Democratic Arrangements and Scrutiny Progress Report

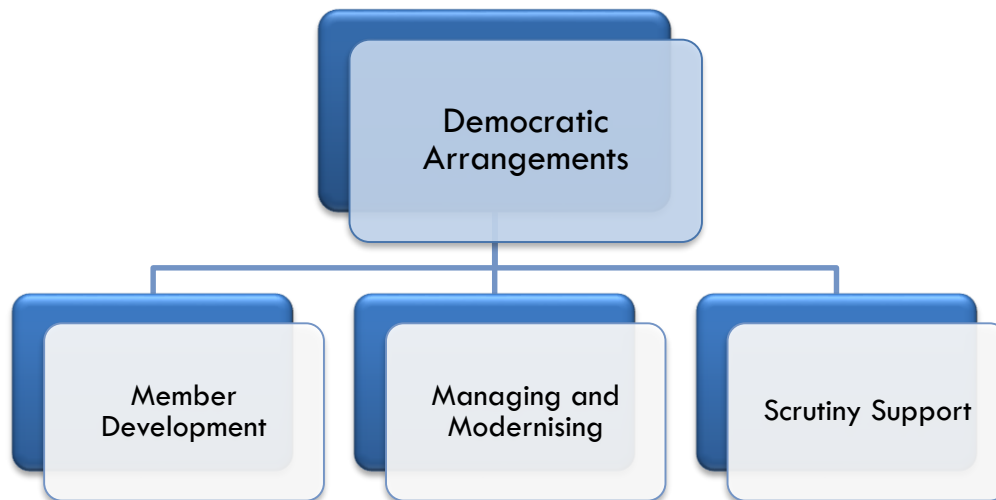# Period: April – September 2019

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:

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                        Democratic
                       Arrangements

        Member          Managing and      Scrutiny Support
      Development        Modernising
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Member Development including:
- Review and implementation of members training programme;
- Review and implementation of the members Personal Development Review (PDR) and Competency Framework procedures; and
- Development of a members development and support library.

Managing and Modernising:
- Members ICT and Support; and
- Modern.gov.

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;
- Supporting the development of transparency within the process by promoting scrutiny committees to the public; and
- Providing an advisory role to support each Scrutiny committee.

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 2019 – September 2019. 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.

Member Development

Key Activity

Support for Members Appointed to Outside Bodies: Further work has been undertaken following the Council's Annual Meeting in May 2019 to promote the approved framework to support members in their role on outside bodies and to report the learning from these organisations in the work of the Council. Two reports were recently considered by Full Council relating to Brecon Beacons National Park Authority and South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority and were positively received by Members. This work will be on-going.

Review of the Mentoring Framework: Following a review of the Member Mentoring Framework, 3 Elected Members completed mentoring training. Further work to promote the framework will be undertaken as part of the Personal Development Review (PDR) and Competency Framework process, which will take place during November.

Member Support and Development Programme: The Member Support and Development Programme have been on-going throughout the course of the year with a further 17 sessions held between April – September 2019. The 2019/2020 Member Development Programme has been developed and aligned to the forward work programmes of the committees. Training needs identified via the Personal Development Review (PDR) process (which will take place during November) will also be incorporated as part of the programme.

Development of a central database of information for Members: Work has been completed on establishing this dedicated resource on the intranet and Members have been notified that the site is now 'live'. The database includes key documentation and information and will continually be updated to include resources from the Member Development and Training sessions.

Elected Member Personal Development Review (PDR) and Competency Framework Procedures: Since adoption of the scheme in May 2018 the first round of PDR sessions took place in November 2018 with the Senior Salary Holders (SRA). Following this initial implementation, feedback has been received from Members and minor amendments have been made to the document to facilitate the process. These will be trialled as part of the PDR review process this year. Personal Development Reviews for SRA holders will be externally facilitated during November 2019. Following this process individual action plans for each SRA holder will be developed.

Discussions have taken place with Group Leaders regarding offering PDR's to non-Senior Salary Holders.

Future Area of Focus

The future focus for this area of work is:
- Continue to review, develop and embed processes for Democratic Arrangements;
- Continue to provide support to those Members Appointed to Outside Bodies;
- Continue to update and provide information on the central database of information for Members;
- Continued support to Members in respect of the PDR process; and
- Provide support to Members as part the Mentoring Framework Arrangements.

