



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

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Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday, 20 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

Officers in attendance

Mr C Bradshaw, Chief Executive
Mr D Powell, Director of Corporate Estates
Mr G Isingrini, Group Director Community & Children's Services
Mr N Wheeler, Group Director – Prosperity, Development & Frontline 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

Others in attendance

113 Apology for Absence

An apology for absence was received from County Borough Councillor C. Leyshon.

114 Declaration of Interest

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

115 The Council's Future Commitment to Delivering Shared Education Advisory Services

The Director, Education and Inclusion Services provided the Cabinet with the decision of the Central South Consortium Joint Committee to consider shared education advisory services in partnership with the other four councils in the region for at least the next three years.

The Director spoke of the independent review of the Consortium, which had been commissioned by the ISOS Partnership and drew Members' attention to the appendices of the report, where the review and implementation plan, which had since been approved by the Joint Committee, was outlined. Members were

pleased to note that the report evidenced that the educational performance of the Central South Region had significantly exceeded that of the other three Regions.

The Cabinet were informed that the report had also been presented to the Council's Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on the 12th February 2020 where Members welcomed the review by ISOS but emphasised that the opportunity for local authority scrutiny functions to challenge the performance of the Consortium needed to be improved.

The Director informed Members that should the Council wish to withdraw from the Agreement, the earliest they could do so is 31st March 2022.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Inclusion Services spoke positive of the outcome of the review, commenting on the importance of identifying areas for improvement. The Cabinet Member stated that the report would provide stability in a period of significant change to the educational sector in Wales.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the contents of this report; and
2. To support the decision of the Central South Consortium Joint Committee to continue to deliver shared educational advisory services in partnership with the other four councils in the region for at least the next three years.

116 Council Fees and Charges Policy 2020-2021

The Director, Finance and Digital Services provided the Cabinet with the report which set out the proposed revisions to Council fees and charges levels for the financial year 2020/21 and details of fees and charges decisions already approved that could be included within the 2020/21 proposed Budget Strategy.

The Director spoke of the Cabinet's review of the fees and charges levels as part of the Council's Medium Term Financial Planning arrangements and it was proposed that a 1.5% standard increase be agreed to be effective from 1st April 2020.

The Director drew Members' attention to Section 5 of the report, where a summary of proposed fees and charges, which were not subject to the proposed standard increase, were detailed:

- Leisure for life - Nil increase;
- Car Park Charges - Nil increase;
- Summer and Winter Playing Fees (Sports Clubs) - Nil increase;
- School Meals (Primary and Secondary) - Increase of 5p per meal (and then no increase for two years i.e. 2021/22 and 2022/23);
- Meals on Wheels and Day Centre Meals - Increase of 10p per meal;
- Pontypridd Lido (Adult users entry fee) - Increase of 50p per adult swim;
- Rhondda Heritage Park - Increase of £1 for the adult entry fee and family ticket for the Welsh Mining Experience (underground tour) and to standardise the non-entry fee for both adults and children for Santa's Toy Mine to £10

The Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure and Heritage spoke of the increase in charge for adults using Pontypridd Lido, advising that when consulted upon, residents were positive.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To approve the proposed revised levels for all areas of the Council's fees and charges as set out at section 5 and detailed at Appendix 1 of the report;
2. To build the net budgetary impact (£2k for 2020/21) into the budget strategy proposals for consideration by Cabinet and Council as appropriate; and
3. To note the fees and charges decisions already approved and included in the 2020/21 proposed Budget Strategy.

117 The Council's 2020/21 Revenue Budget

The Director, Finance and Digital Services provided the Cabinet with the results of the second phase of the Budget consultation in order for Members to consider and amend as necessary the draft budget strategy, which they would wish to recommend to Council at the meeting on 4th March 2020.

The Director advised that although the financial climate remained a challenge, the Council to date had delivered year on year balanced budgets alongside a robust investment programme, which supports key priorities.

Having regard to the repercussions of Storm Dennis and the devastation caused within RCT as a result of the floods, Members were asked to authorise the Director of Finance and Digital Services to amend the budget strategy report to reflect the impact of the allocation of £1M from General Reserves in response to Storm Dennis.

