



DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

2.00 PM - THURSDAY, 12 FEBRUARY 2015

COMMITTEE ROOMS 1/2 - PORT TALBOT CIVIC CENTRE

PART 1

1. To receive any declarations of interest from Members
2. Minutes of the last meeting on 29 July 2014 (*Pages 1 - 4*)

To receive the Report of the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services

3. Role and Resources of the Head of Democratic Services (*Pages 5 - 8*)
4. Weekly Courier Service (*Pages 9 - 14*)
5. Modern Gov and Members IT Progress Update (*Pages 15 - 22*)
6. Member Development (*Pages 23 - 38*)
7. Corporate Assessment & Democratic Arrangements (*Pages 39 - 58*)
8. Webcasting of Council Meetings (*Pages 59 - 62*)
9. Democratic Services Committee Work Programme - To be tabled at the meeting
10. Any urgent items at the discretion of the Chairman pursuant to Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972

S.Phillips
Chief Executive

Committee Membership:

Chairman: Councillor Mrs.L.H.James

Vice Chairman: Councillor Ms.C.Morgans

Councillor: C.P.Golding, M.Harvey, E.E.Jones, R.G.Jones,
D.Lewis, J.D.Morgan, H.G.Rawlings, A.J.Siddley,
A.L.Thomas and A.N.Woolcock

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

(Civic Centre, Port Talbot)

Members Present:

29th July, 2014

Chairman: Councillor Mrs. L.H.James

Vice Chairman: Councillor Ms.C.Morgans

Councillors: M.Harvey, R.G.Jones, J.D.Morgan and A.N.Woolcock

Officers in Attendance: Mrs. K.Jones, S.John, R.George, N.Evans,
Ms. S.Sullivan and Mrs. A.Manchipp

1. **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON THE 31st JANUARY, 2014**

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the Democratic Service Committee held on the 31st January, 2014, as circulated, be confirmed as a correct record.

Matters Arising

2. **ANNUAL REPORTS BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

As an update to the last meeting, Members were advised that it was now possible to record the number of times each of the Member Annual Reports were viewed on the website.

In addition Members received an update on the number of reports received for 2013/14, and noted that copies had been placed in the Members' Room for information.

To date only a few draft Annual Reports had been received by Officers and the Committee discussed the options available to promote participation, such as letters to the Leaders of the Political Groups and supplying anonymised copies of last year's Annual Reports for information.

Members would also be reminded of the facility and that additional support/training would be provided to all Members who wished to participate. It was noted that Annual Reports for 2013/14 were still being accepted. Members noted that the Welsh Government had undertaken an all Wales survey in relation to the take up of Annual Reports by Members, a copy of which would be circulated to Committee once received.

3. **ANNUAL MEMBER DEVELOPMENT REVIEW SCHEME**

The Committee was advised that copies of extracts of the Authority's Constitution had been distributed and discussed at the Scrutiny Committee Workshops and that a Seminar on Governance Issues would be held in the Autumn, which would be repeated at an alternative time of day to ensure maximum attendance.

4. **WEBCASTING AND REMOTE ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS**

Members received an update on the above and in particular noted that the Authority was not against the principle of Webcasting, but that the funding provided by Welsh Government was a one off grant. As such the Authority felt it could not fund the ongoing costs of the scheme thereafter due to the severe austerity measures facing Welsh Local Government. In relation to Remote Attendance, it was felt that not only did it present technical problems but also governance issues which would need to be addressed prior to any further consideration.

Report of the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services

5. **MEMBER DEVELOPMENT**

The circulated report contained details of the work undertaken to update in relation to Member Development, in particular Members noted the work being carried out in developing Forward Work Programmes for Scrutiny Committees and Executive Cabinet Boards. Members were also advised that a dedicated member of staff had been identified to progress this work.

Members noted details of the Member Development Programme for 2014/15, as contained in the circulated report. During the discussions Members highlighted the following points:-

- The need to keep Members updated with developments/changes throughout the Authority - the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services confirmed that a monthly newsletter would shortly be issued to all Members;
- The lack of reference to training, etc. in the report to Regulatory Committees/Sub Committees – this was acknowledged;
- The need for IT training and how this would be best delivered in light of the range of IT abilities;
- The need to provide, where requested, paper copies of reports, etc;
- The new system in relation to all Member Seminars, allowing for better evaluation, which could be considered by this Committee, in conjunction with attendance figures and possible improvements;
- The possibility of providing an Intranet Information Portal for Members use which would also include links to the WLGA, etc - Officers advised that this was a function of the new Modern.Gov system being introduced in Democratic Services;
- That, for a trial period of 6 months, a day time and evening time session of key Member Seminars be held, where appropriate, and following the trial period it be assessed whether this be continued for all seminars;
- That future meetings of the Democratic Services Committee commence at 9am.

RESOLVED: that the above report be noted and that the points raised be taken forward.

6. **COMMITTEE/DECISION MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE SYSTEM 'MODERN.GOV' – PROGRESS UPDATE**

Members received a progress report in relation to the installation of the Modern.Gov system in Democratic Services. From the report it was noted that there was an anticipated 'go live date' of 19th September, 2014, although this was subject to review.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted, and that a Member Reference Group be established to have input into the installation of the 'Modern.Gov' system.

Report of the Head of ICT

7. **ICT FACILITIES AND SUPPORT FOR MEMBERS**

Members noted the above report in relation to ICT facilities and support for Members. From the report the following points, which were raised in the All Member Seminar on 20th May, were discussed:-

- Members IT Skills – there were various levels of IT competence within Council and in order to address this it was proposed that a Reference Group, made up of Members, be established, which would include Members of different levels of IT skills. This Reference Group would then consider the proposed priorities in relation thereto;
- IT Equipment and Resources – there was a need to review Members’ IT equipment through the Members’ IT Strategy with a view to providing the right equipment to enable Members to be more efficient and reduce the need for excess printing whilst balancing the security aspect;
- Social Media Queries and Issues – There was a need to provide Members with support and advice in dealing with these issues.

RESOLVED: that the above report be noted, the above actions endorsed and that a further progress report be submitted to the next meeting of Committee.

