- It was expressed that the Covid period had changed lives and that the offer of virtual training was beneficial to many as it saved travel time for Councillors and saved money for the Council.
- The standard of the training was believed to be very good.
- A member expressed their view that the virtual courses or training were more difficult to understand and remember compared with those that were held face-to-face where Members could discuss and talk together. The member believed that these were more effective.
- The above opinion was reiterated, noting that face-to-face training was more interesting.
- It was noted that it would be interesting to see a list of which training the Members had attended and were required to attend, especially with mandatory training.
- It was reported that the Council used to offer training on how to deal with the press e.g. television or radio interviews, and this training was commended. It was asked whether something similar would be offered during the coming months.
- Another member supported the above observation regarding the benefit of receiving training on dealing with the press as well as an element of training on public speaking.
- A member enquired about the procedure of providing feedback after attending training.
- A comment was made that more training relating to Acts and the legal side would be beneficial, in order to have better clarity of these matters.
- The Learning and Development Unit were thanked for their work.

In response to the observations:

- It was expressed that it was important to offer a variety of virtual and face-to-face training and that the unit was attempting to strike the right balance.
- It was noted that members could see a list of which training individual Members had attended on the Staff Development Module under My Training Record. The Member Development Officer could send an e-mail to the Members explaining where to find this record.
- It was reported that a training session on dealing with the press could be arranged should the Members so wish. It was added that historically, this training was offered to Cabinet Members or Chairs, but it was agreed that it should be offered more widely. It was noted that the sessions for Cabinet Members had been arranged for the beginning of 2023; the unit would discuss when would be timely to offer the training to the remaining Members.
- The officer took the opportunity to refer to the Personal Development Review that was available to every Member which was an opportunity to have an individual

- conversation with the Learning and Development Unit to identify different fields, opportunities or priorities to be included in their personal development programme.
- It was confirmed that a feedback form was sent to Members following the training.
 - It was confirmed that there was more training to come, including training relating to Acts. It was noted that the unit had focused on the mandatory training mainly since the Elections in May 2022. Softer training, for example Quick Reading would be offered over the next few years.

9. THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES'S DRAFT REPORT

RESOLVED:

To accept the report noting the Committee's observations for formulating a response to the Independent Remuneration Panel's consultation on the draft report and on the arrangements for reviewing senior salaries.

The report was submitted which recommended increasing Councillors' basic salary to £17,600, which was a 4.76% increase. Observations were requested to enable the Council to formulate a response to the Independent Remuneration Panel's draft report consultation which outlined the changes proposed for the 2023/24 financial year. It was explained that the Panel's responsibility was to set the salary levels of Wales's Councillors, and that their role was fully independent.

It was added that Members were not obliged to accept the salary, they were entitled to surrender the salary and would have to do so in writing to the Head of Democratic Services.

It was reported that the maximum number of senior salaries that could be paid was 18, and the report detailed recommendations from the Panel's perspective. It was added that 17 of the 18 senior salaries had been allocated for 2022/23, as a result of the changes in appointing a Lay Member as Chair of the Governance and Audit Committee. The Committee was requested to review the situation for 2023/24. It was added that a list of the senior salaries could be seen in paragraph 17 of the report.

It was noted that the report referred to reviewing the responsibilities of Committee Chairs, therefore the Democracy team would try to assess the work pressures and responsibilities on the Chairs over the coming months. The results would be reported at the next meeting of the Democracy Services Committee in March 2023, in order to draw up a recommendation for the annual meeting of the Full Council in May.

During the discussion the following observations were made:

- A comment was made that Members had already been criticised for accepting a salary increase.
- It was noted that Members could claim care costs reimbursements to assist them with childcare and that they were entitled to maternity leave and it was questioned whether all Members were aware of this.
- It was added that this also applied to carers with dependants, and that it was important to promote the support that was available.
- Disappointment was expressed that there was no difference in the Salaries of Town Councillors and Councillors of rural areas. It was added that Councillors in urban areas did not need to use their cars or pay to hire rooms for holding surgeries, meaning that they saved a lot of money compared with Councillors in rural wards. It was believed that the lack of consideration to the added costs for rural Councillors was unfair.
- It was reiterated that the fairest way of determining which Committee Chairs should receive the senior salary would be to look at their individual role and workload.

In response to the observations:

- It was noted that the Service was continuing to take steps to raise awareness of what was available to Members in terms of reimbursement of care costs. Reference was made to the Members' Handbook which referred to what was available.
- It was noted that all the information was available in the full report by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales, and the Democracy and Language Services Manager could send a copy of the full report to the Members should they wish.
- It was added that the Service could arrange to include the information in a more obvious place on the Members' Intranet.
- It was added that Officers would question Committee Chairs about their responsibilities and the demands there were on them as Committee Chairs in order to receive their comments for further consideration during the March meeting of this Committee.


The meeting commenced at 13:00 and concluded at 14:50.

CHAIR

Meeting	Democratic Services Committee
Date of meeting	16 March 2023
Subject	Annual report by the Head of Democratic Services on behalf of the Democratic Services Committee with regards to support for Members
Recommendation	The Democratic Services Committee is asked for comments on the draft report outlining the support available for Members and what will be developed in future.
Contact Officer:	Ian Jones, Head of Democratic Services

What is the background and relevant considerations?

1. A draft of my report is presented below which is to be submitted to the Full Council at its May 2023 meeting. I am required to submit a report to the Full Council on an annual basis outlining the support available to Councillors. I appreciate your input to the content of the report.
2. In accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Act 2011, the Democratic Services Committee is responsible for specific matters (under Section 11), as follows:
 - Appoint a Head of Democratic Services on behalf of the local authority
 - Review the available support for the Head of the Democratic Services in relation to staff, buildings and other resources, ensuring they are sufficient for carrying out the requirements of the role.
 - Produce a report, at least once a year, to be presented to the Full Council in relation to support for Members.
3. It has been a very busy year, especially as a result of the Local Government election, welcoming 69 Councillors this term, with 25 new Councillors to the role.
4. I am also new to the role since November 2022 and eager to continue to learn and support you in the most effective manner. I will build on the firm foundations that have already been laid by the former Head of Democratic Services, Geraint Owen. I will take this opportunity, on our behalf, to thank Geraint officially for all his hard work.
5. Also, I wish to thank you as Committee members for your welcome and constructive comments so far. I would also like to thank the officers of the Democratic and Language Services for their hard work and support, the



Monitoring Officer for his continuous guidance, and all officers who help support you in your roles. I look forward to collaborating with you all in the future to further develop the provision.

