

County Hall  
Rhadyr  
Usk  
NP15 1GA

6<sup>th</sup> May 2014

**Notice of Meeting:**

**Democratic Services Committee**

**Monday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2014 at 10.00am  
Council Chamber, County Hall, Usk**

**AGENDA**

|    |   |
|----|---|
| 1. | Apologies for absence.  |
| 2. | Public Open Forum.  |
| 3. | Declarations of Interest.   |
| 4. | To confirm and sign the minutes of the Democratic Services Committee dated 17 <sup>th</sup> March 2014 (copy attached)  |
| 5. | Link to <a href="#">Report on Diversity</a> , from the Welsh Government Minister for Local Government and Government Business.  |
| 6. | Future Work Programme Items (copy attached)   |
| 7. | To discuss frequency of meetings and note the date and time of the next meeting as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2014 at 2.00pm.</li></ul> |

**Paul Matthews**

**Chief Executive**

# Democratic Services Committee Membership

**Councillors:** D. Blakebrough  
P. R. Clarke  
D. L. Edwards  
D. Evans  
R.G. Harris  
A. Easson  
S.G.M. Howarth  
P. Jones  
S. Jones  
J.L. Prosser  
V.E. Smith  
S. White

## *Connecting with people*

### **Our outcomes**

The Council has agreed five whole population outcomes. These are *People in Monmouthshire will:*

- Live safely and are protected from harm
- Live healthy and fulfilled lives
- Benefit from education, training and skills development
- Benefit from an economy which is prosperous and supports enterprise and sustainable growth
- Benefit from an environment that is diverse, vibrant and sustainable

### **Our priorities**

- Schools
- Protection of vulnerable people
- Supporting enterprise, job creation and entrepreneurship

### **Values**

- \* **Openness:** we aspire to be open and honest to develop trusting relationships.
- \* **Fairness:** we aspire to provide fair choice, opportunities and experiences and become an organisation built on mutual respect.
- \* **Flexibility:** we aspire to be flexible in our thinking and action to become an effective and efficient organisation.
- \* **Teamwork:** we aspire to work together to share our successes and failures by building on our strengths and supporting one another to achieve our goals.

**Minutes of the meeting of the Democratic Services Committee held at County Hall, Usk on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2014 at 2.00 p.m.**

**PRESENT:** County Councillor D. Evans (Chairman)

County Councillors: D. Blakebrough, D.L. Edwards, R.G. Harris, A. Easson, S.G.M. Howarth, P. Jones, J.L. Prosser and V.E. Smith.

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

|               |   |                                   |
|---------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| Mr M. Andrews | - | Monitoring Officer                |
| Mrs. T. Harry | - | Head of Improvement and Democracy |
| Mrs S. King   | - | Democratic Services Officer       |

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors P.R. Clarke, A. Easson, S. Jones and S. White.

**2. PUBLIC OPEN FORUM**

There were no members of the public present.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

County Councillor D. Edwards declared a personal interest in relation to agenda item 5i Support for Members with Caring Responsibilities.

**4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

We resolved that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

It was agreed that action points would be highlighted in **bold** print.

**5. REPORTS FROM HEAD OF DEMOCRACY AND REGULATORY SERVICES**

**i) SUPPORT FOR MEMBERS WITH CARING RESPONSIBILITIES**

We received a report which informed members of the existing support available to members who have caring responsibilities.

Members noted that the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales outlined the allowances that members were entitled to claim for undertaking their role as councillors and Section 3.30 of the annual allowance report refers to reimbursement of care costs.

**It was resolved that the report would be circulated to all members.**

**Minutes of the Democratic Services Committee  
dated 17<sup>th</sup> March 2014 - continued**

**ii) INDIVIDUAL MEMBER REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT**

We received the Individual Member Review and Development report, which sought member approval to the proposed individual member review and development scheme attached to the report as appendix 1.

The Head of Democracy and Regulatory Services presented a proposals for members and invited the committee to endorse the scheme, subject to any changes, and recommend adoption by the next available full Council.

Key issues were identified as follows:

- Not an appraisal
- Filling skills/knowledge gap
- Discuss training over the year
- Democratic services would put together training programme for whole year to identify training needs.
- Members to consider the proposal and endorse the scheme and make recommendations to full council.
- Policy would have to be agreed.
- Review process would be a pre-planned interview between a member and suitably qualified person. Review could be undertaken by leader of political party, Chief Executive, Statutory Head of Democracy or suitably qualified HR professional.

Members were invited to comment and ask questions. During discussion the following points were noted:

- It was suggested that a list of suitable people should be available, to undertake reviews and members would choose according to preference.
- A member suggested the possibility of self-assessment, to save time and reduce the necessity of interviews for all.
- We noted that the guidance could not force members to go through individual review process, however, it demonstrated good practice in terms of being an effective councillor.
- Some members felt the proposal helpful, especially in relation to one to one and it would be beneficial for group leaders to be involved, as well as other councillors.
- Some concerns were expressed that not all Councillors had completed annual reports and that the same could apply with a review process.
- There would be a requirement to structure a training programme from collated information.
- If additional information or assistance was required, it was suggested that Democratic Services could facilitate with the process.
- A pro forma was presented which listed some questions to be considered by members and included additional learning and development

**Minutes of the Democratic Services Committee  
dated 17<sup>th</sup> March 2014 - continued**

information. The form would be received by Democratic Services for assessment and would be completely confidential.

