



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CABINET

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday, 13 February 2020 at 10.30 am at the Council Chamber, The Pavilions, Cambrian Park, Clydach Vale, Tonypany, CF40 2XX.

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

Officers in attendance

Mr C Bradshaw, Chief Executive
Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Mr G Isingrini, Group Director Community & Children's Services
Mr P Mee, Director, Public Health, Protection & Community Services
Mr R Evans, Director of Human Resources
Mr A Wilkins, Director of Legal Services
Mr B Davies, Director of Finance & Digital Services
Ms G Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services

103 Declaration of Interest

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, there were no declarations made pertaining to the agenda.

104 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd January 2020 as an accurate record.

105 Change to the order of the agenda

The Cabinet agreed that the agenda would be considered out of sequence as detailed in the minutes set out hereunder.

106 Consideration for Family Engagement Officer Roles

The Director, Education and Inclusion Services presented the report to Cabinet, which sought consideration for the funding and consequent employment of Family Engagement Officers in six secondary/through schools to help tackle school attendance.

The Director informed Members that there had been a decline in secondary

school attendance within RCT in the academic year 2018/19, which placed RCT 22nd in the All Wales attendance table. As such, in order to ensure that the most vulnerable pupils are supported, a model of best practice within the Primary Schools had been identified, that was believe to be beneficial to supporting attendance as well as forming and enhancing relationships with parents in the lowest performing settings.

The Director drew Members' attention to Section 5 of the report, where the Family Engagement Officer proposal was outlined. Members were asked to consider piloting the placement of a Family Engagement Officer in each of the following lowest performing schools:

- Porth Community School (Red)
- Aberdare Community School (Red)
- Mountain Ash Comprehensive School (Amber)
- Ferndale Community School (Amber)
- Tonyrefail Community School (Yellow)
- Ysgol Nantgwyn (Yellow)

The Cabinet Member for Education and Inclusion Services voiced her support for the proposal and spoke of Glenboi Primary School, where the role of the Family Engagement Officer had worked extremely well in engaging families and improving attendance.

The Leader and Deputy Leader spoke positive of the proposal and agreed that the good practice needs to be shared as supporting families is essential.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the information contained in the report; and
2. To the funding and consequent employment of Family Engagement Officers in six secondary/through schools to help improve attendance.

107

Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 examination results for 2019 and Primary and Secondary School Categorisation for 2019/20

The Director, Education and Inclusion Services provided the Cabinet with the final confirmation of Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 examination results for 2018-19 and Primary and Secondary School Categorisation for 2019/20. Prior to her presentation, the Director advised of an oversight in the report, confirming that the data is final and not provisional.

The Director proceed to outline the results concluding that overall, the school categorisation outcomes suggest improvement in the numbers of primary schools requiring green and red support and that categorisation at secondary level remained stable. However, Members were informed that it is difficult to make meaningful comparisons across 2018 and 2019 datasets due to the fact that the 2019 outcomes include the 'first award' data only.

Members noted that in order to move away from threshold measures, Welsh Government no longer provide analyses on the percentage of learners achieving: individual subjects, including the Welsh Baccalaureate at Foundation or National level, or threshold performance measures, namely the Core Subject Indicator (CSI) or Level 2 threshold.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Inclusion Services thanked the Director

for the robust report. The Cabinet Member was pleased to note that although deprivation was an influence of educational performance, the Council remained ambitious with measures in place to improve performance where possible.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the information contained within the report; and
2. To note the action taken to date and the future planned intervention of the Director of Education and Inclusion Services in partnership with Local Authority Education Services and Central South Consortium to support schools currently categorised as amber and red.

108 Leader's Scheme of Delegation

The Service Director, Democratic Services and Communication updated Members with the changes to the Leader's Scheme of Delegation and it was **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the content of the Leader's Scheme of Delegation; and
2. To note that the Leader of the Council is able to amend the Scheme of Delegation relating to executive functions at any time during the year; and that an update of the 3A will be presented to Members at the next meeting of the Cabinet.

(Note: At this point in proceedings, County Borough Councillor J. Rosser left the meeting)

109 Recommendations of the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group

The Service Director, Democratic Services and Communication provided the Cabinet with the recommendations of the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group, which met on the 28th January 2020, to consider a report on the draft Wildflower Grass Management Policy for Rhondda Cynon Taf and a report on the action that can be taken in the Air Quality Management Areas, to ensure air quality improves across the County Borough.

In respect of the Wildflower Grass Management Policy report, the Service Director advised that the Steering Group were in favour of the proposals to increase the number of sites in wildflower management and to establish a Biodiversity website.

