



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CABINET

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Cabinet held on Tuesday, 17 November 2020 at 10.30 am

County Borough Councillors - Cabinet Members in attendance:-

Councillor A Morgan (Chair)

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

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 N Wheeler, Group Director – Prosperity, Development & Frontline 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
Mr M Crumbie, Head of Procurement Delivery

23 Declaration of Interest

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, the following declarations of interest were received:-

- County Borough Councillor R Bevan declared 'As granted by the Standards Committee on the 29th November 2019, I have a dispensation to speak and vote on all matters relating to the Community and Children's Services Group, save for any specific matters that directly affect my daughter, who is employed by the Council in the Community and Children's Services Group'
- County Borough Councillor R Lewis declared a personal interest in respect of Item 3 – Brexit 'There is reference to foodbanks within the report and I am a volunteer with the Cynon Taf Trussell Trust Foodbank';
- County Borough Councillor G Hopkins declared a personal interest in respect of Item 7 – Community Infrastructure Levy Annual Monitoring Report 'The report refers to CIL and its impact on Community Councils and I am a Member of Llanharan Community Council';
- Mr N Wheeler, Group Director, Prosperity, Development and Frontline Services declared a personal and pecuniary interest in respect of Item 13 - Cynon Valley Waste Disposal Company Limited and Amgen Rhondda Limited Annual General Meeting and left the meeting when the item

- discussed "I am on the Amgen Board"
- Mr P Griffiths, Service Director, Performance and Improvement Services declared a personal and pecuniary interest in respect of Item 13 - Cynon Valley Waste Disposal Company Limited and Amgen Rhondda Limited Annual General Meeting and left the meeting when the item was discussed "I am on the Amgen Board"

24 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 13th October 2020 as an accurate record.

25 Brexit

The Head of Procurement Delivery provided the Cabinet with an update on the work that was underway across the Council to prepare for Brexit and identified the areas classified as the highest potential risk/impact.

The officer explained that the Council was currently faced with uncertainties surrounding the deal between the UK and EU, and emphasised the need for contingency plans to be in place for key frontline services that aim to manage interruptions are far as is practicably possible, particularly in relation to the supply of food and key commodities such as cleaning products and personal care.

The Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities, Well-being & Cultural Services thanked the officer for the update and commented that it provided a degree of support to businesses, residents and the vulnerable in the community in what has and continued to be a difficult time., by identifying and mitigating the risks to supply chains and procurement.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services referred to Section 4.1 of the report and questioned how the Council is communicating the information to the residents. The Service Director, Democratic Services and Communication advised that the social media campaign would commence at the end of the week and would follow a similar approach to last year.

The Deputy Leader questioned how prepared the Local Authority was for any future implications to residents' accessibility to foodbanks, should there be a shortage of food supplies and increased demand. The officer advised that regular meetings were taking place with food banks to identify their needs and to support them as much as possible.

The Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Development and Housing sought an update on the Shared Prosperity Fund. The Leader informed the Cabinet Member of his discussion with the Secretary of State, whereby it was believed that it was the intention for the Chancellor to outline the Shared Prosperity Fund in the coming week. The Secretary of State had also indicated that it was the intention to honour the not a penny less commitment and that it appeared that funding would go directly through Local Authorities, with a preferred regional model.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

1. To receive assurance that the Council is planning as best as it possibly can for Brexit;

2. To identify any other areas which they consider require further assurance; and
3. To review the areas identified as being the highest risk (section 1.2 above), and whether any others should be highlighted.

26 Council's Performance and Resources (Quarter 2)

The Service Director, Performance and Improvement Services provided Members with an overview of the Council's performance, both from a financial and operational perspective, based on the first six months of the financial year (to the 30th September 2020).

The Service Director discussed in detail the Executive Summary of the report, which included financial data and progress against the Council's Corporate Plan priorities.

Members were informed of the second quarter revenue budget position, which was projecting a £1.853M overspend. Members acknowledged that the budget position was set in the unprecedented context of Covid-19 and takes into account additional Welsh Government funding received for the first six months of the year, and that forecasted to be received for the remainder of the year, in respect of additional expenditure incurred and income loss as a result of the pandemic.

The Cabinet Member, Corporate Services spoke positive of the report and in particular, the £32.5M Capital investment. The Member was also pleased to note that the decrease in sickness absence rate and the increase in staff numbers, which was partly due to the Council's appointment of a number of apprentices and graduates.

The Leader took the opportunity to commend officers for their financial management and commented that the position was fairly positive given the current circumstances.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the continued unprecedented circumstances Council Services are operating within as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Revenue

2. To note and agree the General Fund revenue outturn position of the Council as at the 30th September 2020 (Section 2 of the Executive Summary) including the on-going Welsh Government Covid-19 funding to support service delivery.

Capital

3. To note the capital outturn position of the Council as at the 30th September 2020 (Sections 3a – e of the Executive Summary).
4. To note the details of the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators as at the 30th September 2020 (Section 3f of the Executive Summary).

