



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Council held on Wednesday, 29 November 2023 at 5.00 pm.

This meeting was live streamed, details of which can be accessed [here](#)

County Borough Councillors – The following Councillors were present in the Council Chamber:-

Councillor G Hughes (Chair)
Councillor S 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 S J Davies Councillor R Davis
Councillor A Dennis Councillor E L Dunning
Councillor J Edwards Councillor L Ellis
Councillor S Emanuel Councillor P Evans
Councillor A Fox Councillor D Grehan
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 R Lewis 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 W Owen Councillor D Owen-Jones
Councillor M Norris Councillor M Powell
Councillor C Preedy Councillor S Rees
Councillor A Roberts Councillor A O Rogers
Councillor J Smith Councillor G Stacey
Councillor L A Tomkinson Councillor S Trask
Councillor W Treeby Councillor J Turner
Councillor G L Warren Councillor M Webber
Councillor D Williams Councillor R Williams
Councillor T Williams Councillor D Wood
Councillor R Yeo

Officers in attendance

Mr B Davies, Deputy Chief Executive and Group Director of Finance, Digital and Frontline Services
Mr R Evans, Director of Human Resources
Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Mr A Wilkins, Director of Legal Services and Democratic Services
Mr M Jones, Audit Wales

Apologies for absence

Councillor L Addiscott Councillor V Dunn
Councillor A J Ellis Councillor S Evans
Councillor H Gronow Councillor G Jones
Councillor D Parkin Councillor S Powderhill
Councillor K Webb Councillor G E Williams
Councillor J Elliott

66 Welcome

The Presiding Member welcomed all attendees to the virtual Council meeting.

67 Declaration of Interest

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct the following personal declarations were made pertaining to the agenda and declarations (viii & ix) in relation to agenda item 6 were declared later in the meeting (Minute 75 refers):

Agenda item 9 – Notice of Motion (WASPI)

- (i) Councillor J Barton– “I am affected by the changes to the State Pension age to women born in the 1950s as set out in the Notice of Motion”.
- (ii) Councillor J Brencher – “I am affected by the changes to the State Pension age to women born in the 1950s as set out in the Notice of Motion”.
- (iii) Councillor R Davis –“I am affected by the changes to the State Pension age to women born in the 1950s as set out in the Notice of Motion”.
- (iv) Councillor S Rees – “I am affected by the changes to the State Pension age to women born in the 1950s as set out in the Notice of Motion”.
- (v) Councillor J Smith –“I am affected by the changes to the State Pension age to women born in the 1950s as set out in the Notice of Motion”.
- (vi) Councillor W Treeby – “I am affected by the changes to the State Pension age to women born in the 1950s as set out in the Notice of Motion”.
- (vii) Councillor M Webber – “I am affected by the changes to the State Pension age to women born in the 1950s as set out in the Notice of Motion”.

Agenda item 6 - Statement of Accounts and Audit Reports for Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC and the Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund 2022/23

- (viii) Councillor J Brencher – “My son works for Transport for Wales”
- (ix) Councillor K Johnson – “I work for Transport for Wales”

68 Minutes

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the hybrid meeting held on the 25th October as an accurate reflection of the meeting subject to it being noted that Councillor G Hopkins surname was misspelled.

69 Announcements

The following announcements were made:

- Councillor R Lewis paid tribute to Richard Jones, who had recently passed away. He was a well-known local personality in the Cynon Valley, a passionate advocate for the rights of disabled people and championed accessibility. He served as Chair of the Cynon Valley Museum and of Accessible Care & Transport and ran his own accessibility charity. He was a Community Councillor for the Hirwaun & Penderyn Community Council. He was passionate about helping others and was known for his sense of humour. He was supported by his family his entire life and Councillor Lewis concluded by saying that Richard Jones will be missed.
- Councillor K Morgan also wished to pay tribute to Richard Jones who was a champion of many other causes, most of those being centred on fair play for all. Councillor Morgan worked alongside Richard in his accessible Wales role and during this work became aware of the frequency with which Richard was met with obstacles in his daily life. Councillor Morgan concluded, let this be his legacy, for us to see the obstacles and remove them in Richard's name. Councillor Morgan wished to extend her condolences to Richard's family.
- Councillor W Hughes paid tribute to a longstanding Labour party member and Trealaw Councillor Bill Murphy, who sadly passed away on the 2nd November 2023. He was a highly respected member of the Trealaw Community. He was elected as a Councillor for the Trealaw ward in 1983 and served until 1999, during this time he was both Deputy Leader and Leader of the Labour Group, Rhondda Borough Council and first Leader of RCT Council. He also sat on many committees and school governing bodies. Councillor Hughes wished to extend his condolences to Bill's wife Barbara and his family.
- Councillor G Caple paid tribute to the former MP for the Rhondda, Allan Rogers who passed away yesterday at the age of 91. He became MP for the Rhondda in 1983 and served until 2001, his commitment to his communities was second to none including his support for the miners against M. Thatcher, which was unwavering. Councillor Caple recounted his election victories ending in a rousing rendition of the Red Flag. He spent a lifetime in politics, as a councillor, as an MP and as a member of the European Parliament and always encouraged others to support the cause of the Labour Government through politics. He worked as a mining geologist which took him all over the world and Councillor Caple extended his condolences to Allan's family.

