

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD
REMOТЕLY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON THURSDAY, 20 OCTOBER 2022 AT 10:00

Present

Councillor T Thomas – Chairperson

P Ford RM Granville D T Harrison M L Hughes
RM James R J Smith G Walter

Apologies for Absence

S Aspey, I M Spiller and E D Winstanley

Officers:

Rachel Keepins Democratic Services Manager

6. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of a meeting of the Democratic Services Committee held on the 07/07/2022 were approved as a true and accurate record.

8. MEMBER INDUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

The Democratic Services Manager delivered the report to the committee. The Chairperson stated that he had requested feedback from his group in relation to the induction period, he shared that Members had advised him that they had found the marketplace experience useful.

The fluctuating attendance of members to member development sessions was raised with the chairperson suggested re-looking at the timings that training is conducted at and proposed conducting a survey. The DSM confirmed a survey on Member Development was already scheduled.

A member of the committee gave feedback about the Market Place event and made suggestions for improvement for such events and training in the future. The manner in which training is conducted with suggestions for improvement was discussed between the Democratic Services Manager and other members.

The Democratic Services Manager (DSM) stated that in relation to the comments made by Members regarding the forward work programme, there had been a mention of Members having a report on the Councillor Portal. The data was being chased but was unavailable at this time. The portal team through the Customer Services team and ICT were having issues with providing the data.

The DSM assured Members that it was being chased and the Head of Partnership Services had provided assurances that they would look to make the report available in time for the next meeting in February 2023.

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The DSM stated that there was a proposal in one of the meetings that some Members may have attended, to have a working group of members to look at the portal and test the various stages as it was still in development and there was a need for monitoring. She mentioned that she had suggested to the Head of Partnership Services and the Group Manager – Legal and Democratic Services that the working group could be represented by members of the Democratic Services Committee. There was then a discussion between members on the best course of action to progress this proposal.

RESOLVED : The committee noted the report and appendices.

The committee agreed to identify additional Member Development topics to be included and prioritised in the overall development plan.

The Committee requested that:

- The Member survey seek views on the timing of these Member Development sessions as well as the appropriateness of training thus far, accessibility and any potential gaps;
- A Marketplace event would be useful sooner after future elections;
- Consideration be given to various training techniques and methods to encourage Member involvement;
- Chairs be considered for all training to ensure structure to the session and keep Members on track;
- The DSM manager explore whether there is a way to monitor when recordings of training sessions have been viewed for those who may not be able to attend the actual session.

9. INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

The Democratic Services Manager presented the report and summarised the points for the committee.

The Chairperson and other members discussed their concerns about the contents of the report, particularly in relation to the proposed increase in pay for Members and the impression this might leave with their constituents in light of the cost of living crisis.

RESOLVED :

- The Committee noted the report and appendices.
- The Committee agreed to provide the following response in respect of the IRPW Draft Annual Report 2023-2024. to the IRPW and WLGA to be submitted by the 1st December 2022:

‘The Committee recognise that given the cost-of-living crisis and the undeniable difficulties that many people in the County Borough are experiencing at the moment and likely to in the near future, it appears somewhat inappropriate to have pay rises for Elected Members for 2023-2024. However, it is also accepted that personal circumstances of Members need to be considered and therefore it should be a personal matter for Members to determine themselves whether or not they accept the pay rise or make the choice to opt-out.’

10. URGENT ITEMS

None Mentioned

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The meeting closed at 10:58