

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

(Civic Centre, Port Talbot)

Members Present:

11th October, 2012

Chairman: Councillor Mrs.L.H.James

Vice Chairman: Councillor Ms.C.Morgans

Councillors: Mrs.R.Davies, C.P.Golding, M.Harvey, R.James,
E.E.Jones, R.G.Jones, C.Morgan and A.L.Thomas

Officers in Attendance: D.Michael, Mrs.K.Jones, N.Evans, Mrs.A.Manlipp
and A.Borthwick

1. MEMBER'S DECLARATION OF INTEREST

The following Member made a declaration of interest at the commencement of the meeting:-

Councillor A.L.Thomas - Agenda Item 4 – Report of the Head of Change Management and Innovation, as he works for an Assembly Member and item 4 refers to Welsh Government Consultation.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON THE 12TH JULY, 2012

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the Democratic Services Committee held on the 12th July 2012, as circulated, be confirmed as a correct record.

3. **MATTERS ARISING**

With regard to recommendation (c) of the Minutes of the last Committee meeting, due to the workload of the Afan Lido Task and Finish Group, the report on the provisions of the Local Government Measure relating to Overview and Scrutiny Committees would be submitted to the next meeting.

RECOMMENDED: that the matter be noted.

Report of the Chief Executive

4. **INTERIM HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

(Note: Mrs.K.Jones withdrew from the meeting during consideration of this item).

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) that, subject to approval by Council, Mrs.K.Jones (Head of Change Management and Innovation) be designated as Interim Head of Democratic Services;
- (b) that it be noted that a report regarding staffing issues would be submitted in due course.

Mrs. Jones then returned to the meeting and agreed to accept the Post of Interim Head of Democratic Services, subject to approval by Council.

Report of the Head of Change Management and Innovation

5. **ANALYSIS OF MEMBER SURVEY**

The circulated report contained details of the analysis of the Members' survey, wherein, it was noted that there had been a 64% response rate, from which the following comments had been received:

(a) Analysis of Timing Survey

The majority of Members were satisfied with the current Committee cycle and expressed a preference for both am and pm meetings. However several Members requested a change in time e.g. “twilight” meetings. Accordingly, a schedule of requests for alternative timing of meetings was tabled at the meeting, for Members’ information. Members then discussed the options available and the previous pilot scheme which had been undertaken.

RECOMMENDED: that, subject to approval by Council, both the Economic and Community Regeneration and the Social, Care Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee meetings and Cabinet Board meetings be held at revised start times, as a pilot project for 3 meetings.

(b) Training and Development Interviews

It was reported that 61% of those Members who had replied would be interested in participating in an Annual Review.

Accordingly enquiries would be made with suitable Organisations e.g. the WLGA, to act as facilitators.

It was suggested that a Task and Finish Group be established to progress the development of a programme of Training and Development for interested Members and thereafter undertake a pilot scheme.

RECOMMENDED: that, to develop the programme of training and development as outlined in the report, a Task and Finish Group be established, consisting of Councillors Mrs.L.H.James, E.E.Jones, R.G.Jones and A.L.Thomas.

6. MEMBER ROLE DESCRIPTIONS

An example of Member role descriptions developed by the WLGA, was contained in Appendix 2 to the circulated report, for Members’ information.

RECOMMENDED: that the report be noted.

7. **ANNUAL REPORT COMPILATION**

Details of a consultation document received from the WLGA, in conjunction with consultation information in relation to Scrutiny issues were contained in Appendix 3 to the circulated report, for Members' information.

Additionally, Appendix 4 of the circulated report contained guidance, from the WLGA, which specified the forms of information which could be, and also what was to be excluded, from the Members' Annual Reports. It was noted that training and support would be provided for Members to prepare for their annual reports.

Finally, it was clarified that under the Legislation, the reviews were not mandatory, only that the results must be made publicly available. Accordingly, enquiries would be made with possible facilitators e.g. the WLGA with regard to the preparation of these reports.

RECOMMENDED : that initially, case studies be prepared for submission to a future meeting of the Committee.

8. **DATABASE FOR MEMBER ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS**

Members noted that work had yet to commence on the development of the Members' database. The Committee provided examples of useful data that could assist with the preparation and future use of the database.

However, it was noted that a further report on this matter would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

RECOMMENDED: that preparation be undertaken on a draft database, for submission to a future meeting of the Committee.

CHAIRMAN