



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CABINET

Minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Cabinet held on Tuesday, 21 September 2021 at 11.00 am

County Borough Councillors - Cabinet Members in attendance:-

Councillor A Morgan (Chair)

Councillor M Webber	Councillor R Bevan
Councillor A Crimmings	Councillor M Norris
Councillor J Rosser	Councillor R Lewis
Councillor C Leyshon	Councillor G Hopkins

Others in attendance

Councillor P Jarman
Councillor L Jones

Officers in attendance

Mr C Bradshaw, Chief Executive
Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Mr P Mee, Group Director Community & Children's Services
Mr R Evans, Director of Human Resources
Mr D Powell, Director of Corporate Estates
Mr S Gale, Director of Prosperity & Development
Mr A Wilkins, Director of Legal Services
Mr B Davies, Director of Finance & Digital Services
Ms G Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Mr P Griffiths, Service Director – Finance & Improvement Services
Ms A Richards, Temporary Service Director - 21st Century Schools and Transformation

36 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, the following personal declarations of interest were made pertaining to the agenda:

- County Borough Councillor M Norris – Agenda Item “I am a voluntary Board Member of the Cambrian Village Trust which is mentioned within the report”
- County Borough Councillor G Hopkins – Agenda item 6 “I live on an unadopted Road”

37 MINUTES

The minutes of the 20th July 2021 were approved as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

38 CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

The Service Director, Democratic Services & Communication provided Cabinet

Members with a draft work programme for the 2021-2022 Municipal Year, which listed matters requiring consideration by Cabinet.

Members were referred to Appendix 1 of the report and were advised that the programme is a live document to allow for any additional / deletion of reports throughout the year. The Service Director reminded Members that in response to the requirements of the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021, at the Council's 26th Annual General Meeting, it was agreed that further detail would be provided within the Cabinet Work Programme going forward to allow sufficient opportunity for consultation and pre-scrutiny and as such, the Council's constitution had been amended to reflect those changes.

The Service Director informed Members that the content of the Work Programme would support discussions between Scrutiny Chairs and Cabinet Members at future engagement sessions and subsequently assist development of the future Work Programmes of the Scrutiny Committees.

The Deputy Leader noted the content of the draft work programme and commented that the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 requires information about forthcoming executive decisions must be made available to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to ensure the Committees are best informed to undertake and better plan their work. The Deputy Leader acknowledged that the development of an accurate and robust Cabinet Work Programme would further strengthen the robust Governance arrangements within the Local Authority.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Work Programme for the 2021-2022 Municipal Year (with appropriate amendment where necessary) and to receive a further update on a 3 monthly basis.

39 CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT

The Service Director, Democratic Services & Communications provided Members with the Annual Report of the Corporate Parenting Board for the 2020 – 2021 Municipal Year which outlined the work of the Board throughout the Municipal Year. Members were advised that the report also featured the priority areas the Board would be considering in the future ensuring that the Council provides continuous improvement to the services that it delivers for its children and young people within the Looked After System.

The Cabinet Member for Children & Young People and Chair of the Board took the opportunity to thank all Board Members for their work over the last Municipal year as reflected in the report and positive work taken forward within the service for the benefits of the children and young people within the Looked After System and also put on record her thanks to the staff within the service for continuing to deliver during the pandemic.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Services and Welsh Language echoed the comments made and as Vice Chair of the Board paid tribute to the Chair for stewardship during the year.

It was **RESOLVED**

1. To note the Annual Report of the Corporate Parenting Board for the Municipal Year 2020/21

REVIEW OF REGULATION, AWARENESS AND ENFORCEMENT OF FLOOD AND WATER LEGISLATION

The Director Highways and Frontline Services provided an overview of his report which provided detail of the review of the regulation, awareness and enforcement of flood and water legislation to be undertaken within the Council following Storm Dennis.

The Director also took the opportunity to further advise members in regard to the implementation of an enhanced Flood Awareness and Enforcement team and increased regulation via the enactment of Land Drainage Byelaws under S66 of the Land Drainage Act 1991.

