

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

Democratic Services Committee – Draft Annual Report 2017-2018

Introduction

This report summarises the work undertaken by the Democratic Services Committee of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council throughout the 2017-2018 Civic Year. It is the first such report to be produced by the Committee, and its publication is an attempt to provide an element of good practice for Members in addition to the production of an appropriate yardstick with which to approach the generation of future reports.

Membership

The Members of the Democratic Services Committee were:

Councillors J.D.Morgan, M.Harvey,
S. ap Dafydd, S.K.Hunt, S.Miller, M.Protheroe,
S.Pursey, S.Renkes, A.J.Richards, A.J.Taylor,
R.L.Taylor and A.Llewelyn

The Committee Chair was Cllr. Dr. Del Morgan, and the Vice Chair was Cllr. Mike Harvey.

Work Programme

The Committee's forward work programme is agreed by Members on a rolling basis. Whilst the Committee takes decisions and provides direction for the Council on several key matters relating to Member support and associated issues, Members are mindful that it is the Cabinet and ultimately Council that has overall responsibility for all strategic and far reaching decision making on behalf of Neath Port Talbot Council. However, Members are also mindful that they are charged with the duty of carrying out all of the statutory requirements provided for this Committee under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.

In order to better facilitate the work of the Committee, Members have supported the idea of creating specific task and finish groups as appropriate to look at particular key topics in more detail. These groups are then able to feed back to the Committee with a set of recommendations, as appropriate. During 2017-2018, the following task and finish groups were established: Personal Development Review, Members' Annual Report Scheme and Members' IT Reference Group.

The Committee met three times formally during the year, whilst the task and finish group for the Personal Development Review and Members' Annual Report Scheme met once in a combined meeting, whilst the Members' IT Reference Group is yet to meet.

The Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee were offered pre-committee briefings prior to each meeting in the cycle, which have been attended.

Specific Duties and Tasks Undertaken by the Committee

The Committee initiated a survey in relation to the timing of meetings across all Members of Council in order to establish, if possible, an ideal pattern of meeting times.

The Committee approved the staffing structure of the Democratic Services Section.

The Committee undertook to oversee the upgrade of Members' facilities at the Civic Centre Buildings.

The Committee has established a Task and Finish Group to review Members' IT facilities and services at the start of the new administration.

The Committee requested and achieved an update to the Authority's Constitution to reflect the current scrutiny process.

The Committee established a task and finish group to give consideration to the Personal Development Review scheme for Councillors.

The Committee established a task and finish group to give consideration to Members' Annual Reports.

The Committee reviewed the Council's policy on the submission of apologies by Members for meetings.

The Committee took the lead in the planning and development of a Member Development Programme for all Councillors.

Committee Members themselves have also had training opportunities provided for them outside of the structure of formal meetings, including a programme of Member seminars delivered throughout the year (being part of the Member Development Programme). A number of these seminars involved topics that had an impact on the work of the Committee.

The Committee Chair has also attended training in relation to chairing committees.

Cllr. Dr. Del Morgan, Chair
November 2018