

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

SUBJECT: ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL - 20TH JULY, 2023

REPORT OF:

PRESENT:

Councillors C. Smith (Presiding Member)
C. Bainton
P. Baldwin
S. Behr
D. Bevan
K. Chaplin
M. Cross
H. Cunningham
D. Davies
G. A. Davies
M. Day
S. Edmunds
J. Gardner
J. Hill
W. Hodgins
J. Holt
G. Humphreys
R. Leadbeater
E. Jones
J. Morgan, J.P.
J. C. Morgan
J. P. Morgan
L. Parsons
D. Rowberry
T. Smith
G. Thomas
J. Thomas
S. Thomas
J. Wilkins
L. Winnett

D. Woods

WITH: Interim Chief Executive
Corporate Director of Regeneration and Community Services
Acting Corporate Director of Education
Chief Officer Resources
Chief Officer Commercial & Customer
Head of Adult Services
Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance
Head of Democratic Services, Governance & Partnerships
Head of Organisational Development
Press and Publicity Officer

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from:</p> <p>Councillor H. Trollope, Corporate Director of Education and the Interim Corporate Director of Social Services.</p>	
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>The following declarations of interest were reported:</p> <p>Item No. 40: Silent Valley Waste Services Limited</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Councillors T. Smith and L. Winnett. <p>Item No. 46: Shortlisting JNC Officers</p> <p>Item No. 47: Appointments Committee – JNC Officers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Councillor W. Hodgins	

	<p>The above-named Members remained in the meeting whilst the items of business were considered.</p> <p>Item No. 45: Recruitment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Damien McCann, Interim Chief Executive <p>The Interim Chief Executive confirmed that he would leave the meeting prior to the above item being considered.</p>	
No. 4	<p><u>PRESIDING MEMBER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</u></p> <p><u>Condolences</u></p> <p>Condolences were expressed to the family of former County Borough Councillor and Mayor, Graham Bartlett on his sad death.</p> <p>Members and officers paid their respects with a minute's silence.</p> <p>It was noted that a condolence letter had been forwarded to the family.</p>	
No. 5	<p><u>DECISION BOOK - FEBRUARY - JULY, 2023</u></p> <p>The Decision Book for the period February - July 2023 was submitted for consideration.</p> <p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED that the decisions be approved and confirmed as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
No. 6	<p><u>ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL</u></p> <p>Agreed.</p>	
No. 7	<p><u>ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL</u></p> <p>Agreed.</p>	
No. 8	<p><u>EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL</u></p> <p>Agreed.</p>	

No. 9	<u>PLANNING COMMITTEE</u> Agreed.	
No. 10	<u>PLANNING COMMITTEE</u> Agreed.	
No. 11	<u>GENERAL LICENSING COMMITTEE</u> Agreed.	
No. 12	<u>SPECIAL GENERAL LICENSING COMMITTEE</u> Agreed.	
No. 13	<u>PLANNING COMMITTEE</u> Agreed.	
No. 14	<u>CABINET</u> Agreed.	
No. 15	<u>SPECIAL CABINET</u> Agreed.	
No. 16	<u>SPECIAL CABINET</u> Agreed.	
No. 17	<u>CABINET</u> Agreed.	
No. 18	<u>SPECIAL CABINET</u> Agreed.	

No. 19	<u>PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u> Agreed.	
No. 20	<u>GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE</u> Agreed.	
No. 21	<u>PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u> Agreed.	
No. 22	<u>CORPORATE AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u> Agreed.	
No. 23	<u>DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE</u> Agreed.	
No. 24	<u>PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u> Agreed.	
No. 25	<u>GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE</u> Agreed.	
No. 26	<u>SPECIAL CORPORATE AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u> Agreed.	
No. 27	<u>PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u> Agreed.	
No. 28	<u>GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE</u> Agreed.	

