



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CABINET

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Cabinet held on Tuesday, 13 October 2020 at 10.30 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 C Leyshon
Councillor G Hopkins

Officers in attendance

Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Mr G Isingrini, Group Director Community & Children's Services
Mr N Wheeler, Group Director – Prosperity, Development & Frontline 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
Mr P Griffiths, Service Director – Finance & Improvement Services

Others in attendance

Councillor P Jarman

13 Welcome and Apology

The Deputy Leader welcomed attendees to the meeting and an apology for absence was received from County Borough Councillor R. Lewis.

14 Declaration of Interest

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

15 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 24th September 2020 as an accurate record.

16 Response to Notice of Motion - Fireworks

The Director, Public Health, Protection and Community Services outlined to Cabinet the current legal controls on the sale and use of fireworks and considered how the Local Authority may further support the Notice of Motion

made to Council on the 27th November 2019 and the RSPCA campaign calling for greater controls.

Section 5 of the report detailed information on the controls of the sale and storage of fireworks; the standards in place concerning noise and safety of fireworks; and controls of the underage sale of fireworks. The Director advised that any organised events in the Borough are considered by the Council's Event Safety Advisory Group, which ensures that all events comply with the legislative requirements and are conducted safely.

The Deputy Leader thanked the Director for the report and commented that the recommendations were sensible and would seek to enhance the provision already in place. The Deputy Leader spoke of the impact fireworks have on not only domestic animals, but wild animals in fields. The Deputy Leader also recognised that many people were affected by fireworks and spoke of the impact of November 5th to those veterans who suffer with PTSD. It was explained that last year, the Local Authority held a successful event at the Park and Dare theatre for veterans to attend.

Cabinet Members noted that the report would be considered at the Council meeting on 21st October 2020.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the existing controls available in UK Law to control the sale of fireworks and their use in public areas;
2. That the Director of Corporate Estates reviews and where necessary imposes greater restrictions on the use of Council land for the purpose of public firework displays; and
3. To support a promotional campaign for 2021 (coronavirus restrictions permitting) that encourages responsible use of fireworks and the early notification to the public of planned events in the community.

17 Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board Annual Plan

The Group Director, Community and Children's Services shared with Cabinet the Annual Plan for 2020/21 for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board, which was attached at Appendix 1 of the report.

The Group Director informed the Cabinet that the Board were working virtually to consider the Strategic Priorities identified and key issues arising from the Covid-19 pandemic. The Group Director advised that the report would be presented to the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny for further challenge.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services commented that the Annual Plan would assist the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board in achieving its priorities and it would be continually monitored. The Cabinet Member added that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that, in the midst of the pandemic, there was a need to be diligent.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Community Services and the Welsh Language voiced his support and took the opportunity to thank the Safeguarding Board for its work.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note and endorse the content of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg

18 Representations, Compliments and Complaints Annual Report

The Group Director, Community and Children's Services provided the Cabinet with the report, which detailed the operation and effectiveness of the Council's statutory Social Services complaints procedure between April 1st 2019 and March 31st 2020. The report contained information on the background of the Social Services statutory complaints procedure, information on lessons learnt from complaints and performance data for Adults & Children's Social Services, together with achievements for 2019/20 and future developments.

The Deputy Leader thanked the Director and the team for the detailed report.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services voiced her support and advised that a new officer had been appointed, whose role is to monitor the activities and remind officers of timescales, in order to continually provide a quality service. The Cabinet Member also took the opportunity to thank the team for their work and the professional manner in which they conduct themselves, when undertaking, what can be, complicated conversations with residents.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Community Services and the Welsh Language commented that the trend was fairly stable in comparison to the previous year, which was particularly encouraging given the current demand. The Cabinet Member added that both complaints and compliments are valued to help improve the service, where possible.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. The contents of the Social Services Annual Complaints report; and
2. To note the work undertaken by the Social Services Complaints Team.

19 Active Travel - Review of the Integrated Network Map

The Service Director, Frontline Services provided the report, which sought Cabinet's approval to commence a review, including a public engagement exercise, of the Council's existing Active Travel Integrated Network Map (ATINM).