6. This year's annual report is brief and focuses on the developments made during the year rather than outlining all the support that is available to Members. It also outlines the priorities for the coming year.
7. The report will be submitted to a meeting of the Full Council meeting on 4th May 2023 after receiving your comments today.

What is the recommendation to the Committee?

The Democratic Services Committee is asked for comments on the draft report outlining the support available for Members and what will be developed in future.



The Annual Report of the Head of Democratic Services - Support for Gwynedd Councillors

2022/23

FOREWORD

I am pleased to present my annual report outlining the support available for Gwynedd Councillors. It has been a very busy year, especially as we welcomed 69 of you as Councillors in May 2022, with 25 new Councillors to the role.

A year after a Local Government election is inevitably very busy and I am pleased to have been a part of this excitement. It has been a jam-packed year for all of you - as you get to grips again with your role as Councillor, some of you with different wards, others of you starting in the role for the first time.

It has also been a new experience for me after commencing my role as the Head of Democratic Services since November 2022. I will build on the firm foundations that have already been laid by the former Head of Democratic Services, Geraint Owen. I will take this opportunity, on our behalf, to thank Geraint officially for all his hard work.

I am eager to continue to learn and support you in the most effective manner and this will not be possible without your support as Councillors and the support of the different officers working in the background. Thank you to everyone, especially the Democratic and Language Service.

I look forward to collaborating with you over the coming years.

Regards,

Ian



Ian Jones,
Head of Democratic Services



2022/23 SUCCESSES

As I have had the privilege of taking over this role during the year, I have taken this opportunity to reflect on what has been delivered during the past year. I have been amazed that so many things have happened for the first time this year.

2022/23 – the first time we...

- welcomed **69** Councillors following the election based on the new wards in Gwynedd
- had **a third** of Councillors as female Councillors
- held **multi-location welcome days**, held over a two-day period to adhere to Covid-19 safety regulations
- give a choice of **information technology** provision in order to facilitate your role, encouraging everyone to have an additional screen to facilitate multi-location meetings
- created a small, useful **handbook** for Councillors to welcome and assist them in their role over the first few days. The handbook has already dated, but it is updated electronically on the Councillors' intranet.
- held **multi-location committee meetings** (Full Council, Cabinet, Planning Committee and Scrutiny Committees) ensuring simultaneous translation and webcasting in both languages - since the beginning of May 2022. This enables Councillors and officers to join remotely and be more flexible for Councillors who work or have caring responsibilities.
- had to call the **police** to a meeting of the Full Council due to a public disturbance. It has led to more robust **safety arrangements** and risk assessments, and it has brought the safety of Councillors to the forefront.
- had a **period of mourning** during the term, which led to rearranging a number of public meetings that led to more requirements on Councillors and staff in a short period
- received **a question from a member of the public** during one Full Council meeting
- adopted a **Petitions Scheme** so that the public had clarity on how to submit a petition to the Council
- adopted a **Participation Strategy** to promote the public's input to democratic decisions
- communicated regularly with you via the **Councillors' Bulletin** on a weekly basis to ensure the sharing of information directly and timely with you as Members.



2022/23 – continue with the support

In addition, we have also succeeded in maintaining normal services and work programme in the post-election period. It was succeeded to

- ✓ Maintain the committees programme for the year, xxxx (the figure will be added at the end of the year) meetings in total, and condensed to a shorter period than usual as a result of the post-election period and period of mourning. It was necessary to take time to establish the committees after the election and to hold training to ensure an understanding of the role of different committees at the same time.
- ✓ Administrate the salaries and expenses of Councillors and publish the information in accordance with the statutory requirements.
- ✓ Undertake all the required post-election background work - set up a payroll number, e-mail address, web page for every Councillor, administrate salaries etc.
- ✓ Publish the election results live from the counting centre, with all the work successfully completed by early afternoon.
- ✓ Offer a full programme of 'presenting information and training' for Councillors during the year. This included programming an information session with every Head of Department during the first 6 - 8 weeks in order to give Councillors an overview of the work of all Council Departments. A recording of the sessions is available on the members' intranet.
- ✓ The training sessions were prioritised to deal with the main issues that Members needed to address at the beginning of their term. This was based on consultation with members of the Democratic Services Committee.
- ✓ As a result of low numbers attending some training sessions, we have reviewed our arrangements to ensure the best value of any training sessions being offered.
- ✓ Trained Chairs on hybrid arrangements after their appointments and as they led a committee meeting! It has been an experience of learning as we go for staff and Councillors, and we continue to learn and adapt to this day. We remain grateful to all for your co-operation and patience as we continue to move forward in this field.
- ✓ Review the political balance and appoint to committees based on the political balance, and administrate this within a very tight schedule.
- ✓ Send out a questionnaire regarding the timing of Council meetings for the term and incorporate the results in the 23/24 calendar onwards.
- ✓ Administrate the arrangements to appoint to external bodies.
- ✓ Continue to administrate the North Wales corporate joint-committee and the North Wales Economic Ambition Board, and also administrate their sub-boards.

- ✓ Use and continue to develop the members' intranet in its new format. It is much easier to use to find information - let us know what is missing or needs to be adapted further. There is a great deal of information about mental well-being, Councillor safety etc. on the intranet site.
- ✓ Send out a satisfaction survey about the services of the democratic team and restart our performance arrangements of holding conversations with one or two Councillors every month to obtain different perspectives on how to improve our service and support for Councillors.
- ✓ Hold informal 'teatime talk' sessions for female Councillors as informal support.
- ✓ Hold informal 1-1 sessions with Councillors as the need arises to offer support e.g. mentoring sessions and opportunities to discuss personal development.
- ✓ Hold specific training for Cabinet Members.

2022/23 – continue with the support

The work continues from year to year to try to support you to achieve in your role as Councillors. As I have noted, the priorities for the coming year involve continuing to build on the very firm foundations already in place.

It is likely that we will also focus on the following priorities:

PRIORITY	EXPLANATION
Safety and support for Councillors	Continue to focus on safety matters for Councillors as well as mental health and well-being support for Councillors.
Personal development conversations	We will offer 1-1 sessions for Councillors to discuss support in terms of development in their role and to prepare for potential future roles e.g. role as Chair.
Examine our scrutiny arrangements following the work of Audit Wales	We will examine our scrutiny arrangements in light of the work output of Audit Wales on our current arrangements, examining whether there is a need for more training or to adapt our committees in any way.
Paperless Council	Move towards becoming a paperless Council to reduce our carbon footprint and to realise the relevant savings for the Council

Members of the Democratic Services Committee have a key role to play and I sincerely thank each of them for being a voice for you all as they bring different issues to my attention. We seek to respond as we can.