The Presiding Member led the Council in a Minute's silence in memory of the three aforementioned residents who had recently passed away.

- Councillor J Brencher announced that a cultural visit had recently been undertaken by a group of visitors including the King of Buganda, for them to visit the county borough and thank the residents of RCT for their work through PONT, in tackling poverty and bringing down the mortality rates. Councillor Brencher passed on her thanks to the Mayor of RCT and all those that supported the visit.

70 Statements

The Leader of the Council, Councillor A Morgan OBE, made a statement in respect of the Council budget and the disappointing outcome of the Autumn Statement. Welsh Government will receive an additional £305M but even with the additional funding, councils face a very difficult year ahead. In real terms this is likely to be approximately £41M which is down to business rate changes which the Chancellor announced and approximately £4M for potholes. The Leader expressed his grave disappointment with the outcome despite concerns raised to the UK Government regarding the pressure on Schools, Social Care and the NHS.

The Leader advised that the core revenue funding for local government in 2024-25 will increase by 3.1% but RCT Council is likely to get below 3% due to its population and formula changes, which will be a very difficult situation. He added that Officers are working hard in the background to identify areas where savings can be made.

The Leader advised that twenty-six local authorities in England are facing a 114 notice in the next 12 months, which means they will be forced to declare financial bankruptcy with no reserves/savings resulting in them failing to deliver statutory services. The Leader advised that delivering a balanced budget for RCTCBC will be extremely challenging and he reiterated his disappointment with the outcome of the Autumn statement.



The Deputy Leader, Councillor M Webber advised that on the 10th November 2023 and on behalf of the Leader, she met with Citizens Cymru/Wales and Citizens UK in St. Catherine's Church in Pontypridd to celebrate the Council's accreditation as a Real Living Wage employer. The Council was presented with a trophy to celebrate the achievement. The Deputy Leader wished to thank Citizens Wales UK for that recognition.

The Deputy Leader stressed the Council's continued recognition of its staff as its biggest asset and she felt proud to meet the Deputy Minister for Social Partnership earlier in the year with the Leader to formerly receive accreditation as a Living Wage employer. The Deputy Leader concluded that as the second largest Local Authority in Wales, RCTCBC is setting the bar high for other Welsh local authorities.



The Cabinet Member for Public Health & Communities, County Borough

Councillor B Harris made a statement in respect of the Council's acceptance of the prestigious National Sustainable Food Places (SPF Bronze award) on behalf of the RCT Food Partnership. It recognises the RCT Food Partnership's outstanding work in promoting sustainable food practices within the communities. The Council's Community Development Team, Sustainable Food Co-ordinator and its partners have been committed to promoting healthy sustainable food and their work has contributed widely to the Council's commitment to addressing significant social challenges such as food poverty, diet related illnesses and the loss of independent food related retailers.

Councillor B Harris wished to extend his congratulations to the team and the partnership for being recognised for this prestigious award and also wished to extend his gratitude for making RCT one of only three Welsh Local authority areas to receive this award since its inception in 2015.

71 **Members' Questions**

1.Question from County Borough Councillor N. H. Morgan to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:

"Will the Leader provide an update on how the Council is progressing its work to upgrade and improve drainage on its highway network?"

