



CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL
RHONDDA CYNON TAF
COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMITTEE SUMMONS

C Hanagan
Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
The Pavilions
Cambrian Park
Clydach Vale CF40 2XX

Meeting Contact: Julia Nicholls - Democratic Services (01443 424098)

YOU ARE SUMMONED to a hybrid meeting of **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL** to be held on **WEDNESDAY, 9TH FEBRUARY, 2022** at **5.00 PM.**

AGENDA

**Page
No's**

TIME	ITEM	PAGE(S)
5 Minutes	ITEM 1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST To receive disclosures of personal interests from Members in accordance with the Code of Conduct 1. Members are requested to identify the item number and subject that their interest relates to and signify the nature of the personal interest; and 2. Where Members withdraw from a meeting as a consequence of the disclosure of prejudicial interest they <u>must</u> notify the Chairman when they leave.	
10 Minutes	ITEM 2. ANNOUNCEMENTS	
5 Minutes	ITEM 3. MINUTES To approve as an accurate record, the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 19 th January 2022.	3 - 20
	OPEN GOVERNMENT:	
10	ITEM 4. STATEMENTS	

Minutes	In accordance with Open Government Council Meeting Procedure Rule 2, to receive any statements from the Leader of the Council and/or statements from Cabinet Portfolio Holders:	
20 Minutes	ITEM 5. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS To receive Members questions in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9.2. (N.B a maximum of 20 minutes shall be allowed for questions on notice.)	21 - 28
45 Minutes	ITEM 6. STATE OF THE COUNTY BOROUGH DEBATE In accordance with Rule 13 of the Council's Procedure Rules (Part 4 of the Council's Constitution) to engage in the Leader's debate.	
	COUNCIL WORK PROGRAMME - FOR MEMBERS INFORMATION Council Work Programme 2021/22	
	OFFICERS' REPORTS	
10 Minutes	ITEM 7. MEMBER'S MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING To receive the joint report of the Director of Legal Services & Service Director, Democratic Services & Communication.	29 - 40
	ITEM 8. URGENT BUSINESS To consider any items which the Chair, by reason of special circumstances, is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.	

Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication

To: All Members of the Council

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Council held on Wednesday, 19 January 2022 at 5.00 pm.

County Borough Councillors - Council Members in attendance:-

Councillor S Powderhill (Chair)

Councillor G Hughes	Councillor M Adams
Councillor J Barton	Councillor S Belzak
Councillor R Bevan	Councillor H Boggis
Councillor J Bonetto	Councillor S Bradwick
Councillor J Brencher	Councillor A Calvert
Councillor G Caple	Councillor A Chapman
Councillor A Cox	Councillor A Crimmings
Councillor J Cullwick	Councillor G Davies
Councillor L De Vet	Councillor J Edwards
Councillor J Elliott	Councillor S Evans
Councillor S Evans	Councillor M Forey
Councillor A Fox	Councillor H Fychan
Councillor E George	Councillor D Grehan
Councillor E Griffiths	Councillor M Griffiths
Councillor J Harries	Councillor G Holmes
Councillor L Hooper	Councillor P Howe
Councillor J James	Councillor P Jarman
Councillor K Jones	Councillor L Jones
Councillor W Jones	Councillor R Lewis
Councillor W Lewis	Councillor C Leyshon
Councillor A Morgan	Councillor S Morgans
Councillor M Norris	Councillor D Owen-Jones
Councillor M Powell	Councillor S Rees
Councillor A Roberts	Councillor J Rosser
Councillor G Stacey	Councillor E Stephens
Councillor G Thomas	Councillor S Trask
Councillor W Treeby	Councillor R Turner
Councillor L Walker	Councillor M Weaver
Councillor M Webber	Councillor E Webster
Councillor D Williams	Councillor J Williams
Councillor R Williams	Councillor T Williams
Councillor R Yeo	

Officers in attendance

Mr C Bradshaw, Chief Executive
 Mr B Davies, Director of Finance & Digital Services
 Mr R Evans, Director of Human Resources
 Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
 Mr P Mee, Group Director Community & Children's Services
 Mr A Wilkins, Director of Legal Services
 Mr R Waters, Service Director – Frontline Services

104 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors A Davies-Jones, J Davies, M Fidler Jones, G Jones, G Hopkins, K Morgan, S Pickering, S Powell, S Rees-Owen, W Owen and M Tegg.

105 Declaration of Interest

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

Agenda Item 4 – Public Speaker

County Borough Councillor M Powell – “Ynysangharad Park is in my ward and I’ve been pushing for a skateboard park publicly”.

Agenda Item 8 - Council Revenue Budget 2022/23 - Provisional Local Government Settlement

County Borough Councillor P Jarman – “I’ve been granted dispensation by the Standards Committee to speak and vote on matters relating to the present and proposed budget for 2022-23”.

County Borough Councillor M Powell – “My wife is an employee of the authority”.

County Borough Councillor J Harries – “My Dad is employed by the local authority”.

A further declaration of personal interest was later declared (Minute No. 113 refers) by County Borough Councillor L Walker – “I declare an interest in that I am a member of Llantwit Fardre Community Council”

Agenda Item 10 - Welsh Church Act Fund Annual Report 2020/2021

County Borough Councillor R Bevan declared a personal and prejudicial interest – “I have Cabinet responsibility for administering funds”.

County Borough Councillor M Norris- “I am on the board of a community group, the Cambrian Village Trust, that is referred to within the report”

County Borough Councillor R Lewis – “The Cynon Valley Museum Trust is referenced in the report, and I am a friend of the Museum”.

County Borough Councillor A Crimmings – “I am a trustee of Friends of Aberdare Park who received funding from the Welsh Church Act”.

County Borough Councillor S Rees – “I am a trustee of Friends of Aberdare Park, and I am also a Friend of Aberdare Museum”.

County Borough Councillor G R Davies – “I am Secretary for Blaencwm in

Treherbert and I am also on the committee for the Tennis Club in the Rhondda, who have received funding from the fund”.

County Borough Councillor J Barton – “I am a trustee Beddau & Tynant Community Library which has in the past received a grant from the Welsh Church Act”

County Borough Councillor J Cullwick – “I am a member of the Methodist Church in Wales”

County Borough Councillor S Bradwick – “I am the Secretary of Maesyffynnon allotments in Aberdare and we received money from the Welsh Church Act a few years ago”.

Agenda item 12 - Overview & Scrutiny Working Group Report - The Development of Future Transportation Infrastructure in Rhondda Cynon Taf

A further declaration of personal interest was later declared (Minute No. 117 refers) by County Borough Councillor J James – “I have been working with the Rhondda Tunnel Society as part of my Senedd duties”

Agenda Item 13 – Notices of Motion

A further declaration of personal interest was later declared (Minute No. 118 refers) by County Borough Councillor M Powell – “I have 40 plus years of experience of working in the heating and plumbing industry”.

106 Announcements

Councillor J Bonetto was saddened to announce the end of her time served as Mayor and she advised that information regarding her charities and money raised would be published shortly. She eagerly anticipated her new role as Cabinet Member for Education & Inclusion Services, building on the strong legacy of improvement and investment established by Councillor Rosser. Councillor Bonetto thanked the Leader for giving her the opportunity to take up this position.

Councillor S Bradwick announced that for Autism Week at the end of February, he would be walking to Pen Y Fan for the charity and to support this worthy cause.

