

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 28 NOVEMBER 2016

PRESENT: Councillor T. Davies (Chair)

Councillors: W.T. Evans, J.D. James, D. Price and H.B. Shepardson

The following Officers were in attendance:

L.R. Jones, Head of Administration and Law

G. Morgan, Democratic Services Manager

J. Owen, Democratic Services Officer

Democratic Services Committee Room, County Hall, Carmarthen - 10.00 - 10.35am

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

No apologies were received.

It was noted that Councillor Mair Stephens the Executive Board Member Development Champion was not able to attend the meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS.

There were no declarations of personal interest.

3. TO APPROVE AND SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 1ST SEPTEMBER 2016

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Democratic Services Committee held on the 1st September 2016 be signed as a correct record.

4. INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT - FEBRUARY 2017

The Committee received for consideration the IRPW's Draft Annual Report (February 2017) that made a number of determinations and recommendations that the Council was required to consider incorporating within its Councillors' and Co-opted Member's Allowances Scheme for 2017/18. It was a requirement that the draft annual report was sent to County Councils and comments had to be submitted by no later than 28th November 2016. The IRPW was required to take into account the representations it had received on the draft before issuing its final version of the report in February 2017.

For 2017/18, the IRPW recommended that the Basic Salary be increased by 0.75%. The increase would be the first in 3 years and would represent an increase of £100 in basic salary for councillors to £13,400. However, there were no plans to increase senior salaries. Following consideration, the Committee felt that although the uplift of 0.75% in basic salary was acceptable, it was not sufficient to encourage younger people to join local government and become a councillor, particularly in a full time role.

It was suggested that Officers work closely with schools and colleges who have their own internal Council in order to educate and encourage youngsters to continue their role further into Local Government.

Members noted that Care Allowances would be re-named to 'Reimbursement of costs of care' and that the IRPW had also proposed changes in the way that such payments are published by allowing Councils to either "Publish the details of the amounts reimbursed to named members; or the total amount reimbursed by the authority during the year but not attributed to any named member. The Committee felt that in order to be open and transparent, the Authority should continue to publish allowances paid to individual members on the Council website.

It was raised, that those standing as Vice Chairperson, currently does not receive any allowance for undertaking this role. The Head of Administration and Law informed Members that a provision was available should the Committee wish to apply for an additional Senior Salary, however, the additional workload would need to be evidenced in order for the application to be successful.

The Chair stated that a response would be forwarded to IRPW incorporating Members comments.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Committee authorise the Chair to submit a response to the IRPW on behalf of the Committee.

5. CARMARTHENSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S SCRUTINY FUNCTION - ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16

The Head of Democratic Services presented Carmarthenshire County Council's scrutiny Function Annual Report 2015/16 to the Committee.

The Chair commented that scrutiny within the Council had developed considerably over the last few years and was now proving to be more engaging and effective.

Due to the increasing emphasis on Scrutiny functions, it was asked if the webcasting facility could be extended to each Scrutiny Committee. The Head of Democratic Services informed the Committee of the timeliness of the request as the current webcasting contract was due to end on 31st March 2017 and that this matter would be considered going forward into the new contract.

A Member noted an error on page 115 of the report referring to 2014/15 which should be 2015/16. The Head of Democratic Services stated that she would rectify the error and would also arrange for the Scrutiny Function Annual Report to be published onto the Council website.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that:

- 5.1 The report be received;**
- 5.2 The report be published onto the Council website.**

6. DEMOCRATIC SERVICES FUNCTION ANNUAL REVIEW

The Committee considered the Annual Review report of the Democratic Services Function. The report provided members with an outline of support provided by the Democratic Services Unit over the last 12 months which included;-

- Democratic Services Resources
- Committee Support
- Civic & Member Support
- Elected Member Support and Accommodation
- Democratic Services Committee Work Programme

With regard to a reminder which had been sent to the Leaders of each Political Group emphasising the importance of holding one to one meetings with their members in order to ascertain their training needs. Disappointment was expressed that, Leaders had not yet provided a response and in not doing so had missed a valuable opportunity to provide their Members' training requirements.

The Chair informed Members that it had not been possible to circulate the Induction Survey (agreed at the last meeting) due to technical difficulties however, there were plans in place to hold Focus Groups in the New Year.

The Chair expressed his gratitude and thanks to all members of the Democratic Services Unit for their hard work and commitment.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to note the Democratic Services Function Annual Review.

7. DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received and considered an updated forward work programme for 2016/17 which provided Members with Agenda Items for the 2016/17/18 Democratic Committee Cycle.

The Head of Democratic Services informed the Committee that Personal Development Reviews would be added to the agenda on a regular basis.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be adopted.

CHAIR

DATE