



## **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 11.00 am on**

**26 July 2024**

**in the**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER AND VIA 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 Meeting of Council (Pages 5 - 10)

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. Budget 2025-26 -Outlook (Pages 11 - 38)
7. Corporate Plan (Pages 39 - 138)
8. Democratic Services Committee Annual Report (Pages 139 - 152)
9. Standards Committee Annual Report (Pages 153 - 180)
10. Scrutiny Committees Annual Reports (Pages 181 - 214)
11. Establishment of a Freeport Joint Scrutiny Committee (Pages 215 - 238)
12. Committee Membership (Pages 239 - 242)

## **PART C**

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

### Notice of Motion

Proposed by: Councillor Simon Knoyle

Seconded by: Councillor Sarah Thomas

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

15. 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, 18 July 2024**