

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE
HELD AT COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS ON 3RD OCTOBER, 2014**

PRESENT: County Councillor L.V. Corfield [Chair]

County Councillors P.J. Ashton, G.J. Bowker, M.J. Jones, D.G. Thomas, and D.H. Williams.

As the Chair and the previous Vice Chair were unavailable it was agreed that County Councillor D.G. Thomas take the Chair for the initial section of the meeting.

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| 1. | APOLOGIES | DSC36-2014 |
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Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors D. Bailey, Sandra Davies, D.O. Evans, D.C. Jones, P.E. Lewis and T. Turner and County Councillor K. Roberts-Jones who was on other Council business. County Councillor P.C. Pritchard was now the Portfolio Holder for Member Support and Development but was unable to attend this meeting.

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| 2. | MINUTES | DSC37-2014 |
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The Chair was authorised to sign as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 4th July, 2014 subject to the following: That the date of the meeting recorded in the minutes be changed to 4th July, 2014.

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| 3. | DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST | DSC38-2014 |
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There were no declarations of interest from members. Wyn Richards, Head of Democratic Services declared a prejudicial interest in DSC42-2014 7.1 Current Constitution.

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| 4. | APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR | DSC39-2014 |
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RESOLVED that County Councillor L.V. Corfield be appointed Vice Chair until the next AGM.

County Councillor L.V. Corfield took the Chair for the rest of the meeting.

The Committee agreed to vary the order of Agenda items. Having declared a prejudicial interest Wyn Richards, Head of Democratic Services left the meeting room for the next item as the report referred to his post.

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| 7. | CURRENT AND NEW CONSTITUTION | DSC42-2014 |
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7.1 Current Constitution

The Committee considered the report of the Solicitor to the Council (copy filed with the signed minutes).

The Committee noted that on the 1st July 2014 new requirements were imposed by the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 (“the 2014 Regulations”) which must be incorporated into the Council’s Constitution.

| RESOLVED: | REASON FOR DECISION: |
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| <p>That the Democratic Services Committee recommends to the Council that it approves</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The amendments to Part 4 Section 9 of the Constitution as set out in Appendix A to the report and ii. The amendment to Article 4 of the Constitution as set out in Appendix B. | <p>To update and make urgent revisions to the Council’s current Constitution.</p> |

Wyn Richards returned to the meeting room.

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| 5. | COUNCIL DIARY 2015 | DSC40-2014 |
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The Committee considered the 2015 Council diary (copy filed with the signed minutes).

The Committee noted that at the last Corporate Parenting Group meeting it had been agreed that future meetings should be held at a time more convenient to the young people representing looked after children. Dates had been agreed and would replace those highlighted in the draft diary. The highlighted Tenants Liaison Committee dates would also be confirmed prior to consideration by the Council.

Officers advised that on approval by Council the diary inserts would be printed.

| RESOLVED: | REASON FOR DECISION: |
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| <p>To recommend the 2015 Council diary to Council.</p> | <p>To confirm the 2015 Council diary for publication.</p> |

Clive Pinney, Solicitor to the Council left the meeting.

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| 6. | THE WALES CHARTER FOR MEMBER SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT | DSC41-2014 |
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The Committee considered the Council’s reapplication for the Standard Level of the Charter (copy filed with the signed minutes).

The Committee noted that the Standard Charter had been awarded in 2011 for a three year period and was now due for renewal. It was noted that the Personal Development Reviews for all members in receipt of Special Responsibility Allowances needed to be completed due to the changes in Cabinet.

Officers advised that the process now put in place regarding support and development, needed to be fully embedded into the working of the Council prior to an application being made for the Advanced Charter.

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| RESOLVED: | REASON FOR DECISION: |
| To approve the Council's reapplication for the Standard Level of the Charter to the Welsh Local Government Association. | To ensure that the Council's Charter status continues. |

The Committee thanked Carol Johnson, Democratic Services Officer for compiling the Charter submission and supporting evidence.

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| 7. | CURRENT AND NEW CONSTITUTION | DSC42-2014 |
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7.2 New Constitution

The Committee noted that previously it had been agreed that the new constitution would be presented to Council as a completed document for approval. Due to the work involved it had now been agreed to take a number of sections to Council for approval at a time and then when all sections had been agreed by Council to implement the new constitution at that time.

Section 2 – Purpose, definition, interpretation and amendment of the Constitution – RESOLVED all amendments agreed.

