

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE - WEDNESDAY, 17 JANUARY 2018

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOMS 2/3 - CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB ON WEDNESDAY, 17 JANUARY 2018 AT 16:00

Present

Councillor RM James – Chairperson

S Aspey
G Thomas

DG Howells
SR Vidal

B Sedgebeer
KJ Watts

SG Smith
CA Webster

Apologies for Absence

E Venables

Officers:

Mark Galvin
Gary Jones

Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Head of Democratic Services

123. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor E Venables.

124. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

125. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of a meeting dated 2 November 2017 be approved as a true and accurate record.

126. REVIEW OF ELECTED MEMBER ANNUAL REPORTS PROCESS

The Head of Democratic Services Committee presented a report, requesting that the Committee:

- Considers proposals to update the Annual Reports for Elected Members and the associated reporting process;
- Determines that the agreed process be submitted to Council for approval; and
- Approves the designation of training for Annual Reports as 'Recommended for all Members.'

He explained that the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, requires every local authority in Wales to make arrangements for all of their Elected Members to make and publish an Annual Report about their activities.

He further explained that Bridgend was the leading Authority in Wales regarding the development and introduction of Annual Reports.

The Head of Democratic Services then advised, that the existing process regarding the above, had been reviewed to reflect changes to the Elected Member information currently available on the BCBC website, the implementation of the Welsh Language

Standards, and to minimise the resources necessary to create, administer and publish Elected Member Annual reports bilingually.

He proceeded by advising that Democratic Services section would provide the report template as a word document (Appendix 1 to the report referred), to each Elected Member in April each year.

He further confirmed that those Elected Members who wished to provide an Annual Report, can then complete the initial draft of their report for the period 1 May of the previous year, until 30 April of the current year. He added that Elected Members could use the revised guidance (at Appendix 2 of the report), and the sample report (Appendix 3) to complete their reports. Any completed draft reports would be requested to be returned to Democratic Services by 31 May each year.

Any approved reports would be translated, and both the English and Welsh versions would be linked on the Elected Members profile page on the BCBC website by 1 September each year.

The Head of Democratic Services stressed that it was optional for Members to complete an Annual Report, as opposed to being mandatory. He added however, that details of the number of Elected Members publishing their Annual Reports would be provided to the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales.

The Head of Democratic Services concluded by outlining training issues regarding the Annual Report submission process, and the report's financial implications.

A Member asked what the information included in an Annual Report was used for.

The Head of Democratic Services advised that the purpose of completing an Annual Report, assisted the public in understanding better the role of a Councillor and what this entailed. Completion of these also gave increased support to the WLGA Charter for Member Support and Development.

A Member suggested that the Committee receives feedback in May coming, as to how many Members had completed Annual Reports, and Committee agreed with this suggestion.

RESOLVED: That the Committee:

- (1) Considered the amendments to the Annual Report process and the proposed schedule of publication for Annual Reports for 2017/18.
- (2) Noted that the Annual Report process would be submitted for approval to Council on 28 March 2018.

127. **REVIEW OF THE PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT REVIEW (PDR) PROCESS**

The Head of Democratic Services submitted a report, in order to present the Committee with proposals for:

- (1) A Personal Development Review (PDR) process that will be made available to all Elected Members;
- (2) The Personal Development Review process to be recommended to Council for approval at its meeting on 28 March 2018.

He reminded Members of the wide range of roles and responsibilities which they were expected to undertake, adding the PDR process would assist Elected Members to identify any support that may be required to fulfil their role effectively. Attaining an appropriate level of knowledge, skills and experience identified as part of the PDR process, would enable them to support also each of the Corporate Priorities of the Council, as detailed in paragraph 2 of the report.

The report then provided some background information, confirming that at its meeting on 6 September 2017, Council approved that a submission be made to the WLGA for the Charter for Member Support and Development. This report identified that one of the criteria for achieving the Charter, was the need to provide a PDR process which could be offered to all Members, and which must be undertaken by all Senior Salary holders. It was optional however, for other Members.

In terms of PDR documents, 3 PDR interview template options were considered during the last administration, and subsequently reviewed and updated accordingly. These were a Comprehensive PDR Document (Appendix 1 to the report); an Intermediate PDR Document (Appendix 2), and a basic PDR Document (Appendix 3).

