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County Hall
Rhadyr
Usk
NP15 1GA

Friday, 13 January 2023

Notice of meeting

Democratic Services Committee

Monday, 23rd January, 2023 at 2.00 pm,
Conference Room - Usk, NP15 1AD

AGENDA

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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 Louise Brown	Shirenewton;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Tomos Dafydd Davies	Llanfoist & Govilon;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Meirion Howells	Llanbadoc & Usk;	Independent Group
County Councillor David Jones	Crucorney;	Independent Group
County Councillor Penny Jones	Raglan;	Welsh Conservative Party
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 Jill Bond	West End;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Rachel Buckler	Devauden;	Welsh Conservative Party

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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

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.

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
at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr USK on Monday, 21st November, 2022 at
2.00 pm

PRESENT: County Councillor David Jones (Chair)

County Councillors: Tomos Davies, Meirion Howells, Penny Jones,
Su McConnell, Maria Stevens, Peter Strong, Armand Watts,
Laura Wright, Jill Bond, Rachel Buckler and Maureen Powell

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

John Pearson
Nicola Perry

Local Democracy Manager
Senior Democracy Officer

1. Declarations of interest

None.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 26th September 2022 were confirmed as an accurate record. In doing so, the following points were noted:

With regards to a question regarding a tour of the County it was confirmed that officers are looking at options and it could possibly be arranged for the New Year.

Customer Services have updated their policies to reflect the discussions around code of conduct.

Issues around the Welsh Language Commissioner Report would be better placed at a Scrutiny Meeting for consideration.

3. Council Diary - 2023-24

The Local Democracy Manager presented a report in order for the committee to review the diary of meetings for 2023/24 and to recommend the diary to Council for approval. He also sought views on the timing of the AGM of Council.

It was asked that planning site visits are taken into consideration when setting the diary of meetings.

Members agreed that it had been appropriate to hold 2 separate meetings for the AGM this year given the number of new councillors but going forward combining into one meeting would be adequate.

There was a suggestion that the meeting be held on one day, but the day be divided.

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Democratic Services Committee held at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr USK on Monday, 21st November, 2022 at 2.00 pm

It was thought appropriate to issue a survey to members to assess opinions on timing of meetings, and this process could be started in the new year. County Councillor Penny Jones pointed out that Council had agreed that the decision on timing of meetings would be revisited in May/June 2023.

Upon being put to a vote the committee resolved:

That the diary of meetings for 2023/2024 be recommended to Council.

That the committee put forward a recommendation to full council that the AGM be held as one meeting.

4. Draft Remuneration Panel Report 2022-23

The Local Democracy Manager presented the report for the Committee to note the contents of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales draft report 2023- 2024.

Headline changes were highlighted as being an increase in basic salary, and small increases in additional salaries.

Views of the committee can be fed back to the Remuneration Panel. The report does no longer go to Full Council.

Concerns were raised that given the current cost of living crisis this was not the right time to implement the increase in salaries. It was suggested that the Council should reflect carefully on the proposals.

On the other hand, it was expressed that to not adequately compensate members could reflect poorly in representation and would not correctly reflect the community. It was also recognised that members are also affected by the cost of living crisis.

There was unease around the increases, given the possibilities of staff redundancies due to budget shortfall.

The importance of this remaining an independent process and it was stated that we should not go down the route of setting own salaries.

The Committee resolved to accept the recommendation:

That Councillors note the determinations of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales.

5. Change of Voting System - Local Elections

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Democratic Services Committee held at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr USK on Monday, 21st November, 2022 at 2.00 pm

The Local Democracy Manager presented the report for the Democratic Services Committee to agree methodology for reviewing and gauging members appetite for a change to the voting system for local elections.

Local authorities have until 15th November 2024 to agree to change their voting system however a number of administrative processes are required, including a full electoral review for all of Monmouthshire, following the decision to change the system and ahead of the next election.

A Member Seminar was being proposed to consider the impact of the changes

Members were not keen to support the changes but understood that a seminar would better gauge opinions.

The Local Democracy Manager suggested that he could send a poll to all members to avoid an unnecessary seminar. If the responses required it, then the seminar could go ahead.

The Committee resolved to accept the recommendation:

That Councillors agree to the process set out below for sharing the information on the change with all councillors and determine whether the item should be put to full council.

