



Complete Agenda

Democracy Service
Swyddfa'r Cyngor
CAERNARFON
Gwynedd
LL55 1SH

Meeting

DEMOCRACY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Date and Time

1.00 pm, TUESDAY, 18TH FEBRUARY, 2025

Location

Virtual Meeting

For public access to the meeting, please contact us

Contact Point

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(DISTRIBUTED 10/02/25)

DEMOCRACY SERVICES COMMITTEE

MEMBERSHIP (14)

Plaid Cymru (9)

Councillors

Annwen Hughes
Olaf Cai Larsen

Beca Roberts
Sian Williams

Linda Ann Jones
Edgar Wyn Owen
Arwyn Herald Roberts
Ioan Thomas
John Pughe

Independent (4)

Councillors

Anwen J. Davies
Eryl Jones-Williams

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 - 8

The Chairman shall propose that the minutes of the last meeting of this committee held on 12th November 2024 be signed as a true record.

5. LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROVISION FOR MEMBERS

9 - 12

The Committee is invited to offer any further suggestions before receiving the report.

6. UPDATE ON THE WORK OF RATIONALISING PRESENTATIONS OF INFORMATION TO COUNCILLORS

13 - 17

The Democracy Services Committee is asked:

- for observations on the developments to date.
- to support the principle of allocating one specific day a month for training session and one day a month to conduct the training programme.

7. COMMITTEES CALENDAR 2025/26

18 - 20

To recommend the Committees Calendar for 2025/26 for adoption by the Full Council.

8. SUPPORT FOR COUNCILLORS

21 - 24

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

9. NOTICE OF MOTION ARRANGEMENTS

25 - 28

The Committee is asked to accept the information.

DEMOCRACY SERVICES COMMITTEE, 12/11/2024

PRESENT:

Councillors:

Anne Lloyd-Jones (Chair), Stephen Churchman, Annwen Hughes, Eryl Jones-Williams, Dewi Owen, Ioan Thomas, Llio Elenid Owen, Beca Roberts, Sian Williams and Anwen Jane Davies

Officers present:

Vera Jones (Democracy and Language Services Manager), Ian Jones (Head of Corporate Services), Sioned Mai Jones (Democracy Team Leader), Catrin Love (Assistant Head of Corporate Services), Mari Edwards (Learning and Development Manager), Cara Williams (Member Development Officer) and Iwan Edwards (Democracy Services Officer).

Also present:

Councillor Menna Trenholme (Cabinet Member for Corporate Services).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Cai Larsen, Arwyn Herald Roberts, Linda Anne Jones and Edgar Wyn Owen.

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 18 June 2024, as a true record.

5. THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES' DRAFT REPORT

DECISION**To accept the report.**

The report was submitted by the Democracy and Language Services Manager, highlighting the main points in the report. It was explained that the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales had a responsibility to set a salary for Councillors across Wales. The Panel publishes a draft report annually and provides Councillors the opportunity to respond to the draft report and its content. It was noted that this was the last Panel report because its duties were transferring to the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru from April 2025 onwards. It was further noted that the report addressed the main changes that the panel had recommended for April 2025 onwards. It was also mentioned that the report included the payments to the co-opted members, noting that Cyngor Gwynedd implemented the new arrangement to claim payments per hour.

During the discussion, the following observations were made:

- It was asked whether the figures for the average wage were based on the average wage across the whole of the United Kingdom, Wales only, or this area. In addition, it was enquired how the average wage was calculated.
- It was explained that it was only the rate for Wales that was for the Panel's attention and that they used a specific rate to calculate the average wage. It was noted that the report explained how the average wage was calculated.

6. LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROVISION FOR MEMBERS**DECISION****To accept the report.****Start publishing details of the Members who had completed the core training on the website from April 2025.**

The report was submitted highlighting that work had been undertaken during the past few months to raise awareness of the seven core training sessions. Referring to table 1 in the report, it was noted that the number of members who had attended the seven core titles had not reached 100%. It was explained that table 2 showed the progress in the number of members who had completed the training over this year, as well as an overview of the number of courses that had been run over the year.

It was noted that the Learning and Development service had received enquiries from Members who were governors asking whether the safeguarding training that they received in their role as governors was sufficient. It was confirmed that this training was insufficient as the governors' course did not address vulnerable adults.

It was explained that the service could not continue to constantly conduct courses that were half empty, despite the fact that the field was a priority. It was noted that the intention was to arrange that recordings were available on the Members' Intranet for members who had not attended the courses to date so that the members could watch them in their own time. It was mentioned that there was a live dashboard available to monitor who had attended the training. It was noted that many other Councils in Wales published statistics regarding the number of members who had completed training. It was explained that this was not something that Cyngor Gwynedd currently did, but there would be a discussion about changing to this direction.

Reference was made to the consultation process with the members over the past few months in the form of a Development and Needs questionnaire. The questionnaire had been open for a six-week period over the summer and the results were available and attached to the report. The Member Development Officer noted that they had categorised the questionnaire and asked the members to prioritise their learning and development needs.

