

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 17 December, 2012

PRESENT:	Councillor H. Eifion Jones – Chair Councillors W.I. Hughes, A.M. Jones, Eric Roberts, G.W. Roberts OBE, Elwyn Schofield, Ieuan Williams, Selwyn Williams.
IN ATTENDANCE:	Interim Head of Democratic Services, Senior Development Officer (MW), Committee Officer (MEH).
APOLOGIES:	Councillor Fflur M. Hughes.
ALSO PRESENT:	Councillor W.J. Chorlton – Group Leader (Invitee). Ms. Sarah Titcombe - WLGA

1 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No declaration of interest was received.

2 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 October, 2012 were confirmed.

Members raised the following matters :-

- Effective Community Engagement was required in respect of informing the local electorate of the electoral procedure at the next County Council Elections in May 2013 i.e. 2/3 votes in electoral areas;
- Electoral Registers need to be available to prospective candidates for the County Council Elections as soon as possible.

The Interim Head of Democratic Services responded and noted that he would draw these issues to the attention of the Returning Officer.

3 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT WORK PLAN

3.1 Submitted – a report by the Senior Development Officer in relation to an overview of the progress made in the last two years with regards to Member Development training and noted that the Member Development Group, having been set up to improve focus on Member Development during the recovery period.

The Senior Development Officer reported that due to changes highlighted in the Local Government Local Measure (2011), the responsibility for the development of Members has now been transferred to the Democratic Services Committee. The Human Resources Service will continue to arrange and support training for Members.

Questions were raised in respect of the charges the authority pay for training and to the WLGA.

RESOLVED that a report be submitted on the breakdown on charges incurred in respect of training of elected members to the next meeting of this Committee.

3.2 Submitted – for information, report on Member Training by the Solicitor to the Monitoring Officer submitted to the Standards Committee held on 31 October, 2012.

The Interim Head of Democratic Services noted that the Standards Committee at its meeting held on 11 December 2012, raised issues regarding attendance levels by Members at Training Sessions.

Members considered that it would be appropriate to invite the Chair of Standards Committee after the County Council Elections in May 2013 to discuss attendance at training sessions.

RESOLVED to note the report.

4 WALES CHARTER FOR MEMBER SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

A presentation was received by Ms. Sarah Titcombe, Organisational and Personal Development Advisor, WLCA in respect of the above. A copy of the Charter Assessment Criteria was attached for Members attention.

Ms. Titcombe gave a background to the Charter which is an award, developed by Members and Officers throughout Wales presented to authorities in recognition of the support provided to Members. She noted that the Charter has 3 levels i.e. Charter, Advanced Charter and Good Practice and Innovation Award.

The Interim Head of Democratic Services noted that it was hoped that the Authority is able to gain Level 1 of the Charter by the next County Council Elections in May 2013 and that the WLGA were providing peer support to review the Council's progress in meeting the standards set out in the Charter. As part of the WLGA support assistance is also being provided to review existing working practices, systems and resources to support Members in readiness for the new Council.

RESOLVED to note the report.

5 COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Submitted – a report by the Interim Head of Democratic Services in respect of the Committee Work Programme.

The Interim Head of Democratic Services proposed that the next meeting focuses on the following matters:-

- Progress report on Member Development Charter application;
- ICT provision for Members including the Council's web-site to promote democracy;
- Implications to Democratic Services in relation to budget proposals for 2013/14;
- Induction for Members (May 2013 onwards).

The Officer further reported the Minister of Social Justice & Local Government had recently approached all local authorities to seek information on the broadcast of their Committees in the future and that this should be considered in due course by the Committee.

Issues raised by Members:-

- An item on Community Engagement is required on each Agenda in relation to the forthcoming local elections;
- Protocols in relation to appointments of Chairs on Committees post May 2013 elections.

RESOLVED to approve the items, as noted above, for consideration at the next meeting

**COUNCILLOR H. EIFION JONES
CHAIR**

