

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

24 JANUARY 2022

Present: Councillor Jones-Pritchard(Chairperson)
Councillors Burke-Davies, Goddard, Goodway, Naughton,
Keith Parry, Mia Rees, Sandrey and Wong

20 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Lay.

21 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

22 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2021 were approved by the Committee as a correct record.

23 : DRAFT DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE - ANNUAL REPORT 2021

Members were advised that this report was to enable the Democratic Services Committee to consider the content of its Annual Report for 2021 and approve the arrangements for the report to be finalised and presented to full Council.

The Head of Democratic Services outlined the report to Members and highlighted the headings from the Annual Report as;

Chair's Foreword

Membership of the Democratic Services Committee

The Democratic Services Team – Support, Services and Structures

Resources

Key Activities

Collaborative Working and Networks

Performance Information

Forward Plan for 2022

RESOLVED To:

- 1) Provide comments on the content of the Committee's Annual Report 2021

- 2) Delegate authority to the Head of Democratic Services, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, to finalise the Annual Report, having regard to comments provided by Members of the Committee; and

Agree that the Annual Report be presented to full Council on 17 March 2022 by the Chairperson.

24 : UPDATED PROPOSALS - DRAFT OUTLINE MEMBER INDUCTION PROGRAMME 2022

Members were advised that the purpose of the report was to seek direction from the Democratic Services Committee on the updated topics for the Council's Elected Member Induction Programme following the Local Government Elections in 2022.

Following the Local Government Elections in 2022 there would be a number of new and returning Elected Members. To support the effective governance arrangements of the Council, enable the newly elected councillors to undertake the variety of roles they are expected to carry out and to integrate them quickly into the Council following their election, an Elected Member induction was to be provided.

The Head of Democratic Services outlined the report and recommendations after which the Chairperson invited Members comments, observations and questions.

Members referred to Signing for Office/Code of Conduct following the elections and asked if there could be a staggered approach to this as there may still be some covid restrictions in place. The Head of Democratic Services advised that this needed to be completed within 28 days of the election, there would be some staggered sessions and further sessions could be set up to ensure flexibility of Members and Officers too.

Members noted the importance of prioritising new members but to also be mindful of mentoring from existing Cllrs – so a mix of new and returning Members would be encouraged.

Members discussed case work and Members Enquiry System training and considered this should be earlier on in the training programme. The Head of Democratic Services agreed that this could be brought forward in the programme and then built on further along.

Members asked if it was possible to advise candidates of the training they would be required to undertake if elected. Members were advised that there is a link to the training programme in the candidacy letter on the website.

Members seemed to recall that years ago Members signed for Office at the Count. The Monitoring Officer explained it would be her preference for this to be done afterwards, so that Officers can focus on the Count.

RESOLVED: To identify any views the Committee may have on the Draft Outline Member Induction Programme 2022 which would be reflected in the subsequent Elected Member Induction Programme 2022.

25 : CONSULTATION - MULTI LOCATION MEETINGS POLICY

The Democratic Services Committee was requested to consider the Draft Multi-Location Meetings Policy being developed by the Constitution Committee and to provide any appropriate feedback as part of this ongoing consultation.

The Head of Democratic Services outlined the report and recommendations to Committee and the Chairperson asked Members for any comments, observations or questions.

Members requested that Members, especially new Members, should receive Chairing Hybrid Meetings training. The Head of Democratic Services explained there would be a full range of training provided for all Members both new and returning, which would cover all elements of multi-location meetings. There would also be mock meetings to enable Members to develop their meeting and chairing skills.

Members made reference to the investment needed for new ICT requirements and asked what this covered. The Head of Democratic Services explained that the investment was to replace all Members devices, all associated equipment, screens, mouse, Office 365, phones etc.

RESOLVED To;

1. Note the provisions of the Multi-location Meetings Policy and provide comments as appropriate; and
2. Delegate authority to the Head of Democratic Services, in consultation with the Chair, to prepare and submit a response to the Constitution Committee consultation on behalf of the Committee.

26 : ACTIVITIES AND SERVICE SUPPORT

Committee were advised that the purpose of this report was to inform the Democratic Services Committee on the performance of the Council's Democratic Services since the last meeting 29 November 2021.

Members were updated on the key points including Member Development; Demographic Profile Survey; Guidelines For Elected Member Family and Sickness Absence Substitution; Updated Members Enquiries System (MES) and Elected Member Surveys.

RESOLVED To;

- a. Note the information set out in the report and its appendices; and
- b. Provide views on the:
 - Draft Guidelines For Elected Member Family and Sickness Absence Substitution; and
 - The Member Enquiry Capture Form.

27 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

None received.

28 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING - TBC

The meeting terminated at 5.08 pm