

Democratic Arrangements Progress Report

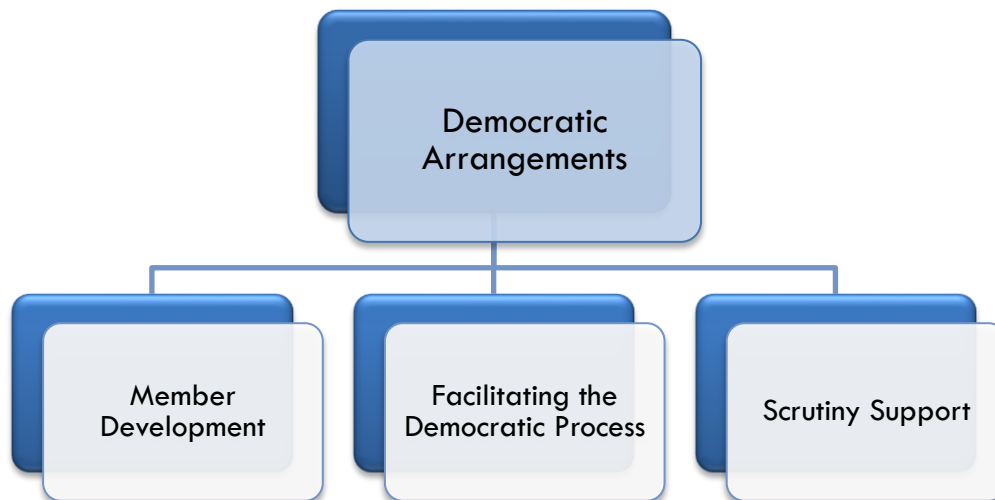
Period: April 2018 – September 2018

Democratic Arrangements Progress Report

Scope of the Report

This report provides detail on the work carried out to embed Democratic Arrangements and Support for Members, focusing on the development of establishing more effective ways of working. The role of an Elected Member is increasingly complex and therefore appropriate support and guidance is vital.

For this report format support has been categorised into 3 broad areas, as shown below:



Member Development including:

- Developing and implementing a members training and development framework;
- Personal Development Review (PDR) procedures; and
- Proposals for mentoring framework for members.

Facilitating the Democratic Process including:

- Supporting Executive Committee and Council Meetings including agenda management and forward work programme planning;
- Support handbooks developed; and
- Providing constituency support to elected members.

Scrutiny Support including:

- Provide advice and guidance to Members and Officers on Scrutiny protocols, procedures, and the effective operation of Scrutiny in meetings and outside of meetings;
- Assist Chairs, Committees and Officers to identify suitable work for the Forward Work Programmes (FWP); and
- Advisor to support each Scrutiny committee.

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Purpose of the Report

The purpose of the report is to present an overview of progress made to support the Democratic Arrangements including Democratic Support and Scrutiny Support. The reporting period covers April 2018 – September 2018. The report sets out the key activities and measures used to monitor performance against each priority actions and key actions set as part of the business planning arrangements.

BRAG Rating System

The Council uses a BRAG rating system to assess progress against actions and measures, the definitions are provided in the table below:

Status	Definition
Blue	The project has been completed; all performance factors set by the project board have been achieved (time, quality, financial aspects).
Green	The project is performing to plan; all performance factors are within the acceptable variance levels set by the project board.
Amber	Issues have been identified with the project that will/may negatively impact on performance; the project manager and delivery team are able to resolve the problem or make corrective decisions without assistance; project is at risk of failing on one or more of the performance factors set by the project board.
Red	Significant issues identified with the project that requires corrective action in order to meet business objectives; the project manager requires additional assistance to handle the issues; project is failing on one or more of the performance factors set by the project board.

Member Development

Key Activity

Support for Members Appointed to Outside Bodies: As previously reported, a full review of appointments to outside bodies has been undertaken and it has been agreed which outside organisations members need to support. A new framework has been approved by Council to support members in their role as well as developing a system for members to report their learning from these organisations into the work of the Council. These arrangements are working well and the first report relating to the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority was considered by Council in September 2018. Further reports are anticipated throughout the course of the year.