Members were advised that the Welsh Government's National Flood Risk Strategy published in October 2020 triggers the requirement under S10 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 for the Council as Lead Local Flood Authority to review the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy. It was therefore highlighted of the opportunity to set a sustainable strategy to manage flood risk and build resilience and facilitate adaption for future generations.

The adoption of the byelaws and creation of the enforcement team and flooding awareness and support officer would also help protect the assets the Council have, prevent new risks from being created, build resilience within communities and ultimately help communities adapt to this particular consequence of climate change, whilst providing valuable information to feed into the Local Flood Risk Strategy Review to provide a robust strategy to manage the increasing risk of flooding through climate change.

The Leader of the Council referenced the report presented to Cabinet in December 2020 and the resulting recommendations taken forward, referencing the need for an enforcement officer with particular reference to water courses on private land and the need to raise awareness within communities and make communities more resilient to flood prevent.

The Deputy Leader commented on previous flooding within her ward and referenced the support provided by Newydd Housing, providing a high level of protection to its residents and the duty imposed on landlords to their tenants.

The Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure & Heritage welcomed the creation of the enforcement team and the need for the Council to work with communities to ensure communities are working proactively rather than reactively to any flooding.

With the agreement of the Leader, County Borough Councillor P Jarman addressed the Committee at this juncture in the meeting to which the Leader responded advising that with Member's agreement, a Members Briefing session in respect of the byelaws could be provided to all Members ahead of a report to Council at the end of the month.

Following discussions it was **RESOLVED**:

1. To the creation of an enforcement team and post as indicated in Section 4.3 and Section 7 of the report.
2. To the creation of a flooding awareness and support officer post as indicated in Section 4.4 of the report

3. That officers commence the process for the adoption of the drainage byelaws and refer the matter to Council for consideration, with a briefing session provided to all Members prior to the Council meeting.
4. To note the proposal to review the practical operational implications within 12 months of establishing the new byelaws and enforcement team to consider resourcing implications based on actual workload.
5. That the financial implications for the current year are met from existing resources and to update the Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2022/23 onwards with the additional ongoing revenue costs

41 UNADOPTED ROADS

The Service Director, Frontline Services provided an overview of his report which proposed a pilot programme of works to private streets which the Council considers are not, to the Council's satisfaction, sewered, levelled, paved, metalled, flagged, channelled, made good and lighted. Members were advised that there are approximately 190km of identified private streets across RCT along with an unknown quantity of unidentified private streets commenting that more than 90% of private streets had been identified.

Members were advised that Welsh Government had allocated funding to a pilot project to assist councils to carry out works to bring private streets up to a suitable standard and to adopt them as highways maintainable at public expense. It was advised that the Council successfully bid for £157,000 of funding to carry out private streetworks at Belle Vue, and the Director sought the Council's approval to progress private streetworks at Belle Vue, Trecynon utilising Welsh Government grant funding.

The Leader referenced his involvement in a welsh government working group looking at such issues as this was a problem experienced across Wales. The Leader referenced the funding received from Welsh Government and the suggested area for this investment in Belle Vue and also referenced the other 6 pilot areas identified by the Council. The Leader commented on the positive engagement with residents taken forward.

The Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure and Heritage Services welcomed the pilot programme and the funding received from Welsh Government.

At this juncture in the meeting, County Borough Councillor P Jarman addressed the Committee.

Following discussions, it was **RESOLVED:**

1. To note and approve the streets listed in Appendix A of the report which are proposed to make up the pilot project.
2. To Determine that the streets listed in Appendix A are not, to the authority's satisfaction, sewered, levelled, paved, metalled, flagged, channelled, made good and lighted.
3. To instruct the Service Director Frontline Services to prepare schemes, estimates and provisional apportionments and to present these for approval in a future report to the Group Director Prosperity, Development and Frontline Services for consideration and approval in liaison with the portfolio holder.

