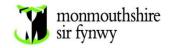# Public Document Pack

monmouthshire
sir fynwy

County Hall
Rhadyr
Usk
NP15 1GA

Friday, 2 July 2021

Notice of meeting

Democratic Services Committee

**Monday, 12th July, 2021 at 2.00 pm,
Council Chamber - Council Chamber**

AGENDA

Item No	Item	Pages
1.	**Apologies for absence**	
2.	**Declarations of interest**	
3.	**Public Open Forum**	
4.	**Feedback from Working Group**	1 - 2
5.	**Prayers at meetings**	
6.	**Response times to members**	
7.	**Discussion on job sharing for Councillors**	
8.	**Induction 2022**	3 - 10
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Paul Matthews

Chief Executive / Prif Weithredwr

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CYNGOR SIR FYNWY

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMITTEE IS AS FOLLOWS:

County Councillor Peter Clarke	Llangybi Fawr;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Christopher Edwards	St. Kingsmark;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor David Evans	West End;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Mat Feakins	Drybridge;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Martyn Groucutt	Lansdown;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Giles Howard	Llanfoist Fawr;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Dave Jones	Crucorney;	Independent Group
County Councillor Jamie Treharne	Overmonnow;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Jo Watkins	Caldicot Castle;	Liberal Democrats
County Councillor Sheila Woodhouse	Grofield;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Tony Easson	Dewstow;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru

:

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Watch this meeting online
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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.

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE WORKING GROUP

THE FUTURE OF AREA COMMITTEES

IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors David Evans, Maureen Powell, Jamie Treharne, Sheila Woodhouse, Chris Edwards, Martyn Groucutt

Officers: Matt Phillips, John Pearson, Cath Fallon, Sharran Lloyd, Nicola Perry.

Matt Phillips opened the meeting providing a background of the history of Area Committees. We recognise that there have been previous reviews which have not been effective and were trying to achieve similar outcomes for area committees that are being discussed today. He explained that Area Committees have not achieved the engagement they were intended to but were a good discussion arena for Members and ward issues.

The most recent review had created the North Mon Area Committee Pilot Scheme and separate Cluster Groups. The North Mon Pilot allowed Community Councils to vote on matters, but it was not thought that there had been any votes of significance other than the change of name.

Councillor Powell, Chair of North Mon Area Committee provided examples of occasions where the committee had influenced decisions, namely traffic issues and a local matter in Goytre.

John Pearson explained the issue of agenda duplication ie. Area – Select – Cabinet.

In terms of where meetings should be held, as places within the community, it was suggested that when a decision is made on how the meetings would go forward, we could then look to identify appropriate sites within the local areas.

Councillor Woodhouse appreciated the value of providing people with an opportunity to come and discuss issues with Members.

Matt Phillips asked if the functionality and formality of the way Area Committees are conducted could affect engagement and invited Cath Fallon and Sharran Lloyd to provide a different perspective. They highlighted the different approaches such as the Business Resilience Forum, which sees representatives from all Chambers of Commerce across the County, Environmental Health, Tourism and Licensing meeting monthly to consider and discuss issues. The meeting is minuted and recorded and is also used as a consultation platform.

We also heard of the four Cluster meetings across the County, not in Abergavenny currently which is a platform for solution-based conversations and addresses any disconnects. This platform is an informal, open dialogue.

Both meetings had seen an increase in attendance and improved engagement since moving to an online basis.

John Pearson asked how these forums engage the Town and Community Councils and we heard that the team allocates area leads who then engage with all stakeholders including local democracy. It was noted that that getting rid of the 'red tape' aspect seemed to improve engagement.

Matt Phillips suggested we leave the technical aspect aside and concentrate on how to get best engagement.

Action: He proposed that members of the working group are invited to the BRF and Cluster meetings to get a feel of how they work and feedback to next meeting. Cath and Sharran to arrange invitations to Members.

