

The Vale of Glamorgan Council

Candidate and Elected Member HANDBOOK 2023



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1.1 Democratic and Scrutiny Services

Introduction. Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

Hello

Thank you for taking an interest in our Candidate & Elected Member Handbook.

Local Government Elected Members are entitled to Corporate Support in line with the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Democratic & Scrutiny Services Division exists to provide such support.

Democratic & Scrutiny Services forms part of the Resources Directorate within the Council. The Division comprises distinct service elements:

- Democratic and Scrutiny Services
- Registration Service
- Record Management / Land Charges / Commons Registration Authority; and
- Cabinet and Mayoral functions.

It is responsible for developing and supporting effective decision-making processes, the Council's scrutiny function and committee arrangements as well as independently administering the school appeals service, providing advice and support for elected Members, that includes the Council's Constitution, Members' Code of Conduct and Member Development and supporting the cabinet and mayoral functions.

It is recognised that the majority of information shared with Elected Members is also relevant and of interest to Election Candidates, so the information contained within this handbook has been written with both Election Candidates and already Elected Members in mind.

We hope that the information contained herein provides you as the reader with a realistic idea of the Elected Member role and the support processes in place for Elected Members to meet their responsibilities.

This Handbook also helps to prepare Elected Members for the Council's Corporate Member Induction and Development Programme that will commence immediately after their election. The Handbook will be subject to change based on updates to legislation and policies and updated regularly when required.

If you have any questions, at any time, please do not hesitate to get in touch:

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“...provides you as the reader with a realistic idea of the Elected Member role...”



1.2 Term of Office

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The last Local Government Election was held on May 5th, 2022.

Individuals who were elected at this time would ordinarily remain in office for a 5-year term until such time that another Local Government Election is held (in 2027) or they resign from their post.

At the start of their 5-year term, each Elected Member (Councillor) would be asked to sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office at the Member Induction Event in the presence of the Chief Executive of the Council; currently Mr Rob Thomas.

The declaration states that an individual will duly and faithfully fulfil the duties of their office according to the best of their judgement and ability as well as observe the Vale of Glamorgan Members Code of Conduct (see section 3.15).

An Elected Member is a public official and therefore the Council has a duty to publish contact information and any interests (see section 3.16) the Councillor may have. These details are available on the council's public website:

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/Council-Structure/councillors/Councillors.aspx

“...will duly and faithfully fulfil the duties of their office according to the best of their judgement and ability...”

1.3 The Annual Meeting

Introduction. Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

The Annual Meeting (formally known as the Annual General Meeting – AGM) marks the start of each municipal year.

In a year when there is an ordinary election of Councillors, the Annual Meeting will take place within twenty-one days of the retirement of the outgoing Councillors. In any other year, the Annual Meeting will take place in March, April, or May.

The Annual Meeting will be the first meeting with the Full Council (all 54 Councillors) present.

Councillors will be asked to verbally declare themselves as present during the roll call at the start of the meeting when the Chief Executive calls their name.

Agenda items for the meeting are centred around setting individual roles, committee memberships and future Full Council meeting dates so it is an important meeting to set out the municipal year ahead. An example of the agenda can be found here:

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/Council-Structure/minutes,_agendas_and_reports/agendas/annual_meeting/22-05-23.aspx

The outgoing Mayor will open and chair the meeting until handing over to the newly elected Mayor during proceedings.

There are certain processes and rules that members abide by during Full Council meetings and these are known as Standing Orders. These are set out in section four of the Council's Constitution:

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/_Committee%20Reports/Committee%20Information/Constitution/June-2018/Section-4.pdf

A 'Rules of Debate' training session will be offered to all Elected Members as part of the Member Induction & Development Programme (see page 3.21).

“...the Annual Meeting will take place within twenty-one days of the retirement of the outgoing Councillors.”



1.4 Councillor Job Roles

Introduction. Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

The Council is comprised of fifty-four Councillors elected ordinarily every five years.

Each Councillor is democratically accountable to the residents of their electoral division (ward) as well as all of those who live in the Vale of Glamorgan.

The overriding duty of Councillors is to the whole community, but they have a special duty to their constituents, including those that did not vote for them.

As well as being a Local Ward Member, Elected Members may also have other roles as part of wider council functions:

The Mayor

The Mayor must be an Elected Member of the Council. They are elected into office at the Annual Meeting of the Council in May and their year of office runs to May of the following year.

The Mayor will wear their chains of office when they attend functions on behalf of the Council.

The procedural role of the Mayor is to preside over the principal meetings of the Council that are held at least five times a year. If they are not present at any meeting of the Council, then the Deputy Mayor has to preside. The duties of the Mayor at Council meetings are set out in the Local Government Act 1972 and include the requirement to use a second or casting vote when necessary.

The Mayor also has a ceremonial role where they act as an ambassador for the Council.

The Leader

The Leader is the political head of the Council and also the Leader of the majority political group(s).

The Leader remains in office until:

- they resign from the office;
- they are suspended from being a Councillor under Part III of the Local Government Act 2000 (although they may resume office at the end of the period of suspension);
- they are no longer a Councillor;
- the next local government election. The Council may remove the Leader from office at an earlier date, but only in the event of a vote of no confidence in the Leader or a change in political control of the Council.

The Leader's primary role is to steer the policies of the ruling Group through the Council.

The Leader appoints the Deputy Leader and the Executive (Cabinet) and advises Council at the Annual Meeting. With them, the Leader agrees the Council's Forward Plan which sets out when decisions are to be made by Cabinet.

In line with the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, the Leader will also decide upon entitlement of job sharing for Cabinet Members and Committee Chairs to support diversity in local government democracy.



1.4 Councillor Job Roles (continued)

Introduction. Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

Chair or Vice-Chair of Committees, Groups and Panels

The role of every Chairperson is to provide confident and effective management of meetings to facilitate inclusivity, participation, and clear decision-making.

The various Job Descriptions and Person Specifications can be found in Section 25 of the Council's Constitution:

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/_Committee%20Reports/Committee%20Information/Constitution/November-2022/22-11-10-Section-25.pdf

Member Champions

Member Champions exist to provide a voice for traditionally underrepresented groups, or issues which need to be kept at the forefront of Council business, although they may not be the responsibility of any individual or committee.

Member Champions are Councillors who, in addition to their other Council responsibilities, make sure that the issue or group that they are championing are considered when Council policy is being developed and decisions are made.

The Leader appoints the Member Champions and advises Council at the Annual Meeting. The current list of Member Champions can be found on the Council's website:

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/Council-Structure/councillors/Member-Champions.aspx

Outside Bodies & Organisations

Councillors also represent the Council at meetings of outside bodies and organisations.

Partnership working is a key ethos for the Vale of Glamorgan Council as a whole and therefore Councillor Representatives play an important role.

Political Group Leaders

Political Group Leaders are nominated by and accountable to their political group. They provide political leadership and act as a political figurehead and spokesperson for their group.

They provide leadership in the constructive challenge of the Council's policies by providing strong, clear leadership in the co-ordination of alternative policies, strategies, and service delivery.

In line with the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, Group Leaders have a duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members of their group.

The current list of Group Leaders can be found on the Council's website:

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/Council-Structure/councillors/Group-Leaders.aspx





1.5 Councillor Role Description & Person Specification

Introduction: Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

Elected Member Role Description

An Elected Member (Councillor) is accountable to:

- The Full Council.
- To the electorate of their ward; and
- To the electorate of the Vale of Glamorgan as a whole.

A Councillor's purpose is to proactively represent and support communities:

- To represent ward interests.
- To be an advocate for the Council in the ward and communities they serve.
- To be a channel of communication to the community on Council strategies, policies, services, and procedures.
- To represent individual constituents and local organisations, undertaking casework on their behalf and serving all fairly and equally.
- To liaise with Executive (Cabinet) Members, other Council Members, Council Officers, and partner organisations to ensure that the needs of the local communities are identified, understood, and supported; and
- To promote tolerance and cohesion in local communities.

Councillors also make decisions and oversee the Council's performance:

- To participate in Full Council meetings, reaching and making informed and balanced decisions, and overseeing performance.
- To participate in informed and balanced decision-making on committees and panels to which they might be appointed.
- To adhere to the principles of democracy and collective responsibility in decision-making.
- To promote and ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the provision of Council and other public services.

Councillors are representatives of the Council:

- On local outside bodies as an appointee of the Council.
- To represent the Council on local partnership bodies, promoting common interest and co-operation for mutual gain.
- To represent and be an advocate for the Council on national bodies and at national events.

“...to ensure that the needs of the local communities are identified, understood, and supported...”

1.5 Councillor Role Description & Person Specification (continued)

Introduction. Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

It is essential that Councillors have regard to Internal Governance, Ethical Standards and Relationships:

- To promote and support good governance of the Council and its affairs.
- To provide community leadership and promote active citizenship.
- To promote and support open and transparent government.
- To support, and adhere to respectful, appropriate, and effective relationships with employees of the Council.
- To adhere to the Members' Code of Conduct, the Member/Officer Protocol, and the highest standards of behaviour in public office.

A Councillor never stops learning and takes responsibility for their Personal and Role Development:

- To participate in opportunities for Member Development provided for Members by the Authority.

A Councillor must be committed to the following values and principles of the Council which govern the conduct of Members of the Council:

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ● Selflessness. | ● Objectivity in decision-making. |
| ● Honesty. | ● Equality and respect. |
| ● Integrity and propriety. | ● Openness. |
| ● Duty to uphold the law. | ● Accountability. |
| ● Stewardship. | ● Leadership. |

Elected Member Person Specification

To fulfil their role as laid out above, an effective Councillor requires the following:

To represent and support communities:

- Good advocacy skills.
- Interpersonal skills.
- Integrity and the ability to set aside own views and act impartially.
- The ability to present relevant and well-reasoned arguments.
- Good communication skills.
- A pro-active attitude and willingness to design and/or contribute to solutions rather than simply signposting individuals.

When making decisions and overseeing Council performance:

- Knowledge and understanding of meetings law, rules, and conventions.
- An understanding of strategic, policy and service contexts for decisions.
- The ability to challenge ideas and contribute positively to policy development.



1.5 Councillor Role Description & Person Specification (continued)

Introduction. Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

When representing the Council:

- Good public speaking skills.
- Good presentation skills.
- The ability to persuade others and act with integrity.

To maintain high levels of Internal Governance, Ethical Standards and Relationships:

- An understanding of the roles of Officers, Members, and different agencies.
- Respect for, and desire to work with, different groups and individuals.
- Have knowledge and understanding of the Code of Conduct and Member/ Officer Protocol.
- A knowledge and commitment to the values of the Council.

To manage their own Personal and Role Development:

- An ability to assess personal and role development needs.
- Desire and skills to participate in development.

The Vale of Glamorgan Council made a Diversity in Democracy Declaration that was formally agreed on 26th July 2021. The declaration sets out the Council's public commitment to improving diversity in democracy, demonstrating an open and welcoming culture to all whilst promoting the highest standards of behaviour and conduct. A press release regarding the declaration can be found here:

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/press_and_communications/latest_news/2021/July/Vale-of-Glamorgan-Council-to-make-Diverse-Council-Declaration.aspx

Section 5 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 contains a requirement for Local Authorities to make provision, from April 2012, for each Councillor to make a voluntary Annual Report on their activities and to publish said reports.

Therefore, Councillors can present a report to the Head of Democratic Services that details the council and outside body positions the Councillor has held over the last municipal year as well as their constituency activity and achievements, learning and development and priorities for the year ahead.

A report template is available to Councillors on request from the Democratic & Scrutiny Services Team and previously published reports are available on the Council's website:

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/Council-Structure/councillors/Annual-Reports.aspx



“...an open and welcoming culture to all whilst promoting the highest standards of behaviour and conduct.”

2.6 The Constitution

Decision Making. Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

The Vale of Glamorgan Council Constitution provides an important means of enabling councillors, officers, citizens, and stakeholders to understand how the Council makes decisions and who is responsible for those decisions.

It describes the various bodies that make up the Council, their functions, membership, and procedural rules so it is quite a lengthy document.

The aims of the Constitution are to:

- Enable the Council to provide clear leadership to the Community in partnership with citizens, businesses, and other organisations.
- Support the active involvement of citizens in the process of local authority decision-making.
- Help Councillors represent their constituents more effectively.
- Enable decisions to be taken efficiently and effectively.
- Create a powerful and effective means of holding decision-makers to public account.
- Ensure that no one will scrutinise a decision in which they are directly involved.
- Ensure that those responsible for decision-making are clearly identifiable to local people and that they explain the reasons for decisions; and
- Provide a means of improving the delivery of services to the community.

