



## DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH  
ON THURSDAY 28TH SEPTEMBER 2017 AT 5:00PM

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PRESENT:

Councillor C.P. Mann - Chair  
Councillor D.T. Davies Vice-Chair

Councillors:

C. Andrews, D. Cushing, W. David, A. Hussey, L. Jeremiah, G. Kirby, Mrs G. D. Oliver,  
G. Simmonds, C. Thomas, R. Whiting and W. Williams.

Together with:

C. Forbes-Thompson (Interim Head of Democratic Services), L. Lane (Corporate Solicitor)  
and E. Sullivan (Interim Scrutiny Officer).

### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P. J. Bevan, Mrs C. Forehead and Mrs M.E. Sargent

### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the beginning or during the course of the meeting.

### 3. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 31st May 2017 (minute nos. 1-6) be approved as correct record and signed by the Chair.

### REPORTS OF OFFICERS

### 4. UPDATE ON THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION

Mrs Lisa Lane (Corporate Solicitor) introduced the report which provided an update and overview of the Council's Constitution.

Members were referred to sections 4.5 and 4.6 of the report which confirmed that the changes identified within the last update report had been made and section 4.7 of the report which highlighted changes to be made to the constitution.

Members fully discussed the report and having considered the nature of the updates it was moved and seconded that they now be received as information items and would only be discussed if brought forward by request and by show of hands this was unanimously agreed. Further to this it was then moved and seconded that the Democratic Services Committee agenda be amended to reflect this option and by show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) the six monthly updates on the Council's Constitution be received as information items.
- (ii) the Democratic Services Committee agenda be updated accordingly.

## **5. SCRUTINY REVIEW: SCRUTINY SELF EVALUATION AND PEER REVIEW**

Mrs Cath Forbes-Thompson (Interim Head of Democratic Services) presented the report which detailed the outcome of the scrutiny self-evaluation and peer review process and the subsequent recommendations of the Scrutiny Leadership Group.

Members were referred to section 4.4 of the report which provided a breakdown of the responses to the questionnaire. Section 4.6 of the report provided a summary of the responses received from Members and section 4.7 of the report outlined the results of the 'peer-review' process.

It was noted that members of Newport City Council and Monmouthshire County Borough Council had agreed to take part in the reciprocal peer evaluations which had been supported by the WLGA. Both the questionnaire and the observations were based on the characteristics of good scrutiny.

Mrs Forbes-Thompson confirmed that the Scrutiny Leadership Group had already considered the report and had made a recommendation that the self-evaluation questionnaire is carried out twice per Council term in order to measure scrutiny performance.

The Democratic Services Committee were invited to consider that recommendation and any further comments or changes they would like make prior to the reports consideration by Council on the 10th October 2017.

The Chair thanked the Officer for her report and full discussion ensued. Having considered the report and the recommendation of the Scrutiny Leadership Group the Democratic Services Committee made no additional comments.

It was moved and seconded that the report and the recommendation of the Scrutiny Leadership Group be recommended to Council for approval and by show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RECOMMENDED that:-

- (i) the outcome of the scrutiny peer review and self evaluation questionnaire be noted;
- (ii) the self evaluation questionnaire be carried out twice per Council term in order to measure scrutiny performance.

## 6. MEMBER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2018-2020

Mrs Emma Sullivan (Interim Scrutiny Officer) introduced the report which detailed the outcome of the Members Training Needs Analysis (TNA) Questionnaire and proposed a prioritised programme of training and development based on those outcomes.

The Questionnaire was circulated to all Councillors, Members of the Standards and Audit Committees and Co-opted Members in total 86 forms were distributed both electronically and in hard copy. A 52% (45) overall response rate was achieved of those 42 (57%) were completed and returned by Councillors.

Members were referred to Appendix 2 of the report which provided an overview of the responses received and Appendix 3 which outlined Members preferences in terms of venues, training and meeting times. A proposed programme of training courses based on these responses was included in Appendix 4.

The Officer confirmed that the suggested programme would be procured over the next three months and a final training programme, including dates, times, facilitators and costings would be presented to the committee for its consideration in the New Year.

It was noted that the questionnaire had also asked for Members feedback on the recent Induction Programme and Market Place Event. 96% felt that the Market Place was either useful or very useful with 63% agreeing that the induction programme had been set at the right level. However 4% (1 responder) fed-back that the programme had been too intensive and not all aspects were relevant. The Officer assured the committee that this information would be retained and used as a baseline when planning the next induction training programme.

Members were referred to the Skills Audit which had been incorporated into the TNA for this first time this year and would be used to identify the types of skills and abilities they already possess that do not necessarily stem from their Councillor role. The audit will enable Democratic Services to offer more personalised future training and development opportunities and recommendations that will be invaluable for the aspirational development of the individual Councillor.

The Chair thanked the Officer for her report and Members questions were welcomed.

Members noted the response to the Market Place Event and agreed with the positive feedback received and referred to an event run by Mark S. Williams and his department area where Councillors were invited to meet Officers and received a briefing on the services provided. It was agreed that this had been very beneficial and Members would welcome the same opportunity for other service areas. Mrs Forbes-Thompson agreed to provide feedback to the respective Corporate Directors and see if it would be possible to organise similar events.

Having fully considered its content the Democratic Services Committee noted the report.

Approved as a correct record subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd November 2017 they were signed by the Chair

The meeting closed at 17:26pm

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CHAIR