4. To note and approve the proposed works and estimate for Belle Vue, Trecynon as shown in appendix B of the report.
5. That no costs will be apportioned to the property frontagers

42 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS PROGRAMME - PROPOSAL TO IMPROVE EDUCATION PROVISION FOR YSGOL GYNRADD GYMRAEG LLYN-Y-FORWYN

The Service Director of 21st Century Schools and Transformation advised Members of the outcome of the recent publication of a Statutory Notice in respect of the proposal to carry out a regulated alteration to Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Llyn-y-Forwyn ("YGG Llyn-y-Forwyn"), by way of transferring the school to a new building on a new site.

Members were advised that following the Cabinet meeting held on the 17th June 2021, a decision was taken to progress to the next phase of the statutory process and to publish the required Statutory Notice. The Statutory Notice was published on 25th June 2021 which triggered the commencement of the Objection Period. This ran for a period of 28 days and Members were advised that no objections or comments were submitted during this period.

The Cabinet Member for Education & Inclusion commented on the ambitious scheme being taken forward and the need to transform the school to ensure the best education for the young people of the County Borough. The Cabinet Member spoke of the positive response to the scheme which was further emphasised as no objections had been received during the objections period.

The Deputy Leader welcomed the further investment into the schools within the County Borough which was echoed by the Leader.

Following discussions, it was **RESOLVED**

1. To note that no objections or comments were received in response to the publication of the statutory notice to progress this proposal.
2. To implement the proposal with no amendments.
3. To receive further reports as the project develops and progresses through the Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools and Colleges approval processes.

43 DESIGNATION AS A COUNTRY PARK OF LAND AT CLYDACH VALE, TONYPANDY CURRENTLY KNOWN AS CWM CLYDACH COUNTRYSIDE PARK

The Director of Corporate Estates presented his report to Members which sought authority to designate land currently known as Cwm Clydach Countryside Park at Clydach Vale, Tonypandy (within the Rhondda Fawr Valley) as a Country Park in accordance with the provisions of the Countryside Act 1968. Members were advised of the rationale for the proposal.

The Director informed Cabinet that the Country Park designation would allow the Council to erect Tourist Destination signs, to identify the area's specific status and promote the area to visitors. The Tourism Service would promote the

location as part of a wider offer to visitors of the park, which would contribute to the 'outdoor activity' theme specified within the Council's Tourism Strategy. The designation of the land as a Country Park would also allow the Council and partners to apply for external grant funding to enhance opportunities for residents and visitors and which will have a direct improvement on health and wellbeing of people using the Country Park.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Service commented positively on the proposal and the positive impact this would have on the local area of Clydach Vale which would further raise awareness of the countryside areas within the County Borough. The Member hoped that this designation would be a catalyst to funding into the area.

The Deputy Leader commented on the features in Cwm Clydach Country park and spoke of the enhancements this designation would have on the already existing positive features.

Following discussions, it was **RESOLVED**

1. To approve the designation of an area of land currently known as Cwm Clydach Countryside Park, measuring approximately 67.2 ha / 166 acres at Clydach Vale, Tonypandy as 'Cwm Clydach Country Park' in accordance with the provisions of the Countryside Act 1968

44 COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN - INVESTMENT PRIORITIES

The Director of Finance & Digital Services referred Members to his report which set out the position regarding the opportunity for Cabinet to propose to Council to further invest in the Council's priority areas, aligned to the Corporate Plan, "Making a Difference" 2020 – 2024.

The Director commented on the importance of investment in areas supporting key Corporate Plan priorities which had already been recognised by the Council with £123M of additional resources, over and above normal Capital Programme allocations, invested since October 2015. He explained that the proposed Council report proposes to continue to invest a further £6.5M in key priorities which could be funded by existing resources already set aside for investment in infrastructure.

The Leader spoke of the important investment in respect of infrastructure and highways and spoke of the funding programme which had continued alongside the investment needed following the repairs following Storm Dennis. The Leader spoke of the inconvenience sometimes experienced when such repairs and investment were carried out but spoke of the long term benefits.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services welcomed the extra £6.5m and spoke of investment already taken forward which had been visible across the County Borough.