A hard copy of the Constitution is available for inspection at Council Offices and an electronic version is published on the Council's Website:

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/Council-Constitution.aspx

Once an Elected Member has signed their Declaration of Acceptance of Office, they will be presented with an electronic copy of the Constitution by the Council's Monitoring Officer; currently Mrs Debbie Marles. The full Constitution will be available to Councillors via the offline 'How To Guides' folder on their Council desktop (see section 5.32).

The Monitoring Officer has tried to make the Constitution as clear and as easy as possible to understand. Inevitably, individuals will have different views about what certain passages mean but Democratic Services Officers are available to discuss and advise on the Constitution as necessary (see contact details in section 1.1).

Pursuant to Section 45 of the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act '21, the Council has compiled and published a guide to its Constitution which is available on the Council's website:

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/_Committee%20Reports/Committee%20Information/Constitution/April-2022/22-04-25-Model-Constitution-Guide.pdf

The Constitution has been updated to reflect the Vale of Glamorgan Council's agreement (on the 24th January 2022) of the interim governance and delivery model for implementation of the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee to comply with the requirements of Section 74 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. This is now section 11 of the Constitution:

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/_Committee%20Reports/Committee%20Information/Constitution/June-2022/Section-11.pdf





2.7 Full Council

Decision Making. Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

The Vale of Glamorgan Council has 54 Elected Members (Councillors), each representing an electoral division, or ward.

Therefore, Full Council is a formal meeting of all Councillors.

The Full Council is required by law to take certain important decisions, including setting the Council's budget and Council Tax and approving a number of key plans and strategies, which together form the Council's Policy Framework.

Other examples of Full Council business are:

- Adopting and changing the Council's Constitution.
- Appointing and removing the Leader in accordance with Standing Orders.
- Agreeing and/or amending the terms of reference for Committees, deciding on their composition, and making appointments to them. This includes Regulatory, Joint and Corporate Joint Committees as detailed in sections 9 and 10 of the Council's Constitution.
- Changing the name of the area or conferring the title of freedom of the County Borough; and
- All matters which by law must be reserved to the Council e.g. appointing the various Committees Chairs and Vice Chairs.

It is the responsibility of the Mayor to preside over meetings of the Full Council so that its business can be carried out fairly and efficiently and with regard to the rights of Councillors and the interests of the Community.

The Mayor, as Chair, ensures that the Council meeting is a forum for the debate of matters of concern to the local community and the place that Councillors, who are not on the Executive, are able to hold the Executive and Committee Chair to account.

During Full Council Meetings, Councillors are subject to certain rules of procedure and debate (see page 3.20).

As well as hearing questions raised by Councillors, Full Council also receives questions from, and provides answers to, the public in accordance with the Council's published procedure.

“...Full Council is a formal meeting of all Councillors.”

2.7 Full Council (continued)

Decision Making. Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

Anyone who is on the Vale of Glamorgan Electoral Register or is a Vale of Glamorgan Council taxpayer or non-domestic ratepayer may submit, in advance, a question at Full Council meetings in accordance with the Council's published procedure. Details of the procedure can be found on the Council's website:

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/Council-Structure/Public-Participation-at-Council-Meetings.aspx

Any Councillor may ask the Leader, the relevant Cabinet Member, or the Chair of a Committee any question without notice directly arising from a Cabinet or Committee report on the Full Council Agenda.

If a Councillor wishes to ask a question in relation to any matter that Full Council has powers or duties which affects the Vale of Glamorgan then they must submit their question at least a week in advance of the Full Council meeting.

Section 4 of the Council's Constitution sets out the function and processes for a Full Council meeting:

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/_Committee%20Reports/Committee%20Information/Constitution/June-2018/Section-4.pdf

Co-Optees

As well as Councillors (who are elected to the Council by the general public), some Committees may also have co-opted members.

These are members of the public (lay members) appointed either by Full Council or because of relevant legislation that governs the particular Committee.

Co-opted members may also have a seat on a Committee to represent a certain outside organisation.

Some Co-opted members will have voting rights on a Committee where as others will not and the terms of reference for the Committee will set out if this is the case.





2.8 The Executive 'Cabinet'

Decision Making. Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

The Executive is more commonly known as the Cabinet.

Cabinet consists of the Leader of the Council and at least two, but not more than nine, other Councillors appointed by the Leader.

The Leader decides the size and membership of Cabinet and the role and responsibilities of each Cabinet Member including which Cabinet Member will act as Deputy Leader in the Leader's absence.

Cabinet is appointed to carry out all of the Council's functions that are not the responsibility of any other part of the council together with making decisions within the budget and policy framework set by the Council.

Cabinet Meetings currently take place on a fortnightly basis.

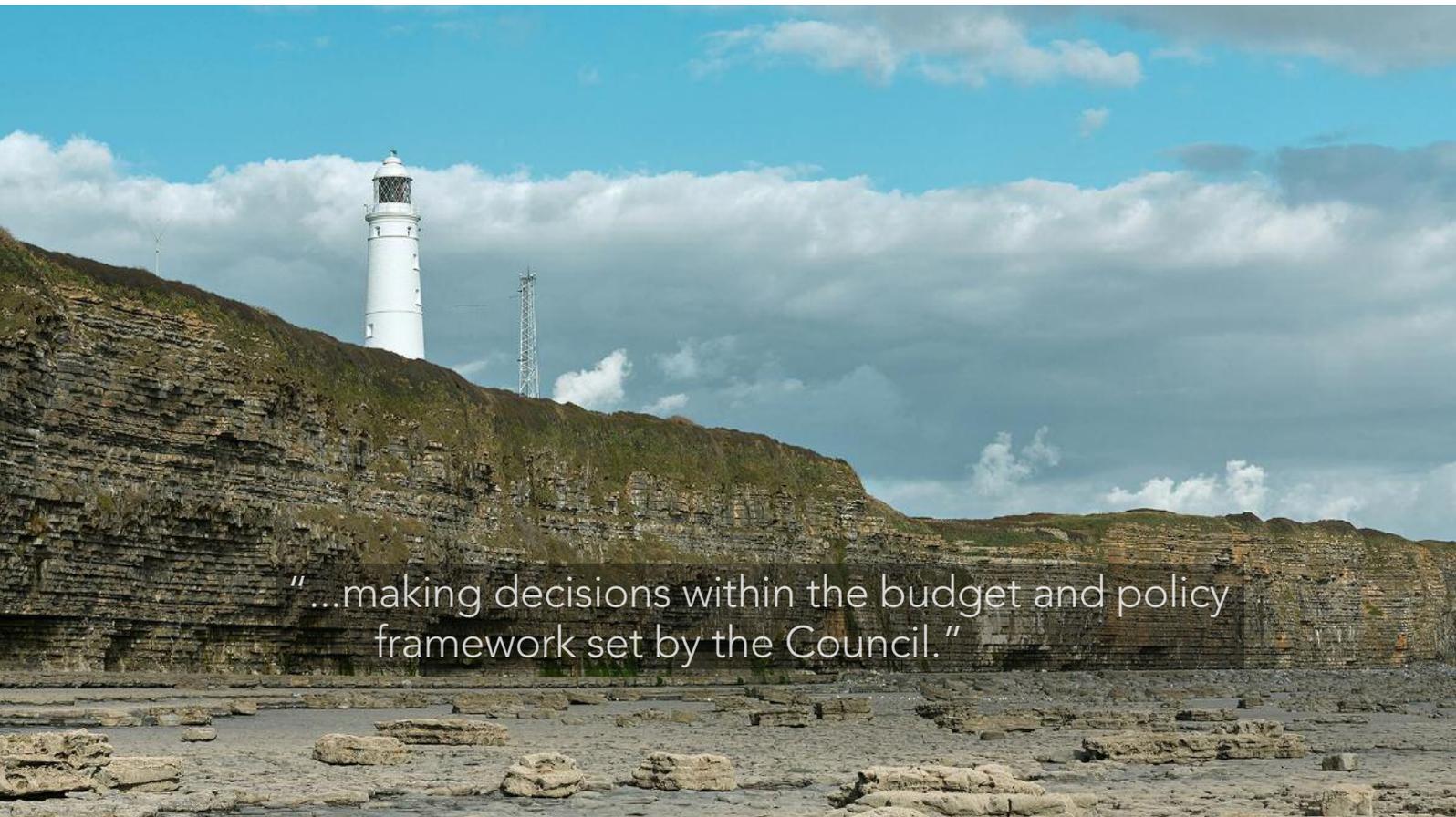
Cabinet work to a Forward Work Programme (see page 2.11) that sets out reports that each Cabinet Member expects to come to the various Cabinet Meetings across the municipal year.

Prior to a Cabinet meeting taking place, the agenda is sent to all 54 Councillors.

All Councillors and Members of the Public are able to observe Cabinet Meetings unless the matter under consideration is deemed confidential. For confidential matters, the Members of the Public will be required to leave the meeting.

Following a Cabinet meeting, the decisions are recorded in the form of minutes. As soon as the minutes from the meeting are approved, they are sent to all 54 Councillors. Any Councillor then has the opportunity to "call-in" an item for further scrutiny (see page 2.13).

Cabinet is supported by a Cabinet Officer based within the Democratic Services Team.



"...making decisions within the budget and policy framework set by the Council."

2.9 Overview & Scrutiny

Decision Making. Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

The principle of the Cabinet style decision process adopted by the Vale of Glamorgan Council is that, by having a small number of Councillors responsible for decision-making, the decision-making process will be quicker, efficient and with increased accountability for those who make the decisions.

However, members of the public need to be assured that the small group of Cabinet Members are making decisions effectively and acting in the best interests of the local community they serve.

The Vale of Glamorgan Council currently has 5 Scrutiny Committees appointed to influence decisions that are taken by the Cabinet, to ensure that the views and needs of the community are considered:

- Corporate Performance & Resources.
- Environment & Regeneration.
- Healthy Living & Social Care.
- Homes & Safe Communities.
- Learning & Culture.

Holding the Cabinet to account can involve scrutinising Cabinet decisions at a number of different stages of the decision-making process: before decisions are made; before they are implemented and after they are implemented.

Holding the Cabinet to account shouldn't be about confrontation – it is more about non-Cabinet Members providing a "critical friend" challenge to the Cabinet and individual Cabinet Portfolio Holders. Scrutiny is not about challenging individuals or personalities but is about challenging decisions and securing improvement where possible.

Scrutiny Committees make 'recommendations' rather than 'resolutions' as they are not the senior decision-making body for the Council.

A protocol setting out the relationship between Cabinet and Scrutiny is available on the Council's Website:

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/_Committee%20Reports/Scrutiny%20information/Protocols/21-05-12-Scrutiny-and-Cabinet-Roles-and-Responsibilities-Cabinet-Approved-Version.pdf

Scrutiny Committee Meetings take place on a monthly basis (apart from August).

The law states that an agenda for every meeting must be published at least 3 clear working days prior to (and not including) the meeting date. The Vale of Glamorgan Council publishes an Agenda at least 5 clear days in advance of every meeting except for meetings where the public are able to register to speak when 6 clear days is provided.

After each meeting, both a Decision Notice and Meeting Minute must be published on the Council's website.

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/Council-Structure/minutes,_agendas_and_reports/minutes,_agendas_and_reports.aspx



2.9 Overview & Scrutiny (continued)

Decision Making. Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

A Decision Notice must be available to the public within 7 working days of the meeting (including the day of the meeting) and sets out the following information:

- The names of the members who attended the meeting, and any apologies for absence.
- Any declarations of interest (see page 3.16).
- Any decision taken at the meeting, including the outcomes of any votes, but excluding anything relating to a decision taken when the meeting was not open to the public as it discloses confidential information.

The Meeting Minute also includes the points listed above as well as discussion had at the meeting. Meeting Minutes are published as soon as possible following the meeting.

Further details relating to Access To Information Procedure Rules for both Members of the Public and Councillors can be found at section 15 of the Council's Constitution:

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/_Committee%20Reports/Committee%20Information/Constitution/June-2022/Section-15.pdf

All Councillors except Members of the Cabinet may be Members of the Scrutiny Committees.

Cabinet Members may attend Scrutiny Meetings on a regular basis to answer questions on decisions taken, or proposed to be taken, which fall within their Cabinet Portfolio.

Reports may be submitted to a Scrutiny Committee by one of the following routes:

- Report referred to a Scrutiny Committee by Cabinet for consideration;
- Report submitted directly to a Scrutiny Committee as part of its Forward Work Programme (see page 2.11);
- As a result of the Call In procedure (see page 2.13);
- As a result of a Request for Consideration item submitted by a Member (see page 2.14) or
- in the form of a reference from another Scrutiny Committee or other Committee.

