

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO COUNCIL

20 JULY 2022

REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

OUTCOME OF THE TIMINGS OF MEETINGS SURVEY

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Council of the outcome of a survey that has been undertaken recently with all Members in respect of timings of meetings for Council and its Committees, and to seek approval to use the data from this survey to set timings of meetings from 1 September 2022.

2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives / other corporate priorities

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:-
1. **Supporting a successful sustainable economy** – taking steps to make the county borough a great place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focused on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions for all people in the county borough.
 2. **Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient** - taking steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services. Supporting individuals and communities to build resilience, and enable them to develop solutions to have active, healthy and independent lives.
 3. **Smarter use of resources** – ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

3. Background

- 3.1 Section 6 (2) of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, refers to local authorities having regard to statutory guidance in respect of the times and intervals at which meetings are held, in order to achieve a Programme of Meetings that is generally convenient to local Members, given their often differing yet demanding commitments.
- 3.2 At the Annual meeting of Council on 18 May 2022, Members approved a Programme of meetings for Council and Council Committees for the municipal year May 2022 – April 2023 and also noted the proposed programme of meetings for the municipal year May 2023 – April 2024.

- 3.3 Members agreed at the Annual meeting of Council that dates and start times for Committees would be initially set from May 2022 – August 2022 based on the times held during the last term of office in order to commence the Committee cycle. The survey would subsequently be undertaken with Members in order to obtain their preferences for start times which would be introduced from 1 September 2022.
- 3.4 The suggested choices of timings for meetings offered to Members as part of the survey, were 10.00am, 11.00am, 2.00pm, 4.00pm or other, enabling Members to propose a different time. An opportunity for members to provide additional comments was also included in the survey.
- 3.5 Members were requested to complete the survey and return it to Democratic Services by 1st July 2022.

4. Current situation/proposal

- 4.1 The survey has now been undertaken. 41 Members and 6 Lay/Co-opted Members completed the survey the results of which are shown in the attached **Appendix 1**. This included a number of proposals for ‘other’ specific timings which were taken into account as part of the timing of meetings proposals.
- 4.2 There was a provision within the survey for Members to give additional comments regarding the survey. Common themes included work commitments, childcare arrangements and also evening commitments.

Appeals Panel, Appointments Committee and Rights of Way Sub-Committee

- 4.3 The Appeals Panel meetings are formed by 3 of the 12 Elected Members appointed to the Panel. These meetings are usually planned to take a full day and do not form part of the calendar of meetings. They are arranged to meet the requirements of the appellants, the supporting officers and the Elected Members.
- 4.4. Similarly, the Appointments Committee and the Rights of Way Sub-Committee are not scheduled in the programme of meetings as they meet on an ad-hoc basis when necessary and are arranged to meet the timetable of the recruitment process / application.
- 4.5 It is therefore proposed that meetings of the Appeals Panel, Appointments Committee and Rights of Way Sub-Committee be considered as ad-hoc and not be planned to start at a specific time.

Coychurch Crematorium Joint Committee

- 4.6 The Coychurch Crematorium Joint Committee is formed by Members from Bridgend, Rhondda Cynon Taff and the Vale of Glamorgan Local Authorities. At each meeting the Joint Committee agree the date of the subsequent meeting therefore for the majority of these meetings there will be no time set as yet.

Cabinet Meetings

- 4.7 The timings of meetings of Cabinet, Cabinet Committee Equalities and the Cabinet

Committee - Corporate Parenting are the responsibility of Cabinet to consider and do not form part of this report.

Proposed Timings

- 4.8 In relation to all other Committees, the responses have been considered in respect of the calendar of meetings and the following proposals have been identified:

Council

- 4.8.1 The majority of responses received requested that the start time of the Council be 4pm. It is therefore proposed that the meeting time of Council re-scheduled to 4pm accordingly.

Democratic Services Committee

- 4.8.2 The majority of response indicated that the start time of Democratic Services Committee meetings should be at 10:00am. It is therefore proposed that meetings of the committee be re-scheduled to start at 10:00am accordingly.

Development Control Committee

- 4.8.3 The majority of responses indicated that the start time of Development Control Committee meetings should be 10:00am. It is proposed that meetings of the Development Control committee be re-scheduled to start at 10:00. Officers will revise the arrangements for Development Control Committee training and other procedures associated with the effective operation of the Committee to meet this proposed revision to the meeting timing.