During the discussion, the following observations were made:

- A member thanked for the support that he had received since losing his eyesight but, unfortunately, it was explained that he was having trouble seeing recordings clearly. It was asked whether it would be possible to receive the information on paper. The Member Development Officer confirmed that she would contact the member to discuss the matter further.
- It was noted that there was inconsistency between the members' learning programme and learning record and an explanation was requested. The Chair reiterated that she had attended seven core training sessions but that these did not show on her learning programme. It was explained that 'my learning record' listed the courses that members had attended and that 'my learning programme' also included e-learning modules. It was explained that the e-learning modules were in addition to the core training.
- It was questioned how many members had completed the seven core training sessions. It was replied that ten members had completed the seven core titles.
- It was expressed that there was no objection to publishing statistics on the members who had completed the core training.
- The Head of Corporate Services reported that the training statistics were public information in other Councils and that some authorities went a step further and included information on every training offered to Members. It was expressed that it was good practice and beneficial, because the service had already started to receive requests regarding this type of information. It was noted that the intention was to aim to start publishing these statistics in April 2025.
- It was proposed that the statistics would be published from April 2025 onwards and this was accepted by the Committee.

7. INFORMATION FOR COUNCILLORS

DECISION

To accept the report, noting the observations submitted.

The report was submitted highlighting the developments that had taken place when trying to rationalise information and the briefing programme for Councillors. Attention was drawn to Councillors' worries and that they had noted that they were drowning as a result of all the demand/offers for briefing sessions, training and information. It was noted that an attempt had been made to take a step back and consider how to improve the situation. In addition, it was noted that there was an attempt to try to rationalise the additional applications that arose over the year, applications that could not be anticipated at the start of the year, but briefing sessions had to be conducted for the members. It was explained that the intention was to have a better order on the briefing sessions and use them when there were matters across the County common to every Councillor. In addition, it was noted that better use had to be made of the Area Forums and it was suggested to use them to present relevant information to specific areas, where the discussion would vary from area to area.

During the discussion, the following observations were made:

- Frustration was expressed that information was published by the press about areas that the Councillor represented but the information was not shared with the Councillor beforehand. It was asked for any information shared with the press to also be shared with the Councillors.
- The observation that the Councillors were 'drowning' as a result of all the requirements for training sessions was reiterated and agreed on. It was noted that they received many e-mails

regarding all the courses held which created a problem filtering through all the e-mails.

8. WALES COUNCILLOR SUPPORT SELF-EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

DECISION

To accept the report.

The report was submitted providing an update on the work that had been undertaken on the Wales Councillor Support Self-Evaluation Framework. It was explained that the new Framework reflected a more progressive approach to assisting and supporting Councillors. It was reported that the Framework had been divided into three different work streams to ensure that every work stream and role was addressed.

An initial meeting had been held in September with representatives from the Democracy Services Committee to share opinions, comments and ideas about the current Learning and Development provision. It was noted that it had been a very useful meeting for officers of the Democracy service and the Learning and Development service to understand the Councillors' problems regarding the Learning and Development provision and also to remind members of the information available and how to reach this information.

It was mentioned that another meeting had been arranged for 3 December to discuss Democracy matters and it was hoped to report on the observations of that meeting at the next Democracy Services Committee meeting. It was noted that any member was welcome to join the meeting if they felt strongly or had an opinion to share on the element of Democracy support.

During the discussion, the following observations were made:

- The members expressed their thanks for the report, welcoming the observations and ideas noted.
- Reference was made to page 7 and 8 of the report's appendix, noting the opinion that the legislation regarding the research facilities was discriminatory. It was mentioned that local authorities were only permitted to appoint three political assistants which placed smaller groups at a disadvantage and created problems. In addition, it was believed that these assistants wrote correspondence on behalf of members which placed a further disadvantage to the members who did not receive this support. It was questioned whether there was a definition of groups without sufficient representation.
- In response, the observation was accepted regarding the political assistants that some groups could take advantage of them, and others could not. However, it was mentioned that support was also available from the Learning and Development team and the Democracy service, and that this was aligned to bring the provision together.
- It was noted that it was a decision for every individual local authority to decide what use they made of the framework and that it was important to set its context first. It was explained that there was support in the framework to identify what Cyngor Gwynedd and Gwynedd Councillors wanted as support and the questions that should be asked when considering the framework and any future developments.
- It was explained that there was no definition of the groups without sufficient representation, but the next steps would consider this. In addition, it was explained that no resources were available for some groups as the Council was bound to the legislative guidelines which meant that some groups required 10% of the membership to be able to have a group assistant.

The meeting commenced at 13:00 and concluded at 13:55

MEETING	Democratic Services Committee
DATE	18 February 2025
REPORT TITLE	Learning and Development Provision for Members
PURPOSE	Submit an update of provision from the Learning and Development service to Members
RECOMMENDATION	The Committee is invited to offer any further suggestions before receiving the report.
AUTHOR	Mari Edwards, Learning and Organisational Development Manager

1. OVERVIEW

1.1 There are 7 core areas identified to Members. The core titles here are the minimum titles that all Members need to be able to do their job effectively i.e. the crucial training courses. They relate to statutory areas that all Members need to be aware of when scrutinising or making decisions, as examples. It can raise governance risks for the Council when decisions are made without a full understanding of the implications in these areas. Ideally all Members should be completing these in the first year, or certainly the second year of the electoral calendar, which would then allow them to operate with certainty for the remainder of the electoral season and allow the training programme to progress to more elective or developmental subjects over the rest of the electoral calendar.