6. White Paper - Electoral Administration and Reform

The Local Democracy Manager presented the consultation document, highlighting specific aspects that relate to members:

1. To revert to a 4 year council term rather than 5 year;
2. Mandatory training for Councillors.

Under the Local Government and Elections Act, Welsh Government determined that from May 2022 the terms for councils would be 5 years. This was agreed with the backdrop that scheduling elections would not clash. If the Committee considers 5 years too long, we can forward a response.

In terms of what is and what is not mandatory training, in signing the declaration of office member agree to abide by the code of conduct which as such makes this mandatory training. Planning and Licensing also require mandatory training. The paper looks to question who should decide what training should be mandatory.

It was thought the WLGA would be better placed to decide mandatory training.

It was stated that there is a lack in training of legislation around privacy and safeguarding, and access to information, for example, for looked after children.

It was agreed that training is important for all members, and beneficial to receive updates throughout the term.

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Democratic Services Committee held at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr USK on Monday, 21st November, 2022 at 2.00 pm

A comment was made that from the end of the 3rd year term onwards, time is often taken up by election issues, and therefore a 5 year term enables members to accomplish more.

It was suggested that bitesize chunks of training would be useful.

7. Date of next meeting - 23rd January 2023

Noted.

The meeting ended at 3.40 pm

SUBJECT:	Timing of Meetings Follow Up
MEETING:	Democratic Services Committee
DATE:	23 January 2023
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	N/A

1. PURPOSE:

To agree methodology and questions for assessing members needs for the timing of full council meetings with a view to make a recommendation for full council later in the year.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Councillors review and agree the process to ensure it will capture the information required for the committee to make an informed recommendation on the timing of Council meetings.

3. KEY ISSUES:

3.1 The Council is required under the Local Government Measure 2011 to review the timing and frequency of Council meetings at least once every term of Council, ideally at the beginning of each, to ensure the arrangements are appropriate for all Councillors.

3.2 Democratic Services Committee reviewed the timing of meetings at its meeting on the 27th June 2022 and recommended to Council, who agreed that;

- Each committee is free to recommend the most suitable time of the committee for themselves and that suits the members of that committee
- That the timing of full council meetings remains at 14:00 for at least 12 months to allow members to gain more experience in the role before making recommendation due to the high number of new members elected in May 2022.

3.3 At the previous meeting of Democratic Services Committee, members requested to progress the review and put a timetable in place to gather members thoughts with a view to make a recommendation back to Council based on the latest information.

3.4 A timetable for the review is below for members consideration:

23 January 2023	Democratic Services Committee to review and agree the timetable and questions to survey members
February 2023	Survey all councillors and gather responses ahead of next Democratic Services Committee
20 March 2023	Democratic Services Committee to review responses and agree a recommendation to be put to Council on the timing of Full Council meetings
22 June 2023	Full Council to consider recommendation from Democratic Services Committee in line with 12 months timescale from previous recommendation.

- 3.5 A template set of survey questions are included at appendix A for members to review and add/amend as required to ensure the committee receives the information it needs to make and informed recommendation.
4. **REASONS:**
To comply with the requirements of the Local Government Measure and ensure arrangements for full council meetings are appropriate for all members.
5. **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**
None
6. **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS:**
There are no sustainable development or equality impacts arising from this report.
7. **SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS**
There are no safeguarding or corporate parenting implications associated with this report.
8. **CONSULTEES:**
Democratic Services Committee
All Councillors
9. **BACKGROUND PAPERS:**
Local Government Measure 2011
10. **AUTHOR:**
John Pearson, Local Democracy Manager

CONTACT DETAILS:

Tel: 01633 644212

E-mail: johnpearson@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Appendix A – Member Survey Questions

1. Do you prefer morning, afternoon or evening for full council meetings?

Morning		Afternoon		Evening	
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2. What time in the morning is most suitable for you?

9am		10am		11am	
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3. What time in the afternoon is most suitable for you?

1pm		2pm		3pm	
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4. What time in the evening is most suitable for you?

5pm		6pm		7pm	
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5. Are there any days or times that are particularly problematic for you to attend meetings? If yes, what are those days/times.

