

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE - THURSDAY, 25 OCTOBER 2018

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOMS 2/3, CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB ON THURSDAY, 25 OCTOBER 2018 AT 16:00

Present

Councillor E Venables – Chairperson

S Aspey
SR Vidal

RM James
A Williams

SG Smith

G Thomas

Apologies for Absence

DG Howells and KL Rowlands

Officers:

Mark Galvin
Michael Pitman
Andrew Rees

Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Business & Administrative Apprentice
Senior Democratic Services Officer – Committees

145. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

All Members of the Committee declared a personal interest in agenda item 5 as they are all in receipt of salaries which are determined by the Independent Remuneration Panel.

146. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of a meeting of the Democratic Services Committee dated 21/06/2018 be approved as a true and accurate record.

147. DESIGNATION OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report to the Democratic Services Committee advising the process followed in the appointment of the Head of Democratic Services.

The Monitoring Officer reported that Section 8 (1) of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 requires the Authority to designate one of its officers to discharge the democratic services functions in Section 9 of the Measure and sought designation for the position as the Council's Head of Democratic Services.

The Senior Democratic Services Officer informed the Committee that the previous Head of Democratic Services had recently resigned from the post.

An interim appointment to the post of Head of Democratic Services would need to be made in order to satisfy the statutory requirements and it was proposed that the Principal Lawyer be designated as the Interim Head of Democratic Services with immediate effect.

RESOLVED: That the Democratic Services Committee designated the Authority's Principal Lawyer as the interim Head of Democratic Services to discharge the democratic services functions of the Council with immediate effect.

148. DRAFT REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES 2019/2020

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The Senior Democratic Services Officer presented the report which advised Members of 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 2019/20 municipal year.

He outlined the salary increases for Members on Basic Salary, Senior Salary and Civic Salary respectively.

He advised that the Basic Salary is currently £13,600 and the IRP proposed to increase this by 1.97%, to £13,868. He stated that the Council is entitled to pay 18 senior salaries but has determined to pay 15 senior salaries.

The IRP have proposed an increase for Leaders and members of the Executive due to the significant level of responsibility required. The present and proposed Senior Salaries are listed below.

Senior Salaries (inclusive of basic salary)	Current Salary		Proposed Salary	
Leader	£	48,300	£	49,100
Deputy Leader	£	33,800	£	34,600
Executive Members	£	29,300	£	30,100
Committee Chairs (if remunerated)	£	22,300	£	22,568
Leader of largest opposition group	£	22,300	£	22,568
Leader of other political groups	£	17,300	£	17,568

The IRP propose that the current 3 bands for the payment of Civic Salaries be removed and payments will be on one band and the increase for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor would be £22,568 and £17,568 respectively.

The Panel has determined that in relation to Support for Members each authority, through its Democratic Services Committee, must ensure that all its elected members are given as much support as is necessary to enable them to fulfil their duties effectively. All elected members should be provided with adequate telephone, email and internet facilities giving electronic access to appropriate information.

Such support should be without cost to the individual member. Deductions must not be made from members' salaries by the respective authority as a contribution towards the cost of support which the authority has decided necessary for the effectiveness and or efficiency of members.

The Panel has determined in relation to Co-opted Members that each authority, through its Democratic Services committee or other appropriate committee, must ensure that all voting co-opted members are given as much support as is necessary to enable them to fulfil their duties effectively. Such support should be without cost to the individual member.

There have been no changes to Travel and Subsistence, Local Government Pension Scheme or Family Absence.

The Senior Democratic Services Officer informed the Committee that he and the Chair had earlier that day attended a consultation meeting with the IRP in Swansea. The Senior Democratic Services Officer requested comments from the Committee on the proposals made by the IRP. The Committee considered that it needed to consider the perception of the public and the declining spiral of budgets when taking salary increases.

The Committee requested that it be provided with details of the overall increase in Members' salaries including Senior Salary holders.

