

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

18 NOVEMBER 2024

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT – SHEENAGH REES

Matter for Approval

Wards Affected: All wards

Social Partnership Duty Annual Report

1. Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to seek Member approval for the Social Partnership Duty Annual Report to be submitted to the Social Partnership Council for scrutiny.

2. Executive Summary:

The Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023 (The SPPP) requires the council, as a public body, to produce an annual report to evidence how they have complied with the Social Partnership Duty. This report must be submitted to the Social Partnership Council (SCP) for scrutiny. Section 18 of the Act states:

Social Partnership reports:

- (1) A public body must prepare, in respect of each financial year, a report of what it has done to comply with the duty.
- (2) The report must be agreed with the public body's recognised trade unions or (where there is no recognised trade union) other representatives of its staff, or contain a statement explaining why it was not agreed.
- (3) The public body must publish the report, and submit it to the SPC, as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of the financial year.

The SPPP Act does not provide a template for the Annual Report. This report summarises the actions taken with the council's recognised trade unions to implement the duty in Neath Port Talbot Council.

3. Background:

The SPPP Act provides for a framework to enhance the well-being of the people of Wales by improving public services through social partnership working, promoting fair work and social responsible public procurement. It is intended to

complement other legislation, including the Socio-economic Duty and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WFGA 2015).

The SPPP Act 2023 requires the council, in carrying out sustainable development, in so far as is reasonable, to seek consensus or compromise with their recognised trade unions, when setting their well-being objectives (in line with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015) and making decisions of a strategic nature about the reasonable steps they intend to take to deliver those objectives set.

Section 16(2) of the Act sets out a number of specific requirements relating to the Duty, which the council must comply with when 'seeking consensus or compromise'. The requirements are intended to ensure that trade unions are fully and properly involved when a public body sets its well-being objectives, or when making strategic decisions. It states that: in order to seek consensus or compromise, a public body must include its recognised trade unions or other representatives of its staff in the process of setting objectives or making decisions, by (in particular):-

(a) consulting them at a formative stage of the process, and

(b) otherwise involving them throughout the process by:

(i) providing sufficient information to enable them to properly consider what is proposed, and

(ii) providing sufficient time to enable them to adequately consider what is proposed and respond.

4. Our Approach at Neath Port Talbot

In preparation for the legislation which came into effect on 1st April 2024, throughout 2023, colleagues from the trade unions, Corporate Policy, Performance & Engagement Team and HR Team began discussing how we would work together to implement the legislation.

As well as including this as an agenda item in formal Staff Council meetings, and more informal briefings, we also held a joint 'refresher' workshop on the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 for trade union colleagues, and then spent time understanding and considering the SPPP Act, and what the requirements would mean for us.

We jointly attended the Welsh Government Social Partnership event held in Cardiff in September 2023, and this provided a really positive opportunity for us to spend time together, focussing on what social partnership means for us.

Together we determined that we could already demonstrate that we met some aspects of the legislation – we have a long and proud history of working together

in social partnership. When setting our well-being objectives in 2021 / 2022 (see the council's Corporate Plan 2022/2027: "Recover, Reset, Renew"), trade union partners were already involved in and consulted on the development of the council's four well-being objectives as key stakeholders, and from an early stage in the development process. We did not however formally seek consensus specifically with the trade unions, and in our discussions around the new duty in 2023, recognised together that this would require us to set aside more time for this when next reviewing our well-being objectives.

5. Review of the Corporate Plan 2024/2027

In 2023, the council launched consultation in relation to the Corporate Plan 2024/2027, via the Let's Keep Talking Campaign. The aim of the consultation was to ensure that the corporate plan remains relevant, and that nothing had fundamentally changed from the perspective of consultees over the 12 – 18 month period since the original consultation. The consultation aimed to answer the following questions:

- What matters to you or your business/organisation now?
- What matters to you or your business/organisation for the future?
- What could be done in your community to improve life for residents or businesses - these could be physical things or services?

Trade unions were identified as key stakeholders in this consultation and a workshop was held with them on 11th July 2023. Following the widespread consultation, a draft revised plan was produced taking into account the feedback received from trade unions and all other stakeholders. No changes were proposed in relation to the four well-being objectives; the revised document focussed on the key strategic priorities to achieve the objectives. Consultation in relation to the revised plan took place over a number of months.

On 5th June 2024, a consultation meeting was held with trade union colleagues, providing them with an overview of the draft Corporate Plan and the priorities required to deliver the Plan. They then had the opportunity following this meeting to provide their feedback on the draft Corporate Plan.

We received comprehensive feedback from the Trade Unions on the above, which resulted in an amendment to the Corporate Plan and some additional comments which were noted and fed back to Directors. Their feedback has also resulted in the creation of a sub-group of our Local Government Services Forum to further develop actions on how we work together to deliver outcomes relating to 'Green and Sustainable Practices'.

The Leader of the council wrote to the Chair of the Joint Trade Unions on 25th July 2024, asking for confirmation that consensus has been reached on the content of

the Corporate Plan. The Chair of the Joint Trade Unions confirmed consensus had been reached with thanks.

6. Financial Impacts:

No impacts.

7. Integrated impact assessment:

A first stage impact assessment has been undertaken to assist the council in discharging its legislative duties (under the Equality Act, the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The first stage assessment, attached at appendix 1 has indicated that a more in-depth assessment is not required. A summary is included below:

“A full impact is not required as there is no impact on any protected group. It also has no negative impact on bio-diversity or the Welsh Language”.

8. Valleys Communities Impacts:

No Impacts.

9. Workforce Impacts:

By achieving a consensus with trade union colleagues on the content of the Corporate Plan 2024/2027 and the priorities required to deliver it, this will have a positive impact on employee relations across the council.

10. Legal Impacts:

No impact.

11. Risk Management Impacts:

No impact.

12. Crime and Disorder Impacts

No impact.

13. Counter Terrorism Impacts

No impact

14. Consultation:

There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item. As discussed in the report, trade unions colleagues have been fully consulted at all stages. Trade union colleagues have agreed this report.

15. Recommendations:

It is **RECOMMENDED** that Members **APPROVE** the Social Partnership Duty Annual Report to be submitted to the Social Partnership Council.

FOR DECISION

16. Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Integrated Impact Assessment Screening Form

17. List of background papers:

None.

18. Officer Contact

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