

**Minutes of the Meeting of the DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE
held remotely by video-conference on Thursday, 5 December 2024**

PRESENT: Councillors Elizabeth Evans (Chair), Eryl Evans, Gwyn James, Gareth Lloyd and Mark Strong

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

(10.00 - 11.04am)

1 Apologies

Councillor Endaf Edwards apologised for his inability to attend the meeting.

2 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

None.

3 Chair Announcements

None.

4 To consider the Minutes of the previous meeting and any matters arising

It was **RESOLVED** to confirm as true the minutes of the meeting held on 31 May 2024.

There were no matters arising.

5 To consider a report upon proposals in relation to e-learning modules available to all Members

Nia Jones, Corporate Manager Democratic Services presented the report to the committee noting that there are currently 57 e-learning modules that are available to all employees and Members, which supplement a comprehensive suite of circa 100 face-to-face training events arranged for Members. The e-learning modules that are compulsory to all employees were noted, and Members considered the proposed categorisation of mandatory, priority, desirable and non-essential for Members.

During the discussion, Members noted that the e-learning module for 'Social Media Awareness' was included in the mandatory list, following a recommendation by the Ethics and Standards Committee that all Members complete this training. Members also recommended that the 'Local Government Finance' e-learning module should be included in the mandatory categorisation as opposed to the priority listing.

Following a discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to recommend that Council approves that:

- a) The following e-learning modules are mandatory, for completion by all members
 - Health and Safety
 - PREVENT

- Protecting Personal Data
 - Safeguarding Children and Adults – Group A
 - VAWDASV
 - Whistleblowing
 - Corporate Parenting
 - Equality and Diversity – Elected Members
 - Social Media Awareness
 - Local Government Finance
- b) The following e-learning modules are a priority, and that all members should aim to complete them
- Introduction to Corporate Governance
 - Ethics and Standards
 - Welsh Language Standards
 - Community Leadership and Casework
 - Effective Scrutiny
 - Chairing Meetings Effectively
 - Governance, Audit and Risk Management
 - Well-Being of Future Generations Act – Elected Members
 - Introduction to Planning
 - Planning for Planning Committees
 - Social Services and Well-Being Act
 - Introduction to Licensing
 - Public Speaking and Working with the Media
 - Data Protection
 - Welsh Language Awareness
- c) The following e-learning modules are desirable:
- Ask & Act - Children & Young People
 - Connect To Kindness
 - Display Screen Equipment
 - Information Security
 - Protecting Individuals at Risk of Vulnerability Crimes

To consider a report upon the protocols for Members of the Public attending Local Authority Meetings in person

Lowri Edwards, Corporate Lead Officer, Democratic Services presented the report to the Committee noting that a request had been received from Members to produce a draft protocol for consideration by Members of the Democratic Services Committee. It was noted that Democratic Services Officers had consulted the Health and Safety Team for advice regarding fire exits and capacity, and that the protocol had been developed taking into consideration the current legislation and alternative methods of attending and viewing committee meetings, privacy for members of the public, capacity, translation facilities, councillor safety and conduct.

Lowri Edwards noted that the protocol had already been shared with Dyfed-Powys Police for comment and that they had confirmed that they are satisfied with its content and that it covers all relevant areas. Practice elsewhere had also been reviewed, including those of the Senedd and the UK Parliament.

It was also noted that many of the elements of the protocol are already included in the Council's Constitution, including removal of members of the public.

Members noted that the historic architectural design of the Chamber had reflected the needs of the Councillors as opposed to the public, and that it did not include an effective public gallery and that we would have to work with these restrictions to ensure all attendees' safety. They considered the practice elsewhere such as pre-booking requirements and noted that Democratic Services Committee did not have the capacity to support such an arrangement. They also noted that the ability for members of the public to view meetings remotely had facilitated greater accessibility for members of the public.

Members noted that there is no barrier between the public area and that of the Members and recommended that all members of the public attending a meeting should be seated. They also noted their concern in terms of their personal safety, and the safety of all those attending a meeting at times where the recommended capacity for the Chamber had been exceeded, and how this could be managed. Members noted that they wished to consider the matter further and asked that the report is re-presented at the next meeting of the Democratic Services Committee.

Following a discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to defer the matter to the next meeting of the Democratic Services Committee.

7 To consider items for the Forward Work Programme

The following items were proposed for inclusion in the Forward Work Programme:

- Representation on External Bodies
- A review of the pilot remote attendance protocol for the Democratic Services Committee and the Governance and Audit Committee
- The use of Artificial Intelligence
- Preparation for post-local elections 2027

8 Any other matter which the Chair decides is for the urgent attention of the Committee

None.

**Confirmed at the Meeting of the Democratic Services Committee held
on 10 April 2025**

Chairman: _____

Date: _____