
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE 12/04/18

Present: Dewi Wyn Roberts (Chair)

Councillors: Annwen Daniels, Anwen J. Davies, Annwen Hughes, John Brynmor Hughes, Nia Wyn Jeffreys, Anne Lloyd Jones, Charles Wyn Jones, Olaf Cai Larsen, Dewi Owen and Catrin Elen Wager

OFFICERS: Vera Jones (Members Manager - Democracy Service) and Geraint Owen (Head of Corporate Support)

APOLOGIES: Councillors Dylan Bullard and Linda Ann Jones

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received by Cllr. Dylan Bullard and Cllr. Linda Ann Jones

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

Councillor Annwen Daniels declared a personal interest in item 10: 'Members' Remuneration' as she was the Chair of the Council.

The Chair declared an interest that was not prejudicial on behalf of the members of the committee on item 10: 'Members' Remuneration'.

3. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

4. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 26 October 2017 as a true record.

5. TECHNICAL PROVISION

Members' Portal

Councillor Annwen Hughes presented the sub-group's work on the Members' Portal. She noted that restructuring work had been carried out to improve the accessibility of the information that was there. She added that efforts to increase the use would continue, in addition to efforts to gather information that would be useful to members.

Office 365

A short presentation was given by Councillor Annwen Hughes, who was a member of the Sub-group of this Committee which was formed to discuss elected members' IT issues. She noted that some members had trialled a provision via the Office 365 system with a cloud provision. The provision had solved a number of technical problems that hindered the work of members, and this was reiterated by other members who were part of the sub-group.

The Senior IT Manager noted that there was an additional cost of approximately £9 per head for the system if it was to be distributed to all members. In response to a question about data protection, he noted that the Council held accreditations from the PSN and

the CSG for government data protection, and that the Council would never compromise on data protection.

Whilst discussing distributing the new provision to Council members, it was noted that it needed to be ensured that effective support would be available to members who were not confident in using the new provision. In response, the Senior IT Manager noted that the service would provide the necessary technical support for all users, in addition to assisting with the set-up of the new system and sharing useful information.

In response to a suggestion that the system should be provided to all members immediately, the Democratic Services Manager noted that discretion should be exercised, although the IT service was willing to do so. She added that lessons had been learnt from attempting to act too quickly in the past.

It was proposed and seconded to extend the Office 365 provision to the rest of the members of this Committee initially.

RESOLVED -

- 1. To offer Office 365 provision to Members of the Democratic Services Committee**
- 2. That the Information Technology Service manage the roll-out of the provision further, depending on solving any problems arising**
- 3. That any useful lessons and information gathered when setting up the provision is shared with the Members in moving forward.**

6. MEMBERS' ENQUIRIES

Submitted – the report of the Head of Democratic Services. He noted that he had made enquiries following observations made at the meeting of the Council on 14/12/17 about the lack of response from officers to messages from elected members. He received 13 responses that were varied in nature.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- The contact details on the Members' Portal were often on a level that was too high for the nature of the enquiry.
- Other organisations such as CCG used one contact point for members.
- Using Galw Gwynedd could be tiresome, especially when attempting to communicate with some specific Services.
- The protocol noted that a response should be provided within five days. Whilst that was useful, it did not differentiate between urgent matters and other matters.
- Acknowledgement of receiving the e-mail would be useful, as it would give assurance that the enquiry had been received.

The Head of Democratic Services thanked everyone for their

7. MEMBER-OFFICER PROTOCOL

Submitted - the report of the Monitoring Officer, noting that the Protocol had been established for some time, defining the role and expectations as members contacted officers. He noted that it was timely to review the Protocol to ensure that it continued to fulfil its purpose and to promote it. The protocol would also be submitted to the Standards Committee before it would go to the full Council to be adopted as a change to the constitution. The main changes were to better convey the principle that was behind clause 29.9.4 (familiarity) and to reflect the staff guidelines in clause 21.10.

In response to a question about familiarity and its relevance to 'friends' on websites such as Facebook, the Monitoring Officer noted that the nature of 'friends' on such websites was different to relationships and familiarity in the real world. He also reminded the

Members of the social media guidelines that had been distributed. He also noted, in response to a question, that in cases of familiarity before the election of a Member, the matter should be dealt with like any other declaration of personal interest.

