

<b>MEETING</b>	<b>Democratic Services Committee</b>
<b>DATE</b>	<b>19 March 2013</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>Support for Members</b>
<b>PURPOSE</b>	<b>To submit an update to members regarding the support available and developments realised and those in progress.</b>
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1. The aim of Gwynedd Council is to seek the “best for the people of Gwynedd now and in the future”. Everyone has a particular role in order to ensure this, especially the Council’s elected members. Ensuring that there is an understanding of the support available to enable everyone to fulfil his/her role is vital.
2. Under the new Local Government 2011 measure, the Democratic Services Committee is responsible for ensuring sufficient and appropriate support to all Council members to fulfil their role. The committee has identified areas which need to be changed and improved and areas where work is already ongoing.
3. On 4 October 2012, a report was submitted to the full Council outlining the support available, and the support which was being developed, in particular as a result of the following changes:
  - Transition to the Cabinet regime as a result of the new Measure
  - Several new members following the May 2012 elections
4. The following table outlines what was reported to the Council on 4 October 2012 and includes an update of the current situation in the context of the developments. The report submitted to the Council also contained a piece about the support for Cabinet members. We have not included that part in this report as the main responsibility of the Committee is the support given to those members outside the Cabinet.

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

Ref	What to expect?	How?	By whom?	Frequency/When?	Update March 2013
<b>Information Strategy for Members</b>					
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 to be run shortly. Frequency of surgeries to be determined following the pilot.	Some Cabinet members have held surgeries, some in the areas, but work of assessing their success has not yet been undertaken. This will be programmed to happen over the next few months.
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	Several workshops have been held when preparing the Strategic Plan and also the Financial Strategy. The informal feedback from members who attended the workshops was favourable and we will be incorporating further similar opportunities into the programme over the coming year.
3	<u>Champions</u> – there is a job	The Cabinet has received a	A Cabinet Member to	Some have been implemented –	Five champions have now been appointed -

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	description for champions.	standard job-description for the role of a Champion and has appointed three and the remainder will be appointed before the end of September.	appoint a non-executive member.	others to receive further attention shortly	<p>Older People – Gareth Thomas  Carers – Eryl Jones-Williams  Disability – Peter Read  Autism – Elin Walker Jones  Vice of Children and Young People – Mair Rowlands</p> <p>The Cabinet will consider two others on 20 March.</p>
3b	<u>Area Assemblies</u>				<p>A unanimous decision was made in the Council that four area assemblies would be established to start work in May. In the meantime, the relevant Cabinet Member (Ioan Thomas) along with the cross-party working group and officers, will address the details of how the assemblies will take place (what sort of support will be provided, guidelines on the form and procedure of meetings etc.) in order for them to start their work immediately after the annual Council meeting. Having said that, and as was clearly noted in the report to the Council, these will be guidelines only and it will be a matter for the assemblies themselves to decide on their systems for implementation, bearing in mind that they will not be formal committees and that the procedural rules</p>

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					will not be relevant to them.
4	<p><u>Electronic information for elected members</u> Ensure that elected members are able to easily receive information electronically by means of a portable tablet.</p>	<p>a) Pilot of a portable provision – tablet – to be held for a period by Cabinet members. Members will be able to receive e-mails, access to their calendar and access to public documents on the internet. Access to confidential documents via e-mail.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>The pilot to be completed by the end of September and to implement on the result of the pilot by the end of October.</p>	<p>It was managed to ensure that every elected member had been offered and given the opportunity if they so wished to receive electronic equipment (iPad) and basic training on how to use it. By now, a substantial number of members use their iPads as their main method of communication and report that they receive information in a much easier and more timely manner through the new technology.</p> <p>By the date of the Democratic Services Committee, over 70 of the 75 current elected member will have received an iPad in order to receive their correspondence and documents via electronic methods where possible.</p> <p>In addition, dates for further training sessions – an opportunity to ask questions and receive guidance on how to make better use of the equipment - have been identified, to be reported orally to the committee.</p> <p>It should be noted that the development has not been as fast and problem-free as</p>

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					<p>first anticipated as the timetable has slipped and we have had to continue to distribute information electronically and in hard copy format for some time. Electronic copies only will be distributed from now on, with the exception of those elected members who do not have iPads.</p> <p>It should also be noted that there have been some problems with a few accounts and <u>it is the elected members' responsibility in such circumstances to contact the IT helpdesk in order to resolve the problem.</u> (01286 679014).</p>
		<p>b) The work of developing the information portal that would be a place to 'capture' all the relevant information has to be amended as a consequence of recent</p>		<p>The Council resolved that the developments of the information portal would not continue as originally intended, with the IT service investigating alternative methods of fulfilling the members' requirements.</p>	