The Service Director referred the Cabinet to Section 5 of the report, which detailed the proposed tasks the Council would undertake as part of the review and update of its ATINM. This evidenced that the preparation of an updated ATINM would involve extensive consultation with the public and key stakeholders and would be undertaken in accordance with Welsh Government guidance. The Service Director noted that the consultation would be predominantly online due to Covid-19 restrictions.

The Service Director spoke of the aim of the Active Travel legislation, in that it seeks to promote more sustainable forms of transport amongst the population, such as walking and cycling, for short journeys and non-recreational purposes. The aims and objectives being to improve the health and well-being of local residents and their access to key facilities and services, as well as reduce congestion and improve local air quality. The Service Director added that the aspiration of the new Active Travel requirements was to focus on mode shifts to improve congestion and the air quality within the communities.

The Service Director advised that the requirement to submit to Welsh Government had been extended to December 2021 and therefore, requested that recommendation 2.3 be amended accordingly.

The Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure & Heritage Services was in support of the proposals and acknowledged the need for a different approach to public engagement. The Cabinet Member commented that the focus of the Local Authority was to promote active travel and that it was important for the health and wellbeing of residents along with obtaining a cleaner environment with less car pollution.

The Deputy Leader thanked the Service Director for the comprehensive report and commented that there was an opportunity for it to form part of the work of the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group, which was due to meet virtually at the end of the month. The Deputy Leader spoke of the need for a mutual respect between walkers and cyclists using the routes, commenting that from her experience, this was evident.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the reasons for undertaking a review of the Council's existing Active Travel Integrated Network Map (ATINM), including a public engagement exercise;
2. To the Council undertaking a public engagement exercise during 2020 and 2021 as part of this review; and
3. To receive a further report in due course on the outcome of this exercise, prior to the submission of the updated version of the ATINM to the Welsh Government.

20 The Council's Draft Corporate Performance Report

The Service Director, Performance and Improvement, presented Rhondda Cynon Taf's draft Corporate Performance Report (CPR) which contained progress for 2019/20 and plans for 2020/21 in respect of the Council's strategic priorities. The report also set out how the CPR enables the Council to meet its statutory reporting requirements.

Members were informed that the report sought to provide a high level, easy to read summary of:

- progress of the Council's previous priorities of Economy, People and Place since 2016 and, in particular, 2019/20. More detailed evaluations of performance and progress, and other relevant support documents, are included as links within the CPR to enable the reader to access more detailed information, as required; and
- plans to deliver the new priorities of People, Places and Prosperity in 2020/21.

The Deputy Leader thanked the Service Director for the report and commented on the importance of the three priorities, particularly given the current climate.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services commented that the report demonstrated the positive progress made since 2016 and noted that the report would be considered by Council at its meeting on 21st October 2020 and that it would be subject to challenge by the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee through the quarter performance reports.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To endorse the draft Corporate Performance Report and recommend its approval to Council on 21 October 2020.

21 Medium Term Financial Plan 2020/21 - 2023/24

The Director, Finance and Digital Services provided the Cabinet with an update on the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2020/21 to 2023/24, based on current modelling assumptions in advance of formulating the detailed budget strategy proposals for 2021/22 during the autumn.

The Director spoke of the uncertain time faced by the Council, from both a financial and operational perspective and reminded Members of the latest indication from the UK Central Government, that the 2020 Budget scheduled for November 2020 would be deferred; and that the Comprehensive Spending Review, setting public sector expenditure / funding limits, which was also scheduled for November 2020, would still go ahead but that no decision had been taken on whether it will cover the three years originally planned.

The Director advised that the Welsh Government continued to support additional cost implications arising from the Covid-19 pandemic, including lost income.

The Cabinet were referred to Section 5 of the report, where the key assumptions factored into the Financial Plan was outlined.

