

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

19 JULY 2021

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

1 : APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR & COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

RESOLVED:

To note that Council at its annual meeting on 27 May 2021 appointed Councillor Mike Jones-Pritchard as Chairperson of this Committee and the following Members to this Committee:

Councillors Bowden, Burke-Davies, Goddard, Goodway, Kelloway, Lay, Naughton, Keith Parry, Mia Rees, Sandrey and Wong.

2 : TERMS OF REFERENCE

RESOLVED:

To note that the Council, at its annual meeting on 27 May 2021, agreed the Committee's Terms of Reference for the municipal year 2021/2022.

3 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct.

4 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 May 2021 were approved as a correct record of that meeting.

5 : DEMOCRATIC SERVICES - ACTIVITIES AND SUPPORT

The Chair invited Gary Jones, Head of Democratic Services, to inform the Committee on the performance of the Council's Democratic Services since the last meeting on 24 May 2021.

A temporary appointment from Cardiff Works has been made to support the team particularly with note-taking at Education Appeals and other committee meetings.

The Democratic Services Team has been developing hybrid meeting facilities in CR4 as part of its work to progress multi-location meetings. Since a dual language capability has not been made available through Microsoft Teams, it has been decided to develop the use of Zoom to allow fully remote bilingual meetings. A conference system with wireless microphones with bilingual functionality will allow the

full range of meetings. Members will need to be trained on the new systems. A significant majority of the Council's public meetings were recorded and streamed on the Council's website with 3238 views in Quarter 1.

A new single Scrutiny Annual Report for the 2020-21 municipal year has been produced to replace the individual scrutiny committee reports, and was presented to Council in June 2021.

The Democratic Services Team are preparing to compress their office space. Electoral Services have moved into Room 263 with Scrutiny, Committee and Member Services to share Room 283.

Initial discussions have been held to develop and deliver a number of Member Development topics, including: Cardiff Replacement LDP; Childs Rights in Practice; Unconscious Bias in Decision Making; Licensing Matters; Social Housing and Section 106; UNICEF Follow On; Workshop to Raise Awareness of PREVENT; Safeguarding E-learning; Dementia Awareness; Biodiversity and Natural Resources; Welsh Language; Wellbeing of Future Generations; E-learning modules.

Members expressed concern about Scrutiny sharing the same accommodation as Committee and Member Services. There was a feeling that Scrutiny should be seen to be separate and to have parity of esteem.

RESOLVED:

To note the report from the Head of Democratic Services.

6 : DIVERSE COUNCIL REPORT

The Chair invited Gary Jones, Head of Democratic Services, to report on the request that had been received from the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) Council for all Councils in Wales to commit to become a Diverse Council in 2022.

Cardiff Council is already working towards the WLGA Council's objectives. It has the ability to demonstrate duty of care for Councillors by providing access to counselling services and by having regard for the safety and wellbeing of Councillors whenever they are performing their role as Councillors.

Some activities of the Democratic Services Committee could be mapped to support the intentions of the WLGA Council, including:

- Assisting in providing a clear public commitment to improving diversity in democracy, by providing Potential Candidate sessions and awareness training videos
- Promoting the Welsh Government candidates' and councillors' survey
- Supporting the setting of ambitious targets for candidates from under-represented groups at the 2022 local elections by identifying the demographic profile of existing Councillors

- Working towards the standards of the Wales Charter for Member Support and Development.

Many of the intentions contained within the WLGA Council letter and report are not within the remit of this Committee. Other individuals, committees and political bodies may have a role within their scope of responsibility, including Group Leaders, the Chairs of various committees, and various officers.

