



## **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CABINET**

Minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Cabinet held on Tuesday, 20 July 2021 at 11.00 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 R Lewis    Councillor C Leyshon  
Councillor G Hopkins

### **Officers in attendance**

Mr P Mee, Group Director Community & Children's Services  
Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication  
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 C Jones, Head of Access & Inclusion  
Ms A Richards, Temporary Service Director - 21st Century Schools and Transformation  
Ms N Goodman - Senior 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Officer

## **21 Declaration of Interest**

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

- County Borough Councillor R Bevan declared a personal interest and remained in the meeting when the item was discussed and voted upon: Item – SACRE “My granddaughter attends a Church in Wales school. Although this is outside of the County Borough she does reside within”
- County Borough Councillor R Lewis declared a personal interest and remained in the meeting when the item was discussed and voted upon: Item – Draft WESP – “I am on the governing body of a school referenced within the report”
- County Borough Councillor M Webber declared a personal interest and remained in the meeting when the item was discussed and voted upon: Item – Corporate Asset Management Plan - “I am on the governing body of a school referenced within the report”

## **22 Minutes**

The Cabinet **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the 17<sup>TH</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> June as

an accurate reflection of the meeting.

**23 APOLOGY**

An apology for absence was received from County Borough Councillor J Rosser.

**24 CWM TAF MORGANNWG SAFEGUARDING BOARD ANNUAL PLAN 2021/2022**

The Group Director, Community & Children's Services presented the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board Annual plan to the Cabinet, reminding Members of the statutory responsibility by the Board to publish an Annual Plan each year, which sets out its priorities for the coming year.

Members were advised that the Board had acknowledged the difficulties and challenges partner agencies had faced over the past year, with the Group Director advising that this year's Annual Plan recognised those challenges and aimed to learn the lessons from a year of unprecedented demands on services.

Members were provided with an overview of the plan and advised that a detailed work plan for the Board and its subgroups would sit underneath the Annual Plan. The work plan would include the actions required to achieve the improvements required, who is responsible, timescales and measures of success. The progress of the work plan would be monitored and reviewed on a quarterly basis and would form the basis of the Annual Report for 2021/2022.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Community Services & Welsh Language thanked the Board for the plan before Members and the work undertaken during the pandemic. The Cabinet Member commented that he was confident of the Board continuing to deliver on behalf of the residents of Cwm Taf Morgannwg in accordance with the new plan, which he noted was ambitious yet realistic.

The cabinet Member for Children & Young People reiterated her thanks and referenced the achievable outcomes within the plan and the effective partnership arrangements in place to help deliver the plan going forward.

Following discussion's it was **RESOLVED** to:

1. To note and endorse the content of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board Annual Plan for 2021/22.

**25 CWM TAF MORGANWG CARERS ANNUAL REPORT 2020/2021**

The Group Director, Community & Children's Services presented the annual report before Members which sought Member's approval for submission of the report to Welsh Government.

The Group Director advised that Welsh Government provided transitional funding of £1million per annum for Wales in 2020/21 (£161,000 for Cwm Taf Morgannwg) to protect and build on progress to date and to support the expansion of Carers rights under the implementation of the SSWB Act. The annual report before Members detailed how the transitional funding was spent in Cwm Taf Morgannwg during the year. Members were provided with the key areas of work across the region which included:

- Around £135,500 of the Carers Grant funding was allocated to third sector organisations through an application process.
- Support to encourage GP surgeries to take part in accredited Carer Awareness training to become Carer Champions.
- Improvements to the hospital discharge process for unpaid carers.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Community Services & Welsh Language spoke of the opportunity before them to acknowledge the work taken forward with carers and vulnerable people across the County Borough, through the publication of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Carers Annual Report.

