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For all enquiries relating to this agenda please contact Emma Sullivan  
(Tel: 01443 864420 Email: [sullie@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:sullie@caerphilly.gov.uk))

Date: 8th March 2023

To Whom It May Concern,

A multi-locational meeting of the **Democratic Services Committee** will be held in Penallta House and via Microsoft Teams on **Tuesday, 14th March, 2023** at **5.00 pm** to consider the matters contained in the following agenda. Councillors and the public wishing to speak on any item can do so by making a request to the Chair. You are also welcome to use Welsh at the meeting, both these requests require a minimum notice period of 3 working days.,

This meeting will be live streamed and recorded and made available to view via the Council's website, except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items. Therefore the images/audio of those individuals speaking will be publicly available to all via the recording on the Council website at

[www.caerphilly.gov.uk](http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk)

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christina Harrhy'.

**Christina Harrhy**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

## A G E N D A

Pages

- 1 To receive apologies for absence.
- 2 Declarations of Interest.

Councillors and Officers are reminded of their personal responsibility to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interest(s) in respect of any item of business on this agenda in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution and the Code of Conduct for both Councillors and Officers.

A greener place Man gwyddach



To approve and sign the following minutes: -

3 Democratic Services Committee held on 17th March 2022.

1 - 4

To receive and consider the following report(s): -

4 Members Support and Development.

5 - 22

5 Timing of Council Meetings Survey.

23 - 36

**Circulation:**

**Councillors** D.T. Davies, A. Farina-Childs, Mrs C. Forehead, A. Hussey, M.P. James (Chair), L. Jeremiah, C.P. Mann, C. Thomas, G. Ead, A. McConnell, L. Phipps (Vice Chair), Mrs D. Price, J.A. Pritchard, J. Sadler, A. Whitcombe and J. Winslade

And Appropriate Officers

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# Agenda Item 3



## DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

### MINUTES OF THE REMOTE MEETING HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON MONDAY, 17<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2022 AT 5:00PM

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#### PRESENT:

Councillor M.P. James - Chair  
Councillor G. Kirby - Vice-Chair

#### Councillors:

Cllrs: C. Andrews, M.P. James (Chair), D.T. Davies, A. Hussey, L. Jeremiah, G. Kirby (Vice Chair), C. P. Mann, W. Williams, Mrs C. Forehead, A. Farina-Childs and P. J. Bevan.

#### Together with:

L. Lane (Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer), E. Sullivan (Senior Committee Services Officer), R. Barrett (Committee Services Officer) and M. Afzal (Committee Services Officer).

#### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs M.E. Sargent, W. David, C. Thomas and Mrs G. D Oliver.

#### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

#### 3. DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD ON 22<sup>ND</sup> NOVEMBER 2021

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 22<sup>ND</sup> of November 2021 be approved as a correct record.

#### 4. MEMBERS INDUCTION 2022

Consideration was given to the report which outlined the proposed induction programme for newly elected and returning Councillors following the Local Government Elections in May 2022. Members were asked to consider the report and recommend its approval to Council.

It was noted that the Induction Programme was based on a mixture of Recommended, Mandatory, and wider induction sessions. Following feedback from the 2017 Induction Programme, the proposed programme would also be adapted to include a Welcome to each of the Directorate's session where Members would be given the opportunity to meet Heads of Service and Corporate Directors.

A Member queried what would occur in the event of any missed training sessions. The Officer advised that Democratic Services aimed to offer multi-locational training subject to the

installation of equipment, and that, if possible, the training would be recorded to allow Members to catch up on any missed sessions.

Members would be given the opportunity to attend sessions remotely, via Teams, as well as in person. Members were assured that training sessions would be tailored to suit their home and working practices and there would be ample opportunity to catch up on any missed meetings.

Clarification on remote training and connectivity issues was sought, with one Member querying what actions could be taken to resolve the ongoing problems. The Officer advised that new hardware was being installed in each of the meeting rooms and that equipment was being upgraded to allow multi-locational meetings to take place. Furthermore, it was confirmed that Committee Services were looking into new platforms, including Civico. It was hoped that the new platforms would mitigate some of the issues.