Response of Councillor A Morgan OBE:

The Leader advised that the Council had procured a 5-year specialist vector cleaning service and CCTV contract with an external provider which is currently in its third year. A number of surface water sewer assets have been cleaned and surveyed to date, with 15km completed to date this year.

The Leader added that the Council also has its own four gulley emptyers and jetting lorries which work every day to clean thousands of gulleys every month and identify defects which have been repaired to help safeguard the network.

The Leader advised that Cabinet recently agreed £200k investment for continued flood alleviation works as part of the wider one-off £7.73m investment for Council priority areas agreed by Cabinet earlier this year. The Leader also referred to the £1m investment from the WG's Resilient Roads Fund for 2023/24 which the Council has secured. Over the past three previous years, the Council has secured over £10m of RRF since Storm Dennis over the last 4 years which looks at those highways which are prone to flooding.

In conclusion, the Leader commented that there is a lot of work being undertaken but more that can be done, he extended his gratitude to Elected Members who continue to identify and report issues within their wards

There was no supplementary question

2.Question from County Borough Councillor G. O. Jones to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:

"We have heard in recent months that the combined impacts of both Brexit and

the war in Ukraine are having a profound effect on our construction industry. What does this mean for the Council and how can we mitigate these impacts?"

Response of Councillor A Morgan OBE:

Councillor A Morgan commented that there has been a rise in construction costs from the supply of materials, partly around Brexit, the war in the Ukraine and the high inflation in the UK which are all impacting the costs of construction.

The Leader explained that in terms of the Council's Capital Programme, the Council has a proven track record of designing and delivering projects within strict quality and price parameters. He added that prices are agreed in advance and once awarded are locked in for construction projects such as Schools or Extra Care facilities.

The Leader referred to difficulties within the labour market, an effect of Brexit, which does have an impact on recruitment issues, particularly in areas such as hospitality and farming, where farmers have difficulty recruiting workers to pick crops. The Leader commented on the difficulty to recruit locally, sometimes having to advertise posts multiple times.

In conclusion, the Leader commented that the Council works well to contracts but will continue to monitor the market and set realistic construction budgets in the future using market intelligence at the time.

There was no supplementary question

3. The Presiding Member announced that as an apology of absence had been received from Councillor S Powderhill he confirmed that question 3 would not be put to the Cabinet Member.

4. Question from County Borough Councillor W. Lewis to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:

"Will the Cabinet Member make a statement on the rollout of the Welsh Government's 20mph default speed limits across Wales and RCT?"

Response of Councillor A Morgan OBE:

The Leader provided the following information in respect of the rollout of the Welsh Government's 20mph default speed limits in RCT. The Council has removed approximately 3,140 signs and erected 1,710 new signs on the highway network to accommodate the introduction of the 20mph default limit. In addition, there was opportunity to remove 1,974 lit signs on the network and replace those signs with unlit versions providing a saving on energy costs and maintenance.

The Leader added that currently there are eighty-four 30mph speed limit exceptions within RCT, with 18 located in the Rhondda, 16 in Cynon and 50 across Taff. He added that the external contractor was due to complete the work by the 24th November but the contractor has requested an extension to complete elements of the red surfacing and 'secondary' signage - Officers are currently reviewing this request and are hopeful that this time will be reduced through negotiation.

The Leader commented that whilst Officers are responding to and rectifying any clear and obvious errors with signage as soon as possible, any requests to review speed limits are being recorded and will be subject to potential review in the future. He added that by the Christmas period the Council should be in a position to confirm that all the signage has been updated.

In conclusion, the Leader advised that Welsh Government has committed to issuing revised guidance in respect to setting local speed limits in Wales in Autumn 2024 which will provide the framework for any review of speed limits in RCT.

There was no supplementary question

5.Question from County Borough Councillor S. Bradwick to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:

“Can the Leader make a statement on bus services in RCT and outline the latest position on providing support to providers?”

Response of Councillor A Morgan OBE:

The Leader advised that Covid-19 affected commercial viability of bus services, and without the intervention of Welsh Government through the Bus Emergency Scheme (BES) and the Bus Transition Fund (BTF), most services would have ceased to operate over the last 3 years. He added that whilst the industry has shown some recovery from the impact of the pandemic, it has faced the additional challenges of more residents working from home and the increased use of online grocery shopping.