As well as Scrutiny Committee Members and Cabinet Members, Senior Officers with responsibility for a service area for the subject of an agenda item under discussion will also attend Scrutiny Meetings to present an agenda item report and to answer questions or provide advice regarding operational aspects of a particular service. This will allow Members to question Officers on the likely impact of any decisions made by the Cabinet and for Members to gather a greater appreciation of reasons why a course of action was agreed upon. Members of a Scrutiny Committee can also question Officers about issues affecting the performance of a specific service and to ask for more detail around the level of resources available within that service area.

The role of the Senior Officer will be to assist the Committee through the provision of professional advice and to ensure access to relevant information and personnel. However, where the agenda item relates to a "Call-In" of a Cabinet decision, the relevant Cabinet Member will respond to questions in the first instance.



"...to answer questions or provide advice regarding operational aspects of a particular service."



2.9 Overview & Scrutiny (continued)

Decision Making, Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

As well as a formal Scrutiny Committee Meeting, a Scrutiny Committee may also choose to set-up a Task & Finish Working Group which allows members of the Scrutiny Committee to research and scrutinise a matter of community concern in more detail outside of the formal meeting setting. Once the members of the working group have concluded their work, they will present a report to the Scrutiny Committee who in turn may choose to make recommendations to Cabinet for consideration.

The Scrutiny Committees must report annually to Full Council on their work, with recommendations for their future Work Programmes and amended working methods if appropriate.

The Vale of Glamorgan Council is committed to engaging residents and other key stakeholders in decision making. 'Working with and for our communities' is one of the four objectives set out in the Corporate Plan 2020-25. Part 3 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 focuses on promoting access to local government. The Act establishes a duty to encourage local people to participate in decision-making and a requirement that local authorities publish, consult on, and regularly review a public participation strategy from 5th May 2022. The Council's Public Participation Strategy is available on the Council's website:

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/achieving_our_vision/Public-Participation-Strategy.aspx

The Council recognises that members of the public can make an important contribution and be a valuable source of information. The Council therefore encourages the active participation of the public within the scrutiny process in the Vale.

A member of the public can engage with the Scrutiny process in the following ways:

- 1) register to speak at a Scrutiny Committee meeting,
- 2) send in written representations for Councillors to consider during a meeting,
- 3) submit a comment or question for a Scrutiny Committee's consideration in relation to an item on an already published meeting agenda,
- 4) submit a request for a topic to be considered at a future meeting of the relevant Scrutiny Committee in line with Council priorities.

A Guide to Public Speaking at Scrutiny Committee(s) is available on the Council's website:

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/_Committee%20Reports/Committee%20Information/Public-Speaking-Guides/21-07-26-%E2%80%93-Updated-Guide-for-Speaking-at-Scrutiny-Committees-as-approved-by-Full-Council-26-07-21.pdf

2.9 Overview & Scrutiny (continued)

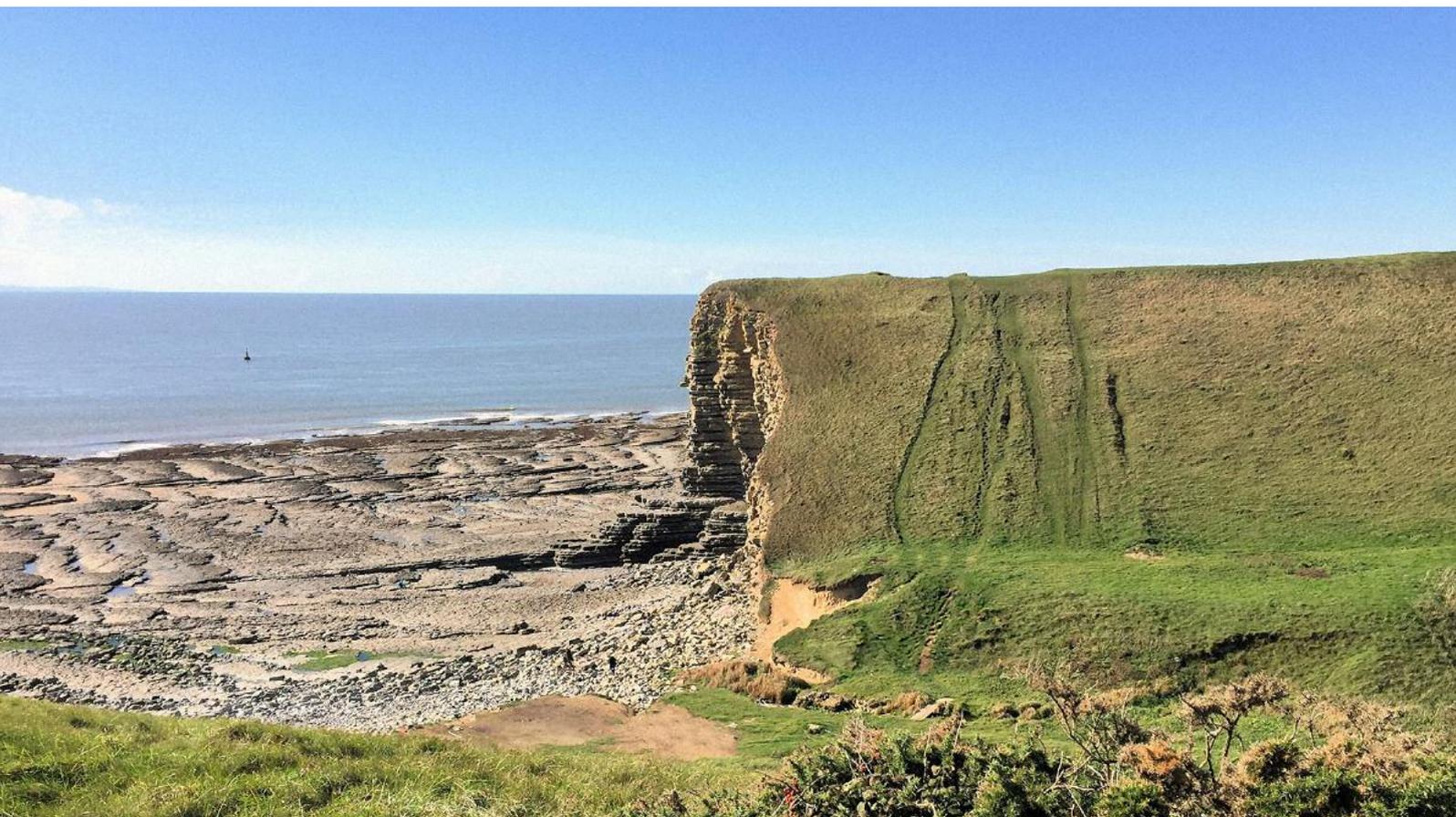
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The Scrutiny 'Request for Consideration' Form is also available on the Council's website:

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/Council-Structure/scrutiny/scrutinyupdate.aspx

Section 7 of the Council's Constitution provides more detail on the Council's Scrutiny Function:

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/_Committee%20Reports/Committee%20Information/Constitution/June-2018/Section-7.pdf



2.10 Delegated Powers and Financial Procedure Rules

Decision Making. Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

The usual decision-making process for the Council, in the main, is via Cabinet and/or Full Council Meetings and those other committees who deal with for example Planning or Licensing matters, but there are certain circumstances that will allow a decision to be taken without the matter being presented to the above bodies in advance or at all:

Delegated Powers

The work of all Vale of Glamorgan Council staff and day to day running of the organisation is managed by the Council's Chief Officers.

Chief Officers are divided into Directors, Heads of Service and Operational Managers. As service managers they make recommendations to and are held accountable by Cabinet, Council and other relevant committees.

In order to provide a practical method of financial and operational management throughout the Council, Chief Officers have been given certain powers in the form of Officer Delegations.

These delegated powers are set out in Section 26 of the Council's Constitution and may from time to time be amended, added to or reduced in the interests of operational efficiency as determined by Cabinet:

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/_Committee%20Reports/Committee%20Information/Constitution/November-2022/22-11-10-Section-26.pdf

Chief Executive's Emergency Powers

The Chief Executive has delegated powers to act on any matter which, in their opinion, requires immediate action and does not justify holding a special meeting of the body which would usually consider the matter, or, there is not enough time to hold a meeting because of the urgent nature.

The Chief Executive must consult with the appropriate Cabinet Member before using their emergency powers and if the matter involves the Council in additional financial commitments, they must also consult with the Leader, the Section 151 Officer and appropriate Chief Officer(s).

Following a decision being made under the Chief Executive's Emergency Powers, the decision must be reported to the next Cabinet or Full Council meeting as appropriate.

The Cabinet Urgent Decision Procedure

If a decision needs to be made quickly, and/or is subject to deadlines, and there is either:

- no time for the matter to go before a Scrutiny Committee for consideration before being presented to Cabinet for a decision; or





2.10 Delegated Powers and Financial Procedure Rules (continued)

Decision Making. Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

- the matter needs to be referred to Full Council by Cabinet but there is no time for a Scrutiny meeting to be held to consider the matter in between the Cabinet meeting taking place and Full Council meeting being held;

then the Urgent Decision procedure may be used by Cabinet.

Because of the urgent nature of the item and that it is unable to be considered by the relevant Scrutiny Committee, the Chair (or the Vice-Chair) of the relevant Scrutiny Committee must agree that the decision is a matter of urgency and cannot be reasonably deferred before this procedure can be used.

For matters that contravene or amend the Council's budget and/or policy framework, a decision may only be treated as urgent if it is not practical to convene a meeting of the Full Council and the decision-taker will provide a full report to the next available Council meeting explaining the decision, the reasons for it and why the decision was treated as a matter of urgency.

All other instances of the Urgent Decision Procedure being used will be reported to Cabinet.

Financial Procedure Rules

Details of the Council's Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules, Financial Procedure Rules, and Contract Procedure Rules, can be found at sections 16 – 18 of the Council's Constitution:

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/Council-Constitution.aspx



"...the decision-taker will provide a full report to the next available Council meeting explaining the decision..."

2.11 Forward Work Programmes

Decision Making. Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

Forward Work Programmes are a series of documents that list the subject matters of decisions that Full Council, Cabinet and Scrutiny Committees intend to take as well as when those matters will be discussed.

This scheduling in advance does not prevent urgent or unforeseen matters being considered.

Each of the aforementioned bodies are responsible for their own Work Programmes.

Annual Forward Work Programmes are prepared at the beginning of each Municipal Year and are supplemented by quarterly updated Work Programmes through the course of the year.

Cabinet work to an Annual Forward Work Programme so both Councillors and the General Public can see which Reports are expected to be presented to which Cabinet Meeting across the whole municipal year.

The Cabinet Forward Work Programme is a working document and is always subject to change based on changing priorities and meeting dates for Cabinet.

Therefore, the Cabinet Officer monitors the Annual Cabinet Forward Work Programme on a quarterly basis and produces a quarterly version of the Cabinet Forward Work Programme which is published on the Council's website alongside the Annual version.

Using the Cabinet Annual Forward Work Programme, each of the Council's Scrutiny Committees builds its own Annual Forward Work Programme that are also updated on a quarterly basis and published on the Council's website:

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/Council-Structure/scrutiny/scrutiny_committees.aspx

As well as service area specific/ one-off reports that fall under the remit of an individual scrutiny committee, all Scrutiny Forward Work Programmes also include the following reports on a regular basis:

- Budget Monitoring.
- Performance Management; and
- Scrutiny Recommendation Tracking and Work Programme Updates.

"...scheduling in advance does not prevent urgent or unforeseen matters being considered..."



2.12 Corporate Calendar of Meetings

Decision Making. Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

A Municipal Year runs from the 1st May to 30th April.

A Corporate Calendar of Meetings is published each year (usually January time) setting out the various committee meetings within the next municipal year starting in May.

There are three types of meeting:

- 1) Annual Meeting (please see page 1.3).
- 2) Ordinary Meetings – Meetings scheduled in advance of the municipal year as agreed by Cabinet and the relevant Committee Chair; and
- 3) Extraordinary Meetings – Meetings called on an ad hoc basis by the Committee Chair during the course of the municipal year.

Meetings are not usually held in the month of August or the two-week Easter academic holiday as these are considered recess periods.

The majority of meetings are held in the evening and the start time will be set out on the calendar.

Once the calendar has been agreed by Cabinet, it is emailed to all Elected Members and uploaded to the Council's Website:

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/Council-Structure/minutes,_agendas_and_reports/minutes,_agendas_and_reports.aspx

The Corporate Calendar of Meetings is subject to any future changes in arrangements for meetings deemed appropriate by the Mayor of the Council or the relevant Committee Chair.