Clarification on the audit of Members' equipment specifically relating to broadband connectivity was also sought. The Head of Democratic Services advised that the issue was under examination and confirmed that IT were preparing a report on the issues pertaining to routers and connectivity. It was hoped that the outcome of the examination would be fed back to Members in the coming months.

Members welcomed the information but felt that the induction programme would benefit from a separate section on the use of IT equipment: this section would allow new Members to familiarise themselves with the various systems.

Furthermore, clarification on the use of IT equipment and working practices was sought. The Officer drew Members' attention to the session on 17 May. It was anticipated that the session would be used to familiarise Members with digital working practices. The Officer advised that training sessions would cover a feast of information, including the use of Microsoft Office, the Mod.Gov app and Zoom as well as meeting requests and computer settings. Training on the CCBC website and Member's Portal would also be provided. Moreover, it was confirmed that any additional training needs would be gathered through an online questionnaire which Members were encouraged to partake in.

Overall, the Induction Programme was welcomed by the Committee, but it was felt that the section on IT training would benefit from further detail. The concerns were acknowledged, and Members were assured that the section on training would be updated prior to its consideration by Council.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation in the report be approved. By way of electronic voting this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officer's report: - The Induction Programme as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report be considered and noted and RECOMMENDED its approval to Council.

## **5. CHANGES TO THE FAMILY ABSENCE PROTOCOL FOR MEMBERS OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES**

Consideration was given to the report which advised Members of the changes to the Family Absence Protocol for Members of Local Authorities which increases the amount of paid absence a Member is entitled to in respect of adoption leave. Members were asked to note the changes to the Family Absence Protocol prior to its consideration by Council.

The changes were noted and clarification on allowances for Members with caring responsibilities was sought. The Officer referred the Member to the provision in the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales report which detailed the cost of care and allowances and advised that she was happy to recirculate the report to Members.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officer's report: -

1. The content of the report and the changes made to the Family Absence for members of Local Authorities Protocol as set out in Appendix 1 be noted and.
2. It be noted that the report will be presented to Council seeking approval for the Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer to amend the Constitution by substituting the existing Protocol with the amended version attached.

**6. VERBAL UPDATE – OUTCOME ON POLL OF MEMBERS ON THE PROVISION OF MOBILE PHONES**

The Head of Democratic Services updated Members on the outcome of the poll undertaken on the provision of mobile phones to members. Members were advised that 32 responses had been received in total with some members expressing more than one option. It was noted that 11 Members were content to use a personal mobile phone or a landline, or they had a separate phone for Council business; 16 Members had expressed a preference to have an App installed on their personal phone; 1 Member expressed the possibility of a dual sim and 7 Members expressed an interest in a Council phone. Overall, the poll demonstrated that a separate phone for Council business was not required. However, an App where Councillors can access work emails through a personal device appeared to be the preferred choice for most Members.

Members were advised that Democratic Services were looking to progress the preferred option following the local elections in May. Clarification on the purpose of the App was sought with one Member querying why the app had been installed on his laptop but later removed. The Head of Democratic Services explained that the App allowed Members to access their Council emails on their personal phones. The Head of Democratic Services was not able to advise on the removal of the App, but the Member was advised that inquiries would be made and the Member would be kept updated.

The meeting closed at 17:29.

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any corrections made at the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2023

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CHAIR

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# Agenda Item 4



## DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE – 14<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2023

**SUBJECT: MEMBERS SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES**

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide feedback to Members on the 2022 Induction Programme for Elected Members and seek their views and endorsement of the next stages of Members Support and Development through the circulation of a Training Needs Questionnaire.

### 2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide feedback to members on the Induction Programme undertaken following the elections in May 2022 and to seek Member's endorsement of the Training Needs Questionnaire at Appendix 1 which will help to facilitate the next stages of Members Support and Development.