RESOLVED: That the Democratic Services Committee:

- (1) noted the contents of the report and considered the recommendations.
- (2) write to the IRP whilst endorsing the determinations it would make, the IRP needs to bear in mind the budgetary pressures faced by local authorities when setting salary levels as each Council across Wales have very difficult budgetary decisions to make. The Committee endorses the independence of the IRP but urges restraint in the conclusions it makes in determining pay awards as the Council needs to demonstrate to the public that it is mindful of budgetary constraints in the delivery of public services.

149. **MEMBER REFERRALS**

The Senior Democratic Services Officer presented the report which updated members on the current situation/proposal on the review of the Member Referrals Process. He also updated Members on the performance of Member Referrals for quarter 1 and quarter 2 of the financial year 2017-19.

The Senior Democratic Services Officer reported that an officer working group had been established to take forward a review of the Council's Member Referral Process. The working group is chaired by the Corporate Director of Communities. It was proposed that Democratic Services Committee nominate three Councillors to provide the officer working group with their input in shaping the future Member Referrals Process.

He outlined the performance from quarter 1 relating to ongoing and completed referrals of the different directorates, noting that the performance was over 93% of the total referrals made. Performance in quarter 2 was 71.77%, the decline in performance was likely to be attributable to staffing resources over the summer period.

- RESOLVED:**
- (1) That the Democratic Services Committee nominated Cllr Elaine Venables, Cllr Malcom James and Cllr Stephen Smith to provide the officer working group with their input in shaping the Member Referrals process.
 - (2) Noted the Directorate and Council Performance on Member Referrals for quarters 1 and 2.
 - (3) That Officers should manage the expectations of Councillors and keep them updated on the progress of referrals.

150. **MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

The Senior Democratic Services Officer reported on an update on the delivery of the Council's Member training and development programme and related activity.

He outlined the Member Training and Development sessions, Development Control Committee Training Sessions and Pre Council briefing sessions that have been provided since 1st April 2018.

He informed the Committee that the Monitoring Officer would be delivering Code of Conduct Training primarily for Town and Community Councillors on 29th October, however all Members were welcome to attend as a refresher if they wished.

He outlined the scheduled Pre Council Briefings:

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- 24th October: Budget Consultation Exercise with Councillors
- 21st November: Young Carers
- 19th December: Anti-Slavery and Human Trafficking
- 23rd January: Rural Development Plan
- 20th February: Rota Visiting

He outlined the future schedule of Development Control Committee training sessions:

- 22nd November: Section 215 notices and procedures
- 3rd January: End of Year Performance report.
- 14th February: Sustainable Drainage Systems and SuDS Approving Bodies – the New System
- 28th March: Education contributions and surplus spaces in 21st Century Schools

He also outlined the future proposed Member Training and Development Sessions /Pre Council Briefings due to be scheduled:

- Elective Home Education
- Using Bridgemaps
- Additional Learning Needs and Autism Awareness
- Scrutiny Training – Various
- Dementia Friends Repeat Session
- Cwm Taf Regional/Partnership Working

He then detailed the courses provided since the start of the electoral term and the number of Members who have completed each of these courses. He explained that only 20 Members have accessed e-learning modules since the start of the electoral term and asked the committee how Members could be encouraged to make greater use of the available e-learning facilities.

Members of the Committee emphasised the importance of the e-learning modules as they are provided as mandatory for Councillors but there is no legal obligation to do them. The Committee considered that some Councillors had difficulty in logging on to the system in order to carry out training. The Senior Democratic Services Officer explained that the logon ID is the Members' payroll number.

He also informed the Committee that Members are all welcome to the Development Control training sessions if they wish and that they did not need to be a member of the Committee to attend the sessions.

The Committee requested that an explanation be given about the types of training and what they entail so that Councillors could have a clearer idea on whether they want to attend.

The Senior Democratic Services Officer asked the committee if there were any other comments they wanted to make about training sessions.