Remember to contact me or anyone from the team directly to discuss any concerns. I look forward to collaborating with you over the coming year.

Agenda Item 6

Date of meeting:	16 March 2023
Subject	Support for Councillors and Councillor Safety
Recommendation	The Democratic Services Committee is asked to accept the report for information.
Contact Officer:	Vera Jones, Democratic and Language Services Manager Catrin Love, Assistant Head of Corporate Support Cara Williams, Members' Training Officer

What is the background and relevant considerations?

1. In the period since the Local Government Election in May 2022, two main themes have continuously become apparent.
 - There are increasing pressures on Councillors and, therefore, the need to ensure **health and well-being support** for you.
 - In addition, **Councillor safety** matters have become apparent in light of national incidents, incidents within the Council and to individual Councillors.
2. There may also be a link between both elements - the harassment suffered by some Members can increase stress. Also, many have reported that work pressures and the strain of living costs are affecting society, and more people are asking their local Councillor for help.
3. However, many also feel that society has changed and the expectations on Councillors have increased as people's expectations are generally higher.
4. Due to recent conversations with a few Councillors, it has become apparent that people are unaware of the support already available to help you to look after your health and well-being. This includes your physical and mental health.
5. The 'Looking after yourself' page on the Members' Intranet refers to some of the support available.
Mental Health.
6. One of the key services available for you is the Medra counselling service. The Service is confidential, and you can self-refer to the service - details on how to do this are on the intranet site.
7. However, we also try to encourage Mental Health and, to this end, we offer a large number of training sessions in the field. At the beginning of January, a two-day 'Mental Health First Aid' session was held and very




positive feedback was received. Further sessions are currently being arranged.

Safety - training

8. As noted, the violence and harassment suffered by some Members increases stress on them and the Safe Leadership course has been adapted to address this. It includes discussion and practical steps regarding personal safety in order to keep you safe and to reduce personal stress. You will see from another report that the numbers who have been registering for the events have been quite low, but the feedback we have received from the sessions has been extremely positive. A further reminder has been sent to all Members who have yet to register on the course encouraging them to attend. For those Members who have attended the course some time ago, previous to the new element on personal safety being included, a short session is available on this element alone.
9. In addition, webinar sessions have been arranged by the Local Government Association in England (LGA) in December 2022 and February 2023. The webinar titles were as follows “Handling On-line Abuse and Intimidation webinar” and “Councillor Personal Safety Webinar”. All Councillors were contacted offering them a chance to attend the free sessions virtually. The provision had not been specifically tailored for Wales but a number of very suitable matters for Councillors to help with safety were part of the sessions.

Safety - practical matters

10. The Council has also adapted practical arrangements in the Chambers following an incident at an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council on 24/08/22. There was disruption from the public gallery during the meeting. Following the incident, many Councillors and staff reported that they did not feel safe in the Chamber. By now, a risk assessment is undertaken for each multi-location meeting held (Chamber and remote location).
11. In light of the risk assessments, some specific steps have been taken to improve safety:
 - ensure lockers for the public to store their bags as they go up to the public gallery,
 - plenty of posters in the public gallery noting what members of the public are permitted to do (and what is not acceptable),
 - a rope to separate the public gallery from the Chamber floor (but access must be permitted to individuals for planning committees or to ask a question at the Full Council meeting).
 - Management arrangements to hold a recess if there is a disturbance
 - Briefing Chairpersons
 - Consider employing a security firm if the risk level is considered high
12. Every risk assessment will consider the matters on the agenda before reaching a conclusion if further security measures are required. Measures



may vary such as moving location (from Siambr Hywel Dda to Siambr Dafydd Orwig), briefing the Chairperson on the steps to be taken, ensuring appropriate safety on the site, or in specific cases holding the meeting virtually. Further work will be undertaken during the coming months to look further on the design of the Chambers and the physical safety measures in place.

13. We are also aware that you are out in the community all the time as Councillors. There are specific steps that could be considered to protect your safety and your family's safety, such as not publishing your home address on the website. Useful guidelines regarding safety considerations before holding surgeries in the community have also been included on the Members' Intranet, which can assist you.

Physical Health

14. One additional element is physical health and there is useful information once again on the Members' Intranet, which includes tips on how to properly set up your workspace at home, and the access available to the physiotherapy service.

Communication

15. It appears that we have not been communicating this information to Councillors explicitly and often enough. Recently, we have shared information via the weekly Bulletin that is sent to you as Councillors. Also remember to have a look at the Members' Intranet for information, or to ask relevant officers - information about training from Cara Williams, information about the contents of the Members' Intranet from the Democracy team and the Political Group Assistants.
16. As representatives of all Members on the committee, you are also asked to share this information with your fellow members to ensure that we all take responsibility of looking after ourselves and each other.

Recommendation

17. The Democratic Services Committee is asked to accept the report for information.

MEETING	Democratic Services Committee
DATE	16 March 2023
TITLE OF THE REPORT	Learning and Development Provision for Members
PURPOSE	To provide an update about the <i>Learning and Development</i> provision for Members, and highlight successes, challenges and developments
RECOMMENDATION	The Committee is invited to consider any further suggestions
AUTHOR	Carey Cartwright (<i>Organisational Learning and Development Manager</i>)

1 Overview

- 1.1 It is an appropriate time to reflect and review the Learning and Development arrangements, following a very busy but relatively stable period.
- 1.2 At the start of the electoral term, the learning programme has been intensive, with a significant number of learning opportunities being offered (to new Members in particular).
- 1.3 We are now in a position to be able to start delivering some training titles in the 'traditional' *face to face* method once again, alongside 'virtual' (*'remote'*) sessions.
- 1.4 The training programme is continuously evolving and growing, and we are now consulting with Heads of Departments and Officers on the content of the 2023/24 programme. We will also include titles at the request of Members and welcome any further suggestions.

2 Training Programme

- 2.1 It can be seen from the 2022-23 programme (Appendix 1) that a range of developmental events were held, with recordings (*where possible*) of the sessions until the end of April 2023 to be viewed on the Members' Intranet.

