



## **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL**

Minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Council held on Wednesday, 28 September 2022 at 5.00 pm

### **County Borough Councillors - Council Members in attendance:-**

Councillor G Hughes (Chair)

Councillor Sera Evans	Councillor B Stephens
Councillor M Ashford	Councillor J Barton
Councillor R Bevan	Councillor P Binning
Councillor J Bonetto	Councillor S Bradwick
Councillor J Brencher	Councillor G Caple
Councillor J Cook	Councillor A Crimmings
Councillor R Davis	Councillor V Dunn
Councillor E L Dunning	Councillor J Elliott
Councillor L Ellis	Councillor S Emanuel
Councillor D Evans	Councillor S Evans
Councillor A Fox	Councillor H Gronow
Councillor B Harris	Councillor S Hickman
Councillor G Holmes	Councillor G Hopkins
Councillor W Hughes	Councillor K Johnson
Councillor G O Jones	Councillor W Jones
Councillor W Lewis	Councillor C Leyshon
Councillor C Lises	Councillor M Maohoub
Councillor C Middle	Councillor A Morgan
Councillor K Morgan	Councillor N H Morgan
Councillor S Morgans	Councillor M Norris
Councillor W Owen	Councillor D Owen-Jones
Councillor D Parkin	Councillor S Rees
Councillor M Rees-Jones	Councillor A Roberts
Councillor A O Rogers	Councillor G Stacey
Councillor L A Tomkinson	Councillor S Trask
Councillor W Treeby	Councillor J Turner
Councillor G L Warren	Councillor K Webb
Councillor M Webber	Councillor G E Williams
Councillor R Williams	Councillor D Wood
Councillor R Yeo	

### **Officers in attendance**

Mr C Bradshaw, Chief Executive  
Mr B Davies, Director of Finance & Digital Services  
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

## **22 Apologies for Absence**

The Chair welcomed attendees to the hybrid meeting of the Council and apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors L

Addiscott, S J Davies, J Edwards, A Ellis, R Evans, D Grehan, G Jones, R Lewis, S Powderhill, M Powell, C Preedy, J Smith, D Williams and T Williams.

**The following Councillors and officers were present in the Council Chamber:**

County Borough Councillors P Binning, S Bradwick, J Brencher, G Caple, J Cook, R Davies, V Dunn, E Dunning, S Emmanuel, S Evans, B Harris, S Hickman, G Holmes, G Hughes, W Hughes, K Johnson, D Owen-Jones, G O Jones, W Jones, W Lewis, C Leyshon, M Maohoub, N Morgan, S Morgans, M Norris, S Rees, M Rees-Jones, B Stephens, L Tomkinson, S Trask, G Warren and M Webber.

Mr C Bradshaw, Chief Executive, Mr B Davies, Director of Finance & Digital Services, Mr A Wilkins, Director Legal Services Mr C Hanagan, Service Director Democratic Services & Communications and Mr P Mee Group Director of Community & Children's Services.

**The following Councillors were present online:**

County Borough Councillors M Ashford, J Barton, R Bevan, J Bonetto, A Crimmings, J Elliott, L Ellis, D Evans, Sera Evans, A S Fox, H Gronow, G Hopkins, C Lises, C Middle, A Morgan, K Morgan, W Owen, D Parkin, A Roberts, A Rogers, G Stacey, W Treeby, J Turner, K Webb, G Williams, R Williams, D Wood and R Yeo.

**23 Declaration of Interest**

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

**Agenda item 9 – Review of the Council's Terms & Conditions:**

Councillor W Lewis declared the following personal interest – “ My son works for the Council”

Councillor S Emmanuel declared the following personal interest–“My wife works for the Council”

Councillor G Hughes declared the following personal interest – “My wife is employed by the Local Authority”

Councillor W Treeby declared the following personal interest – “Both my sons work for the Council”

Councillor W Hughes declared the following personal interest – “My wife works for the Council”

After the conclusion of the meeting, the following declarations of interest were received, which were unable to be communicated due to them experiencing technical difficulties during the meeting or not identified by the Members concerned as part of the formal proceedings:

## **Agenda item 9 – Review of the Council’s Terms & Conditions:**

Councillor A Roberts declared the following personal interest – “My son works for the Council”

Councillor G Stacey declared the following personal interest – “My Daughter, Son and Grandson work for the Council”

## **24 Notice of Motion**

### **Motion of Condolence**

To consider the under-mentioned Notice of Motion:

Proposed by Councillor A Morgan (Leader of the Council)

Seconded by Councillor K Morgan (Leader of the Opposition)

Supported by Councillor M Powell (Leader of the Independent Group) and Councillor S Trask (Leader of the Conservative Group).

