



Report of the Monitoring Officer

Special Democratic Services Committee – 27 September 2021

Results of Members Questionnaire on Remote Attendance

Purpose:	To feedback to the Committee following the circulation of a questionnaire to members and officers on remote attendance.
Policy Framework:	Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021
Consultation:	Access to Services, Finance, Legal.
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that the Committee: 1) Note the response of councillors and officers to the Questionnaire attached at appendix A.
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 At their meeting of the 19 July 2021 the Committee approved a revised Questionnaire to be circulated to members and officers around their experience of remote attendance at meetings and what could be learned from their experience and changed or improved on.
- 1.2 The Questionnaire was circulated on 9 August and the responses can be found at Appendix 1. In total 42 persons responded with 32 councillors responding and 10 officers.

2. Questionnaire results

- 2.1 Although disappointing that only 32 councillors responded there were some consistent results.

- 2.2 92.9% of those responding thought the current remote meetings worked well with 42.9% of the view that they worked very well.
- 2.3 The benefits of remote meetings were overwhelmingly because it saved time, saved travelling time and was good for the environment. The disadvantages of remote meetings, perhaps not surprisingly, focused on IT issues and the need for 2 devices but there was also reference to missing the social interaction of committee meetings.
- 2.4 In terms of Question 5 and what meetings did councillors/officers consider should be by hybrid/face to face/remote only, the response was overwhelmingly in favour of supporting the hybrid option for all meetings save ceremonial council where 55.8% favoured a face to face ceremonial council. There was very little enthusiasm for remote only meetings going forward.
- 2.5 In terms of additional support there is mention of hard copy papers, written reports for PDC's and additional training.
- 2.6 As the work on the Council Chamber and Gloucester Room progresses further work will continue on developing a hybrid/multi location policy for councillors and officers.

3. Integrated Assessment Implications

- 3.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage
 - Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language
 - Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
 - Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 3.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2005 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'.

- 3.3 Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.
- 3.4 An IIA Screening Form has been completed and no adverse implications have been noted. The Committee is receiving a report on councillor feedback to a questionnaire on remote attendance.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report. The legislation to continue remote attendance is contained within the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

Background Papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Questionnaire on remote attendance at committee meetings responses.