Not all Council bodies are reflected in the Corporate Calendar however, Democratic Services Officers will be able to advise on meeting dates as required (see contact details on page 1.1).





2.13 Call-In

Decision Making. Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

The Call-In process is the mechanism used by any Vale of Glamorgan Councillor to ask for the relevant Scrutiny Committee to review a decision made by Cabinet providing that the decision is not subject to:

- Implementation of the Urgent Decision Procedure (see page 2.10);
- If the decision is required to be ratified by Full Council, or
- If the matter has already been referred by Cabinet to a Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

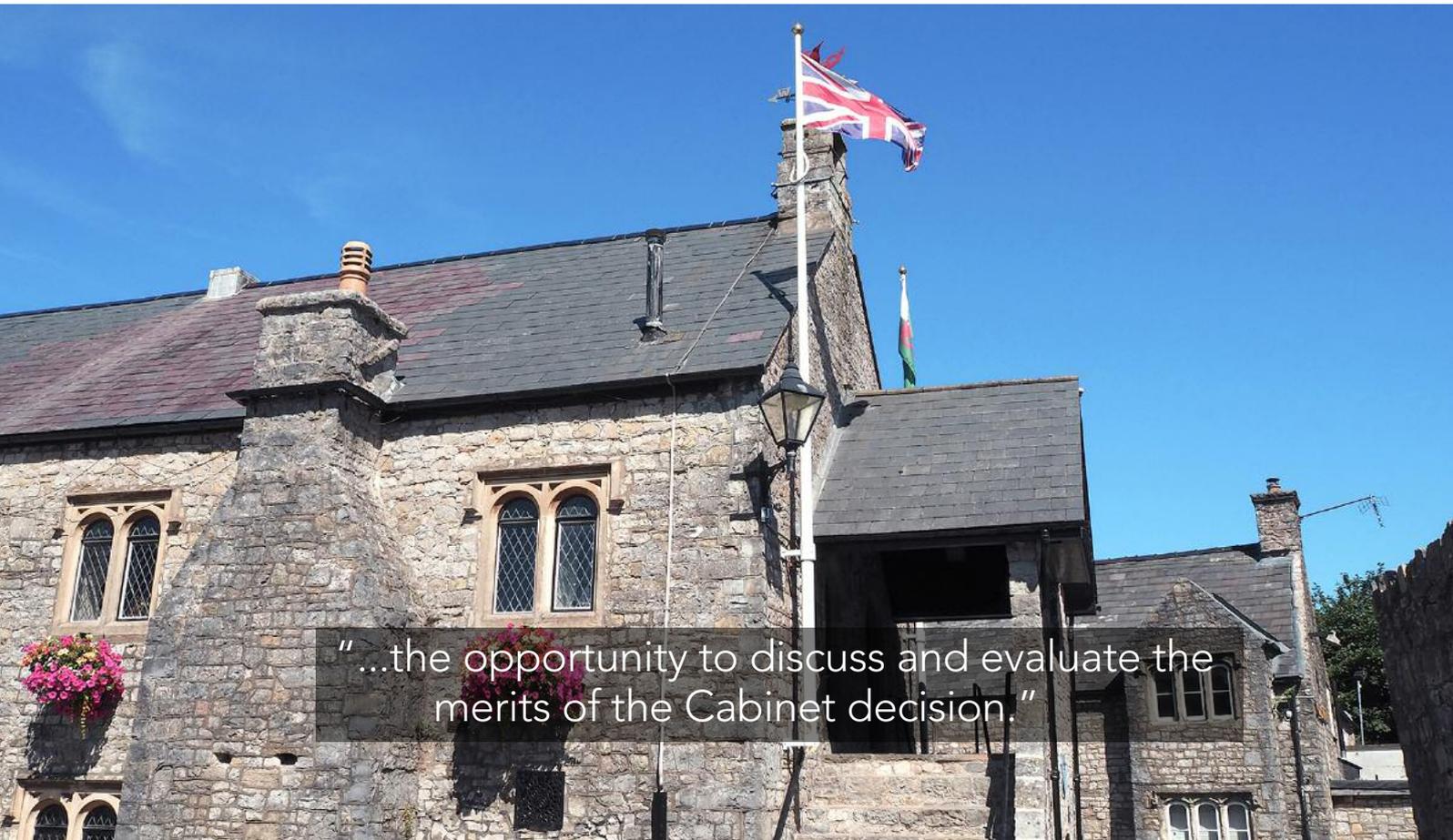
When a decision is made by Cabinet, the decision (in the form of meeting minutes) will be published on the Council's website. This marks the start of the Call-In period when councillors have five working days, not including the publication date, to complete a Call-In Request Form.

If no Call-in requests are received by the end of the Call-In period then Cabinet's decision stands and Officers may act on the decision.

If a Call-In request is received during the Call-In period then it must first be accepted by the relevant Scrutiny Committee Chair as the relevant Scrutiny Committee will have the opportunity to discuss and evaluate the merits of the Cabinet decision. The relevant Scrutiny Committee must meet within twenty working days of receipt of the 'Call-In' request, not counting the month of August.

Unless there are extenuating circumstances, the relevant Cabinet Member would be expected to attend a Scrutiny Committee meeting when a 'Call-In' is being considered. It is accepted however, that Officers are often better placed to present greater detailed information that led up to the decision and this is deemed to be acceptable, although it should always be the decision-maker that is held to account.

The public are not able to Call-in a Cabinet decision, only Vale of Glamorgan Councillors, therefore the Call-In Request Forms are only available on the MemberNet section of StaffNet which is the Council's intranet system.



"...the opportunity to discuss and evaluate the merits of the Cabinet decision."

2.14 Requests for Consideration

Decision Making. Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

Section 62 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 requires the Council to put arrangements in place to enable all persons who live or work in the Vale of Glamorgan area to bring to the attention of the relevant Scrutiny Committee their views on any matter under consideration by the Committee. A Scrutiny Committee must also take into account any views brought to its attention by a member of the public.

Therefore, **any** individual Vale of Glamorgan Councillor can ask for a specific issue or topic to be considered by the relevant Scrutiny Committee by completing a Request for Consideration Form that can be found on MemberNet.

Members of the Public are also able to engage with this process and can access the form via the following link (please also see section 2.9 'Overview & Scrutiny'):

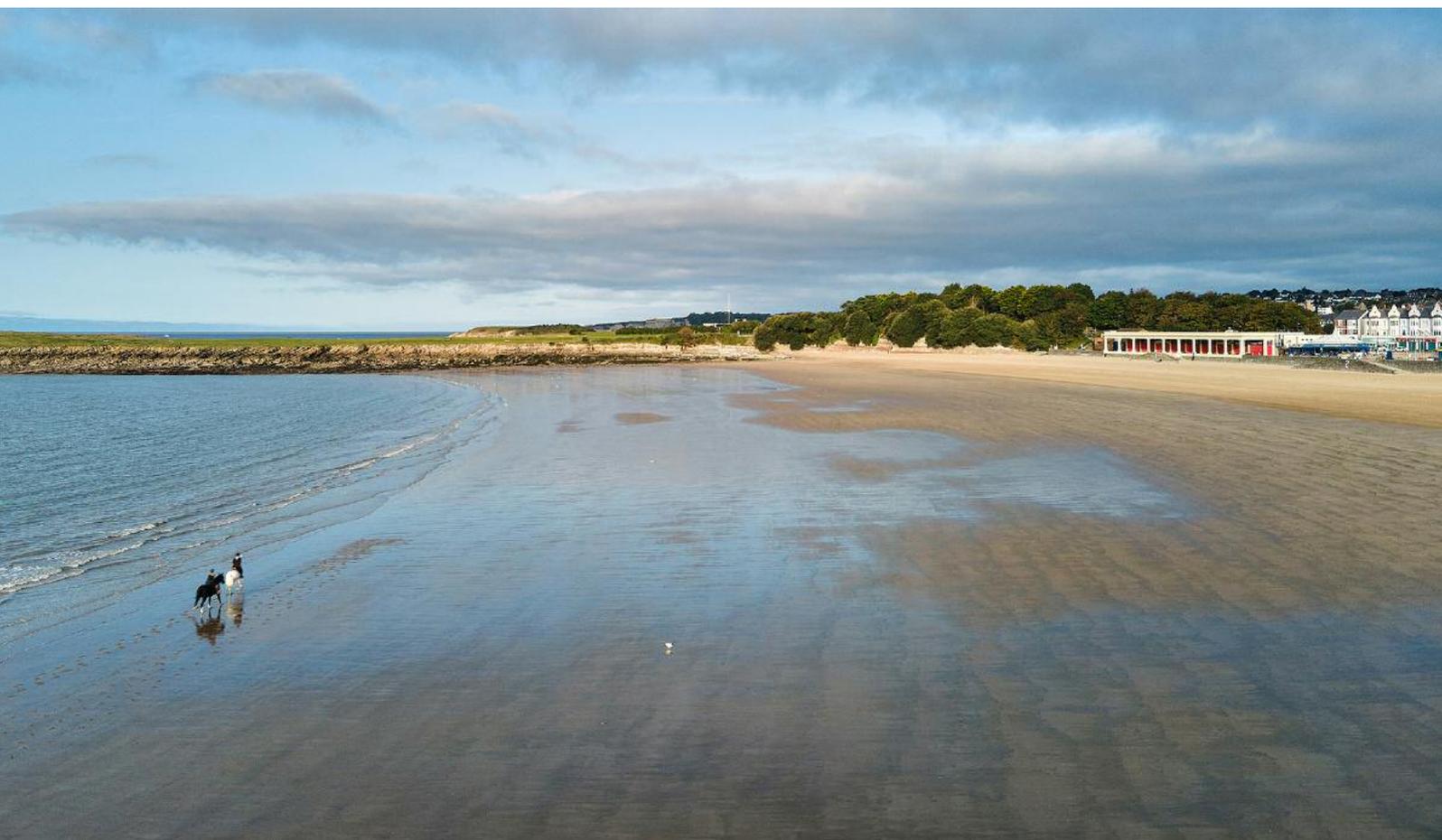
https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/Council-Structure/scrutiny/scrutiny.aspx

All Requests for Consideration must be forwarded to the Democratic & Scrutiny Services Team who will share the request with the appropriate Director(s) required to prepare a report for consideration by the relevant Scrutiny Committee(s). A copy of the request will also be forwarded to the relevant Scrutiny Chair for information.

There is no time limit on when a request must be considered but the relevant Officers and Committee Chair will do all they can to ensure the request is presented to Committee as soon as possible.

Councillor Call for Action

The Councillor Call for Action is a mechanism for enabling elected Members to refer local Crime and Disorder issues to the Homes & Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee. It should be an option of "last resort". Any Councillor may request that an item is placed on the agenda of the Scrutiny Committee for consideration. The procedure for dealing with a Call for Action is set out in the Councillor Call for Action – Guidance for Councillors, which is available to Councillors on StaffNet (the Council's internal intranet).



3.15 Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct. Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

Effective Local Government requires high standards of conduct to ensure that there is public confidence in the Council's work. Section 19 of the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Constitution sets out those standards, how to apply them and the potential consequences for Councillors if they do not adhere.

All Councillors must agree to follow the Vale of Glamorgan Code of Conduct as set out in the Council's Constitution.

Failure to undertake or observe the Code of Conduct could result in a Councillor being temporarily suspended, issued with a formal censure or removed from office.

Elected Members have a legal duty to act ethically and must have regard to the following principles:

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ● Selflessness | ● Honesty |
| ● Integrity and Propriety | ● Duty to Uphold the Law |
| ● Stewardship | ● Objectivity in Decision Making |
| ● Equality and Respect | ● Openness |
| ● Accountability | ● Leadership |

The General Rules an Elected Member needs to follow under the Code are as follows:

- Promote equality,
- Treat others with respect and consideration,
- Do not bully or harass people,
- Do not compromise the impartiality of officers,
- Do not disclose confidential information,
- Do not prevent access to information,
- Do not bring your office or authority into disrepute,
- Report breaches of the code to the Monitoring Officer,
- Report conduct believed or likely to involve criminal behaviour,
- Do not make vexatious complaints,
- Cooperate with investigations,
- Not use their position improperly,
- Do not misuse the authority's resources,
- Reach decisions objectively,
- Consider advice given by officers and provide reasons if you don't take it,
- Comply with the law and the authority's rules regarding expenses and
- Do not accept any gifts or hospitality (see page 3.17) that would place you under an obligation or seem to do so.

