

SUBJECT:	STAFFING CHANGES – COMMITTEE, SCRUTINY AND MEMBER SUPPORT
MEETING:	DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE
DATE:	5th June 2019
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To provide an overview of proposed staffing changes in the local democracy and scrutiny functions to increase scrutiny capacity and provide more direct support members and improving the robustness of forward planners which will enable the council to involve more people in local democracy.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That members consider the report ahead of a single member decision on 12th June.

3. KEY ISSUES:

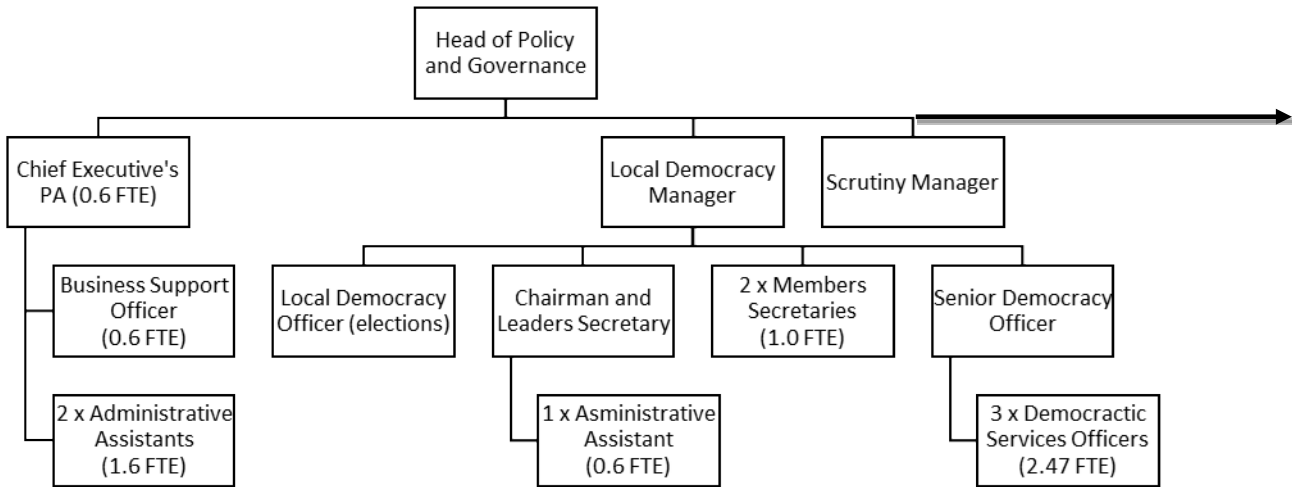
- 3.1 The Local Democracy Team has benefitted from advances in technology in recent years: The adoption of the Modern Government ICT system has reduced the amount of time it takes to compile agendas, these are no longer printed which has brought about financial savings and a reduction in administrative duties; members expenses are now submitted and approved electronically, and live streaming means that the production of minutes is easier as democratic services officers are able to refer back to the meeting recording to produce a record of discussions. This means that minutes of some meetings such as Select Committees can be produced after the event.
- 3.2 A report from Wales Audit Office carried out in 2018 has highlighted a lack of capacity in the scrutiny function which has been supported by comments from members. This is likely to be exacerbated as the authority begins to deliver more functions through regional and collaborative arrangements such as the Cardiff Capital Region which will require joint scrutiny.
- 3.3 The Democratic Services Committee has been looking at the extent to which our current arrangements facilitate citizen engagement with local democracy. The committee has concluded there is a need for fundamental change in how we attract the public in debating major issues. The fifteen minute public open forum provides an opportunity for the public

to offer a view on the agenda subject matter or to suggest items for future scrutiny. However, it cannot serve as the only mechanism to engage people in democratic debate. Creating a new Policy and Scrutiny Officer role would enable more to be done to engage people earlier in debating and shaping solutions to the pressing issues in our communities and to secure earlier public involvement in debating potentially contentious issues to identify alternative solutions and secure buy-in where needed.