8. **DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE – WORK PROGRAMME/ACTION PLAN AS AT 29th JULY, 2014**

RESOLVED: that the above Work Programme/Action Plan for the Democratic Services Committee, as at 29th July 2014, be noted.

CHAIRMAN

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF CORPORATE STRATEGY AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES – K.JONES

12 February 2015

SECTION B – MATTER FOR INFORMATION

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

ROLE AND RESOURCES OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

Purpose of Report

To provide Members with an update in relation to the role and resources of the Head of Democratic Services in light of 2015/16 budget savings targets.

Background

As outlined in the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 each County and County Borough is required to designate one of their officers to the post of ‘Head of Democratic Services’ and provide that officer with sufficient support to undertake their role.

One of the core functions of the Head of Democratic Services is to:-

‘...to make reports and recommendations in respect of the number and grades of staff required to discharge Democratic Services functions and the appointment, organisation and proper management of those staff’.

Current Position

Due to the continued necessity to pursue savings targets as outlined in the 2015/16 budget it has been necessary to implement a number of changes to the staffing arrangements to the current structure of the Electoral and Democratic Services team.

With the cessation of two Scrutiny Officer secondments in December 2014, amendments to the organisational structure of the team have been required to create an administrative post to help provide additional support and capacity.

In addition, a new hybrid role of Democratic Services Officer has been created merging the previous posts of Member Service Officers and Scrutiny Officers into one new generic role. This will allow for greater resource flexibility within the team as well as helping to enhance the skill set and knowledge base of individual officers.

A copy of the new organisational structure adopted by the Head of Democratic Services is attached for Members information.

Financial Implications

Departmental budget savings will be achieved by changing the current organisational structure arrangement.

Recommendations

It is recommended as follows:-

- (a) That the above report be noted.

List of Background Papers

Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011

Statutory Guidance from the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011

Officer Contact

Mrs. Karen Jones, Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services

Tel: 01639 763284

E-mail: k.jones3@npt.gov.uk

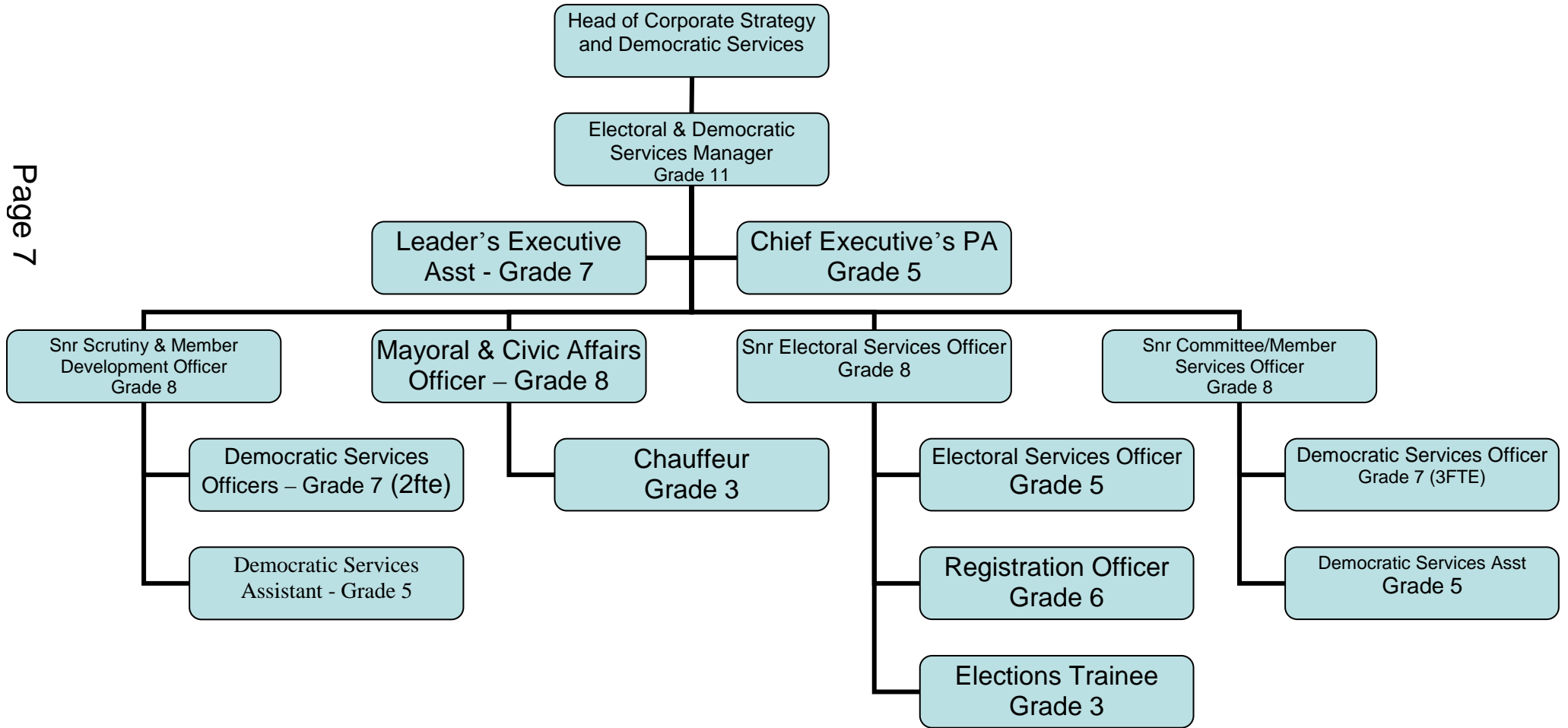
Mr. Rhys James George, Electoral and Democratic Services Manager

Tel: 01639 763719

E-mail: r.j.george@npt.gov.uk

Staffing Structure – 2015/16 Electoral and Democratic Services

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DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF CORPORATE STRATEGY AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES – K.JONES

12 FEBRUARY 2015

SECTION A – MATTER FOR DECISION

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

DELIVERY OF AGENDAS AND OTHER PAPERS TO MEMBERS – WEEKLY COURIER SERVICE

Purpose of Report

To remind councillors of their right to receive committee papers and to seek support for alternative options that will secure financial savings.

