

**NOTES OF A MEETING OF THE MEMBER DEVELOPMENT WORKING  
GROUP HELD AT COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS ON  
29 NOVEMBER, 2012**

**PRESENT:** County Councillor Mrs S.C. Davies [Chair]  
County Councillors D.O. Evans, G. Price, J. Powell, G. Ratcliffe, T. Turner and  
D.H. Williams

**Officers in Attendance:** Stephen Boyd (Cabinet Manager), Carol Johnson (Democratic Services Officer), Janet Kealey (Head of Legal, Scrutiny and Democratic Services), Wyn Richards (Scrutiny Manager) and Shane Thomas (Member Support Manager).

**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from County Councillors P.J. Ashton and Mrs D. Bailey and Lisa Griffiths (Organisational Development Manager).

**2. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

2.1 The notes of the previous meeting held on 18 October, 2012 were agreed as a correct record.

2.2 Matters arising not included elsewhere on the Agenda:

- (i) Annual Reports – responses from Political Groups had been sought. Councillor D.H. Williams advised he had completed the Bridgend Council annual report template and copies were provided to the Group. The Group considered:
- that annual reports would help the public understand councillors' role
  - it was noted that the Authority was only required to publish a Councillor's report but a councillor could use their report in a number of ways such as a newsletter, present it to community councils or other groups to show the work undertaken.

It was noted that support and guidance would be needed and that a Member Development session had already been added to the Member Development Programme for early 2013. The following was noted – signs/symbols would be used to assist the public to understand the headings, reports should not criticise other councillors or past councillors and they should not identify members of the public, councillors should keep a diary of their work. There would need to be consideration of editorial control for Annual Reports.

**Agreed that:**

1. **The Working Group Members would complete the Bridgend Council Annual Report template to assess the content and ease of completion and forward these to Shane Thomas for collation and discussion at the next meeting**
2. **A small sub-group be set up to develop guidelines etc. for the introduction of Annual Reports.**

### 3. **Service Level Agreement [SLA] for Member Support**

- (i) To discuss how technology can support Member Development with Elaine Worgan

Wyn Richards advised that a Project Group was looking at the technology available to replace the old congress system in The Chamber, County Hall. Any replacement would need to meet the requirements of the Local Government Measure in respect of remote attendance and also the webcasting of meetings if this was to be undertaken. It was noted that the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority had received funding to install equipment to enable its meetings to be webcast. He advised that the Council was looking to the Welsh Government for extra funding and had put itself forward as a pilot to look at remote attendance and it was hoped that capital funding would be available for this.

It was noted that Carl Sargeant had written to Chief Executives and Leaders asking them what they were doing in respect of broadcasting meetings. Wyn Richards agreed to check whether a response to this letter had been sent.

In respect of supporting Member Development sessions Elaine Worgan advised that these sessions could be videoed and then put online. In addition "voice overs" could be added to presentations and put online. These could then be accessed by Members at a later date or if they had been unable to attend a session.

It was noted that the Joint Chair and Vice Chairs Group had asked if the equipment being issued to Members was fit for purpose and asked that the Democratic Services Committee consider the need to update IT for Members. Elaine Worgan advised that a five year rolling programme for updating equipment was followed for members as for staff. The main problem was connectivity issues in Powys which limited the level of advanced technology used. Members also commented on the problems of mobile phone connections. It was considered that the Council should work with other local authorities, such as Ceredigion, which was experiencing similar problems and lobby network providers to provide a better service in this area.

- (ii) To consider a draft SLA

The Group agreed that the SLA should clearly state what is currently provided and then Members need to say what else they require to support them in their role. However, it was agreed that there needed to be capacity to support any future needs.

#### **Agreed that:**

- 1. Officers check the draft in respect of the current provision**
- 2. The revised draft be forwarded to Groups for comment and that they indicate what other support etc Members required.**

County Councillor Mrs S. Davies left the meeting. County Councillor D.H. Williams took the Chair.

#### **4. Step-Up Powys County Council**

The document "How Fair is Wales" had highlighted the under-representation of people from across all walks of society. It had shown that people from such groups were keen to learn more about democracy and get involved in politics and/or their communities. Step Up Cymru had been successfully piloted and the Council was committed to using this model to develop opportunities for such groups in Powys. It was noted that Steve Boyd and Wyn Richards were working with Rob Beardall, Equalities Officer. A project plan and success criteria would be brought to the Working Group for consideration.

#### **5. Member Support and Development Lead Members and Officers Network, 12<sup>th</sup> September.**

The notes of the meeting were received. County Councillor T. Turner advised that it was an interesting day and useful to meet Members from other authorities.

#### **6. Protocol for using laptops etc in Council meetings**

The Working Group noted the request from the Standards Committee that the development of a protocol be considered regarding the use of laptops and electronic media during training sessions and presentations. The Working Group was advised that the independent members of the Standards Committee had observed Members using their laptops, for a variety of things, during the Code of Conduct training. They felt that this was disrespectful to the presenter and they were not concentrating on what was being said by the speakers. Concerns were also raised that when laptops are used during meetings it gives the wrong impression to the public who may be in attendance.

**Agreed to draft a protocol for consideration by the Working Group.**

#### **7. Date of Next Meeting**

5 February, 2012 at 2.00 p.m. Committee Room A, County Hall

County Councillor Mrs S. Davies  
Chair