



Complete Agenda

Democracy Service
Swyddfa'r Cyngor
CAERNARFON
Gwynedd
LL55 1SH

Meeting

DEMOCRACY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Date and Time

2.00 pm, TUESDAY, 3RD NOVEMBER, 2026

Location

Virtual Meeting

*** NOTE ***

This meeting will be webcast

https://gwynedd.public-i.tv/core//en_GB/portal/home

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(DISTRIBUTED 26/10/26)

DEMOCRACY SERVICES COMMITTEE

MEMBERSHIP (15)

Plaid Cymru (10)

Councillors

Annwen Hughes
Arwyn Herald Roberts
Olaf Cai Larsen
Sian Williams
[Vacant Seat]

Edgar Wyn Owen
Ioan Thomas
Beca Roberts
Elin Hywel
[Vacant Seat]

Independent (4)

Councillors

Anwen J. Davies
Anne Lloyd-Jones

Eryl Jones-Williams
Dewi Owen

Gwynedd First (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

5 - 11

The Chairman shall propose that the minutes of the last meeting of this committee held on 16th June 2026, be signed as a true record.

5. THE DEMOCRACY AND BOUNDARY COMMISSION CYMRU (DRAFT) REPORT ON FINANCIAL REMUNERATION TO COUNCILLORS FOR 2027/28

12 - 17

The Democracy Services Committee is asked for comments on the proposed decisions in order to draw up a response to the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru consultation.

6. LOCAL AUTHORITY ELECTION 2027

18 - 21

To provide an update on the work being done to prepare for the 2027 Election.

7. LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROVISION FOR ELECTED MEMBERS

22 - 24

To provide an update on the work being done to strengthen Learning and Development provision for Members.

8. COUNCILLOR SAFETY

25 - 26

Provide an update on the work being done in terms of the Safety of Members.

9. UPDATE - WORK TO UPGRADE THE CHAMBERS

27 - 28

To provide an update on the work that is being done to upgrade the Chambers.

10. UPDATE ON MEMBERS CONCERNS' CONCERNS AND ENQUIRIES WORK PROGRAMME

29 - 32

To provide an update on the Members' Concerns and Enquiries

DEMOCRACY SERVICES COMMITTEE 16 JUNE 2026

PRESENT:

Councillors:

Dewi Owen (Chair), Annwen Hughes, Eryl Jones-Williams, Anne Lloyd Jones, Ioan Thomas, Edgar Wyn Owen, Llio Elenid Owen, Cai Larsen, Sian Williams, Stephen Churchman, Anwen Jane Davies

Officers present:

Ian Jones (Head of Democracy Services), Vera Jones (Democracy and Language Service Manager), Annes Sion (Democracy Team Leader), Catrin Love (Assistant Head of Corporate Services), Mari Edwards (Learning and Development Manager), Catrin Meirion Owen (Member Development Officer), and Courtney Leigh Jones (Democracy and Civic Services Officer).

1. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Councillor Anne Lloyd Jones was elected as Vice-Chair of the Committee for 2026/27.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Elin Hywel, Arwyn Herald Roberts and Beca Roberts.

3. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received.

4. URGENT ITEMS

A Member referred to the matter which had recently arisen in the press. It was agreed that this Committee was not the appropriate place to hold the discussion.

5. MINUTES

The Chair accepted the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 24 February, as a true record.

6. DRAFT OF THE ANNUAL REPORT BY THE HEAD OF DEMOCRACY SERVICES

Submitted - the draft annual report of the Head of Democracy Service. Members were reminded that this was a draft report and that it would be submitted to the Full Council for adoption. The Democracy Team was thanked for its work in supporting members and holding Council Committees. Attention was drawn to the staffing changes that had taken place within the team, welcoming several officers who had just joined the team and wishing well to those who were retiring. The work of the Democracy Team, the Translation Team and the Learning and Development officers was praised, noting appreciation for the work that went on behind the scenes to host and administrate virtual and hybrid committees and meetings. It was noted that Council Members' satisfaction with the Democracy Team's service remained high, and that several positive comments had been received during the year.

Reference was made to the service's priorities for the coming year, noting that preparations for the 2027 election had already begun, and would intensify over the coming months. It was noted that planning work for the election was progressing, by learning lessons from the last election, receiving members' input and welcoming new arrangements as part of the induction period.

An update was provided on the Chambers Upgrade project. It was explained that the technology used in the chambers was now outdated and needed to be updated to ensure the provision of hybrid meetings and maintain the Council's democratic arrangements, as well as raising the standard of the chambers and improving Members' experience. It was noted that work was being carried out in the background to create a brief of the Council's needs to communicate and engage with the market shortly to identify the company that could provide the best support. It was explained that this would include visual screens, voting systems, mics and sound systems.

An update was provided on the ongoing work taking place in relation to the Members' Training Programme. Reference was made to the eighth core subject that had been added to the Core Programme during the year, namely Violence against Women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

It was highlighted that members' Health and Safety remained a priority for the department and that work continued as needs changed. It was ensured that threats to members were taken seriously through security risks, and that support was always available to members, as part of the health and safety plans.

