

CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

MINUTES OF THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

**HELD AT COMMITTEE ROOM 3A, GUILDHALL, SWANSEA ON
TUESDAY, 18 OCTOBER 2016 AT 5.00 PM**

PRESENT: Councillor P M Black (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

A C S Colburn

E T Kirchner

Councillor(s)

N J Davies

K E Marsh

Councillor(s)

J A Hale

L V Walton

Officer(s)

Sarah Caulkin

Huw Evans

Jo Harley

Allison Lowe

Tracey Meredith

Chief Transformation Officer

Head of Democratic Services

ICT Strategic Performance Manager

Democratic Services Officer

Interim Head of Legal & Democratic Services and
Monitoring Officer

8 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R A Clay, J P Curtice and D J Lewis.

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

In accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the City & County of Swansea the following interests were declared:

Councillors P Black, A C S Colburn, N J Davies, J A Hale, E T Kirchner, K E Marsh and L V Walton declared a Personal Interest in Minute No. 12 "Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) Draft Annual Report 2017-2018 – Consultation" as all Councillors stand to benefit from the £100 Basic Salary increase proposed.

10 **MINUTES.**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Democratic Services Committee held on 28 June 2016 be approved and signed as a correct record.

Matters Arising:

Minute 6 – Councillors Self Service

The Chair requested an update in relation to resolution 2 – The Scrutiny Panels and other aspects of the Scrutiny process be added to the Modern.gov software system.

The Head of Democratic Services responded that some discussions had taken place with the Scrutiny Manager however they were still utilising an alternative format for publishing the Scrutiny Inquiry Panel & Working Group meetings. It was noted however that Scrutiny Programme Committee was being published via the Modern.gov software and could be accessed via the "app".

RESOLVED that a report be presented to the next meeting of the Democratic Services Committee outlining when Scrutiny Inquiry Panels etc. would be linking up to the Authority purchased Modern.gov software as the Democratic Services Committee were keen to utilise one platform for all relevant agenda publications.

11 **COUNCILLORS' BROADBAND AND TELEPHONE, ICT AND MOBILE PHONE ALLOWANCES - MAY 2017 & BEYOND.**

The Head of Democratic Services, Chief Transformation Officer and ICT Strategic Performance Manager presented a report which sought to review the "Councillors ICT – May 2012 and Beyond" policy thereby ensuring that Councillors are provided with an ICT provision suited to their needs and is compliant with the determinations of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW).

Discussions centred on the following topics:

- Advice and guidance in relation to various IT support packages available and compatible device information be provided in the Councillors Induction pack 2017. Seminars / training sessions also be provided in how to operate devices. This information be re-iterated throughout the 5 year term of office as a result of technology advances;
- The IT help desk would continue to assist Councillors with issues that related to Authority based software / network issues;
- Windows 10 had been installed on all agile working laptops, however windows 7 was still being utilised on Desktop computers.

RESOLVED that the Democratic Services Committee support the report and its recommendations and recommend its adoption to Cabinet as follows:

- 1) The report be forwarded to Council prior to Cabinet in order to obtain any additional comments from Councillors;
- 2) The current arrangements for Councillors to purchase their own ICT equipment be continued;
- 3) Access to Office 365 to enable cloud technology for more resilient, secure information sharing system, subject to successful pilot be noted;
- 4) The Councillors' ICT Allowance as outlined within the report be noted;
- 5) The Councillors' Broadband and Telephone Allowance as outlined within the report be noted;

- 6) The Councillors' Mobile Phone Allowance as outlined within the report be noted;
- 7) The section relating to Councillors' Self Service be noted.

12 **INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES (IRPW) DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2017-2018 - CONSULTATION.**

The Head of Democratic Services provided a report in order to obtain the views of the Democratic Services Committee relating to the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) Draft Annual Report 2017-2018 and to comment on determinations made. The comments would form a report to Council followed by a formal reply to the IRPW by their deadline of 28 November 2016.

RESOLVED that the responses outlined in Appendix A be forwarded to Council subject to the following amendments/additions being made:

Determination 2:

- 1) The Authority remains concerned at the two levels of payments for Cabinet members and Committee Chairs created in February 2016. The Authority believes that a Leader of a Council would create a balanced Cabinet with collective responsibility. No Cabinet Member is more or less important to the decision making process. Whilst it may appear that some Portfolios are smaller than others, those with smaller budgets will face difficulties as a smaller budget could quite easily mean more drastic outcomes. Equally Council has created Committees with a balanced workload.
- 2) CCS notes that there is no change. No further comment.

Determination 8:

- 1) Further clarification is sought from the IRPW. Determination 8 seems to imply that subject to IRPW approval, Authorities would be allowed to exceed their Senior Salary Cap (currently 19 in Swansea) providing the total number of Senior Salaries cannot exceed 50% of the membership.
- 2) If this is the case then the Authority supports it.

Determination 43:

- 1) The Authority welcomes the Panel's change to use the term "reimbursement of costs of care" to replace **care allowance**, as a result of discussion with the WLGA leadership.
- 2) The Authority shares the IRPW's concerns that take up of the Care Allowance has been low and accepts that this is likely due to the sensitivity of the Allowance. The Authority therefore supports the IRPW proposal to amend "Annex 4: Publication of Remuneration - The Panel's Requirements" of the Annual Report.

This amendment would allow an Authority to either:

- a) Publish the details of the amounts reimbursed to named Members; or
- b) Publish the total amount reimbursed by the Authority during the year but not attributed to any named Member.

However, the Authority is concerned that without support from the Information Commissioners Office (ICO), the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act could render this amendment meaningless as the Act could be used as a legislative tool forcing an Authority to release the information. The Authority suggests that the IRPW liaise with the ICO in order to seek formal guidance on this issue prior to it becoming an issue for an Authority.

Section 11 – Sickness Absence for Senior Salary Holders

No determination:

The IRPW proposes to amend the Family Absence Regulations Framework to provide specific arrangements for Senior Salary Holders that are suffering long term sickness. The arrangements are set out within the IRPW Draft Annual Report.

The Authority welcomes the Panel's proposals.

13 **WORKPLAN.**

RESOLVED that the Workplan for 2016-2017 be approved as follows:

20 December 2016	Councillors Induction Programme 2017
20 December 2016	Modern.gov being rolled out for all Committee / Scrutiny meetings
28 March 2017	Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales 2017-2018 Annual Report – February 2017

The meeting ended at 5.49 pm

CHAIR