1.2 Following work to ensure that everyone completes the core titles required for all Members to achieve as a minimum, we have run various sessions since May 2022 and have now reached the third election year. This remaining period gives us the opportunity to offer a wider range of coaching titles that can focus on personal and innovative development.

Here's an update of where we're at with the core titles:

Core Title	Number completed	% completed	Number not completed
Leading Safely and Personal Safety	51	74	18
Code of Conduct	54	78	15
Well-being and Future Generations Act	34	49	35
Safeguarding Children and Adults	57	83	12
Your Responsibility for Equality	39	56	30
Information about People	52	75	17
Corporate Parenting	46	67	23

1.3 The table below shows the progress that has been made on the numbers who have completed the core titles during the past year:

Core Title	February 2024	November 2024	February 2025	Progress (February 2024-2025)
Leading Safely and Personal Safety	44	50	51	+ 7
Code of Conduct	39	50	54	+ 15
Well-being of Future Generations Act	14	27	34	+ 20
Safeguarding Children and Adults	33	33	57	+ 24
Your Responsibility for Equality	27	39	39	0
Information about People : Your Responsibility	45	51	52	+ 7
Corporate Parenting	39	46	46	+ 7

1.4 Supporting Members to complete core courses is a **priority**. As an effort to facilitate this, recordings of the 7 Core Titles are now available on the Members Intranet. It is hoped that by having this resource online, it will make things easier for Members to access and complete the Core titles at a time convenient to them.

1.5 The detailed work continues of establishing clear systems to publish the information about what training Members have completed. The new system of publishing numbers who have completed the core training is planned to start from April 2025 before moving on to publishing other training completed by Members in due course.

1.6 You are aware that the VAWDASV (Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and sexual violence) training is important to have whilst in a Member role. Sessions have already run in 2024 through Welsh Women's Aid and a further session is scheduled to run in April this year. Discussions are underway for this training to be allocated as a Core training to reflect the statutory requirement, and a few neighbouring Councils have already taken this route.

2. LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT NEEDS QUESTIONNAIRE

2.1 You're aware of the consultation process with you, as Members, that took place in September 2024. The questionnaire was open for a period of 6 weeks, and we obtained responses from 24 Members. The responses from the questionnaire gave us an understanding, whilst responding to the Self-Assessment Framework for Councillors, of wishes and Members' priorities in regards to training needs.

2.2 Following collecting feedback from the questionnaire, work has and is being carried out to respond to the findings that came from the questionnaire results.

- 2.3** From the questionnaire, it was found that Members identified the need for support with aspects of using IT. Some Members have already had one-on-one sessions with an officer from the Learning and Development Team. The Members' Bulletin has sent several messages asking any Member wishing any IT support, to contact the Learning and Development Team.
- 2.4** Two sessions were held in January 2025 on the Members Intranet, these were practical sessions to familiarise Members through the various pages on the Intranet, guiding them through the plethora of information available to support in their duties. These sessions were also an opportunity for Members give any feedback/ideas for modifying/improving the Intranet for the future.
- 2.5** Further to these workshops, other courses and workshops have been identified for the Training Programme, such as Helping Constituents with cost support live, Scam Awareness, media and delivery training, training scrutiny, work skills and advocacy case to support Members' demands following collecting feedback from the questionnaire.
- 2.6** Further work is being undertaken to continue to respond to the questionnaire results from within the Learning and Development service to ensure we target Members' needs and priorities as required.

3. TRAINING PROGRAMME

- 3.1** The latest training programme has already been delivered to you and further work will take place over the next few months to further populate it in line with the results of the questionnaire and what the Departments wish to include in the programme.
- 3.2** Following a conversation on democracy issues on the 15th of January 2024, we discussed how to support cabinet members and have made an application to prioritise three specific trainings over the next period namely:
- Good decisions and issues for Cabinet Members to be aware of (e.g. the Wellbeing Act).
 - Considerations for Cabinet Members regarding information handling and data protection.
 - Raising awareness of developments with Gwynedd Road.

4. ATTENDING CONFERENCES

- 4.1** Opportunities can reach you to attend conferences or courses. It is possible for the Council to assist Members with the costs of attending Conferences/Courses and many may be considered as 'development'. However, under the current financial climate with resources scarce these days, the conference or course area needs to be

relevant to your work as a Member in order for the Council to support your application.

This matter is brought to your attention as a Committee as a few cases have come up recently where it is clear that not everyone understands the procedure. Consideration needs to be given to the most effective method of raising awareness of all members' arrangements to follow, and the guidance on the matter available on the Members Intranet.

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

Due to the statutory requirement regarding the VAWDASV (Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence), the Committee is asked to support the recommendation to add this training as an additional core title.

Date of meeting:	18 February 2025
Subject	Update on the work of rationalising presentations of information to Councillors
Recommendation	<p>The Democracy Services Committee is asked</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for observations on the developments to date. • to support the principle of allocating one specific day a month for training sessions and one day a month to conduct the training programme.
Contact Officer:	Vera Jones, Democracy and Language Services Manager

What is the background and relevant considerations?

1. It was reported at the previous meeting of this committee on 11 November 2024 that the Head of Democracy Services had noted the following as a priority for 2024/25:

“Rationalise the training programme and briefing programme for Councillors in order to ensure the best use of Councillors’ time and the best use of Council resources.”

