

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE
5 OCTOBER 2016

Minutes of the meeting of the Democratic Services Committee of Flintshire County Council held in County Hall, Mold on Wednesday, 5 October 2016.

PRESENT: Councillor Nigel Steele-Mortimer (Vice-Chair in the Chair)

Councillors: Alex Aldridge, Glyn Banks, Haydn Bateman, Chris Bithell, Clive Carver, David Cox, Paul Cunningham, Ian Dunbar, Andy Dunbobbin, George Hardcastle, Dave Mackie, Neville Phillips, David Williams and Arnold Woolley

APOLOGIES: Councillors Veronica Gay, Tim Newhouse and Ian Smith

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Governance), Member Engagement Manager, and Committee Officer

25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

26. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 29 June 2016, were submitted.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received, approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

27. MEMBER INDUCTION FOLLOWING 2017 COUNTY COUNCIL ELECTIONS

The Member Engagement Manager introduced a report to update on progress on the work of the 2017 Induction Steering Group of Officers following their initial meeting on 31 August 2016. He reported on some of the key considerations, as detailed in the report, which had been agreed by the Steering Group as part of the preparation for the Induction Programme. The Member Engagement Manager advised that further progress reports on the work of the Steering Group would be made to the meetings of the Democratic Services Committee on 1 February and 5 April 2016.

Councillor Alex Aldridge suggested that training/raising awareness on the use and impact of social media should be included for new and existing Members in the Induction programme. The Member Engagement Manager acknowledged the concerns raised and gave an assurance that this matter would be addressed.

Councillor Clive Carver expressed the view that the training provided for members of the Planning Committee needed to be more robust to ensure Members were fully informed of their role and could make an effective contribution. The Member Engagement Manager said he would forward Councillor Carver's concerns, and his additional comments around e-learning, to the Chief Officer (Planning and Environment) for consideration.

Councillor Chris Bithell said he supported the proposals outlined in section 1.02 of the report and commented on the merits of also providing a mentoring programme to offer guidance and support to new Members.

Councillor Arnold Woolley expressed the view that Members should be given a clear indication of their personal responsibilities to participate and remain updated with the training provided.

Councillor Glyn Banks spoke in support of training by e-learning to enable more Members to engage at a time which fitted around other responsibilities and commitments.

The Chief Executive thanked the Committee for the positive points made and agreed it could be helpful to have more focus around short, sharp, briefing sessions prior to Committee meetings. He suggested that the programme of support to prospective candidates could be expanded to include further information about how the Council operates and drop in sessions provided to give helpful guidance around the 'do's and don'ts' of campaigning and lobbying. The Member Engagement Manager explained that in preparation for the 2017 elections, an information feature for candidates was being drafted to go onto the Council's website. A copy would be forwarded to the Democratic Services Committee for comment before completion.

Councillor Chris Bithell commented on the need to raise the issue of Members attendance at training sessions with Group Leaders. He also commented on the matter of personal development interviews for Members with Group Leaders and said this needed more consideration.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

28. PUBLIC AND PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There were no members of the press or public in attendance.

(The meeting commenced at 11.35 am and finished at 12.13 pm)

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Chairman