



MERTHYR TYDFIL
County Borough Council
Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
MERTHYR TUDFUL

MINUTES OF MEETING

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING

MONDAY, 28TH SEPTEMBER, 2015

PRESENT: Councillor Richard Thomas (In the Chair)

Councillors: T Chaplin, G Lewis, T Lewis and K Moran

Portfolio Member
Councillor Phil Williams

Officers:
Ann Taylor (Democratic Services Team Leader) and Matthew Phillips (Democratic Services Officer)

ITEM NO.	AGENDA MATTER	DECISION
466	Apologies for Absence	Apologies for absence we received from Councillor Gareth Jones, Councillor Margaret Davies, Councillor Clive Jones and Councillor Brian Mansbridge.
467	Declarations of Interest	No Declarations of Interest were made.
468	Democratic Services Departmental Structure	<p>Ann Taylor (Head of Democratic Services) updated the Committee on the recent changes in relation to the department and the structure. She highlighting that Mair Morgan is now a Democratic Services Officer, that the Corporate Support Team will now administer the minute taking duties of the Scrutiny Committees and that Karen Vokes has taken up a role in training of the support staff in relation to duties that the department can share.</p> <p>The Head of Democratic Services provided advice and background information in relation to what is the role of HR in relation to the training of staff.</p>

		<p>Councillor Phil Williams commented in relation to the training role and explained that the expertise sits with the officers within the department and they would be best suited to share that knowledge with other officers within the Authority.</p> <p>The Chair commented that the Democratic Services Department is a very small team in relation to other Local Authorities but provide an excellent service to Members.</p>
469	Member Development Strategy	<p>Councillor Phil Williams introduced the report by giving a brief explanation of the new committee report templates to the members before highlighting the salient points held within the report.</p> <p>The Chair addressed the Committee and explained that course fees were a major issue in relation to member development with the budget being relatively small and course fees being quite large it limits the number of opportunities.</p> <p>The Chair also drew Members' attention to the WLGA competency framework and requested that all Members of the Committee receive an electronic copy of the document</p> <p>The Head of Democratic Services provided advice and background information in relation to the following questions from the Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should all Members be involved in the Training Needs Analysis (TNA) to assist the Democratic Services Team in the process and to expand the training base of both officers and Members. • Would it be more practical to start with small scale internal courses for Members looking at departmental points of contact; Heads of Service; introduction of new policies etc. • Would it be a good starting point for offices to introduce training for Members in areas that they can see need improving rather than waiting for the TNAs to be completed • The poor response in relation to the TNAs may be down to some Members not being able to admit weaknesses. • Could an internal Member mentoring scheme be introduced; as there are a large number of Members who have a wealth of knowledge that could be lost if they don't wish to stand at future elections. • Could we invite a member of the WLGA Councillor Development and Support Service Team to the next Democratic Services Committee.

		<p>It was agreed that an e-mail be sent out under the Chair signature posing the question - What members will not be standing at the next local election and to send an invite to the WLGA to attend the next Democratic Services Committee.</p> <p>The recommendations for this item be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee to allow the development of the TNA.</p>
470	Training and Development Programme	<p>The Head of Democratic Services updated the committee on the current position in relation to the Training and Development programme.</p> <p>Councillor Phil Williams addressed the committee and reiterated that the TNA needs to be kept as simple as possible with no more than two pages.</p> <p>The Chair suggested that a meeting be arranged with himself, Councillor Phil Williams and the Head of Democratic Services to draw up a Training Needs Analysis which can be sent out to all Councillors as soon as practicable and bring a report back to the next Democratic Services Committee on the response to the TNA.</p>
471	Councillor Web Pages	<p>The Head of Democratic Services introduced the report and highlighted to the Committee the potential the members have to develop their own personal webpage held on the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council website in relation to the training they attend, community/ward work and advertising their surgeries.</p> <p>Councillor Phil Williams addressed the committee and stated that there were a number of annual reports still outstanding and that he will be speaking to the Members in question shortly.</p> <p>The Head of Democratic Services provided advice and background information in relation to the following questions from the committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will the information provided by Members be monitored and uploaded onto the webpages. • Can the information on the personal webpages be used for social media purposes.
472	Any Other Business Deemed Urgent by the Chair	<p>The Chair advised the committee that he would discuss possible dates for the next committee with the Head of Democratic Services after checking the availability of the WLGA and would also look at adding more Democratic Services Committee meetings to the annual calendar to allow for more stand alone meetings.</p>