An intensive programme of events has been held, with a focus on 'Core' training to accomplish the role, e.g. *'Training for Members of the Planning Committee'*, and titles such as *'Safe Leadership and Personal Safety'*, addressing health and well-being matters. Extra sessions were organised, e.g. *'Social Media'* and *'Mental Health First Aid'* also, in response to requests from Members.

- 2.2 It should be noted that the feedback on the whole has been excellent and that the sessions are very valuable for many.

2.2.1 Mental Health First Aid

"Two extremely valuable days, especially as we are in the field of dealing with people in our communities. The Coach was fantastic and gave information on where to go if we wanted to learn about something specific. Also appreciated that our mental well-being as Members has been taken into consideration, and the importance of having a healthy brain and a healthy mind."

"Great training, all Councillors should attend it."

"Enjoyed it immensely, practical and very supportive."

2.2.2 Safe Leadership and Personal Safety

"As a Cabinet Member, this session has been a complete eye-opener for me, and proves how important it is that we understand what the risks are, where to question, and how to ensure that we make the right decisions."

"Learned a lot about a field that I didn't have much knowledge or understanding of. A very valuable session that every Councillor should take seriously and strive to attend."

3 Personal Development Interviews

3.1 The developmental needs of individuals vary considerably, and Members have received an invitation to attend a '*Personal Development Interview*' with a Learning and Development specialist, to discuss their developmental needs and to draw up a personal developmental programme. To date, two have expressed an interest.

4 Attendance Statistics

4.1 In the period since May 2022, 35 events were held (noting that there are various other elements in addition to this, such as coaching sessions). Attendance rates have varied greatly, e.g. School Categorisation = 33, Equality Session with only 5 having attended.

It may be necessary to consider:

- Reviewing the wording of the invitations to ensure clarity.
- Emphasising the benefit and personal advantages of attending.

5 Flexibility

5.1 In response to members' needs and to facilitate opportunities for them to attend training, a number of arrangements were reviewed to offer more flexibility:-

- Offer online sessions ('remotely')
- Offer more than one option of dates
- Organise sessions at different times (e.g. in the evening)

5.2 However, it seems that the introduction of these alterations has not made the sessions easier for everyone to attend, and some sessions had to be run with small numbers which was not cost effective, e.g. the '*ratio*' of officers to attendees was almost equal. A tendency was observed not to register on the initial events when offering a series of dates - this led to having to cancel some events due to insufficient numbers.

6 Looking to the Future

In order to make the most of meagre resources and budget, the Organisation's Learning and Development Service will take the following steps:-

6.1 General programme:

- 6.1.1 Continue to give adequate notice of events
- 6.1.2 Avoid an 'overlap' with events already in the committee calendar
- 6.1.3 Continue with the 'virtual' learning provision on *Teams/Zoom* ('live' sessions)
- 6.1.4 Develop a menu of e-learning modules available anywhere/any time
- 6.1.5 Organise and advertise **one event at a time** sending **one meeting request**
- 6.1.6 Organise and advertise further sessions as needed, i.e. when sufficient numbers have expressed an interest (go on a waiting list)
- 6.1.7 Continue to be flexible in terms of arrangements if a group of Members requests an event which is held at a different time than usual
- 6.1.8 Encourage Members to make use of the Intranet to obtain information about the latest developmental opportunities

6.2 Core Titles

- 6.2.1 Details and expectations regarding attending these titles will be set out on the Members' Intranet
Provision of some titles through e-modules available anywhere/any time

6.3 Developmental Titles

When individuals apply for a title/field of learning specific to them personally (where there is an insufficient number to warrant commissioning an event in the Council) we will:-

- 6.3.1 Look at the possibility of arranging for the individual to attend an external (open) session
- 6.3.2 Create a waiting list and organise an event when there are sufficient numbers to justify it

6.4 Running or cancelling events

If the numbers applying to attend a session are low, we will:-

- 6.4.1 Send a reminder with a specific reply by date
- 6.4.2 Take a 'business' decision in terms of cancelling/postponing an event based on:-
- Only running events where numbers justify it
 - The risk to individuals/the Council
 - Value for money when commissioning external companies
 - The best use of officers' time

The Committee is invited to consider the training arrangements and steps proposed and approve them.

RHAGLEN DATBLYGU AELODAU ETHOLEDIG

ELECTED MEMBERS' DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME



Dyddiad ac amser / Date and time		Digwyddiad / Event	Dull Dysgu / Learning Method	Arweinwyr / Leaders
Mai 10 + 11 May	(Trwy dydd/all day)	Diwrnod Croeso / Welcome Day	Siambrau & Zoom Hybrid	Amrywiol / Various
Mai 30 May	(10:00 – 11:00)	Cyflwyniad i Gynllunio / Introduction to Planning (Holl Aelodau / All Members)	Rhithiol / virtual	Gareth Jones/Keira Sweeney/Rebeca Jones
Mehefin 6 June	(2:00 – 3:00)	Hyfforddiant i Aelodau'r Pwyllgor Cynllunio / Planning Committee Members Training	Rhithiol / Virtual	Gareth Jones/Keira Sweeney/Rebeca Jones
Mehefin 8 June	(10:00 – 11:00)	Gwybodaeth am Bobl : Eich Cyfrifoldeb Chi / Information about People : Your Responsibility	Rhithiol / Virtual	Helen Mary Parry (Rheolwr Gwybodaeth / Information Manager)
Mehefin 9 June	(10:00 – 12:30)	Y Cod Ymddygiad / The Code of Conduct	Rhithiol Virtual	Iwan Evans
Mehefin 22 June	(10:00 – 11:00) (14:00 – 15:00)	Cyflwyniad i Opsiynau Tai Gwynedd / Introduction to Gwynedd Housing Options	Rhithiol / virtual	Swyddogion Amrywiol (Tai ac Eiddo)
Mehefin 29 June	(10:00 – 12:30)	Hyfforddiant i Aelodau'r Pwyllgor Llywodraethu ac Archwilio / Training for the Governance & Audit Committee Members	Rhithiol / Virtual	Dewi Morgan / Luned Fon Jones