Councillor P Jarman announced the passing of the former Chief Executive Cynon Valley Borough Council, Mr Tony Bessent Roberts OBE and paid tribute to him by sharing some of his many achievements such as receiving a non-directorship of Tower in recognition of his role in the Tower story. Councillor Jarman wished to send her condolences to his family for their loss.

Councillor Sheryl Evans wished to acknowledge and pay special thanks to the Council refuse workers and volunteer litter pickers on behalf of her constituents.

107 Minutes

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the virtual meeting held on

the 24th November 2021 at 5pm and of the hybrid meeting held on the 15th December 2021 as an accurate reflection of the meetings.

108 Public Questions

Members were advised that in the absence of Mr Marshmann, author of the public question, a written response would be provided to him from the Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure and Heritage Services, County Borough Councillor A Crimmings.

109 Statements

As previously announced, the Leader advised that changes to the Cabinet membership under the Leader Scheme of Delegation would take effect from the 20th January 2022. The Leader was pleased to announce that Councillor J Bonetto and G Caple would be joining his Cabinet. He paid tribute to both Councillors G Hopkins and J Rosser for their hard work and dedication to the Cabinet and he wished Cllr Rosser the very best with her retirement following her announcement.

He acknowledged their hard work as part of the Cabinet, Councillor Rosser in driving forward significant investment in education services such as the 21st Century Schools projects, engagement with other partners over a 7-year period. Councillor Hopkins in playing a key role in the transformation of social services and bringing forward the development of Extra Care in RCT, the biggest investment in over a generation, as well as the support he has shown for the social care staff, managers and service users throughout the pandemic (as has Councillor Rosser).

The Leader announced that the Leader's Scheme of Delegation will be updated and circulated to all Members in due course.

110 Members' Questions

Members were advised that apologies of absence had been received from Councillor G Jones and that question 6 would not be put to the Chair of the Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee.

1. Question from County Borough Councillor J. Edwards to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:

"Can the Leader please give an update on the improvement works to the culverts in Ynyshir, particularly above Heath Terrace?"

Response from the Leader:

The Leader advised that following a survey of the culvert, open watercourse and the enclosed culvert lines, there did show significant damage above Standard View. Over £110,000 worth of structural lining work has been carried out in the summer of 2021. Additional manholes were also installed. Work to the two watercourses above Heath Terrace commenced in late Autumn but inclement weather delayed the work. The Leader confirmed that the work would be

completed by March 2022. A current programme shows investment in the region of between £175,000-£200,000 to rectify the problems in the area which has been fully funded by Welsh Government following Storm Dennis.

There was no supplementary question

2. Question from County Borough Councillor L. Walker to the Cabinet member for Education & Inclusion Services, County Borough Councillor J. Rosser:

“Can the Cabinet Member for Education & Inclusion Services outline the progress made in the proposed site for the new Special school provision in RCT and what steps have been taken, if any, as regards funding and eventually building it given the chronic overcapacity in special schools”

Response from Councillor J Rosser:

Councillor Rosser commented that this would be her last question as Cabinet Member and she is proud of her record in delivering investment in special school facilities and in securing funding for a new school site to be developed. Band B of the Council’s 21st Century Schools Strategic Outline Programme has been approved by Welsh Government and a new special school is part of that programme and funding is included within the current wave of investment subject to the necessary business case approval process and scrutiny by Welsh Government. Councillor Rosser confirmed that the Council is at feasibility stage and progress is in line with current Band B investment programme timescales.

Supplementary question from County Borough Councillor L Walker:

“Can the Cabinet Member give any indications where we are with timescales and what consultations have taken place with the school staff regarding this new building?”

Response from Councillor J Rosser:

Councillor Rosser advised that Officers within the Education Directorate are managing demand for school places, in line with the School Admissions Code 2013 and the Additional Learning Needs and Educational Tribunal Wales Act 2018 and Officers work closely with all the Head Teachers in this regard. Projects to increase accommodation are in progress in two schools, Ysgol Hen Felin and Ysgol Ty Coch and internal modifications were recently completed in Ysgol Ty Coch and Park Lane Special School to manage known, current and forecasted placements. Councillor Rosser confirmed there is no chronic over subscriptions within the Council’s special schools and the Council continually promotes high educational standards locally to ensure fair access to education as demonstrated by the level of investments earmarked for the new and exciting school proposals.

3. Question from County Borough Councillor R. Turner to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:

“Will the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Highways please give an update on the latest position with regards to the Llanharan Footbridge?”

Response from the Leader:

The Leader advised that the bridge was closed in September 2021 due to identified safety defects. It was planned to remove the pedestrian footbridge over the Christmas holiday period; however, the crane broke down on site and Network Rail had to recover it. The work to advance this scheme has continued and the Leader announced that the crane will be set up on site tomorrow night and using Sunday night closure, the bridge will be lifted overnight, moved to the land adjacent, dismantled and broken down. The Leader advised that a new contractor has been appointed to take forward the new bridge which is due to be in place and completed by July 2022 depending on a number of critical factors.

There was no supplementary question**4. Question from County Borough Councillor T. Williams to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:**

“Can the Leader provide an overview of the works completed to date to help protect residents of Bronallt Terrace in Abercwmboi from flooding, and can the Leader also outline whether further measures can be taken?”

Response from the Leader:

The Leader confirmed that 42 properties in Bronallt Terrace have been offered property flood resistance measures e.g. flood gates, sandbags and emergency flood sacks. Of the 42 properties, 24 accepted in full and Officers are now in the process of discussing the options with other residents as some may be concerned with the impact on their properties. The Leader advised that work to the upper debris catcher on the one main culvert has cost £40,000, work in Bronallt Terrace has been carried out to enlarge the culvert inlet and renew the underground pipe which cost £160,000, work is due to start on the inlet at Mostyn Terrace at the cost of between £95-100,000 and work is ongoing to identify further schemes for the area.

There was no supplementary question**5. Question from County Borough Councillor H. Boggis to the Deputy Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor M. Webber:**

“Will the Deputy Leader provide an update on the progress to implement a Guaranteed Interview Scheme for Armed Forces Veterans, following the decision of Cabinet?”

Response of the Deputy Leader:

The Deputy Leader advised that Cabinet gave its approval to progress and implement the guaranteed interview scheme at its meeting on the 4th October 2021. From the 1st January 2022 the scheme is fully implementational for reservists and veterans. The additional commitment demonstrates the Council's support for the Armed Forces community and honours the spirit of the Armed Forces covenant of which the Council is a signatory. The Council also holds the Gold Standard Award for the level of work and continued commitment with the Armed Forces.

The Deputy Leader explained that the guaranteed interview scheme ensures

that where veterans and reservists meet the essential criteria of an advertised job, they are guaranteed an interview. It has been recognised that members of the Armed Forces can bring valuable, transferrable skills and qualities to the workforce. In addition to the guaranteed interview scheme, the Council has committed to advertise relevant jobs to the Armed Forces Community through the Career Transition Partnership which is in addition to the normal advertising process. In conclusion, the Deputy Leader gave assurance that the Local Authority is committed to the Armed Forces covenant and will continue its work with Armed Forces families throughout the whole of the county borough.