The Council also has a 'Standard of Conduct Expected by Members Protocol' which establishes the behaviour which is acceptable and unacceptable between Councillors. It sits alongside the Code and fills the gap between behaviour which possibly in itself is not serious, but creates unpleasantness between Members, and behaviour that is approaching the threshold and serious enough for the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (see page 3.18) to hold an investigation.

“Elected Members have a legal duty to act ethically...”

3.15 Code of Conduct (continued)

The Code of Conduct. Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

Member & Officer Relations

Both Councillors and Officers are servants of the public, and they are indispensable to one another. But their responsibilities are distinct. Councillors are responsible to the electorate and serve only so long as their term of office lasts. Officers are responsible to the Council. Their job is to give advice to Councillors and the Council, and to carry out the Council's work under the direction and control of the Council, its committees and sub-committees.

Section 22 of the Council's Constitution sets out the Member & Officer Protocol that provides a set of principles to guide Members and Officers of the Council in their dealings with one another:

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/_Committee%20Reports/Committee%20Information/Constitution/November-2022/22-11-10-Section-22.pdf

Standards Committee

The Council's Standards Committee has the following roles and functions in relation to Councillors, Co-opted Members and Church and Parent Governor Representatives:

- (a) promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Councillors,
- (b) assisting Councillors to observe the Members' Code of Conduct,
- (c) advising the Council on the adoption or revision of the Members' Code of Conduct,
- (d) monitoring the operation of the Members' Code of Conduct,
- (e) advising, training or arranging to train Councillors on matters relating to the Members' Code of Conduct,
- (f) granting dispensations to Councillors from requirements relating to interests set out in the Members' Code of Conduct,
- (g) dealing with any reports from a case tribunal or interim case tribunal, and any report from the Monitoring Officer on any matter referred to that officer by the Public Services Ombudsman,
- (h) the exercise of (a) to (g) above in relation to the Community Councils wholly or mainly in its area and the members of those Community Councils; and
- (i) overview of complaints handling and Ombudsman investigations.
- (j) make an Annual Report to Full Council describing how the Committee's functions have been discharged during the financial year;
- (k) monitor compliance by political leaders of the above duties and provide advice, training or arrange to train leaders of political groups.

Section 8 of the Council's Constitution sets out the full remit of the Standards Committee:

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/_Committee%20Reports/Committee%20Information/Constitution/May-2021/Section-8.pdf



3.16 Declarations of Interests

The Code of Conduct. Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

The public must have confidence that Councillors are making decisions in their best interests and not their own. Therefore, if a Councillor has an interest, they must declare it.

An interest is any form of business or asset that could be perceived to influence a Councillor's decision.

Section 19 (part 3) of the Council's Constitution sets out:

- the different types of interest,
- under what criteria an interest exists,
- the declaration process for Councillors,
- how interests must be registered prior to publication, and
- to what extent a councillor may participate in council business if they have an interest.

After each Local Government Election, the successful Elected Members will be asked to complete a Register of Interests Form that is then published on the Council's public website and remains on the website for the duration of the Councillor's term in office:

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/Council-Structure/councillors/Register-of-Members-Interests.aspx

If a Councillor's business or assets change during their time as a councillor then they must complete a Change of Interest Form that is then published alongside their original Register of Interests Form on the Council's website.

If a Councillor needs advice on any matter that they think may constitute an interest, then they must contact the Council's Monitoring Officer.

Democratic & Scrutiny Services Officers, on behalf of the Monitoring Officer, may also offer advice on Member Interests during Committee Meetings. Councillors must declare their interest at a meeting as soon as they are aware that a matter is to be discussed and must complete the Declaration of Interest Form provided by Democratic Services.

Some Councillors are also Twin hatted Members i.e. they have also been elected to serve on a Town or Community Council and therefore they must have due regard to declarations of interests being a Member of both a Principal and Town and Community Council.



3.17 Registration of Gifts & Hospitality

The Code of Conduct. Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

All Councillors must, within twenty-eight days of receiving any gift, hospitality, material benefit or advantage above £25 or totalling £100 over a year from a single source, provide written notification to the Council's Monitoring Officer.

A note will then be added to the Gift & Hospitality Register that is maintained by the Monitoring Officer.





3.18 Complaints

The Code of Conduct. Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

Any person who wishes to lodge a complaint about a Vale of Glamorgan Service may do so via the Council's Corporate Compliments & Complaints Procedure as set out on the Council's website:

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/Complaints-and-Compliments.aspx

Councillors, when dealing with a constituent/ public complaint and if they are unable to resolve the matter themselves, should direct the individual to the above complaints procedure.

For complaints related to Vale of Glamorgan Councillors, the person may:

- Contact the Council's Monitoring Officer directly, or
- Contact the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales.

The Public Service Ombudsman for Wales is independent of the Vale of Glamorgan Council and has legal powers to look into complaints about public services and independent care providers in Wales. They also investigate complaints that members of local government bodies have broken their authority's code of conduct.

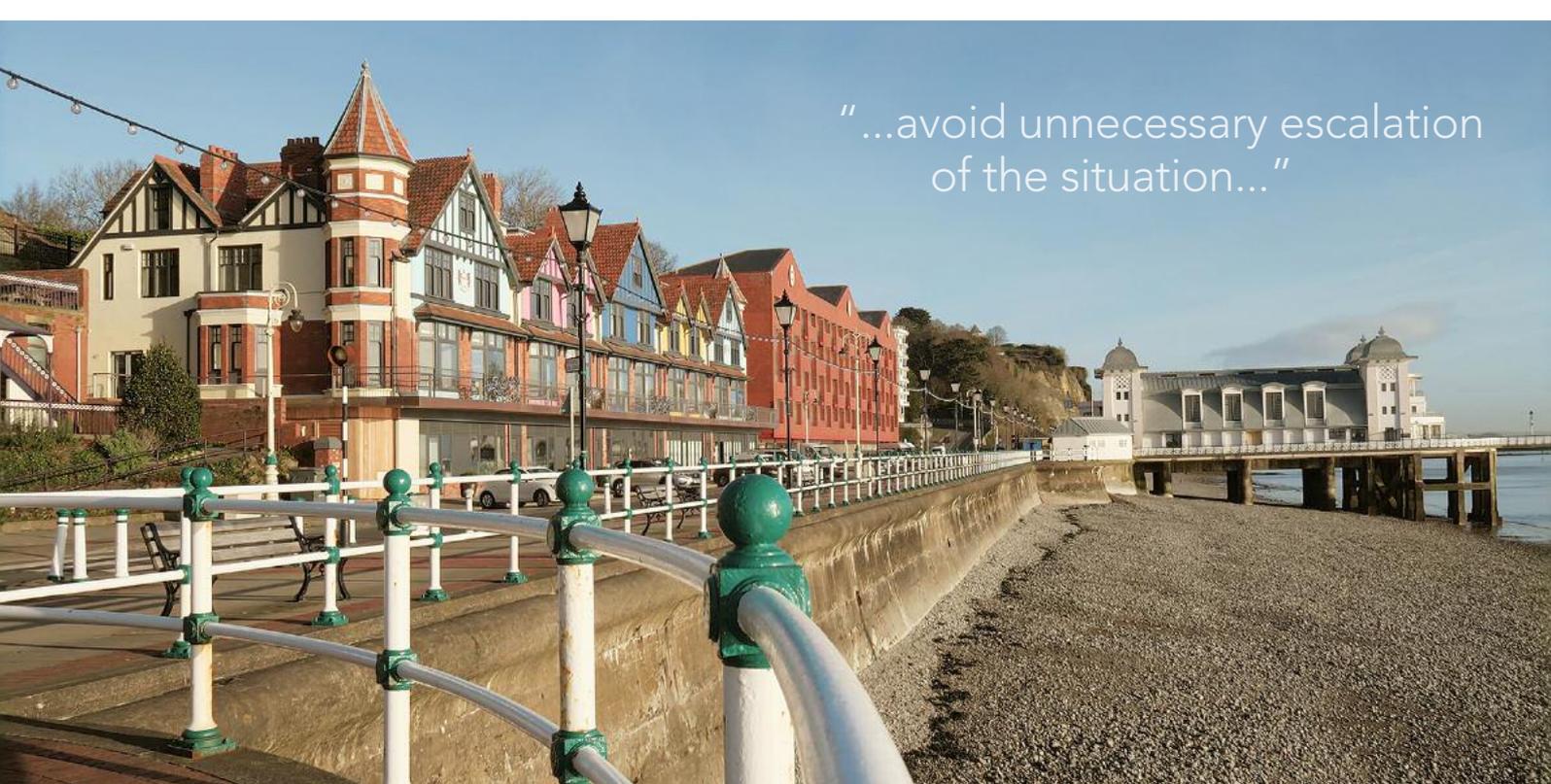
If the Ombudsman believes a complaint to be justified, then they will refer the complaint on to the Council's Standard's Committee or to a tribunal convened by the Adjudication Panel for Wales depending on the severity of the complaint.

For low level allegations of breaches of the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Code of Conduct made by a Councillor against a fellow Councillor, the Council has a Local Dispute Resolution Procedure overseen by the Council's Monitoring Officer. The key objectives of the Procedure are to:

- resolve allegations of breaches of the Code and Protocol locally and quickly,
- avoid unnecessary escalation of the situation which might impact on personal relationships within the Council and damage the Council's reputation, and
- avoid unnecessary involvement of the Ombudsman so that their resources are devoted to the investigation of more serious or repeated complaints.

The Local Dispute Resolution Procedure can be found in Section 19 of the Council's Constitution:

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/_Committee%20Reports/Committee%20Information/Constitution/November-2022/22-11-10-Section-19.pdf



"...avoid unnecessary escalation of the situation..."

3.19 Member Attendance

The Code of Conduct. Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

Every Councillor is entitled to attend any formal meeting of the Council whether that be its Committees, sub-committees, or Cabinet.

A Councillor is entitled to attend any Committee Meeting but is not entitled to take part in proceedings, if they are not a member of the Committee, without the Committee's permission.

A Councillor cannot vote on a matter being considered by the Committee if they are not a member of the Committee or have declared a prejudicial interest (see section 3.16).

If a Councillor has failed to attend any meeting of the Council for six consecutive months, then they will cease to be an Elected Member of the Council.

Each Councillor has a dedicated Member Page on the Council's Website that includes their meeting attendance record for the Committee's they were appointed to at the Annual Meeting of the Council or following a change of political group representation on a Committee made at the request of the relevant group leader.

The Democratic & Scrutiny Services Officer present at each meeting will make a record of which Councillors are present, as well as any apologies for absence provided, and use that information to update the online member attendance records on a regular basis.

Meetings of the Council can be held face-to-face, remotely online or via a mixture of both (hybrid). Further details on how meetings are conducted can be found in the Council's 'Multi-Location Meetings Policy' that is available on the Council's website:

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/_Committee%20Reports/Remote-Procedures-COVID-19/Multi-Location-Meetings-Policy-i.pdf

If held face-to-face, the majority of meetings take place at the Civic Office building in Barry Town Centre. There are several different meeting rooms in the building but the largest is the Council Chamber. In the Chamber Councillors will be required to use a microphone to ensure that all participants can hear them. There is also a hearing loop system available in the Council Chamber.

If held remotely, the meeting will take place on either the Microsoft Teams or CIVICO Platform. All Councillors will be provided with the minimum of a Council laptop and mobile phone to support them with carrying out their duties via Microsoft Office and accessing both platforms (see section 5.28). A Member wishing to attend the Civic Offices e.g. from the Council Chamber, in order to access/ attend a remote meeting, via the use of their Council device using the Council ICT network to join the meeting can



3.19 Member Attendance (continued)

The Code of Conduct. Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

do so, but they are requested to notify Democratic Services in advance of the meeting particularly when the meeting is held in the evening so that building security can be notified.

For a hybrid meeting, some participants will be face-to-face in the same meeting room and some will be in a different location participating via an electronic device.

