

## DRAFT

# PROTOCOL ON CIVIC AND EXECUTIVE MATTERS POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL

## INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The County Council fulfills a number of ceremonial, civic and political leadership roles. It is considered important and helpful that the roles are clarified to avoid confusion between the respective roles.
- 1.2 This protocol outlines the main ceremonial, civic and political events which require attendance of elected members and the Chief Executive by virtue of their office, namely the Council Chairman and his/her Vice Chairman and Assistant Vice Chairman, the Leader of the Council and the Deputy Leader and Executive Members [Portfolio Holders] and the Shire Chairmen and his/her Vice Chairmen.
- 1.3 Whilst recognising the precedence accorded to the role of the Chairman, the Council has two institutions, that of the **elected** Leader and that of the Executive. The Leader is the political Leader of the Council as well as being the Leader of the Executive. It is the Leader's function to represent the political views of the Council and the Executive. As a consequence the Leader and Portfolio Holders, will receive invitations from groups or organisations to attend meetings, functions and events where they may be called upon to speak about Council policy and the Executive's plans. On other occasions they will be invited to enable networking, which is a vital part of the Leader's and Executive Members' roles, specifically in developing partnership relationships but also in securing support for Council policy and gaining feedback on community or organisations' views.
- 1.4 The Council also appoints three Members as Shire [Area] Committee Chairmen to represent the three historic shire areas of Brecknockshire, Montgomeryshire and Radnorshire.

## GUIDANCE

### 2 Ceremonial/Lieutenancy

- 2.1 Traditionally, and in accordance with the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended), the Chairman takes precedence in the County subject only to Her Majesty's Royal Prerogative. It is clear therefore that the Chairman must give precedence only to Her Majesty The Queen and/or Members of the Royal Family (if present) or the Lord Lieutenant of the County when acting in his/her official capacity representing The Queen.
- 2.2 It follows therefore that the Chairman takes precedence over all Members and staff of the County Council, Mayors/Chairmen persons and members of Town and Community Councils within the County and Members of Parliament, European Parliament or Welsh Assembly. This applies not only on the occasion

of presentation to Her Majesty The Queen and/or Members of the Royal Family during a Royal Visit to the County but also for other civic events.

- 2.3 There is an official Order of Precedence. An example is that on Royal visits the order of presentation to the particular Member of the Royal Family by the Lord Lieutenant would be [NB substitutes will not be allowed where any of the following are unable to attend]:-

Lord Lieutenant's spouse  
High Sheriff and Spouse  
Chairman of County Council and Spouse  
County Chief Executive and Spouse  
Town/Community Council Mayor/Chairman and Spouse  
Member of Parliament and Spouse  
Member of European Parliament and Spouse  
Welsh Assembly Member and Spouse  
Chief Constable and Spouse

The usual procedure after that is that the Organiser of the event is presented and he/she will then present others.

- 2.4 Against this background of formal precedence, the Chairman's Secretary's role therefore is to ensure that the Council, its members and staff and hosts of functions accord the Chairman proper precedence with regard to ceremonies and events and to liaise with the Chief Executive to ensure the effective discharge of this work.

### **3 Civic Role**

- 3.1 Where both a civic representative and a political representative are in attendance at an event etc the Civic Role takes precedence over the political role.

#### **Chairman**

- 3.2 The Chairman represents the Council in a non political capacity, that is, as a corporate body whose constitutional status and range of responsibilities warrants inclusion on the attendance lists of the meetings and functions of outside bodies. The Chairman attends such functions in an ambassadorial capacity representing the Council as the duly elected body, representing the people of Powys. For the County to be excluded by organisations from invitations to events can in some circumstances be regarded as an affront to the Council's position and indirectly to the community of Powys.
- 3.3 Attendance by the Chairman at an event has the following possible meanings:
- ❖ It recognises the event as one at which it is important for the Council to be represented
  - ❖ It confirms the event as having a significance for the community of Powys

