

Meeting of:	Democratic Services Committee
Date of Meeting:	Friday, 21 March 2025
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Corporate Performance and Resources
Report Title:	Democratic Services Committee Forward Work Programme
Purpose of Report:	To provide an update on the work programme for the Council's Democratic Services Committee for the 2025-2026 Municipal year.
Report Owner:	James Langridge-Thomas, Head of Democratic Services
Responsible Officer:	James Langridge-Thomas, Head of Democratic Services
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	All Elected Members will be circulated a copy of this information only item.
Policy Framework:	This is a matter for Executive Decision.
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order for the Committee to have a clear direction a travel, a provisional draft Forward Work Programme has been designed for the 2025-2026 Municipal year, available in Appendix A. • Items for consideration have been categorised to allow for ease of understanding: "Standard", "Cyclical" and "Other". • This draft Forward Work Programme represents current known items, and will likely be updated on an ongoing basis, with agreement between the Chair and Head of Democratic Services, based on wider Council or National developments, alongside suggestions from Councillors and members of the public (If appropriate). 	

Recommendation

1. T H A T the Committee agrees the provisional Forward Work Programme for the 2025/2026 Municipal year.

Reason for Recommendation

1. To allow for the Committee to have a clearly structured programme of work to support their ongoing work.

1. Background

- 1.1 As outlined within 14.16a of the Council's Constitution, Democratic Services Committee has a range of functions, including:
 - (1) To designate the Head of Democratic Services.
 - (2) To keep under review the provision by the Authority of adequate resources to discharge Democratic Services functions.
 - (3) To make reports and recommendations in respect of (2) above to Full Council at least annually.
 - (4) To have regard to Welsh Ministerial guidance when exercising its functions.
 - (5) To be responsible for overseeing the Council's approach to Member Development.
- 1.2 To support the Committee in enabling these functions, as the Committee meets multiple times a year, a Forward Work Programme has been drafted based upon a proposed schedule of activity, as no such document previously existed.
- 1.3 It is proposed that is reviewed on a regular basis by the Chair and Head of Democratic Services to allow for the Committee to have a robust schedule of activity based upon local and national updates.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1 The Forward Work Programme has been developed to consider items as "Standard", "Cyclical" and "Other".
- 2.2 Standard items are defined as items which should be included in every agenda. There may be instances where there has been no update since the previous Committee meeting.
- 2.3 Cyclical items are to be considered as items which are shared with the Committee with a scheduled regularity (such as six monthly or annually), including items such as Annual Reports.
- 2.4 Other items are agenda items which are scheduled on an ad hoc basis, and can be suggested by the Chair, Heads of Democratic Services, Committee Members, other Elected Members and residents of the Vale of Glamorgan.
- 2.5 Dates currently identified within the Forward Work programme are provisional, are subject to the Municipal calendar being approved in the Spring.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1** A Forward Work Programme allows for multiple stakeholders to be involved and to take a longer-term view of the Democratic Services Committee function. This will enable resources to be identified in collaboration with officers allowing for the Council to consider how they can work in an integrated manner to enhance the discharging of its duties.

4. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 4.1** There are no direct Climate Change and Nature implications to this report.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 5.1** The update outlines a range of activity to be undertaken by the Committee, with resources allocated as appropriate. Any additional activities and related expenditure identified because of any of the areas included in the above will be subject to the Council's usual finance processes.

Employment

- 5.2** The main implication will be in terms of Officer time to co-ordinate and/or facilitate sessions and/or resources.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 5.3** Member Training and development is required by the Local Government Act 2000 and Local Government Measure (Wales) 2011.
- 5.4** The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 places new duties on Local Government in relation to Member knowledge and development.
- 5.5** A determination within the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) Annual Report 2024-2025 states that "Each authority, through its Democratic Services Committee or other appropriate committee, must ensure that all its elected members are given as much support as is necessary to enable them to fulfil their duties effectively."

6. Background Papers

[WLGA – Local Democratic and Member Development](#)

[Statutory and non-statutory guidance on democracy within principal councils](#)

**Appendix A – Provisional Democratic Services Committee Forward Work Programme
2025/2026**

Date	Standard Items	Cyclical Items	Other Items
Monday, 30th June 2025	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. WLGA Heads of Democratic Services Update 2. Forward Work Programme 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Head of Democratic Services Annual Report 2. Members Annual Reports 3. Members Personal Development Reviews (PDRs) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Councillor Advice and Support
Monday, 17th November 2025	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. WLGA Heads of Democratic Services Update 2. Forward Work Programme 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Draft Report 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 21st Century Democratic Services
Monday, 2nd March 2026	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. WLGA Heads of Democratic Services Update 2. Forward Work Programme 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learning Needs Analysis Review 	
Monday, 13th April 2026	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. WLGA Heads of Democratic Services Update 2. Forward Work Programme 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preparing for the 2027 election