



Complete Agenda

Democratic Service
Swyddfa'r Cyngor
CAERNARFON
Gwynedd
LL55 1SH

Meeting

DEMOCRACY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Date and Time

2.00 pm, TUESDAY, 5TH JULY, 2022

Location

Virtual Meeting - Zoom

For public access to the meeting, please contact us.

Contact Point

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(DISTRIBUTED 27/06/22)

DEMOCRACY SERVICES COMMITTEE

MEMBERSHIP (15)

Plaid Cymru (9)

Councillors

Annwen Hughes
Olaf Cai Larsen
Gwynfor Owen
Arwyn Herald Roberts
Empty Seat

Linda Ann Jones
Edgar Wyn Owen
Llio Elenid Owen
Beca Roberts

Independent (5)

Councillors

Anwen J. Davies
Eryl Jones-Williams
Empty Seat

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. ELECT VICE-CHAIR

2. APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies for absence.

3. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

To receive any declaration of personal interest.

4. URGENT ITEMS

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

5. MINUTES

4 - 8

The Chairman shall propose that the minutes of the last meeting of this committee held on 17 February, 2022 be signed as a true record.

6. ROLE OF THE DEMOCRACY SERVICES COMMITTEE

9 - 11

Head of Corporate Support to submit information about the role of the Democracy Services Committee.

7. REVIEW COUNCILLOR INDUCTION ARRANGEMENTS

12 - 15

To ask Committee members for observations on the induction arrangements following the May 2022 Election.

8. MULTI-LOCATION MEETINGS

16 - 17

To provide an update on practical developments for holding hybrid meetings.

DEMOCRACY SERVICES COMMITTEE THURSDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2022

PRESENT:

Councillors:

Anne Lloyd Jones (Chair), Gwynfor Owen, Annwen Hughes, Olaf Cai Larsen, Edgar Wyn Owen, Linda Ann Jones, Judith Mary Humphreys, Eryl Jones-Williams, Hefin Underwood, Anwen J Davies and Dewi Owen.

Officers: Iwan Evans (Head of Legal Services), Vera Jones (Democracy and Language Services Manager), Annes Sion (Democracy Team Leader), Sioned Mai Jones (Democracy Services Officer) and Ffion Bryn Jones (Democracy Services Officer).

1. APOLOGIES

An apology had been received from Geraint Owen (Head of Corporate Support Department).

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

There were no declarations of personal interest.

3. URGENT ITEMS

No urgent items were raised.

4. MINUTES

The Chair accepted the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee, held on 16 November 2021, as a true record.

5. UPDATE ON THE MAY 2022 ELECTIONS

RESOLVED:

To accept the report and to note the information.

The item was presented by the Democracy Service Team Leader.

It was noted that a lot of organising and planning had been happening behind the scenes for around a year in preparation for the May 2022 Elections. She announced that information sessions for prospective councillors would be held virtually on 28 February and on 7 March. It was explained that these sessions would be a good opportunity for applicants to have an opportunity to ask any questions that concerned them and to share relevant information.

She went on to explain that preparations were in place for the welcome and induction days for the councillors that would be elected in the elections. It was explained that the plans for the welcome days this year were in line with the comments and feedback received following the 2017 elections. It was noted as a part of these plans that arrangements were being made for members of the democracy team to update the website with the election results efficiently on results day.

During the discussion the following observations were made:

- Enquiries were made about the guidance being provided to applicants before the election. It was explained that the electoral period would begin on 18 March, and would end on 5 April. It was noted that robust guidance would be given in the information sessions and this guidance would be placed on the website as soon as it was finalised.
- It was asked whether there was an intention for the election plans to be adapted as had been done with the Senedd Elections in 2021, in compliance with the Covid-19 regulations. In response, it was noted that the Elections Team would be making these arrangements and publishing them once finalised, ensuring that the Covid arrangements were taken into account. It was also noted that a system of confirming the election results on-line within minutes of their announcement would reduce the number of people who needed to be in the election halls.
- Following the changes to the wards, it was asked whether the electoral roll and polling stations had been adapted. It was noted that work was currently being done to adapt the electoral roll along with arrangements for new locations for polling stations.

6. DIVERSITY IN DEMOCRACY

RESOLVED:

- a) To accept the report, noting the observations made during the meeting.**
- b) To establish formal arrangements for Female Councillors following the May 2022 Election.**

An update was received from the Democracy and Language Service Manager on the actions taken by the Council in an attempt to encourage more diversity in Democracy. It was explained that Gwynedd Council's Diversity Statement had been published in October 2021, before a work programme had been adopted by the Full Council at its meeting on 2 December 2021.

