



## **C O U N C I L   S U M M O N S**

**To all Members of Council**

**You are hereby summoned to attend a**

**MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

**to be held at 2.00 pm on**

**16 October 2024**

**in the**

**MULTI-LOCATION MEETING - COUNCIL CHAMBER, PORT TALBOT  
& MICROSOFT TEAMS**

**ALL MOBILE TELEPHONES TO BE SWITCHED TO SILENT FOR THE  
DURATION OF THE MEETING**

**Webcasting:** This meeting may be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's Internet Site. By participating you are consenting to be filmed and the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes.

**--- A G E N D A ---**

### **PART A**

1. Mayor's Announcements
2. Leader's Announcements
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Minutes of the Previous Meetings of Council (Pages 3 - 24)

5. Public Question Time.  
*Questions must be submitted in writing to Democratic Services [democratic.services@npt.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@npt.gov.uk) no later than noon on the working day prior to the meeting. Questions must relate to items on the agenda. Questions will be dealt with in a 10 minute period.*

## **PART B**

6. Update to Constitution to reflect Joint Working Arrangements (Pages 25 - 32)
7. Committee Membership Changes (Pages 33 - 36)

## **PART C**

8. Notice of Motion under Section 10 of Part 4 (Rules of Procedure) the Council's Constitution
9. Questions from Members, with Notice, under Rule 9.2 of the Council's Procedure Rules
10. Urgent Items  
*Any urgent items at the discretion of the Chairperson pursuant to Section 100BA(6)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).*



**Chief Executive**

**Civic Centre  
Port Talbot**

**Thursday, 10 October 2024**

## COUNCIL

(Civic Centre, Port Talbot)

**Members Present:**

**26 July 2024**

**The Mayor:** Councillor Matthew Crowley

**The Deputy Mayor:** Councillor Wayne Carpenter

**Councillors:** C.Clement-Williams, A.Dacey, R.Davies, S.E.Freeguard, C.Galsworthy, N.Goldup-John, W.F.Griffiths, S.Grimshaw, J.Hale, S.Harris, M.Harvey, L.Heard, J.Henton, S.K.Hunt, J.Hurley, N.Jenkins, J.Jones, L.Jones, R.G.Jones, S.Jones, S.A.Knoyle, E.V.Latham, C.Lewis, A.Llewelyn, A.Lodwig, K.Morris, S.Paddison, D.M.Peters, C.Phillips, S.Rahaman, P.A.Rees, S.Renkes, S.H.Reynolds, G.Rice, A.J.Richards, P.D.Richards, P.Rogers, S.Thomas, D.Whitelock, L.Williams and R.W.Wood

**Officers in Attendance:** S.Curran, N.Daniel, C.Griffiths, K.Jones, C.Morris, T.Rees, M.Shaw, A.Thomas, A.Thomas and A.Thomas

**Representatives of the Translation Service:** Present

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### 1. **Mayor's Announcements**

The Mayor wished the 31 Welsh athletes that will be competing in the Paris Olympics well, and made particular reference to Daniel Jervis from Resolven who will be taking part in his second Olympics in the 1500m swimming freestyle.

The Mayor also congratulated Derek Salisbury from Port Talbot, Chair of Neath Hockey Club who was honoured in the Kings Honours List and received an MBE for his services to hockey in South Wales.

2. **Leader's Announcements**

There were none.

3. **Declarations of Interest**

No interests were declared.

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

**RESOLVED:** that the previous minutes be approved as an accurate record.

5. **Public Question Time.**

None received.

6. **Budget 2025-26 -Outlook**

The Chief Executive advised Council of the financial outlook for 2025-26 and the broad approach that will be taken to support the setting of the Council's revenue and capital budgets for the financial year 25/26.

Council were informed that the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Constitution and Cabinet Office in her statement of 11th June 2024 recognises the challenging context and makes clear that we must prepare for difficult decisions and trade-offs in our planning. A Welsh Spending Review is to be undertaken and this will drive the Welsh Government's future annual budgets.

It was highlighted that the statement makes clear that there will be an emphasis on key priorities for Wales – reducing NHS waiting lists; support for children in early years; educational excellence in our schools; better, greener jobs; secure homes; and improved transport links across the country. The incoming Labour Government following the General Election held on 4th July 2024 is yet to signal whether it will adjust current spending plans. Welsh Government advise, for 2025-26, we should base our planning on NO uplift to the Revenue Support Grant.

It was explained that the scale of the challenge a cash flat Settlement presents for Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council was set out in the body of the report and that work has already started to identify

the measures that will need to be considered to achieve a balanced budget for the next financial year.

