



**CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL
RHONDDA CYNON TAF
COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

COMMITTEE SUMMONS

C Hanagan
Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
The Pavilions
Cambrian Park
Clydach Vale CF40 2XX

Meeting Contact: Julia Nicholls - Democratic Services (01443 424098)

YOU ARE SUMMONED to a hybrid meeting of the **DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE** on **THURSDAY, 3RD MARCH, 2022** at **5.00 PM**.

AGENDA

**Page
No's**

1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

To receive disclosures of personal interest from Members in accordance with the Code of Conduct

Note:

1. Members are requested to identify the item number and subject matter that their interest relates to and signify the nature of the personal interest: and
2. Where Members withdraw from a meeting as a consequence of the disclosure of a prejudicial interest they must notify the Chairman when they leave.

2. MINUTES

To receive the minutes of the previous meeting of the Democratic Services Committee held on the 8th November 2021.

3 - 6

3. FAIR & RESPECTFUL ELECTION CAMPAIGN PLEDGE

To receive the report of the Head of Democratic Services.

N.B. Group Leaders, or their nominated representatives have been

invited to contribute to this item

7 - 14

4. URGENT BUSINESS

To consider any items, which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, is of the opinion should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency

Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication

Circulation:-

The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Democratic Services Committee
(County Borough Councillor L Hooper and County Borough Councillor M Webber respectively)

County Borough Councillors:

Councillor M Adams, Councillor J Brencher, Councillor J Edwards,
Councillor H Fychan, Councillor G Holmes, Councillor K Morgan, Councillor S Rees,
Councillor J Rosser, Councillor E Stephens, Councillor G Jones, Councillor W Jones
and Councillor S Powderhill

Chris Bradshaw, Chief Executive

Christian Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication

Andy Wilkins, Director of Legal Services



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Democratic Services Committee held on Monday, 8 November 2021 at 5.00 pm at the Hybrid.

Details of the webcast for this meeting can be found [here](#)

County Borough Councillors - Democratic Services Committee Members in attendance:-

Councillor L Hooper (Chair)

Councillor M Webber	Councillor M Adams
Councillor J Bonetto	Councillor J Brencher
Councillor G Caple	Councillor J Edwards
Councillor S Rees	Councillor E Stephens
Councillor G Jones	Councillor W Jones
Councillor S Powderhill	

Officers in attendance:-

Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Ms L Evans, Principal Information Management & Data Protection Officer

26 WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed Members and officers to the meeting and for the benefit of the recording, advised of the Members attending the hybrid meeting through the virtual platform and those in physical attendance at the Chamber.

The Chairman advised that the meeting would be livestreamed to the public.

27 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors H Fychan and K Morgan.

28 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, there were no declarations made pertaining to the agenda.

29 MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the 27th September 2021 as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

30 MEMBERS SAFETY / SECURITY

The Head of Democratic Services provided Members with an update in respect

of the provisions available to ensure Members safety / security when undertaking their role following the recent sad events of Sir David Amess MP.

Members were advised of the briefing session taken forward by the Council Business Unit on the 2nd November in conjunction with the Community Safety Partnership and South Wales Police in respect of Members Safety and referred Members to the presentation slides attached to the report as an appendix.

The Head of Democratic Services advised of the importance of Members reporting any unacceptable behaviour as potentially criminal behaviour and referenced the contact details to South Wales Police.

Members were advised of a number of proposals outlined within the report which looked to strengthen the arrangements in place in respect of Members safety, which included a review of Member contact details, Personal alarm systems and review of the lone working policy.

The Chair welcomed the report and commented on the detailed powerpoint presentation delivered at the briefing session.

The Vice Chair commented on previous experience of unacceptable behaviour as an Elected Member and welcomed the review into Members contact details on the Council, although proposed that this proposal be further strengthened with a blanket removal of residential address from the website and such details being published on an exception basis following a request from the Member.

Members welcomed the suggested availability of 'personal alarms' and reference was made to Members being 'identifiable' with reference to Civic roles such as the Mayor.

Members queried the publication of addresses on Ballot papers and the Head of Democratic Services confirmed that following the implementation of the Local Government & Elections Act 2021 this requirement was no longer needed and that instead ballot papers would advise that the candidate was a resident of Rhondda Cynon Taf. A fellow Member queried the address needed to be provided on election material with imprints and the Head of Democratic Services advised that confirmation of such requirements would be feedback to Members.

