

Democratic Services Service Delivery Plan 2018 – 2019

Overview of the service

The objectives of the Service are to deliver effective and high quality Electoral Registration, Elections, Committee Administration and Member Support Services and to promote Community engagement with an understanding of the democratic processes of the Council.

Democratic Services covers the following functions:

Committee Administration, procedural advice and guidance

Member Support (e.g. Members allowances; outside bodies; registers of Members interests; publishing of agendas, minutes and Member information on the Council's website; Member surgeries)

Member Induction, Training and Development

Electoral Registration

Elections

The majority of the Service's activities are defined by legislation and statutory/non-statutory guidance and involve working with a wide range of partners both internally and externally (e.g. Councillors; Lead Officers, Service Leads and report authors for Committees; DCLG; Cabinet Office; Electoral Commission; County Council; neighbouring Councils; Parish Councils; ARP; LGA; ADSOs; AEA).

On the Committee and Member Support side, the Service ensures the smooth running of Full Council and Committees by providing the administration, support, guidance, advice and training to Members and officers on all aspects of the Democratic process. This position was enhanced by the appointment of the Democratic Services Manager (DSM) as Deputy Monitoring Officer (DMO) in October 2015 with specific responsibility for the provision of procedural information and advice and maintenance and updating of the Constitution.

The year commenced with approval by full Council in April 2017 of a revised Committee structure and implemented with effect from the Annual Council meeting in May. The four yearly review of the Members' Allowances Scheme by the Independent Remuneration Panel was concluded and a revised Scheme approved by full Council in July 2017. The ECTC Board, operating under Company Law and outside of the governance processes of the Council, continues to be clerked by a DSO on a rechargeable basis. However, the creation of a stand-alone Shareholder Committee, as part of the Committee re-structuring, has led to this requiring clerking as well by the Democratic Services Team, and consideration being given to the separation of roles between the Board and Shareholder Committee. The establishment of a new Trading Company for Waste Services from January 2018 also has required further consideration of the procedural issues relating to clerking of this new LATC and the extension of the role of the Shareholder Committee.

The Team continues to clerk an external partner body, the RECAP Board, on a chargeable basis from January 2017; and the Democratic Services Manager provided some Democratic Services management support and advice to SCDC for an interim period of up to August 2017 on a chargeable basis, to assist during the period of a vacancy in the Democratic Services Team Leader post there. Looking forward, the Team has been requested to clerk a new Joint East Cambridgeshire and Fenland Living Well Partnership with Health Service bodies on an alternating basis with Fenland DC from February 2018.

The creation of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority with effect from May 2017 has resulted with the DSM being appointed to act as Deputy Monitoring Officer (DMO) on a rechargeable basis, and the Democratic Services Team hosting the Combined Authority Scrutiny Officer. It also has led to two Councillor By-Elections as detailed below.

On the Electoral Registration side, the Team continues to implement, consolidate, monitor and review all of the processes and systems relating to Individual Electoral Registration (IER). Central Government, via the Cabinet Office, has given a commitment to fully funding the additional costs of IER during the life of this parliament. As in previous years, the Cabinet Office provided each Local Authority with a 2017/18 grant payment to cover the additional costs of IER.

On the Elections side, the Team conducted both the County Council and Combined Authority Mayoral elections on 4 May 2017 and the snap General Election on 8 June 2017. In addition, 2 District By-Elections were held on 22 June and 7 September, due to the election of former Councillor and Leader of the Council, James Palmer, as Mayor of the Combined Authority and the resignation of former Councillor Tom Hunt due to his appointment to a senior post within the Combined Authority. Currently, there are no Elections scheduled for 2018.

Looking forward, a Community Governance Review (CGR) and a Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations Review (PDR) have been commenced in February 2018, to address issues arising from the two reviews by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) of the electoral arrangements for the County and District, and/or identified by Elections staff, Ward Councillors or Parish Councils. The timetable has been drafted in order that the required processes can be carried out to enable any changes to be incorporated into the December 2018 Register of Electors ready for the next District and Parish Council elections in May 2019.

Cost of service

The cost to run the service in 2018/19 totals £573,639 per annum, including staffing costs. This is broken down as follows:

Members' & Committee Support	£492,624
Electoral Services	£76,969

Key areas of expenditure in these Budgets are:

Members Allowances	£252,700
Member Training	£3,500
Members ICT	£6,000
Electoral Registration	£54,469
Elections	£22,500

The costs of external elections are recharged to the relevant body. The sum of £22,500 is put into an Election Reserve each year towards the cost of District Council Elections which take place every 4 years. Any District Council By-Election is an additional cost to this Council.

