

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the hybrid meeting held on 12 March 2026

PRESENT:	Councillor Keith Roberts (Chair) Councillor Llio A Owen (Vice-Chair) Councillors Non Dafydd, 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 Policy and Welsh Language Manager Committee Officer (SC)
APOLOGIES:	None

The Chair congratulated Councillor Llio Owen on the birth of her son recently.

1 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None received.

2 MINUTES

The draft minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 4 November 2025 were presented and confirmed as correct.

3 DEMOCRACY AND BOUNDARY COMMISSION CYMRU – ANNUAL REMUNERATION REPORT 2026-27

Submitted – a report by the Head of Democratic Services on the Democracy and Boundary Commission's first annual report. The Commission sets out the pay structure for members' salaries and allowances. It was noted that the Council is not responsible for setting increases in members' salaries.

The Head of Democratic Services reported that the Commission will continue to use the existing framework for 2026/27, as set by the previous Independent Remuneration Panel. The Commission has determined that the members' pay structure will be linked to the Annual Survey of Salaries and Earnings (ASHE), which represents a salary increase of 6.4% for members, being an increase of £63k to the Council budget for 2026/27.

The Head of Democratic Services reported on the Government's aims for the Commission for the year ahead. He stated that work has commenced on the Commission's key objectives in relation to remuneration. It was noted that when the framework has been reviewed and modified, it will result in significant changes to its content by 2027.

Clarity was sought as to whether elected members who also represent Town/Community Councils are entitled to claim allowances for both posts? The Head of Democratic Services responded that he would look into the matter and report back to the Committee in due course.

RESOLVED: -

- **To note the final determinations within the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru's Annual Remuneration Report for 2026/27.**
- **That the Commission Annual Remuneration Report be presented to the County Council on 12 May 2026 for approval.**
- **The Head of Democratic Services to look into whether elected members and Town/Community Councillors are entitled to claim allowances for both posts, and report back to the Committee.**

4 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

Submitted – an update report by the Human Resources Learning and Development Manager (HRLDM) on training provision that has been offered to elected members since the Committee's last meeting in November 2025.

The HRLDM reported that since April 2023, 60 learning and development opportunities have been offered to elected members. She stated that emphasis has been placed on mandatory titles, where attendances have increased significantly during the last period, and positive figures have been recorded compared with other local authorities.

It was noted that the members' annual conversations are currently ongoing, and any areas highlighted in relation to training will be included in the Development Plan for next year. Close collaboration continues between the HRLD Team and Democratic Services staff to address the needs of elected members.

An update was provided on Safeguarding developments and future expectations regarding the new framework. It was highlighted that Safeguarding training has been designated as mandatory for all Council staff (Group A), with elected members (Group F) expected to complete the E-Learning module on Learning Pool.

It was noted that the Development Plan for Group Leaders has been completed and data is being collated to provide feedback in due course.

RESOLVED to note the content of the report.

5 POLICY AND WELSH LANGUAGE TEAM: OVERVIEW OF WORK AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Submitted – a report by the Policy and Welsh Language Manager (PWLM) providing an overview of the Policy and Welsh Language team's work and responsibilities. She stated that the team's main role is to ensure that the Council conforms to legislative

requirements and develops a positive culture as regards the Welsh language and equality.

A question was raised regarding the support the two Elected Member Champions receive from the Policy team. The PWLM responded that close collaboration exists between the team and the Members' Champions in preparing annual reports and supporting Portfolio Holders in their work. It was noted that both Champions are members of the Executive and the Welsh Language Steering Group and lead in areas where they have constitutional powers to authorise key delegated decisions.

The PWLM reported that the Policy team is co-ordinating the Council's presence at the Urdd National Eisteddfod in Anglesey this year. A timetable of events is being prepared, and discussions are ongoing on the activities that will be available to young people focusing on fun. A showcase will also be presented on what the Council has to offer through different services.

A question was raised regarding planning issues and the Welsh language. The PWLM responded that the Local Development Plan's Supplementary Guidance's methodology is considered to decide whether applications of a specific nature will require a Welsh language statement or assessment when determining planning applications. Discussion focused on whether the Welsh language considerations can be implemented for previous planning applications, where building work has not commenced? It was noted that Planning Officers cannot revisit planning applications that have been granted previously.

It was highlighted that the Policy and Welsh Language team play a vital role in ensuring compliance, accountability and strong governance within Democratic Services.

RESOLVED to note the content of the report.

6 DEMOCRATIC SERVICES UPDATE

Submitted – an update report by the Head of Democratic Services on member support and governance issues.

The Head of Democratic Services reported that over the next few days elected members will be reminded that they will need to complete their annual reports for 2025/26. An updated template will be provided by Democratic Services together with instructions for completing the reports, which will need to be presented to Democratic Services by the end of May, for publishing in June on the Council website. It was noted that support is available to members who may require assistance.

The Head of Democratic Services reported that information has been shared with Group Leaders regarding annual conversation arrangements. He stated that members are encouraged to share their development, wellbeing and training needs confidentially with relevant staff. It was noted that Group Leaders are provided with regular updates of their members' training for monitoring purposes.

A consultation is currently in progress on electoral arrangements, reviewing the number of members on Town/Community Councils (TCCs) and their wards. It will ascertain whether the current electoral ward arrangements and number of members of TCCs are appropriate for the local elections in 2027, the results of which will be presented to the County Council in September. It was noted that only 8 or 9 TCCs have responded out of 40, which is disappointing. It was further noted that a few days remain before the end of the consultation period. A reminder has been sent by Democratic Services asking TCCs who have not responded to the consultation, asking them to reply. A further review will be held on the final proposals in October, in time to implement any changes before the local elections in 2027.

The Head of Democracy reported that the service is currently working with Conwy Council on preparations for the Welsh Senedd Elections on 7th May. The pre-election period will be effective on 25th March, not the 26th, as noted in the report.

It was highlighted that raising awareness of democratic matters and inviting schools to attend question and answer sessions in the Council Chamber was welcomed by the Committee.

RESOLVED to note the content of the report.

The meeting concluded at 2:45 pm

**COUNCILLOR KEITH ROBERTS
CHAIR**