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## DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes of a remote meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> April, 2023.

The Committee agenda is available [here](#).

The Meeting recording is available [here](#).

Present: Councillor Dr. I.J. Johnson (Chair); Councillors G.D.D. Carroll, E. Goodjohn, H.C. Hamilton, S.M. Hanks, K.P. Mahoney, S.D. Perkes, J. Protheroe and N.C. Thomas.

Also present: Councillors W. Gilligan, G. John and E Williams

### 890 ANNOUNCEMENT –

Prior to the commencement of the business of the Committee, the Principal Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer read the following statement: “May I remind everyone present that the meeting will be live streamed as well as recorded via the internet and this recording archived for future viewing.”

### 891 APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE –

This was received from Councillor S.J. Haines (Vice-Chair).

### 892 MINUTES –

RESOLVED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2023 be approved as a correct record.

### 893 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

No declarations were received.

### 894 MEMBER INDUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME UPDATE AND OUTCOME OF THE LEARNING NEEDS SURVEY (HDS) -

The Principal Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer presented the report advising that the 2022 Member Induction and Development Programme was now in Phase 4 which was ongoing until the end of the current Municipal term (May 2027) and involved delivery of refresher courses and any new development topic sessions as identified by Members. Appendix A to the report detailed the results of the 2023 Learning Needs Analysis Self-Assessment Survey (LNASAS) which had been an electronic survey approved by the Democratic Services Committee to

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be sent to all Elected Members between January – March 2023. To date 32 responses had been received which equated to a 59% response rate. The survey had not been deemed mandatory to complete.

Appendix B to the report referred to the 2022 Microsoft Forms Feedback Survey (MFFS) results which had been a mini electronic survey sent to all Members in attendance at Member Development Sessions that had been offered as part of the Member Induction and Development Programme immediately after the sessions took place (over the first 7 months from the May 2022 LG Election). The report set out the response rates for the MFFS's as well as a breakdown of the feedback received for each development topic. A total of 221 responses were received resulting in a 15% average response rate. Again, this survey had not been considered mandatory to complete and Appendix C detailed the minutes of the Democratic Services Committee of 25<sup>th</sup> July, 2022 which provided Member comments at that time on the induction programme.

The Principal Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer drew the Committee's attention to the key findings that had been analysed and as referred to in paragraphs 2.8 and 2.16 of the report.

In referring to the feedback survey results of the LNASAS, the Chair and some Members stated that in their view the responses could be misconstrued, without considering the questions in the survey at the same time. By way of explanation it was noted that the questions related to support that Members considered they may require, with the no responses meaning no further support was required in the areas referred to, and the yes responses advising what further support they would like and what the preferred method of learning would be to do so.

During the discussion, reference was also made to the fact that the survey considered by the Committee at its November meeting did not appear to have been the exact same survey as forwarded in January 2023 to Elected Members for completion. It was subsequently agreed that the survey emailed in January 2023 \*\*\* be appended to the minutes for completeness when uploaded to the Council's website, and that, in future, any survey should be presented in a consistent manner across formats, from the draft presented to Committee for agreement, to that used in the survey software and in any report on survey results. Councillor Protheroe also suggested that the reference to 'support needs' be included in the survey results to indicate whether Members were requesting additional support, and to reduce ambiguity in the presentation of the report's findings.

Councillor Perkes enquired as to whether e-learning could be used to facilitate support for Members when considering Forward Work Programmes so that Members could refer back to as and when required. The Principal Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer agreed to look into the suggestion and also reminded Members of the Council's MemberNet facility which provided similar support as it stored the recordings of the training sessions and presentations that had been provided at the Member Induction Programme, which Members were also able to access, as and when required.

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Having regard to the response rate to the surveys it was noted that this had been low for the Member Induction Programme survey although the Chair acknowledged there was a significant amount of information that Democratic Services could work with having regard to the comments that were made.

Following a query from Councillor Hanks regarding the Personal Development Review (PDR) process referred to at paragraph 2.9 of the report, the Chair advised that the Head of Democratic Services would be making arrangements for reviews to be undertaken in June / July with Members who were in receipt of a special responsibility allowance and with back bench members.

There being no further comments it was subsequently

RESOLVED –

- (1) T H A T the comments of the Committee as discussed above, be collated and considered by Democratic Services Officers going forward.
- (2) T H A T the formatting of any future surveys be consistent when provided in draft paper format, in survey software and in the publication of any results and outcomes.
- (3) T H A T the feedback received from Members, as set out in Appendices A, B and C to the report, be noted.
- (4) T H A T the suggested findings of the Learning Needs Analysis Self-Assessment Exercise, and the Member Induction Programme feedback surveys as set out in paragraph 2.8 and 2.16 of the report, be endorsed.
- (5) T H A T a draft of the autumn 2023 onwards Member Development Programme Schedule be presented to the Committee, prior to sharing with all Elected Members (and Co-opted Members where appropriate), once details of the programme were available.

#### Reasons for decisions

- (1) To ensure that the views of the Democratic Services Committee are considered and included by Democratic Services officers in any future surveys.
- (2) To assist common understanding and interpretation of findings.
- (3) Having regard to the feedback received to date from both Elected and Co-opted Members via multiple avenues.
- (4) Having regard to the findings contained within the report and the discussions at the meeting.
- (5) For the Committee's consideration and to provide all Elected Members (and Co-opted Members where appropriate) with the continued opportunity to engage with Phase 4 of the Council's Member Development Programme in line with

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development topics identified as required by Elected and Co-opted Members themselves.