

ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL	
Committee:	Democratic Services Committee
Date of meeting:	4 October 2022
Title:	Timing of Council Meetings
Report by:	Director of Function – Council Business / Monitoring Officer

1.0 Background

In accordance with the statutory guidance issued by the Welsh Government under Section 6(1) of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, the Council is required to survey Members in respect of the times at which meetings of a local authority are held. All local authorities should review the times at which meetings are held at least once every term, preferably shortly after the new Council is elected.

This is also consistent with the Diverse Council statement that the full Council adopted at its meeting on 7 September 2021, in line with the recommendation of this Committee on 29 July 2021. The statement includes a commitment to *"consider how to provide flexibility in the Council's business by reviewing its practical arrangements in terms of holding meetings"*.

2.0 Response

A survey was sent to all members to obtain their views. The options were to start meetings at 10.00 am, 2.00 pm, 4.00 pm and 6.00 pm.

There were 17 responses (48.57%) from elected members. The questionnaire was also circulated among non-elected members, including the external parties who attend meetings of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE).

An analysis of preferred options is given below:

Committee	Feedback in order of preference	Number that chose the time as their first preference
County Council		
10.00 am	2	5
2.00 pm	1	9
4.00 pm	3	1
6.00 pm	4	0

Committee	Feedback in order of preference	Number that chose the time as their first preference
The Executive		
10.00 am	1	9
2.00 pm	2	4
4.00 pm	3	1
6.00 pm	4	0
Scrutiny Committees		
10.00 am	2	5
2.00 pm	1	7
4.00 pm	3	1
6.00 pm	4	1
Regulatory Committees (Planning and Orders; Governance and Audit; Appointments; Investigation; Disciplinary; Appeals; Licensing)		
10.00 am	2	5
2.00 pm	1	8
4.00 pm	3	2
6.00 pm	4	0
Other committees		
10.00 am	2	5
2.00 pm	1	7
4.00 pm	3	1
6.00 pm	4	1

County Council – majority support 2:00 pm (5 also indicate it as second choice)

The Executive – majority support 10:00 am (2 also indicate it as second choice)

Scrutiny Committees – majority support 2:00pm (6 also indicate it as a second choice)

Regulatory Committees – majority support 2:00 pm (5 also indicate it as a second choice)

Of the 4 non-elected members of the Governance and Audit Committee, there were 3 responses, with 2 stating 2:00pm as their first choice and one stating 10:00am as their first choice

Other Committees – majority support 2:00pm (6 also indicate it as a second choice)

Of the 5 non-elected members of the Standards Committee, there were 5 responses with 3 indicating 10:00 am as their first choice, 1 indicating 2:00 pm and 1 indicating 6:00 pm. 2 indicated 2:00 pm as their second choice.

Of the 11 external parties who attend SACRE meetings, there were 2 responses, 1 supporting 10:00 am and the other supporting 2:00 pm

Other observations made:

- One member was flexible across all times
- Three members have indicated that adhering to specific days for holding committee meetings (eg Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday) would help with combining day to day work and councillor work

3.0 Conclusions

The majority of the elected members who responded are in favour of adhering to the current arrangements of holding meetings during the working day:

County Council (2:00 pm)

Executive (10:00 am)

Scrutiny Committees (2:00 pm)

Regulatory and all other Committees (2:00 p.m.); but the situation regarding the two committees below requires further attention:

Planning and Orders Committee - currently starts at 1.00pm.

Standards Committee – the majority of its membership are non-elected Members. 10:00 am is the first choice of the majority (3 out of 5); with 1 preferring 2:00 pm and 1 preferring 6:00 pm. 2 had indicated 2:00 pm as their second choice.

Currently, meetings of this Committee start at 2:00 pm

4.0 Equality considerations

The Committee is asked to give due regard to the points below before making its recommendations to the full Council:

- A small minority (2 members) favour starting later (4.00 pm and 6.00 pm) but no specific comments were made in relation to this.
- 3 Members have indicated that adhering to specific days for holding Committee meetings (eg Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday), would help with combining day to day work and the work of a councillor.

- The availability of contributions towards the costs of care and personal assistance to:
 - enable anyone whose responsibilities as a carer would limit their ability to participate as a member of an authority to fulfil their role, or
 - to provide care support to a member to enable that person to fulfil their role.

The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales is of the opinion that Democratic Services Committees should take steps to encourage members who are eligible to claim these contributions.

5.0 Recommendations

The Committee is requested to:

- give due regard to all the findings of the survey before making recommendations to the full Council on the timing of Council meetings from 2023/24
- take the opportunity to raise awareness about the contribution towards the costs of care and personal assistance
- note that in light of draft statutory guidance, a further review of the timing, frequency and length of committee meetings to take place at the beginning of 2024. The draft survey that will be circulated to members to first be considered and approved by this Committee.