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To: Cllr Robin Guest (Chair)

Councillors: Alex Aldridge, Glyn Banks, Haydn Bateman, Chris Bithell, Clive Carver, David Cox, Peter Curtis, Paul Cunningham, Glenys Diskin, Ian Dunbar, Andy Dunbobbin, Veronica Gay, George Hardcastle, Dave Mackie, Tim Newhouse, Neville Phillips, Ian Smith, Nigel Steele-Mortimer, David Williams and Arnold Woolley

21 April 2016

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Democratic Services Committee which will be held at 2.45 pm on Wednesday, 27th April, 2016 in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Mold to consider the following items.

**Please note that the meeting will commence at 2.45 p.m. or on the rising of the Constitution Committee, whichever is the latest. Members are also asked to note the venue for the meeting.**

## A G E N D A

### 1 APOLOGIES

**Purpose:** To receive any apologies.

### 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

**Purpose:** To receive any Declarations and advise Members accordingly.


### 3 MINUTES (Pages 3 - 4)

**Purpose:** To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the last meeting.

4 **TIMING OF COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS SURVEY** (Pages 5 - 10)

To report back to the committee the results of the recent survey.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Evans', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Peter Evans  
Democracy & Governance Manager

## **DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE** **27 JANUARY 2016**

Minutes of the meeting of the Democratic Services Committee of Flintshire County Council held in County Hall, Mold on Wednesday, 27 January 2016

**PRESENT: Councillor Robin Guest (Chairman)**

Councillors: Alex Aldridge, Haydn Bateman, Clive Carver, David Cox, Paul Cunningham, Ian Dunbar, Andy Dunbobbin, Veronica Gay, George Hardcastle, Dave Mackie, Neville Phillips, Ian Smith, Nigel Steele-Mortimer, and Arnold Woolley

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors Glyn Banks and David Williams

**SUBSTITUTION:** Councillors David Healey (for Chris Bithell) and Tim Newhouse (for David Roney)

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Chief Officer (Governance), Member Engagement Manager, and Committee Officer

**9. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**10. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 1 July 2015, were submitted.

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes be received, approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**11. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS FOR 2016/17**

The Member Engagement Manager introduced a report on the schedule of meetings for 2016/17. He explained that the Council's schedule of meetings which was set at the annual meeting has meetings held in the morning and afternoon in a ten week cycle. It is recognised that the established model of morning and afternoon meetings may make attendance difficult for Members with work or caring responsibilities and therefore consideration needed to be given to whether meetings should be held in the evening as well as during the day. Options for expanding the range of meetings could also involve early evening/'twilight' meetings at 4.30/5.00 p.m in the afternoon. It had been suggested that a short survey be undertaken to enable Members to express their preferences on when meetings are held and feedback provided to the next meeting of the Committee.

Councillor Alex Aldridge spoke in favour of the suggestion to hold meetings during the evening as well as the day. He commented on the need to engage a wide range of people from diverse backgrounds to participate in Council business and to make it easier for individuals in employment or with caring commitments to attend meetings of the Council. He emphasised the need for meaningful consideration to be given to the matter.

Councillor Neville Phillips commented on the need to be mindful of Town and Community Council meetings which were held in the evening and would have an impact on Members' availability to attend evening meetings held by the Council.

Councillor Dave Mackie commented on the historically poor attendance at training sessions which were scheduled in the evening as well as the day.

Councillor Tim Newhouse proposed that the Committee recommend that meetings of the full County Council are held at 5.00pm to make it possible for the maximum number of Members to attend. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Alex Aldridge and when put to the vote was carried.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the Committee recommends to the County Council that it holds its meetings at 5.00 p.m. during the next municipal year; and
- (b) That officers be tasked with carrying out a survey amongst Members to enable them to express their preferences for changing when meetings of Committees are held.

**12. PUBLIC AND PRESS IN ATTENDANCE**

There was one member of the public and no members of the press in attendance.

