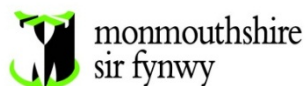


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County Hall
Rhadyr
Usk
NP15 1GA

Monday, 24 December 2018

Notice of meeting

Democratic Services Committee

Monday, 7th January, 2019 at 2.00 pm,
Council Chamber, County Hall, Usk

AGENDA

Item No	Item	Pages
1.	Apologies for absence	1 - 6
2.	Declarations of interest	
3.	Timing of Council Meetings	

Paul Matthews

Chief Executive / Prif Weithredwr

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CYNGOR SIR FYNWY

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMITTEE IS AS FOLLOWS:

County Councillors:

D. Evans
T. Thomas
D. Dovey
L. Dymock
M. Groucutt
G. Howard
L. Jones
J. Treharne
S. Woodhouse
P. Clarke
F. Taylor
J. Watkins

Public Information

Access to paper copies of agendas and reports

A copy of this agenda and relevant reports can be made available to members of the public attending a meeting by requesting a copy from Democratic Services on 01633 644219. Please note that we must receive 24 hours notice prior to the meeting in order to provide you with a hard copy of this agenda.

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

Building Sustainable and Resilient Communities

Objectives we are working towards

- Giving people the best possible start in life
- A thriving and connected county
- Maximise the Potential of the natural and built environment
- Lifelong well-being
- A future focused council

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.



REPORT

SUBJECT:	TIMING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS
MEETING:	DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE
DATE:	7th January 2019
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	N/A

1. PURPOSE:

To consider the responses to the members survey on timing of all council meetings and consider whether it is necessary to make a recommendation to Council on the timing of meetings.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

That members consider the responses and agree whether or not to make a recommendation to Council on the timing of meetings.

3. KEY ISSUES:

In considering the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales report 2019-20 at the meeting of Democratic Services Committee on the 3rd December 2018, it was agreed to survey all County Councillors in matters relating to the timing of council meetings to assess whether a recommendation was needed to be made to Council for their consideration.

In considering the report, members of the Democratic Services Committee noted the level of remuneration may not be enough to encourage diversity in candidates standing for election and also that the timing of council meetings may also be a barrier to those who could stand for election.

All responses received to the survey are included at Appendix A for information.

In summary;

- Majority of members prefer the current arrangements of morning and afternoon meetings to evenings.
- It was noted that evening meetings may be difficult for members due to representation on other bodies such as town/community councils. Similarly parents noted a preference to day meetings to avoid missing family time. In contrast however, some members preferred evening meetings due to work commitments.

- Majority of members think that meeting times should be fixed rather than varied.
- Majority of members agree that the start time of committees should be left up to the committee themselves to agree.
- Most members consider the current start times of 10/14:00 to be suitable and that holding meetings earlier than 10:00 would impact on the timing of pre meetings for committees.
- Some members consider a trial period alternating the timing of select committees may be useful but most members don't want another trial of varying times.
- The majority of members don't think that Democratic Services Committee should make a recommendation to Council to reconsider the timing of meetings.

4. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

None

5. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS:

None

6. SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

None

7. CONSULTEES:

All County Councillors

8. AUTHOR:

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Appendix A – Responses to Members Survey

Question 1

Do you prefer morning (start between 9:00 and 10:00), afternoon (start between 13:00 and 15:00), evening (16:00 onwards) or anytime meetings?

Morning	9	Afternoon	6
Evening	3	Anytime	0

Question 2

Do you have difficulty in attending meetings at a specific day or time? if yes what are those days and times? What are the issues that cause those difficulties for you (Employment, Family, Religion etc) and how could the timing of meetings help resolve this for you?

- Evening meetings difficult due to being on Abergavenny TC
- No problem but prefer to avoid Evenings as many other outside meetings are held in the Evenings.
- Family not happy about number of evening meetings I attend. Cannot prepare adequately for FC if held anytime other than afternoon.
- Starting Full Council meetings earlier would mean I could pick my child up from school/nursery.
- None
- Mornings are bad due to working full time.
- As I am employed full time, its incredibly difficult attending 10am meetings and very disruptive to my day. Afternoons or evenings are easier as I can start earlier and finish earlier in order for me to attend the meeting.
- I do not drive, so therefore I am reliant on public transport or taxis. If evening meetings were called, then I would need a taxi home which I could not pre book as I wouldn't know what time the meetings finished.
- Any time after School pickup - 3pm - is difficult
- No
- Evening times extremely difficult. Family
- Yes, employment and caring responsibilities (children but also older parents) have made attendance at Council meetings difficult. Meetings at 10 or 2 effectively take an enormous amount of the day if you are working in particular. Some flexibility with a number of meetings being in the evening would be helpful.
- Employment, Family and evening commitments
- Employment
- In particular the ones that overlap the end of school hours (3pm - 5pm)

Question 3

Do you think the start time for a meeting should be fixed for familiarity or varied?