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
REPORT

SUBJECT: Draft Induction Programme for 2022 Elections
MEETING: Democratic Services Committee
DATE: 12th July 2021
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: N/A

1.   **PURPOSE:**

To consider the attached draft timetable for the induction of Councillors in 2022 and recommend changes or additions that members consider suitable.

2.   **KEY ISSUES:**

In May 2022, elections will be held to elect a new set of councillors to represent Monmouthshire County Council residents for a five year term.

Given the wide ranging services and responsibilities elected members face when elected, a clear induction programme is required to;

- Highlight the training that we will provide to all councillors
- Ensure all service areas and training requirements are captured
- Provide candidates with advanced details of the induction programme and how it would impact them upon election

The induction programme should be considered in two phases, what is needed immediately upon election and what is knowledge building that isn't time critical. Feedback from councillors at previous induction programmes is that it is too much information too soon and too quickly. However the longer the induction programme takes to complete for the statutory training needs, the longer it will take for committees to start back up and members participating in committees. These are particularly important quasi-judicial committees such as licensing and planning committee.

The familiarity and confidence of councillors in using ICT thanks to the introduction of online meetings offers a new way of delivering sessions as part of the induction that we weren't able to utilise and should be considered as part of the induction to ease the travel time for newly elected members as well the impact on climate change.

The attached draft induction timetable take account of the factors above and members are invited to recommend changes or additions to the induction programme based on their experience as a councillor during this term.

3.   **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

None.

4.   SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS:

The induction programme will ensure that all councillor are provided with the adequate tools and training needs to carry out their role as a councillor.

5.   SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS:

The induction programme will ensure that all councillor are provided with the adequate tools and training needs to carry out their role as a councillor including their safeguarding and corporate parenting responsibilities.

6.   AUTHOR:
John Pearson, Local Democracy Manager
Email: johnpearson@monmouthshire.gov.uk

When	What	Why	Mandatory / Recommended	Delivery Method	Supporting Guidance
End of 2021/early 2022	Candidate Briefing Sessions	To promote the role of councillor and encourage people to stand as candidates for election	N/A	Both in person and online only	WLGA Be a Councillor campaign IRPW information Experience from councillors of the role Councillor Role Descriptions
10th May 2022	Welcome, Introductions and orientation	Introductions and welcomes for all members. Meet senior officers and familiarise with County Hall and Council Chamber. Sign declaration of acceptance of office (statutory requirement), photo opportunities etc	Mandatory	In Person	
12th May 2022	Decision making, ethics and standards of behaviour (E-Learning)	Introduction to local governance arrangements and constitution, how decisions are taken, structures etc Code of conduct training for all members to be aware of the expectations of them when undertaking councillor duties. Overview of how council meetings operate online, broadcasting, rules of engagement.	All members should undertake regular code of conduct training as a matter of good practice	Either	Member Officer Protocol.pdf Members' Code of Conduct.pdf Protocol for Self Regulation of Member Conduct.pdf

		ICT collection and set up likely to be around this time if not available for the 9th and in advance of AGM the following week.			
17th May 2022	Chief Executive session	Information sharing session from the chief executive ahead of the Council AGM	Recommended	Likely in person if situation allows due to AGM the same day.	
19th May 2022	ICT Drop in session	Opportunity for members to follow up on queries with their device and equipment.	As required	In Person	
19th May 2022	Chief Executive Session	Information sharing session from the chief executive ahead of the deferred full Council Meeting.	Recommended	Likely in person if situation allows due to Council the same day	
23rd May 2022	Online service area introductions	Opportunity for members to meet with each chief officer and the senior managers to get an overview of the responsibilities of each service and know who to contact	Recommended	Online – possible use of breakout rooms	
24th May 2022	Licensing Committee Training (E-learning)	Overview of the licensing system works, how the committee operates and the legislation that sets out the processes to be followed Licensing Committee to follow session if required	Mandatory for all Licensing Committee members – open to all members.	Can be online	
26th May 2022	Introduction to Local	To give members an overview of Local	Mandatory for all Governance	Online	[Guide to Local Government Finance](#)

