

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD
AT COMMITTEE ROOM A - COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS, POWYS ON
MONDAY, 3 JULY 2017**

PRESENT

County Councillor M J Dorrance (Chair)

County Councillors G Breeze, J Charlton, D O Evans, E M Jones, D R Price,
E Vaughan and R Williams

1.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
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Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors L V Corfield, J R Jones and D Jones-Poston.

2.	MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING
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The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 21st February, 2017 as a correct record.

3.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
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There were no declarations of interest.

The election of a Vice Chair had been excluded from the Agenda, but due to the apologies received it was agreed that this would be added to the next Agenda.

4.	MATTERS RELATING TO DEMOCRATIC SERVICES ISSUES
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The Committee considered the report from the Head of Democratic Services [copy filed with the signed minutes].

1. Democratic Services Committee [DSC] function and work to date

The Committee noted the functions of the Committee, as agreed in July 2012. It was noted that its only function, as set out in the Constitution, was to consider family absences of Members. Officers advised that its functions should be clearly identified in the Constitution.

The Head of Democratic Services advised of the range of functions DSCs undertook within five other local authorities. A number of authorities limited the functions of their Committees to those functions set out in the Local Government Measure 2011. These would need inclusion in the Council's list of functions for the Committee in addition to the current function as set out in the Constitution. However some had included other functions for its Committee which were considered. Members considered that the Committee needed to be more aspirational and ambitious.

There was also a need to clarify which roles would be decided by the Committee and which items would be recommendations to Council. It was suggested that the Development and Monitoring of the Member Development Programme should be the role of the Committee whilst reviews of the Constitution would be a

recommendation to the Council for approval. The Committee could also consider proposed Welsh Government legislation, but would only consider the proposals as they related to Members' roles and functions, development or support. The Committee could in addition consider proposals by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales in relation to Members' salaries and expenses.

Another role identified would be the nomination of a Member Development Champion. The appointment of champions was the role of the Leader but the Committee could make a nomination to the Leader for consideration.

In response to comments the Committee noted that:

- a Member Development Programme would be developed providing Members with a range of opportunities to consider issues and also Members would be asked what skills training they required. Training on equalities would be included in the programme.
- In preparing for the submission to renew the Member Support and Development Charter to the WLGA the Council should consider whether the support provided to members should be expanded to include such items as postage for constituency work, workspaces for Members in other buildings and hire of other buildings for surgeries as well as the provision of a casework system.
- Pre-scrutiny of issues prior to decisions by Cabinet had been introduced last year and was an essential part of the decision making process. The Welsh Audit Office [WAO] had indicated that the Cabinet should produce an eight month Work Programme. The Solicitor advised that the Cabinet was developing its vision and this and the Work Programme should be available from January 2018. Officers considered it would be appropriate to revisit the effectiveness of the pre-decision scrutiny process after January 2018. It was noted that the scrutiny model used by the Welsh Assembly where Assembly Members could send written questions to Cabinet Members with answers being made public, could be considered in the future.

RECOMMENDATION TO	Reason for recommendation
<p>Council that, in addition to the current function of the Democratic Services Committee [DSC] as stated in the Constitution, the Constitution is amended as follows:</p> <p>1. The DSC undertakes the functions as set out in the Local Government Measure 2011.</p> <p>2. that the DSC undertakes the following functions:</p> <p>(a) Development, Monitoring and Review of the Member Development Programme</p> <p>(b) Any matters relating to Members, their functions support and development not included in 3 below which</p>	<p>To ensure the Terms of Reference and the Council's Constitution are reviewed to reflect the current and future role of the Democratic Services Committee.</p>

<p>require a decision elsewhere (c) To establish any Working Groups required to undertake any of its functions.</p> <p>3. that the Committee considers and makes recommendations to the Council / Cabinet / Leader (as appropriate) regarding the following functions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recommend to the Leader the nomination of a Member Development & Support Champion • recommend to Council any changes to the Council's Constitution. • recommend to Cabinet a response to the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales [IRPW] to any consultation regarding Members' salaries and expenses • recommend to Cabinet any response to proposed legislation by Welsh Government which affects Members roles, functions, support and development. 	
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2. Appointment of Working Groups

