

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 27th September, 2017

- PRESENT:** Councillor Vaughan Hughes (Vice-Chair)
- Councillors Richard Griffiths, Carwyn Jones, Eric Jones, R G Parry OBE, FRAgS, Dylan Rees, Dafydd Roberts, Nicola Roberts
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Head of Democratic Services
Development Manager (Human Resources) (MW)
Committee Officer (SC)
- APOLOGIES:** Councillors Robert Llewelyn Jones (Chair), John Arwel Roberts
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1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None received.

2. MINUTES

Submitted for confirmation - the draft minutes of the meetings of the Democratic Services Committee held on the following dates:-

- 29th March, 2017
- 31st May, 2017

RESOLVED that the above minutes be confirmed as correct.

3. WELSH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION – ELECTORAL REFORM IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN WALES

Submitted - a report by the Head of Democratic Services on the Welsh Government's intention to reform the local government electoral system.

The Head of Democratic Services reported that the Welsh Government are now seeking views on electoral reform, dealing primarily with the way people register and cast their vote. It was noted that the consultation document seeks to modernise the local government electoral system and covers the following main areas:-

- Building the franchise
- Improving registration
- The voting system
- The voting process
- Standing for election
- Returning Officers

The closing date for responses to the consultation document is 10th October, 2017.

The Head of Democratic Services referred to the draft response prepared and enclosed within this report. In response, the Committee gave their views, and noted the following :-

- the age for voting should be reduced to 16;
- it is not feasible to have separate registers to vote at County Council and local elections;
- extending voting rights should be addressed by central government;
- piloting electronic methods of voting, in the hope of encouraging young people to vote is supported;
- greater emphasis should be placed on postal voting rather than voting at polling stations;
- it was noted that elections always take place on Thursdays. It was suggested that the Welsh Government follows examples set by other countries and gives citizens the option to vote at weekends.

RESOLVED:-

- **To note the Committee's views on the initial draft response (Appendix 2).**
- **That the Head of Democratic Services in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee to finalise comments and respond to the Welsh Government before 10th October, 2017.**

4. MEMBER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Submitted - a report by the Human Resources Development Manager on post-election induction and training arrangements for Elected Members, as presented to the Standards Committee on 13th September, 2017.

The Development Manager reported that since the County Council Elections in May, an Induction Programme has been developed to accommodate Elected Members' training needs and changing demands of this Authority. The Development Plan was established with input from the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and local authorities across Wales. The Plan was reviewed and localised by the Council's Senior Leadership Team and Group Leaders, and is continually evolving.

The Development Plan for 2017/18 was presented to and adopted by the full Council on 28th February, 2017. The initial phase of the Plan focused on the induction of newly Elected Members into the Authority, and 20 formal development sessions were offered to Members between May and August, 2017.

It was noted that some Members will need to undertake additional iPad training. Arrangements are in place for the ICT team to deliver further training sessions in due course.

The Development Manager reported that Members are encouraged to complete evaluation sheets for feedback purposes, following attendance at training sessions. It was noted that information in relation to Members' attendance at each session is

recorded. Presentations from training sessions are also uploaded onto MonITor, the Council's website for staff and Elected Members.

The Development Manager reported that four Elected Members will be piloting E-Learning programmes to assist Members' personal development from September, 2017. The programmes are hosted through the All Wales Academy.

RESOLVED:-

- **To note progress on the Member Development Programme.**
- **That the Developments Manager highlights training sessions that are mandatory for new/re- Elected Members.**

5. MEMBERS' ANNUAL REPORTS

Submitted - a report by the Head of Democratic Services on proposed arrangements for publishing the 2016/17 Members' Annual Reports.

Section 5 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 places an obligation on the Council to ensure that arrangements are in place for Members to prepare annual reports.

The Head of Democratic Services reported on the timescale for the 21 Re-Elected Members to submit annual reports for 2016/17 and publication on the Council website by 30th September, 2017.

RESOLVED to note the position with regard to publishing Members' Annual Reports for 2016/17.

6. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18

Submitted - a report by the Head of Democratic Services on the Committee Work Programme for 2017/18.

The Head of Democratic Services reported that the Committee has identified the following as part of its Work Programme for the 2017/18:-

- The Member Development and Training Plan including Personal Development Reviews;
- Webcasting of meetings;
- Members' Annual Reports;
- Independent Remuneration Panel Annual Report;
- Relevant Welsh Government consultation;
- Outside bodies and reporting arrangements;
- Timing of meetings.

RESOLVED to accept the report.

The meeting concluded at 3.00 pm

**COUNCILLOR VAUGHAN HUGHES
VICE-CHAIR**