

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE - THURSDAY, 6 JUNE 2019

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB ON THURSDAY, 6 JUNE 2019 AT 10:00

Present

Councillor E Venables – Chairperson

DG Howells
G Thomas

RM James
A Williams

B Sedgebeer

SG Smith

Apologies for Absence

S Aspey, RM Granville, KL Rowlands and SR Vidal

Officers:

Michael Pitman
Andrew Rees

Business & Administrative Apprentice
Democratic Services Manager

162. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None

163. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of a meeting of the Democratic Services Committee of the 14/03/2019 be approved as a true and accurate record subject to an amendment to minute number 158 - Timings of Meetings Surveys;

- (1) that a further consultation be undertaken with all Members being requested to express a preference for morning, afternoon and evening meetings, including selecting the days of the week on a committee by committee basis for all meetings of the Council;
- (2) That in the event of a preference for meetings to be held in the evening, consultation take place with the Trade Unions, as it would involve changes to the contractual terms and conditions of Officers.

164. MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION

The Democratic Services Manager presented a report which informed the Democratic Services Committee of a request for a review of elements of the Consultation and a proposal to establish a Working Group of Members of this Committee to assist with the review.

He explained that the Monitoring Officer had received a request from an Elected Member for a review of the Constitution. The following proposals had been indicated:

- (1) The time period for questions and motions be re-instated at 5 days, now that suitable resources are in place to allow timely translation to Welsh;
- (2) That following the presentations and announcements by Cabinet members, the Leader, and Chief Executive, members be allowed to ask non tabled questions for a period of 15 minutes;

- (3) That the three largest opposition groups, be given 3 minutes (taken from Development Control Committee 3-minute rule) to make announcements or presentations to Council;
- (4) The timing of Council meetings.

The Democratic Services Manager explained that it was further proposed that the Council's Call-In procedure was reviewed to ensure it was working effectively within the current Scrutiny Structure and that the review of the Constitution would be the optimum time to also review the Call-In Procedure.

He explained that it was recommended that the Committee established a working group to review elements of the constitution with the outcome of the review being reported back to the committee and subsequently to the Monitoring Officer for consideration.

A Member asked in relation to 4.1 (2) if the period of 15 minutes given would be for the whole Committee or per Member. The Democratic Services Manager confirmed that the 15 minutes would be in total for the whole of Council and not individual Members.

A Member asked if it would be possible to have a Cabinet Member on the Working Group, as it would provide the group with more perspective on a wider range of issues.

RESOLVED: That the Democratic Services Committee:

- (1) Established a working group to look at the various components of the existing Constitution which comprised of the Chairperson, a potential Cabinet Member, and the 5 Members listed below;

Cllr G Thomas
Cllr G Howells
Cllr B Sedgebeer
Cllr RM James
Cllr Alex Williams

- (2) Note that the findings of the working group would be reported back to the committee with eventual consideration by the Monitoring Officer and Council.

165. **MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

The Democratic Services Manager presented a report which provide the Committee with an update on the delivery of the Council's Member Training and Development Programme and related activity.

He explained that the Committee had the following functions with support from the Head of Democratic Services as necessary:

1. Review the adequacy of provision by the Authority of staff, accommodation and other resources to discharge Democratic Services functions,
2. Make reports and recommendations to the authority in relation to such provision.

The Democratic Services Manager provided Members with the training and development sessions that had been given since 30 April 2018 until 2 May 2019. He also explained to Members the Pre Council Briefing and Development Control Committee Training Sessions that had been provided since the last Democratic Services Committee held on 14 March 2019.

The Democratic Services Manager explained of a further planned training session on Chairing Skills session. The Committee considered that this would be a worthwhile topic.

The Democratic Services Manager asked Members to provide any training sessions that they believed would be beneficial to them.

A Member asked if training could be provided on the Welfare and Benefits Systems. This would provide all Members with more insight to be able to direct their constituents to the right places. He asked if it were possible for it to be an E-Learning Module which could give a brief overview of the basics.

The Democratic Services Manager explained that this was something that could be provided as a Member Development session or as a Pre-Council Briefing.

A Member asked if clear information could be given during this training on what a Councillor can or cannot do/say. The training should be more about signposting their constituents rather than giving advice to them.

A Member asked if training could be provided on having difficult conversations with the public so that they could be better equipped to deal with aggressive situations and sensitive situations etc. The Democratic Services Manager explained that this could be provided, as there was already training available to Officers for this. He explained that he would contact HR and see if this training could be tailored to Members.

The Democratic Services Manager said that in addition to this he would be happy to provide a report to the next committee on Lone Working which could go hand in hand with this topic.

A Member asked if further instructions or training could be provided on how to Log on and use the E-Learning system as many Members were experiencing difficulty in accessing the E-Learning modules. The Democratic Services Manager stated that he would email all Members encouraging them to complete the E-learning modules and could provide members with the necessary log on information.

A Member asked if training could be provided on the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) as many Members were in receipt of it but did not know many of the details. The Democratic Services Manager said that he would see if training could be put on for all Members.

RESOLVED: That the Democratic Services Committee:

- (1) noted the contents of the report,
- (2) Identified further topics for Member Development on the Welfare and Benefits System; Dealing with Difficult Conversations and Chairing Skills with details on this to be provided at a later date

166. DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Democratic Services Manager presented a report which informed the Democratic Services Committee of the proposed items that would be considered at its subsequent meetings. The proposed items for inclusion on the Forward Work Programme were appended to the report.

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He asked Members if the meeting scheduled in October could be bought forward so that the review of the Constitution could be bought to this Committee before going to Council in October. Members considered that this would be beneficial.

A Member asked in relation to the referral system if there was a way that Councillors could manage their own case work as the current system did not allow for this.

The Chairperson advised that this could be bought up at the Member Referrals meeting in July.

RESOLVED: That the Democratic Services Committee considered the proposed work programme appended to this report and identified any additional topics for consideration at future meetings of the committee.

167. **URGENT ITEMS**

none

The meeting closed at 11:07