

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

(Council Chamber - Port Talbot Civic Centre)

Members Present:

12 September 2019

Chairperson: Councillor J.D.Morgan

Vice Chairperson: Councillor A.Aubrey

Councillors: S. ap Dafydd, M.Harvey, J.Hurley, S.Pursey,
S.Renkes, A.J.Taylor, A.Llewelyn and S.K.Hunt

Officers in Attendance: K.Jones, C.Furlow, S.Curran and A.Manchipp

1. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 July 2019 were approved as an accurate record.

Members noted that in respect of Minute No 1 a response had been received from the IRPW in relation to Members' carers' allowances being subject to tax, and noted that several local authorities had raised the same issue. The IRPW would raise this issue with the HM Revenue and Customs.

2. **INCREASING PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT IN THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS INCLUDING WEB CASTING - DRAFT PROJECT PLAN**

In accordance with Minute No 3 of the meeting held on 11 July, Members received a draft project plan in relation to increasing public engagement in the democratic process including web casting.

Members discussed the draft project plan and agreed that in addition to what was proposed in the plan the first meeting needed to also consider

- what the Authority was doing already on public participation
- How many local authorities currently webcast and the level of take up by members of the public?

Members noted that the City Deal Joint Scrutiny Committee had agreed to webcast and that this would give officers and the relevant members experience of different ways of providing the service.

Members asked for an explanation of the Valleys Communities Impacts, as contained in the circulated report and were advised that it was envisaged that this work would need to consider the impact of proposals on valley communities. For example digital inclusion could be an issue in certain areas.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That a task and finish group be established to undertake the work outlined in the report to enable the preparation of advice to Council by 31 March 2020;
 2. That all members of the Democratic Services Committee be confirmed as members of the task and finish group, unless any members advise officers that they do not wish to be; and
 3. The proposed project plan outlined within the circulated report be approved subject to the following being added:

what the Authority was doing already on public participation
How many local authorities currently webcast and the take up by members of the public?

3. **DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE**

The Committee received and noted the Draft Annual Report for the Committee for 2018/19.

- RESOLVED:** That the report be approved, subject to an additional section being added on the work contained in the forward work programme as at May 2019.

4. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 19/20**

The Committee received and noted the forward work programme for 2019/20. Members asked whether there would be a capacity issue in relation to the amount of work contained in the planner, and the Head of Democratic Services advised that this could be accommodated. In the event that additional items were added, an assessment of the capacity to undertake additional work would be needed.

In discussion, it was noted that Democratic Services undertake an annual survey for elected members. Members agreed to contribute to the questions in this year's survey which in due course could then inform the forward work programme.

RESOLVED: That the forward work programme be approved subject to the addition of the draft members' survey being discussed at the next meeting.

CHAIRMAN

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