

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 Monday, 11th September, 2017 at 5 p.m.

PRESENT

County Borough Councillor J.James – in the Chair

County Borough Councillors

L.M.Adams	K.Morgan
J.Bonetto	E.Stephens
H.Fychan	W.Treeby
E.George	M.Webber

Officers in Attendance

Mr.C.Hanagan – Service Director, Cabinet & Public Relations
Ms.K.May – Head of Democratic Services
Mr.T.Jones – Head of ICT
Ms.L.Evans – Principal Information Management & Data Protection Officer

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair, County Borough Councillor J.James welcomed everyone to the meeting and the necessary introductions were made.

2. APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from County Borough Councillor S.Powderhill.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESOLVED – to note that there were no declarations of interest made at the meeting pertaining to the agenda.

4. MINUTES

RESOLVED- to approve as an accurate record the minutes of the meeting of the Democratic Services Committee held on the 5th October, 2017 as a correct record.

5. DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

Following the meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on the 10th July, 2017 when it was requested by the Chair of this Committee that an

update on the Document Management proposals as contained in the Cabinet Work Programme be made at this meeting (Minute No.4(3) – Overview & Scrutiny Committee, refers); and the verbal comments made at the last meeting of this Committee by the Chief Executive (Minute No.20 refers); the Committee received Mr.C.Hanagan, Service Director, Cabinet & Public Relations who outlined the progress that had been made to date in respect of the `paperless Cabinet`.

The Service Director for Cabinet & Public Relations reported that Cabinet took the decision to work towards a paperless approach through the use of iPad devices and using the Modern Gov software, after looking at other facilities as this system and way of working had been successfully used by the Assembly and other neighbouring authorities. He reported that the Modern Gov software manages all Committee agendas, minutes and reports and collates them in one place and can also be uploaded onto mobile phone devices. The software not only gives alerts to notifications it also makes it easier for Members to take part in meetings as they can annotate on the device and go to different pages and reports much faster than through the use of hard copies. Following an evaluation of the use of Modern Gov utilising the iPad and input from stakeholders this was recommended as a standard device that could be adopted more widely to Members. To date the savings achieved in the Cabinet moving towards the `paperless` approach has resulted in over £20,000 by the non production of hard copies of agendas for meetings of the Cabinet

The Service Director, reported that it was intended to roll out this `paperless` approach to the regulatory Committees i.e. Planning and Licensing but in view of the elections in May of this year, it was felt more appropriate that this be moved forward by the new Council. However, the decision was taken to provide iPads to all newly elected Members so that they could get used to operating the device prior to the installation of the ModGov App. It was acknowledged that there had been a few `teething` problems and these should be lessened by the installation of Office 365 which includes `Word`, `Excel` and `PowerPoint` which will support Members further in their role. and will enable them to send attachments with emails in a much easier way than is being undertaken currently.

The newly elected Members of the Committee who had been furnished with iPads outlined the problems that they were experiencing with the device and expressed concerns that they "have not got the right tools to do the job" as it is very often the case that they have to send emails and attachments from their iPad to their personal devices and vice-versa as their own personal printers are not compatible. Further, in view of the recent problems encountered with emails, they have had to communicate with their constituents using their own IT equipment and therefore, had the proposed Elected Member ICT, Internet & Email Acceptable Use Policy been approved previously, then Members would've been in breach of the requirements contained therein.

Concern was also expressed on the roll out of the iPads as it was felt that all Members were not working on an equal footing.

In response the Head of ICT indicated that Cabinet and newly elected Members had already been provisioned with the device/ Pending the wider roll out of Modern Gov, further distribution of iPads were being provided on a priority basis e.g. should a Member experience material problems with an existing laptop then that Member would be provided with the option of an iPad.

Following a discussion, it was **RESOLVED** -

1. To note the verbal comments made by the Service Director, Cabinet & Public Relations;
2. That a Working Group be established to consider this matter in further detail and to look at further options that are available to assist Members in their role such as the installation of the `Good App` on mobile telephone devices.

6 **INTERNET AND EMAIL ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY FOR ELECTED MEMBERS**

The Committee received Mr.T.Jones, Head of ICT, who reported that following the meeting of this Committee held on the 5th October, 2017 a revised Internet & Email Acceptance Use Policy for Elected Members had been drafted as shown at Appendix 1 to the report.

Following a discussion, it was **RESOLVED** – that in view of the comments made earlier on in the meeting (Minute No.5 above refers), a Sub-Committee be established to consider this matter in further detail; and that at its first meeting, Members receive information on Data Protection.

7 **ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE**

In conjunction with her report detailing the training and development activities undertaken by Members since the County Borough elections in May, 2017, the Head of Democratic Services, with the aid of PowerPoint slides, gave an overview of the role and functions of the Democratic Services Committee.

A lengthy discussion ensued, and it was **RESOLVED** –

1. To present for Members' consideration to a future meeting of this Committee, a report outlining any recommendations in respect of any proposed changes to the number and grades of staff required to discharge the Democratic Services functions, and to note that any proposed changes would need to be reported to Council for approval;

2. To receive further reports to future meetings of this Committee on the promotion of the role of the Authority's Overview and Scrutiny Committees, as and when felt appropriate;
3. To adopt the Member Development Strategy as shown at Appendix 1 to the report;
4. To note the training and development activities undertaken by Members since May, 2017 to date, and that further consideration be given to this matter at the next meeting of the Committee;
5. That in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure, 2011, all elected Members be given the opportunity to undergo annual PDRs (including those Members who choose to remain "unallocated");
6. That the Committee receive update reports on the PDRs highlighting the development needs identified and the take up of such training.

7. **DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE – WORK PROGRAMME**

In her report, the Head of Democratic Services sought Members' consideration to whether the Committee should devise a Work Programme for the 2017/18 Municipal Year, and if so a proposed list of topics were shown at Appendix 1.

It was reported that whilst there is no requirement to devise a Work Programme for the Committee as one of the requirements within the Local Government (Wales) Measure, 2011 is that "the Democratic Services Committee must meet at least once in every calendar year", one of the main functions of the Committee is the training and development of Members. The Council's Standards Committee also has a role in monitoring the training for Members, and with this in mind, it was suggested that should Members wish to develop a Work Programme then a meeting be arranged between the Chair of this Committee and the Chair of the Standards Committee, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication of future Work Programmes

It was further reported that at a meeting of the Standards Committee it was agreed viz: *"That all Community/Town Councils should be invited to provide their ideas on topics for any future training they require"*. It was therefore felt that as the Democratic Services Committee is the decision making body in relation to all processes relating to Member development then the training needs for Community/Town Councillors should be incorporated within the role of this Committee.

Following a discussion, it was **RESOLVED –**

1. To note the information contained in the report.

2. To set a Work Programme for the Democratic Services Committee for the Municipal Year 2017/18, as shown at Appendix 1.
3. That arrangements be made a meeting between the Chair of this Committee and the Chair of the Standards Committee, as referred to in paragraph 3.3 of the report.
4. That the draft questionnaire in respect of the survey to be undertaken amongst all elected Members regarding the Timing of Meetings as required by Section 6(2) of the Local Government (Wales) Measure, 2011 be circulated to Members of this Committee for comments in the future.

**J.JAMES
CHAIR**

The meeting closed at 7.30 p.m.