



## **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**19<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2019**

### **DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE**

#### **MEMBER INFORMATION – POLICY CONSIDERATION**

#### **REPORT OF THE INTERIM HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

##### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The purpose of the report is for Members to consider the creation of a policy to guide Council Officers to communicate key information to Elected Members in respect of their electoral division.

##### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 It is recommended that the Democratic Services Committee:

- (i) Consider recommending the development of a 'Member Information' policy for the use of Council Officers.
- (ii) Subject to 2.1(i) request that the Interim Head of Democratic Services take forward this matter and report progress to the next meeting of this committee.

##### **3. BACKGROUND**

3.1 Over recent months a number of requests have been put forward to the Interim Head of Democratic Services requesting that Members receive timely notification of any updates / events or significant work being carried out within a Members wards.

3.2 Being provided with timely information is important to help Members undertake their role.

3.3 The Councils Communications team respond in a timely manner to any public or press enquiries that the Council receives and Services areas are aware of the importance of informing relevant local members when an issue may be of public interest. There is however no specific guidance in place to Officers.

3.3 To ensure this approach is taken forward in a consistent manner across all of the Council Services it is proposed that a 'Elected Members Information policy

be drafted to provide guidance to Officers to ensure continuity in providing information.

- 3.4 The Council corporately recognises the importance of good communications, both with elected members and communities. In the 24/7 digital age, the reactive and fast-moving pace of media, can sometimes mean that it is necessary for the Council to swiftly respond to matters
- 3,5 In this 'instant news' age, there will also be potential for stakeholders to hear information through channels, before receiving official confirmation. However, the development of a policy will ensure strong guidance is in place to minimise these occurrences and would demonstrate the commitment of the Council corporately to strong communication will all relevant stakeholders and partners.

#### **4 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 One of the primary aims of a policy is to ensure that all Councillors are able are of matters of public interest in relation to their local member role.

#### **5. CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 It will be necessary to consult with Officers and the Council's Senior Leadership Team in respect of developing a policy with ensure timely information is provide, where appropriate, through a method which would not impact upon the operational responsibilities and roles of Officers

#### **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

- 6.1 None.

#### **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 None

#### **8. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.**

- 8.1 The work of all Councillors is fundamental to the work of the Council and subsequently the delivery of the Corporate Plan and developing a policy to guide officers to ensure timely information is provided, has the potential to enhance the flow of information which is already provided to members
- 8.2 Ensuring all Members are supported and have equal access to support and development links to the future generations well being goals of a more equal Wales and a Wales of cohesive communities.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS – Notification Policy**

None