The Deputy Leader took the opportunity to thank the robust financial team, who she considered to be an asset to RCT and the staff who had continued to deliver. The Deputy Leader noted that the proposed Council Tax increase for 2020/21 of 2.85%, was stable considering the continuing financial pressures and was low in comparison to those proposed in neighbouring local authorities.

The Deputy Leader took the opportunity to speak of the atrocities caused by Storm Dennis in the local communities and praised residents for the support they have given one another. The deputy Leader was happy to support the additional recommendation, commenting that the payment would help residents and businesses at such a difficult time.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services was also happy to support the additional recommendation and stated that although Wales Audit Office recommend that the General Reserves remain above the minimum level of £10M, they are to be spent at a time of emergency, which it evidently was.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To recommend the Budget Strategy to Council on the 4th March 2020;
2. To authorise the Director of Finance and Digital Services to amend the level of contribution from the Medium Term Financial Planning and Service Transformation Reserve as a consequence of any change to the Council's resource levels announced in the Final Local Government Settlement; and
3. To authorise the Director of Finance and Digital Services to amend the budget strategy report to reflect the impact of the allocation of £1M from General Reserves in response to Storm Dennis.

118 The Council's Capital Programme 2020/21 - 2022/23

The Director, Finance and Digital Services provided the Cabinet with the proposed three year Capital Programme for 2020/21 to 2022/23.

The Director advised that the proposed three year programme represents a total investment of £131.772M and comprises:

- A core programme of £42.300M over the next three years;
- Prudential borrowing of £20.249M to support the 21st Century Schools Programme, Llys Cadwyn Development and Highways improvement schemes;
- Specific grants of £16.819M;
- Earmarked reserves and revenue contributions previously allocated to schemes and investment priorities of £29.223M;
- Capital receipts, in addition to the 3 year core allocation, of £10.283M; and
- Additional and reallocated earmarked reserves of £1.658M and additional prudential borrowing of £7.500M to fund the investment priorities, alongside the one of Welsh Government capital funding of £2.692M.

In respect of the £1.658M of earmarked reserves, which in addition to the prudential borrowing make a total of £11.850M, the Director spoke of the numerous investment opportunities for the infrastructure, which would support the new Corporate Plan priorities.

Members spoke positive of the report, commenting on the previous significant investment undertaken by RCT and the ambition to further invest.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

1. To propose the attached three year capital programme at Appendix A to Council on 4th March 2020 which includes:
 - A review and proposed release of earmarked reserve balances as detailed in paragraph 5.3 of the attached report;
 - Proposed investment priorities as detailed in paragraph 6.2 of the attached report;
 - The Council's core capital programme;
 - The Council's total capital programme including additional non core funding.
2. To authorise the Director of Finance and Digital Services to amend the level of Council Resources required to fund the Core Three Year Capital Programme as shown at Appendix 2 as a consequence of any change to the Council's capital resource levels announced in the Final Local Government Settlement.

119 To consider passing the following Resolution:

It was **RESOLVED**: "That the press and public be excluded from the meeting under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act (as amended) for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of the exempt information as defined in paragraph 14 of Part 4 of the Schedule 12A of the Act".

120 Acquisition of the Former Bingo Hall, Pontypridd

The Director, Corporate Estates provided Members with an overview of his report which contained exempt information.

Following consideration of the report, it was **RESOLVED:**

1. To acquire the Freehold interest of the premises at High Street, Pontypridd, known as the former Bingo Hall and Angharad's Night Club, at an agreed price plus VAT, fees and Land Transaction Tax;
2. To note that Welsh Government (WG) has offered funding support of £1.540M of Targeted Regeneration Investment (TRI) funding towards the total costs. The detailed terms and conditions of this funding are currently being finalised with WG;
3. To accept the offer of £1.540M of TRI funding from WG towards the acquisition, related fees and demolition costs of the premises at High Street, Pontypridd, known as the former Bingo Hall and Angharad's Night Club; and
4. To receive a further joint report from the Director of Corporate Estates and the Director of Prosperity and Development on the demolition and redevelopment of the site.

This meeting closed at 11.05 am

**Cllr A Morgan
Chairman.**