- ❖ It is a means of encouraging community life
- 3.4 The Chairman will represent the Council at events:
- ❖ to welcome representatives of other bodies to the Council
  - ❖ to represent the Council in public engagements, other authorities' civic functions, community functions and ceremonies
- 3.5 Where the Chairman is unavailable the Vice Chairman or Assistant Vice-Chairman will take his/her place. If neither of these are available [ or decide to send a substitute] the relevant Shire [Area] Chairman will attend in their absence.
- 3.6 The Chairman's role [or their substitute] takes precedence over any other representative from the Council, which means that he/she should speak first to welcome visitors or open an event. The Chairman [or their substitute] does not deal with political issues in his/her speech.
- 3.7 The Chairman, Vice-Chairman or Assistant Vice-Chairman of the Council will preside at all Council Seminars or Member Development sessions. Executive Members with responsibility for portfolios which are the subject of the Council Seminar or Member Development session may assist the Chairman, Vice-Chairman or Assistant Vice-Chairman in facilitating the seminar or development session. However, they should not preside over such a seminar or development session unless authorised by the Chairman of the Council.

#### **Shire [Area] Committee Chairmen**

- 3.8 The Shire [Area] Committee Chairmen may receive invitations to events where his/her presence is entirely consistent with the performance of that role. Such events include presiding over Civic Ceremonies, attendance at local Shire based events,
- 3.9 However where the Council Chairman [or substitute] are also invited to attend events the Guidance should be followed and the order of precedence as stated in paragraph 2.5 above.

### **4 POLITICAL ROLE**

#### **The Leader**

- 4.1 The Leader represents the political authority of the Council and the Executive. He/she represents the specific political programme of the Council and Executive and also any issues concerning the policy direction of the Council. As such, meetings with Government, Assembly Members and MPs would normally fall to the Leader rather than the Chairman. The Leader should not be responsible for the offering of civic greetings on behalf of the Council, or to welcome Royal, ambassadorial and civic visitors to the County or represent the Council at non-political functions or events.

- 4.2 The Leader in his/her role as "political Leader" may receive invitations to events where his/her presence is entirely consistent with the performance of that role. There may also be events where organisers would wish to extend invitations to both the Chairman and the Leader to represent both the civic and political function of the Council. In such circumstances, the Chairman's role takes precedence, which means that he/she should speak first to welcome visitors or open an event.
- 4.3 Invitations for the Leader to attend an event must be gauged in terms of the nature of the meeting. Meetings which concern the promotion of Powys are a grey area and should be agreed with the Chief Executive, but in some cases it will be a purely political event e.g. gaining acceptance for the Council's tourism policy, lifelong learning policy etc. In those circumstances the Leader or Executive Member would be the relevant person to consider for attendance.

### **Executive Member**

- 4.4 An Executive Member may receive invitations to events where his/her presence is entirely consistent with the performance of that role. There may also be events where organisers would wish to extend invitations to both the Chairman and the Executive Member to represent both the civic and political function of the Council. In such circumstances, the Chairman's role [or substitute] takes precedence, which means that he/she should speak first to welcome visitors or open an event.
- 4.5 Executive Members with responsibility for portfolios which are the subject of a Council Seminar or Member Development session may assist the Chairman, Vice-Chairman or Assistant Vice-Chairman in facilitating the seminar or development session. However, they should not preside over such a seminar or development session unless authorised by the Chairman of the Council.

## **5 GUIDANCE TO OFFICERS**

- 5.1 Corporate Directors and other officers organising an event should bear these guidelines in mind. Any queries should be discussed with the Chief Executive if there is any doubt.
- 5.2 All civic receptions held by the County Council should be arranged in consultation with the Chairman's Secretary, who will liaise with Executive support staff.
- 5.3 All invitations to the Council to be represented at events, ceremonies or functions should be referred, in the first instance, to the Chairman's Secretary and Executive support staff.
- 5.4 For events, ceremonies and functions involving the Chairman, the event organiser should liaise with the Chairman's Secretary regarding protocol etc. A copy of this Protocol should be sent to organisers.
- 5.5 External organisations should be advised of the issues of Precedence and Protocol covered in this note and be encouraged to address invitations correctly to the Chairman, Leader or both of them as appropriate.

- 5.6 The Chairman and Leader require adequate briefing and support to fulfill their roles. At important events, it will be appropriate for them to be accompanied by a suitably senior officer, such as a corporate director or head of service. At other events, it will be sufficient for other staff to accompany them. As a minimum officers should consider for each event whether attendance by an officer is necessary and should advise the Chairman or Leader which (if any) officer will be present.

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