Members were asked to comment or raise questions on the information received. Those discussions are summarised as follows:

- Members expressed concern at the short timescale before the next Council elections. It should not be seen as a failure if little was achieved in the few months remaining.
- Members discussed the outcome it was hoped to achieve. It was argued that the composition of the Council was fairly representative of the community with BAME, women, young and old members. It was pointed out that only a third of councillors are women and the objective should be to have closer to 50%.
- Members discussed how many of the aims of the WLGA report were not within the remit of Democratic Services but were the responsibility of party groups, individuals and other services. The WLGA letter was sent to all councils, but Cardiff was doing reasonably well on many of the issues raised.
- Members were advised that there would need to be resources committed to achieving the aims of the WLGA Council. The Diverse Council Declaration had been proposed as a significant piece of work and the Committee was not yet in a position to tell the Council what needed to be done. The WLGA had identified July as an aspirational date but understood the level of work that would be needed. It was hoped to bring forward more detailed plans for the Council to consider later in the year.
- Members discussed whether the Declaration was appropriate for Cardiff Council. Members were advised that the motion supporting the Declaration was being referred to individuals and groups across the Council to make sure it was supported before being presented to the Council.

RESOLVED:

To note the report and accept the recommendations contained therein.

7 : CANDIDATE EVENT

The Chair invited Gary Jones, Head of Democratic Services, to report on provisional plans to provide a 'Potential Candidate' event, for anyone considering standing as a Cardiff Councillor at the Local Government Elections in 2022 or would like more information about Local Government, Cardiff Council and the role of Councillors.

Local Democracy Week 11-15 October 2021 would be the ideal time to hold the event but workloads may make it impossible, however it should be possible to hold it before the end of the year. It would be a 3-hour public event on Teams or Zoom.

The first part would include a multiple-choice quiz about the tiers of government, and overviews of Cardiff and Cardiff Council. The second part would explain the roles and responsibilities of councillors, and the third part would look at qualifications, restrictions and other aspects of elections.

Members were asked to comment or raise questions on the information received. Those discussions are summarised as follows:

- Members considered that 3 hours was too long and that 1.5 or 2 hours would be better. Having more than one session scheduled at different times would allow more people to be reached. Members were advised that resources might not be available for multiple sessions. A recording would be available on a webcast after the event.
- Members considered that the success of the event should not be measured by who was elected, but by how many people from different communities stood for election.
- Members considered that having too many officials at the event might be daunting for some people, and that the event should be as informal and welcoming as possible.
- Members considered that it was very important that people understood that councillors are not able to do whatever they like. People become disillusioned when they realise they have to work within the powers and responsibilities of the Council.
- Members enquired whether the event was intended to be a one-off or an annual event. Members were advised that this year's event was intended to be an 'icebreaker', and that future events would have less of an election focus but would instead look at other matters such as Council decision making and scrutiny.

RESOLVED:

To note the report and accept the recommendations contained therein.

8 : REVIEW OF KEY DOCUMENTS

The Chair invited Gary Jones, Head of Democratic Services, to inform the Democratic Services Committee of the key documents which will be used in the development of the Elected Member Induction Programme following the Local Government Elections in 2022.

The Committee was requested to recommend the revised Elected Member Learning and Development Strategy V2.0 to Council for approval. To ensure that any potential candidates or returning Elected Members are provided with a consistent understanding of the roles they will be undertaking when they are elected as a councillor or to which they may be appointed by Council, it is recommended that the WLGA role descriptions updated for 2021 be adopted by Council.

There is a need to provide members with the opportunity to have mentors. Training can be provided by the WLGA in early 2022 to ensure that there are sufficient

mentors available immediately after the election when the mentors are able to provide the greatest benefit.

Members were asked to comment or raise questions on the information received. Those discussions are summarised as follows:

- Members enquired about the timetable for party groups to nominate mentors. Members were advised that Councillors would be identified as mentors after Christmas 2021. More mentors would be trained than were needed, because some would not be re-elected but those that remained would be enough to provide base cover. More mentors could be trained quickly if necessary.
- Members suggested that one meeting per week was excessive. Members were advised that there was no prescription about how often mentors and mentees met. Either party could terminate the agreement at any time.

RESOLVED:

To note the report and accept the recommendations contained therein.

9 : FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair welcomed Gary Jones, Head of Democratic Services to the meeting to present the Forward Work Programme.

RESOLVED:

To approve the committee's Forward Work Programme (FWP) as at Appendix A.

10 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

No urgent items were received.

11 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Democratic Services Committee is on Monday 18 October 2021 at 5.00 pm.

The meeting terminated at 6.00 pm