Review of the Mentoring Framework: Following a review of the Member Mentoring Framework 3 Elected Members have undergone mentoring training.

Member Support and Development Programme: The Member Support and Development Programme has been on-going throughout the course of the year with a further 22 sessions being held between March – September 2018. Further sessions have been scheduled until the end of the meeting cycle in April 2019. The Member Development Programme has been developed in line with the forward work programmes of the committees. Training needs identified via the Personal Development Review process will also be incorporated as part of the programme.

Member Development Strategy: The Member Development Strategy was reviewed as part of the Council's resubmission of Level 1 of the Wales Charter for Member Support and Development. This Strategy which spans 2018 – 2022 was adopted by Council on 19th July, 2018.

Resubmission of the Level 1 of the Wales Charter for Member Support and Development: The Council has been successful in renewing Level 1 of the Charter for Member Support and Development. In their letter to the Council, the WLGA wrote:

'The WLGA would like to commend Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council for your excellent submission for the renewal of the Wales Charter for Member Support and Development. The information and evidence provided clearly demonstrate that all the required criteria have been met or exceeded, showing that the required arrangements for member support and development are in place'.

The WLGA have been invited to attend Council on 8th November, 2018 to present the Charter award.

Development of a central database of information for Members: A key area of focus identified in the last Democratic Arrangements Action Plan Report was the development of a central database for Members. Work has concluded on establishing this dedicated resource on the intranet and Members will be notified once this resource has gone 'live'. The database includes key documentation and information and will be further developed to include resources from the Member Development and Training sessions.

Elected Member Personal Development Review (PDR) and Competency Framework Procedures: Have been developed and adopted by Council on 24th May, 2018. Personal Development Reviews for Senior Salary Holders will be conducted by an external party during November 2018.

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Member Support and Development Programme: A proposal for improvement from the recent Wales Audit Office study, 'Overview and Scrutiny: Fit for the Future?' highlighted where they Council's Scrutiny function could be strengthened including:

Improving the provision of training and development opportunities for members to:

- provide further training on the Well-being of Future Generations Act for scrutiny members to improve their understanding and consideration of the Act when undertaking scrutiny activity;
- understand the individual development needs of members and deliver relevant scrutiny skill training; and
- develop member questioning skills to improve member questioning and constructive challenge.

Future Area of Focus

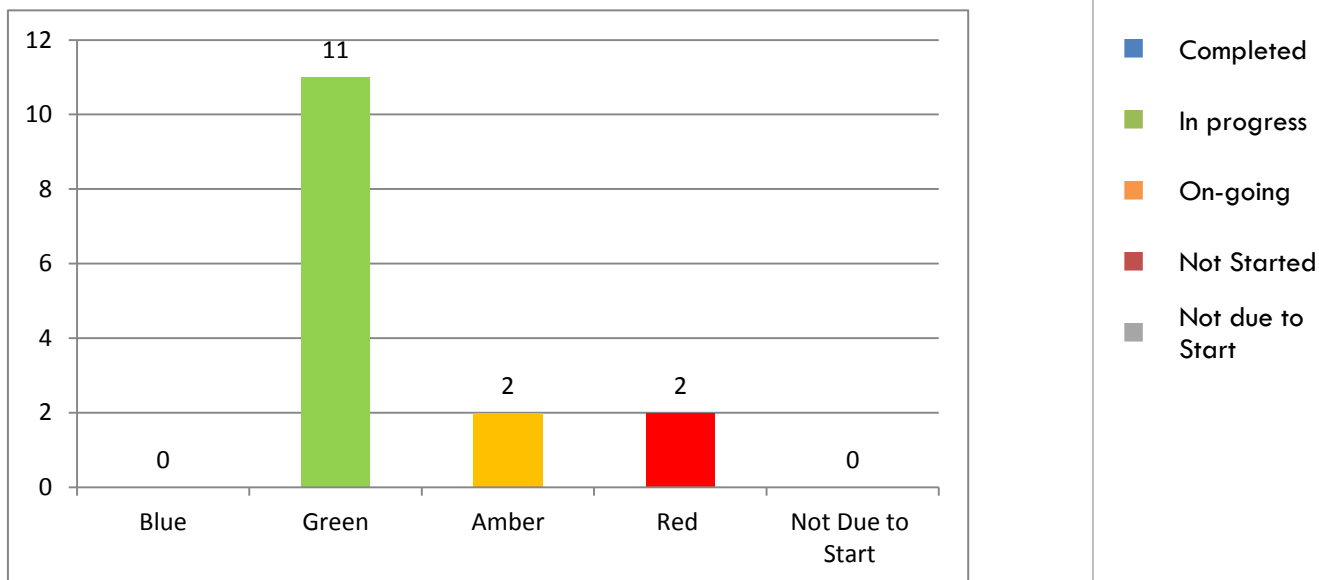
The future focus for this area of work is:

