

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

15th December 2022

Report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services - Mr Craig Griffiths.

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Multi Location Meeting Policy

Purpose of the Report

To approve the draft Multi Location Meetings Policy considered by the Democratic Services Committee on the 3rd October 2022.

Background

At its meeting of the 3rd October 2022, the Democratic Services Committee considered a draft Multi Location Meetings Policy and accordingly it is now placed before Council for formal approval.

Under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 (“the 2021 Act”), Local Authorities are required to facilitate multi-location meetings (that is, formal meetings where participants may not all be in the same physical place.)

Alongside the legally mandated arrangements, which the Council has adopted since the implementation of the 2021 Act, recent statutory guidance states that Local Authorities should develop a wider policy setting out the detailed systems chosen by the Council for the operation of its multi-location meetings.

The draft Multi Location Meeting Policy reflects the statutory guidance where it states that the exact contents will be agreed at a local level. It is suggested that the policy includes:

- The process which meetings are conducted.
- Which online meeting platform will be used
- How formal notices will be issued, and the publication of agendas and minutes
- How exempt matters will be dealt with
- How participants who sit as part of committees or bodies subject to the 2021 Act will be able to access and participate in the meeting (including support and advice on technology, behavioural and conduct issues).
- How observers (including the public and the press) will be able to access the meeting, and how they may actively participate in the meeting where needed.
- Facilitating broadcast of the meeting.
- Chairing of meetings.

Draft Multi- Location Meeting Policy

The draft Multi Location Meeting policy is attached at Appendix 1 for member's approval.

It should be noted that the Council adopts the following principles in respect of its meetings:

Predominantly Remote Meetings

The Council administers both the Swansea Bay City Region Joint Scrutiny Committee and the Corporate Joint Committee and associated committees. Given the challenges of travelling significant distances across the region and the need to ensure maximum participation, these meetings have been initially identified as "predominantly remote meetings".

Predominantly Physical meetings

Experience has identified that some meetings may be better suited to having a higher level of physical attendance. However, this does

not preclude some or all participants attending these meetings remotely if they wish or if there are overriding reasons for doing so. These meetings may include the following committees: Appointments Committees, Appeals Committee, Licensing Sub Committee.

Multi-location Meetings

All Council, Cabinet and committee meetings must be able to operate as multi-location meetings and ensure that participants are able to attend remotely.

Financial Impacts

There are no financial impacts associated with this report. Previous reports authorised the purchase of hybrid meeting and webcasting equipment to facilitate multi-location meetings

Integrated Impact Assessment

There is no requirement to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment as this report is in relation to administrative matters only.

Workforce Impacts

No impact.

Risk Management

No impact.

Legal Powers

Under 2021 Act, this Council is required to facilitate multi-location meetings (that is, formal meetings where participants may not all be in the same physical place.)

Valleys Communities Impacts:

There are no specific impacts for valley communities arising from this report.

Appendices:

Appendix 1- Draft Multi Location Meetings Policy

Consultation

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

Recommendation

It is recommended that:

- The draft Multi Location Policy at Appendix 1 of this report be approved.
- Delegated authority be granted to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to update the Constitution of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council to reflect the approval of the Multi-Locations Policy

Reason for Proposed Decision

To approve the Council's draft Multi Location Meeting policy

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