The majority of Council Meetings are live streamed via the CIVICO platform so that anyone can watch the meeting live at the time that the meeting takes place by clicking the appropriate hyperlink on the Council's Minutes, Agendas & Reports Webpage. However, meetings are also recorded for watching on demand at a later date. Recent on-demand recordings are available by clicking the appropriate link on the Council's CIVICO Homepage:

<https://civico.net/valeofglamorgan>

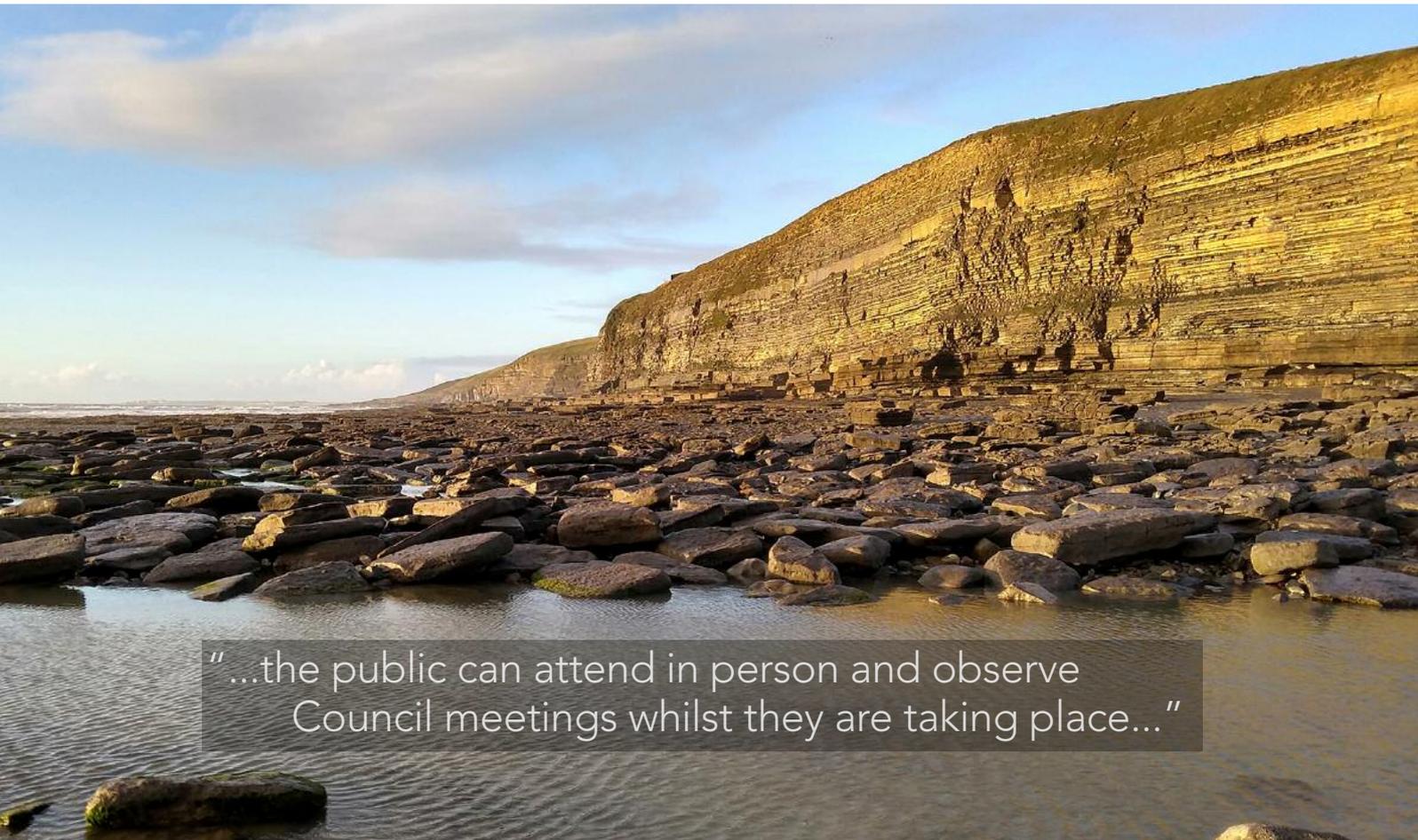
More historical recordings are available via the Democratic Services YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1KDuJ63xoGQ0B8IKkclHNQ>

From the 1st of May 2022, for any meetings that are live streamed as required under the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021, it is a requirement of Councillors taking part to be seen on screen when actively participating during the course of the meeting.

Some meetings may involve confidential or exempt information and therefore these meetings are not recorded or live streamed. Confidential information on an agenda is referred to as 'Part Two' (Part II) information.

Members of the public can attend in person and observe Council meetings whilst they are taking place. The above Part II restrictions also apply and when such items are being discussed the public will be asked to leave the meeting by the Chair.



"...the public can attend in person and observe Council meetings whilst they are taking place..."

3.20 Rules of Debate

The Code of Conduct. Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

Section 4 of the Council's Constitution sets out the various rules of procedure and debate that Councillors must adhere to during Council Meetings such as:

- How to propose a topic for discussion (a motion) and vote during the meeting itself and in advance of the meeting,
- The different types of speeches, when to make them and for how long,
- How to amend, alter or withdraw a motion prior to a vote,
- How to conduct themselves during the meeting and address the Chair, and
- The different types of vote and the process for these.

All Councillors will be provided training on Rules of Debate as part of the Member Induction & Development Programme (see section 3.21).



3.21 Member Induction & Development Programme

The Code of Conduct. Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

The Council is committed to an ongoing programme of Member Development to support Councillors to meet their responsibilities and undertake their role(s) within the Council through-out their entire 5-year term.

Immediately following each Local Government Election, a Member Induction Event will take place, which will be followed by topic-specific development sessions on a range of relevant subject areas linked to the varying roles and responsibilities that Councillors will undertake.

Once an individual has been confirmed as a Candidate for the 2022 Local Government Election, they will receive an email/letter from the Head of Democratic Services asking them to book a space on one of the Council's Member Induction Events. This will ensure that all successful candidates have the dates/times of the integral event in their diaries in advance of the election and allow Council Officers to plan appropriately for the event taking place shortly after the election itself.

Some of the topic-specific development sessions will be open to all Councillors, and some will be related to membership of specific Committees (e.g. Planning / Licensing), albeit non-Committee Members will also be most welcome to attend.

The Council has determined that certain sessions will be essential (mandatory) for new and returning Councillors, either for all Councillors or those Councillors appointed to specific Committees.

For Committees such as Planning and Licensing, Councillors will need to attend the training in order to take their seat on the Committee.

The Member Induction & Development Programme occurs over four phases:

- **Phase 1** This is the first two weeks following the Local Government Election but prior to the first Annual Meeting of the Council [May]. The Member Induction Event takes place during this phase as well as other introductory sessions.
- **Phase 2** This is a further two months [June and July] prior to the August Recess and the period when the first committee meetings take place.
- **Phase 3** This is a further four months [September – December] up until the end of the calendar year and covers the first six months of the municipal year since the Local Government Election.
- **Phase 4** This is an ongoing period of development until the next Local Government Election based on topics requested by Councillors.

Two sessions will be offered for each seminar topic, one daytime and one evening, to support Councillor availability, unless it's a session facilitated by an external presenter or not deemed necessary because of the low number of Councillors expected to attend.



3.21 Member Induction & Development Programme (continued)

The Code of Conduct. Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

Development sessions may be facilitated in a variety of ways. They may take place face-to-face in either a seminar or workshop style or be delivered remotely via a Microsoft Teams meeting. They may also be delivered in a self-study, remote learning style by way of an e-module.

Each Councillor will be provided with log-in credentials for the Council's online learning tool, iDev, at the Member Induction Event. If a Councillor is required to complete an e-module (either for the first time, or as a refresher course) then the module will be available on their iDev account for them to complete at their own convenience within a dedicated window of time.

Any resources provided during development sessions are either uploaded to MemberNet or stored on the Councillor's iDev account following the session for the Councillor to access at their own leisure. Remote development sessions may also be recorded and the recording made available on the Committee Hub.

Councillors will be offered specialist ICT advice and/or support as and when required through-out their term in office (see section 5.28).

Councillors will also be invited to attend essential Member EXPO events that take place twice a year. Member EXPOs are an excellent opportunity for Councillors to network with other Councillors and to receive up to date information from chief officers on matters impacting council services; both of which support Councillors to provide accurate advice and information to their ward constituents.

“Councillors will be offered specialist ICT advice and/or support as and when required...”



4.22 Salaries

Member Remuneration. Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

All Members of the Council receive a basic salary. This covers all Councillors' telephone, ICT and office costs and is reviewed annually by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales.

The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales is responsible for determining the level of payments to elected members of councils, national park authorities and fire and rescue authorities in Wales. The Panel produces an annual report that states:

“From inception, the Panel has consistently argued that local democracy and the governance of local public services are not cost free and that financial barriers should not limit anyone’s opportunity to participate. Remuneration must be sufficient to encourage and enable a diversity of willing and able people to undertake local governance through elected, appointed or co-opted roles.”

February 2022 Annual Report

When the Panel’s Annual Report is issued, the Council must comply with the statutory requirements and apply all the relevant determinations. The proper officer of the Council must put in place mechanisms for all eligible councillors to receive payments as determined by the Panel.

Levels of payments to which Councillors are entitled cannot be varied by a vote of Full Council.

Councillors who have a senior role will also receive a senior salary, also known as a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA), that is inclusive of the basic salary. Senior Salaries are reviewed annually by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales. No Councillor can receive more than one Senior Salary.

All payments of Councillor salaries and allowances are made monthly by direct bank credit and are subject to the appropriate Tax and National Insurance deductions. Councillors will be asked to provide bank details at the Member Induction Event.

Any Councillor may elect to forgo any part of their salary entitlement by putting their election in writing to the Head of Democratic Services who will make the necessary arrangements.

If a Councillor is suspended or partially suspended from any responsibility in accordance with Part III of the Local Government Act 2000 or regulations made under that Part, the relevant part of any salary payable under the Council’s Member Allowance Scheme in respect to that responsibility will be suspended and in the case of an over-payment, paid back to the Council.



4.22 Salaries (continued)

Member Remuneration. Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

The Council is required to agree, publish, and maintain an annual Schedule of Member Remuneration. The latest schedule can be found via the following link:

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/Council-Structure/Schedule-of-Member-Remuneration.aspx

The Schedule of Member Remuneration sets out details of the specific payments that it intends to make to Councillors and Co-opted Members in accordance with the levels of remuneration and allowances determined by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales. It provides details of the remuneration of Members through the payment of a Basic, Senior or Civic Salary and fees which are payable to Councillors and statutory Co-opted Members. The Schedule also provides details of the Care, Travel and Subsistence Allowances which apply.

Section 27 of the Council's Constitution sets out the details of the Council's Member Salary Scheme:

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/_Committee%20Reports/Committee%20Information/Constitution/November-2022/22-11-10-Section-27.pdf





4.23 Allowances

Member Remuneration. Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

Councillors may claim Travel and/or Subsistence Allowances when they incur costs performing approved duties as a Member of the Council.

All claims made are published each year, for the previous municipal year, on the Council's website.

With regards to Travel, Councillors are requested to be mindful of choosing the most cost effective and environmentally friendly means of travel and encouraged to travel with other Councillors. For travel by car, motorcycle, or pedal cycle the (mileage claims) national rates for mileage are set by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales each year.

Subsistence allowances are payable when a Councillor performs duties outside the Vale of Glamorgan area and the rates are also set by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales each year. Councillors are advised to consult with the Democratic Services/Cabinet Office to take advantage of central booking arrangements when arranging overnight accommodation which has to be prior approved by the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council via the submission of the appropriate form.

All claims must be accompanied by relevant receipts for all actual expenditure incurred and submitted to the relevant Officer within ninety days. For Cabinet Members the relevant Officer is the Cabinet Officer, for all other Members the relevant Officer is any Member of the Democratic & Scrutiny Services Team.

The exact rates are set out on the Travel and Subsistence Claim Form on the MemberNet Homepage as well as the latest Member Schedule of Remuneration on the Council's website.

If a Councillor is suspended or partially suspended from any responsibility in accordance with Part III of the Local Government Act 2000 or regulations made under that Part, the relevant part of any allowance payable under the Council's Member Allowance Scheme in respect to that responsibility will be suspended and in the case of an over-payment, paid back to the Council.

Co-opted Members may also claim an allowance. A Co-Opted Member is someone who is appointed to a committee or sub-committee and has voting rights but is not an Elected Member. Their payments are capped to ten full days per year (i.e 20 half days) for each committee to which they are co-opted and are made monthly by direct bank credit. Any Co-Opted Member may elect to forgo any part of their entitlement to an allowance or fee and will not be entitled to claim if they are suspended or partially suspended from any responsibility.

Section 27 of the Council's Constitution sets out the details of the Council's Member Allowance Scheme:

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/_Committee%20Reports/Committee%20Information/Constitution/November-2022/22-11-10-Section-27.pdf

“...requested to be mindful of choosing the most cost effective and environmentally friendly means of travel ...”