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		difficulties.			
5	Information Bulletins by Cabinet Members – short bulletins. The focus will be on developmental work.	<p>a) Information bulletins by the Cabinet as a body on a monthly basis to provide an update for all members on what the Cabinet has achieved.</p> <p>b) Information Bulletins by individual Cabinet Members summarising what has happened in a particular field as required.</p>	<p>a) The Cabinet Team will assist in terms of information and administration.</p> <p>b) Responsibility of the individual member with administrative assistance and assistance in terms of information from the Head of Service.</p>	<p>a) To be confirmed – presumed on a monthly basis.</p> <p>(b) Occasionally</p>	<p>A lengthy discussion was held, with members and officers, to agree on the format of the bulletin and it is now intended to address four headings, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Information about what the Cabinet or individual members of the Cabinet do</li> <li>➤ Information about member support matters (training etc.)</li> <li>➤ Information about what is happening within the Council in a broader sense (latest news/press releases)</li> <li>➤ Information about matters within wards (road works/disposal of properties etc.)</li> </ul> <p>The information bulletin is seen as one valuable tool to address the members' need for information and for the Council to act in an inclusive manner and the value of the bulletin to the members will be assessed during the year.</p> <p>An e-mail was sent to all member on 15 March to present the bulletin and, in order to ensure that we address the information needs, an electronic questionnaire will be</p>

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					<p>sent to them on 22 March.</p> <p>The first issue will be published on 15 April and on a monthly basis thereafter.</p>
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	<p>A procedure has started of having a Cabinet member reporting on an element of his/her work in every Council meeting, with an opportunity for members to ask questions. The following presentations have already been made:</p> <p>December Council meeting – Cllr Sian Gwenllian (challenges in the education field)</p> <p>January Council meeting – Cllr Brian Jones (changes to the welfare system)</p> <p>February Council meeting – Cllr R H Wyn Williams (developments in the care field)</p> <p>It is intended to continue with this procedure for the next few meetings and then assess the value.</p>
7	<u>Meetings between Scrutiny Chairs and the Cabinet</u>	Protocol on the nature of the relationship in order to discuss and facilitate	Meetings between Scrutiny Chairs and the Cabinet	Commencing October 2012 and subsequently every 6 months.	Initial meeting between the Scrutiny Chairs' Forum and the Cabinet was held at the end of September 2012 and was of benefit to all members in order to establish a protocol on the nature of the relationship and ensuring respect and

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		networking is being discussed. Meetings will be held bi-annually between members of the Scrutiny Chairs Forum and the Cabinet.			<p>collaboration in order to do the best for the residents of Gwynedd.</p> <p>A second meeting has been organised to have an open and constructive discussion to assess progress to date and share lessons learned by the Scrutinisers and Cabinet. The meeting will be held on 17 April 2013, in order to allow us to move on to the future.</p>

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

Support for Local Members to fulfil their roles					
Ref	What to expect?	How?	By whom?	By when?	UPDATE MARCH 2013
8	<u>Timely information on developments or consultations on developments in the local area of elected members.</u>	Cabinet Member or Heads of Service to try to identify when specific work or developments are in the pipeline in any	Cabinet Member, Head of Service or any specific Project Leader.	Regularly	See comments above about the Information Bulletin.

		field in the wards of the local members and contact elected members in a timely manner to inform them.			
9	<u>Responding to enquiries or complaints by Local Members.</u>	Local Member to contact the specific service first of all to seek an answer to the enquiry. If the answer provided is not adequate, the matter should be referred to the attention of the relevant Cabinet Member to ensure an answer is given.	Responsibility on the local member to follow the correct steps to ensure a response.	Regularly	This procedure is already in place but there is no detailed information regarding how often it is implemented. There have been some examples of members expressing their complaints in the press before following this procedure and there was a discussion on that in the Business Group on 18 February. Members are urged to use the appropriate systems in the first place as it is more likely to lead to a resolution to the enquiry.
10	<u>Individual Members' Right in Cabinet meetings</u>	Cabinet meetings are public meetings and,	Cabinet team's responsibility to identify local members for	Regularly	Update not needed – report has already been given.

