

COUNCIL

(Civic Centre, Port Talbot)

Members Present:

4 October 2023

The Mayor: Councillor C.Williams

The Deputy Mayor: Councillor M. Crowley

Councillors: A.R.Aubrey, T.Bowen, W.Carpenter,
H.C.Clarke, C.Clement-Williams, A.Dacey,
H.Davies, H.Davies, O.S.Davies, R.Davies,
S.E.Freeguard, N.Goldup-John, W.F.Griffiths,
J.Hale, S.Harris, J.Henton, S.K.Hunt, J.Hurley,
C.James, N.Jenkins, J.Jones, L.Jones,
S.Jones, C.Jordan, D.Keogh, S.A.Knoyle,
E.V.Latham, C.Lewis, D.Lewis, A.Llewelyn,
A.R.Lockyer, A.Lodwig, K.Morris, S.Paddison,
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,
L.Williams and R.W.Wood

Officers in Attendance: L.Beynon, S.Curran, N.Daniel, J.Hodges,
A.Jarrett, H.Jones, K.Jones,
A.Thomas, C.Morris, C.Plowman and P.Chivers

South Wales Police: Chief Superintendent Chris Truscott,
Superintendent Eve Davies

1. **Mayor's Announcements**

It was with great sadness that the Mayor informed Council of the deaths of the mother of Cllr. Robert Wood and Mrs. Margaret Thorne, CBE, OBE, Freeman of the Borough of Neath Port Talbot who was well known for her contribution to voluntary services.

Council stood for a minute's silence

2. **Leader's Announcements**

The Leader of Council gave an overview of the joint announcement made by the UK Government and Tata Steel on 15th September 2023. The UK government have proposed an investment of £0.5bn with a further investment of £750m from Tata Steel which would fund the replacement of the existing blast furnaces with an arc furnace. Consultation is currently taking place between Tata Steel and trade unions. The Leader noted that the steel industry is fundamental to the local and wider economy and national security and whilst the news of investment in the plant is welcomed, the potential number of jobs at risk is of great concern. There are currently no details of the proposed transition but Council will be informed as more information becomes available.

The Leader of Council gave an update on the Welsh Governments 20 mph policy which was implemented on restricted roads across Wales on 17 September 2023. The policy intent is to reduce the number and severity of casualties, to enable more people to use active travel, to reduce environmental impacts and to improve quality of life. Funding was made available by the Welsh Government to implement the policy change over two financial years. The guidelines provided by Welsh Government to make exceptions to the 20 mph policy are prescriptive, all exceptions put forward by council were vetted by Transport for Wales before they could be implemented. Recent ministerial statements suggest that local highway authorities are best placed to determine the application of speed limits, although any revisions of change as part of the policy are not yet supported by additional funding. The full impact of the policy change will emerge over the next six months, it is having widespread positive and negative impact across the county borough. Officers have monitored the changes that have been introduced and some local changes will be needed, local members and residents will be consulted as this is brought forward.

3. **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were received.

4. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting of Council**

The minutes of 12 July 2023, were approved as a true and accurate record.

5. **Public Question Time.**

No public questions were received

6. **Presentation to Council by South Wales Police**

The Mayor welcomed Chief Superintendent Chris Truscott, Divisional Camp Commander for the Western Division and Superintendent Eve Davies, who gave a remote presentation to Council on the current position for South Wales Police.

Members praised the professionalism and expertise within the force over the last eighteen months and commented that technology such as facial recognition and I.T. applications will potentially lead to cost savings.

Members asked for reassurance that prevention work and rapid response will still be carried out in relation to anti-social behaviour, given the current resource pressures. Chief Superintendent Truscott confirmed that anti-social behaviour was a high priority and despite funding pressures the force is committed to neighbourhood policing and investment continues in relation to PCSO's. A commitment was made that teams will continue to work proactively with all partners and members to solve problems that are impacting on local communities

Members commented on the outstanding efforts of South Wales Police to tackle substance misuse and serious and organised crime. Members asked what additional measures could be taken to address substance use and the extent of South Wales Police engagement with the recently established Western Bay Drug Commission. Chief Superintendent Truscott acknowledged that anti-social behaviour and substance misuse were linked and continued to be a concern. Although enforcement would still be carried out for those who cause the highest level of harm there is also a need for partnership work in relation to educating young people. Superintendent Eve Davies gave an overview of Project Adder.

Members asked for information relating to media reports of plans to restrict responses to certain types of incidents and asked if any restrictions would be imposed locally, especially in relation to vulnerable people in crisis. Chief Superintendent Truscott outlined the Right Care Right Person programme, which has been adopted nationally and is being implemented across England and Wales.

Work is ongoing in relation to the practicalities of the programme and a number of partner engagement events are taking place. Priority will always be given to people who are in significant and immediate crisis but it was noted that in certain situations, where no immediate threat to life was present, other partners may be best placed to attend. Clear understanding of each partner organisations responsibilities will be needed. The initial roll out is planned in the New Year/spring 2024.

Members outlined the recent issues at Baglan Energy Plant and stressed the importance of monthly meetings between Councillors and police to resolve any issues.

Members commented that many residents have lost confidence in calling the police and asked if data is available regarding the onward progression of reported crimes. Chief Superintendent Truscott, gave reassurance that previous issues regarding phone call handling had improved but acknowledged that more work is needed in neighbourhood policing to regain public confidence. Data on incoming call handling and response proportion is available.