Staffing information

The Service comprises 6 staff as follows:

Democratic Services Manager & Deputy Monitoring Officer (DSM & DMO)
2 Democratic Services Officers (DSOs)
Democratic Services Support Officer (FTE during Canvass and Elections periods & 30 hours per week outside of these periods)
Electoral Services Team Leader
Electoral Services Officer

Forward planning for Councillors

Proposed date of decision	Item	Service Area	Service Delivery Champion	Committee
February 2018 to July 2018	Conducting of CGR/PDR	Democratic Services	Councillor Stuart Smith	Full Council 22 February 2018, Full Council 19 April 2018 & Full Council 12 July 2018
May 2018 onwards	Ongoing delivery of Member Training, Development and Member Seminar Programme	Democratic Services	Councillor Stuart Smith	
August to 1 December 2018	Publish Register of Electors based on IER Canvass	Democratic Services	Councillor Stuart Smith	
Winter 2018 to May 2019	Preparations for District and Parish Council Elections in May 2019 and new Member Induction & Training Programme	Democratic Services	Councillor Stuart Smith	



Performance Measure	Link to Corporate Plan Priority	Target and reporting timescale (i.e. 6 monthly or annually)	Baseline from previous year/output from previous year	Owner and co-owners
Provide effective, high quality and legally compliant Committee and Member Support Services	Delivering a financially sound and well managed Council	Publish Agenda for Council/Committees, etc, within 5 working days of a meeting (statutory) 100% published	100%	Tracy Couper Democratic Services Manager
		Publish decision lists for Council/Committees, etc, within 3 working days of a meeting 95% published	97.4%	Tracy Couper Democratic Services Manager
		Publish draft Minutes for Council/Committees, etc, within 14 days of a meeting 85% published	94.6%	Tracy Couper Democratic Services Manager
Provide legal, efficient and cost-effective Elections for the Electors of the District and our external partners		Review customer feedback forms/information from Election and resolve, as far as practicable, issues by commencement of next Election period 95% of all customer feedback actioned (where possible) by commencement of next Election period	100%	Tracy Couper Democratic Services Manager/Joan Cox Electoral Services Team Leader

Publish and maintain an accurate and legally compliant Electoral register each year and maximise registration for target groups within the District	Delivering a financially sound and well managed Council	To publish and maintain an accurate and legally compliant Electoral register each year and maximise registration for target groups within the District in order to achieve at least an 90% registration rate	93.72% registration	Tracy Couper Democratic Services Manager/Joan Cox Electoral Services Team Leader
		Electors registering electronically via Government portal, etc At least 12,000 to be registered	12,174 registered	Tracy Couper Democratic Services Manager/Joan Cox Electoral Services Team Leader
Promote community engagement and involvement in the Democratic processes of the Council	Delivering a financially sound and well managed Council	Publication of Agendas on website on day of despatch 98% to be published	94.9% IT systems failure for over a 2 week period in September led to a delay in publication of Agendas, usually with agendas published on website on the day after despatch.	Tracy Couper Democratic Services Manager
To ensure trained staff, comprehensive understanding by Service Delivery Champion and continual professional development of Councillors	Delivering a financially sound and well managed Council	To ensure that all staff appraisals are completed annually and within the time frame set by HR 100% appraisals completed on time	100%	Tracy Couper Democratic Services Manager/Joan Cox Electoral Services Team Leader
		To include Service Delivery Champion in all aspects of the day to day running of the Democratic Services Team to promote transparency and good partnership working and meet on a quarterly basis 4 meetings arranged	3	Tracy Couper Democratic Services Manager
		To prepare, agree and implement a Programme of Member Seminar, Training and Development sessions, to provide Members with the required knowledge and skills to effectively perform their role as a District Councillor 6 sessions to be arranged at the request of Officers and Members as part of the Member Development Programme	5	Tracy Couper Democratic Services Manager

Ensure that the Council's corporate risks are managed effectively and mitigations are put in place to reduce impact.

To regularly review higher level corporate risks, including:

- Changes to the political composition of the Council affecting the democratic decision-making processes;
- Local, regional and national legislative and policy changes affecting the democratic process, both in terms of electoral administration/elections and democratic decision-making;
- Impact of corporate initiatives such as shared services, commercialisation, on the working practices of the Team.

Implemented review of Committee structure from May 2017.

Completed IRP review of Members' Allowances Scheme.

Conducted Combined Authority Mayoral, County Council and General Elections and 2 local By-Elections.

Offering services of Team on a commercial basis:

- Clerking of ECTC & ECSS Board
- Clerking of RECAP Board
- Dem Services Manager acting as DMO for Combined Authority
- Dem Services Manager provided some informal management support & advice to SCDC

Commenced PDR and CGR

Tracy Couper Democratic Services Manager