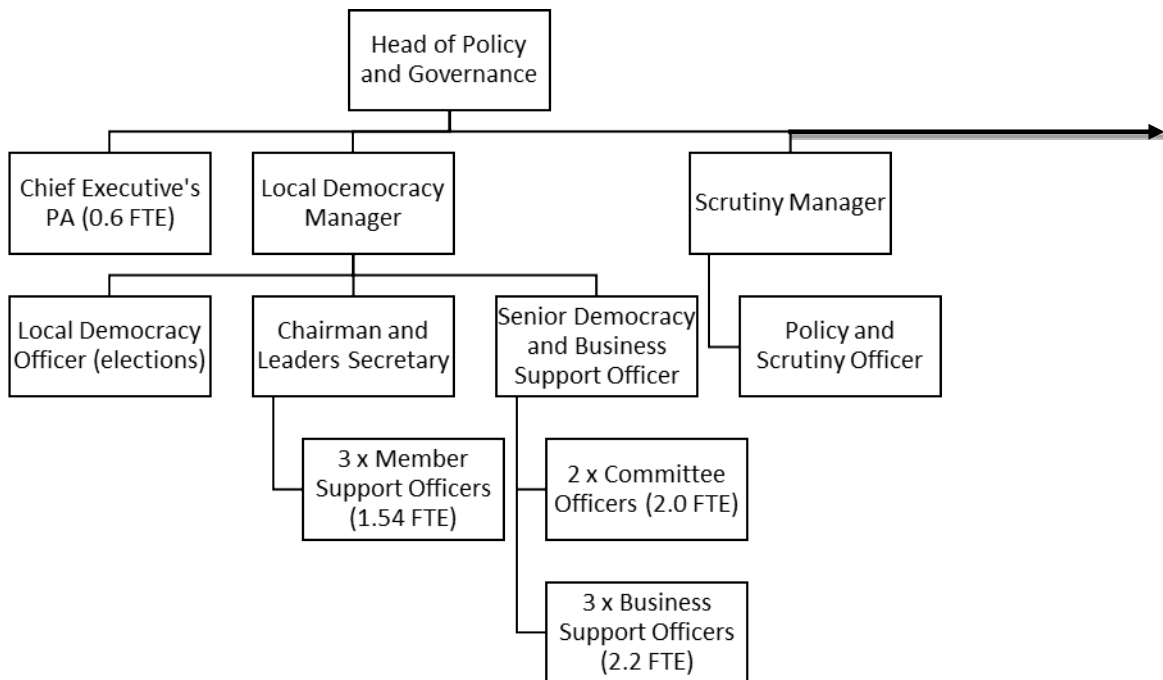
- 3.4 A new role of Policy and Scrutiny Officer would facilitate greater focus on assisting officers improve the quality of reports and developing evaluations which would give Cabinet and Council robust evidence about the longer term impact of decisions whilst enabling Select Committees to draw on these evaluations to inform scrutiny work programmes. This officer would attend committees and other meetings to advise the chair providing enhanced scrutiny capacity. They would assume responsibility for keeping a note of the meeting reducing the need for two officers to be present at Select Committees and enabling a formal minute to be produced from contemporaneous notes and the meeting recording. The minutes of select committee meetings would be produced in a more concise format focusing on lines of questioning, responses and subsequent action points.
- 3.5 The existing role of Democratic Services Officers would be removed and replaced by Committee Officers. The Senior Democratic Services Officer will continue to manage this function and will also assume line management responsibility for the business support team who provide support to senior managers. This will improve alignment between officers and councillors and in particular help improve the robustness and clarity of the forward planner.
- 3.6 A repurposed Member Support Officer role will replace the Members Secretary role and will provide a more professional internal customer support for elected members, acting as a source of information, arranging appointments and members training whilst focusing on broader development which would enhance the experience and professional development of members during their time on Council. This team would provide digital first aid to councillors, championing the use of technology such as Skype and making it easier for members to attend meetings remotely in line with recent changes to the constitution, reducing travel time and the financial costs of meetings. They would also take a more proactive role and a liaison between officer and political decision-making ensuring earlier and more detailed forward planners to improve involvement and decision-making. The democracy team will relocate from its current area to room M4 which will make it more accessible to members on a day-to-day basis.
- 3.7 These changes will result in the deletion of some posts. It also sees the creation of new opportunities to take the service forward with refreshed purpose and pace. Role profiles are attached as an appendix to this report.

Structure (as is)

(only shows teams affected by the proposals, not all of those that report to the Head of Service)



Structure (proposed)



4. REASONS:

To deliver ensure effective staffing arrangements that will enable robust decision-making and scrutiny alongside a professional support service for councillors that maximises the potential of digital technology and offers greater opportunity for member development.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

The changes will result in an increase in costs of £18,468 per full year in 2019-20 rising to £25,321 once all employees reach the top of their respective pay spine. This will be afforded within departmental budgets.

6. WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS IMPLICATIONS (INCORPORATING EQUALITIES, SUSTAINABILITY, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING)

The report has no direct impact upon front-line services and as a result a full assessment has not been deemed necessary

7. AUTHOR:

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ROLE TITLE:	Policy and Scrutiny Officer (New) Permanent
POST ID:	tbc
GRADE:	Band G - (Subject to Job Evaluation)
HOURS:	full-time / part-time (Monday to Friday)

The purpose of this role

To ensure that the council's policy and scrutiny functions provide an effective mechanism to identify and evaluate evidence, improve services and involve people in the scrutiny and decision-making processes.

