

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

8 MARCH 2017

Present: County Councillor Boyle(Chairperson)
County Councillors Dilwar Ali, De'Ath, Hyde, Robson and Wild

31 : MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEE

The Council on 26 January 2016 Min No: 135 approved the nomination of Councillor Joe Boyle to the Democratic Services Committee in place of Councillor Elizabeth Clark; and appointed Councillor Boyle as Chair of the Committee for the remainder of this municipal year.

Councillor Boyle, Chairperson formally thanked Councillor Clark for her contributions to the work of the Committee and the effective consideration of matters that directly affect Councillors and their work.

32 : APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Chaundy, Goddard and Murphy.

33 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest for this meeting.

34 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2017 were approved as a correct record and were signed by the Chairperson.

35 : MEMBER EXIT SURVEY 2017

The Committee was advised that 46 responses had been received to the Members Exit Survey undertaken in February 2017 with all those that had held the office of Councillor since May 2012. The survey covered the following areas within the remit of this Committee: -

- Support to Elected Members
- Members Casework; correspondence and the Member Enquiries
- Induction and developmental training and briefing sessions
- Work Life balance
- Communications

The overall responses to the questions asked were positive and Appendix A provided an analysis of the free text feedback that provided Members the opportunity to add additional information.

The Committee discussed key themes and outcomes namely: -

- Member Induction, learning and development opportunities;
- The information available to them on the role of a Councillor and commitments;
- How the Council can promote diversity of Elected Members
- Member support services including support with casework; enquiries and time management;
- Elected Member remuneration and the work of the Independent Panel
- Work-life Balance including the start and finishing; time of meetings; need for some members to have other employment; issues around reimbursement of care costs;
- Wellbeing of Councillors;
- Code of conduct matters.

The Director of Governance and Legal Services advised of the alignment of support to Councillors within Members Services with the transfer of the operation of the Members Enquiry System to Members Services from C2C in May 2017, and the appointment of a permanent team of Members Support Officer/s as part of this transition and support to new Councillors.

The Director confirmed that to support the well-being of Elected Members that the Carefirst Counselling Service had been made available to all Councillors.

The Committee was keen to monitor the key themes identified from in the survey and it was proposed that the Survey be re-run in the late Autumn of 2017 – this would provide the basis of trend data and an action plan to take forward in the new administration.

RESOLVED – That the Committee supported the proposal to re-run the Member Exit Survey in the Autumn of 2017 using the questions to gain comparator information; and noted comments received in Appendix A of the report.

36 : MEMBER INDUCTION 2017

The Committee received the draft Member Induction Plan identifying Essential training for new and returning Members and briefing and awareness raising session programmed for first 6 months of the programme.

The Committee supported the programme, in particular the planned Marketplace Induction Event and endorsed those session marked as essential, The Committee was advised that the Constitution Committee would be recommending to Full Council the strengthening of Councillors commitment to undertaking essential training in the Cardiff Undertaking, and the including in the terms of reference or all quasi-judicial committees the need for Committee Members to have completed essential training before they can sit on these Committees.

It was noted that ELearning would also be promoted as an alternative learning tool. The ELearning suite has modules to support School Governors. It was noted that the scheme of training of Members as Governors was mandatory.

RESOLVED - That the final draft Induction Programme was approved subject to any other minor updates if appropriate.

37 : WHITE PAPER - REFORMING LOCAL GOVERNMENT: RESILIENT AND RENEWED

The Committee was invited to feed into the consultation process on the Welsh Government White Paper document on proposals for Reforming Local Government: Resilient and Renewed published on 31 January 2017 as far as the matters concerned this Committee.

The Committee considered the proposals in relation to:

- Broadcasting Council meetings;
- New duties for Leaders of political groups to ensure high standards of conduct amongst their Members;
- Councillor Surgeries

Members suggested that greater clarity was required on some of the proposals particularly in relation to Councillors and their Ward Surgery meetings.

RESOLVED – That the Committee

1. noted the draft provisions in the Reforming Local Government: Resilient and Renewed White paper;
2. agreed that the Chair on behalf of the Committee responds to the consultation on the White Paper.

Before closing the meeting the Chair thanked Members for their significant contributions to the work of this Committee and for those not standing at the Local Election in May, wished them all the best for the future.