

# BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## REPORT TO DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

14 MARCH 2019

### REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

#### TIMINGS OF MEETINGS SURVEYS

#### 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Democratic Services Committee of the outcomes of timings of meetings surveys recently undertaken in respect of certain Council Committees, including the Democratic Services Committee, and for Members to note that it is proposed that similar surveys be carried out to establish future timings of the Council's four Overview and Scrutiny Committees as part of the Programme of Meetings 2019/2020.

#### 2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives / Other Corporate Priorities

- 2.1 This report links to the following Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities:

- a. **Supporting a successful economy** - taking steps to make the county a good 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 of all the people in the county.
- b. **Helping people to be more self-reliant** – taking early steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services.
- c. **Smarter use of resources** – ensuring that all its resources (financial, physical, human, and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the development of resources throughout the community that can help deliver the Council's priorities.

#### 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, including those Members who are working in part/full time employment.
- 3.2 At a meeting of Council on 26 July 2017, Members considered a report for information purposes, on the outcomes of a timings of meetings survey undertaken for Council and Council Committees (on a Committee by Committee basis), in order to obtain their preferences for starting times of meetings from 1 September 2017

onward. Such a survey is required to be carried out at least once in any term of office for all Committee meetings (that comprise the Council).

3.4 Since the above period, and upon either the request of a number of Members of Committees or due to changes to the membership of that particular body, further timing of meetings surveys were recently undertaken for the following Committees, with these meetings previously commencing at the times detailed alongside them:-

- Audit Committee (2.00pm)
- Development Control Committee (2.00pm)
- Town and Community Council Forum (4.00pm)
- Democratic Services Committee (4.00pm)

3.5 Following responses that were received to the surveys from Members of each of the above Committees, the timings of meetings for the Audit Committee, Development Control Committee and Town and Community Council Forum remained unchanged. However, the most popular starting time for future meetings of the Democratic Services Committee has changed to that of 10.00am. This change will be reflected to future dates of the Committee in the Programme of Meetings 2019/2020.

3.6 The choice of starting times for the commencement of these Committee meetings was 10.00am, 2.00pm and 4.00pm, as was the times given for all Committees in the original timings of meetings survey carried out shortly after the commencement of the new term of office.

#### **4. Current Situation / Proposal**

4.1 A number of Members of the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees have recently requested that a further timings of meetings survey be carried out in respect of these particular bodies and for the sake of completeness, this has been seen as a reasonable request, given that this has also recently been completed for other Council Committees.

4.2 It has been considered however that in order to give Members a little more scope in terms of a preferred starting time for these Committees, that the choice be extended to times of 9.00am, 10.00am, 2.00pm and 4.00pm.

4.3 It should also be noted that as part of a scrutiny review, consideration will be given to evening meetings being held in different community areas of the County Borough in the future to give more flexibility with regard to increasing awareness and engagement of scrutiny with the public.

#### **5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules**

5.1 None.

#### **6. Equality Impact assessment**

6.1 There are no equality implications in relation to 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. Financial Implications**

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

## **9. Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the Democratic Services Committee:

- 9.1 notes the outcome of the timings of meetings surveys recently undertaken in respect of certain Council Committees, including the Democratic Services Committee, as detailed in paragraph(s) 3 of this report;
- 9.2 further notes that it is proposed that similar surveys be carried out to establish future timings of the Council's four Overview and Scrutiny Committees as part of the Programme of Meetings 2019/2020.

**Andrew Rees**  
**Democratic Services Manager**  
**7 March 2019**

**Contact Officer:** Mark A. Galvin  
Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees  
**Telephone:** (01656) 643148

**E-mail:** Mark.Galvin@bridgend.gov.uk

**Postal Address** Level 4, Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend.

### **Background documents:**

Report to Council dated 26 July 2017, entitled 'Outcomes of the Timings of Meetings Survey.'