



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CABINET

Minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Cabinet held on Monday, 4 October 2021 at 11.00 am

Details of the webcast for this meeting can be found [here](#)

County Borough Councillors - Cabinet Members in attendance:-

Councillor A Morgan (Chair)

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

Others in attendance

Councillor G Caple
Councillor P Jarman

Officers in attendance

Mr C Bradshaw, Chief Executive
Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Mr P Mee, Group Director Community & Children's Services
Mr R Evans, Director of Human Resources
Mr D Powell, Director of Corporate Estates
Mr S Gale, Director of Prosperity & Development
Mr A Wilkins, Director of Legal Services
Mr B Davies, Director of Finance & Digital Services
Ms L Davies, Director, Public Health, Protection and Community Services
Ms G Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services

55 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

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

56 21ST CENTURY SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME - BAND B UPDATE

The Director of Education & Inclusion Services provided Members with an update on the Council's revised 21st Century Schools Strategic Outline Programme (SOP), recently approved in principle by the Welsh Government.

Members were provided with an overview of the projects taken forward which included

- Completion of Hirwaun Primary
- Progression of works at YGG Aberdar on site and progressing well;

- Progression of works at YG Rhydywaun on site and progressing well;
- Planning consultation has commenced for a new Welsh medium school in Rhydyfelin;
- Detailed design is nearing completion for 3 new primary schools funded through MIM, these are Pontyclun Primary, Penygawsi Primary and Llanilltud Faerdref Primary;
- The creation of 2 all-through schools is progressing in Pontypridd and Hawthorn; and
- The new 6th form teaching block and significant improvements to Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School are at the design stage

The Director advised that the significant increase in 21st Century Schools and Colleges funding for Rhondda Cynon Taf provided an exciting opportunity for more learners and the communities to benefit from improved educational and community facilities. Members were advised that the programme allowed more learners to be taught through the medium of Welsh and supports the access of more vulnerable learners to 21st Century Schools' facilities.

It was advised that the Programme would deliver exciting opportunities for the community focussed schools' agenda, putting schools at the heart of the community and would allow the Council to continue to deliver its ambitious goal to make every school a great school.

The Cabinet Member for Education & Inclusion Services spoke of the exciting proposal with the investment commenting that the original SOP totalled £167 million of investment and the new Programme totalling £252 million, which was a substantial increase that enabled a further £85 million to be invested in the schools of Rhondda Cynon Taf.

The Cabinet Member stressed that the programme created additional capital and investment and did not create closure of facilities.

The Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Development and Housing welcomed the news and spoke of the desperate need for improvements faced by some school buildings citing Penrhys school and questioned the Director in respect of timescales to which the Director responded, advising of the 5 year programme.

At this juncture in the meeting and with the permission of the Leader, County Borough Councillor G Caple spoke on this item.

The Deputy Leader commented that it was pleasing to see the future investment being proposed which would allow the young people of the Authority to receive the best facilities available that they deserved.

The Leader commented that this was the biggest investment in schools to be taken forward and welcomed the investment across the County Borough.

Following discussions, it was **RESOLVED**:

1. To note that the investment in the approved Strategic Outline Programme has increased significantly from £167 million to £252 million, an increase of £85 million.

2. To receive further reports on projects as they develop and progress through the Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools and Colleges approval processes.

57 REVIEW OF SPECIAL SCHOOL PROVISION IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Director of Education and Inclusion Services provided Members with updated information following the [report](#) presented to Cabinet in February 2021 where Cabinet agreed to additional scoping work being undertaken including feasibility studies, where appropriate, to inform potential proposals for change in the Council's special school provision.

Members were advised that given the considerable changes planned in Wales in relation to the statutory provision required to meet the needs of learners with the implementation of new legislation, building a new special school, and creating further capacity in the Authority's current provision, would ensure that the Council successfully delivers on its statutory obligations.

The Cabinet Member for Education & Inclusion Services welcomed the report and the opportunities within which would address the demand within the Council's special school and accommodate the growth in learners. The Cabinet Member referenced the pressures facing special schools and commented that the proposal would increase the number of special schools from four to five which would meet the needs of learners.

At this juncture of the meeting and with permission of the Leader, County Borough Councillor P Jarman spoke on this item.

The Deputy Leader commented on the pressures within special schools and need to increase additional capital, commenting that the proposal within the report would alleviate such pressures.

Following discussions, it was **RESOLVED**:

1. To note the content of the report.
2. To acknowledge the pressures on the Council's special schools and the need for significant investment to increase capacity and manage increased demand.
3. To note that investment has been included within the Council's revised 21st Century Schools Strategic Outline Programme to invest in a new special school within the County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT).
4. To receive further reports as the proposal develops and progresses in accordance with the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code, and Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools and Colleges statutory approval processes.

