

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD
AT COMMITTEE ROOM A - COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS, POWYS ON
MONDAY, 16 APRIL 2018**

PRESENT

County Councillor M J Dorrance (Chair)

County Councillors L V Corfield, G Breeze, J Charlton, D O Evans, A Jenner,
J R Jones, D Jones-Poston, D R Price, GD Price, E Vaughan and R Williams

1.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
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Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor E.M. Jones.

2.	MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING
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The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 15 January, 2018 as a correct record.

In response to questions the Head of Democratic Services advised that he was to attend Management Team later this month to discuss the process for using the Local Environment Initiatives & Locality Forums, for keeping Members up to date on issues upon the cessation of the Shire meetings. Officers need to ensure that a process is in place to make the new system works.

In respect of mandatory and other training, Members asked that more training be provided on-line. The Head of Democratic Services advised that the Member Development Working Group was looking at how a mixture of formats for training can be used.

3.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
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There were no declarations of interest.

4.	REVIEW OF THE ROLE OF CHAIR OF COUNCIL AND CIVIC ROLES
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The Committee received the minutes of the Working Group which reviewed the role of the Chair of Council and other Civic roles.

The Committee considered that where extra resources were required for the Chair to undertake their role a business case should be developed. Approval of the request should not be with officers, as has previously been the case, but with Members due to the public interest in such issues.

Although, it was not in the remit of the Committee to consider the provision of a car for the Chair comment was made that any future provision should be equitable with pool cars for staff and not exceed the cost of lease cars for staff. The Head of Democratic Services clarified that the current budget allocation for the Chair's use had recently been reduced to £10k per annum. It was noted that this allocation was available for such things as events and functions during a Chair's term of office.

It was proposed and duly seconded that the penultimate conclusion from the Working Group should be amended to read: The current budget allocation for the Chair's use should be retained. On the Chair's casting vote the amendment was approved.

The Committee noted that in addition to the Chair's budget referred to above, resources were provided to support the Chair in their role and included, staff, postage, a car etc.

It was proposed and duly seconded that the final conclusion from the Working Group should be amended to read: The Chair's role needs to be appropriately supported and resourced subject to a robust business case being approved by the Democratic Services Committee for expenditure outside of the Chair's allowance.

RECOMMEND TO THE COUNCIL THAT	Reason for recommendation
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The civic roles are valued and should be retained. 2. The roles of Chair, Vice-Chair and Assistant Vice-Chair will be more important now as they absorb the Shire Chair roles as from May. 3. The current rotation for Chair of Council between areas be retained. 4. There is no benefit in moving to a Presiding Member in place of a Chair of Council. 5. There is limited scope for reducing the level of civic salary paid as it does not provide significant savings. 6. The current budget allocation for the Chair's use should be retained. 7. The Chair's role needs to be appropriately supported and resourced subject to a robust business case being approved by the Democratic Services Committee for expenditure outside of the Chair's allowance. 	<p>Response to the resolution passed at Council on 13 July 2017.</p>

5. TIMING OF MEETINGS SURVEY RESULTS

The Committee received the results of the Member Survey regarding the timing of Council meetings.

The Committee noted the comments from some responders regarding the time commitments in addition to the main Council meetings. It was noted that the

Welsh Local Government Association [WLGA] advises that being a councillor is a commitment of three days per week. The Monitoring Officer advised that the legal requirement was the attendance at one meeting every six months. Comment was made that it was becoming more difficult for Members who were employed to get time off work to enable them to meet the increased workload of a councillor. Concerns were also expressed that not all councillors were appointed to a committee.

It was considered that the information from the survey should be shared with the WLGA. In addition the views of Members regarding increasing time commitments should be considered and how members contribute to the council should be reviewed.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL	Reason for Recommendation
That the general timing of meetings of the Council, Cabinet and Committees remain unchanged for the current term of the Council with the provision that Chairs of Committees can vary the times of meetings as needs dictate.	To complete the Members' Survey as required under Section 6 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.

6. SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDE FOR MEMBERS

The Committee received the draft Social Media Guide for Members which had been developed by a small group of Members. The Chair considered that the Guide was important as social media presented opportunities but also challenges for users. It was acknowledged that once the Guide was approved by Council, this small group of Members could review and update the Guide in response to changes in social media.

The Committee confirmed that the Guide had been developed to help Councillors to use social media in addition to understand how they can do this in a way that protects themselves. Members needed to be able to make their views known but also needed to know the law around online abuse and also appreciate the pitfalls and dangers. It was noted that further training on social media was being arranged for members.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL	Reason for recommendation
That the Council adopt the Social Media Guide for Members.	To approve the revised Guide.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM JOINT CHAIRS REGARDING SCRUTINY

The Committee considered the report from the Joint Chairs and Vice Chairs Steering Group.

The Head of Democratic Services advised that the report by the Wales Audit Office was awaited on scrutiny in Powys which was also looking at Public Service Board [PSB] Scrutiny. A further report would need to be considered

regarding the allocation of senior salaries after the Leader had confirmed her requirements following the recent changes to the Cabinet.

