

**COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT**

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b><u>THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE</u></b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b><u>DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE – 4<sup>TH</sup> JULY, 2018</u></b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b><u>BUSINESS SUPPORT OFFICER - DEMOCRATIC &amp; CORPORATE SUPPORT</u></b>

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**PRESENT:** COUNCILLOR M. CROSS (CHAIR)

Councillors J. Millard (Vice-Chair)

J. Collins  
N. Daniels  
M. Day  
L. Elias  
K. Hayden  
W. Hodgins  
H. McCarthy  
J.C. Morgan  
J.P. Morgan  
L. Parsons  
T. Sharrem

**AND:** Corporate Performance Manager  
Chief Finance Officer

**ALSO:** **Scrutiny Chairs & Vice-Chairs**  
Councillors P. Edwards  
S. Thomas  
H. Trollope

<b><u>ITEM</u></b>	<b><u>SUBJECT</u></b>	<b><u>ACTION</u></b>
1.	<p data-bbox="244 387 826 427"><b><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></b></p> <p data-bbox="244 472 1251 555">It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
2.	<p data-bbox="244 651 469 692"><b><u>APOLOGIES</u></b></p> <p data-bbox="244 750 1251 833">An apology for absence was reported from Councillor J. Wilkins, Vice-Chair of Corporate Services and Overview.</p> <p data-bbox="244 898 1251 1128">The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised that Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs had been invited to attend. Although they were permitted to take part in discussions they would not be allowed to vote on recommendations.</p> <p data-bbox="244 1193 1251 1476">The Chair of Education and Leisure Scrutiny Committee asked how his attendance at this meeting would be recorded as he was not part of the Democratic Services Committee. It was confirmed that attendance would be recorded as informal attendance rather than formal as he was not a Member of the Committee.</p>	
3.	<p data-bbox="244 1588 1211 1628"><b><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></b></p> <p data-bbox="244 1686 1217 1727">No declarations of interest or dispensations were reported.</p>	

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4.	<p data-bbox="244 394 935 432"><b><u>DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE</u></b></p> <p data-bbox="244 481 1230 562">Consideration was given to the Minutes of the Meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 2018; whereupon:-</p> <p data-bbox="244 651 427 689"><b><u>Apologies</u></b></p> <p data-bbox="244 739 1246 819">It was reported that Councillor J.C. Morgan had submitted his apologies for the meeting due to annual leave.</p> <p data-bbox="244 869 959 907">The Committee AGREED this amendment.</p> <p data-bbox="244 956 1246 1077">The Committee FURTHER AGREED, subject to the foregoing that the Minutes be received as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
5.	<p data-bbox="244 1178 1145 1216"><b><u>SCRUTINY TASK AND FINISH GROUP PROTOCOL</u></b></p> <p data-bbox="244 1265 1246 1386">The Chair reported that this item had been WITHDRAWN and would be presented for discussion at a future Committee.</p> <p data-bbox="244 1435 1246 1682">A Member referred to the notification which had been received to advise that the item had been withdrawn and noted that the reason for the withdrawal had been due to further discussion by the Corporate Leadership Team. He proposed that senior politicians also be included in this discussion.</p>	

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
	<p>Another Member referred to the Centre for Public Scrutiny which detailed the importance of scrutiny and felt that task and finish group was a critical part to the challenge from Members and identifying new ways of working. He proposed that a Democratic Services Working Party be established in order to look at how scrutiny should work going forward in line with information from the Centre for Public Scrutiny. The Member stated that task and finish groups should be considered either by Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs or via a Democratic Services Working Party.</p> <p>The Corporate Performance Manager agreed to take this request forward with the Head of Democratic Services.</p> <p>The Member felt it was important that as a Scrutiny Member Councillors were permitted to scrutinise matters fully to ensure they gained the maximum benefits from the scrutiny process.</p> <p>Members concurred with the comments raised and another Member further noted his disappointment that the report had been withdrawn. He felt that Task and Finish Groups provided Scrutiny Members an opportunity to scrutinise and challenge. The Member referred to comments raised by the Leader of the Council in his previous role as Chair of Democratic Services that it was important this we undertake the role with full transparency and Members should not be afraid to challenge and scrutinise.</p> <p>The Chair of Environment, Economic Development and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee concurred with the comments raised and stated it was important that we identify the influence management had in terms of Task and Finish Groups. He asked if they could bypass Members to end Task and Finish Groups. It was further asked when the Task and Finish Groups from Environment, Economic Development and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee would be resumed.</p>	