Mehfin 30 June	(10:00 – 11:00) (16:00 – 17:00)	Cyflwyniad i Ddigartrefedd / Introduction to Homelessness	Rhithiol / virtual	Swyddogion Amrywiol (Tai ac Eiddo)
Gorffennaf 6 July	(10:15 – 11:15)	Cyflwyniad i Graffu : Gweithdy Pwyllgor Craffu Cymunedau / Introduction to Scrutiny : Communities Scrutiny Committee Workshop	Siambr Hywel Dda & Zoom Hybrid	Bethan Adams
Gorffennaf 7 July	(10:15 – 11:15)	Cyflwyniad i Graffu : Gweithdy Pwyllgor Craffu Gofal / Introduction to Scrutiny : Care Scrutiny Committee Workshop	Siambr Hywel Dda & Zoom Hybrid	Llywela Owain
Gorffennaf 13 July	(10:00 – 12:30)	Eich Cyfrifoldeb dros Gydraddoldeb / Your Responsibility for Equality	Rhithiol / Virtual	Delyth Gadlys Williams
Gorffennaf 14 July	(10:15 – 11:15)	Cyflwyniad i Graffu : Gweithdy Pwyllgor Craffu Addysg ac Economi / Introduction to Scrutiny : Education & Economy Scrutiny Committee Workshop	Siambr Hywel Dda & Zoom Hybrid	Vera Jones
Gorffennaf 25 July	(4:00 – 5:00)	Gofal Cartref – Diweddariad ar y model Newydd Home Care – Update on the new model	Rhithiol / Virtual	Meilys Haulfryn Smith, Sian Wyn Griffiths
Gorffennaf 25 July	(1:30 – 3:00)	Rôl y Fforwm Craffu a rôl craffu yn y trefniadau perfformiad o dan Ddeddf Llywodraeth Leol ac Etholiadau (Cymru) 2021 / The Scrutiny Forum's role and the role of scrutiny in the performance arrangements under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.	Rhithiol / Virtual	Bethan Adams, Dewi Wyn Jones
Medi 8 September	(2:00 – 3:30)	Arwain yn Ddiogel a Diogelwch Personol / Safe Leadership & Personal Safety (Sesiwn dwyieithog / bilingual session)	Rhithiol / Virtual	Catrin Love (Ymgynghorydd Iechyd Diogelwch a Lles / Health, Safety & Wellbeing Consultant)
Medi 9 September	(10:00 – 11:00)	Cadeirio Pwyllgorau Craffu – Agweddau Cyfreithiol / Chairing Scrutiny Committees – Legal Aspects)	Rhithiol / Virtual	Sion Huws
Medi 14 September	(2:00 – 4:30)	Eich Cyfrifoldeb dros Gydraddoldeb / Your Responsibility for Equality	Rhithiol / Virtual	Delyth Gadlys Williams

Medi 21 September	(10:00 – 12:30)	Y Cod Ymddygiad / The Code of Conduct	Rhithiol / Virtual	Iwan Evans (Pennaeth Gwasanaethau Cyfreithiol / Head of Legal Service)
Medi 28 September	(2:00 – 3:00)	Gwybodaeth am Bobl : Eich Cyfrifoldeb Chi / Information about People : Your Responsibility	Rhithiol / Virtual	Helen Mary Parry
Medi 29 September	(2:00 – 3:30)	Arwain yn Ddiogel a Diogelwch Personol / Safe Leadership & Personal Safety (Sesiwn Cymraeg / Welsh medium session)	Rhithiol / Virtual	Catrin Love
Hydref 5 October	(1:30 – 3:30)	Catgoreiddio Ysgolion yn ôl y ddarpariaeth cyfrwng Cymraeg / Categorising Schools according to the Welsh language provision	Rhithiol / Virtual	Debbie Williams-Jones
Hydref 10 October	(2:00 – 3:30)	Polisi Cynllunio a'r Cynllun Datblygu Lleol / Planning Policy & the Local Development Plan	Rhithiol / Virtual	Gareth Jones a Rebeca Angharad Jones
Hydref 12 October	(10:00 – 11:30)	Deddf Llesiant Cenedlaethau'r Dyfodol / Future Generations Wellbeing Act	Rhithiol / Virtual	Dewi Wyn Jones a Sandra Thomas
Hydref 12 October	(2:00 – 3:00)			
Hydref 27 October	(10:00 – 11:00)			
Hydref 19 October	(2:00 – 3:30)	Ffordd Gwynedd	Rhithiol / Virtual	Dafydd Gibbard (Prif Weithredwr/Chief Executive)
Tachwedd 9 November	(10:00 – 11:00)	Diogelu Plant ac Oedolion / Safeguarding Children & Adults	Rhithiol / Virtual	Dafydd Paul / Mannon Trappe
Tachwedd 16 November	(2:00 – 3:00)			
Tachwedd 11 November	(10:00 – 11:30)	Ffordd Gwynedd	Rhithiol / Virtual	Geraint Owen a Carey Cartwright
Tachwedd 11 November	(1:00 – 2:30)	Hyfforddiant i'r Pwyllgor Llywodraethu ac Archwilio – Y Broses Gwynion The Complaints Procedure – Training for the Governance & Audit Committee	Rhithiol / Virtual	Matthew Harris (Ombudsman)


Tachwedd 22 November (1:30 – 4:30)	Amrywiaeth mewn Democratiaeth i Ferched/ Diversity in Democracy for Women	Rhithiol / Virtual	Dr Jessica Laimann Swyddog Polisi a Materion Cyhoeddus Women's Equality Network (WEN) Wales / Rhwydwaith Cydraddoldeb Menywod (RhCM) Cymru
Tachwedd 25 November (2:00 – 3:00)	Gwybodaeth am Bobl : Eich Cyfrifoldeb Chi / Information about People : Your Responsibility	Rhithiol / Virtual	Helen Mary Parry
I'w gadarnhau / To be confirmed			
Rhagfyr 6 December (1:30 – 3:00)	Cyfryngau Cymdeithasol – Rheoli eich enw da ar-lein	Rhithiol / Virtual	Equinox
Rhagfyr 15 December (10:00 – 11:30)	Social Media – Managing your reputation online		
Rhagfyr 14 December (10:00 – 11:30)	Safle Treftadaeth y Byd / World Heritage Sites	Rhithiol / Virtual	Rebeca Angharad Jones / Roland Evans
Rhagfyr 15 December (3:30 – 5:00)			
Ionawr 11 January 2023 (10:00 – 11:30)	Anwytho Llywodraethwyr Newydd / New Governors Induction	Rhithiol / Virtual	Buddug Mair Huws
Ionawr 12 a 13 January 2023 (9:30 – 4:30)	Cymorth Cyntaf Iechyd Meddwl / Mental Health First Aid	Wyneb i Wyneb / Face to face (Caernarfon)	Bethan Roberts
Ionawr 18 January (10:00 – 11:30)	Cyfryngau Cymdeithasol (Ail ran – Sut i greu cynnwys da) Social Media (Second Part – How to create good content)	Rhithiol / Virtual	Equinox
Ionawr 25 January (5:30 – 7:30)	Eich Cyfrifoldeb dros Gydraddoldeb / Your Responsibility for Equality	Rhithiol / Virtual	Delyth Gadlys Williams
Chwefror 1 February (9:00 – 3:30)	Hyfforddiant Cyfryngau a Chyflwyno Media & Presenting Training 'Refresher' i Aelodau Cabinet 'Refresher' for Cabinet Members	Wyneb i Wyneb (Caernarfon)	Sgript

