

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Special Remote Meeting held on 28th September, 2021.

The Council agenda is available [here](#).

The recording of the meeting is available [here](#).

Present: Councillor Rhiannon Birch (Deputy Mayor in the Chair); Councillors Julie Aviet, Vincent Bailey, Jonathan Bird, Bronwen Brooks, Lis Burnett, George Carroll, Janice Charles, Millie Collins, Geoff Cox, Robert Crowley, Pamela Drake, Vincent Driscoll, Stewart Edwards, Ben Gray, Owen Griffiths, Stephen Griffiths, Anthony Hampton, Sally Hanks, Nic Hodges, Hunter Jarvie, Gwyn John, Dr. Ian Johnson, Gordon Kemp, Peter King, Kevin Mahoney, Kathryn McCaffer, Anne Moore, Neil Moore, Michael Morgan, Rachel Nugent-Finn, Andrew Parker, Bob Penrose, Sandra Perkes, Andrew Robertson, Leighton Rowlands, Ruba Sivagnanam, John Thomas, Neil Thomas, Steffan Wiliam, Margaret Wilkinson, Edward Williams, Mark Wilson and Marguerita Wright.

405 ANNOUNCEMENT –

Prior to the commencement of the business of the Committee, the Principal Democratic Services Officer reminded all present of some housekeeping issues which included that meeting would be live streamed as well as recorded via the internet and archived for future viewing.

406 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE –

These were received from Councillors Jayne Norman (Mayor), Christine Cave and Andrew R.T. Davies.

407 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

No declarations were received.

408 REVIEW OF STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM STRUCTURE (REF) –

The Leader commenced by advising that the review had been undertaken to ensure that the Council was in the best position to meet and respond to future challenges. Following consideration of the reports to Cabinet on 12th May, the Scrutiny Committee Corporate Performance and Resources on 19th May 2021 and discussions with Group Leaders in consultation with the Head of Human Resources he had commissioned a consultant to undertake the review.

The report before Council had been considered by Cabinet on 13th September 2021 and the Scrutiny Committee Corporate Performance and Resources on 22nd

September 2021. The report set out the findings of the recent analysis of the Council's senior management structure, in response to the Cabinet decision of 12th May 2021 to commission an external consultancy review of the structure. The report proposed, the high-level organisational structure that would be required to deliver the ambitious agenda set out in the Corporate Plan 2020-25, the broad direction of travel for how the organisation would work in the future and proposed immediate structure changes.

The Leader commented that the changes in his view were necessary in order to carry out the functions of the Local Authority to the best of standards and to ensure that it remained the best performing authority in Wales.

Following a request by the Leader that Standing Orders be waived (seconded by Councillor Lis Burnett) to allow the consultant (Steve James) appointed by the Council to undertake the review, to speak and provide a presentation to Council, this was duly agreed.

The consultant commenced by providing an overview covering a number of aspects of the review which included drivers for the review, strategic challenges facing the Council due to a number of factors, pressures/ demands and the proposals for structural changes in the senior leadership of the Council to address these issues.

The report itself proposed the immediate structural changes that were required to:

- build the senior level capacity and capability to drive the transformational changes to Service delivery required in the Corporate Plan;
- ensure appropriate operational leadership and management to maximise opportunities from the emerging national and regional agenda; and
- develop a leadership direction that provided the basis for an organisation structure for 2022/23 and beyond that would embed the capacity and capability needed to fully implement the new operating model and deliver services as envisaged in the Corporate Plan

The Leader following the presentation took the opportunity to thank Mr James for his work in relation to the review which he added provided a structure for the Council going forward. The Leader drew Members attention to Management restructures that had taken place in previous years highlighting that the current reporting requirements to the Managing Director at Senior Level were too many. The Council had already agreed that its delivery plan was Strategic in nature and therefore to meet the demands the Strategic lead needed to be formulated.

The Leader then proposed, seconded by Councillor Burnett that the recommendations as contained within the report be approved.

Councillor Carroll thanked the Leader and the consultant for the briefings that had been afforded to Group Leaders throughout the process and in referring to the proposals advised that he was happy to support the replacing of the Managing Director title with that of Chief Executive. However, with regard to the creation of the two new director positions (Director of Corporate Resources and Director of Place), he considered that as the Authority was facing cost pressures he was unable to

support the creation of the two positions due to the additional costs which he and his group he added could not justify to the Vale of Glamorgan taxpayers.

