



Cyngor Sir
CEREDIGION
County Council

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT

2022-23

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn y Gymraeg



CONTENTS

Forward by the Chair of the Committee	3
Terms of Reference of the Committee	4
Membership of the Committee 2022-23	5
The Activities of the Committee	6
The year ahead	15
Attending the Committee	15
Contact us	15

FOREWARD FROM THE CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE

The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 required each County and County Borough Council to establish a Democratic Services Committee and it has been a privilege to be elected to the role of the chair of the Democratic Services Committee following the Local Election in 2022.

The Committee has focussed its work on ensuring that the needs and requirements of Members are addressed and that appropriate arrangements are made to support Members in their duties. During this first municipal year of the term of office, we have focussed on the development and training needs of new Members, and continued the work carried out during the previous 2 years in Implementing changes brought about by the 'Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act'.

Work will continue on the review of this legislation following the publication of guidance documents by the Welsh Government which is currently in draft format.

The last 12 months have been extremely busy, whilst valuable and educational at the same time, in order to ensure that all Members, both returning and new councillors have the necessary information and skills to carry out difficult decisions during council meetings as well as representing and providing support to their communities.

Members have adapted extremely well to the hybrid working arrangements, thanks to all the support and training provided by the Democratic Services Officers. I would like to extend my thanks and

appreciation to the Committee for their time, dedication and support, and Officers who have supported the work of the Committee and all Members and I thank them all for their willingness, commitment and continued support.

There are several matters that the Committee will be considering in the future including continuing to ensure that the needs and requirements of Members are addressed and that the facilities in the Council Chamber are appropriate for hybrid meetings, as well as ICT solutions for Members.

Councillor Elizabeth Evans
Chair of the Democratic Services Committee,
Ceredigion County Council
2022/23



Councillor Elizabeth Evans
Chair of the Democratic Services Committee



Councillor Gareth Lloyd
Vice-Chair of the Democratic Services Committee

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEE

Democratic Services Committee Terms of Reference

The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 (the Measure) requires the local authority to appoint a Democratic Services Committee. At its first meeting in July 2012, the Terms of Reference were agreed as follows:

The functions of the Democratic Services Committee are to:

- Carry out the local authority's function of designating the Head of Democratic Services (HDS)
- Keep under review the provision of staff, accommodation and other resources made available to the HDS, in order to ensure that it is adequate for the responsibilities of the post
- Make reports, at least annually, to the full council in relation to these matters

- To consider, and make recommendations to the Council, concerning the timing of meetings
- To oversee the training and development of Members.

Membership

The Committee will comprise 6 Members as appointed by the Council.

Chairman

The Chairman will be appointed by the Council and will serve for a term of two consecutive municipal years (in accordance with Article 5.2 of Part 2 of the Constitution).

Co-option

The Measure does not provide the Committee with powers to co-opt persons onto the Committee.

Sub-committees

The Committee may appoint sub-committees as and when

required and delegate functions to them.

The Committee will appoint the Chairman of any sub-committee.

Attendance to answer questions

The Committee (and any sub-committee) has the power to require the attendance of any Members or Officers of the Council to answer questions and can invite anyone else it likes to do so also. If a member or officer is required to attend they must answer any questions unless the question is one which they would be entitled to refuse in a court.

Access to information

The Committee's proceedings are subject to the Council Access to Information Rules as found in Document B Part 4 of the Constitution.

Frequency of meetings

The Committee will meet at least three times in any municipal year.

A meeting of the Committee can also be convened if the full Council so decides or at least a third of the members of the Committee demands a meeting.

The onus lies on the Chairman to ensure that meetings are held when required.

Welsh Government Guidance

The Committee must have regard to guidance from Welsh Ministers when exercising its functions.

Reports of the Head of Democratic Services

Any report presented to the Committee by the HDS must be considered by the Committee within three months. Similarly, any report made by the Committee must be considered by the full Council within three months.



MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

The Committee is made up of 6 Members and is politically balanced. In 2022/23 it was chaired by Councillor Elizabeth Evans. The Members have worked together to progress the work of the Democratic Services Committee:

Chair



Councillor Elizabeth Evans
Liberal Democrats
Attendance 2/3

Vice-Chair



Councillor Gareth Lloyd
Independent
Attendance 3/3



Councillor Endaf Edwards
Plaid Cymru
Attendance 3/3



Councillor Gwyn James
Independent
Attendance 3/3



Councillor Caryl Roberts
Plaid Cymru
Attendance 2/3



Councillor Mark Strong
Plaid Cymru
Attendance 1/3

THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMITTEE

Learning and Development

Preparation for the 2022/23 learning arrangements started in October 2021 when the Committee considered the Member Development Competency Framework and revised Role Descriptions.

In March 2022, the Committee considered a draft Members' Induction Programme which had been revised to reflect the anticipated changes resulting from the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act. The programme was approved, and Members also acknowledged the role of group leaders in supporting the induction of new Members.

The training programme was implemented from the Monday following the election results.

Learning was delivered via a multi-faceted approach, which included:

- Face-to-face
- Training via remote / hybrid attendance
- E-Learning
- Workshops
- Practical experience
- One-to-one support

Face to Face

The initial training events, including the 'Code of Conduct' and 'Introduction to the Council' were delivered at the Council Chamber in Aberaeron, as this provided opportunities for new Member to familiarise themselves with the set-up and technology that is implemented, and also an opportunity to meet other councillors and lead Officers.

Remote / hybrid attendance

The majority of training was delivered by this method, as it allows Members to view documents on separate

monitors simultaneously, whilst being cost-effective and contributing toward the Council's target of reducing our Carbon Footprint.

E-Learning

There are currently circa 33 courses available on the Ceredigion e-learning platform. Several of these are targeted specifically towards Councillors, however some Councillors have opted to complete all courses available to them in order to get a better understanding of the services provided by Ceredigion County Council.

Workshops

Workshops were arranged both with External Organisations and internal services in order to provide Members with a better understanding of the operational nature, of the services and an opportunity to ask in depth questions and propose alternative approaches.

Practical Experience

Members were given the opportunity to take part in a 'Dementia Bus Experience'. Some Councillors also took part in an 'Autism Bus Experience', training which they had arranged personally.

One-to-one support

Members have been provided one-to-one support from ICT, CLIC, and from Democratic Services staff with regards to using the Modern.gov app, accessing documents, annotating, book-marking etc.

The Democratic Services Committee plans to review the training programme at a later date to identify cross-over with other training providers such as the School Governors, in an aim to continuously improve the support provided to Members.

A sample of courses provided are available on the next page:

THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMITTEE



Learning and Development

- Code of Conduct
- Introduction to the Council
- Information and Data Protection
- Role and Responsibilities of Cabinet Members including effective decision making
- Role and Responsibilities of Ethics and Standards Committee
- Development Management Committee training for all Members
- Role and Responsibilities of Members of the Governance and Audit Committee
- Role and Responsibilities of Political Group Leaders
- Role of Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Chairing Overview and Scrutiny committees
- Role of Overview and Scrutiny Committees in relation to the Public Service Board
- Welsh Language Standards
- Introduction to e-Learning
- Health and Safety for Lone Working for Elected Members



Learning and Development

- Wellbeing of Future Generations
- Role and Responsibilities of Members of Licensing Committees
- Safeguarding (level 1)
- Role and Responsibilities of Members of Charity Trustee Committee
- PREVENT
- VAWDASV
- General Finance Budget Training
- Welfare Training
- Treasury Management Training
- Social Media Training
- Equalities Training
- Corporate Parenting
- Dementia Bus Experience
- Development Management Committee - Local Development Plan
- Development Management Committee - impact of phosphates on planning