<p>No. 29</p>	<p><u>MEMBERS QUESTIONS</u></p> <p>There were no questions submitted by Members.</p>	
<p>No. 30</p>	<p><u>PUBLIC QUESTIONS</u></p> <p>There were no questions submitted by members of the public.</p>	
<p>No. 31</p>	<p><u>PROPOSED COUNCIL FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2023/2024</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Democratic Officer.</p> <p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely that the Council Forward Work Programme 2023/2024 be agreed.</p>	
<p>No. 32</p>	<p><u>IVF POLICY</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Organisational Development.</p> <p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely that the paid time off be increased for two cycles of IVF treatment.</p>	
<p>No. 33</p>	<p><u>FIRE SAFETY AT WORK POLICY</u></p> <p>Members considered the report of the Head of Organisational Development.</p> <p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely that the Fire Safety at Work Policy be endorsed for implementation.</p>	

<p>No. 34</p>	<p><u>SCHEDULE OF MEMBERS REMUNERATION 2023-24</u></p> <p>The report of the Head of Organisational Development was submitted for consideration.</p> <p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely that the Schedule of Members Remuneration 2023/2024 be agreed and published.</p>	
<p>No. 35</p>	<p><u>ANNUAL REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES</u></p> <p>The report of the Head of Democratic Services was submitted for consideration.</p> <p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely that the report be approved on the basis that Council was satisfied there was a sufficient level of support for Elected Members.</p>	
<p>No. 36</p>	<p><u>DIVERSE COUNCIL ACTION PLAN UPDATE</u></p> <p>Members considered the joint Officers' report.</p> <p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely that the Council was satisfied with the action taken to date and no amendments were made to future actions.</p>	
<p>No. 37</p>	<p><u>ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT 2022-23</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Democratic Services, Governance & Partnerships.</p> <p>The Leader of the Independent Group referred to Appendix 1 of the document relating to scrutiny evaluation, in particular completion of the evaluation forms and stated that this element of the process needed to be further developed and improved.</p>	

The Leader of the Council proposed that the Head of Democratic Services be requested to review this aspect of the scrutiny process with the aim of improving the scrutiny evaluation element going forward.

It was unanimously,

RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely that the 'scrutiny activity' that had been undertaken by each Scrutiny Committee during 2022/23 be approved, and the report be published on the Blaenau Gwent website.

No. 38

BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL PETITIONS PROTOCOL 2023/27

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Democratic Services, Governance & Partnerships.

It was unanimously,

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed namely that the Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Petitions Protocol 2023/2027 be approved.

No. 39

CIVIC CENTRE INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IIA)

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Community Services.

The Leader of the Council made reference to paragraph 2.9 of the report relating to the infrastructure of the previous Civic Centre building and felt that some of the information contained therein could have been portrayed differently. He continued by stating that he had previously requested that the closure of the Civic Centre building be delayed as he felt the building could have served a purpose for the Council in the future including the use of the Council Chamber which had been large enough to accommodate all Members, officers and the public. The Leader concluded by stating that whilst he supported the report, he requested that his comments be noted and included accordingly.

Following a lengthy discussion when concerns were raised in relation to the acoustics and parking issues within and at the General Offices, it was proposed and seconded that:

- Investigations take place into identifying an alternative venue to hold Full Council meetings for the current time (it was noted that these meetings needed to be offered on a hybrid basis).
- A full Integrated Impact Assessment be completed for any alternative venue identified.

It was unanimously,

RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and the retrospective Integrated Impact Assessment which had been completed in line with legislation be accepted.

No. 40

ADOPTION OF THE HIGHWAYS ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN (HAMP) 2023-2028

Members considered the report of the Team Manager – Street Scene.

It was proposed that the report be deferred pending investigations into identifying further funding opportunities that could be used to implement the work plan.

RESOLVED accordingly.

No. 41

TRANSFER OF SILENT VALLEY WASTE SERVICES BACK TO THE COUNCIL

Councillors T. Smith and L. Winnett declared an interest in this item but remained in the meeting whilst it was considered.

Consideration was given to the joint Officers' report.

Councillor J. Wilkins left the meeting at this juncture.

It was unanimously,

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the following be noted:

- i) The position statement on the successful transfer of Silent Valley Waste Services back to the Council undertaken on 1st May, 2023 (including the transfer of assets and liabilities on or after the transfer date up to the point of winding up of the Company).
- ii) That given the assumptions currently applied, the estimated financial impact remained within the budget envelope agreed previously.
- iii) The assessment by Silent Valley Waste Services Ltd of financial benefits to the Council since inception of the Company.

