



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CABINET

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday, 29 April 2021 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 R Lewis
Councillor C Leyshon	Councillor G Hopkins

Others in attendance

Councillor S Bradwick
Councillor M Tegg

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 L Davies, Director, Public Health, Protection and Community Services
Ms G Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Ms C O'Neill, Strategic Arts & Culture Manager

90 Declaration of Interest

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

- The Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure and Heritage Services declared a Personal Interest in Item 3 – Direct Cremations: 'I am a Member of the Llwydcoed Crematorium Committee';
- The Deputy Leader declared a Personal Interest in Item 6 - Rhondda Cynon Taf: Social Housing Grant Offer 2021/2022: 'One of the proposed schemes listed at section 5.4 to receive the SHG allocation for 2021/2022 is within my ward';
- The Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities, Well-being & Cultural Services declared a Personal Interest in Item 6 - Rhondda Cynon Taf: Social Housing Grant Offer 2021/2022: 'One of the proposed schemes listed at section 5.4 to receive the SHG allocation for 2021/2022 is within my ward'; and
- County Borough Councillor S. Bradwick declared a Personal Interest in

Item 7 - Council Corporate Plan Investment Priorities: 'Two of the streets referenced are within my ward'

91 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 25th March 2021 as an accurate reflection.

92 Direct Cremations

The Director, Public Health, Protection and Community Services provided the Cabinet with an opportunity to consider the outcome of the pilot project to offer direct cremations in Rhondda Cynon Taf and to approve continuation of this service on a permanent basis.

Members were advised that the pilot of offering direct cremations to bereaved families, which had run from November 2019 to November 2020, had been well received and that 65 direct cremations had taken place, 28 in Glyntaff and 37 in Llwydcoed. In the subsequent three months, a further 31 direct cremations had taken place across both crematoria.

The Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities, Well-being and Cultural Services noted that the pilot had demonstrated a demand for direct cremations and endorsed the recommendations contained within the report that the Council continue to offer the service to its residents.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

1. That approval be given for the continuation of the provision of offering a Direct/Simplicity cremation service at Glyntaff Crematorium, at the reduced prescribed fee of £568 for 2021/22 and in line with the rate applied for the pilot scheme;
2. That the Direct Cremation fee level for 2022/23 onwards be determined as part of Cabinet's consideration of Council fees and charges each year; and
3. That an update is reported to the Llwydcoed Crematorium Joint Committee seeking implementation of direct cremation arrangements at Llwydcoed Crematorium in line with those approved for Glyntaff Crematorium.

93 RCT Theatres: 2021 Christmas Offer

The Strategic Arts and Culture Manager provided the Cabinet with outlines a proposal to develop a digital production of 'Aladdin' for RCT Theatres to be shared with the community in December 2021. The officer noted the continued uncertainty regarding the reopening of theatres and stated that the proposal would enable RCT Theatres to plan effectively to secure and produce a joyous digital Christmas offer, free of charge for the residents of RCT.

The officer advised that the proposal had been costed at £75,000 and as an Arts Council of Wales Portfolio client in receipt of revenue funding, £45,000 would be allocated from the budget. It was explained that if the production was to be a fully online and it was to remain free of charge, then no income would be generated. However, if the situation were to improve and theatres were allowed to open during the festive period, the production could be screened as a cinema offer within RCT Theatres and there would be potential to generate an income

through ticket sales.

The Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities, Well-being & Cultural Services noted that like many other sectors, the Arts and Culture sector had suffered over the past year, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and commended the officers for adapting their work to meet the needs of the residents. The Cabinet Member was pleased to note that the 2020 digital production of 'Once Upon a Time' had reached 10,101 views and 205 new subscribers to the newly established RCT Theatres' YouTube channel, which demonstrated the demand for such provision.

The Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure & Heritage Services echoed the previous comments and stressed the need for positivity at Christmas during such a challenging time.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To consider the content of the report;
2. To approve the proposal to produce a digital Christmas offer of Aladdin to share online during December 2021 and the additional budget of £30,000 to deliver the production and make it available to view free of charge via the Council's social media channels; and
3. To postpone the live pantomime production of 'Dick Whittington' until December 2022.

94 Porth Transport Hub: Compulsory Purchase Order

The Service Director, Frontline Services presented the report, which sought Cabinet approval to exercise Compulsory Purchase Order powers in respect of land adjacent to the site of the Porth Transport Hub for the purpose of creating a safe access route to the new facility. The Service Director advised that the acquisition of the necessary land would enable the progression of the Porth Transport Hub development, which would bring improved connectivity within the wider area and would have the potential to attract more people to the town to work, live, visit and invest.

The Service Director explained that despite the Council's best efforts over an extensive period of time, no suitable agreement with the affected parties had been reached to date and therefore, requested that the necessary steps are taken to secure the making, confirmation and implementation of a Compulsory Purchase Order, if required.

The Leader thanked the Service Director for the report and was happy to support the recommendations. The Leader hoped that ongoing discussions in the background would mean that the Council would not have to proceed with the Compulsory Purchase Order but felt it was necessary to begin proceedings as a contingency in order to acquire land that is integral to the project's success.