Background

Councillors who are summoned to attend meetings of the Authority are to be provided with a summons. Schedule 12, Paragraph 4 of the Local Government Act 1972 provides as follows:

“...a summons to attend the meeting...shall, subject to sub-paragraph (3) below, **be left at or sent to the usual place of residence of every member of the Council.**”

Historically, the Authority has provided a weekly courier service to the home address of each Councillor. The Friday courier service was initially intended to deliver actual summons to Councillors; however over the years this has slipped to include almost everything placed in a Councillor’s pigeon hole.

The Courier Service is expensive and in light of the difficult financial challenges facing the Authority, all arrangements need to be reviewed in order to try and seek a cheaper yet effective alternative.

Overtime costs alone are in the region of £10,000 per annum. There are also additional costs associated with the service due to fuel and vehicle costs.

The purpose of this report is to request the Council to consider alternatives to the current arrangement to secure the £10K savings already approved as part of the Council's budget setting process.

Whilst the statutory provision refers to the Councillors having papers delivered to their home address, the Act does provide for an alternative:

“...If a member of a principal council gives notice in writing to the proper officer of the council that he desires summonses to attend meetings of the council to be sent to him at some address specified in the notice other than his place of residence, any summons addressed to him and left at or sent by post to that address shall be deemed sufficient service of the summons.”

Use of Technology to Distribute Agendas

The Democratic Services team has been publishing agendas on-line and distributing electronic agendas via e-mail for a number of years. This is an effective and efficient way of distribution.

Following the recent acquisition of the Modern.Gov software system, an App on Apple and Android devices will be available to Members in due course, which will allow agendas, minutes and reports to be automatically downloaded direct to an individual's tablet computer.

The user would simply need to choose preferences and everything else is done in the App. This system means that once downloaded they sit on the tablet without the need for any connection at the meeting.

Technology appears to be the answer to many issues; however Councillors, Officers and the Public often favour a hard copy over an electronic copy. In part, this is due to the fact that it is habit to make notes on a hard copy whereas it can be complicated to make notes on electronic versions. There are software solutions available for this. Other reasons include confidence and competency in using new and emerging technologies.

Options to Consider

Option 1 – All Councillors give notice in writing stating that they wish to cease receiving agendas at their home address. The Authority can then cease to continue operating a courier service; and all Councillors will collect their agendas directly from their preferred Civic Centre location (i.e. Neath or Port Talbot). Additionally, electronic versions of the agendas will be available on-line and e-mailed directly to them.

Option 2 – The Authority establishes a voluntary opt out system whereby Councillors are encouraged to opt out of the Courier Service; however it is clearly their choice. These Councillors will have their agendas distributed to them electronically; however, hard copies will remain in their pigeon hole until they choose to collect it, or unless they confirm they no longer wish to receive hard copies of meeting papers.

Option 3 – Alternative suggestions to be provided by Council.

Equality Impact Assessment

A Screening Assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010. After completing the Screening Assessment, it has been determined that this policy does not require a Full Equality Impact Assessment and is considered unlikely to have any significant equality impact.

Financial Implications

Budget savings will be achieved by changing the current arrangement to the sum of £10K per annum.

Recommendations

It is recommended as follows:-

- (a) The Democratic Services Committee considers the options in this report and identifies a proposal that can be commended to Council.

Reasons for Proposed Decision

To review and assess alternative options for the weekly Courier Service.

List of Background Papers

Draft Letter to Members

Officer Contact

Mrs. Karen Jones, Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services

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Mr. Rhys James George, Electoral and Democratic Services Manager

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All Members of Council

Dear Member,

**DELIVERY OF AGENDAS AND OTHER PAPERS TO MEMBERS –
WEEKLY COURIER SERVICE**

As you may be aware due to the difficult financial challenges facing this authority, alternative arrangements for the provision of providing meeting papers to Members via the weekly courier service has been under review.

To provide you with some background information, historically the Authority has provided a courier service to the home address of each Councillor. The Friday courier 'run' was initially intended to deliver actual summons to Councillors; however over the years this has slipped to include almost everything placed in a Councillors pigeon hole.

Provision of this type of service is expensive and as such has been evaluated to try and seek a cheaper more effective alternative.

Following consultation it has now been decided by Council to establish a voluntary system whereby Councillors are encouraged to 'opt out' of the Courier Service; however this remains your **own** choice.

Continued overleaf

Those Councillors who choose to 'opt out' will instead have their agendas distributed to them electronically; however hard copies of the relevant papers will remain in their pigeon hole until you choose to collect it, or unless you confirm you no longer wish to receive hard copies.

As such I would be grateful if you could now complete, sign and return the attached pro-forma as soon as possible and by no later than 31 March 2015, to inform us of your wishes in relation to this matter.

Yours sincerely,



Karen Jones
Head of Corporate Strategy & Democratic Services

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF CORPORATE STRATEGY AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES – K.JONES

12 February 2015

SECTION A- MATTERS FOR DECISION

WARDS AFFECTED-ALL

'MODERN.GOV' AND MEMBERS IT PROGRESS UPDATE

Purpose of Report

- 1) To provide Members with an update in relation to the progress made with the installation and development of the new Software solution (Modern.Gov) which is assisting in modernising the Council's decision management processes.
- 2) To update Members in relation to progress made in exploring Members' IT support requirements since the last meeting of the Democratic Services Committee.

Background.

In the last meeting, the Committee received a progress report in relation to the installation of the 'Modern.Gov' software package. Since that meeting the system has 'gone live' and work to continue to develop the use and functionality of the system has been ongoing with Members and Officers. In order to achieve maximum benefits from the system the Committee recognised that work should be undertaken to ensure Members had the right level of skill and support. Members of the Committee agreed to participate in a workshop with other Members to take this forward.

Progress

As agreed in the last meeting of the Committee, a workshop was held on Members' IT where issues were discussed with the Head of ICT and the Modern.Gov system was demonstrated.

Feedback from Members who attended was positive and the group committed to continuing to meet when necessary to progress the Member IT agenda.