2. We also reported on our intention to try to rationalise the requests received to present information to Councillors. They would include trying to make better use of the training programme, briefing sessions, area forums and the information bulletin to Members. This was in response to comments about the high demands on Councillors and observations from many that they were 'drowning' as a result of all the requirements and offers.

3. Appendix 1, which is in a diagram form, notes the new arrangements approved by the Committee on 11/11/2024. The table below explains the possible route for items:

- BRIEFING SESSIONS - an update on a specific operational topic relevant to all members/cross-county issues. Scope to consider rationalising the numbers/dates e.g. one day per month.
- AREA FORUMS – The agenda is currently owned by elected members. The Area Forums will be used to present relevant information or issues concerning specific areas, where the conversation/discussion would vary from area to area.

- **MEMBER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME** – Information to enable Councillors to fulfil their role. The 'core' training is considered to be essential and is therefore not under consideration here. Applications for 'additional' and 'developmental' training will be considered.
- **MEMBERS INTRANET AND MEMBERS BULLETIN** – there is a need to make better use of the resource and promote its use among members. There is scope to try to consider creating an information note only, without the need to hold any briefing session.
- Act as a 'postman' for matters related to training raised by others e.g. Data Unit, WLGA i.e. only send the information on to Councillors. We are aware that Members receive several offers of training directly from outside bodies, however we are not able to control these emails.


What are the developments since the last meeting?

4. Specific arrangements - work has been undertaken internally to establish arrangements to present requests to hold sessions and/or present information to Members. All requests should now be presented to one internal email address and a small team meets each month to identify the best solution for these requests. This is a significant step forward from arranging events on an ad-hoc basis. Many requests have already reached us, but we are aware that some events have fallen through the net.
5. Training programme - Work is underway on rationalising the Member Learning and Development programme, the training programme. There is a clear definition for
 - core training – an expectation for each Councillor to complete the seven priority areas and necessary training prior to being permitted to sit on specific committees (e.g. Planning Committee, licensing committee etc),
 - 'additional training' – training outside the seven core areas
 - 'developmental training' – for Elected Members' personal development
6. It was previously reported that many sessions had to be cancelled because of low numbers attending, highlighting the waste of resources from the officers who hold the sessions, the translators who attend the training and the officer who arranges them. By now, the final session has been held for the core training areas, with the training available via an online recording for those who still have not completed them (there is a separate report elaborating on this). In addition, the principle not to hold training when fewer than five have registered has been established to ensure the efficiency of our courses.

7. Information sessions - The new arrangements have led to better arrangements in terms of conducting information sessions. The principle to conduct sessions of up to one hour on subjects where there are important developments for all Members to be aware of and where relevant across the whole of Gwynedd has been established. As it happens, it has been a busy period in terms of matters arising, with several sessions having been arranged (see the list below). However, some have been refused, some have been referred to the Area Forums for a more relevant conversation and some have been asked to include a short briefing note in the information bulletin for Members.
8. We continue to develop our arrangements and learn lessons as the developments go ahead. It is noted however, whilst trying to rationalise the workload for Councillors, it has meant additional needs for officers as a result of the need to record the sessions, to identify a 'Chair' for some sessions, and the need to discuss and move dates with officers when planning the programme.
9. The table below notes the briefing sessions that have been held since October 2024:

SUBJECT	DATE
Items to be confirmed	19/03/2025
Briefing session - Financial Strategy	28/01/2025
Workshop for all Members - savings and financial strategy (no recording of the workshop)	09 & 10/01/2025
Council Tax Premium - the impact of the Council tax premium on second homes and long-term empty properties in Gwynedd	20/11/2024
Ambition North Wales - a presentation to the work of the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee	13/11/2024
Financial Situation and the Single Transferrable Vote	16/10/2024

10. Area Forums - it was also noted that some matters would be referred to the Area Forums to allow better discussion on local matters in the Area Forums. The forums' programmes for the February/March cycle were



already quite full, however, the Highways Department will present the 'Highway Maintenance Service resurfacing work programme' at these meetings.

11. Further work is required in terms of ensuring better use of the Area Forums, but this will take time to permeate to the individual programmes.
12. Others – some other items have been refused, that would have been held under the past ad-hoc arrangements. An information sheet will be created to put on the Members' intranet, and attention is given to this in the Members bulletin.

