

CONSTITUTION AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE
28 SEPTEMBER 2023

Minutes of the Constitution and Democratic Services Committee of Flintshire County Council held as a remote attendance meeting on Thursday, 28 September 2023.

PRESENT: Councillor Rob Davies (Chairman)

Councillors: Ian Hodge, Alasdair Ibbotson, Paul Johnson, Gina Maddison, Roz Mansell, Ted Palmer, Andrew Parkhurst, Michelle Perfect, Vicky Perfect, Linda Thew, Arnold Woolley and Antony Wren

SUBSTITUTIONS: Councillor Carolyn Preece for Councillor Gillian Brockley and Councillor Debbie Owen for Councillor Steve Copple

IN ATTENDANCE: Chief Officer (Governance), Democratic Services Manager and Democratic Services Officer

9. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

10. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2023 were submitted. The minutes were approved as a correct record as moved and seconded by Councillors Paul Johnson and Ian Hodge.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

11. BRIEFINGS FOR MEMBERS

The Democratic Services Manager presented the report to agree how to use the “reserved dates” for full Council (as listed in section 1.03 of the report), if not required by the Council for a meeting, to deliver targeted developmental sessions for Members. He provided background information and referred to the main points as detailed in the report.

The Chair asked that training on Planning be provided for non-Committee members as soon as possible. Councillor Andrew Parkhurst asked that training on Section 106 Agreements also be included. The Democratic Services Manager agreed to contact the Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy) to progress the request.

Councillor Alasdair Ibbotson asked what were the resource implications for current training to be provided by external bodies. The Democratic Services Manager explained that at present there were no external courses which required funding.

Councillor Carolyn Preece commented on the suggestion of training on rights and responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and more broadly the Social Model of Disability, and proposed that training on the Equality and Diversity Act 2020 also be included. She also suggested that training on Data Protection and Safeguarding be added to the training programme.

In response to further questions and comments the Democratic Services Manager provided an update on the training provided on Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting.

Councillor Paul Johnson spoke in support of the courses provided by the WLGA which gave an overview of how other local authorities operated. He also suggested that training on maintaining a Healthy Work/Life Balance be included on the training programme.

Councillor Gina Maddison asked that advice/training be provided on the ethical use of Social Media. The Democratic Services Manager advised that this would be included in the training on Communications which was currently being developed for Members.

It was agreed that the Democratic Services Manager would circulate a draft Development Plan 2023 which included the suggested additional topics put forward during the meeting.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the proposed content for inclusion on the Councillor Development Plan which was appended to the report be approved; and
- (b) That the Democratic Services Manager circulates a draft Development Plan 2023 which includes the additional topics suggested during the meeting.

12. ROLLING REVIEW OF THE EMPLOYEES CODE OF CONDUCT

The Chief Officer (Governance) presented the report. He provided background information and advised that the Standards Committee had recently reviewed the Employees Code of Conduct and recommended changes. The changes were shown in Appendix 1 as tracked changes and Appendix 2 as a “clean version”. The Chief Officer reported on the key points as detailed in the report.

Councillor Alasdair Ibbotson referred to Appendix 1, section 2.3, regarding Contract Procedure Rules, and expressed concern that there was a lack of reference in section 8 to Contract Procedure Rules. He proposed that a reference to “complying with all the procedures set out in Section 8 of the Employees Code of Conduct” be included in Section 2.3. He also suggested that the same reference be applied to section 5.4. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Ted Palmer and when put to the vote was carried.

The Chief Officer provided explanation in response to the further questions and comments raised by Councillor Ibbotson concerning the request in Section 8.9 that Chief Officers and those Managers reporting directly to them, and employees with delegated powers, will be asked to voluntarily register their membership of all clubs, societies, and organisations.

Councillor Paul Johnson referred to section 2.5 - employees in contractor or client units must exercise fairness and impartiality when dealing with all customers, suppliers, other contractors and sub-contractors. and sought clarification on the requirements of 'impartiality' and 'fairness'. The Chief Officer provided explanation and commented on the wide range of considerations which were dependent on the circumstances or function.

RESOLVED:

That subject to the additional amendment above the Committee recommends the proposed changes to Full Council for adoption.

13. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There were no members of the press or public present.

(The meeting started at 2.00 pm and ended at 2.45 pm)

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Chairman