An action arising from this group was to hold a Members' IT Seminar. This was done on December 1st 2014 and included a demonstration of equipment available to Members at the Committee Rooms in Port Talbot as well as the opportunity to sign up to additional IT Training.

Disappointingly, the Seminar was poorly attended (24 Members) with a large number of Members missing and only a very low percentage have attended any supplementary training (12 Members).

The Modern.Gov system went live on October 24th 2014. To assist Members through the transition process a Members IT 'Hub' has been set up in the Democratic Services Office.

A selection of equipment has been set up (such as iPads and laptops) and Members are encouraged to drop in to the office to have an induction to the Mod.Gov system. Democratic Services staff can also support Members with specific issues in relation to Modern.Gov such as accessing reports.

Since the Modern.Gov system has gone live the following changes will be apparent:

- New design and layout of the 'Your Council' webpages;
- The creation of committee 'packs';
- Auto pagination of papers resulting in clearer page numbering and the removal of coloured paper resulting in a significant cost saving; and
- More clarity in the titles of reports on the face of agendas referring to the subject of the report instead of being title as simply 'Report of the Head of...'

Thus far, those Members who have used the system have provided very positive feedback as well as constructive criticism and advice which has allowed for improvements and changes to be made to the system. This assistance has been invaluable and additional feedback is encouraged as the system continues to develop.

For those Members who have accessed the new system online the following functionality can now be observed:

- New Member Profile pages (which include linkable contact details, committee membership and where additional links to surgery information, annual reports etc. can be found.)
- Live interactive calendar of meetings which provides Council meeting information for that week/month/year and is updated instantly when any changes are made; and
- Online access to all meeting papers (current and retrospective)

The system has more functionality which is yet to be enabled but the next phase is likely to include:

- Publishing Members' apologies (following the Annual Meeting a new process of receiving apologies for meetings will be agreed to ensure that they are accurately captured in the system);

-Publishing Members' attendance. This function is currently disabled as the information is not currently accurate due to Modern.Gov only showing meeting information since its October 'go live' date. Following the Annual Meeting in May, Members' Attendance will be captured and recorded on the system and will be portrayed via the Member Profile Pages.

One of the next major steps in progressing the Modern.Gov system is the activation of the automatic email notifications which will enable Members to be emailed a link to the papers for relevant meetings as soon as they are available. This will allow papers to be viewed immediately rather than wait for delivery via the courier run. In advance of switching e mail notifications on, it is essential that all members can access the system confidently and competently.

The Democratic Services Committee are asked to support the introduction of email notifications from the beginning of the next Civic Year with each Member given responsibility for accessing the necessary support to operate the system over the interim period. Included in Appendix 1 is a draft letter to be circulated to all Members informing them of the changes for the Committee's comments and endorsement.

It would be of assistance if the Committee could provide any further suggestions to maximise the engagement of Members on this project.

Recommendation

- 1) That Members of the Democratic Services Committee note the progress made in the installation and development of the Modern.Gov decision management software.
- 2) That Members of the Democratic Services Committee agree and endorse the proposal to switch on email notifications.
- 3) The Members of the Democratic Services Committee endorse the content of the letter attached at Appendix 1 to be circulated to Members.
- 4) In order to fully consider how the additional functionality of Modern.Gov can be implemented to suit Members needs it is recommended that Members of the Democratic Services Committee formalise the establishment of a Member Reference Group of representative and interested members so that the next phase of the systems implementation can be planned in accordance with Members' needs.

List of Background Papers

Modern.Gov – Local Government Decision Management Software Solution
<http://www.modern.gov.co.uk>

Wards Affected

All

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Mrs Karen Jones, Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services Tel: 01639 763284 e-mail: k.jones3@npt.gov.uk

Mr Rhys George, Electoral & Democratic Services Manager
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Ms. Stacy Sullivan Change Management and Innovation Officer
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Appendix 1

Dear Member,

MODERNISING DEMOCRATIC ARRANGEMENTS – MODERN.GOV

‘ENABLING EMAIL NOTIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERS.’

You will remember that I recently write to you informing you of the transition within the Democratic Services Team onto a new committee management software system which ‘went live’ in October 2014.

I provided you with some background to the new system, which is known as ‘Modern.Gov’ which offers the Authority a more efficient way to collate, prepare and publish all types of committee agendas, reports and minutes as well as papers for other meetings.

In addition, I informed you that the system will provide a robust foundation to allow, in due course, Members to more easily access and manage their diary and weekly Council papers utilising their current PC, laptop or iPad in ways which currently are not possible.

The introduction of the Modern.Gov system was a key part of the ongoing commitment to modernise and improve democratic arrangements of the authority as was laid out in the 2 July 2014, Council Report of the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services.

As part of the transition to the new system you may have already started to notice some changes, these have included:

- A new look to the Council and Democracy webpages
- A new and improved ‘search’ functionality for documents
- Improved Member Profile Pages with links to Member information such as Annual Reports and surgery details
- An online interactive Calendar of meetings
- Report Cover Agendas and Agenda Indexes being replaced with a more straightforward ‘All-In-One’ Agenda template
- Inclusion of consecutive Page Numbering on all Agendas, Reports & Minutes

- Printing all Council Documents on White Paper (as opposed to headed and coloured paper) allowing for significant stationery cost savings

The next step in allowing us to increase the functionality of the system is to switch on automatic email notifications, which will involve Members of Committees receiving automatic email notifications when the papers for their relevant Committees are ready and will include an email link to all your papers which will be bundled into a single comprehensive electronic document pack. This will allow Members to access their papers as soon as they are published, rather than having to wait to receive them in their courier mail run on Fridays

In order to make the most of this new and extremely useful function it is imperative that Members have full confidence and ability in using email and internet functions. If you feel you would benefit from training to allow you to better understand email and internet please don't hesitate to get in touch with my colleague Stacy Sullivan in the Democratic Services Team (s.sullivan@npt.gov.uk 01639 763194) who will be more than happy to arrange training for you.