The Committee's attention was drawn to the recent Statement that had been signed by all Welsh Council Leaders to hold a fair and respectful electoral campaign. It was believed that this would encourage diversity in Democracy and that it would add to this Council's work programme. As a result of the Statement, everyone who campaigned for the election were asked to treat each other with respect and courtesy.

It was added that the feedback that had been received in the form of questionnaires about the Women who are Councillors sessions had been very positive to date.

During the discussion the following observations were made:

- Pride was expressed about the Statement on a fair and respectful campaign and its importance was acknowledged.
- It was believed that a proportional voting system was needed and that this would attract new candidates as it made it easier for them to put their names forward.
- A comment was made that the number of Councillors should be reduced further, thus making the post a full-time one, in order to promote diversity.
- The Council's actions in this respect were accepted.

- It was expressed that the Women who are Councillors sessions had been beneficial and had given members an opportunity to discuss openly and informally and share experiences. It was believed that they were particularly useful for new Councillors.
- It was suggested that similar sessions for Men who are Councillors could be arranged should members so wish.

7. UPDATE ON HYBRID MEETINGS

RESOLVED:

To accept the report and to note the information.

The item was presented by the Democracy and Language Service Manager.

The Committee was given an update about the arrangements for hybrid meetings. It was noted that the Full Council had decided which committees would be held as hybrid meetings within the committees calendar - namely the Full Council, Cabinet, Scrutiny Committees, as well as the Planning Committee.

It was explained that the Welsh Government's Covid regulations had slowed down the opportunities to develop the arrangements for hybrid meetings. However, it was noted that there had been opportunities to test the system and that the Head of Corporate Support had approved it.

Gratitude was expressed to the workforce of the Democracy and Language service for playing their part in the development of the system by conducting regular exercises and tests in order to identify any weak spots. It was noted that the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer would be trialling this system soon.

It was expressed that training and guidance would be held for Councillors on attending hybrid meetings, and training for Committee Chairs in particular. It was explained that protocols would be developed for such meetings.

During the discussion, the following observations were noted:

- Pride was expressed in seeing the progress in the development of the hybrid meetings - it was asked whether it would be possible to support Community Councils and Governing Bodies to enable them to conduct their meetings as hybrid meetings. In response, it was noted that the chamber's system had been installed, but that there were no mobile systems. It was noted that the translation team had been assisting some community councils on how to obtain an on-line translation system.
- It was asked whether it would be possible to have guidelines and a clear point of contact for those members who were having difficulties joining meetings, as it was not possible for committee members to be aware of their difficulties and their attendance status. It was noted that having a contact number on the front page of agendas was unsuitable as this contact was usually taking minutes at the meeting. It was explained that it was possible to contact the generic Democratic Service e-mail address.
- It was expressed that better training was needed on how to use devices and join meetings. It was noted that training was available to anyone, at any time they needed it.
- Confirmation was sought on whether the development of hybrid meetings would be shared with the information about elections, as this could attract a variety of people to stand as councillors. It was confirmed that this was most definitely being noted and that further information would be shared at the information sessions.

8. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

RESOLVED:

To accept the report and support the Committees Calendar for 2022/23 and recommend it to the Full Council meeting on 3 March 2022.

The Meetings Calendar for the 2022/23 Committee year was presented. It was explained that the Calendar had been developed jointly with the Council's Departments in order to ensure that Committees were being held in a timely way. It was added that the time of the Committees would be confirmed with members after the election, after confirming what times would be most convenient.

There were no further comments and members were happy with the dates and they recommended the Calendar to the Full Council.

9. FINANCIAL REMUNERATION AND SENIOR SALARIES

DECISION

- a) To accept the report that notes which roles will receive senior salaries for 2022/23 and recommend it to the Full Council.**
- b) To review the list for 2023/24.**

The Democracy and Language Services Manager noted that she was awaiting a final report from the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales by the end of the month. It was expressed that the information would be outlined in the Democracy Services Committee's bulletin.