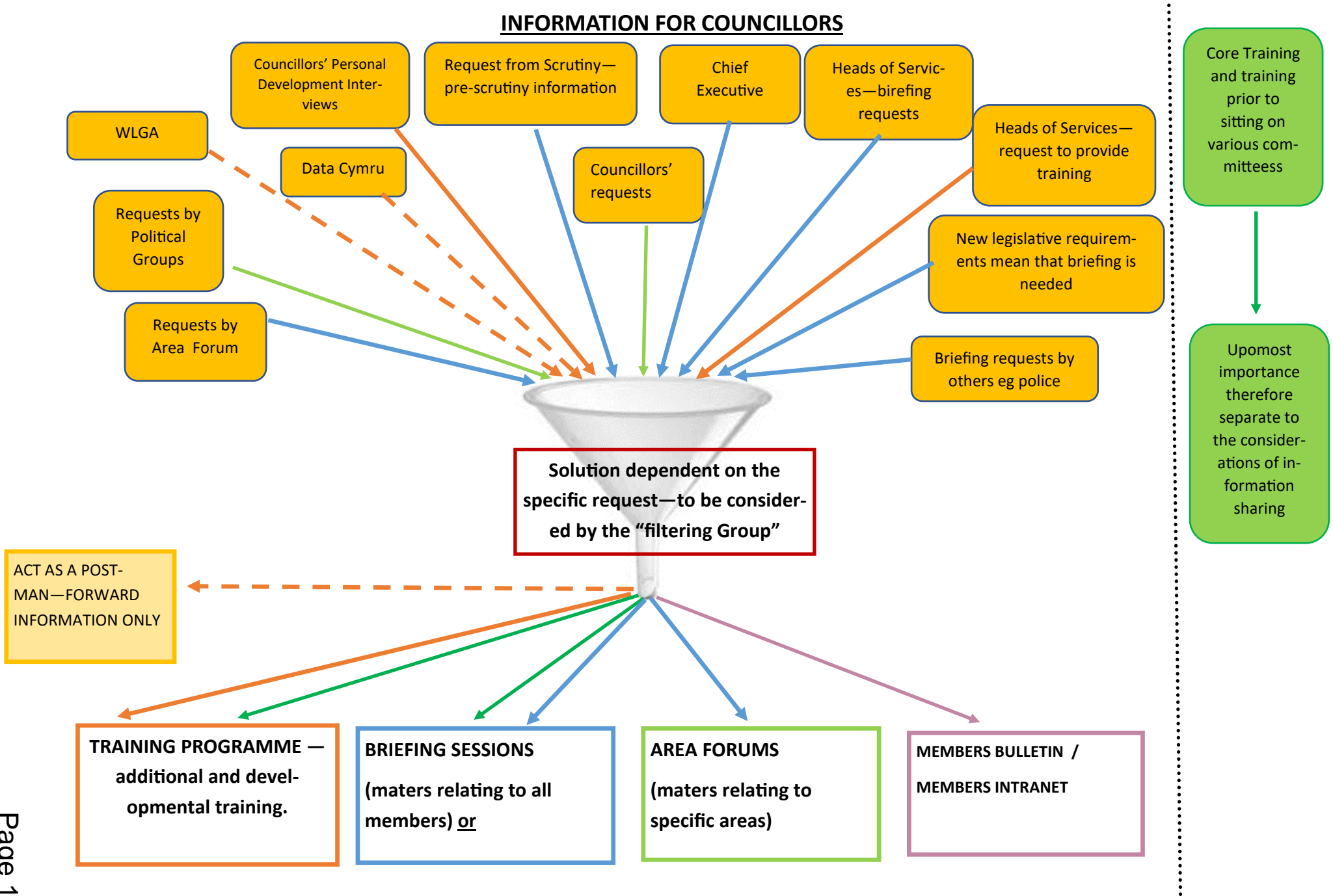
What are the next steps?

13. We will continue to take steps to try to rationalise what is being presented as information to Members, trying to strike a balance of presenting the correct matters, in a timely manner, but without providing excessive information at the same time.
14. As a result of the work to date, one of the challenges that has been identified is our ability to respond flexibly when important matters arise unexpectedly (whether as part of the training programme or to present information). Finding a 'free date' where no other meeting or committee has already been arranged is proving to be challenging.
15. In response, we have considered identifying one date each month to hold briefing sessions (it could mean two briefing sessions on the same day) and one day a month to conduct the training programme. The intention is to note these dates as part of the committee calendar to ensure that they are known to everyone beforehand. However, it is noted that there is no guarantee that this arrangement will succeed at the officers' or external instructors' availability to resent on these days could be a challenge

Recommendation

16. The Democracy Services Committee is asked
 - for observations on the developments to date.
 - to support the principle of allocating one specific day a month for training sessions and one day a month to conduct the training programme.

INFORMATION FOR COUNCILLORS



MEETING	Democracy Services Committee
DATE	18 February 2025
SUBJECT	Committees Calendar 2025/26
PURPOSE	To recommend the Committees Calendar for 2025/26 for adoption by the Full Council
AUTHOR	Sioned Mai Jones Temporary Democracy Team Leader

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The calendar of Council committee dates for 2025/26 is submitted for your comments before it is presented to a meeting of the Full Council on 6 March, 2025.
- 1.2 The Calendar assists the Council, its Members and the public to plan ahead for the dates and times of the Council's principal meetings.
- 1.2 Note that these are the dates we have currently scheduled, but situations can arise where additional meetings may need to be arranged in order to carry out Council business.
- 1.3 While every effort is made to avoid conducting meetings during school holidays, this is not possible on all occasions if we are to ensure a continued service by the Council.
- 1.4 Relevant officers and Eryri National Park Authority were consulted regarding the draft version of the committees calendar to ensure, as far as practicable, that there were no clashes with other meetings. In addition, we have sought to ensure that there is no clash with the dates of regional meetings such as the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee meetings, although not all dates for 2025/26 are known yet.
- 1.5 In addition this year, we have noted a date for the Members' Briefing session every month as well as a monthly Training Day, so that Councillors are given adequate notice of the dates. We will make every effort to try to arrange the Briefings or Training sessions on those dates where possible, noting that there is a possibility of having to change to other dates should key trainers or officers not be available.