There was no supplementary question

6. Question from County Borough Councillor W. Jones to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure and Heritage Services, County Borough Councillor A. Crimmings:

“Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on the Blaenrhondda Park Pavilion”

Response of Councillor A Crimmings:

Councillor Crimmings responded that the Blaenrhondda Park Pavilion is in poor condition and acknowledged the value of the pavilion to the community. The replacement pavilion was approved through the 2021 Parks Capital Programme but due to the limited access, the original plan to put the demountable in place had to be abandoned. Councillor Crimmings gave assurances that this will be a priority subject to approval for the Capital Investment Programme for 2022/23.

Supplementary question from County Borough Councillor W Jones:

“Replacing this facility is important to the community as it is for other places such as Darren Park. It’s not the community’s fault that access to the park is limited so can you give a date as to when work will be completed as its not only used for sport but also for bowls, the community and old aged pensioners”

Response of Councillor A Crimmings:

Councillor Crimmings acknowledged the value of the park to the residents and advised that regular updates would be provided to the community however, she was unable to provide a date for completion at this stage. Councillor Crimmings gave assurances that the Council continues to work closely with sports clubs across the county borough and acknowledged their importance.

7. Question from County Borough Councillor W. Treeby to the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, County Borough Councillor C. Leyshon:

“Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on the Santa Appeal and the huge generosity shown by residents and businesses?”

Response from Councillor C Leyshon:

Councillor Leyshon advised that the Santa Appeal timescales were extended in December due to the challenges associated with the Covid Pandemic, to maximise the time for people to pledge and drop off gifts. As a result, every child

on the list was allocated a present for Christmas. Due to the pandemic a number of organisations missed out on donating to the appeal such as the University of Glamorgan, South Wales Students Union who had collected and distributed over 1,500 presents in the last ten years. This year 50 bags of presents were collected from them. There were approximately 1,862 pledges and some of the larger donors included the Welsh Blood Service, Bethel Bush Church, Royal Mint, The International Baccalaureate, The Network Recruitment for Wales, Coleg Y Cymoedd, HM Prison & Probation Services, Hirwaun Primary School, Cardiff & Vale UHB and Pontypridd Town AFC for Girls.

Councillor Leyshon thanked the staff from across the local authority and from all services and all those that took part and helped the appeal in particular the individual residents and families from RCT for their donations who, during the Covid-19 pandemic, were often struggling themselves.

111 Council Work Programme 2021-2022

The Service Director Democratic Services & Communications confirmed that there were no changes regarding the adopted and published Council Work Programme 2021/22. Details regarding the arrangements for the Leader's Annual Debate would be circulated in advance of the meeting and it was advised that the Council meeting on the 2nd March 2022 would be removed from the calendar.

112 Audit Wales - Annual Audit Summary 2021 (Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council)

The Performance Audit Manager, Audit Wales, presented the Annual Audit Summary 2020/21 for RCT and confirmed that updates have been considered by the Council's Governance & Audit Committee.

Other areas of work undertaken by Audit Wales in response to the Covid-19 Pandemic included Test, Trace and Protect in Wales, supply of PPE and a report on the roll out of the Covid-19 vaccination programme in Wales. Recovery planning across the local authorities, as included within the report, has brought regular meetings with officers to understand their responses and their individual recovery plans will be an ongoing matter. In conclusion, an overview of the ongoing work and planned future work of Audit Wales was provided such as a National study around Carbon reduction, town centre regeneration and a high-level governance review relating to the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Partnership.

In response to a query regarding comparative data in relation to the useable financial reserves of other local authorities, it was confirmed that Audit Wales would collate and provide this data following the meeting.

Following discussion in relation to the RCT Annual Audit Summary Report 2020/21, it was **RESOLVED** to note the information contained within the report.

113 Council Revenue Budget 2022/23 - Provisional Local Government Settlement

Through his report, the Director of Finance and Digital Services provided information in respect of the 2022/2023 Provisional Local Government Settlement, announced on the 21st December 2021 and initial comments on its likely implications for the delivery of Council services.

The Director provided Members with the headline data from the settlement as set out at section 4 advising of an all Wales increase of 9.4% (+£437M) with this Council's resources set to increase by 8.4% Provisional indicative settlement levels are also included for the following 2 years at 3.5% and 2.4% respectively, which points to more challenging times ahead. A number of transfers into the settlement are also set out at section 4 and a reduction in the Council's capital funding of £2.165 m

The settlement is more positive than that modelled in the Council's latest medium term financial plan and it is also reflective of the Council's significantly increasing cost base and service pressures. Welsh Government have also brought the Hardship Fund to an end which reimburses local government for costs and income losses as a direct result of the pandemic. The projection for the level of support for this year from the fund is £30m, some of which will be key financial risks to be managed into next financial year and beyond.

The increased budget requirements are set out which includes funding to cover increases in a number of areas such as to employer NI contributions linked to the UK Govt Health & SC Levy, payment of the Foundation Living Wage to social care providers across RCT which has increased from £9.50 to £9.90 per hour, additional costs associated with the ALNET ACT, council wide inflationary and supply chain pressures including employee costs, ongoing pandemic related costs e.g waste services and specialist placement costs within social care, all of which are set out at table 2 within the report amounting to a net increased budget requirement of £11.7M for next year.

The Director advised that the combined impact of the provisional settlement and the updated base budget requirements are set out at table 3, against a budget gap of £9.2M at the medium-term financial planning stage, assuming a 4% settlement, the additional budget requirement when offset against the additional resources provided at the provisional settlement results in a remaining budget gap of £229,000.

Following his summary, the Director reported that Cabinet will consider its draft budget strategy for next year to include any efficiencies, Council Tax levels, resources for schools and other council services. The Council's medium term financial planning arrangements will continue to be as important as ever going forward.

In conclusion, the Director advised that the final settlement is due to be released in early March and it will be for Council to agree its final proposals and Council Tax levels for next year.

Members welcomed the Provisional 2022/23 Local Government Settlement, announced by Welsh Government and following discussion the Director responded to a number of queries such as the provision of a specific grant for Free School Meals to Primary Learners agreed as part of the Plaid Corporation Agreement, £40M for 2022/23, £70m for 2023/24 and £90m for 2024/25.

RESOLVED to:

1. Note the Provisional 2022/23 Local Government Settlement, announced by the Minister for Finance and Local Government on the 21st December

2021;

2. Note that the Final 2022/23 Local Government Settlement is expected during early March 2022; and
3. Note the approach to budget consultation for 2022/23 as already determined.

(**Note:** County Borough Councillor L Walker declared the following personal interest– “I declare an interest in that I am a member of Llantwit Fardre Community Council”

114 Council Tax Reduction Scheme

The Director of Finance & Digital Services presented his report which set out the requirement to annually consider whether to revise or replace the Council's existing Council Tax Reduction Scheme (“CTRS”) and the requirement to adopt a scheme by 31st January 2022.

The Director confirmed there are no changes proposed to the current scheme and local discretions; and Welsh government have updated their regulations to reflect upratings consequential to wider and national benefit changes. These amendment regulations were considered and agreed by Welsh Government yesterday.

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

1. Note and adopt the provisions of the Prescribed Requirements Regulations and the amendments made to those regulations by the Amendment Regulations as the Council's local CTRS for 2022/23, subject to the local discretions that the Council is able to exercise;
2. Note the outcome of the consultation exercise undertaken by the Council on the local discretions applicable to the CTRS for 2022/23; and
3. Confirm the discretions applicable to the Council's local CTRS for 2022/23 as set out at paragraph 5.3 (Table 2) of the report.