The following comments on the report was made:

- It was noted that all Committee Chairs receive the same senior salary level and yet the workload can vary greatly
- All Councillors should be mandated to be a member of at least one committee
- Changes should not take place until Members had visited other councils to observe how their scrutiny works
- There should be a lead scrutiny member responsible to Council rather than dispersing the role across four chairs

The informal views of the Education Scrutiny Committee B were noted as follows:

- The current scrutiny arrangements do not work
- The membership of the Education Scrutiny Working Group and Children Scrutiny Working Group is the same
- Education and Children services and Portfolios will become more aligned in the future
- Both Education and Children scrutiny have huge workloads.

The Head of Democratic Services advised that the changes needed to be made at the Council's Annual meeting as the Improvement and Assurance Board was monitoring the Council on its pace of change. Once changes had been agreed a programme of development would be implemented for scrutiny committees.

Although it was recommended that nine councillors would be appointed to the proposed scrutiny committees there was always the option to co-opt additional members. In response to comments the Head of Democratic Services advised that discussions would take place with Group Leaders regarding the proposals, so that Groups could consider their allocations to the proposed scrutiny committees prior to the Annual Council meeting. It was noted that scrutiny committees should be politically balanced.

It was moved and duly seconded that as soon as possible work is undertaken to set out the responsibilities, powers and duties of the proposed scrutiny committees.

RESOLVED	Reason for decision
that as soon as possible work is undertaken to set out the responsibilities, powers and duties of the proposed scrutiny committees.	To ensure that the new scrutiny structure is reflected in the Constitution - Section 7.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL	Reason for recommendation
(i) That the recommendations of the Joint Chairs and Vice-Chairs Steering Group set out in paragraph 2.5 (items (i) to (ix) [in the officer's report) be	To complete the review of the Scrutiny Committee structure.

<p>approved.</p> <p>(ii) That the Constitution be amended to reflect the changes in the scrutiny committee structure. The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Democratic Services Committee be given delegated authority to approve the wording of the amended Constitution.</p> <p>(iii) That the report to Council on the Constitutional changes should include a full list of the various options open to Council to fund the additional Senior Salary.</p>	
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RESOLVED	Reason for decision
That work be undertaken to consider changing the Constitution to require all Councillors to be appointed to at least one Committee.	To ensure that the requested change is legal.

County Councillors J. Jones, D Price and E Vaughan left the meeting for other Council business.

8. **WOMEN'S EQUALITY NETWORK'S (WEN) MENTORING SCHEME**

The Committee noted Member involvement in the Women's Equality Network's Mentoring Scheme. The Committee was advised that County Councillor Jackie Charlton had, as a mentor, been matched with a mentee. However, at the moment County Councillor Beverly Baynham had not been matched with a mentee.

County Councillor Charlton considered that it was good that the Council was involved in this Scheme. She advised that although there were no funds to support the Scheme, the Wales Equality Network had agreed to meet her mentee's travelling expenses due to her specific needs.

The Head of Democratic Services was asked to discuss the issue of providing financial support to those involved in the scheme, with the WLGA, as without support this was a barrier to involvement.

County Councillor Charlton agreed to share the paperwork for the scheme with officers. It was noted that a mentor scheme had previously been developed by the Council but this needed to be reviewed.

RESOLVED	Reason for decision
That officers investigate how the Council supports the travel	To encourage and support Powys County Councillor involvement in

expenses of Powys County Councillors who are Women's Equality Network's mentors.	a national scheme.
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9.	WORK PROGRAMME
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9.1. Work Programme

The Committee noted the Work Programme and that issues highlighted during the meeting would be added to this.

9.2. Developing the promotion of involvement in public life

The Committee noted the report regarding developing the involvement of people in public life and received a verbal update from the Chair.

RESOLVED	Reason for decision
That County Councillors J Charlton, M. Dorrance, A Jenner, D Poston-Jones and R Williams form a Working Group to plan and set the priorities.	<p>To establish an area of work in the Committee's work programme.</p> <p>To promote democratic engagement and participation regardless of background, gender, disability or race.</p>

10.	MEMBER DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP
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The Committee received the notes of the Member Development Working Group held on 13 November, 2017.

In response to a question, officers advised that they would establish whether those members who had recently undertaken General Data Protection Regulations [GDPR] training for school governors would be required to attend the session for Members on 20 April, 2018. Comment was made that the data protection training should focus on what Members needed to do in respect of the day to day management and use of personal data rather than the technical issues of the law.

10.1. Use of electronic voting system in the Council Chamber

The Committee noted the recommendation from the Member Development Working Group [MDWG] regarding the electronic voting system.

The Head of Democratic Services advised that since the MDWG meeting he had reviewed the system and discussed the issue with the Councillor who had raised the issue. He stated that he would now use a different template on the system for recording the individual votes and review this after the next meeting. The Member indicated that the different template was an improvement as it did show who was present at the meeting or not.

11. REVISION TO SECTION 13 - RESPONSIBILITY OF FUNCTIONS

The Committee considered the recommendation from officers that the Monitoring Officer be given delegated authority to change the details of Portfolio Holder's responsibilities, contained in the Constitution, when amendments are made by the Leader.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL	Reason for recommendation
that the Monitoring Officer be given delegated authority to change the details of Portfolio Holder's responsibilities, contained in the Constitution, when amendments are made by the Leader.	To ensure that the Constitution is kept up to date.

County Councillor M J Dorrance (Chair)