Expectations and outcomes

To work with members of select committees and officers to contribute to policy development and improve the performance and delivery of council services

To provide advice to committee members using legislative, policy and research expertise by analysing information and providing advice and guidance to members

To assist the development of a scrutiny work programme which is clearly aligned to the priorities and policy framework of the council alongside the issues of greatest importance to the community.

To support improved use of evidence in the evaluation and scrutiny of council services

Your responsibilities are to

- 1) Support the development of the scrutiny work programme, giving regard to the priorities of the council as outlined in the policy framework, alongside issues of importance to local communities. This will involve informal engagement and arranging consultation with key stakeholders, and developing these proposals for scrutiny.
- 2) Support constructive working relations between officers and the council's cabinet and select committees to facilitate meaningful scrutiny.
- 3) Ensure that committees and sub-groups comply with all constitutional and legislative requirements by providing pro-active advice to the committee and officers.
- 4) Provide a concise note of scrutiny meetings which clearly capture the challenge, questioning and any resulting recommendations, ensuring that these are used to inform any subsequent reports to council or cabinet.

- 5) Contribute to any working or sub-groups ensuring that these are well-evidenced and impartial identifying and engaging experts and evidence and producing reasoned, well-written reports with practical recommendations.
- 6) Deliver reviews and evaluations that are well-evidenced, objective and impartial. This involves scoping reviews, project managing reviews, identifying and liaising with key witnesses, evidence gathering in support of scrutiny reviews and producing well reasoned reports with practical recommendations.
- 7) Work effectively with elected members and senior officers using integrity, diplomacy, confidence and sound judgement and act appropriately and in line with the member/officer behaviours protocol. This requires maintaining the confidentiality of personal and sensitive information in a political environment.
- 8) Work with colleagues across the organisation to assist in ensuring that the Council's decision-making is robust, transparent and understandable to the public.
- 9) Attend meetings of select committees, sub-groups, working groups, pre-meetings providing advice and presenting reports as required.
- 10) Provide independent and impartial advice and guidance to select committee members, including guidance on questioning strategies and the discharge of their democratic roles and constitutional and governance issues.
- 11) Assist with the development of partnership working and collaborative scrutiny with other local authorities, public bodies and partner organisations, collecting information and data and preparing issues for discussion.
- 12) Maintain awareness of changes in legislation, policy and practice in respect of the scrutiny function
- 13) To maintain an in-depth and current knowledge of overview and scrutiny and other local government developments, participating in training and development activities to enhance competence within job role.
- 14) Have a commitment to delivering the vision and behaving in accordance with the values of Monmouthshire County Council.
- 15) Maintain safe working practices for self and others, in accordance with the authority's policy statement on Health and Safety at Work.
- 16) Actively support the principles and practice of equality of opportunity as set out in the Council's Equal Opportunity Policy.
- 17) Undertake any ad-hoc duties commensurate with the level of the post.

ROLE TITLE: **Committee Officer (New)**
 Permanent

POST ID: tbc

GRADE: Band E – (Subject to Job Evaluation)

HOURS: full-time / part-time (Monday to Friday)

The purpose of this role

To support open and transparent local democracy and governance by providing effective and accurate administration of council meetings by arranging work programmes, agendas, ensuring timely dispatch of information and providing an accurate record of meetings and decisions.

Expectations and outcomes

To work closely with elected members and senior officers of the council to contribute to effective governance and decision making arrangements.

To ensure the effective and timely collation, quality assurance and distribution of agenda for a wide range of meetings

To maintain and working knowledge of the council's constitution to ensure that chairs and members

Your responsibilities are to

- 1) Carry out preparatory work necessary for successful and robust local decision-making, taking the lead on managing the agenda process for meetings and liaising with Chief Officers, Heads of Service, members and senior managers in the organisation.
- 2) Ensure that all documentation (e.g. agendas, decision logs, minutes and public notices) is produced, despatched and published efficiently and on time in accordance with agreed timescales using the Modern Government ICT System.
- 3) Be proactive in advising the chair and members on procedural matters and interpretation of the constitution to ensure effective meetings with clear outcomes
- 4) To be able to provide independent and impartial advice and guidance to select committee members in the absence of the Scrutiny Manager and Policy and Scrutiny Officer, including providing guidance on questioning strategies
- 5) Produce a minute of meetings and accurately record decisions made in accordance with the Council's constitution.

