

# MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of Democratic Services Committee held  
at Conference Room - Usk, NP15 1AD on Monday, 20th March, 2023 at 2.00 pm**

**PRESENT:** County Councillor David Jones (Chair)

County Councillors: Louise Brown, Meirion Howells, Penny Jones, Su McConnel, Maria Stevens, Peter Strong, Armand Watts, Laura Wright, Jill Bond, Rachel Buckler and Ann Webb (substitute for Tomos Davies)

## **OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

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

### **1. Declarations of interest**

None.

### **2. Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> January were approved.

### **3. Timing of Full Council Meetings - Survey Response**

The Local Democracy Officer presented the report for the Committee to consider the responses to the member survey on a preferred timing for full council meetings with a view to making it a recommendation to Full Council.

The survey was issues to all Members following discussion at the previous meeting of the Democratic Services Committee. 29 responses were received and were attached to the report

The responses indicated that alternating the start time would not be a preferred option. Members recognised a number of comments around caring responsibilities and we heard that councillors are entitled to reimbursement of the costs of care.

It was suggested that an issue could relate to the length of the meeting rather than the start time.

There was some disappointment in the number of responses.

**Upon being put to the vote the recommendation was accepted:**

**That a start time of 14.00pm should remain for meetings of full Council.**

### **4. Constitution**

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The Chief Officer for People and Governance/Monitoring Officer presented the draft Constitution for consideration ahead of taking it to Full Council in May 2023.

We noted that following the debate around Budget 2023, an additional meeting of Council had been added to 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

Members were advised that the changes were highlighted as tracked changes in the document.

Members were provided with reassurance around the submission of amendments to reports

There was concern around the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education being replaced by the Standing Advisory Council, considering that SACRE would still be in existence until September 2024. The Chief Officer assured Members that both SAC and SACRE would be covered under one committee, which could be titled SAC/SACRE. The Monitoring Officer advised that any further concerns be directed to the relevant officers.

It was proposed that recommendation 3.3 "*The Monitoring Officer is delegated authority to make editorial and legal changes to the Constitution and has committed to bringing the document to Council each year to inform Council of any changes that have been made. Substantive amendments still require Full Council approval regardless*" be removed from the report, and that it should be Full Council who adapt or make changes to the Constitution.

In response to a question on the proposal it was confirmed that this would result in Full Council having to receive a report on every change. In doing so, Members were reminded that the updated Constitution is taken to Democratic Services Committee and then Full Council annually, allowing Council to take decision on any changes.

Members agreed that Key Issue 3.3 should remain in the document.

The Monitoring Officer noted the comments raised.

#### **5. Date of next meeting - 12th June 2023**

Noted.

**The meeting ended at 3.45 pm**