### 3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Members consider and approve the attached Training Needs Analysis Questionnaire for circulation to All Councillors.
- 3.2 Members note the update on the Members Induction Programme 2022.

### 4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 To update members on the Induction Programme for 2022 and to agree the subjects for inclusion in the Members Training and Development Programme.
- 4.2 The Council's Member Training and Development Programme is the key initiative in discharging the Council's responsibility and commitment to supports Members to carry out their roles effectively.

### 5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 The Council has always recognised the importance of supporting Members' many and varied roles through a programme of targeted training and development. Indeed, the Council was the first in Wales to be awarded the WLGA's Wales Charter for Member Support and Development in 2007. The last award was received in 2019 and expired in 2022.

- 5.2 As members training provision has developed and evolved since the introduction of the Charter, it has become clear that if it is to continue the criteria needs updating to take account of recent legislative changes, policy developments and the evolving practice of Democratic Services across local authorities in Wales.

As a result the WLGA are currently seeking the views of Heads of Democratic Services on how the work on the Charter should progress if it is to continue. Information will be fed back to this committee on the outcome of this survey over the coming months.

- 5.3 In the interim our commitment to member training and development will continue. In order to meet members needs and assist the process a Training Needs Analysis Questionnaire (as attached in Appendix 1) has been compiled and will be distributed to all Councillors, Members of the Standards Committee, Governance and Audit Committee and Co-opted Members. Suggested courses within the questionnaire are based on Wales Local Government Association (WLGA) recommendations and will be comprised of a mix of e-learning and multi-locational facilitator led sessions.

- 5.4 The Questionnaire also asks Members to provide feedback on their views of the Member Induction 2022 which will be used to inform future programmes.

- 5.5 Responses will be analysed, and a training programme developed based on the responses to the training needs that Members themselves have identified.

### **Members Induction May 2022**

- 5.6 Following the local government elections, the Members Induction Programme ran from the 9<sup>th</sup> of May to the 6<sup>th</sup> June 2022, the programme was made up of mandatory and recommended training together with Directorate Show Cases, all aimed to provide the best start possible for newly elected Councillors whilst providing the opportunity for returning Councillors to refresh their skill set.

- 5.7 Mandatory Training on Code of Conduct and Governance (Ethics and Standards), Equalities and Diversity and Information Governance achieved 100% attendance and the Recommended Sessions achieved an average attendance of 94%. Recommended session included, Smart and Safe Working Practices, Working in a Digital Environment, Planning, Licensing and Welcome to Scrutiny.

- 5.8 Due to ongoing installation works of the hybrid (multi-locational) equipment, the training sessions were undertaken either virtually or in person and at various times to accommodate Members with their personal and business commitments. Training was also recorded for those members who were unable to make the session times who were then able to view the training at times to suit individual needs.

- 5.9 In addition to the training sessions, the Directorate Show Cases provided an opportunity for Members to meet Senior Officers in an informal setting and learn more about each service area. Feedback given verbally during the event was extremely positive. However, it became apparent that using separate rooms (necessary under the restrictions in place at this time) for each Directorate did hamper the flow of the event. With COVID restrictions fully lifted, Democratic Services would look at facilitating the next showcase solely within the Atrium/Restaurant area, which would resolve this issue, improving the cohesiveness of the event as a whole and making it easier for Members to meet and mingle.

- 5.10 The wider Induction Programme and Seminar Programme included an Introduction to the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, Biodiversity and Grass Cutting Regimes, 20mph Speed Limit and Local Development Plan (LDP). Members of the Planning Committee and Licensing Committee will also receive regular relevant training as part of their continuing development.

Seminars do not form part of the Member Support and Development Programme but will

continue to be arranged as required.

## **Elected Member Handbook 2022**

- 5.11 Part of the 2022 Induction included the production of an Elected Member Handbook, the document was circulated to all Members by email and contained information on a variety of topics including: - Member and Officer Relations, Councillor Job Description and Person Specification, overviews of Scrutiny and Executive functions, Calendar of Meetings, WLGA Workbooks and a Directory of useful links and contacts.
- 5.12 Democratic Services will also be asking Members for their feedback on the Handbook as part of the questionnaire.

