

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOMS 2/3, CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB ON THURSDAY, 26 MAY 2016 AT 2.00 PM

Present

Councillor JH Tildesley MBE – Chairperson

P James
E Venables

RC Jones

M Reeves

G Thomas

Officers:

Mark Galvin
Gary Jones

Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Head of Democratic Services

95. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor DK Edwards

96. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None

97. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of a meeting of the Democratic Services Committee dated 5 November 2015 be approved as a true and accurate record, subject to reference to the Members salary of £29,600 in Minute 92, bullet point 4, being amended to read £26,100.

98. POTENTIAL CANDIDATE EVENT

The Head of Democratic Services presented a report, the purpose of which, was to seek the views of Members regarding the provisional plans to provide a 'Potential Candidate' event for any person interested in standing as a Bridgend County Borough Councillor at the Local Government Elections in 2017.

He confirmed that with the Local Government Elections in May 2017, this year's Local Democracy Week was scheduled for 10 – 16 October 2016, which would be an appropriate time to begin preparations for the elections, and to actively involve the electorate in the democratic process.

As the report advised, a similar event was held in 2011 where a total of 38 potential candidates attended the event, with the feedback to this having been very positive.

The Head of Democratic Services explained that it was the intention of BCBC to hold Potential Candidate awareness sessions during the above week in October, which anyone within Bridgend County Borough could attend to find out more about becoming a Councillor, and paragraph 4.1.3 of the report explained the topics that will be covered as part of these sessions.

The remainder of the report, explained how the sessions would be delivered; how it was intended to promote and publicise them, together with details of where and when they would be held.

Though the report outlined certain financial implications regarding the sessions, the Head of Democratic Services confirmed that the events would cost approximately £5k and be met from the Member Development budget.

The Head of Democratic Services advised that he had provisionally agreed with all local authorities in Wales to undertake similar activities simultaneously during Local Democracy Week in October, in a bid to encourage individuals to stand for election.

RESOLVED: That the Committee agreed with the provisions contained in the report, regarding proposals for Potential Candidate event(s) planned to take place in Local Democracy Week 2016, together with the verbal submissions given by the Head of Democratic Services at the meeting.

99. **REVIEW OF THE ELECTED MEMBER LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND THE ELECTED MEMBER INDUCTION PROGRAMME**

The Corporate Director – Operational and Partnership Services submitted a report, in order to review the Elected Member Learning and Development Strategy attached at Appendix 1, and consider the Welsh Language Government Association (WLGA) Model:- Local Authority Councillor Year-Long Induction Programme, attached at Appendix 2 to the report.

The Head of Democratic Services confirmed that the Strategy was coming towards the end of its effective life, and in preparation for the 2017 Local Government Elections and the subsequent induction of newly elected Members, a review of the Strategy and its effectiveness was required.

Paragraph 4.2 outlined the expectations and outcomes of the revised Strategy in bullet point format, and the Head of Democratic Services asked Committee if they felt that these were addressed in the Strategy and Members confirmed that they were.

A Member considered that that the Expectations as detailed in the report, should be added to, i.e. Members would be expected to attend any mandatory training, and that this should be listed in the Strategy.

A Member followed up, by asking if all Councillors were clear that they had to attend mandatory training as part of the Member Induction Programme. The Head of Democratic Services confirmed that this would be made clear in the Learning and Development Strategy.

A Member felt that Code of Conduct ethics should be mandatory training for all local authority Councillors, as well as possibly for Town/Community Councillors, if it wasn't already. She added also, that this should be a sit down session rather than marketplace training.

A Member referred to Appendix 2 of the report, and the training schedule illustrated there, and asked what was meant by the term 'market place'.

The Head of Democratic Services confirmed that this was a type of "Round Robin" training event(s), with added stalls that gave information upon key Council services.

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE - THURSDAY, 26 MAY 2016

A Member stated that the item entitled Constitutional matters including meeting participation, should be mandatory in terms of a training requirement, and also that training on the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act, and the subject of Corporate Parenting, should be a priority.

A Member further added, that training in respect of Overview and Scrutiny and Planning matters should be given as soon as possible in the new administration. He also advised, that BCBC had carried out a very positive Member Induction training process after the last local government elections, as well as playing a similar effective support role to new Members who had been elected to the Authority as a result of by-elections during the course of this term of office.

The Head of Democratic Services confirmed that certain material could, if considered appropriate in the next term of office, be delivered through e:learning, particularly for those Councillors elected who worked full-time.

RESOLVED: That the Democratic Services Committee reviewed the Elected Member Learning and Development Strategy attached at Appendix 1 to the report, as well as considering the WLGA Model:- Local Authority Councillor Year-Long Induction Programme attached at Appendix 2 to the report.

100. URGENT ITEMS

None

The meeting closed at 4.20 pm