

### Action Plan - Council Focused

The plan has been drafted to illustrate the Welsh government overall objectives and then a combination of Welsh Government derived actions for Local Authorities to drive forward and actions that have been proposed following Members comments.

<b>Objective 1: Increase understanding of different tiers of government in Wales, the role each plays in society and how they operate.</b>	
Potential Actions for the Council	Proposed Way Forward
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dissemination of Welsh Government educational resources to accompany the extension of the franchise to 16 and 17 year olds in Wales</li> <li>• Guidance and workshop setting with 16 and 17 year olds regarding Democracy in Wales</li> <li>• Social Media campaign to engage with youth voters</li> <li>• Review the 'Council Business' page on the Council website providing information on how the Council works and the different tiers of government.</li> </ul>	<p>Resources have been developed by WG and have been disseminated through YEPs. Work is now being undertaken with dissemination to Schools.</p> <p>There is the opportunity to establish whether the materials could have a web-based platform within these youth areas, such as using the Wicked website other social media platforms?</p> <p>Opportunity to link to the Council web page of <a href="#">'becoming a Councillor'</a> promoting the educational resources that are available.</p> <p>Workshops have already been taken forward through YEPS through a variety of different platforms promoting the extension of the voting franchise. Such engagement is to be taken forward with schools although this has been delayed due to the Covid pandemic. The Head of Democratic Services and Consultation and Engagement Officer have recently met with the Director of Education &amp; Inclusion to discuss the best way forward with potential democracy events being taken forward via zoom / team platform with schools by consultation team.</p> <p>There is a need to take forward a social media campaign to engage with youth voters, raising awareness of the importance of voting and how democracy can affect their lives. Work is currently being undertaken by the Council Communications team, with the campaign being piloted with youth groups to test its effectiveness. The campaign will be brought before Members at the next meeting of the group. A need to focus on the wider opportunities with the campaigns and not focus solely on young people. Working and linking</p>

	<p>with wider partnerships going forward with such engagement and awareness raising could achieve this wider audience.</p> <p>The Council website holds details of '<a href="#">Council Business</a>', Councillor details and election results however there is opportunity to review this area and provide details and links of the different tiers of government to assist in increasing the understanding of democracy.</p> <p>To take forward a review and evaluation following the forthcoming Senedd elections to establish if the awareness raising campaigns had been successful and areas for further improvements.</p>
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<p><b>Objective 2: Increase engagement with the public to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>raise awareness of the role and activities of the Council provide clarity about how the public can better inform local decision making;</b></li> <li>• <b>build greater community cohesion through a greater presence at community events, creating and building upon community networks.</b></li> </ul>	
Potential Actions	Proposed Way Forward
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting the role of a Councillor and the work of the Council</li> <li>• Publication of Council's constitution and constitution guide to increase public engagement</li> <li>• Produce a Public Participation Strategy</li> <li>• Conducting Hybrid Council meetings and webcasting at the Council Chamber to promote local decision making.</li> </ul>	<p>The WLGA are currently revising the content of the 'become a Councillor' website to include videos and pen portraits of Members across different welsh authorities. This revised content should be completed by March 2021. There is opportunity to promote the '<a href="#">Become a Councillor website</a>' by linking with the Council webpage. In addition there is an opportunity to take forward a local 'RCT Councillors' video message with Members highlighting the positives of a role of a Councillor identifying potential barriers that might have been identified to standing for election and the opportunities to overcome such barriers. There is a need to promote how the work of a Councillor links in with everyday services taken forward by the Council and again there is the opportunity for this to be demonstrated through the 'Council' webpages, with this in turn being illustrated during the youth engagement sessions to strengthen the connection of how people's votes can impact on the work of the Council. Following the Covid regulations, meetings of the Council are undertaken virtually and recordings of which</p>