It was noted that the main point to draw attention to was the recommendation to reduce the number of members on higher salaries from 18 to 17, by removing the Governance and Audit Committee from the list of chairpersons on a higher salary. It was explained that the Council was expected, in line with the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, to appoint the Chair of the Governance and Audit Committee from amongst the Lay Members from May 2022 onwards. It was explained that it would be sensible for the Democracy Services Committee to review the list of higher salary posts in full during 2022/23 to ensure that the correct roles continued to receive the higher financial remuneration.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- It was noted that the Chair of the Democratic Services Committee should receive remuneration in the form of a higher salary since it came with quite a responsibility. It was noted, in line with the recommendation, that the responsibilities of all Committee Chairs could be assessed, but that this could not be done before May.
- It was asked whether all Council committees were statutory, however, it was noted that they were not and rather they were appointed as required by the Local Authority. Consequently, it was expressed that there was room for new Councillors to assess the current structure and make a recommendation for 2023/24.
- It was expressed that this report was being presented at the wrong time, considering that many families were in financial difficulties, whilst the Council was proposing to distribute more money.

10. THE DEMOCRACY SERVICES TEAM'S PERFORMANCE REPORT

DECISION

To accept the report, noting the observations made during the meeting.

A report was submitted on the performance of the Democracy Services Team. It was noted that the team already reported to the Departmental performance challenging process but it was believed that it would also be beneficial for this Committee to receive an update and have an opportunity to express an opinion on the team's work.

Reference was made to the questionnaires that were completed by Members twice a year about the team's performance, as well as the 1:1 conversations with Members that had now commenced. It was intended to hold these conversations regularly and that this work would continue over the coming months. It was added that the Democracy Services team also received comments from the public; further details on this feedback could be seen in the report.

To close, it was noted that a report on the Democracy team would be submitted to every Democratic Services Committee meeting in the future, so that Members received regular information about the team's work.

During the discussion the following observations were made:

- A comment was made that the public should be given an opportunity to convey their feelings about how Council Members acted on their behalf and on behalf of the Council. For the 2022/23 Committee year, it was suggested that this Committee should ask and receive information about specific problems by the public and discuss them at the meetings. It was suggested that providing a questionnaire for the public would be a way of ascertaining this information.

The meeting commenced at 14:00 and concluded at 15:10

CHAIR

GWYNEDD COUNCIL



Committee:	Democracy Services Committee
Date of meeting:	5 July 2022
Title of Item:	The Role of the Democracy Services Committee
Purpose:	To submit information about the role of the Democracy Services Committee
Contact Officer(s):	Geraint Owen, Head of Democracy Services

Report to a meeting of the Democracy Services Committee

1. THE DECISION SOUGHT

- The Democracy Services Committee is asked to note the information submitted.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 A specific role for the Democracy Services Committee is set out in the Local Government (Wales) Act 2011. It is noted in the Act that the Democracy Services Committee is responsible for certain matters (under Section 11), as follows:
- Appoint a Head of Democracy Services on behalf of the local authority
 - Review the available support for the Head of the Democracy 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.
- 2.2 There are 15 members on the Committee. Membership is based on the political balance of the Council, seeking to ensure representation from all political groups. The Chair is appointed by the full Council on an annual basis. It is the responsibility

of the committee to appoint a vice-chair. The Chair has an important role as a point of contact for all Council members to discuss any support requirements in their role.

- 2.3 As Head of the Democracy Service, I continue to emphasise that an open dialogue with you as Elected Members is a necessity in order to ensure that the support provided to you responds to your needs for the role. Therefore, I encourage you to contact me or the Chair of the Committee to raise any relevant matters. As members of the Committee, you have a responsibility to represent your fellow members, raising issues on their behalf.
- 2.4 As you are all aware, I presented my annual report to the full Council meeting on 23 June this year.
- 2.5 Over the last Council term, there has been progress with the provision offered to elected Members as a result of issues raised by the committee. Please note below some examples:
- Develop the Members Intranet to be easier to use
 - Develop useful guidance and links for how to look after yourself e.g. setting a workstation correctly, considerations when running surgeries with the public, mental health support e.g. through Medra
 - Input into arrangements for virtual and hybrid meetings
 - Input into the arrangements for the election, including offering options of IT provision, developing the Members' Handbook and identifying/prioritising an information and training programme.
- 2.6 It is likely that committee members will pay attention to the following issues over the next year or two.

