

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

Democratic Services Committee
23 January, 2017

REPORT BY: **Head of Democratic Services**

SUBJECT: **Matters relating to Democratic Services issues**

REPORT FOR: **Decision, Information and Discussion**

1. ICT support to Members – to receive a verbal report

2. Contacts from Members to Officers of the Council

The Member Development Working Group [MDWG] has considered the attached protocol [Appendix 1] which will ensure that contacts from Members to officers of the Council via the Member Support Unit are responded to within 10 working days of receipt. The MDWG recommends this to the Committee.

The MDWG was advised that officers do not always advise Members of unusual incidences in their areas, such as closure of road due to an incident, flooding or breakdown of a recycling lorry which will affect the rest of the day's collection rota. On many occasions the local Member only gets to know about these when a resident contacts them. It is considered that in such incidents officers should "Remember the Member" and forward information to the local Member. The DSC is asked to consider referring this issue to Management Team.

RECOMMENDATION	Reason for Recommendation:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) That the Protocol for contacts from members to Officers of the Council is adopted as from 1st May 2017; (ii) That this new way of working is promoted by the Member Support Unit to staff. (iii) That the Management Team promotes the need to keep Members informed of incidents and to "Remember the Member". 	To ensure timely responses to Members contacts.

3. Member Support Agreement

The Member Support Agreement was introduced in 2013 to formalise the support provided to Members. As new support is developed and agreed this is included in the Agreement. The attached [Appendix 2] takes into account recent changes and is recommended by the MDWG. The Agreement will form part of the Members Information Pack.

RECOMMENDATION	Reason for Recommendation:
That the Member Support Agreement is agreed.	To ensure that Members are aware of the support they will receive.

An issue which was raised by the MDWG on 13th January, 2017 was whether Members should be issued with business / calling cards once purdah starts on 17th March, 2017. It was the view of the MDWG that such items should not be issued by the Council and the Head of Democratic Services agreed to ask the Solicitor to the Council to include this exception in his guidance on purdah.

RECOMMENDATION	Reason for Recommendation:
That business / calling cards will not be issued to Members once purdah commences on 17 th March, 2017.	To ensure that the Council does not breach the rules regarding the promotion of candidates at an election.

4. Member and Cabinet development and support post 2017 election

To support the Democratic Services Committee [and Member Development Working Group] in preparing for the new Council in May 2017, the Solicitor to the Council took a report to the Management Team in November, 2016 to gain the Management Team's support in their role in Member and Cabinet development and support for the new Council [Appendix 3]. The latter's views were sought on the proposals for Member and Cabinet development and support.

The Management Team supported the proposals and the report was subsequently considered by the MDWG on 13th January, 2017. The Democratic Services Committee has previously agreed the Induction Programme which is included in the report.

In the report the additional items which the MDWG considered and approved were:

- (i) the range of topics for the Member Development Programme September 2017 - April 2018
- (ii) a Regional Induction Seminar for new Councillors being facilitated by the WLGA
- (iii) the "Market Place"
- (iv) topics for the Cabinet Induction Programme
- (v) the provision of induction / development support to Group Leaders and an the development of an Information Pack
- (vi) Portfolio Holder Information Pack.

Over the next four months the content of the items listed above will be finalised ready for the elections in May 2017.

RECOMMENDATION that the Democratic Services Committee:	Reason for Recommendation:
(i) notes the development of the Member Development Programme	To complete the Induction process for Members and to develop a Member

<p>for 2017-18, the detail of which will be agreed with the Member Development Working Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (ii) supports the development of the “Market Place” in the period leading up to May 2017, and that the “Market Place” be utilised as part of the Member Development Programme for the new Council (iii) supports the development of a Cabinet Induction Programme (iv) supports the provision of induction / development support to Group Leaders and the development of an Information Pack (v) supports the development of information and support to individual Portfolio Holders. 	<p>Development Programme for the new Council.</p>
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5. Managing Casework

Some Members have asked for support in managing casework. A Working Group of Members and officers are looking into the IT packages available. Swansea City Council are developing an in-house tool. The Working Group will visit Swansea City Council to review this system in due course and a report will be brought back to this Committee.

5. Managing the potential changes of councillors in May 2017.

The Committee is advised that discussions have been ongoing between officers from Democratic / Scrutiny Services, Employment Services and ICT over a number of months to plan ahead for the Council Elections in May 2017. In particular officers have sought to review and agree processes to make sure that new Members are registered quickly onto the payroll system, and have access to ICT and any systems which they will use as a Councillor.

There will be opportunities for some action to be taken at an early stage e.g. following the issue of the Statement of Persons Nominated on 4th April when it will be known which of the current membership is not standing for re-election or in which electoral divisions there will not be a contest. That will provide the opportunity for officers to write to relevant Members regarding issues such as the return of equipment. However it is anticipated that the bulk of the work will be required after 4th May, 2017.

One question which has been discussed by the MDWG is whether any support should be offered to those councillors either standing down at the next election or losing their seats. A discussion with colleague officers at the all Wales Member Support Officer Network highlighted that this is not something provided by authorities. The question arises whether the Council has a “duty of care” and

should consider such a provision and what form it would take. As a minimum it has been suggested as to whether providing access to the Council's counselling service to offer support, would be a provision which the Council could consider, although it is unknown whether former Members would wish to make use of such a facility, or for how long such a facility should be available following an election. In addition it is not known whether any political groups provide support to their members. In addition the Council could consider whether it should offer pre-retirement course to members. The Committee's views is therefore sought.

RECOMMENDATION	Reason for Recommendation:
That the Committee indicates whether any form of support service to former Members of the Council should be provided by the Council and for what time period.	To consider the provision of support to former Councillors following an election.

Contact Officer Name:	Tel:	Email:
Wyn Richards, Head of Democratic Services	01597 826375	Wyn.richards@powys.gov.uk