

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

Monday, 11 June 2018

PRESENT: Councillor S.A. Curry (Chair)

Councillors:

K.V. Broom (In place of D. Thomas), W.T. Evans and T.J. Jones

The following Officers were in attendance:

N. Daniel, Head of I.C.T.

H. Daniels, Learning & Development Advisor

G. Morgan, Head of Democratic Services

**Democratic Services Committee Room, - County Hall, Carmarthen. SA31 1JP. -
10.00 - 11.05 am**

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Dai Thomas.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS.

No declarations of personal interest were made.

3. TO APPROVE AND SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 9TH MARCH 2018

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Democratic Services Committee held on the 9th March 2018 be signed as a correct record.

4. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT - PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT REVIEWS (PDR).

The Committee was advised that under the Local Government Wales Measure 2011 authorities were required to make specific provision for the training and development of members and also make available to each member of the authority an annual review of the member's training and development needs.

The Corporate Learning and Development Advisor informed the Committee that the previous Council had taken the approach that Personal Development Reviews should be undertaken by the leaders of the political groups, as this will allow groups to identify those areas where there was a demand for training so that it was member-led. The Corporate Learning and Development Advisor would be on hand to assist in any member-led assessment of training needs and to enable the Member Development Programme to be tailored in accordance with training needs.

The report provided the Committee with suggested templates which could be used by the Group Leaders to assist them in the reviews. It was suggested that the training needs of any unaffiliated members should be ascertained by the Chair of the Democratic Services Committee.

The Committee welcomed the report and suggested that IT training should be

highlighted as a possible development area, in order for members to be fully enabled to work in a mobile and efficient way using the most appropriate digital technology available.

RESOLVED that the existing arrangements for the Personal Development Review process and template documents be supported.

5. MEMBER MENTORING PROCESS

The Committee considered a report on the introduction of a Member Mentoring Process

The Corporate Learning and Development Advisor informed the Committee that Mentoring was a voluntary, confidential, one to one relationship in which an individual benefited from the knowledge of a more experienced or more senior person as a sounding board for guidance. It enabled the mentee to “grow” in their role in skills, knowledge, understanding and behaviour. Mentoring could be a medium, long term or ongoing relationship, and was not a prescriptive or directive relationship but rather one which allowed the mentee to find his/her own way, assisted by the mentor.

The report provided a role description for a Member Mentor and information on a WLGA training session which would be held in September 2018.

The Committee welcomed the report and although it was acknowledged that mentoring was being undertaken informally within the political groups, a formal mentoring process was welcomed.

RESOLVED that planned progress for the use of Member Mentors be noted and the role description supported.

6. COUNCILLORS' ANNUAL REPORTS

The Head of Democratic Services advised the Committee that under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 local authorities were required to make arrangements for:

- (a) each person who is a member of the authority to make an annual report about the person's activities as a member of the authority during the year to which the report relates,
- (b) each person who is a member of the authority's executive to make an annual report about the person's activities as a member of the executive during the year to which the report relates, and
- (c) the authority to publish all annual reports produced by its members and by the members of its executive.

The Committee was informed that although the authority was required to provide the facilities for Councillors to produce and publish an annual report, the production of a report was not mandatory. All published Annual reports were available to view on the Authority's website.

The Head of Democratic Services advised that the report provided the Committee with the number of annual reports published for 2016-17 and sought endorsement of the report template and guidance for 2017-18.

RESOLVED

- 1. to note that 4 of the Councillors re-elected in the May 2017 local government elections produced Annual Reports for 2016-17.**
- 2. To confirm the Member Annual Report procedure, template and guidance for 2017-18 onwards, as detailed within the report.**

7. PAPERLESS WORKING

The Committee was advised that in January 2015 the Council had resolved to support a notice of motion that all Councillors should accept their responsibility in contributing towards efficiency savings and therefore move as soon as possible to a paperless system of Communication with all Councillors.

In order to achieve this the Authority had purchased new hardware and software to enable a paperless working approach and to allow members to work in a mobile and efficient, way using the most appropriate digital technology.

The Committee was informed that significant progress had been made in terms of technology since July 2015, this included improved availability and speed of broadband provision within the County, enhancing the Authority's own digital infrastructure by ensuring that all Council buildings were wi-fi accessible, and equipment and software had been updated as digital technology progressed.. The Authority would shortly be rolling out Office 365 which would make accessing emails, diaries and committee papers easier and would resolve some password issues which some members had difficulty with, thus ensuring that both members and officers worked in a more agile way.

The Head of Democratic Services advised that, should the Committee agree to recommend a move to paperless working as per option 3 within the report, it was important for members and officers to embrace a new way of working and have the skills and confidence to work electronically. In order to achieve this arrangements would be put in place for mod.gov paperless app training and also any additional IT training which members felt would be of benefit.

The PDR reviews agreed earlier at the meeting would assist in identifying the needs of members and ongoing specific training could be incorporated within the Member Development Programme which the Committee considered on a regular basis.

The Committee in noting that the Authority currently paid for a Data Sim for each device, questioned whether this was still necessary. The Committee was informed

that data Sims had been purchased in order to allow members to use their devices remotely via 3G/4G when wi-fi was not available, however, it may now be prudent to re-look at this issue as broadband connectivity had improved and there were more wi-fi hotspots. It was suggested that a breakdown of data sim usage be obtained and that this be reported to the Committee at the next meeting in order to consider whether the SIM cards provided value for money and should be retained.

RESOLVED

- 1. TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL THAT the Authority move towards a paperless system of communication with all Councillors with effect from 1st January 2019 and that an appropriate training programme be arranged prior to this date.**
- 2. that the Committee receive a breakdown on data sim usage at its next meeting, in order to determine whether the provision provided value for money and should be retained.**

8. COUNCILLORS EXPENSES - SELF SERVICE

The Committee was informed that Democratic Services had recently participated in a Transform Innovate and Change review which aimed to help the council deliver cashable efficiency savings as part of its response to the financial challenges that it was facing in the short, medium and long term and also to deliver improvements to the quality of services, while also making those services more efficient.

One of the issues raised prior to and as part of the review was whether Councillors could move to a system of Self Service for member expenses, using a separate element of the Authority's integrated HR, and payroll system which was used by the Authority's staff. Councillor self-service would allow Councillors to :-

- Submit their Mileage and Expenses Claims on line
- Change their personal details i.e. address, bank details etc
- View Payslips on line (with paper payslips to cease)

The Head of Democratic Services advised that following discussion with the Payroll Manager it had been agreed to undertake a specific piece of work to develop a separate section on Resource Link specifically for elected members. In order to test the system and to ascertain whether a move to self-service was achievable she suggested that a group of member be asked to pilot the system prior to a further report being submitted to the Committee.

In response to a question, the Head of Democratic Services advised that it was hoped that up to 10 members would be prepared to participate in the pilot and she would welcome volunteers from the Committee and nominations from the Group Leaders.

RESOLVED to pilot a new Self-Service system for Member expenses.

**9. DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME
2018-19**

The Committee received and considered a forward work programme [FWP] for 2018/19 which provided Members with Agenda Items for the 2018/19 Democratic Committee Cycle.

RESOLVED that the Democratic Services Committee forward work programme be adopted.

CHAIR

DATE