- Continue to review, develop and embed processes for Democratic Arrangements;
- Implement arrangements to support the provision of training as identified by the WAO; and
- Continuing to support members to meet future challenges.

Progress against Priorities

DA.1	Facilitating the Democratic Process	Green
DA.2	Implementing Member Development	Green
DA.3	Modernising the Democratic Arrangements: Future Focus	Green
DA.4	Support to Members	Amber

Progress Against Actions



Progress Against Actions – Exceptions

The two actions identified as 'red' are in relation to:

Provision of Webcasting – this has been delayed as we are awaiting a report to be written by IT on Office 365.

Upgrading of the Council Chamber – this has been delayed as we await confirmation on what is required and the resource required.

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Key Performance Measures

Member Briefing Sessions – March 2018 to September 2018

Name of Event	Date of Event	Number of Members Attending
Self-Evaluation of Local Government Education Services	22 nd March, 2018	18
Valley Task Force	23 rd March, 2018	11
Connecting the Cardiff Capital Region The Role of the Regional Transport Authority and the South East Wales Metro	10 th April, 2018	18
Blaenau Gwent Flood Risk Management Plan	17 th April, 2018	10
Industrial Property Portfolio	17 th April, 2018	10
Self-Evaluation Report	24 th April, 2018	9 (Role specific session)
Adults Safeguarding	25 th April, 2018	20
Building Control Activities	26 th April, 2018	10
Home to School Transport	27 th April, 2018	19
Welfare Reform	1 st May, 2018	18
Support for Care Leavers	10 th May, 2018	17
National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme	17 th May, 2018	13
Destination Management	8 th June, 2018	13
Abertillery Learning Community	20 th June, 2018	15
Chair & Vice-Chair Licensing Training	4 th July, 2018	2 (Role specific session)
The Role of Planning Members	5 th July, 2018	14 (Role specific session)
Abertillery Learning Community (repeat session)	10 th July, 2018	7
Regeneration Priorities	18 th July, 2018	23
Care & Repair	4 th September, 2018	17
Aspire Shared Apprenticeship Programme	12 th September, 2018	14
Side Waste Enforcement Progress Update	26 th September, 2018	17
Supporting People Programme	27 th September, 2018	10

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Facilitating the Democratic Process

Key Activity

Modernising the Democratic Process: The Head of Democratic Services met with the Group Leaders to identify any additional support that members require. Through this engagement ICT was identified as the most pressing issue. Following this, a concerted effort has been made to support members to access ICT. To date, all but five members have requested to use ICT and all now have access to utilise this.

A report on webcasting was prepared following agreement at Democratic Services Committee and Council. A report has been taken to CLT by the IT Manager requesting approval of the Council taking on Office 365. Should this be approved, the system will support the provision of webcasting Council meetings, therefore not requiring a separate resource.

