

Committee: **Council**

Date of Meeting: **21st July, 2022**

Report Subject: **Support Arrangements for Members on Outside Bodies**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Stephen Thomas, - Leader of the Council/
Executive Member Corporate Overview and Performance**

Report Submitted by: **Sarah King, Head of Democratic Services, Governance and Partnerships**

| Reporting Pathway | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|----------|----------------------|
| Directorate Management Team | Corporate Leadership Team | Portfolio Holder / Chair | Governance & Audit Committee | Democratic Services Committee | Scrutiny Committee | Executive Committee | Council | Other (please state) |
| | 07/07/22 | | | | | | 21/07/22 | |

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 To present proposals for enhanced reporting arrangements for Members sitting on all Outside Bodies.
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 The reporting arrangements are being proposed in order support the governance arrangements of the Council, by offering a transfer of knowledge of the work being undertaken with Outside Bodies and providing this information back to both Officers and Members.
 - 2.2 Providing appropriate support for Members sitting on Outside Bodies will ensure Members can provide an effective and valuable contribution in these roles. Many of the Outside Bodies have a direct role in terms of providing services and/or activities for the communities.
 - 2.3 In 2017, Council approved for arrangements to be put in place for Members sitting on Outside Bodies. This work was undertaken by considering national guidance and arrangements in other local authorities. At the time, these arrangements were only put in place for Members sitting on Outside Bodies that represented either Strategic Partners or bodies whose services had a direct impact on Blaenau Gwent, including:
 - Brecon Beacons National Park
 - Gwent Police and Crime Panel
 - Silent Valley Waste Services Ltd
 - South Wales Fire Authority
 - 2.4 This report proposes that arrangements are put in place for all Outside Bodies, with enhanced arrangements put in place for the bodies identified as having a strategic significance to the Council. Further to the list above it is suggested that this is broadened to include:
 - Greater Gwent Cremation Joint Committee

- Gwent Archives Joint Committee
- Cardiff Capital Region City Deal – Regional Scrutiny Committee
- E.A.S. - Education Achievement Service Company Board
- SRS
- Gwent Regional Partnership Board

2.6 **Proposed Arrangements**

2.6.1 **Strategic Bodies**

For the Outside Bodies identified above, it is suggested that the representing member completes a template which is then reported to Council on a quarterly basis in order to provide communication/feedback to all Members. The template is found at appendix 1.

For the Strategic Bodies, it is suggested that the following support arrangements are put in place:

- A short pre-meeting is held between the Member(s) and relevant lead officer to discuss the agenda and any particular points of interest (Member(s) attend the meeting);
- A short post-meeting is held between the Member(s) and lead officer to de-brief, if required.

2.6.2 **All Other Outside Bodies**

The representing member to complete a brief template in order to provide information on the work being undertaken by the outside body. This template will be reported to Council on a 6 monthly basis. The template is found at appendix 2.

2.7 *Tai Calon (please note, owing to the nature of the information provided by this Outside Body it is not appropriate for formal feedback arrangements to be put in place).*

2.8 Prior to the AGM Part 2, an initial review of the list of Outside Bodies was undertaken to ascertain if member representation is still required. The reporting arrangements suggested within this report will provide additional evidence as to whether this list can be further reviewed.

2.9 Member Training on the requirements for Members sitting on Outside Bodies is included as part of the member induction and refresher programme to inform Members of the role and responsibilities of Members on Outside Bodies as well as the support and feedback arrangements.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 **Recommendation**

For Council to approve the enhanced arrangements for Outside Bodies, as outlined within the report.

3.2 **Option One – Strategic Outside Bodies**

- Agree the set of Strategic Outside Bodies in paragraph 2.4; or
- Make amendment to the suggested Strategic Body list.

3.3 **Option 2 – Reporting Arrangements for Strategic Outside Bodies**

- Agree for the enhanced template to be completed by Members represented on the Strategic Outside Bodies, found at appendix 1;
- Make amendments to this template; or
- Not approve the template.

Option 3 – Reporting Arrangements for All Other Outside Bodies

- Agree for the brief template to be completed by Members represented on the other Outside Bodies, found at appendix 1;
- Make amendments to this template; or
- Not approve the template.

Option 4 – Reporting Timelines

- Agree for the Members represented on the Strategic Outside Bodies to report to Council twice per year;
- Agree for the Members represented the other Outside Bodies to report to Council once per year; or
- Suggest a new reporting framework.

Option 5 – Review of the Outside Bodies

Agree for there to be a further review of the current outside bodies following feedback from Members as outlined above.

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

Providing appropriate support for Members sitting on Outside Bodies will ensure they can provide an effective and valuable contribution in these roles. Many of the Outside Bodies have a direct role in terms of providing services and/or activities for the communities.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***

There are no new financial implications arising from these proposals.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

Members are fully liable for the decisions they take whilst sitting as Members on Outside Bodies. However, it would be prudent for the Council to ensure that its appointees are fully briefed on their new roles and responsibilities and are well supported in them. This could help avoid any reputational damage to individuals or the Council. Support to Members sitting on the Strategic Outside Bodies is identified above under paragraph 2.6.1.

5.2.1

Putting in place these new support arrangements also provides the full Council (and lead officers) with an opportunity to receive feedback on the progress being made in these partner organisations through a formal route.

5.3 ***Legal***

There are no legal implications for implementing these reporting arrangements however, Members will need to be mindful to not provide any commercially sensitive information into the public domain.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

The proposals suggest that lead officers meet with Members for short pre and post meetings, so this will have an impact on capacity but it should be kept to a minimum. It should also help the officers as they will have a better understanding of how their partner organisations are operating and progressing.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

Following the development of arrangements in 2017 further amendments have been made to the process to support the Council's governance framework.

6.1.1 A review of the number of Outside Bodies has been undertaken and it is proposed that a further review in undertaken later in the year.

6.1.2 Many Outside Bodies provide relevant training for Members.

6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***

Members will become more knowledgeable of the work being undertaken by Outside Bodies and the potential impacts on Blaenau Gwent.

6.2.1 By putting arrangements in place for reporting in to Council, all activity will be detailed and available within the public domain.

6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***

The arrangements will enable for information sharing with Members and officers involving them in any future discussions as necessary.

6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***

Following the introduction of these new arrangements Members should feel better able to fulfil their roles on the Outside Bodies and have an increased confidence in making well informed judgements and decisions in the future. It will also help to ensure a consistent approach to these different roles by all Council Members.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

The new arrangements and training will also help to minimise the risks around Members liabilities on Outside Bodies and any adverse reputational

damage to individuals and the Council by making sure Members fully understand their roles and responsibilities and where they can go to for further information and/or support.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

The nature of having Members represented on Outside Bodies support collaborative working.

6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***

Officers have consulted guidance from the Welsh Local Government Association and other local authorities who have previously briefed Members in this area.

6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***

Members will need to be mindful of how they attend meetings of the Outside Bodies and if there are opportunities to meet virtually and to receive documentation via email.

6.9 ***Integrated Impact Assessment***

There is no anticipated negative impact on the protected characteristics.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 *State how the work will be monitored e.g. through scrutiny or directorate performance management arrangements*

As identified within the report.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- *Appendix 1 – Enhanced Template for Members Sitting on Strategic Outside Bodies*
- *Appendix 2 – Brief Template for Members Sitting on Other Outside Bodies*