

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Democratic Services Committee held at the County Borough Council Headquarters, The Pavilions, Clydach Vale on Thursday, 24th March 2016 at 5 p.m.

PRESENT

County Borough Councillor P.Jarman – in the Chair

County Borough Councillors

(Mrs) A.Calvert, (Mrs) M.E.Davies, P.Howe, (Mrs) S.J.Jones, (Mrs) C.Leyshon,
M.Norris and M.Webber

Officers in Attendance

Mr.P.J.Lucas – Director, Legal & Democratic Services

Mr.S.Gale – Service Director, Planning

Ms.D.Hughes – Head of Organisational Development

Ms.L.Lawson – Performance Manager

9 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors L.M.Adams, S.Bradwick, (Mrs) A.Davies, A.S.Fox, P.Griffiths, S.Lloyd and K.Morgan.

10 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no personal interests declared in matters pertaining to the agenda.

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

11 INTERNET AND EMAIL ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY FOR ELECTED MEMBERS

In the report, the Head of Democratic Services informed the Committee of the feedback received from Members in respect of the Internet and Email Acceptable Use Policy.

In view of the mixed response of Members in respect of the Policy, the Head of Democratic Services recommended that Officers look at redrafting the Policy to take into consideration the comments made and a further report and Policy be presented to the Committee in the near future for consideration.

Following consideration of the report, it was **RESOLVED** –

- (1) To note the comments made by Members (anonymised) as shown at Appendix 2 to the report.
- (2) To authorise the Head of Democratic Services and the Head of ICT to draft a further Internet & Email Acceptable Use Policy for elected Members only and that it be presented to the Democratic Services Committee for consideration.

12 PRESENTATION - CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING AND TRAINING FOR ELECTED MEMBERS

The Committee received a presentation from Ms. D. Hughes, Head of Organisational Development in respect of Corporate Safeguarding and Training for Elected Members.

During her presentation, Ms. Hughes reported that the Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 introduced a new statutory framework to protect children and adults at risk. There would be new structures for safeguarding board and the introduction of Adult Safeguarding Boards. There would also be a new power of entry for adults at risk and a legal duty to report a child or an adult at risk.

Members were informed that all employees, Councillors and volunteers now had a duty to report concerns about abuse and neglect. Children's Services had the responsibility for receiving and responding to new concerns about children and Adult Services Safeguarding Managers had the responsibility for received and responding to new concerns about adults at risk in compliance with the arrangements at the Cwm Taf Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

Ms.Hughes then highlighted what the Council was doing to help Councillors and employees meet their new responsibilities.

The Committee noted in respect of elected Members that:

- they were subject to a new duty to report concerns from 1 April 2016
- their Role Descriptions would be amended to include the new duty
- they would be invited to a training conference in April 2016
- they might need a DBS check due to the nature of their role.

The Chairman then thanked Ms. Hughes for the information presented and she was asked by the Committee to investigate the possibility of merging Corporate Safeguarding training sessions provided for elected Members who were also School Governors.

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR, REGENERATION & PLANNING

13 PRESENTATIONS AT THE DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

The Service Director, Planning presented the report to advise the Committee of the work that was being undertaken to improve the quality of the equipment

and material that was used to present planning applications at the Council's Development Control Committee.

Members were informed that in 2014 a project was initiated to explore the use of innovative solutions to maximise the use of visual aids at the Development Control Committee. The aim was for the presentation to be "brought to life" as part of a more multimedia rich experience that allowed for the application story "to be told" as opposed to the current use of traditional liner PowerPoint slides. Areas that could be exploited to improve and support the decision making process include photographs enhanced and supported by a short "onsite" video and Online services such as Google Streetview and Google Earth.

The first stage of the project was complete with the purchase of new screens and a projector for the Council Chamber. In terms of the second stage, Officers from ICT and Planning were currently in discussion with Microsoft about their latest presentation tools which would enable Members to take decisions based on the best possible visual information and reduce the need to convene site visits. Although, site visits could still be requested by Members when considered appropriate.

A full consultancy day was being arranged with Microsoft for Officers to be trained in the use of the new software which would then be tested through a trial run at the meeting of the Development Control Committee on 18th April 2016. The aim then would be to have the new format in place for the first Development Control Committee after the Council's AGM to be held in May 2016.

Members noted that the costs incurred so far had been funded through a Welsh Government Grant and there would be no further charge for the use of the Microsoft products as they were covered under current arrangements.

Following consideration of the proposal, it was **RESOLVED** to note the information and to request that a report be presented to the Council's AGM to raise awareness of the new system and procedures.

P.JARMAN
CHAIR

The meeting terminated at 5.40 p.m.