

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD
AT COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS, POWYS ON
WEDNESDAY, 21 SEPTEMBER 2016**

PRESENT

County Councillor S C Davies (Chair)

County Councillors L V Corfield, PJ Ashton, D Bailey, G R Banks, G J Bowker,
M J Jones, P E Lewis and T J Van-Rees

1.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	DSC21 - 2016
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Apologies were received from County Councillors D Mayor and D R Price

The Chair welcomed Debby Jones, Deputy Monitoring Officer and County Councillor W.T. Jones, Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Democratic Services and Member Development and Support, to the meeting.

It was noted that County Councillor E. Michael Jones had been appointed to the Committee by the Powys Independent Alliance Group rather than County Councillor T.Van-Rees. The Committee's membership details would be amended as appropriate.

2.	MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING	DSC22 - 2016
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The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 4th July, 2016 subject to it being noted that County Councillor P.E. Lewis had given his apologies.

3.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	DSC23 - 2016
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There were no declarations of interest.

4.	MEMBERSHIP OF WORKING GROUPS	DSC24 - 2016
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The Committee considered the membership of the Working Groups. It was noted that the Groups were politically balanced with five Members plus the Chair and Vice Chair.

RESOLVED	Reason for decision
<p>The membership of Working Groups was agreed as follows:</p> <p>Constitution Working Group – County Councillor Sandra Davies, Chair [Welsh Labour] County Councillor, Linda Corfield, Vice Chair [Powys Independent Alliance] County Councillor Dawn Bailey [Powys Independent Alliance] County Councillor Darren Mayor</p>	<p>To ensure that the Working Groups can function.</p>

<p>[The Independent Group] County Councillor Peter Lewis [Welsh Conservatives] County Councillor Gemma-Jane Bowker [Welsh Liberal Democrats] County Councillor Garry Banks [Non-political Group]</p> <p>Member Development Working Group – County Councillor Sandra Davies, Chair [Welsh Labour] County Councillor, Linda Corfield, Vice Chair [Powys Independent Alliance] County Councillor E. Michael Jones [Powys Independent Alliance] County Councillor Michael J. Jones [Independent Group] County Councillor Graham Jones [Welsh Conservatives] County Councillor Paul Ashton [Welsh Liberal Democrats] County Councillor Jeff Holmes [Non-political Group]</p>	
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5.	MATTERS RELATING TO DEMOCRATIC ISSUES	DSC25 - 2016
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The Committee considered the report from the Head of Democratic Services [copy filed with the signed minutes].

1. Public Participation at Council meetings

The Head of Democratic Services advised that if the Committee was content with the draft Protocol it should recommend it to Council for adoption for a trial to be undertaken and then reviewed.

The following comments were made [numbers relate to the sections in the draft protocol:

- 2.3 - Questions would not be allowed to Regulatory Committees as they relate to an individual application. Any questions relating to regulatory committee policy would be referred to the Portfolio Holder.
- 2.4 & 2.5 - Children could submit questions. As Council meetings were being webcast, parental consent would be required if a child were to attend to ask a supplementary question.
- 2.6.1 – It was questioned whether the name and address of the questioner would be made public. It was noted that such details are public in respect of an individual who comments on a planning application and only telephone/mobile numbers and email addresses are redacted. It was

- agreed that there should be consistency in the approach in respect of such details across the Council.
- 2.6.4 – Where a question is accepted and included on the Council agenda, the requestor would not receive any reimbursement for the cost of attending the Council meeting.
 - 2.7.1 (iii) – A question would be rejected if it was substantially the same as a question asked by a Member or member of the public in the last six months
 - 2.7.1 (xiv) – Where a question is submitted regarding a local matter that has no wider significance to the County, the matter will be referred to the local member
 - 2.22 – the supplementary question can be asked to another Portfolio Holder, but the total time available for responses will be four minutes in total. The Chair of Council would also have discretion to vary the time for responses.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL	Reason for recommendation
that the draft protocol, with the above amendments, be approved and trialed at a meeting of the Council and then the process reviewed by the Democratic Services Committee.	To complete the process for the development of a protocol for public participation at Council meetings.

2. Provision of the Council diary 2017 to Members

The Committee noted that with the introduction of the Modern committee management system there are opportunities for the Council to operate more efficiently and this also related to the area of Members' diaries. The Committee noted that by maintaining a diary on the Modern system only, would save £657 each year [£3686 over five years]. In addition, with a number of changes of dates of meetings and in particular additional meetings being inserted in the Council diary during the year, the paper diaries once printed become out of date very rapidly.

With the Modern system, Members could chose to access the calendar electronically or print a copy of the calendar to which they could add details of other commitments. Any Member using the latter would need to ensure that they kept this paper version up to date.

County Councillor W.T. Jones, Portfolio Holder advised that it was proposed that during the next few months, Windows phones were to be made available to Members, where they paid for the monthly rental costs. A growth bid was to be made for funding for the next financial year. By utilising these phones Members could access the "live" Modern calendar and also manage emails and their personal calendars. It was noted that in the future Members would be offered a range of IT equipment and it was agreed to ask an officer from IT services to attend a future meeting to discuss what was proposed.

RESOLVED	Reason for decision
<p>(i) that the Council no longer produces the printed Filofax diary as previously (Option 2 in the report); and</p> <p>(ii) that Members select from Option 1 and 1(a) as set out in the report, which they wish to use to access the diary of meetings.</p>	<p>To modernise the production of the calendar of Council meetings and to produce cost savings in the Members' budget.</p>

3. Members' Annual Reports

The Committee considered the issue regarding publication of Members' Annual reports for the period May 2016 - May 2017. The Committee noted the guidance from Welsh Government, but considered that as a minimum, details of a Member's membership and attendance at Committees and the development sessions attended should be published for a six month period. It was also considered that previous annual reports should remain available to the public as it was historical information of a Members' activities.

RESOLVED	Reason for decision
<p>(i) that Members' Annual reports, giving details of membership of and attendance at committees, membership of outside bodies and attendance at development sessions would be published for the period May 2016 – January 2017 and</p> <p>(ii) that all annual reports would remain available on the Council website.</p>	<p>(i) To enable annual reports to be prepared and published in the last year prior to a Council election.</p> <p>(ii) To ensure annual reports are available on the Council's website in the last year prior to an election.</p>

4. Local Democracy Week 10th - 16th October, 2016

The Committee noted the proposals in respect of Local Democracy Week and for the period until the date of closure of nominations to stand for the County Council election in 2017.

The Chair advised that any promotion should also go to PAVO, disability groups and other interested groups such as the Powys Youth Forum.

6.	JOINT CHAIRS AND VICE CHAIRS STEERING GROUP	DSC26 - 2016
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The Committee received the notes of the Joint Chairs and Vice Chairs Steering Group held on 24th May, 2016.

County Councillor S C Davies (Chair)