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MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of Democratic Services Committee held
at Remote Meeting on Monday, 18th January, 2021 at 2.00 pm**

PRESENT: County Councillor D. Jones (Chair)

County Councillors: P. Clarke, M.Groucutt, G. Howard, J.Treharne,
J.Watkins and S. Woodhouse

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Matt Phillips	Head of Law/ Monitoring Officer
John Pearson	Local Democracy Manager
Nicola Perry	Senior Democracy Officer
Matthew Gatehouse	Head of Policy and Governance

APOLOGIES:

Councillors D. Evans

1. Declarations of interest

None.

2. Public open forum

No matters for the public open forum.

3. Overview of Local Government and Elections Bill

The Local Democracy Manager presented a report to provide members with an overview of the provisions contained within the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill soon to be enacted into law.

Following an overview of the changes Members were invited to discuss. Areas highlighted included:

- Extends voting age to include 16/17 year olds at local government elections.
- Allows Councils to change their voting systems from first past the post to a single transferrable vote.
- Confirms that terms of the Council will be 5 years rather than 4 years.
- Remote attendance and encouraging participation in local government.

The Head of Policy and Governance highlighted the changes around performance management arrangements.

It was clarified that any changes to the voting system would need to be agreed by full Council with a 2 thirds majority vote and would need to take place at certain points during the Council term.

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Guidance was sought on the practicalities around job sharing, but we heard there is no guidance as yet. It was thought that job sharing would increase diversity, making the role more family friendly.

It was agreed that we gauge Members interest in holding a seminar to provide wider information.

4. Constitution Review

The Head of Law and Monitoring Officer presented the report for the Committee consider the revised and updated MCC Constitution.

It was noted that there was not a specific requirement for all Town and Community Councils to look at their constitution but may be done as a matter of course.

It was hoped that, with the changes, we would see more public questions submitted to Council. The Monitoring Officer explained that the deadlines have been changed, but not the detail, and questions should continue to be submitted in the same way.

There was disappointment that the suggestion of Members being able to submit written submissions to planning had not been included.

A seminar to provide wider information would be welcomed by Members, ahead of the report going to full Council in March 2021.

5. To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 30th November 2020 were confirmed as an accurate record.

The meeting ended at 3.00 pm