Building on this year's developments

- 2.7 The focus this year will be on trying to ensure that you receive the necessary information and training to enable you to fulfil your role and to develop within it. A programme of presentations and training is available to you, but please remember to contact the Learning and Development Team if you wish to receive any further or specific training.
- 2.8 We will continue with the informal sessions for female Councillors and also hold similar sessions for new Councillors. This will be an opportunity for informal discussions, to ask any questions and support each other in your role.
- 2.9 We will also implement the Committee Arrangements Framework and move on to offer hybrid provision for meetings of the Full Council, Cabinet, Planning Committee

and Scrutiny Committees. Considerable work has been carried out in this field already, but there is always room for improvement. We will be working together with you on this over the coming months.

Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

2.10 The requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 will come into effect gradually and the details of the requirements continue to be developed. We will need to ensure that we comply with the conditions of the Act, looking in detail at some elements such as;

- webcasting requirements,
- a duty to encourage local people to participate when local government make decisions,
- a duty to make and publish a petitions plan,
- continue with the remote access work to ensure that it is possible to facilitate Members to contribute to committees.
- Secure an annual review of the individual training requirements of every Councillor
- Review committee start times

2.11 Some issues are discussed on an annual basis by this committee, including the annual consultation by the Independent Panel on Financial Remuneration (wales), relevant legal requirements in the field, the draft Head of Democracy, committee calendar for the year.

2.12 I look forward to your input to progress this work.

Agenda Item 7

GWYNEDD COUNCIL



Committee:	Democracy Services Committee
Date of meeting:	5 July 2022
Title of Item:	Review Councillor induction arrangements
Purpose:	To ask Committee members for observations on the induction arrangements following the May 2022 Election.
Contact Officer(s):	Vera Jones, Democracy and Language Services Manager

Report to a meeting of the Democracy Services Committee

1. THE DECISION SOUGHT

- The Democracy Services Committee is asked to make observations on the Councillor induction arrangements following the 2022 Election in order to learn lessons prior to the 2027 election.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 Over the past eighteen months, members of the Democracy Services Committee have been focusing on developing arrangements for the new Council term following the May 2022 election. There was an opportunity for members to provide input to the arrangements for various elements, including the awareness raising sessions about the election for the public, the arrangements for the Welcome days, the programme to present information and training, along with IT provision.
- 2.2 We are extremely pleased to have received positive observations about the arrangements, but are fully aware that there is always room for improvement. As we normally do, it is important to try to capture and record what went well and what we should consider changing next time, while it is all still fresh in our minds. A few comments about the arrangements are set out below as a starting point for the discussion.

RESULTS DAY

- 2.3 In accordance with our normal arrangements, the count and declaration of the results took place in Caernarfon and Dolgellau. As part of the arrangements, the Democracy and Language Service welcomed the new councillors and ensured that we collected the necessary details from them in order to process email addresses, payroll numbers, meeting requests etc., all of which took place within 1 working day of the result.
- 2.4 The service was also responsible for declaring the results on the website, with the information readily available by ward and as a total across Gwynedd by party, live. At the same time tweets were updating the public of the results.
- 2.5 The count was completed and all results declared by 2 o'clock that afternoon, which was a particularly good performance and very quick compared to a number of other authorities. The information was also clear on a ward-by-ward basis in Gwynedd, and that could be filtered rather than having to work through one long list that was not in particular order, like some other authorities.
- 2.6 We are aware that a small number of tweets were published before the web site was updated, and we have identified this as a lesson for the future.
- 2.7 We are also aware that some users had not been updating the results page and have therefore noted that the results had not been declared. We can ensure that there is guidance to assist the public with this next time.

WELCOME DAY

- 2.8 Two welcome days were held, on the 10th and 11th of May this year. All members were invited to attend one of the two days. There was a combination of returning and new councillors in the sessions on both days. It was nice to welcome 25 new councillors. Most were able to attend over the two days, 5 of whom attended virtually. The purpose of the days was to:
 - seek to present the necessary information to Councillors before new Council business resumes
 - ensure that all Councillors had signed to accept the post and have an introduction to the code of conduct
 - give Councillors the opportunity to meet other Councillors
 - arrange IT provision for all

- 2.9 Following comments from Members of the Democracy Services Committee, a short handbook for all Councillors was developed as a directory resource to obtain more information and to take with them from the welcome days. Committee members also assisted in prioritising the information to be presented to Councillors at the start of the new term. It is not an easy task to strike the right balance in this regard. Alongside this, the Members Intranet has been developed to be easier to use and as a point of information for Councillors. This is a continuous development, and we kindly ask that anyone with ideas to improve the provision contact us. A training session will also be provided soon.
- 2.10 Councillors who wanted to were offered remote access for the first time on the welcome days. Comments were received that it had all worked smoothly for those who had joined via zoom.
- 2.11 However, there were some challenges that needed to be overcome. There was a wi-fi connection problem on the Tuesday, with a number of Councillors having to wait a long time for their IT provision or had to leave without receiving their equipment. The arrangements for the second day were adapted and the problems were overcome. It should also be noted that the IT team attended the day of the first meeting of full Council to assist councillors with any questions that arose.

INFORMATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMME

- 2.12 10 virtual sessions, 1 by each of the Heads of Department have been held between 23 May, 2022 and 4 July, 2022. All sessions have been recorded and will all be placed on the Members Intranet for any Councillor who was unable to attend to watch them, or for any other Councillor to refer back to at any time. The numbers attending these sessions varied greatly.
- 2.13 At the same time training sessions have also been held virtually in line with the work programme that had been created. We are aware that the first year of a new Council is very demanding in terms of requirements on all Councillors, and that it is a difficult balance in terms of ensuring that the necessary information is available in a timely manner to all.

LEARNING LESSONS

- 2.14 In general, the main comments that have been made in order to learn lessons to the future are as follows:

- Timetable See if the timetable for the first events following the election can be extended e.g. welcome days, annual meeting of full council, start of committee cycle etc. to allow more time to put things in motion behind the scenes.
- Welcome Days.
 - Consider a specific day to receive IT provision, or a different procedure for receiving and returning IT provision, although everything worked smoothly on the second day.
 - Consider a specific day for new Councillors only, but with the need to consider an event that enables new Councillors to get to know returning Councillors
 - Expand on remote access provision for welcome days
 - Consider smaller groups to enable more conversation rather than presentations.
- Information and training
 - Consider how to further prioritise the information being presented over the initial period.

Agenda Item 8

GWYNEDD COUNCIL



Committee:	Democracy Services Committee
Date of meeting:	5 July 2022
Title of Item:	Multi-Location meetings
Purpose:	An update on practical developments for holding hybrid meetings.
Contact Officer(s):	Geraint Owen, Head of Democracy Services

Report to a meeting of the Democracy Services Committee

1. THE DECISION SOUGHT

- The Democracy Services Committee is asked to note the information submitted.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 Since October 2020 all Council meetings have been held virtually with simultaneous translation provision via Zoom. By now, such meetings are second nature for the Councillors and everyone is familiar with the arrangements. We were able to hold 123 Council committee meetings virtually during 2021/22 as well as supporting 41 informal meetings for Councillors.
- 2.2 In December 2021, the Full Council decided on the long-term arrangements for holding Council committee meetings. The decision was to continue to hold meetings virtually wherever possible and hold hybrid meetings when there is a high level of interest from the public. Therefore, we are holding hybrid meetings for
- The Full Council
 - The Cabinet
 - Planning Committee
 - Scrutiny Committees

- 2.3 Obvious benefits and good practice have emerged from holding virtual meetings, practices that need to be maintained in future. In adopting the arrangements consideration was given to a number of different factors including
- promoting diversity in democracy by enabling remote access to virtual meetings and responding to the needs of Councillors who work and/or have young families
 - Contribute positively to reducing the impact of the Climate Crisis by identifying ways of reducing carbon by limiting travelling for councillors and officers
 - make wiser use of Councillors and officers' time by removing the need for travel.
- 2.4 In light of the decision to hold formal committee meetings virtually wherever possible and hold multi-location meetings when there is a high level of interest from the public, we have been working on amending the facilities in the meeting chambers to enable holding this type of meeting. It has been a challenge to bring the arrangements together, especially while ensuring that it all happens naturally through the medium of Welsh and enable simultaneous translation. It is easy to forget that all of the development work had to happen within Covid-19 restrictions, as we faced months of guidance to work from home.
- 2.5 I can now confirm that we have held meetings of the Full Council, Cabinet and Planning Committee as multi-location meetings. The first round of the scrutiny committee will begin in July - again as multi-location meetings. By now it is possible to hold multi-location meetings based at both chambers – Siambr Dafydd Orwig Chamber and Siambr Hywel Dda. I am grateful to you all for your co-operation as we continue to develop these arrangements.
- 2.6 Coupled with the above, work is taking place on developing other meeting rooms for informal hybrid meetings. One system will be ordered for each room with a focus on trying to ensure that the use of the system is the same in all rooms, although the hardware may vary depending on the size of the room.