- The measure indicated statutory guidance for Local Authorities, for members to produce an annual report and individual review and development. However, members would not be forced to take part but the opportunity must be provided.
- **A report would be submitted to full Council by The Head of Democracy and Regulatory Services. The report would highlight that members have the opportunity to undertake a self-assessment or take part in an interview with a suitably qualified person, timescales would be included within the report.**
- A member raised a query regarding a paper telephone directory. We were advised a paper version had not been produced, however, contact details were available electronically and via the Hub.
- It was requested that all members have the opportunity to undertake a review and that the self-assessment forms would be available electronically.
- **We agreed that the report to Council would also identify options available and recommend the way forward.**
- A member suggested that attendance sheets were publicised.

## **6. REVIEW OF CONSTITUTION**

We received an update on the review of the Council's Constitution from the Monitoring Officer.

It was anticipated that the document would be formally adopted at the annual meeting and had already been subject to considerable review, consultation and discussion.

The constitution comprised of a number of elements which had been reviewed in a number of settings. In particular:

- The rules of procedure have already been reviewed in this committee and were due for consideration at a member seminar later in March.
- Audit committee would look at financial regulations and contract standing orders.
- Standards committee has recommended amendments to the member/officer protocol and addendum to the local resolution protocol for members.
- JAG and Cabinet had looked at revisions to the employee code of conduct.
- Planning officers are considering a review of the planning protocol.
- Cabinet and Democratic Services had approved a scrutiny and executive protocol.

A review of the scheme of delegation has taken a significant amount of time, and would shortly be presented to officers for further consideration.

## **Minutes of the Democratic Services Committee dated 17<sup>th</sup> March 2014 - continued**

The presented document highlighted changes from the last meeting and it was anticipated that this would be received by full Council on 10<sup>th</sup> April, with the remainder going to the Annual Meeting deferred business in May.

Member views and guidance were welcomed and during discussion we noted the following:

- Suggestion Council limited to 3 hours. Feedback was received following a meeting of the Political Leadership Group, which was of the view that there should be no limit on the time for Council meetings and that time allowed for debate should not be constrained.

### **4.2 The Policy Framework**

- **Armed Forces Covenant to be included.**

#### **4.19 Questions by Members**

- It was agreed that time limits for full Council meetings would restrict debate.
- Subject to the discretion of the Chair, there should be a limit of one question per member.
- Members were unable to agree whether there should be a limit of 30 minutes for questions to be considered.
- **4.19.10 a Member answering a question may speak for no longer than three minutes and one question would be asked.**
- **Remove 30 minute restriction on time allowed for consideration of questions within 4.19.11.**
- It was noted that the Chair retained discretion to waive compliance with the rules of debate to facilitate the transaction of business at the meeting and that the decision of the Chair on the interpretation of any Procedure Rule was final.
- We noted that questions should be retained within the remit of the topic.
- The committee agreed that appropriate breaks were required in longer meetings.
- We recognised that agenda management was a significant issue, and that motions and questions take time within a meeting.
- It was suggested that business could be included at the start of a meeting, with questions and motions at the end. We were advised that the format was prescribed within the constitution and discussions would be held with the Chair prior to the meeting.
- We agreed that the budget should be considered at a special meeting of Council.
- A significant change had occurred in relation to the £10,000 call-in threshold being removed.

## **7. WORK PROGRAMME**

We received and noted the Democratic Services Committee Work Programme.

During discussion the following points were raised:

**Minutes of the Democratic Services Committee  
dated 17<sup>th</sup> March 2014 - continued**

- Significant item is the Wales Charter for Member Support and Development. Issues will be raised during future meetings and members were invited to suggest any areas of interest.
- It was requested that older items were removed from the work programme.
- The issue of engagement with the public was highlighted, possibly through the medium of workshops. Reflecting on the role of the Council, responsibilities and role of democracy. One big issue is 'what do councils have to do' what are 'we' responsible for. Role as council to make sure perception is the right one.
- Discussions were held in relation to promoting local democracy and the events held by the election service, also in relation to the perceived role of a Councillor and the difference of the actual role.
- **Information was requested regarding the Newsletter.** It was recognised that work of the Council should be promoted and advertised. We noted that a publication would have to be bilingual.

**8. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held at County Hall, Usk on **Monday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2014 at change to 2.00pm (instead of 4pm).**

**The meeting ended at 3.25 p.m.**

| Item   | Purpose   | Reporting Arrangements |
|--|---|------------------------|
| <b>Annual Reports for members</b>  | To help members to report their achievements and activities during the year as required under the Local Government (Wales) Measure. | Annually               |
| <b>Wales Charter for Member Support and Development</b>  | To draw up proposals for member development and support in line with the “Wales Charter for Member Support and Development”         | Ongoing                |
| <p><b>On-going Items:</b></p> <p><b>Scrutiny</b> - We resolved that the Democratic Services Committee be asked to prepare a report on the way forward for the Scrutiny function and the Scrutiny committees, taking account of the report to be produced by the Wales Audit Office, and report back to Council this year(reference from Council 10<sup>th</sup> January 2013)</p> <p><b>Fully support non-executive role of councillors.</b></p> <p><b>Undertake pieces of work aimed at improving the democratic function, in line with the ethos of the Local Government Measure 2011.</b></p> |   |                        |
| <p><b>Dates of meetings:</b><br/> <b>23<sup>rd</sup> June 2014</b><br/> <b>1<sup>st</sup> September 2014</b><br/> <b>13<sup>th</sup> October 2014</b><br/> <b>24<sup>th</sup> November 2014</b><br/> <b>5<sup>th</sup> January 2015</b><br/> <b>9<sup>th</sup> February 2015</b><br/> <b>16<sup>th</sup> March 2015</b><br/> <b>11<sup>th</sup> May 2015</b></p>   |   |                        |