

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Council

15th May 2024

Report of the Chief Executive – Mrs Karen Jones

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected:

All wards

Reconstitution of Council 2024/2025

Purpose of the Report:

To fulfil the legal requirements of the Local Government Act 1972 and the Constitution of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and constitute Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council for the civic year 2024/2025.

Background:

In accordance with the Council's Constitution, the Council is obliged at its annual meeting to undertake the following:

- (a) elect a person to preside if the Chair of Council is not present; but no member of the Executive can preside, or be Chair or Vice Chair of the Council;
- (b) elect the Chair of the Council (who will be entitled "Mayor");
- (c) appoint the Vice Chair of the Council (who will be entitled "Deputy Mayor");
- (d) receive any announcements from the Chair and/or Chief Executive;

- (e) elect the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council;
- (f) agree the number of Members to be appointed to the Executive;
- (g) appoint Scrutiny Committees, a Standards Committee and such other Committees as the Council considers appropriate to deal with matters which are neither reserved to the Council nor are executive functions;
- (h) agree such delegations as the Constitution determines it is for the Council to agree;
- (i) approve a programme of ordinary meetings of the Council and its Committees for the year, and
- (j) consider any business set out in the notice convening the meeting.

Various decisions are required to be taken by Council today, in respect of the following matters:

Section 1	Policy and Budget Framework;
Section 2:	Executive Arrangements;
Section 3:	Apportionment of seats to the political groups
Section 4:	Scrutiny Arrangements;
Section 5:	Member representation on Other Committees;
Section 6:	Staff Council and Other Member/Officer Groups;
Section 7:	Joint Committees, Outside and Other Public Bodies;
Section 8:	Cycle and Timetable of Meetings plus schedule of Seminar Dates for 2024/2025
Section 9:	Distribution of Senior Salaries
Section 10:	Democratic Services Structure and Staffing Resources

1. Policy and Budget Framework

- 1.1 In order to reflect changes in Welsh Government Policy and Legislation, an updated version of the Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council's Constitution in relation to the Policy and Budget Framework is attached for approval at **Annex A**.

Recommendation

1.2 Council is requested to approve the Policy and Budget Framework set out in **Annex A**.

2. Executive Arrangements

2.1 Council is required to make decisions for the Civic Year 2024/2025, in respect of:

- the size of the Cabinet (number of Executive Posts);
- the relevant Portfolios for each of the Executive Posts; and

2.2 For Council's consideration, the proposed Executive Structure for the Civic Year 2024/2025 is to confirm a Cabinet of ten (10) Members, including the Leader. These details are set out at **Annex B**.

2.3 Council will note that at its meeting of the 20th March 2024, Council endorsed moving to Cabinet meeting on a three weekly cycle with all decision making vesting in the Cabinet and no longer convening Cabinet Boards.

2.4 Council is also required to receive and approve the proposals in respect of the Cabinet portfolios for the Civic Year 2024/2025, together with the appointment of Members thereto. These details are set out at **Annex B**.

Recommendations

2.5 Council is requested to approve the proposals set out in **Annex B**.

3. Apportionment of Seats to the Political Groups

3.1 The proposed apportionment of seats to the political groups for each relevant Committee is enclosed at **Annex C**.

Recommendations

3.2 Council is asked to approve the apportionment of seats to the political groups for each relevant Committee as set out in **Annex C**.