## **6. ASSUMPTIONS**

- 6.1 No assumptions have been made in the report which is based on work undertaken by the WLGA Charter for Members Support and Development and the requirements of the Local Government Measure (Wales) Act 2011 and the Local Government and Elections Wales Act 2021.

## **7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 As the report is asking for the Democratic Services Committee to approve the circulation of a questionnaire to gauge Members thoughts on the 2022 Induction process and the development of a Members Support and Development Programme an IIA is not necessary at this stage.
- 7.2 The Members Support and Development Programme forms part of the Council's commitment to Diversity in Democracy as it seeks to establish Members preferences in terms of training topic, facilitation platform and session times to ensure that Councillors are valued, developed and supported.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The costs associated with the Member Development Programme will be met from the Council's existing Members' training budget provision.

## **9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The administration of the Members Training and Support Programme means additional tasks for the Democratic Services staff, but these will be met through existing budgets.

## **10. CONSULTATIONS**

- 10.1 The report reflects the views of the consultees.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

- 11.1 The Local Government Act 2000, Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, Local Government and Elections Wales Act 2021.

Author: Emma Sullivan – Senior Committee Services Officer.  
Consultees: Christina Harrhy- Chief Executive

Richard Edmunds – Corporate Director Education and Corporate Services  
Robert Tranter – Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer  
Lisa Lane – Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer

Appendix 1 Training Needs Analysis Questionnaire.



# Training Needs and Meeting Times Questionnaire

The survey will take approximately 7 minutes to complete.

We would value your feedback on the 2022 Induction Programme, our Member Support and Development Programme and your preferences on meetings time and venues. Please study the following list of suggested topics for Member Training and Development Opportunities. Please tick the topics that you feel would be helpful to Elected Members. Any information provided will be used to inform future Members Support and Development Programmes.

1. Did you feel that the Member Induction Programme provided you with a good introduction to the Council and Councillor role?

Yes

No

Only Partly

2. If you answered No or Only Partly - Please explain why and how we could improve future Induction Programmes

3. Was the Induction Programme set at the right level?

- Yes - I found the sessions easy to follow and informative
- No Not All- I found the session overly complicated and did not provide me with the information I needed
- Partly - I found only some of the sessions useful

4. If you answered Partly or Not At All, please explain which sessions and how we could improve them?

5. Did you feel well supported during your Induction?

- Yes
- No
- Other

6. Please give details of any areas where you felt more support was needed.

e.g. IT Support, Committee/Democratic Services Support, Administration

7. Did you find the Members Induction Handbook Useful

Yes

No

8. Please use the space below to detail any additional comments you would like to make on Member Induction

## Future Member Support and Development

9. Ward Work and Surgeries (A blend of effective management skills for casework and a guide to resolving constituency correspondence and problems)

- Yes - E-Learning
- Yes - in Person with a Facilitator (Multi-Locational)
- No

10. Community Leadership and Engagement (To provide members with an overview of the modern role of the Councillor being a Community Leader, working with Local Organisations, influencing Council decisions and policies and understanding the council's complex policy framework)

- Yes - E-Learnnng
- Yes - in Person with a Facilitator (Multi-Locational)
- No

11. Information Technology - Outlook (Email), Word (Producing Letters and Documents), Teams (Provided by IT Training)

- Yes - E-Learning
- Yes - in Person with a Facilitator (Multi-Locational)
- No

12. Chairing Skills (Practical Training on Chair Meetings)

- Yes - E-Learning
- Yes - In Person with a Facilitator (Multi-Locational)
- No

13. Chairing Skills Advanced (For Existing Chairs)

- Yes - E-Learning
- Yes - In Person with a Facilitator (Multi-Locational)
- No

14. Question and Listening Skills for Scrutiny Committee Members  
(Practical advice on questioning and listening skills)