115 Welsh Church Act Fund Annual Report 2020/2021

In his report, the Director of Finance and Digital Services sought the approval of Members of the Statement of Accounts for the Welsh Church Act Fund for the financial year ended 31st March, 2021; following the completion of the audit process with an unqualified audit opinion; and it was **RESOLVED**:

1. To approve and note the Welsh Church Act Fund Annual Report and Financial Statements for the financial year 2020/2021 (Appendix 1);
2. To approve and note the Letter of Representation relating to the Welsh

Church Act Fund (Appendix 2); and

3. To note the External Auditor report (Appendix 3).

116 Urgent Executive Decisions

In accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules 17.2(a), the Service Director of Democratic Services and Communication presented an overview of the Urgent Decisions taken forward by the Cabinet Committee and Urgent Key Officer Delegated Decisions taken forward outside of the Cabinet Committee during the period October – December 2021.

Following consideration of the report it was **RESOLVED** to note the information contained within the report.

117 Overview & Scrutiny Working Group Report - The development of future transportation infrastructure in Rhondda Cynon Taf

The Service Director Democratic Services & Communications presented the findings and recommendations of the Overview & Scrutiny Working Group which was established to deal with 'The development of future transportation infrastructure in Rhondda Cynon Taf' following the Notice of Motion considered by Council at its meeting held on the [18th September 2019](#). The Service Director advised that the report and recommendations had been agreed by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the 9th December 2021.

The Service Director Democratic Services & Communications commented that progress had been delayed by the Covid-19 Pandemic following the inaugural meeting in 2019 and having sought submissions from local Members and stakeholders. Upon re convening the Working Group, Members acknowledged that much had changed across the integrated transport map and direction set by Welsh Government which has been reflected in the final report. In conclusion, the Service Director thanked the Director, Frontline Services, for his support to the Scrutiny Working Group.

In response to a query regarding the Welsh Government Moratorium, the Service Director Democratic Services & Communications commented that in the majority, the Working Group agreed that where there is an economic benefit the road schemes remained important.

The Director, Frontline Services confirmed that the reopening of the Rhondda Tunnel is currently being considered, he also added that a report would be presented to Cabinet before the end of the financial year in respect of the extension of the rail line from Treherbert to Tynwydd as part of a wider study looking at improved transport links to/from the Mid Valleys areas. The Director also advised that following the moratorium announced by Welsh Government a panel has been established to review road building across Wales and a report will be produced shortly from the deputy minister, outlining those more mature road schemes that have undergone the Weltag process. He added that the Rhondda Fach Relief Road will not be included in that review but will form part of the LDP as a credible plan with prospects of delivery (and will be tested again for inclusion in a future plans). In conclusion, the Director, Frontline Services confirmed that the Tylorstown tip will not prejudice the Rhondda Fach Relief Road, the consultation on the pre-planning application will commence soon and it will be for the local authority to demonstrate that the scheme is viable.

Following additional comments from the Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee regarding the issues raised, it was **RESOLVED** to note the conclusions and recommendations of the Scrutiny Working Group as set out at paragraph 6 and as ratified by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

(**Note:** County Borough Councillor J James declared a personal declaration – “I have been working with the Rhondda Tunnel Society as part of my Senedd duties”).

118 Notices of Motion

13A The following Notice of Motion was received standing in the names of County Borough Councillors, A Roberts, W. Lewis, L. M. Adams, J. Barton, D. R. Bevan, H. Boggis, J. Bonetto, S. Bradwick, J. Brencher, A. Calvert, G. Caple, A. Crimmings, A. Davies-Jones, L. De- Vet, J. Edwards, J. Elliott, S. Evans, M. Griffiths, G. Jones, M. Fidler Jones, M. Forey, A. Fox, E. George, J. Harries, G. Holmes, G. Hopkins, R. Lewis, C. Leyshon, A. Morgan, S. Morgans, M. A. Norris, D. Owen-Jones, S. Pickering, S. Powell, S. Rees, J. Rosser, G. Stacey, M. Tegg, G. Thomas, W. Treeby, R. K. Turner, M. Webber, D. Williams, R. Williams, T. Williams, R. Yeo:

This Council recognises the efforts of the Welsh Government in helping to address the issue of fuel poverty in Wales, both in terms of providing financial support to low income households, and also through a range of home energy efficiency improvements through the Warm Homes initiative.

Since 2009/10, over 67,000 lower income households have benefitted from energy efficiency improvements, at an estimated average saving on their energy bills of £300 with the added benefit of reduced carbon emissions.

One element of the Welsh Government's Warm Homes programme is the Nest Grant scheme, which offers a range of free, impartial advice and if eligible applicants can access a package of free home energy efficiency improvements such as a new boiler, central heating or insulation, which can lower energy bills and benefit the applicant's health and wellbeing.

Excellent work has been carried out by the Council's Heat and Save team, despite the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic, with RCT being the 2nd highest referring area in 20-21 with 9% of Nest referrals being received from RCT residents and the 2nd highest area for successful installs at 12.5%. During 2021-2022 the Council's Heat & Save Department, have sent out 3,631 direct mailers to strategic areas in partnership with Nest offering a targeted intervention helping the correct households access Nest assistance.

Despite this positive work undertaken in Wales and locally in RCT, the continually increasing costs of energy prices means more and more households are being pushed toward fuel poverty.

This trend threatens the targets outlined in the Welsh Government's Tackling Fuel Poverty 2021-2035 strategy and with the Welsh Government recently launching a consultation on shaping the next iteration of the Warm Homes programme, it is now an opportune time to examine the feasibility of broadening

the criteria for applications for the Nest scheme.

This Council therefore notes:

- The good work undertaken in Wales by the Welsh Government, and on a local level by the Council's Heat and Save team in tackling fuel poverty.

And resolves to:

- Request that the Council Leader writes to Julie James MS, the Welsh Government's Minister for Climate Change, to make the necessary representations for the criteria of eligibility of the Nest (and other schemes) to be widened to allow further applications to be approved, to the benefit of our residents.

With the consent of the proposer and in accordance with the Council's Rules of Procedure 12.7 the following alteration to the Motion was voted on and moved "*Request that the Council Leader writes to Julie James MS, the Welsh Government's Minister for Climate Change, to make the necessary representations for the criteria of eligibility of the Nest (and other schemes) to be widened **and funded** to allow further applications to be approved, to the benefit of our residents*".

The altered Motion read:

This Council recognises the efforts of the Welsh Government in helping to address the issue of fuel poverty in Wales, both in terms of providing financial support to low income households, and also through a range of home energy efficiency improvements through the Warm Homes initiative.

Since 2009/10, over 67,000 lower income households have benefitted from energy efficiency improvements, at an estimated average saving on their energy bills of £300 with the added benefit of reduced carbon emissions.

One element of the Welsh Government's Warm Homes programme is the Nest Grant scheme, which offers a range of free, impartial advice and if eligible applicants can access a package of free home energy efficiency improvements such as a new boiler, central heating or insulation, which can lower energy bills and benefit the applicant's health and wellbeing.