Governance and Audit Committee

- 4.8.4 The majority of responses indicated that the start time of Governance and Audit Committee meetings should be at 10:00am. It is therefore proposed that meetings of the committee be re-scheduled to start at 10:00 accordingly.

Licensing Committee /Licensing Act 2003 Committee

- 4.8.5 The majority of responses indicated that the start time of the Licensing/Licensing Act 2003 Committee meetings should be at 10:00am. It is therefore proposed that the meetings of the Licensing Committee/Licensing Act 2003 Committee be scheduled to start at 10:00am accordingly.

Licensing Act 2003 Sub-Committee

- 4.8.6 The majority of responses indicated that the start time of the Licensing Act 2003 Committee Sub-Committee meetings should be at 10:00am. These meetings deal with hearings under the Licensing Act 2003 and involve 3 Elected Members of the Licensing Act 2003 Committees. These meetings also involve outside agencies, members of the public and other stakeholders who may not always be locally based and therefore this start time will not always be appropriate. The members sitting in support of these meetings are consulted regarding their availability. It is therefore

proposed that attempts be made to try and schedule these at 10:00am with flexibility for alternative start times if necessary.

Licensing Sub-Committees

- 4.8.7 The majority of responses indicated that the start times of the Licensing Committee Sub-Committee meetings should be at 10:00am. It is therefore proposed that meetings of the Licensing Sub-Committees be scheduled for 10:00am accordingly.

Standards Committee

- 4.8.8 The majority of responses indicated that the start time of Standards Committee meetings should be at 10:00am. It is therefore proposed that meetings of the committee remain at 10:00am accordingly.

Town & Community Council Forum

- 4.8.9 The majority of responses indicated that the start time of meetings of the Town & Community Council Forum should be at 4pm. It is therefore proposed that meetings of the Town & Community Council Forum remain at 4pm.

Scrutiny Committees

4.8.10 Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The majority of responses indicated that the start time of meetings of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee (COSC) should be at 10:00am. It is therefore proposed that meetings of the COSC be re-scheduled to start at 10:00 accordingly.

Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1

The majority of responses indicated that the start time of meetings of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 (SOSC 1) should be at 11:00am. It is therefore proposed that meetings of the SOSC 1 be re-scheduled to start at 11:00am accordingly.

Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2

The majority of responses indicated that the start time of meetings of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 (SOSC 2) should be at 10:00am. It is therefore proposed that meetings of the SOSC 2 be re-scheduled to start at 10:00am accordingly.

Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3

The majority of responses indicated that the start time of meetings of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 (SOSC 3) should be at 4pm. It is therefore proposed that meetings of the SOSC 3 be re-scheduled to start at 4pm accordingly.

Member Development

- 4.9 The majority of responses indicated that the preferred times for Member Development activities to be undertaken were 10:00am. It is understood however that this might not always be possible and does depend on the availability of training providers, particularly where these may be external. As such it is proposed that where possible, future Member Development activities will be scheduled for

10:00am, but given that there were a high number of respondents who also requested 2pm and 4pm, sessions will be alternated where necessary particularly where duplicate sessions are being held.

Programme of Meetings

- 4.10 The revised programme of meetings from September onwards is attached at **Appendix 2**. It should be noted that any changes to the proposed days of meetings may require further work to be undertaken to prevent conflicting meeting timings and take account of procedure for various committees in order to provide a workable programme of meetings.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

- 5.1 This report has no effect on the Council's policy framework and procedure rules.

6. Equality Act 2010 implications

- 6.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. This is an information report, therefore it is not necessary to carry out an Equality Impact assessment in the production of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications

- 7.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there is no significant or unacceptable impact upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.

8.1 Financial implications

- 8.1 There are no financial implications in relation to this report.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 It is recommended that Council:
- a) Note the outcome of the timings of meetings survey as detailed in **Appendix 1** of this report;
 - b) Approve the proposed Programme of Meetings from September 2022 as shown in **Appendix 2**, which has been compiled from the survey and developed using the rationale as outlined in this report.

K Watson

Chief Officer – Legal and Regulatory Services, Human Resources and Corporate Policy and Monitoring Officer

14 July 2022

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Background documents: None