6. Does remote attendance help you to attend meetings that would otherwise be problematic?

7. Do you prefer to attend meetings remotely or in person?

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Your Councillors



County Councillor Jill Bond West End Welsh Labour/Lafur Cymru	County Councillor Mary Ann Brocklesby Llanarth Hill Labour & Co-Operative Party Leader	County Councillor Fay Broomfield Llangrifi Fair Welsh Conservative Party	County Councillor Louise Brown Shirenewton Welsh Conservative Party	County Councillor Emma Bryn Wjesham Independent Group	County Councillor Rachel Buckler Derauden Welsh Conservative Party	County Councillor Sara Burch Cantref Labour & Co-Operative Party Cabinet Member for Inclusive and Active Communities	County Councillor Jan Butler Goetre Fair Welsh Conservative Party	County Councillor Ben Callard Llanfist & Govlon Welsh Labour/Lafur Cymru	County Councillor Jan Chandler Llanillo Crossenny Green Party	County Councillor John Crook Magor East with Undy Welsh Labour/Lafur Cymru	County Councillor Tomos Dafydd Davies Llanfist & Govlon Welsh Conservative Party
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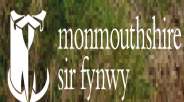
County Councillor Lisa Dymock Portskewett Welsh Conservative Party	County Councillor Tony Easson Dewstow Welsh Labour/Lafur Cymru	County Councillor Christopher Edwards St. Kingsmark Welsh Conservative Party	County Councillor Catherine Fookes Towyn Welsh Labour/Lafur Cymru Cabinet Member for Equalities & Engagement (Job Share)	County Councillor Steven Garrett Overmonnow Welsh Labour/Lafur Cymru	County Councillor Rachel Catherine Garrick Caldicot Castle Labour & Co-Operative Party Cabinet Member for Resources	County Councillor Paul Griffiths Chespow Castle & Lanfield Welsh Labour/Lafur Cymru Cabinet Member for a Sustainable Economy & Deputy Leader	County Councillor Martyn Groucutt Larsowen Welsh Labour/Lafur Cymru Cabinet Member for Education	County Councillor Simon Howarth Llanelli Hill Independent Group	County Councillor Meirion Howells Llanabod & Usk Independent Group	County Councillor Richard John Mitchel Troy and Trelech United Welsh Conservative Party	County Councillor David Jones Cruorney Independent Group
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County Councillor Penny Jones Reglan Welsh Conservative Party	County Councillor Tony Kear Llanabod & Usk Welsh Conservative Party	County Councillor Malcolm Lane Mardy Welsh Conservative Party	County Councillor Jane Lucas Oboston Welsh Conservative Party	County Councillor Catrin Mabey Drybridge Welsh Labour/Lafur Cymru Cabinet Member for Climate Change & the Environment	County Councillor Su McConnell Crosnon Welsh Labour/Lafur Cymru	County Councillor Jayne McKenna Mitchel Troy & Trelech United Welsh Conservative Party	County Councillor Phil Murphy Caerwent Welsh Conservative Party	County Councillor Alistair Neill Gobion Fair Welsh Conservative Party	County Councillor Paul Pavia Mount Pleasant Welsh Conservative Party	County Councillor Maureen Powell Pen Y Fâf Welsh Conservative Party	County Councillor Sue Riley Bulwark and Thomwell Welsh Labour/Lafur Cymru
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County Councillor Dale Rooke Chespow Castle & Lanfield Welsh Labour/Lafur Cymru	County Councillor Angela Sandles Magor East with Undy Welsh Labour/Lafur Cymru Cabinet Member for Equalities & Engagement (Job Share)	County Councillor Maria Stevens Seiem Welsh Labour/Lafur Cymru	County Councillor Jackie Strong Caldicot Cross Welsh Labour/Lafur Cymru	County Councillor Peter Strong Rugiet Welsh Labour/Lafur Cymru	County Councillor Frances Taylor Magor West Independent Group	County Councillor Tudor Thomas Park Welsh Labour/Lafur Cymru Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding & Accessible Health Services	County Councillor Armand Watts Bulwark and Thomwell Welsh Labour/Lafur Cymru	County Councillor Ann Webb St Annans Welsh Conservative Party	County Councillor Laura Wright Grofield Welsh Labour/Lafur Cymru
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