

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2014

PRESENT:	Councillor Vaughan Hughes (Chair) Councillor Richard O Jones (Vice-Chair) Councillors Derlwyn Hughes, R Meirion Jones, R G Parry OBE, Dylan Rees
IN ATTENDANCE:	Councillors Aled M Jones, Nicola Roberts, Trefor LI Hughes
APOLOGIES:	Councillors Peter Rogers, Dafydd Rhys Thomas
ALSO PRESENT:	Interim Head of Democratic Services (JHJ) Senior HR Officer (MW) Scrutiny Manager (BS) Committee Officer/Admin Assistant (SC)

1 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Councillor Richard Owain Jones was elected as Vice-Chair of this Committee.

2 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None received.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 26th March, 2014 were confirmed as correct.

4 TIMING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS

Submitted - a report by the Interim Head of Democratic Services referring to the Notice of Motion approved by Council on the 8th May, 2014 to further review the Timing of Meetings by this Committee.

RESOLVED to recommend to Council that the Interim Head of Democratic Services prepare proposals from 2015 onwards including options to hold meetings on specific days of the week, and that a representative from each Group assist in this process.

5 DIVERSIFYING DEMOCRACY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN WALES

Submitted - a report by the Interim Head of Democratic Services referring to the key recommendations in the report published by the Welsh Government in March 2014 – ‘*On Balance: Diversifying Democracy in Local Government in Wales*’. It was noted that the recommendations would need to be addressed by central government and local authorities. It was further noted that the WLGA was addressing the recommendations. In addition, it was advised that the Minister for Local Government and Government Business was establishing a network of Diversity Champions and a request has been received for the Council to nominate a Member to undertake this role.

RESOLVED to accept the report and that progress be submitted to this Committee in due course.

6 REMOTE ATTENDANCE

Submitted - a report by the Interim Head of Democratic Services referring to the content of a report for submission to the Executive and Council in relation to the above. The report referred to the provisions in the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, which have been enacted and that remote attendance is discretionary. The report also detailed a number of issues regarding implementation and various technical considerations and resource implications, which would need to be addressed.

The Committee was requested to consider the report prior to the Executive and Council and make observations.

RESOLVED to recommend that the use of remote attendance be not supported in view of the technical concerns and potential resource implications detailed in the report.

7 FAMILY ABSENCE

Submitted - a report by the Interim Head of Democratic Services requesting the views of this Committee on a report for submission to the Executive and Council in relation to requirements under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 relating to family absence for Members of local authorities. It was noted that there would be a need to make certain changes to the Council's Constitution to meet requirements in the regulations and the report also made reference to the establishment of a Democratic Services Sub-committee for the purpose of hearing appeals under the Measure.

RESOLVED to note the requirements detailed in the report and advise the Executive and Council accordingly.

8 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT TRAINING PLAN 2014/15

The Senior Human Resources Officer referred to the Annual Member Training and Development Plan approved by the County Council on 8th May. It was noted that this formed part of the Council's commitment to member development and in securing the Member Development Charter Award. It was also noted that there was a need to target training around specific needs and to provide details on the schedule of training proposed, taking account Member's workloads.

RESOLVED to accept the report.

9 TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCILS WEBSITE GRANT - UPDATE

Submitted – a report by the Interim Head of Democratic Services providing an update on the number of Town and Community Councils who had claimed the grant. It was noted that at present 32 Councils had claimed the grant provided by Welsh Government and managed by the Council which was available during 2014/2015. Also, the Town and Community Council Forum Meeting held on 12th June, 2014 were given an update and reminded of the availability of funds for website development.

RESOLVED to note the report.

The meeting concluded at 4.00 pm

**COUNCILLOR VAUGHAN HUGHES
CHAIR**