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DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

8 SEPTEMBER 2022

PRESENT (In Person): Councillor L. Davies (Chair)

Councillors (Virtually):

W.T. Evans, F. Walters, P.T. Warlow and
Councillor K.V. Broom – Substitute for Councillor H.A.L. Evans.

The following Officers were in attendance (In Person):

G. Morgan, Head of Democratic Services;
S. Rees, Simultaneous Translator;
J. Owen, Democratic Services Officer [Minute taker].

The following Officers were in attendance (Virtually):

H. Daniels, Learning & Development Advisor;
M. Evans Thomas, Principal Democratic Services Officer.
J. Owens, Democratic Services Officer;

Chamber, County Hall, Carmarthen and remotely – 10:00am - 10:21am

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor H.A.L. Evans and Linda Rees Jones, Head of Administration and Law.

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 28TH FEBRUARY 2022

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 28th February, 2022 be signed as a correct record.

4. DEMOCRATIC SERVICES FUNCTION

The Head of Democratic Services presented a report on the role and function of the Democratic Services Committee to Members. The report provided information in regard to the statutory framework within which the Democratic Services Committee functions together with the remit and powers available to the Committee.

In addition to the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and the specific Sections 8 to 21 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure, the report highlights that the Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013 had added section 11A which provides that the Democratic Services Committee may, at the request of the authority, review any matter relevant to:

- (a) the support and advice available to members of that authority, and
- (b) the terms and conditions of office of those members.

The report seeks the Committee to note its role and function and to re-affirm the appointment of Chair of the Committee as the Council's Member Development Champion, who would work closely with the Member Development lead for the Executive and officers of the Learning and Development Team on identifying and promoting member development issues.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED

4.1 that the role and function of the Democratic Services Committee be noted.

4.2 that the appointment of Chair of the Democratic Services Committee as the Authority's Member Development Champion be reaffirmed.

5. UPDATE ON MEMBER INDUCTION PROGRAMME 2022

The Committee received a report which provided information in respect of the member Induction Programme 2022.

The Learning & Development Advisor in presenting the report informed the Committee that the Programme which was launched on the 18th May 2022 contained total of 40 developmental sessions which were divided into sessions for all members, sessions specifically for Cabinet members and panel members sitting on relevant committees.

In addition to the programmed schedule, many sessions had been recorded enabling members to watch at their leisure via the Councils eLearning platform.

In order to ascertain if the Induction Programme had been effective, the report proposed to seek feedback from members by way of focus groups.

Members expressed their sincere gratitude to the Democratic Services Unit and Learning Development department for their hard work in preparing, facilitating and providing a varied programme which had been beneficial for Members both new and re-elected.

In response to a query regarding gaining Member feedback, the Learning & Development Advisor suggested that focus groups to gain an understanding of what did and did not go well in regard to the Member Induction Programme be arranged in due course.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that:

5.1 the Member Induction Programme to date be noted;

5.2 focus groups with all members at the end of November be arranged in order to seek feedback of the Induction Programme.

6. MULTI-LOCATION MEETING POLICY

The Committee received a report which appended a draft Multi-location Meeting Policy. The draft policy had been considered by the Constitutional Review Working Group at its meeting on 20th July, 2022 where it was recommended to the Democratic Services Committee that the policy be endorsed.

Since the introduction of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 the Welsh Government provided Councils with the power and freedom to convene multi-location meetings enabling a greater accessibility and public participation in local government decision making.

The report provided information in respect of what constituted multi-location, also referred to as 'Hybrid'. For all meetings, participants must be able to speak to and hear each other. In addition, meetings which were required to be broadcast participants must also be able to see and be seen by each other.

In relation to a substitute attending a meeting remotely, a query was raised if they would also be required to be in attendance by the commencement of the meeting? It was added that there may be times whereby the technology would prevent an individual to be present before the start of the meeting. The Head of Democratic Services confirmed that in accordance with CPR 4 (12)(c) substitutes attending both physically and remotely would have to be present by the commencement of the meeting. However, it was recognised that elements of the CPR's may require a review following the introduction of multi-location attendance and that CRWG would be considering this during the course of the year.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL that the draft Multi-location Meeting Policy be approved.

7. TIMING OF MEETING SURVEY

The Committee received a report which provided the findings of the survey undertaken following the recent local government elections.

The Council, in accordance with the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, carried out a survey seeking Members preference in respect of the times and intervals at which meetings of a local authority were to be held.

Members noted that 53 members responded to the Timing of Meetings Survey which was open to all Elected Members to complete between 19th May 2022 and 30th May 2022.

Committee members considered the results of the survey appended to the report which signified that the majority of members would prefer meeting arrangements to remain as at present.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL that the Councils meeting arrangements remain as at present.

8. DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received and considered a suggested Forward Work Programme for the 2022/23 municipal year.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Democratic Services Committee 2022/23 Forward Work Programme be adopted.

CHAIR

DATE