“This Council expresses its deep sadness at the death of Her Majesty the Queen and offers its sincere condolences to His Majesty the King and other members of the Royal Family. We recognise Her Majesty’s enduring commitment to public service and duty, including her support for many Welsh charities and organisations, and her lifelong association and dedication to Wales and its people.”

The Group Leaders were unanimous in supporting the Motion of Condolence and paid their respects to the Royal Family.

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the substantive Notice of Motion.

## **25 Announcements**

The following announcements were made:

- The Presiding Officer, County Borough Councillor G Hughes led the Minute’s silence in memory of former County Borough Councillor Tony Burnell who had sadly passed away earlier in the year.

Following the Minute’s silence, the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council extended their condolences to Councillor Burnell’s family and the Leader of the Opposition paid tribute to Councillor Burnell, a former friend and colleague of the Plaid Cymru Group.

- Councillor Sera Evans announced that she would be running the Cardiff Half Marathon on Sunday, 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2022 and raising money for her chosen charity, the Halcyon Foundation. She added that should Members wish to donate they could do so in advance of the event via a link which would be circulated following the meeting.

- Councillor D Owen-Jones submitted a petition on behalf of residents of Tonyrefail East Residents Association objecting to a development in the ward.

## 26 Minutes

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the 6<sup>th</sup> July 2022 as an accurate reflection of the meeting subject to it being noted that Councillors Sheryl Evans and S Emmanuel were present at the meeting.

## 27 Members' Questions

The Service Director Democratic Services & Communication advised that written responses would be provided to the proposers of questions one and three in the absence of the Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation and Welsh Language, County Borough Councillor R. Lewis. Furthermore, the Service Director confirmed that he had received instruction from County Borough Councillor M Rees-Jones to withdraw her question tabled at number five.

### **Question from County Borough Councillor R. Williams to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:**

“How is the Council delivering upon the manifesto commitments made at the local elections over the course of this Council term?”

### **Response from Councillor A Morgan:**

The Leader confirmed that the manifesto commitments from the last administration have been delivered in full and this term there are twenty core commitments. He advised that progress has been made in the following areas:

- Funded and recruited ten Community Wardens;
- Discussions with South Wales Police about the recruitment of a further ten PCSO's;
- £100,000 agreed budget for the war memorials with a War Memorials Officer now in post;
- Increasing the number of School Family Engagement Officers;
- Rolling out Free School Meals across all Primary Schools from September 2022 ;
- Additional funding to the Youth Service (particularly to support and expand the mobile hub vehicles);
- Rolling out the major programme of investment relating to EV charging;
- Reports to Cabinet such as the Strategy on Tree Planting which is currently out to consultation;
- Further funding for highways improvements in the future

### **Supplementary Question from County Borough Councillor R Williams:**

“Can the Leader expand on one of the commitments which is to provide additional support to families in most need, in view of the cost-of-living crisis (and following the recent announcements in the mini budget from Central

Government)?"

**Response from County Borough Councillor A Morgan:**

The Leader confirmed that the Local Authority will be working closely with Welsh Government to roll out the second phase of their programme to support residents with the cost-of-living crisis. Residents on working tax credits and Universal tax credits received support earlier in the year. The original scheme has now been expanded to include those that qualify for Pension Credits, with over £300m available from Welsh Government to support these residents. The Leader urged Elected Members to encourage any residents to claim the support they are entitled to receive.

The Leader referred to the Council's own support, such as a payment of £125 to all council staff on GR6 and below and £75 to all families with school-aged children. In the coming months, the Leader estimated that the local authority will be making approximately 30,000 payments to residents and with the Welsh Government funding, the Council will be making a total of 70,000 payments to its local residents to assist those in need.

**Question from County Borough Councillor J. Barton to the Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Council Business, County Borough Councillor M. Webber:**

"Can the Deputy Leader make a statement on the Council's programme of events for 2022/23 as we move toward post-pandemic life?"

**Response from County Borough Councillor M Webber:**

County Borough Councillor M Webber confirmed that the Council is now delivering on its events programme through the autumn/winter months which had been suspended during the difficult past two years as the Council put an end to the much-loved and well attended events as it turned its attention to ensuring the safety of its residents during Covid. Councillor Webber advised that recent events have brought record breaking attendance figures such as the Aberdare Festival in June (over 15,000 attendees) and the Big Welsh Bite event in Pontypridd in August (over 30,000 attendees) Further winter calendar events include the Halloween Spooktacular and Santa's Toy Mine, two very popular events. Five town centre Christmas events will take place to include the Festival of Remembrance concert which will be held in the Coliseum, Aberdare.