E-Learning

- Chairing meetings effectively
- Community Leadership and Casework
- Corporate Parenting
- Data Protection
- Effective Scrutiny
- Equality and Diversity—Elected Members
- Ethics and Standards
- Governance, Audit and Risk Management
- Health and Safety
- Information Security
- Introduction to Corporate Governance
- Introduction to Licensing
- Introduction to Planning
- Local Government Finance
- Planning for Planning Committees
- Public Speaking and Working with the Media
- Safeguarding Children and Adults-Level 1
- Social Media Awareness
- Social Services and Well-being Act
- VAWDASV
- Wellbeing of Future Generations Act—Elected Members
- Welsh Language Awareness / Standards
- Whistleblowing



Workshops

- Hywel Dda University Health Board
- Hydrogen Power
- Development Management Workshops
- Self-Assessment for Members of Overview and Scrutiny committees
- Overview by Heads of Services reporting to the Healthier Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Eisteddfod Genedlaethol Ceredigion
- CLIC
- School Transport
- Housing Register Policy
- Fire and Rescue Services
- Refuse Collection
- Corporate Assessment Workshop



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TIMINGS OF MEETINGS

THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMITTEE 2022/23

Timings of Meetings

Section 6 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure requires the Council to have regard to the Statutory Guidance in respect of the times and intervals at which meetings are held. The relevant meetings in the context of the guidance are meetings of the full Council and the Committees.

In December 2022, the Democratic Services Committee agreed to undertake a Members' Survey in relation to the timing of meetings.

The survey was carried out during January/February 2023. 25 Members (66%) responded to the survey, and the results were reported to Council in April 2023.

In addition to the questions asked in the survey, Members were asked to provide comments in support of their responses.

It transpired that although 2 questions asked Members regarding their preferred start time, it did not differentiate between the start time for am sessions, and the start time for pm sessions.

Several Members commented that due to childcare responsibilities, it is difficult to attend afternoon sessions which start at 2.00pm. As a result, the Democratic Services Committee also recommended to Council that afternoon sessions commence at 1.30pm.