Any questions or observations from Members were welcomed:

- The two recently retired officers from the Democracy Team were thanked after many years of service and they were wished well on behalf of the members of the Democracy Services Committee. The new officers who had joined the team were welcomed and were wished well. The Democracy and Language Service was thanked for their work, noting that the work often took place behind the

scenes. It was noted that they carried out valuable work in assisting and maintaining the Council's democracy work. The praise was also extended to all electoral staff noting that a lot of detailed work was happening to maintain democracy in Gwynedd.

- The report was commended. A Member noted that at times more clarity was needed when referring to the data of Members' satisfaction with the Democracy Team's service. It was noted that the statistics could be complex to understand due to the style they were presented in the report and it was confirmed that the officers would address this. Some observations were made regarding the accuracy of facts regarding staffing issues, and observations were made about a few typos in the report. It was assured that this would be corrected before the report was adopted at the Full Council.
- The translation service was praised noting that their simultaneous translation work at meetings was of particular importance. A Member stated that he was very grateful to the translation team because they assisted him in attending committees and fulfilling his role as a Councillor. Frustration was expressed with the translation equipment in Siambr Dafydd Orwig noting that the headphones were not very comfortable. The upgrades for the chamber outlined in the report were welcomed and the effort to improve the equipment for Members was praised. Further frustration was expressed with the audio in Siambr Dafydd Orwig during hybrid meetings, noting that discussions were difficult to follow.
- It was asked if there was a timetable for the developments of the Chambers. It was confirmed that much of the planning work by the project team had progressed to identify a specification of the specific needs in the Chambers. It was noted that members of the Team had engaged with the market to see what was possible in terms of new technology, and this would feed into the specification, which was scheduled for publication in late summer, hopefully. It was highlighted that procurement arrangements would need to be followed, and as soon as a provider was identified, the department would work with the supplier to confirm a timetable. It was noted that the department aimed to ensure that the new equipment was up and running for May 2027, so that the new Councillors could use the new equipment and systems.
- In referring to the data on the number of people viewing the committee and meeting webcasts, it was asked whether there was a breakdown of the committees that were viewed most often by the public. In response, it was confirmed that Committees discussing the most contentious topics or topics of public interest attracted the highest number of viewings. For the year 2025/26, it was confirmed that the Council Tax Premium and Budget had attracted the highest number of viewers. It was explained that they were continuing to adapt, as it was possible to catch up with Committee meetings on the Council website. It was noted that the number of viewers seemed to rise annually as interest in politics and democracy increased.

- A discussion was held about threats to Members. It was asked how common this was and whether there was a specific system in place to deal with threats, should they arise. In response, the department confirmed that there was a procedure in place. It was explained that officers planned ahead when considering the forward agendas of meetings and committees assessing the topics that would arise and how contentious they were. It was confirmed that a risk assessment would then be completed and measures would be put in place to reduce risks where possible. It was explained that Members were encouraged to contact officers if they were worried about anything and that a form was available to log any incidents. It was noted that matters were referred to the police if necessary. It was expressed that there was specific training for Members' health and safety. It was confirmed that the matter received ongoing attention, referring to the remembrance event for the politician Jo Cox which was taking place next week.

DECISION

To accept the report and agree to make minor amendments before being recommended for adoption by the Full Council.

7. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS MAY 2027

Submitted - the report of the Democracy Team Leader. The work programme for the May 2027 Local Government Election was outlined, noting that there was a considerable amount of preparatory work to be done over the coming months. It was explained that three key themes had been identified as part of the preparatory work, namely; pre-Election preparation, Election Day and results and induction period and training programme. It was noted that a programme of work was available for each theme with details included in the report.

It was explained that a discussion group had been set up to obtain Members' input, which included several representatives from the political groups. It was noted that the group had met twice so far and that discussions had already begun to take place, with the next meeting scheduled in two weeks' time. Some of the issues covered at the meetings were addressed, including the Members' Intranet and the Members' Bulletin. It was anticipated that the next meetings would include discussions on training and information technology provision for members. Committee members were welcome to join the discussion groups to discuss the work programme and offer observations.

It was suggested that members of the discussion group could cascade information to all Council members through the political group meetings. A Member suggested members could offer observations and have an input to the work programme through the discussion groups by asking the representatives to pass the observations forward at the meetings. In response, it was agreed that it would be a good idea to get wider input from Members.

It was emphasised that future candidates should be fully aware of the required responsibilities which were a key part of a Councillor's role. It was expressed that the importance of taking the role seriously needed to be reinforced, ensuring that all mandatory training was completed, with regular attendance at meetings and committees, and active ward work. It was emphasised that it was necessary to ensure that the candidates were ready to fully commit to working for the benefit of the residents in their ward and to work the equivalent of three days a week to earn their pay fairly. It was acknowledged that some members had other commitments in addition to being Councillors, such as working part-time and raising a family, but emphasised the need to commit to the role and take it seriously.

There was surprise that not many residents understood the responsibilities and expectations of the role, and the work that needed to be done. It was noted that it was important for Members to join several different committees in the Council to understand how the Council worked for the people of Gwynedd. In response to this, it was highlighted that work was underway to highlight the role and expectations of Councillors as part of the diversity in democracy project. It was noted that this would be shared on the website and social media so that more information about the work was available to prospective Members.