	<p>are published on the Council website. Such recordings provide a powerful demonstration of democracy and part of the role of a councillor and raise awareness of the work of the Council.</p> <p>Opportunity to work with Town and Community Council's to ensure links with 'Becoming a Councillor page' are promoted on own website / social media platforms and for similar local 'role of a councillor to be developed' and promoted.</p> <p>To push to a wider audience and engagement, Members could be encouraged to utilise own media platforms to promote the role of a Councillor - through Member blogs / 'day in the life of'.</p> <p>There is an opportunity to take forward promotion of the role of a Councillor and democracy at future Career Fairs taken forward by the Council.</p> <p>In addition to this, potential virtual workshops within school settings could be taken forward to raise awareness of the role of a Councillor 'what do you do?' so young people have an understanding from a young age.</p> <p>There is a need and duty to build upon the public participation strategy already in place within the Council in respect of Public participation at meetings. The current strategies should be reviewed and updated in accordance with future hybrid meeting protocols.</p> <p>A number of Council Committees require lay members within its membership and the Council will need to take forward the further duty placed upon it to widen the future 'Audit &amp; Governance' Committee lay membership, with the Chairmanship of this Committee taken forward by a lay member. The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee utilise the knowledge and experience of parent Governors on its Committee, as statutory required. Many of the Council's Members are or have been Parent Governors. Linking in with Governor support on the role of Councillors and the co-</p>
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	<p>opted / lay person membership could be considered to engage with potential future candidates. Scrutiny working groups have also previously benefitted from engaging with stakeholders during reviews to strengthen their work and resulting recommendations. There is the opportunity to drive forward further public engagement in democracy by seeking the public's view on items for consideration at scrutiny meetings, ensuring work programmes are dealing with issues that matter to residents of the County Borough.</p> <p>There will be a need to take forward webcasting of Council meetings as specified within the Act and the opportunity of hybrid meetings. Ensuring that the Council Chamber is DDA compliant is currently being taken forward. There is a duty to ensure the availability of translation facilities for Members to conduct Committee meetings bilingually. The Council have recently purchased new equipment to provide an improved audio feed and purchase of additional screens to assist with the running of meetings. Such improvements will potentially remove any barriers that might have prevented a future Candidate from standing at election.</p> <p>The Council Constitution provides guidance on how the council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are to be followed to ensure these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. As part of the duty of the Act and to engage the public in local democracy the Council will need to provide a constitution guide to be developed and promoted on the Council website.</p>
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<b>Objective 3: Increase awareness of the role of councillors, the contribution they make to society and how to become a councillor</b>	
Potential Actions	Proposed Way Forward
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promoting the role of a Councillor and the work of the Council</li> </ul>	<p>Affording new Members with the opportunity to take forward a Mentoring scheme to assist new Councillors undertake their roles.</p>

	<p>Following the easing of lock down restrictions and when safe to do so take forward the opportunity for the promotion of 'open invites' to the Chamber for potential candidates to they become familiar with part of their future role.</p> <p>Promotion of the role of a Councillor could be circulated to established groups, such as School Governors who are often already active within their local communities.</p> <p>Taking forward potential (virtual) workshops within school settings that could be taken forward to raise awareness of the role of a Councillor 'what do you do'?' so young people have an understanding from a young age.</p>
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**Objective 4: Increase confidence of councillors that they are valued, expectations placed on them are fair and that their remuneration levels appropriately reflect the work undertaken**

Potential Actions	Proposed Way Forward
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure appropriate training and support is in place to support Councillors in their role to give confidence in what they do.</li> <li>• To provide the opportunity for mentoring of newly elected members</li> <li>• Ensure Members are provided with suitable electronic devices and training on such devices to support them in their role.</li> <li>• Advise of the remuneration available</li> <li>• Promotion of the 'role of a Councillor'</li> <li>• To survey Members during and at the end of their term of office</li> <li>• To promote the 'open door policy' for all Members to seek support from the Head of Democratic Services and the Council Business Unit.</li> </ul>	<p>Ensure that the Member induction programme is fit for purpose and provides all Members with the skills and knowledge base to undertake their role. Ensure that a rolling programme of training is developed for each Member throughout their term of office. The Head of Democratic Services works closely with the Head of Organisational development to ensure Members are supported through training opportunities and as such there is no limit on the training budget available to Members.</p> <p>To provide the opportunity for mentoring for Newly Elected Members. Head of Democratic Services to liaise with WLGA regarding the mentoring programme.</p> <p>As previously agreed, to work with Members and ICT to establish the most suitable device for Members rather than a 'one size fits all' approach. To provide reasonable adjustments as advised upon. To ensure Members are provided with suitable training on such devices to assist them going forward.</p>

	<p>To promote the reasonable adjustments that the Council can offer Elected Members to assist them in undertaking their role confidently.</p> <p>To promote the remunerations that are available to Members on the Council website and to candidates standing for Election by linking with the Council Business page.</p> <p>To review the support / barriers that may have been experienced by a Member during their term of office. Such a review will help the Council going forward to resolve any issues to assist Members in their role.</p> <p>To ensure Members are advised of the support available to them through the Council Business unit and the Head of Democratic Services – providing contact details at the earliest opportunity during the Member Induction.</p>
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**Objective 5: Greater respect and support for those standing for and securing elected office in Wales.**

Potential Actions	Proposed Way Forward
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Place a duty on political group leaders to promote high standards of conduct</li> <li>Social Media training to be provided to Members and offer of such training to future candidates</li> </ul>	<p>opportunity for the working group to take forward discussions with Group Leaders to promote the code of conduct within their parties.</p> <p>Social Media training to be delivered to Members through the Member Induction programme and built upon during a Members term of office.</p> <p>Further training to Members on aspects such as unconscious bias and menopause training and the need to ensure the training opportunities delivered to Council staff are also provided to Members. Ensuring this training is also delivered to town and community Councillors.</p> <p>Undertaking a Members survey to gauge Members feedback on actions that needed to be addressed and training opportunities available was identified as a positive step forward to trying to deliver a positive and diverse environment for Members to undertake their roles</p>