

# **NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **Council**

**26<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

### **Report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services – Mr Craig Griffiths**

#### **Matter for Decision:**

#### **Wards Affected:**

All wards

#### **Member Induction 2022 and Diversity in Democracy**

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

1. To update members on work programmes to be established to inform Member Induction arrangements following the Local Government elections that will take place in 2022 and to seek a declaration in light of the Welsh Local Government Association's ("WLGA") Diversity and Democracy Programme.

#### **Background:**

2. Local Government Elections will take place in May 2012 and it is important that prior to this, the Council (via its officers) reviews its Induction Programme that will take place following the election of new Members to the Council to accurately reflect the concerns and views of members based on their induction experience when they were elected in 2017.
3. The Democratic Services Committee has within its remit the responsibility 'to review the adequacy of provision by the Council of staff, accommodation, and other resources to discharge democratic services functions' and 'to make reports and recommendations to the Council in relation to such provision'. As such, Democratic Services Committee are to be asked to

contribute to the exercise that officers are undertaken to establish the member induction programme.

4. Work is also being undertaken by the WLGA via their Member/Officer Networks to develop a 'typical induction curriculum' for use by Local Authorities.
5. The Democratic Services Committee are to be asked to agree that Member Induction 2022 be considered as one of their priority work areas leading up to 2022 and to agree that a 'Task and Finish' approach to the work be agreed to allow members to contribute to this work programme. The 'Task and Finish' Group will report to the Democratic Services Committee and will meet throughout July, August and September 2021 with the aim of presenting a proposed approach to Member Induction 2022 in October 2021 to a special meeting of the Democratic Services Committee.
6. Members should also note that the WLGA has recently embarked on an ambitious Diversity and Democracy Programme to ensure council chambers are more representative of their communities following local elections in May 2022. As part of this at a meeting of the WLGA on the 5<sup>th</sup> March 2021, the WLGA Council agreed
  - a. to encourage all political parties, through the WLGA Political Groups, to commit to proactive and coordinated activities to improve diversity in local government democracy;
  - b. a formal position calling for the introduction of resettlement grants for all councillors and senior salary holders;
  - c. to encourage all councillors to claim any necessary allowances or expenses;
  - d. to encourage a declaration by July 2021 from councils in Wales, on becoming 'Diverse Councils'; to:
    - i. Provide a clear, public commitment to improving diversity;
    - ii. Demonstrate an open and welcoming culture to all;
    - iii. Consider staggering council meeting times and agreeing recess periods to support councillors with other commitments; and

- iv. Set out an action plan of activity ahead of the 2022 local elections.
  - e. that councils should set targets to be representative of the communities they serve at the next elections;
  - f. to support the use of voluntary quotas for Welsh local elections; and
  - g. the WLGA reviews the impact of voluntary quotas following the next local elections.
- 7. Accordingly, in light of paragraph 6(d) above, members are asked to formerly declare that the Council will:
  - a. Provide a clear, public commitment to improving diversity;
  - b. Demonstrate an open and welcoming culture to all;
  - c. Consider staggering council meeting times and agreeing recess periods to support councillors with other commitments; and
  - d. Set out an action plan of activity ahead of the 2022 local elections.
- 8. In order to establish the best way to implement these requirements, Democratic Services Committee are requested to be tasked to consider the same as part of their consideration of the Member Induction Programme for 2022.

### **Financial Impacts:**

- 9. The Task and Finish Group proposed can be supported within existing financial resources.

### **Integrated Impact Assessment:**

- 10. There is no requirement for an Integrated Impact Assessment as this is a report in respect of governance arrangements only. A well designed Member Induction programme would assist the Council in discharging its duties and responsibilities as set out in the Equalities Act 2010

### **Valleys Communities Impacts:**

11. There are no valley community impacts

### **Workforce Impacts:**

12. There are no workforce impacts associated with the proposed Task and Finish Group; however any workforce implications that arise from proposals made by the Group will need to be considered.

### **Legal Impacts:**

13. This work is proposed to be undertaken in accordance with the function of the Democratic Services Committee as expressed in the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.

### **Risk Management Impacts:**

14. There are no risk management issues associated with this report.

### **Consultation:**

15. There will be no requirement for any consultation.

### **Recommendations:**

16. It is recommended that:
  - (a) Members note that Democratic Services Committee are tasked to undertake and contribute to a review of the Member Induction Programme for 2022.

(b) Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council commits to becoming a “Diverse Council” pursuant to the Welsh Local Government Association Diversity and Democracy Programme as set out in paragraph 7 of this report.

(c) Democratic Services Committee be tasked to undertake a review of the Diversity in Democracy Programme as part of its review of the Member Induction Programme for 2022.

(d) A report be brought back to Full Council with updates on the Member Induction Programme and the Diversity in Democracy Programme in November 2021.

**Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

17. To ensure that Member Induction arrangements in 2022 are fit for purpose.

**Implementation of Decision:**

18. The decision is proposed for immediate implementation.

**Appendices:**

19. None

**List of Background Papers:**

20. None

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