(The meeting commenced at 4.21 pm and finished at 4.43 pm)

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Chairman



## Democratic Services Committee

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Wednesday, 27 April 2016
<b>Report Subject</b>	Timing of Council and Committee Meetings Survey
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cabinet Member for Corporate Management
<b>Report Author</b>	Member Engagement Manager
<b>Type of report</b>	Operational

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report details the recent holding of a survey amongst both elected and co-opted members of the Council to determine their preferences for when we should hold formal meetings. There was a significant majority in favour of not making changes to the current approach, so the recommendation is that we will continue to hold a mixture of morning and afternoon meetings, with a four week recess during the month of August for the life of this Council. The new Council, elected in 2017, will then be invited to review the meetings arrangements.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That the committee acknowledges the results of the survey detailed in the report and recommends to the Council that there be no change in our arrangements for the times and frequency for holding meetings for the life of this Council.
2	That the practice of holding a four week recess from scheduled meetings during the month of August be continued for 2016.

## REPORT DETAILS

1.00	The Timing of Meetings Survey																				
1.01	Members will recall that at the previous meeting, a report on the Schedule of Meetings for 2016/17 was submitted. One of the recommendations which was made in that report was that a survey be conducted amongst Members, to enable preferences to be expressed about when we hold meetings.																				
1.02	Arising from the January meeting, it was resolved that a survey be undertaken and that, in addition, a recommendation be made to the Council that Council meetings should be held at 5pm. At the meeting of the County Council which was held on 1 <sup>st</sup> March, that recommendation was not approved.																				
1.03	<p>The survey of both the elected and co-opted members was conducted in March. We received 33 responses. The results of the survey are attached as appendix 1. From that survey, it is apparent that there is a majority in support of maintaining the status quo for meetings of the Council, the Cabinet and committees. As some Members have also expressed a preference for the specific time when committees currently meet, these could also be added to the status quo figure in many cases, as follows:</p> <table border="0" data-bbox="311 989 1378 1388"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="311 989 617 1024"><b>Meeting</b></th> <th data-bbox="646 989 1378 1024"><b>Aggregated % in favour of current meeting time</b></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="311 1062 617 1098">Cabinet</td> <td data-bbox="1016 1062 1378 1098">70%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="311 1104 617 1140">Community &amp; Enterprise O&amp;SC</td> <td data-bbox="1016 1104 1378 1140">60%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="311 1146 617 1182">Constitution Committee</td> <td data-bbox="1016 1146 1378 1182">57%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="311 1188 617 1224">Corporate Resources O&amp;SC</td> <td data-bbox="1016 1188 1378 1224">57%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="311 1230 617 1266">County Council</td> <td data-bbox="1016 1230 1378 1266">73%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="311 1272 617 1308">Democratic services</td> <td data-bbox="1016 1272 1378 1308">70%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="311 1314 617 1350">Education &amp; Youth O&amp;SC</td> <td data-bbox="1016 1314 1378 1350">61%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="311 1356 617 1392">Planning &amp; Development Control</td> <td data-bbox="1016 1356 1378 1392">63%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="311 1398 617 1434">Standards</td> <td data-bbox="1016 1398 1378 1434">71%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Aggregated % in favour of current meeting time</b>	Cabinet	70%	Community & Enterprise O&SC	60%	Constitution Committee	57%	Corporate Resources O&SC	57%	County Council	73%	Democratic services	70%	Education & Youth O&SC	61%	Planning & Development Control	63%	Standards	71%
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1.04	In Flintshire, along with the majority of local authorities, we have a four weeks August recess. Some Members have suggested that this is no longer required, so we asked whether we should hold meetings in August. The responses to this were Yes, 11 (33%) and No, 22 (66%).																				
1.05	We also asked whether Members thought that the frequency of our meetings is about right. 31 (93%) respondents said yes, whilst 2 (6%) said no.																				
1.06	Having regard to the above, the recommendation of this report is that the committee acknowledges the results of the survey detailed in the report and recommends to the Council that there be no change in our arrangements for the times and frequency for holding meetings. However, it is proper that the new Council, elected in May 2017 should be invited to review arrangements for their meetings.																				