Democratic Arrangements Progress Report

Key Performance Measures

Member Briefing Sessions – April to September 2019			
Name of Event	**Portfolio**	**Date of Event**	**Number of Members Attending**
Education Transformation	Education & Learning	8th April, 2019	12
Regeneration & Community Services Directorate Update	Regeneration	10th April, 2019	19
Young People's Services	Education & Learning	15th April, 2019	19
Home Start Blaenau Gwent	Externally Facilitated	16th April, 2019	12
Town Centres – Exploring Opportunities	Regeneration	24th April, 2019	20
Persistent Absenteeism	Education & Learning	24th April, 2019	11
Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence	Externally Facilitated	3rd June, 2019	7
Planning & Licensing Training	Planning/Licensing	4th June, 2019 & 21st June, 2019	15
Rassau and Tafarnaubach Industrial Estates – Business Improvement District	Regeneration	6th June, 2019	16
Care Closer to Home	Externally Facilitated	12th June, 2019	15
Keeping Up with the Jones' Campaign	Community Services	28th June, 2019	14
Regeneration Department – Overview of the Service and Priorities Moving Forward	Regeneration	3rd September, 2019	4
School Balances	Education & Learning	3rd September, 2019	10
Assistive Technology/Digital Solutions to Promote Independence	Corporate Services	12th September, 2019	10
Tai Calon – Universal Credit	Resources/Externally Facilitated	20th September, 2019	12
Welsh Government Youth Support Grant	Education & Learning	24th September, 2019	14
Blaenau Gwent On The Move	Corporate Services	30th September, 2019	17

Period: April – September 2019

Managing and Modernising

Key Activity

ICT for Members: Following discussions within political groups and to provide additional support for Members, 'Essential Skills' ICT Sessions was developed and offered to Members which focussed on the use of Microsoft Outlook and provided a basic understanding of Word. Three sessions were delivered in-house by the Council's Digital Inclusion Officer and Democratic Services. In total, 14 Members attended and the sessions were well received. Further sessions may be arranged during the course of the year following the roll out of Office 365. The Chief Officer Commercial also provided three 'drop in' sessions for Members regarding ICT arrangements during September in order to record the specific concerns and issues being experienced by members with regards to ICT.

Modern.gov: As part of the modernising agenda, a new electronic agenda management system has been procured and introduced Council wide. The Modern.gov System offers broader functionality and is more user friendly for Officers, Members and the public to access and view on-line information such as minutes and agendas. An 'app' has also been procured for Member and officers that will enable agendas to viewed and annotated on tablets/I Pads. This new system went 'live' on 1st October, 2019. Specific support has been provided by Democratic Services to Members who required assistance.

Future Area of Focus:

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

- Potential for the provision of Webcasting linked to the forthcoming Local Government Bill;
- Continue to provide ICT support to members including Office 365;
- Member sessions with SRS in order to pick up issues raised; and
- Continued phased implementation of the Modern.gov Agenda Management System.

Scrutiny Support

Key Activity

Forward Work Programmes: Work commenced on the development of the Forward Work Programmes for 2019/20 during April of this year. Officers within the Performance and Democratic Team worked with each department and the Chairs and Vice-Chairs to develop the Forward Work Programmes. The Forward Work Programmes were agreed at the relevant scrutiny committees during July 2019; these have been translated and made available on the Blaenau Gwent Website and in the Members Library. Forward Work Programmes have been advertised in the local press as required by the Local Government Measure. Regeneration Scrutiny Committee agreed its Forward Work Programme in September 2019 and it is currently awaiting translation.

Development of Processes to Further Engage the Public in Scrutiny: Work has continued in this area, items that may be of interest to the public continue to be promoted on Social Media; in doing so it is hoped to encourage questions from the public that could be raised at scrutiny committee meetings and then responses from the Committee fed back to the public via Social Media. In order to try and make Scrutiny more visible to the community scrutiny committees continue to be held outside of the Civic Centre. It is also intended to explore promoting scrutiny via other forums, e.g. Youth Forum, Older Peoples Forum and GAVO. Officers are currently working with the Engagement Team to encourage representation from young people at Scrutiny Committee meetings; the Engagement Team intend to raise this opportunity at the Youth Forum to establish if there is any interest by the young people in either attending scrutiny committee meetings or being involved in some way.

The Council is actively involved in the **Joint Scrutiny Committee of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD).** Each of the 10 local authorities is represented on the Committee. Currently the Chair of Regeneration Scrutiny Committee is the Blaenau Gwent representative on the Joint Committee. Five meetings have taken place to date. The next meeting is planned for January 2020. A Workshop is scheduled for nominated Chairs during November 2019 to consider the dedicated support required from members on the committee in order for them to perform their role on the joint committee.

