

MEETING	Democratic Services Committee
DATE	10 March 2015
SUBJECT	Improvement Grant - Welsh Government
PURPOSE	Present the latest information and seek guidance on the way forward.
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Background

1. The arrival of the Local Government Measure 2011 (Wales) brought considerable requirements and expectations on elected members. The Measure also outlines the requirements for Local Government to support members to fulfill their roles successfully. This support can be offered through a number of ways (Training, clear role descriptions, personal development interviews and so on).
2. The Committee will remember that the Wales Local Government Association (WLGA) have played an integral part supporting Local Government to fulfill the requirements of the Measure by leading on certain developments and developing other elements in partnership with Local Government. A number of topics of discussion by this Committee has been based upon guidance by the Wales Local Government Association over the last few years.
3. We now understand that the Minister for Local Services, Leighton Andrews has decided that the Welsh Government Improvement Grant will cease at the end of March 2015.
4. As things currently stand, this will lead to the Improvement and Equality Team within the WLGA and the Local Government Data Unit which is responsible for performance data, ceasing to exist. The services provided by these teams will come to an end.

Competency Framework Consultation.

5. The competency Framework consultation, which is included in Appendix A is an example of the work lead by the WLGA, it is an important tool to support elected members. The consultation has been shared with all members through Rhaeadr on 6th February, with a request for members to provide any comments for the Committee to consider or provide comments directly to the WLGA.

Member Support and Development Charter

6. The WLGA developed the Member Support and Development Charter, known as the 'Member Charter'. The new Charter was developed in 2012/13 following

consultation with political arenas and member support officers from various Councils. Elements of the Charter build upon the requirements of the Local Government Measure 2011 (Wales) mentioned above.

7. Currently, however, due to the situation noted in 3 and 4 above, with the abolishment of the Equality and Improvement Team within the WLGA, Gwynedd Council will no longer be able to achieve the Charter as no further awards can be made.
8. However, elements included in the Charter are considered to be very important and valuable (eg suitable role descriptions, ensuring a full training programme etc) as they endorse the Council's principles for supporting elected members development to ensure they are able to undertake their role successfully. It is considered that we should continue to identify and work towards the important elements within the Charter in order to ensure that the relevant support is given to Member development within Gwynedd Council. This is also very important with consideration to the forthcoming Local Government elections, with the aim to ensure everything is in place by then.
9. It is recommended that the Committee
 - A) Consider any comments they have with regards to the competency framework consultation, especially with regards to the specific questions asked.
 - B) Support the Head of Democratic Services to continue to identify the important elements of the Charter in order to ensure the appropriate support is developed for the members of Gwynedd Council. It is important to continue with this work with the aim of ensuring all important elements are in place prior to the next Local Government elections.