Councillor Webber advised that the Council previously implemented and adhered to any recommended Covid 19 guidance for its events held and although there are no longer restrictions in place, the Council continues to undertake risk assessments and implements any necessary measures to protect staff and attendees at all its events.

**Supplementary Question from County Borough Councillor J Barton:**

"How does the Council support Community Groups and organisations within the County Borough with the ever-increasing demands on organisers to run community events effectively?"

**Response from County Borough Councillor M Webber:**

Councillor Webber advised that it is difficult for the Council's events team to provide individual support to all community groups but confirmed that advice and guidance is always available through ESAG (Events Safety Advisory Group) as well as the multi-agency body, which includes the Council's Licensing and Planning teams, South Wales Police and South Wales Fire & Rescue. The Council's events team manage the 'What's On' listings which can advertise individual events.

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

"Can the Leader update on budget discussions with the Welsh Government in his role as WLGA Leader?"

**Response from County Borough Councillor A Morgan:**

The Leader described the current situation as 'grim' and he referred to the Medium-Term Financial Plan which would be reported to Council later in the meeting highlighting the budget gap. He described the situation facing local government as unprecedented and further described the future as 'austerity on steroids' with the impact on cost pressures with food prices and utilities costs increasing as a result of the recent changes to markets and global trade.

The Leader added that discussions with Welsh Government have been positive with a commitment that funding will be provided to the local authorities, should funding become available, however under the provisional budget there is no scope for Welsh Government to release further funding. The Leader reminded Council that Welsh Government does not have borrowing powers for revenue, only for capital which is limited.

The Leader advised that local authorities in Wales fare better than those in England as a result of further funding and protection in Wales from austerity. He confirmed that regular discussions will take place with Welsh Government in the coming weeks and months and further local and Welsh Government cross-party lobbying will take place for additional support.

**Supplementary Question from County Borough Councillor R Davis:**

"What are the Leader's thoughts on reforming the Barnett consequential?"

**Response from County Borough Councillor A Morgan:**

Councillor Morgan provided his thoughts on the Barnett Consequential and also commented on the difficulties when the Treasury provides funds or an award which have derived from 'existing resources'. The Leader gave the example of the Teacher's pay award of 5% in England and subsequently in Wales, which had derived from 'existing resources' within the Department of Education. This subsequently impacted on the funding available for Wales and removed the option of providing a better pay settlement over and above the 5%.

**4. Question from County Borough Councillor J. Turner to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:**

“Will the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Highways please outline the timescales for the installation of the new railway footbridge in Llanharan?”

**Response from County Borough Councillor A Morgan:**

The Leader responded that the bridge works were delayed due to the deterioration of the bridge since the initial survey which meant an emergency closure had to be put in place. The estimated completion of the work by April/May this year was further delayed due to two key issues, the first was the need to apply for a new licence which took time to complete, the second reason was due to the temporary works undertaken by Network Rail on a challenging section of the main south Wales railway line. He confirmed that work is now progressing as quickly as possible with all the necessary agreements signed off. The new estimated completion date is the end of this year. The Leader confirmed that the local Members and residents would be kept updated and involved with progress.

**There was no supplementary question**

**5. Question from County Borough Councillor Sera Evans to the Cabinet Member for Environment & Leisure, County Borough Councillor A. Crimmings:**

“Will the Cabinet Member for Environment & Leisure please inform Members how the Council is tackling the continued and increasing litter issues we are facing in the County Borough?”

**Response from County Borough Councillor A Crimmings:**

Councillor Crimmings advised that in the recent Welsh Government report on fly tipping incidents across Wales between April 2021 to March 2022, RCT was highlighted as the lead authority to take action, with 42 of the 94 court prosecutions in Wales being carried out in this county borough. This is the highest number of all the authorities and the Council will continue its work in this area to send a clear message that blighting the landscape will not be tolerated.

Councillor Crimmings commented that the employment of the 12 community wardens will serve to enhance the Council’s efforts to combat littering with more officers undertaking high visibility patrols to deter people from dropping litter. She added that the removal of fly tipping costs hundreds of thousands of pounds which could be spent on key frontline services and the items which are fly tipped those which could easily be taken to community recycling centres at no cost. Numerous campaigns on social media and community events are held to promote and increase awareness of this issue.

Councillor Crimmings concluded that in the main, the vast majority of RCT residents are great at recycling and don’t litter. RCT is on track to meet the Welsh Government’s recycling targets for 2025 and this has been extended to 80% to widen the agenda and ambitions locally.

**There was no supplementary question due to the lapse of the allotted time**

for the item.

## **28 Council Work Programme 2022/23**

The Service Director Democratic Services and Communications presented an update regarding the adopted and published Council Work Programme that the Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund Statement of Accounts and External Audit Report, Model Constitution and Public Participation Strategy reports will be presented to Council in November. He added that the reporting of the Local Government Settlement is dependent on the Welsh Government timelines and will be reported accordingly.

