

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE  
HELD AT COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS ON 15<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 2015**

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

County Councillors P.J. Ashton, D. Bailey, G.J. Bowker, L.V. Corfield, D.O. Evans, D.C. Jones, K. Roberts-Jones and D.G. Thomas

<b>1.</b>	<b>APOLOGIES</b>	<b>DSC12-2015</b>
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Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors P.E. Lewis and D.H. Williams and from County Councillor T. Turner who was on other Council business. Apologies were also received from County Councillor P.C. Pritchard, Portfolio Holder HR and ICT.

<b>2.</b>	<b>MINUTES</b>	<b>DSC13-2015</b>
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The Chair was authorised to sign as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2015.

In response to a question the Committee was advised that training for Councillors who do not sit on the Planning Committee was being arranged. It was noted that such training would be provided at “regular intervals” and the Head of Democratic Services suggested that this would be once every two years.

<b>3.</b>	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>	<b>DSC14-2015</b>
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There were no declarations of interest.

<b>4.</b>	<b>MEMBER DEVELOPMENT – MANDATORY AND NON-MANDATORY DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>DSC15-2015</b>
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The Committee received the report regarding Mandatory and non-mandatory development for Councillors (copy filed with the signed minutes).

Details of Mandatory and non-mandatory development had been produced by the Member Development Working Group [MDWG] and the Standards Committee. The views of the Political Groups had been sought and the Committee noted the views from the Powys Independent Alliance Group and that other Groups had not been able to respond.

**Mandatory Development**

It was noted that if Mandatory development is identified there needed to be sanctions to enforce this. In response to comments the Head of Democratic Services advised that if the Standards Committee were delegated the responsibility for enforcing sanctions, it would take into account a Member’s individual circumstances when considering sanctions. Two dates, on different days, would be scheduled for each Mandatory session, to facilitate Members’ attendance.

The Committee supported the recommendation from the MDWG and Standards Committee.

**Non-mandatory development**

The Head of Democratic Services advised that different methods of delivery were being considered, including recording sessions and using these as a form of video-learning. The All Wales Academy was developing e-learning packages for local authorities in Wales and this could mean that some sessions could be provided using these packages. Presentations used in sessions had been added to the Members’ Portal for some time. However, an email would be sent to all Members reminding them of this and an email would be sent to Members after each session with details of the link to the page.

The Committee discussed the level of attendance required at non-mandatory sessions and the level of 80% recommended by the Standards Committee and the MDWG. It was considered that this was a very high level to achieve and could be difficult for Members who have employment outside the Council and/or who have family commitments. The Committee considered that the level of attendance should be set at 60%, the same as the required attendance at Council’s committees.

The Committee questioned why some Members do not attend development sessions.

<b>RESOLVED:</b>	<b>REASON FOR DECISION:</b>
<b>To write to Members who regularly do not attend development sessions to establish why they do not attend and to establish what development they would like to see provided.</b>	<b>To establish why some Members do not attend development sessions.</b>

<b>RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL</b>	<b>REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION</b>
<p><b>(i) That as from the next election of Councillors that Members should be required to agree to complete all “mandatory development” and at least 60% of “non-mandatory development” when they sign their Declaration of Acceptance of office forms</b></p> <p><b>(ii) That from May 2015:</b></p> <p><b>a. Members attend all “mandatory development” sessions i.e. one of two sessions offered in a period</b></p> <p><b>b. The sanctions detailed in paragraph 2.3 of the report be approved, including powers of the Standards Committee to suspend</b></p>	<b>To support the continuous professional development of Members and encourage them to see this as part of their councillor role.</b>

<p><b>Members for a period of one month where other sanctions have not been effective</b></p> <p><b>c. Members attend 60% of “non-mandatory development”</b></p> <p><b>d. Other methods of delivering sessions such as e-learning be developed as soon as possible.</b></p>	
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<b>5.</b>	<b>SCRUTINY COMMITTEES</b>	<b>DSC16-2015</b>
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The Committee received a report regarding the areas of responsibility of the two Scrutiny Committees and the name of the Environment, Infrastructure and Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee.

The Committee noted the views of the Joint Chairs and Vice Chairs Steering Group [Scrutiny, Audit and Democratic Services Committees].