		therefore, individual members are entitled to be present. The Local Member is invited to be present in relation to local matters. Cabinet agendas are distributed via a link to all members.	local items and local members' responsibility to ensure that he/she is aware of the content of the Cabinet agenda.		
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Support for Scrutiny Members and to various other committees					
Ref	What to expect?	How?	By whom?	By when?	
11	<u>Independent advice and 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 programme	Head of Democracy Services, Senior Corporate Commissioning Service Manager and the team within	Now	The three Scrutiny Committees have received training on their role and have been receiving independent advice and guidance continually during the months since their establishment. As the role of the committee has changed, they have taken some time to establish.  It should be noted that the Wales Audit

		including challenging progress and hold the Cabinet to account and ensure that scrutiny adds value.	the Strategic and Improvement Department.		<p>Office recently facilitated a peer investigation to improve Scrutiny in Wales. As part of the work, a team from Conwy observed two Scrutiny Committees in Gwynedd and they gave positive initial observations on the running of those scrutiny committees. A full report by the observation team will follow.</p> <p>Additionally, the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-chairs Forum has been formalised and established, with invitations also extended to the Chairs and Vice-chairs of the Audit Committee and Democratic Services Committee to attend. The forum is considering the work programme and priority fields across all Committees.</p>
12	<u>Administrate and take the minutes at meetings</u> (scrutiny and others) and publish the minutes	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.	<p>Administering and taking minutes of meetings has been undertaken successfully over the last year, with the minutes published on the Council website.</p> <p>It should be noted that work to modernise Dafydd Orwig Chamber has been undertaken, and work is still ongoing in Hywel Dda Chamber. The sound and translation systems have improved greatly at Dafydd Orwig Chamber, and the new voting system is easier to use. The modernisation work prepares us further for the future requirements regarding</p>

					webcasting.
13	<u>Scrutiny Investigations</u> to examine the impact of policies at grass roots level (an in-depth examination of a specific subject) Start and finish investigation.	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.	Members of the Scrutiny Committees supported by the Democratic Service Unit and the Performance and Efficiency Unit within the Strategic and Improvement Department.	In accordance with the agreed work programmes, each Scrutiny Committee will undertake one investigation at a time.	<p>Two 'start and finish' scrutiny investigations have already reported to the Scrutiny Committees with the recommendations submitted to the relevant Cabinet Member. The two investigations which have already reported are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Systems Thinking (Corporate Scrutiny Committee)</li> <li>• Housing Scrutiny Investigation (Communities Scrutiny Committee)</li> </ul> <p>Members and officers have also held a session to learn lessons after these two investigations in order to try to improve for the future.</p> <p>Other fields have been identified for the next investigations by the Scrutinisers, namely the rural agenda, Bangor Pride and Procurement by the Council.</p> <p>In addition, an investigation commissioned by the relevant Cabinet Member is also currently ongoing into the education quality field and it is expected to report to the cabinet member shortly.</p>

<b>Support for all members – administrative, practical and developmental</b>					
<b>Ref</b>	<b>What</b>	<b>to</b>	<b>How?</b>	<b>By whom?</b>	<b>By when?</b>
					<b>UPDATE MARCH 2013</b>

	expect?				
14	<u>Administrative support for political groups</u> , such as arranging meetings, taking minutes, a service for typing letters, photocopying and coordinating response of the supported party.	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, Members' Manager – Support and Scrutiny.	Now	Administrative support to the political groups has been implemented in accordance with what was decided by the full Council in May 2012.
15	<u>Administrative, process and pay salaries and travelling expenses</u> of all members in a timely manner.	Travelling expenses claim forms already distributed. New clear and simple guidelines have now been developed.	Strategic and Improvement Department coordinating the work.	Now	<p>Arrangements for administrating, processing and paying salaries and travelling expenses are ongoing in a timely manner and in compliance with the guidelines of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales on Financial Recognition. Guidelines on claiming are on-line.</p> <p>It should be noted that an independent report had been received from Internal Audit to confirm that the new, current arrangements are correct but that there is room to remind members to submit their application on a monthly basis in accordance with the guidance.</p>

16	<u>Annual Reports</u> by elected members	Section 5 of the Local Government Measure (2011) noting the need to submit annual reports. Awaiting further guidelines on the need for members to be producing annual reports, but it is currently understood that it is necessary for the Council to ensure that support is in place to assist members to produce annual reports.	All members (awaiting confirmation) with the assistance of officers from the Strategic and Improvement Department. It is recommended that members keep a record of what they currently do.	March 2012. (Again awaiting guidelines to confirm the exact requirements).	See additional report about annual reports of elected members to the Democratic Services Committee.
17	Training – a comprehensive programme of	A series of programmed training	Developments of the Cabinet under the	Now	See additional report about annual reports of elected members to the Democratic Services Committee.

	<p>training – a general programme available to all and a more specialist and developmental programme available depending on a member's post.</p>	<p>sessions provided in-house or externally. Continuous adaptation of the programme in accordance with requirements of the members.</p>	<p>guidance of the Cabinet Member.</p> <p>Democracy Services Committee to consider the developments of a training programme to the remainder of the members.</p> <p>A questionnaire to be sent out to members in order to have further consideration of the nature and order of the training programme – to be discussed by the sub-group established by the Democratic Services Committee.</p>		
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