The Chief Finance Officer detailed to members the financial modelling and based on the latest assumptions highlighted to Council that the budget gap for 2025/2026 is £18.061m before any increases to Council Tax. In his role as the Council's section 151 Officer, he made it clear to members the very serious financial position the Council is in. He explained there is some resilience in relation to the Council's reserve position but clarified that this is not a long term solution.

Directors gave detailed breakdowns of the budget pressures being faced in their services areas as detailed in the report:

The Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning highlighted in particular that Neath Port Talbot is the only Council in Wales where schools are in an overall deficit position. This is in relation to Teachers Pay awards not being appropriately funded, energy costs and the ALN support requirements.

The Director of Social Services outlined the significant increase to demand and complexity to the service. Concerns were raised regarding Welsh Government and Home Office policy decisions which are resulting in an unsustainable position for Local Government given the ever increasing numbers of vulnerable people in our communities.

The Director of Environment and Regeneration made particular reference to energy costs, construction inflation and costs of raw materials as well as the ambitious unfunded decarbonisation targets from Welsh Government WG decarbonisation targets.

The Director of Strategy and Corporate Services made reference to increased and unfunded regulatory, legislative and digital requirements from Welsh Government.

It was reiterated that the many years of austerity, coupled with the series of economic shocks in recent years and the prospect of further significant reductions to the Council's funding base, will have very negative overall consequences for the services and functions the Council operate, the number of people it will be able to employ and rates of council tax, fees and charges and members of Council were urged to lobby UK and Welsh Government to start funding Local Government appropriately.

**RESOLVED:** That the potential for there to be no increase to the Revenue Support Grant in 2025-26 and the serious implications this will have for services, jobs, fees and charges and council tax levels be noted.

7. **Corporate Plan 2024/2027**

Members received the Corporate Plan for 2024/2027: Working towards a more prosperous, fairer and greener NPT as contained within the circulated report.

It was clarified that a summary of the aspirations and key elements would be provided.

**RESOLVED:** that the Council adopt the Corporate Plan for the period 2024/2027.

That Council note the priorities will need to be subject ongoing review given the level of uncertainty in terms of available revenue and capital resources provided by Government.

That the Director of Strategy & Corporate Services be granted delegated authority in consultation with the Leader, Deputy Leader and Chief Executive to make any further changes that are necessary prior to final publication and which do not materially change the content of the Plan.

8. **Democratic Services Committee Annual Report**

The Chair of the Democratic Services Committee presented the Annual Report 2023/24. Members expressed thanks to the Democratic Services Team for their support.

**RESOLVED:** That Council note and endorse the Democratic Services Committee Annual Report 2023/24 attached at Appendix 1.

9. **Standards Committee Annual Report**

Craig Griffiths, Head of Legal and Democratic Services presented Council with the Standards Committee Annual Report representing the Chair of the Standards Committee, Mrs Louise Fleet.

Members were reminded that there is now a legal requirement for Standards Committees to make an annual report to the full Council on the standards regime within Neath Port Talbot.

Members were asked to take particular note of the new duty in respect of group leaders and their obligation to ensure ethical behaviours and conduct. The Standards Committee was pleased to report the engagement of group leaders and to provide an assurance to Council in that regard.

Members were urged to remain mindful of the fundamental importance of high standards of conduct in order for members of the public to maintain their trust and confidence in local democracy.

**RESOLVED:** That Standards Committee Annual Report 2023-2024 be noted and the recommendations included therein.

#### 10. **Scrutiny Committees Annual Reports**

The Scrutiny Champion, Cllr Phil Rogers presented the Scrutiny Annual Reports for 2023/24. Members expressed thanks to the Scrutiny Team for their support.

**RESOLVED:** That Council note and endorse the Scrutiny Committees Annual Reports 2023/24.

#### 11. **Establishment of a Freeport Joint Scrutiny Committee**

Members received the proposal to establish a Joint Scrutiny Committee for the Celtic Freeport Joint Committee with Pembrokeshire County Council as contained within the circulated report.

**RESOLVED:** That the establishment of a Joint Scrutiny Committee for the Celtic Freeport Joint Committee on the terms identified in the Joint Committee Establishment Agreement enclosed at Appendix 1 be approved.

That the Members identified at paragraph 9 of the circulated report be appointed as the Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council members of the

Joint Scrutiny Committee for the Celtic Freeport  
Joint Committee.

12. **Committee Membership**

**RESOLVED:** that the following changes to Council Committee membership be agreed:

That Cllr Helen Ceri Clarke be removed as a member of the Community, Finance and Strategic Leadership Scrutiny Committee.