There was a discussion about restructuring the Members' Intranet and it was confirmed that developments were underway to make the Intranet more accessible to enable Members to use the resource more effectively.

All democracy service staff were thanked for being very supportive of Members. A member stated that he greatly appreciated the support, and that he would not be able to carry out his work as a councillor without the support of staff due to his disability. It was noted that it was important for prospective candidates to realise that there was full support available to them and should be open to those applying to become a County Councillor.

A member expressed frustration about her travel limitations and problems joining remote meetings. She complained that she had experienced difficulty in arranging rooms in local Council offices and there was no adequate system in place to assist with arrangements. Special thanks were given to the staff of Galw Gwynedd in Pwllheli for their assistance in answering calls promptly and assisting with arrangements.

All Members were thanked for their observations and their input to the work programme to improve service provision and make arrangements for the 2027 Election was appreciated.

DECISION

To accept the report.

8. CYNGOR GWYNEDD'S STATEMENT REGARDING PROMOTING DIVERSITY IN DEMOCRACY

Submitted - the report of the Democracy Team Leader. It was confirmed that the Council had adopted the Diversity in Democracy Statement at the Full Council Meeting in October 2021, in accordance with the Local Government Act which came into force the same year. It was reported that the Council was declaring its commitment in the wake of the upcoming local Government Election in May 2027. It was clarified that there had only been a few changes to the statement since 2021, but the support of Committee Members was sought to submit the statement to the Full Council in July.

The members expressed their thanks for the report and the importance of diversity in democracy was emphasised to improve representation of the county's residents. It was reinforced that there was a need to seek to attract a wide range of potential candidates and ensure that the role was accessible and flexible enough for people to fulfil the role through practical arrangements. It was noted that there was a need to consider the challenges and barriers for people and seek to overcome them. The draft work programme was welcomed.

DECISION

To accept the report.

It was agreed to recommend that the Full Council adopts the Diversity in Democracy Statement (the new version) along with the work programme to support action on the statement.

9. LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROVISION FOR MEMBERS

Submitted – the report of the Learning and Organisational Development Manager. An overview was provided of the number of Members who had completed the core training titles. It was noted that the numbers that had not completed the titles remained high. It was ensured that the Learning and Development department continued to encourage Members to complete the training, by sending reminders, offering support and providing accessible resources for Members to complete the training at a time convenient for them. It was noted that officers were contacting Members individually to try to encourage them and motivate Members to attend the training and complete the titles. It was noted that the training was available on the Intranet to Members and Members were encouraged to contact officers for assistance.

Reference was made to the ongoing work to incorporate the LGBTQ+ training as part of Equality training, and it was assured that work to identify actions to achieve this would be completed before May 2027.

It was reported that the process of identifying mentors for new Members starting in May 2027 had begun. It was explained that the mentors would be experienced Elected Members and could act as a point of contact for new Elected Members settling into their new role. It was noted that Members could take Coaching and Mentoring sessions, as part of the more specialist and self-development work, and Members were welcome to contact the Learning and Development Department to arrange this.

Members were invited to arrange a Personal Development conversation with the Learning and Development Manager or another appropriate Officer. Sessions were offered for Members to reflect on their role, consider areas of development and formulate a personal development programme to meet their needs and wishes. It was noted that a Member Training Strategy was in the process of being created and would be introduced soon. It was assured that this would be part of the Learning and Development handbook for new members in May 2027.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions and make observations.

Frustration was once again expressed at so few Members who attended training, particularly the mandatory training despite the numerous efforts of officers to encourage them. It was noted that several Councillors had not completed the mandatory training on the Code of Conduct, and Safeguarding Children and Adults, which was crucial to Members' role as a corporate parent. Frustration was further expressed that three Members had not completed any of the mandatory training titles at all. It was considered whether the Members could be identified and their names made public. In response, it was confirmed that this information was now publicly available on the Council website.

It was highlighted that some Members were struggling to access their learning programme and were struggling to confirm which training courses they had completed. It was assured that the Learning and Development service would send an email to the Members individually with a link to the relevant training which had not yet been completed. The training courses provided by the Learning and Development service were praised and they were thanked for their support.

DECISION

To accept the report.

The meeting started at 10:00am and ended at 11:20am.

Date of meeting :	3 November 2026
Subject	The Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru (draft) report on Financial Remuneration to Councillors for 2027/28
Recommendation	The Democracy Services Committee is asked for comments on the proposed decisions in order to draw up a response to the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru consultation.
Contact Officer:	Vera Jones Democracy and Language Services Manager

What is the background and relevant considerations?

1. This is the second report by the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru (the Commission). This is the body responsible for setting the financial remuneration levels for all Welsh Councillors.
2. The draft changes, should they come into force, will be published by the end of February 2027 and will be effective for the 2027-28 financial year, namely 1 April 2027. The consultation will close on **17 December 2026** and therefore, we will need to respond by then.

