

ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL	
Committee:	County Council
Date of meeting:	27 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 Council adopted at its meeting on 7 September 2021, in line with the recommendation of the Democratic Services 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. An analysis of the preferred options was reported to the Democratic Services Committee at its meeting on 4 October 2022, as summarised below.

There were 17 responses (48.57%) from elected members; a breakdown is available at Appendix 1. 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).

The majority of those who responded were in favour of maintaining the current arrangements, namely:-

County Council (2:00 pm)
 Executive (10:00 am)
 All other committees (2:00 pm)

However, the situation regarding the following two committees required further attention:

- **Planning and Orders Committee** – meetings currently start at 1.00 pm but the majority of respondents preferred the meetings to start at 2pm
- **Standards Committee** – meetings currently start at 2pm but the majority of respondents preferred the meetings to start at 10am

3.0 Equality considerations

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

- A small minority (2 members) favoured starting later (4.00 pm and 6.00 pm)
- 3 members indicated that keeping to specific days for holding committee meetings (Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday) would help with combining other work and responsibilities with the role of a member.
- The availability of financial support towards the costs of care and personal assistance to:
 - enable anyone whose responsibilities as a carer would limit their ability to fulfil their role as a member or
 - 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.

4.0 Recommendations of the Democratic Services Committee

The Council is requested to consider the following recommendations made by the Democratic Services Committee at its meeting on 4 October 2022:

- where possible, the current start times be retained for ordinary meetings of the County Council (2.00 pm); the Executive (10:00 am) and all other committees (2.00 pm) subject to the next paragraph below
- that the start times of the Planning and Orders Committee, and Standards Committee, should be decided by those committees, following advice from their lead officers

- where possible, committee meetings should be held on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays; to help with combining other work and responsibilities with the role of a member
- that the Council takes the opportunity to raise awareness about the availability of financial support towards the costs of care and personal assistance; and
- to note that, in light of draft statutory guidance awaited from the Welsh Government, there is an intention to carry out a further review of the timing, frequency and length of committee meetings early in 2024. The draft survey that will be circulated to members will first be considered and approved by the Democratic Services Committee.

Appendix 1

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
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