

24th June 2022

APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY LEADER AND SPOKESPERSONS FOR 2022-23

Purpose

1. To appoint a Deputy Leader/s and Spokespersons to serve for the Council term 2022-23.

Background

2. Section 10 of the WLGA Constitution empowers the 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 Leaders 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 which allowed representation and engagement with Ministers to be shared. Such an approach ensured the WLGA was 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 during the 2017-22 term included 20 Spokespersons with 25 Deputy Spokespersons.
5. Leaders discussed options for Spokespersons for the new term at a meeting on 10th June 2022. 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.

6. The list of 9 Spokespersons below reflects leaders' views:

Finance

(which could be called 'Finance and Improvement' given it combines the previous Finance portfolio, with the previous roles of Digital and Innovation & Improvement)

Economy

(incorporates the previous role of Economic Development, Inward Investment and Energy and the previous roles of UK Intergovernmental Relations and Levelling Up; and Culture, Sport and Tourism)

Rural Affairs

(this was a previous standalone role)

Workforce

(this was a previous standalone role)

Social Justice

(incorporates the previous roles of: Community Safety (covering fire and rescue and policing); Equalities & anti-poverty (including migration); and Future generations and wellbeing)

Climate Change

(incorporates the previous Spokesperson roles of: Housing, Transport, Environment and Climate Change; and Development Control and Planning)

Education and Welsh Language

(incorporates the previous Spokesperson roles of: Education; Welsh Language; and Employability and Skills)

Health and Social Services

(incorporates the previous roles of: Health and Social Services; and Mental Health & Wellbeing)

Public Health and Regulatory Services
(this was a previous stand-alone role)

7. 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'.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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

11. The Council is invited to:

11.1 Confirm the appointment of a Deputy Leader for the Council term 2022-23.

11.2 Agree the members to undertake the roles of Spokespersons for the Council term 2022-23.

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