The role of the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru

3. As noted above, this is the second report by the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru, with the draft produced, bearing in mind that the local government elections will be held in May 2027. The Commission has concluded that no major changes are required to the Framework prior to the election. This means that the report includes upgraded amounts, where appropriate, but the framework is left unchanged.

Main Decisions relevant to the Council

4. A full copy of the report in its draft form is available by clicking on the link below.

[Draft-annual-remuneration-report-2027-28-E.pdf](#) (English)

The Commission has also produced a supplementary report on the Financial Remuneration of the Fire and Rescue Service; see the full final report by clicking on the link below.

[20260925-supplementary-remuneration-report-FRA-E.pdf](#) (English)



Remuneration for Elected Members.

5. The basic salary, which is paid to every elected member, is remuneration for the responsibility of representing the community and participating in the scrutiny and regulatory work and the functions associated with local governance. It has been based on a sum equivalent to three full days per working week.
6. As noted in the report, the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) was used as a basis for the remuneration of Elected Members in the past. However, the Commission has noted that the information from this survey is outdated (around two years old) by the time the decisions come into force - e.g. Financial Information dated April 2024 formed the basis for decisions on the financial remunerations to Councillors in 2026/27.
7. The Commission has decided that choosing a measure relating to the cost-of-living is appropriate and has used the Consumer Price Index, including the costs of owner-occupiers (CPIH) as a basis for the financial remuneration levels within its remit. The latest figure available when drawing up the report is the figure for May 2026; an increase of 3%.
8. The Commission seeks the views of authorities on the use of the Consumer Price Index as a basis to the annual increase as a part of the consultation. *The Committee's opinion is sought on whether you agree with this change to the basis of the decision?*
9. The basic salary will be **£21,676, for 27/28**, which is a 3% increase. The basic salary was £21,044 in 2026/27 and £19,771 in 2025/26.

Senior Salaries for Elected Members

10. There is no change in the cap on the number of senior salaries for Cyngor Gwynedd, and the figure remains at 18.
11. The table below shows the details of payments for senior roles, and every senior salary includes the basic salary payment. Note that the increase to the 'senior' element of the salaries is 3% for each role. The relevant figures for Cyngor Gwynedd (group B) are shown for 2027-28.



Financial remuneration

Role	Likely 27/28	2026/27	2025/26
Basic salary (payable to every elected member)	£21,676	£21,044	£19,771
Band 1: leader	£73,156	£71,025	£66,727
Band 1: deputy leader	£51,209	£49,717	£46,709
Band 2: executive members	£43,893	£42,615	£40,036
Band 3: committee chairs (if the role receives a remuneration)	£32,514	£31,567	£29,657
Band 4: the leader of the largest opposition party	£32,514	£31,567	£29,657
Band 5: leaders of other political groups	£26,011	£25,253	£23,726
Civic Head (Chair of the Council)	£32,514	£31,567	£29,657
Deputy Civic Head (Vice-chair of the Council)	£26,011	£25,253	£23,726

12. The Civic Head is a senior post in councils, which is different to political or executive leadership. As well as chairing important meetings, the civic head is the 'first citizen' and the authority's 'ambassador', who represents the Council in its dealings with all types of organisations and bodies.

13. Note that there are no details regarding whether the role of Civic Head and Deputy Civic Head (if paid), have been included within the cap or not. (In the past, it was clear that it was not within the cap). *It is recommended that committee members seek confirmation of the situation about the senior salaries for the Civic Head and Deputy Civic Head as part of the response to the consultation.*



Salaries/senior salaries when serving on other bodies

Corporate Joint Committee (CJC)

14. Each of the four Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs) include the leaders of the principal councils in their area and the chair of any National Park authority located wholly or in part within their boundaries. These leaders receive financial remuneration for their role within their appropriate bodies. The Commission has consulted on whether there is a need for any additional financial remuneration to reflect the time commitments and additional responsibilities. The Commission's decision at present is to conduct more research before making a final decision. The final decision is expected to be included in the 2028/29 report.

National Park Authority

15. National Park Authorities include members who are either elected members nominated by the principal councils within the national park area or members appointed by the Welsh Government through the public appointments' process. The members appointed by the Welsh Government and members nominated by the Council are treated equally in relation to financial remuneration.
16. Elected Members nominated by the Council who receive a Band 1 Salary (Leader and Deputy Leader) or Band 2 (Cabinet Members) are not permitted to receive any additional salary for a role in a National Park Authority. The remuneration for the roles within the National Park Authority are also increasing by 3% in 2027/28, i.e.,

Basic Salary	£6,114
Chair	£16,952
Vice-chair	£10,449 (if appointed)
Committee chair	£10,449

Fire and Rescue Authority

17. The Commission on Financial Remuneration for Fire and Rescue Authorities in Wales published a final report as those bodies move towards new governance arrangements. The final report was published in September 2026, and a link has been included above. The changes were introduced by the Welsh Government, establishing smaller-sized boards, similar to an executive, which include one executive councillor from every constituent local authority, as well as a minority of independent members appointed through public competition. The new model will come into force following the local government elections in May 2027.