Members also referenced the safety of Members at Committee meetings with specific reference to Planning and Development Committee Site Visits. The Head of Democratic Services advised that risk assessments had previously been undertaken for formal meetings, which would need to be reviewed following the commencement of hybrid meetings.

Following discussions, it was **RESOLVED**:

- (i) To acknowledge the support provided to Members to ensure Members safety and security both in a physical and online context
- (ii) To support the proposals to further advance the support arrangements as outlined within section 6 of the report, with a blanket approach to the removal of Members residential address from the Council website.

The Head of Democratic Services referenced the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Draft Annual Report and the opportunity for the Committee to respond to the consultation in respect of the draft recommendations.

The Head of Democratic Services referenced a number of changes within the draft report and the links made with the diversity agenda which was a focus for the Democratic Services Committee and the Council as a whole. It was confirmed that consultation would also be undertaken with the Community Liaison Committee.

The Chair advised Members of the meeting he was due to attend on the 9th November with the IRP and confirmed that he would also take the opportunity to provide the Committees feedback at this meeting in addition to a formal committee response being provided.

Members spoke of the importance of highlighting the remuneration available to both Members and Community Councillors due to the work undertaken at all different levels of democracy.

It was also added that the Cost of care and personal assistance allowances was of vital importance and awareness of these allowances needed to be encouraged.

Members **RESOLVED** to note the draft report and for their comments to be fed back to the IRP.

32 ELECTED MEMBERS' DATA PROTECTION HANDBOOK

The Information Manager presented to Members a draft Elected Member Data Protection Handbook, following previous consideration of the creation of such a handbook at previous meetings, which would look to provide additional guidance and support to Elected Members in complying with the requirements of data protection legislation.

The Information Manager confirmed that the handbook would be a good reference point for Members and encouraged Members to still participate in the Member training offered to Members and to utilise the information management team for any queries Members may have. It was suggested that the handbook, if agreed would be provided electronically to all Members and also made available through the Members portal and Member induction pack for future reference.

The Chair welcomed the handbook, commenting on the useful tool the handbook would have for both current and future Members.

The Vice Chair commented on the important resource that the handbook provided and queried if training with ICO officers could be considered, to which officers acknowledged.

The information Manager clarified the position with leaving answerphone messages to residents following a query from Members.

A Member of the Committee also thanked the Information Management team for the support and advice previously provided.

Following discussions, it was **RESOLVED**:

1. That following the review of the draft Elected Member Data Protection Handbook to approve the Handbook for use and publication.

33 LOCAL DEMOCRACY WEEK

With the permission of the Chair, the Head of Democratic Services provided the Committee with a verbal update in respect of the work undertaken by the Council for the first time to support 'Local Democracy Week'. Members were advised that during the 11th – 15th October a number of social media posts were promoted which included details of a number of future events and promotional activities all designed to showcase the political process within RCT, to assist in increasing engagement in the democratic process and help shape the future in democracy. The campaign provided the opportunity to promote the positive steps taken forward with the webcasting provision of Committee meetings and live streaming of meetings which again is a positive step forward with public participation.

Members were advised that all of the social media posts were viewed a total of 109,582 times for the duration of the week on both Facebook and Twitter, which was positive feedback.

The Chair thanked the Head of Democratic Services for his update and commented on the positive campaign.

This meeting closed at 5.38 pm

**CLLR L HOOPER
CHAIR.**



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

3 MARCH 2022

FAIR & RESPECTFUL ELECTION CAMPAIGN PLEDGE

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 At the Council meeting held on the [9th February 2022](#) Members agreed to delegate responsibility for confirming the contents of the Fair & Respectful Election Campaign Pledge to the Democratic Services Committee.
- 1.2 Council made a commitment to support the Fair and Respectful Election Campaign Pledge which will form an integral part of the Council's Election material for successful candidates.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that:
 - (i) Members confirm the wording of an RCT specific Fair & Respectful Election Campaign Pledge; and
 - (ii) The Fair & Respectful Election Campaign pledge forms an integral part of the material provided to successfully nominated candidates and is subsequently promoted by the Council throughout the 2022 election period.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At the Council meeting, Members endorsed and adopted the Member's Memorandum of Understanding, developed by the Democratic Services Committee, which will support the ambitions of the Council to promote diversity in democracy, promote high standards of behaviour and mutual respect

between Members and play an integral part of the Council's 'Become a Councillor' activities.