Yes - in Person with a Facilitator (Multi-Locational)

No

15. Public Speaking (Practical Advice and Skills on speaking to groups of people, members of the public and webcast meetings with confidence)

Yes - in Person with a Facilitator

No

16. Mentoring (Practical training for Members interested in becoming mentors to new/potential candidates)

Yes

No

17. Do you think a Mentor would be useful for new/existing Members?

Yes

No

18. Please outline any other subjects you would like to be included to support the development of your personal skills and knowledge

19. Would you be willing to be a Mentor?

Yes

No

20. Training Times - Please indicate which of the following times you would prefer?

Morning

Afternoon

Evening

21. Please indicate your preference for training provision.

Meeting Rooms - Council Chamber etc.

Microsoft Teams - On Line with Interaction

Webinar - On Line Tutor Led

E Learning - Module to be completed at home at a time and duration to suit the individual

## Meeting Times

22. Do you find the current arrangements for meetings satisfactory (i.e. hybrid where you can choose to attend in person or remotely)?

Yes

No

23. Do you find the current frequency and length of meeting satisfactory?

Yes

No

24. If you replied 'NO' to the above, please give your reasons below and how you feel this could be improved.

**Please Select Your Preferred Meeting Times from the Committees Listed Below.**

**25. Full Council**

Morning

Afternoon

Evening

**26. Cabinet**

Morning

Afternoon

Evening

**27. Scrutiny Committees (including Joint Scrutiny)**

Morning

Afternoon

Evening

**28. Planning Committee**

Morning

Afternoon

Evening

**29. Licensing Committee (Taxi and General and Licensing and Gambling)**

Morning

Afternoon

Evening

**30. Governance and Audit Committee**

Morning

Afternoon

Evening

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31. Democratic Services Committee

Morning

Afternoon

Evening

32. Standards Committee

Morning

Afternoon

Evening

33. Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee

Morning

Afternoon

Evening

**34. Corporate Health and Safety Committee**

Morning

Afternoon

Evening

**35. Appointments Committee**

Morning

Afternoon

Evening

**36. Community Council Liaison Committee**

Morning

Afternoon

Evening

**37. Please state why any particular time would be difficult for you (e.g. Caring Responsibilities, Employment etc)**

38. Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire, we welcome your input, if you have any suggestions for additional training topics or have any views on Members Support and Development needs please comment below.

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Microsoft Forms

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# Agenda Item 5



## DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE – 14<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2023

**SUBJECT: TIMING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS SURVEY**

**REPORT BY: HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND DEPUTY MONITORING  
OFFICER**

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To discuss the Timing of Council Meetings Survey prior to it being circulated to all members for completion.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to comment and endorse the questions outlined in the survey prior to circulation to all members.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 That the committee discuss and endorse the draft Survey attached at Appendix 3 which will then be circulated to all members.

### **4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 To satisfy the Council's statutory duties under the Local Government Wales Measure 2011.

### **5. THE REPORT**

- 5.1 Section 6 of the Local Government Wales Measure 2011 and associated guidance sets out a requirement for local authorities to review the times and intervals at which meetings of a local authority are held at least once during the term of the administration. An extract of the current guidance is set out in Appendix 1, however updated **draft** statutory guidance was consulted on last year which is attached at Appendix 2. The final version is currently awaiting Ministerial approval.

- 5.2 Members will note that the principles remain largely the same with the guidance recognising that the timing of council meetings is a significant factor for individuals who decide to stand for election and the importance of providing flexibility to support the changing needs of councillors when they are elected so that diversity can be maintained.
- 5.3 The general principle is that meetings should be held of a length and at times, intervals and locations which are convenient to its members, having regard to equality and diversity issues. Also, regardless of whether meetings are fully on-line, multi-location or in person, agendas should provide for suitable breaks as this not only promotes a more effective meeting but is essential for members' and officers' health and wellbeing.
- 5.4 When considering the results of the survey, councils should also consider whether there may be advantages to rotating meeting times due to an impossibility of meeting all of their members needs all of the time. Any such arrangements will, of course, need to be clearly publicised for the benefit of interested members of the public.
- 5.5 The issues to be included in a survey could include :
- (i) Whether daytime or evening meetings are preferred;
  - (ii) Whether meetings are to be multi-location;\*
  - (iii) The preferred meeting length
  - (iv) Whether particular times cause difficulties for Councillors with particular characteristics, such as age, gender, religion, having caring responsibilities or being in employment.

