

## COUNCIL

(Civic Centre, Port Talbot)

**Members Present:**

**2 February 2022**

**The Mayor:** Councillor J.Warman

**The Deputy Mayor:** Councillor J.D.Morgan

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

**Officers in Attendance:** K.Jones, A.Jarrett, A.D.Thomas, N.Pearce, C.Griffiths, M.Shaw, K.Windsor-Brown, R.Crowhurst, S.Curran and J.Woodman-Ralph.

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1. **Welcome and Roll Call**

The Mayor welcomed all present, and a roll call was taken.

2. **Mayor's Announcements**

The Mayor invited the Council to join him in congratulating P.C. Anne Overton, South Wales Police, who had received the prestigious Queen's Police Medal for distinguished service in the New Year's

Honours List. She had been a hate crime officer in the Swansea and Neath Port Talbot area since 2018.

The Mayor further congratulated Dr Edward Morgan Roberts (Deputy Lieutenant), as he was made a Member of the Order of the British Empire for services to medicine and to the community in Swansea and Neath Port Talbot.

3. **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were received.

4. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting of Council held on the 22nd December 2021**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2021 be approved for accuracy.

5. **Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022 - 2032**

Cllr.P.A.Rees, Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Culture introduced the report which was commended to Council from Education, Skills and Culture Cabinet Board held on the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

Members noted that it was the aim of Welsh government to increase the number of Welsh speakers in Wales to one million by 2050. Neath Port Talbot's draft Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP), detailed the work to support and further develop Welsh language education in schools and in the wider communities. The draft plan had been developed through comprehensive consultation with a wide range of stakeholders which was an essential part of the preparation of the plan. The Cabinet Member for Educations, Skills & Culture thanked the officers and all those who had been involved in developing the WESP.

Members welcomed the report and noted their support for the WESP but concern was raised regarding the recent announcement that a standards enforcement investigation was to be conducted by the Welsh Language Commissioner into the Swansea Valley School

reorganisation and whether that section in the WESP should be removed until the results of the investigation are known.

The Director of Education Leisure and Lifelong Learning stated that the WESP had been developed by key strategic partners and the joint ownership of the key strategic plan was very important. The document had been approved by the WESP Forum and the Education, Skills and Culture Cabinet Board following consideration and support by the Scrutiny Committee. It was also explained that if the Plan was submitted as published in the agenda, without any amendments, there would still be an opportunity to be amended, by Neath Port Talbot Council and the Welsh Ministers, following the outcome of the investigation.

Clarification was also received that the standards enforcement investigation into the Swansea Valley School re-organisation was as a result of a complaint received by the Welsh Language Commissioner into the process.

Officers clarified that the queries raised by Members had been discussed at the WESP Forum, and initially the first draft followed general guidelines from Welsh government to include an appendix outlining the considered mitigating factors regarding Swansea Valley. It was then agreed, however, to remove this as its inclusion would take away from the importance and the positivity steps to be taken over the next 10 years by Neath Port Talbot as a county, and would focus on one specific area. Following discussion at the Forum, and its Sub-Forums, it was agreed to amend Appendix A to the report to relate to all areas within the authority, including the addition of targets to protect all areas of linguistic sensitivity, and proposed mitigating factors to be rolled out across the whole authority.

Following on from the discussion an amendment as detailed below was received and put before Council as follows:

*“Having given due regard to the responses to the consultation it is recommended that members permit the submission of the draft WESP to Welsh Ministers subject to removal of the section relating to Swansea Valley and Swansea Valley mitigation measures pending the outcome of the Welsh Language Commissioner’s investigation and an updated version provided at that point.”*

The above amendment fell, as a result the substantive recommendation contained within the circulated report was considered.

**RESOLVED:** Having given due regard to the responses to the consultation, approval be granted for the draft Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032 be submitted to the Welsh Government for approval.

6. **Decision Making March 2022 - May 2022**

**RESOLVED:** 1) That any matters which normally require determination by Cabinet or Cabinet Boards, or any other Committee or Sub Committee of the Council, and which in the view of the Chief Executive, or a Corporate Director or Head of Service necessitates a decision to be taken during the period 5<sup>th</sup> May to the 31<sup>st</sup> May 2022, then such Officer (s) in respect of matters within their service functions, shall have delegated power to take a decision and to authorise any action on the matters in question, subject to the following:

- (a) any decisions taken must comply with normal reporting format, including compliance statement and reason for decision, except that implementation shall be with immediate effect without any call-in requirement;
- b) all decisions shall be reported back to Members
- c) this delegation will not include any determination of planning applications which are normally determined by the Planning Committee, unless deemed urgent by the Head of Planning and Public Protection in the context of statutory timescales; nor will it include decisions on any planning matters deemed to be “controversial” in the view of the Head of Planning and Public Protection. Any planning applications dealt with under this delegation will be determined by the Head of Planning and Public Protection

- d) in exercising the above delegated powers, Officers will be required to consult with three Members as follows:
- i) From 6th May to 17th May – the current Mayor or Deputy Mayor and two other Members from different Political Groups (including one from any Majority Group);
  - ii) From 17th May to 31st May - the newly elected Leader or Deputy Leader (or in their absence the newly elected Mayor or Deputy Mayor) and two other Members from different Political Groups (including one from any Majority Group). Subject in both cases to these groups being constituted.
- 2) the Mayor or Deputy Mayor be authorised to be present at the opening of tenders during the period set out in recommendation 1(a) above and the Leader or Deputy Leader (or in their absence the Mayor or Deputy Mayor) during the period set out in (1(d)(ii) above.

## **7. Changes to Political Proportionality and Committee Membership**

- RESOLVED:**
- 1. That Councillor Mark Protheroe be removed as a member of the Education, Skills and Culture Scrutiny Committee, the Registration and Licensing Committee and the Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee.
  - 2. That Councillor Dennis Keogh be removed as a member of the Leisure and Culture Scrutiny Sub Committee.
  - 3. That Councillor A.McGrath be removed as a member of the Streetscene and Engineering Scrutiny Committee.
  - 4. That Councillor M. Protheroe be appointed a member of the Streetscene and Engineering Scrutiny Committee.

5. That Councillor A.McGrath be appointed as a member of the Education, Skills and Culture Scrutiny Committee, the Leisure and Culture Sub Committee, the Registration and Licensing Committee and the Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee.

8. **Governance and Audit Committee - Appointment of Voting Lay Members**

**RESOLVED:** That the following individuals be appointed as voting lay members on the Governance and Audit Committee:

Andrew Bagley,  
Helen Griffiths,  
Mark Owen.

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

No Notice of Motions were received.

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

The following question was received under Rule 9.2 of the Council's Procedure Rules.

*“Following the British Government's decision to refuse a bank holiday in Wales for St David's Day, will Neath Port Talbot Council consider following the example set by Gwynedd Council and create a defacto bank holiday for council staff and give TOIL to those carrying out essential services? Will Neath Port Talbot Council and its leadership also consider following Caerphilly Council in lobbying both Welsh and UK governments to ensure this power is devolved, bringing about equality across these Islands?”*

Councillor D. Jones, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Equalities responded by confirming that a clear commitment was made in the Council's Corporate Plan to increase the focus given to heritage and culture and to ensure that the Welsh Language and traditions could be enjoyed by future generations.

Officers were asked to provide detailed advice on the proposal to create a bank holiday for council staff, which would include learning from Gwynedd Council.

In addition, requests would be made in writing to both the Welsh and UK Governments asking that the powers to set bank holidays be devolved to the Welsh Government.

#### 11. **Urgent Items**

No urgent items were received.

**CHAIRPERSON**