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County Hall
Rhadyr
Usk
NP15 1GA

Friday, 5 April 2024

Notice of meeting

Democratic Services Committee

Monday, 15th April, 2024 at 2.00 pm,
Council Chamber, Usk

AGENDA

Item No	Item	Pages
1.	Apologies for Absence	
2.	Declarations of Interest	
3.	To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting	1 - 2
4.	Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Report 2024/25 - arrangements for payments to co-opted members.	3 - 6
5.	Constitution Update	Verbal Report
6.	Next Meeting 8th July 2024	

Paul Matthews

Chief Executive / Prif Weithredwr

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CYNGOR SIR FYNWY

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMITTEE IS AS FOLLOWS:

County Councillor Louise Brown	Shirenewton;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Tomos Dafydd Davies	Llanfoist & Govilon;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Meirion Howells	Llanbadoc & Usk;	Independent
County Councillor David Jones	Crucorney;	Independent Group
County Councillor Su McConnel	Croesonen;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Maria Stevens	Severn;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Peter Strong	Rogiet;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Armand Watts	Bulwark and Thornwell;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Laura Wright	Grofield;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Rachel Buckler	Devauden;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Ann Webb	St Arvans;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Tudor Thomas	Park;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru

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Public Information

Access to paper copies of agendas and reports

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Watch this meeting online

This meeting can be viewed online either live or following the meeting by visiting www.monmouthshire.gov.uk or by visiting our Youtube page by searching MonmouthshireCC.

Welsh Language

The Council welcomes contributions from members of the public through the medium of Welsh or English. We respectfully ask that you provide us with adequate notice to accommodate your needs.

Aims and Values of Monmouthshire County Council

Our purpose

- to become a zero-carbon county, supporting well-being, health and dignity for everyone at every stage of life.

Objectives we are working towards

- Fair place to live where the effects of inequality and poverty have been reduced;
- Green place to live and work with reduced carbon emissions and making a positive contribution to addressing the climate and nature emergency;
- Thriving and ambitious place, where there are vibrant town centres and where businesses can grow and develop
- Safe place to live where people have a home where they feel secure in;
- Connected place where people feel part of a community and are valued;
- Learning place where everybody has the opportunity to reach their potential

Our Values

Openness. We are open and honest. People have the chance to get involved in decisions that affect them, tell us what matters and do things for themselves/their communities. If we cannot do something to help, we'll say so; if it will take a while to get the answer we'll explain why; if we can't answer immediately we'll try to connect you to the people who can help – building trust and engagement is a key foundation.

Fairness. We provide fair chances, to help people and communities thrive. If something does not seem fair, we will listen and help explain why. We will always try to treat everyone fairly and consistently. We cannot always make everyone happy, but will commit to listening and explaining why we did what we did.

Flexibility. We will continue to change and be flexible to enable delivery of the most effective and efficient services. This means a genuine commitment to working with everyone to embrace new ways of working.

Teamwork. We will work with you and our partners to support and inspire everyone to get involved so we can achieve great things together. We don't see ourselves as the 'fixers' or problem-solvers, but we will make the best of the ideas, assets and resources available to make sure we do the things that most positively impact our people and places.

Kindness: We will show kindness to all those we work with putting the importance of relationships and the connections we have with one another at the heart of all interactions.

Public Document Pack Agenda Item 3

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Democratic Services Committee held
on Monday, 22nd January, 2024 at 2.00 pm

PRESENT: County Councillor Ann Webb (Chairman)

County Councillors: Louise Brown, Tomos Davies, Meirion Howells,
David Jones, Su McConnel, Maria Stevens, Peter Strong,
Laura Wright, Rachel Buckler and Tony Easson

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

John Pearson
Nicola Perry

Local Democracy Manager
Senior Democracy Officer

APOLOGIES:

Councillors Armand Watts

1. Declarations of Interest

None.

2. To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 9th October 2023 were approved as an accurate record.

3. Draft - Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Report 2024/25

The Local Democracy Manager introduced the draft proposals from the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales for councillor remuneration for the year 2024/25.

