

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

27TH APRIL 2015

PRESENT: Councillor W.T. Evans (Chair);

Councillor. J.D. James.

Councillor A. P. Cooper **Substitute for Councillor D.M. Cundy**

Councillor D.M. Jenkins **Substitute for Councillor D. Price**

Councillor D.W.H. Richards **Substitute for Councillor H.B. Shepardson**

Also present as observers:-

Councillors P.A. Palmer – Executive Board Member for Communities

Councillor L.M. Stephens – Executive Board Member for HR, Efficiencies and Collaboration.

The following officers were in attendance:-

Ms. L. Rees-Jones - Head of Administration and Law;

Ms. G. Morgan – Head of Democratic Services

**(Democratic Services Committee Room, County Hall, Carmarthen 2.30 p.m.
– 3:10 p.m.)**

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D.M. Cundy, D. Price and H.B. Shepardson.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS.

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 5th February 2015 be signed as a correct record.

4. INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES (IRPW) ANNUAL REPORT (FEBRUARY, 2015)

The Committee received for consideration the IRPW's Annual Report (February 2015) that made a number of determinations and recommendations that the Council was required to consider incorporating within its existing Councillors' and Co-opted Member's Allowances Scheme for 2015/16. The Committee noted that the IRPW in setting the level of salaries and allowances for 2015/16 has decided that there would be no increase in remuneration in 2015/16 given the continuing constraints on local government spending.

The Committee was informed that the report provided information on the current payments made to Members and sought its views on payments to Civic Heads and

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Deputies, Subsistence and Accommodation allowances, Remuneration of Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairs, and payment of Co-opted Members' Fees for the 2015/16 Municipal year.

A suggestion was made that the Authority should re-consider the appointment of a Presiding Member, The Head of Administration and Law advised that the Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013 introduced legislation to allow principal councils to appoint a Presiding Member, thereby separating the ceremonial duties of the Chair of Council from the constitutional aspect of Chairing Council meetings. She reminded the Committee that the Council at its meeting held on the 8th January 2014 had decided not to appoint a presiding member and the Constitutional Review Working Group had also agreed not to re-consider this issue.

Clarification was requested on the provision of additional Senior Salaries and the Head of Administration and Law advised that the Authority could apply for specific or additional senior salaries that did not fall within the current remuneration framework or could not be accommodated within the maximum number of senior salaries relating to the Authority. If the Council was mindful to seek such a provision, it would need to make a request to the IRPW and provide clear evidence that the post/posts would have additional responsibility demonstrated by a description of the role, function and duration.

It was noted that the Local Government Wales Measure 2011 provided greater prominence to both the Democratic Services and Audit Committees and the Chairs of these Committee were unpaid. The Head of Administration and Law advised that the maximum number of council membership eligible for a senior salary within Carmarthen was 18 and the Council had determined that these should be payable to the Executive Board, and Chairs of the Licensing, Planning and Scrutiny Committees. Should the Council wish to remunerate Chairs of other Committees it would need to make a business case for additional senior salaries or review its current allocation.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL THAT the IRPW'S recommendations and determinations be accepted and incorporated within the Council's existing Councillors' and Co-opted Members' Allowances Scheme for 2015/16 subject to the following:

- **Option b) be adopted in relation to the payment of Civic Salaries to the Chair and Vice Chair of Council for 2015/16;**
- **that the previous decision not to allocate the maximum daily rate of £28.00 between different meals be continued and that where accommodation included breakfast, a daily rate of £24.00 be applied i.e. the sum of £4.00 being deducted where breakfast was provided as part of overnight accommodation**
- **to continue with the arrangement that all overnight accommodation for members be arranged through the Council's Democratic Services Unit;**

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- **The arrangements for Joint Overview Scrutiny Committees with other authorities be noted and included within the Council's scheme in the event the Council decided to establish Joint Committees during the 2015/16 Municipal Year and to pay a salary**
- **The payment of Co-opted Members' Fees remain capped for 2015/16 at the current level of 10 full day (or 20 half day) meetings.**

5. **CROSS PARTY CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW WORKING GROUP (CRWG) RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee was reminded the Council at its meeting held on the 12th November 2014 had established a Cross-Party Constitutional Review Working Group (CRWG) to consider recommendations contained within the WLGA Carmarthenshire Peer Review Report November 2014. The Group had referred 3 recommendations to the Democratic Services Committee for consideration, namely recommendations 7, 8 and 11.

The Head of Administration and Law informed the Committee that recommendation 7 of the Peer Review report had recommended that the Member Development Programme and Strategy should be updated and led by members through Democratic Services Committee, she reminded the Committee that it had, at its meeting held on the 16th April 2014 approved the Annual Member Development Programme for 2014/16 and the Personal Development Reviews currently being undertaken by Group Leaders would form the basis for the ongoing Member Development Programme. The Committee was also informed that the Executive Board Member for HR, Efficiencies and Collaboration had been confirmed as the Member Development Lead for the Executive Board and would work alongside the Chair of the Democratic Services Committee to champion and Coordinate member development and support.

The Committee was advised that Recommendation 8 of the Peer review had recommended that Member Personal Development Reviews should be led by members, with appropriate support from Training Managers. The Head of Administration and Law advised that the Corporate Development Advisor had met with the Group Leaders and Deputies and the Chair of the Democratic Services Committee to discuss the Personal Development needs of members and how the Groups would encourage their members to undertake personal development. It was agreed to provide all Group Leaders with a standard template invitation letter and self reflection template for use by the political groups in identifying the personal development needs of their members, and following discussion, the Groups would feed back to a further meeting in July 2015 when development needs and common themes would be identified and a programme of development considered. A report on responses and the type of training sought would be submitted to the Democratic Services Committee in Autumn 2015.

The Committee was informed that the final recommendation (11) stated that all members should produce Annual Reports in order to promote openness and transparency about the role and contributions of councillors. The Head of

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Administration and Law reminded the Committee that the Local Government Wales Measure 2011 recommended that each person who was a member of the authority should publish an annual report about their activities during the year and whilst not a mandatory requirement, it should be noted that the Welsh Government White paper on “Reforming Local Government: Power to Local People” proposed to make the production of Annual Reports mandatory for members. The Committee was advised that 51 out of 74 members had, produced annual reports for 2013/14 based on a draft template approved by the Committee at its meeting held on the 15th March 2013.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be noted and the action previously taken by the Committee be reported to the Constitutional Review Working Group.

SIGNED: _____

DATE: _____