

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE - THURSDAY, 2 NOVEMBER 2017

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOMS 2/3 - CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB ON THURSDAY, 2 NOVEMBER 2017 AT 4.00 PM

Present

Councillor RM James – Chairperson

S Aspey
SR Vidal

DG Howells
KJ Watts

B Sedgebeer
CA Webster

G Thomas

Apologies for Absence

SG Smith and E Venables

Officers:

Mark Galvin
Gary Jones

Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Head of Democratic Services

Invitees:

Invitees

115. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

116. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of a meeting of the Democratic Services Committee dated the 13 July 2017 were approved as a true and accurate record.

117. DRAFT REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES 2018/19

The Head of Democratic Services submitted a report, which advised the Democratic Services Committee of the draft Annual Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW), in respect of the level and range of remuneration the Authority must make available to its Members for the 2018/19 municipal year.

The report provided some background information, and of the Local Authorities (Allowances for Members) (Wales) Regulations 2007 provided for the establishment of the IRWP, and how the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 extended the responsibilities of the Panel and its powers (under Section 142) to decide payments to Members of local authorities.

The Head of Democratic Services then explained that representatives of the IRWP undertook visits to all principal Councils in 2017, to discuss the remuneration framework, and how it was implemented in each of the local authorities in Wales. He added that the 52 proposed determinations of the IRWP Annual Report 2018/19, were shown in Appendix 1 to the report and separated into appropriate sections for clarity of roles/suggested payment etc.

The Head of Democratic Services Officer then proceeded to outline proposals of BCBC in terms of how it wished to determine allowances for all Members, including those for senior salaries, the Executive, Chairs of Committees, opposition Group Leaders, maximum number of senior salaries and finally, Civic salaries. The remainder of the report outlined certain other information relating to local Members as contained in the IRWP's determinations for 2018/19, and the Head of Democratic Services gave a resume of each of these for the benefit of the Committee.

He then explained to Members the views from all Members of the Authority that he had received on the IRWP's determination, and these were generally as follows, together with views expressed by Committee Members themselves:-

1. General

The Labour and Plaid Cymru groups along with some of the independent members accepted the determinations of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales.

2. Visit from the Panel

This Council considers that the Panel's visit to each Local Authority provided an invaluable opportunity for a variety of individual Elected Members to discuss some of their issues relating to the remuneration directly with Panel Members. It was considered beneficial that this practice continue at least once in term of office.

3. Basic Salary

The Committee expressed its concerns that the increase in Basic Salary was in excess of the one percent public sector pay cap and treated Elected Members differently from Local Authority employees. It was understood that Elected Members could elect to forgo some of their salary in order to align their pay increase to the public sector pay cap but it was considered that the difference in salary increase sent the wrong message as the public sector were not in a position to receive a higher increase in salary and then subsequently choose to forgo some of their salary.

4. Job Sharing

The Committee considered that although job sharing may be beneficial to some individuals, the job sharing arrangements could create difficulties in terms of governance and accountability. If job sharing arrangements were shared during a week i.e. 2.5 days as a cabinet member and 2.5 days as a ward member, this would create confusion as to who was making the decisions and when. It was suggested that further details be provided to clarify which roles would be considered suitable for job sharing and how the job sharers would maintain effective governance and accountability.

5. Reimbursement of Care costs

The changes to the Reimbursement of Care costs were welcomed and the Committee considered that these changes were likely to encourage greater use of this facility. Committee Members also considered that any specialist care needs usually required a long term commitment from the Elected Member to the care provider which would not allow a great deal of flexibility. This would usually prevent any specific care needs being able to be provided at short notice resulting in the Elected Member being unable to fulfil their role effectively.

6. Supporting the work of Local Authority Elected Members

A variety of options were raised which could be explored to extend the existing support provided to Elected Members. The Committee determined that the Elected Members ICT Forum be re-established to review the support currently provided to all Elected Members and to review the effectiveness of ICT provision. It was anticipated that the review would be included as part the of budget consultation process which was currently

taking place. It was hoped that any outcomes from the review would be implemented at the start of the next financial year.

Following further debate of this item, Members of the Democratic Services Committee added the following comments and observations:-

General

- Reduce the number of Borough Councillors?
- Fewer senior salaries. 18 out of 54 Councillors is too many.
- Fewer Cabinet members?
- I have read the report of the IRP for Wales and have no comment to make other than I accept its recommendations.
- The Labour Group accepted the determinations of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales.

Basic Salary

- Members who have no income other than their councillor salary (especially younger members) – as with students attending University, perhaps means testing should be considered.
- Councillors should be paid as it is certainly far more demanding a role than new Members had ever imagined. It was hoped that most Councillors were not exercising their role as a local member just for the allowance.
- As there is a 5 year limit on the term of a Councillor until a further election, it was felt that very few would give up their “day job” to become a Councillor for just over £13,000 a year. Therefore, does it not attract bright, young, dynamic people into the role as it should do. Those that do become Councillors have to fulfil this role with their substantive employment and time management becomes an issue.

