

MATTER WHICH THE CHAIRMAN HAS DECIDED IS URGENT BY REASON OF THE NEED TO MAKE AN URGENT DECISION

Agenda Item No

The Vale of Glamorgan Council

Cabinet Meeting: 25 April, 2016

Report of the Leader

European Union Referendum and Welsh Local Government Association Position

Purpose of the Report

1. To advise Members of the receipt of correspondence from the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) in respect of the European Union (EU) referendum and to adopt a position in relation to the referendum.

Recommendations

1. That subject to consideration by Council on 27 April 2016 Cabinet notes the report and considers the proposal to support the WLGA stance in relation to supporting the EU Referendum.
2. That subject to consideration by Council on 27 April 2016, the proposed response to the WLGA at [Appendix 1](#) be approved.
3. That Cabinet authorises the use of Article 14.14 of the Council's Constitution (urgent decision procedure) to submit the report to Council on 27 April 2016.

Reasons for the Recommendations

1. To consider the Council's stance in relation to the EU referendum.
2. To agree a proposed response to the WLGA.
3. To enable the matter to be considered by Council on 27 April 2016.

Background

2. The WLGA Co-ordinating Committee received a report on 24 March 2016 which updated Members on the referendum on UK membership of the EU. A copy of a recent letter dated 15 April 2016 from Councillor Bob Bright (spokesperson on European Affairs) seeks feedback on the stance being adopted by individual Councils in the run up to the EU Referendum.

- Copies of the letter and attached proforma for feedback and the report to the Coordinating Committee are attached at [Appendix 2](#).

Relevant Issues and Options

- The attached proforma seeks feedback on whether this authority has adopted or plans to adopt a final position on the issue of the EU Referendum. The first issue to consider is therefore whether the authority ought to adopt a stance and it is recommended that the authority supports the WLGA stance and commitment for the UK to remain a member of the EU.
- The proforma also seeks further details on a number of questions (2 through to 6) and an attempt has been made to provide a draft response for the consideration of Cabinet. In summary reference is made to:
 - The fact that the steps taken by the authority in publicising the referendum will be those normally taken in relation to any election or referendum.
 - That it will be a matter for individual members to support and/or promote any campaigns. However, in doing so it will be appreciated that council facilities are not to be used for party political or campaigning purposes.
 - That the activities planned as part of Europe Day will not differ from any other year.
 - Examples are also given as to how the EU membership has benefited the economy of the Vale of Glamorgan area as well as other benefits (questions 5 and 6).

Resource Implications (Financial and Employment)

- There are no direct resource implications in considering this issue.

Sustainability and Climate Change Implications

- There are no direct sustainability or climate change implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications (to Include Human Rights Implications)

- Attached at [Appendix 3](#) is advice from SOLACE. In addition, advice has been circulated by the Regional Counting Officer which provides guidance in relation to conduct of councils in relation to media and other issues. In addition, it is clear that any position a council takes in completing the WLGA survey should be in the name of the author and their capacity, be this the Leader, controlling group or Cabinet. In addition a Council should only formally put its name to a position after a formal debate and majority resolution.
- The purdah period for the EU Referendum commences on 27 May 2016 and continues until the close of poll on 23 June 2016.

Crime and Disorder Implications

- None directly attributable to this report.

Equal Opportunities Implications (to include Welsh Language issues)

- None directly attributable to this report.

Corporate/Service Objectives

12. This is a matter specific to the EU Referendum and it is considered that the stance adopted could have a bearing on the delivery of a number of outcomes contained within the Corporate Plan.

Policy Framework and Budget

13. The issue of adopting a position in relation to the EU is a matter for Council consideration.

Consultation (including Ward Member Consultation)

14. As this matter relates to a Vale of Glamorgan wide matter, no individual ward members have been consulted. Individual Group Leaders have been issued with a copy of the information enclosed in the appendices of this report.

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

15. Corporate Resources

Background Papers

WLGA and SOLACE papers attached as appendices

Responsible Officer:

Leader of the Council