That Cllr Angharad Aubrey be appointed as a member of the Community, Finance and Strategic Leadership Scrutiny Committee.

That Cllr Angharad Aubrey be removed as a member of the Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services Scrutiny Committee.

That Cllr Helen Ceri Clarke be appointed as a member of the Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services Scrutiny Committee.

That Cllr Wayne Carpenter be removed as a member of the Governance and Audit Committee.

That Cllr Andy Ludwig be appointed as a member of the Governance and Audit Committee.

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

There was one notice of motion received under Section 10 of Part 4 (Rules of Procedure) of the Council's Constitution.

The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Cllr Simon Knoyle and seconded by Cllr Sarah Thomas was APPROVED.

It is noted that:

Recent years have been characterised by considerable volatility as a result of world and domestic events.

Specifically:



- The pandemic period has left a significant legacy with high numbers of people requiring support from social services, homelessness services and more young people presenting with additional learning needs and more young people needing additional help to attend school and participate in their education;
- Energy prices, general inflation and interest rates have sharply increased. Although inflation has now returned to 2%, many goods and services remain more costly and energy prices and interest rates remain high;
- The cost of living crisis continues with many of our residents and local businesses experiencing financial hardship;
- Whilst there has been a small increase in the number of people unemployed, the labour market remains very competitive and this is reflected in higher prices for services. The council is also continuing to experience difficulty filling some roles in our organisation. A worrying large number of people of working age are economically inactive and not looking for work;
- Capital projects have become more challenging to deliver as a consequence of a number of factors identified above; and
- Whilst the Council is engaged in a range of significant economic development opportunities and is also a key partner in responding to the challenging and complex changes at Tata Steel UK Ltd, the cumulative impact of these developments is challenging to resource whilst uncertainty remains.

The revenue settlements from Welsh Government in the last two financial years – 2023/4 and 2004/5 fell substantially short of what the Council needed to deliver its services and functions. Additional pressures of some £70 million were identified for the two year period with Welsh Government providing some £26.9 million funding. Budget cuts, additional income, including council tax increases have been necessary to balance the budget – the associated change management activity has increased workloads, placing further pressure across the organisation.

The Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Constitution and Cabinet Office in her statement of 11th June 2024 recognises the challenging context and makes clear that we must prepare for difficult decisions and trade-offs in our planning. A Welsh Spending Review is to be undertaken and this will drive the Welsh Government's future annual

budgets. The statement makes clear that there will be an emphasis on key priorities for Wales – reducing NHS waiting lists; support for children in early years; educational excellence in our schools; better, greener jobs; secure homes; and improved transport links across the country.

The incoming Labour Government following the General Election held on 4th July 2024 is yet to signal whether it will adjust current spending plans. Welsh Government advise, for 2025-26, we should base our planning on NO uplift to the Revenue Support Grant.

The scale of the challenge a cash flat Settlement presents for Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council is serious. Work has already started to identify the measures that will need to be considered to achieve a balanced budget for the next financial year. The many years of austerity, coupled with the series of economic shocks in recent years and the prospect of further significant reductions to the Council's funding base, will have very negative overall consequences for the services and functions we operate, the number of people we will be able to employ and rates of council tax, fees and charges.

Accordingly, it is resolved that:

- Members note the serious implications that will stem from no increases to the Revenue Support Grant in 2025-2026 on services, jobs, fees and charges and council tax levels.
- The Leader of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, on behalf of all elected members, write to UK and Welsh Government highlighting the pressures which are identified in this motion and expressing serious concern over the potential for no uplift to the revenue support grant and to call on UK and Welsh Government to provide adequate funding to enable the sustainability of councils.

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

Two question from Members with Notice under Rule 9.2 of the Council's Procedure Rules were received.

Question 1:

Cllr Stephanie Grimshaw asked the following:

“Plan International UK has released a report highlighting the state of girls’ rights across the UK, with Neath Port Talbot alarmingly identified as the most challenging place in Wales to live as a girl. What specific measures are the Council taking to address the barriers that women and girls face in the borough? Additionally, will the council develop an action plan based on the issues raised in the report?”

Cllr Simon Knoyle, Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Social Justice provided the following response:

Can I thank my colleague cabinet member Cllr Sian Harris and the Director of Social Services, Housing and Community Safety for enabling local young people supported by our HOPE service to contribute to this research. It is good to see that as well as ensuring young people are shaping the way we are responding to the issues facing women and girls at a local level, we are also helping our young people to shape research like this which has the potential to bring about policy change at Government level.

I note that the recommendations set out in the report are aimed at Government, however, I have asked officers to undertake a detailed review of the report and its findings. I have also asked for advice on any additional action that we can consider beyond those initiatives that we have already identified in our Strategic Equality Plan and associated policies. I look forward to having further discussion with members once that advice is to hand.