The Cabinet Member for Enterprise Development and Housing spoke of the long term benefits of the scheme and the positive impact on trading in Hannah Street, Porth in particular.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To consider the preliminary investment and enabling works carried out in order to prepare the development site for the Porth Transport Hub and the position of the facility as the anchor project within the wider-reaching Porth Town Centre Strategy, and;

2. To grant authorisation to the Group Director of Prosperity, Development and Frontline Services to take all necessary steps to secure the making, confirmation and implementation of a Compulsory Purchase Order (if required) in respect of the land identified in the reference plan at Appendix [1] to the report including but not limited to the following:
 - All steps up to and including seeking confirmation of the CPO by the Welsh Ministers (or, if permitted, by the Council pursuant to Section 14A Acquisition of Land Act 1981), including the preparation and presentation of the Council's case for any Written Representations, Hearing or Public Inquiry which may be necessary;
 - Publication and service of notices of confirmation of the CPO and thereafter to execute and serve any General Vesting Declarations and/or Notices to Treat and Notices of Entry;
 - To acquire the necessary interests in the land; and
 - Referral and conduct of disputes, relating to compulsory purchase compensation, to the Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber).

95 Rhondda Cynon Taf: Social Housing Grant Offer 2021/2022

The Director, Prosperity and Development informed the Cabinet of the Social Housing Grant offer for 2021/2022 and the potential benefits that the grant would have on meeting housing need and supporting economic growth across Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Members were informed of Welsh Government's allocation of an additional £100m into the Social Housing programme, taking the total investment to nearly £250m in 2021-22, with the aim of supporting jobs and training opportunities for Welsh SME builders and local supply chains. Following the announcement, RCT had received confirmation from WG that the 2021/2022 Social Housing Grant allocation would be £15.3M. As such, the Director drew Members' attention to Section 5.4 of the report, where the 14 schemes proposed to receive the SHG allocation for 2021/2022 were outlined for consideration.

The Cabinet Member for Enterprise Development and Housing welcomed the significant investment into social housing, which would support the Council in delivering the priorities of the LDP. The Cabinet Member took the opportunity to praise the high quality of the schemes, which meet the demand of the community.

The Leader also welcomed additional investment and noted that house building was a priority of the Government moving out of the pandemic.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Community Services & Welsh Language acknowledged the high demand for high standard, affordable accommodation and took the opportunity to praise the quality of the schemes within his own ward.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the new Social Housing Grant offer for 2021/2022; and
2. To note the proposed schemes set out in the report to receive the

SHG allocation for 2021/2022, and the benefits that this grant will bring to meeting housing need and supporting economic growth across RCT.

96 Council Corporate Plan: Investment Priorities

The Director, Finance and Digital Services provided Cabinet with the report, which set out the position with regard to one-off resources, which had become available as a result of additional external funding being awarded from Welsh Government (WG) during March 2021 after the Council's Capital Programme was agreed by Council on 10th March 2021. A further allocation from existing earmarked reserves (set aside to support our infrastructure) was also proposed to supplement the additional WG funding.

The Leader thanked the Director for the report and was pleased to note the four areas of additional investment, totalling £6.540M, which aligned to the Corporate Plan, "Making a Difference" 2020 – 2024.

With the agreement of the Chair, County Borough Councillor S. Bradwick spoke on the item.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

1. To note the additional resources provided by Welsh Government; and
2. To the additional investment and funding arrangements as set out in Section 4 of the report.

97 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".

98 Write Off of Irrecoverable Debts

The Head of Service for Revenue and Benefits provided the Cabinet with a position statement on irrecoverable debt and identifies the requirement to write-off certain amounts in accordance with strict review criteria.

Following discussion, the Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

1. To write-off the accounts set out in the attached schedule to the appropriate Bad Debt Provision contained within the Council's accounts (if further information on any debt becomes available, payment will be pursued).

99 Acquisition of Land to the North West of Harriet Street, Trecynon, being the former Mayhew Chicken Factory, Trecynon, Aberdare, RCT

The Director, Corporate Estates presented the report, which sought authority to acquire the Freehold interest of land to the North West of Harriet Street, Trecynon, comprising the Former Mayhew Chicken Factory site which was located in a key position adjacent to the Aberdare bypass road, to facilitate the development of a new railway halt together with a park and ride facility.

Following discussion, the Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To purchase the Freehold interest of approximately 2.89 Ha / 7.15 acres of land at the Former Mayhew Chicken Factory site, Trecynon, Aberdare, for a purchase price of £850K plus VAT and Land Transaction Tax of £38.9K.

100 Acquisition of Land and Buildings at Willowford House, Willowford Road, Gwaelod-Y-Garth, Taffs Well

The Director, Corporate Estates presented the report, which sought authority to acquire the Freehold interest of land and buildings at Willowford House, Willowford Road, Gwaelod -Y -Garth, Taffs Well, comprising a residential property and land immediately adjacent, being primarily woodland which is located in a key position adjacent the Willowford Road to facilitate the development of a new railway halt.

Following discussion, the Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To purchase the Freehold interest of approximately 1.56 Ha / 3.87 acres of land at Willowford House, Willowford Road, Gwaelod- Y -Garth, Taffs Well, for a purchase price of £550K plus Land Transaction Tax of £21.2K. In addition, Compensation costs of £88K will also be payable in accordance with the Compensation Code, resulting in a total acquisition cost of £659K.

This meeting closed at 11.03 am

**Cllr A Morgan
Chairman.**