Future Area of Focus

The future focus of the Scrutiny function will be to:

- **Evaluating Scrutiny**: Scrutiny Committee meetings are evaluated following every formal meeting, to which the whole committee is invited to attend. Discussions have taken place on how to present feedback of the evaluations to members and officers and it has been agreed that this will be done via Chairs and Vice-Chairs meetings and CLT. This will commence during Q3. The Annual Scrutiny report will also be developed and presented to Council by May 2020.
- Continued engagement with the CCRCD.
- Continued promotion of the scrutiny process and making it more transparent and open.

Key Performance Measures

Indicator Description	Q1 2018-19	Q2 2018-19	Q1 2019-20	Q2 2019-20
Number of Formal Scrutiny Committees held	8	10	8	11
% of Member Attendance at Formal Scrutiny Committees	77.9%	69.2%	73%	59%
Number of members of the public attending scrutiny meetings	0	0	0	0
Number of recommendations amended by scrutiny	5	0	2	0
Number of recommendations amended by scrutiny accepted by Executive committee	3	0	1	0
Number of reports requesting amendments following Quality Assurance by Scrutiny Officer	1		1	2

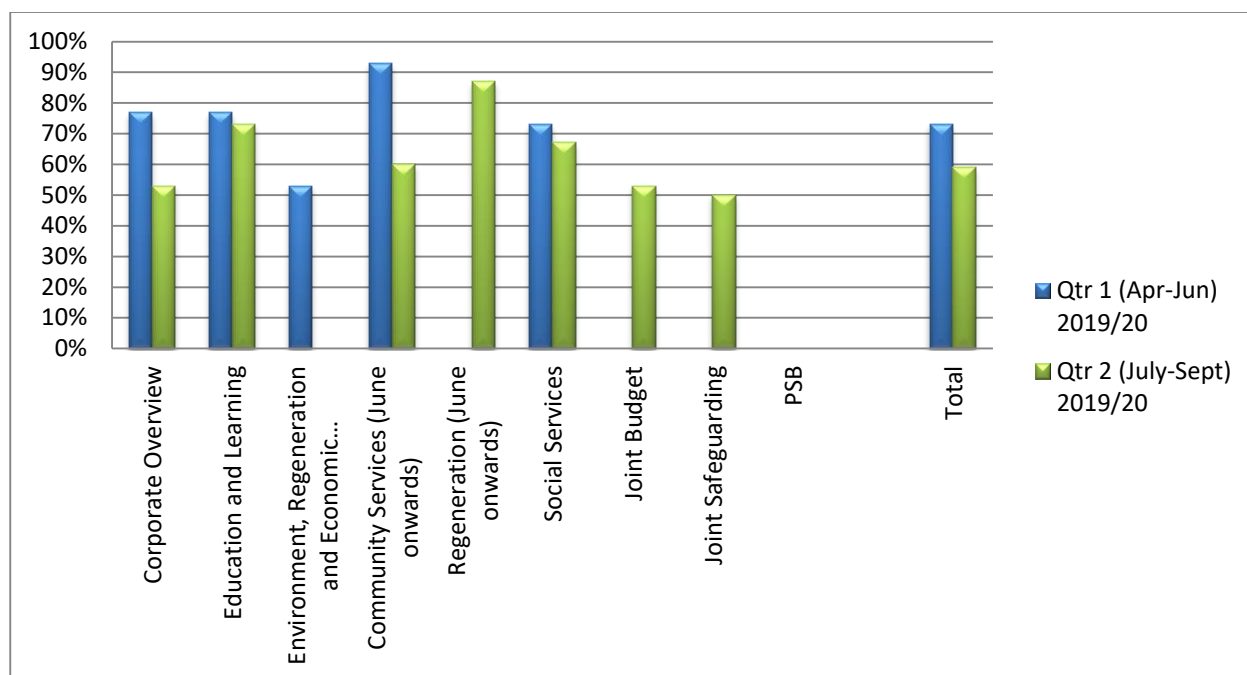| Member Attendance at Scrutiny Committees Period from 1st April 2019 to 30th September 2019						
	Agreed Committee Membership	Number of Meetings Held	Total Members Due to Attend	Actual Members in Attendance	% of Members in attendance at Scrutiny Committees	% of Members in attendance at Scrutiny Committees during same period 2018/19 Cycle
Corporate Overview	15	5	75	47	62.6%	73.3%
Social Services	15	3	45	31	68.8%	75.0%
Education and Learning	15	3	45	34	75.5%	80.0%
Environment, Regeneration and Economic Development (April – May 2019)	15	2	30	16	53.3%	65.3%
Community Services (June 2019 onwards)	15	2	30	23	76.6%	-
Regeneration (June 2019 onwards)	15	1	15	13	86.6%	-
Scrutiny Committees	**90**	**16**	**240**	**164**	**68.3%**	**72.9%**
Joint Safeguarding	22	1	22	11	50%	80.8%
Joint Finance	34	2	68	36	52.9%	67.6%
PSB	-	-	-	-	-	-
Joint Committees	**56**	**3**	**90**	**47**	**52.2%**	**73.0%**
Overall	**146**	**19**	**300**	**211**	**70.3%**	**72.9%**

