

## **Democratic Services Committee**

Tuesday, 23 March 2021

**PRESENT:** Councillor R. James (Chair)

**Councillors:**

W.T. Evans, E.M.J.G. Schiavone, D. Thomas and H.I. Jones

**The following Officers were in attendance:**

L.R. Jones, Head of Administration and Law  
G. Morgan, Head of Democratic Services  
H. Daniels, Learning & Development Advisor  
M. Howard, Agile Working Project Manager  
M. Evans Thomas, Principal Democratic Services Officer  
R. Lloyd, Democratic Services Officer  
A. Eynon, Principal Translator  
J. Corner, Technical Officer

**Also in attendance as an observer:-**

Councillor Mair Stephens, Member Development Lead for the Executive Board

**Virtual Meeting - 10.05 - 10.35 am**

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

There were no apologies for absence.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS.**

There were no declarations of personal interest.

**3. DEMOCRATIC PROCESS NEW WAYS OF WORKING**

The Head of Democratic Services presented the report detailing how the Authority has transformed its way of working due to the Covid19 pandemic.

Whilst the Authority is currently holding all Democratic Meetings virtually, it is now time to consider how the Democratic Process will operate in the future, be that a return to full physical attendance (once restrictions are lifted), a hybrid approach or a continuance of virtual meetings only. Democratic meetings remain held remotely so that normal Council business can continue.

Offices are now largely empty across the estate and going forward the authority is looking at options to collaborate with public sector partners, and acknowledges that it must transform its working practises and consider how we work and the building space we require.

It is suggested that Democratic Services Committee undertake a Task and Finish review of members' requirements in order to determine the needs of elected members in driving the new way of working for the democratic services function.

The following proposal was raised on the report:-

- Suggested a 5 2 2 1 political balanced group of 10 members i.e.  
5 x Democratic Services committee members  
5 x additional members

Legal advice was sought to expand the membership and the Head of Administration & Law confirmed that the membership can be set as required. In terms of the work of the Group she advised that the views of members could be collected by various different means e.g. via questionnaires or virtual drop in sessions to seek the views of members. The Project Manager advised that on receipt of the views of members i.e. having a wider consultation to develop and move forward the new Democratic process.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the report be received and that a Task and Finish Group of 10 politically balanced members be established which would automatically include the members of the Democratic Services Committee. The Head of Democratic Services being given authority to approach the political groups for the remaining members as per the above recommendation.

#### **4. INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES (IRPW) ANNUAL REPORT (FEBRUARY, 2021)**

The Head of Democratic Services presented the report which asks the committee to note the determinations by the IRPW for 2021/22.

The IRPW determinations will be included within the Councillors' and Co-opted Members' Salaries and Allowances Scheme for 2021/22, which will be considered at the Annual Meeting of Council on the 19<sup>th</sup> May, 2021.

The following question was raised on the report:-

- The Chair asked what consultations had been carried out by the IRPW. The Head of Democratic Services advised that Chairs and Heads of Democratic Services had met with representatives of the IRPW in October, 2020 and the draft report was circulated to Principal Authorities, Town and Community Council, National Parks and Fire Authorities and written responses requested.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the report be received.

#### **5. UPDATE ON MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021/22**

The Learning and Development Advisor presented the report giving an update on the Member Development Plan for 2021-22 and the proposal for a toolkit of learning to support the programme and invited the committee to comment on any additions, deletions or amendments to the proposals.

The toolkit will encompass the initial proposal on the 21st Century Councillor Model that was presented to members back in July 2019 and will continue to be a

blended and inclusive approach to learning that reflects different learning styles. The toolkit will include the two distinct areas of development already discussed with members:

- **Foundational Skills**– Practical and knowledge skills (covered by most existing learning and development)
- **Relational Skills** – Connective, digital & reflective skills (to be effective as a 21st Century Councillor and covered as part of learning conversations).

The learning will sit within three themes to support members in their role.

The Learning & Development Advisor suggests producing a dedicated page for members giving them a clear understanding of their learning skills, needs and the way forward. This page will be made available on both the Intranet and Website which may also act as a recruitment platform for possible new members.

The Learning & Development Advisor advised that she has linked with the Electoral and Civil Registration Services Manager and will include Democratic Services making sure that its inclusive; ensuring accessibility for everyone. The Head of Democratic Services advised that we are currently awaiting more funding from Welsh Government to allow production of more digital content on social media platforms.

#### **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED**

- 5.1 to endorse the proposal for a Toolkit of learning to support the Member Development Programme.
- 5.2 to receive a demonstration of this dedicated page for members at the next meeting of the Democratic Services committee.

### **6. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT - PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT REVIEWS [PDR]**

The Learning & Development Advisor presented the report summarizing the member-led process for conducting Personal Development Reviews (PDR) which meets the needs of members and invites increased participation and considers the process that will be made available for all Elected Members.

Elected Members have a wide range of roles and responsibilities which they are expected to undertake. The PDR process will assist Elected Members to identify any support that may be required to fulfil these roles effectively.

Templates are made available to Group Leaders to assist in the reviews and to note that any unaffiliated members should be ascertained by the Chair of the Democratic Services Committee with the timescale aim to complete all Personal Development Reviews by the end of July 2021.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the report be received.

### **7. DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE - ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20**

The Head of Democratic Services presented the report which outlines the work of the committee during the 2019-20 municipal year and noted that due to the impact of Covid19

and the suspension of all democratic meetings in March, 2020 it was not possible to hold the full cycle of Committee meetings for the year.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOVLED** that the report be received and to publish on the website.

**8. DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE - FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2021-22**

The Head of Democratic Services presented the report which details the expected Agenda items for the 2021-22 Democratic Committee Cycle in line with the Forward Work Programme ensuring that all appropriate Committees of the Authority have published up to date programmes which are owned by the Committee members.

The Head of Democratic Services also gave members further opportunity to raise any additional items at the next meeting.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOVLED** that the report be received.

**9. TO APPROVE AND SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 30TH NOVEMBER, 2020**

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020 be signed as a correct record.

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**CHAIR**

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**DATE**