2.0 COMMITTEES CALENDAR 2025/26

- 2.1 Please see the appendix for the dates of Council Meetings 2025/26.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The Democratic Services Committee is requested to recommend that the Full Council adopt the Committees Calendar for 2025/26.

2025/26	Meeting time	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May
COUNCIL	pm	1*		3			2		4			5		7*
Cabinet	pm	13	10	8		16	14	11	16	20	10	10	21	
Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee.	am / pm		19				16		11		12		23	
Communities Scrutiny	am / pm		5			18		6		22		19		
Care Scrutiny Committee	am / pm		12			25		20		29		26		
Governance and Audit Committee	am	22				11	9	13		15	5			
Democracy Services Committee	pm		17					4			24			
Planning Committee	pm	19	16	14		8 / 29	20	17	8	12	2	2 / 23	27	
Central/General Licensing Committee	am		30			22			1			9		
Standards Committee	am		9					3			23			
SACRE	pm		24					18			3			
Language Committee	am		23				13				9		20	
Local Joint Consultative Committee	am			16										
Employment Appeals Committee	am / pm	16	13	11		12	10	14	12	16	13	20	24	
Pensions Committee	pm			7		15		24**		19		16		
Porthmadog Harbour Consultative Committee	pm					30						3		
Pwllheli Harbour Consultative Committee	pm						7					10		
Aberdyfi Harbour Consultative Committee	pm						14					17		
Abermaw Harbour Consultative Committee	pm						21					24		
Members Training	am/pm	7	4	2		17	8	5	3	7 / 28		4	15	
Briefing Session	pm	14	18	16		24	22	19	17	14	11	18	22	

*Annual Meeting

**Pensions Committee (am) / Annual Meeting (pm)

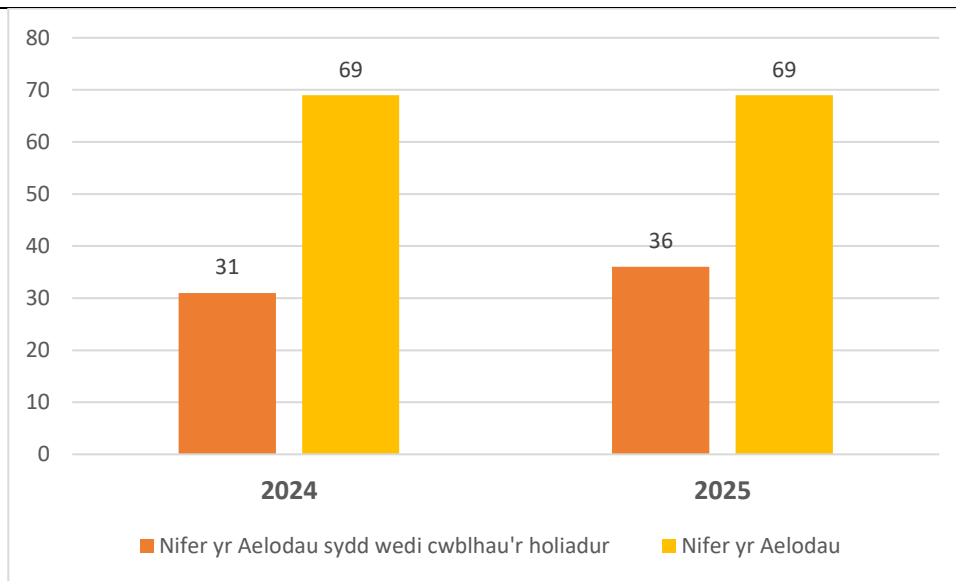
Meeting time (as required) **am** – morning **pm** – afternoon **am/pm** – all day

These are the dates we have currently scheduled, but situations can arise where additional meetings may need to be arranged to carry out Council business.

Date of meeting:	18 February 2025
Subject	Support for Councillors
Recommendation	The Democracy Services Committee is asked to note the observations and accept the report.
Contact Officer:	Sioned Mai Jones, Democracy Team Leader (temporary)

What is the background and relevant considerations?

1. The purpose of the Democracy Team is to provide full support to Councillors, by supporting the committee system and being available to assist County Councillors. To ensure that the support provided meets the needs of Councillors we are constantly seeking opinions.
2. We report our performance to the Cabinet Member as part of the performance challenge arrangements of the Corporate Services Department; but we believe there is a role for members of this Committee to receive a performance update and have an opportunity to voice their opinion on the team's work.
3. The Democracy Team is keen to be improving the service being delivered, therefore, a satisfaction questionnaire was sent to Councillors in early December 2024. The questionnaire sought feedback on the service being offered by the Democracy Team within the Democracy and Language Service.
4. Councillors were asked about their satisfaction with the work of the Democracy Team as well as three further questions:
 - *Please comment on your satisfaction with the service provided by the Democracy Team*
 - *Are there any developments or changes the Democracy Team could make to further support you in your role?*
 - *Are there any further comments you would like to make?*
5. 36 responses were received, which was an increase on the 31 responses received last year, with various comments from Councillors about their views on the service of the Democracy Team.



6. 97% rated the service as "very good" or "good" with one stating it was "acceptable". No further comment was provided by the person who had rated the service as "acceptable". By comparison, 91% rated the service as 'very good' or 'good' last year, with 1 indicating it was 'acceptable' and 2 not answering the question.

7. Some of the comments received included:

"We are fortunate as councillors in Gwynedd as the service from the democracy team is very efficient and friendly."

