

# DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

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

**Members Present:**

**3 March 2020**

**Chairperson:** Councillor J.D.Morgan

**Councillors:** S.apDafydd, M.Harvey, J.Hurley, S.Miller,  
S.Pursey, S.K.Hunt and E.V.Latham

**Officers in Attendance:** K.Jones, A.Manchipp, C.Furlow-Harris,  
S.Curran and R. Jenkins

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## 1. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 November 2019 were approved as an accurate record.

Members then noted the following updates:

- The Members' IT Reference Group was trialling Office 365 with a view to rolling this out to all members.
- In relation to the recent presentation on the Case Work app., Members asked that the slides from the presentation be circulated to those members who were not present at that meeting.

## 2. **Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales**

Members received the above report and noted that the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRPW) had issued its final report for 2020/2021 and that there had been no changes from the draft report. It was noted that a letter to the HMRC in relation to the taxation of carers' allowance would be sent shortly.

Members also received a copy of the supplementary report issued for consultation, by the IRPW, in relation to encouraging the take up of the members' carers' allowance. Members noted, attached at Appendix 1, a copy of the proposals together with details of what the authority currently does.

Members confirmed the principle that 'no member should be out of pocket being a councillor'. In addition it was noted that issuing general directives to either the Head of Democratic Services or democratic services staff was not within the remit of the IRPW. The report had tried to address every scenario. Were the scenarios not identified in the supplementary report therefore not covered? Should Freedom of Information requests be dealt with in conjunction with GDPR? It was agreed that clarification be sought in regard to GDPR, both from the IRPW and the head of legal services and that a report be brought back to members.

**RESOLVED:** That the content of the final report of the IRPW for 2020/2021, be noted, the head of democratic services be authorised to respond to the consultation contained in the draft supplementary report based on the above comments made at Committee and that a further report in relation to the implications for GDPR be submitted for members' consideration.

### 3. **Disability Audit Group**

The Chair of the Disability Audit Working Group presented the circulated report. It was noted that the Chair had encouraged Members with any issues to contact democratic services officers in order for their specific needs to be addressed.

From the details contained in the circulated report, members noted that there were less actions required in the Neath Civic Centre as this was a newer building and that there were several issues in the Port Talbot Civic Centre which could not be rectified, for example widening the lifts to allow for wheelchairs and mobility scooters.

The refurbishment of the toilets was being progressed and a number of 'quick wins would be undertaken' such as improved signage.

Members asked whether there was a floor plan of the civic centres available, which could assist members.

It was acknowledged that the proposed actions contained in the report would not address all issues and that a plan based on individual's need may also need to be developed.

Members noted that a plan for the complete refurbishment of the Port Talbot Civic Centre had previously been developed and that perhaps

this would need to be revisited. In addition it was agreed that, as a second phase of the work of the group, a sensory audit be undertaken.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the terms of reference of the Disability Audit Working Group be amended such that the Group becomes a consultative group and takes forward the work in relation to neurodiverse barriers and mental health issues and monitors the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report.
  2. That the Cabinet member for Equalities be tasked with considering a public exit survey of the civic centres and consider Evac Chair training be considered for elected members.
  3. That a letter of thanks be sent to Proudlock Associates for their assistance in undertaking the work.

4. **Assessment of Resources for Democratic Services**

**RESOLVED:** That the proposed structure of the Democratic Services section, as contained in Appendix 2 to the circulated report, be commended to Council for approval.

5. **Forward Work Programme 19/20**

**RESOLVED:** That the Forward Work Programmed be noted.

6. **Access to Meetings**

**RESOLVED:** That pursuant to Section 100A(4) and (5) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded for the following item of business which involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the above Act.

## 7. Webcasting Proposals

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the Democratic Services Committee recommend to Council that meetings of full Council and the Planning Committee be webcast, on a pilot basis for a period of 12 months commencing October 2020 and that the costs associated with this pilot be met from the Member Development Specific Reserve.
  2. That the Democratic Services Committee recommend to Council that the Head of Democratic Services be authorised to enter into contract for the provision of a suitable service to support the pilot project.
  3. That in providing advice to Council, the Committee recommends that training for Elected Members and officers be arranged and delivered prior to the pilot project commencing.
  4. That the Procedural Rules and Terms and Conditions of viewing a Webcast (included at Appendix 1) be commended to Council for approval to support the proposed pilot.
  5. That the Head of Democratic Services make representations to the WLGA, providing the full anticipated costs for webcasting all meetings for this council.
  6. That the Democratic Services Committee note the findings from research conducted to date by the Task and Finish Group into ways that public participation in the democratic function might be organised and that the following four areas be the subject of the work of the Group going forward:
    - The establishment of a Petitions Committee
    - The public's right of audience at Council/Committees
    - Improvements to the Council's website
    - Develop a list of ways in which the authority interacts with the public.

7. That the Terms of Reference of the Group be amended to include the implications of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill on public participation.

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