



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CABINET

Minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Cabinet held on Tuesday, 6 September 2022 at 2.30 pm.

County Borough Councillors - Cabinet Members in attendance:-

Councillor A Morgan (Chair)

Councillor G Caple Councillor A Crimmings
Councillor R Lewis Councillor M Norris
Councillor B Harris

Officers in attendance

Mr C Bradshaw, Chief Executive
Mr B Davies, Director of Finance & Digital Services
Ms G Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Mr L Davies, Director, Public Health, Protection and Community Services
Mr R Evans, Director of Human Resources
Mr S Gale, Director of Prosperity & Development
Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Mr D James, Service Director – Prosperity & Development
Mr D Powell, Director of Corporate Estates
Mr A Wilkins, Director of Legal Services
Mr A Critchlow, Parking Services and Streetworks Manager
Mr S Williams, Head of Strategic Investments

32 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors M. Webber and C. Leyshon.

33 Declaration of Interest

The Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language declared the following prejudicial interest in respect of the item: "A close family member would be a beneficiary of the support to lower paid Council staff." The Cabinet Member left the meeting whilst this item was discussed and voted upon.

34 Minutes

The Cabinet **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 18th July 2022.

35 Local Cost of Living Support - Supplementary (Discretionary) Scheme

The Director of Finance and Digital Services provided the Cabinet with details of a local Supplementary (Discretionary) Cost of Living Support Scheme for consideration.

The Leader thanked the Director for the report and noted that the £75 payment would be distributed to approximately 22,000 families; and 5,800 Local Authority employees would be in receipt of the £125. The Leader advised that this would be in addition to approximately 40,000 payments made by the Local Authority through the Welsh Government Winter Fuel Support scheme. The scheme had since been widened to include further categories.

The Leader was pleased to note that the support was focused on families with children and noted that it would be difficult to administrate the funding to families with children not in school, due to records.

The Leader emphasised the importance of the Third Sector groups and how invaluable the foodbanks are for some of the community. The Leader advised that any significant funding would need to come from UK Government and hoped there would be an announcement in the near future regarding support in respect of the Energy Crisis and the Cost-of-Living Crisis.

The Cabinet Member for Development and Prosperity acknowledged the struggles of the residents in RCT and noted that the challenges are most acute for families, and as such was pleased to note that specific report was being directed to them; and, to some of the lowest paid roles within the Local Authority.

The Cabinet Member echoed the comments of the Leader and urged the UK government to follow in support of the most vulnerable.

(**Note:** Having previously declared a personal and prejudicial interest in respect of this item, the Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language left the meeting whilst this item was discussed and voted upon.)

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note and agree the detail of the proposed Local Cost of Living Support - Supplementary (Discretionary) Scheme; and
2. To note and agree the implementation arrangements and delegation to the Director of Finance and Digital Services as detailed at section 10.

36 Council Corporate Plan - Investment Priorities

The Director of Finance and Digital Services set out the position regarding the opportunity for Cabinet to propose to Council to further invest in the Council's priority areas, aligned to the Corporate Plan, "Making a Difference" 2020 – 2024.

The Leader noted that the release would target the areas of priority for investment, which were set out within the Council's Corporate Plan. The Leader advised that the proposals would be a positive continuation of the investment already confirmed by the Council. The Leader hoped that such investment reviews would continue over the year but stated that it would be dependent on the economic outlook.

The Cabinet Member for Development and Prosperity noted that despite the current financial pressures, the Council continues to strive to invest and make improvements for the communities in RCT.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

1. To propose the additional investment and funding arrangements as set out in the report at Appendix A to Council at its meeting on 28th September 2022.

37 Introduction of a new Solar Panel Grant and the Extension of the Domestic Heating Grant

The Director of Prosperity and Development sought approval from Cabinet to establish a new solar panel grant scheme for residents of RCT, which supports the Council's Affordable Warmth Strategy 2019 – 2023 and the RCT 2022-25 Plan [‘Think Climate RCT’ - Making Rhondda Cynon Taf Carbon Neutral by 2030](#); and to extend the current domestic heating grant scheme until 2025 for residents of RCT, in order to repair, replace or install a new heating system and energy efficiency measures in line with the Council's Affordable Warmth Strategy 2019 – 2023 and the RCT 2022-25 Plan [‘Think Climate RCT’ - Making Rhondda Cynon Taf Carbon Neutral by 2030](#).

The Cabinet Member for Development and Prosperity noted that the proposals would extend the current domestic heating grant scheme until 2025 for residents of RCT, at a time when energy costs are soaring to un-manageable levels. The Cabinet Member noted that the grants would support residents to repair, replace or install a new heating system and energy efficiency measures, which would play an important role in the current energy crisis and support the Council in delivering upon its climate change ambitions.

The Leader noted that the proposals were in line with manifesto commitments and commented that energy efficiency and the potential of self-generation had been a priority prior to the recent energy crisis. The Leader hoped that shared prosperity funding would be secured to fund the package.

The Leader advised that in September 2021, an Arbed scheme was targeted in the Penrhiwceiber area due to its high levels of fuel poverty. The scheme ended in November 2021 supporting 142 homes, delivering 570 energy measures. Of the 142 homes, 68% of these had Solar PV installed. It was noted that the extension to include solar panels would have many advantages for households.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

1. To approve the creation of a new solar panel grant up until 2025;
and
2. To note the positive impact that the domestic heating grant has had on residents of RCT and agree for the grant to be extended until 2025.

38 Ultra Low Emissions Vehicles (ULEV) Transition Plan

The Frontline Services Officer outlined the Council's plan to transition from an Internal Combustion Engine, (ICE), fleet to an Ultra-low Emissions Vehicles, (ULEV), fleet over the next 6 years. The scope, and primary focus of the report, relates to the Council's Light Goods Vehicle, (LGV), Fleet.

The Leader was in support of the proposals and spoke of the practicalities such

as the substantial cost and transfer of the fleet, which would need to fit in with the Fleet Renewal Programme. The Leader also noted that in certain instances, electrical vehicles would not be suitable but agreed that in the short term, the transfer of the smaller vehicles was the way forward.

The Cabinet Member for Development and Prosperity noted that a great deal of research had been undertaken and several ULEV schemes had been piloted over recent years. The Cabinet Member felt that it was the appropriate time to transfer to ULEV with the establishment of the Regional EV Charging Network.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

1. To note the content of the report and duly to resolve to support:
 - a) The procurement, either via lease-hire or outright purchase, of electric LGVs to replace existing ICE vehicles in accordance with the indicative timeline below in a phased approach.
 - b) The development and installation of associated Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure, (EVCI), to enable the successful delivery and implementation of the ULEV transition plan.
 - c) Trials of alternatively-fuelled vehicles, such as Hydrogen and Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil, (HVO), when and where available. (One such HVO trial is presently underway with respect to a selection of vehicles from the Council's Heavy Goods Vehicle, (HGV), fleet, with developments being closely monitored for signs of reductions in carbon emissions, which could potentially be used to inform future green fleet initiatives).
2. That Officers continue to pursue any and all opportunities to secure grants to assist with funding, either in part or in full, of any aspect of ULEV procurement or EVCI development.

39 Leader's Scheme of Delegation - 3A

The Cabinet **RESOLVED** to note the changes to the Leader's Scheme of Delegation as detailed by the Director.

This meeting closed at 3.00 pm

**Cllr A Morgan
Chairman.**