It was further agreed that:

- The balance of the Silent Valley Aftercare provision and the profit and loss reserve be utilised to establish appropriate provisions/earmarked reserves within the Council to support the ongoing financial commitment of aftercare and maintenance at the Silent Valley landfill site and other liabilities.
- Officers continue to look at the Legal advice on the option of making the company dormant as an alternative to dissolution. Any proposal to make the company dormant would be reported to Council for consideration and agreement.

No. 42

FREE SCHOOL MEAL HOLIDAY PAYMENTS - SUMMER HOLIDAY 2023

Members considered the report of the Acting Director of Education.

It was unanimously,

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely that one-off funding in the sum of approximately £300,000 from General Reserves to enable the extension of the free school meal holiday payments for the period outlined in paragraph 2.5 of the report be approved.

<p>No. 43</p>	<p><u>MEMBERSHIPS REPORT</u></p> <p><u>Advisory Panel for Local Authority Governors</u></p> <p>The following recommendations were made by the Panel on 10th July, 2023 to appoint in principle:</p> <p>All Saints RC Primary School – Mr Tim Baxter (with effect from 1st September, 2023)</p> <p>Ebbw Fawr 3-16 Learning Community – Ms. Joanne Davies</p> <p>It was, thereupon, unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED that the above appointments be endorsed.</p> <p><u>Housing and Homeless Strategy Working Group</u></p> <p>RESOLVED that the establishment of the above-named Working Group be ratified and the following appointments to the Group be confirmed:</p> <p>Cabinet Member – Place & Environment (Chair) Cabinet Member – Place & Regeneration and Economic Development Councillor S. Behr Councillor W. Hodgins</p>	
<p>No. 44</p>	<p><u>TIME OF FUTURE COUNCIL MEETINGS</u></p> <p>Members considered the time of future Council meetings.</p> <p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED that all future Council meetings commence at 10.00 a.m.</p>	
<p>No. 45</p>	<p><u>EXEMPT ITEMS</u></p> <p>To receive and consider the following reports which in the opinion of the proper officer were exempt items taking into account consideration of the public interest test and that the press and public should be excluded from the meeting (the reasons for the decisions for the exemptions was available on a schedule</p>	

	<p>maintained by the proper officer).</p> <p>The Interim Chief Executive left the meeting at this juncture.</p>	
<p>No. 46</p>	<p><u>RECRUITMENT</u></p> <p>Having regard to the views expressed by the Proper Officer regarding the public interest test, that on balance, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and that the report should be exempt.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the public be excluded whilst this item of business is transacted as it is likely there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 15, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).</p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Organisational Development.</p> <p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report which related to information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matters arising between the Authority and employees of or office-holders under, the Authority be accepted and the current position and the arrangements for recruiting a permanent Chief Executive be ratified.</p>	
<p>No. 47</p>	<p><u>SHORTLISTING - JNC OFFICERS</u></p> <p>Councillor W. Hodgins declared an interest in this item but remained in the meeting whilst it was considered.</p> <p>Having regard to the views expressed by the Proper Officer regarding the public interest test, that on balance, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and that the report should be exempt.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the public be excluded whilst this item of business is transacted as it is likely there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 12 & 13, Schedule</p>	

	<p>12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).</p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the meeting held on 7th March, 2023.</p> <p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report which related to staffing matters be accepted and the decisions contained therein be noted.</p>	
<p>No. 48</p>	<p><u>APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE - JNC OFFICERS</u></p> <p>Councillor W. Hodgins declared an interest in this item but remained in the meeting whilst it was considered.</p> <p>Having regard to the views expressed by the Proper Officer regarding the public interest test, that on balance, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and that the report should be exempt.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the public be excluded whilst this item of business is transacted as it is likely there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 12 & 13, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).</p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the meeting held on 21st March, 2023.</p> <p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report which related to staffing matters be accepted and the post be offered to Lee Williams on a salary in accordance with JNC 1 (£54,103 – £59,317 per annum).</p>	