

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Democratic Services Committee held at Conference Room on Tuesday, 26th January, 2016 at 1.00 pm

PRESENT: County Councillor D. Evans (Chairman)
County Councillor R. Harris (Vice Chairman)

County Councillors: P. Clarke, P. Jones, J. Prosser, V. Smith, F. Taylor and A. Webb

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Tracey Harry	Head of Democracy and Regulatory Services
John Pearson	Local Democracy Manager
Richard Williams	Democratic Services Officer

APOLOGIES:

Councillors D. Edwards and S. Jones

1. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

2. Minutes of previous meeting

We resolved that the minutes of the Democratic Services Committee Meeting held on 19th October 2015 be confirmed and signed as an accurate record.

In doing so, we resolved that an action sheet should be produced following these meetings, as undertaken following previous meetings.

3. Induction and Information for new members - WLGA consultation

We received a report in which the Head of Democracy and Regulatory Services provided the Committee with an update regarding induction for new Members in 2017 following local elections.

In doing so, the following points were noted:

- An induction programme would be beneficial for new Members.
- Sessions could be held to allow experienced Members to contribute and support new Members.
- Providing new Members with a 'buddy' is a useful and informal way of helping new Members after they have been elected.
- Consideration should be given to supporting Members who also work.

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- Potential candidates and existing Members would be provided with a seminar outlining the duties of a County Councillor and any potential changes to their duties. This could be held in October 2016 during Local Democracy Week.
- The Local Government Bill is proposing to increase the performance management of Members and is proposing that Members hold surgeries. A seminar for all Members is being held on 27th January 2016 the Local Government Bill.
- A Member role description had been agreed by the Democratic Services Committee. This would be circulated to the Committee whereby Members could send their comments to the Head of Democracy and Regulatory Services.

We resolved that the Head of Democracy and Regulatory Services would present a further report to the Democratic Services Committee regarding Induction for New Members in 2017.

4. Live Streaming

The Head of Democracy and Regulatory Services provided the Committee with a verbal update regarding Live Streaming. In doing so, the following points were noted:

- The live streaming system used by Monmouthshire County Council is free. Other Authorities use Public Eye which is costly to use. Concern had been expressed regarding delays in meetings where agenda items containing exempt information required the live stream to be switched off during a meeting if that item was considered during the meeting and not at the end. It was therefore considered that agenda items containing exempt information should be placed on agendas as the final item and considered at the end of the meetings.
- A reminder would be despatched to all members outlining microphone management in the Council Chamber. Officers would also check sound settings at the beginning of each meeting to ensure volume levels were adequate.
- A training model could be established to demonstrate good microphone management which would be beneficial to existing and new Members.

We resolved to receive the verbal update and noted the points raised.

5. Draft Diary 2016/17

We received the draft Council Diary for 2016 – 17.

In doing so, the following points were noted:

- The diary would be amended to accommodate Members' Seminars. The Forward Planner would aid in identifying the need for such seminars.
- The CCTV Committee meetings would be added to the diary.
- Local Service Board Scrutiny Meetings meet quarterly and would be added to the Council Diary.

We resolved to agree the draft Council Diary subject to the additional items being added, as identified in the bullet points.

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6. Election Boundaries 2017

We received a letter from Leighton Andrews AM, Minister for Public Services, which responded to a letter from Monmouthshire County Council's Chief Executive regarding the Electoral Review conducted for Monmouthshire. In doing so, it was noted that the Minister had decided not to implement the electoral order for Monmouthshire.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman thanked the Local Democracy Manager for the work that he has undertaken in respect of this matter.

7. Frequency of Democratic Services meetings

We discussed the frequency of Democratic Services Committee meetings.

We resolved that:

- (i) the next meeting, scheduled to be held on 8th February 2016, be cancelled;
- (ii) future meetings be held on a quarterly basis.

In response to issues raised by the Committee, the following points were noted:

- County Councillors would be able to continue to serve on both County and Community Councils.
- The Head of Democracy and Regulatory Services would be presenting a report to the next meeting outlining the process members must adhere to in respect of Motions submitted to council meetings.

The meeting ended at 2.07 pm