

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL

Democratic Services Committee – 29 April, 2019

REPORT AUTHOR: Head of Democratic Services

SUBJECT: Member support and wellbeing

REPORT FOR: Discussion and Decision

1. Background

- 1.1 As councillors are under increasing pressure, the Welsh Local Government Association [WLGA] Member Support Network has discussed this issue. The following observations have been made:
- Local authorities have a duty of care to councillors
 - Providing access to staff counselling arrangements is working well
 - Physical health is also important, RCT takes a wellbeing approach and provides health checks
 - There is a role for member development, PDR and mentoring in supporting mental health. Conwy for example have provided a personal resilience training session
 - The WLGA workbook on stress management and personal resilience is useful <https://www.wlga.wales/councillor-workbooks-for-personal-development-1>

2. Support available in PCC

- 2.1 The Member Development Working Group [MDWG] at its meeting on 8 April, 2019 considered whether Members and Co-opted Members should have access to the Employee Assistance Programme. The Council is currently reviewing its Employee Assistance Programme and will be going out to tender soon. Attached is an extract of the draft specification.
- 2.2 Lorna Simpson, HR Manager attended the meeting to explain how the Programme works. The Working Group considered that providing support to Members was important and reassuring to Members that the Council cared for their wellbeing. It agreed that support should be provided to Members and Co-opted Members at the end of their term of office or appointment, especially those who may not have been re-elected.
- 2.3 A service provider would need to meet national standards, for such a service, in respect of such issues as confidentiality, security of personal information and service standards. The cost per head was noted and was subject to confirmation by HR.
- 2.4 The MDWG asked whether Political Groups provide support to their members and how Members are covered by the Council's insurance. To date the following information has been received:

- Welsh Labour - Labour Councillors have access mental health support and advice commissioned by the Association of Labour Councillors in partnership with Mind. The group also has a Chief Whip who acts as lead member in terms of member wellbeing and support.
- Plaid Cymru – no support
- The Independent Group – no support.

Recommendation	Reason for recommendation
<p>that subject to costs and a budget being confirmed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Councillors and Co-opted Members have access to the Employee Assistance Programme, 2. ex-Councillors and Co-opted Members have authorised access to the Programme for three months following their last day of office as a Councillor or as a Co-opted Member, 3. family members of Councillors or Co-opted Members would have the same access rights as family members of employees. 	<p>To meet the Council's duty of care.</p>

Relevant Policy (ies):	
Within Policy:	Y / N
Within Budget:	Y / N

Relevant Local Member(s):			
Person(s) To Implement Decision:	Wyn Richards		
Date By When Decision To Be Implemented:			
Contact Officer Name:	Tel:	Fax:	Email:
Wyn Richards Head of Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager	01597-826375	01597-826220	wyn.richards@powys.gov.uk

Background Papers used to prepare Report:

Labour Councillors have access mental health support and advice commissioned by the Association of Labour Councillors in partnership with Mind.

The group also has a Chief Whip who acts as lead member in terms of member wellbeing and support.