Fixed	12	Varied	6
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Question 4

Should the start time of meetings be left up to each committee to agree themselves through the chair?

Yes	15	No	3
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Question 5

What do you consider would be the most suitable start time for meetings to encourage diversity and engagement whilst ensuring that committee business can be managed effectively?

- Variety of start times.
- 10.00 or 2.00
- 10.00
- Vary times of Select Meetings as a trial,
- Leave as they are.
- 9/9.30am
- From 9 am
- No view
- 16:00 would be at the end of someone's working day.
- 14:00/15:00
- This is a difficult one. 2pm seems to be a nice start time. Although 1pm would give me more time to catch the 15.50pm bus back to Monmouth, or it is the 16.50pm bus.
- 10 am
- 18:00
- 10am
- A variety to accommodate the differing needs of elected members.
- Some variety helps so that no one is completely inconvenienced. Flexibility helps and accommodates most members.
- Nothing
- I think we need a mixture

Question 6

Previous discussions on timings of meetings raised points of starting meetings at 9am or 9:30am rather than 10:00am to avoid waiting time for the meeting to start and using up a full morning. Issues around travel time and weather were countered to this previously. Do you have a preference to starting at 9:00am or 10:00am? or 15:00 rather than 14:00?

- 10 am to allow travel time for members living further away.
- 10.00 and 2.00
- 10.00
- No 10:00 and 14:00 is fine. As pre meetings would need to start at 9:30 and 13:30.
- 10am and 2pm.
- 9/9.30am
- 9 am
- 10.00am and 15.00pmno

- No
- 15:00
- 10am start is better for if I have to catch a bus, alternatively, earlier starts mean I have to take a taxi. 1pm is better for me for reasons stated in previous question.
- Happy with 10 and 14:00 starts.
- 10 and 14 - I can't get there any quicker after school drop off (what parent could?) and the above reasoning is true of meetings at 15.00
- No
- 10:00am
- The clue is in the rationale for the survey. Different members have different needs, however because we have a significant number of members who may have some flexibility in their diary - every attempt at variation is thwarted. We agreed to have meetings at various times - 10-3 and 5 but as this presumably did not suit some members it was rescinded.
- 9 or 2 would be fine.
- 14.00

Question 7

The trial period of alternating Council between 10:00am, 14:00 and 17:00 only had one council meeting at 17:00 due to changes to the diary. Should another trial period varying times of council meetings be held and if so which committee?

- Another trial period - CYP or similar committees.
- No
- No
- A trial of Select Committee Meetings may be more beneficial than Full Council Meetings. Allow individual Committees to set their own meeting start times,
- No.
- 9/9.30am
- No
- No
- Yes, full Council.
- I believe each committee should run their own trial.
- As a town Councillor also, I have meetings Monday evenings. So Democratic Services would clash with my Town Council commitments which almost always start at 6pm.
- nope. varying things is just confusing
- Yes preferably Council
- No
- Yes
- No. no advantage at all in having an evening meeting starting at 5pm. If it is an evening meeting should it not start at 7 or 7.30 which would be too late.
- no preference
- yes

Question 8

What should Democratic Services Committee consider, other than attendance at meetings, to assess whether a varied time is better or worse for a meeting?

- Gather member opinions - in reality difficult to get agreement across 43 members of different ages and responsibilities.
- Leave it. It works now.
- Time of year for evening meetings, attendance could be affected by poor travelling conditions.
- Likelihood of people turning up at wrong time.
- Family friendly hours, like the Welsh Assembly has
- Timings of all meetings
- Nothing
- People who work full time.
- A public survey to see if more working age people would be interested in standing if it did not impact your full time job.
- Surveys is a good option, if all elected members would complete them.
- any common denominators between those who don't attend (i.e. are the absentees all parents)?
- Is it easier for those with young children, or full time employment, to attend - and for the future, does it encourage a wider demographic of people who stand for election
- Majority wishes
- Reasons for non attendance. Is the measure we should attach value to just attendance or is contribution and outcomes?
- What are the issues. If they are not readily apparent don't consider them
- circumstances

Question 9

Should democratic services committee make a recommendation to Council that Council set the start times for all meetings of the authority?

Yes	8	No	11
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Question 10

If no, Should Democratic Services Committee make a recommendation to Council that Council set the start time for certain meetings, and if so which ones and what time?

- No. In a previous question, the option of committee chairs calling the start time of meetings is offered. I think this should be so. Up to the chairs of the committees. But each chair should fully listen to all members points when asked.
- Full Council, varied between morning and afternoon
- No.
- Full council - morning start
- No
- No view

- Yes. Full Council. The times are being set by people who don't work or are retired. Little wonder younger working people can be councillors eh?
- TBH I don't mind if it's set by committee or by council, I just want them to be fixed at 10 am where possible
- No. Each committee should decide for itself.
- Committees as present. Council 2pm
- None
- Na

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