The Cabinet Member welcomed the funding allocated to the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector and spoke of the positive work taken forward by the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector and took the opportunity to put on record his thanks for their continuing support. Reference was made to the Support to encourage GP surgeries to take part in accredited Carer Awareness training to become Carer Champions. The Cabinet Member welcomed the Improvements to the hospital discharge process for unpaid carers.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services welcomed the report before Members and spoke positively of the Young Carer Card scheme which was launched in RCT in March 2021, which offers young carers an easy way to start a conversation about their role and also provided the added benefit of discounts attached in local shops for those with the card.

Following discussions, it was **RESOLVED**:

1. To approve the 2020/21 Cwm Taf Morgannwg Carers Annual Report attached as Appendix 1 to the report.
2. To note the publication by Welsh Government of a Strategy for Unpaid Carers in March 2021 and acknowledges this as a key document in planning and delivering carer services across the Council.

## **26 LEARNING DISABILITY DAY SERVICE OFFER**

The Group Director, Community & Children's Services presented Members with the report which provided key information and issues relating to the Council's current day service offer for people with a learning disability.

The Group Director explained that the current day service offer was predominantly building based and followed a traditional “day centre” maintenance model that provided services for adults with a learning disability with limited scope to offer choice and control and raise aspiration for people - a more innovative and diverse response is required. At present Covid-19 has impacted on the ability of day services to operate some of the existing building based day services due to the requirements for social distancing and it was added that this could have longer term implications. The Group Director commented that it was important that Adult Services take on board any learning and good practice from during the pandemic to help shape the future day services offer.

The report before Members looked to recommend that with Cabinets agreement the Council continue ongoing engagement with people with a learning disability, their families and carers, staff and partners and co-produce a new day opportunities strategy to transform the Council’s current day services offer for people with a learning disability and ensure that services, both in the short and long term, are arranged and delivered in a way that achieves the best possible individual outcomes for people and make the best use of Council resources. The Group Director discussed the production of a draft day opportunities strategy for approval prior to formal public consultation, if Members were in agreement.

Members were advised that the Council were currently unable to provide a day service at Treforest Day Centre due to the serious flooding and damage in February 2020 and that this service remained temporarily closed, which would allow for further evaluation to be undertaken when the proposed draft day opportunities strategy is reported back to Cabinet for approval

The Cabinet Member for Adult Community Services & Welsh Language spoke of the common theme running across the transformation agenda and the recognition of the need to improve the offer the Council provide to adult population, in particular older and vulnerable people, including those with learning disability. The Cabinet Member added that it was widely acknowledged that the current provision was limited and agreed that it was the right time to review and improve the service provided. The Cabinet Member welcomed open discussions with user groups, clients and wider population, to improve the opportunities available.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. To consider the information provided in this report, including the summary of key observations and feedback from the engagement undertaken as part of the implementation of the new Learning Disability Transformation Programme.
2. To approve the on-going engagement with people with a learning disability, their families and carers, staff and partners and the proposals to co-produce a new day opportunities strategy to transform the Council’s current day services offer and future service provision in Rhondda Cynon Taf as set out in Section 9 of the report.

3. To receive a further report that presents the co-produced draft day opportunities strategy for people with a learning disability for approval prior to formal public consultation.
4. To approve to the Treforest Day Centre remaining temporarily closed and for arrangements to continue to be made to support people registered at Treforest Day Centre and their families and carers to meet their assessed need as set out in paragraph 7.21 of the report.

## **27 DRAFT WELSH IN EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN**

The Temporary Service Director of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and Transformation provided Members with the draft Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP), as required by Section 84 of The School Standards and Organisation Act 2013. Members were advised that since the first WESP was submitted to the Welsh Government in 2016 by the Council, there had been significant changes in the Welsh medium education sector at local and national levels. These changes had been mainly influenced by Welsh Government legislation, in particular the new Welsh in Education Action Plan and further implementation of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and Colleges Programme. The two new focuses for the WESP needed to be extending the duration of the WESP from its current three year implementation cycle to a ten year implementation cycle; and the removal of the current duty on Local Authorities to plan their provision of Welsh medium education based on demand, with the requirement that Local Authorities achieve targets set by the Welsh Government which aim to increase the percentage of year one learners in Welsh medium education over the duration of the WESP.

