

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD
AT COMMITTEE ROOM A - COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS, POWYS ON
MONDAY, 29 APRIL 2019**

PRESENT

County Councillor M J Dorrance (Chair)

County Councillors L V Corfield, G Breeze, J Charlton, D O Evans, D Jones-Poston,
D R Price, D Rowlands, K S Silk and R Williams

1.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
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Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor D Davies.

2.	MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING(S)
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The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 21 January, 2019 as a correct record.

3.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
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County Councillor M Dorrance declared a prejudicial interest in the Review of Senior Salaries, as he was in receipt of a senior salary. County Councillor R Williams declared a prejudicial interest in the Member Support and Wellbeing as he was a Trustee and Treasurer of Brecon Mind, which might be involved in the tender process.

4.	MEMBER DEVELOPMENT
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The Chair welcomed the Dr Caroline Turner, Chief Executive to the meeting.

The Committee considered the report regarding the future proposal for Member Development for all Members and to support the new scrutiny structure. The Committee agreed that development needed to be provided in a variety of ways to suit the learning needs of Members. In response to questions officers advised that the completion of mandatory development is monitored and that sessions are provided on a number of occasions. Members who do not complete such development are reported to the Standards Committee. It was noted that this had done in respect of the non-completion of mandatory Treasury Management development.

The Committee noted the proposal to undertake monthly Laming visits (visits with Children's Services teams / establishments) involving Members and a representative of the Senior Leadership Team to develop links with front line staff.

RESOLVED	Reason for decision:
That the Committee supported the proposed approach.	To support the development of Member Development.

5. REDESIGN OF ICT SUPPORT TO MEMBERS
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The Chair welcomed Ellen Sullivan, Professional Lead ICT to the meeting. The Committee considered the report regarding the proposed ICT support to Members. The Committee advised that the proposed changes should not be viewed as a criticism of the current officer but addressed the risks in the current system.

Members noted that the proposed changes would mean a dedicated contact number for Members, as the current systems already in place for PtHB and Schools. However, comment was made that the latter was not working as well as officers indicated. Concerns were raised that any officers providing support needed to be trained to speak to Members in “non-technical” ways and need to build up relationships with the Members. It was suggested that “Meet the Team” sessions could be provided to support this.

Members raised concerns that although officers had stated that the system was not effective or efficient there had not been any discussions with Members to seek their views.

The officer’s recommendation was put to the vote and was lost.

RESOLVED	Reason for decision
That the proposal for the re-design of ICT Support for Members be refused.	The current support was considered appropriate.

The Chair agreed to change the order of the Agenda.

6. REIMBURSEMENT OF COSTS OF CARE
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The Committee considered the report regarding how details of the reimbursement of care costs to Members is published. The Committee noted the two options available. Concerns were raised that having details of individuals’ claims may prevent some Members with caring responsibilities from making legitimate claims. In response to questions the Head of Legal and Democratic Services advised that for some individuals their caring responsibilities may be in the public domain. However, for others this may not be the case and therefore publishing their details could lead to a breach of personal data.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL THAT	Reason for recommendation
from May 2019 the Council only publishes the total amount reimbursed for costs of care by the authority during the year but not attributed to any named member.	To publish the total costs of care reimbursed to Members only rather than on an individual basis.

7. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT COUNCIL MEETINGS
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Since the Committee reviewed the Public Participation at Council meetings at its last meeting, officers had discussed the reasons for refusing questions, in light of experience. It was noted that questions not taken to the next meeting are held on a reserve list and if the questioner still wishes it to be put, it would be taken to the next meeting. In response to questions, the Committee was advised that those submitting questions were asked for their feedback after the Council meeting.

The Committee commented that it should periodically review questions received, the public should be advised that they can ask questions via their local member and that the responses to questions may not be what they want to hear.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL	Reason for recommendation
That 1.7.1 (iii) is amended to read: is substantially the same as a question / issue which has been considered at two meetings of the Council in the past six months (including questions raised by Members and answered).	To update the Public Participation at Council meeting process.

8. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP [MDWG]

8.1. Personal safety guide for Councillors

The Committee considered the draft Personal Safety Guidance developed by the Member Development Working Group. It was noted that this had been developed to support Members in their work.

In response to comments officers agreed to make a cross reference in the Guide to the Social Media Guide previously developed for Members. Members were advised that if they were the subject of abuse etc. they should advise the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, police and provide information to the Personal Safety Register. The Committee was advised that Members could register to access the Personal Safety Register and Corporate Lone Worker System.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL THAT	Reason for recommendation
The Personal Safety – A Guide for Councillors be approved and that a Member development session on personal safety be provided for Members.	To support Members in their role.

County Councillor R Williams declared a prejudicial interest in the following item and left the meeting room.