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	<p>A Member referred to a meeting scheduled for all Abertillery Ward Members in relation to a petition which had been received against the opening hours of Abertillery Multi Storey Car. He felt that the Chair of the Town Centre Strategy Task and Finish Group should be presented with the Petition for discussion at a future meeting. The recommendations from that Group would then be presented back to the Environment, Economic Development and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee for consideration.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED with this course of action.</p> <p>The Committee further AGREED to recommend, subject to the foregoing that the report be presented to the next meeting.</p>	
6.	<p><b><u>MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY</u></b></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Performance Manager.</p> <p>The Corporate Performance Manager advised that the Council had previously achieved Member Development Charter Level 1 in 2011. The Charter was due to expire and therefore it was an appropriate time to formally review the Strategy. The Officer referred Members to the report which provided detail on the development of the Member Development Strategy.</p> <p>The Officer noted that strategies from other local authorities had been considered as part of the development of the Strategy. The Strategy also includes reference to the Council's Corporate Plan and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act. The Officer highlighted the budget section of the report and reminded Members that the Head of Democratic Services had been tasked to review the Member Development budget and consider a potential increase in order to take Member Development forward.</p>	

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	<p>A Member referred to a consultation event taking place in the Sirhowy Ward which had been planned the same time as a road closure. He advised that the local Ward Members had not been made aware and this brought Members integrity into question. He felt that the different departments across the Council should be working together to ensure this did not happen and suggested that the Communications Team inform Members and place the information on Social Media.</p> <p>The Member proposed that the Strategy include reference to protect the integrity of Members when dealing with members of the public.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED this course of action.</p> <p>In response to a question raised about training, it was confirmed that the majority of training was undertaken in house, however if there was the appropriate budget in place training could be facilitated with external providers and neighbouring authorities.</p> <p>The Committee FURTHER AGREED to recommend, subject to the foregoing, that Option 2 was approved, Members to consider and suggest amendment to the Strategy prior to approval at Council, to include reference to protect the integrity of Members when dealing with members of the public.</p>	
8.	<p><b><u>SCHEDULE OF MEMBERS REMUNERATION 2018/19</u></b></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Finance Officer.</p> <p>The Chief Finance Officer noted the report which outlined the Schedule of Members Remuneration for 2018/19. He advised that the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales required the Council to publish the schedule of payments on an annual basis.</p>	

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	<p>A Member referred to the positions held by Councillors on the Silent Valley Board which was remunerated and pointed out that these payments were not included on the schedule and asked if these payments should be included.</p> <p>It was confirmed that the payments to the Silent Valley Board Member fell outside the responsibility of the IRP and therefore were not included on the schedule. The Chief Finance Officer advised that for open and transparency the payments could be added as a note to the schedule.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend this course of action.</p> <p>Another Member referred to the Silent Valley Board and sought clarification of the payments made to Councillors which would be additional costs to the Council and asked if that could be claimed back from Silent Valley.</p> <p>The Chief Finance Officer was unable to confirm if this could be the case for Councillors. He advised that it was the case for the officers who previously sat on the Board and clarification had been sought in terms of Members.</p> <p>The Committee FURTHER AGREED to recommend, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and the Schedule of Members Remuneration for 2018/19 be published with the added note to the schedule.</p>	

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8.	<p><b><u>STATEMENT OF PAYMENTS MADE TO MEMBERS IN 2017/2018</u></b></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Finance Officer.</p> <p>The Chief Finance Officer advised that this was a standard report to agree the publication of the Statement of Payments made to Members for 2017/18. He noted the Schedule of Payments which had been made to Members and Co-opted Members which was detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.</p> <p>A Member referred to the amendment to the Schedule of Remuneration in terms of payments made to Councillors as Board Members of Silent Valley and proposed that these payments also be noted on the Statement of Payments.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend this course of action.</p> <p>The Committee FURTHER AGREED to recommend subject to the foregoing that the report be accepted and the Statement of Payments made to Members during 2017/18 be published in compliance with relevant legislation with the added note to the schedule.</p>	
	<p><b><u>TIME OF FUTURE MEETINGS</u></b></p> <p>The Chair referred to the timing of future meetings and asked the Committee for their preferences.</p> <p>Following discussions, the Committee AGREED that future meetings be held at 9.30 am.</p>	