

ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL	
REPORT TO:	County Council
DATE:	24th May, 2022
TITLE OF REPORT:	Democratic Services Committee Annual Report for 2021/22
REPORT BY:	Cllr Robert Llewelyn Jones, Chair of the Democratic Services Committee
PURPOSE OF REPORT:	Report on the work of the Committee during 2021/22
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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 tenth annual report by the Committee since its establishment in 2012.

2. Covid-19 Pandemic unique context

2.1 It is true to say that the Pandemic has had 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 subsequent recovery**) has been an extremely challenging time for the Council and all other public sector organisations across Wales as we continue to face the challenges of the Covid-19 emergency. This involved the Council having to change its way of working as a result of the global health emergency.

2.2 In accordance with statutory requirements¹, we continue to convene our meetings virtually and since May, 2021, our public committee meetings have been live streamed via YouTube. Arrangements are in place to modernise and upgrade our current webcasting and microphone systems in the Council Chamber and committee room and put in place a hybrid solution to facilitate multi location meetings. It is envisaged that this hybrid solution will be operational by June, 2022. These arrangements will ensure that the Council is fully compliant with the requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

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 The Coronavirus Act 2020 and subsequent Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) Regulations 2020. The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

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 regularly to the Standards Committee and the Democratic Services Committee in order for specific officers to identify specific or appropriate development inputs. During the past year significant elements of the corporate training and development programme were put to one side as a result of the Pandemic with training inputs concentrating on upskilling Members in terms of technology and ensuring that all Members were able to participate effectively in virtual meetings.

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

4. Committee Work Programme

This report summarises the issues discussed by the Committee during 2021/22 and also provides commentary on current status.

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

- The Council's Draft Diversity Declaration
- Review of Parliamentary Constituencies
- Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales - Draft Annual report for 2022/23.

A total of 4 meetings of the Committee were held during the last civic year. The first meeting² was in relation to electing a vice-chair for the 2021/22 year. The table below summarises the issues discussed at the other three meetings:

² Meeting of the Democratic Services Committee held on 18 May, 2021

Date of Committee	Subject	Current Status
29 July, 2021	The Council's Draft Diversity Declaration	<p>The report of the Head of Democratic Services was presented along with the draft Diversity Declaration. The following points were noted during the discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) has considered diversity in local government and agreed to encourage every Council to adopt a Diversity Declaration as part of a commitment by local authorities to promote diversity, prior to the 2022 Elections. • It was noted that a working group was established to gather evidence of under-representation in democracy. The group presented its findings to the WLGA at its meeting in March 2021. The report acknowledged that people from various backgrounds are encouraged to stand for election and a national campaign is planned to promote this. • The Council supported the Diversity Declaration, which was consistent with the Authority's strategic aims to reflect the local community. It was noted that the Council was hoping to increase the number of women, young people, disabled people and people from ethnic minority groups who stand for election. • Following the WLGA meeting in March this year, local Councils were requested to adopt a Diversity Declaration and prepare an action plan. <p>The Democratic Services Committee resolved to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommend that Full Council adopts the draft Diversity Declaration at its meeting in September, 2021 • Delegate authority to the Democratic Services Committee to agree an action plan to support the declaration.
19 October, 2021	Review of Parliamentary Constituencies	<p>Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Democratic Services. The following points were noted in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earlier in 2021, the Boundary Commission for Wales announced the commencement of its 2023 review of parliamentary constituencies in accordance with the provisions of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 as well as the initial proposals for consultation.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was noted that the proposals recommended reducing the number of parliamentary constituencies from 40 to 32 • The proposals did not recommend any changes to the Ynys Môn constituency. <p>The Committee resolved to welcome the proposals for the Parliamentary constituency of Ynys Môn, as set out in the consultation document, and to recommend accordingly to Full Council.</p>
<p>25 November, 2021</p>	<p>Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales - Draft Annual Report for 2022/23</p>	<p>A report by the Head of Democratic Services was presented and the following points were noted in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Annual Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales who determine the levels of allowances payable to Elected and Co-elected Members with voting rights. • The Panel's Draft Annual Report for 2022/23 was published for consultation until 26 November 2021 and the final report was published in February 2022. • The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 requires the Panel's Annual Report to take effect from 1st April. However, when new councils are elected the Panel's determinations will be effective from the new municipal term. Therefore, the Annual Report for 2022/23 will have two different effective dates, namely:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. For the period 1st April to 8th May 2022, all of the determinations contained in the 2021/22 Annual Report will continue to apply ii. The determinations contained in the 2022/23 Annual Report will take effect from 9th May 2022. • Basic salary – a proposed increase in the basic salary for Elected Members of principal councils from £14,368 to £16,800 in 2022/23. • Senior salaries – it was noted that the number of senior salaries (“the cap”) would still stand i.e. a total of 16 for Ynys Môn. The total included civic salaries. The Panel would need to update the report in line with the Statutory Order that came into force in October 2021 which increases the number of Elected Members on the Council from 30 → 35. • Assistants to the Executive – it was noted that the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 allows councils to appoint

		<p>Elected Members to assist the Executive in discharging its functions. Such appointments will be made by the Leader of the Council. There are exclusions and limitations to the role.</p> <p>The Panel has given initial consideration to matters of remuneration for Members appointed as assistants to the Executive but has concluded that it is not possible to decide on additional payments, if any until there is more information in respect of the responsibilities attached to the posts. It was therefore proposed that this would be further considered when the Council decides to make appointments and when details of the specific responsibility is available. To give effect to this without the requirement for a further formal report, the following determination will apply: <i>“Determination 13: The Panel will decide on a case-by-case basis the appropriate senior salary, if any, for assistants to the executive.”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Implications - The level of increase in allowances proposed by the Panel would increase costs to councils. In relation to Ynys Môn, with 35 Members after the Local Elections, it was projected that this would be in the region of £180,000 annually. (For 2022/23, the new allowances would be payable from May 2022). It is a matter of individual choice whether Members take up allowances, although this is encouraged by the Panel. <p>The Committee resolved to – recommend the increase in allowances to Full Council as a possible tool to attract a wider cross-section of the community to stand for election in May, 2022.</p>
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Looking forward to 2022/23:

The Democratic Services Committee work programme will focus on the following areas for 2022/23:

- 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 for 2022 elections

Recommendation:

The County Council is requested to accept the report and note the matters considered by the Committee during 2021/22.

Cllr Robert Llewelyn Jones
Chair of the Democratic Services Committee
(03.05.2022)