

COUNCIL

(Civic Centre, Port Talbot)

Members Present:

28 September 2022

The Mayor: Councillor R.W.Wood

The Deputy Mayor: Councillor C.Williams

Councillors: A.R.Aubrey, T.Bowen, W.Carpenter, H.C.Clarke, C.Clement-Williams, M.Crowley, A.Dacey, H.Davies, H.Davies, R.Davies, C.Galsworthy, N.Goldup-John, W.F.Griffiths, M.Harvey, J.Henton, S.K.Hunt, J.Hurley, C.James, N.Jenkins, J.Jones, L.Jones, R.G.Jones, S.Jones, C.Jordan, S.A.Knoyle, C.Lewis, D.Lewis, A.Llewelyn, A.Lodwig, R.Mizen, K.Morris, S.Paddison, S.M.Penry, D.M.Peters, C.Phillips, R.Phillips, S.Pursey, P.A.Rees, S.Renkes, S.H.Reynolds, A.J.Richards, P.D.Richards, P.Rogers, M.Spooner, D.Thomas, S.Thomas, D.Whitlock and L.Williams

Officers in Attendance: K.Jones, A.Jarrett, A.Thomas, N.Pearce, C.Griffiths, M.Shaw, S.Curran and J.Woodman-Ralph

1. **Mayor's Announcements**

It was with regret that the Mayor informed Council of the recent death of Sally Ann Reynolds (nee Harper), the daughter of former Deputy Leader Councillor L.Harper and niece of the current Leader of Council Councillor S.K.Hunt. As a mark of respect Council observed a minute's silence.

Council joined the Mayor in congratulating all of the Welsh athletes and officials who recently competed in the Commonwealth games:

For Athletics: Joe Brier and Hannah Brier

For Boxing: Zoe Andrews

For Lawn Bowls: Laura Daniels and Julie Thomas

For Rugby Sevens: Callum Carson

For Swimming: Daniel Jervis

For Triathlon: Iestyn Harret

And officials:

Mark Adams, Chris Jones and Alison Harris

The Mayor also invited those athletes and officials to a mayoral reception to pay tribute to their achievements.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were received.

3. **Public Question Time.**

No questions were received.

4. **Update to Outside Body Appointments**

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services introduced the report which was to authorise a change to the appointment of Deputy Mayoress for the remainder of the Civic Year and to authorise changes to the allocation of seats on council committees to the political groups as detailed in the circulated report.

RESOLVED:

1. That Mrs Debbie Rees be appointed to the role of Deputy Mayoress for the remainder of the Civic Year.
2. That the changes to the membership of committees as detailed in the circulated report be approved.

5. **Welsh in Education Strategic Plan**

Councillor N. Jenkins, Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Wellbeing introduced the report.

The Plan has been subject to comprehensive public consultation and has been approved by partners, Welsh Government and the Education, Skills and Wellbeing Cabinet Board at a meeting held yesterday. The Plan was before Council today for permission to publish.

RESOLVED: Having given due regard to the Integrated Impact Assessment the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan as detailed in Appendix A to the circulated report be approved for publishing and to progress implementation.

6. **Notice of Motion under Section 10 of Part 4 (Rules of Procedure) the Council's Constitution**

The Mayor called upon Councillor Goldup-John to introduce his motion put before Council today on the “Climate Emergency”.

Councillor Goldup-John addressed Council:

“Council thank you for hearing this motion today. The declaration of the Climate Emergency on behalf of the whole of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council regardless of party should be something we all embrace.

The effects of climate change can already be seen throughout the world with more intense and frequent hurricanes in the America’s, severe flash flooding in Pakistan and sobering droughts in China which we have not seen for generations if at all. Locally, we have seen harrowing floods in my home town Skewen. Also, throughout the borough in Aberdulais, Ystalyfera and Port Talbot to name but a few. Record breaking heatwaves in July this year added additional pressure on local residents and devastating storms which have resulted in an enhanced regional focus on sea defence works throughout the borough. The doorstep effect of climate change are detrimental to the residents of Neath Port Talbot and its time we demand change. Not just for our generation but for our children and

grandchildren and all those who follow. The clock is ticking on the time for fossil fuels so let us not be those fools who rest on the inactions of others but rather chart and enhance a renewable course for Neath Port Talbot. Therefore, I propose this notice of motion to Council today to declare a climate emergency.

This Council therefore declares climate emergency, and calls upon the government of the United Kingdom to do the same.

- To call upon the UK and Welsh governments to provide us with the necessary powers and resources to ensure Neath Port Talbot becomes carbon neutral by 2030.
- To publicise climate emergency and promote a greater awareness of the truth of climate change amongst the local population.
- To work with relevant experts in research and development to:
 - Review our current strategies and action plans for addressing climate change;
 - Identify any further policy changes or actions which we could undertake, within the scope of our powers and resources, to meet the challenge of climate emergency;
 - Seek the help of local partners and other research bodies to explain to the community work already underway and achievements already made, as well as targets for the future.
- To update on further work undertaken by the Council in this area on an annual basis through the Council Annual Review of Performance Report section on the corporate wellbeing objectives. Our local environment, culture and heritage can be enjoyed by future generations. “

Councillor J.Hurley, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Wellbeing responded, highlighting that:

the De-carbonisation and Renewable Energy Strategy (DARE) had been published in April 2019. Embedded in that was an Action Plan, since that time the Council has commissioned a gap analysis to identify the areas of the strategy which needs further work. This analysis provided us with a route map for the Council to progress to reduce its carbon footprint to a point where it can be eliminated. It

was highlighted that this cannot be done in isolation to achieve this the Council has to work in partnership with other public organisations, third sector, private organisations and as Councillors with communities and residents.

Concern was expressed by some members on what impacts this would have on particular coal within the Neath Port Talbot County Borough. In addition, a query was raised whether the 21st century schools project which were constructed to Welsh Government specification to achieve net zero would still be achieved if Council moved to have smaller schools rather than one super school. Also, how would the Council fund the actions needed to achieve carbon zero. Further discussion took place on what further investment was planned to support the Council achieving net zero.

It was explained that the Council was pursuing a number of projects, one of which we are leading on within the City Deal project known as Supporting Innovation Low Carbon Growth. The Council has built an energy positive building in Baglan Energy Park and this was the first of its kind in the UK and achieved the Construction Excellence Award. The building not only support the energy needs of the building but it exports energy to the national grid which is converted into hydrogen. The Council was also working with the universities in the area and was a member of Flexis and South Wales Industrial Areas cluster. Those organisation are working with us and with other parties to try and improve the speed of which we transition to a net zero carbon world.

Members also received a clarification that the Skewen Flooding was currently subject to court action with the National Coal Board.

The Leader of Council, Councillor S.K.Hunt agreed to respond to the concerns raised at Council in regard to the queries on costings of the motion in writing within an appropriate timescale.

RESOLVED: That the motion “Climate Emergency” be adopted.

7. **Questions from Members, with Notice, under Rule 9.2 of the Council's Procedure Rules**

No questions were received.

8. **Urgent Items**

No urgent items received.

CHAIRPERSON