

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 Information

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Outcome of Members Survey on Timing of Council Meetings (Follow-Up Survey)

Purpose of the Report

1. To update Members of the Democratic Services Committee on the outcome of the follow-up survey on the timing of Council meetings.

Background

2. Section 6 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 requires the Council to undertake a survey of Members regarding the timing, frequency and location of meetings of the Council and its Committees at least once during the term of administration.

3. The original format and content of the survey was discussed and agreed by Members of the Committee at a meeting held on 27 July 2017.
4. Following analysis of the original survey results at the meeting of the Committee held on 19 October, 2017, Members requested that arrangements be made to provide additional data by canvassing the views of individual Committee Members.
5. In line with the Council's Digital By Choice - Channel Shift Strategy, both the original survey and the supplementary survey were compiled as online questionnaires.

Progress

6. Following the expiry of the supplementary survey deadline on 1 December 2017 a total of 41 out of 64 Members (64%) completed the questionnaire. A summary of the main findings is provided below with the detailed results outlined in Appendices 1A and AB.
7. As part of the survey Members outlined which committee meetings they attended and were asked the question:

'In general, are you content with the start times of meetings?'
8. A total of 32 Members (50% of membership) stated that they were content with the current arrangements, while nine Members (14% of membership) said that they were not content.
9. Members who were not content with the current timing of meeting arrangements were then asked to specify their reasons.
10. Comments made fell into two categories with seven Members requesting making a preference for afternoon meetings while two Members made representations for meetings to be held out of standard office hours.
11. Finally, Members were asked what their preferred start time(s) for meeting(s) would be if they had the choice.

12. In relation to this question opinion was split with five Members opting for early/late afternoon meeting start times, two Members making a preference for meetings commencing out of standard office hours, while one Member made representations for morning meetings and another called for further piloting of varying start times for different committees.
13. To conclude, while it was once again clear that there are no arrangements which suit all Members in relation to all formal meetings the majority of respondents outlined their support for the current cycle schedule.
14. Nevertheless, an underlying preference for early to late afternoon meetings was highlighted from those Members who submitted comments with one or two other Members also keen to consider greater flexibility on meeting start times primarily to help those Members with family or work commitments.
15. Further discussions will now be undertaken with individual committee chairs based on the data obtained by the surveys to assist in refining the various times for meetings.

Financial Impact

16. There are no financial impacts associated with this report. However, future changes to meeting times and/or venues locations, may have potential implications in relation to the costs associated with administering the governance arrangements of the Council.

Equality Impact Assessment

17. A screening assessment has been undertaken but a full equality impact assessment is not required.

Workforce Impacts

18. There are no workforce impacts associated with this report. However, changes to existing meeting arrangements may have implications for those officers who attend meetings of the Council.

Legal Powers

19. S.6 Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2011/4/contents>

Risk Management

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

Consultation

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

Recommendation

22. That the Committee consider the findings in relation to the timing of council meetings (follow-up) survey.

Appendices

23. Appendix 1A - Follow-Up Survey on Timing of Council Meetings
24. Appendix 1B - (Detailed Summary)
25. Appendix 2 - Committee by Committee break-down summary

List of Background Papers

26. None.

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