

**Democratic Services Committee**

**(via MS Teams)**

**Members Present:**

**9 September 2021**

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

**Vice Chairperson: Councillor A.R.Aubrey**

**Councillors:** J.Hurley, S.Miller, S.Pursey, S.Renkes,  
A.Llewelyn, A.J.Richards, S.K.Hunt and L.Jones

**Officers In Attendance** C.Griffiths, S.Curran, S.Blewett and A. Thomas

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1. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest received.

2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2021 were approved as accurate, subject to the following amendment:

Minute3, Paragraph 4, Line 9:

To change 'staff' to 'member' so that it reads:

For example how would a 'member' approach a member of staff?

3. **Head of Democratic Services**

It was confirmed that the role is a statutory role which someone is being designated to carry out. The designation of the role cannot be challenged under employment arrangements. It is adding a statutory element to the current post which is being occupied by the employee. Trade Unions were consulted with and in agreement with the principles used to designate the role.

Following discussion, members were in support of the recommendation in the report to be placed before Full Council for consideration.

#### 4. **Report of the Constitution Review Task & Finish Group**

Members were provided with a report outlining the outcomes of the Constitution Review Task & Finish Group. The review considered both the legal requirements and also the practical elements that Members wished to see as part of the Constitution.

Members were advised that the final decision on constitutional amendments rests with Full Council.

Members queried the implementation of some of the constitutional changes. Mr Griffiths advised that if ratified by Full Council, it is his intention to write to all Councillors providing them with a copy of the amended Constitution and outlining the key changes made.

Members specifically referred to member officer relations. It was confirmed that there will shortly be a member seminar on this item and it will also be built into the member induction programme 2022.

Following discussion, members were in support of the recommendations in the report to be placed before Full Council for consideration.

#### 5. **Members ICT Reference Group**

Members were advised that the ICT Reference Group is usually re-established when there is a business requirement to do so. There are a large amount of ICT issues that will be required to be trialled in the near future. The report recommends that the group is re-established to be able to respond to these emerging items. Items include the move to Zoom, possible future hybrid working and the Member Induction 2022 including the members ICT kit and ICT policy.

Resolved:

- (a) the Terms of Reference for the Members ICT Reference Group be approved; and

(b) the Membership of the IT Reference Group be confirmed and that a date be arranged for the first meeting.

## 6. **Hybrid Meeting Arrangements and Equipment**

Craig Griffiths outlined the current arrangements with regards to meetings, and how they are being relayed on YouTube. However, the legislative arrangements have changed since this process was put in place. As well as the requirement for publication and webcasting, there is now a legal requirement for meetings to operate within a hybrid model.

Paragraph 20 of the report, provides a financial overview of the requirements to enable the Council to operate a hybrid model. There will be works required to the Chamber, which will also address some of the DDA issues that are currently faced at the venue. This will ensure that members and members of the public can access the Chamber.

It was noted that currently work is focusing on the Chamber. This is predominantly due to the expense. The report also seeks to set up a study group to look at other rooms that could potentially be used to accommodate hybrid meetings.

Members were reminded that the report is about the purchase of the equipment which will enable the physical element of hybrid working. The report was not seeking to determine the policies, protocols etc. to operate the hybrid arrangement.

Members were keen to see other rooms considered to upgrade to operate a hybrid model. Portable equipment could perhaps be considered for other rooms. Further work would be undertaken by the study group recommended to be set up.

Members were reminded about the duty on Council's to increase and promote public participation, and it is hoped that the new equipment would assist with the Council in successfully fulfilling its duty to do this.

Members suggested that a dedicated room for scrutiny meetings could be considered. Further, that the current equipment in the Chamber could be utilised elsewhere so that it does not become redundant, given that it had only been upgraded in recent years.

Members reaffirmed the importance of having adequate access to the Chamber which would include disability access.

Following discussion, members were in support of the recommendation in the report to be placed before Cabinet for consideration.

7. **Forward Work Programme 20/21**

Members were advised of the possibility of additional meetings between October and April, depending on the business that may arise.

To note the Forward Work Programme.

8. **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items to consider.

**CHAIRPERSON**