Senior Salary

- Too big a financial hike from Basic salary to Senior salary.

Supporting the work of Local Authority Elected Members

- Some members may not have access to the internet &/or an ability to print at home so the costs have to be found from their “pay” thereby decreasing the affordability of attending council meetings/carrying out councillor duties.

Reimbursement of Travel and Subsistence Costs when on Official Business

- If a member hasn't got use of their own transport it leads to the need to use public transport. If they live where there are no bus routes or indeed no buses then there is a need to travel by taxi.
- Reduce travel costs with more use made of conference calling and Skype/Facetime

Local Government Pension Scheme

- Pension scheme far too generous

Payments to Members of Community and Town Councils

- The £500 to Town Councillors (we as a Town Council have all opted to forego this payment) as for the £150 suggested for telephone and sundries. Hopefully no Town Councillor is taking advantage of this too generous a payment.

- RESOLVED:**
- (1) The Committee considered the draft Annual Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales in respect of the level and range of remuneration the Authority must make available to its Members for the 2018/19 municipal year, and provided the above comments as part of the Authority's response, to the Draft Annual Report 2018/19.
 - (2) That the following Committee Members be nominated to sit on the re-established Elected Members ICT Forum, and that three other nominations be awaited, with these nominations sought from all other political groups comprising the Council:-

Cllr Bridie Sedgebeer
Cllr Gary Thomas
Cllr Sadie Vidal

118. **ELECTED MEMBER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

The Head of Democratic Services submitted a report, in order that Members could consider the draft Elected Member Learning and Development Strategy attached at Appendix 1 to the report, and propose appropriate amendments to this and endorse its submission to Council for approval on 28 November 2017. This would go towards the Council obtaining WLGA Charter status for Member Support and Development

The report gave some background information, confirming that the Elected Member Learning and Development Strategy 2012-17 was approved by Council in 2013.

A desktop review of the Strategy had been undertaken recently to ensure that it was fit for purpose and updated where necessary to reflect a number of factors which had changed since the approval of the original Elected Member Learning and Development Strategy.

The next section of the report, gave Members information in respect of the following areas:-

- Digitalisation and e-learning
- Councillors elected in 2017
- Volume of Learning and Development Opportunities

The Head of Democratic Services then explained that the proposed Strategy was divided into 5 phases, and details of these were shown in paragraph 4.5 of the report.

The next part of the report then outlined Member Development processes that Councillors were required to become involved in, in order to develop their role, and these were classed as Essential, Recommended and Optional.

Paragraph 4.9 of the report then proposed greater use of e-learning facilities going forward, and methods by which these could play a significant part in the overall future Member Development programme.

A Member made the point that the Future Generations and Wellbeing Act 2015 needed in future to be closely considered and integrate with the work Members were undertaking as part of their role and responsibilities.

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE - THURSDAY, 2 NOVEMBER 2017

The Head of Democratic Services confirmed that this would be a key component in all future reports to Committees, and therefore would directly relate to the future decision making processes of the Council.

Members also encouraged in the future the role of mentoring of less experienced Councillors by the more experienced and established Members, and the importance of training in the current term of office for all Members of the Council.

RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (1) Considered and agreed the proposals contained in both the report and the Elected Member Learning and Development Strategy attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

Endorsed the Strategy for the period 2017-22 to Council for approval at its meeting scheduled for 29 November 2017.

119. REVIEW OF ELECTED MEMBER ROLE DESCRIPTIONS

The Head of Democratic Services submitted a report, the purpose of which, was to:

- Present the Elected Member Role Descriptions for the consideration of the Democratic Services Committee.
- Request that the Committee propose and agree any amendments that may be required to the Elected Member Role Descriptions
- Approve the submission of the agreed Member Role Descriptions to Council for approval at its meeting scheduled for 20 December 2017.

He referred to paragraph 4.1 of the report, and that the respective Member Role Descriptions had been developed from the model role descriptions produced by the WLGA and tailored to the requirements of the roles undertaken by Councillors within BCBC. He added that additional role descriptions were developed by the Officers in Bridgend, for the Member Mentor and the LA School Governor. These were all attached at Appendices 1 – 19 inclusive, to the report, whilst Appendix 20 detailed a generic role description for Outside Bodies representatives.

The next section of the report made reference to Individual Portfolio roles, whilst paragraph 4.3 of the report gave information with regard to the requirements of the WLGA Charter for Member Support and Development which outlined that members are supported with role descriptions, as were shown in paragraph 4.3.1 of the report. These would be used also as part of the particular Member's Personal Development Review (PDR).