Chwefror 8 February 2023 (10:00 – 11:00)	Trefniadau Cwynion Ysgol – y gwahanol fathau o gwynion, pa Bolisi sy'n berthnasol a sut mae delio â nhw / School Complaints Procedures – the different types of complaints, what Policies are appropriate and how to deal with them.	Rhithiol / Virtual	Buddug Mair Huws
Chwefror 8 February 2023 (3:30 – 5:00)	Trosolwg ar ymarfer da o Wella Gwasanaeth o Gwynion Overview of Service Improvements learning through Complaints	Rhithiol / virtual	Matthew Harris (Ombudsman)
Chwefror 15 February (1:00 – 3:00)	Ein dyletswyddau ni fel Rhieni Corfforaethol / Our duties as Corporate Parents	Rhithiol / virtual	Marian Parry Hughes, Aled Gibbard, Elenid Glyn, Ffion Elis Edwards
Mawrth 8 March (2:00 – 3:00)	Gwybodaeth am Bobl : Eich Cyfrifoldeb Chi / Information about People : Your Responsibility	Rhithiol / virtual	Helen Mary Parry
Mawrth 16 March 2023 (10:00 – 1:00)	Arwain Cymunedau trwy Newid / Leading Communities through Change	Wyneb i wyneb Penrhyndeudraeth	Carey Cartwright, Ffion Bryn Jones
Ebrill 19 April (2:00 – 3:30)	Ffordd Gwynedd (Sesiwn pellach i'r rhai sydd wedi methu mynychu'n barod / Further session for those who've been unable to attend previously)	Rhithiol / virtual	Geraint Owen a Carey Cartwright
Ebrill 20 April (4:00 – 5:00)	Gwybodaeth am grantiau Cist Gwynedd / Information about Cist Gwynedd grants	Rhithiol / virtual	Rhian George (Economi a Chymuned / Economy & Community)
Ebrill 27 April (11:00 – 12:30)	Arwain yn Ddiogel a Diogelwch Personol / Safe Leadership & Personal Safety (Sesiwn i'r bawb sydd wedi methu'r rhai blaenorol / a session for those who have been unable to attend previously)	Rhithiol / virtual	Catrin Love
(2:30 – 3:30)	Diogelwch Personol / Personal Safety (yr elfen newydd i'w cwrs sydd heb gael ei gyflwyno i'r rhai sydd eisoes wedi mynychu / The new 'bolt on' to the course and for those who have not had this element)	Rhithiol / virtual	Catrin Love


Ysgrifên dywyll – Digwyddiadau “Craidd” / Bold font – ‘Core’ events

Ysgrifên cyffredinol – Digwyddiadau “Dewisiol” / General font – ‘Optional’ events

Date of meeting :	16 March 2023
Subject	Support for Councillors – Performance of the Democracy Services Team
Recommendation	The Democracy Services Committee is asked to note the observations and accept the report.
Contact Officer:	Vera Jones (Democracy and Language Services Manager) and Sioned Mai Jones (Democracy Services Team Leader)
What is the background and relevant considerations?	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Democracy Team is working hard to ensure full support for Councillors. In order to ensure the appropriate support, we ask for your views regularly. We gather opinions via a Satisfaction Survey twice a year. We also speak to two or three Councillors each month to hold in-depth conversations about the support and what can be done to assist Councillors in their role. 2. The outcome of the last Satisfaction Questionnaire was reported at the last meeting of this Committee in November 2022. We will arrange to send out a further questionnaire to you in the spring in order to receive regular feedback and reflect continuously on the service that is provided. 3. In the meantime, we have recommenced our arrangements of holding conversations with individual Councillors. These conversations allow us to gain a better understanding of any issues causing concern. Below, some of the highlighted themes and matters have been outlined. Note that some of the observations are ambiguous to maintain the confidentiality of the conversations. 4. The majority of the conversations confirmed the hard work of the Democracy team and the willingness of staff from the team to try to assist with any issues immediately. There were specific matters to be praised, as follows: 5. Arrangements for all committees, including the background support provided to committee Chairs– from notes or briefing sessions with the officers responsible for the committee to the practical matters arranged by the Democracy team. 6. A particularly good programme for presenting information and training sessions held over the past year. 	

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7. General praise for the **hybrid system** arrangements and Cyngor Gwynedd's ability to hold multi-location meetings and webcast them. It is a source of pride how much Cyngor Gwynedd has been able to do in comparison with a number of other authorities and public bodies. As part of the same praise, some frustration was noted regarding the sound in Siambr Hywel Dda, and it is noted that work is ongoing to find a better solution. Members who join hybrid meeting virtually are encouraged to wear headphones with a connected microphone in order to make it easier for those in the Chamber to hear them.
 8. Standard of the **minutes** is particularly good and manage to strike the right balance in Committees.
 9. Some observations were also offered about areas for improvement, such as:
 10. **Information about salaries, costs and how to obtain a P60 at the end of the year.**
 - It was highlighted that some people were unclear about where to find information about Members' salaries. the basic wage, where to find pay slips and P60.
 - It was also highlighted that there were higher costs for Councillors in rural wards as they had to travel to visit individuals in the ward etc.
 - *It is intended to use the members' bulletin to note the information that was submitted to the Democratic Services Committee today regarding Councillor salaries. Political party assistants will have been briefed and will be able to instruct any Councillor who wishes to see their P60 on how to do so.*
 - *We have already drawn the attention of the Independent Remuneration Panel to the comparative costs of rural wards compared to urban wards. They intend to visit county councils next year (23/24), and the matter can be raised again then.*
 11. **Office space for use by Councillors.**
 - A request has been made to use locations within the Council for work purposes and/or holding Councillor surgeries.
 - *The work location of each Councillor is home, and they are welcome to attend meetings in the chambers when they are multi-location meetings, or attend meetings with specific officers by prior arrangement if required. We are continuously encouraging all to think of the most efficient way of meeting bearing in mind that we as a Council have declared a climate emergency.*

Council buildings only provide workspace for officers (with the exception of Cabinet members) and there is insufficient space to enable a work



location or space for Councillors to hold surgeries in Council offices. All Members are asked to respect this. Specific arrangements have been implemented on particular occasions to assist individual Councillors in the event of a power cut or no internet connection, although this was by prior arrangement.