Consequently, Councillor Carroll moved the following amendment, seconded by Councillor Vince Bailey,

THAT points (c) Creation of the post of Director of Corporate Resources and point (d) Creation of the post of Director of Place be deleted from the Cabinet resolution 2, Cabinet minute C660.

Councillor Dr. Ian Johnson expressed his disappointment with the proposed amendment and reminded Members that the Council had frequently changed administration over the years stating that 42 members of the current Council had participated in administrations at some point since 2017. The annual turnover of Council was 400 million it had 5,000 members of staff and the Senior Management capacity was therefore hugely important in delivering the correct services for the people of the Vale of Glamorgan. It was important that agreement was made as to how the Council Management Team was organised. Five Director positions in his view was the right amount for a Council of its nature and size for Senior Leadership and external opportunities needed to be taken. The Director of Place role was about ambition and provided opportunities for the receipt of extra funding and the capacity to go forward. The levelling up fund was also important and the capacity proposed in the report would allow for this. He asked the Conservative Group that if they wanted to delete the posts could they advise if they would be participating in the recruitment process for the posts if approved, whether they would remove the positions if successful in the elections in May 2022 and or keep them, and whether they would take the credit for the posts and for what they achieved if in administration in the future.

Councillor Kemp indicated that he had not read the report, but queried the commissioning arrangements for the report, the consultants background and whether the size of the Council justified a freestanding Chief Executive with no departments under him. Having regard to austerity Councillor Kemp enquired whether the costs associated with the positions would have an impact on service delivery and sought clarity as to what was going to happen with staff structures below the level of Directors and whether the proposals would achieve better services for the public.

The Leader addressing Councillor Kemp's remarks drew attention to the process for the appointment of the consultant, as contained within the report, advising that SOLACE had been requested to suggest consultants that the Council could consider to undertake a review. Four different consultants had been recommended these had been duly assessed and a shortlist of two agreed for interview. Mr James was not connected to SOLACE, he had a private limited company and had worked with a number of other Councils, previously employed by Deloittes. The report itself detailed that it was a strategic management review and other positions within Directorates below that of the Director level would be for the appropriate Director to consider and determine what was required once appointed.

The Leader thanked and congratulated Councillor Dr Johnson (Plaid Cymru Group Leader) for his comments which he stated were in his view absolutely right. The Council needed to be Strategic in outlook and strategic in its thinking.

Mr James echoed the comments of the above group Leaders advising that a number of Council's were looking to manage strategic challenges as outlined within the report. The ambitions detailed in the Council's Corporate Plan would require strategic leadership capacity and if a leadership structure was to thin there would be challenges. The potential scale of growth and opportunity the role of Director of Place could bring was key.

Councillor Bailey advised that he could not support the proposals as in his view the creation of the two Director appointments, as outlined in the report, was not appropriate. His opposition to the proposals was about doing the right thing with taxpayers' money and acknowledged that staff were doing excellent work within current resources. He could not recall being advised that the current structure was unable to deliver the ambitions outlined in the Corporate Plan 2020/25 and considered it to be inappropriate to appoint two new director positions.

Councillor Wilson referred to the external pressures facing the Council, the challenges of Brexit, Climate Change and the COVID 19 pandemic which required the Council to be fit for purpose. The Council needed officers to be visionary, be reinvigorated, concentrate on strategy and look at future direction.

Councillor Mahoney endorsed some of the comments made by the Conservative members. He also referred to the Managing Director who had not he said advised the Council that he was not happy with the structure he had inherited in 2015 and that in his view the people of the Vale of Glamorgan would prefer the money to be spent on services. In conclusion, Councillor Mahoney commented that if the Council was currently doing well there was no reason to change.

Councillor Robertson considered the timing for the review to be inappropriate, officers had done a remarkable job as a result of COVID and that residents had had a difficult time over the previous two years and in his view the proposals would not go down well with the public.

Councillor Rowlands asked the Leader when the two positions would be put in place as the timing of the appointments could affect the financial implications of £280,000, if the appointments were made in the last quarter of the current financial. This would add in his estimate an additional £70,000 in salary costs. In response, the Leader advised that it would be dependent on the recruitment process, but hoped they would be in post in time for May 2022.

Councillor Gray referred to the number of opportunities Members had had to be involved in the consideration of the reports and that the report was also the start of a consultation with staff. He requested a recorded vote when the motion was to be put which was duly agreed.

Councillor Perkes advised that she had also worked for the Council a number of years previously and had seen how austerity measures had impacted on staff. The

staff and Directors needed to be supported to do the Strategic work that needed to be delivered.

