

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

(Committee Rooms 1/2, Civic Centre, Port Talbot)

Members Present:

1 July, 2016

Chairperson: Councillor Ms.C.Morgans

Councillors: M.Harvey, A.Jenkins, E.E.Jones, R.G.Jones,
J.D.Morgan, Mrs.K.Pearson and A.N.Woolcock

Officers In Attendance Mrs.K.Jones, S.John, N.Evans and
Mrs.A.Manchipp

1. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 DECEMBER 2015**

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the meeting held on 18
December, 2015, be confirmed as a correct record.

2. **MEMBER FACILITIES**

Committee received the report of the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services regarding the improvements to the Members' facilities in Port Talbot Civic Centre to date. Details of planned improvements for the Members' Room and the Political Group Rooms in Port Talbot Civic Centre and the rooms in the Civic Centre Neath were also noted.

Members were pleased with the work carried out to date, however concern was expressed at the problems being experienced by the Planning Committee and the problem accommodating the public who attend the meeting. In addition the setting up of the room was sometimes an issue.

With regard to the Members' rooms, the Committee suggested that in place of the current set up/furniture, workstations be provided for Members to include computer access and i pad charging stations.

The Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services agreed to look at what could be provided within the limited budget available.

3. **MEMBER SURVEY**

Members received a progress report in relation to the Members' survey carried out in the Summer of 2015 and noted that a workshop had been held, to which all Members of the Committee had been invited.

As a result of the workshop 4 priority areas had been identified, as follows:-

- Members Induction Programme for 2017;
- The development of a local Councillors' guide for all prospective candidates in 2017 Local Government Elections;
- Member Development Programme;
- Members IT.

RESOLVED: that the 4 priority areas, as outlined above, be adopted for 2016/17 and that Committee receive regular progress reports thereon.

4. **PROGRESS ON MEMBERS IT AND MOD.GOV SYSTEM**

Following Council's approval of the Members' Remuneration and Expenses for 2016/17 and the updated Members' IT Scheme, on 30 March 2016, Committee was advised that a letter had been distributed to all Members inviting them to participate in the scheme. To date 22 Members had responded positively. Work would commence shortly, inviting small cohorts of Members to receive training and to receive their i pad.

Committee requested that a second letter be circulated to all Members advising that training/support would be provided for those opting to use an i pad, and that IT Champions would be identified to assist where necessary.

The Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services advised Members of a funding stream which had recently been identified, at a Digital Literacy meeting with Trade Union representatives, to

establish a project to train staff who would in turn then be able to train and support elected Members.

The Committee also felt that those Members who had not agreed to take up the offer of an i pad should be approached and asked why.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted and that Officers address the points raised above.

5. **MEMBER IT REFERENCE GROUP**

The Committee noted the current Terms of Reference of the Members IT Reference Group, as contained in Appendix A to the circulated report, and considered whether the Group should continue and whether the Terms of Reference remained fit for purpose.

Members agreed that the IT Reference Group should also be highlighted in the letter referred to in Minute No 4 above as a source of further support to Members.

RESOLVED:

1. that the Reference Group should remain in place particularly as the Authority had adopted a Digital By Choice Strategy and that the existing Terms of Reference be amended to reflect the view of the Councillors that Membership of the Group be open to all Members and the review of the Group be extended to 12 months time;
2. that details of the Reference Group be contained in the All Member letter to be circulated, see Minute No 4 above, as a further source of support to Members.

6. **MEMBER DEVELOPMENT, ANNUAL DEVELOPMENT REVIEWS AND ANNUAL REPORTS**

Members considered the report of the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services in relation to the above and expressed concern at the low level of attendance at Seminars and training sessions. Members requested that any presentations given at Seminars/training sessions be made available to those Members

unable to attend and that e learning be given greater priority. Members were advised that presentations etc could be found via the Members hub on the Authority's Intranet. Members also viewed a demonstration of the All Wales Academy Learning Pool which was an online learning portal. Committee therefore requested that a link to the Members' hub be included in the letter referred to in Minute No 4 above.

In relation to the Members' Annual Development Reviews Members generally felt that they were not beneficial. As such an alternative scheme should be identified.

In relation to Members' Annual Reports, Members asked for details on the number of 'hits' they received on the Council's internet.

Committee also discussed advertising their surgeries on the Authority's website and while some Members found this of benefit, some Members did not.

- RESOLVED**
1. that Officers identify an alternative framework for the Member Annual Development Reviews, for example APSE, as the current Scheme does not take into account the political nature of Members personal/political development;
 2. that the number of 'hits' Members' Annual Reports receive on the Authority's website be reported back to Members;
 3. that a link to the Members' Hub be included in the letter to be sent to all Members, Minute No 4 above refers.

7. **MEMBER INDUCTION 2017**

Members considered the above report on Member Induction for 2017.

RESOLVED: that a Task and Finish Group be established to discuss the Member Induction following the 2017 Local Government elections, comprising of the following Members:

Councillors: Mrs.L.H.James, A.Jenkins, E.E.Jones,
R.Jones J.D.Morgan and
Mrs K.Pearson.

CHAIRPERSON

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