\*Members will recall that Council adopted its Multi-location Meetings Policy in May 2022 with all meetings being held on a multi-locational basis.

- 5.6 By way of background, a survey was undertaken prior to the end of the last administration however the response rate was low and so the survey was placed on hold until after the Local Government Elections last May. This intervening period has given both returning and new members time to experience the meeting cycle times particularly as all meetings have been held on a multi-locational basis since the Annual Meeting in May. As such now would be the optimum time to undertake the survey to gauge members views.
- 5.7 Members will be aware that currently the majority of council meetings are held in the evening, for example full Council has a usual start time of 5pm along with Planning Committee and all Scrutiny Committees start at 5.30pm. Cabinet is generally held in the afternoon together with the Governance and Audit Committee, with Licencing Sub Committees (Taxi and General and Licensing and Gambling) held in the morning with all other committees held at various times throughout the day.
- 5.8 A copy of the draft survey is attached at Appendix 3 for members comments which takes account of the additional issues outlined above. Subject to the committees approval the Survey will be circulated to all members with a submission date of 3 weeks from its launch date.
- 5.9 **Conclusion**

The committee are asked to consider and endorse the content of the Survey attached at Appendix 3 which will be circulated to all members. The results of the survey will be brought back to this committee for discussion.

## **6. ASSUMPTIONS**

- 6.1 No assumptions are necessary within this report.

## **7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment will be undertaken when the results of the survey have been received and analysed.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

## **9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 There are no personnel implications arising from this report.

## **10. CONSULTATIONS**

- 10.1 The views of the consultees have been incorporated into this report.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

- 11.1 Local Government Wales Measure 2011

Author: Lisa Lane Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer

Consultees: Christina Harrhy Chief Executive

Dave Street Corporate Director for Social Services and Housing

Richard (Ed) Edmunds Corporate Director Education and Corporate Services

Mark S Williams Corporate Director for Economy and Environment

Robert Tranter Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer

Stephen Harris Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer

Emma Sullivan Senior Committee Services Officer

Cath Forbes-Thompson Scrutiny Manager

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Statutory Guidance made under Section 6 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure

Appendix 2 Draft Guidance as at March 2022

Appendix 3 Section of Questionnaire – Meeting Times

## **APPENDIX 1**

Statutory Guidance made under Section 6 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011

### **Timing of Council Meetings**

#### **Introduction**

1.1 Part 1 of the Measure contains provisions related to the strengthening of local democracy. More specifically, Chapter 1 of this Part deals with “promoting and supporting membership of local authorities” and section 6 relates to the timing of meetings.

1.2 These provisions flowed from proposals developed in the report of the Councillor Commission Expert Panel Wales Are We Being Served? published in 2009. It included a number of recommendations aimed at making local government service more attractive to a more diverse cross-section of the adult population. These included laying greater emphasis on the roles of “backbench” councillors, including through the introduction of remote access to council meetings, a review of councillors’ time commitments, a bi-annual survey to establish councillors’ support needs and engaging with employers to try and attract more candidates from the employed workforce.

1.3 In this context, the times at which meetings of the local authority take place is of considerable significance as it can affect the extent to which individuals may contemplate standing for election.

#### **What the Measure requires**

1.4 This is statutory guidance issued in accordance with section 6 (1) of the Measure. By virtue of section 6 (2) of the Measure, local authorities must have regard to this guidance in respect of the times and intervals at which meetings of a local authority are held. The relevant meetings in the context of this guidance are meetings of the full council and any committee or sub-committee of the council. Reviewing existing arrangements

1.5 Only members of council executives are considered to be “full-time” councillors and this is reflected in the levels of payments that they are currently entitled to for their special responsibilities. By contrast, non-executive members are considered to undertake the equivalent of a part-time role, which will, in many cases, need to be fitted around whatever other commitments councillors may have.

