



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.**