

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD  
AT COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS ON 7<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2014**

**PRESENT:** County Councillor Sandra Davies [Chair]

County Councillors G.J. Bowker, L.V. Corfield, D.O. Evans, M.J. Jones, P.C. Pritchard, K. Roberts-Jones, D.G. Thomas, T. Turner and D.H. Williams.

C. Pinney (Solicitor to the Council), W. Richards (Head of Democratic Services), L. Patterson (Scrutiny Officer), S. Glenn (Corporate Consultation Officer), A. Hart (Information Services Senior Manager).

Attendance at afternoon session where items 11 and 12.3 were considered: County Councillor Sandra Davies [Chair], G.J. Bowker, L.V. Corfield, D.O. Evans, M.J. Jones, K. Roberts-Jones and T. Turner.

<b>1.</b>	<b>APOLOGIES</b>	<b>DSC24 - 2014</b>
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Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors P. Ashton, D. Bailey, D. Jones and P.E. Lewis.

<b>2.</b>	<b>MINUTES</b>	<b>DSC25 - 2014</b>
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The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the meetings held on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2014 subject to the recording of Cllr K. Roberts-Jones as having given her apologies and 13<sup>th</sup> June 2014 as a correct record.

<b>3.</b>	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>	<b>DSC26 - 2014</b>
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There were no declarations of interest.

<b>4.</b>	<b>APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR</b>	<b>DSC27 - 2014</b>
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**RESOLVED** that the election of Vice-Chair be deferred until the next meeting of the Democratic Services Committee.

In the interim the existing Vice-Chair County Councillor Turner remains as Vice-Chair.

<b>5.</b>	<b>MEMBERS' ANNUAL REPORTS, SECURITY OF INFORMATION AND APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS GUIDANCE</b>	<b>DSC28 - 2014</b>
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Annual Reports

Members queried the recording of absence on Members Annual Reports. Concern was expressed that bare statistics did not show the extent of work undertaken by Members. It was agreed that Officers would draft each Members Annual Report with the basic

information regarding attendance which Members would have the opportunity to amend. Reports would be published for all Members

### Security

Members wished for the most cost effective means of securing confidential information in the Members lounge which was to move the pigeon holes and confidential waste to the Members Support area. The need to ensure that the door into the Members area was secure was noted.

Concern was expressed that the codes on code locked doors are not changed sufficiently frequently, particularly in schools. It was agreed that the Property Team would be advised of this concern.

### Appointments to Outside Bodies guidance

Section 2 – appointments - the second paragraph needs to be completed.

Section 5 – Membership of organisations in your ward as a result of being a councillor – second paragraph delete as follows: If you participate in any committees you will do so as the ward councillor ~~and not as a representative of the Council~~, as no formal appointment has been made by the Council.

It was agreed that the appendix, as amended be agreed.

<b>6.</b>	<b>MEMBERS COMPLETING ON-LINE EXPENSES FORMS</b>	<b>DSC29 - 2014</b>
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This item was withdrawn and will be considered at a later date.

<b>7.</b>	<b>MEMBERS' COMMUNICATIONS SURVERY 2013 – FINDINGS REPORT</b>	<b>DSC30 - 2014</b>
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The Corporate Consultation Officer presented a report on the Members Communications Survey 2013 (copy filed with signed minutes).

Training for Facebook and Twitter – some options include video streaming or CDs for e-learning. Some of this work is already taking place. Any ICT training should be done in small groups rather than Full Council training. E-learning training is not always the best choice as there is no opportunity to interact with the trainer.

Committee documents – Members were happy with the mix of email notification of online committee papers but with paper copies available when requested. Problems were noted with agendas circulated by email (for example CYPP) with documents embedded in the agenda. Paper copies should be available for Members.

Member diaries – the majority of Members prefer the paper Filofax diaries although a minority of Members would be happy with an electronic diary.

Webcasting – this cannot be pursued until the Council has a secure congress system. The Council Solicitor confirmed that a report was put to informal Cabinet recently and it has not been progressed. Money was set aside in the Capital programme two years ago. At present a cost benefit analysis was being undertaken.

£9,000 of Welsh Government grant is still available for webcasting after which there is no revenue funding for webcast meetings. It costs approximately £2k per webcast. Of the 17 webcast meetings there have been in excess of 24,000 views which equates to approximately £2 per hit. At the end of the pilot consideration should be given to undertaking public engagement on the public's view of webcasting. Alternatively a questionnaire could be sent out after the next webcast meeting.

Another beneficial aspect of webcasting is managing the volume of people attending County Hall when contentious issues are on the agenda.

Members will have an opportunity to consider their position at remote attendance at County Council in October 2014. Across the 22 authorities no authorities had yet agreed to remote attendance and some had decided against it.

**RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holders for Property and ICT be invited to attend the next meeting of the Democratic Services Committee to update the committee on the progress being made regarding the congress system**

8.	ICT AND RELATED ISSUES	DSC31 - 2014
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The Information Services Senior Manager

#### Windows 7 upgrade

One of most complicated upgrades that have been undertaken. A consultation on the upgrade was undertaken and a number responses have been received and we have provided 10 new printers.

The service calls have been examined to identify issues from staff and members.

There are a small number of laptops which still need an upgrade.

Members raised a series of questions regarding their own experiences of the upgrade.