The Officer continued by providing Members with an overview of the draft WESP highlighting the target set to increase the percentage of year one learners in Welsh medium education, and the seven outcomes or areas setting out how Local Authorities are expected to improve Welsh medium and Welsh language education in their locality.

The Temporary Service Director spoke of the partnership engagement needed to be taken forward to assist in achieving the desired outcomes and the need for a public consultation to be undertaken.

The Leader thanked Members of the Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group for their prior consideration to the draft WESP and noted the comments arising out of the meeting which had been circulated to Members in advance.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Community Services and Welsh Language welcomed the move to a 10year strategy and spoke positively of the engagement with partners to draft the strategic plan, which had produced a balanced and realistic plan to take forward. Further consultation on the draft plan was important to further strengthen the ambitions of the Council in delivering the welsh government targets.

The Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities, Well-being and Cultural Services commented on the ambitious strategy before Members and commented on the investment already made by the Authority through welsh medium education settings, which was reflected in the plan.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. To note the contents of this report and the draft WESP attached in appendix 1 to the report.
2. To Consider the draft WESP.
3. To agree for officers to engage and consult with a wide range of stakeholders on the draft WESP.
4. To agree to review the results of the consultation on the draft WESP at a future meeting of the Cabinet

(**N.B.** For transparency, the comments and feedback of the Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group were attached to the decision notice for this item)

## **28 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES PROGRAMME - MUTUAL INVESTMENT MODEL (MIM) - UPDATE**

The Senior 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Officer provided Members with an overview of the report which provided an update on the Mutual Investment Model (MIM) funding element of Welsh Government's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and Colleges Programme in relation to the Council's MIM Pathfinder Project.

Members were advised of the need to progress the MIM pathfinder projects to the next stage in accordance with the Approval Process for New Projects as set out in Schedule 5 of the Strategic Partnering Agreement for the delivery of new school buildings and to keep on track with the timescales outlined in the indicative programme.

The Leader of the Council referenced the comments of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee following their pre-scrutiny of the report and thanked Members for their comments which had been shared with Cabinet Members in advance of the meeting.

The Leader referenced the three new schools referenced in the report to be taken forward which were within identified areas of growth. The Leader commented that RCT were only one of two Local Authorities taking forward the MIM investment model and welcomed the investment being taken forward.

Following discussions, it was **RESOLVED**:

- I. To note the information contained within the report.
- II. To note the costs incurred to date and indicative costs going forward.
- III. To approve the submission of an Outline Business Case to Welsh Government for consideration in July / August 2021.
- IV. To approve progression to Stage 2 of the MIM process with Welsh Government and the private sector partner.

- V. To note that formal approval to proceed to deliver the Pathfinder Project, and to enter into associated legal documentation to facilitate the same including a Project Agreement, would require further approval of the Cabinet.

(**N.B.** For transparency, the comments and feedback of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee were attached to the decision notice for this item)

**29 PROPOSALS TO ESTABLISH PRIMARY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR THE LLANILID HOUSING DEVELOPMENT**

The Temporary Service Director of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and Transformation provided an update to Members on the proposal to establish new primary education provision to serve the new housing development at Llanilid, Llanharan. Members were advised that this would be achieved, in the first instance, by treating the new building that will be provided by the housing developers as an extension to the dual-language provision at the existing Dolau Primary School.

Members were advised of the number of planning constraints the housing developers taking forward the build of the school had encountered and for this purpose it was suggested that as a result of this delay, and to mitigate any additional risks that may arise with this project, a delay to the implementation date by three years, the maximum delay allowed within the School organisation Code, which will postpone the implementation date of the proposal until September 2024 be considered.

The Leader of the school supported the proposal and the new timeframe to be taken forward.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Community Services and Welsh Language spoke on the item, as a local member and welcomed the extension.

It was **RESOLVED:**

- I. To note the information contained within the Report.
- II. To agree to delay the implementation date of the proposal to September 2024.