4. Scrutiny Arrangements

- 4.1 The Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Constitution summarises the Scrutiny functions.
- 4.2 Council is now required to make decisions for the Civic Year 2024/2025, in respect of:
- the proposed appointment of the four Scrutiny Committees identified and their functions;
 - the number of Members on each Scrutiny Committee and the apportionment of seats-amongst the constituted Political Groups;
 - to designate the Social Services, Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Committee to discharge the powers in respect of Crime and Disorder matters and to be authorised to make a report or recommendation under Section 19 (1)(b) and (3)(a) of the Police and Justice Act 2006; and
 - to designate the Community, Finance and Strategic Leadership Scrutiny Committee to discharge the power under s35 of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
- 4.3 It should be noted the model for scrutiny is as endorsed by Council at its meeting of the 20th March 2024.
- 4.4 For Council's consideration, the proposed Scrutiny Committee Structure for 2024/2025 is set out in **Annex D** of this report.
- 4.5 Following approval of the above, Council then needs to consider the allocation of the Chairs to the Scrutiny Committees, taking into account the political constitution of the Council and the requirements of Section 21(1) of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 in that Chairs of the Scrutiny Committees are allocated on a proportional basis i.e. the number of Scrutiny Chairs apportioned to the Executive (Majority) Group; and the number of Scrutiny Chairs apportioned amongst the remaining eligible Opposition Political Groups;
- 4.6 Accordingly, the Executive Group is to be apportioned 2 Chairs of Scrutiny Committees (Community, Finance and Strategic Leadership Scrutiny Committee, and Education, Skills and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee) whilst the number apportioned to Welsh Labour will be 2 Chairs of Scrutiny Committees (Social Services, Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Committee and

Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services Scrutiny Committee).

- 4.7 The Member appointments to the Scrutiny Committees, including Chairs and Vice Chairs, are then received by Council, in accordance with the wishes of the respective Political Groups.
- 4.8 The co-optees to the Education, Skills and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee are also required to be re-appointed by Council.
- 4.9 The proposed appointments to the Scrutiny Committees for 2024/2025 are set out in **Annex D** of this report.

Recommendation

- 4.8 Council is requested to approve the Recommendations in respect of the above, as set out in **Annex D** of this report.

5. Other Committees of the Council

- 5.1 The Neath Port Talbot Council Constitution summarises the current discharge of functions of the Other Committees of the Council:

Planning Committee

Registration and Licensing Committee

Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee

Personnel Committee

Special Appointments Committee

Governance and Audit Committee

Democratic Services Committee

Standards Committee

Appeals Panel

- 5.2 Council is now required to make decisions for the Civic Year 2024/2025, in respect of:

- the continuation of, or any changes to, the existing Constitutional arrangements for each Committee;

- the number of Members on each Committee and the apportionment of seats amongst the constituted Political Groups; and
- the Chairs and Vice Chairs of each Committee.

5.3 For Council's consideration, the recommendation in **Annex E** of this report proposes the following "Other Committees" be re-constituted under the existing arrangements:

Planning Committee
Registration and Licensing Committee
Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee
Personnel Committee
Special Appointments Committee
Appeals Panel
Standards Committee

5.4 In order to comply with the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, a **Democratic Services Committee** must be established to comprise elected Members only, with no more than one Executive (Cabinet) Member (who is not the Leader) and with the Committee Membership reflecting the political balance of the Council, including an Opposition Chair (appointed by Council).

5.5 The Member appointments to the above Committees, including Chairs and Vice Chairs, are received by Council, in accordance with the wishes of the respective Political Groups - taking into account the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 where applicable.

Recommendations

5.7 Council is requested to approve the Recommendations in respect of the revised "Other Committees" arrangements for 2024/2025 as set out in **Annex E** of this report

6. Staff Council and Other Member/Officer Groups

6.1 Council is required to consider the re-appointment of the following Groups, the number of Members thereon and the respective Chairs for the Civic Year 2024/2025:

**Staff Council;
Corporate Parenting Panel
Schools Standards Partnership Group**

and to receive the Member appointments to the same, according to the wishes of the Political Groups.

Recommendations

- 6.2 Council is requested to approve the Recommendations in respect of the above Member/Officer Groups for 2024/2025 as set out in **Annex F**.

7. Joint Committees, Outside and Other Public Bodies

- 7.1 Council is required to appoint the Member/Officer representation on the above bodies for the Civic Year 2024/2025. It should be noted Non-Executive Members are permitted to serve on such Committees where they deal with Executive functions. The Members will however represent the Executive, be accountable to the Executive and thus the Cabinet is responsible for making such appointments.
- 7.2 The Outside Body Representation is contained in **Annex G**

Recommendations

- 7.3 Council is requested to approve the Recommendation in **Annex G** for the appointment of Member/Officer appointments to Joint Committees, Outside and Other Public Bodies.