- 3.2 Council also agreed to delegate responsibility to the Democratic Services Committee to draw up a pledge which will be supported by Full Council to conduct a Fair and Respectful Election Campaign in the 2022 local elections.

4. FAIR & RESPECTFUL ELECTION CAMPAIGN PLEDGE

- 4.1 At a meeting of the WLGA Executive Board, held on Friday 28th January, the 22 Welsh Council Leaders agreed to make a joint statement calling on all Councillors and candidates at May's local elections to commit to a fair and respectful election campaign. A copy of this statement is attached at Appendix A.
- 4.2 This statement of principle, supported by all political groups, seeks to build upon the positive work being undertaken under the umbrella of the 'diversity and democracy work' and would complement the principles outlined in the proposed MOU.
- 4.3 Members of this Council have made a commitment to support such a statement, which would seek to ensure, as far as is possible, all candidates participate in a fair election campaign, which is based upon a positive approach to campaigning, rather than personal attacks upon individuals.
- 4.4 Members agreed to delegate responsibility for confirming the contents of such a commitment, which best suit the circumstances and personal commitments of this Council's members, to the Democratic Services Committee. It was also proposed that an invitation would be extended to Group Leaders, or their nominated representatives, to attend and contribute to the meeting of the Democratic Services Committee.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 5.1 The work of the Democratic Services Committee Diversity working group looks to improve the equality and diversity across the County Borough and within the local democracy setting. The more representative of society and diverse our Councillors are the better understanding they will have of the needs of the local community and therefore are better equipped at carrying out their duties and responsibilities

6. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Encouraging diversity within democracy includes promotion of all languages. The Council has positively promoted and supported bilingual engagement at Council meetings and provision of Committee materials.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 Council – 9th February 2022

7.2 Democratic Services Committee – 3rd March 2022 (in consultation with Group Leaders or their representatives)

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

8.1 None

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 outlines a number of duties placed on Local Authorities in respect of the diversity agenda.

10. LINKS TO CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.

10.1 The work of a Councillor is fundamental to the Council's Corporate plan, as Councillors are the mouthpiece for the communities that they serve.

10.2 Ensuring that there are greater opportunities for a more diverse democracy across RCT links to the Wellbeing of Future Generations goals of a more equal Wales and a Wales of cohesive communities

11. CONCLUSION

11.1 Trying to achieve a diverse culture is challenging and the Democratic Services Committee working group have, in a short period of time, already identified potential barriers that may dissuade members of the public to stand as a candidate for election.

11.2 As a Council we need to ensure that any perceived barriers are eradicated and instead celebrate and promote the rewarding experiences of becoming a Councillor.

11.3 Ensuring Members have a clear understanding of their roles and behaviour in and outside of the Council Chamber is paramount to ensuring a safe and inclusive working environment for all.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

3 MARCH 2022

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES



Joint statement by the 22 council leaders in Wales:

Fair and respectful election campaign

At Friday's WLGA Executive Board, council leaders agreed to make a joint statement calling on all councillors and candidates at May's local elections to commit to a fair and respectful election campaign:

We are all too familiar with the abuse we see in our inboxes, on our social media feeds or see and hear on our streets or, worse, at our homes.

Politics should focus on facts and respectful debate about differences of policy or priorities, not insults or intolerance, misinformation or misogyny, discrimination or division.

We are committed to attracting more diverse people to consider standing for election. We need to reassure and support those candidates who are newer to democratic life, those who are conscious they are in the minority or have already experienced discrimination.

The council elections are about people who just want to contribute and who want to make a positive difference to our communities.

Unfortunately, we are seeing an increasing number of councillors and candidates being subjected to abuse, threats and intimidation.

As well as being totally unacceptable, this behaviour undermines the principles of free speech, democratic engagement and debate.

We therefore endeavour to treat everyone with courtesy, kindness and respect and, as leaders, we stand together to call for an end to abuse, intimidation and harassment of any kind. This is particularly relevant as we enter the key period in the run up to the local government elections in May.

We pledge to participate in a fair election campaign which is based on positive campaigning and merit, rather than personal attacks and smears against individuals.

We encourage all elected members and candidates in the forthcoming election to do the same. In addition, we will publicly 'call out' any such inappropriate behaviour and take a zero-tolerance approach to abuse.