**30 A PROPOSAL TO PILOT A VIRTUAL SCHOOL MODEL TO IMPROVE THE EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES OF CHILDREN WHO ARE LOOKED AFTER**

The Head of Inclusion Services informed Members of the opportunity to consider a joint pilot strategy between Education and Inclusion Services and Children's Services to improve the educational outcomes of children who are looked after (CLA) by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC) through the creation of a Virtual School Model (VSM).

Members were advised that the proposal to pilot an integrated model of support would promote the educational achievement of CLA who attend both in county and out of county educational settings. It was also explained that the proposal would promote opportunities to develop more inclusive practices within schools

and to support the implementation of wider educational reforms to meet the needs of learners who are CLA.

The Cabinet Member for Children Services welcomed the pilot and referenced the need to improve the educational outcomes of children who are looked after and the role of each Member as a corporate parent. The Cabinet Member welcomed the evaluation following the pilot.

It was **RESOLVED**:

- i. To note the content of this report.
- ii. To proceed with the proposal to provide funding to pilot a Virtual School Model to improve the educational outcomes for children who are looked after (CLA) by RCTCBC.
- iii. To receive a further report presenting an evaluation of the Virtual School Model pilot to inform future actions.

### **31 STANDARD ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)**

The Temporary Service Director for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and Transformation presented the report to Members which provided information on the Council's statutory duties to establish a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE).

The Officer advised that the main function of SACRE was 'to advise the authority upon such matters connected with religious worship in county schools and the religious education to be given in accordance with an agreed syllabus as the authority may refer to the Council or as the Council may see fit'.

Members were informed that changes in the way support for schools is organised and delivered had resulted in changes in the provision of traditional subject led advisory service to a more school-to-school self-supporting system. Such changes in working practices had required SACRE to fulfil its role and functions with schools using a consultative model.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Community Services and Welsh Language thanked Members of SACRE for work over the last year.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the content of the Annual Report 2019-2020.

### **32 COUNCIL PERFORMANCE REPORT – 31st March 2021 (Quarter 4/Year End)**

The Director of Finance and Digital Services provided Members with an overview of the Council's performance, both from a financial and operational perspective, for the financial year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

Members were provided with details in respect of an executive summary, revenue monitoring, capital monitoring, organisational health, corporate priorities and enhancing the Councils response to extreme weather conditions.



The Director advised that good progress had been made overall across the Council's three Corporate Plan priorities of People, Places and Prosperity, where focus was afforded on providing essential support to residents and businesses to help counter the significant impact of Covid-19 alongside the continued delivery of strategic projects.

The second progress update on the delivery of recommendations to enhance the Council's response to extreme weather events showed a positive position, with key actions being taken forward that provided a clear direction for the future.

In respect of the year-end revenue budget position, it was advised that this currently stood as a £0.204M overspend and represents an improved position to that reported for quarters 1 to 3 of 2020/21. The Director added that this position is set in the unprecedented context of Covid-19 and takes account of additional one-off Welsh Government funding claimed during the year, and also reflects the continuation of key budget pressures particularly across Adult Services and Children's Services. Members were reminded that it would be critically important that additional Welsh Government funding to address 'core' cost pressures remains in place for 2021/22 and beyond, for example, across social care services, together with additional Covid-19 funding to fund additional expenditure and income losses as a direct result of the pandemic.

The Director concluded by advising that capital investment was at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 £102M, supporting visible improvements to infrastructure and assets, taking account of Covid-19 restrictions and safety requirements.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Estates spoke of the positive report before Members and referenced the areas within the report, including the reduction in overspend from previous quarters and the further £102m in capital spend which was a boost to the local economy. The Cabinet Member concluded by referencing the Welsh Government already provided to the Authority through the pandemic and the need for this to continue to help sustain services.

The Leader spoke of the difficult year endured with both the flooding and the covid pandemic and spoke of the year round efforts taken forward by Officers and Cabinet Members to deliver a balanced budget. The Leader took the opportunity to comment on the Welsh Government support received and requested that this detail be made publicly available, as outlined below.

