

Council Meetings Member Survey 2018

Feedback Report for the Democratic Services Committee

Background:

The Democratic Services Committee agreed on 15 January, 2018 to survey Members regarding the timings of meetings. Statutory guidance issued by the Welsh Government under Section 6(1) of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, states that councils are required to survey members in respect of the times meetings are held at least once a term.

Members were invited to complete an online survey to express their preference for the timings of meetings that they may need to attend during the coming term. The link to the online survey was emailed on 8 February, 2018 with a deadline of 2 March, 2018. A reminder was sent on 23 February and a further reminder, to those that had not responded, was sent on 5 March with a deadline of 8 March, 2018.

The results of the survey are set out in this report with the aim of a recommendation being made to Full Council, after which the Council's full calendar for 2019 will be produced.

Response Rate

43 members completed the online survey in English. Three members completed the Welsh version and two members requested and completed a paper copy in English bringing the total response rate to 48 out of a possible 73 which equals 66%.

Key Findings

- Overall all members who responded had given their views on the meetings they attended and had completed the survey without any major problems or concerns. Some had selected one timeslot for their preferred meeting whilst other members had selected more than one time that suited them.
- All who had completed the online survey except two members, were happy to complete the survey online again. All three members who responded to the online survey in Welsh were also happy to do so again online.
- In total four members who responded appeared to prefer the option of completing a paper survey rather than the online. (Two had requested a paper survey and a further two had actually completed the survey online but stated they'd prefer not to do so again).
- Reasons for non-completion of the survey are not clear without speaking to those members who failed to return the survey. The change of format, access to the internet to get to the survey and other time commitments could all be reasons why some members didn't complete the survey.
- Overall the times expressed by members who responded seem to mirror the current meetings times for the most part.
- In particular this applied for Full Council, Cabinet, Scrutiny Committees, Standards Committee, Audit Committee, Pensions and Investments Committee and the Democratic Services Committee.
- Full Council. All 48 members had given a view with regard to this meeting. A time slot of between 9.30am – 11am for Full Council was the preference of the majority of members with five choosing a 9.30am start, 24 members opting for a 10am start and 13 stating that 10.30am would be suitable for them. A further five had ticked the 11am start time. There thus appears to be a desire by the majority to bring forward the meeting by half an hour to a 10am start rather than the current 10:30am start.

Note: 48 members responded in total to the survey but they were not asked to specify one time slot for each meeting. On this basis it is worth noting that the numbers for each column add up to more than number of respondents as some members choose 2 or 3 times that would best suit them not just one.

Finally below are some of the comments given by members in response to Q4. In total 32 members commented. A full list is provided in Appendix A.

“Please use this space to give us any additional information about your own time preferences and reasons for them OR any factors that you feel need further consideration when scheduling meetings.”

10am is ideal for me as I can take the kids to school and get to Llandod for 9.50am. Evenings are impossible for me.

With my full time work Mondays and Fridays are difficult for meetings and development.

Having PCC meetings in the evening would prove difficult because of the number of meeting in my community that I already attend

Travelling from Ystradgynlais area takes up to one and a half hours. I feel meetings need to be worthwhile to travel three hours out of a day for. Modern technology should assist members to attend meetings remotely, this would save travelling time and the public purse. Thank you.

In reality if we have short sessions it is easier for me to attend an afternoon meeting but I realise we need to start earlier to get through the business.

Please, if possible, can you consider that meetings do not clash with neither the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority or Mid & West Wales Fire Authority. Might PCC and these two External Bodies, be able to have their Calendars electronically linked. Thank you for your kind consideration.

I currently feel that Full Council can take too long as a whole day is set aside. I wonder if it started later whether the meeting could be carried out more productively and more succinctly. I do find it difficult to get to County Hall by 9.00am for group meeting with having children and the morning commitments.

I find it better to start early especially if there is a long agenda

Work commitments make daytime meetings hard. Evening meetings are better for working members and the public.