



DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE REMOTE MEETING HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON MONDAY, 17TH MARCH 2022 AT 5:00PM

PRESENT:

Councillor M.P. James - Chair
Councillor G. Kirby - Vice-Chair

Councillors:

Cllrs: C. Andrews, M.P. James (Chair), D.T. Davies, A. Hussey, L. Jeremiah, G. Kirby (Vice Chair), C. P. Mann, W. Williams, Mrs C. Forehead, A. Farina-Childs and P. J. Bevan.

Together with:

L. Lane (Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer), E. Sullivan (Senior Committee Services Officer), R. Barrett (Committee Services Officer) and M. Afzal (Committee Services Officer).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs M.E. Sargent, W. David, C. Thomas and Mrs G. D Oliver.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

3. DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD ON 22ND NOVEMBER 2021

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 22ND of November 2021 be approved as a correct record.

4. MEMBERS INDUCTION 2022

Consideration was given to the report which outlined the proposed induction programme for newly elected and returning Councillors following the Local Government Elections in May 2022. Members were asked to consider the report and recommend its approval to Council.

It was noted that the Induction Programme was based on a mixture of Recommended, Mandatory, and wider induction sessions. Following feedback from the 2017 Induction Programme, the proposed programme would also be adapted to include a Welcome to each of the Directorate's session where Members would be given the opportunity to meet Heads of Service and Corporate Directors.

A Member queried what would occur in the event of any missed training sessions. The Officer advised that Democratic Services aimed to offer multi-locational training subject to the

installation of equipment, and that, if possible, the training would be recorded to allow Members to catch up on any missed sessions.

Members would be given the opportunity to attend sessions remotely, via Teams, as well as in person. Members were assured that training sessions would be tailored to suit their home and working practices and there would be ample opportunity to catch up on any missed meetings.

Clarification on remote training and connectivity issues was sought, with one Member querying what actions could be taken to resolve the ongoing problems. The Officer advised that new hardware was being installed in each of the meeting rooms and that equipment was being upgraded to allow multi-locational meetings to take place. Furthermore, it was confirmed that Committee Services were looking into new platforms, including Civico. It was hoped that the new platforms would mitigate some of the issues.

Clarification on the audit of Members' equipment specifically relating to broadband connectivity was also sought. The Head of Democratic Services advised that the issue was under examination and confirmed that IT were preparing a report on the issues pertaining to routers and connectivity. It was hoped that the outcome of the examination would be fed back to Members in the coming months.

Members welcomed the information but felt that the induction programme would benefit from a separate section on the use of IT equipment: this section would allow new Members to familiarise themselves with the various systems.

Furthermore, clarification on the use of IT equipment and working practices was sought. The Officer drew Members' attention to the session on 17 May. It was anticipated that the session would be used to familiarise Members with digital working practices. The Officer advised that training sessions would cover a feast of information, including the use of Microsoft Office, the Mod.Gov app and Zoom as well as meeting requests and computer settings. Training on the CCBC website and Member's Portal would also be provided. Moreover, it was confirmed that any additional training needs would be gathered through an online questionnaire which Members were encouraged to partake in.

Overall, the Induction Programme was welcomed by the Committee, but it was felt that the section on IT training would benefit from further detail. The concerns were acknowledged, and Members were assured that the section on training would be updated prior to its consideration by Council.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation in the report be approved. By way of electronic voting this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officer's report: - The Induction Programme as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report be considered and noted and RECOMMENDED its approval to Council.

5. CHANGES TO THE FAMILY ABSENCE PROTOCOL FOR MEMBERS OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Consideration was given to the report which advised Members of the changes to the Family Absence Protocol for Members of Local Authorities which increases the amount of paid absence a Member is entitled to in respect of adoption leave. Members were asked to note the changes to the Family Absence Protocol prior to its consideration by Council.

The changes were noted and clarification on allowances for Members with caring responsibilities was sought. The Officer referred the Member to the provision in the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales report which detailed the cost of care and allowances and advised that she was happy to recirculate the report to Members.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officer's report: -

1. The content of the report and the changes made to the Family Absence for members of Local Authorities Protocol as set out in Appendix 1 be noted and.
2. It be noted that the report will be presented to Council seeking approval for the Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer to amend the Constitution by substituting the existing Protocol with the amended version attached.

6. VERBAL UPDATE – OUTCOME ON POLL OF MEMBERS ON THE PROVISION OF MOBILE PHONES

The Head of Democratic Services updated Members on the outcome of the poll undertaken on the provision of mobile phones to members. Members were advised that 32 responses had been received in total with some members expressing more than one option. It was noted that 11 Members were content to use a personal mobile phone or a landline, or they had a separate phone for Council business; 16 Members had expressed a preference to have an App installed on their personal phone; 1 Member expressed the possibility of a dual sim and 7 Members expressed an interest in a Council phone. Overall, the poll demonstrated that a separate phone for Council business was not required. However, an App where Councillors can access work emails through a personal device appeared to be the preferred choice for most Members.

Members were advised that Democratic Services were looking to progress the preferred option following the local elections in May. Clarification on the purpose of the App was sought with one Member querying why the app had been installed on his laptop but later removed. The Head of Democratic Services explained that the App allowed Members to access their Council emails on their personal phones. The Head of Democratic Services was not able to advise on the removal of the App, but the Member was advised that inquires would be made and the Member would be kept updated.

The meeting closed at 17:29.

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any corrections made at the meeting held on 14th March 2023

CHAIR