

Democratic Services Committee

(remotely via Teams)

Members Present:

25 January 2021

Chairperson: Councillor J.D.Morgan

Vice Chairperson: Councillor A.R.Aubrey

Councillors: J.Hurley, S.Miller, S.Purse, S.Renkes, S.K.Hunt,
A.J.Taylor and E.V.Latham

Officers In Attendance C.Griffiths, S.Blewett and S.Curran

1. **Declarations of Interest**

None received.

2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 2 November 2020 were approved as an accurate record.

3. **WLGA Competency Framework for Councillors 2021**

The report circulated is to advise members of the proposed WLGA Competency Framework for Councillors. The framework outlines the knowledge and behaviour required by Councillors in Unitary authorities. Members of the Committee were asked to provide any feedback/comments on the framework that the Chair and officers can provide to the Lead Members and Officers for Member Support and Development Network.

It was confirmed that the proposed framework was likely to be considered by the WLGA in Spring but no firm timeframe had yet been determined. Members were informed that the consultation was likely to produce a generic framework, however this would be converted to an NPT template, once agreed.

Members noted that the WLGA Competency Framework was fluid and Members could continue to comment on the framework following the meeting, should any further comments be required.

Members referred specifically to A18 in the report – personal safety. Members acknowledged the vulnerable position that Council work could sometimes put them in. Members discussed the register of violent people that used to exist. It was confirmed that due to legislative restrictions there would need to be a

legitimate reason established to access the list. Officers confirmed that a protocol could be developed which would allow legitimate access to the list.

Resolved: Members to note the Development Framework for Councillors in Wales 2021 and identify any proposed feedback and propose key points to enable the Chair to prepare a response on behalf of the Committee to the Lead Members and Officers for Member Support and Development Network.

4. Review of the Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Constitution

Members were advised that the majority constitution is prescribed by law. Although the Monitoring Officer has updated the Constitution when new legislation has come into force, the Monitoring Officer is of the view that it could be updated further and simplified to make the document more user friendly and understandable to members of the public who wish to review.

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill introduced in Welsh Government proposals to reform legislative framework for local government electoral arrangements, democracy, performance and governance. The proposed Bill would require the Council to make a number of changes to its Constitution. A review of the constitution is required.

Members were keen to ensure that procedures contained within the Constitution, as prescribed by law, are clear so that Councillors can fully understand the implications of them. Further, that adherence to the Code of Conduct in relation to councillor behaviour is clearly outlined and easily understood by members.

An action programme to carry out the review was outlined within the report. A Task & Finish Group would be required to be set up to progress the item. They would be required in line with the structure of the action programme outlined.

Officers confirmed there was no requirement for political balance within the Task & Finish Group. The Task & Finish Group would report back to the Democratic Services Committee, with final approval of any recommended amendments by Full Council.

Resolved: To establish a task and finish group to undertake the proposed work outlined within the report to enable the preparation of advice to Council;

To agree the membership of the task and finish group;

To agree the proposed project plan outlined within this report.

Members of the Task & Finish Group:

Cllrs D Morgan, A Taylor, A Aubrey, S Miller, J Hurley, S Hunt, E Latham, S Pursey.

Membership of the Task & Finish Group to be extended to members of the committee who are not in attendance.

5. **Members - ICT Environment**

Officers provided members with an update on the progress of the upgrade of members' ipads etc. to the new programme.

Members thanked the officers for their support and work in upgrading the items.

Resolved: That the Committee notes the update on the ICT Environment

6. **Draft Annual Report of the Democratic Services Committee 2019-20**

Members considered the Draft Annual Report of the Democratic Services Committee 2019-20.

Resolved: That the Democratic Services Committee note and endorse the Annual Report 2019/20 attached at Appendix 1 and commend to Council.

7. **Forward Work Programme**

Resolved: That the Forward Work Programme be noted

8. **Urgent Items**

No items to consider.

CHAIRPERSON

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