COUNCIL

(Civic Centre, Port Talbot)

Members Present:	**13 March 2024**

The Mayor:	**Councillor Chris Williams**
The Deputy Mayor:	**Councillor Matthew Crowley**
Councillors:	A.R.Aubrey, T.Bowen, W.Carpenter, H.C.Clarke, C.Clement-Williams, M.Crowley, H.Davies, H.Davies, O.S.Davies, R.Davies, S.E.Freeguard, C.Galsworthy, N.Goldup-John, W.F.Griffiths, S.Grimshaw, J.Hale, S.Harris, M.Harvey, J.Henton, J.Hurley, C.James, N.Jenkins, J.Jones, R.G.Jones, S.Jones, C.Jordan, D.Keogh, S.A.Knoyle, E.V.Latham, D.Lewis, A.Llewelyn, A.R.Lockyer, R.Mizen, S.Paddison, C.Phillips, S.Pursey, S.Rahaman, S.Renkes, S.H.Reynolds, G.Rice, A.J.Richards, P.D.Richards, P.Rogers, S.Thomas, D.Whitelock, C.Williams, L.Williams, R.W.Wood and B.Woolford
Officers in Attendance:	C.Griffiths, A.Jarrett, K.Jones, N.Pearce, M.Shaw and A.Thomas
Representatives of the Translation Service:	Present

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1. Mayor's Announcements

It was with sadness that the Mayor informed Council of the death of the wife of former Chief Executive Ken Sawyer, Mrs Jackie Sawyer. Mrs Sawyer attending many local events and civic occasions.

Council stood to observe a minute's silence.

2. Leader's Announcements

The Deputy Leader announced the apologies of the Leader.

3. **Voting Systems for Principal Area - Local Government Elections**

The Chief Executive introduced the Voting Systems for Principal Area, Local Government Elections as per the circulated report.

It was explained that members have a choice to retain the current 'first past the post' system or to alternatively choose to move to a 'single transferable vote' system.

Members debated the topic at length.

Members highlighted that the move to STV (Single Transferable Vote) will come at a cost and complexity to the Local Authority, and the likely issues of consistency between voting methods in UK Parliamentary, Senedd, Town and Community Council and County Council elections.

It was also raised that by the Senedd not legislating the change, the STV method comes with no electronic counting mechanisms, which is a logistical burden when administering an election count. Moving to the STV system would also trigger a Boundary Review of existing Ward Boundaries, which has only very recently taken place and concern about widening and changing ward boundaries and the logistics around this was discussed (particularly in relation to the practicality of Valley wards where an increase in geographical area would have the consequences of increased travel expenses, workload and disparate ward knowledge.)

Members referred to where the system is used in other countries, and then went on to discuss how STV could enhance local democracy, the importance of proportional representation and how it can improve diversity in democracy and agreed the merits of consulting with the public to gauge their opinions at this stage.

It was clarified by the Group Leaders that there is no whipped vote in relation to the upcoming question.

Council were then asked the question:

Do you wish to consider changing the voting system for local elections from first past the post to single transferable vote?

A recorded vote was proposed and seconded and approved by the appropriate number of members.

There were 11 votes for yes, 38 votes for no and no abstentions.

Therefore, the Council voted against considering changing the voting system for local elections from first past the post to single transferable vote.

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

None received.

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

None received.

6. **Urgent Items**

There were none.

CHAIRPERSON