1.6 The Expert Panel found that, although many councillors are retired, others had difficulty in marrying their work commitments with those of their council duties, or, in other cases, did so at the expense of any meaningful personal time.

1.7 For many prospective councillors in full-time employment, the extent to which their employers are supportive of their new commitment is a vital concern. Although employment legislation entitles councillors to time off for public duties, operating that in practice may be more difficult.

1.8 The timing and frequency of meetings is the most problematic issue in this respect. Other duties may be fulfilled at times which suit the individual but a meeting is at a set time and (subject to any arrangements made for remote attendance) at a set venue.

1.9 It is neither practical nor desirable for the Welsh Government to prescribe the times and frequency of meetings of the full council, committees and sub-committees as these are matters for each local authority to consider in individual circumstances. However, it is

important that local authorities do not simply continue to hold their meetings at the same time as they always have done simply out of inertia. What may have been tradition or an arrangement which suited the previous generation of councillors will not necessarily serve the interests of the new intake.

1.10 All local authorities should review the times at which meetings are held at least once in every term, preferably shortly after the new council is elected. The rule of thumb should be that meetings will be held at times, intervals and locations which are convenient to its members and as far as is practicable have regard to equality and diversity issues. Councils should find ways of surveying their members, at least after each election, to assess their preferences and should be committed to act on the conclusions. The survey should be carried out within three months of ordinary elections. It will be for each authority to decide on the regularity of such surveys.

1.11 Although this process could result in long-serving councillors having to make changes to their pattern of working that would be worth doing if it meant that the council was better able to retain new councillors with outside responsibilities.

1.12 Issues to be taken into account in conducting a survey could include:

- Whether daytime or evening meetings are preferred.
- Whether particular times cause difficulties for councillors with particular characteristics, such as age, gender, religion, having caring responsibilities or being in employment.

1.13 As a result of the survey, local authorities should also consider whether there may be advantages to rotating meeting times due to an impossibility of pleasing all their members all of the time. Any such arrangements will, of course, need to be clearly publicised for the benefit of interested members of the public.

## **APPENDIX 2**

**Draft Guidance as of March 2022**

### *Annex 1 1. Timing of Council Meetings Statutory Guidance*

#### *Status of this Guidance*

*1.1 This is statutory Guidance made under Section 6 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 (the Measure). By virtue of section 6 (2) of the Measure, local authorities must have regard to this guidance in respect of the times and intervals at which meetings of a local authority are held. The relevant meetings in the context of this guidance are meetings of the full council and any committee or sub-committee of the council.*

#### *Purpose*

*1.2 Part 1 of the Measure contains provisions related to the strengthening of local democracy. More specifically, Chapter 1 of this Part deals with “promoting and supporting membership of local authorities” and section 6 relates to the timing of meetings.*

*1.3 The times at which the meetings of a council take place is of considerable significance as it can affect the extent to which individuals may contemplate standing for election. This is an area for concern as it may impact on the diversity of membership of the council and thus impact on the council’s ability to make decisions which are informed by and reflect the diversity of people living in the council area. Decision making informed by insight from people of all ages and backgrounds is likely to be more balanced and have more focus on sustainable and long term solutions which balance the needs of different people in keeping with the principles set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.*

*1.4 For example, whilst the requirement to provide the facility for multi-location meetings for members who wish to join meetings remotely (see section 47 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 (the 2021 Act)) should overcome some concerns, many people will find attending, sometimes lengthy meetings, in the day is incompatible with their paid employment and certain times of day are challenging for people with caring responsibilities such as young children. Therefore, for the purposes of this guidance the timing of meetings includes their frequency and length.*

