

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE - THURSDAY, 17 NOVEMBER 2016

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOMS 2/3, CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB ON THURSDAY, 17 NOVEMBER 2016 AT 2.00 PM

Present

Councillor JH Tildesley MBE – Chairperson

N Farr	CA Green	M Gregory	RC Jones
M Reeves	G Thomas	E Venables	

Officers:

Mark Galvin	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Gary Jones	Head of Democratic Services

101. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the following Members:-

Councillor P James
Councillor DK Edwards

102. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

103. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of a meeting of the Democratic Services Committee held on 26 May 2016 were approved as a true and accurate record.

104. SERVICE AND PERFORMANCE UPDATES

The Corporate Director Operational and Partnership Services submitted a report, the purpose of which, was to update the Committee on the performance of services provided to Elected Members.

The report included information on the following areas, each of which, the Head of Democratic Services expanded upon for the benefit of Members:-

- Member Referral statistics
- The Member Development Programme
- Pre-Council Briefings
- Other Member Development topics (for consideration)
- Development Control Committee training sessions
- Annual Reports
- Town and Community Council (TCC) Website Grants
- Webcasting
- Members ICT Forum
- Town and Community Council Charter
- I-Call

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With regard to Referrals, the Head of Democratic Services confirmed that the historic trend was continuing, whereby the Communities Directorate had by far the majority of these. Members felt that more accessibility should be given to displaying on the Council's website email addresses and contact numbers of Officers who were directly responsible for key services, which were often subject to a considerable number of Member Referrals or complaints they made on behalf of their constituents.

In respect of the Member Development Programme, it was considered that other than those outlined in the report, these be kept to a minimum in view of the forthcoming local government Elections scheduled for May 2017.

Paragraph 4.2.3 of the report informed Committee of the Pre-Council briefings that had been planned and supplemented as follows:-

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|--------------------------------------|------|------------------|
| 1. Corporate Parenting update | – | 30 November 2016 |
| 2. Dementia Friendly Communities | – | 11 January 2017 |
| 3. Sustrans | – | 1 February 2017 |
| 4. Update on WCCIS IT System project | – | 1 March 2017 |
| 5. Dark Skies | – 29 | March 2017 |

The Head of Democratic Services confirmed that between and including June – Oct 2016, Pre-Council Briefing attendance by Members came to an average of 61.05%.

Paragraph 4.2.5 of the report then gave a number of further Pre-Council presentations that had been earmarked prior to Council meetings after the above dates which were agreed upon. It was further agreed to prioritise the Update on the Cultural Trust, and to add to the list, an Update on the Radicalisation Programme.

A Member recommended that more powers should be devolved to Town and Community Councils, in order that they could provide support to the local authority on certain initiatives to include funding smaller type projects, etc. This could be achieved by neighbouring Town/Community Councils working collaboratively.

The Head of Democratic Services advised that he could prepare a report on such a suggestion and submit this to Council for consideration, as well as raising it as part of his next meeting with Clerk's to Town and Community Councils under the new Town & community Council Charter.

He also suggested that some Committees scheduled in the Calendar of Meetings would not take place nearing the Election, due to the purdah period. The Head of Democratic Services advised Committee that a Member Induction Programme would be set-up for newly Elected Members shortly after the date of the Election.

The Head of Democratic Services made reference to paragraph 4.2.11 of the report, and advised that attendance at Development Control Committee training sessions was also currently (ie since May 2016) below the expected threshold of 75%, presently being an average of 53.97%.

Members also questioned the merit of submitting Annual Reports, particularly as these may have to be made available bi-lingually in the future which was an unnecessary added resource for the Council. Added to this, only 20% of Members had completed these in 2015-16.

The Head of Democratic Services confirmed that he would therefore send an email to all Members confirming that the submission of Annual Reports would be put on hold and he would remove from the Council's web site those that had been submitted to date.