Similarly, while we are going through a period of change and development with new digital services becoming available to you as Members, we have set up a 'Members Hub' in the Democratic Services Office whereby a range of IT equipment that is available to you as Members has been set up on a work station so that you can drop in at any time and be given 1-1 advice from a member of the team who can talk through any issues you may have with the new system and accessing reports on the equipment that you are comfortable and familiar with and I would urge you to take up this offer if you feel it would assist you in any way whilst you get to grips with the new system.

I must emphasise that we will still continue to provide Members with all papers they currently receive in hard copy format via the courier run service. In due course, once the new system is properly established we will, following approval, begin to approach Members to ask if they wish to continue to receive their papers in hard copy format or would prefer to 'opt out' and only receive their papers electronically. In essence, the choice will remain yours as to how you would like to receive your Council papers.

I will of course keep you informed of progress in relation to the new system, in the meantime if you have any specific questions regarding 'Modern.Gov' or any other queries or concerns you may have around the modernising of the Council's democratic arrangements please do not hesitate to contact me or anyone in the team.

Yours faithfully,
Rhys George
(Electoral and Democratic Services Manager)

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DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF CORPORATE STRATEGY AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES – K.JONES

12 February 2015

SECTION A – MATTERS FOR DECISION

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

Purpose of Report

- 1) To update the Democratic Services Committee on the progress made in relation to Member Development
- 2) To discuss and propose items to be included in the programme for the new Civic Year 2015/16.

Background

A report on Strengthening and Modernising Democratic Arrangements in Neath Port Talbot was taken to Modernisation Group on April 25th 2014, was the focus of an All-Member Seminar on May 20th 2014 and was endorsed by full Council on 2nd July 2014.

The report recognised the Council's track record of providing a range of opportunities for Members to improve their knowledge and understanding of issues that affect their roles and responsibilities.

However, it recognised that there is scope for these arrangements to be better co-ordinated; better aligned to forward work programmes and for Members to have greater involvement in setting the programme. In the last meeting of the Democratic Services Committee, Members received an update in relation to Member Development and were keen to receive reports back on the programme and progress therein.

The Wales Audit Office Corporate Assessment of Neath Port Talbot Council in January 2015 recommended that ‘establish a skills training programme which supports Members to discharge their roles and responsibilities effectively.’

Progress

The following changes have been made since the last meeting of the Committee:

Briefing notes have been circulated on forthcoming seminars which aim to provide Members with better information about the seminar objectives to help Members assess how the content will meet their learning and development needs;

Evaluation forms have been distributed for completion following each session so that valuable feedback can be collected and used to improve the programme. Feedback has been received which has influenced the logistics of the Seminar programme such as heating, lighting, timing and venues. Similarly, feedback has been provided to the providers of the training in relation to the detail of the presentation or certain queries being clarified to Members themselves. Varying times and venues have been trialled for some Member Seminars (such as 5pm starts and using the Princess Royal Theatre.)

The Member Development Programme for 15/16 is currently under development. The Democratic Services Committee has previously discussed the importance of Members taking a greater role in determining the programme with input from key stakeholders (such as the Leadership and the Chairs and Vice Chairs of Scrutiny forum.) It would be of assistance if the Committee could provide a steer on the way in which its Members would wish to be involved in the development work going forward.

It is anticipated that the programme would be based on the below:

- The outputs of the second round of Annual Development Reviews for Members in line with the scheme as revised by the Democratic Services Committee in 2013/14;
- Identifying priority needs linked to the development of the Scrutiny and Cabinet Forward Work Programmes;
- Responding to recommendations made by the Wales Audit Office following the Corporate Assessment of the Council.
- Emerging legislation and policy matters
- Addressing identified risks and issues.

The WLGA has lost an element of its funding so will be unable to provide support for Member Development as they have done in previous years. The Council has retained some funding to support Member Development (£40,000). It is important that activity is focussed on targeted areas that will provide most value to Members.

Additionally it is proposed that an annual survey of Members is introduced which would aim to draw out suggestion for improving Member Development opportunities within the Council; for example venues used for learning and development and use of e-resources.

To support the above activities, work has been re allocated within Democratic Services so that there is dedicated capacity to support Member Development on a more robust footing.

Recommendations

- 1) That Members of the Democratic Services Committee consider areas that might be included in the Member Development programme for the 15/16 civic year.
- 2) That the Committee indicates how it might be involved in the creation and design of a suitable Member Survey to progress Member support and development matters
- 3) That Members of the Democratic Services Committee promote the participation in the second round of Annual Development Reviews for Members in line with the scheme as revised by the Democratic Services Committee in 2013/14

List of Background Papers

Democratic Process- Strengthening and Modernising Arrangements in Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council. Council. July 2014.

Council Report-WAO Corporate Assessment of Neath Port Talbot Council, January 2015.

Appendix 1- Draft Member Development Programme Model.

Officer Contact

Mrs Karen Jones, Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services

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Mr Rhys George, Electoral and Democratic Services Manager

Tel; 01639 763719 e-mail r.j.george@npt.gov.uk

Ms. Stacy Sullivan Change Management and Innovation Officer

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APPENDIX 2

(DRAFT- NO STATUS) Member Development Programme
2014/15

Before August Recess

Topic:	Objective:	Method:	Date:	Venue:
Forward Financial Plan	To provide members with an updated Forward Financial Plan position covering the period 2015-16 to 2017-18	All Member Seminar	3pm, 14 th July 2014	Council Chamber, Port Talbot Civic Centre.
Forward Financial Plan	To provide members with an updated Forward Financial Plan position covering the period 2015-16 to 2017-18	All Member Seminar	5.30pm, 17 th July 2014	Council Chamber, Port Talbot Civic Centre.
Individual Electoral Registration	To enable Members to be briefed on the key information about Individual	All Member Seminar	10am, 18 th July 2014	Council Chamber, Port Talbot Civic Centre.