The Committee resolved to note the content of the draft IRPW report.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/kGwytwX4l4s?feature=shared>

4. Recorded Votes - Verbal

The Local Democracy Manager introduced the item and invited Members to discuss.

The issue around recorded votes at meetings centred around consistency regarding when Members should request a recorded vote.

The current process was explained, and it was noted that the wording in the Constitution was vague and could need amending.

The Committee resolved to discuss the matter with the Monitoring Officer and bring the next meeting.

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

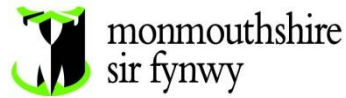
Minutes of the meeting of Democratic Services Committee held on Monday, 22nd January, 2024 at 2.00 pm

<https://www.youtube.com/live/kGwytwX4l4s?feature=shared>

5. Date of Next Meeting - Monday 15th April 2024

On closing the meeting, the Chair suggested that, following the success of the last bus tour of the County, another trip be arranged. It was agreed to arrange this around Springtime.

The meeting ended at 2.35 pm



MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

SUBJECT:	Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Report 2024/25 – arrangements for payments to co-opted members.
MEETING:	Democratic Services Committee
DATE:	15th April 2024
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	All

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To approve the method of remunerating co-opted members to committees on the Council.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Democratic Services Committee approve the decision to retain the full/half day rate of remuneration for co-opted members.

3. REASONS:

- 3.1 At the meeting of the Democratic Services Committee on the 22nd January 2024, the committee received the draft version of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales report for 2024/25 which sets out the level of remuneration councillors are to receive.
- 3.2 The final version of the IRPW report was published and circulated by email to all councillors for information on the 29th February 2024.
- 3.3 Determination 5 of the report proposes potential changes to the way remuneration is calculated for co-opted members to the County Council. Previously, co-opted members have been able to claim their remuneration based on half day (upto four hours) or full day (over four hours) rates as set out in the report. The 2024 report, adds in the option to remunerate co-opted members on an hourly basis and leaves the decision on which system to use to each local authority to determine.
- 3.4 Co-opted members have been consulted on the proposals and those that responded confirmed that retaining the current half/full day rate is the preferred method. The main benefit being that the rate allows co-opted members to work in a way that best suits their need to prepare for and participate in council meetings with minimum additional administration attached to the claims process.
- 3.5 Claims from co-opted members are submitted to democratic services with the date and rate of pay relating to the work they are carrying out along with any expenses claims relating to the role. The claims are checked and authorised before forwarding to payroll for payment.

3.6 Pros and cons of each method is highlighted below

Hourly Rate:

Pros

- Greater transparency between remuneration received and hours worked
- Procedures remain in line with IRPW requirements

Cons

- Unclear what, if any, cost savings the change to an hourly rate system could produce
- Greater administration burden and associated costs with an hourly rate system for co-opted members, democratic services and payroll
- A need to predetermine suitable time allowed for meeting preparation to ensure that claims remain acceptable which reduces the flexibility for co-opted members to properly prepare for meetings.
- Unnecessary work to claim for single hour work multiple times of a period where preparation and pre meetings are dispersed and still leaves ambiguity for any work undertaken that is less than one hour.

Half/Full Day Rate

Pros

- Greater flexibility for co-opted members to claim accumulated work relating to a particular meeting in a manner that suits them rather lots of itemised bits of work that equate to the same amount. For example, single claims for meeting preparation, pre meetings and the time spent within the meeting itself
- Procedures remain in line with the IRPW requirements
- Less administration to process
- Clarity of budget planning retaining the current system

Cons

- Potential less transparency relating to hours worked and remuneration received

4. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 4.1 Retaining the current system of half/full day rate allows for greater clarity of budget implications as the system has already been adopted over previous years. Calculating hourly rate costs are difficult due to the varying size of agenda and details of report and length of council meetings and provide less certainty of long term budget implications. Hourly rate claims will also incur additional costs in checking and processing more detailed claims in addition to the unknown costs of changing the system.

5. CONSULTATION:

Co-opted Members
Monitoring Officer

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

7. **AUTHOR:** John Pearson, Local Democracy Manager
johnpearson@monmouthshire.gov.uk

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