*To note – the number of committee meetings held in 2019/20 may differ from the number held in the same period during 2018/19
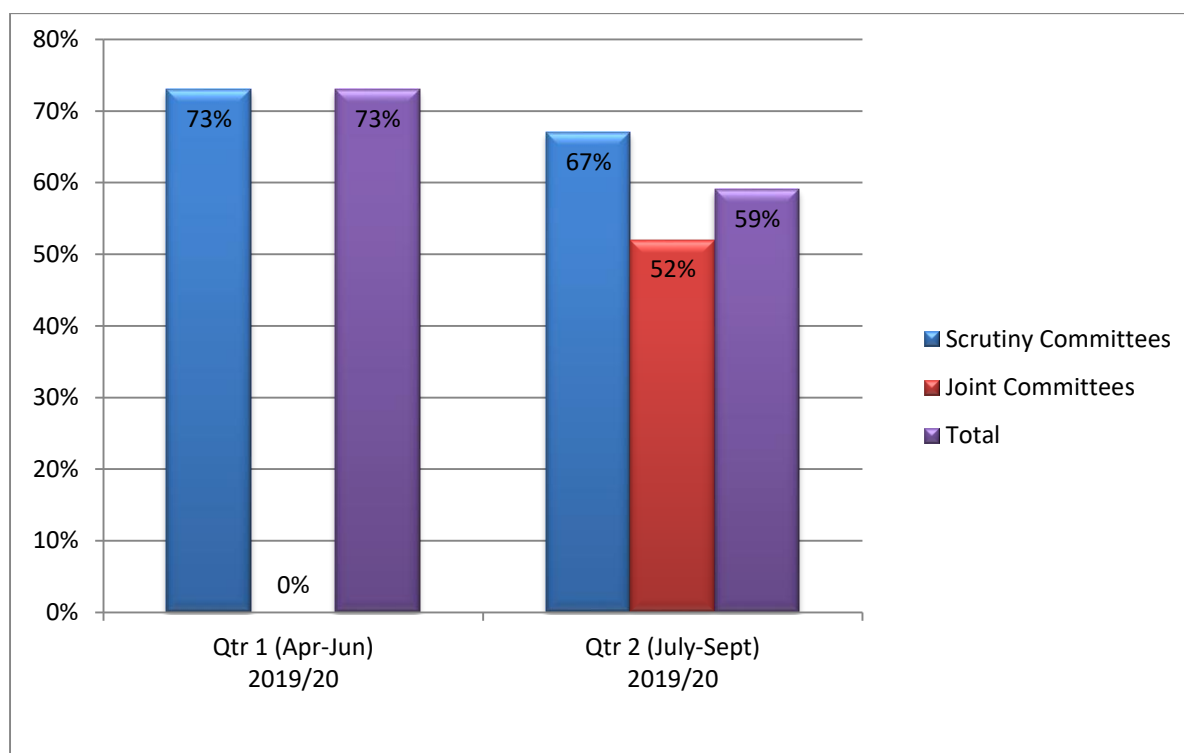
Member Attendance at Formal Scrutiny Committees

Period: April – September 2019

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Member Attendance by individual Scrutiny Meeting

Members Attendance by Meeting Type

- **Scrutiny Committees** include Corporate Overview, Social Services, Education and Learning, Environment, Regeneration and Economic Development. Two new committees from June 2019 – Community Services and Regeneration.
- **Joint Committees** include Joint Safeguarding, Joint Finance and Public Services Board Scrutiny

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