

COUNCIL

(Civic Centre, Port Talbot)

Members Present:

2 July 2020

The Mayor: Councillor S.Jones

The Deputy Mayor: Councillor J.Warman

Councillors: A.R.Aubrey, S.Bamsey, D.Cawsey, H.C.Clarke, C.Clement-Williams, M.Crowley, S.apDafydd, A.P.H.Davies, N.J.E.Davies, O.S.Davies, R.Davies, C.Edwards, J.Evans, S.E.Freeguard, C.Galsworthy, W.F.Griffiths, J.Hale, S.Harris, M.Harvey, N.T.Hunt, S.K.Hunt, J.Hurley, H.N.James, C.J.Jones, D.Jones, H.Jones, J.Jones, L.Jones, R.G.Jones, D.Keogh, S.A.Knoyle, E.V.Latham, D.Lewis, A.Llewelyn, A.R.Lockyer, A.McGrath, J.Miller, S.Miller, R.Mizen, J.D.Morgan, S.Paddison, S.M.Penry, D.M.Peters, R.Phillips, L.M.Purcell, S.Purse, S.Rahaman, P.A.Rees, S.Renkes, S.H.Reynolds, A.J.Richards, P.D.Richards, M.Spooner, A.J.Taylor, R.L.Taylor, D.Whitecock, R.W.Wood and A.N.Woolcock

Officers in Attendance: S.Phillips, H.Jenkins, A.Evans, A.Jarrett, N.Pearce, K.Jones, C.Griffiths, S.Rees, C.Morris, C.Furlow-Harris, A.Manchipp, S.Curran, T.Davies, C.Davies, C.Plowman, and J.Woodman-Ralph

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chief Executive advised Council that he, Directors, the Assistant Chief Executive and Heads of Service would declare their interests in the report of the Head of Human Resources on the Pay Policy Statement 2020/2021 and would withdraw from the meeting during the discussion and voting thereon.

2. **MEMBERS' ACCESS TO MEETINGS**

Concern was expressed that some members of Council had difficulty accessing meetings remotely via Microsoft Teams and that this may have an impact on members' attendance in accordance with the six month rule contained in the Authority's Constitution. Officers would consider this going forward and continue to provide members with assistance.

3. **VOTING ARRANGEMENTS AS A RESULT OF REMOTE ATTENDANCE**

RESOLVED: That the protocol for voting, as set out below, be approved, for the duration that meetings of the Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council are held remotely and that the Head of Legal Services be authorised to amend the Constitution accordingly to incorporate this:

- The Chair will read the recommendation before members (or refer to the page number of the report where the recommendation is to be found).
- The Chair will ask members whether there are any members who wish to object to the recommendation, providing a suitable delay to allow members to respond accordingly – they may do so either by relaying the objection verbally, using the hand raise functions on Microsoft TEAMS or utilising the chat facility on Microsoft TEAMS.
- The Chair will ask members whether there are any members who wish to abstain on the recommendation, providing a suitable delay to allow members to respond accordingly – they may do so either by relaying the objection verbally, using the hand raise functions on Microsoft TEAMS or utilising the chat facility on Microsoft TEAMS.
- Following this, it will be assumed that any members who have not indicated to the contrary will be deemed to be in favour of the recommendation.

- The Chair will then confirm whether the recommendation has been approved or not.
- In the event that the Chair is unable to confirm that all members were capable of being heard or they deem a roll call to be necessary to ensure the democratic process is complied with, the Chair shall be entitled to undertake a roll call of all members to confirm their vote.
- Where the Chief Executive, Head of Democratic Services or Monitoring Officer are of the opinion that members have not had the ability to be heard, they will advise the Chair that a roll call of all members to confirm their vote should be held, the final discretion as to whether to hold such a roll call will remain at the discretion of the Chair
- For the avoidance of doubt this revised protocol would not apply to meetings of the Licensing or Planning Committees (or any sub committees) because of a need to address additional matters as part of decision making processes in those meetings (i.e. the need to establish that a Member has heard all elements of the debate before a decision is reached).
 - It should be noted that Members will also be able to call for a recorded vote as per the requirements of the Council's Constitution.