I note that Cllr Grimshaw’s question draws attention to the scoring that researchers have applied across all areas in the UK and the relative position of NPT in that index. Having read the report, I can see that whilst the researchers have attempted to identify those areas where women and young people may face the greatest challenges, the report urges caution in using the results for individual areas. I quote:

‘The goal is not to single out individual local authorities, but to show the scale of structural challenges faced both by girls and young women as they navigate through life, and also the difficulties facing local leaders in delivering services to communities in need of support. Each local authority will be facing different, and sometimes more extreme, challenges in terms of delivering services. Communities with greater needs for services, in order to give girls the best possible start in life, will inherently need to spend more in delivering public services

– but this has become increasingly challenging. We have detailed earlier in this report the pressures facing local government finance generally – councils are now dealing with a 27% real terms cut in core spending power since 2010 against a backdrop of increasing costs to delivery services and increasing demand from a growing population’

The report authors also conclude that:

‘There are challenges across the country – not one place varies outside 69.07 to 79.74 out of 100 on our Index. This shows that every community has room to improve, and robust support and investment from central governments is necessary to improve the lives of girls and young women in the UK.’

That advice is clearly very important in ensuring that the report findings are used in a constructive and productive manner and not used inappropriately. I am sure you will agree with that.

Whilst waiting for the analysis I have commissioned to be available, I would like to take the opportunity today to underline our ongoing commitment to addressing gender inequality. It must be of concern to all of us that despite a range of policy initiatives over an extended period of time, women and girls from all backgrounds across the United Kingdom continue to experience significant challenges and inequality.

Of course, NPT Council has been working hard to address inequality since its inception - an issue which has been supported across all political groups. I pay tribute to those cabinet members that have come before me who have championed equality of opportunity for everyone. I am committed to continuing to build on their achievements so we can make further progress.

Just as a brief reminder to members of council of some of the important work in progress:

The Cabinet continues to meet with the Youth Council to hear directly from young people and we have been very pleased to support our current youth mayor in her work to champion better sexual health and relationship service for young people;

We continue to give priority to ensuring all children and young people are aware of their rights and are confident to exercise those rights. We are particularly proud of the work undertaken by our Youth Service who have been externally recognised for the significant

difference they are making with young people, particularly those facing the greatest disadvantage and the work done through the HOPE project by Children's Social Services;

The Council continues to provide leadership across local partnership agencies to reduce violence against women and girls, sexual abuse and domestic violence and has protected the budgets that enable this important work to take place;

As an employer, we have made very good progress in addressing equal pay. Chwarae Teg formally recognised the work done by the Council to support women experiencing the menopause and to enable women on lower pay to progress within our organisation; women are better represented at senior level across the organisation now, which includes the appointment of the current chief executive Mrs Karen Jones to the most senior professional role in the Council;

These are a just few of the changes we have introduced that are making a difference. Details of the wider work being delivered across the Council will be provided in the fuller update report that I referenced earlier in my response.

Mr Mayor, this is my initial response to the question posed by Cllr Grimshaw this afternoon. Clearly, the approval of the Council's Equality Policy and Plan is the responsibility of the whole Council so I look forward to continuing the dialogue on this important issues once the analysis I have commissioned is available.

Cllr Sian Harris also explained the purpose of the HOPE charity.

Cllr Grimshaw highlighted the data in the report in relation to Neath Port Talbot and that it needs a whole system approach when decisions are being taken.

Question 2:

Cllr Rob Jones asked the following:

This council resolved over two years ago to bring Celtic Leisure in house. Can the Cabinet Member for leisure report to council on the progress made by the Coalition to fulfil that decision and bring it back in house”?

The Cabinet Member for Nature, Tourism and Wellbeing responded

The future of the Indoor Leisure contract, currently with Celtic Leisure, is something that has been under careful consideration since the decision to insource was made, and Members will be aware that the arrangements in terms of Celtic Leisure in respect of financial year 2024/25 were incorporated into the Council budget setting process, which was communicated and properly scrutinised.

In preparation for insourcing, as previously intended in April 2023 and April 2024, officers from departments across the Council together with senior Celtic Leisure staff have worked closely to make the preparations necessary for such a change.

In doing so they have been monitoring and regularly updating the costs of insourcing, and whilst there are positives to insourcing, the substantial additional costs of circa £1.4m a year is certainly not one of them.

As members will know the council has been having to make some difficult decisions as we see the government settlement flatline and inflation surging over the past couple of years. As adding an extra £1.4m pressure to those cuts was not very desirable, we have been working with the Trade Unions to identify the best possible way forward.