It was asked how strong the protocol was, and what was its status. In response, the Monitoring Officer noted that the Protocol defined the internal process, and whilst it was possible for cases to go before the Standards Committee, it did not have a statutory basis.

Other observations arising from the discussion:

- That local members were often unaware of what the Council was doing in their wards, and that it caused concerns that Members were receiving information from their electors.
- What steps should a Member follow if they received a complaint of bullying.

In response, the Monitoring Officer noted that the Protocol referred to cases of officers being bullied by Members. The Head of Democratic Services added that the internal bullying policy existed in order to address such matters.

RESOLVED to accept the report and to send the Committee's observations to the Standards Committee

8. MEMBER TRAINING

Submitted - the report of the Learning and Development Manager, noting that 35 learning and development opportunities had been offered across 87 events. The service had also worked to develop a learning and development provision, looking into and using different methods of provision. He emphasised that the learning and development programme was a live programme, and that feedback and suggestions were welcomed.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- The programme was useful to members. Would it be possible to make some types of training compulsory?
- It would be useful to offer training on Unconscious Bias for Members and staff.
- Whilst the numbers who attended some events were disappointing, it was not possible for all members to be present for different reasons.
- Continuing to develop alternative methods of providing training was important.
- Was it raising awareness or training that was most important in some cases?

The Learning and Development Manager thanked the Committee for the observations and suggestions, emphasising that the service needed to be flexible, and offer a number of opportunities and different methods for members to receive learning and development opportunities.

RESOLVED to accept the report.

9. THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES' ANNUAL REPORT

Submitted - the report of the Head of Democratic Services, outlining the support for Members that had been delivered over the term of this Council and the elements that were being developed for them.

Comments arising from the discussion:

- That it was beneficial to see the terms of reference of different committees. It may be beneficial to add a contact name to the report.
- Encourage the development of using technology, such as Skype.

RESOLVED: To approve issuing the report to the Full Council.

10. MEMBERS' REMUNERATION

Submitted - the report of the Democratic Services Manager. He noted that the Council had been successful in influencing the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales, and the Council's observations had been reflected in the report of the Panel. He emphasised that the Council had no choice but to accept the recommendations of the panel, apart from the salary of the Chair of the Council. Members were free to accept or refuse any proportion of the remuneration that was offered to them.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- Concerns that Elected Members were receiving an increase in difficult financial circumstances.
- The fact that there was one higher salary level now was welcomed.
- The Chair of the Council should receive the highest civic salary rate to reflect the status and the commitments of the role of the Chair.

It was proposed and seconded to recommend that the Council should set the civic salary for the Chair of the Council at Level 1 (£24,200), and the Vice-chair of the Council at level 2 (£16,300).

RESOLVED:

- **To accept the report.**
- **To recommend setting the civic salary for the Chair of the Council at Level 1 (£24,200), and the Vice-chair of the Council at level 2 (£16,300) to the Council.**
- **To share the Committee's observations with the Council.**

11. MEMBERS' ANNUAL REPORTS

Submitted - the report of the Democratic Services Manager, outlining that the purpose of the reports was to give Members an opportunity to communicate their activities to their electors. Guidelines on what should be included would be circulated, with a template that had been submitted to Committee members. He noted that annual reports were not published for 2016/17 due to the election, but that the opportunity was being offered to Council Members again for 2017/18.

Comments arising from the discussion:

- More emphasis on the electoral work of members was needed on the template
- It was useful for Members to keep a diary in order to make the process of producing an end of year report easier.
- The opportunity to note why a Member was unable to be present at meetings or events was appreciated
- Would there be any further promoting apart from publishing the reports on the Council's website?

In response, the Democratic Services Manager noted that there was a statutory duty in place to enable Members to publish the reports. There was no obligation for Members to produce annual reports. He added that the exemplary template could be adapted to coincide with individual Members' content, and that there would be no further promoting.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 12.45 pm

CHAIRMAN