	<p>Electoral Registration (IER): the biggest change to how people register to vote in almost a century.</p>			
<p>Planning (Wales) Bill</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •To consider the proposed changes defined within the Planning (Wales) Bill •To consider how these changes will impact upon the structure and operation of the Planning and Development Control Committee within Neath Port Talbot 	<p>All Member Seminar</p>	<p>9am, 22nd July 2014</p>	<p>Council Chamber, Port Talbot Civic Centre.</p>

RECESS- AUGUST 2014

September- December 2014

Topic:	Objective:	Method:	Date:	Venue:
Children's Services- Referrals, Complaints and understanding the process of taking a child into care.	Councillors are sometimes approached by members of the public who have contact with Children & Young People Services in Neath Port Talbot with claims that the Social Worker has taken away their children in unjust circumstances. It is important that Councillors	All Member Briefing	3 rd September 2014	Council Chamber

	understand the powers that Social Workers have and do not have in such circumstances and the process that must be gone through before children are removed from parents care.			
Equalities Event		Partner Event Open to Members	18 th September 2014	Princess Royal Theatre
Annual Development Review Refresher Training	To provide refresher training to ADR reviewers on the process	ADR Trainers only	24 th September 2014	Council Chamber
Forward Financial Plan	To provide members with an updated Forward Financial Plan position covering	All Member Seminar	25 th September 2014	Council Chamber

	the period 2015-16 to 2017-18			
Equality Impact Assessment WLGA Training	To provide targeted Equality Impact Assessment Training to Cabinet Members	Cabinet Members	2 nd October 2014	Committee Room 3
Committee Procedure	The Seminar was a result of requests by Members for training on Committee Procedure within the Council. The Seminars were basic training on Committee procedures and scrutiny arrangements.	All Member Briefings (x3)	1 st , 7 th and 10 th October 2014	Neath Civic Centre and the Chamber

New Social Work Model	To inform Members about the principles of the engagement process and provide Members with further information.	All Member Briefing	17 th October 2014	Council Chamber
Equality Impact Assessments Roles and Responsibilities	To provide targeted training on Equality Impact Assessments and the members' roles and responsibilities.	All Member Briefing	21 st October 2014	Council Chamber
Community Funds		All Member Briefing	18 th November 2014	Council Chamber
Members IT	To demonstrate the new Mod.Gov system to members and to provide demonstrations	All Member Briefing and equipment demonstration	1 st December 2014	Council Chamber & Committee Rooms

	of the kit available to members.			
Draft Housing Allocation Policy	To provide an update to Members on the new Policy.	All Member Briefing	8 th December 2014	Council Chamber
ERW (Education through Regional Working)	The seminar was presented by Betsan O'Connor, Managing Director of ERW, the aim of which is to have an informal discussion with Members regarding collaborative working across the region and the Regional Strategy.	All Member Briefing	18 th December 2014	Council Chamber

January- April 2015

Proposed Response to WG Consultation on the Planning Bill.	The seminar was to enable Members to consider the proposed changes defined within the Planning (Wales) Bill and to consider how these changes will impact upon the structure and operation of the Planning and Development Control Committee within Neath Port Talbot.	All Member Briefing	13 th January 2015	Council Chamber
Budget	This seminar was to update Members on the Budget setting	All Member Briefing	16 th January 2015	Council Chamber

	<p>arrangements and proposals</p> <p>This seminar was a follow up to the Closing the Budget Gap Seminar of 19 September 2014 and the Cabinet report of 1 October 2014</p>			
Human Trafficking	<p>To raise awareness about the exploitation of human beings and to understand your organisations role and responsibility in tackling human trafficking.</p>	All Member Briefing	<p>22nd January 2015</p> <p>(Repeat)5th February 2015</p>	Council Chamber

Public Health Wales	To give an overview of health in NPT, progress being made, and the action we still need to see to improve outcomes for local people. The overview will be made as a presentation , with opportunities for members to ask questions and contribute. The second part will focus on how Scrutiny can focus action where it may be needed, and to	All Member Briefing	27 th January 2015	Princess Royal Theatre
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	explore possible themes that Scrutiny Committees may wish to pick up.			
Western Bay Scrutiny	TBC	All Member Briefing	23 rd February 2015	Princess Royal Theatre
Direct Payments and the Independent Living Fund	TBC	All Member Briefing	19 th March 2015	Council Chamber
Universal Credit	TBC	All Member Briefing	March 24 th 2015	Council Chamber
Learning & Development needs identified from ADRs	TBC	TBC	TBC	
ICT Training Needs	TBC	TBC	TBC	
Learning & Development needs related to FFP	TBC	TBC	TBC	

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF CORPORATE STRATEGY AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES – MRS K JONES

12 February 2015

SECTION B – MATTER FOR INFORMATION WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

CORPORATE ASSESSMENT AND DEMOCRATIC ARRANGEMENTS

Purpose of Report

To update the Democratic Services Committee on the progress made in relation to the proposals for improvement outlined in the WAO Corporate Assessment.

Background

On 14th January 2015, Council received a presentation from the Wales Audit Office on the outcome of the Corporate Assessment undertaken in June 2014. A number of proposals for improvement within the Wales Audit Report were addressed at the Council's democratic arrangements.

Enclosed is the Wales Audit Office report on the Corporate Assessment and the action plan (drawn up by officers to respond to the proposals for improvement) agreed by Council.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications.

Recommendations:

It is recommended as follows:-

- (a) That the above report and relevant appendices be noted.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Corporate Assessment Action Plan

List of Background Papers

Neath Port Talbot CBC Annual Improvement Report including Corporate Assessment – November 2014

Officer Contact

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**WALES AUDIT OFFICE CORPORATE ASSESSMENT OF NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNCIL 2014
ACTION PLAN**

Ref	Proposal for Improvement	Actions	Lead Officer	End Date	Status			Comment
					Complete	Part Complete	Not Started	
Governance								
P1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a skills training programme which supports members to discharge their roles and responsibilities effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised format for Member Seminars introduced 	CS/DS	Complete	X			
Page 41		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refresher training for Members undertaking ADRs with other Members completed 		Complete	X			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey of all Members to be conducted to identify development priorities for civic year 2015/16 		30.4.15			X	Work to be led by Democratic Services Committee in early 2015

