

ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO :	County Council
DATE:	18 May, 2021
TITLE OF REPORT:	Democratic Services Committee Annual Report: 2020/21
REPORT BY:	J Huw Jones, Head of Democratic Services
PURPOSE OF REPORT:	Report on the work of the Democratic Services Committee during 2020/21
CONTACT OFFICER:	J Huw Jones (Head of Democratic Services)
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1. Recommendation

The **Committee is requested to:**

R1 Accept the report and note the matters considered by the Committee during 2020/21

2. Background and context

- 2.1** This is the ninth annual report by the Democratic Services Committee since its establishment in 2012.
- 2.2** The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 places a duty on the Council to establish a Democratic Services Committee supported by the Head of Democratic Services. The main purpose of the Committee is to review the adequacy of provision within the Authority in terms of staff, accommodation and other resources to fulfil the duties and functions of Democratic Services. It is a requirement under the Measure that the Committee meets at least once per annum and to report on such matters to Full Council.
- 2.3** The Annual Report provides an overview of all matters discussed by the Committee during 2020/21 and provides details of any decisions made.
- 2.4** Also, the report outlines what the content of the Committee's work programme will be during 2021/22 in terms of the matters that will be given consideration which will provide the foundation for the Committee's work for the next year.

Appendix :

Democratic Services Committee Annual Report for 2020/21

CYNGOR SIR YNYS MÔN

REPORT TO:	County Council
DATE:	18 May, 2021
TITLE OF REPORT:	Democratic Services Committee- Annual Report 2020/21
REPORT BY:	Cllr Robert Llewelyn Jones, Chair of the Democratic Services Committee
PURPOSE OF REPORT:	To report on the work of the Committee during 2020/21
CONTACT OFFICER:	Huw Jones (Head of Democratic Services)
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1. Introduction

The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 places a duty on the Council to establish a Democratic Services Committee supported by the Head of Democratic Services. The main purpose of the Committee is to review the adequacy of provision within the Authority in terms of staff, accommodation and other resources to fulfil the duties and functions of Democratic Services. Under the Measure, the Committee is obliged to meet at least once per annum and to report on such matters to Full Council.

This is the ninth annual report by the Committee since its establishment in 2012.

2. COVID-19 PANDEMIC UNIQUE CONTEXT

1.1 It is true to say that the pandemic has had and continues to have a far reaching impact on people's lives, our communities and the manner in which the Council provides its services. This period (**managing the emergency response to the Pandemic, the Recovery Period and the new Normal**) is an extremely challenging time for the Council and all other public sector organisations across Wales as we continue to face the challenges of Covid-19 emergency. This had meant that the Council has changed its way of working as a result of the global health emergency.

1.2 In line with The Coronavirus Act 2020 and the subsequent Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) Regulations 2020 we hold virtual meetings following the Strategy for Committee Meeting put in place in May¹. As a result of the pandemic, the Committee did not meet until 30 July, 2020.

3. Members' Professional Development

Supporting Elected Members is essential in order for them to fulfil their duties in terms of supporting and fully representing their communities, making decisions, and monitoring the Council's performance in the best interests of their constituents, to effectively represent the Council, to ensure internal governance and ethical standards, as described in the Role Description for Elected Members.

¹ Committee Meeting Strategy until April, 2021 (IOACC, May, 2020).

In order to develop and expand on the skills and knowledge of Members, there exists a Members Training and Development Plan which outlines all the development and training opportunities on offer for them throughout the year. The document is reviewed regularly in order to meet the needs of all Members, and responds to the requirements identified in the Councillors Personal Development Reviews. The Development Plan is submitted quarterly to the Standards Committee and the Democratic Services Committee in order for specific officers to identify specific or appropriate development inputs. As noted further on in the report, very little development and training sessions have taken place for elected members during the last quarter of 2019/20, except for comprehensive IT training.

In the same manner, monthly briefing sessions for Members are held on specific topics, in order to ensure that they acquire knowledge on transformational and strategic matters within the Council which is crucial for them in order to fulfil their roles and duties.

4. Work Programme of Committee

This report summarises the issues discussed by the Committee during 2020/21 and also provides commentary on current status.

In general, the Committee has focused on the following areas:

- Review of Electoral Arrangements for the Isle of Anglesey County Council by the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales
- Members' Annual Reports 2019/20
- Payments to Members- Reports by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales
- Democratic Services Committee Annual Report 2019/20
- Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales – Annual Report for 2021/22
- Changes to adoption absence for local authority members
- Member Development

A total of 3 meetings of the Committee were held during the past 12 months.

The table below summarises the issues discussed at each meeting during the past year.

