

CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

MINUTES OF THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

HELD AT COMMITTEE ROOM 5, GUILDHALL, SWANSEA ON
TUESDAY, 15 MARCH 2016 AT 5.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor P M Meara (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

R A Clay
N J Davies
K E Marsh

Councillor(s)

A C S Colburn
J W Jones
L V Walton

Councillor(s)

J P Curtice
D J Lewis

Officer(s)

Huw Evans
Allison Lowe
Tracey Meredith

Head of Democratic Services
Democratic Services Officer
Deputy Head of Legal and Democratic Services

22 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J A Hale.

23 **DISCLOSURES OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS.**

In accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the City & County of Swansea, no interests were declared.

24 **MINUTES.**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Democratic Services Committee held on 15 December 2015 be approved and signed as a correct record.

Matters Arising:

12 Democratic Services Annual Report 2014-2015

The number of Annual Reports submitted by Councillors had decreased considerably to those submitted for the 2013-2014 period. 53 Annual Reports had been received for the 2014-2015 period. The Head of Democratic Services asked the Committee to champion the submission of annual reports for 2015-2016 with their Political Groups which would be required in June 2016.

19 Discussion on Future ICT Provision for Councillors from 2017

The Chair and Head of Democratic Services proposed that a Seminar be held in May / June 2016 in order to consult with all Councillors regarding their views on the future ICT provision for Councillors from May 2017.

20 Councillor Training and Development 2016-2017

At the Democratic Services Committee held on 15 December 2015 a number of questions were posed relating to the training provided to those Councillors that sit on the Planning Committee. It was suggested that following changes to the membership of the Planning Committee, that the newly added Councillors had not received adequate training.

The Deputy Head of Legal and Democratic Services, the Planning Control Manager and Head of Democratic Services have investigated the claim and can assure all Councillors that all of the members of the Planning Committee have been appropriately trained.

It appears that the confusion arose as the original members of the Planning Committee received elements of their training from an external Training Provider which provided additional Continuous Personal Development (CPD); however following membership changes, this external training was not provided to those new members. This additional training does not prejudice anyone's ability to sit on Planning Committee.

Whilst accepting the difference in training provider, Councillors can be assured that the necessary level of training was provided albeit from an Internal Training Provider. As such, each of the members of the Planning Committee has had the necessary standard of training to sit on Planning Committee.

There is no statutory requirement for members to be trained in order for them to sit on Planning Committee but Welsh Government are currently consulting on a Planning Committee protocol, which if implemented will provide that all members of Planning Committees must undertake training in accordance with a local or national training scheme before participating in any decision making at meetings.

Whilst this Welsh Government initiative is not yet in place, it is important to note that this Authority has operated a system whereby all members of a Planning Committee must be trained prior to being permitted to sit on the Committee.

Certain Councillors felt that enhanced training had been promised when the newly formed Planning Committee was established in January 2015. In addition some Councillors requested that Planning Training be offered to all Councillors even if they didn't currently sit on the Planning Committee.

RESOLVED that the Head of Democratic Services liaise with the Planning Control Manager in relation to planning training.

25 **INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES 2016-2017 ANNUAL REPORT - FEBRUARY 2016.**

The Head of Democratic Services outlined the content of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales 2016-2017 Annual Report of February 2016.

He outlined the main determination changes that would affect the City & County of Swansea in relation to:

- Executive members may be paid at either of the two senior salary levels below:

Level 1 – Group A - £32,000

Level 2 – Group A - £28,800

- Chairs of Committees may be paid at either of the two salary levels below:

Level 1 Chairs - £22,000

Level 2 Chairs - £20,000

Council at its Annual Meeting in May 2016 will need to consider at what level payments will be made in relation to the above.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

26 **COUNCILLOR INDUCTION 2017.**

The Head of Democratic Services outlined a report in relation to the Councillors Induction Programme 2017.

The Committee were asked to consider the early draft Councillors Induction Programme and use it as a tool to assist in drafting a response to the Welsh Local Government Authority (WLGA).

The Committee felt that the Induction should be available for all Councillors, not just new members and that training immediately following the election should be on a light-touch basis and repeated in the months after the election, around September / October time.

RESOLVED that the Head of Democratic Services respond to the WLGA outlining the above comments.

The meeting ended at 5.23 pm

CHAIR