

# **NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE**

1 February 2018

### **Report of the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services - K. Jones**

#### **Matter for Decision**

#### **Wards Affected:**

All Wards

### **Submission of apologies for Council meetings**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide an update in relation to the system for recording Member meeting absences, and, to consult with Members on the potential option to amend the current apologies submission policy.

#### **Background**

2. In May 2017, a policy outlining the approach to be taken in relation to the submission of Member apologies for absences from formal meetings was approved by Council.
3. Currently there are three standard categories:-

General Category Apologies - Members are not expected to confirm their reason for absence unless they wish to (i.e. holiday, illness etc.)

Apologies Due to Council Business - Members may use this category where clashes with Council and external meeting occur. Members representing the Authority will be expected to highlight the reason so that it is recorded correctly.

Absence without notification - Where apologies are not received then the Member will be listed as absent and this will show in the attendance record.

4. The standard rules also state that when a Member is unable to attend a meeting they must submit their apologies prior to or during a formal meeting, communicating with Democratic Services staff to ensure that the apology has been correctly recorded and the relevant meeting remains quorate.
5. Any apologies submitted after a meeting has concluded are not recorded.

## **Progress**

6. With the introduction of the Modern.Gov document management software system, functionality is now available which automatically transfers a Councillor's attendance from the minutes of a specific meeting to an information summary located on the Council's corporate website and intranet.
7. Following the conclusion of the May 2017 local elections ,and the establishment of the new Council, the system was activated and has been utilised to record and publish the attendance of all elected members in relation to formal council meetings.
8. Due to the development of the functionality available within the Modern.Gov system it is now possible to include additional information detailing the reason for a Members potential absence from formal meetings.
9. Once recorded the additional detail automatically appears in the attendance section of each Member's profile page, located on the corporate website and intranet.

10. For Members reference a copy of the Council's current policy for submitting apologies for Council meetings is shown at Appendix 1. In addition, The current extended category list of available 'reasons for absence' is detailed in Appendix 2.
11. Members are asked to consider the options outlined in the recommendation in relation to the current policy for the submission of Council meetings.

### **Financial Impact**

12. There are no financial impacts associated with this report.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

13. A screening assessment has been undertaken but a full equality impact assessment is not warranted.

### **Workforce Impacts**

14. There are no workforce impacts associated with this report.

### **Legal Powers**

15. Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1972/70/content>
16. Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2011/4/contents>

### **Risk Management**

17. There are no significant risks associated with this report.

### **Consultation**

18. There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

## **Recommendation**

19. That Members considers whether they wish to make a recommendation to Council to amend the current member apologies submission policy.

### Option 1:

Recommend to Council to amend the current policy for submitting Member apologies for all Council meetings to record the categorisation of absences in greater detail for public scrutiny.

### Option 2:

Retain the status quo arrangements in relation to the submission of Members apologies as outlined in the current policy.

### Option 3:

Propose an alternative arrangement.

## **Reason for Decision**

20. To review the current system for recording Member meeting absences.

## **Implementation of Decision**

21. The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

## **Appendices**

22. Appendix 1 - Current Policy for submitting apologies for Council meetings
23. Appendix 2 - List of Additional categories to record Member absences

## **List of Background Papers**

24. None

## **Officer Contacts**

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