

Mae'r cofnodion hyn yn amodol ar gymeradwyaeth yng nghyfarfod priodol nesaf y Pwyllgor.

These Minutes are subject to approval at the next appropriate meeting of the Committee,

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, 23rd July, 2018 at 4 p.m.

PRESENT

County Borough Councillor G. R. Davies – in the Chair

County Borough Councillors

J. Brencher	E. Stephens
G. Caple	G. P. Thomas
J. James	W. Treeby
S. Rees	M. Webber

OTHER MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

County Borough Councillor J. Davies
County Borough Councillor J. Williams
County Borough Councillor M. J. Powell
County Borough Councillor J. Cullwick

Officers in Attendance

Mr. C. Bradshaw – Chief Executive
Mr C. B. Jones – Director, Legal & Democratic Services
Mr T. Jones – Head of ICT

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED – to approve as an accurate record the minutes of the meeting of the Democratic Services Committee held on the 12th February 2018.

3. APOLOGY

An apology of absence was received from County Borough Councillors J. Bonetto, A. Davies-Jones, H. Fychan, K. Morgan and L. Walker.

4. **SUPPORTING THE WORK OF MEMBERS**

With reference to Minute No. 14 of the General Annual Meeting of the Council held on the 23rd May 2018, Members resolved to refer the report titled “Members’ Salaries and Allowances – Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales” (the Panel) Tenth Annual Report” to the Democratic Services Committee for review and to subsequently report any proposals back to full Council.

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services set out the proposal for all Elected Members to be remunerated for costs associated with the provision of home broadband to enable them to fulfil their duties effectively, costs which had been determined by the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) for Wales.

Committee was informed that following a desktop exercise the cost of the monthly provision of a telephone line and Broadband is estimated to be £37 per month (after the relevant tax deductions) which would equate to the full year cost of £33K to the Council which would be met from existing resources.

In response to a query, the Head of ICT provided an explanation as to how the desktop exercise and subsequent costs had been established and it was agreed to clarify at the next committee whether the estimated amount would be subject to pension contributions.

A query was raised in respect of Members accepting the payment in part or not at all. In response the Director, Legal & Democratic Services suggested that although it was for the individual Member to decide, accepting the payment for the Broadband package would assist them in carrying out their role at no cost to themselves. The Cabinet Member for Council Business stated that should Members accept the payment they would be complying with the requirements of the IRP and suggested that the proposal is reviewed within 6 months to assess its effectiveness.

Following a discussion it was **RESOLVED** –

1. To agree that all Elected Members receive a payment of £37 per month (before tax and national insurance deductions) as a contribution toward the cost of home broadband for a period of 6 months when the proposal will be reviewed; and
2. That the proposed way forward be reported to full Council for consideration of all Elected Members.

5. DESIGNATION OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

In his report, the Head of Paid Service outlined the background to the above-mentioned matter and invited the Committee to consider his recommendation to designate Mr Christian Hanagan as the interim Head of Democratic Services until the 1st September 2019 in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 (the Measure). Subject to Members agreeing the designation, a report would be presented to the next meeting of the Democratic Services Committee from the interim Head of Democratic Services concerning the council's discharge of Democratic Services functions and training developments.

Committee was reminded that following the review of the Council's Senior and Associated Management Post Structure in 2017 the co-ordination of Council and Executive functions were placed within the remit of the Service Director-Cabinet & Public Relations. It was confirmed that should Members agree to the designation of Mr Hanagan as interim Head of Democratic Services, his current role as Service Director – Cabinet & Public Relations would be amended and he would cease to act as Secretary to the Cabinet.

Members were provided with details of the wider proposal to enhance the scrutiny function within Rhondda Cynon Taf with a strong, experienced corporate lead and by bringing the Democratic Services team and Executive and Regulatory Business Unit together would serve to strengthen existing arrangements.

Following a query, the Head of Paid Service advised that Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council is a strong advocate of women in senior positions as demonstrated by the Council's Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and this sentiment was echoed by the Cabinet Member for Council Business who praised the Council for its reputation for equality. It was clarified that the Democratic Services Committee would be best placed to review the designation and recommendations at the end of the interim period, in September 2019 based on consideration of evidence such as the Wales Audit Office report.

In response to a concern from the Chair, the Cabinet Member for Council Business assured Committee that there are a number of examples of other authorities in Wales where the officer who holds the statutory title of HoDs advises both the Executive and Non-Executive. The Head of Paid Service provided assurance that every Officer of the Council supports Elected Members of all political parties and provides independent advice and support to the Council's Scrutiny function. He added that any conflict of interest would be addressed and managed accordingly.

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

- (1) To designate Mr Christian Hanagan as the interim Head of Democratic Services in accordance with the requirements of the “Measure” until the 1st September 2019; and

- (2) To note that Members will receive a report at the next meeting of the Democratic Services Committee from the newly designated Head of Democratic Services concerning the Council’s discharge of Democratic Services functions and training and development together with any reports and/or recommendations he wishes to make to the Democratic Services Committee in respect of the same.

Note: County Borough Councillors G.R.Davies and E.Stephens wished to have their votes recorded that they voted against the above motion.

**G.R.DAVIES
CHAIR**

The meeting closed at 4.40 p.m.