UPDATE ON WELSH GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS TO ESTABLISH CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEES AND THE CHANGES TO THE CARDIFF CAPITAL REGION JOINT COMMITTEE

The Chief Executive provided Members with an overview of his report which provided an update in respect of Corporate Joint Committees (CJC's).

Members were reminded that the formation of CJC's was provided for in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act adding that over time, CJC's would alter the landscape and governance of some strategic economic well-being, strategic planning and transportation functions currently undertaken by the constituent councils making up the CJC across the South East Wales Region or Welsh Government or another Welsh Government sponsored public body. It was advised that Welsh Government hope that they act as the catalyst to the development and implementation of collaborative arrangements across local government, where regional planning and delivery makes sense, using them as a means of maximising outcomes for the people of Wales by maintaining local democratic accountability, reducing complexity and making the best use of resources.

The Chief Executive continued by advising that in South East Wales, the Cardiff Capital Region Joint Committee Cabinet had sought to be proactive and agreed to transfer the functions under the City Deal agreement, previously approved by UK Government, Welsh Government and the ten councils in March 2016, to the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee on 28th February 2022, the date when the economic well-being, strategic planning and transportation functions come into being for the new CJC.

The Leader thanked the Chief Executive for the update and advised that updates in respect of CJC's would be taken forward to Council in addition to Cabinet. The Leader spoke positively of the benefits of joint working, especially through the City Deal arrangements and referenced the many positive projects delivered through such working.

At this juncture in the meeting and with the permission of the Leader, County Borough Councillor P Jarman addressed the Cabinet on this item. In response to some of Councillor Jarman's comments in respect of City Deal the Chief Executive advised that the benefits of the arrangements were significantly over and above what could have been delivered without such working arrangements, referencing projects such as zipworld.

The Leader echoed these comments in respect of collaborative working and provided reassurance that the formation of CJC's would be taken forward only if it worked for the Authority.

Following discussions, it was **RESOLVED**:

1. To note the new regulations that have established the South East Wales CJC and the future development of the following functions across the region from 1 March 2022; (1) economic well-being, (2) strategic development planning, and (3) developing transport policies;
2. To note the decision of the Cardiff Capital Region Joint Committee

on 20th December 2021 to transfer its existing functions, that are principally in respect of the City Deal agreement as committed to by the ten South East Wales councils in March 2016, to the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee on 28th February 2022. The transfer of the City Deal from the existing Joint Committee to the new Corporate Joint Committee, enables the smooth transition of the City Deal functions, which include existing regional economic well-being and transportation functions.

3. That additional updates are provided to Cabinet and Full Council, where appropriate as further detail is provided by Welsh Government into the powers and responsibilities of the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee and the potential devolution of powers and functions from Welsh Government to the Corporate Joint Committee

59 CWM TAF MORGANNWG SAFEGUARDING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2020/2021

The Group Director, Community & Children's Services provided Cabinet with the Annual Report of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board, which demonstrated its effectiveness in exercising its functions in the preceding financial year.

Members were provided with a summary of the key achievements of the Board and the focus on critical activity only in the past year, due to the pandemic.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Services and Welsh Language thanked the Board for the work undertaken and spoke of the huge challenges that fell under the safeguarding banner. The Cabinet Member referenced the new delivery models taken forward including new technology platforms and assessing risks with partners.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services thanked the staff involved for their hard work.

Following discussions, it was **RESOLVED** to:

1. Note and endorses the content of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board Annual Report for 2020/2021.

60 REPRESENTATIONS, COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES ANNUAL REPORT

The Group Director, Community & Children's Services provided Cabinet with an overview of the operation and effectiveness of the Council's statutory Social Services complaints procedure between 1st April 2020 and 31st March 2021, which contained information on the background of the Social Services statutory complaints procedure, information on lessons learnt from complaints and performance data for Adults & Children's Social Services, together with achievements for 2020/21 and future developments.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Services and Welsh Language thanked the Customer Feedback, Engagement and Complaints Manager for the hard work constantly undertaken in dealing with all representations received. The Cabinet Member referenced the clear evidence of the robust procedures in place and was pleased to note the substantial decrease in complaints received, following a demanding year.

The Leader echoed the comments of the Cabinet Member and spoke of how the Council used the representations received to further improve on the services and provision provided.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services spoke on the professional manner that the service dealt with the representation received.