Following discussions, it was **RESOLVED**:

1. To propose the additional investment and funding arrangements as set out in the report at Appendix A to Council at its meeting on 29th September 2021

45 COUNCIL'S PERFORMANCE & RESOURCES REPORT (Q1)

The Service Director, Finance & Improvement provided Members with an overview of the Council's performance, both from a financial and operational perspective, based on the first three months of this financial year (to the 30th June 2021).

The Service Director advised that the report was set in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic continuing to pose significant challenges in the delivery of Council Services alongside on-going significant additional costs and income losses that have, to date, been funded in the majority of cases by Welsh Government.

Members were advised that the Quarter 1 revenue budget position was projecting a £0.415M overspend, which was an early projection for the full year and reflects the impact of forecasted changes in demand through to year-end, with key pressures being primarily within Adult Social Care and Children's Services, and takes account of forecasted additional costs and income losses as a direct result of the Covid-19 pandemic (that are assumed to be fully funded by Welsh Government). The Service Director advised that work would continue to closely monitor the Council's financial position, refresh financial forecasts as updated information becomes available and continue to engage with Welsh Government to highlight the importance of providing additional funding to support the financial implications of Covid-19 and also on-going permanent cost pressures.

In respect of Capital investment as at 30th June 2021 this stood at £10.624M, with a number of schemes being re-profiled during the quarter to reflect changes in costs and also new external grant funding approvals received. The expenditure to date represents the continuation of a long-term programme of investment that is supporting visible improvements to infrastructure and assets across the County Borough, taking account of Covid-19 safety requirements.

With regard to the Council's Corporate Plan priorities of People, Places and Prosperity, overall, good progress has been made during the first three months of the year.

The Service Director concluded his report by advising of the third progress update on the delivery of recommendations to enhance the Council's response to extreme weather events, which shows a positive position, with key actions being taken forward that provide a clear direction for the future.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services thanked officers for the report and commented on the projected overspend and the pressures facing the Council in respect of social services and the need for continued support from Welsh Government to assist in easing these pressures. The Cabinet Member welcomed the continued investment in the capital programme and the continued works undertaken which ran alongside the remedial works needed across the County Borough following the adverse weather conditions. The Cabinet Member paid tribute to Council staff and spoke of the additional pressures placed on services due to the covid pandemic which may have had an effect on the slight rise in sickness levels.

The Cabinet Member continued by providing a detailed overview of the positive works of the Council in a range of different services which primarily looked at improving the services provided to the residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf.

The Leader echoed the comments of the Cabinet Member and spoke of the continuation by the Council of core services during the pandemic and also the

evolution of new services to help support residents and partners during this time, with Innovative ways of thinking and delivering of services to ensure the safety of all.

The Deputy Leader took the opportunity to pay tribute to the hard work and dedication of Council staff during the pandemic and beyond.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Welsh Language spoke of the pressures placed on the social care sector and the need for Welsh Government to be alive to the pressures and the need for additional support within this area and again paid tribute to the staff in this sector for going above and beyond for the benefit of others.

The Leader commented that the pressures with social care were acute across Wales and welcomed any additional funding that could be secured from Welsh Government.

Following discussions, it was **RESOLVED**:

1. To note the on-going impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on service delivery and, in parallel, the re-introduction of services as Covid-19 restrictions are gradually lifted

Revenue

2. To note and agree the General Fund revenue outturn position of the Council as at the 30th June 2021 (Section 2 of the Executive Summary) and note the incorporation of Welsh Government Covid-19 funding into this position to support on-going service delivery

Capital

3. To note the capital outturn position of the Council as at the 30th June 2021 (Sections 3a – e of the Executive Summary).
4. To note the details of the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators as at the 30th June 2021 (Section 3f of the Executive Summary).

Corporate Plan Priorities

5. To note the Quarter 1 progress updates for the Council's Corporate Plan priorities (Sections 5 a – c of the Executive Summary).
6. To note the progress update to enhance the Council's Short term and long-term response to extreme weather events (section 6 of the Executive Summary)

This meeting closed at 12.00 pm

**Cllr A Morgan
Chairman.**