#### *Review of Existing Arrangements*

*1.5 Only members of council executives are considered to be “full-time” councillors and this is reflected in the levels of payments they are entitled to for their special responsibilities. By contrast, non-executive members are considered to undertake the equivalent of a part-time*

*role, which will, in many cases, need to be fitted around whatever other commitments councillors may have.*

*1.6 For many prospective councillors in full-time employment, the extent to which their employers are supportive of their new commitment is a vital concern. Although employment legislation entitles councillors to time off for public duties, operating that in practice may be more difficult (see Section 50 of the Employment Rights Act 1996 (1996 c18)*

*1.7 The timing, length and frequency of meetings is the most problematic issue in this respect. Other duties may be fulfilled at times which suit the individual but a meeting is at a set time and (subject to any arrangements made for remote attendance) at a set venue.*

*1.8 It is neither practical nor desirable for the Welsh Government to prescribe the times, length and frequency of meetings of the full council, its committees and sub-committees as these are matters for each council to consider in individual circumstances. However, it is important that councils do not simply continue to hold their meetings at the same time, in the way as they always have done, simply out of inertia. What may have been tradition or an arrangement which suited the previous cohort of councillors will not necessarily serve the interests of the current one. It is recommended that meetings should be held of a length and at times, intervals and locations which are convenient to its members, having regard to equality and diversity issues. Also, regardless of whether meetings are fully on-line, multi-location or in person, agendas should provide for suitable breaks as this not only promotes a more effective meeting but is essential for members' and officers' health and wellbeing.*

*1.9 Therefore, all local authorities should review the times, frequency and length of meetings at least once in every term, preferably shortly after the new council is elected. However, with the advent of five year terms it would be prudent to consider an increase in this frequency to accommodate changes in circumstances that may accrue during that period.*

*1.10 Councils should survey their members, at least once shortly after each election, to assess their preferences and should be committed to act on the conclusions. The survey should be carried out at such time as it will be of most benefit to incoming members but no later than six months following ordinary elections. It will then be for each authority to decide on the regularity of such surveys.*

*1.11 Issues to be taken into account in conducting a survey could include:*

- Whether daytime or evening meetings are preferred.*
- Whether meetings are to be multi-location.*
- The preferred meeting length.*
- Whether particular times cause difficulties for councillors with particular characteristics, such as age, gender, religion, having caring responsibilities or being in employment.*

*1.12 When considering the results of the survey, councils should also consider whether there may be advantages to rotating meeting times due to an impossibility of meeting all of their members needs all of the time. Any such arrangements will, of course, need to be clearly publicised for the benefit of interested members of the public.*

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## Meeting Times

22. Do you find the current arrangements for meetings satisfactory (i.e. hybrid where you can choose to attend in person or remotely)?

Yes

No

23. Do you find the current frequency and length of meeting satisfactory?

Yes

No

24. If you replied 'NO' to the above, please give your reasons below and how you feel this could be improved.

**Please Select Your Preferred Meeting Times from the Committees Listed Below.**

**25. Full Council**

Morning

Afternoon

Evening

**26. Cabinet**

Morning

Afternoon

Evening

**27. Scrutiny Committees (including Joint Scrutiny)**

Morning

Afternoon

Evening

28. Planning Committee

Morning

Afternoon

Evening

29. Licensing Committee (Taxi and General and Licensing and Gambling)

Morning

Afternoon

Evening

30. Governance and Audit Committee

Morning

Afternoon

Evening

:::

31. Democratic Services Committee

Morning

Afternoon

Evening

32. Standards Committee

Morning

Afternoon

Evening

33. Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee

Morning

Afternoon

Evening

**34. Corporate Health and Safety Committee**

Morning

Afternoon

Evening

**35. Appointments Committee**

Morning

Afternoon

Evening

**36. Community Council Liaison Committee**

Morning

Afternoon

Evening

**37. Please state why any particular time would be difficult for you (e.g. Caring Responsibilities, Employment etc)**

38. Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire, we welcome your input, if you have any suggestions for additional training topics or have any views on Members Support and Development needs please comment below.

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