

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 24 October 2016

- PRESENT:** Councillor Vaughan Hughes (Chair)
Councillor Victor Hughes (Vice-Chair)
- Councillors Richard Owain Jones, R Meirion Jones,
R G Parry OBE, Dylan Rees and J A Roberts
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Head of Democratic Services,
Committee Officer (MEH).
- APOLOGIES:** Councillor Dafydd Rhys Thomas
- ALSO PRESENT:** Councillors K.P. Hughes, Alwyn Rowlands (Member of the
Executive)
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1 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None received.

2 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 March, 2016 were confirmed as correct, subject to the amendment to Item 3 – Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Report 2016/17 which should read 'The Council was allocated 15 senior salary posts for 2015/16, but decided to allocate senior salaries to 14 office holders to reduce democratic costs.

3 INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES

Submitted – the report of the Head of Democratic Services on the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales draft report on payments to elected Members.

The Head of Democratic Services reported that the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales has decided to increase the basic allowance for Members from £13,300 to £13,400. This is an increase of 0.75% and the first increase for 3 years. There are no changes in respect of senior salaries which remain as they are for 2016/17 and the senior salaries allocated to the Council are set at 15 for 2017/18. He further referred to Section 11 of the report which provides details of changes to the framework to be applied for dealing with long term sickness which are consistent with arrangements that apply for family absence. Also there are proposals to change the way details of care allowances are published and guidance was provided in Appendix 4 of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales' report.

The Head of Democratic Services referred to Sections 3.16 to 3.18 within the report with regard to the role of the Democratic Services Committee to review the support provided to Elected Members. In view of the need to plan ahead for the Council in May 2017 it is proposed to arrange focus groups with Members with regard to the use of ICT and relevant matters. It was noted that there will be a need to review outside bodies in accordance with the Council's decision in May 2016.

The Chair stated that he and the Head of Democratic Services will attend a meeting of the Independent Remuneration Panel in Llandudno on the 26th October, 2016 and he was willing to convey any matters which the Committee wish to raise.

The Committee considered the report and raised the following issues :-

- Members had reservations with the increase in the basic allowance;
- Whilst being satisfied that arrangements are now been made to arrange training for new Members following the May 2017 Elections it was considered that training and briefing sessions needs to be phased to allow Members to digest all the information presented to them.

RESOLVED to accept the report and to ask the Chair to raise the Committee's reservations with the increase in the basic allowance at the Independent Remuneration Panel meeting to be held on 26th October, 2016.

ACTION : As noted above.

4 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PLAN - APRIL, 2016 - MARCH, 2017

Submitted – the joint report of the Head of Democratic Services and the Human Resources Development Manager in relation to the draft training programme for Members in May 2017.

The Head of Democratic Services reported that the Member Development Plan seeks to address the needs of Members to support and evaluate their roles as Elected Members. The Development Plan for the period April 2016 to March 2017 was attached to the report which highlighted the main areas of training opportunities being offered during the current financial year. The Development Plan seeks to accommodate Members needs with workshops, mentoring, e-learning and one-to-one sessions. He further stated that a twelve month Induction Programme has been developed by the WLGA in collaboration with all Local Authorities in Wales.

The Committee considered the report and made the following comments :-

- Induction Training sessions needs to be phased;
- Budgetary and Treasury Management sessions need to be held in the first 3 months in preparation for the annual budget.

RESOLVED to accept the report and comments noted above.

Action : As noted above.

5 COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17

Submitted – the proposed Committee’s Work Programme for 2016/17.

The Head of Democratic Services reported that it recommended that the Democratic Services Committee should focus on the following areas :-

- The Member Development and Training Plan including Personal Development Reviews;
- Webcasting of meetings;
- Members Annual Reports;
- Independent Remuneration Panel Annual Report;
- Review of arrangements to support Members in advance of new Council including ICT and outside bodies.

Arising from discussion Members noted the potential to webcast some meetings of Scrutiny Committees where items of public interest are discussed.

Following deliberations it was **RESOLVED to accept the report and that a report be submitted on the options available with regard to webcasting of Council meetings to the next meeting of this Committee including Scrutiny Committees.**

Action : As noted above.

The meeting concluded at 2.35 pm

**COUNCILLOR VAUGHAN HUGHES
CHAIR**