

**Minutes of the Meeting of DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE
held at Neuadd Cyngor Ceredigion, Penmorfa, Aberaeron and remotely via
video conference on Wednesday, 20 September 2023**

PRESENT: Councillor Elizabeth Evans (Chair), Councillors Endaf Edwards, Gwyn James, Gareth Lloyd, Caryl Roberts and Mark Strong.

Officers in attendance: Lowri Edwards, Nia Jones, Elin Prysor

(10.00am - 10.47am)

1 Apologies
None.

2 Disclosure of personal / prejudicial interests
None.

3 To consider the Minutes of the previous meeting and to consider any matters arising

It was **RESOLVED** to confirm as true the minutes of the meeting held 9 June 2023.

Matters arising

Members queried the timeline for implementation of multi-location meetings, and it was confirmed that the report will be presented to the Constitution Working group later this month, followed by Council, and that it is anticipated that it will be implemented from December 2023.

4 To consider a report on amendments to the Democratic Services Committee Terms of Reference

The Corporate Lead Officer for Democratic Services presented the report to Committee, noting that the amendments are proposed in order to reflect the wording of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, however this will not impact upon the role of the Committee.

Members noted that the legislation requires that the committee meets at least once annually, however they were pleased that the guidance states that Ceredigion County Council continue to aim to hold meetings at least 3 times a year.

It was **AGREED** to recommend the proposed amendments to Council.

5 To consider a report on proposals to conduct a survey of all Councillors in relation to research facilities

The Corporate Manager, Democratic Services presented the report to Committee noting that the Welsh Government Statutory and Non-Statutory Guidance for Principal Councils in Wales, recommends that the Democratic Services Committee should consider the provision of Research Support and Services for Councillors by identifying the baseline of support which is already available, then work with members to identify how this support and its parameters could be developed over time. This is not a statutory

requirements, however the guidance does suggest that the Democratic Services Committee 'should consider' this.

Members noted the current base-line support listed in Appendix A, and the proposed Member survey included in Appendix B, recommendation that details of the training and workshops provided is also included. It was also noted that training by Data Wales on 'Understanding and Using Data' has been scheduled during the next few weeks, and that it would be fitting for the survey to be conducted following the training.

It was **AGREED** to request that Officers survey Councillors in relation to the baseline support currently available to members and any additional support required.

6 To consider a report on amendments to the Ceredigion County Council Petition Scheme to include e-petitions

The Corporate Manager, Democratic Services presented the report to Committee noting that the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 places a duty on local authorities to set out a petition scheme, to include electronic petitions. A draft revision Document O of the Council's Constitution was presented for consideration.

Members queried the rationale for the duration of petition schemes, and it was noted that the regulations do not stipulate a timeframe; however a maximum period of 3 months would allow for matters to be notified to Cabinet in a timely manner.

Members also queried the role of Overview and Scrutiny on receipt of petitions. It was noted that not all petitions would meet the criteria for consideration by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee; however information relating to petitions would be available on the Council's website and reported in Cabinet agenda and minutes and that Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committees may decide to discuss any matters that arise that is of relevance and interest to their committees.

It was **AGREED** to make recommendations to the Constitution Working Group in relation to the proposed amendments.

7 To consider a report on the proposed WLGA Self-Assessment Framework

The Corporate Lead Officer, Democratic Services presented the report to committee noting that the WLGA are currently consulting upon the draft Member Support and Development Self-Assessment Framework to supersede the current Charter.

Members noted that they were confident that Ceredigion County Council met the majority of the requirements as set out in the self-assessment framework, and did not propose any amendments to the draft document.

8 Discussion upon a review of live-streaming additional meetings

Councillor Gareth Lloyd led a discussion upon increasing the number of meetings that are recorded, or live-streamed as they provide an important historical record, and provide an opportunity for considerations to be reviewed at a later date.

It was noted by Officers that current live-streaming of Council and Cabinet meetings on the Council's Facebook pages are available as recordings.

It was however noted that supporting live-streaming of meetings are currently extremely resource intensive. Once ongoing issues with the hybrid system have been resolved, Ceredigion County Council plans to transfer live-streaming from Facebook to a link provided on the Council's website via the Modern.gov meeting management system. The system would need to be trialled before full implementation; however it would allow for the technical management of meetings to be transferred from ICT to Democratic Services, with an aim to gradually increase the number of meetings that are available to view via the Council's website.

It was noted that a report would be presented to the next meeting of the Democratic Services Committee on 8 December 2023 outlining the proposed developments. Members noted that their priorities in relation to an expansion to the current arrangements include the Development Management and Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

9 To consider items for the forward work programme

- a) Recording / live-streaming of additional committees;
- b) Guidance for Multi-Member Wards
- c) Councillor Wellbeing and Personal Safety protocol

10 Any other matter which the Chairperson decides is for the urgent attention of the Committee

None.

**Confirmed at the Meeting of the Democratic Services Committee held
on 8 December 2023**

Chairman: _____

Date: _____