In terms of the report's financial implications, it confirmed that the role descriptions for Elected Members would require translation at an approximate cost of £480, with all activities detailed in the report, being met from existing budget provision.

A Member requested that it may be useful if it was possible to monitor how many members of the public accessed the welsh section of the Council's website, in

relation to the information produced bilingually by the Democratic Services Section.

The Head of Democratic Services advised that he would link in with the Bridgend team at BCBC regarding this.

RESOLVED: That the Democratic Services Committee:

- (1) Considered, agreed and accepted all the various Member Role Descriptions as attached at Appendices to the main report.
- (2) Noted the Outside Bodies guidance as shown at Appendix 20 to the report.

Approved subject to 8.1.1 and 8.1.2 of the report, that the revised role descriptions be submitted to Council for approval on 20 December 2017

120. SERVICE AND PERFORMANCE UPDATES

The Head of Democratic Services presented a report, the purpose of which, was to update the Committee on the performance of services provided to Elected Members.

The report covered the undermentioned service areas, which the Head of Democratic Services expanded upon as well as picking out the salient points to share with Members, which included the percentage of Members attendance at these events:-

- Number Member Referrals (1 July – 30 September 2017);
- Member Development Induction/Programme activities (since the local Elections);
- Member Workshops;
- Pre-Council Briefings;

The report confirmed that individual ICT training had also been provided to those Members that had requested this.

Attached to the report at Appendix 1, was a draft Member Development Programme. This identified the Member Development sessions scheduled for delivery this year.

Paragraph 4.2.6 of the report then detailed topics planned for inclusion in the Member Development Programme, whilst paragraph 4.2.7 listed items for possible consideration for inclusion in the Member Development Programme.

In respect of the former, Members felt that the item with regard to Member Mentoring Training should be brought forward from April 2018 to next month or early 2018.

In relation to the items suggested for the Member Development Programme, Committee was of the opinion that the three sessions relating to Autism could be merged into one larger session.

The Head of Democratic Services advised that Members could prioritise these in terms of them being scheduled in the coming months, as soon as they received further information on the topics, as well as deciding what items should be rolled over to April 2018 – March 2019. A Member thought that it would be beneficial if an item on an

'Introduction to Welfare Benefits' could be added to the future Member Development Programme, and Members agreed to this.

The Head of Democratic Services added that some Member training/development sessions could be included as part of "Round Robin" events.

The next part of the report included suggested e:learning topics for inclusion in the Member Development Programme, as well as any such topics that may be considered suitable on the Learning and Development or AWA website.

Paragraph 4.2.11 of the report then contained topics planned for up and coming pre-Council briefings, and Members considered that MP's should be lobbied on the item in respect of Universal Credit, as this was an extremely important topic that would affect constituents considerably. A Member was of the opinion that an item should be added to this schedule on the subject of Valleys 2 Coast, in order that the new Chief Executive of this organisation could be invited and be introduced to Members.

Paragraph 4.2.13 of the report then highlighted areas of Planning where there would be training for Development Control Committee Members, though it was pointed out, that all Members could attend these training sessions should they so wish.

The next section of the report gave details regarding the webcasting of Committee meetings, and the Head of Democratic Services confirmed that it was planned that around 10 Committee meetings per year be webcast.

The remainder of the report gave information on the subjects of I-Call and Internal Audit – New Member Support.

RESOLVED: That the Democratic Service Committee accepted and noted the report, subject to its comments and observations detailed above.

121. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME (FWP)

The Head of Democratic Services submitted a report, in order to inform the Democratic Services Committee of the proposed items that will be considered at its subsequent meetings.

The proposed items for inclusion as part of the FWP were detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.

Paragraph 4.5 of the report showed in Table format, provisional timescales which were expected to be met for items contained therein, which were required to be met in order to achieve the submission by the Authority for the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) (Standard) Charter in 2018.

It was considered by Members that the item of 'Identifying and training potential Elected Member Mentors,' which was required to be achieved by 30 April 2018 in order to meet Charter status, should be considered at an extra meeting of the Committee that Members thought should be convened in January 2018, in order that all business scheduled for the Committee in the current Programme of Meetings cycle until May 2018, could be adequately accommodated and processed, particularly in order for the Committee to review processes for the Personal Development Reviews (PDRs), Annual Reports, together with the plans for Member Mentoring. Members felt that this meeting should be added to the current cycle on or around January 2018.

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE - THURSDAY, 2 NOVEMBER 2017

RESOLVED: (1) That the Democratic Services Committee considered the proposed FWP attached as an Appendix to the report.

That the Members recommend to Council that a further meeting of the Committee be convened sometime in January 2018, in order to consider any extra items of business along the lines detailed in the report and debated at the meeting.

122. URGENT ITEMS

None.

The meeting closed at 6.10 pm