RESOLVED	Reason for decision
<p>That the membership of the Working Groups be as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Constitution Working Group: Chair and Vice Chair plus County Councillors D. Price, E. Vaughan and R. Williams ii. Member Development Working Group: Chair and Vice Chair plus County Councillors G. Breeze, J. Charlton, D. Evans, E.M. Jones and E. Vaughan iii. and that other Committee Members be asked on which Working Group they wished to participate to ensure all political groups 	<p>To establish a Constitution Working Group and Member Development Working Group of five Members each (comprising representatives of each of the political groups) plus the Chair and Vice Chair.</p>

are represented.	
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3. Work Programme

The Committee noted the issues that had been brought forward into the Work Programme from the previous Council and/or identified by officers and issues raised by Members. The following comments were made on the following issues raised by Members:

- Audit Committee request re considering adding times for agenda items on agendas – it was noted that where a number of big issues were considered at a Council and Cabinet meeting the times for considering each item was added to the agendas so that interested parties could attend at specific times. It was considered that in general, it would be for the Chair for each Committee to consider whether to use times on agendas.
- Explore the development of a Town and Community Council Charter – the need to ensure County Councillors were kept abreast of issues raised by Town and Community Councils and the responses from officers was acknowledged. It was agreed to review whether this process should be included in the current process for officers responding to enquiries from Members. It was noted that a new CRM system was being introduced and linking to this may be appropriate.
- Council Agendas – consider the possibility of Opposition Day Debates – information on good practice would be collated to support consideration of this issue.
- Inviting school councils to attend Shire Meetings to engage with them – consideration should be widened to review how the Council engaged with young people.
- Member Support and Development Charter – the Committee asked whether the Council should be seeking the higher level Charter rather than applying for the same level as previously. In addition the level of support provided to Members should be revisited as part of the process.
- How can the Council progress towards being an organisation which is representative of its electorate – it was suggested that there was some work which the Council could consider in the lead up to the next Council elections which could include a programme of Members visits to schools to promote democracy and looking at how the Council engaged with younger people. However there was also a role for political parties in this including their own selection processes.

RESOLVED	Reason for Decision
That the issues identified in the report by officers and Members, subject to the comments above be added to the Work Programme and that dates and lead Members be added to the programme.	To ensure the Committee had a Work Programme.

4. Public Participation at Council meetings – review of the trial

The Committee noted the protocol and the pilot undertaken in January, 2017.

The DSC considered that the protocol should be implemented for a year and reviewed and evaluated after this time and that the system should be promoted via all social media sources. In addition, officers should investigate if different forms of social media could be used by members of the public to submit questions and report back to DSC for discussion.

RECOMMENDATION TO	Reason for recommendation
County Council that Public Participation at Council meetings be implemented for a year and that it be reviewed by the Democratic Services Committee after this period.	To review the draft Protocol as required by Council taking into account the pilot undertaken in January 2017.

5. Business and calling cards

It was noted that the previous Council had agreed that Members were required to cover the cost of production of any business or calling cards they used and this was incorporated in the Members' Support Agreement. It was noted that a Cabinet Member had commented on this issue and that business and/or calling cards were an important tool in their role and asked that the previous decision be reviewed.

The Head of Democratic Services advised that the funding for this had been taken out of the budget, as a saving and if the policy changed, a bid would need to be made for the funding to be reinstated. The use of and demand for business and calling cards by Members was also variable. The Committee noted that new Members had been provided with new laptops and mobile phones.

After discussion it was agreed that Members should continue to meet the cost of business and/or calling cards themselves.

RESOLVED	Reason for Decision
That the Committee reaffirm the previous decision regarding the production of calling / business cards for Members the cost of which would be borne by individual Members.	To confirm the previous decision taken in January, 2017.

**County Councillor M J Dorrance
Chair**