	Government Finance (E-Learning)	Government Finance, provide details on the budget process in Monmouthshire and the role of the Audit Committee	and Audit Committee Members – open to all members.		
27th May 2022	Orientation	Site visits to various offices throughout Monmouthshire if possible.	Recommended	In person	
31st May 2022	Planning Committee Training (E-Learning)	To give members an outline of the planning system and an understanding of planning law and how it links with the Planning Committee.	Mandatory for all Planning Committee Members. Recommended to all members as there may be a need to speak at planning committee on behalf of residents.	Online	Planning Handbook - A guide for Councillors.pdf Planning Service.docx Gypsy and Travellers Sites - Councillor Responsibilities.pptx
2nd June 2022	Safeguarding, Corporate Parenting and Personal Safety (E-learning)	And understanding of the role members play in safeguarding and corporate parenting as well as ensuring they have the tools to carry out their roles safely.	Mandatory	Online	Democratic Services - Health and Safety Corporate Parenting Workbook.pdf Safeguarding - A Councillors Workbook.pdf
7th June 2022	Scrutiny (E-Learning)	The role of scrutiny and how to be an effective scrutiny member	Mandatory	Online	
9th June 2022	Chairs Training (E-Learning)	Training for Chairs of Committees in how to manage meetings effectively	Mandatory for all committee chairs	Online	WLGA Chairing Skills Guidance WLGA Influencing Skills

June – Aug 2022	Equalities, Diversity & Welsh Language (E-Learning)		Recommended	Online	
	Standards Committee Training	Overview for members of the standards committee and standards regime	Mandatory for Standards Members Recommended for all members to meet independent standards members	Online	
	Data Management, FOI and GDPR Regulations (E-Learning)	Understand expectations of you with regard to data management, how deal with Freedom of Information requests and how GDPR relates to you.	Recommended	Online	GDPR Overview Members sheet V2.pdf Freedom Of Information Policy April 2012.doc Advice_for_the_elected_and_prospective_members_of_local_au…
	Social Services and Wellbeing Act (E-Learning)	Understand how the Social Services and Wellbeing Act impacts your role as a councillor	Recommended	Online	
	Policy and Future Generations Act (E-Learning)	Understanding how the Future Generations Act is applied and relates to the decision you make as a councillor	Recommended	Online	Future Generations - 19 10 16 - Access for All Forum.pptx Making Sustainable Decisions.pdf
	Planning Committee for Non planning	Opportunity for members not sitting on planning committee to understand	Recommended	Online	Planning Service.docx Gypsy and Travellers Sites - Councillor Responsibilities.pptx

	committee members (E-Learning)	how it links to their role, their right to speak and make representation etc			
	Public Speaking and Social Media Training (E-learning)	Opportunity for members to understand how to present themselves when addressing committees or public speaking and how to deal with queries from the media	Recommended		WLGA Guidance - Online Abuse of Councillors WLGA social Media Guidance for Councillors.doc
	Climate Change Workshop	Understand the position and agenda with regards to Climate Change within the Council	Recommended	Online	
	Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (E-Learning)	Understand the how you can prevent violence against women and domestic violence in your role as a Councillor	Recommended	Online	
	Various Service/Project Specific Workshops	Looking for feedback from Members on what would be useful: Corporate Joint Committees City Deal My View MonMaps ICT Drop in Sessions Mod Gov App SRS EAS Emergency Planning Customer Services/Complaints			

E-Learning – A national collaboration project currently underway and hoping to have all modules where its notes E-Learning above, available for members to undertake online if unable to sessions during the induction programme.