4.24 Reimbursement of Costs of Care

Member Remuneration. Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

If a Councillor has needed to arrange care for a dependent child or adult so that they may carry out their official and approved duties as a Councillor, they can be reimbursed for the cost of that care.

A cost of care payment applies to care provided by informal or formal carers for the following:

- (a) dependent children up to the age of 15; or
- (b) children over the age of 15 and adults providing that the Councillor can demonstrate that the dependent individual requires supervision.

Payments will not be made:

- to more than one Councillor or Co-Opted Member in relation to the care of the same child or dependant for the same episode of care; or
- to someone who is a part of a Member's household.

All claims for the Reimbursement of Costs of Care should be made in writing to the Head of Democratic Services, detailing times, dates and reasons for claim by completing both the 'Reimbursement of Cost of Care Claim Form' and 'Costs of Care Receipt Form' available on MemberNet. Receipts are required from the carer for both informal and formal care arrangements.

Family Absence

Councillors are entitled to a period of family absence, during which, if they satisfy the prescribed conditions, they are entitled to be absent from Council meetings.

When taking family absence, Councillors are entitled to retain their Basic Salary irrespective of their attendance record immediately preceding the commencement of the family absence.

A Senior Salary holder will be able to continue to receive their Senior Salary for the duration of the absence. If the Council agrees that it is necessary to make a substitute appointment to cover the family absence of a Senior Salary holder, the Councillor substituting will be eligible to be paid a Senior Salary.

When the Council agrees a paid substitution for family absence, it will notify the Independent Remuneration Panel within 14 days of the date of the decision of the details, including the particular post and the duration of the substitution.



5.25 ID & Access Card

Resources. Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

All Councillors will be issued with a photographic ID card and corporate lanyard during the Member Induction Event.

For new Councillors, the photograph on the card will be taken during the event itself. For returning Councillors, they may elect to use a previous photograph or have a new one taken.

The card is an access control card for Council buildings as well as the various printers (see section 5.29) located around the buildings.

Councillors must not, under any circumstance, lend their ID Card to any other person.

It is important, for the safety of all, that Councillors:

- have their own ID badge on display when entering and moving around Council buildings,
- do not let anyone enter the building or secure areas of the building with them unless the individual also has a Council ID,
- if they are working alone in the building after office hours, inform the building security officer via the main reception desk, and
- if they see someone they do not recognise in a secure area, do not approach them and inform the building security officer via the main reception desk.

Councillors must report their ID card lost, damaged or stolen, within 24 hours of discovery, so that a replacement may be issued by contacting the Democratic & Scrutiny Services Team.

All Councillors will be asked to complete an Equality & Diversity Survey during the Member Induction Event. This will allow the Democratic & Scrutiny Services Team to identify any building access or mobility needs that Councillors may have so that appropriate support and advice can be offered.



5.26 Travel to Council Premises

Resources. Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

On the 29th July 2019 the Council agreed to join with Welsh Government and other Councils across the UK in declaring a global 'climate emergency' and on the 26th July 2021 declared a Nature Emergency. The declarations were made in response to the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report and the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) report in recognition of the inextricable link between climate change and the loss of biodiversity.

Project Zero is the Council's response to the climate emergency. It sets out the Council's commitment to reduce its own carbon emissions to net zero by 2030, but the ambition of Project Zero is wider than just reducing the Council's carbon emissions. It recognises the Council's role as a community leader and how through its policies and actions it can work with, support and influence others to make changes and consider their impact on the environment.

The Project Zero Challenge Plan details eighteen challenges framed around the need for the Council to demonstrate strong leadership, fulfil its responsibility to current and future generations and to make a difference to the environment now. Further details are available on the Council's website:

<https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/living/Climate-Change/Project-Zero.aspx>

Walking, Cycling & Public Transport

The Vale of Glamorgan Council is working to promote and improve opportunities for active travel within the local authority area and further information such as Active Travel Maps are available to both Members of the Public and Councillors on the Council's website:

<https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/living/transportation/Active-Travel.aspx>

The Council also operates a Cycle2Work Scheme allowing Councillors to make savings on the cost of a new bike and accessories to keep fit, reduce stress, reduce travel expenditure, save time travelling and reduce carbon emissions. Further information on the scheme will be provided to Councillors at the start of their term in office.

The following journey planners may also assist Councillors with their travel arrangements:



TRAFNIDIAETH CYMRU
TRANSPORT FOR WALES

<https://tfw.wales/plan-a-journey>



Cardiff bus
bws Caerdydd

<https://www.cardiffbus.com/plan-a-journey>



5.26 Travel to Council Premises (continued)

Resources, Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

Car Parking

Car Parking is currently free and available at all three of the Council's largest office buildings for Councillors to attend meetings (if they choose to attend a meeting face-to-face):

Only the Civic Office Building in Barry has 10 designated parking spaces for Councillors however, these are on a first-come-first-serve basis.

All Car Parks are also used by Council Staff, therefore, parking may take longer during working hours than evenings and weekends.

Useful Travel Information

Civic Offices	Dock Offices	The Alps
Holton Road Barry CF63 4RU	Subway Road Barry CF634RT	Alps Quarry Road Wenvoe CF5 6AA
Opening Times: Monday - Friday: 9am - 5pm Weekends: closed	Opening Times: Monday - Friday: 9am - 5pm Weekends: closed	Opening Times: Monday - Friday: 9am - 5pm Weekends: closed
Cardiff Bus Routes: 93, 94, 95, 96A, 97A, 100 or 304.	Cardiff Bus Routes: 88.	Cardiff Bus Routes: 96, 96A
Nearest Train Station: Barry Docks (BRD)	Nearest Train Station: Barry Docks (BRD)	Nearest Train Station: Not accessible by train.
Other Facilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bike Storage ● Showers ● Multiple occupancy car parking spaces ● Disabled Parking Spaces 	Other Facilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bike Storage ● Showers ● Multiple occupancy car parking spaces ● Disabled Parking Spaces 	Other Facilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bike Storage ● Showers ● Disabled Parking Spaces

5.27 Political Group Rooms

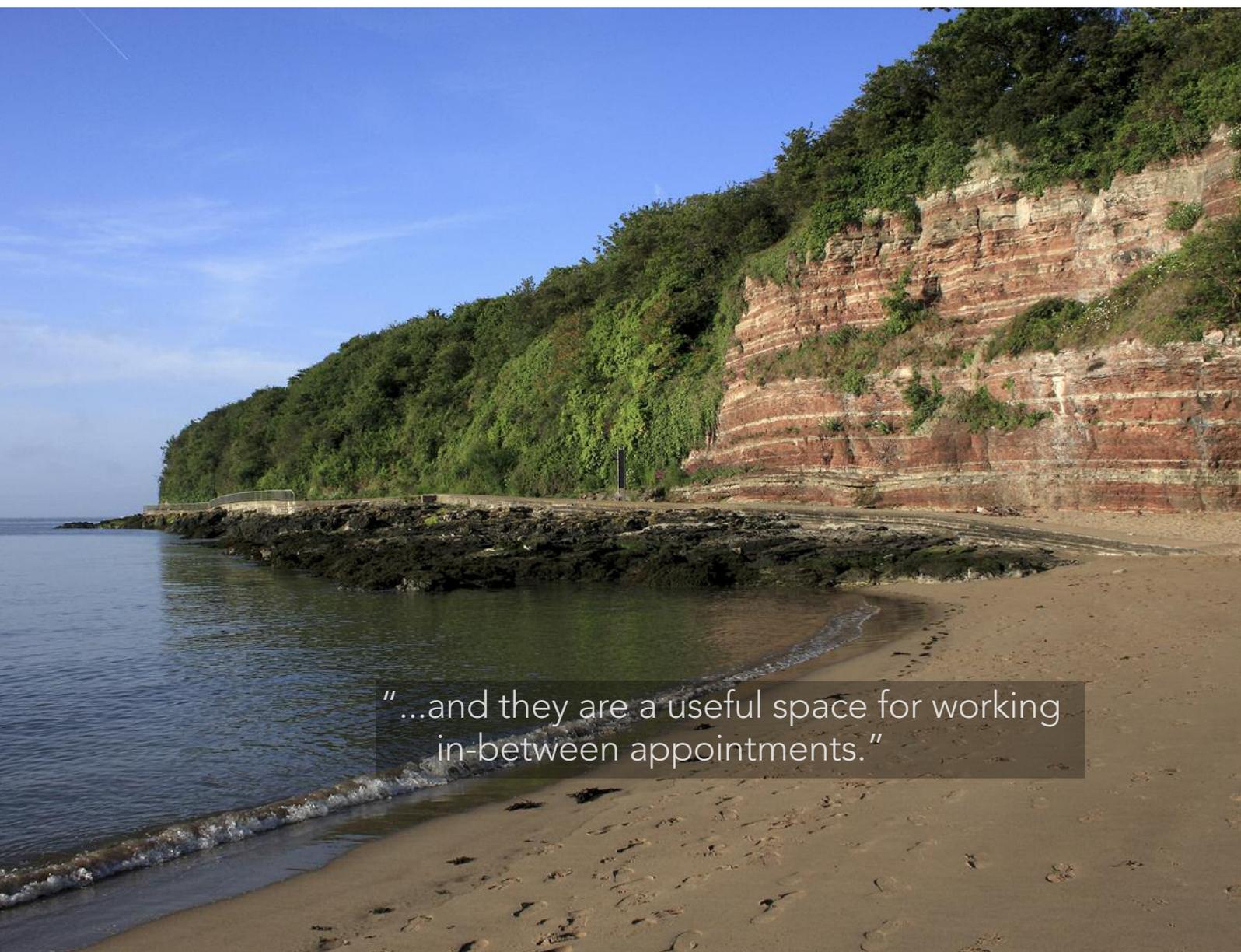
Resources. Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

Each Political Group has a designated meeting room on the lower ground floor of the Civic Office building.

These rooms are accessed via the building's rear entrance using an ID Access Card (see section 5.25).

Councillors are free to use these rooms at all times when the Civic Office Building is open and they are a useful space for working in-between appointments.

A supply of Tea, Coffee and Soft Drinks is also available near to the group rooms for Councillor use.



"...and they are a useful space for working in-between appointments."

5.28 Council Equipment

Resources. Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

The Council provides Councillors with appropriate Microsoft Office 365 operated equipment to assist in undertaking their various roles and responsibilities:

- **Council Computer** – This is a portable laptop with the ability to connect to the Vale of Glamorgan network from home as well as in Council buildings.
- **Council Mobile Phone** – For making calls, sending text messages, and receiving Emails on the go. Councillors may also opt to have access to their Vale of Glamorgan emails on their personal mobile device if they would prefer to operate only one mobile phone and decline the Vale of Glamorgan mobile device.
- **Remote Meeting Headset** – Earphones and microphone to support councillors to hear and be heard clearly during remote meetings.

Equipment will be issued to Councillors as part of the Member Induction Event.

Other devices may be issued to Councillors, based on their individual support needs, as identified from their response to the Member Equality & Diversity Survey completed at their start of term.

Any devices issued remain the property of the Council and Councillors will be asked to return the equipment at the end of their term in office having accepted responsibility for the devices at the start of their term in office.

Council equipment and services must not be used for personal use or any activity not authorised as part of a Councillor's job description. Councillors must not remove Council information from the network and copy it to personal or non-Council owned equipment as this introduces a serious information loss and malware risk to the Council.

To access the Vale of Glamorgan network from home, Councillors will require a home broadband WiFi connection. Councillors are required to arrange and purchase their own broadband service independently, using a provider of their choosing, and are advised to source a super-fast broadband service.

All Councillors will be required to undertake in writing that they will observe and comply with the procedures and protocols set by the Council governing the use of their equipment; the ICT Code of Conduct. Councillors will be provided with a copy of the Code at the start of their term in office.

The Council's Digital Strategy to enable opportunities for improvement through the innovative use of ICT, now and in the future, as well as setting out the Council's vision for how it will leverage new technologies to continue to provide high quality priority services is available on the Council's website.

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/achieving_our_vision/Achieving-our-Vision.aspx

The Council's technical support service is called the ICT Service Desk and all Councillors will be provided with the contact details for this service as part of the Member Induction Event.

For informal discussions/meetings, Councillors will have use of Microsoft Teams and for formal meetings access to the Council's Hybrid Meeting Solution; CIVICO. Training on both these platforms will be provided to Councillors at the start of their term in office and ongoing support will be available on request via the Democratic & Scrutiny Services Team.



