

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 4 February, 2013

- PRESENT:** Councillor H. Eifion Jones – Chair
- Councillors Mrs. Fflur M. Hughes, Eric Roberts, G.W. Roberts OBE, Elwyn Schofield, Ieuan Williams.
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Chief Executive,
Deputy Chief Executive,
Interim Head of Democratic Services,
ICT Services Manager (BE),
Senior HR Development Officer (MW),
Committee Officer (MEH).
- APOLOGIES:** Councillors W.I. Hughes, Selwyn Williams.
- ALSO PRESENT:** Councillors W.J. Chorlton, G.O. Parry MBE – Group Leaders
(Invitees).
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1 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No declaration of interest was received.

2 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 December, 2012 were confirmed.

ARISING THEREON

Questions were raised at the last meeting in respect of the following matters :-

- **Expenditure for the Training of Members**

The Senior HR Development Officer stated that as explained at the last meeting, expenditure in respect of training for Elected Members was minimal due to the WLGA not charging for their services. Ms. Sarah Titcombe from the WLGA has further clarified the issue of training costs and highlighted that 'training is funded from Welsh Government grant for improving activities in local authorities not funded by Members subscription' this is why the WLGA is not charging for their service.

The Officer further stated that some internal training had been provided to Members by staff and as previously reported to the Standards Committee a very broad calculation of costs in this respect would amount to just over £1000 per session. The overall approximate costs for the training delivered to Elected Members for 2012/2013 was around £9,000.

- **Electoral Registration/County Council Election**

The Chief Executive outlined his role as Returning Officer for the forthcoming County Council Election and stressed that he had to deal with prospective candidates and current elected members on the same level. He noted that the Electoral Commission has sole responsibility for electoral matters and as Returning Officer he was bound to their regulations. He further noted that since the other 21 local authorities in Wales had their County Council elections last May, the Isle of Anglesey will be the only authority with an election this year.

He stated that it is intended to report to the Executive Committee in February on the new Committee structure of the authority. With the decrease in the number of elected

members from 40 to 30. It was noted that the allocation of Chairs for the Committees will be through the normal procedure of election of Chair being made by the individual Committees.

3 IMPLICATIONS TO DEMOCRATIC SERVICES IN RELATION TO BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2013/14

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

It was reported that savings proposals in relation to Democratic Services are included within the Consultation Document under the Deputy Chief Executive service. These aspects have already been scrutinised by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held on 28 January, 2013. The main savings identified relating to Democratic Services are proposals to end the use of pre-paid envelopes across the Authority. Pre-paid envelopes have been provided to Members since 1996, on request, to fulfil their duties. During 2011/12 only 6 Members requested pre-paid envelopes with a cost of £185. The report also referred to guidance issued by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales in their Annual Report on supporting the work of local authority Members.

At present the Council provides, without charge, the following support to Members :-

- ICT equipment – ipads (pilot scheme for Executive Members), laptops, printers and consumables;
- Broadband and Telephone lines;
- Stationery on request;
- Postal Services.

Issue raised by Members :-

- Concerns expressed to possible conflict between Council and private broadband at Members home addresses. The ICT Services Manager responded that no technical conflict should incur as technology has advanced with no need for the separation of the dedicated phone lines;

Following indepth discussions it was **RESOLVED** :-

- **To support the savings proposed in relation to pre-paid envelopes;**
- **That a report be submitted to this Committee after the May 2013 County Council Election on the provision of broadband connections and data security management.**

4 ANNUAL REPORT BY MEMBERS

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

It was reported that the purpose of the Annual Report by Elected Members is to improve communication between Elected Members and the public. In view of the Local Elections in Anglesey in May 2013 confirmation has now been received from Welsh Government that, as far that this Council is concerned, Annual Reports need to be produced by June 2014.

RESOVLED to note the report and that a further report be presented to this Committee after the May 2013 Local Elections setting out a suggested template and protocol for Members to prepare for the Annual Report in 2014.

5 E-DEMOCRACY FOR MEMBERS

Submitted – a report by the ICT Systems Manager in respect of e-Democracy for Members.

It was reported that as part of the Council's modernisation agenda the Council is currently implementing the Modern Gov. Committee Management System which will assist the Council to deliver its democratic duties. The system enables the electronic delivery and management of Committee agendas, papers and decisions and is available to Officers, Elected Members and citizens online. Following the May 2013 Local Elections it is proposed to adopt the Modern Gov. system as standard for all Members. In addition Modern Gov. system will allow Members to complete and update entries online in relation to Registers of Interests. It was further noted that Members of the Executive have received iPads tablet devices and it is intended to roll out iPads to

all Members of the County Council after the May elections. Once fully adopted the Modern Gov. system and iPads will provide significant savings and efficiencies in relation to committee documents, publication of agendas and will reduce the printing and postage costs to the authority.

Members of the Committee supported the Modern Gov. system and noted that all meetings in future should be broadcast 'on-line' on the Councils website.

RESOLVED to accept the report and to endorse the proposal to adopt Modern Gov. as part of modernising working practices and the roll out of iPads to all Members after the May 2013 elections.

**COUNCILLOR H. EIFION JONES
CHAIR**

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