Ref	Proposal for Improvement	Actions	Lead Officer	End Date	Status			Comment
					Complete	Part Complete	Not Started	
Page 42	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce formal appraisal of the roles of Cabinet Members and Committee Chairs as a means of driving skills development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft scheme developed by the WLGA has been considered and it has been decided that no further action will be taken at this time to introduce formal appraisal. Other mechanisms will be employed to ensure Members access the development that they need. 	CS/DS	Included in P1				
	P2	Revised scrutiny arrangements to establish a more balanced range of scrutiny activity, produce a forward programme to enable planning and coordination of activity and end time-consuming practices that lack impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forward work programmes established for each committee and published Pre-decision work now operating on a 	CS/DS	Complete	X		
				Complete	X			

Ref	Proposal for Improvement	Actions	Lead Officer	End Date	Status			Comment
					Complete	Part Complete	Not Started	
Page 43		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> selective basis Evaluation of changes to scrutiny to be undertaken towards the end of the civic year to identify further priorities for improvement 		30.4.15		X		
	P3	Provide comprehensive and accessible information about the business conducted by the Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replacement committee administration system "Modern.gov" went live October 2014 Forward work programmes now in place for all scrutiny committees and cabinet boards 	CS/DS	Complete	X		

Ref	Proposal for Improvement	Actions	Lead Officer	End Date	Status			Comment
					Complete	Part Complete	Not Started	
Page 44		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised procedures introduced to enable the publication of minutes in a more timely way Procedures to record decisions taken by officers under delegated authority to be reviewed 		Complete	X			
				30.9.15			X	
P4	<p>Improve whistle blowing by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarifying reporting arrangements Bringing together the information currently held in different documents Giving more information about safeguards that the council will provide to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The policy and procedure will be reviewed in line with WAO advice and amalgamated into one document The accessibility of the policy will be reviewed, again in line 	HR	30.06.15			X	

Ref	Proposal for Improvement	Actions	Lead Officer	End Date	Status			Comment
					Complete	Part Complete	Not Started	
	employees under the arrangements	with WAO advice						
Performance Management								
P5	Ensure programme delivery expectations are based on a realistic assessment of resources available – especially in the Transforming Adult Social Care Programme and Regeneration Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The scope and aims of the two priority programmes will be reviewed as part of the annual development of the Corporate Improvement Plan and confirmation that sufficient resources are available to deliver the agreed, revised programme will be part of that review 	CDG	31.3.15		X		
P6	Place a focus on poorer performing schools to drive and sustain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This proposal for improvement is already 	DELLL	Complete	X			

Ref	Proposal for Improvement	Actions	Lead Officer	End Date	Status			Comment
					Complete	Part Complete	Not Started	
Page 46	improvements having regard to the levels of performance expected for schools in Wales with similar levels of deprivation	<p>accommodated within the Corporate Improvement Priority “Better Schools, Brighter Prospects”.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced scrutiny and monitoring arrangements have been identified to enable Members to have a greater insight into performance at school level 		31.3.15	X			
	P7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement proposed performance reporting improvements to bring together information in a way that allows the council to evaluate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post-implementation review of progress in developing report cards at 	CS/DS & FS	30.4.15		X	

Ref	Proposal for Improvement	Actions	Lead Officer	End Date	Status			Comment
					Complete	Part Complete	Not Started	
Page 47	whether it is making effective use of its resources	<p>accountable manager level to be carried out in early 2015</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate performance and resource dashboard developed 		31.3.15		X		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce performance review arrangements that enable evaluation of the contribution of internal trading agencies to the achievement of the council's objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrangements to ensure systematic review of the operation of internal trading agencies to be considered 		31.5.15			X	
Financial Planning								
P8	Improve financial planning and monitoring by combining financial and performance information more effectively, particularly reinforcing links between	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised budget monitoring arrangements have been introduced and will be subject to continuous 	CS/DS & FS	Complete	X			

Ref	Proposal for Improvement	Actions	Lead Officer	End Date	Status			Comment
					Complete	Part Complete	Not Started	
	the Forward Financial Plan and Business Plans	improvement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timetabling of budget and performance monitoring subject of review with the aim of securing better integration 		30.4.15		X		
Page 48	Clarify the corporate policy on income generation and charging to ensure a consistent approach to concessions and target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare corporate policy on income generation and charging 	FS	30.09.15			X	.

Ref	Proposal for Improvement	Actions	Lead Officer	End Date	Status			Comment
					Complete	Part Complete	Not Started	
P10	Improve reporting of financial information to assist understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The implications of savings plans and additional pressures on the quality and range of services especially those services which support improvement priorities • The links between budget reports and the Forward Financial Plan to explain the impact on the savings target and risk assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covered in actions taken regarding P8 	FS	On-going				
P11	Review Accounting Instructions and Financial Regulations to ensure they reflect the latest working practices and Council policies and communicate requirements to staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review started 	FS	On-going		X		Review started before the corporate assessment and will be on-going, each of the Accounting Instruction's needs to be continually reviewed periodically.

Ref	Proposal for Improvement	Actions	Lead Officer	End Date	Status			Comment
					Complete	Part Complete	Not Started	
Human Resources								
P12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure full adoption by December 2015 of an appraisal process that ensures staff are equipped to do their jobs and enables people to be held to account 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chief Officer appraisal process was implemented in 2014. An end of year review of process will take place post 31st March 2015, to ensure fit for purpose. Roll out to Accountable Managers has begun. Appraisal process for wider workforce to be developed and implemented during 2015. 	HR	31.12.15		X		
				31.12.15		X		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement an induction process and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Corporate Induction 						

Ref	Proposal for Improvement	Actions	Lead Officer	End Date	Status			Comment
					Complete	Part Complete	Not Started	
Page 51	ensure new staff are briefed on corporate expectations.	process is in place – The Induction Checklist. This will be reviewed in line with WAO expectations. It will be determined if this can be linked to on line learning as part of the re-launch of the Checklist.						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a Workforce Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VISION development, under the Efficiency Programme Board aims to establish the collation of accurate workforce data 		30.4.15		X		

Ref	Proposal for Improvement	Actions	Lead Officer	End Date	Status			Comment
					Complete	Part Complete	Not Started	
Page 52		to enable managers to workforce plan as part of the Business Planning process. Data cleansing of the establishment data held on the VISION system will be completed by 30/4/15 and to enable the provision of accurate post data.						
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Corporate Improvement Plan will set out the actions the Council plans to take to improve its workforce planning 		31.3.15		X		

