

## DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

(Civic Centre, Port Talbot)

**Members Present:**

**29<sup>th</sup> 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

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1. **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON THE 31<sup>st</sup> JANUARY, 2014**

**RESOLVED:** that the Minutes of the Democratic Service Committee held on the 31<sup>st</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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 29<sup>th</sup> JULY, 2014**

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

**CHAIRMAN**