"Always very willing to help with any query"


"The team is great at providing committee documentation on time"


"Nice crew, all friendly"

"All Democracy staff are always on the other end of the phone and respond to e-mails promptly. Zoom and Teams meeting arrangements by the team are extremely effective. IT arrangements and translation are also easy. Thank you so much again this year."

8. In response to the question asking if there were any developments or changes the team could make to further support Councillors in their role, the majority noted that no development or changes were needed. A wish to receive a paper copy of each Committee agenda was accepted but unfortunately this is contrary to the decision to go paperless (except for exceptions). This followed the decision by the Full Council to realise financial savings by reducing printing and postage costs.

9. We take the opportunity to remind you that Councillors with sight problems receive paper copies of Committee Agendas or any other relevant documents if the Head of Democracy Services has received and authorised an appropriate request.

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10. Thanks and acknowledgements were received for the good work of the team staff in providing support to Councillors with sight problems. It was highlighted that the team is open to helping Advisors who have any needs and are flexible in making adjustments. Anyone needing further assistance is advised to contact the team.
 11. Among the responses, one Councillor noted that "*it would be advantageous to have a list of what you can do to help us*". Consideration was given to design a poster or guide to respond to the request, however, it is difficult to create a complete list of the service that we as a team and the Political Assistants offer. It is suggested for anyone to get in touch for a chat about the support available. We will send a note to the Councillors confirming the names of the Democracy team officers as there have been quite a few staffing changes recently.
 12. Comments were received from Councillors stating that they wished to receive information before they read about it in the newspapers. Councillors are reminded that a great deal of information per area is shared through the weekly information bulletin and is available on the Members' Intranet. In addition, we will be attempting to address this observation during the year by developing our briefing arrangements and trying to ensure that a date has been set every month for Councillors' briefing sessions. The dates will be noted in the Committees Calendar for 2025/26 so that Councillors are aware of them. In addition, we will be sharing the observation with the Corporate Director so that he can share the concern with the Heads of Department reminding them to try and ensure that Councillors, specifically local members, are updated in a timely manner in the event of a matter being addressed by the press in their ward.
 13. It was noted that it was taking time for new Councillors to understand the arrangements; however, the service was a very supportive one at Cyngor Gwynedd. We would like to remind you that the team is available to assist you in any way, recognising that it takes time for new Councillors to settle into their role. We are also grateful for the guidance and support being provided to new Councillors within the political groups, with the Democracy and Language Service Manager holding regular conversations with Political Assistants to ensure the appropriate support is in place.
 14. Not many negative comments or further suggestions were received.
 15. However, we recognise that the role of Councillors is a challenging one and I would like to remind Councillors of the support available within the Council for mental health and well-being issues. A lot of information on what is available can be found on the Members' Intranet, under the tile "Looking after yourself."
 16. The Democracy team works closely with the Learning and Development unit and held joint sessions in January to promote the use of the Members'



Intranet for Councillors and to highlight the recent changes that have been made to the site. This work is continually developing with your support.

17. We are also trying to reduce the demand on Councillors through the work of the filtering group, with an attempt here to manage the number of training requests, briefings or information that reach Councillors.

18. In addition to the electronic satisfaction questionnaire being sent to Councillors once a year, we will try to restart our arrangements to hold a one-to-one conversation with 2 or 3 Councillors each month to discuss the support being offered and gain a better understanding of the barriers for Councillors.

19. Whilst the above reports on the comments received by you as Elected Members, it is also important to remember that we as a team also provide a service for the public and external bodies. Members of the public take part in some of our committees e.g. Licensing Committee, and a number view the webcasting of meetings or request access to listen to our virtual meetings. The team regularly receive comments to thank them for their work in providing clear instructions and ensuring thorough preparation to ensure the smooth running of committee meetings.

Recommendation

20. The Democracy Services Committee is asked to note the observations and accept the report.



**CYNGOR GWYNEDD
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE**

Meeting Date :	18 February 2025
Report	Iwan Evans – Head of Legal Services – Monitoring Officer
Matter Heading	Notice of Motion Arrangements

Introduction

1. The object of this report at the request of the Committee is to provide a summary of the Council's arrangements to deal with Notices of Motion and in particular their propriety . It explains the relevant legal context, the arrangements in place and the guidance available to members.

Full Council and Cabinet Functions.

2. The governance arrangements for unitary local authorities in Wales is based on executive arrangements derived from the Local Government Act 2000. In 2012 this system became mandated for all unitary authorities. Fundamentally it means that there is a statutory framework about the decision-making arrangements of the Council which attributes specific functions to the Full Council on the one hand and the Executive on the other. Central to this is that the Full Council has the responsibility for setting the Budget but also the Policy Framework for the Council. A framework that sets the boundaries for the Cabinet. The arrangements also set out the steps to adopt and change policy. With a few exceptions this is based on the Cabinet having the responsibility and power to recommend the Policy Framework. This is central to the guidance about notices of motion.