96%
able to attend
Thursday

84%
able to attend
Tuesday

80%
able to attend
Wednesday

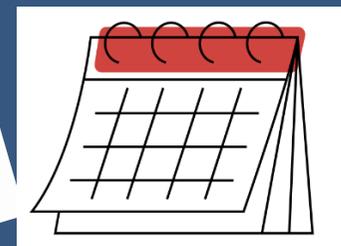
68%
able to attend
Friday

60%
able to attend
Monday

52%
Preferred
9.30am start



Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday



THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMITTEE 2022/23

Diversity in Democracy

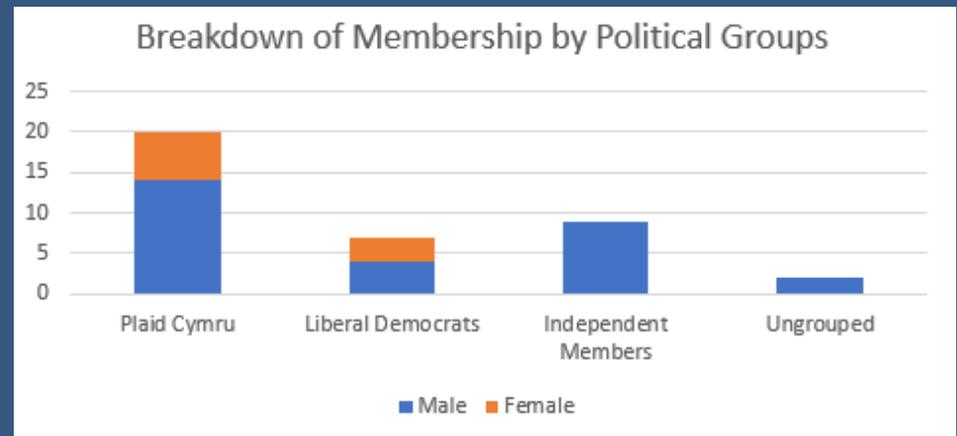
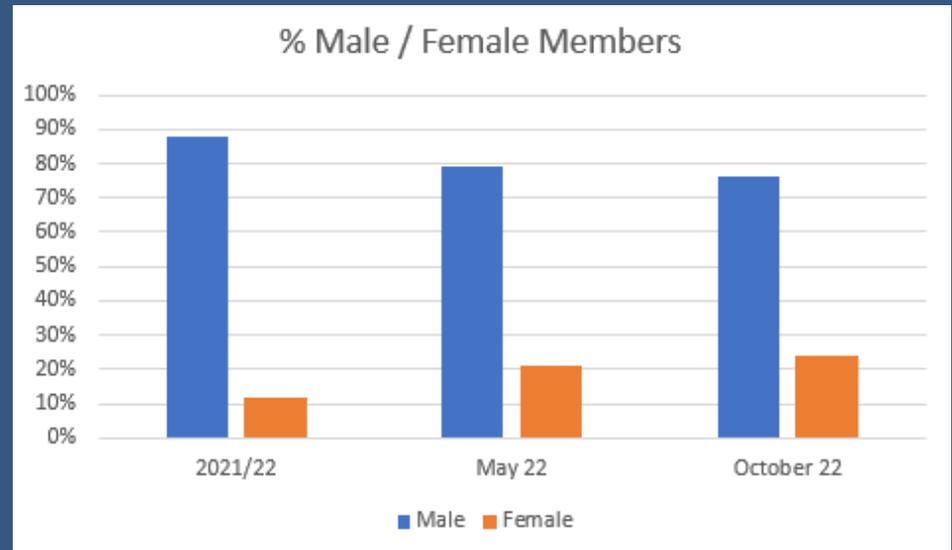
On 23rd September 2021, Ceredigion County Council endorsed the WLGA 'Diversity in Democracy Declaration'. It was agreed to:

- Provide a clear public commitment to improving diversity in democracy
- Demonstrate an open and welcoming culture to all, promoting the highest standards of behaviour and conduct
- Consider staggering council meeting times and agreeing recess periods to support Councillors with other commitments; and
- Set out an Action Plan of activity ahead of the 2022 local elections

The Council's Diversity in Democracy Declaration was published on the Council's website and promoted via social media, a

press-release and a Candidates' Guide for prospective candidates in the Local Elections. This detailed the role of a Councillor, the different Committees, the nomination process etc. The Guide also referred to the contributions the Council can make to the cost of care as well family absence etc. This has also been reinforced by the enabling hybrid meetings to take place which will provide flexibility for those who may have caring or work commitments. A review of meeting times for council meetings will take place shortly, with the views of Councillors sought via consultation.

The Democratic Services Committee reviewed the results of the May 2022 elections, and ensuing by-election in October 2022 noting that there had been a significant shift towards improving diversity in democracy at Ceredigion County Council



THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMITTEE 2022/23

Protocols for Remote Attendance and Electronic Broadcasts of Meetings

On 17 June 2022, the Democratic Services Committee reviewed a Protocol Document for Remote Attendance and Electronic Broadcasts of Meetings.

The protocol considered matters such as the procedure for requesting and receiving electronic invites to attend meetings, and preparation in advance of a meeting; the procedure in relation to broadcasting of meetings; filming and recording of meetings; participation; declarations of interest; translation; quorum and voting.

The protocol was brought about as a result of the evolving guidance relating to the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act, which requires councils to make and publish arrangements in relation to hybrid meetings and the

broadcasting of proceedings, as well as the emergency protocols brought in as a result of the COVID-19 epidemic and the changing rules relating to working from home, travelling etc.

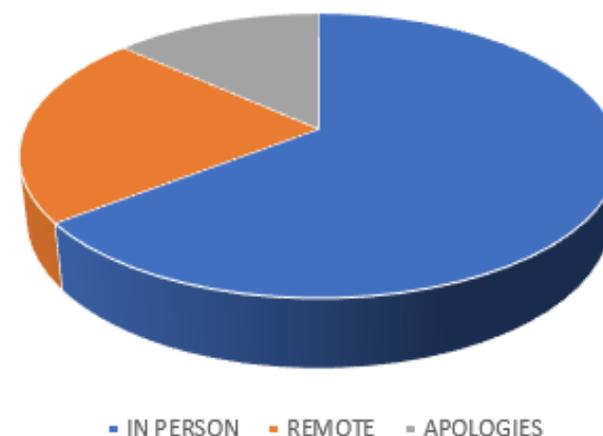
The Democratic Services Committee intends to review the protocols during 2023/24 to include a workshop for all Members on etiquette for remote attendance.

