

MEETING	DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE
DATE	11 September 2012
SUBJECT	Support for Members
PURPOSE	To submit information regarding support for members and to challenge progress on developments.
Portfolio Leader	Councillor Dyfed Edwards, Cabinet and Council Leader
AUTHOR	Geraint George Head of Democratic Services

1. As a consequence of the recent changes to Gwynedd Council's constitution, it is crucial that we establish a clear procedure for the support that is available for all members of the Council. It is the responsibility of the Democratic Services Committee to ensure that the support offered is suitable for all members.
2. As part of the support for members, an effective communications procedure must be established to ensure that:
 - clear information and timely messages are received from the Cabinet to the remainder of elected members
 - there is an opportunity for the remainder of members to ask questions and to discuss and raise important issues for them and their electors with the relevant Cabinet Member (formal and informal opportunities)

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

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

Ref	What to expect?	How?	By whom?	By when?
Information Strategy for Members <i>(Note that all these elements need to be considered in the context of the future of the Area Committees.)</i>				
1	<u>Surgeries</u> - One-to-one meetings with Cabinet Member so that members are given the opportunity to raise questions and receive updates.	It is intended to hold a pilot to assess whether the idea of surgeries will improve communication between Members of the Cabinet and non-executive members.	The Cabinet Team will be responsible for arranging the surgeries and appointments. The Cabinet Member will be responsible for recording any action issues arising from the meeting.	The pilot will be running now. Frequency of surgeries to be determined following the pilot.

Ref	What to expect?	How?	By whom?	By when?
2	<u>Information /Consultative Workshops</u> on specific subjects for members with an interest in the field.	An opportunity to submit information and /or engage with elected members on specific subjects.	The Cabinet – Cabinet Member with assistance from the Heads of Service.	As required
3	<u>Champions</u> – there is a job description for champions.	The Cabinet has received a standard job-description for the role of a Champion and has appointed three champions, with the remainder to be appointed before the end of September.	A Cabinet Member to appoint a non-executive member.	Some have been implemented – others to receive further attention before the end of September.
4	<u>Electronic information for elected members</u> Ensure that elected members are able to easily receive information electronically by means of a portable tablet.	a) Pilot of a portable provision – tablet – to be held for three months from 18 July by Cabinet members and some officers. Members will be able to receive e-mails, access to their calendar and access to public documents on the internet. Access to confidential documentation via e-mail. b) The work of developing the information portal that would be a place to ‘store’ all the relevant information has to be amended as a consequence of recent difficulties.	Responsibility of the Democratic Services Committee. Input on the technical side by the Senior IT and Business Transformation Manager. Input in terms of needs and information to be coordinated by the Strategic and Improvement Department.	The pilot to be completed by the end of September and action taken on the result of the pilot by the beginning of October (i.e. everyone to receive a tablet by October).
5	<u>Information Bulletins by Cabinet Members</u> – short bulletins. The focus will be on developmental work.	a) Information bulletins by the Cabinet as a body on a monthly basis to provide an update for all members on what the Cabinet has	a) The Cabinet Team will assist in terms of information and administration.	a) to be confirmed, probably Monthly

Ref	What to expect?	How?	By whom?	By when?
		achieved. b) Information Bulletins by individual Cabinet Members summarising what has happened in a particular field as required.	b) Responsibility of the individual member with administrative assistance and assistance in terms of information coming from the Head of Service.	(b) Occasionally
6	<u>Cabinet Members' Reports to the Council</u>	Three Cabinet members reporting at every meeting of the Council.	Cabinet Members with the assistance of the Delivery Managers	March 2013
7	<u>Meetings between Scrutiny Chairs and the Cabinet</u>	A protocol on the nature of the relationship to facilitate interaction and discussions is being developed. Meetings will be held bi-annually between members of the Scrutiny Chairs Forum and the Cabinet.	Meetings between Scrutiny Chairs and the Cabinet	Commencing October 2012 and subsequently every 6 months.

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

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

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

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

Support for all members – administrative, practical and developmental

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

	supported party.		Members' Manager – Support and Scrutiny.	
12	<u>Administer, process and pay salaries and travelling expenditures</u> of all members in a timely manner.	Travelling expenses claim forms already distributed. New clear and simple guidelines are now being developed.	Strategic and Improvement Department coordinating the work.	Now
13	<u>Annual Reports</u> by all elected members	Section 5 of the Local Government Measure (2011) noting the need to submit annual reports. A further report is on the programme.	All members with the assistance of officers from the Strategic and Improvement Department.	March 2013.
14	Training – a comprehensive programme of training – a general programme available to all and a more specialist and developmental programme available depending on a member's post.	A series of programmed training sessions provided in-house or externally. Continuous adaptation of the programme in accordance with requirements of the members.	Developments for the Cabinet under the guidance of the Cabinet Member. Democracy Services Committee to consider the developments of a training programme to the remainder of members.	Now

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

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

Specific support for the Cabinet and individual Cabinet Members				
15	Commissioning Priorities (namely developing and recommending the	A series of meetings for the Cabinet to consider which matters to prioritise,	Chief Executive and Corporate Director.	Now

	ambition and contents of the Strategic Plan).	which solutions to commission. Annual reviews of any new issues or adapt plans.	Head of Strategic and Improvement Department and the Corporate Commissioning Team within Strategic and Improvement Department.	
16	Achieve priorities (namely achieve the pledges in the Strategic Plan).	Meetings of the Delivery Panel at least every two months. Cabinet Members to consider progress on implementing the pledges and to respond as required.	Individual Cabinet Members to receive support by means of a "Delivery Panel". Cabinet Member, Corporate Director and relevant Heads of Service.	Now
17	<u>Secretarial support</u> for the Cabinet as a body	Arrange formal and informal meetings, work programme, taking the minutes etc.	The Cabinet Team	September / October
18	<u>Support for individual members</u> to undertake their day-to-day work.	Reply to correspondence, prepare reports, release press statements, prepare information for back-bench members etc.	Secretarial officers in relevant departments.	As soon as possible
19	<u>Secretarial support for individuals</u>	Keep diary, arrange meetings, photocopying etc.	Secretarial officers in relevant departments.	As soon as possible