3. Currently the following are included in the Policy Framework:

- Gwynedd and Môn Wellbeing Plan
- The Cyngor Gwynedd Plan
- Economic Development Strategy
- Local Transport Plan
- Plans and amendments that together make up the Local Development Plan
- Welsh Language Promotion Scheme and Language Policy
- Youth Justice Scheme
- Housing Strategy

- Young People's Partnership Strategic Plan and Children and Young People's Framework Partnership
- Pay Policy
- Rights of Way Improvement Plan
- Public Participation Strategy
- Petition Scheme
- Council Wellbeing Statement and Objectives (in accordance with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015)
- Corporate Asset Management Plan.
- Indemnity Policy
- Gambling Policy
- Licensing Policy

4. The essence of the above from the point of view of the Full Council and Notices of motion are four propositions:

- The Council has significant decision-making powers.
- A decision under a notice of motion does not have a different status from any other resolution in which the responsibilities of the Council are under consideration.
- There are broad requirements about taking Council decisions in the same way as any other decision. Issues such as lawfulness, impact assessments, financial implications, consultation etc.
- Requirements have been set out as to how matters can be brought before the Council for decision.

Monitoring Officer

5. As Monitoring Officer I have statutory and constitutional functions over the functions of the Council. Under section 5 of the 1989 Act, I have a statutory duty to intervene if I consider that a motion, decision or inaction by the authority, its committee officers, Cabinet etc. is contrary or is likely to contravene the law or constitute maladministration. Ultimately, I have to formally report either to the Council or Cabinet if the situation is not resolved.

“(7) The duties of a relevant authority's monitoring officer under this section shall be performed by him personally or, where he is unable to act owing to absence or illness, personally by such member of his staff as he has for the time being nominated as his deputy for the purposes of this section.”

6. In accordance with this I also have certain responsibilities under the Constitution which apply namely advising on the propriety of notices of motion of course but also outside meetings the onus is on me to interpret and apply the Constitution.

Constitution

7. Notice of a motion "must be about matters for which the Council has a responsibility, or which affect the wellbeing of the administrative area of the Council." The following

ordinance was laid down by the Full Council for the provision of a system that was clear about the handling of Notices of Motion. The procedure set out below was adopted by the Full Council to provide a system that was clear about the processing of Notices of Motion.

“4.18..4 Propriety

- (i) if notice is given of any motion that is, in the opinion of the Monitoring Officer, unlawful, irregular or improper the Monitoring Officer shall immediately inform the Chairman and the Chief Executive, and it shall not be placed on the agenda without their sanction. In this case the Monitoring Officer shall inform the member giving notice. If the motion can be amended to render it appropriate, then the member giving notice shall be advised of this and given an opportunity to amend the notice of motion.

- (ii) Notwithstanding (i) a notice of motion, which in the opinion of the Monitoring Officer on being adopted would mean an unlawful decision or lead to maladministration as defined in Section 5 of The Local Government and Housing Act 1989, shall not be placed on the agenda.

Conclusions

- 8. In accordance with the Constitution and where the need arises I will work with any member to seek a wording that brings the motion within the bounds of propriety. I have provided guidance (Appendix 1) to assist with this procedure. In most cases the matter is resolved at this stage. Where that is not possible any decision will be supported by a rationale. The decision will be taken in accordance with the Constitution. Nevertheless, the intention is to bring forward notices which can be placed before the Council and are capable of being adopted.

Decision Sought

The Committee is asked to accept the information

NOTICES OF MOTION - BRIEFING PAPER

What is a Notice of Motion?

A Notice of Motion allows a member to put a matter forward before the Full Council for decision.

What may I propose?

A Notice of motion may seek a decision on a matter for which the Council has responsibility. It may also be about an issue affecting the wellbeing of the area or residents, but which is not the responsibility of the Council itself.

Any decision then?

The adoption of a motion is a decision of the Full Council, and it is not always possible to do this by a notice. It is open to the same challenges as any other decisions. This may be because it is not legally possible to make the decision. Sometimes it's because the matter is a Cabinet responsibility. It may also require detailed information or follow statutory procedures such as consultation and equality assessments before reaching a view or position on the proposal.

But I want to have a debate on the subject.

Rather than deciding an issue on the spot it is sometimes possible to draft a motion in a way that allows for debate. For example, a motion to ask a Scrutiny Committee to address a particular topic and consider how to respond to what is being addressed. This provides an opportunity for the issues highlighted to be understood and considered. But you should also, be aware of what is already before a Scrutiny Committee which might be addressing the subject.

Questions?

You have the right to submit a question to be asked in Full Council and this may provide a way forward. Sometimes this is a vehicle to address or avoid a problem with the wording or objective of a motion. It is also a better avenue if you are seeking an explanation or account.

What about the wording of the notice?

The form asks you to provide an explanation of the background and reasons for the motion. In drafting the wording of the decision sought it is necessary to be clear about what the Council will decide e.g.:

- I ask the Full Council to support
- I ask the Full Council to ask ??? to write to the Minister to ????
- That the Council adopt??
- That the Council declares/resolves???
- That the ABC Scrutiny Committee consider the appropriate way of responding to ?

Where could I take advice?

You may contact the Monitoring Officer at any time if you need guidance. Although he cannot suggest a text or direction for a motion, he can assist by giving an initial opinion on its propriety and if it is possible how to reword to bring it into order.

Who verifies notices?

The Monitoring Officer has responsibility for determining the propriety of notices of motion. If there is a question about propriety you will be contacted to discuss the situation. Nevertheless, if it cannot be resolved, then a determination will be made with the Chair and Chief Executive as to its inclusion on the agenda which will be final.

Iwan Evans
Monitoring Officer