The Leader commented that regarding the Bus Emergency Scheme, which was in place for three years, Welsh Government have been working with Councils in terms of the funding (ten councils on the same footprint as the CJC's and with RCT part of the South East footprint for the ten local authorities who all work together with the bus industry) to move towards a more sustainable funding mechanism that will maximise the use of the funding available and minimise duplication of services from the start of the 2024/25 financial year. The Leader confirmed that It is estimated that the quantum of additional funding available to support the bus industry from Welsh Government for next year will be in the region of £46m.

As with all Councils in Wales, in preparation for the new funding mechanism, officers from the Council's Integrated Transport Unit have been preparing tender documentation that seeks to maintain as much of the current bus services as possible within the funding available to it. The outcome of the tendering exercise will be known in the new year, at which point bids will need to be made to regional leads to seek the funding required.

Supplementary question from Councillor S Bradwick

“With regards to the £1 Bus Fare scheme, can you provide information as to the roll out of the scheme?”

Response of Councillor A Morgan OBE:

The Leader was pleased to announce that the Council is due to introduce a further reduced fare bus scheme for the whole month of December, which will be £1 for all single journeys taken within the County Borough. He added that this will be the third such scheme that we have introduced in RCT this calendar year via the Cabinet's decisions, following the free travel scheme in March, and £1 single bus fare scheme for the 6 weeks school summer holidays. There was a significant increase in the footfall and patronage on the buses during these periods.

The Leader confirmed that this is due to funding received from Welsh Government and will greatly assist residents with not only the cost-of-living crisis, supports the carbon footprint but will also alleviate some of the traffic on the roads in December during the busy Christmas period.

In conclusion, the Leader commented that he hoped the Council will be able to continue with the scheme in the future and the scheme will be evaluated post Christmas.

6.Question from County Borough Councillor J. Barton to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:

"In light of the continuing Cost of Living crisis, what support is available for RCT residents as we approach the winter months with the weather turning much colder over the past few days?"

Response of Councillor A Morgan OBE:

The Leader advised that in addition to the £1 Bus Fare scheme, which will certainly support many families and the local economy, in September, the Council's Cabinet agreed a new Cost of Living Support Scheme for 2023 amounting to £4.292m, which is more than any other Local Authority in Wales. The package includes a one-off payment of £125 to all households in RCT that have a child/children of compulsory school age (per family, not per child). He added that to date, of the 20,235 households eligible for the payment, 18,819 have been paid which equates to 93%. He urged those families who have not already done so to apply for the scheme which remains open until the 31st of December 2023, during which time officers will send follow up letters to any cases that have yet to apply.

The Leader commented that Cabinet also approved £245,000 to be awarded for local community organisations to use to provide significant support for RCT residents. This includes the Community Facilities Grant (£135,000) which supports the third sector groups maintain the community hubs. For the Winter Welcome Centres, grants of £110,000 of the Council's own funding has been provided with 86 Winter Welcome Centres which have registered for this support. The Leader reminded Members that all the Council's Libraries are classed as Winter Welcome Centres.

The Leader commented that in terms of direct support for residents facing financial hardship through the Winter months, three resident support services within the Council have been given access to Supermarket and Fuel vouchers which can be issued to those most in need to a value of £100,000, plus £100,000 has been additionally allocated for discretionary housing awards to

support residents to maintain their tenancy to prevent them facing eviction and hardship. The Leader commented that it will be a challenging Winter for many families.

Supplementary question from Councillor J Barton

“Is the Leader as angry and sad as I am that as one of the richest countries in the World, we are having to help the most vulnerable in society while at the same time we are facing cuts ourselves”

Response of Councillor A Morgan OBE:

The Leader concurred with the sentiments of Councillor Barton and he expressed his disappointment with having to provide financial support for the local Food Banks to be able to carry out very important and much needed work for the communities of RCT. The Leader hoped he would see the end of Food banks in RCT in the future but would wholeheartedly support them whilst they are needed.

There were no further questions due to the lapse of the allotted time.

72 Council Work Programme 2023-24 & Information Report

The Service Director Democratic Services & Communication advised that there were no changes to the Council work programme for the period and confirmed that due to timescales relating to the office move from Clydach Vale to Llys Cadwyn in Pontypridd, the next meeting of Full Council on the 17th January 2024 would also be held virtually.