- 6) Initiate the follow-up of agreed actions agreed ensuring that appropriate officers are clear about responsibilities arising from decisions and recommendations.
- 7) Work closely with Business Support Officers to ensure that forward planners look to the long-term, are fully populated and inform effective democratic processes
- 8) Contribute to promoting and developing opportunities for digital services including the effective operation of ICT systems to manage agendas, calendars, reports, decisions and minutes.
- 9) Operating the systems for live-streaming and recording meetings seeking to resolve problems where necessary to ensure that the political process is open and accessible
- 10) Support elected members in all aspects of their role
- 11) Provide support to, and liaise with, a range of committees and outside bodies which have county councillors as part of their membership.
- 12) Working with others to deliver training and support for councillors using ICT and other digital tools that will assist them in performing their roles
- 13) Work with outside bodies, partners and other local authorities for the successful delivery of services.
- 14) Promote increased involvement and engagement with members of the public
- 15) To assist with the administration of elections and electoral registration when required.
- 16) Have a commitment to delivering the vision and behaving in accordance with the values of Monmouthshire County Council.
- 17) Maintain safe working practices for self and others, in accordance with the authority's policy statement on Health and Safety at Work.
- 18) Actively support the principles and practice of equality of opportunity as set out in the Council's Equal Opportunity Policy.
- 19) Undertake any ad-hoc duties commensurate with the level of the post.

ROLE TITLE: **Member Support Officer (New)**
Permanent

POST ID: tbc

GRADE: Band D – (Subject to Job Evaluation)

HOURS: full-time / part-time (Monday to Friday)

The purpose of this role

To employ a pro-active approach to the delivery of business and administrative support to senior managers and elected members of the council including the effective use of technology and management of forward planners.

Expectations and outcomes

To work closely with senior managers and elected members to ensure effective business support which contributes to effective governance and decision-making.

To co-ordinate the flow of communication between senior managers, elected members, community councils and citizens.

To maintain a good knowledge of the technology used by a modern organisation and ensure that this is deployed to maximise the efficient and effective use of capacity and capability time and available capacity.

Your responsibilities are to:

- 1) Work pro-actively with elected members to manage electronic diaries for council meetings and appointments to outside bodies helping ensure efficient use of capacity;
- 2) Assist with travel arrangements for members including attendance at conferences and events
- 3) Arrange, co-ordinate and facilitate meetings on behalf of elected members, leadership team and other senior managers;
- 4) Produce documents to strict deadlines and ensuring a high standard of accuracy and presentation;
- 5) Coordinate and publish the agenda and decision for individual cabinet member decisions in accordance with the constitution and relevant legislation, updating the forward plan and liaising with officers and the business support team to ensure the plan is accurate and reports and submitted on time.

- 6) To arrange and promote civic and fundraising events on behalf of the Chairman of the Council
- 7) To meet civic heads and senior officers and visitors from other organisations on behalf of the chairman and leader.
- 8) To make travel arrangements on behalf of the chairman and effectively co-ordinate attendance at civic events
- 9) Provide assistance in making arrangements for events including venue hire and arrangements for catering and audio-visual equipment where required;
- 10) Be part of a network of officers delivering pro-active responses to queries from internal and external customers which minimises the number of hand-offs required to other parts of the organisations;
- 11) Maintain an awareness of the priorities and key issues being dealt with by the organisation;
- 12) Co-ordinate timely, accurate and considered responses to correspondence on behalf of senior leaders and elected members managing communications and identifying opportunities to improve processes where necessary;
- 13) Provide support with elections including registration and assisting with postal votes
- 14) Dealing with enquiries from community and town councils, ensuring that they understand how to log queries on the My Monmouthshire systems and ensuring a response from officers where necessary
- 15) Respond to e-mails and letters on behalf of elected members and senior managers where necessary;
- 16) Provide information management support for Cabinet and other elected members ensuring effective document management, storage and retrieval in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation;
- 17) Set up and support the technology for video conferencing and tele-conference calls ensuring that software and hardware is set up in advance of meetings;
- 18) Provide digital first aid to senior managers and elected members to ensure they can maximise the benefits of the available technology and maintain productivity throughout the working week;
- 19) Use financial systems to place orders, pay invoices and maintain oversight of small budgets where required;
- 20) Ensure councillors DBS checks are in place and liaise with the information commissioners office to ensure councillors GDPR registrations are in place
- 21) Deal with Freedom of Information requests related to councillors in accordance with statutory processes and timescales
- 22) Prepare paperwork to ensure that councillors and co-opted members are paid allowances and expenses in line with guidance from the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales.

- 23) Be able to set up live streaming of meetings and upload meeting recordings to the council's YouTube channel where appropriate.
- 24) Have a commitment to delivering the vision and behaving in accordance with the values of Monmouthshire County Council.
- 25) Maintain safe working practices for self and others, in accordance with the authority's policy statement on Health and Safety at Work.
- 26) Actively support the principles and practice of equality of opportunity as set out in the Council's Equal Opportunity Policy.
- 27) Undertake any ad-hoc duties commensurate with the level of the post.