Excellent work has been carried out by the Council's Heat and Save team, despite the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic, with RCT being the 2nd highest referring area in 20-21 with 9% of Nest referrals being received from RCT residents and the 2nd highest area for successful installs at 12.5%. During 2021-2022 the Council's Heat & Save Department, have sent out 3,631 direct mailers to strategic areas in partnership with Nest offering a targeted intervention helping the correct households access Nest assistance.

Despite this positive work undertaken in Wales and locally in RCT, the continually increasing costs of energy prices means more and more households are being pushed toward fuel poverty.

This trend threatens the targets outlined in the Welsh Government's Tackling Fuel Poverty 2021-2035 strategy and with the Welsh Government recently launching a consultation on shaping the next iteration of the Warm Homes programme, it is now an opportune time to examine the feasibility of broadening the criteria for applications for the Nest scheme.

This Council therefore notes:

- The good work undertaken in Wales by the Welsh Government, and on a local level by the Council's Heat and Save team in tackling fuel poverty.

And resolves to:

- Request that the Council Leader writes to Julie James MS, the Welsh Government's Minister for Climate Change, to make the necessary representations for the criteria of eligibility of the Nest (and other schemes) to be widened and funded to allow further applications to be approved, to the benefit of our residents.

Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the Notice of Motion with the alteration.

(**Note:** County Borough Councillor M Powell declared the following declaration of personal interest – "I have 40 plus years of experience of working in the heating and plumbing industry").

13B The following Notice of Motion was received standing in the names of County Borough Councillors, J. Barton, J. Edwards, L. M. Adams, D. R. Bevan, H. Boggis, J. Bonetto, S. Bradwick, J. Brencher, A. Calvert, G. Caple, A. Crimmings, A. Davies-Jones, L. De- Vet, J. Elliott, S. Evans, M Griffiths, G. Jones, M. Fidler Jones, M. Forey, A. Fox, E. George, J. Harries, G. Holmes, G. Hopkins, R. Lewis, W. Lewis, C. Leyshon, A. Morgan, S. Morgans, M. A. Norris, D. Owen-Jones, S. Pickering, S. Powell, S. Rees, A Roberts, J. Rosser, G. Stacey, M. Tegg, G. Thomas, W. Treeby, R. K. Turner, M. Webber, D. Williams, R. Williams, T. Williams, R. Yeo:

The rising cost of energy prices is being described as a "national crisis" affecting households, businesses and the energy companies themselves.

The significant rise in gas prices has seen the U.K. energy sector pay approximately £20bn more this year. With the energy price cap, which currently sits at £1,277 set to jump in April, households could see their energy bills alone rise by 50%, meaning that households could be as much as £1,200 a year worse off as National Insurance contributions also rise.

The rising price of energy has seen more than 20 energy suppliers go out of business since September, with many customers unfairly moved on to new providers on more expensive tariffs.

Whilst most consumers are protected by the energy price cap at £1,277 for

normal domestic usage, the limit will rise on 1st April in line with an expected announcement in early February – meaning the U.K. Government is running out of time to tackle the crisis.

The charity National Energy Action (NEA) has warned that a record 6 million UK households will be in fuel poverty when the next increase in the energy price cap comes into force in April, and this view is compounded by the findings of the Resolution Foundation think tank, which warned that millions of UK families face a "year of squeeze" in 2022 thanks to rising energy bills, stagnant wages and tax rises. The Bank of England has also said it expects inflation to reach 6% by the spring.

The Resolution Foundation have said that an increase in National Insurance contributions from April, along with an expected rise in energy bills in the same month could amount to a £1,200 hit to household finances, with low-income families forced to bear the brunt of these rises as they spend a greater proportion of their income on electricity and gas.

Earlier this month, a group of twenty Conservative MPs and Peers – including five former Ministers – called on the Prime Minister to take action to tackle the spiralling cost of living and alleviate the pressures on the lowest income families.

Energy suppliers including Good Energy, EDF and trade body Energy UK have called for government intervention, after the cost of gas in wholesale markets rose by more than 500% in less than a year. The increase has bankrupted over twenty providers, forced to buy wholesale gas at higher prices than they are allowed to sell it.

The Westminster Government's inaction is leading to "an enormous crisis for 2022" with energy bills potentially increasing by another 50% unless the government intervenes. Many other governments across Europe have reduced taxes and other levies, and similar action taken in the U.K. could save close to £200 a year on an average bill.

One solution voiced by the industry is to move green levies from energy bills to general taxation as it would mean higher earners pay more than lower income households, who spend a larger proportion of their income on essentials like heating.

They also argue it would lower the measure of inflation, saving the government money on inflation linked borrowing costs. The Treasury, however, appear not to favour this approach in reluctance to increase the general tax burden, and the indications are that the U.K. Government will instead seek to expand the £140 Warm Homes Discount Scheme as part of a targeted relief package to up to 6 million households.

Despite the Westminster Government's apparent inability to act decisively, residents in Wales and across RCT have benefitted from initiatives designed to cut fuel poverty and increase household energy efficiency.

The Welsh Government's Arbed am Byth scheme has delivered 206 energy measures to 113 homes in Penrhiwceiber, whilst RCT was also the 2nd highest referring area and 2nd highest successful install area in Wales in 2020-21. The Council's own RCT Heating Grant - which provides funding of up to £5,000 to assist up to 20 households who are at risk of fuel poverty but not eligible for

other assistance schemes – has received 24 applications with 7 grants approved at a cost of £1,500 per property.

Council Officers are also working closely with the Citizen's Advice Bureau and other organisations to signpost individuals and families in need of support to the most appropriate stream of financial assistance.

This Council therefore resolves:

- To call on the U.K. Government to honour the Brexit campaign promise of cutting the 5% VAT rate on energy bills, or to bring forward an alternative support package that provides additional funding – both to subsidise energy companies and to provide relief to households - so that families across the U.K., including here in Rhondda Cynon Taf, are not the ones to bear the brunt of price increases.
- To request that the Council Leader writes to the Business Secretary, Chancellor of the Exchequer and Prime Minister to request that urgent action is taken to address the energy price crisis.

Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the Notice of Motion.

119 Urgent Business

120 Change of Membership

Following changes to the Leader's scheme of delegation, the Service Director Democratic Services & Communications presented his report requesting that Council elect the following appointments for the remainder of this Municipal Year: He also sought authority from Council to make any consequential changes to the Labour Group's committee representation.

- a) Mayor;
- b) Deputy Mayor;
- c) Vice-chair of the Planning & Development Committee;
- d) Chair of the Appeals/ Employee Appeals/ Chief Officer Appeals Committee

a) **RESOLVED** – to elect County Borough Councillor W Treeby as Mayor of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2021-2022.

(County Borough Councillor W Treeby announced her Consort as Mr Paul Hammett and that details of her chosen Chaplain would be announced in due course)

b) **RESOLVED** – to elect County Borough Councillor W Lewis as Deputy Mayor Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2021-2022.

(County Borough Councillor W Lewis advised that details of her consort would be announced shortly)

c) **RESOLVED** –to elect County Borough Councillor R Williams as Vice-Chair of Planning & Development Committee for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2021-2022.

d) **RESOLVED** –to elect County Borough Councillor G Holmes as Chair of the Appeals/ Employee Appeals/ Chief Officer Appeals Committee for the remainder

of the Municipal Year 2021-2022.

e) **RESOLVED** - That the Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication be authorised to make appointments to the Labour Group representation to politically balanced committees of the Council, upon receipt of notification to him of the wishes of the political group in question.