In respect of the Air Quality Management Areas report, the Service Director advised that the Steering Group spoke of the Clean Air Day on 20th June 2020 and felt that the Council's participation in the initiative would promote a positive message to its residents but agreed that the correct message would need to be conveyed, whether that be in respect of car sharing, cycling to work or tree planting. Furthermore, the Steering Group recommended that in addition to progressing with the short-term and practicable actions, the viable, long-term actions needed to be identified to include within the Council's Highway Capital Programme for Cabinet consideration

The Cabinet Member for Communities, Culture and the Welsh Language echoed the feelings of the Steering Group in relation to the Wildflower Grass Management Policy report. The Cabinet Member stated the importance of encouraging biodiversity but reiterated the need to convey to the public that it is not a cost-cutting exercise.

The Cabinet Member went on to speak of the Air Quality Management Areas report, commenting that, generally, air quality across RCT is contained and managed well, with just sixteen small areas identified.

The Deputy Leader took the opportunity to praise the Climate Change Steering Group on the vast amount of work undertaken in such a short period of time.

Speaking of the Wildflower Grass Management Policy, Members recognised the importance of signage and communication to ensure residents understand the need for biodiversity across the Borough.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the content of the two reports considered by the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group on the 28th January 2020; and
2. The recommendations of the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group:
 - I. To approve the Wildflower Grass Management Policy for Rhondda Cynon Taf
 - II. To continue progressing with the short-term and practicable actions identified in Table B of the Air Quality Management Areas report;
 - III. That having regard to the current local circumstances, the Director of Public Health, Protection and Community Services work with the Group Director of Prosperity, Development and Frontline Services to identify the viable, long-term actions from Table B of the Air Quality Management Areas report, to include in the Council's Highway Capital Programme for Cabinet consideration; and
 - IV. That the Council seek to engage with its residents on the Clean Air Day, which is taking place on 20th June 2020, which is funded by the Welsh government and forms part of the wider Clean Air Day campaign across the UK.

110 Making a Difference: The Council's Draft Corporate Plan 2020-2024

The Chief Executive set out a new draft Corporate Plan from 2020 – 2024, explaining that the draft Plan provides a vision for the County Borough and sets out the Council's priorities and objectives it will focus upon over the following four years.

The Chief Executive spoke of the consultation, which had been undertaken over a 12 week period and drew Members to the appendix to the report, where the feedback was outlined. Members noted that the feedback was particularly positive with a clear mandate supporting the Council's Vision and the three priorities.

The Leader spoke of how essential the Corporate Plan is to RCT, commenting that it paints a county wide picture, with all budget reports aligning to it. The Leader was pleased to advise that all of the priorities of the Council's previous Corporate Plan had been delivered and asked that all staff are thanked for their invaluable involvement.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To consider and challenge the draft Corporate Plan;
2. To note the feedback from the consultation process; and
3. To present the draft Corporate Plan to Council at its meeting on 4th March 2020.

111 ITU Collaboration

The Service Director, Frontline Services presented the report, which sought Cabinet approval for the Integrated Transport Units of both Caerphilly and Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Councils to work collaboratively to create a centre of excellence for the delivery of passenger transport services across both local authorities.

Members were referred to Section 5 of the report, where outlined for consideration was the proposal to pool together resources under a memorandum of understanding, which would be overseen by a joint board/steering group.

The Service Director emphasised that only when a full 12 months of data is available will a full and clear picture be available on how the collaboration is performing against the original business and delivery plan.

The Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure and Heritage Services praised the proposal and commented that residents would continue to receive the best services, despite a decrease in funding from the Government. The Cabinet Member commented that she looked forward to the review in 12 months.

The Deputy Leader was pleased with the proposal and commented that the report evidenced the willingness of the Council to engage with its neighbouring Local Authorities to enhance the services provided to residents.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. That Council officers work with Caerphilly County Borough Council to explore the creation of a centre of excellence for the delivery of passenger transport services across Caerphilly and Rhondda Cynon Taf; and
2. That a further report be brought back to Cabinet on the outcome of that review for their formal consideration at a future date.

112 Supporting Town and Retail Businesses in Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Business Rate Reduction Scheme

The Director, Finance and Digital Services provided the Cabinet with the results of the consultation process on a local Business Rate Reduction Scheme for Rhondda Cynon Taf and an update on the continuation of the Welsh Government High Street and Retail Rate Relief (HSRR) Scheme for 2020/21.

The Director explained that the proposal offered a local discretionary relief to be provided in addition to the Welsh Government HSRR of up to a maximum of £300 per qualifying business. The Director drew Members' attention to Appendix 3 of the report, where the results of the eight week consultation were outlined.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services spoke positive of the report and welcomed both the Welsh Government Retail Relief, along with the Council's proposal of additional local discretionary relief. The Cabinet Member was disappointed that out of the 485 businesses that would benefit from the support, only 26 people responded to the online consultation.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the outcome of the consultation exercise as set out in paragraph 7 of the report;
2. To note the continuation of the Welsh Government High Street and Retail Rate Relief Scheme for the year for 2020/21; and
3. To proceed with the proposed local Business Rate Reduction Scheme for 2020/21.

This meeting closed at 11.15 am

**Cllr A Morgan
Chairman.**