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MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Democratic Services Committee held
on Monday, 4th June, 2018 at 2.00 pm

PRESENT: County Councillor D. Evans (Chairman)
County Councillor T. Thomas (Vice Chairman)

County Councillors: D. Dovey, L. Dymock, M. Groucutt, J. Treharne
and S. Woodhouse

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

John Pearson	Local Democracy Manager
Nicola Perry	Senior Democracy Officer
Matthew Gatehouse	Head of Policy and Governance
Marie Bartlett	Finance Manager

APOLOGIES:

Councillors F. Taylor and J. Watkins

1. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

We noted the Council appointment of County Councillor D. Evans as Chair.

We appointed County Councillor T. Thomas as Vice Chair.

2. Public Open Forum

There were no matters for the public open forum.

3. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd April 2018

The minutes of the meeting held on 23rd April 2018 were approved and signed by the Chair.

4. Council response to WG Consultation - 'Strengthening Local Government, Delivery for People' - ALL MEMBERS WELCOME

The Head of Policy and Governance presented a report to provide the committee with the opportunity to debate the Welsh Government's Green Paper "Strengthening Local Government: Delivering for People". Member's views were sought on the draft response to be submitted on behalf of the Council as there is no opportunity for a full Council debate prior to the consultation closing on 12th June.

Members presented differing views on the response and recommended that there were not enough Members present for a consensus to be reached.

The officer agreed to contact Welsh Government to request an extension on the consultation deadline.

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It was noted the report would be presented to Cabinet on 6th June 2018.

5. Engagement of the Democratic Services Committee around the Alternative Delivery Model Management Agreement

Members were presented with a report to provide an update on the Alternative Delivery Model Management Agreement and to ensure they understand and are able to engage and review the democratic process in relation to the future delivery of sustainable Tourism, Leisure, Culture and Youth (TLCY) services in Monmouthshire.

Councillor Groucutt stated on behalf of the wider Labour movement in Monmouthshire that they remain opposed to the model.

Clarity was sought around the timetable and we heard that there would be 3 drop in sessions rather than a seminar. It was asked that one of these sessions be held at Magor.

Members resolved to agree the recommendations in the report:

Members are invited to consider the draft response attached as appendix one and suggest additions or deletions where consensus can be reached.

Subject to amendments agreed during the meeting, to approve a draft response to the consultation be submitted on behalf of the Council by the deadline and that this be endorsed by Council and opened for further debate, if deemed necessary, at the next Council meeting after the deadline.

6. Independent Remuneration Panel Report Update

Noted.

7. Coordination:

Coordination covered under Item 10

8. Automation

The Committee welcomed the Chair of Economy and Development Select to discuss a current workstream around automation, and where that could sit under the remit of Democratic Services Committee.

Members of E&D Select have taken a pro-active lead on areas such as procurement, cross-border working, Future Monmouthshire and were starting to look at automation as an area for scrutiny. The Committee were thinking how new technology could improve efficiency and service retention, and ensure service improvement.

It was suggested that certain workstreams could be distributed to other Select Committees.

The Head of Policy and Governance recognised the broadness of the subject and highlighted areas for the scrutiny committees. He added that at present it is unclear where this would sit under the coordinating role of Democratic Services Committee.

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It was recommended that the Chair discuss further with Select Chairs, and items for decision would be brought forward as and when.

9. Other items coming forward

None.

10. Update from sub-group

The Head of Policy and Governance presented an update on the work of the working-group tasked with considering public involvement in local democracy.

A Member questioned how areas, or people, would be identified. The Scrutiny Manager stated that the sub group was at early stages, but one idea is how do members of the public feed into major decisions made by the Council. It was thought that the public open forum at meetings could be better utilised. The sub group has been established to identify ways to bring public voice into decision making.

Members recognised the need to identify the small changes to promote engagement, and amendments to the website would be a good start.

Councillor Dovey referred to the success of the Strategic Transport Group, where people with interest were well engaged.

A Member stated that a leaflet drop is a good way to engage with constituents.

The Committee resolved to agree the recommendations:

That minutes and action lists for all council meetings be placed at the close of the agenda rather than the beginning, in conjunction with forward work programming.

That the Democratic Services Committee agrees to broaden its role to promote democracy and public involvement through:

- **overseeing a new element of the council's website that will pilot a new approach to public engagement.**
- **taking ownership of a forward plan of topics that will be discussed in the next six/nine/twelve months which are likely to be of interest to the public.**

That subject to agreeing 3.2, the Democratic Services Committee identifies a number of issues drawn from appendix 1 that could be used to test the new approach.

11. Timing of future AGM

The Chair opened discussion around the timing of the Council's AGM meeting. Rather than the meeting be held at 5pm, with deferred items on a later date at 2pm, he suggested that the AGM commence at 12noon, with a break and buffet for guests, to be followed by the deferred items meeting at 2pm. Thus reducing the amount of claimed expenses.

It was agreed this be put as a motion to Council.

12. County Hall, car park issues

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Members agreed that a review of the efficiency of the car park barrier be conducted.

13. To note the forward workplans

Noted.

16. Confirm the date of next meeting as 16th July 2018

Noted.

The meeting ended at 16:20