



COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MULTI-LOCATIONAL ANNUAL MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON THURSDAY, 8TH MAY 2025 AT 5.30PM

PRESENT:

Councillor C. Gordon – Presiding Member
Councillor E.M. Aldworth – Deputy Presiding Member

Councillors:

M. Adams, C. Andrews, A. Angel, C. Bishop, C. Bissex-Foster, A. Broughton-Pettit, M. Chacon-Dawson, R. Chapman, P. Cook, S. Cook, D. Cushing, C. Cuss, E. Davies, N. Dix, G. Ead, C. Elsbury, G. Enright, K. Etheridge, M. Evans, A. Farina-Childs, C. Forehead, E. Forehead, J. E. Fussell, N. George, D. Harse, T. Heron, A. Hussey, D. Ingram-Jones, M. James, L. Jeremiah, G. Johnston, J. Jones, S. Kent, A. Leonard, P. Leonard, C. Mann, A. McConnell, B. Miles, C. Morgan, S. Morgan, B. Owen, T. Parry, L. Phipps, M. Powell, D.W.R. Preece, H. Pritchard, J. Pritchard, J.A. Pritchard, J. Rao, J. Reed, J. Roberts, R. Saralis, J. Scriven, J. Simmonds, S. Skivens, E. Stenner, J. Taylor, C. Thomas, A. Whitcombe, L. Whittle, S. Williams, W. Williams, J. Winslade, C. Wright and K. Woodland.

Together with:

R. Edmunds (Chief Executive), R. Tranter (Director of Legal, Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer), M.S. Williams (Executive Director Corporate and Regeneration), M. Lloyd (Director of Infrastructure and Waste Services), R. Hartshorn (Director of Environment and Regulatory Services), S. Harris (Director of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer), L. Lane (Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer), L. Sykes (Deputy Director of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer), S. Pugh (Communications Manager), E. Sullivan (Democratic Services Manager) S. Hughes (Senior Committee Services Officer) and J. Lloyd (Committee Services Officer).

Also in attendance:

M. Jones (Wales Audit Office) and P. Brunt (Chair of Standards Committee).

RECORDING, FILMING AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Presiding Member reminded those present that the meeting was being live streamed and a recording would be made available to view via the Council's website, except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items – [Click Here to View](#). He advised that decisions would be made by Microsoft Forms.

IN MEMORIUM

The Presiding Member referred to the recent passing of former Mayor and County Borough Councillor, Gaynor Oliver. Members and Officers stood for a minute's silence as a mark of respect.

Councillor C. Cuss, Councillor L. Whittle and the Leader of Council paid tribute to Gaynor Oliver, highlighting her dedication, passion and contributions to the community.

CHANGES TO THE RUNNING ORDER

The Presiding Member advised of a change to the running order in that Agenda Item 11 (Financial Statements for 2023/24) would be taken directly after Agenda Item 3.

1. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D.T. Davies MBE and A. Gair.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received at the commencement or during the course of the meeting.

3. COMMEMORATION OF VE DAY

The Leader of Council spoke about the significance of VE Day, marking the end of a devastating conflict in Europe. He emphasised the bravery and sacrifice of those who fought for freedom and the importance of remembering their contributions to peace and democracy. The Leader highlighted the unity of the community in gratitude for the selflessness of those who served. He mentioned the collective efforts to support and remember the armed forces community, reflecting the Council's commitment to honouring their legacy.

Councillor T. Heron, the Council's Armed Forces Champion, announced the renewal of the Defence Employer's Recognition Scheme Gold Award, which reflects the Council's deep-rooted commitment to supporting the armed forces community. She detailed the significance of the award and the Council's dedication to upholding the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant. Councillor T. Heron elaborated on the initiatives and policies implemented by the Council to support veterans, reservists, and military families. She emphasised the proactive and sustained approach to fostering a workplace that welcomes and advocates for the armed forces community.

Other Members also spoke, paying tribute to those who served in the armed forces and highlighting the importance of remembering their sacrifices. A special mention was made for Councillor Denver Preece, who was born on VE Day in 1945 and celebrated his 80th birthday on the day of the meeting.

The Presiding Member called forward the Armed Forces representatives for the award presentation.

11. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR 2023/24

Consideration was given to the report which presented Council with the Audit Wales 'Audit of Accounts Report' for the 2023/24 financial year and sought Council approval of the 2023/24

Audited Financial Accounts. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance provided an overview of the Audit Wales Audit of Accounts report, detailing the adjustments made during the audit process. It was emphasised that the adjustments had no impact on the provisional outturn positions or cash and usable reserve balances. The Cabinet Member explained that the Council missed the deadline for submitting the draft accounts by five days, which delayed the audit and certification process. However, Members were assured that lessons had been learned, and measures would be put in place to meet future deadlines.

A Member expressed concern regarding the unqualified audit despite misstatements totalling over £8 million and it was hoped such misstatements would not happen again in the future. The Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer explained the difference between adjusted and unadjusted misstatements, noting that the unadjusted misstatements were below materiality levels and would be addressed in the preparation of the 2024/25 draft financial accounts.

Another Member asked why the deadline was missed and if there were any penalties or if this was a common occurrence. The Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer explained the complexity of the process and noted that other authorities also missed the deadline. Members were assured that lessons had been learned and that a project team will be put together to ensure timely submission in the future.

Following consideration of the report it was moved and seconded that the recommendations be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms (and in noting there were 59 For, 1 Against and 6 Abstentions) this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that: -

1. The Audit Wales 'Audit of Accounts Report' be noted.
2. The 2023/24 Audited Financial Accounts be approved.

4. TO NOTE THE PRESIDING MEMBER (CHAIR) OF COUNCIL AND THE PAYMENT OF A SENIOR SALARY

RESOLVED that the appointment of Councillor C. Gordon as Presiding Member (Chair) of Council and the payment of a senior salary be noted.

5. TO NOTE THE DEPUTY PRESIDING MEMBER (VICE CHAIR) OF COUNCIL

RESOLVED that the appointment of Councillor E.M. Aldworth as Deputy Presiding Member (Vice Chair) of Council be noted.

6. TO NOTE THE APPOINTMENT OF LEADER OF COUNCIL AND THE PAYMENT OF A SENIOR SALARY

RESOLVED that the appointment of Councillor S. Morgan as Leader of Council and the payment of a senior salary be noted.

7. TO NOTE THE APPOINTMENT OF A DEPUTY LEADER AND THE PAYMENT OF A SENIOR SALARY

RESOLVED that the appointment of Councillor J. Pritchard as Deputy Leader and the payment of a senior salary be noted.

8. TO NOTE THE NUMBER OF MEMBERS TO BE APPOINTED TO THE CABINET AND THE NAMES THE LEADER HAS CHOSEN TO BECOME MEMBERS OF THE CABINET AND THE PAYMENT OF SENIOR SALARIES

RESOLVED that the number of Members appointed to the Cabinet, the names the Leader has chosen to become Members of the Cabinet and the payment of senior salaries be noted.

Councillor James Pritchard - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Prosperity, Regeneration and Transformation.

Councillor Nigel George - Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Highways.

Councillor Eluned Stenner - Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance.

Councillor Carol Andrews - Cabinet Member for Education and Communities.

Councillor Shayne Cook - Cabinet Member for Housing.

Councillor Elaine Forehead - Cabinet Member for Social Care.

Councillor Philippa Leonard - Cabinet Member for Planning and Public Protection.

Councillor Chris Morgan - Cabinet Member for Waste, Leisure and Green Spaces.

9. TO NOTE THE APPOINTMENT OF THE LEADER OF THE MAIN OPPOSITION GROUP AND THE PAYMENT OF A SENIOR SALARY

RESOLVED that the appointment of Councillor L. Whittle as Leader of the main opposition group and the payment of a senior salary be noted.

10. LEADER'S STATEMENT

The Leader of Council addressed the ongoing financial pressures and the substantial budget shortfall, emphasising the need for transformation and improvement programs to address the £29 million budget gap over the next three years. The Leader highlighted the authority's leading role in Wales with a bold approach to transformation, resulting in £10 million in savings and a roadmap for an additional £14 million over the next three years. It was noted that difficult decisions have been made to deliver savings, including upcoming reports on the future of leisure centres and library services. It was highlighted that efforts are being made to enhance customer experience through digital services whilst maintaining face-to-face contact. It was further highlighted that significant savings at the senior leadership level have been achieved, including streamlining top-tier management to deliver £900,000 in savings.