Ref	Proposal for Improvement	Actions	Lead Officer	End Date	Status			Comment
					Complete	Part Complete	Not Started	
Asset Management								
P13	Update the Asset Management Plan so that it acts as a point of reference for the next five years and corresponds more closely to current priorities set out in the Council's Corporate Improvement Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan to be revised and aligned to the Corporate Improvement Plan 	DENV	30.09.15			X	
P14	Ensure asset management consideration is included within Service Business Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business planning guidance to be revised and reissued 	DENV	31.03.05			X	
P15	Formalise arrangements for the Strategic Asset Management Working Group by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Producing a terms of reference and stating expected corporate working practices (based on existing custom and practice); 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Terms of reference and reporting lines to be established 	DENV	31.03.15			X	

Ref	Proposal for Improvement	Actions	Lead Officer	End Date	Status			Comment
					Complete	Part Complete	Not Started	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> and Produce an indicative annual work programme, and produce notes of decisions made by the Group 							
Information Technology and Information Management								
P16	Ensure the Information Technology Strategy identifies and mitigates risks arising from reduced staff resources	Incorporated into the Service Business Plan	ICT	Complete	X			
P17	Finalise the Council's Information Strategy and communicate this to all staff	Final draft to be presented to Members for approval	ICT	31.03.15		X		
P18	Provide an annual report on information management and information governance matters to members to enable them to evaluate performance and the effectiveness of arrangements	Annual report to be produced alongside annual data protection report	ICT / LS	31.03.15		X		

Ref	Proposal for Improvement	Actions	Lead Officer	End Date	Status			Comment
					Complete	Part Complete	Not Started	
Collaboration								
P19	Engage with key partners to establish a programme of community capacity building to support alternative methods of service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussions have been initiated with the WCVA and NPTCVS to identify opportunities for developing further options for service delivery 	C EX	31.5.15		X		
P20	Further develop reporting arrangements to enable evaluation of the effectiveness and sustainability of collaborative activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced arrangements have been established to monitor the effectiveness of the ERW arrangements Discussions are taking place to put scrutiny of the Western Bay collaborative on an enhanced 	CS/DS	Complete 30.4.15	X			

Ref	Proposal for Improvement	Actions	Lead Officer	End Date	Status			Comment
					Complete	Part Complete	Not Started	
Page 56		footing		Complete	X			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scrutiny forward work programmes contained selected topics for scrutinising the work of the Local Service Board Scrutiny Members will be surveyed to establish what improvements to information they would wish to commission to their scrutiny of the large partnership contracts in place with Grwp Gwalia, NPT 						

Ref	Proposal for Improvement	Actions	Lead Officer	End Date	Status			Comment
					Complete	Part Complete	Not Started	
		Homes and Celtic Leisure						

Key:

CDG	Corporate Directors Group
C EX	Chief Executive
CS/DS	Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services
DELLL	Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning
ENV	Director of Environment
FS	Head of Financial Services
HR	Head of Human Resources
ICT	Head of Information and Communication Technology
LS	Head of Legal Services

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DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF CORPORATE STRATEGY AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES – K.JONES

12 February 2015

SECTION B – MATTER FOR INFORMATION

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

WEBCASTING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS

Purpose of Report

To provide Members with a further update in relation to the Welsh Government grant funding made available to support the development of webcasting of council meetings.

Background

In February, 2013, the Welsh Government wrote to local authorities notifying them of specific grant funding that it had decided to make available to modernise democratic arrangements. Specifically:

- To enable councils to make particular arrangements to broadcast council meetings;
- Introduce remote attendance at council meetings; and
- Assist community councils to publish information on and be contactable through the Internet.

The conditions of the grant funding were drafted in such a way that councils would need to deliver on all three of these developments in order to secure any of the grant funding. The total grant available to Neath Port Talbot Council was £49,500.

To secure the grant the Council was required to:

- Broadcast some/all of the council meetings by 31 March 2014;
- Provide funding to community councils to assist them with the development of their websites by 31 March 2014.
- Arrange for remote attendance by councillors at council meetings by 31 March 2014.

Following an exchange of correspondence with Welsh Government, officers received written confirmation that it would be possible to distribute the funding to Town and Community councils even if this Council chose not to proceed to use the funding allocated for broadcasting and remote attendance.

Progress and current position

The Council decided in Policy and Resources Cabinet Board of 11 July 2013, following scrutiny that it did not wish to proceed with the introduction of webcasting due to the fact that there was no recurring additional funding available to support the maintenance of these activities and Council budgets were already under significant pressure. In relation to remote attendance at meeting by Members this was also rejected due to the lack of demand for the facility in this area and again due to issues of cost.

However, the Council did agree that arrangements should be put in place to disperse the ring-fenced £9,500 in grant aid to Town and Community Councils for the development of websites.

Following the decision of the Council, the Chief Executive, Mr Steven Phillips, formally wrote to the Welsh Government on 1 August, 2013, confirming the Council's decision to return the allocated grant funding of £40,000.

During the Summer of 2014, the Welsh Government began to investigate the possibility of pursuing a single contract arrangements for all local authorities who wished to pursue an All-Wales webcasting arrangement from April 2015 onwards.

On 12 November 2014, the Council was informed by Welsh Government that following discussions with suppliers and representatives of the National Procurement Service, the decision had been taken not to pursue a national contract.

This was due to difficulties surrounding the level of interest in the agreement, contract duration, as well as the added complication of EU procurement rules. In addition, it was felt that due to the significant budget pressures facing local authorities at the moment, the level of political commitment to this type of project remained highly uncertain.

On 3 February 2015, Welsh Government published a White Paper that proposed to introduce a requirement to broadcast Council meetings at some future date.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications.

Recommendations

It is recommended as follows:-

- (a) That the above report be noted.

List of Background Papers

Report of the Head of Democratic Services and Corporate Strategy –
Webcasting and Remote Attendance at Meetings (31 January 2014)

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