The report gave further details as to what extent of information was required to be inserted in each of these documents. It outlined in the process that would be required to be undertaken in order to produce PDR's. Appropriate training would also be required in order for Members, and in particular new Members, prior to them completing PDR's.

It was also proposed that reviewers of PDR's be determined by each political group that comprises the Council.

The report concluded by confirming the timescales that were required, in order to meet the deadlines for the submission for the WLGA Charter; the approval of the PDR process, its implementation, and the successful completion of PDR's by Senior Salary holders (i.e. which was mandatory).

The Head of Democratic Services asked Members which of the 3 PDR interview template options they preferred to put forward as an agreed template.

Members felt that as it was a new term of office, and due to the fact that there were a number of new Members, the best option of the PDR template options, may be the most basic one to complete. This process could then be reviewed in 12 months.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee:

- (1) Selected the standard Personal Development Review Document attached at Appendix 3 to the report, as a vehicle for progressing the PDR process in BCBC.
- (2) Approved the proposed activities and timescale as shown at paragraph 4.5.1 of the report.
- (3) Agree that a review of the suitability of standard Personal Development Review Document be taken following the completion of the process in 2018.

128. THE MEMBER MENTORING PROCESS

The Head of Democratic Services presented a report, the purpose of which, was to inform the Committee of the Member Mentoring process, and the progress that has been made to identify and train Member Mentors.

By way of background, the Head of Democratic Services advised that mentoring was a voluntary and confidential, one to one relationship, in which an individual uses a more experienced or more senior person as a sounding board for guidance.

He added that prior to the 2012 Local Government Elections, the Authority established a Member Mentoring process, whereby approximately 20 Member Mentors were trained in advance of these Elections.

Following the 2017 Local Government Elections, Council determined to agree to submit an application to the WLGA for the Charter for Member Support and Development. Part of the criteria for achieving the Charter, included the need to provide a Member Mentoring process, which could be offered to all Members.

The above resulted in a review of the process and role of Member Mentors, in order to ensure this was fit for purpose. This was carried out, and the role description for a Member Mentor (Appendix 1 to the report), was approved by Council on 20 December 2017.

The next section of the report explained more about the process regarding Member Mentoring, which if successfully carried out, would allow mentees to “grow” in their role in further development of their skills, knowledge, understanding and behaviour.

The report identified those Councillors who had shown an interest in being a Member Mentor on a political group by group basis. It was noted at the meeting that Councillors Voisey and Giffard, even though they were omitted from this list, should also be included in the table, and this was acknowledged by the Head of Democratic Services.

The Head of Democratic Services concluded his report, by confirming that training would be provided by the WLGA on 1 February 2018 at 4.00pm, and this would be based on the WLGA Guidance for Member Mentors, as detailed at Appendix 2 to the report.

Finally, he advised that he hoped more Members would come forward in due course, to carry out the role of member Mentoring.

RESOLVED: That Members noted the planned process for the use of Member Mentors.

129. DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Head of Democratic Services submitted a report, which informed the Committee of the proposed items to be considered at its subsequent meetings as part of a rolling Forward Work Programme (FWP), attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

Members felt that a more in-depth report be awaited with regard to a possible new system being put in place to deal with Member Referrals, but agreed that this could be considered as part of the regular report entitled Service Updates. Members at a recent Overview and Scrutiny Committee, had asked for more data analysis to be provided in future from the Member Referral System, and the current system did not have sufficient facility to provide this analysis. The Head of Democratic Services confirmed that whilst this could be considered, he was not confident in there being introduced within the

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immediate future such a new system, due to the fact that there was little budget available to accommodate this request, ie through developing the appropriate software for this purpose. He would however look into this request he added, and provide cost implications to Members on the possibility of the introduction of a more expansive and developed system as part of the Service Update report to the next scheduled meeting.

The remainder of the items listed on the FWP would be prioritised for submission to future meetings, at the March meeting it was concluded.

The item entitled Update on Annual Reports and PDR would now be taken off the FWP, due to what had been agreed by Members earlier as part of today's agenda.

RESOLVED: That Committee considered the proposed Forward Work Programme, subject to the changes as outlined above.

130. URGENT ITEMS

None.

The meeting closed at 17:10