Hybrid Attendance

On 16 December 2022, the Democratic Services Committee reviewed the data relating to method of attendance by Members during all Council Meetings between May and December 2022. It was noted that 64.60% attended meetings in person, 21.98% attended remotely and 13.42% noted their apologies. It was noted that attendance levels was significantly higher than previous years.

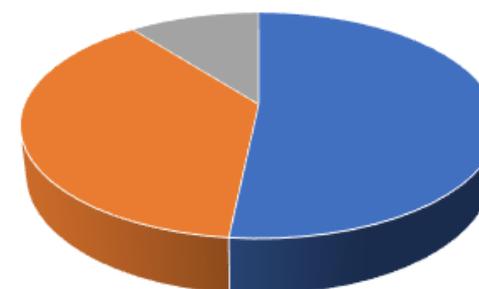
PROTOCOLS FOR REMOTE ATTENDANCE AND ELECTRONIC BROADCASTS OF MEETINGS

Mode of Attendance between May - December 2022



■ IN PERSON ■ REMOTE ■ APOLOGIES

Mode of Attendance between January - March 2023



■ IN PERSON ■ REMOTE ■ APOLOGIES

SURVEY OF MEMBER APPRAISAL

THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMITTEE 2022/23

Survey of Member Appraisal

In December 2022, the Democratic Services Committee approved a self-assessment 'Learning and Development Plan' template. The content of the self-assessment was targeted to reflect the WLGA Development Framework as adopted by Ceredigion County Council, and provided Councillors with an opportunity to identify their training needs and priorities.

Section 7 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 requires local authorities to secure the provision of reasonable training and development opportunities for its members, and to make available to each member of the authority an annual review of the member's training and development needs.

The survey was sent to all Members on 1 February 2023, and

a reminder sent on 27 February 2023.

8 Members responded to the survey. Based upon the responses received, the Democratic Services Committee considered a report during its meeting on 24 March 2023 noting the areas identified by the responses requiring further development and support.

The Committee recommended that a reminder is sent to all Members to complete the survey as this will provide a clearer picture of the support required, and to assist Democratic Services Officers in developing future training plans.



SURVEY OF MEMBER ICT SUPPORT AND EQUIPMENT

THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMITTEE 2022/23

Survey of Member ICT Support and Equipment

In December 2022, the Democratic Services Committee resolved to issue a survey to all councillors to ascertain their ICT requirements.

The survey was issued in February 2023, and received 15 responses.

The survey was two-fold, addressing the digital capabilities as well as the technological requirements of members in order to identify and prioritise training and support provided to Members.

The Committee noted their disappointment that only 15 had responded, however it noted that where the need for additional support had been highlighted, it had been addressed immediately. For example, support in using the e-learning platform in order to access the additional training

courses that are available.

During its meeting held on 24 March 2023, the Committee analysed the responses to the survey, both in terms of digital capabilities and technological requirements, and it was noted that the main message was a need for 4G when working away from the office or home, and the need for a secondary telephone number to separate work and home life.

During the discussion at the meetings, Members identified solutions that would address both of these.

It was agreed that ICT provision be reviewed prior to the next election in order to ensure that Councillors' needs are met, taking into consideration any future technological advancements.