Freedom of the Borough: Council at its meeting on 24th May, 2018 unanimously agreed to hold an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council to bestow the Freedom of the Borough on Mr. Mark Williams in recognition of his sporting achievements and recently winning the World Snooker Championship for the third time. Confirmation of the date for this Extraordinary meeting is awaited.

Future Area of Focus:

The future focus of the Democratic Services team will be to:

- Arrangements for the Freedom of the Borough to be arranged;
- Provision of Webcasting (subject to approval at CLT of Office 365); and
- Source training support for Members using ICT.

Progress against Priorities

DA.2	Implement the findings of the Head of Democratic Services Review as agreed by Council	Green
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Scrutiny Support

Key Activity

Peer Learning: Members have identified as good practice that Peer Learning from neighbouring authorities will benefit the learning process. As part of this, arrangements have been made for the Chairs and Vice Chairs of Scrutiny, along with the Scrutiny Officer, to view the Safer Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee in Torfaen CBC on 24th October. Following this observation, a Chairs and Vice Chairs meeting has been scheduled to discuss learning that we may be able to consider as part of our internal scrutiny process. The intention is to observe more areas throughout the year and to consider the learning as part of the annual evaluation of Scrutiny.

Chair and Vice Chair Meeting: The Chairs and Vice Chairs have met and discussed the WAO's view that the post evaluation session of scrutiny is a positive process but it could be strengthened by making it more structured. The Chairs and Vice Chairs agreed to meet individually with the Scrutiny Officer to establish an evaluation individual to each committee. At the end of the year, as part of the annual evaluation of scrutiny we would then be able to consider the most effective process moving forward. Meetings with the Chairs and Vice Chairs have been scheduled in.

Annual Scrutiny Evaluation: The annual evaluation of Scrutiny was undertaken following the end of the cycle. The learning from this has been incorporated into the democratic arrangements action plan and areas of progress have included: supporting a more outcomes focus by adding a specific section into the report template; and for members to suggest potential content of future reports by including an item on each agenda.

Future Area of Focus

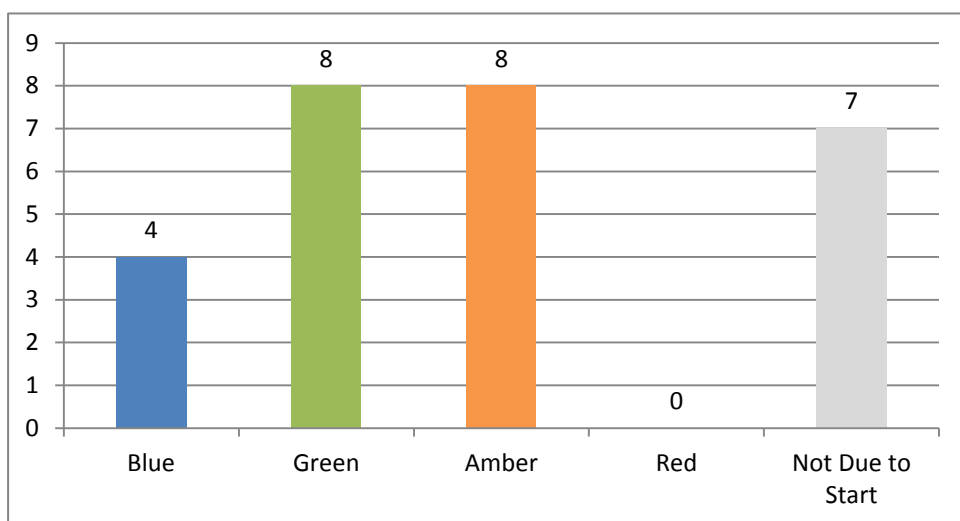
Development of Processes to Engage the Public in Scrutiny: Although work has progressed in this area, there is still more to do to encourage public participation in the Scrutiny process. With the assistance of the Members, we are looking to identify items that are likely to resonate with the public and to include this on social media. Through learning with other local authority scrutiny functions, we would hope to be able to identify potential questions from the public that we could consider at Scrutiny Committee.