The Leader outlined a number of achievements including progressing major capital investment programs totalling £461 million over the next three years, advancing the ambition to build more council houses, endorsing new town centre place plans developed in partnership with local communities and businesses and developing and approving a new waste strategy, resulting in increased food waste recycling and reduced black bag waste. Further achievements included managing emergency flood instances and implementing flood alleviation schemes, administering the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund allocating £34 million to communities and businesses and reviewing fleet services to improve performance, compliance and financial benefits.

The Leader also outlined future priorities which included improving customer engagement and performance in dealing with telephone calls, enhancing the street scene by investing in specialised teams, focusing on community safety in partnership with Gwent Police, increasing housing availability by reducing the average length of time Council properties are vacant and delivering targeted highway improvements.

The Leader acknowledged the ongoing efforts of staff across the organisation, he expressed gratitude for their dedication and contributions to the Council's success.

12. AMENDMENTS TO THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION

Consideration was given to the report which asked Council to consider and endorse the track changes to the Scheme of Delegation as set out in Part 3 of the Constitution, the track changes in Part 2 of the Constitution, the changes to the Call-in procedure, to consider the continuation of the role of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor and to delegate authority to the Director of Legal, Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer to amend the Constitution as necessary.

Some Members expressed concern regarding the proposal to remove the mayoral role from 2026 onwards, they emphasised the importance of the Mayor as an ambassador and the impact on community engagement.

A Member raised concerns about the call-in procedure, specifically if new evidence emerged following a report being considered at a scrutiny meeting as part of pre-decision scrutiny. The Director of Legal, Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer clarified that if new evidence came to light after the pre-decision scrutiny meeting then a call-in may be allowed, as covered by the existing provisions, but it would be highly unlikely to arise as the report going to pre-decision scrutiny would contain all relevant information

It was moved and seconded that recommendations 3.1 and 3.3 contained in the Officer's report be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms (and in noting there were 51 For, 5 Against and 9 Abstentions) this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that: -

1. The changes to the Constitution shown as track changes in the attached at appendices 1, 2, and 3 be approved.
2. Delegated authority to the Director of Legal, Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer to amend the Constitution, as necessary, be approved.

It was moved and seconded that recommendation 3.2 contained in the Officer's report be approved in that the function of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor be ceased from 2026 onwards. By way of Microsoft Forms (and in noting there were 42 For, 19 Against and 5 Abstentions) this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that: -

1. The function of Mayor and Deputy Mayor be ceased from 2026 onwards.

13. RETIRING MAYOR'S REMARKS

The retiring Mayor, Councillor J. Simmonds, expressed gratitude for the opportunity to serve as Mayor for a second time. He expressed appreciation for the support from his family, friends, and colleagues. Councillor J. Simmonds shared his memorable experiences as

Mayor, including attending special events, anniversaries, and celebrations. He highlighted the privilege of meeting talented young people and inspirational residents in the community.

The retiring Mayor thanked everyone who had supported his chosen charity, Dreams and Wishes, and noted that final figures for the amount raised would be available soon. In concluding his remarks, the retiring Mayor wished the incoming Mayor all the best for the year ahead.

14. TO ELECT A MAYOR OF COUNCIL UNTIL THE ANNUAL MEETING IN MAY 2026 AND TO NOTE THE PAYMENT OF A CIVIC SALARY

It was moved and seconded that Councillor D. Ingram-Jones be elected Mayor of Council until the annual meeting in May 2026 and the payment of a civic salary be noted. By way of Microsoft Forms (and in noting there were 55 For, 1 Against and 4 Abstentions) this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that Councillor D. Ingram-Jones be elected Mayor of Council until the annual meeting in May 2026 and the payment of a civic salary be noted.

15. TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR

The newly elected Mayor, Councillor D. Ingram-Jones, began by thanking fellow Councillors for nominating and selecting her to serve as Mayor for the coming year. She expressed her honour at being trusted with the role and thanked Councillor J. Simmonds for his service as Mayor over the past year. Councillor D. Ingram-Jones shared her positive experiences serving as Deputy Mayor, highlighting the rewarding nature of the role and the opportunity to engage with inspiring individuals and community groups. She thanked her daughter, Megan, for her support during her tenure as Deputy Mayor. The Mayor emphasised her pride in representing Caerphilly County Borough Council and her eagerness to build on existing relationships and make a positive difference in the community. She acknowledged the significance of being the last Mayor and expressed her commitment to showcasing the best of Caerphilly.

16. REVIEW OF POLITICAL BALANCE

Consideration was given to the report which detailed the review of political balance across the authority and the allocation of seats to political groups in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

The report outlined the political balance of the authority and Council was asked to note the political balance as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report and the general allocation of seats to the committees in accordance with the political balance.

Following consideration of the report it was moved and seconded that the recommendation be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms (and in noting there were 59 For, 0 Against and 1 Abstention) this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that the political balance as outlined in Appendix 1 and the general allocation of seats to the Committees in accordance with the political balance be noted.

17. THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The Presiding Member welcomed Mr P. Brunt, Chair of the Standards Committee, to the meeting, which would be his last as his 10 years as a lay member of the Standards Committee

would conclude later this year.

Mr P. Brunt presented the Annual Report of the Standards Committee which covered the activities of the Standards Committee during the period of the 2024/2025 civic year from the local government election to the annual meeting of council.

RESOLVED that the Annual Report of the Standards Committee be noted.

18. TO APPOINT THE CHAIR, VICE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE POLITICAL BALANCE FOR THE ENSUING YEAR AND TO NOTE THE PAYMENT OF A SENIOR SALARY TO THE CHAIRS

RESOLVED that: -

1. Councillor D. Cushing be appointed as Chair of the Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee and Councillor B. Miles be appointed as Vice Chair.
Councillors E.M. Aldworth, C. Bishop, A. Broughton-Pettit, M. Chacon-Dawson, P. Cook, M. Evans, A. Farina-Childs, C. Gordon, T. Heron, A. Leonard, T. Parry, J. Roberts, J. Simmonds, S. Skivens, J. Winslade and K. Woodland be appointed as Members of the Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee.
2. Councillor G. Johnston be appointed as Chair of the Corporate and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee and Councillor A. McConnell be appointed as Vice Chair.
Councillors M. Chacon-Dawson, G. Enright, C. Forehead, J. Fussell, A. Gair, D. Harse, L. Jeremiah, J. Jones, S. Kent, C. Mann, M. Powell, D.W.R. Preece, C. Thomas, L. Whittle, W. Williams and C. Wright be appointed as Members of the Corporate and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee.
3. Councillor A. Whitcombe be appointed as Chair of the Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee and Councillor S. Williams be appointed as Vice Chair.
Councillors M. Adams, C. Bishop, R. Chapman, P. Cook, D. Cushing, C. Cuss, D.T. Davies (MBE), T. Heron, A. Hussey, D. Ingram-Jones, M. James, B. Owen, L. Phipps, H. Pritchard, J.A. Pritchard and A. McConnell be appointed as Members of the Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee.
4. The payment of a senior salary to the Chairs be noted.

19. TO APPOINT THE CHAIR AND/OR VICE CHAIR AND MEMBERS TO THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEES FOR THE ENSUING YEAR (IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE POLITICAL BALANCE) AND TO NOTE THE PAYMENT OF A SENIOR SALARY TO THE CHAIR OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE AND CHAIR OF LICENSING AND GAMBLING/TAXI AND GENERAL COMMITTEE

APPEALS PANEL

APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

***GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE (*CHAIR WILL BE A LAY MEMBER AND WILL BE APPOINTED AT THE FIRST MEETING FOLLOWING THE ANNUAL MEETING OF COUNCIL)**

