

## **FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

**DATE:** WEDNESDAY, 24 APRIL 2013

**REPORT BY:** DEMOCRACY & GOVERNANCE MANAGER

**SUBJECT:** GRANT IN RELATION TO BROADCASTING OF COUNTY COUNCIL MEETINGS AND IMPROVING TOWN/COMMUNITY COUNCIL WEBSITES.

### **1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.01 To inform the committee of a grant the Welsh Government has awarded to the County Council.

### **2.00 BACKGROUND**

2.01 On the 21 February 2013 the Minister for Local Government and Communities made available funding of £1,245,000 to support the broadcasting of Council meetings, preparations for remote attendance and the establishment of Community Council websites. Each of the 22 principal Councils was allocated £40K to assist with broadcasting and remote attendance plus an extra £500 in respect of each Town or Community Council in its area so that in Flintshire's case it is funding of up to £57K. Following clarification of parts of the formal offer letter Flintshire accepted the offer on the 7 March 2013.

### **3.00 CONSIDERATIONS**

3.01 The Welsh Government is on public record as supporting the broadcasting of Council meetings as an important way in which local government can ensure that its profile is raised and that the public are better able to follow and engage with the deliberations and decision making procedures of their local Council. The way of achieving this is through webcasting certain meetings. At present very few Welsh authorities do this. In order to claim the grant the Council will have to produce evidence of at least a pilot of webcasting a meeting by the end of March 2014.

3.02 Section 4 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 provides that a meeting of a local authority is not limited to a meeting of persons all of whom are present in the same place. It provides that a Member may be present at a meeting through remote attendance where that Member is able to see and hear and be seen and heard by those in actual attendance. The Measure provides that guidance will

be issued by Welsh Ministers in relation to remote attendance. At the present time such guidance is expected in the autumn. In order to obtain the grant funding, the Council is required to have piloted remote attendance for at least one meeting prior to the end of March 2014.

- 3.03 The Council is investigating both webcasting and remote attendance with appropriate webcasting providers and liaising with other County Councils over a joint procurement exercise.
- 3.04 The third aspect of the grant is for the authority to provide grants to Town and Community Councils of up to £500 for improvements in their publication and accessibility on the internet. £17K of the grant has been ring-fenced for this purpose.
- 3.05 On the 14 March 2013 all Town and Community Councils were written to informing them of the availability of up to a maximum of £500 for work done in providing or improving a website for the Town or Community Council. A copy of that communication is attached as appendix 1.

#### **4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.01 For the committee to note the grant funding that the Council has accepted.

#### **5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.01 None as a result of this report.

#### **6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

- 6.01 None as a result of this report.

#### **7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

- 7.01 None as a result of this report.

#### **8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 8.01 None as a result of this report.

#### **9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.01 None as a result of this report.

#### **10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

- 10.01 None as a result of this report.

**11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

11.01 With Town & Community Council Clerks.

**12.00 APPENDICES**

12.01 Appendix 1 – Communication to Town & Community Councils dated 14 March 2013

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985  
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Letter dated the 27 November 2012 from Carl Sargeant AM  
Award of funding from the Welsh Government dated 21 February 2013.

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