

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2013

PRESENT:	Councillor Vaughan Hughes (Chair) Councillors D R Hughes, R LI Jones, Richard Owain Jones, R.Meirion Jones, R G Parry OBE, J A Roberts and P S Rogers
IN ATTENDANCE:	Interim Head of Democratic Services, Senior HR Development Officer (MW), Committee Officer (MEH)
APOLOGIES:	Councillors Dylan Rees, Dafydd Rhys Thomas
ALSO PRESENT:	None

1 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRPERSON

Councillor Peter S. Rogers was elected Vice-Chair.

2 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No declaration of interest received.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 April, 2013 were confirmed.

4 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2013/14

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

He noted that the remit of the Committee includes responsibility for the Member Training and Development Programme and the context and detail of the Member Development Plan for the current financial year as was reported to the County Council on 23rd May, 2013.

In line with past practice it is appropriate for the Committee to nominate one of its members to act as Member Development Champion. It was recommended that the Chair of the Democratic Services Committee assumes this role.

To demonstrate that the Authority's commitment to Member Development, Personal Development Reviews was introduced in the organisation during 2012 for all elected members. This enabled members to provide feedback on their own development/experiences in specific roles and informed work on updating training development plans.

The Senior HR Development Officer gave a brief background on the Training afforded to elected Members since the local government elections in May.

Members raised the issue that there had been numerous training sessions for members to attend during the past 2 months. It was suggested that consideration should be given to convene evening meetings and training during the evenings. The Interim Head of Democratic Services responded that the matter is being considered.

RESOLVED

- **To confirm that the Chairman of this Committee be nominated as Member Development Champion;**
- **To note that the Training Programme will be a standard item on the Committee agenda;**
- **To note the focus on personal development reviews for Members as part of the programme.**

5 WALES CHARTER FOR MEMBER SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

Submitted – a progress report by the Interim Head of Democratic Services in relation to the Member Development Charter.

The Charter aims to provide a broad framework for local planning, self-assessment, action and review together with comparison amongst authorities and the sharing of good practice. The Council has made a commitment to gain Charter Status to mirror its commitment to member training and development and focus on Personal Development Reviews which is a requirement of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.

RESOLVED

- **To note the progress as detailed within the report;**
- **To authorise the Interim Head of Democratic Services to update the WLGA in relation to the Charter Mark submission.**

6 BROADCASTING OF MEETINGS AND REMOTE ACCESS

Submitted – a report by the Interim Head of Democratic Services in relation to broadcasting of meetings and remote access.

The Officer reported that in January 2013, the Minister for Local Government and Communities wrote to all Local Authorities on the issue of promoting local democracy and public engagement. Each principal Council has been allocated £40k to assist with broadcasting and remote attendance plus an extra £500 for each Community Council to support the establishment of Community Council websites. The grant allocation needs to be spent during 2013/2014. There is no guarantee of grant funding for future years.

At present audio recordings of proceedings at the Planning and Orders Committee are posted to the Council website and has not been extended to other Committees. With regard to webcasting, there are various issues, technical and non-technical which need to be addressed in order to take full advantage of webcasting Council meetings and future requirements in relation to remote access.

The grant for £500 allocated for each Community Council to develop websites will be discussed further with One Voice Wales

The Interim Head of Democratic Services noted that a detailed update report will be submitted to the next meeting of this Committee in relation to the item.

Members noted concerns that the costs of broadcasting and remote access would need to borne by the Council in the future. .

RESOLVED to note the report and that a detailed joint report will be submitted by the Interim Head of Democratic Service and the ICT Services Manager.

7 MEMBERS ANNUAL REPORT

Submitted – a report by the Interim Head of Democratic Services in relation to the requirement of Members Annual Reports.

The Interim Head of Democratic Services reported that it is understood from the Welsh Government that Statutory Guidance on Annual Reports will be issued soon. The method of publishing the report is up to the authority to decide, with the minimum requirement to link the report to the individual member's section on the authority website. Guidance notes have been prepared to assist members prepare annual report which was attached to the report as Appendix 2. It is likely that the guidance proposes standard items for inclusion, such as :-

- Role and Responsibilities including attendance;
- Local activities such as surgeries and case work;
- Major projects;
- Learning and Development.

RESOLVED

- **To note the report;**
- **To adopt the proposed template and accompanying guidance at appendix 2 and 3 and authorise the Interim Head of Democratic Services to issue guidance to Members and arrange briefing sessions in accordance with the timescale set out in the report;**
- **That political groups be requested to actively promote the completion of Annual Reports by all of their members.**

8 COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2013/14

Submitted – a report by the Interim Head of Democratic Services in relation to the Committee's Work Programme.

He recommended that the Committee focuses on the following matters at its next meeting :-

- The Member Development and Training Plan
- Wales Charter for Member Support and Development
- Broadcasting of Meetings and Remote Attendance
- Modernising working practices and use of Ipads

RESOLVED to accept the report and to note the work programme.

The meeting concluded at 3.10 p.m.

**COUNCILLOR VAUGHAN HUGHES
CHAIR**