Questions	Yes / No	Training required Yes / No
I know how to access documents on the Councils website such as the Constitution and Local Development Plan		
I know how to access the Meeting Calendar and Reports on the Council's website		
I know how to access CLIC on the Council's website		
I know how to access the e-learning programmes available to Members		
I know how to use Zoom and Teams to attend meetings and to complete questionnaires		
I know how to transfer the Office 365 software to up to 5 other devices		
I know how to access the Modern.gov app and select the meetings of interest		
I know how to annotate and bookmark documents on the Modern.gov app		
I understand how data should be used and stored in terms of GDPR		
I use social media, and I understand the requirement in relation to GDPR		

THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMITTEE 2022/23

Member Exit Survey

In March 2023, Members considered the results of the Exit Survey conducted by the WLGA following the election in May 2022.

The Committee noted that the number of Councillors standing down at election in 2022 in Ceredigion was 26% which is exactly in line with the percentage across the whole of Wales. The main reason for standing down was due to retirement.

It was noted that the modal response for the number of years spent in the role of Councillors is 21-25 years, and that the modal age range of those standing down was 75-84 years of age.

The arithmetic mean response to the average number of hours per week spent in the role, including community casework was equivalent to 23.4 hours per week,

broken down as follows:

9.7 hours per week in Council meetings and meeting preparation;
6.7 hours per week involved with Ward and case work;
5.1 hours per week involved with outside bodies; and
7.8 hours per week listed as other.

The majority of respondents stated that Councillor support in terms of ICT, support and training was good. Whilst the majority of respondents noted that the timing of meetings was very good or good..

10% noted that they were in fulltime employment, 60% were self-employed and 30% were retired. All stated that their employers were very supportive, and the majority noted that they would recommend being a Councillor to others.

**Modal response for the number of years spent in the role of Councillor is:
21-25 years**

**Average number of hours per week spent in the role:
23.4 hrs/wk**

**As follows:
9.7 hrs/wk meetings and preparation
6.7 hrs/wk Ward and casework
5.1 hrs/wk involved with outside bodies
7.8hrs/wk other**

70% would recommend being a Councillor to others

INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL REPORT

THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMITTEE 2022/23

Independent Remuneration Panel Report

During the 2022-23 municipal year, the Committee considered the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel twice.

The first being in June 2022, postponed due to the election in May 2022, and again in March 2023 for the 2023-24 municipal year.

In 2022, there was a focus on diversity, facilitated by remote attendance offering a wider range of opportunities for Members to attend meetings, and members noted the significant reduction to cost and the carbon footprint resulting from remote attendance.

Members emphasised the importance of leading by example, noting that hybrid meetings are the way forward and that reduced travel should be encouraged.

Members recommended to Council that those that are not members of the respective Committee or are specifically invited to attend, are encouraged to attend meetings remotely, and that Members should liaise with the Corporate Lead Officer, Democratic Services with regards to attendance at conferences, seminars, external meetings and training events in order to ensure that there is provision in the budget and that there is a need to attend in person.

The Committee recommended to Council that this continue to 2023-24.



REPORT

Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales: annual report 2023 to 2024

Sets the range and level of payments for the financial year
2023 to 2024.

First published: 27 February 2023

Last updated: 27 February 2023

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.
Go to <https://www.gov.wales/independent-remuneration-panel-wales-annual-report-2023-2024.html> for
the latest version.
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THE YEAR AHEAD

The key areas the Democratic Services Committee will consider during 2023/24 are as follows:

- To monitor the emerging issues which arise from the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021;
- To review the annual self-evaluation of Overview and Scrutiny survey to reflect amendments to legislation;
- To review annual Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales consultations and outcomes;
- To review the induction programme for all Members;
- To arrange a workshop for all Members on protocols for attending hybrid meetings;
- Any matters that are raised by Members that requires the Committee's consideration.

TO ATTEND

Attending meetings of the Democratic Services Committee

The Council is keen to see members of the public attend Democratic Services Committee meetings and all other Council meetings, including Council itself, Cabinet, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings, Development Control Committee and the Licensing Committee.

With the exception of confidential items, all business is held in public, with members of the public able to attend meetings remotely or in person. All of the public papers are published online 3 working days in advance of the meeting: <http://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/your-council/councillors-committees/committees/>

CONTACT US

If you wish to find out more about the Democratic Services Committee or make a comment or suggestion, please contact us:

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