

Carmarthenshire County Council Democratic Services Committee Annual Report 2016-17



Annual Report

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DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2016-17

Foreword by the Chair of the Democratic Services Committee

As the new Chair of the Democratic Services Committee it is my pleasure to present the Committee's report for the period 2016-17.

Under the Chairmanship of former Councillor Terry Davies, the Committee during 2016-2017, concentrated its work on preparations for the 2017 local government elections, and the support services provided to members to undertake their roles. It also reviewed the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales on Councillors' allowances for the period 2017-18.

The Committee focussed its work on ensuring that the needs and requirements of Members were addressed, but at the same time, being aware of the financial challenges facing the Council and how to make best use of Council resources. Cllr Davies stood down as a Councillor at the May 2017 elections and on behalf of the new Committee I would wish to express my gratitude to Cllr Davies for his leadership and direction and to the other Committee Members for their work..



Cllr Rob James

Chair of the Democratic Services Committee 2017-18.

The Committee's Remit

The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 required each County and County Borough Council to establish a Democratic Services Committee and the remit of the Committee is set out in Section 11 of of this measure namely to

- exercise the function of the local authority under section 8(1)(a) (designation of head of democratic services),
- review the adequacy of provision by the authority of staff, accommodation and other resources to discharge democratic services functions, and
- make reports and recommendations to the authority in relation to such provision.

The Council at its meeting held on the 17TH April 2013 agreed to a recommendation of the Democratic Services Committee to include the following additional responsibilities within Committee's functions/e terms of reference:-

- To secure the provision of reasonable training and development opportunities for Councillors and prepare reports and recommendations to Council in relation to such provision;
- To appoint the Council's Member Development Champion;
- To be consulted on the implementation of reports issued by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales in respect of members allowances etc.
- To promote and support good governance by the Council

The Local Government (Democracy)(Wales) Act 2013 added section 11A which provides that the Democratic Services Committee may, at the request of the authority, review any matter relevant to :

- (a) the support and advice available to members of that authority, and
- (b) the terms and conditions of office of those members.

Membership of the Democratic Services Committee

The membership of the Democratic Services Committee for the period 18th May 2016 – 24th May 2017 comprised of 5 members on a politically balanced basis:-

Councillor Terry Davies – Chair



Councillors Tyssul Evans (Vice-Chair).



Councillor John James,



Councillor Hugh Shepardson,



Councillor Darren Price



Democratic Services Committee Meetings

The Democratic Services Committee met 3 times during 2016-17:-

1st September 2016

28th November 2016

14th March 2017

Attendance by the Members of the Democratic Services Committee

The attendance figures for each member of the Democratic Services Committee are set out below.

Councillor	Number of Meetings held	Meetings attended
Terry Davies	3	3
Tyssul Evans	3	3
John James	3	2
Hugh Shepardson	3	3
Darren Price	3	3

Key issues considered during 2016/17

During the year the Democratic Services Committee discussed the following reports, and a brief synopsis is included for each topic:-

- **Member Development and Induction 2016/17**

The committee considered a report on how it could assist group leaders in identifying the development needs of their party members, and were offered the opportunity to meet with the Corporate Learning and Development Officer to feed back any needs arising as a result of their 1:1 meetings with members.

The Committee also agreed the content of a survey which was circulated to existing members which sought their views on the induction they received in 2012, the survey allowed the authority to plan an effective induction programme for both new and returning Councillors following the local government elections in May 2017.

- **Reviewing the council's on-line information under Council & democracy**

The Head of Democratic Services briefed the Committee on the information currently available on the Council and Democracy section of the corporate website, which included a link to the revised Code of Conduct for Members and Co-opted Members and information on 'How to be a Councillor' in readiness for the local government elections in May 2017.

- **Independent Remuneration Panel (IRPW) for Wales Annual Report - February 2017**

The Committee received for consideration the IRPW's Draft Annual Report for comment and thereafter the final version which was published in February 2017.

The Chair of the Committee was authorised to provide a response to the IRPW on the draft report and also met with representatives of the IRPW, alongside the Head of Democratic Services, to discuss the draft document.

In considering the final version of the report, the Committee made a number of recommendations to Council for inclusion within the Councillors' and Co-opted Members' Salaries and Allowances Scheme for 2017/18 which were approved in April 2017.

- **Carmarthenshire County Council's Scrutiny Function – Annual Report 2015/16**

The Head of Democratic Services presented Carmarthenshire County Council's Scrutiny Function Annual Report 2015/16 to the Committee.

- **Democratic Services Function - Annual Review**

The Head of Democratic Services presented a report on the services provided to support elected members in their roles, and discharge the democratic services function which included :-

Democratic Services Resources

Committee Support

Civic & Member Support

Elected Member Support and Accommodation

Democratic Services Committee Work Programme

- **Member Induction Programme 2017**

The Committee considered and endorsed a draft 12 month Member Induction Programme for new and returning members following the May 2017 local government elections.

The Committee was advised that a draft Induction Programme had been produced following consultation with the WLGA and the Lead Member and Officer network with a view to operating a similar type programme throughout Wales. Two focus groups had also been held during February 2017 to seek feedback from existing councillors to help assist in delivering an effective induction programme to both new and returning councillors.

The focus groups discussed;

1. What worked well at the 2012 Councillor Induction?
2. What aspects of the 2012 Councillor Induction could have been better?
3. What would members like to see different at the 2017 Councillor Induction?

- **Members ICT provision – Post May 2017**

The Committee received a report from the Interim Head of Information and Communications Technology on proposals to provide an improved, more cost effective, sustainable and efficient ICT service to Members following the Local Government elections on May 5th 2017.

Forward Work Programme

- The Committee will agree its Forward Work Programme for the forthcoming 12 months at its first meeting following election of the new Council.

General Information

The Democratic Services Committee is a public meeting and with the exception of confidential items, all business is held in public. All of the public papers are published online at <http://democracy.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeeld=152>

The Council is keen to see members of the public attend Democratic Services Committee meetings and all other Council meetings, including Council, Executive Board, Scrutiny and Regulatory meetings.

Further information can be provided by Democratic Services:

DemocraticServices@carmarthenshire.gov.uk or on 01267 224028.