

COUNCIL

(Civic Centre, Port Talbot)

Members Present:

16 March 2022

The Mayor: Councillor J.Warman

The Deputy Mayor: Councillor J.D.Morgan

Councillors: S.Bamsey, D.Cawsey, H.C.Clarke, C.Clement-Williams, M.Crowley, A.P.H.Davies, N.J.E.Davies, O.S.Davies, R.Davies, J.Evans, S.E.Freeguard, C.Galsworthy, W.F.Griffiths, J.Hale, S.Harris, N.T.Hunt, S.K.Hunt, J.Hurley, C.James, C.J.Jones, 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, J.Miller, S.Miller, R.Mizen, S.Paddison, S.M.Penry, R.Phillips, M.Protheroe, S.Purseley, 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.Whitelock, R.W.Wood and A.N.Woolcock

Officers in Attendance: K.Jones, A.Jarrett, N.Pearce, A.D.Thomas, H.Jones, S. Rees, M.Shaw, S.Curran and J.Woodman-Ralph

1. **Welcome and Roll Call**

The Mayor welcomed all to Council and a roll call was completed.

2. **Mayor's Announcements**

The Leader, Cllr E.V.Latham addressed Council. The Leader updated Council on the worsening situation in the Ukraine and the

resultant humanitarian crisis and the need to support displaced people as a matter of urgency. Work has been ongoing with Welsh Government to make preparation to receive Ukrainian refugees.

Council received details of the variety of routes that would allow refugees to come to the UK. It was noted that the Welsh Government would take on the role of a super sponsor and establish a number of reception centres prior to dispersing refugees to a network of accommodation.

Local Authorities will receive £10,500 per refugee in the first year, future funding to be determined. The monies would go towards the cost of providing services for example educating children of school age of refugee families.

The Director of Social Services, Health and Housing will co-ordinate the Council's involvement and has already established groups to take forward this work and has started discussions with partners on the wider community response.

It was also highlighted that the Council was not only responding to the humanitarian crisis but was developing the best response to assist communities deal with the increasing energy costs and the implications of that.

Members noted that a detailed briefing note would be emailed to all elected members following Council today.

The Mayor stated that as this was the last meeting of Council, there would be an opportunity at the end of Council for Members who were retiring to speak.

3. **Declarations of Interest**

The following Members made a declaration of interest at the commencement of Council. In regard to Agenda Item 5 Pay Policy Statement 2022/2023. They all have family members working for the Council but had dispensation to speak and vote.

Councillors: S. Jones
 L. Jones
 D. Cawsey
 J. Hurley
 M. Protheroe

R. Wood
A. Llewelyn
M. Crowley
J. Miller
S. Miller
S. Harris
P.A.Rees

The Chief Executive on behalf of all Officers declared an interest in Agenda Item 5 Pay Policy Statement 2022/2023 and would withdraw from the meeting for that item only. Only the Head of Human Resources and the Democratic Services Officer would remain.

4. **Audit Wales - Annual Audit Summary**

The Mayor welcomed N.Jenkins and G.Gillett from Wales Audit Office to Council where a briefing was given on the Annual Audit Summary 2021 as detailed in the circulated report.

Members noted that the Annual Audit Summary was produced as a single summary of the findings of performance and financial work undertaken by Audit Wales over the last 12 months.

Chief Executive thanked Wales Audit Office for the support Council had received during the challenges faced as a result of the pandemic.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

5. **Pay Policy Statement 2022/2023**

At this point, Officers present re-affirmed their interest and withdrew from the meeting for this item only. The Head of People and Organisational Development and the Democratic Services Officer remained in the meeting.

Councillor D. Jones, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Equality introduced the report and explained that it was a requirement of the Localism Act 2011 for the Council to produce a Pay Policy Statement for each financial year as detailed in the circulated report.

Members welcomed the continuing reduction in the gap between the lowest and highest paid officers and asked if there was potential to reduce the gap further or was this governed by the difficulty in

appointing to senior posts and retaining staff in some sections, what work was taking place to address this.

Officers explained that work was taking place looking at the recruitment and retention of staff. A recruitment taskforce has been set up to identify areas of concern but overall Neath Port Talbot does not have issues with retaining staff especially at a senior level.

In addition, pay benchmarking takes place across the 22 authorities in Wales for senior posts and nationally social workers pay was being considered across Wales

All Wales networking meetings are used as a forum to discuss any issues in regard to an inability to recruit to posts or retain staff. Pay was only one of the issues when recruiting staff the recruitment campaign also focusses on the many other positives that working for Neath Port Talbot brings.

RESOLVED: That the Pay Policy Statement for 2022/2023 be approved for publication on the Council's website.