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of Democratic Services Committee held
at Remote Meeting on Monday, 7th June, 2021 at 2.00 pm**

PRESENT: County Councillor D. Evans (Chairman)
County Councillor J.Treharne (Vice Chairman)

County Councillors: C.Edwards, M.Feakins, M.Groucutt, D. Jones, J.Treharne, J.Watkins and S. Woodhouse

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Matt Phillips	Chief Officer People and Governance and Monitoring Officer
John Pearson	Local Democracy Manager
Nicola Perry	Senior Democracy Officer

APOLOGIES:

Councillors P. Clarke and G. Howard

1. **To note the appointment of County Councillor David Evans as Chair**

Noted.

2. **To appoint a Vice-Chair**

County Councillor S. Woodhouse nominated County Councillor J. Treharne as Vice-Chair, duly seconded by County Councillor David Jones.

County Councillor J. Treharne was appointed as Vice-Chair.

3. **Declarations of interest**

None.

4. **Public open forum**

No matters for the public open forum.

5. **Area Committees**

The Chief Officer for People and Governance and Monitoring Officer addressed the Committee to advise of the upcoming working group to discuss Area Committees. It was agreed that the first meeting will be held 28th June 2021. This will be an opportunity to reflect on legislative changes coming into force and allow us to think more broadly about lessons learnt from the Covid period.

An area of consideration will be how the Clusters work and the engagement that happens within those groups with our Community Councils.

It was agreed that the Head of Enterprise and Community Animation be invited to the working group meeting.

6. Diversity in Local Democracy

The Local Democracy Manager presented a report for the Committee to consider an action plan and once agreed to make a recommendation to Full Council that Monmouthshire County Council commits to becoming a Diverse Council as set out by the WLGA.

It was important to consider that there are elements of the commitment that we have little control over, but it is all linked into the same action plan.

There is a recommendation that we appoint a diversity ambassador within each political group, and it was recommended that should we do so those ambassadors should come from Democratic Services Committee. This would ensure the Committee receive feedback, and ensure we are aware should the action plan and commitments need changing.

Members welcomed the proposals within the report and noted that many are already carried out by MCC.

Councillor Watkins welcomed the promotion of diversity, acknowledging that MCC is well represented by both male and female councillors. She added that MCC should strive to improve representation and participation from BAME communities.

Shadowing and mentoring would be on a member-to-member basis and was something that had been suggested following the 2017 induction programme.

In terms of the DSC Chair attending sessions to provide personal experience of being a councillor to potential candidates, it was suggested that this could be expanded to varied Members to reflect the personal situation of the candidates.

7. Response times to Members

The matter of officer response times was brought to the attention of the Committee in response to concerns raised by some members. There were also concerns regarding IT equipment, and access to remote meetings.

It was suggested that a survey be issued to all members to identify areas of concern.

Members agreed there were varying response times from officers, but it was noted that there was no definitive timescale.

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of Democratic Services Committee held
at Remote Meeting on Monday, 7th June, 2021 at 2.00 pm**

Councillor Woodhouse added that an updated directory of officer contact details would be beneficial.

The Local Democracy Manager agreed to issue a survey to members to obtain further information.

8. Elections 2022

The Local Democracy Manager presented the report to agree specific areas to bring to the committee in order to ensure necessary and targeted work is undertaken ahead of the 2022 local elections and for the induction of new councillors for the next term.

Matters raised:

- Meeting face to face beneficial for new members – some elements such as signing declaration of office must be done physically so there will be face to face contact. Some sessions which are more information based could be based online. It is thought the key elements will be face to face.
- Mentoring would come naturally to members, as had been experienced following the last election.
- Important the potential candidates are aware that all meeting dates are constantly reviewed.
- Directory would be useful for all members, with the onus on members to keep it up to date.
- Induction sessions being recorded is very useful for members to refer to at any time.

9. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 15th March 2021 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

10. To note the next meeting date of 12th July 2021

Noted.

Agenda item – Discussion on prayers at Full Council.

The meeting ended at 2.50 pm

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