

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the hybrid meeting held on 25 June 2025

- PRESENT:** Councillor Keith Roberts (Chair)
Councillor Llio A Owen (Vice-Chair)
- Councillors Non Dafydd, Paul Ellis, Jeff M Evans, Carwyn E Jones, Gwilym O Jones, Dylan Rees, Ken Taylor
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Head of Democratic Services
Human Resources Learning and Development Manager (for Item 3)
Committee Officer (SC)
- ALSO PRESENT:** Councillor Aled Morris Jones
- APOLOGIES:** None
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The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly Councillor Paul Ellis to his first meeting of the Democratic Services Committee.

1 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None received.

2 MINUTES

The draft minutes of the previous meetings of the Committee held on 19 March and 20 May 2025 were presented and confirmed as correct.

3 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

Submitted – the report of the Human Resources Learning and Development Manager (HRLDM) on the training provision that has been offered to members since the meeting of this Committee held in November 2024.

The HRLDM reported that 55 training and development opportunities have been offered to members since April 2023 to date, which represents the Learning and Development Team's commitment to offer a wide choice of valuable learning opportunities to members. The HRLDM stated that emphasis has been placed on mandatory training, where positive tendencies have been recorded. An increase has also been recorded in the number of members who have completed Health & Safety and Cyber Security training.

The HRLDM explained that each elected member is expected to complete the mandatory training sessions as a minimum, with further training available to support these key titles.

Discussion will now focus on the titles with the lower completion figures, which include Equality and Safeguarding. An invitation has been extended to members who have not attended training on these titles to attend corporate training sessions on 2nd and 8th July 2025.

The HRLDM reported that the HRLD Team will be working closely with Democratic Services to meet the training needs that will arise from the proposed changes to the local scrutiny arrangements.

Discussion focused on progress made in Phase 1 of the Development Plan for Group Leaders. It was noted that all group leaders have completed a DiSC (personality) Profile, and where relevant, have participated in a 1:1 analysis session with an external specialist trainer.

Arrangements are in place to proceed to Phase 2 of the Plan, which includes a series of bilingual formal coaching sessions, which will commence next month.

It was noted that quarterly updates on member training attendances are shared with Democratic Services and group leaders in due course.

Concerns were expressed that some members had not attended mandatory training. A question was raised as to whether those members had been reminded to attend. The HRTDM responded that quarterly attendance figures are shared with the Head of Democratic Services and the Chair of the Standards Committee, who discuss training issues with relevant group leaders and encourage their members to attend.

RESOLVED to note the content of the report.

4 TIMING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS

Submitted – the report of the Head of Democratic Services on the statutory review process for the timing of formal Committee meetings.

The Head of Democratic Services reported that it is timely to consult with elected members to gather their views on when statutory Council meetings should be convened. He stated that the last review was held in Autumn 2022. Since then, Welsh Government has published a statutory guidance to assist Councils to meet the requirements.

The Welsh Government Guidance notes the following points for consideration: -

- a. Whether daytime or evening meetings are preferred;*
- b. Whether meetings are to be in person, fully online or multi-location;*
- c. The preferred meeting length;*
- d. Whether particular times cause difficulties for councillors with particular*

characteristics, such as age, gender, religion, having caring responsibilities or being in employment.

The Head of Democratic Services reported that a consultation period of 6 weeks will be held during July and August. He welcomed the Committee's responses to the survey.

Concerns were expressed on the impact evening meetings would have on staff as well as members. The Head of Democracy responded that staff who attend meetings would be consulted following feedback from members on the questionnaire. The importance of keeping to the same days of the week for meetings was also highlighted, to assist members who have family and work commitments.

It was noted that a report summarising the findings of the consultation will be presented to the Democratic Services Committee in the autumn, followed by recommendations to full Council in December.

RESOLVED to recommend that the Committee agrees: -

- **To consult with members on the timing of meetings.**
- **To the timescale in paragraph 12 to the report.**
- **To consider and approve the consultation document in Appendix A.**

5 MEMBER SAFETY

Submitted – the report of the Head of Democratic Services on the guidance and support that is available to members on personal safety in their role of Councillors.

The Head of Democratic Services reported that support is available to members via an Elected Official Advisor, PC Jaggard from North Wales Police through the 'Operation Ford' scheme funded by the Home Office. The Advisor has been providing briefing sessions to members of local authorities, with 14 members from Anglesey County Council having attended one of those sessions at the beginning of June. It was noted that further sessions will be held in the second half of 2025.

The Head of Democratic Services reported that concerns about safety and harassment can have a detrimental impact on the wellbeing of members. He reminded the Committee that the Council has a confidential counselling service for members provided by Medra, if required.

It was noted that Democratic Services will develop a concise guidance to members over the summer and welcomed input from members for the guidance. The Head of Democratic Services encouraged members who had not attended the safety briefings to attend.

Members expressed concern regarding the negative press reporting and malicious comments that the Council and members are subjected to on social media. The Head of Democratic Services responded that abusive comments online are on the

rise, and he suggested that he discusses with PC Jaggard whether briefing sessions are available on raising members' self-awareness of online safety.

RESOLVED: -

- **To note the content of the report and comments received on members' safety.**
- **To agree that Democratic Services encourage every member to attend the Police safety training.**
- **To agree to Democratic Services sharing a short guidance document with members.**

The meeting concluded at 10:45 am

**COUNCILLOR KEITH ROBERTS
CHAIR**