- Council Tax increases are currently being modelled at 2.85% per annum;
- One-off funding from Welsh Government assumed to be mainstreamed in respect of Social Services and Children's Services specific grants;
- Fees and charges uplifted by inflation only;
- Uplifts included for pay and non-pay inflation; and.
- Schools budget is modelled to cover, in full, pay and non-pay inflation (and in the context of the projected range of local government settlement levels).

(Note: At this point in proceedings, the Leader of the Council joined the meeting)

The Director advised that options would be developed which could help address the range of the potential budget gap which the Council faced, but stressed the importance, that in doing so, critical services are maintained.

The Deputy Leader thanked the officers for the modelling despite the many challenges and uncertainty, noting that the repercussions of 'Storm Dennis' were still faced by the Local Authority and the communities. The Deputy Leader proposed that the report is presented to full Council at its meeting on 21st October 2020 and that the details forms part of the Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee consultation as part of the 2021/22 budget strategy approach.

Both the Leader and Deputy Leader expressed their thanks to officers for their financial management. The Leader spoke of pressures in relation to Council Tax but was pleased that the modelling was below 3% and one of the lowest in

comparison to other Local Authorities.

The Leader advised that the Local Authority were continuing to lobby Welsh Government in relation to funding for the teachers and the wider staff pay award.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services paid tribute to the officers, commenting that the uncertainty in respect of funding from UK Government, makes it difficult to formulate the Financial Plan.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the current position modelled in respect of the 'Medium Term Financial Plan 2020/21 to 2023/24' and receive further updates in the autumn as part of the annual budget setting process; and
2. That the report is presented to full Council at its meeting on 21st October 2020 and that the details forms part of the Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee consultation as part of the 2021/22 budget strategy approach.

22 Engagement on the Council's Budget 2021/22

The Service Director, Democratic Services and Communication informed the Cabinet of the proposed 'digital by default' approach to resident engagement and consultation in respect of the 2021/22 budget.

The Service Director explained that as a result of the current Covid-19 pandemic and challenged, it was proposed that the 2021/22 annual budget consultation would take on a 'digital by default' approach, whilst continuing to consider hard to reach groups, those having reduced or no access to the Internet and those who prefer to engage through traditional methods.

The Service Director explained that the approach was used in the recent consultation on the Dog Fouling PSPO and was found to be an effective way to engage with a wide range of residents and stakeholders.

The Deputy Leader stated that she would miss the face to face interaction with the public but was grateful that the Council had adapted to the current climate and the new virtual approach. The Deputy Leader emphasised the need to reach out to those without IT provision and was pleased to note that methods had been identified within the proposals.

When asked about the level of engagement with colleges, the Service Director confirmed that a specific virtual forum would be set up to engage with those young adults.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services voiced her support for the proposals and commented on the importance of engaging with the Youth Forum, who had put forward some interesting and innovative suggestions in previous discussions.

The Deputy Leader spoke of the Disability Forum and their valued contribution in previous consultations and the importance of ensuring the interaction is not lost.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Community Services & Welsh Language was pleased to advise that the OPAG had met virtually since the lockdown and had become increasingly confident with meeting via 'Zoom'.

The Leader spoke of the importance of Elected Members using their social media to sign post residents and the importance of adapting previous ways of consulting through community groups to enhance engagement.

(Note: With the agreement of the Chair, County Borough Councillor P. Jarman spoke on this item).

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To support the suggested 'digital by default' approach to the Council's budget consultation for 2021/22, whilst providing alternative means of engagement for those having reduced or no access to the Internet and those who prefer to engage through traditional methods;
2. To support the Council's statutory requirements regarding consultation on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Council Tax levels will be met via the proposed approach;
3. To support the budget consultation process taking place during the autumn of 2020, with the dates to be confirmed following clarification of the likely Welsh Government budget settlement timescales; and
4. To authorise the Service Director – Democratic Services & Communications to plan the necessary timeline of engagement once the details of the Provisional Local Government Settlement are known, in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Member & Director of Finance & Digital Services.

This meeting closed at 11.10 am

**Cllr A Morgan
Chairman.**