DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE, 09.12.14

Present: Councillor Lesley Day (Chair)
Councillor Tom Ellis (Vice-chair).

Councillors: Anwen Davies Jean Forsyth, Selwyn Griffiths, Siân Gwenllïan, Annwen Hughes, Jason Humphreys, Sïon Jones, Michael Sol Owen, Mandy Williams-Davies.

Also present: Councillor Ioan Thomas (Cabinet Member for Customer Care); Councillor Annwen Daniels (shadowing)

Officers: Geraint George (Head of Strategic and Improvement Department/Head of Democratic Services), Arwel Ellis Jones (Senior Manager - Corporate Commissioning Service), Huw Ynyr (Senior Manager - Information Technology and Transformation) and Lowri Haf Evans (Member Support and Scrutiny Officer).

Carey Cartwright (Learning and Development Manager) and Cara Williams (Members' Training Coordinator) for item 8 only.

1.   WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Everyone was welcomed to the meeting by the Chair, Lesley Day, with a special welcome to Councillor Siân Gwenllian to her first meeting and to Councillor Annwen Daniels, a new member of the Council who was shadowing. Apologies were received from Councillors Gweno Glyn, Dilwyn Morgan,Mair Rowlands and Vera Jones (Members' Manager - Democratic Services.)

2.   DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received from any members present.

3.   URGENT ITEMS

Reference was made to the decision made by Mr Leighton Andrews (Minister for Public Services in the Assembly), to withdraw the grant paid by the Welsh Government to the Welsh Local Government Association to provide support to improve Authorities in Wales from April 2015.

RESOLVED to send a letter in the name of the Democratic Services Committee to Mr Leighton Andrews asking him to reconsider his decision.

4.   MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 9 September, 2014, as a true record subject to: a correction that Councillor Tom Ellis was the Vice-chair and not Councillor Anne Lloyd Jones.

5.   WEB-CASTING

Submitted – the report of the Head of Democratic Services, sharing the latest information regarding the developments of web-casting. It was explained that the meeting of the Council that was held on 4.12.14 had been broadcasted internally and had been a successful exercise. It was highlighted that web-casting was important for the image of the

Council and valuable for sharing information with the public. Further observations were invited by members of the Committee regarding their opinions on preparing brief guidelines.

During the discussion, the following was highlighted:-
- The web-casting training had been very useful.
  It was proposed that there was a need for specific training for Chairs and Members on presenting.
- There was a need for a note explaining the procedure of committees so that the public were familiar with the rules. Concern was expressed regarding the public's understanding and, therefore, it was recommended that the chair should summarise decisions or explain the recommendations.
- The committees that would be web-casted. The intention thus far had been to broadcast meetings of the Council and the Planning Committee in Caernarfon. (It was explained that it was due to technical reasons only that the decision had been made to broadcast the Planning Committee in Caernarfon only).
  It was suggested that consideration should be given to web-casting meetings of the Formal Cabinet as it was here where the power and the leadership was to make operational decisions. It was expressed that there was a need to highlight Scrutiny work which would convey the challenge and the discussions undertaken prior to the decisions being reached by the Cabinet. It was proposed that the Scrutiny Forum could choose items which would be of interest to the public. A balance had to be ensured and it had to be shown that the Council was acting 'healthily'.
- If the web-casting was successful, there would be a need to review the contract hours and to consider the statistics that would provide evidence of web-casting use. It would be appropriate for Eleri Williams (Information and Internet Services Manager), to attend the next meeting.

RESOLVED to accept the report and to agree that a brief guidance is prepared with Councillors Lesley Day, Selwyn Griffiths, Sion Jones and Tom Ellis to collaborate with officers to draw it up.

6. **CONSIDER THE USE OF E-CIGARETTES IN COMMITTEES**

Submitted - the report of the Head of Democratic Services to stimulate a discussion on the use of e-cigarettes by elected members. The Committee was invited to consider whether the Council should adopt a policy statement extending the ban on staff and customers from using e-cigarettes within Council premises and their vicinity to elected members.

