

ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL

MEETING:	COUNTY COUNCIL
DATE:	14 MAY 2015
TITLE OF REPORT:	Democratic Services Committee – Annual Report 2014/15
REPORT BY:	Chair of Democratic Services
PURPOSE OF REPORT:	To report on the Work of the Committee during 2014/15

1) **Introduction**

The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 places a duty on the Council to establish a Democratic Services Committee as 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 fulfill 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 Council.

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

2) **Work Programme of Committee**

This report summarises the issues discussed by the Committee during 2014/15 and also provides commentary on current status.

In general the Committee has focused on the following areas:

- Member Development and Training Plans
- Modernising working practices
- Webcasting of meetings, and Town and Community Council websites
- Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011
- Members Annual Report
- Budget for 2015/16 and impact on Democratic Services
- Independent Remuneration Panel Annual Report

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

Date of Committee	Subject	Current Status
18/06/2014	Timing of Council meetings	<p>This matter was referred to the Committee following a Notice of Motion approved by the Council on the 8 May, 2014. The Committee resolved that the Interim Head of Democratic Services prepare proposals for 2015 onwards. A report recommending that Committees be held on specific days and to vary the timing of Scrutiny Committees was approved by the Council on 26 February, 2015.</p>
	Diversifying Democracy in Local Government in Wales	<p>A report was submitted to the Committee referring to the key recommendations highlighted in a report published by Welsh Government in March 2014 – “<i>On Balance: Diversifying Democracy in Local Government in Wales</i>” As part of addressing recommendations a network of diversity champions was being established and the Council requested to nominate a Member to undertake this role. Councillor Carwyn Jones has been nominated. Progress on addressing recommendations on an all Wales basis will be reported to the Committee in due course.</p>
	Remote Attendance	<p>A report on the provisions in the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 was considered by the Committee and the report detailed a number of issues regarding implementation and various technical considerations and resource implications which would need to be addressed. The Committee recommended that the use of remote attendance be not supported in view of various implications highlighted in the report. This was subsequently considered</p>

	<p>Family Absence</p> <p>Member Development Training Plan</p> <p>Town and Community Councils Website grants</p>	<p>by the Executive on the 14 July, 2014 and Council endorsed the recommendations not to proceed with remote attendance at its meeting on the 9 October, 2014.</p> <p>This report dealt with the requirements in the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and proposed changes to the Constitution including the establishment of a Democratic Services sub-committee for the purpose of hearing appeals under the regulations. This was accepted by the Committee and subsequently considered by the Executive on 14 July, 2014 and endorsed by Council on 9 October, 2014.</p> <p>A progress report was considered by the Committee following approval of the plan by Council on the 8 May, 2014.</p> <p>A progress report was submitted to the Committee on the present position regarding the allocation of grants to the Town and Community Councils for website development.</p>
18/09/2014	<p>Webcasting of Council Meetings</p> <p>Members Annual Reports</p>	<p>A progress report on the roll out of the webcasting pilot was considered by the Committee noting that webcasting had commenced in June 2014; the Committee also approved a draft webcasting protocol incorporating WLGA guidance for Members and Officers.</p> <p>This report focused on the preparation of annual reports by Members during 2013 – 2014 noting that all Members had prepared reports up to the</p>

	<p>Town and Community Councils Website grants</p> <p>Committee Work Programme 2014 - 2015</p>	<p>period March 2014 and information published on the Council's website by the 30 June, 2014. The report also referred to the timetable for preparation of reports covering 2014 – 2015. Further reports on this issue were considered by the Committee during the year.</p> <p>This was a further progress report on the allocation of the grants to Town and Community Councils for website development.</p> <p>This was a progress report on the Committees Work Programme for the year and the views of the Committee sought on issues to be considered by the Committee following the two focus groups held in June to review working practices. The Committee was advised that further iPad training would be provided to Members on the 26 September, 2014.</p>
02/12/14	<p>Independent Evaluation of the Anglesey Intervention</p> <p>Web-casting of Council Meetings</p>	<p>The Committee considered and noted a report commissioned by Welsh Government on the Anglesey Intervention. The report summarised a number of key conclusion and opportunities for learning.</p> <p>This was an update to the report submitted to the Committee on 18 September, 2014. The report summarised statistics on the number of live and archived hits.</p>

	<p>Town and Community Councils Website Development grants</p> <p>Member Development Programme</p>	<p>This was a further progress report on the allocation of the grants to Town and Community Councils for website development.</p> <p>This was an update to the report considered by the Committee on the 18 June, 2014. The report also referred to the timeframe for undertaking personal development reviews for Members, to inform the 2015 – 2016, Member Development Plan. The report also referred to the announcement by the Minister for Local Government to discontinue the WLGA's improvement grant with effect from March 2015 and implications not least on National Training Programmes and the Charter for Member Development and Support. The Committee resolved to make representations to Welsh Government in response to the ending of the WLGA Improvement Grant.</p>
29/01/15	<p>Budget Consultation</p> <p>Members Annual Reports</p>	<p>The Committee was given the opportunity to make any comments on draft Budget proposals in relation to Democratic Services. One particular aspect which was drawn to the Committee's attention was the proposed savings within the Committee section to reduce printing and postage costs following the roll out of iPads for Members. The proposed savings were endorsed by the Committee.</p> <p>This was an update to the report submitted to the Committee on 18 September, 2014. The report also referred to a review undertaken across</p>

	<p>WLGA Continuing Professional Development for Councillors 2015</p>	<p>Wales by the Minister for Public Services on the number of annual reports published for 2013 – 2014, noting that only Anglesey and another Authority had published annual reports for all its Members. The report also proposed a simplified version of the template to assist Members prepare reports for 2014 – 2015 and this was accepted by the Committee.</p> <p>This report focused on work undertaken by the WLGA in the form of a draft competency framework to support Members in their roles and to assist with the preparation of Personal Development Reviews. The Committee endorsed the competency framework.</p>
<p>25/03/15</p>	<p>Independent Remuneration Panel Annual Report 2015 – 2016</p> <p>Members Annual Report</p>	<p>A report was submitted to the Committee summarising the determinations made by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales in relation to Member remuneration for 2015 – 2016 and the requirements for the Democratic Services Committee to review the level of support provided to Members to carry out their duties. Members’ remuneration for 2015 – 2016 is the subject of a separate report to Council on the 14 May, 2015 and the issue of support provided to Members will form part of this Committee’s Work Programme for 2015 – 2016. In this respect the Committee resolved that the Head of Democratic Services seek the views of Members prior to reporting back to this Committee.</p> <p>This report made reference to observations made by the Standards Committee on the</p>

	<p>Webcasting of Meetings</p> <p>Appointment of Head of Democratic Services</p>	<p>12 March, 2015 following a review of the Council's registers which had noted that there were certain inconsistencies between the information provided in annual reports and in the Council's Standing Register and recommended minor changes to the template for preparing annual reports be approved. This primarily concerned information on outside bodies and attendance levels. This was accepted by the Committee.</p> <p>This was an update to the report submitted to the Committee on 02 December, 2014. The report summarised statistics on the number of live and archived hits.</p> <p>This report endorsed the recommendation of the Appointments Committee held on 27 January, 2015 in relation to the permanent appointment to this post.</p>
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3) Recommendation

The County Council is requested to accept the report and note the matters discussed as part of the Committee's Work Programme for 2014/15.

Chair of Democratic Services Committee
28/04/2015