Corporate Plan Priorities

5. To note the Quarter 2 progress updates for the Council's agreed Corporate Plan priorities (Sections 5 a – c of the Executive Summary).

27 Council Tax Base for 2021-22

The Head of Revenues and Benefits provided the Cabinet with the report, which formally set out the Council Tax Base for the financial year 2021/22.

The officer advised that the gross Council Tax Base calculated for 2020/21 was £79,380.78 and proposed that the collection rate was to be estimated at 97.25%. This produces a net Council Tax Base of £77,197.81. This meant that for every £1 levied in Council Tax next year, a sum of £77,198 would be generated to meet the budget requirement of the Council.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services was happy to support the recommendations, noting that the report was considered on an annual basis as part of the Budget setting process.

The Leader thanked the officer for the report and it was **RESOLVED**:

1. That in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (Wales) Regulations 1995 as amended, the amount calculated by the Council as its net tax base for the financial year 2021/22, shall be **£77,197.81**; and
2. That for each defined community area of the County Borough, the 2021/22 tax base for Council Tax setting purposes, shall be as set out at Appendix 1 of the report.

28 Public Services Ombudsman for Wales - Annual Report and Letter 2019-20

The Director, Legal Services advised the Cabinet of the publication of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales' ('PSOW') Annual Report and Annual Letter to this Council for 2019-2020.

The Director advised that the number of complaints about local authorities across Wales reduced to 890 from 912 and of the 2,242 complaints received about public bodies, the top 5 categories related to health (41%), housing (15%), complaint handling (9%), social services (8%) and planning and building control (7%). The Director advised that in terms of local authorities specifically the main subjects were: Social Services (18%) Housing (16.9%) Planning and Building Control (15.4%) Environment and Environmental Health (10.6%) Complaint Handling (9%).

Members were informed that during 2019-2020 39 complaints (for periods 2018/2019 – 36 and 2017/2018 – 36) were received by the PSOW relating to the Authority which equates to 0.16 complaints per 1000 residents and represents the second lowest total in Wales out of the 22 authorities.

The Deputy Leader thanked the Director for the update and was pleased to note that RCT was the second lowest in Wales in terms of complaints. The Deputy Leader was concerned about the 22 complaints to the Ombudsman in respect of a small Community Council within RCT, but had been reassured that the Director and Chair of the Council's Standards Committee had addressed the Community Council. The Deputy Leader emphasised the importance of Heads of

Democratic Services providing appropriate standards training.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To consider and note the 2019-2020 Public Services Ombudsman for Wales' Annual Report and Annual Letter to the Council.

29 Community Infrastructure Levy Annual Monitoring Report

The Director, Prosperity and Development provided Members with the report, which sought approval of the contents of the CIL Annual Monitoring Report and the proposed changes to the Regulation 123 List.

The Director also advised Members of the pre-scrutiny undertaken by the Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee in respect of the Community Infrastructure Levy.

The Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Development & Housing noted that the CIL receipts may seem lower than anticipated and explained that many sites were provided with consent prior to the implementation of CIL. The Cabinet Member highlighted the importance of the Council's 123 List and was pleased to note its additions, particularly Treforest Railway Station and the planned extension to the passenger line from Aberdare to Hirwaun.

The Deputy Leader added that a presentation was received by the Community Liaison Committee at its meeting held on 6th November 2020, to remind the Community Councils of their obligations.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To approve the CIL Annual Monitoring Report;
2. To approve the amended Regulation 123 List for publication on the Council website for a period of 28 days and consultation as set out in paragraph 5.9 of the report; and
3. To approve the subsequent adoption of the amended Regulation 123 List if no adverse comments are received.

30 Highways, Transportation and Strategic Projects - Highway Asset Investment Strategy

The Service Director, Frontline Services presented to Cabinet the report, which proposed the addition of carriageway and footway maintenance schemes to the pool of previously approved schemes, further to the approval of the Highways, Transportation and Strategic Projects Capital Programme approved on 6th May 2020 and subsequent to the report to Cabinet of 24th September 2020.

The Service Director drew Members' attention to Appendix 1, which included a further £2.210M of carriageways schemes and a further £0.496M of footways schemes to be added to the already approved pool.

The Leader was happy to support the recommendations and spoke of positive progress made in terms of delivery of schemes, despite the Covid-19 restrictions such as lockdowns and interruptions to supply and staffing. The Leader then referred to the efficient delivery of schemes, during Welsh Government's two week 'Firebreak' Lockdown, when traffic was lighter.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note and approve the addition of the schemes listed in Appendix A of the report to the pools of previously approved schemes.

31 Director of Social Services Annual Report 2019-20

The Group Director, Community and Children's Services provided Members with the Director, Social Services Annual Report. The Group Director explained that due to the Covid-19 pandemic, there had been difficulties carrying out the usual level of public engagement, but assured the Cabinet that service users had been consulted as part of compiling the report. As such, the Group Director requested for the report to go through the Scrutiny process and avoid any wider public consultation.