6. **Appointment of Senior Management Posts**

Members received an overview of the Appointment of Senior Management Posts as detailed in the circulated report.

The Chief Executive explained that this item would normally be considered by Personnel Committee, but due to recent changes made by the Welsh Government, authority to advertise these posts at this level would now need to be considered by Council. The recruitment and selection process would be overseen by the Special Appointments Committee after the Local Government Elections in May 2022.

Members were pleased with the proposal before them today. Discussion took place on the importance of these posts and the areas and challenges they would need to concentrate on.

RESOLVED: Having due regard to the Integrated Impact Screening Assessment:

1. Approval be granted to establish a new post of Head of Housing and Communities, reporting to the Director of Social Services, Health and Housing;
2. Approval be granted to establish a new post of Head of Leisure, Tourism, Heritage and Culture reporting to the Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning;
3. That the Chief Executive and the Head of People and Organisational Development be authorised to advertise these posts with the recruitment and selection to be overseen by the Special Appointments Committee following the Local Government Elections, May 2022.
4. Approval be granted for the salary to apply to both posts, in line with the NPT Head of Service Pay Grade that ranges from £77,269 per annum to £84,991 per annum and delegates authority to the Special Appointments Committee to determine the starting salary to be offered to successful candidates within the parameters of the pay grade.

7. **Democratic Services Committee Annual Report 2020-2022**

Councillor D.Morgan, Chairperson of Democratic Services Committee introduced the report.

Members noted that the report was not of the Chairperson but of the Committee and it covered the 2020/2021 civic year and the period May 2021 to February 2022 of the 2021/2022. In addition, Cllr. D. Morgan thanked officers for all the support they had given to the Democratic Services Committee.

RESOLVED: The Annual Report 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 as attached as Appendix 1 to the report be endorsed and noted.

8. **Governance and Audit Annual Report**

Councillor D.Morgan, Chairperson of the Governance and Audit Committee introduced the report.

Members noted that the report was not of the Chairperson but of the Committee and it covered the work undertaken by the Governance and Audit Committee for the civic year 2020/2021. In addition, Cllr D. Morgan thanked officers for all the support they had given to the Governance and Audit Committee and wished lay members well on the future work of the Governance and Audit Committee.

RESOLVED: That the Governance and Audit Committee Annual Report as detailed in Appendix 1 to the circulated report be endorsed and noted.

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

The following joint notice of motion was put to Council by Councillor E.V.Latham, Leader of the Labour Group, Councillor A.Llewelyn, Leader of the Plaid Cymru Group, Councillor S.Jones, Leader of the Independent Democrats Group.

Members were asked to endorse a Fair Campaign Pledge as detailed as detailed below:

Over recent years we have unfortunately seen an increase in the number of councillors and candidates being subjected to abuse, threats and intimidation.

Behaviour of this kind is not only totally unacceptable it fundamentally undermines and erodes the principles of free speech, democratic engagement and debate in our towns and communities.

As leaders we endeavour to treat everyone with courtesy, kindness and respect and, on behalf of our respective political groups, along

with other council's across Wales, we stand 'shoulder to shoulder' to call for an end to abuse, intimidation and harassment of any kind.

This is particularly relevant as we enter the key period in the run up to the local government elections in May.

We add our voices to support and participate in the fair campaigns pledge and will aim to make use of the resources as produced by the Civility in Public Life programme which are based on positive campaigning and merit, rather than personal attacks and smears against individuals.

In addition, we will publicly 'call out' any such inappropriate behaviour and take a zero-tolerance approach to abuse of any kind, and strongly encourage all elected members and candidates in the forthcoming election to do the same

All of us have the right to carry out our civic duties without fear of being attacked, bullied, intimidated or abused. Any inappropriate behaviour, whether that be verbal, physical, in print or via social media, must be stamped out and action will be taken if deemed necessary.

In all that we say and do we will:-

- Set an appropriate tone when campaigning
- Lead by example to foster constructive democratic debate
- Promote and defend the dignity of others, including our opponents.

Be kind and fair in your words and actions.

RESOLVED: Members endorsed the Fair Campaign Pledge as detailed in Appendix 1 to the circulated report.

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

No questions with Notice, under Rule 9.2 of the Council's Procedure Rules were received.

11. **Urgent Items**

No Urgent Items were received.

Prior to the closing of the Council meeting. Cllr. E.V.Latham, Leader of Council, on behalf of Council wished all the retiring Members well in their forthcoming retirement and thanked them for the many years spent in public service.

Councillors A.R. Woolcock, D.Jones and J.D.Morgan responded, thanking Officers and all Members of Council for the support they had, had during their many years of public service.

Council also thanked Cllr.J.Warman for his commitment to the Mayoral office over the last 12 months as Mayor of Neath Port Talbot.

CHAIRPERSON