Overview and Scrutiny Joint Committee Members

18. The salary for the chair of the overview and scrutiny joint committee will be set at £10,838, an increase from £10,522 last year, and the salary of the vice-chair will be set as half of that, namely £5,419, compared with £5,261 last year. This decision has existed for some years and refers to Scrutiny joint committees from local authorities, not the Scrutiny joint committee for the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee.

Co-opted members and lay members

19. This year, for the first time, there is a recommendation to increase fees for Lay Members and Co-opted Members who serve on various committees. *As committee members have drawn attention to this injustice in the past, it is recommended that the members of the committee welcome the 3% increase, which is in line with the increase for Elected Members, as recognition for the work done by these individuals.*
20. There is continued emphasis in the report on an 'appropriate officer' within the authority to determine beforehand whether a meeting has been programmed for a full day or half a day, and to determine when it would be appropriate to qualify a full or half day or to use the hourly rate where it is sensible to combine several meetings. *Considering that the hourly rate was originally introduced to reflect the new way of working (e.g. a 45-minute Briefing Meeting), it is recommended that Committee Members ask the Commission once again to emphasise the need to use the hourly rate to show that County Councils are financially prudent and give fair pay for the work done.*
21. Please note the below fees for Co-opted and Lay Members with voting rights.

Role	Hourly rate payment	Payment rate up to 4 hours	Payment rate 4 hours and above
Standards Committee Chairs, and Audit Committees	£34.50 £33.50 (26/7)	£138 £134 (26/27)	£276 £268 (26/7)
CJC Lay Chairpersons - a new category to highlight the payment to the CJC	£34.50	£138	£276
Ordinary members of Standards committees who also chair Standards Committees for Town and Community Councils	£30.50 £29.75 (26/7)	£122.50 £119 (26/27)	£245 £238 (26/7)
CJC Ordinary Lay Members - a new category to highlight the payment to the CJC	£30.50	£122.50	£245
Ordinary members of Standards Committees, Education Scrutiny	£27 £26.25 (26/7)	£108 £105 (26/7)	£216 £210 (26/7)



Committee, Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee and Audit Committee			
Town and Community Councillors who are Members of Principal Councils' Standards Committees	£27 £26.25 (26/7)	£108 £105 (26/7)	£216 £210 (26/7)

Payments for Town and Community Council Members

22. Please note that the report states the terms for Community and Town Council Members for 'compensation for financial loss' - and the rates are increased in line with the 3% increase. As this element is outside the Council's remitt, it is recommended that members discuss relevant matters at their respective Town/Community Councils.

Other costs

23. In paragraph 99, the report states that "Reimbursement must be at the current HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) rates", in relation to travelling costs.

24. Since the beginning of 2026/27, the rates have increased for Members and Staff, with the current rates as follows:

- 55p a mile for the first 10,000 miles
- 25p a mile for every mile exceeding 10,000 miles.

Recommendation

25. The Democracy Services Committee is asked for:

- comments on the proposed decisions to draw up a response to the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru consultation.

MEETING	Democracy Services Committee
DATE	3 November 2026
TITLE	LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS MAY 2027
PURPOSE	To provide an update on the work being done to prepare for the 2027 Election
RECOMMENDATION	To note and accept the report.
AUTHOR	Annes Siôn Democracy Team Leader

FOREWORD

1. We are all aware that Local Government elections are being held in May 2027. As a result, there are considerable preparations to be made - by you as elected members, by the political groups, and by us as officers.
2. The work is already underway, with three main themes to consider, as follows:
 - Pre-election preparation (including promoting diversity in democracy)
 - Results/election day
 - Induction and the training programme
3. Preparation
Naturally, there are many sub-sections to each theme. A programme of work was presented to you as members at the last meeting and below is an update on the work that has been carried out on some of the actions.

Action	Details
Ensure comprehensive information for prospective candidates.	Work has begun to update the information on the website, and it is hoped that the information will be up to date by mid-November. In addition to the information on the website, we are creating a Handbook for Prospective Candidates containing useful information giving them a full picture of the role of a member. Some of the headings are as follows: • Role of a Councillor • How does the Council work? • Time Commitment and Salary • Values • Support for Councillors • A Day in the Life of a Councillor. We will be presenting this at the next meeting of the Councillors' Discussion Group: Election 2027.
Promoting diversity	Videos have been created by the Democracy Team to highlight the role of a Councillor and these will be posted on

Action	Details
	social media in early November. Thanks to the Elected Members who have volunteered to take part in the videos. An Elect Her Session will be held on XXXXXX which will be a specific session created to encourage women to stand for election. The session will be chaired by Catrin Thomas, Corporate Director and there will be contributions from the Group Leaders. As part of a wider programme to promote democracy, sessions will be held jointly by the Monitoring Officer and the Propriety Officer along with the Democracy Team to explain to anyone considering standing what a member's role is and to give them the opportunity to ask any questions. These will be held in early January.
Members' Intranet	Following discussions in the Councillors' Discussion Group: Election 2027, work is underway to reconsider the members' intranet to simplify it in the hope that it will be more useful and easier to use.