Progress against Priorities

SAP.1	Evaluate the impact that the Council's scrutiny function has on improving outcomes for local people.	Amber
SAP.2	Evaluate the effectiveness of the Council's scrutiny function in engaging with the public.	Amber
SAP.3	Further develop scrutiny support processes	Green
SAP.4	Encourage use of the Well-being of Future Generations Act via the Corporate Report with both members and officers to support implementation of the Act.	Amber
SAP.5	Undertake a review of the post evaluation session to support constructive learning	Amber
SAP.6	Consider development of a scrutiny research function for members	Green
SAP.7	Annual Evaluation of Scrutiny 2017-18	Blue

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Progress Against Actions



Progress Against Actions – Exceptions

The eight actions identified as 'amber' or 'ongoing' are in relation to:

- Using Social Media to highlight Scrutiny items to the public;
- Working with Members to identify items to engage with the public;
- General development of Social Media in relation to Members;
- Evaluating the impact reports have on the public;
- Undertaking a review of the posts evaluation session;
- Consider the Scrutiny characteristics as part of questions for the post evaluation session
- Consider Scrutiny Using the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act to formulate questions in the committee meeting; and
- Provide support to Chairs to encourage discussion on the Sustainable Development Principles (included within the report format).

Key Performance Measures

Indicator Description	Annual 2017-18	Q1 2018-19	Q2 2018-19	Performance Trend
Number of Formal Scrutiny Committees held	42	8	10	-
% of Member Attendance at Formal Scrutiny Committees	67.5%	77.9%	69.2%	↓
% of reports submitted to Scrutiny Committees identified as having public impact	*	64.7%	32.0%	↓
Number of members of the public attending scrutiny meetings	1	-	-	-
Number of recommendations amended by scrutiny	7	5	-	↓
Number of recommendations amended by scrutiny accepted by Executive committee	7	3	-	-
Number of reports requesting amendments following Quality Assurance by Scrutiny Officer	19	1	2	↓

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Member Attendance at Scrutiny Committees Period from 1st April 2018 to 30th September 2018