8.2. Member support and wellbeing

The Committee considered the recommendation from the Member Development Working Group that Members, co-opted members and their family members have access to the Employee Assistance Programme.

The Committee noted that HR was to undertake a tender process and the final costs would be known after the completion of this process.

RESOLVED	Reason for decision
<p>that subject to costs and a budget being confirmed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Councillors and Co-opted Members have access to the Employee Assistance Programme, 2. ex-Councillors and Co-opted Members have authorised access to the Programme for three months following their last day of office as a Councillor or as a Co-opted Member, 3. family members of Councillors or Co-opted Members would have the same access rights as family members of employees. 	<p>To meet the Council's duty of care.</p>

County Councillor R Williams returned to the meeting room.

9. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee noted the Work Programme. The Chair advised that Members could suggest issues for consideration by the Committee.

10. MEMBERS' FACILITIES IN COUNTY HALL

The Chair welcomed Isobel Bowen, Property Services to the meeting to update the Committee on Members' facilities in County Hall, since the last meeting. The Committee noted that the Welsh Government office was due to co-locate in County Hall from April 2020. Refurbishment work on the ground floor in County Hall was scheduled to commence in six months' time.

The Committee raised concerns that officers had developed plans for the Members' facilities without discussing the needs with Members. Concerns were also raised that there should be clarity regarding the source of funding for any refurbishment of Members' facilities due to the public perception of the Council spending money on itself when services were being cut. The Property Officer advised that discussions were ongoing with the Welsh Government regarding the level of funding available to support the refurbishment of the ground floor to be used by the Council.

RESOLVED THAT	Reason for decision
The Democratic Services Committee meets on 20 May, 2019 to meet with Property Officers to discuss the Members' facilities in County Hall and that the Portfolio Holder Highways, Recycling and Assets be invited to attend.	To ensure Members' needs are taken into account in the refurbishment of Members' facilities at County Hall.

Prior to moving to the next item the Chair advised that this was his last meeting as Chair and thanked the Committee for its work in developing the support to Members.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services advised that the Radnorshire Room would be used for the Petition regarding the Brecon and Radnor MP. Access to the Member Support Unit would be via the main corridor rather than directly from Reception.

County Councillor M Dorrance having declared a prejudicial interest left the meeting room for the next item.

County Councillor L Corfield took the Chair.

County Councillors J Charlton and K Silk left the meeting for other Council business.

11. REVIEW OF SENIOR SALARIES

The Committee considered the report from the Working Group – Senior Salaries.

The Committee noted that the size of the Cabinet was for the Leader to determine. The current Cabinet was 8 Members. The maximum membership could be 10. It was agreed that the reference in recommendation (i) should not refer to a number.

The Committee noted that the Working Group had recommended that the chair of the Employment Committee should not be paid a senior salary. The Committee discussed the workload of this Committee and at Employment Appeals. It was duly moved and seconded that the chair of the Employment Committee should be paid a senior salary. On the casting vote of the Chair, the proposal was agreed.

RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL THAT:	Reason for recommendations
(i) a senior salary be paid to the Members of the Cabinet; (ii) a senior salary be paid to the 3 Chairs of the Scrutiny Committees; (iii) the role description for the Independent / Lay Member	To review senior salaries as requested by the Council.

<p>(iv)</p> <p>(v)</p> <p>(vi)</p> <p>(vii)</p> <p>(viii)</p> <p>(ix)</p> <p>(x)</p> <p>(xi)</p> <p>(xii)</p> <p>(xiii)</p>	<p>of the Audit committee be amended to include the requirement that the Independent / Lay Member would be the chair of the Committee;</p> <p>the requirement for the Independent / Lay Member to chair the Audit Committee be established as a local protocol, subject to the committee being able in accordance with the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 to elect a councillor as chair instead;</p> <p>the Chair of the Audit Committee be paid a senior salary if that role was undertaken by a councillor;</p> <p>the chair of the Employment Committee should be paid a senior salary;</p> <p>the chair of the Planning Committee should be paid a senior salary;</p> <p>in view of the workload that the chair of the Democratic Services Committee should not be paid a senior salary;</p> <p>in view of the workload that the chair of the Pensions and Investment Committee should not be paid a senior salary;</p> <p>the Leader of the Opposition role be paid a senior salary;</p> <p>the chair of the Public Service Board [PSB] Scrutiny Committee should not receive a senior salary.</p> <p>should there be any requests to increase the number of senior salaries being paid, that a business case be presented to the Democratic Services Committee for consideration</p> <p>the Working Group should meet annually to review the</p>	
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<p>position regarding senior salaries and make recommendations to the Democratic Services Committee and Full Council.</p>	
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County Councillor M J Dorrance (Chair)