4. Results/election day

Considerable appreciation was shown for the work done for the 2022 elections, particularly the success in announcing the election results per ward as they were being declared. We will ensure that arrangements are in place for similar success in 2027. Because of the current staff turnover within the democracy team, it will be necessary to create a training programme for new members of staff so that they understand the requirements and are confident to take action so that we can achieve similar success in 2027.

5. Induction and the training programme

There are two main elements to induction work, namely the welcome day and the training programme for the first year.

6. The main actions for the elements of the work above include:

Action	Details
Welcome day	We have reflected on how information was presented to Councillors during the Welcome Day in 2022. It was highlighted by several Councillors that a lot of information had been presented on the day, which was heavy and led to a tiring day. To respond to the comments, we intend to put together a Welcome Day which prioritises the following key points: • An outline of how the Council works • Code of Conduct • Support available to Councillors • Information Technology Provision.

Action	Details
	It was noted that many had benefited from meeting their fellow members and several key officers on the first day. It is our intention to invite all members (those who are new and returning) to a Welcome Day in Siambr Dafydd Orwig, holding it as a face-to-face event only. By ensuring that we do not overwhelm Councillors on the first day, we hope that we will be able to have brief and engaging sessions in order to share more of the information needed in the first two weeks. Topics such as: • What to expect at the first meeting of the Full Council (the annual meeting) • Virtual and Hybrid Meetings – practical tips on how to attend the meetings and share good practice In addition, it has come to our attention that the Members' Handbook presented to Councillors back in 2022 did not address all the needs and information required. As a result, work is being done to create a comprehensive booklet that will be of greater use.
The first-year induction programme	We have noted at the previous meeting that prioritising core training for Members to equip them with the knowledge necessary to fulfil the role is vitally important – a specific report about training has been submitted to the meeting. Please note that it is a difficult task to strike a balance between ensuring that members are presented with adequate information and ensuring that they are not overwhelmed by excessive information and training. Obviously, the balance must also be maintained with the committees to be held in the first period before the summer, bearing in mind that specific training must be presented for some committees, e.g. planning, licensing, scrutiny, etc. before a member can sit on the committee. The period before summer will be a very busy one as the same number of committees (if not more) need to be held within a shorter period of time than is available in a normal year. Work is being carried out in conjunction with the Learning and Development Service to map out the training that will be required for the first year.

7. Any comments on the work programme are welcomed.

8. Members' Comments

To ensure that we get your views and input as members to be central to the development work for the election, a small group of Members come together to share their views. It is a cross-section of experienced members and others who have joined more recently, and they offer observations on specific areas of discussion. The group has held several meetings and has discussed areas such as Members' IT Equipment, Members' Training and the Members' Intranet. The responses inform the work being done by the team on the work programme.

In the coming months we will be meeting to discuss areas such as:

- Information for Prospective Councillors
- Welcome Day/Induction Period/Councillors' Booklet
- Support during the first year.

9. As members of the Democracy Services Committee, you are also welcome to join if you wish.

We will update you on the preparatory work at the committee's February meeting.

10. DECISION SOUGHT

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

MEETING	Democratic Services Committee
DATE	3 November 2026
REPORT TITLE	Learning and Development Provision for Elected Members
PURPOSE	To provide an update on the work being done to strengthen Learning and Development provision for Members
RECOMMENDATION	The Committee is invited to make any further suggestions before receiving the report
AUTHOR	Mari Edwards, Learning and Organisational Development Manager

1.0 OVERVIEW

1.1 There are **8** Core training titles for Members. These training titles supports Elected Members in their work and there is a strong encouragement for you to be completing them as a **minimum** to be able to carry out the role effectively.

1.2 Here's an update on the numbers who have completed the Core training:

Core Title	Numbers completed by October 2026	Numbers NOT completed
Safe Leadership and Personal Safety	57	12
Code of Conduct	62	7
Well-being of Future Generations Act	39	30
Safeguarding Children and Adults	63	6
Your Responsibility for Equality	49	20
About People	56	13
Corporate Parenting	53	16
Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (Group F)	54	15

1.3 There has already been support from members of this committee, encouraging Elected Members to complete the Core training titles following the previous Democracy Committee meeting. We, within the Learning and Development service are very appreciative of the support and have seen a significant change in the figures who have completed the training.

1.4 At the beginning of October 2026, we sent an email to give every Elected Member, individually, to update as to where they are up to with the completion of the Core titles.

