

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting held on 25th June, 2019.

Present: Councillor L.O. Rowlands (Chairman); Councillor N.P. Hodges (Vice-Chairman); Councillors: G.D.D. Carroll, Mrs. S.M. Hanks, M.J.G. Morgan, A.R. Robertson, N.C. Thomas and M.R. Wilson.

77 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE –

These were received from Councillors O. Griffiths and K.F. McCaffer.

78 MINUTES –

RESOLVED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 17th October, 2018 be approved as a correct record.

79 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

No declarations were received.

80 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME UPDATE (MD) –

The Committee at its previous meeting in October 2018 approved proposals for the development of a Member Competency Framework and associated development programme. Consequently, a working group of Elected Members was appointed to help shape the outline for the above Framework. It formed the basis of the first series of “Expo” events that were held during November 2019.

Having regard to the above, the report now provided feedback to the Committee on the first Expo and outlined proposals for discussion at the next series of Expos to be held during July 2019.

The Committee was informed that a total of 30 Members attended the first Expo event held in November 2018 with the purpose of the Expo to provide Elected Members with an opportunity to visit a number of Directorate stalls to discuss current issues and projects underway across the Council with officers from all relevant departments. The second half of the Expo sessions provided Elected Members with an opportunity to input into the development of the then proposed Member Competency Framework. This exercise involved Elected Members identifying key skills, experience and behaviours associated with the five areas relating to the following competency behaviours:

- Managing My Role;
- Working with Citizens;
- Navigating Future Change;

- Managing Myself;
- Managing Relationships.

Following the Expo event a feedback survey had been distributed to the attendees of the Expo albeit only four formal responses had been received with some other Members providing feedback via e-mail and attached at Appendix A was an overview of that feedback set out for the Committee's attention. Officers considered the feedback to be largely positive and provided useful information that had been taken account of and reflected in proposals for the forthcoming series of Expo events planned to be held during July 2019.

It was proposed that these would be held on 10th and 11th July with invitations already extended to all Elected Members to attend. It was proposed that the July Expo sessions would focus on the "managing the future" element of the Framework and based around the Council's transformational change programme, Reshaping Services. The aim of the Reshaping Services programme was to enable the Council to continue to provide priority services at a time of significant challenge, both in financial and social terms. It was proposed that the July programme would follow a similar format as the previous sessions held in November and would include an update from the Council's Senior Management Team, officers from each Directorate who would provide information about Reshaping Services activities that had been undertaken and that were underway across the Council as well as a participative workshop activity.

It was suggested that the workshop activity would enable Elected Members to explore the different aspects of Reshaping Services as ways of mitigating the effects of reducing budgets and increasing challenges, within the context of managing the future. The input from those workshops would be used to inform the development of future phases of the Reshaping Services programme.

In addition to the above and having regard to the ongoing development of a Member Competency Framework, it was also being proposed that Committee approve proposals to seek two nominations from each of the Council's political groups with a view to renewing the membership of the Member Development Working Group. Following receipt of nominees, it was proposed that the Working Group would be reconvened to consider the outputs from the November Expo session workshop activity in order to finalise a draft of the Member Competency Framework.

In terms of progressing and moving forward, it was proposed that a further report would be submitted for consideration to the Committee following the Working Group's meeting and the July 2019 Expo events.

Councillor Thomas, in referring to the low number of responses to the survey, expressed his disappointment. In echoing those comments, Councillor Wilson suggested that more interactive methods of feedback where instant feedback could be provided during such events, be considered. He also suggested that relevant case studies be provided as part of the Expo material to allow Members to be sighted on initiatives being developed within local government.

Councillor Thomas also suggested that in regard to the membership of the Working Group, that invitations also be extended beyond the political groups to the two independent Members, Councillors Mahoney and Penrose.

The Chairman, alluding to the comments of Councillor Thomas and Wilson, concurred with those points and requested officers to consider the feasibility of facilitating interactive feedback or similar at future Expo events to provide case studies where available. He also took the view that the membership of the Working Group should be extended to both Councillors Penrose and Mahoney to enable them the opportunity to be part of the Working Group.

Having regard to the above, it was

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the contents of the report be noted.
- (2) T H A T the proposed Member Development Expo Programme to be held in July 2019, be approved.
- (3) T H A T the Leaders of each Political Group nominated up to two Elected Members each to form the Member Development Working Group and that Councillors Mahoney and Penrose be afforded the opportunity to be a member of the Working Group.

Reasons for decisions

- (1) To provide an update to the Committee.
- (2) To enable the Committee to consider and input into the design and delivery of the next series of Expos to be held during July 2019.
- (3) To enable a renewed Working Group of Members to be appointed to form a Working Group to further develop the Member Competency Framework.