Council officers have worked closely with the Celtic Leisure board to improve the quality of strategic leadership within the company, which has resulted this year in a £460k reduction in the management fee, achieved through boosting income, which was very helpful in helping to reduce the level of cuts needed across the rest of the Council services.

The Celtic Leisure contract expires at the end of March 2025, so a final decision will now have to be made soon, and you will note there is an item on the forward plan for October, where we will be bringing forward a report on the options now available.

Cllr Jones followed up by referring to the £1.3m budget pressure that exists from bringing Celtic Leisure in house. He asked for the Cabinet Member to give an undertaking to deliver on the promise to safeguard leisure provision.

Cllr Cen Phillips stated that no decision has been taken and discussions with the Celtic Board, Trade Unions and staff are ongoing to review all options. An evidence based decision will be taken, prioritising the protection of jobs and services

## 15. **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

**CHAIRPERSON**

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## COUNCIL

(Civic Centre, Port Talbot)

**Members Present:**

**4 September 2024**

**The Mayor:** Councillor M.Crowley

**The Deputy Mayor:** Councillor W.Carpenter

**Councillors:** A.R.Aubrey, T.Bowen, H.C.Clarke, A.Dacey, 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, L.Heard, 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, A.Llewelyn, A.R.Lockyer, A.Lodwig, R.Mizen, S.Paddison, D.M.Peters, C.Phillips, R.Phillips, S.Pursey, S.Rahaman, P.A.Rees, 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:** S.Curran, N.Daniel, C.Furlow-Harris, C.Griffiths, A.James, A.Jarrett, K.Jones, L.McAndrew, C.Morris, M.Shaw, A.Thomas and J.Woodman-Ralph

**Representative of the Wales Audit Office** Alison Lewis

**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 former Councillor and Mayor, Councillor Peter Lloyd who served the

Seven Sisters Ward and was Mayor of the County Borough between 2003 and 2004.

Council stood to observe a minute's silence.

## 2. **Leader's Announcements**

The Leader announced to Council that the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru has published its initial proposals for Wales' 16 new Senedd constituencies yesterday and that the Commission is inviting comments on its proposals by 30<sup>th</sup> September.

The Commission is required to pair the new Parliamentary Constituencies to arrive at 16 new Senedd constituencies. The Commission must have regard to a number of rules in coming to its proposals.

The new parliamentary constituency of Neath and Swansea East is proposed to be paired with Brecon, Radnor and Cwmtawe. The Aberavon Maesteg constituency is proposed to be paired with Rhondda and Ogmore.

Given the importance of this issue, the Leader said he will be writing to each political group leader inviting them to nominate 2 members to help develop the Council's formal response to the proposal within the consultation window.

The Leader continued to explain to Council that the eighth meeting of the Tata Transition Board took place on 15th August 2024.

At that meeting, the Secretary of State for Wales, Jo Stevens, announced the release of £13.5 million to assist businesses with a significant exposure to Tata and also to support employees and contractors at risk of redundancy.

The Leader explained that this announcement was welcome as the Council has been responding to many requests for support through its Business Support and Employability Service for several months. The additional funding will enable agencies who are involved in providing help and support, including the Council, to gear up their own capacity before the company moves into its next phase where we anticipate more businesses and people will be looking for help.

Following the meeting, the Secretary of State also paid tribute to the way Neath Port Talbot businesses and wider community has come

forward. The Leader reminded members that the Council offered guaranteed interviews to steelworkers following the announcement by the company last year and continues to do so. The Leader explained that the Council has reached out to local partners and businesses to ask them if they were in a position to help. A significant number of organisations have come forward offering vacancies, training opportunities and other forms of help. The Council is continuing to develop the network of support, including working with neighbouring authorities. The Leader stated it had been good to see the Secretary of State and First Minister publicly acknowledge the important role of the Council in helping those impacted by the transition process.

The Leader concluded by explaining that the Council is leading discussions on short-medium term job creation opportunities. It is expected that the Transition Board will receive advice this side of Christmas on a number of projects it could consider to bring new jobs to our local economy, whilst also reinforcing the importance of the Welsh and UK governments continuing to support the work we have been doing through the Celtic Freeport and the associated development of the port of Port Talbot.

3. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

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

The minutes from the 31<sup>st</sup> July were approved.

5. **Public Question Time.**

There had been one question submitted to Council.