Section 4 – Full Council –

4.9 Appointment and term of office of Chair, Vice-Chair and Assistant Vice-Chair of Council – the Committee noted that Montgomeryshire had asked that the current rota of Chair of Council should be changed to reflect the membership of the Shire areas. The Committee noted the views of the other Shires. Members considered that there needed to be a wider, more detailed discussion regarding the role of Shires, the cost of meetings, the impact of changes in local government in the next few years.

RESOLVED that a report on the role of the Shire Committees and associated costs be brought to the next meeting.

4.27 Remote Attendance – the Committee was advised that the Cabinet had agreed to renew the congress system in the Chamber and Committee Room A, County Hall and update the video conference facilities in County Hall, Neuadd Brycheiniog and Neuadd Maldwyn. Due to the costs it had not been possible to link Neuadd Brycheiniog and Neuadd Maldwyn to County Hall to enable remote attendance at these sites. It was noted that the Cabinet would look at this issue again if finances became available. The Committee commented that the County should have equal facilities and be fully accessible.

RECOMMENDED to Full Council that remote attendance is not undertaken but that its value is acknowledged.

Officers advised that the White Paper would make webcasting compulsory, but the extent of its use was unknown. The Committee considered which meetings should be webcast. Officers advised that this view would then enable a bid to be made for resources in the forthcoming budget round. It was noted that the views of the Cabinet and the Planning, Taxi Licensing & Rights of Way Committee would be sought prior to the meeting of Council.

RECOMMENDED to Full Council that the following meetings should be webcast – Full Council, Cabinet, Planning, Taxi Licensing and Rights of Way Committee where major applications were to be considered and/or at the discretion of the Committee Chair and Scrutiny Committees at the discretion of the Chairs where specific issues are being considered.

Section 4 - RESOLVED all amendments agreed.

Section 5 - The Cabinet - RESOLVED agreed.

Section 6 – The Leader - RESOLVED amendments agreed.

The Committee noted that the above sections would now be considered at the next Full Council meeting.

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| 8. | MODERN.GOV SYSTEM | DSC43-2014 |
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The Head of Democratic Services explained that currently in-house software was used to publish agendas etc. A number of Welsh Authorities were now using Modern.Gov and it was also noted that the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority had recently started to use the system.

Officers would look into what systems and support was provided by Modern.gov and keep the Committee updated on this issue.

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| 9. | PAYMENTS TO LEADERS OF OTHER POLITICAL GROUPS | DSC44-2014 |
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The Chair welcomed County Councillor J. Morris to the meeting. County Councillor J. Morris thanked the Chair for the opportunity to discuss this issue. He declared an interest in this issue as a Group Leader and advised he would speak to the Committee and answer questions and then leave the room prior to any discussion.

County Councillor J. Morris advised that group leaders had discussed this issue and he had been asked to represent them at this meeting. The Independent Remuneration Panel Wales [IRPW] allows an allowance to be paid to the leader of the largest opposition group and the leader of a group with more than 10% of

councillors [unless they take an allowance in another form]. In Powys there are a number of opposition groups and the leaders of these are called together on a regular basis. The leaders in Powys consider that it would be unfair to provide an allowance to a few leaders and not others when the workload is the same irrespective of the size of the group and they are expected to attend the leaders' meetings. They had suggested that either no allowance is paid to leaders of the opposition or that the available allowance is split equally between the leaders [unless they take an allowance in another form]. It was noted that the IRPW had allowed the Council to split the Deputy Leaders allowance between the three deputies and the same principle should be applied for opposition leaders.

County Councillor J. Morris thanked the Committee and left the meeting room.

The Committee discussed the issue.

RECOMMENDED to Group Leaders that the Council make representations to the Independent Remuneration Panel Wales that there be a single allocation for opposition group leaders which the Council could choose either to:

- a. **split equally between all group leaders with groups over 10% membership of Council or**
- b. **split equally between all opposition group leaders irrespective of group size.**

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| 10. | MEMBER DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP | DSC45-2014 |
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The Committee received the notes of the Member Development Working Group held on 9th June, 2014 [copy filed with the signed minutes]. The Committee was advised that 25 Members had written full reports and 42 had completed reports providing basic information. Six reports were still outstanding. The reports would be published by the end of the following week.

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| 11. | JOINT CHAIRS AND VICE CHAIRS STEERING GROUP | DSC46-2014 |
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The Committee received the notes of the Joint Chairs and Vice Chairs Steering Group held on 16th May, 2014 [copy filed with the signed minutes].

County Councillor G.J. Bowker asked if a sign could be put in the Members' Lounge to remind members to check their pigeon holes before leaving and that the confidential waste bin in the Members Support Unit was an open top bin and therefore was not very secure. The Committee asked that these issues be addressed.

County Councillor L.V. Corfield
Chair