Date of Committee	Subject	Current Status
30 July 2020	Review of Electoral Arrangements for the Isle of Anglesey County Council by the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An update report was submitted by the Head of Democratic Services, following the report presented to the Committee on 25 September 2019, as part of the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales' review of the County Council's electoral arrangements. • It was noted that the Commission has endorsed the County Council's case and recommendations for a Council of 35 Members and 14 wards, with no changes to 6 electoral wards, resulting in a county average of 1,461 electors per Member. The Commission intends to introduce the new arrangements in time for the 2022 elections.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was resolved to recommend to the County Council that the proposals detailed in the Boundary Commission's report be accepted, subject to changing the name to 'Bodowyr' for the new Braint ward. • A further report was submitted to the Committee on 23 November, 2020.
	Members' Annual Reports 2019/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Head of Democratic Services submitted a report on proposed measures for publishing Members' Annual Reports for 2019/20. • Section 5 of the Local Government Measure (Wales) 2011 places a duty on the County Council to ensure that arrangements are in place to enable Members to publish annual reports on their activities. • The Members were requested to complete reports by 22 May in order to publish on the Council's website by 30 June, 2020. • It was resolved to accept the report and encourage members to complete annual reports.
	Payments to Members- Reports by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales	<p>The Head of Democratic Services submitted a report, and noted the following points in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Annual Report sets out the allowances payable to Elected Members and Co-opted Members and voting rights. • The Panel's draft proposals for 2020/21 were submitted to this Committee on 10 December, 2019. • The final annual report was published in February 2020, with no further changes to the draft proposal, apart from an increase of £350 in the Members' basic salary. It was noted that the Council's Schedule of Member Remuneration for 2020/21 has been published in accordance with the requirements. • Reference was made to the Panel for reimbursing care costs, which became operational on 1 July 2020. The Panel is concerned that the uptake on this provision is very low. The Panel has asked that local authorities raise Members' awareness of the financial assistance that is available, and has recommended that an annual review of each Members' circumstances be carried out during their annual appraisal. • It was resolved to note: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. That the Committee has published its Schedule of Member Remuneration for

		<p>2020/21, in accordance with the requirements;</p> <p>ii. the principles relating to reimbursement of costs of care, and to confirm how the Council intends to implement the principles.</p>
	Democratic Services Committee Annual Report 2019/20	<p>The Head of Democratic Services submitted this Committee's annual report, and noted the following points in particular: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the annual report will be presented to full Council on 8 September, 2020. • the report summarises issues discussed by the Committee during 2019/20. • It was resolved to accept the report and note the matters considered by the Committee during 2019/20.
23 November 2020	Review of Electoral Arrangements for the Isle of Anglesey County Council by the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales	<p>The Head of Democratic Services submitted an update report, following reports presented to this Committee on 30 July and 25 September 2020, which covered the following matters.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was noted that the Commission published its draft proposals for consultation on 16 June 2020, which were consistent with the County Council's recommendations, for a model based on 14 wards and 35 Members. • It was further noted that this Committee's recommendations, which included changing the name of the new Braint ward to Bodowyr, were adopted by the Commission. The Boundary Commission's final recommendations will be presented to the County Council on 8 December 2020 for approval. It is hoped to introduce the new changes in time for the 2022 elections. • It was resolved to:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. To note the Boundary Commission's final recommendations, and ii. To recommend that the County Council's accepts the Boundary Commission's final recommendations on 8 December 2020.
	Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales – Annual Report for 2021/22	<p>The Head of Democratic Services submitted the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW)'s draft Annual Report, and noted the following points in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report outlines the allowances payable to Members and co-opted members who have voting rights.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The IRP's Draft Annual Report for 2021/22 has been published for consultation until 23 November 2020. The Panel will publish its final report in February 2021. • A summary of the proposed changes which will be implemented from 1 April 2021 was provided. • It was resolved to accept the draft determinations in the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales' report for 2021/22.
	Changes to adoption absence for local authority members	<p>The Head of Democratic Services submitted a report on a consultation document to expand the terms of adoption absence for local authority Members. The following points were noted in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the monthly cap on payments will be replaced by formal and informal care costs. • Welsh Government is seeking to ensure that the terms of employment for elected Members will be more favourable, and that absences will be brought in line with those of staff, which permit 26 weeks of absence. • The Committee welcomed the proposal, and hoped that greater interest would be generated by younger individuals, and women in becoming Members of the Council. • It was resolved to accept the proposed changes outlined in the Welsh Government consultation document, and authorise the Head of Democratic Service to respond accordingly in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee.
16 March, 2021	Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales – Annual Report for 2021/22	<p>The Head of Democratic Services presented the report, and noted the following points in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposals that will be made to the Remuneration Framework for 2021/2022 have been limited due to the impact of the pandemic. • The final report was published on 25 February 2021. The Panel has confirmed the increases in the salaries for elected members of principal councils, with consequential increases for members of National Park and Fire and Rescue Authorities. There are no other substantive changes to the draft Report. • It was resolved to note the determinations within the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales for 2021/2022.

	Member Development	<p>The Training Manager presented the report, and noted the following points in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the pandemic has had an impact on the training provided, and that very little activity has taken place in terms of training offered to Elected Members during the last quarter of 2019/2020 as a result. • The intention is to gather training needs and formulate a revised Development Plan for the period up until the elections in 2022 and submit to Full Council for approval. • During the lockdown period, training on the use of MS Teams and Zoom was provided in order to ensure that Members could participate in virtual meetings. • It is hoped that guidance and information with regards to future training provision will be shared by Welsh Local Government Association across all Authorities. • Work continues on the E-Learning modules available to Elected Members. • A training bulletin has been created for Elected Members to advertise training available. • It was resolved to submit the Training Plan for 2021/22 to the Full Council for approval.
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Looking forward to 2021/22:

The Democratic Services Committee will focus on the following areas for 2021/22:

- The Member Development and Training Plan including Personal Development Reviews
- Members Annual Reports
- Member related issues including - Wales Charter for Member development and support
- Relevant Welsh Government consultations/ Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales
- Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 relevant matters and preparations towards 2022 elections.

Recommendation:

The County Council is requested to accept the report and note the matters considered by the Committee during 2020/21.

Cllr Robert Llewelyn Jones

Chair of the Democratic Services Committee

(30.04.2021)