Mr Holroyd was welcomed and asked the following question to Council:

*Is Neath Port Talbot aware that even if we stopped all fossil fuel production today, food emissions alone would exceed the 1.5 limit of the Paris Agreement?*

*Did you know that the majority of food emissions come from meat and dairy, and a recent analysis of UK diets revealed that food emissions could be slashed by 75% with a plant-based diet?*

*As well as a climate crisis, we also face a biodiversity crisis. In fact, Britain has lost more of its natural biodiversity than almost anywhere else in Western Europe. 83% of farmland worldwide is used for animal agriculture, but it only supplies 18% of global calories. In fact, if every country ate and consumed like the UK, we would need another planet the size of Mercury to feed everyone. A plant-based food system on the other hand would create an opportunity to return three-quarters of agricultural land to nature, absorb carbon dioxide in the process and improve biodiversity.*

*If we switched to a plant-based food system we could also improve public health. If the UK population swapped meat for their weekday lunches, over 11,000 cases of Type 2 Diabetes could be prevented a year, and 366k fewer people could be living with cardiovascular disease. This council could help make that happen.*

*Research shows that the public trusts their local council representatives more than national governments, so I believe this council has a mandate to lead this initiative by introducing plant-based menus and defaults to help increase the consumption of plant-based food across Neath Port Talbot.*

*Several councils, including Edinburgh, Norwich, Lambeth, Exmouth and Belfast have endorsed the Plant Based Treaty and initiated real actions to reduce food emissions such as plant-based catering at meetings and events, carbon labelling in schools and universities, fruit and vegetable vouchers for low income communities, commitments to lower emissions of school plates, plant-based cookery workshops for the community and public education campaigns.*

*Will Neath Port Talbot show climate action leadership by endorsing the Plant Based Treaty and developing a Plant Based Treaty action plan?*

The Cabinet Member for Nature, Tourism and Wellbeing thanked Mr Holroyd for his question along with raising the importance of this topic at Council.

The Cabinet member highlighted that Neath Port Talbot was providing clear leadership, and believed it was demonstrating its commitment in addressing the issues of Climate Change, Decarbonisation and Biodiversity.

The Council acknowledged the important role it has in reducing the impact on the climate and nature emergencies by working towards a more prosperous, fairer and greener Neath Port Talbot as detailed within the Corporate Plan.

It was noted that the production of meat and dairy had a significant impact on the climate. The Cabinet Member highlighted that consideration around improved environmental sustainability around both meat production and plant based choices and that we will all need to eat less meat, and consider improved environmental sustainability both within meat production and with alternative plant-based choices. There are important conversations to be had around this issue locally as well as nationally, and that's the purpose of the Local Food Partnership. \*\*

The Cabinet Member stated that although direct responsibility for agriculture lies with the Welsh Government, which has published 'The Agriculture ( Wales ) Act 2023', introducing the Sustainable Land Management Framework with a focus on sustainable food production, the Neath Port Talbot Food Partnership is bringing together people, businesses and organisations with an interest in the local food sector. It seeks to collaborate, connect and strengthen NPT's food system and local food economy. Together, we are working towards those shared values and priorities, developing projects that promote healthy, local and sustainable food. It's about businesses, organisations and local residents, coming together to try and re-localise our food supply chain and support local small producers in the food system, and he said he would love to hear from anyone who is keen to be involved.

The Cabinet Member went on to explain that underpinning our commitment to addressing Climate Change, the Council published it's 'Decarbonisation and Renewable Energy Strategy' in May 2020. Two years later, in September 2022, the Council declared a climate emergency. This focused on key priorities approved by Council that it believed could progress and were within the Council's control. This work has involved reducing carbon emissions across our estate, developing one of the UK's first 'energy positive' commercial office buildings, decarbonising our vehicle fleet, and working towards a prosperous, low-carbon economy for Neath Port Talbot. Neath Port Talbot Council also published its 1<sup>st</sup> Biodiversity Duty Plan in 2017 demonstrating this council's ongoing commitment to maintaining and enhancing biodiversity, and promoting the resilience of our eco-systems. The latest revision to the Plan was in 2023, and it will be considered on a three year cycle, ensuring it remains relevant

and demonstrates our long term vision to reverse the decline in Biodiversity.

At present Neath Port Talbot Council does not have a 'Corporate Food Strategy', and the Cabinet Member stated that this is certainly something the Council will consider. Schools provide over six and a half thousand meals every day, and promote a healthy balanced diet with a wide choice of non-meat and non-dairy produce, including vegetables, salads and fresh fruit. Similar diverse menu options are also available at a number of sites owned by the Council that provide catering for customers, such as Margam Park. The Cabinet Member was keen that we continue to improve and enhance our plant-based offerings, and to encourage people to consider alternative options to meat and dairy products, as part of a balanced healthy diet.