A Member referred to information contained in the report regarding I-Call, and it was agreed that Councillor E Venables be included in the trial of this initiative. A Member also asked for further information to be provided in respect of the effectiveness of this call management system as well as the number of individuals who currently used this.

The Chairperson concluded debate on this item, by stating that he wished it placed on record how well Members were supported by Officers and in particular the Democratic Services team members, despite on-going budget restraints.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and the recommendations and actions detailed above, be both agreed and actioned where appropriate.

105. **CONSULTATION - INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2017-18**

The Corporate Director Operational and Partnership Services presented a report, which advised that the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) had issued its Draft Annual Report for consultation, which was attached as an Appendix to the report.

The Head of Democratic Services stated that the Committee were requested to provide its views in respect of the draft report. He added that any response on behalf of the Council, would be submitted to the IRPW and the WLGA by a deadline date of 28 November 2016.

The Head of Democratic Services outlined certain background information that was contained in the report, and particularly, that in accordance with the requirements of Section 147 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, the IRPW has published its draft Annual Report setting out its determinations for the municipal year 2017/18.

The paragraphs that comprised paragraph 4 of the report outlined the basic salary for a local Member, and the Head of Democratic Services advised Members that if they had any comments to make on this or any other provision of the report, then to let him know in order that these observations could be included in the above response to the IRPW, etc.

A Member of the Labour Group confirmed to the Committee, that BCBC's Labour Group had agreed that they would be supporting the current proposals with regard to Members basic salary, ie an increase of £100 equating to a rise of 0.75%, as well as the rate outlined for Level 1 in terms of the senior salary holders.

The Head of Democratic Services stated that if Council proposed in the future that there be an Executive that consists of 7 Members, as it had done in the recent past, then he felt that this would merit Level 1 as opposed to Level 2 for Senior salary holders, as BCBC would continue to have a Cabinet consisting of less than 8 Members, not including the Leader/Deputy Leader.

Paragraph 4.3 of the report then detailed the Remuneration proposals for Civic Heads and Deputy Civic Heads, and Members supported the salaries identified here at Level 2 in terms of responsibility for these dignitaries. A former Mayor of the Authority added however, that the mayoral role should not include any commitment from their salary allowance to support functions and charities etc.

A Member in terms of a more general comment, felt that Members allowances should be set in-keeping with the size of the local authority, and that the administration in power at the time, should have a say in how allowances are allocated on this basis.

The Head of Democratic Services then proceeded to expand upon the remaining provisions of the report for the benefit of Members.

He finally then reiterated that he would take Members comments on this item into consideration, and include these in suitable a reply to the IRPW.

RESOLVED: That the Head of Democratic Services prepares a reply to be sent to the IRPW in respect of its draft Annual Report 2017-18, to include the views of Members.

106. **INITIAL OUTCOMES - POTENTIAL CANDIDATE EVENTS**

The Head of Democratic Services presented a report, the purpose of which, was to inform the Democratic Services Committee of the initial outcomes from the 'Potential Candidate' events held on 11 and 12 October 2016, for anyone considering standing as a Bridgend County Borough Councillor at the Local Government Elections in 2017.

He confirmed that the feedback on these sessions from those that had attended, had reflected that they had not only been worthwhile but also a success.

The Head of Democratic Services added that each event had lasted approximately 3 hours comprising 2 parts, the first of which outlining information about the role of a councillor and the functions of the Council. The second part then provided information regarding how an individual becomes a candidate at the election, as well as the processes for being elected.

Paragraphs 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4, then gave details of the events with regard to their promotion and publicity; location timings and venue and how the sessions were delivered, respectively.

Appendix 1 to the report gave a summary of the feedback provided at the events, whilst paragraph 4.5.1 of the report gave the events key outcomes.

RESOLVED: The Democratic Services Committee considered and noted the initial outcomes from the Potential Candidate sessions and the ongoing activities leading up to the Local Government Elections in 2017.

107. **URGENT ITEMS**

None

The meeting closed at 4.00 pm