

## CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

**Report to:** Democratic Services Committee

**Date:** 28.02.2024

**Title:** Report on the findings of a survey upon research facilities

**Purpose of report:** To consider the findings of the survey

### Background

During its meeting dated 20 September 2023, the Democratic Services Committee delegated responsibility to Officers to survey Councillors upon the baseline support currently available to Members. It was agreed that on completion of this survey, a report would be presented to the Democratic Services Committee to review the findings of the survey.

The aim of conducting this survey was to reflect the recommendation of *The Welsh Government Statutory and Non-Statutory Guidance for Principal Councils in Wales*, to consider the provision of Research Support and Services for Councillors as part of its considerations as to what constitutes sufficient resources for the Head of Democratic Services to discharge their functions. The guidance anticipated that this will mainly focus on signposting individual members to existing sources of information or available training, as well as pre-meeting briefings and targeted support for example when leading on a task and finish investigation, or in response to a call for action. It should be noted that the guidance does not stipulate that this is a statutory requirement, however it does suggest that the committee 'should consider' this.

A survey based upon questions agreed by the Democratic Services Committee was sent to all Members on 8 November 2023, together with a baseline of support currently available to Members and a list of all training provided since May 2022.

To date, there has been 6 responses to the survey, as follows:

**Question 1: Having considered the base-line support to Members currently identified, are there any other areas of support that you believe should be included in this list?**

### Responses:

- a) *None at present*
- b) *Support and independent legal advice. The support of a specific officer to look after Councillors that are part-independent*
- c) *I think we should have a basic sign language course available*
- d) *No the list is quite extensive and broad in its approach*
- e) *Having read the support outline document provided on the original e-mail, the scale of support to members does seem sufficient and encompasses a wide range of areas*

**Question 2: What support has been useful in your role as Councillor?**

**Responses:**

- a) *Regular meetings with the Corporate Lead Officers*
- b) *Training sessions*
- c) *IT equipment*
- d) *Clic System*
- e) *Ceri net*
- f) *We have a lot of support from our council*
- g) *Data protection, safeguarding, licensing training. Development control. Could be provided with more IT training and how to interrogate information already in place*
- h) *All sorts of training etc has been useful, having an individual/officer presenting the information each time has facilitated the process*
- i) *I have received a wealth of support as a new councillor, from ICT to meeting agendas and additional information that I would find difficult to access without this direct communication*

**Question 3: What could be improved?**

**Responses:**

- a) *Occasional meetings held face to face – but not as a norm, in order to expand discussions*
- b) *System CRM Synology for highways and estates to interface with CLIC*
- c) *I can't think of anything, we get a lot of training and support*
- d) *Content with the provision in place*
- e) *Can't think of much. With regards to all the modules available to us as councillors on-line, it might be worth having an occasional introduction/briefing (5 – 10 minutes) on each module*
- f) *Nothing that I can see*

**Question 4: What information / data do you require that is not currently available on the Council's website or reports provided to committees?**

**Responses:**

- a) *CLIC reports in order to view wider challenges*
- b) *None that I can think of*
- c) *None*
- d) *Content with the current provision*
- e) *Can't think of anything at present. I'm happy that we are able to raise any subject/data for the attention of officers if anything arises in the future*
- f) *I'm still exploring the website. It does seem sufficient for both the public and for members, however, it is very difficult to lead people to information services, especially for 3<sup>rd</sup> sector activities. This is no fault of the website, as the information is already there. The issue is promotion in other ways ie within the communities including individuals social media, posters and word of mouth*

**Question 5: What information / data do you require that is not currently available via external providers such as Data Cymru, WLGA etc**

**Responses:**

- a) *None at present*
- b) *It would be useful to know more about agencies that provide services to the Council in all services*
- c) *None*
- d) *Could be useful to get data on services provided by the public sector providers e.g. Health, Police, Fire and Rescue, Welsh ambulance service. As we are in a strong agricultural area, data on general farming issues, similarly Tourism data.*
- e) *As above, happy that there is a mechanism for bringing to the attention of officers any information/data that's required if anything arises, is discussed*

**Question 6: Please list any areas of research that you may find useful to your role as Councillor, where this information is not already available in the public domain**

**Responses:**

- a) *Reports on any new thing that arises about wards from websites such as ONS maybe? A micro level and county level in order to understand that whole picture*
- b) *None*
- c) *Refer to previous response, it could well be publicly available currently but it would be great to have all Public material contained in one document / Folder*
- d) *None at present*
- e) *One example would be data for subjects such as traffic flows through wards relating to parking issues and potential solutions. Data may well be available already but there may be some potential for members/officers portal for statistics on fundamental issues that can easily be accessed and understood*

**Recommendations:**

To note the report

**Appendices:**

None

**Background documents:**

Welsh Government Statutory and Non Statutory Guidance for Principal Councils in Wales;

The Local Government Act 2000;

The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011;

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

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**Job Title:**

Corporate Lead Officer: Democratic Services

**Date:**

29.12.2023