He stated he was aware of the Plant Based Treaty and that research is ongoing to discover best practise within other Local Authorities. He re-iterated the commitment as a Council in addressing Climate Change, Decarbonisation and Biodiversity, and as we review our key delivery plans the Cabinet Member stated he will be asking officers to take into account the important issues raised by the Plant Based Treaty.

Mr Holroyd was thanked for the question and for highlighting this issue.

Mr Holroyd thanked the Cabinet Member for his response and finished with a poem on the Plant Based Treaty.

## 6. **Audit Wales - Annual Audit Summary 2023**

Council received a presentation from Alison Lewis, Audit Wales setting out the work completed since the last Annual Audit Summary in March 2023.

**RESOLVED:** that Council notes the content of the Annual Audit Summary 2023.

## 7. **Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028**

The revised Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) for 2024-2028 was presented to Council following approval at Cabinet on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2024.

Attention was drawn to a statement in the report stating that NPT has one of the largest Gypsy and Traveller Communities in Wales and more detail around this was sought.

The Officers committed to responding in writing with further detail.

It was noted that feedback from the Scrutiny Committees had been fed into the Plan.

**RESOLVED:** That Council adopt the Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028.

That the Head of People and Organisational Development be given delegated authority to make such changes as may be needed to the Strategic Equality Plan prior to publication, provided that such changes do not materially alter the content of the document considered by Council.

8. **Gambling Act Policy**

The draft Gambling Act Policy was presented to Council prior to commencing the consultation process.

It was noted that Members were pleased that NPT remains a 'No Casino' town.

**RESOLVED:** that the draft Gambling Act Policy commence the statutory consultation exercise be APPROVED.

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

None received.

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

The following was asked by Councillor Sonia Reynolds:

"Given that the very well-used, Pontardawe Swimming Pool was closed for good at the end of August, could the Cabinet Member please update Council on the progress of the Feasibility Study, to investigate options for a replacement pool, for which £30,000 has been allocated?"

Cllr Cen Phillips, Cabinet Member for Nature, Tourism and Wellbeing stated that a written answer would follow.

11. **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

**CHAIRPERSON**



## NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### COUNCIL

16<sup>th</sup> October 2024

### REPORT OF THE HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

#### Matter for Decision

**Wards Affected:** All

#### Update to Constitution to reflect joint working arrangements

#### Purpose of the Report

1. To update the Constitution of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (“the Constitution”) in respect of joint working arrangements and to agree and identify the Joint Committees in place by Neath Port Talbot Council following the recent approval of the Celtic Freeport Joint Working Agreement

#### Background

2. At its meeting of the 29<sup>th</sup> May 2024, Cabinet approved the Joint Working Agreement in respect of the establishment of the Celtic Freeport Public Funds Committee. At its meeting of the 26<sup>th</sup> July 2025, Full Council approved the Joint Working Agreement in respect of the Celtic Freeport Public Funds Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
3. Accordingly, the Joint Working Arrangements detailed in the Constitution require updating to reflect these recent changes and Council is required to confirm the Joint Committee Agreements that this Council wishes to operate pursuant to powers under sections 101 and 102 of the Local Government Act 1972, sections 19 and 20 of the Local Government Act 2000 and all other enabling powers.
4. A copy of the proposed constitutional extract in respect of Joint Working is enclosed at Appendix 1.
5. Members should note that references to the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee have been removed from the Joint Committee Arrangements document at Appendix 1, as this was included in error in the previous version. The Corporate Joint Committee regime has been created under separate legislation and is not established pursuant to the legislative powers in paragraph 4 above. This provision is included in the articles of the Constitution instead.

### **Financial Impact**

6. There are no financial impacts associated with this Report.

### **Integrated Impact Assessment**

7. There is no requirement for an integrated impact assessment for this report.

### **Workforce Impacts**

8. There are no workforce impacts associated with this Report

### **Legal Impacts**

9. In exercise of powers under sections 101 and 102 of the Local Government Act 1972, sections 19 and 20 of the Local Government Act 2000 and all other enabling powers Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council may create a Joint Committee with any other local authorities.

### **Consultation**

10. There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

### **Recommendations**

11. It is recommended that members approve the Joint Working Arrangements document enclosed at Appendix 1 of this report and the Joint Committee Agreements that will be operated by the Council pursuant to powers under sections 101 and 102 of the Local Government Act 1972, sections 19 and 20 of the Local Government Act 2000 and all other enabling powers and that delegated authority be granted to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to amend the constitution to incorporate the updated Appendix 1.

