

Date of meeting:	24 February 2026
Subject	Support for Councillors
Recommendation	The Democracy Services Committee is asked to note the observations and accept the report.
Contact Officer:	Annes Sion Democracy Team Leader

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 improve the service provided, therefore, a satisfaction questionnaire was sent to the Councillors in early January 2026. The questionnaire sought feedback on the service being offered by the Democracy Team within the Democracy and Language Service.
4. In addition to this year's satisfaction questionnaire, we sent a questionnaire about the Members' Intranet, Communication and Training. Our hope in sending the questionnaire was to get an idea of the actual use made of the intranet and whether the communication methods currently used were useful. This report notes the responses to both questionnaires.
5. **Satisfaction Questionnaire:**

27 responses were received, which was less than the average that has been received over the last few years, but perhaps a busy period with an extraordinary meeting of the Full Council and the Scrutiny Committee has led to less providing a response. However, several observations were received from Councillors about their view on the Democracy Team service.
6. 88% noted that the service was "very good", with 11% noting "good". This was an increase from last year when one Councillor noted that the standard was acceptable.

- 
7. Some of the observations received suggested very high satisfaction, with the team's availability and punctuality in responding being highlighted and a great deal of praise about professionalism and friendliness. This is highlighted in some of the observations below:

"The team provides a high level of professionalism but always in a friendly manner"

"I am very happy of your support as a member. You are always available to help"

"Committee papers arrive timely. The committees themselves run effectively. Every time I ask for advice, or have an enquiry, I receive an answer promptly"

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.
9. One Member noted that "having current and correct information on the council's site for councillors about the names of the staff of every department and a phone number would be useful". This observation feeds into the second questionnaire about the members' intranet, and it was an observation that had been highlighted as further work to do to ensure that the information was current.
10. In addition to this, one Member proposed the idea of duplicating an App, I will contact the individual to see what the content of the app would be, as there was no further information as part of the response.
11. Frustration was expressed about a delay in responses from Officers and Departments within the Council, but as many of you know, further work is currently being done by the Corporate Director to look into the matter in detail. It is hoped that a further report on this work will be presented to the Democracy Services Committee during the summer term.
12. No further suggestions or negative observations were received.
13. In addition to the electronic satisfaction questionnaire being sent to Councillors once a year, we will try to recommence 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.
14. Overall, it must be noted that the findings showed a very positive perspective of the service that the Democracy Team offered, with special praise about the prompt responses, committee arrangements and quality support.

15. Members' Intranet

A slightly lower number responded to the questionnaire about the members' intranet, with only 20 members responding. Of the 20, 19 noted that they used the Intranet "often" or "sometimes", with one noting that they did not use it at all. The individual who did not use it emphasised that they *"did not understand it and it often did not work for me"*. This highlighted the need to consider the possibility of conducting basic training for some individuals to be able to make better use of the intranet.

16. The following pages were highlighted from Members as ones being used often:

- Officers' Contact Details
- Self-service
- News
- On-line training
- Information about specific departments and wards.

17. It was expressed that there were no elements missing on the intranet but the information could be dated. Some noted the need for a more current and comprehensive list of staff. One member noted *"I turn to the list every day, but it is not current or comprehensive... the list should be updated more often."*

18. A problem was highlighted regarding the bilingualism of the intranet, as some text boxes were too small for a bilingual text. The need for the pages to be simpler was also noted. This was also a problem that arose with the Members' Bulletin.

19. In terms of communication through the Members' Bulletin, the majority noted that they read the bulletin "every week" or "sometimes", with the same individual noting that they never read it. The majority noted that the current frequency of publishing the bulletin was fine and "once a week was enough".

20. It was noted that the majority was happy with the content in terms of the Council's News, Consultations, training and they would like to have a "glimpse of the future objectives".

21. Overall, it was noted that the Bulletin was a simple, clear and useful way of sharing information.

22. When answering questions about training, it was noted that training was very important and there were plenty of learning opportunities available. As the service had created a specific satisfaction questionnaire about training, there were only a few questions as part of this questionnaire.

23. To summarise the responses to the questionnaire, it was highlighted that an extensive use of the Intranet was made by the individuals who responded. It was emphasised that the staff contact phone numbers was



the most important element, but there was frustration that the page was not current. In terms of the Members' Bulletin, it was noted that it was a useful resource that was read regularly and praise was received about the content.

24. Responses to the questionnaires would be used over the next year to develop and ensure that the necessary resources were in place and updated before the 2027 Election.

Recommendation

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