8. Cycle and Timetable of Meetings

- 8.1 Council is required to approve the provisional Committee Cycle and Timetable of Meetings for the Civic Year 2024/2025. Consultation has been carried out in accordance with Section 6 of the Local Government Measure 2011 and related Statutory Guidance.
- 8.2 Full details are given in **Annex H** and are subject to the approval of the proposals agreed earlier in this report

- 8.3 It should be noted that the Cycle includes the usual four-weekly recess during August for all meetings, other than the “Regulatory” meetings – Planning and Licensing Committees and Appeals Panel. Members are also asked to note that dates for Members’ Seminars included in the Cycle to aid Members in planning their own diary commitments and to promote maximum attendance at Seminars.
- 8.4 Consultation will continue to be undertaken as appropriate regarding the start time of meetings, with the Chair of each committee being provided with the opportunity to vary the start time by up to one hour following consultation with the committee members. A review of committee times will also be carried out in the 2024/2025 by the statutory Head of Democratic Services in order in accordance with the Local Government Measure 2011 and related Statutory Guidance.

Recommendations

- 8.5 Council is requested to consider and approve the new Committee Cycle and Timetable set out at **Annex H**.

9. Distribution of Senior Salaries

- 9.1 Members occupying specific posts shall be paid a Senior Salary. In accordance with the Regulations, the rates of Senior Salaries and Civic Salaries shall be reviewed annually as determined by the Annual or Supplementary Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales. A Member of the Authority cannot be paid a Senior Salary and a Civic Salary.

Recommendation

- 9.2 That Council approves the proposed distribution of the available Senior Salaries as set out in **Annex I**

10. Democratic Services Structure and Staffing Resource

- 10.1 Section 9(h) of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 places a duty on the statutory Head of Democratic Services to make reports and recommendations in respect of the number and grades of staff required to discharge democratic services functions. The structure set out in **Annex J** has been considered

and supported by the Democratic Services Committee. Also included are the executive support officers, whose role are to support the Cabinet office.

10.2 It should be noted that during the course of the 2024/2025 a review will be undertaken in respect of the Democratic Services Structure to incorporate the recent proposals to amend the scrutiny model and decision making forums (i.e. removal of Cabinet Boards). This will be reported to Democratic Services Committee and a report will be brought to Full Council for information in 2024/2025.

Recommendation

10.2 That Council endorses the structure of the Democratic Services section and Executive Support section as set out in **Annex J**.

Financial Impacts:

There are no financial impacts associated with this report

Integrated Impact Assessment:

There is no requirement for an Integrated Impact Assessment as this is a report in respect of governance arrangements only

Valleys Communities Impacts:

There are no valley community impacts

Workforce Impacts:

There are no workforce impacts associated with this report

Legal Impacts:

The report discharges duties placed on the Council pursuant to the Local Government Act 1972

Risk Management Impacts:

Failure to ensure that the appropriate appointments are made could render the Council in breach of its statutory duties.

Consultation:

There will be no requirement for any consultation.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Council:

- (1) Approves the Policy and Budget Framework as set out in **Annex A**.
- (2) Approves the proposals for the proposed size of the Executive and the Executive portfolios for the Civic Year 2024/2025 as set out in **Annex B**.
- (3) Approves apportionment of seats to the political groups as set out in **Annex C**.
- (4) Approves the proposals for the Scrutiny arrangements for the Civic Year 2024/2025 as set out in **Annex D**.
- (5) Approves the proposals in respect of the revised “Other Committees”, arrangements for the Civic Year 2024/2025 as set out in **Annex E**
- (6) Approves the proposals in respect of the Staff Council and other Member/Officer Groups as set out in **Annex F**
- (7) Approves the proposals in respect of the Joint Committees, Outside and Other Public Bodies as set out in **Annex G** subject to the membership appointment to Joint Committees being approved by Cabinet at its meeting following Council.
- (8) Approves the Cycle and Timetable of Meetings for 2024/2025, as set out in **Annex H** be approved;
- (9) Approves the proposed distribution of the available Senior Salaries as set out in **Annex I**
- (10) Endorses the structure of the Democratic Services section and Executive Support section as set out in **Annex J**.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

To ensure the Council is appropriately constituted pursuant to the Local Government Act 1972 and Local Government Act 2000

Implementation of Decision:

The decision is proposed for implementation immediately

Appendices:

None

List of Background Papers:

Constitution of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

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