Councillor Moore bemused by some of the comments made during the debate referred to the impact of the COVID pandemic on staff. Although the Councils management were exceptional in his view, a strategy was needed to take the Council forward. He also reminded Council that it also did not spend up to its Standard Spending Assessment level. In referring to the UK Government's Levelling Up fund he said this was a bidding war and, in his view, it was trying to circumvent democratic processes in Wales.

Councillor Carroll in response considered the Vale's existing management structure would be able to make bids successfully to the Levelling Up Fund. However, he asked where the money was going to come from to pay for the salaries for the two posts advising that his comments did not reflect on the current management team who had he agreed, worked extremely hard and well together. However, in response to Councillor Johnson's comments as to whether the Conservative group would take part in any appointment process, he advised they would work within decisions made.

A Recorded Vote then took place on the following Amendment:

THAT points (c) Creation of the post of Director of Corporate Resources and point (d) Creation of the post of Director of Place be deleted from the Cabinet resolution (2), Cabinet Minute C660.

Members	For	Against	Abstain
Julie Aviet		√	
Rhiannon Birch		√	
Vincent Bailey	√		
Jonathan Bird		√	
Bronwen Brooks		√	
Lis Burnett		√	
George Carroll	√		
Janice Charles	√		
Millie Collins		√	
Geoff Cox		√	
Robert Crowley	√		

Pamela Drake		√	
Vince Driscoll	√		
Stewart Edwards	√		
Ben Gray		√	
Owen Griffiths	√		
Stephen Griffiths	√		
Anthony Hampton	√		
Sally Hanks		√	
Nic Hodges		√	
Hunter Jarvie		√	
Gwyn John		√	
Ian Johnson		√	
Gordon Kemp	√		
Peter King		√	
Kevin Mahoney	√		
Kathryn McCaffer		√	
Anne Moore		√	
Neil Moore		√	
Michael Morgan		√	
Rachel Nugent-Finn	√		
Andrew Parker		√	
Bob Penrose	√		
Sandra Perkes		√	
Andrew Robertson	√		
Leighton Rowlands	√		
Ruba Sivagnanam		√	

John Thomas		√	
Neil Thomas		√	
Steffan Wiliam		√	
Margaret Wilkinson		√	
Edward Williams		√	
Mark Wilson		√	
Marguerita Wright	√		
TOTAL	16	28	

The Amendment was lost.

Councillor Penrose referring to the Leaders Motion, as above, stated that although not opposed to the recommendations, he was opposed to the increase in the salary budget unless it could be contained in the current salary envelope. He also commented that any changes to the Senior Leadership Structure should be made by the administration in charge following the Local Government Elections in May 2022.

Cllr Thomas in concurring with Cllr Johnsons comments stated that as a previous Leader of the Council he understood the pressures on the Senior Management Team. The Council needed to evolve and move forward to enable it to continue to remain one of the best, if not, the best performing authority in Wales.

Councillor Bailey commented that it was refreshing to see the passionate comments at the meeting, but reiterated that it was about doing what was right for the people of the Vale and asked for examples as to how the appointments would pay for themselves.

Councillor Mahoney stated he had no issues with more Council jobs being created as long as they were created within the existing payroll.

Councillor Burnett referred to coming to the debate from a position of strength stating that the Vale of Glamorgan Council had been Wales' best performing Authority since 2013 and even through the Pandemic the Council had continued to deliver existing services as well as a wide range of extra support. There remained many challenges ahead for the Council and for the Communities. As a result of austerity since 2010 the Council had had to cut £59 million from its budget. Communities had been badly affected by the Pandemic and with the forthcoming end of furlough, cut in Universal Credit, and an increase in National Insurance, the public services the Council provided for the people of the Vale would not only be essential they would be crucial to many lives. The Council needed to drive forward the rural regeneration agenda when Brexit had pulled the rug out from under it and the amazing locally driven work

of Rural Regeneration Team and the Local Action Group. However, alongside the challenges there were also opportunities. Opportunities to look to the future and this was where the second role of Director of Place was important. The focus of the last Corporate Plan had been 'Strong Communities with a Bright Future' and more recently it had developed into 'Working Together for a Brighter Future' the plan was challenging and ambitious. There was a list of things that needed investment and the Council needed Leaders able to do that.

Referring to the Council meeting on 20th September where she had reported 82% of the construction spend 85% of the workforce in Wales related to the 21st Century schools programme, 48% from the postcode, 154 new full-time jobs created and 86 apprenticeships 47 community initiatives had been supported and she wanted this to be replicated across all the Council's procurement spend. The Council also needed to build schools and homes, transport infrastructure and the jobs to support its communities and it needed to meet the challenges of Climate Change and achieve this in partnership with the communities.

