

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD
AT COMMITTEE ROOM A - COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS, POWYS ON
WEDNESDAY, 18 MARCH 2020**

PRESENT

County Councillor E Vaughan (Chair)

County Councillors J Charlton, L V Corfield, D E Davies, S C Davies, D O Evans,
S M Hayes, D Jones-Poston, D Rowlands, K S Silk and R Williams

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors M Weale and
S L Williams

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors M Weale and S L Williams.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Committee noted that the minutes of the last meeting were not available.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. DRAFT MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2020

The Committee considered the draft Member Development Strategy 2020 -2022 which was based on the previous Strategy which had been updated. It was noted that strategies produced by Councils in Wales and the UK had been reviewed. The final Strategy would be published on the Council's website.

In response to comments regarding the amount of Member Development being undertaken the Head of Legal and Democratic Services advised that a range of mandatory development has been agreed by Council and other development was non-mandatory, but was provided to support Members in their roles. The Head of Democratic Services advised that a mixed economy of development is used, such as face to face, eLearning and videoed development sessions, so providing Members with a range of ways of accessing sessions. He advised it was difficult to compare the range of development with other Councils as over the last year a large amount of non-mandatory sessions had been provided reflecting the current position of the Council.

In response to questions the Head of Democratic Services advised that the Strategy is a key part of the Member Support and Development Charter. Section

23 of the Council's Constitution contains the Welsh Local Government Association [WLGA] members' role descriptions and person specifications. It was noted that the WLGA had updated these and officers considered that they should be extracted from the Constitution, so that they can be reviewed more easily as a live document by the Committee with recommendations to Council regarding any changes.

The Committee noted that details of members' development record is maintained on their individual pages on the Council website.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL	Reason for recommendation
(i) To agree the updated Member Development Strategy 2020 – 2022	To ensure the Member Development Strategy supports the Council's Vision 2025 and the needs of Members.
(ii) That Section 23 be removed from the Constitution.	

5. REVIEW OF "FORMAL QUESTIONS AT ANY TIME" TRIAL

The Committee considered the report regarding the review of the "Formal questions at any time" process. The Committee noted that as provided by Council at its meeting on 10 October 2019 the Democratic Services Committee Chair had used his delegated powers to extend the trial period, after consultation with the Committee. The trial period will continue until a report from the Committee is considered by Council on 14 May 2020.

The Committee noted the views from some Members who had submitted questions and from the Portfolio Holders and officers that answered questions. The Committee debated whether questions, including urgent questions should continue at Full Council meetings. Concerns were raised that having different processes in which to ask questions could be confusing for Members and the public. However, it was considered that retaining questions at Full Council meetings was part of the democratic process. Comment was made that continuation of "Formal Questions at any time" may over time lead to a reduction in questions to Full Council and this could be reviewed again.

In response to questions the Head of Democratic Services advised that Members would be notified of questions and answers as they are published on the Council website.

RECOMMENDATION TO FULL COUNCIL THAT	Reason for recommendation
1. "Formal Questions at Any Time" to Portfolio Holders and Heads of Service be adopted with Questions at Full Council remaining	To incorporate "Formal questions at any time" into the Constitution.
2. the Constitution be amended as set out in Appendix 3 of the report and	
3. there should be a further review in 12	

months time.	
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6. MEMBER CHAMPIONS REVIEW

The Committee considered the initial Member Champions review. The Committee noted that Member Champions could have an important role to play in the work of the Council. However, the need for champions, the promotion and appointments process and the support and governance arrangements needed to be developed.

It was moved and duly seconded to develop governance arrangements to support the appointment of Member Champions.

RESOLVED	Reason for decision
That governance arrangements to support Member Champions be developed and reported back to the Committee by the end of the calendar year at the latest.	To support any Member Champions appointed by the Council.

7. CIVILITY IN PUBLIC LIFE PAN-UK PROGRAMME - DRAFT PROGRAMME
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The Committee noted the draft Civility in Public Life pan-UK programme.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services thanked the Members for participating in this meeting via Microsoft Teams. He advised that under current legislation Councils' Annual Meetings were due to take place in May 2020. Monitoring Officers across Wales were pressing the Welsh Government to amend the legislation to allow meetings to be held in such a way as not to expose people to the risk of coronavirus-19.

County Councillor E Vaughan (Chair)