This meeting closed at 7.50 pm

**Cllr S Powderhill
Chairman.**

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
COUNCIL

9 FEBRUARY 2022

MEMBERS QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & COMMUNICATION.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To present the order of questions in respect of the Members Questions on Notice, following the amendment to the process agreed at the [Council AGM 2019](#).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Receive the Questions and any supplementary questions proposed, as in accordance with the running order advised upon in 4.3 of the report, which should not exceed a 20-minute time period.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 As agreed at the Council AGM on the 15th May, 2019, Members agreed to amend Council Procedure Rule 9.2 in respect of Members Questions on Notice. A further amendment was made to Council Procedure Rule 9.2 at the Council AGM on the 26th May 2021 in respect of supplementary questions following expiry of the 20 minute time duration. [Council AGM 2021](#)

4. MEMBERS QUESTION ON NOTICE

- 4.1 The closing date for receipt of Members Questions on Notice to the Council Business Unit for the Council meeting on the 9th February 2022 was 5pm on the 27th January 2022.
- 4.2 Twenty five questions were received and put forward to the Council Ballot held on the 31st January 2022, to determine the running order of the questions at the Council Meeting.
- 4.3 The results of the ballot are outlined below:-

Number	Corresponding Question
1	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor L Walker to the Cabinet Member for Education & Inclusion Services County Borough Councillor J Bonetto:</p> <p>“In view of the fact that Welsh Secondary schools are 25% under capacity, would the education department consider using this spare space for children with special education needs in order to alleviate the overcrowding in special schools, as other local authorities in Wales run satellite classes in mainstream schools”.</p>
2	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor M. Forey to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:</p> <p>“Can the Leader please provide an update on how the Council is supporting colleagues in Health in the fight against the Omicron variant?”</p>
3	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor M. Powell to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure and Heritage Services, County Borough Councillor A. Crimmings:</p> <p>“Whilst Aberdare has been fortunate to get funding from RCT for a BMX track and Gravity Family Bike Park would the Cabinet Member say what RCTCBC has done to date to provide similar facilities in Pontypridd please?”</p>
4	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor G. P. Thomas to the Chair of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, County Borough Councillor S. Rees-Owen:</p> <p>“Can the Chair of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee please make a statement on the priorities of the Committee?”</p>
5	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor D. Williams to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:</p> <p>“How is the Council supporting low-income households to meet the pressures of increasing household fuel costs during the winter?”</p>
6	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor H. Boggis to the Chair of the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee, County Borough Councillor M. Powell:</p> <p>“Can the Chair of the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee please make a statement on the priorities of the Committee?”</p>

7	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor A. S. Fox to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:</p> <p>“Can the Council Leader provide an update on what progress is being made on the backlog of repairs to bridges and other critical infrastructure?”</p>
8	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor A. Roberts to the Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities, Wellbeing and Cultural Services, County Borough Councillor R. R. Lewis:</p> <p>“Will the Cabinet Member please make a statement on the Council’s work with Voluntary and Third Sector organisations in Rhondda Cynon Taf?”</p>
9	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor Sheryl. Evans to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:</p> <p>“Can the Council Leader outline the priority areas when considering the draft budget for 2022/2023?”</p>
10	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor G. Stacey to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure and Heritage Services, County Borough Councillor A. Crimmings:</p> <p>“Can the Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure and Heritage Services please provide an update on the further works due to start in Ynysangharad Park?”</p>
11	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor L. M. Adams to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:</p> <p>“Will the Leader provide an update on how many families have received support through the £100 Winter Fuel Support Scheme in Rhondda Cynon Taf?”</p>
12	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor L Hooper to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:</p> <p>“Can the Cabinet Member please make a statement on the chronic congestion on the A4119 and the roundabout for Junction 34 of the M4?”</p>
13	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor S. Bradwick to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:</p> <p>“Can the Leader of the Council provide an update on the progress of flood alleviation scheme bids for the forthcoming year please?”</p>

14	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor S. M. Powell to the Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities, Wellbeing and Cultural Services, County Borough Councillor R. Lewis:</p> <p>“How is this Council progressing plans for the introduction of Electric Charge Points throughout Rhondda Cynon Taf?”</p>
15	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor W. Lewis to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:</p> <p>“With the change in working practices due to the pandemic what is the Council doing to support co-working spaces?”</p>
16	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor J. Barton to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:</p> <p>“What action can the Council take to improve road safety and reduce speeding traffic in local communities?”</p>
17	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor J. Elliott to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A Morgan:</p> <p>“Can the Council Leader please provide an update on the various flood schemes planned and ongoing across RCT, including for the Cwmbach ward?”</p>
18	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor S. Morgans to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure and Heritage Services, County Borough Councillor A. Crimmings:</p> <p>“Will the Cabinet Member make a statement on the Council’s investment in outdoor leisure facilities?”</p>
19	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor M. Griffiths to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:</p> <p>“Can the leader update on budget discussions with the Welsh Government in his role as WLGA Leader?”</p>
20	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor D. Owen-Jones to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:</p> <p>“What implications does the recent Welsh Government announcement to pause major roadbuilding schemes in Wales have for Rhondda Cynon Taf?”</p>

21	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor R. Williams to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:</p> <p>“Can the Council Leader provide an update on the implementation of the Real Living Wage to the social care sector in RCT?”</p>
22	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor S. Rees to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:</p> <p>“Will the Leader please make a statement on the Council’s budget planning ahead of the next financial year?”</p>
23	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor G. Holmes to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Services, County Borough Councillor G. Caple:</p> <p>“Could the Cabinet Member please make a statement on delayed discharges from hospital and outline what work the Council is undertaking to assist with this?”</p>
24	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor R. Yeo to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:</p> <p>“Can the Council Leader provide an update on Storm Dennis damage repairs and what further works are expected to be carried out this year?”</p>
25	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor S Trask to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure and Heritage Services, County Borough Councillor A. Crimmings:</p> <p>“Would the Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure and Heritage Services make a statement about the ongoing use of leisure facilities as coronavirus vaccination sites?”</p>

- 4.4 At the Council meeting a maximum of 20 minutes shall be allowed for Questions on Notice. Any questions that are not dealt with in this time limit shall fall. Any questions on notice not answered will need to be resubmitted to the Proper Officer for the next full Council meeting in accordance with these rules.

5. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 5.1 The amendments to the Council Procedure Rule in respect of Members Questions was considered and agreed at the Council’s AGM 2019 and AGM 2021, following consultation with the Constitution Committee.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The amendment to the Council procedure rule taken forward at the Council AGM, allows the opportunity for more Members to ask a question at Council

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 8.1 The report has been prepared in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9.2.

9. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES.

- 9.1 The opportunity for Members to propose questions at Council meetings allows Members to receive information which potentially detail the Council priorities. It also embraces the Future Generations Act as all work and decisions taken by Council seek to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of the County Borough.

10. CONCLUSION

- 10.1 Detailing the procedure for Members Questions on Notice assists in transparency for both Members and for public engagement.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee – Overview & Scrutiny Committee

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

9 FEBRUARY 2022

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES &
COMMUNICATION.**

Item: MEMBERS QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Background Papers

[Council AGM 2019.](#)

[Council AGM 2021](#)

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

9 FEBRUARY 2022

MEMBER'S MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

JOINT REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL SERVICES & THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & COMMUNICATION.

