

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2013

- PRESENT:** Councillor Vaughan Hughes (Chair)
Councillor Peter Rogers (Vice-Chair)
- Councillors D R Hughes, R LI Jones, R.Meirion Jones, R G Parry OBE,
Dylan Rees, J A Roberts, P S Rogers and Dafydd Rhys Thomas
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Chief Executive,
Interim Head of Democratic Services,
ICT Services Manager,
Senior HR Development Officer (MW),
Committee Officer (MEH).
- APOLOGIES:** None
- ALSO PRESENT:** Councillors Aled M. Jones and Ieuan Williams.
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1 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No declaration of interest received.

2 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 July, 2013 were confirmed.

3 WEB CASTING AND REMOTE ACCESS

Submitted – a joint report by the Interim Head of Democratic Services and the ICT Services Manager in relation to the above.

The Head of Democratic Services reported that webcasting of meetings is linked to the provisions within the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 to strengthen local democracy. The intention is to strengthen the structures and working of local government in Wales at all levels and to ensure that local Councils reach out to, and engage with, all sectors of the community they serve. Each principal Council has been allocated £40k to assist the broadcasting and remote attendance plus an extra £500 each for each Community Council to support the establishment of Community Council websites.

In respect of remote attendance, the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 places a requirement on local authorities to put arrangements in place to Members to participate in meetings remotely. This requirement has not yet been enacted but is likely to be scheduled for the Spring of 2014.

In relation to webcasting it was reported that informal discussions have taken place with leading suppliers in order to gain better understanding of the proposals, the costs involved and whether webcasting is a feasible option. Indicative costs for a managed service suggest that the grant would fund a 2 year pilot for a hosted solution, based on annual costs of around £18k per annum, but is dependent on a number of factors.

The Officers outlined the staffing resources required to prepare for each meeting in setting up equipment together with additional demands on the Translation Unit to service meetings and arrange translation of proceedings for the purpose of webcasting.

Members of the Committee discussed the issue of which Committees of the Council to pilot webcasting and **RESOLVED to recommend to the County Council :-**

- **To proceed with the webcasting of meetings for a 2 year pilot period in order to utilise the Welsh Government funding;**
- **That the full County Council, the Executive and the Planning and Orders Committee be the meetings to be webcasted;**
- **To authorise the Interim Head of Democratic Services and the ICT Manager to procure the necessary equipment based on a hosted solution;**
- **To note the position in relation to remote access as detailed in the report.**

4 MEMBER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Senior HR Development Officer gave a verbal report on the Training Sessions arranged for Elected Members, Lay Members and Community Councils since the last meeting of this Committee.

Members considered that training on planning procedures should be given to Members of the Council who are not members of the Planning and Orders Committee.

RESOLVED

- **to note the report;**
- **that an update report will be submitted to the next meeting of this Committee;**

5 PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT REVIEW FOR MEMBERS

Submitted – a report by the Senior HR Development Officer in relation to the above.

The Officer reported that as part of the annual training and development plan, adopted by the Council in May 2013, there is a commitment to support Members to undertake Personal Development Reviews (PDR's). PDR's were introduced initially during 2011/12 to support the Council's work towards meeting the requirements of the Wales Charter for Member Support and Development. The Reviews are an important element of Member Development and contribute towards updating tailored plans for individual Members and the Council's wider Development Plan. This process helps to identify any mentoring support that may benefit the work of Members.

Questions were raised regarding if job descriptions produced for specific roles within the Council for Elected Member e.g. Chairperson's of Committees. The Interim Head of Democratic Services reported that job descriptions had been issued to all Members to reflect specific roles.

RESOLVED

- **To note the report;**
- **That a progress report be submitted to the next meeting of this Committee.**

6 WALES CHARTER FOR MEMBER SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT - PROGRESS REPORT

Submitted – an update report by the Interim Head of Democratic Services in relation to progress on the Council's submission for Charter Status.

The Interim Head of Democratic Services reported that initial feedback has been received by the WLGA noting their satisfaction. He wished to make a correction at C2 of the appendix which refers to the requirement of authorities to undertake a review as to whether daytime or evening meetings are preferred. A questionnaire will be sent to each Elected Member to gauge to Members preference for the convening of meetings within the Council. It is anticipated that a report will be submitted to the full County Council in December in respect of this matter.

RESOLVED

- **To authorise the Interim Head of Democratic Services to update the WLGA on the schedule attached to this report;**
- **That an update report be submitted to the next meeting of this Committee on the Charter application.**

The meeting concluded at 6.00 p.m.

**COUNCILLOR VAUGHAN HUGHES
CHAIR**