
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE 26/6/18

Present: Councillor Dewi Owen (Chairman).

Councillors: Dylan Bullard, Annwen Daniels, Anwen Davies, Annwen Hughes, John Brynmor Hughes, Anne Lloyd Jones, Charles Wyn Jones, Cai Larsen, Dewi Wyn Roberts and Catrin Wager.

Officers: Bryn Goodman Jones (Information Technology Support Service Team Leader), Vera Jones (Democratic Services Manager), Helen Parry (Information Manager), Cara Williams (Member Development Officer), Delyth Gadlys Williams (Corporate Policy Officer), Huw Ynyr (Senior Information Technology Manager) and Siôn Owen (Member Support Officer).

Apologies: Councillors Linda Ann Jones

1. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Resolved: To elect Councillor Dylan Bullard as Vice-chairman of this Committee

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES

The Chairman signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 12 April, 2018 as a true record.

4. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ISSUES

The Senior Information Technology Service Manager gave a presentation updating the Committee since members of this Committee had migrated to Office 365 on their Surface devices. He stated that the Information Technology Service had responded to problems as they had arisen, and had used the information to improve the provision. He also noted that it had become apparent that more training and support was needed for Members. He added that collaboration between Members and the services that supported them was vital so that a provision could be created that addressed their needs.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- Time was needed to become familiar with the new provision and this was more difficult for members who were less confident using Information Technology.
- It was reiterated that Members needed to be provided with more IT training.
- Being able to view e-mails on mobile phones and other devices was very useful.

In response, the Democratic Services Manager stated that she would call Members for further training.

Resolved:

1 - Share the Office 365 with the rest of the Council Members

2 - Further training sessions would be arranged to facilitate use of the new provision among Members.

5. WOMEN IN DEMOCRACY

The report of the Democratic Services Manager was presented by Councillor Catrin Wager who reported on the lessons learnt from attending a conference to promote the role of women in democracy. She stated that the conference introduced the outcomes of research carried out by the Fawcett Society. The main message was the need to promote policies to help women in democracy, calling for cultural and constitutional changes. There was also a need to talk to women to find out about the problems they faced, and encourage women who were active in community groups to consider standing for election.

The Democratic Services Manager also added that the Committee had been working to encourage diversity in democracy before the 2017 Election, and she welcomed the additional information shared by the Councillor.

The Corporate Policy Officer stated that discussions had been held on providing training on unconscious bias following Councillor Catrin Wager's experience at the conference. Discussions were held with the Learning and Development Service and the Democratic Service about piloting a training session.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- Whilst the Community Council was one obvious route for individuals who wished to become councillors, it did not tend to be the best route for women. Since meetings tended to be convened at times that did not fit in around family life, it was more probable that likely candidates would be found in other community groups.
- Contact should be made with community groups in order to encourage active members to take part in the democratic process.
- Much progress had been made in the field of diversity, despite political culture making it difficult for women to participate.
- The work of the Diversity in Democracy sub-group had helped

In response, the Democratic Services Manager noted that a number of factors influenced individuals' decision to stand for election. She added that the Assembly was also conducting research into the field.

RESOLVED:

1 - To reconvene the Diversity in Democracy sub group in order to determine the way forward.

2 - To hold a pilot training session on unconscious bias for Committee Members.

6. PERSONAL SAFETY OF MEMBERS

The Democratic Services Manager presented her report and stated that the public nature of the role of Elected Members meant that they were open to contact with the community at any given time. Whilst that contact could be positive, it could also be negative. She also noted that there had been no specific cases relating to Members' safety but that awareness needed to be raised among Members.

Observations arising from the discussion

- Negative attention was an unavoidable part of the work of Elected Members, and the possible impact of this on individuals needed to be acknowledged.
- It was important for Members to be aware of what was acceptable and unacceptable with regard to negative attention.
- It was important for people to feel as though their voice was being heard and expressed, and that this was an important part of gaining respect in the community.

- The ongoing balancing act between being a public figure and a private citizen, that brought with it a duty to deal with difficult people, and also a duty to take advice and take sensible steps to remain safe where appropriate.
- It was important for relevant information to be available for applicants as well as Elected Members.

In response, the Democratic Services Manager stated that she acknowledged that Members would, from time to time, find themselves in difficult situations, and that there was often a fine line between what was acceptable and unacceptable.

RESOLVED:

1 - That the personal safety of members be proposed as an item for the Area Forums for the purpose of raising awareness.

2 - That the guidelines on personal safety be uploaded onto the Members Portal.

7. DATA PROTECTION

The report of the Statutory Data Protection Officer was presented in which it noted that the General Data Protection Legislation would come into force on 25 May 2018. It was part of the Members' role to protect the data in their possession in accordance with the requirements of the Act and the Council had registered them with the Information Commissioner as data controllers. She added that training had been arranged to assist Members in fulfilling their responsibility to protect and handle data in accordance with the rules. She encouraged Elected Members to attend the training that directly related to their responsibility as Elected Members rather than training that dealt with the field in general.

The meeting commenced at 10.30am and concluded at 12.15pm.

CHAIRMAN