Following discussions, it was **RESOLVED** to:

1. Agree the contents of the Social Services Annual Complaints report (attached as Appendix 1).
2. Note the work undertaken by the Social Services Complaints Team

61 FRONTLINE SERVICES; HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORTATION AND STRATEGIC PROJECTS SUPPLEMENTARY CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2021/22

The Director, Frontline Services referred Members to his report which set out the detailed capital programme for the additional funding allocated to maintaining the Council's highways and transportation network, further to the 21st September 2021 Cabinet approval of an additional £1.5M of capital funding for highway maintenance in 2021/22, and subject to positive consideration by Council on 29th September.

Members were provided with details of the highways improvements identified including carriage ways and footways improvements and Members were referred to appendix 1 of the report which further detailed the investment to be made. The Director added that the Council was one of the few Councils that had continued to make meaningful and significant investments in its highway network.

The Leader welcomed the report before Members and referenced the improvements already taken forward by the Council with £1.304M proposed schemes to be added to carriage ways, which would be further supplemented by £0.100M to carry out drainage improvements throughout the period. The Leader also referenced the £0.096M proposed schemes in respect of footways.

At this juncture in the meeting and with the permission of the Leader, County Borough Councillor P Jarman addressed the committee on this item.

The Deputy Leader commented on the challenges faced by all Local Authorities and referenced the investment that the Council had continued to take forward and complimented the service for the work delivered and continued to deliver.

Following discussions, it was **RESOLVED** to:

1. Note and approve the Supplementary Capital Programme for Highways, Transportation and Strategic Projects as detailed within this report.

2. Note that the current allocations are part of a 3-year capital programme and delegate authority to the Group Director, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Director of Finance and Digital Services, to extend activity to deliver additional projects during the financial year where capacity exists for accelerated delivery in accordance with the purpose of the wider programme, or to suspend programmes/projects and reallocate funding to optimise delivery.

62 IMPROVING THE COUNCIL'S RECRUITMENT PROCESS FOR THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY

The Service Director, Democratic Services & Communication provided Members with an overview of the Joint report which provided Cabinet with a number of options that could improve the Council's recruitment process, so as to make it easier for the Armed Forces Community and veterans to overcome barriers to civilian employment.

Members were advised that the main proposal was the introduction of a Guaranteed Interview Scheme for Armed Forces service leavers, reservists and veterans if they meet the vacancy essential criteria.

The Deputy Leader referenced the positive track record of the Authority with working with Armed forces and spoke of the Armed Forces Covenant and gold recognition award. The Member referenced the transferable skills veterans possessed which the Council could benefit from. Cabinet were advised that the Armed Forces Working Group were very supportive of the proposals.

At this juncture in the meeting and with the permission of the Leader County Borough Councillor P Jarman addressed the Committee.

The Leader took the opportunity to thank the Deputy Leader for the work that she undertook in respect of Armed forces and veterans and welcomed the proposals within the report.

Following discussions, it was **RESOLVED:**

1. To note and agree to the implementation of a Guaranteed Interview Scheme for service leavers, veterans and reservists.
2. To agree that the Council works with the Career Transition Partnership, a no cost recruitment service for organisations seeking highly motivated and experienced veterans, who are leaving the Armed Forces.
3. To agree that the Council works with Forces Families Jobs, a no cost recruitment service supporting members of the Armed Forces Community into employment.
4. To agree to include a strap line on job advertisements welcoming

applications from the ex-forces community.

63 EXEMPTION OF THE PRESS AND 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 14 of Part 4 of the Schedule 12A of the Act".

64 LIVING WAGE FOUNDATION - PAYMENT OF THE REAL LIVING WAGE FOR INDEPENDENT SECTOR SOCIAL CARE PROVIDERS AND DIRECT PAYMENT RECIPIENTS

The Group Director, Community & Children's Services provided his report to Cabinet which contained exempt information. The Group Director spoke of the growing and sustained pressures on domiciliary and residential care and in response to the recruitment and retention crisis in care and support the need for the Council to ensure an appropriate minimum level of pay for care workers which was a critical step towards supporting this essential workforce.

Members of the Cabinet spoke in support of the report and with the permission of the Leader, County Borough Councillor also addressed the Committee on this item.

Following discussions it was **RESOLVED**:

1. To formally commit to providing support for independent sector social care providers to ensure that all care workers are paid at a minimum of the Real Living Wage level, specifically, those commissioned (excluding specialist placements) to provide older people residential and nursing care, supported living, extra care and home care and personal assistants providing care and support through direct payments for Adult and Children's Services; and
2. To delegate responsibility to the Group Director of Community and Children's Services (in consultation with the Director of Legal Services) to engage with providers listed above and make the necessary contractual amendments; and
3. To formally write to Welsh Government seeking their assurance that core (base budget) funding is provided in this regard

This meeting closed at 12.30 pm

**Cllr A Morgan
Chairman.**