



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Democratic Services Committee**

Committee Room 5 - Guildhall, Swansea

Tuesday, 30 January 2018 at 5.00 pm

Present: Councillor P M Black (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

N J Davies
W G Lewis
B J Rowlands

Councillor(s)

L S Gibbard
S Pritchard
L J Tyler-Lloyd

Councillor(s)

K M Griffiths
K M Roberts
L V Walton

Officer(s)

Huw Evans
Allison Lowe
Tracey Meredith

Head of Democratic Services
Democratic Services Officer
Head of Legal, Democratic Services and Business
Intelligence and Monitoring Officer

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): M Durke, J A Hale, S M Jones, E T Kirchner, I E Mann, C Richards and G J Tanner

15 Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

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

16 Minutes.

Resolved that the Minutes of the Democratic Services Committee held on 7 November 2017 be approved and signed as a correct record.

17 Timing of Council Meetings - Survey.

The Head of Democratic Services provided a report on the outcome of the Councillors Survey on Timings of Council Meetings.

Section 6 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 requires the Authority to undertake a survey of Councillors regarding the timing and frequency of Council meetings at least once during each term of the administration.

Following the Local Government Elections in May 2017, it was deemed appropriate not to conduct this survey immediately following the election in order to allow Councillors to have some time to understand the requirements of being a Councillor and the time commitment which it commands. As such, the Head of Democratic

Services delayed the survey until 21 December 2017 with the survey ending on 12 January 2018.

The survey, which had been completed by 60 out of the 72 Councillors and its results were outlined in Appendix B of the report.

The Committee discussed the various issues that can affect Councillors attendance at meetings such as employment, caring responsibilities, health and public transport. The Head of Democratic Services reiterated that Councillors were able to claim up to £403 per month for reimbursement of costs of care. He encouraged Councillors with caring responsibilities to utilise this facility.

Councillors acknowledged that unfortunately, timings of meetings would never suit all, therefore they agreed that the most appropriate course of action would be to continue with the current format and allow each Committee to consider the timing of their own meetings at the first meeting of each Committee. It was noted that the Committee would only be able to alter the time of the Committee, not the day.

Resolved that:

- 1) The report be noted;
- 2) The Council diary for the 2018-2019 Municipal Year be drafted maintaining the format of the 2017-2018 Municipal Year diary;
- 3) "Timing of Future Meetings" be a standard item on the agenda of the first meeting of each Committee.

18 Councillors' Annual Reports 2016-2017. (Verbal update)

The Head of Democratic Services provided a verbal update on the number of Councillor Annual Reports received for the 2016-2017 municipal year.

To date 42 out of 53 returning Councillors had completed an annual report. These will all be published online in due course.

Councillors first elected in May 2017 were not eligible to complete an annual report for 2016-2017 as they were not Councillors during that period. However a number of newly elected Councillors had submitted a short paragraph about their activities undertaken since elected, which had been published in the "about me" section of their page on the Council's website. All Councillors newly elected in 2017 could utilise this facility.

The Head of Democratic Services went on to state that he would update the Committee on final figures at the next meeting. The Committee would also review the format of the Annual Report as we had not considered this since its implementation in 2012.

Resolved that the update be noted.

19 Councillor Pledge on Standards. (Verbal Update).

The Head of Democratic Services reported that 61 out of 72 Councillors had signed the Councillor Pledge on Standards.

The forms would be published on the Council's website.

Resolved that the update be noted.

20 Councillor -v- Councillor Local Dispute Resolution Protocol. (Verbal Update)

The Head of Democratic Services reported that 69 out of 72 Councillors had signed the Councillor-v-Councillor Local Dispute Resolution Protocol.

He was hopeful that that remaining 3 Councillors would also sign-up in due course.

The forms would be published on the Council's website.

Resolved that the update be noted.

21 Workplan.

The Head of Democratic Services outlined Workplan for the next meeting:

- Annual Reports – update and review of template;
- Review of Councillors Handbook (Sections B and C).

Resolved that the Workplan be noted.

The meeting ended at 5.22 pm

Chair