The Committee requested that Bridgemaps training be progressed as soon as possible as there have been many occasions where it would have been useful and saved a lot of time on referrals. The Senior Democratic Services Officer explained that he was to meet with the ICT Department to discuss the ideas and process of training Councillors and will keep them updated on further developments. He asked whether the Committee wanted the training session to be in the form of a Pre Council Briefing or Member Development

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Training session, the Committee requested that a Member Development Training session would be more beneficial.

The Senior Democratic Services Officer asked if there were any changes or additions they would like to make to the proposed schedule. Members agreed that they would like more comprehensive training on GDPR as they felt their knowledge on this could be improved.

The Senior Democratic Services Officer gave an update on Dementia Awareness Training as this was bought up in the previous Democratic Services Committee meeting. He explained that the trainer was currently unavailable and that another session would be organised for Members at a later date.

RESOLVED: That the Democratic Services Committee:

- (1) Noted the future Pre Council Briefings listed in paragraph 4.5.1 in the report and should Members have any ideas for Pre Council Briefings they should contact the Democratic Services Team.
- (2) Noted the future Member Development listed in paragraph 4.7.1 in the report and should Members have any ideas for Member Development training sessions they should contact the Democratic Services Team.
- (3) That Members be requested to complete the mandatory E Learning modules listed in paragraph 4.8.2 of the report.

151. **WEBCASTING OF COUNCIL, CABINET AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

The Senior Democratic Services Officer presented a report which updated the Committee on arrangements for the webcasting of Council, Cabinet and Committee meetings.

He informed the Committee that the Council had procured and introduced an innovative webcasting service that was implemented in 2017/18. This service was re-procured for 2018/19 and the same provider was successful. As part of the process, a Dual Language Facility was also procured, which was installed in August 2018.

The Senior Democratic Services Officer explained that this was implemented so that the Council could provide a Welsh language service in the event of a legislative requirement to webcast in both English and Welsh.

He explained the statistics for webcasting in 2017/18, and also the figures to date for 2018/19. These are detailed below with some additions as these figures were not available at the time of writing the report.

	Date	Meeting Name	Live Views	On Demand Views	Total Views
1	30-Aug-18	Development Control Committee	38	51	99
2	17-Sep-18	Scrutiny Subject Committee 3	11	142	153
3	16-Oct-18	Scrutiny Subject Committee 1	0	42	42
4	18-Oct-18	Scrutiny Subject Committee 2	22	47	69
		Average Views	17.75	70.5	90.75
		Total Views	71	282	363

Members raised their concerns about the numbers of views and that they believe this needs to be addressed.

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The Senior Democratic Services Officer explained that the Democratic Services team have been working with the Communications Team to publicise the meetings that have been webcast recently on the Council's Twitter and Facebook pages. Both the Democratic Services and Communications Teams are looking to continue this as a regular method of engaging with the public as well as looking for other ways of heightening interest. The Senior Democratic Services Officer also explained to the Committee that he was exploring with the Communications Team and the Council's Webcasting and Committee Management system providers on creating additional links on the Council's website to increase the visibility of webcasting.

The Committee considered that the current webcasting situation would need to be reviewed in the future if the overall views did not improve. The Committee also considered there was a need to engage better with the public and make webcasting more visible to the public to encourage greater viewing. The Committee also considered the role members have in engaging with their constituents via social media platforms on the webcasting of meetings.

The following meetings are proposed for webcasting:

- Development control committee – 22nd November 2018
- Cabinet – 18th December 2018
- Scrutiny Subject Committee 3 – 24th January 2019 (Community Asset Transfer)
- Scrutiny Subject Committee – Review of Fostering (to be scheduled)
- Scrutiny Subject Committee – Education Outcomes (to be scheduled)
- Scrutiny Subject Committee – Child Adolescent Mental Health Services (to be scheduled)
- Council – date TBC

RESOLVED: That the Democratic Services Committee:

- (1) Noted the update on arrangements for the webcasting of Council, Cabinet and Committee meetings.
- (2) Noted the meetings scheduled above for future webcasting.

152. URGENT ITEMS

None.

The meeting closed at 6.00pm