The Group Director informed the Cabinet that the report set out the priorities for the 2020-21 Municipal Year but recognised that the substantial impact of Covid-19 could affect the delivery of those priorities.

Both the Cabinet Member for Adult Community Services & Welsh Language and the Cabinet Member for Children & Young People thanked the Group Director for the comprehensive report, despite the challenges faced by the service.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the draft Rhondda Cynon Taf Director of Social Services Annual Report and scrutinise its contents.

32 Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board Annual Report 2019-20

The Group Director, Community and Children's Services presented to Cabinet the Annual Report for 2019/20 for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board.

Both the Cabinet Member for Adult Community Services & Welsh Language and the Cabinet Member for Children & Young People reiterated their thanks to the Group Director for the report.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note and endorse the content of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board Annual Report for 2019/20.

33 Cwm Taf Carers Annual Report 2019-20

The Group Director, Community and Children's Services presented to Cabinet the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Carers Annual Report for 2019/20, for approval for submission to Welsh Government.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Community Services & Welsh Language voiced his support for the report and commented that the pandemic had emphasised the importance of the role of carers.

The Cabinet Member for Children & Young People thanked the Group Director for the report and commented that it was disappointing that the Young Carers Annual Achievement Award Ceremony would not take place as a result of Covid-19 and social distancing restrictions, but was pleased to note that it would be held virtually.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To approve the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Carers Annual Report for 2019/20;
2. To note, as in previous years, that the Annual Report has been submitted in draft to Welsh Government, pending its approval by Cabinet and similar executive arrangements at Merthyr Tydfil and Bridgend County Borough Councils and Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board. The final version will be sent to Welsh Government following approval by all four regional partners; and
3. To note the positive work undertaken relating to carers across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region in line with an agreed regional Statement of Intent for Carers (included within the Annual Report at Appendix 1)

34 21st Century Schools Capital Programme - Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Aberdar

The Director, Finance and Digital Services provided the Cabinet with an update regarding financing of the proposals to increase the capacity of Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Aberdar (YGG Aberdar) to meet the demand for Welsh medium school places.

The Director explained that following Cabinet's approval, at the meeting on 20th September 2018, to develop and submit a 21st Century Schools Programme financial business case to the Welsh Government to increase the capacity of Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Aberdar to meet the demand for Welsh medium school places, an award of funding was received on 4th November 2020.

Members were informed that the total cost had increased to £4.5M from £3.3M as the project now incorporated a new childcare facility but were pleased to note that the Welsh Government intervention rate had since increased to 65% from 50%, which meant the Council's funding requirement had decreased to 35%.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Inclusion Services was pleased to note that the financial business plan submitted to Welsh Government had been successful and commented that it would be a positive way forward in meeting the target of increasing the number of Welsh Medium speakers within RCT.

The Leader was pleased to note the additional funding provided by Welsh Government and the overall percentage of match funding for 21st Century Schools.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the updated position on the outcome of the submission of a financial business case to Welsh Government;
2. To review and agree the updated total costs and funding package; and
3. To propose that the attached Prudential Borrowing report at Appendix A is presented to Council on 25th November 2020.

35 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".

Cynon Valley Waste Disposal Company Limited and Amgen Rhondda Limited Annual General Meeting

(Note: Having previously declared an interest (Minute No. 23), the Service Director, Performance and Improvement Services and the Group Director, Prosperity, Development and Frontline Services left the meeting prior to this item)

The Director, Legal Services provided Members with an overview of his report which contained exempt information. Members were referred to the appendices of the report which provided the financial statements of the Companies which are to be presented to the Annual General Meetings ('AGM's') of the Cynon Valley Waste Disposal Company Limited and Amgen Rhondda Limited (the 'Companies'), to be held virtually at 09:30 a.m. on Tuesday 1st December 2020.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the current intention to continue the operation of Cynon Valley Waste Disposal Company Limited and Amgen Rhondda Limited (the 'Companies') as Local Authority controlled companies into the future is confirmed;
2. That subject to the Director of Finance and Digital Services being satisfied that there are no irregularities in the accounts of the Companies that the accounts be received on behalf of the Council;
3. That Azets Audit Services are appointed as auditors to the Companies for the year-ending 31st March 2021;
4. That the Directorships of the Group Director – Prosperity, Development and Frontline Services and the Service Director – Finance and Improvement Services for both Companies continue;
5. To note the continuation of the non-executive director position on the Board of the Companies through to 31st December 2021;
6. That the Director of Legal Services and/or his nominee be authorised to exercise the Council's vote at the Annual General Meetings of the Companies in accordance with recommendations 2(ii) to 2(iv) above; and
7. That the Council be represented at the Companies' Annual General Meetings by a Cabinet Member.

This meeting closed at 11.15 am

**Cllr A Morgan
Chairman.**