12. Information about attendance on Modern.gov.


- We have received a query about why the system chooses a specific period when displaying Councillor attendance at Committees. Also, a Member has noted a wish to explain that another organisation had arranged a meeting that coincided, which meant that they had to apologise in relation a Council meeting.
- *Any individual who views the statistics can change the period being viewed, and we have made enquiries to see whether the period of 6 months which is automatically displayed can be extended. Additionally, it is not possible to note the reason for an individual's apology, and traditionally the Councillors' annual reports have been used to provide the explanation.*

13. Options for further training.

- It was noted that the scrutiny training had been extremely useful at the beginning of the process, but that it was perhaps timely to hold a 'refresher course', as everyone now had a better understanding of the role. In addition, the praise for the specific training for Scrutiny Chairs was noted.
- It was noted that the volume of all the reports that needed to be read and understood in order to make informed decisions could be extremely challenging. It was asked whether the reports could be simplified, or training provided on how to read reports more effectively and quickly.
- *We will work with the Learning and Development service to try to arrange the above. It is noted that Councillors can arrange a 1-1 session with the Learning and Development team in order to identify training needs such as these - and I'm sure that this will serve as a reminder for some of you. We also note that there is detailed information on the about training on the Members' intranet.*

14. Safety, and support for Councillors.

- Individual members have reported that they take specific steps in relation to ensuring their personal safety while out in the community.
- Observations have also been received regarding providing emotional support to Councillors, and the need to offer face-to-face sessions to ensure that Councillors do not become depressed and isolated.
- An observation was received about the importance of ensuring timely breaks in Committees.

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- *We are continuing to address the issue of Councillor safety, and there is a specific report to the Committee today outlining the overall support for Councillors.*
 - *The policy for holding hybrid meetings also continues to be in force. In reviewing it, it will be mandatory to consider savings (Councillor travel costs) and the capacity of the Democracy team, particularly due to the current recruitment challenges.*
 - *Officers will continue to remind Chairs of the need to ensure a timely break in Committees according to need.*

15. Further action

- The Democracy team intends to hold conversations with Democracy Services in other councils to identify good practice and other working methods that could lead to opportunities for improvements. We have already held a beneficial discussion with one other Council and have shared good practice. We believe that it is a method of ensuring continuous evaluation.

Recommendation

- 16. The Democracy Services Committee is asked to note the observations and accept the report.**

Date of meeting:	16 March 2023
Subject	Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales
Recommendation	The Democratic Services Committee is asked for a recommendation for 2023/24 Senior Salaries for submission to the Full Council on 4 May 2023.
Contact Officer:	Vera Jones, Democratic and Language Services Manager

What is the background and relevant considerations?

1. A report was presented to a meeting of this committee on 17 November 2022 outlining the content of the draft report by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales. Also, it was reported on the intention to review the senior salaries that are paid in Cyngor Gwynedd. The two elements are further reported upon below.

a) The Panel's Main Decisions

2. A full copy of the report is available by clicking on the following link.

[Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales: annual report 2023 to 2024 | GOV.WALES](#)

Remuneration for elected Members

3. As reported annually, the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales independently sets the salary levels for all Councillors in Wales.
4. The basic salary will be **£17,600**.
5. The basic salary, which is paid to every elected member, is remuneration for the responsibility of representing the community and participating in the scrutiny and regulatory work and the functions associated with local governance. This is based on an amount that equates to three full days a week. This will be reviewed by the Panel during the next year.
6. If an Elected Member decides to surrender the salary, it is necessary for him/her to declare so in writing to the Head of Democratic Services. The guidance can be seen in paragraph 3.21 of the 2022/23 annual report and remains relevant to this year:

"The prescribed salary and expenses must be paid in full to each member unless an individual has independently and voluntarily opted in writing to the authority's proper officer to forego all or any element of the payment. It is fundamental there is transparency in this process so any possible suggestion that members are put under pressure to forego some of the salaries is avoided."

Senior Salaries for Elected Members

7. Although the boundaries changed in some authorities and the number of Councillors also changed as a consequence of that, the Panel has decided not to change the number of senior salaries that can be determined in the individual authorities. 18 is the maximum number of senior salaries that can be paid to Group B authorities, which includes Cyngor Gwynedd.
8. The table below shows the details of Group B payments for 2023-24.

	Remuneration Payment
Basic salary (payable to every elected member)	£17,600
Band 1: leader	£59,400
Band 2: deputy leader	£41,580
Band 2: executive members	£35,640
Band 3: committee chairs (if they receive a recognition payment)	£26,400
Band 4: the leader of the largest opposition party	£26,400
Band 5: leaders of other political groups	£21,340

9. The posts of the civic head and the deputy civic head have not been included in the cap. The civic heads are senior posts in councils and they are different to political or executive leadership. As well as chairing important meetings, the civic head is the 'first citizen' and the authority's 'ambassador', who represents the council in its dealings with all types of organisations and bodies.
10. Paying the remuneration for these roles is a decision for the Council. The level for 2023/24 has been set as follows:

Civic Head	£26,400
Deputy Civic Head	£21,340

Other costs

11. No further changes are made to the payments and benefits paid to elected members and so every other Decision from 2022 to 2023 still stand and they should be applied to 2023-24, including those that encompass:
 - travelling and subsistence
 - care and personal support
 - sickness absence
 - corporate joint-committees
 - executive assistants
 - additional salaries and job-share arrangements
 - Co-opted Members



Reviewing the Responsibilities of Committee Chairs

12. This committee was requested to review the senior salaries that are paid for 2023/24. This was as a result of the changes with the appointment of a Lay Member as Chair of the Governance and Audit Committee, leaving 17 of the 18 senior salaries earmarked for 2022/23.
13. The most sensible way of reviewing the responsibilities of Committee Chairs is to seek to assess the work pressures arising in the specific role. This was done by asking the officers with responsibility for the Council's main committees to outline the responsibilities/demands on Chairs and consult with the Chairs. The result of the work can be seen in **Appendix A**.
14. In light of information included regarding work pressures, it is recommended to adopt the following list of higher salaries for 2023/24.
 - Leader
 - Deputy Leader
 - Up to 8 other Cabinet members
 - The Leader of the largest Opposition party*
 - Committee Chairs:
 - o Scrutiny Committees (x3)
 - o Planning Committee
 - o Licensing Committee (the Central and General Licensing committees count as one Committee)
 - o Pensions Committee
 - Civic head (Chair of the Council)
 - Deputy civic head (Vice-chair of the Council)
- * (this is a specific requirement by the Panel - it is not optional)
15. It is also noted that the requirements of the Panel note a duty by the Council to pay remuneration to the Chair of the Governance and Audit Committee in accordance with Panel terms.