Councillor Burnett concluded that she believed the proposed structure would allow the Council to deliver for its communities and that was the reason she was seconding and supporting the proposals in the report.

Councillor King indicated that the service areas he was responsible for had and continued to deliver to the maximum in such a difficult period. The biggest challenge had been the supply chain challenges and this would be one of the areas that would be addressed as part of the strategic lead.

The Leader in summing up commented that the pressures pre COVID, during COVID and post COVID were different, and the Council needed to evolve and go forward. He stated Member comments in the chat bar on TEAMS about the adverts already having been written were disgraceful and vehemently refuted this to be the case.

The aim the Leader stated was to have a strategy to help the Council to go forward and continue to be the best Authority and suggested that the consultant may wish to respond to some of the comments made during the debate in particular to the role of the Director of Place. Mr James responded by advising that although the Council was in a position of strength, the degree to which further improvement and progress of the substantial issues contained in the Corporate Plan would be difficult to achieve within the current senior leadership structure. The Director of Place role was about growth and development, with the Director of Corporate Resources role also being key to the overall transformation of the organisation to maximise opportunities to deliver the Corporate Plan.

Following the debate, a Recorded Vote then took place on the Leader's original Motion and as contained within the Cabinet reference of 13th September, 2021 as follows:

The Leader of the Council (Councillor Neil Moore), seconded by Councillor Lis Burnett, moved that the resolutions of Cabinet (Minute No. C660, 13th September, 2021) as set out below, be approved:

(1) T H A T the proposed reorganisation of the first and second tier structure, including new and changed roles, as detailed in the report be approved and recommended to a Special Full Council meeting to be held on Tuesday, 28th September, 2021.

(2) T H A T the deletion and creation of the following posts in line with the detail contained in the report and as part of the proposed structure be approved and recommends these proposals to Full Council:

- (a) Deletion of the post of Managing Director;
- (b) Creation of the post of Chief Executive;
- (c) Creation of the post of Director of Corporate Resources; and
- (d) Creation of the post of Director of Place.

(3) T H A T the proposed consultation process and implementation timetable be noted.

Members	For	Against	Abstain
Julie Aviet	√		
Rhiannon Birch	√		
Vincent Bailey		√	
Jonathan Bird	√		
Bronwen Brooks	√		
Lis Burnett	√		
George Carroll		√	
Janice Charles		√	
Millie Collins	√		
Geoff Cox	√		
Robert Crowley		√	
Pamela Drake	√		
Vince Driscoll		√	
Stewart Edwards		√	
Ben Gray	√		

Owen Griffiths		√	
Stephen Griffiths		√	
Anthony Hampton		√	
Sally Hanks	√		
Nic Hodges	√		
Hunter Jarvie	√		
Gwyn John	√		
Ian Johnson	√		
Gordon Kemp		√	
Peter King	√		
Kevin Mahoney		√	
Kathryn McCaffer	√		
Anne Moore	√		
Neil Moore	√		
Michael Morgan	√		
Rachel Nugent-Finn		√	
Andrew Parker	√		
Bob Penrose		√	
Sandra Perkes	√		
Andrew Robertson		√	
Leighton Rowlands		√	
Ruba Sivagnanam	√		
John Thomas	√		
Neil Thomas	√		
Steffan Wiliam	√		
Margaret Wilkinson	√		

Edward Williams	√		
Mark Wilson	√		
Marguerita Wright		√	
TOTAL	28	16	

The Motion was duly carried.

RESOLVED –

- (1) T H A T the proposed reorganisation of the first and second tier structure, including new and changed roles, as detailed in the report be approved.
- (2) T H A T the deletion and creation of the following posts in line with the detail contained in the report and as part of the proposed structure be approved as set out below:
- (a) Deletion of the post of Managing Director;
 - (b) Creation of the post of Chief Executive;
 - (c) Creation of the post of Director of Corporate Resources; and
 - (d) Creation of the post of Director of Place.
- (3) T H A T the proposed consultation process and implementation timetable be noted.

Reasons for decisions

- (1) To enable Council to fully consider the findings of the review and the underlying business case for the recommended structural changes.
- (2) To agree formal proposals for organisational change to deliver the Corporate Plan.
- (3) To enable the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development to begin preparations for formal staff consultation on the proposed changes, subject to Council approval.