The Service Director outlined the purpose of the enclosed information report which provided an update to the Notice of Motion (NOM) submitted to Full Council on the 29th March 2023, proposed by County Borough Councillor D Grehan and seconded by County Borough Councillor S Evans in respect of Child Poverty. The Service Director commented that the NOM had been referred to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee which is due to receive a report in respect of the Corporate Plan as part of its next cycle of meetings.

73 Statement of Accounts and Audit Reports for Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC and the Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund 2022/23

Mr M Jones, Audit Wales presented the Audit Wales Audit of Accounts Report for Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC and Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC Group referring Members specifically to paragraph 4 which set out the level of materiality this year of £9.6 million for this year's accounts audit of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, and £9.8million for the audit of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Group.

Mr Jones referred to paragraph 9 and advised that Audit Wales will issue an unqualified audit opinion on this year's accounts and he confirmed that as set out in paragraphs 13 and 14, all misstatements in the report have been corrected by management (with a summary of the misstatements at Appendix 3 of the report).

Mr Jones praised the efficiency of Finance Services within RCT Council and provided assurance that the new audit approach in place this year is as robust as it has always been.

Following a discussion regarding the report, Audit Wales presented the Audit of Accounts report, Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund for which RCT is the administering authority. He referred to the high materiality of £42.64 million for this year's audit and he praised the positive report which reflects only minor typographical and presentational misstatements.

(Note: Due to technical difficulties experienced at this time, the decision was made by the Presiding Member that the agenda would be considered out of sequence, as detailed in the minutes set out hereunder, before returning to Agenda item 6 -Statement of Accounts & Audit Reports for RCTCBC and the RCT Pension Fund for the resolution to be agreed).

74 Appointment of Director of Adult Services

The Director of Human Resources presented his report which sought ratification of the decision of the Appointments Committee, regarding the appointment of the selected candidate to the post of Director of Adult Services following completion of the recent recruitment and selection process agreed previously by the Appointments Committee.

The Director advised that an intensive assessment centre recruitment process was held on Thursday 16th November and Friday 17th November 2023, following which, the Appointments Committee determined to recommend that Mrs Sian Nowell be appointed to the post of Director of Adult Services.

The Chair of the Appointments Committee, Councillor S J Davies concurred that the formal recruitment and selection process, had determined to unanimously recommend that Mrs Sian Nowell be appointed to the post of Director of Adult Services.

Members wished to express their support for the appointment and it was **RESOLVED:**

- a) To ratify the recommendation of the Appointments Committee that Mrs Sian Nowell be appointed to the post of Director of Adult Services; and
- b) To note that Mrs. Nowell's start date in this post will be Thursday 30th November 2023.

75 2023-2024 Mid-Year Treasury Management Stewardship Report

(Note: With technical difficulties resolved the Presiding Members advised that consideration of Agenda item 6 - Statement of Accounts and Audit Reports for Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC and the Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund 2022/23 would resume at this juncture in the proceedings).

The Group Director of Finance, Digital & Frontline Services presented the Accounts of RCT Council and Pension Fund for Council's consideration and referred to confirmation received earlier in the meeting from the Audit Manager, Audit Wales, of the intention to issue an unqualified audit opinion on this year's accounts. The Group Director confirmed that both accounts have previously been considered by the Council's Governance & Audit Committee with no issues raised.

With regard to the outturn position presented within the accounts, this reflects what was presented to Cabinet and to the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee in July 2023 and the reserves position reflects what was presented to Council at its meeting in September 2023 alongside the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

The Audit Manager, Audit Wales confirmed that the final suggested letter of representation states the correct reference to Full Council approving the financial statements on the 29th November 2023.

The Leader of the Council and all other Group Leaders thanked Audit Wales and acknowledged the successful joint working and engagement between them and the Council's Finance team.

Following consideration and discussion of the report, it was **RESOLVED**:

a) To approve and note the Statement of Accounts of Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC (Appendix 1), and associated Letter of Representation incorporating responses to the Audit Enquiries Letter (Appendix 2).

(b) To approve and note the Statement of Accounts of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund (Appendix 3), and associated Letter of Representation incorporating responses to the Audit Enquiries Letter (Appendix 4).

(c) Approve and note the audited final out-turn position for the Council with regard to the financial year 2022/23 and the level of General Fund Balances (paragraph 6.4); and

(d) Note the considerations and comments of the 4th September 2023 Governance and Audit Committee meeting as required by the Local Government Measure (section 9).