2.0 LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- 2.1 Following the review of the Core areas, the decision was made to retain the eight titles that currently exist. The name of a few titles will be changed to make it clearer what the course content is.
- 2.2 Following discussions about including LGBTQ+ training as part of the offering, we are proposing that this training becomes part of the training titled Equality.
- 2.3 Work will be undertaken to ensure that the content of all Core title courses is up to date and ready to be run for the next Electoral Cycle. As a result of this work, we ask that **every** Elected Member who will have been elected after May 2027 completes **every** training title during the first year, whether they have done it previously or not. This would ensure consistency and an opportunity to set standards.
- 2.4 During an Election cycle, Elected Members will be required to complete all Core training titles at least once. Some titles, for example Safeguarding, will have to be completed twice due to the legal requirement of the training. We will make every effort to plan things carefully so as not to put too much work pressure on Elected Members.
- 2.5 We will continue with the careful scheduling of the Core training taking into consideration the best approach to delivering the training; whether it is face-to-face training (which will require moving around the county to provide those), virtual or a recording of the training is suitable. Consideration will be given to the level of expertise of the trainer, looking at internal and external trainers.
- 2.6 There is an awareness of the fact that some of the Core titles are offered by agencies or other stakeholders that Elected Members are involved in as part of their duties. We will continue to keep an eye on this, ask Members to prioritise what is provided internally by the Council, and identify ways of proving what training Elected Members have completed.
- 2.7 For the next Electoral Cycle, it is intended to encourage Elected Members to be completing all Core titles during the first year, so that we can put our efforts into providing Developmental titles in subsequent years within the five-year cycle. It is hoped that this will enable us to provide better provision and offer training opportunities of value to Members.
- 2.8 The Elected Member Training Strategy remains to be work in progress and will be rolled out to you once ready.

The committee is invited to consider the training arrangements, comment on what is presented in this report and approve the proposed action.

MEETING	Democracy Services Committee
DATE	3 November 2026
TITLE	Councillor Safety
PURPOSE	Provide an update on the work being done in terms of the Safety of Members
RECOMMENDATION	To note and accept the report.
AUTHOR	Vera Jones Democracy and Language Service Manager

1. The safety of Members has been and continues to be a priority for the Democracy Service. Unfortunately, it remains to be a subject that needs constant attention. We are aware that many Councillors face threats in their communities and we are available to offer advice and support to individual members when safety or well-being matters arise.
2. The Head of Democracy Services reported in the Annual Report in 2024/25 that there was a need to raise the awareness of Councillors of the need to report any incident or threat, by completing and returning the relevant forms (HS11).
3. The report notes the work done by the Council over the past few months to ensure that the safety of members receives ongoing attention.
4. Jo Cox Remembrance Event
 - 4.1 On 19 June, following a Notice of Motion at the Full Council, an event was held for Councillors to remember Jo Cox. It was part of the national 'Great Get Together' event. Councillors came together under the banner of what mattered to Jo Cox, i.e., to celebrate what connects us, showing that we have more in common than the issues that divide us.
 - 4.2 There was an opportunity to have open discussions and receive information regarding:
 - the threats and challenges facing Members in their communities,
 - good practice when considering the safety of Members in the community and in meetings
 - guidance for Members on how to hold events safely
 - raising awareness of the support available from the Council.
 - 4.3 Attention was drawn to the support that we have available here in the Council, particularly the pages on the members' intranet regarding the safety of Members and regarding the well-being of Members. In addition, there was an opportunity to remind Members of the specific support available for Elected Members from a designated officer at North Wales Police through "Operation Ford". It is important that any member contacting the police for support if something is happening/has happened to them states that the incident is relevant to "Operation Ford".

- 4.4 It was a valuable morning of sharing experiences, and it highlighted that Councillors from all parties and backgrounds often faced the same issues. A request was noted by the Members in attendance for the Council to hold such sessions more regularly to give Councillors an opportunity to share experiences, identify potential solutions and good practice that have worked for others and have the support of their fellow councillors.

5. Incident Reporting Training for Councillors

- 5.1 As previously reported, we are aware that Councillors are facing incidents and/or threats as a result of their role as Councillors. Having said that, the factual evidence that we have on the number of incidents is very low. It has been a requirement for years that Members report on incidents, violent and dangerous incidents or such threats by completing a specific form (HS11), but the number who have completed this form is very low.
- 5.2 As part of the work of raising Members' awareness of the need to report any incident or threat, a virtual training session was held by the Health and Safety Team. The training was in addition to the 'Leading safely' core training.
- 5.3 The Council has modernised and simplified the incident reporting procedure and created digital forms to report incidents, risks and violent and dangerous incidents. The session provided the necessary skills and information to ensure that every individual is able to use the system confidently and correctly. There is an intention to hold these sessions for councillors in the future.
- 5.5 With the Local Government election on the horizon, it seems likely that many Elected Members will be preparing to go out and campaign over the coming months. We encourage all our members to be familiar with the information regarding safety, which is found on the website, as part of their work to prepare for the election. In addition, if any Councillor faces any of these situations, they are encouraged to report the incident on the system or contact us as a Council, should you require support. Nobody should face this alone.