We all have the right to carry out our civic duties without fear of being attacked or abused.

Any inappropriate behaviour, whether that be verbal, physical or in writing on social media, is totally unacceptable and action will be taken if deemed necessary.

Please be kind and fair in all that you say and do.

Website: www.wlga.gov.uk

Twitter: @WelshLGA

If you require more information, please contact:

Glesni Haf Parry, Communications Officer (Media and Social Media), Welsh Local Government Association:

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Datganiad ar y cyd gan y 22 o arweinwyr cyngor yng Nghymru:

Ymgyrch etholiadol teg a pharchus

Yng nghyfarfod Bwrdd Gweithredol CLILC ddydd Gwener, fe gytunodd arweinwyr y cyngorau i wneud datganiad ar y cyd yn galw ar gynghorwyr a'r holl ymgeiswyr yn etholiadau lleol mis Mai i ymrwymo i ymgyrch etholiadol teg a pharchus:

Rydym i gyd yn rhy gyfarwydd â'r gamdriniaeth yr ydym yn ei gweld yn ein mewnflychau e-bost, ar ein negeseuon ar y cyfryngau cymdeithasol neu'n ei gweld neu'n ei chlywed ar ein strydoedd, neu'n waeth na hynny, yn ein cartrefi.

Fe ddylai gwleidyddiaeth ganolbwyntio ar ffeithiau a thrafodaeth barchus am wahaniaethau o ran polisi neu flaenoriaethau, nid sarhad neu anoddefgarwch, camwybodaeth neu gasineb at fenywod, gwahaniaethu neu rwyg.

Rydym wedi ymrwymo i ddenu mwy o bobl amrywiol i ystyried sefyll ar gyfer etholiad, mae angen i ni roi tawelwch meddwl a chefnogi'r ymgeiswyr hynny sy'n newydd i fywyd democrataidd, y rhai hynny sy'n ymwybodol eu bod yn y lleiafrif neu sydd eisoes wedi profi gwahaniaethu.

Mae etholiadau'r cyngor yn ymwneud â phobl sydd eisiau cyfrannu a sydd eisiau gwneud gwahaniaeth cadarnhaol i'n cymunedau.

Gwaetha'r modd, rydym ni'n gweld nifer gynyddol o gynghorwyr ac ymgeiswyr yn cael eu cam-drin, eu bygwth a'u dychryn.

Yn ogystal â bod yn gwbl annerbyniol, mae'r ymddygiad hwn yn tanseilio egwyddorion rhyddid barn, ymgysylltu democrataidd a thrafod.

Rydym ni'n ymdrechu i drin pawb â chwarteisi, caredigrwydd a pharch ac, fel arweinwyr, rydym ni'n sefyll gyda'n gilydd i alw am roi diwedd ar gam-drin, brawychu ac aflonyddu o unrhyw fath. Mae hyn yn arbennig o berthnasol wrth i ni gychwyn ar y cyfnod allweddol cyn yr etholiadau llywodraeth leol ym mis Mai.

Rydym ni'n addo cymryd rhan mewn ymgyrch etholiadol deg sy'n seiliedig ar ymgyrchu cadarnhaol a theilyngdod, yn hytrach nag ymosodiadau personol a difenwol yn erbyn unigolion.

Rydym ni'n annog pob aelod etholedig a phob ymgeisydd yn yr etholiad sydd ar y gweill i wneud yr un peth. Yn ogystal, fe fyddwn ni'n amlygu'n gyhoeddus unrhyw ymddygiad amhriodol o'r fath ac ni fydd unrhyw oddefgarwch o ran cam-drin.

Mae gan bob un ohonom ni'r hawl i gyflawni ein dyletswyddau dinesig heb ofni ymosodiad neu gamdriniaeth.

Mae unrhyw ymddygiad amhriodol – naill ai ar lafar, yn gorfforol neu'n ysgrifenedig ar y cyfryngau cymdeithasol – yn gwbl annerbyniol, a bydd camau'n cael eu cymryd os bydd angen.

Byddwch yn garedig ac yn deg ym mhopeth rydych chi'n ei ddweud ac yn ei wneud.

Gwefan: www.wlga.gov.uk

Trydar: @WelshLGA

Os hoffech ragor o wybodaeth cysylltwch â

Glesni Haf Parry: Swyddog Cyfathrebu (Y Cyfryngau a Chyfryngau Cymdeithasol):

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