

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD
AT COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS ON FRIDAY 5TH APRIL, 2013**

PRESENT: County Councillor Mrs S. Davies [Chairman]

County Councillors P.J. Ashton, Mrs D. Bailey, Mrs L.V. Corfield, S. Davies, D.O. Evans, D.C. Jones, M.J. Jones, Mrs D.G. Thomas and T. Turner.

1.	APOLOGIES	DSC14-2013
-----------	------------------	-------------------

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors Dr G.J. Bowker, P.E. Lewis, P.C. Pritchard and D.H. Williams.

2.	MINUTES	DSC15-2013
-----------	----------------	-------------------

The Chairman was authorised to sign as a correct record the minutes of the meetings held on 4th January and 15th February, 2013.

3.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	DSC16-2013
-----------	---------------------------------	-------------------

County Councillor D.O. Evans declared a prejudicial interest in DSC19-2013 Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales as his daughter was a Co-opted Member of the Standards Community Sub-Committee.

4.	PROMOTING ENGAGEMENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT	DSC17-2013
-----------	--	-------------------

The Chairman welcomed Anya Richards, Senior Communications Manager to the meeting to make a presentation on Promoting engagement and public involvement and discuss issues with Members. County Councillor G.W. Ratcliffe, the newly appointed Portfolio Holder for communications attended the meeting for this item.

The following was noted:

- Communication was the responsibility of Members and all staff, not just the Communications Team. The Portfolio Holder advised that he was considering changing the name of the Communications Team to Corporate Communications to reflect their actual role and to emphasise that communications was also the responsibility of individual service areas.
- The results of a Staff survey regarding engagement had recently been received. The Strategic Director Finance and Infrastructure would be leading a project group to consider the results and ensure good practice was used in all service areas.
- A Consultation Framework had recently been agreed by the Cabinet. This would be forwarded to Members and could be shared with Town and Community Councils.
- Portfolio Holders were being asked to identify issues in their forward work programme which would require input from the Communications Team. This

would enable the Authority to manage communication rather than merely responding to issues.

- Resources had been provided by the Welsh Government for authorities to undertake webcasting and for Town and Community Councils to develop websites. Guidance on how these funds were to be used was awaited.
- Existing channels of communication such as Red Kite could be used to promote the work of Committees.
- Training was being developed for Cabinet and Scrutiny Chairs regarding speaking to the media and using social media.

RESOLVED:	REASON FOR DECISION:
<p>That</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Committee provides its views on which Committee meetings should be webcast, in addition to those regarding windfarms 2. The Communications survey for staff be sent to Members to seek their views on current communications and how this can be improved. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To ensure that the views of the Committee are sought 2. To ensure that the views of the Members influence the future development of communications.

The Chairman thanked the officer and Portfolio Holder for their attendance at the meeting.

The Chairman raised the issue of balancing child care and work during school holiday periods for both Members and staff, especially when younger people were being encouraged to stand as councillors. Members wondered whether there were growth opportunities for local businesses and if the Council could promote this.

5.	PLANNING PROTOCOL	DSC18-2013
-----------	--------------------------	-------------------

The Committee considered the revised Planning Protocol (copy filed with the signed minutes).

It was noted that the Protocol had been discussed by the Planning, Taxi Licensing and Rights of Way Committee. It was noted that the time period in which objectors had to register their wish to speak had not changed from “at least 3 working days before the date of the relevant committee”. This was due to the fact that Committees were now being held on Thursdays and content of agendas were being agreed much earlier, resulting in the notification letters being sent out much earlier. The Planning, Taxi Licensing and Rights of Way Committee had agreed to keep this under review.

The Committee agreed the proposed changes subject to the following:

- Page 3 – the numbering would be checked
- 11.9.4 [page 56] – officers would check whether the original Wales Audit Office report recommended that Chairman “sum up”
- 12.1 [page 58] – planning officers would be asked whether a record of planning officers’ interests is held

- 13.2 [page 62] - Members were not notified of delegated decisions, appeals and enforcement issues
- 14.2 [page 63] reword
- 17.1.1 [page 68] reword to “The Planning Committee will undertake reviews of a sample of implemented planning decisions and visit such sites in conjunction with other site visits or as part of training.”

RESOLVED:	REASON FOR DECISION:
That subject to the amendments the revised Planning Protocol be recommended to Council for adoption.	To ensure the Planning Protocol reflects changes in the Executive arrangements, current and good practice.

Having declared a prejudicial interest County Councillor D.O. Evans left the meeting room for the next item.

6.	INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES	DSC19-2013
-----------	---	-------------------

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Directors – Law and Governance and Finance and Infrastructure (copy filed with the signed minutes).

The Committee noted that The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales in its December 2011 Report set the limits for payments to Co-opted Members (i.e. Lay Members of the Standards Committee; Town and Community Council Representatives of the Standards Sub-Committee; Parent Governor and Church Representatives of the People Scrutiny Committee, Lay Member of the Audit Committee). Following representations by Councils in Wales that the annual maximum may be too restrictive, the Independent Remuneration Panel in its December 2012 Report decided that relevant authorities may decide on the maximum number of days for which co-opted members may be paid in any one year.

The Committee noted that changes if agreed would be implemented from the AGM in May 2013 rather than April 2013, as stated in the report.

RESOLVED:	REASON FOR DECISION:
That the Democratic Services Committee recommend to the County Council that: (i). the maximum number of days for which the Standards Committee Lay Members and Standards Sub-Committee Town and Community Council representatives may be paid from the AGM in May 2013 be 10 days. (ii). the maximum number of days for which the Parent Governor and Church Representatives and the Audit Committee Lay Member may be paid from the AGM in May 2013 be 15 days.	To set the maximum number of days for which co-opted member may be paid in any one year as required by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales’ Report – December 2012.

<p>(iii). A further report be presented to the Committee to review the position following 6 months of operation of the new maximum days.</p> <p>(iv). The Council seeks clarification from the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales regarding whether travelling times are included in the definition for a half/full day meeting.</p>	
--	--

County Councillor D.O. Evans returned to the meeting room.

7.	COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME	DSC20-2013
-----------	---------------------------------	-------------------

The Committee received and noted the Work Programme as at 31st March, 2013.

The Committee noted the following:

- Need to update IT for Members – officers would check what other work was being undertaken regarding this to avoid duplication.
- Town and Community Council links to PCC intranet – officers would consider if the Welsh Government funding for the development of websites by Town and Community Council impacted on this request.

The following was added to the Work Programme:

- Maximum number of days lay members may be paid [Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales] – report on six month review after implementation of new payments at the AGM May 2013.

8.	MEMBER DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP	DSC21-2013
-----------	---	-------------------

The Committee received the notes of the Member Development Working Group held on 29th November, 2012 [copies filed with the signed minutes].

It was noted that at this meeting Members discussed whether communication links could be improved by linking with the Welsh Government Offices' facilities, as buildings were closely located in Llandrindod Wells. It was agreed to follow this up with Elaine Worgan.

9.	JOINT CHAIRS AND VICE CHAIRS STEERING GROUP	DSC22-2013
-----------	--	-------------------

The Committee received the notes of the Joint Chairs and Vice Chairs Steering Group held on 6th December, 2012 and 11th January and 22nd February, 2013 [copies filed with the signed minutes].

County Councillor Mrs S. Davies
Chairman