

# MEMBER ZONE KEY AIMS

The Member Zone aims to provide Argyll and Bute Council's Elected Members with an easy to use platform to request information and action to different Council Services, both for themselves and on behalf of constituents. It will also provide topical, ward specific information of interest to members.

Training on the system will be provided by Member Services and this document will form part of that initial training. A specific system user guide will also be available on the Member Zone.

## **In general the system will:**

- Be the main platform used by Members to submit queries and request services so they can be managed in an efficient and structured way
- Be the central platform which Officers log Member requests that members do not log through Member Zone on a self-service basis, so that all correspondence can be managed and actioned, through a single dedicated system which is supported by trained teams.
- Be actively managed by Services and all requests actioned timeously in line with the agreed service standards. Performance of the service will be reported to Senior Management and Members.
- Be continually improved with input from members via a "Sounding Board" approach.
- Be based on realistic expectations of what can be achieved

## **Key features of the system include:**

- A secure web based interface (The Member Zone), through which Members can raise requests using simple online forms, track their full portfolio of requests and interact with Services until each request is fulfilled.
- An in-built escalation process for queries, so if Elected Members are not satisfied with responses provided, there is a method to have these escalated within the system itself, which is ultimately easier to track, monitor and action these issues.
- A mechanism to 'rate' responses from Services. This quality rating will be regularly reported and will provide for real-time information on satisfaction so that different Services can monitor performance and engage with Elected Members as required
- Any suggestions for development of Member Zone would be welcome and there is a feedback/improvement button on Member Zone for this.

## **Security and GDPR:**

- In line with Council security requirements Member Zone log on credentials should never be shared and the devices used to access the Member Zone should never be left unattended when the Member Zone is open. For secure authentication Elected Members must have a national MyAccount account.
- In line with GDPR requirements, for requests raised on behalf of constituents Members must have the consent of their constituents to share any personal information used and that information must only be the minimum needed to permit satisfactory actioning of the request. Requests raised should not include Special Category data e.g. racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, health or sexual orientation data.
- Members log requests for information or action through Member Zone and will receive an initial response to their requests within 5 working days (urgent requests to be raised via the Head of Service), and if that response indicates that it will take longer to fully fulfil that request a new deadline will be agreed with the Member.

- When making a request Members are asked to provide as much detail as possible to help the Service investigate and speedily resolve the matter e.g. if a constituent has escalated a matter to the Member they may already have a case reference that should be passed on. Members are also asked to be as clear as possible about “the ask” of the Service; the outcome they desire.

#### **Commitments from Officers:**

- All Officers of Argyll and Bute Council are committed to encouraging open local democratic debate and delivery of high quality services and will support Elected Members through the Member Zone system to ensure they are in the best place to facilitate this
- At all times Officers will recognise the role of Elected Members and will engage through Member Zone in a spirit of mutual respect and trust, seeking clarification on any areas of uncertainty.
- Officers will seek to provide speedy and complete responses to Elected Members and keep them fully informed. Officers will provide progress updates where appropriate, and fully advise of any limitations in the ability to fulfil a request.
- Officers will use performance management data to analyse performance and identify improvement actions where issues are identified.

The Member Zone system has been introduced at pace to be ready for the induction of the new Council. There will be continual improvement with input from Members. The system in its current form is not the finished product – it is expected the system will evolve over time with input from Elected Members.

**\*\*\*ends\*\*\***