During the discussion:-

- It was noted that the same rule should apply to everyone and that the use of e-cigarettes should be banned within Council premises and their vicinity.
- Should a further discussion be needed regarding the Council's general policy, it should be referred to the Cabinet Member or the Corporate Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED that the Council should adopt a policy statement extending the ban on the use of e-cigarettes in Council premises and their vicinity to elected members.

7. **COMMUNITY AND TOWN COUNCIL WEBSITES**

a) Submitted – the report of the Senior Manager - Information Technology and Transformation, on the developments regarding the Welsh Government's £500 grant for providing web

presence to Community/Town Councils. It was stated that Option 2, namely collaborating with other town and community councils in the county to establish a joint website, had now been priced and that protocols were in the pipeline.

During the discussion:-

- Concern was expressed that there was insufficient guidance regarding what was needed. It was suggested that a package could be produced for community/town councils which could provide guidance on what would be possible to provide.
- In terms of sharing good practice of already established websites, it was noted that the website had to be kept simple and that it should be updated regularly ensuring up-to-date information.
- It was proposed that the preferred language for the websites was a matter for the Community Councils.

RESOLVED to continue to support the work of facilitating the development of websites for town and community councils during 2014/15.

b)   In response to the arrival of the Council's new website, it was noted that there was a need to give more prominence to the work of the Cabinet. Access had to be simplified to highlight the importance of their work. There was also a need for an easier access to see the responsibilities of each Member and the committees of which they were members. It was explained that the Council had ordered a committee agenda management system (Modern Gov) that would in time include a 'Democratic' Department. It was proposed to have the system in place by Easter 2015. The programme would also include an app to ensure that agendas were downloaded automatically onto Councillors' tablets.

8.   **PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT INTERVIEWS**

Submitted – the report of the Head of Democratic Services, when the committee was reminded that 20 members had received Personal Development Interviews. Several general themes arose from the interviews and it was intended for these to be addressed via the current training programme.

During the discussion:-

- It was suggested that it would be worthwhile to implement the 'who is who?' information soon to ensure up-to-date information.   It was suggested that Rhaeadr could be used to address this.
- For those who had been interviewed, it was reported that it had been beneficial and had highlighted weaknesses/difficulties that would otherwise not have been highlighted. Other members were encouraged to take advantage of the situation.

RESOLVED to submit a report to a meeting of this committee in the next few months on the response of the 20 members to the personal development interviews and what has happened as a result of the interviews.

9.   **ONLINE TRAINING PROVISION**

Submitted – the report by the Learning and Development Manager on the online training provision for members as a result of a discussion regarding Members' annual reports. It was explained that the Council acknowledged the importance of appropriate training to support Members to fulfil their roles effectively and that learning via technology was now

exciting and advantage had to be taken of it. It was emphasised that e-learning was in addition to the members' training programme:

- it offered all types of technology, e.g. video, modules, internet research etc.
- it used different devices i.e. i-pad, Smartphone, Laptops and PC Computers
- it was an opportunity to create interesting, attractive and high quality learning materials
- it offered a convenient and flexible provision which provided value for money (by avoiding travelling costs and time)

The next step would be raising awareness.

During the discussion:-

- a request was made for the quality and contents of the training modules to be simple and accessible with support and instruction (it was noted that initial sessions with the Members' Training Coordinator would provide a taste of what was available).
- it was highlighted that this addressed the needs of those members who had difficulties in attending training because of work commitments.

The Learning and Development Manager was thanked for the information.

10. **DEVELOPING THE USE OF I-PADS AND TRAINING**

Submitted – the report of the Senior Manager - Information Technology and Transformation, on the developments in training arrangements to make better use of i-pads and apps to support their use. It was reported that meetings had been held with the Head Teacher of Ysgol Llanrug (Llanrug Primary School) to produce a training package which included subjects that the members had highlighted.

During the discussion:-

- It was reported that there was a need to ensure better use of i-pads. It was acknowledged that the i-pad was an excellent device for procedure and information and there was potential for it to offer more.
- It was suggested that further training was needed on the use of social media.

It was noted that there was a need for five to participate in the apps trial on the use of i-pads (to include officers and members).

The meeting commenced at 10.00am and concluded at 11.55am.