




<b>Date of meeting:</b>	14 November 2023
<b>Subject</b>	Priorities of the Head of Democracy Services - update
<b>Recommendation</b>	The Democracy Services Committee is asked to accept the report for information.
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Ian Jones, Head of Democracy Services

### **What is the background and relevant considerations?**

1. As part of my first annual report, I reported that I have four priority fields that will receive attention during 2023/24. They are listed below as a reminder for you
  - Safety and support for Councillors
  - Personal development conversations (consultation sessions)
  - scrutiny arrangements
  - Paperless Council
2. The intention of the report is to update you on the priority areas. For information, I will not report on the Scrutiny arrangements to this committee as governance arrangements are discussed and therefore there is a need to report to the Governance and Audit Committee. However, you are already aware of the workshops which were held recently where there was an opportunity for Councillors to discuss our scrutiny arrangements.

#### **Safety and support for councillors**

3. A report was given on the steps already taken by the Council to try to respond to the challenges that face Councillors in regard to health and safety in the committee's most recent meeting. Constant attention is given to Councillors' safety, as we are aware that different and challenging situations face you regularly. Social expectations have changed as well as the overall nature of society.
4. You are aware that there is information on health and safety matters on the Members' Intranet, and there are regular updates given on the field in the Members' Bulletin. Recently (during October), an invitation was given to all Councillors to join sessions regarding on-line safety by the Local Government Association.

- 
5. However, we understand that several Councillors continue to not be aware of the array of information available on the Members' Intranet, and also the important information provided in the weekly Member's bulletin. We accept that this could reflect Councillors' busy lives, with Councillors enquiring about health and safety matters when matters arise. However, it is a consideration for the committee's members on how to ensure better use of the Members' Intranet and the weekly bulletin for Members' that communicate crucial key messages.

### **Consultation sessions**

6. Every member has received an invitation to take advantage of Consultation Sessions.
7. Everyone is different, with various strengths and a wide range of developmental needs. Maybe the individual is unaware of which type of development they need, or what is available.
8. An informal conversation with experts in the learning and development field will be an opportunity to discuss your role as a member, by considering the things that come easy to you, the things that are a challenge and might cause concern, and your future wishes. There will also be an opportunity to discuss how you would like to learn- what suits you?
9. The outcome of the session usually is a Personal Development Plan (a programme that has been tailored for you) with a range of Learning and Development elements. It can also lead to general matters that can be included in the corporate training programme where all the Councillors benefit from the training.
10. Currently, only 3 have attended. It is recommended that you contact the Members' Development Officer (Cara Williams) to arrange a Consultation Session if you have not benefited so far.

### **Paperless Council**

11. It was reported to the previous meeting on the steps we intend to follow to move towards being a paperless Council. Over the summer and the beginning of September, many conversations with Councillors took place.
12. Many of the Councillors now
  - have ordered extra screens to be able to assist them in their work.
  - Some have arranged specific training sessions with the officer from the Learning and Development Service to better understand the equipment.
  - Those Councillors who have declared medical needs continue to receive paper copies.
  - Some other Councillors receive paper copies in specific situations as a result of their role.

13. In addition, it was arranged that officers from the IT service were available on the day of the Full Council to answer questions if any matters arose. There was no interest in these sessions.

14. I would like to remind you that you can contact us if you wish to receive an additional screen, and to arrange a 1:1 training slot at a time convenient to you.

15. I acknowledge that it has been a difficult time whilst adapting, and I am grateful to you all for your co-operation as we drive this change forward.

### **Other Developments**

16. We continue to drive on with other improvements on a regular basis in addition to the list of priorities mentioned above.

17. During the summer, changes were made to the sound system in Siambwr Hywel Dda following observations from Councillors that it was hard to hear some individuals at times. The sound has certainly improved in the Chamber following these changes, but remember the other steps that make a difference:

- Earphones with a microphone should be worn whilst joining remotely to ensure clearer sound in the Chamber.
- Ensuring a wired connection when joining remotely ensures a better connection and also assists with the sound level.
- Members in the Chamber can wear earphones which allows them to personally adapt the sound level in the Chamber.
- Whilst participating, speaking slowly and steadily to the microphone will also facilitate the situation.

18. We continue to hold our training programme that offers a variety of opportunities for you as a Councillor to take advantage of them. Since the committee's last meeting, the following sessions have been organised and held by the Development and Learning service. The number of Councillors that have attended each session is also noted.

EVENT	ATTENDEES (Number)
Mental health and suicide awareness	14
Article 4 Direction: Raising awareness session:	30
101 Data training: A presentation to understand and use data (Wales data)	4
Gypsies and Travellers: Cultural sensitivity training	13



Public speaking	5 (room for 6 on the course)
Assertiveness	10
Recruiting in the care field	15
Training for Scrutiny Committees Chairs and Vice-chairs on legal considerations	5
Adults Departments - Work together to ensure good outcomes for the people of Gwynedd	19
Organised Crime - County Lines	11

19. The numbers appear quite low for some sessions. We will report on the above to this meeting regularly to the future.

20. A report on the training programme for 2024/25 is presented to meet on February of the committee.

**Recommendation**

21. The Democracy Services Committee is asked to accept the report for information.