#### Security

There have been a number of queries regarding security of information for example with regard to the cabinet connectivity. A three month trial is being undertaken to try to improve ability to access information which is device independent. Also undertaking some work around the guest wifi network to make it more accessible which will start with procedural changes then move on to technological changes.

Members requested information regarding the lack of mobile access in the building. It was confirmed that a booster for Vodafone had been installed in County Hall when Vodafone was appointed as preferred provider for County Council mobile phones. The cost of providing additional boosters is in the region of £25k per provider per building.

Concern was expressed that not all county council mobile phone numbers are being given out to Members.

#### Laptop webcams

All laptops purchased since October 2012 have webcams. There is a stock of external cameras available in Information and Customer Services (ICS) which have been purchased at a cost of £16. Lync is a method which can be used securely to hold conference calls. A YouTube style clip is being made produced to train members and staff on Lync.

#### Member Support

ICS has had a radical reorganisation. The Member support area has been redesigned and there is a dedicated Member Support Officer backed up with a dedicated hotline into the ICT service desk. Higher ICT skills have been made available to Members but savings have been also been made.

#### Printers

Members still required clarity on the policy of providing printers to Members

<b>9.</b>	<b>MEMBER DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP</b>	<b>DSC31 - 2014</b>
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The notes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2014 were received.

<b>10.</b>	<b>JOINT CHAIRS AND VICE CHAIRS STEERING GROUP</b>	<b>DSC32 – 2014</b>
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The notes of the meetings held on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2014 and 16<sup>th</sup> May 2014 were received.

<b>11.</b>	<b>CURRENT/NEW CONSTITUTION</b>	<b>DSC33 – 2014</b>
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#### 11.1 Whistleblowing Policy

The Solicitor to the Council advised that this had been produced in a response to a Wales Audit Office report received at Audit Committee. The draft would be considered at Audit Committee next week. It is a combination of the Wales Audit Office policy together with other Welsh local authority policies. It has been through the Employment Policy Group and the Standards Committee.

Section 1: add *'if unsure discuss with the Monitoring Officer'*.

Section 2: amend to 'this applies to all staff whether you are a permanent employee, *Member*, agency or temporary staff.....'

Section 3: change 'staff' to 'you'.

Section 3.2: change to 'Senior Officer within *the your*-service'.

Section 3.2: change to '*concerns have already been voiced*'.

Section 4 – change to 'trade union/*professional body*'

Section 4.1 – change to ‘the *appropriate* line manager’.

Section 4.2 – Change to ‘the *appropriate* Head of Service or Strategic Director....make arrangements *accordingly*’.

Section 4.2: delete the lilac section to read ‘we will write to you summarising your concerns’.

Include *telephoning* 101 or 999.

Add paragraph numbers.

Section 7: Response times: change to one calendar month

### Officers’ Code of Conduct

Section 1.1 grammar checks needed

Section 1.5 remove ‘fulfilment’

Sections 1.7 and 1.8 move up to beginning.

Section 1.9 remove but add in the part regarding Elected Members to section 1.8.

A5 change ‘~~forgiveness of debt~~’ to ‘*writing off debt*’.

A6 define which forms are in the log.

B1 change ‘~~post you held~~’ to ‘*position*’.

B3 The Solicitor to the Council to discuss Officer/Member friendships with the HR Officer.

B5 The Solicitor to the Council to speak to the HR Officer regarding removing this section.

C1 reword to reduce the number of ‘you’s.

C3 add ‘council tax *benefit*’

C4 commas unnecessary

E4 The Solicitor to the Council to speak to the HR Officer regarding the definition of ‘friend’.

Renumber Section E.

2<sup>nd</sup> E3 and E4 – if Officers who have friends, partners or relatives should not be involved in any tender process concerning such friends, partners or relatives.

2<sup>nd</sup> E5 – officers must make sure that Council and private purchases are kept separate.

E6 – change grammar.

E7- remove.

F2 – bullet point 4 amend to read “require you to wear...”

G3 – this paragraph should include the disposal of confidential information appropriately.

I3 – add “in any event” at end of sentence.

K1 – amend to read “If you are in doubt...”

Appendix L – add spouse or partner to definition of close relative.

General comment – the document should include the statement that an officer’s private conduct should not bring the Council into disrepute.

<b>12.</b>	<b>NEW MODEL CONSTITUTION</b>	<b>DSC34 – 2014</b>
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### 12.1 Section 10 Joint Committees

10.1 with another local authority – amend to ‘*other local authorities*’. Solicitor to the Council will identify if joint committees can be held with other bodies and if so amend as appropriate.

10.2 amend to ‘The Council *and/or* Cabinet....’

10.3.4 highlight ‘Section 13’

10.4.4 superscript the final ‘1’.

### 12.2 Section 19 Planning Protocol

The Planning Protocol is similar to the existing protocol but has been renumbered. It has been considered by the Planning Committee.

19.68 training for members acting as local members needs to be undertaken ‘*on election and a refresher every 2 years*’.

19.96.4 add in ‘*at the discretion of the Chair*’.

### 12.3 Local Resolution Process

This had been produced in respect to a request from the Ombudsman who may be minded to impose a process for Council's who do not implement such a process. The process has been considered by Group Leaders and the Standards Committee.

It was confirmed that there was an internal formal complaints process concerning complaints from Members regarding Officers. For complaints from Officers regarding Members the Local Resolution Process would apply.

**Resolved that the Local Resolution Process is included in the Constitution.**

**County Councillor Sandra Davies  
Chair**