Recommendation

16. The Democratic Services Committee is requested to recommend the higher salaries list for 2023/24 and for the future (as seen in para. 14) to the Full Council.

APPENDIX A

RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMITTEE CHAIRS 2022/23

COMMITTEE	MEETINGS - programmed	MEETINGS - Held	ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES
Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee	5	5 (1 of them led to the 'annual scrutiny workshop')	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny Forum x 3 • Meetings with Head of Department/Cabinet Member (4 Heads of Department in total. Number of meetings varies between 1 to 4 times per year depending on the field.) • Cabinet/Scrutiny Meetings (once a year) • Chair / officer briefings - minimum of 5 times (it has been higher this year) • Annual scrutiny workshop (1/2 days) • 3 savings workshop sessions held this year • Specific briefing sessions on specific fields - 2 have been held this year so far. • 2 training sessions – Chair attended on behalf of the committee members • Councillors' point of contact to raise matters • New role with the Petitions Scheme
Communities Scrutiny Committee	5	5 (1 of them led to the 'annual scrutiny workshop')	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny Forum x 3 • Meetings with Head of Department/Cabinet Member (2 Heads of Department in total. Number of meetings approximately two times per year) • Cabinet/Scrutiny Meetings (once a year) • Chair / officer briefings- minimum of 5 times • Annual scrutiny workshop (1/2 days) • 3 savings workshop sessions held this year

COMMITTEE	MEETINGS - programmed	MEETINGS - Held	ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific briefing sessions on specific fields - one held this year. • Councillors' point of contact to raise matters • New role with the Petitions Scheme
Care Scrutiny Committee	5	5 (1 of them led to the 'annual scrutiny workshop')	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny Forum x 3 • Meetings with Head of Department/Cabinet Member (3 Heads of Department in total. Number of meetings approximately three times per year) • Cabinet/Scrutiny Meetings (once a year) • Chair / officer briefings - minimum of 5 times • Annual scrutiny workshop (1/2 days) • 3 savings workshop sessions held this year • Specific briefing sessions on specific fields – Chair meeting with Corporate Director twice a year. • Councillors' point of contact to raise matters • New role with the Petitions Scheme
Central/General Licensing Committee	4 meetings of the Central Licensing Committee and 4 General Licensing Committee	13 & 7	<p>13 General Licensing Sub-committees were held - where a hearing is required for taxi driver licence applications. This happens where the right to refuse a taxi driver licence has not been delegated to officers via the Head of Department. The chair and two members of the main licensing committee sit on the Sub-committee. The chair and members are briefed before/during each meeting.</p> <p>7 Central Licensing Sub-committees were held to determine applications for a licence to sell alcohol, where objections to an application were received.</p>

COMMITTEE	MEETINGS - programmed	MEETINGS - Held	ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES
Planning Committee	12	12	<p>Briefing meetings are held with the Chair, namely 12 of them, before every Planning Committee meeting. Up to 6 site visits are undertaken every year for some Committee applications (this in addition to 12 Planning Committee meetings), and site visits are also chaired by the Chair of the Planning Committee. Any sessions to raise awareness/hold training for the Planning Committee are chaired by the Committee Chair (up to 2 per year).</p> <p>Before Covid - annual meetings were held between Chief Planning Officers, Cabinet Members (Planning) and Planning Committee Chairs - and Welsh Government officers, including the Minister responsible for planning - and it is expected to hear whether or not these meetings will restart.</p>
Pensions Committee	5	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend Pension Board meetings (and be accountable for Pension activity for scrutiny purposes) x 5 • Chair the Investment Panel x 4 • Gwynedd Pension Fund Representative on the Welsh Pension Partnership Joint Committee x 4 • Chair the Pension Fund Employers' Annual Meeting x 1 • Represent the Council at National Meetings x 4 (4 LAPFF – Local Authority Pension Fund Forum) • Attend Training / Conferences x 2 (1 Russell Investments Conference and 1 WPP Training (Welsh Pension Partnership)) which is specifically the role of the Pension Committee Chair
Employment Appeals Committee	Usually, 11 meetings are organised (monthly	2 brief meetings - no full meetings have been held	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare towards individual employment cases - read documents, many of them voluminous, and prepare questions.

COMMITTEE	MEETINGS - programmed	MEETINGS - Held	ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES
	meeting), but due to the election, approximately 5 were noted in the diary.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage the process of holding the hearing, bearing the contentious and sensitive nature of cases for individuals in mind. • Contribute to the process of drawing up a decision letter • In very exceptional cases, the chair may be asked to attend an employment tribunal
Democratic Services Committee	3	3	Chair / officer briefings - three times a year There have been no additional requirements this year. Sometimes, it will be required to attend national meetings with the Welsh Local Government Association (about once a year) and the Independent Remuneration Panel (about once a year).
SACRE	3 – one every term	3	3 preparatory meetings; Attend Wales WASACRE meetings (online) x 3 times per year; Visit individual schools to observe collective worship (has not happened since pre-COVID)
Language Committee	4	4	Briefing meetings before every meeting. The Chair is also invited to attend a Regional Language Forum and Education Language Forum to represent the Committee. The need to correspond on behalf of the Committee from time to time (about twice a year) and to accept and respond to correspondence from the public on matters that are relevant to their Committee.
Civic Salary - Chair/vice-chair of the Council	5	5	Between May 2022 and the end of January 2023, over forty events were attended to foster identity and community pride, as well as promote the Council's benefits and reputation. Many of those occasions were held by himself by virtue of his post as Chair of the Council. Many other events involved attending an event organised by a Council department, which were led by the Leader

COMMITTEE	MEETINGS - programmed	MEETINGS - Held	ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES
			or the Cabinet Member. The rest were external invitations where he represented the Council as an ambassador.