<b>RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL</b>	<b>REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION</b>
<p><b>(i) that the revised areas of responsibility for the scrutiny committees as set out in the Appendix to the report, be approved and included in the new Constitution.</b></p> <p><b>(ii) that the name of the Environment, Infrastructure and Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee be amended to the Place Scrutiny Committee.</b></p>	<p><b>(i) to revise the areas of responsibility for scrutiny committees; and</b></p> <p><b>(ii) to amend the name of the Environment, Infrastructure and Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee.</b></p>

<b>6.</b>	<b>NEW CONSTITUTION</b>	<b>DSC17-2015</b>
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The Committee considered the following:

- Section 11 – Officers – various acronyms should be given in full
- Section 14 – Access to Information Procedure Rules – it was noted that 14.5 allowed meetings to be recorded subject to certain caveats.
- Section 15 – Budget Procedure Rules – it was noted that 15.2.4 regarding the Council’s budget was new
- Section 16 - Finance Procedure Rules – this Section had recently been considered by the Audit Committee. The Head of Democratic Services highlighted the significant changes. It was noted that once approved the Section would be circulated as appropriate including schools.
- Section 22 – Confidential Reporting “Whistleblowing” Code – noted.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL	REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION:
<p>the adoption of the following:  <b>Section 11 – Officers</b>  <b>Section 14 – Access to Information Procedure Rules</b>  <b>Section 15 – Budget Procedure Rules</b>  <b>Section 16 - Finance Procedure Rules</b>  <b>Section 22 – Confidential Reporting “Whistleblowing” Code</b></p>	<p><b>To adopt for the New Constitution.</b></p>

<b>7.</b>	<b>MODERN.GOV</b>	<b>DSC18-2015</b>
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The Committee received a verbal report from the Head of Democratic Services. Modern.gov was a system relating to members and meetings to manage a range of administration functions including Agendas, Committee and development attendance records, Members’ interests and declarations of interests. The system was being used by many local authorities in Wales, the Brecon Beacons National Park and the Welsh Government. It had been purchased from existing resources as the current administration system was 10 years old and had limited functionality and was failing.

Officers would receive training to use the system over the next few months and create the relevant databases. Members would receive training in due course.

<b>8.</b>	<b>DIVERSIFYING DEMOCRACY PROJECT</b>	<b>DSC19-2015</b>
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The Head of Democratic Services updated the Committee on the Project.

The Welsh Government commissioned an Expert Group to look at Diversity in Local Government which published a report “On Balance: Diversifying Democracy in Local Government in Wales [2014]. The Report made 24 recommendations to the Welsh Government including:

- improving the candidate survey and sending this out with nomination papers
- councils should:
  - develop strategies to improve diversity
  - make better use of mentoring schemes
  - consider the creation of “Shadow” Youth Cabinet
  - member champions to encourage greater participation in local government and run publicity campaigns prior to the next elections

The Project sponsored by the Welsh Government is working with the 22 local authority Diversity Champions to provide mentoring to prospective candidates and raise the profile of the role of councillors. County Councillor Darren Mayor is the Council’s Diversity Champion.

Members interested in become mentors should put themselves forward and Members should assist in identifying those interested in local government who

would be interested in becoming mentees, especially individuals from diverse backgrounds and under-represented groups.

<b>RESOLVED:</b>	<b>REASON FOR DECISION:</b>
<p><b>That the Democratic Services Committee would:</b></p> <p><b>i. Assist in publishing the Diversifying Democracy Project amongst Members to reinforce the email recently sent to Members and</b></p> <p><b>ii. The Chair of the Democratic Services Committee would work with the Diversity Champion, County Councillor D. Mayor to publicise the Project in the press.</b></p>	<p><b>To promote the Diversifying Democracy Project.</b></p>

<b>9.</b>	<b>WORK PROGRAMME</b>	<b>DSC20-2015</b>
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The Committee received and noted the Work Programme.

<b>10.</b>	<b>MINUTES OF THE MEMBER DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP</b>	<b>DSC21-2015</b>
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The Committee received the notes of the Member Development Working Group held on 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2014 and 16<sup>th</sup> January, 2015 [copies filed with the signed minutes].

<b>11.</b>	<b>JOINT CHAIRS AND VICE CHAIRS STEERING GROUP</b>	<b>DSC22-2015</b>
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The Committee received the notes of the Joint Chairs and Vice Chairs Steering Group held on 14<sup>th</sup> November, 2015 [copy filed with the signed minutes].

The Committee noted that the following had been clarified at the Joint Chairs and Vice Chairs meeting in January 2015:

- Item 5 – need to clarify that scrutiny chairs were being paid travel expenses only for attending Cabinet meetings.
- Item 8 – the final bullet point should have read 73 Members and 1 Lay “Independent” Member.

County Councillor Mrs S. Davies  
Chair