5.29 Universal Printing

Resources. Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

In 2018, the Council revised its print strategy to reduce printing waste and subsequent costs. This resulted in universal printers being placed in communal areas across the organisation and its office buildings. This move was also aligned to the Council's climate change challenge plan launched in 2021, 'Project Zero,' to adapt to and mitigate the impact of climate change.

The Council recognises that Councillors may be unable to work completely 'paper-free' however, does encourage individuals to work 'paper-less' where possible.

Therefore, all Councillors are automatically elected to receive meeting papers electronically, rather than in hard copy, but they may request to have hard copies sent out to them in the post or delivered to their designated pigeonhole by making a request in writing to the Head of Democratic Services.

All Councillor laptops are set to the universal printers. This means that all documents sent to print will be held on the Councillor's print account for 48 hours until they reach any printer in the building to print the document.



"...encourage individuals to work 'paper-less' where possible."



5.30 Correspondence

Resources. Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) UK

The law on Data Protection changed on 25th May 2018. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) UK is a new, Europe-wide law that superseded the UK Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA 1998).

The GDPR UK sets out requirements for how organisations will need to handle personal data. It has enhanced the rights of people whose data is held (known as data subjects in the Data Protection Act) and give them more control over what happens to their data. It also allows for financial penalties to be imposed on any organisation that breaches those rights or does not comply with the 'accountability principle' – which basically means that data controllers and data processors i.e. The Council and its Councillors need to put technical and organisational measures in place to protect the data they hold from loss, unauthorised access etc and to ensure the rights of data subjects are protected.

All Councillors must be registered as a Data Controller with the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) and pay a fee. The fee will be paid for by the Council and registration forms will be completed shortly after the election.

Councillors will:

- (1) Make use of personal data provided by the council in the same way as an officer of the council might make use of data. Council officers and its suppliers will be subject to the controls of GDPR UK.
- (2) Use personal case work material in their own right when they collect or are given personal data through communications with their residents.
- (3) Access, collect and deploy personal data through their political campaigning and activation – with or without the use of political agents or political parties if they represent one.

Therefore, as Data Controllers, Councillors must comply with the new GDPR UK requirements as follows:

- Keep a record of their processing activities, this is to show their compliance with the legislation.
- Give a more detailed Privacy Notice when they collect personal data.
- Tell data subjects of their rights.
- Have appropriate security measures in place to protect personal data they hold.
- Regularly review and delete 'old' data they no longer need; and
- Report any breaches to the ICO within 72 hours.

Councillors should only use their official Vale of Glamorgan email address to respond to resident enquiries and give due regard to the Council's Privacy Notice:

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/Website-Privacy-Notice.aspx

If Councillors have any queries or require advice regarding GDPR UK then they can email the Council's Data Protection Officer at: DPO@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk



5.30 Correspondence (continued)

Resources. Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

Postal Service

In accordance with the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 (Section 43), the Council has a duty to publish official addresses for each Elected Member, electronic and postal. Members not wishing to make their home address public (provided they satisfy the requirements of the Members' Code of Conduct) may utilise the Vale of Glamorgan Council's address.

Welsh Language Standards

The Council is committed to the provision of an excellent service to Welsh speakers.

During 2015 it was issued with a legal Compliance Notice by the Welsh Commissioner specifying which Standards applied to the Council.

In order to achieve the 174 standards within the notice the Council developed a comprehensive Action Plan which is published on its website:

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/equalities/welsh-language-standards.aspx



5.31 MemberNet

Resources. Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

The Council has its own intranet called StaffNet and it is the automatic search homepage on Councillor computers.

Therefore, it requires being connected to the Vale of Glamorgan Virtual Private Network (VPN) via a secure internet connection in order to use it.



From the StaffNet Homepage, Councillors can access documentation and Council Officer contact details that they will need to function as a Councillor.

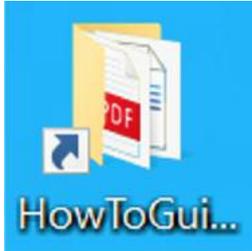
A section of StaffNet is specifically tailored towards Councillors and is called MemberNet. The MemberNet intranet page includes important information, documents, and guidelines for Councillors to refer to at their convenience and is updated on a regular basis. Therefore, Councillors are required to visit MemberNet on a regular basis.



5.32 'How To' Desktop Guides

Resources. Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

Every Councillor will have a 'How To Guides' document folder on their Vale of Glamorgan computer desktop:



This folder contains guides, instructions and policy documents to support Councillors with tackling any technical issues they may have when the ICT Service Desk is closed.

Because the folder is located on the desktop, Councillors can access and use the folder when working offline.



5.33 Committee Hub

Resources. Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

The Committee Hub is an electronic storage folder for all published meeting agendas.

A short cut to the Hub is available on Councillor desktops, on Vale of Glamorgan devices only, and updated after every agenda publication:



Councillors can access agendas in several ways:

- (1) Via the hyperlink included within the notification email they receive each time an agenda is published.
- (2) By clicking on the relevant Committee name in the Committee Hub on their desktop.
- (3) By visiting the Council's Minutes, Agendas & Reports public webpage; or
- (3) Receiving a hard copy of the papers in the post (if requested in advance).

Some Committees are locked down to certain individuals because of the confidential nature of the paperwork and therefore only the members of that particular Committee have access to view the relevant Part II papers via the Hub.

Any Councillor may request access to Part II information, if they do not already have access to it, by raising a formal request with Democratic & Scrutiny Services. These requests must then be assessed on a 'need-to-know' basis due to the confidential nature of the information.

Members of the public are not entitled to see Part II information. Therefore, the Committee Hub is the only way for Councillors to view Part II information other than in hard copy.

Councillors can also download the agenda from the Committee Hub on to their Vale of Glamorgan laptop. This can be useful if they wish to annotate the document in advance of the meeting based on their own thoughts/comments to raise and/or work offline during the meeting itself.



5.34 Officer Directory

Resources. Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

An Officer Directory is available to Councillors via MemberNet and the How to Guides Folder on their desktop.

Councillors will also have the opportunity to meet key Officers as part of the Member Induction Event to formally introduce themselves, open lines of communication and establish good working relationships.

The Directory helps Councillors to contact the right 'on-the-ground' Officer for their query whether that be for themselves or as part of their ward casework.

Councillors may also use the Council's corporate methods of raising queries with Officers as available to Members of the public, such as:

the **Report It** Webpage on the Council's website which allows individuals to report a wide variety of matters:

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/living/do_it_online/Report.aspx

the **Contact Us** Webpage on the Council's website which provides the contact information for the Council's Contact One Vale (C1V) Call Centre and directions to council offices to raise a matter in person at reception:

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/Contact-Us.aspx



Councillors' Guide to 5.35 Health & Safety and Personal Wellbeing

Resources. Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

The Vale of Glamorgan Council attributes the utmost importance to the health, safety and well-being of its councillors, employees and those for whom it provides a service.

Councillors have a responsibility to follow the health and safety arrangements as set out in the Council's Health, Safety & Well-Being Policy and to report any issues that would jeopardise the maintenance of a positive health and safety culture throughout the organisation.

The Policy Statement, as well as its various policy procedures are available to Councillors via the Human Resources and Organisational Development section of StaffNet and Councillors are encouraged to have regard to this in all aspects of their Council work.

Physical Safety

An important role of a councillor is to keep in touch with their residents and communities. This includes helping individuals with any problems they might have. Often this extends beyond just the delivery of council services. These contacts are usually rewarding and non-adversarial. However, councillors can find themselves in a position where they need to manage angry and frustrated residents who often contact their elected representative when they feel that they have no other avenue to pursue. Often councillors will deal with constituents on a face-to-face basis when alone.

Most councillors will not experience any problems during their term(s) of office, but a little time given to the preparation and planning can reduce any risk.

Councillors are encouraged to:

- assess the risks to their person in carrying out their public duties,
- recognise potential danger from personal contact or internet / postal communication and take appropriate action, and
- be proactive in considering personal safety through, for instance, the purchase of a personal alarm, ensuring your partner, friend or relative has information on your activities, and ensuring your mobile telephone is charged.

The Local Government Association (LGA) in partnership with the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) has produced a Councillors' guide to handling intimidation, the purpose of which is to set out what personal safety and security measures a Councillor could take to prevent and deal with those rare circumstances when they might find themselves in situations where they are concerned for their safety.

<https://www.local.gov.uk/councillors-guide-handling-harassment-abuse-and-intimidation>

The guide is not designed to alarm, but to suggest some steps a Councillor and their Council can undertake to protect them as a person in a public position, and how to respond should an incident occur.



Councillors' Guide to 5.35 Health & Safety and Personal Wellbeing (continued)

Resources. Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

Online Safety

Social media is changing the way society communicates, the way it receives news and, increasingly, the way it thinks about itself and others.

Social media is transforming politics too; it makes politicians and public institutions more accessible, allows individuals to have their voices heard and helps share ideas or promote campaigns, potentially to millions, in an instant. It is a powerful tool that can do much good but, in the wrong hands, can cause harm too. The growth of online abuse or trolling is a concern, as is the mounting evidence that organisations or even foreign agencies can exploit social media or use 'fake news' to influence public opinion or even affect democratic contests.

Social media has therefore become a vital tool for councils and councillors to inform and engage with the communities they serve. Many councillors already use social media and many more are thinking about using it. Therefore, the Council offers a 'Personal Safety & Self-Care' Member Development Session that includes online safety.

The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) also offers guidance to councillors who are new to social media and some tips for those already using it. Social media is rapidly evolving, so the guidance offers a general overview, some key pointers and principles and references to step-by-step resources online:

<https://www.wlga.wales/SharedFiles/Download.aspx?pageid=62&fileid=344&mid=665>

Personal Wellbeing

Councillors may use the Council's Employee Assistance Programme 'Care First' that offers Counselling, Information and Advice through three different services:

- 24/7 Online and Telephone Counselling Service.
- 'Zest,' an Application that teaches users coping mechanisms to handle situations life may throw their way; and
- 'Lifestyle,' an online resource providing advice, information, webinars and articles on health, fitness, finance, childcare and consumer rights.

Councillors will also have access to the Council's E-Learning Portal called 'iDev' and the variety of wellbeing courses and seminars offered free of charge via the portal.



5.36 Glossary of Terms

Candidate and Elected Member Handbook 2023

Agenda	A list of matters either in electronic or hard copy form to be discussed at a meeting.
Annotate	To add a short explanation or opinion to a text or drawing.
Chair / Vice-Chair	The gender-neutral role description for the person in charge of the meeting.
Constituents	A person who can vote in a particular area of the country.
Constitution	The set of political principles by which a state or organization is governed, especially in relation to the rights of the people it governs.
Democratic	Democratic is the adjective of Democracy: the belief in freedom and equality between people, or a system of government based on this belief, in which power is either held by elected representatives or directly by the people themselves.
Desktop	A view on a computer screen that contains icons (= small symbols or pictures) representing files, programs, and other features of the computer.
Electoral Division/Ward	One of the areas into which a Council area (Vale of Glamorgan) is divided, having its own elected political representative(s) for each ward for the purposes of an election.
Electorate	All the people who are allowed to vote.
Forward Work Programme	A schedule document that sets out the matters the Committee will consider in the future and when.
Governance	The way that organizations or countries are managed at the highest level, and the systems for doing this.
Intranet	A system of connected computers that works like the internet and allows people within an organization to communicate with each other and share information.
Local Government	The control and organization of towns and small areas, and the services they provide, by people who are elected by those living in the area.
MemberNet	The Councillor specific resource section of the Council's Intranet.
Motion	A formal suggestion made, discussed, and voted on at a meeting.
Municipal Year	The municipal year is a period used by local government in the United Kingdom. The municipal year usually begins in May and ends at the end of April each year.
Offline	(Of a computer) not connected to or directly controlled by a central system, or not connected to the internet.
Part II	"Part Two" information is confidential or exempt information not available to members of the public.
Proper Officer	An Officer designated to carry out a specific function provided for within the Council's Constitution. Unless stated otherwise, the "Proper Officer" is the Chief Executive.
Scrutiny	The careful and detailed examination of something in order to get information about it.
Standing Orders	Rules that say how an organization should organise its formal meetings (Council/committee).
Summons	The Agenda papers are sent to the Councillor by way of an invitation requesting that they attend the meeting.
The Executive "Cabinet"	The Cabinet, made up of the Leader of the Council and up to 9 other Councillors from the controlling political group(s), uses its Executive Powers to make most of the Council's decisions on services, functions and corporate management, including plans and strategies.

The Vale of Glamorgan Council

Candidate and Elected Member HANDBOOK 2023

This handbook has been collated by Amy Rudman, Democratic & Scrutiny Services Officer.
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