1.07	The schedule of meetings for 2016/17 will be submitted to the Annual Meeting of the Council on Tuesday 10 <sup>th</sup> May 2016 for approval and will include the August recess.
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<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	As the recommendation from this report is to continue with our current arrangements for meetings, there are no additional resource implications.

<b>3.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT</b>
3.01	The survey, upon which this report is based is part of our consultation with Members on meeting arrangements.

<b>4.00</b>	<b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
4.01	It was previously acknowledged that a greater range of meeting times may have encouraged a more diverse range of candidates to stand for election. Our conducting the survey fulfils our responsibility under the WLGA Member Development Charter to seek Members' views on when we hold our meetings. Should the Welsh Ministers decide to issue guidance to local authorities under section 6 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 in the near future, we will be able to use the result of the survey as evidence of appropriate consultation having been carried out.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	None

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	<p>Report <b>Schedule of Meetings for 2016/17</b> from the Member Engagement Manager to the Democratic Services Committee on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2016 and subsequent minute.</p> <p>Report <b>Timing of Council Meetings</b> from the Chief Officer (Governance) to the County Council on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2016 and subsequent minute.</p> <p><b>Contact Officer:</b> Robert Robins, Member Engagement Manager  <b>Telephone:</b> (01352) 702320  <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:Robert.robins@flintshire.gov">Robert.robins@flintshire.gov</a>.</p>

<b>7.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
7.01	<p><b>Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA)</b> body which represents the interest of the 22 local authorities in Wales, together with the three National Park Authorities and the three Fire &amp; Rescue Authorities. Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011</p> <p><b>WLGA Member Development Charter:</b> accreditation for good practice.</p>

### Appendix 1, Analysis of Survey Results

	Status Quo	Static 9.30 am	Static 10 am	Static 2 pm	Static 6 pm	Alternating 10am / 2pm	Rotational 10am/2pm /6pm	Total
<b>Audit Committee</b>	8 53%	2 14%	0	2 14%	2 14%	0	1 7%	<b>15</b>
<b>Cabinet</b>	10 59%	2 12%	0	1 6%	3 18%	1 6%	0	<b>17</b>
<b>Community &amp; Enterprise O&amp;S Committee</b>	8 40%	0	4 21%	2 11%	2 11%	2 11%	2 11%	<b>20</b>
<b>Constitution Committee</b>	9 47%	0	1 6%	2 11%	3 17%	3 17%	1 6%	<b>19</b>
<b>Corporate Resources O&amp;S Committee</b>	7 50%	0	1 8%	3 23%	2 16%	0	1 8%	<b>14</b>
<b>County Council</b>	11 42%	0	2 8%	8 32%	3 12%	1 4%	1 4%	<b>26</b>
<b>Democratic Services</b>	10 59%	1 6%	0	2 12%	3 18%	0	1 6%	<b>17</b>
<b>Education &amp; Youth O &amp; S Committee</b>	10 38%	1 4%	2 8%	6 23%	2 8%	4 16%	1 4%	<b>26</b>
<b>Environment O &amp; S Committee</b>	8 40%	1 5%	3 15%	2 10%	2 10%	1 5%	3 15%	<b>20</b>
<b>Licencing Committee</b>	8 47%	1 6%	1 6%	3 18%	3 18%	0	0	<b>17</b>
<b>Licensing Sub Committee</b>	9 60%	1 7%	0	2 14%	3 21%	0	0	<b>15</b>



	Status Quo	Static 9.30 am	Static 10 am	Static 2 pm	Static 6 pm	Alternating 10am / 2pm	Rotational 10am/2pm /6pm	Total
<b>Organisational Change O &amp; S Committee</b>	8 42%	2 11%	2 11%	2 11%	2 11%	2 11%	1 5%	<b>19</b>
<b>Planning &amp; Development Control Committee</b>	11 50%	3 14%	2 10%	3 14%	3 14%	0	0	<b>22</b>
<b>Social &amp; Health Care O &amp; S Committee</b>	8 40%	1 5%	0	3 15%	2 10%	4 20%	2 10%	<b>20</b>
<b>Standards Committee</b>	6 42%	1 7%	1 7%	1 7%	4 29%	0	1 7%	<b>14</b>

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