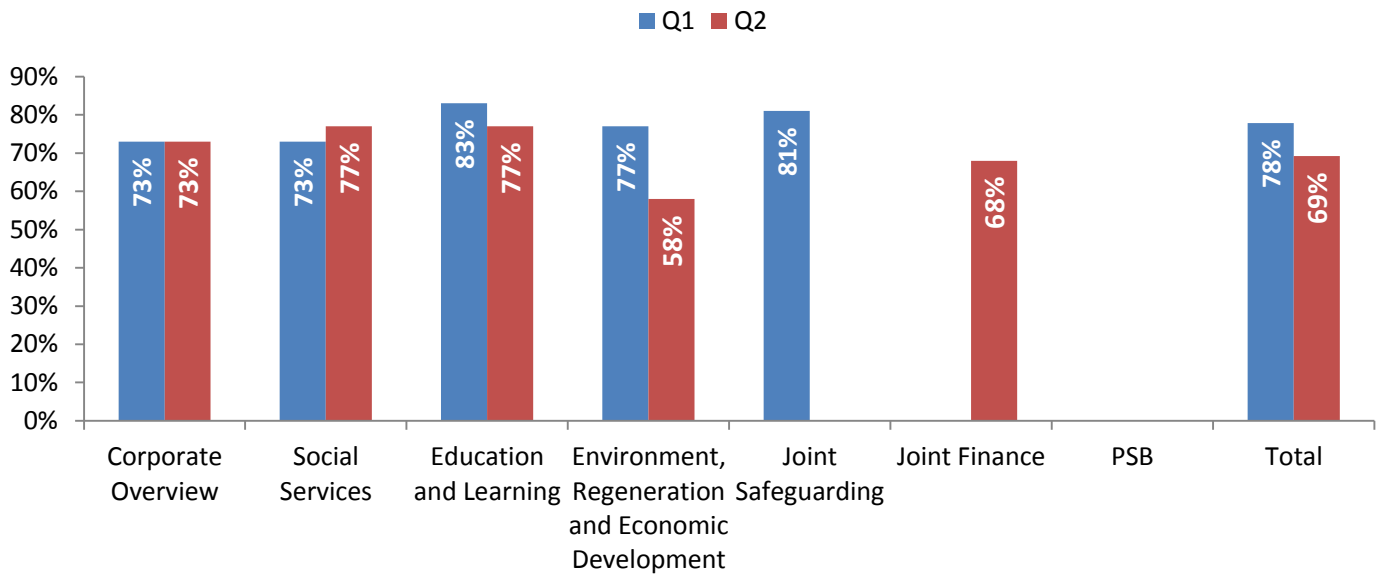
	Agreed Committee Membership	Number of Meetings Held	Total Members Due to Attend	Actual Members in Attendance	% of Members in attendance at Scrutiny Committees	% of Members in attendance at Scrutiny Committees during same period 2017/18 Cycle
Corporate Overview	15	3	45	33	73.3%	86.7%
Social Services	15	4	60	45	75.0%	86.7%
Education and Learning	15	4	60	48	80.0%	80.0%
Environment, Regeneration and Economic Development	15	5	75	49	65.3%	85.0%
Scrutiny Committees	60	16	240	175	72.9%	84.6%
Joint Safeguarding	26	1	26	21	80.8%	66.7%
Joint Finance	37	1	37	25	67.6%	67.6%
PSB	18	-	-	-	-	77.8%
Joint Committees	81	2	63	46	73.0%	77.7%
Overall	141	18	303	221	72.9%	80.1%

↑ Denotes performance trend of attendance when compared to the same period in the previous year.

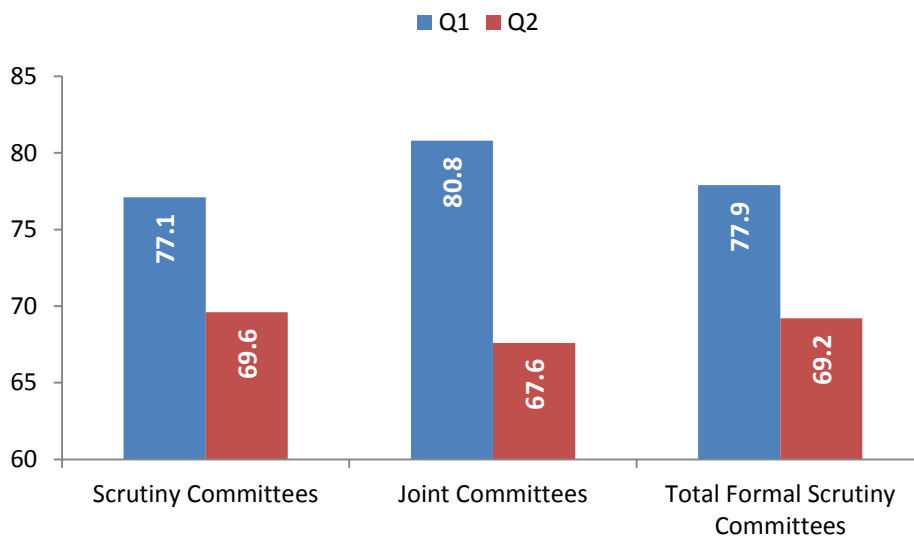
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Member Attendance at Formal Scrutiny Committees

Member Attendance by individual Scrutiny Meeting



Members Attendance by Meeting Type



- **Scrutiny Committees** include Corporate Overview, Social Services, Education and Learning, and Environment, Regeneration and Economic Development
- **Joint Committees** include Joint Safeguarding, Joint Finance and Public Services Board Scrutiny