

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2014

PRESENT:	Councillor Vaughan Hughes (Chair) Councillors D R Hughes, Victor Hughes, Richard Owain Jones, R LI Jones, R G Parry OBE, Dylan Rees and J A Roberts
IN ATTENDANCE:	Interim Head of Democratic Services, Senior HR Development Officer (MW), Committee Officer (MEH), Administrative Assistant/Committee Officer (SC).
APOLOGIES:	Councillors R.Meirion Jones and Councillor Dafydd Rhys Thomas
ALSO PRESENT:	Councillor Aled Morris Jones

1 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Councillor Richard Owain Jones was elected as Vice-Chair of this Committee.

2 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None received.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 30th January, 2014 were confirmed as correct.

4 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT CHARTER

Submitted - The report by the Interim Head of Democratic Services in relation to the progress on work associated with meeting the requirement of the WLGA Charter for Member Support and Development.

The Interim Head of Democratic Services gave an update on how the Council has met the necessary requirements and awarded the Standard Charter. Mr Daniel Hurford , Head of Policy (Improvement & Governance), WLGA presented a plaque and certificate to the Council on 6th March, 2014.

It was noted that the award has been granted for a period of 3 years and this formed a part of the Committee's work programme.

The Interim Head of Democratic Services explained that in addition to the Standard Charter, the Council can also work towards meeting the WLGA's newly developed Advanced Charter Level.

RESOLVED to note the content of the report.

5 WEBCASTING OF MEETINGS AND REMOTE ATTENDANCE

Submitted - A progress report by the Interim Head of Democratic Services in relation to the above.

The Interim Head of Democratic Services stated that following the report to the Executive on 17th February relating to the procurement exercise undertaken, it has been necessary to reschedule the implementation of webcasting of meetings. The installation of equipment in the Council Chamber is due to take place at the end of April. Following a competitive tendering process, Public-i was awarded the contract. Training for Member and staff on the Public-i webcasting solution is to commence in May, with the system fully operational by June, 2014 commencing with the Executive Committee on 9 June, 2014.

With regard to remote attendance, final guidance is awaited from the Welsh Government. The Council's Monitoring Officer will report to the Executive in due course.

RESOLVED to note the contents report.

6 WEBSITES FOR TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCILS

Submitted - The report by the Interim Head of Democratic Services stating that the Welsh Government has allocated funding to County Councils to offer a grant of up to £500 each for town and Community Councils, including those who already have a website, to be spent on website development.

It was noted that the grant is to assist Town and Community Councils to prepare for the Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013, which contains provisions for community councils to publish information on a website. The Welsh Government originally issued guidance that funding needed to be utilized before the end of March 2014. This period has now been extended to 2014/15.

It was noted that the Council is liaising with Unllais Cymru to ensure that Town and Community Councils are using the allocated funding.

The Chair suggested that Clerks of Town and Community Councils should be updated and reminded of the grant funding available.

RESOLVED to note the current position.

7 MEMBERS ANNUAL REPORT

The Interim Head of Democratic Services reported to this Committee on the 4th February, 2013 and 2nd July, 2013 regarding Section 5 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, and the requirement to ensure that arrangements are in place to allow for Members to prepare an Annual Report on their work.

It was noted that draft reports have been requested by the 9 April, 2014 from Members with a view to publication on the Council's website in June 2014.

RESOLVED to note the current position as outlined in the report.

8 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

The Senior Human Resources Development Officer gave a verbal report with respect to the Member Development Plan and Personal Development Reviews.

With regard to the Personal Development Reviews, the Officer stated that she was assessing feedback from the reviews undertaken and the need to liaise with Group Leaders in due course.

A report on the 2014/15 Development Plan would be submitted to Council in due course.

It was RESOLVED to accept the report.

9 COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2014/2015

Submitted - a report by the Interim Head of Democratic Service in accordance with the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, stating that this Committee's function is to review the Council's adequate provision of staff, accommodation and resources to fulfil the functions of democratic services.

A report on the work of the Committee during 2013/14 will be submitted to the Council on 8th May, 2014.

In developing the work programme for 2014/15, it is recommended that focus should be made on the following:-

- Member Development and Training Plan including Personal Reviews;
- Webcasting of Meetings and Remote Attendance;
- Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011;
- Independent Remuneration Panel Annual Report;
- Modernising Working practices;
- Budget for 2015/16 and Impact on Democratic Services.

During the first quarter of 2014/15, it is proposed to arrange a focus group for Members to receive feedback on working practices.

RESOLVED to accept the report.

The meeting concluded at 2.40 pm

**COUNCILLOR VAUGHAN HUGHES
CHAIR**