

**COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT**

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

**SUBJECT: ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL - 23RD JANUARY, 2025**

**REPORT OF:**

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**PRESENT:**

Councillors C. Smith (Presiding Member)  
D. Wilkshire (Deputy Presiding Member)  
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  
J. Millard  
E. Jones  
J. Morgan, J.P.  
J. C. Morgan  
L. Parsons  
D. Rowberry  
T. Smith  
G. Thomas  
J. Thomas  
S. Thomas  
H. Trollope  
L. Winnett

WITH: Joint Chief Executive  
 Corporate Director of Regeneration & Community Services  
 Corporate Director of Corporate Services  
 Corporate Director of Education  
 Interim Corporate Director of Social Services  
 Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance  
 Head of Organisational Development  
 Service Manager – Performance & Democratic  
 Service Manager - Registration, Elections & Corporate Complaints  
 Team Leader – Corporate Communications

Representing Local Partnerships  
 Natalia Silver, Director

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
No. 1	<p><b><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></b></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
No. 2	<p><b><u>APOLOGIES</u></b></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from:</p> <p>Councillors J. P. Morgan, J. Wilkins and D. Woods.</p>	
No. 3	<p><b><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></b></p> <p>The following declaration of interest was reported:</p> <p><b>Item No. 12: Appointment of Chief Executive and Collaborative Working with Torfaen County Borough Council</b></p> <p>- Stephen Vickers, Joint Chief Executive.</p>	

	<p>The officer left the meeting prior to this item of business being considered.</p>	
<b>No. 4</b>	<p><b><u>PRESIDING MEMBER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Holocaust Memorial Day</u></b></p> <p>The Presiding Member announced that Council was proud to be supporting Holocaust Memorial Day, observed every year on 27th January. The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust promoted remembrance in a world scarred by prejudice and systematic, targeted persecution.</p> <p>This year's theme for Holocaust Memorial Day is 'For a Better Future'.</p> <p>Members and officers remembered and paid their respects to those who had lost and gave their lives during the Holocaust with a minute's silence.</p>	
<b>No. 5</b>	<p><b><u>DECISION BOOK - NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2024</u></b></p> <p>The Decision Book for the period November – December 2024 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>	
<b>No. 6</b>	<p><b><u>ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL</u></b></p> <p>Agreed.</p>	
<b>No. 7</b>	<p><b><u>PLANNING COMMITTEE</u></b></p> <p>Agreed.</p>	

<p><b>No. 8</b></p>	<p><b><u>CABINET</u></b></p> <p>Agreed.</p>	
<p><b>No. 9</b></p>	<p><b><u>CORPORATE AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></b></p> <p>Agreed.</p>	
<p><b>No. 10</b></p>	<p><b><u>MEMBERS QUESTIONS</u></b></p> <p>There were no questions submitted by Members.</p>	
<p><b>No. 11</b></p>	<p><b><u>PUBLIC QUESTIONS</u></b></p> <p>There were no questions submitted by members of the public.</p>	
<p><b>No. 12</b></p>	<p><b><u>SUPERINTENDENT MIKE RICHARDS</u></b></p> <p>In the absence of Superintendent Richards, this item of business was postponed.</p>	
<p><b>No. 13</b></p>	<p><b><u>APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND COLLABORATIVE WORKING WITH TORFAEN COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL</u></b></p> <p>The Joint Chief Executive declared an interest in this item and left the meeting whilst the report was considered.</p> <p>Members considered the report of the Head of Organisational Development.</p> <p>Following a discussion, it was proposed that the Joint Chief Executive be invited to return to the Council meeting in order to respond to specific questions which had been raised by Members.</p> <p>This proposal was seconded and unanimously supported by Members.</p> <p>RESOLVED accordingly.</p> <p>The Joint Chief Executive upon his return to the meeting</p>	

	<p>responded to questions and clarified points raised by Members. The officer then left the meeting whilst a vote on the proposal was taken.</p> <p>It was, thereupon, unanimously,</p> <p>FURTHER RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Stephen Vickers be appointed as the permanent Joint Chief Executive for Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen County Borough Councils; this would include taking forward the recommendations for closer working as set out within the Local Partnerships report attached as Appendix 1. Also, the work programme and arrangements to establish closer and collaborative working between both Councils.</li> <li>➤ The actions delegated to the Joint Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service) as described in paragraphs 3.2 – 3.7 of the report be endorsed.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>No. 14</b></p>	<p><b><u>TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID-YEAR REVIEW - SEPTEMBER 2024</u></b></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director of Corporate Services.</p> <p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely that the treasury management activity undertaken during the first six months of 2024/2025 be noted. No amendments were made to the previously agreed Treasury Strategies and performance indicators.</p>	
<p><b>No. 15</b></p>	<p><b><u>REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES/STATIONS 2024</u></b></p> <p>The report of the Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance was submitted for consideration.</p> <p>A Ward Member referred to the permanent closure of Holy Trinity &amp; St Anne’s Church and that it would no longer be available to be</p>	

used as a polling station and proposed that as in previous years, consideration be given by the Electoral Registration Team for a polling station to be provided within a portacabin on Ffosmaen Road, Nantyglo as this was a central location and far more accessible for those constituents residing at the top end of Nantyglo.

This proposal was seconded.

RESOLVED accordingly.

It was unanimously,

FURTHER RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and Option 2 be endorsed, namely that:

- the list of polling stations and register of amendments be approved;
- the Electoral Registration Team consider the request to use a portacabin as a polling station at Ffosmaen Road, Nantyglo and undertake a review to ascertain if this was feasible; and
- these changes be implemented with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2025 when the new register of electors was published.

**No. 16**

**MENSTRUATION/MENOPAUSE POLICY**

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Organisational Development.

It was unanimously,

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely that the Menstruation/Menopause Policy be approved.

No. 17

**FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH CROSS PARTY WORKING GROUP**

Consideration was given to the report of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> December, 2024.

It was unanimously,

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1a be endorsed, namely that the Freedom of the Borough be bestowed on Steve Jones, MBE.

No. 18

**MEMBERSHIPS REPORT**

Consideration was given to:

**Advisory Panel for Local Authority Governors**

The following recommendations were made by the Panel on 8<sup>th</sup> January, 2025 to appoint in principle:

**Brynmawr Foundation School – Deanne Griffiths.**

It was, thereupon, unanimously,

RESOLVED that the above appointment be endorsed.

**FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH CROSS PARTY WORKING GROUP**

RESOLVED that the appointment of Councillor Joanna Wilkins to replace Councillor Lee Parsons on the above-named Working Group be endorsed.

**APPOINTMENT OF LAY MEMBER – GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE**

RESOLVED that the appointment of Debbie Austin as a Lay Member on the Governance & Audit Committee be ratified.

<b>No. 19</b>	<p><b><u>EXEMPT ITEM</u></b></p> <p>To receive and consider the following report which in the opinion of the proper officer was an exempt item taking into account consideration of the public interest test and that the press and public should be excluded from the meeting (the reason for the decision for the exemptions was available on a schedule maintained by the proper officer).</p>	
<b>No. 20</b>	<p><b><u>IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE MIDDLE TIER REVIEW</u></b></p> <p>Councillor J. Hill left the meeting at this juncture.</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 14, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).</p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director of Education.</p> <p>Following a discussion, it was proposed and seconded that the further report which would provide the detail of the partnership arrangement, be considered jointly by Members of both the People and Partnership Scrutiny Committees.</p> <p>It was unanimously,</p> <p>RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report which contained information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) be accepted and Option 2 be endorsed, namely that the Council remained in a school improvement partnership with EAS staffing.</p>	