

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD AT COMMITTEE ROOM A - COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS, POWYS ON MONDAY, 15 JANUARY 2018**

**PRESENT**

County Councillor M J Dorrance (Chair)

County Councillors L V Corfield, G Breeze, J Charlton, D O Evans, A Jenner, E M Jones, J R Jones, D Jones-Poston, D R Price, GD Price, E Vaughan and R Williams

<b>1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>
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There were no apologies for absence.

<b>2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING(S)</b>
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The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 27 November, 2017 as a correct record.

<b>3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>
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There were no declarations of interest.

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

County Councillors D.O. Evans and R Williams arrived.

**1. Area Shire Committees**

The Head of Democratic advised that the costs detailed in the report were understated as they did not include the cost of preparing reports, agendas, minutes and follow up actions.

The Working Group discussed the issues as follows:

Removing the Shire Committees

- The Council needs to focus on the important and big issues such as Children's Services.
- Shires have no powers.
- The Shire Chairs roles can be incorporated into the Chair of Council's role.
- Local issues can be dealt with via the Local Environment Initiatives, Locality Forums, which need to be developed further.
- Appointments made to outside organisations can be made at Council's annual meeting.
- The current delegation of highways issues to Shires can be taken back by the Cabinet. Future issues would be delegated to the Portfolio Holder in consultation with the local member, which would ensure that local members still have a role, without the need for a Committee meeting.

- The Members Bulletin could be used to disseminate information to all Members, which would have previously been provided at Shire meetings.
- There is a lack of interest in Shires and they are just a talking shop. Attendance at Shire meetings does not count toward members' attendance levels of 60%.

#### Retaining the Shires

- As the Shires are valued by some members the option of having less meetings and holding them in County Hall after Council meetings or Member Development sessions was suggested. The Head of Democratic Services advised that holding Shire meetings after such sessions was not feasible due to the agendas and length of meetings.
- Shire Chairs can save the Council Chairs from having to travel across the County for functions and events.
- Shires can focus on local issues, which are important and therefore Shires should meet on a quarterly basis.
- Shires give members an opportunity to meet the Cabinet and ask questions and also receive presentations from other organisations.
- Members should make the Shires work.

It was moved and duly seconded to recommend to Council to abolish the Shire Committees and incorporate the Area (Shire) civic roles within the remit of the Chair, Vice-Chair and Assistant Vice-Chair of the Council. The motion was put to the vote and lost.

The Committee then considered how the Shires should function.

It was proposed and duly seconded to recommend to Council that Shire meetings should be held on a quarterly basis and the Shire Chair could call further meetings if urgent issues arose.

<b>RECOMMENDATION TO THE COUNCIL</b>	<b>Reason for recommendation</b>
<b>That Shire meetings should be held on a quarterly basis and the Shire Chair call further meetings if urgent issues arose.</b>	<b>To review the role of the Shire Committees.</b>

## 2. Timing of meetings

The Committee received the draft questionnaire seeking Members views on the timing of Committees and working group meetings. This information would help the Council produce the 2019 meetings diary.

Officers agreed to look at whether it was feasible to use an online survey system for circulation of the questionnaire.

<b>RESOLVED</b>	<b>Reason for decision</b>
<b>That the draft survey be circulated to Members.</b>	<b>To undertake the survey of Members as required by statutory guidance under the Local Government (Wales)</b>

<b>Measure 2011.</b>
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**3. Constitution**

The Committee considered the revisions to the Constitution:

- Section 3 Getting Information and Getting Involved  
Rule 3.9A and 3.9B – The Committee raised concerns about the process suggested and considered that local officers were better placed to respond to local issues rather than Heads of Service.

It was agreed that officers review the proposed rule in light of Members' comments.

- Section 4 Full Council  
Rule 4.6.6 was approved.
- Section 6 The Leader  
The Committee considered that a Leader must appoint a Deputy Leader. The Head of Democratic Services advised that this cannot be imposed on the Leader, however, the Committee considered that the appointment of a Deputy Leader be required within the Constitution.

It was agreed that officers should review the Constitution in light of views expressed by the Committee.

- Section 7 Scrutiny Committees  
Rule 7.14 was approved.
- Section 9 Regulatory Committees  
Rules 9.2.4, 9.2.8, 9.3.6 and 9.3.7 were approved.
- Section 18 Code of Conduct for Members  
Rules 18.4.8.1, 18.4.10.7 (5) were approved.
- Section 19 Planning Protocol  
Rule 19.4 and 19.5 were approved.

<b>RESOLVED</b>	<b>Reason for decision</b>
<b>That officers review Rules 3.9A and 3.9B and Section 6.</b>	<b>To consider the comments of the Committee.</b>

<b>RECOMMENDATION TO THE COUNCIL:</b>	<b>Reason for Recommendation:</b>
<b>That the revised sections of the Constitution be approved, subject to the additional amendments</b>	<b>To update the Constitution on a regular basis.</b>

#### 4. Request for Additional Council Meetings

The Committee debated the request that the number of Council meetings annually should be increased to 10 meetings. It was noted that several new members had asked for this. It was considered that if more meetings were held, agendas could be shorter and this would then give time for Member Development sessions to be held in the afternoons. Comments were made that meetings needed to be more focussed.

It was moved and duly seconded to recommend to Council that the number of Council meetings held each year is increased to 10. The motion was lost on a vote.

#### 5. Mandatory training

The Committee noted the Member Development programme for January – March 2018 relating to Leadership and Governance of the Council. The Committee noted that the sessions for all Members and those for scrutiny would be held on two dates to ensure that Members could attend one session.

<b>RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL</b>	<b>Reason for Recommendation:</b>
<b>That the Member Development programme for January – March 2018 relating to Leadership and Governance of the Council be mandatory.</b>	<b>To demonstrate that the Council is serious about improvement.</b>

**County Councillor M J Dorrance  
Chair**