

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

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

Members Present:

15 September 2016

Councillors: E.E.Jones, A.Jenkins and Mrs.K.Pearson

Officers In Attendance R.George and N.Evans

1. **TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF HEAD OF CORPORATE STRATEGY AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

(a) **Draft 2017 Induction Programme**

Members considered the draft 2017 induction programme. Officers stated that this had been pulled together following consideration of the induction programme of 2012 and in taking consideration of Members comments from the previous task and finish meeting held in August.

Members stated that they would like to see something within the induction programme within the first week in relation to safeguarding/corporate parenting. Officers agreed that this should form part of the presentations made by senior officers of the Council at the "Market Place" event within the first week then specific at three month intervals as necessary.

Members also raised some queries as to the effectiveness of the 'Marketplace' concept and commented that requiring senior officers, Heads of Service and Directors to attend for an entire day would seem in appropriate. It was suggested that a half day event may be more practicable linked to a timetable of keynote speeches similar to other 'expo' type events.

Despite some limited concerns, Members expressed their support for a more interactive and focussed approach to Member induction and felt there was real merit in newly elected Members having the opportunity to network with officers, Heads of Services and Directors at the earliest opportunity.

Officers stated that they would consider the timings and structure of the event in more depth and bring back a revised induction programme to a future meeting of the Democratic Services Committee.

(b) **Member Survey - Frequent Contact Centre Contact**

Officers presented information that had been collated in consultation with the Council's contact centre and following discussions with elected Members. The survey summarised the key service areas which generate the largest number of calls and queries from local residents.

Members agreed with the list as summarised by officers. Following further discussions it was highlighted that it would also be beneficial for newly elected Members to have information on Education Directorate Services and specifically on Free School Meals, Home to School Transport and Special Educational Needs. Officers agreed to investigate if the Employee Directory could be made more 'search sensitive' and also look to make available up to date high level organisational structures for each of the directorates within the authority in readiness for the new intake of Members.

Resolved:

Officers develop a suite of organisational structures for each Directorate and liaise with ICT over the search ability of the Intranet Employee Directory.

Officers develop options for how the "Market Place" would operate to allow for maximum member attendance and the most efficient use of officers time.

Returning Members after the May 2017 elections are invited to the "Market Place" to provide any specific advice or guidance to the newly elected Members.

(c) **Online Training Portal**

Due to essential maintenance the training portal, currently referred to as the All Wales Academy Learning Pool, was unavailable. Officers confirmed that the e-learning website would be demonstrated to Members at a future meeting.

(d) **Needs Analysis/Mentoring in other Local Authorities**

Members considered a short report summarising a comparative research exercise which had been undertaken examining the approach taken by other public bodies in relation to Needs Analysis and Mentoring Schemes.

Officers explained that it appeared councils took wide ranging approaches to identify training needs analysis for Members with the majority of respondents not undertaking work in relation to skill levels, disabilities and learning requirements until elected Members had been in post for a suitable period of time i.e. 6-12 months.

Following discussion Members commented that early analysis of Members skill needs could prove beneficial. In addition, Members felt that if the exercise could be undertaken as part of the initial induction schedule, this would allow those members who required further assistance, at a critical juncture, to get supplementary support.

With regard to Mentoring, Members stated that following their election they had received informal mentoring from experienced Members but highlighted that this had developed organically via their party group structure. It was suggested that this could again be organised by the different political groups. Member felt there was no significant need for a formal mentoring programme and questioned whether it would be necessary.

Resolved

That Officers develop a short needs analysis for consideration by the wider Democratic Services Committee.

That the Democratic Services Committee writes to all political group leaders suggesting that they may wish to consider a mentoring scheme following the May 2017 election.

Officers draft a guidance note on the role of a mentor.

CHAIRPERSON

This page is intentionally left blank