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Council with a draft Member's Memorandum of Understanding, developed by the Democratic Services Committee, for endorsement and adoption. The Memorandum seeks to support the ambitions of the Council to promote diversity in democracy, promote high standards of behaviour and mutual respect between Members.
- 1.2 In addition to being asked to consider endorsing and adopting the Memorandum, Members are also asked to consider adopting a Fair and Respectful Election Campaign Pledge.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that Members:
 - (i) Agree to adopt the draft 'Memorandum of Understanding' ('MOU'), developed by the Democratic Services Committee and attached at Appendix A, following commendation by the Council's Standards Committee in order to encourage further mutual respect and a show of working together by Members for the benefit of their communities; and
 - (ii) As part of adopting this MOU, Council is asked to commit to supporting a Fair & Respectful Election Campaign Pledge, and to delegate responsibility to the Democratic Services Committee to agree its content.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Democratic Services Committee have proactively been undertaking work to promote and encourage diversity in democracy through the Diversity in Democracy Working Group.

- 3.2 At the meeting of the Democratic Services Committee on the [10th May](#) Members received and supported the interim report of the Diversity in Democracy working group and its resulting recommendations.
- 3.3 Due to the importance of the work of the group and its links with the work of the WLGA in respect of the 'Council's Diversity Pledges', the interim report was presented to Council for further endorsement following the Council's AGM, to raise the profile of the work undertaken to-date and the future plans of the Democratic Services Committee to progress this important agenda.
- 3.4 Council endorsed the 16 recommendations outlined by the working group and also committed to becoming a Diverse Council.

4 MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

- 4.1 Within its interim report, the working group took forward a recommendation in respect of the creation of a 'Memorandum of Understanding'

"To consider introducing a 'statement of understanding' for Members outlining their duties as a Councillor including the need to have mutual respect within the Council Chamber."
- 4.2 The intended outcome of the statement would be a demonstration of mutual respect to other people with varying political opinions and a commitment for all Members to continue working together for the benefit of its communities.
- 4.3 A draft MOU was presented to the Democratic Services Committee on the 27th September 2021, to which Members agreed for its presentation to the Council's Standards Committee for further comment and feedback.
- 4.4 The Council's Standards Committee considered and supported the draft MOU at its November meeting and were supportive of the principles included and its intended benefits.
- 4.5 The Draft MOU is attached at Appendix A. The MOU would provide an opportunity for Members to publicly commit to using their term of office to work for the Council, the County Borough and its citizens, and to commit to the standards of conduct expected by the Council. It's considered its adoption would strengthen standards and ethical arrangements within the Council and would support and sit alongside the Council's Code of Conduct for Members, the Standards of Conduct Expected By Members Local Resolution Policy and Member-Officer Protocol.
- 4.6 It was originally proposed that this MOU would receive further consideration in early 2022 by the Democratic Services Committee. With the agreement of the Chair of that Committee, this item is being presented to Council at its February meeting, to facilitate, subject to support from full Council, its content playing an integral part of the Council's 'Become a Councillor' activities.

- 4.7 Consideration by Full Council at this point will also enable Members to consider supporting a pledge to conduct a Fair and Respectful Election Campaign in the 2022 local elections.

5. FAIR & RESPECTFUL ELECTION CAMPAIGN PLEDGE

- 5.1 At a meeting of the WLGA Executive Board, held on Friday 28th January, the 22 Welsh Council Leaders agreed to make a joint statement calling on all Councillors and candidates at May's local elections to commit to a fair and respectful election campaign. A copy of this statement is attached at Appendix B.
- 5.2 This statement of principle, supported by all political groups, seeks to build upon the positive work being undertaken under the umbrella of the 'diversity and democracy work' and would complement the principles outlined in the proposed MOU.
- 5.3 Members of this Council are asked to consider supporting such a statement, alongside the broader aspirations outlined within the MOU, which would seek to ensure, as far as is possible, all candidates participate in a fair election campaign, which is based upon a positive approach to campaigning, rather than personal attacks upon individuals.
- 5.4 Members are asked to delegate responsibility for confirming the contents of such a commitment, which best suit the circumstances and personal commitments of this Council's members, to the Democratic Services Committee. It is proposed, that should this recommendation be supported by Council, that an invitation would be extended to Group Leaders, or their nominated representatives, to attend and contribute to the next meeting of the Democratic Services Committee.
- 5.5 The pledge would then form part of material provided to successfully nominated candidates by the Council's Electoral Services department. The pledge would also be promoted by the Council, to demonstrate to residents the conduct they can expect during the 2022 election period.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 6.1 The work of the Democratic Services Committee Diversity working group looks to improve the equality and diversity across the County Borough and within the local democracy setting. The more representative of society and diverse our Councillors are the better understanding they will have of the needs of the local community and therefore are better equipped at carrying out their duties and responsibilities

7. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Encouraging diversity within democracy includes promotion of all languages. The Council has positively promoted and supported bilingual engagement at Council meetings and provision of Committee materials.

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Diversity in Democracy Working Group.
- 8.2 Democratic Services Committee – 27th September 2021
- 8.3 Standards Committee – 19th November 2021
- 8.4 Group Leader's Meetings with the Head of Democratic Services

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 9.1 None

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 outlines a number of duties placed on Local Authorities in respect of the diversity agenda.

11. LINKS TO CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.

- 11.1 The work of a Councillor is fundamental to the Council's Corporate plan, as Councillors are the mouthpiece for the communities that they serve.
- 11.2 Ensuring that there are greater opportunities for a more diverse democracy across RCT links to the Wellbeing of Future Generations goals of a more equal Wales and a Wales of cohesive communities

12. CONCLUSION

- 12.1 Trying to achieve a diverse culture is challenging and the Democratic Services Committee working group have, in a short period of time, already identified potential barriers that may dissuade members of the public to stand as a candidate for election.
- 12.2 As a Council we need to ensure that any perceived barriers are eradicated and instead celebrate and promote the rewarding experiences of becoming a Councillor.
- 12.3 Ensuring Members have a clear understanding of their roles and behaviour in and outside of the Council Chamber is paramount to ensuring a safe and inclusive working environment for all.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972
AS AMENDED BY
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985
RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
COUNCIL
9th FEBRUARY 2022
REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES &
COMMUNICATION

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Democratic Services Working Group – 27th September 2021
Standards Committee – 19th November 2021 – Report of the Service Director,
Democratic Services and Communication

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MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

This Memorandum of Understanding should be considered in conjunction with the Members' Code of Conduct and forms part of the ethical code which binds all Members of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council.