### **Reason for Proposed Decision**

12. To ensure the Constitution is updated and reflects legal decision-making arrangements in place.

### **Appendices**

13. Appendix 1 – Joint Working Arrangements (Updated Document)

**List of Background Papers**

14. None

**Officer Contact**

Mr Craig Griffiths

Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Appendix 1

## **Joint Arrangements**

Both Council and its Executive are able to establish joint arrangements for the discharge of any of their functions (with the exceptions of those functions which must be discharged by the full Council) and which may involve delegation to other Councils, or their Executive, or the establishment of Joint Committees or any other means of achieving joint arrangements or contracting out.

The constitutions and responsibilities of Joint Committees, etc. will be set out in formal documents agreed by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and the other parties.

The Authority has made arrangements under Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 and Sections 19 and 20 of The Local Government Act 2000 and Part 5 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 with the Local Authorities (and other such organisations) indicated in the tables below for the functions shown therein.

The Authority must comply with all legal requirements concerning Joint Committees and delegations in accordance with Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 and Sections 19 and 20 of The Local Government Act 2000 and Part 5 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

The Committees are administered by and operative under the Standing Orders of the Council denoted by an asterisk. Where no such notation occurs the Committee operates under other working arrangements or protocols which are held by the Clerk, or Proper Officer of the Lead Authority, of the respective Committee.

**Table 1 – Joint Committees (Section 101 L.G.A. 1972 and Section 20 L.G.A. 2000)**

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Other Local Authorities</b>	<b>Membership for Each Authority</b>	<b>Function/ Responsibility</b>
Joint Archives Committee	City & County of Swansea	5 Members	Executive
*Margam Joint Crematorium Committee	Bridgend County Borough Council	5 Members - NPT 2 Members - Bridgend	Executive
South West Wales Regional Waste Management Committee	City and County of Swansea Carmarthenshire County Council Pembrokeshire County Council	3 Members (1 voting, 2 non-voting)	Executive
Swansea Bay City Deal Joint Committee	City and County of Swansea Carmarthenshire County Council Pembrokeshire County Council Ceredigion County Council	Executive (Leader or nominated representative)	Executive
Swansea Bay City Region Joint Scrutiny Committee	City and County of Swansea Carmarthenshire County Council Pembrokeshire County Council Ceredigion County Council	3 Non Executive Members	Non Executive
The National Parking Adjudication Service Joint Committee	All those Authorities who have executed a Memorandum, of Participation in the National Parking	1 Executive	Executive

	Adjudication Service Joint Committee		
Celtic Freeport Public Funds Committee	Pembrokeshire County Council	3 Executive	Executive
Celtic Freeport Public Funds Scrutiny Committee	Pembrokeshire County Council	4 Non Executive	Non Executive

**Table 2 – Joint Arrangements for Discharge of Functions by the Authority on behalf of other Authorities (Section 101 L.G.A. 1972 and Section 19L.G.A 2000)**

<b>Function</b>	<b>Other Authority</b>
Provision of Waste Recycling and Disposal Services	Bridgend County Borough Council
South Wales Trunk Road Agency	Welsh Government (pursuant to the Highways Act 1980)

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**NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL  
CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL CASTELL-NEDD PORT TALBOT**

**COUNCIL  
16<sup>th</sup> October 2024**

**REPORT OF THE HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC  
SERVICES - Mr. Craig Griffiths.**

**SECTION A – MATTER FOR DECISION**

**WARDS AFFECTED: ALL**

**CHANGES TO POLITICAL PROPORTIONALITY AND COMMITTEE  
MEMBERSHIP**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to authorise changes to the allocation of seats on council committees to the political groups.

**Amendments to Committee Membership**

2. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services has been notified of the proposed changes to the membership of Council committees specified below:
  - That Cllr Sharon Freeguard be removed as a member of the Registration and Licensing Committee and the Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee.
  - That Cllr Lauren Heard be appointed as a member of the Registration and Licensing Committee and the Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee.

**Financial Impact**

3. There are no financial impacts.

## **Integrated Impact Assessment**

4. There is no requirement to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment as the issues within the report relate to constitutional matters only.

## **Workforce Impacts**

5. There are no workforce Impacts.

## **Legal Powers/Impacts**

6. Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and Local Government Act 2000

There are no legal impacts.

## **Risk Management**

7. There are no risk management issues that require attention.

## **Consultation**

8. There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

## **Recommendations**

9. It is recommended that Council approves the changes to the membership of committees as contained in paragraph 2 of this report.

## **Reason for Proposed Decisions:**

10. To update the Council's membership arrangements.

## **Implementation of Decisions:**

11. The decisions are for immediate implementation.

## **List of Background Papers:**

12. Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Constitution.

### **Officer Contact**

Craig Griffiths, Head of Legal and Democratic Services  
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