In conclusion, the Service Director confirmed that Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board will present an update to Council in November in advance of the 5pm Council meeting and further information on those arrangements would be circulated in due course.

## **29 Medium Term Financial Plan Update**

The Director of Finance & Digital Services presented an update on the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2022/23 to 2025/26, based on current modelling assumptions in advance of formulating the detailed budget strategy proposals for 2023/24 during the autumn.

Members were informed that the overriding context of the MTFP is that the budget requirements for next year and the medium term are set against provisional and indicative levels of funding announced as part of the Welsh Government's settlement for this year in December 2021 and in light of the comprehensive spending review of that year. It is hoped that Central Government's budget review currently due to be announced at the end of November will reflect on this at a time when residents are facing a cost-of living crisis. Albeit on Monday, the Treasury announced that the existing spending review total set until 2024/25 will be adhered to.

The Director of Finance & Digital Services advised that in the absence of any indication to the contrary, the Council's projection shows a period of significant financial challenge with a budget gap of £77 million by the year 2025/26 and over £36 million for next financial year alone.

The Director referred to the modelling assumption set out at paragraph 5 of the report includes council tax models at 2% increase, but it will be for Council and Cabinet to consider this further in due course. He commented that it is important to plan for this situation and a review is underway to consider all options to reduce spend and generate income across the Council but in the absence of additional funding it is inevitable that there will be a need to reduce council services to close the budget gap. The Council has fully funded Schools pressures for many years, but they will now also need to be prepared

In conclusion, the Director advised that updates will be provided to Council once the provisional settlement has been received from Welsh Government in December 2022. The Director advised that the updated MTFP would be presented to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee as part of the 2023/24 budget consultation process.



Members spoke of the severity and uncertainty of the current financial situation and of the potential implications across all Council services. Group Leaders were unanimous in agreeing that cross party support and a collective response would be needed over the coming months.

Following discussion and consideration of the report it was **RESOLVED** to note the current position modelled in respect of the 'Medium Term Financial Plan 2022/23 to 2025/26' and receive further updates in the autumn as part of the annual budget setting process.

### **30 Council Investment Priorities**

The Director of Finance and Digital Services presented his report which set out the position regarding the opportunity for the Council to further invest in its priority areas, aligned to the Corporate Plan, "Making a Difference" 2020 – 2024.

In presenting his report, he sought Council's agreement of the additional investment of £2.725 million across the areas as set out in paragraph 4.1 of the report which, if agreed, will be incorporated into the Council's Capital Programme. It was confirmed that further details on specific schemes will be reported to Cabinet.

Following consideration of the report it was **RESOLVED** to agree the additional investment and funding arrangements as set out in paragraph 4 which will be incorporated into the Council's Capital Programme.

### **31 Review of the Council's Terms & Conditions**

The Director of Finance & Digital Services presented his joint report with the Director of Human Resources and the Chief Executive to advise Council of a further proposal to introduce an enhanced rate of pay for council employees at a rate of time and one third for hours worked at the weekend which will remove a barrier and support the Council's operational requirements around weekend working. The Director advised that the weekend enhancements will align the council with other service providers such as independent care providers where such enhancements are increasingly being made.

The Director advised that the employees to benefit from this enhanced rate of pay would include homecare, social care, leisure and cleansing staff. It is proposed that this enhancement starts from the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2022 with the ongoing implications factored into the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan as part of the current update. The part year implication for this financial year (6 months, £0.500M) can be funded from available one-off resources.

Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED**:

1. To agree to introduce an enhancement for weekend working based on a Third of Time payment; and
2. That this change is introduced from the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2022.

### **32 Urgent Business**

The Presiding Member advised that the report of the Service Director, Democratic Services & Communication regarding 'Changes to Membership' would be considered at this juncture, as a matter of urgent business.

### **33 Changes to Membership**

The Service Director Democratic Services & Communications advised of the changes to the Labour representation on both the Planning & Development Committee and Licensing Committee and he sought nominations for the role of Vice-Chair of the Licensing Committee for the 2022/23 Municipal Year.

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

1. County Borough Councillor G Hopkins is to be nominated in place of County Borough Councillor D H Williams on the Planning & Development Committee;
2. County Borough Councillor G Stacey is to be nominated in place of County Borough Councillor D H Williams on the Licensing Committee; and
3. County Borough Councillor G Stacey is to be appointed as Vice Chair of the Licensing Committee for the 2022-2023 Municipal Year.

**This meeting closed at 6.26 pm**

**Councillor G Hughes  
Chair.**