6. **DECISION SOUGHT**

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

MEETING	Democracy Services Committee
DATE	3 November 2026
TITLE	Update - Work to Upgrade the Chambers
PURPOSE	Provide an update on the work that is being done to upgrade the Chambers
RECOMMENDATION	To note and accept the report.
AUTHOR	Annes Siôn Democracy Team Leader

1. Back in July, you as a Council accepted the Annual Report of the Head of Democracy Services for 2025/26. In that report, it was noted that updating the resources in the Chambers was one of the priorities for 2026/27.
2. It was expressed that the project would follow the necessary scrutiny arrangements to upgrade the equipment in the chambers to enable simultaneous translation, remote access, voting and webcasting of Council meetings from the chambers. It was also noted that we would ensure that the experience for chamber users, the people of Gwynedd who are watching the webcast and Council staff members who are responsible for using the system, would be easy to use and effective.
3. This follows many problems with the resources that are currently available, with some elements dating back to 2012, and sound problems, specifically in Siambr Dafydd Orwig, becoming more prominent over the past few months.
4. The intention of this report is to give you an update on the work.
5. The Cabinet Members have now commissioned a piece of work to look at the market and receive information in terms of quotes to complete the work. To complete the work, a project group was established, which include the Head of Democracy Services, the Assistant Head - Digital and Technology and Officers from the field of Information Technology, Housing and Property and Democracy and Language.
6. Over the past months, the Project Group has been working on a technical specification that will meet all the needs for the chambers. An Event to Engage with the Supplier Market will be held over the coming weeks for potential prospective suppliers to see for themselves the Council's needs for resources in the Chambers. This is a normal step before starting the official tendering process and usually leads to more accurate and detailed tenders.
7. The following next steps are anticipated for delivering the work:
 - Procurement before Christmas
 - Agreeing a contract in January/February
 - preparing to undertake the work by the summer.

We will update you on the preparation work through regular reports to this committee.

8. DECISION SOUGHT

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

CYNGOR GWYNEDD

Report to a meeting of the Democracy Services Committee

Date of Meeting	3 November 2026
Title of Item	Update on Members' Concerns and Enquiries work programme
Contact Officer	Heledd Jones, Senior Executive officer

1. DECISION

- 1.1 The Democracy Services Committee is requested to consider the contents of this report and the associated appendix.

2. WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND AND RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS?

Background

- 2.1 Following concerns raised in 2022 about failings and delays in responding to enquiries from Members, a number of amendments were implemented across the Council to strengthen response arrangements and to support Members more effectively. These improvements included the implementation of the Hybrid Working Policy, the Digital Plan, the Customer Care Plan, and changes to the Self-service portal.
- 2.2 Between September 2025 and February 2026, a further review was undertaken, which included engaging with Members, town and community councils, heads of service and officers. While the findings of the review were generally positive, a number of areas were identified where further consistency and improvement was needed. Specifically, the need to:
- standardising arrangements across services;
 - ensure that enquiries are promptly acknowledged and receive a punctual response;
 - provide regular updates on the progress of enquiries; and
 - support members when contacting Services on a wide range of matters
- 2.3 Furthermore, Members expressed a desire for greater clarity regarding the channels and procedures that should be followed when raising different types of concerns, enquiries and complaints, particularly in relation to whistleblowing matters, safeguarding issues, and concerns raised on behalf of constituents.

Members Enquiries Work Programme

- 2.4 Following the review, a Members' Enquiries Work Programme was jointly developed jointly by the Members' Task Group and the Cross-Departmental Task Group, with the aim of strengthening the support provided to Elected Members. The Cross-

Departmental Task Group has led and coordinated the implementation of the actions identified within the work programme.

2.5 Several elements of the work programme have already been implemented or are currently being developed, including:

- **Members' Enquiries Portal** – A dedicated portal has been developed to enable Members to submit and record enquiries in a single central location. The portal is currently being piloted by the Members' Task Group. Subject to an evaluation of the pilot arrangements, the intention is to roll out access to all Elected Members, enabling them to submit enquiries and monitor their progress.
- **Members' Confidential Reporting ("Whistleblowing") Policy** – The Policy was introduced following work to establish a specific procedure for Elected Members to raise concerns in confidence. The Policy was approved by a meeting of the Full Council on 2 July 2026.
- **Reporting Pathways** – An infographic has been produced to provide Members with a clear overview of the most appropriate route to follow when raising a concern, complaint or enquiry. A copy of the infographic is attached in Appendix 1. It is intended that these infographics will, in due course, be made available in an accessible location on the Members' intranet.

Next steps

2.6 Work will continue over the coming months, with the aim of ensuring that robust, consistent and effective arrangements are in place ahead of the 2027 local government elections. This will help ensure that Elected Members receive appropriate support in carrying out their role, while also supporting the preparation for the induction of the new Council following the elections in May 2027.

2.7 The main work streams will include:

- updating the Members' induction package, including clear information on roles, democratic arrangements and the support available;
- co-ordinate Members' training programme, reviewing existing provision and ensuring a structured programme that responds to Members' needs;
- carry out an evaluation of the Members' Enquiry Portal following the pilot phase, to ensure a consistent and effective procedure for the submission and tracking of enquiries; a
- updating the Members' Intranet, to ensure that relevant information, policies, guidance and contact details are readily available.

2.8 Through this work, the aim is to ensure clear, consistent and effective support arrangements for Members, improving access to necessary information and training.

2.9 As the main tasks associated with the work programme have now been completed, and the remaining actions are underway, responsibility for monitoring and completing the outstanding actions will transfer to the usual operational arrangements. Where further

Member input is required, those matters will be considered by the Members' Group:
Preparing for the 2027 Election.

Appendix:

Appendix 1: Infographic – Members reporting and reporting pathway

Members' Enquiries and Reporting Pathways