As an Elected Member of Rhondda Cynon Taf Council I agree to:

1. Represent the people of Rhondda Cynon Taf equally and without discrimination. I will show respect at all times and consideration for others and not use bullyingⁱ language or behaviour towards others.
2. Acknowledge all issues that are brought to my attention by residents of the County Borough and act appropriately and timely following receipt of such information, ensuring I act in the best interests of the residents and the Council as a whole.
3. Ensure that the Council's resources are used both lawfully and prudently, when discharging my duties and responsibilities.
4. Undertake my role in a professional manner whether in a physical or virtual setting when representing the Council and the residents that I serve.
5. Undertake my role and the duties aligned in a safe manner, ensuring the safety of myself, colleagues and residents whether through a physical or virtual setting.
6. Promote civility online through any digital engagement and social media platforms that I utilise, providing a clear statement of intent as to engagement through a civil and open manner.
7. Abide by the Council's Constitution, Rules of Procedure and Council policies and procedures as advised upon during my term of office.
8. Have regard to the contributions made by colleagues, officers and public speakers during Council meetings, demonstrating mutual respect regardless of political opinions and positively demonstrating a show of working together for the benefit of the communities within the County Borough.
9. Safeguard and promote the life chances of children looked after by the Council and diligently discharge my responsibilities as Corporate parent of those children, Safeguarding both Vulnerable Children and Adults.
10. Act according to the highest standards of probity in carrying out my various duties as a Councillor
11. Adhere to and respect the Members' Code of Conduct and have proper regard to the advice and guidance issued by the Council's Standards Committee, including adherence to the provisions of any Local Resolution Protocol proposed by the Council's Standards Committee.

12. Support and promote the conduct of the Council's business being carried out in an open and transparent manner and ensure that information provided to me in a confidential setting is not disclosed and made available in the public domain.
13. Promote and support these commitments by leadership and by example and act in a way that secures or preserves public confidence
14. Proactively take forward the training opportunities provided to me, including all training which has been identified as mandatory in the Member Development Programme, or equivalent, to equip me to carry out my duties as a Councillor.

ⁱ Bullying can be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious, insulting or humiliating behaviour. Such behaviour may happen once or be part of a pattern of behaviour. Bullying behaviour attempts to undermine an individual or a group of individuals, is detrimental to their confidence and capability, and may adversely affect their health. This can be contrasted with the legitimate challenges which a member can make in questioning policy or scrutinising performance.



Joint statement by the 22 council leaders in Wales:

Fair and respectful election campaign

At Friday's WLGA Executive Board, council leaders agreed to make a joint statement calling on all councillors and candidates at May's local elections to commit to a fair and respectful election campaign:

We are all too familiar with the abuse we see in our inboxes, on our social media feeds or see and hear on our streets or, worse, at our homes.

Politics should focus on facts and respectful debate about differences of policy or priorities, not insults or intolerance, misinformation or misogyny, discrimination or division.

We are committed to attracting more diverse people to consider standing for election. We need to reassure and support those candidates who are newer to democratic life, those who are conscious they are in the minority or have already experienced discrimination.

The council elections are about people who just want to contribute and who want to make a positive difference to our communities.

Unfortunately, we are seeing an increasing number of councillors and candidates being subjected to abuse, threats and intimidation.

As well as being totally unacceptable, this behaviour undermines the principles of free speech, democratic engagement and debate.

We therefore endeavour to treat everyone with courtesy, kindness and respect and, as leaders, we stand together to call for an end to abuse, intimidation and harassment of any kind. This is particularly relevant as we enter the key period in the run up to the local government elections in May.

We pledge to participate in a fair election campaign which is based on positive campaigning and merit, rather than personal attacks and smears against individuals.

We encourage all elected members and candidates in the forthcoming election to do the same. In addition, we will publicly 'call out' any such inappropriate behaviour and take a zero-tolerance approach to abuse.

We all have the right to carry out our civic duties without fear of being attacked or abused.

Any inappropriate behaviour, whether that be verbal, physical or in writing on social media, is totally unacceptable and action will be taken if deemed necessary.

Please be kind and fair in all that you say and do.

Website: www.wlga.gov.uk

Twitter: @WelshLGA

If you require more information, please contact:

Glesni Haf Parry, Communications Officer (Media and Social Media), Welsh Local Government Association:

glesni.hafparry@wlga.gov.uk

07570370455.



Datganiad ar y cyd gan y 22 o arweinwyr cyngor yng Nghymru:

Ymgyrch etholiadol teg a pharchus

Yng nghyfarfod Bwrdd Gweithredol CLILC ddydd Gwener, fe gytunodd arweinwyr y cyngorau i wneud datganiad ar y cyd yn galw ar gynghorwyr a'r holl ymgeiswyr yn etholiadau lleol mis Mai i ymrwmo i ymgyrch etholiadol teg a pharchus:

Rydym i gyd yn rhy gyfarwydd â'r gamdriniaeth yr ydym yn ei gweld yn ein mewnflychau e-bost, ar ein negeseuon ar y cyfryngau cymdeithasol neu'n ei gweld neu'n ei chlywed ar ein strydoedd, neu'n waeth na hynny, yn ein cartrefi.

Fe ddylai gwleidyddiaeth ganolbwyntio ar ffeithiau a thrafodaeth barchus am wahaniaethau o ran polisi neu flaenoriaethau, nid sarhad neu anoddefgarwch, camwybodaeth neu gasineb at fenywod, gwahaniaethu neu rwyg.

Rydym wedi ymrwmo i ddenu mwy o bobl amrywiol i ystyried sefyll ar gyfer etholiad, mae angen i ni roi tawelwch meddwl a chefnogi'r ymgeiswyr hynny sy'n newydd i fywyd democrataidd, y rhai hynny sy'n ymwybodol eu bod yn y lleiafrif neu sydd eisoes wedi profi gwahaniaethu.

Mae etholiadau'r cyngor yn ymwneud â phobl sydd eisiau cyfrannu a sydd eisiau gwneud gwahaniaeth cadarnhaol i'n cymunedau.

Gwaetha'r modd, rydym ni'n gweld nifer gynyddol o gynghorwyr ac ymgeiswyr yn cael eu cam-drin, eu bygwth a'u dychryn.

Yn ogystal â bod yn gwbl annerbyniol, mae'r ymddygiad hwn yn tanseilio egwyddorion rhyddid barn, ymgysylltu democrataidd a thrafod.

Rydym ni'n ymdrechu i drin pawb â chwarteisi, caredigrwydd a pharch ac, fel arweinwyr, rydym ni'n sefyll gyda'n gilydd i alw am roi diwedd ar gam-drin, brawychu ac aflonyddu o unrhyw fath. Mae hyn yn arbennig o berthnasol wrth i ni gychwyn ar y cyfnod allweddol cyn yr etholiadau llywodraeth leol ym mis Mai.

Rydym ni'n addo cymryd rhan mewn ymgyrch etholiadol deg sy'n seiliedig ar ymgyrchu cadarnhaol a theilyngdod, yn hytrach nag ymosodiadau personol a difenwol yn erbyn unigolion.

Rydym ni'n annog pob aelod etholedig a phob ymgeisydd yn yr etholiad sydd ar y gweill i wneud yr un peth. Yn ogystal, fe fyddwn ni'n amlygu'n gyhoeddus unrhyw ymddygiad amhriodol o'r fath ac ni fydd unrhyw oddefgarwch o ran cam-drin.

Mae gan bob un ohonom ni'r hawl i gyflawni ein dyletswyddau dinesig heb ofni ymosodiad neu gamdriniaeth.

Mae unrhyw ymddygiad amhriodol – naill ai ar lafar, yn gorfforol neu'n ysgrifenedig ar y cyfryngau cymdeithasol – yn gwbl annerbyniol, a bydd camau'n cael eu cymryd os bydd angen.

Byddwch yn garedig ac yn deg ym mhopeth rydych chi'n ei ddweud ac yn ei wneud.

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