

30th June 2023

APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY LEADER AND SPOKESPERSONS FOR 2023-24

Purpose

1. To appoint a Deputy Leader(s) and Spokespersons to serve for the Council term 2023-24.

Background

2. Section 10 of the [WLGA Constitution](#) empowers the WLGA Council to appoint a Deputy Leader/s and Spokespersons at each Annual General Meeting:
 - 10.3 *The Council shall, at each Annual General Meeting of the Association, appoint a Deputy Leader or Deputy Leader(s) to support the work of the Leader of the Association.*
 - 10.4 *The Council may appoint Spokespersons and such Deputy Spokespersons as are required with responsibility to promote the policies of the Association in specified policy areas. Spokespersons, on behalf of the Association, may undertake bilateral meetings with Welsh Government Cabinet Secretaries and Ministers, UK Government Ministers, represent the Association at committees of the Senedd or Parliament, chair meetings of cabinet member forums and fulfil the terms of reference of any relevant WLGA Advisory Group or sub-committee.*
 - 10.5 *The Council will appoint Spokespersons so that the number of spokespersons appointed from each political group will so far as is possible reflects the political balance of the Council.*
 - 10.6 *To ensure that a majority group, or coalition, on the Council can express a majority view if required, such majority group, or coalition, shall have the first choice in appointing Spokespersons.*
 - 10.7 *Spokespersons may convene meetings of leading members and officers from each Member Council, and with relevant professional bodies to exchange information, inform and review Association policy and report to report back to the Association*

Spokespersons

3. The WLGA has previously adopted a collective leadership approach to allow representation and engagement with Ministers to be shared. Such an approach aims to ensure the WLGA has been able to field a consistent, experienced and team of members at key Welsh Government bi-lateral meetings, Partnership Council, Cabinet Members networks, Senedd Committees and Inquiries, and meetings with the Secretary of State for Wales and Members of Parliament. The Group Leaders also meet as a cross party forum for opinion and the facilitation of business.

4. The WLGA's Spokespersons structure was discussed in June 2022 and the consensus was:
- To reduce the number of Spokespersons portfolios, aligned where possible with the Welsh Government Cabinet portfolios;
 - Whilst portfolios might be aligned to the Welsh Government cabinet portfolios, Workforce should be retained as a separate brief, given the workload and range of devolved and non-devolved engagement on pay matters and that Public Health and Regulatory Services should be retained as a separate brief as a core local government function;
 - A case was also made for Spokespeople to be broadly aligned with Council cabinet portfolios (which are a maximum of 10 roles, although some councils have introduced job share roles);
 - A 'team of leaders/deputies' should cover and support each brief, with fewer deputy spokespersons; and
 - It was also noted that deputy roles allow for some peer development/succession planning and that diversity should be a consideration in terms of appointment.
5. The list of Spokespersons agreed for 2022-23 is below for reference:

Finance	Cllr Anthony Hunt (Torfaen) – Labour Cllr Steve Thomas (Blaenau Gwent) – Labour Cllr Mark Pritchard (Wrexham) – Independent Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn (Gwynedd) – Plaid Cymru
Digital & Innovation	Cllr Jane Mudd (Newport) – Labour Cllr Neil Prior (Pembrokeshire) – Independent
Economy	Cllr Rob Stewart (Swansea) – Labour Cllr Huw Thomas (Cardiff) – Labour Cllr Jason McLellan (Denbighshire) – Labour Cllr Carwyn Jones (Ynys Mon) – Plaid Cymru
Rural	Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn (Gwynedd) – Plaid Cymru Cllr Lis Burnett (Vale of Glamorgan) – Labour Cllr James Gibson-Watt (Powys) – Lib Dem
Workforce	Cllr Anthony Hunt (Torfaen) – Labour Cllr Jane Gebbie (Bridgend) – Labour Cllr Rob Stewart (Swansea) – Labour Cllr Robin Williams (Ynys Mon) - Plaid Cymru
Social Justice	Community safety – Cllrs Jane Mudd and Emily Owen Fire and Rescue – Cllr Emily Owen, Cllr Lis Burnett Armed Forces – Cllr Lis Burnett Migration – Cllrs Mary Anne Brocklesby, Cllr Nia Wyn Jeffreys, Cllr Jason McLellan Equalities – Cllr Mary Anne Brocklesby, Cllr Nia Wyn Jeffreys, Cllr Jason McLellan
Climate Change	Cllr Andrew Morgan (RCT) – Labour Cllr Andrea Lewis (Swansea) – Housing – Labour Cllr Keith Henson (Ceredigion) – Plaid Cymru Cllr Geraint Thomas (Merthyr Tydfil) – Independent Cllr Mary Ann Brocklesby (Monmouthshire) – Labour
Health & Social Services	Cllr Huw David (Bridgend) – Labour Cllr Llinos Medi (Ynys Mon) – Plaid Cymru Cllr Charlie McCoubrey (Conwy) - Independent Cllr Norma Mackie (Cardiff) – Labour
Education & Welsh Language	Cllr Ian Roberts (Flintshire) – Labour Cllr Darren Price (Carmarthenshire) – Plaid Cymru
Public Health & Regulatory Services	Cllr Steve Thomas (Blaenau Gwent) – Labour Cllr Mathew Vaux (Ceredigion) – Plaid Cymru

6. There would also be a WLGA Presiding Officer, Deputy Presiding Officers, Leader, Deputy Leader and Group Leaders, all of whom may be appointed as a Spokesperson or provide support as part of a Spokesperson 'team'.
7. The Climate Change Ministerial portfolio and subsequent spokesperson portfolio is broad and covers several areas and cabinet member networks within local government. Members may wish to consider ensuring sufficient leaders and/or deputies are appointed to support this brief.
8. It was also previously agreed that it would be appropriate to have an additional Welsh speaking leader within the Education and Welsh Language spokesperson 'team' to lead on the Welsh language brief.
9. The Constitution notes that:
 - "10.5 The Council will appoint Spokespersons so that the number of Spokespersons appointed from each political group will so far as is possible reflects the political balance of the Council. Where Spokesperson or Deputy Spokesperson vacancies arise following an Annual General Meeting, interim appointments may be made by the relevant Leader of the Group that held that Spokesperson or Deputy Spokesperson position. Such appointments will be reported to the next Executive Board, Management Sub-Committee or Council meeting, whichever is earlier.
 - 10.6 To ensure that a majority group, or coalition, on the Council can express a majority view if required, such majority group, or coalition, shall have the first choice in appointing Spokespersons."

Recommendations

10. The WLGA Council is invited to:

- 10.1 **Confirm the appointment of a Deputy Leader for the Council term 2023-24.**
- 10.2 **Agree the members to undertake the roles of Spokespersons for the Council term 2023-24.**

Author: Lee Pitt, Democratic Services Officer

E-mail: members@wlga.gov.uk