

Meeting	Democratic Services Committee
Date	26 October, 2017
Subject	Personal Development Interviews - Individual Meetings arising from the induction
Purpose	To update the committee on messages from meetings with new members
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INTRODUCTION

1. The Committee will, no doubt, be aware of the Council's responsibility to offer Personal Development Interviews to each member to discuss their training and development needs. The Committee will need to discuss this and the way it wishes to do so in the coming months after the members of the new Council have settled into their work.
2. However, as part of the Council's arrangements for inducting elected members after the election, an offer was made to the 24 new members of the Council whether they wished to have a 1:1 conversation as they were settling in to their work.
3. 10 of those meetings have taken place with Arwel Jones, the Senior Manager, Corporate Support. It was an opportunity to discuss a variety of matters as the new members got to know the Council and settled into their work. The purpose of this report is to report on the general messages arising from those interviews that require the Committee's attention and to invite the Committee's views on them.

MAIN MESSAGES

4. It is clear from those discussions that there is quite a lot to be done yet to familiarize with the way the Council functions as an organisation. That falls into two categories. Firstly, committee arrangements where some of the constitutional arrangements are very new to some members. A "surgery" was held on 14th September to help with these matters. This was attended by 10 members who were very appreciative but only 3 of those 10 were new members. Therefore, it may be beneficial to re-run the session or prepare an online learning package using parts of that session that were filmed for that purpose.

The Committee's view is sought.

5. The second element of understanding the work of the Council is to know who to contact on different occasions. Some members are still unclear about who to contact – particularly on service matters. Of course, on the Members' Portal, there is a paper where each department has noted responsibilities for services and contact details for them. It has become clear that there are two problems with knowing who to contact:-
 - a) Firstly, a number of members are still unfamiliar with the Portal and do not know how to contact the officers, and
 - b) Secondly, some members feel that they should be able to contact officers lower down the structure than the Service Managers noted on the Portal.

With the agreement of the Committee, our intention is to hold “surgery” sessions on I.T. matters, including the use of the Portal, before or after the next meetings of the 4 Area Forums.

With regard to the content of the list, with the agreement of the Committee, we will ask each department to review the content of the list to see whether it is reasonable to release the contact details of more officers to enable members to contact them.

In addition, there has been considerable input into the portal in order to establish it in Pay, 2017, but its success will depend on it being used regularly since appropriate information is placed on the portal. In order to ensure that the information continues to be appropriate and current, 2-3 members of the committee are invited to form a small group to advise officers on the content and any developments.

The Committee’s view is sought.

6. Members were, clearly, very appreciative of the induction arrangements at the start of the new Council, particularly the two very successful days held during May, 2017. However, looking at the content of those sessions and the subsequent programme, it is clear that the focus has been, very much, on work “within the Council” with little attention being paid to work in the community and in the ward, an extremely important element of a member’s work. Of course, how a members acts within the ward is a very personal matter but it is clearly something where members can learn from each other by seeing good practice. It is suggested, therefore, that we organize another “surgery” where new and experienced members can share the way in which they deal with ward matters and see if such a session proves successful.

The Committee’s views and observations are sought.

7. In some cases, specific needs on individual matters have arisen. Time management is clearly a difficult issue as councilors try to keep a balance between council work, ward work and everyday life, It will be possible to discuss with those members to see whether they could take advantage of time management training. Arrangements are in hand by the Learning and Development Unit to offer a Time Management Webinar before the end of November with the option of offering further face to face training to those who wish.

The Committee’s views and observations are sought.

8. Other more specific matters are time management, public speaking and dealing with difficult people. It is easy to see why there is a need to offer this sort of provision and the Learning and Development Unit will consider the best way to offer that provision. Arrangements are in hand to offer face to face training on “Leading Communities through Change”, public speaking and dealing with difficult people. Because of the nature of the subjects, the intention is to hold a series of smaller groups. It is foreseen that titles will be offered early in the new year but we can be flexible.

The Committee’s views and observations are sought.

9. The Housing field is a difficult field, particularly for new members as they understand the responsibilities of the Council, housing associations and Gwynedd Community Homes in particular. Following concerns about this, arrangements have been made for the Housing Service to hold briefing sessions for new members in September and November to explain how the systems work and how a councillor can act on behalf of their electors in this field.

10. The Committee's responses to the points noted above are invited together with guidance on the way forward regarding them.