<b>Grant Scheme</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>Accounting treatment</b>
Additional Expenditure and Loss of Income (Hardship Fund)	48.9 67	Principal
Furlough Scheme	2.02 6	Principal
Social Care Bonus Scheme £500	2.80 7	Agent

Statutory Sick Pay Enhancement	0.16 7	Agent
Care Home Testing	0.10 0	Principal
Self Isolation Payments	0.51 0	Agent
NDR Rate Relief (Retail, Leisure & Hospitality)	15.9 20	Agent
Business Grants to Support Business	73.2 89	Agent
Test Trace Protect (TTP)	4.30 0	Principal
Start Up Grants	0.13 3	Agent

The Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Development and Planning acknowledged the efforts by officers to balance the budget and spoke of the projects taken forward within town centre and other areas of growth for the local economy. The Cabinet Member also referenced the tourism development across the county borough.

Following discussions, it was **RESOLVED**:

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

**Revenue**

- II. To Note and agree the General Fund revenue outturn position of the Council as at the 31st March 2021 (Section 2 of the Executive Summary) including the additional one-off Welsh Government Covid-19 funding accounted for during the year to support service delivery

**Capital**

- III. To note the capital outturn position of the Council as at the 31st March 2021 (Sections 3a – e of the Executive Summary).
- IV. To note the details of the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators as at the 31st March 2021 (Section 3f of the Executive Summary).

**Corporate Plan Priorities**

- V. To note the year end position regarding progress made against agreed corporate priorities (section 5a -c of the Executive Summary)
- VI. To note the progress update to enhance the Council's short term and long term response to extreme weather events (section 6 of the Executive summary)

**33 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLANNING UPDATE**

The Director of Finance and Digital Services provided Cabinet Members with an update on the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2021/22 to 2024/25,

based on current modelling assumptions in advance of formulating the detailed budget strategy proposals for 2022/23 during the autumn.

Members were advised that the report and the accompanying 'Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 to 2024/25' sets out the current position on the financial challenges facing the Council in the medium term. The report notes, that subject to the level of funding from Welsh Government, a significant budget gap is likely to be faced in 2022/23 and for the following two years.

The Director added that the proactive strategy adopted in recent years through early identification of savings and the targeting of key areas such as new ways of working and an increased emphasis on preventative approaches could still deliver significant efficiency savings.

It was noted that the focus would switch to the 2022/23 budget strategy upon receipt of the Provisional Local Government Settlement and, as part of this, setting out a range of budget saving options to enable the Council to deliver a balanced budget for the forthcoming year.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services commented on the balancing act needed to be taken forward and the Welsh Government Settlement, to assist in establishing a balanced budget. The Cabinet Member spoke of the potential funding gap which could range between 2-4%.

The Leader of the Council referenced the RSG and the implications with budget gap, pay pressure and inflation. The Leader spoke of how recovery from the pandemic might look and the impact that this might have on the budget going forward and also referenced the lobbying taken forward by WLGA to UK Government.

Other Members referenced the difficult decisions needed to be taken over previous years with austerity measures and thanked officers for the work taken forward with budget setting and the investment in core priorities.

Following discussions it was **RESOLVED**

- i. To note the current position modelled in respect of the 'Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 to 2024/25' and receive further updates in the autumn as part of the annual budget setting process; and
- ii. To note that the MTFP will be presented to Council in September and will be reviewed by the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee in line with their terms of reference alongside our budget consultation arrangements.

## **34 EXEMPTION OF THE PUBLIC**

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 12 of Part 4 of the Schedule 12A of the Act".

**35 CORPORATE ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2018/23: INTERIM UPDATE**

The Director of Corporate Estates provided Members with an overview of the exempt report before them which detailed progress against the key themes of the Corporate Asset Management Plan 2018/23.

Members put on record their thanks to the Service area for the work carried out during the pandemic to ensure the safety of staff and public.

Following discussions it was **RESOLVED** to note the content of the report

**This meeting closed at 12.01 pm**

**Cllr A Morgan  
Chairman.**