

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT TO DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

21 OCTOBER 2021

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

POTENTIAL CANDIDATE EVENT

1. Purpose of report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the views of the Democratic Services Committee regarding the provisional plans to provide a 'Potential Candidate' event, for anyone considering standing as a Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) Councillor at the Local Government Elections in 2022.

2.1 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 Local Democracy Week is held every year in October with the purpose of:

- strengthening links between elected representatives and their communities
- increase participation in the democratic process
- involvement of citizens in community affairs
- increase their knowledge of local democratic institutions and processes

3.2 With the Local Government Elections in May 2022, this year's Local Democracy Week (11-17 October 2021) would be an appropriate time to begin preparations for the elections and to actively involve the electorate in the democratic process.

3.3 The WLGA and the Member Support Officer Network have planned to co-ordinate the promotion of the Local Government Elections in 2022 throughout Wales during Local Democracy Week. This will provide a range of events which will encourage the participation of the public and political parties in the democratic process and increase the awareness of the election.

4. Current situation / proposal

4.1 Following on from Local Democracy Week it is anticipated that local authorities will run their own programme for potential candidates. It is proposed that BCBC hold Potential Candidate awareness session(s) which can be attended by any constituents of the County Borough of Bridgend.

4.1.2 Each session would take approximately two hours and comprise two parts. The first part would outline information about the role of the councillor and the functions of the Council. The second part would provide information regarding how an individual becomes a candidate at the election and the processes for being elected.

4.1.3 The session(s) are planned to provide information and not to be political. If potential candidates require further information regarding political parties they can be signposted to political representatives outside of these events.

4.1.3 The following general topics are planned to be included:-

Part 1

- Overview of the services provided by BCBC
- The role of a BCBC councillor
 - The time commitment for councillors
 - Ward work
- An overview of the decision making process
- An overview of the Code of Conduct
- The support provided to elected Member

Short Break

Part 2

- Overview of the Electoral roles and responsibilities
- Standing for election
 - Qualification
 - Nomination
 - Uncontested elections
 - Restrictions and offences

- Sign posting for further information
 - Elections team
 - Political groups
 - Electoral Commission
 - "Be a Councillor" WLGA guidance

4.2 Delivery

4.2.1 The sessions are to be fully developed by officers from Electoral and Democratic Services and it is hoped that additional support would also be provided at each event from:-

- cross party representation from existing councillors to utilise their “real-life” experience to bring the event to life for those attending
- Returning Officer

4.3 Promotion and publicity

4.3.1 Initial discussions with the Communications, Marketing and Engagement Team suggest that these event(s) would stimulate positive interest from constituents of the County Borough. Opportunities to publicise the event will be provided via the BCBC website and social media.

4.3.2 Other bodies such as the political groups and Town and Community Councils will be informed of the event with the aim of attracting those councillors and party members that are already planning to stand as Borough Councillors.

4.3.3 The level of interest from the public to participate in the event(s) cannot be gauged at this time. The publicity for the events would request that those wishing to participate, register their interest in attending in the event and confirm that they were considering standing in the Local Government Elections in May 2022. This would assist in identifying the levels of engagement and participation for each event and prevent over subscription which would enable the necessary costs and resources to be managed more effectively.

4.4 Location, timings and venues

4.4.1 Due to the current pandemic, the sessions will be held via Microsoft Teams on dates to be confirmed in November 2021. It is proposed that these sessions are held in the early evenings starting at approximately 6:30pm. This will provide wider scope of access for those people interested in participating in these events.

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

5.1 None.

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. 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 will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 A detailed assessment of the costs which may be incurred will be completed following consideration of the proposals by the Democratic Services Committee. The following expenditure is likely to be incurred and will be met from the Member Development Revenue budget:

- Documentation including Welsh Translation
- Advertisement and Promotion

9. Recommendation

9.1 That the Democratic Services Committee considers the proposals and provides input for the prospective candidate event(s) planned to take place in November 2021.

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Background documents

None