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

INVESTIGATING AND DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE

LICENSING AND GAMBLING COMMITTEE/TAXI AND GENERAL COMMITTEE

PENSIONS COMPENSATION COMMITTEE

PLANNING COMMITTEE

***STANDARDS COMMITTEE (*CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR WILL BE LAY MEMBERS)**

RESOLVED that: -

1. Councillor B. Miles be appointed as Chair of the Appeals Panel and Councillor W. Williams be appointed as Vice Chair. Councillors G. Enright together with nominated substitutes Councillors M. Adams, T. Parry and E.M Aldworth be appointed as Members of the Appeals Panel.
2. Councillor E.M. Aldworth be appointed as Chair of the Appointments Committee and Councillor A. McConnell be appointed as Vice Chair. Councillors N. George, P. Leonard, A. Whitcombe, C. Mann, J. Taylor, Vacant (Independent) and the relevant Cabinet Member, together with nominated substitutes Councillors J. Simmonds, M. Chacon-Dawson, P. Cook and J. Scriven be appointed as Members of the Appointments Committee.
3. The Chair of the Governance and Audit Committee will be a Lay Member to be appointed at the first meeting following the Annual Meeting of Council and Councillor C. Wright to be appointed as Vice Chair. Councillors M. Adams, C. Bissex-Foster, A. Broughton-Pettit, M. Chacon-Dawson, E. Davies, G. Enright and J. Taylor be appointed as Members of the Governance and Audit Committee.
4. Councillor M. James be appointed as Chair of the Democratic Services Committee and Councillor L. Phipps be appointed as Vice Chair. Councillors D.T. Davies, G. Ead, A. Farina-Childs, C. Forehead, A. Hussey, L. Jeremiah, C. Mann, A. McConnell, J.A. Pritchard, J. Simmonds, C. Thomas, A. Whitcombe, J. Winslade and K. Woodland be appointed as Members of the Democratic Services Committee.
5. Councillors E. M. Aldworth, A. Angel, R. Chapman, E. Davies, C. Gordon, J. Taylor and A. Whitcombe, together with nominated substitutes Councillors G. Enright, A. Leonard and W. Williams be appointed as Members of the Investigating and Disciplinary Committee.
6. Councillor S. Williams be appointed as Chair of the Licencing and Gambling/Taxi and General Committee and Councillor W. Williams be appointed as Vice Chair. Councillors M. Adams, E.M. Aldworth, R. Chapman, P. Cook, D. Cushing, G. Enright, C. Gordon, D. Harse, T. Heron, J. Jones, D.W.R. Preece, J. Roberts and J. Scriven be appointed as Members of the Licencing and Gambling/Taxi and General Committee.
7. Councillors P. Cook, G. Enright, N. George, B. Miles, M. Powell, J. Scriven, W. Williams and the relevant Cabinet Member, together with nominated substitutes Councillors M. Adams, E.M. Aldworth and J. Taylor be appointed as Members of the Pensions Compensation Committee.
8. Councillor R. Saralis be appointed as Chair of the Planning Committee and Councillor E.M. Aldworth be appointed as Vice Chair. Councillors M. Adams, A. Angel, R. Chapman, N. Dix, G. Ead, J. Fussell, A. Hussey, B. Miles, M. Powell, J. Simmonds, J. Taylor, S. Williams, A. Whitcombe and K. Woodland be appointed as Members of the Planning Committee.
9. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Standards Committee will be Lay Members to be appointed at the first meeting following the Annual Meeting of Council. Councillors S. Williams and J. Taylor, together with nominated substitutes Councillors P. Cook and J. Scriven to be appointed as Members of the Standards Committee.
10. The payment of a senior salary to the Chair of the Planning Committee and the Chair of the Licencing and Gambling/Taxi and General Committee be noted.

20. TO CONSTITUTE SUB COMMITTEES/WORKING PARTIES/PANELS/BOARDS AND APPOINT MEMBERS TO SERVE THEREON FOR THE ENSUING YEAR IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE POLITICAL BALANCE

RESOLVED that the Sub-Committees/Working Parties/Panels/Boards be constituted and the names of Members provided to Democratic Services be appointed to serve thereon for the ensuing year in accordance with the political balance.

21. TO APPOINT/NOMINATE REPRESENTATIVES TO SERVE ON OUTSIDE BODIES WHERE REQUIRED

RESOLVED that the names of representatives provided to Democratic Services be appointed to serve on Outside Bodies where required.

The meeting closed at 6.55 pm.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 1st July 2025 they were signed by the Presiding Member.

PRESIDING MEMBER