Members made reference to the inadequate police response to the public disturbances that took place in Mayhill, Swansea and asked whether this could happen again. Chief Superintendent Truscott acknowledged that the force had learnt lessons from the Mayhill incident and recommendations from the independent review had been actioned. These recommendations were tested during a similar public disturbance in Ely and had worked well.

Members questioned whether there would be any changes to the precept this year. Chief Superintendent Truscott was unable to comment but following consultations with the Police and Crime commissioner, members will be updated of any changes.

Members expressed frustration regarding police reluctance to intervene in neighbour disputes and the high incidences of on-road and off-road motorbike nuisance and questioned whether drones could be used to help address this particular issue.

Members commented on the shift pattern of the PCSO's in the Afan Valley; current shift patterns do not provide adequate cover. Chief Superintendent Truscott will ensure the shift patterns are reviewed but gave assurances that other neighbourhood policing teams are available to respond to any urgent incidents.

The Cabinet member for Housing and Community Safety thanked Chief Superintendent Chris Truscott and Superintendent Eve Davies for their presentation and detailed responses to member's questions.

7. **Democratic Services Committee Annual Report 2022/23**

The Vice Chair of the Democratic Services Committee presented the Annual Report 2022/23, reference was made to an omission in the report, committee members Cllr Phil Rogers and Cllr. Wayne Carpenter had been omitted from the report in error. This oversight will be corrected. Members expressed thanks to the Democratic Services Team for their support.

RESOLVED: That Council note and endorse the Democratic Services Committee Annual Report 2022/23 attached at Appendix 1.

8. **Changes to Political Proportionality and Committee Membership**

The Democratic Services Manager introduced the report, outlining the proposed reapportionment of seats to council committees to the political groups. This follows the notification from Cllr. Angharad Aubrey that she intends to sit as a member of the Coedffranc Liberal and Green group.

Cllr. A Aubrey gave a brief statement to council regarding her decision to leave the Labour Party.

RESOLVED: Council approved the proportional allocation of seats to the political groups as contained in Appendix 1:

Council approve the changes to the membership of committees as contained in the report.

- That Cllr S Thomas be removed as a member of the Registration and Licensing Committee.
- That Cllr S Thomas be removed as a member of the Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee.
- That Cllr A Aubrey be removed as a member of the Governance and Audit Committee.
- That Cllr S Grimshaw be appointed as a member of the Governance and Audit Committee

- That Cllr S Thomas be removed as a member of the Democratic Services Committee
- That Cllr S Reynolds be appointed as a member of the Democratic Services Committee
- Cllr S Reynolds replaces Cllr S Thomas on Democratic Services Committee
- That Cllr A Aubrey be removed as a member of the Appeals Panel
- That Cllr S Paddison be appointed as a member of the Appeals Panel
- That Cllrs S Grimshaw and S Freeguard be removed as members of the Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services Scrutiny Committee
- That Cllrs S Thomas and R Wood be appointed as members of the Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services Scrutiny Committee
- That Cllrs A Aubrey and A Lockyer be removed as members of the Social Services, Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Committee
- That Cllrs D Whitlock and S Freeguard be appointed as members of the Social Services, Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Committee.
- That Cllr A Aubrey be removed as member of the Corporate Parenting Panel
- That Cllr S Freeguard be appointed as member of the Corporate Parenting Panel
- That Cllr D Whitelock be removed as member of the Education, Skills and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee
- That Cllr D Keogh be appointed as member of the Education, Skills and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee
- That Cllrs A Lockyer and S Renkes be appointed as substitutes to the Appeals Panel
- That Cllr A Aubrey be appointed as a member of the Registration and Licensing Committee.
- That Cllr A Aubrey be appointed as a member of the Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee
- That Cllr N Goldup John be removed as a member of the Planning Committee
- That Cllr A Aubrey be appointed as a member of the Planning Committee
- That Cllr K Morris be removed as a member of the Personnel Committee
- That Cllr J Jones be appointed as a member of the Personnel Committee.

9. **Revised Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) Delivery Agreement 2021-2036**

The Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning Transport and Connectivity presented the report.

Members referred to the draft delivery agreement and the summary of changes contained on page 35 of the report and asked what differences are expected from the revised plan. The Head of Planning and Public Protection advised members that dialogue is ongoing with Welsh Government officials who appreciate our local challenges and are supportive of this approach. The revised plan will enable evidence based studies to be updated, as well as building on key issues that have arisen recently such as the decision on Freeports and the transition of Tata Steel. There is also uncertainty in certain key policy areas (e.g. TAN15 Flooding) within Welsh Government and it is anticipated that the policy position will be updated and clarified in the spring. The intention is to repeat the candidate site process, looking at the thresholds of evidence based burden that has to support any submission, to potentially encourage a larger number of sites to come forward.

Members commented that it was pleasing that the Valleys communities' impact is being re-visited and acknowledged that space is limited around the M4 corridor route.

Members questioned whether candidate sites submitted previously would be penalised and potentially lost due to financial reasons, is there any evidence that delaying and re-opening the call will enable the required numbers to be reached? The Head of Planning and Public Protection confirmed that candidate sites already submitted would be rolled forward and no re-submissions would be required.

RESOLVED: The RLDP Delivery Agreement as presented in Appendix 2 be agreed for the basis of consultation and subsequent submission to Welsh Government for approval.

Decision making on responses to any representations received following consultation be delegated to the Head of Planning and Public Protection in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Transport and Connectivity. Any substantive changes deemed necessary to the

Delivery agreement will be reported to Council for approval.

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

No Notice of Motions were received.

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

No questions were received.

12. **Urgent Items**

No urgent items were received.

CHAIRPERSON