4. **WEBCASTING AND CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES**

The Chairman of the Democratic Services Committee gave Council the background to the work carried out by the Committee prior to the Covid 19 outbreak. This work had been modified as a result of the lockdown and Members were asked to consider the changes contained in the circulated report.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the work done by the Democratic Services Committee to progress the work tasked to it in July 2019 - to introduce webcasting of Council meetings and to enhance public participation in the democratic process, be noted;

2. That the impact of the Covid-19 emergency situation on the recommendations prepared by the Democratic Services Committee in respect of webcasting of Council meetings be noted, and as an interim position, the changes to the standing orders contained within the Council's Constitution to permit the recording of council meetings, publication of those recordings and the live streaming of meetings, be approved;
3. That the Head of Legal Services be authorised to make the changes necessary to the Constitution that arise from approval of recommendations 1 and 2 as set out in Appendix 1 to the circulated report.

5. **NEATH PORT TALBOT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (LDP) 2011-2026**

Council received the report of the Director of Environment and Regeneration in relation to the Authority's Local Development Plan. It was noted that the report had been commended to Council by Cabinet on 25 June 2020.

Concern was expressed that the severe adverse weather conditions at the beginning of the year and the Covid 19 lockdown had prevented members, the public and stakeholders from contributing to the consultation process. The importance of members' input into the process would be highlighted in the Delivery Agreement. It was noted that the process to develop a replacement LDP would take three and a half years and that the current LDP would remain in place until its replacement had been adopted.

In relation to the Covid 19 lockdown, it was felt that this had highlighted the importance of localism, community spirit, improving accessibility into the valleys to open them up and the environment. Members agreed that there was a need for the Plan to be flexible and it was noted that the Plan's flexibility would be assessed as part of the tests of soundness.

Members received assurances that policies in relation to Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's) would be included in the Plan. In

relation to small housing developments, it was noted that some developments had not materialised and that this was perhaps due to viability issues. A review of the number of settlements and their boundaries would also be undertaken. It was noted that deliverability was also a test of the soundness of the Plan.

The Covid 19 lockdown had resulted in many people working from home and it was hoped that this could continue after lockdown resulting in increased employment in valley areas.

RESOLVED: That the responses and recommendations to the representations received, as set out in Appendix 1 to the circulated report, be agreed and that the final Review Report, as set out within Appendix 2 to the circulated report, be approved.

6. PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2020 / 2021

(The Chief Executive, Director of Finance and Corporate Services, the Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning, the Director of Social Services, Health and Housing, the Director of Environment and Regeneration, the Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Digital Officer, the Head of Legal Services and the Head of Planning and Public Protection reaffirmed their interests in this item and withdrew for the discussion and voting thereon).

RESOLVED: that the Pay Policy Statement for 2020/2021, as contained in the circulated report, be approved for publication on the Council's website.

7. URGENT ITEMS

The Leader of Council made two statements as follows:

Black Lives Matter

The brutal killing of George Floyd on 25 May 2020 has rightly caused an international outcry.

I am sure this event will have horrified all members of Council and that you will all join me in condemning what took place.

The killing of George Floyd, the Windrush scandal and other events in our recent history show that despite all of the commitments made to achieve racial equality across society, there remain deep seated attitudes and behaviours towards people from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities which simply cannot continue.

This is especially stark at the present time when people from black, asian and minority ethnic backgrounds are playing a vital role in the response to the Covid-19 crisis - often on the front line – whilst, worryingly, being disproportionately affected by the disease.

I would like to take this opportunity today to initiate a fresh look at how we work with our black, asian and minority ethnic communities in Neath Port Talbot to achieve equality, equity and social cohesion.

As elected councillors we must show leadership in bringing about the societal change that is needed and to demonstrate that black lives matter.

Incident at Seven Sisters

The Leader paid tribute to the emergency services, council staff and members of the community who assisted in the rescue of a mother and her two children from their home following the devastating gas explosion in Seven Sisters.

This was seconded by the ward member for the area.

CHAIRPERSON