(Note: Two personal declarations were made pertaining to the agenda item by Councillors K Johnson and J Brencher (Minute No. 67 refers (item viii & ix)).

76 2023-2024 Mid-Year Treasury Management Stewardship Report

In accordance with the requirements of both the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management the Group Director of Finance, Digital and Frontline Services provided Members with information on the Council's Treasury Management activity during the first six months of 2022/23 and Prudential and

Treasury Indicators for the same period.

The Group Director advised that against a challenging economic background of relative low growth and higher rates of inflation and higher interest rates, the Council has maintained its position of being underborrowed which is demonstrated by the gross borrowing position as compared to the capital finance requirement (CFR) which represents the Council's underlying need to borrow. The Group Director further reported that the borrowing requirement has increased in the first half of the financial year as further approvals in respect of the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme have been received, having been reported through the quarterly performance monitoring reports.

The Group Director advised that the Council continues to operate well within its limits both the authorised limit and the operational boundary. He added that the Council is in a procurement process for treasury management advisers and Council will be updated accordingly when the process is completed. The Council continues to operate within the overall borrowing envelope as has been agreed for the Council's 21st Century Schools.

In conclusion, the Group Director of Finance, Digital and Frontline Services advised that the report will be presented to the Governance & Audit Committee for further review.

Following a discussion whereby the Group Director responded to a number of queries, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the content of the report.

77 Notice of Motion

To consider the under-mentioned Notices of Motion which have been submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10.1 and received by the Proper Officer, standing in the names of County Borough Councillors:

- 1) R. Williams, S. Emanuel, L. Addiscott, M. D. Ashford, J. Barton, D. R. Bevan, J. Bonetto, S. Bradwick, J. Brencher, G. Caple, J. Cook, A. Crimmings, S. J. Davies, R. Davis, A. J. Dennis, V. Dunn, E. L. Dunning, J. Edwards, J. A. Elliott, L. Ellis, R. Evans, A. S. Fox, B. Harris, S. Hickman, G. Holmes, G. Hopkins, W. Hughes, G. Jones, G. O. Jones, R. R. Lewis, W. Lewis, C. Leyshon, M. Maohoub, C. Middle, A. Morgan, N. H. Morgan, S. Morgans, M. A. Norris, D. Owen-Jones, D. Parkin, S. Powderhill, C. Preedy, S. Rees, A. Roberts, J. Smith, G. Stacey, L. A. Tomkinson, W. Treeby, J. Turner, G. L. Warren, K. Webb, M. Webber, D. Williams, G. E. Williams, T. Williams, R. Yeo.

After weeks of speculation, the Prime Minister has finally confirmed that the Northern leg of HS2 between Manchester and Birmingham will now not be constructed.

The announcement, which has seemingly been the worst-kept secret in politics, follows on from the scrapping of both the Eastern leg between Birmingham and Leeds, and the east-west high speed line between Leeds and Manchester in 2021.

The original designation of HS2 as an England and Wales project was

shocking in and of itself' with the nearest high-speed rail project situated almost 70 miles away from the Welsh border, and the justification for the classification was that passengers in North Wales would allegedly benefit from the interchange planned for Crewe.

Over the past decade, the inequalities of the Barnett Consequential and the decisions of the Conservative Westminster Government has seen Wales be deprived of nearly half-a-billion pounds of transport investment (based on like-for-like rail funding per-head of the population compared to other parts of the U.K.).

With the HS2 project being scrapped and "billions of pounds now saved" it is absolutely fair and just that Wales benefits from its fair share of investment.

The announcement that £1bn would be allocated to electrifying the North Wales mainline is nothing more than a finger in the air figure and, according to the Welsh Government, will take at least 10 years.

The Prime Minister has already stated that every region outside of London will receive the same or more government investment than they would have done under HS2, and with quicker results.

This commitment must apply to Wales and be delivered on a scale that reflects the needs of Wales in seeking to address the underfunding of rail transport over the last decade, and allows for other important transport projects across Wales to be funded as well.

This Council therefore notes:

- That the cancellation of HS2 provides an opportunity for Wales to receive a fair share of funding for rail transport infrastructure projects.
- That the Barnett formula requires urgent review to prevent future occurrences of projects being wrongly classified to circumvent funding being provided to the devolved nations.
- That the Westminster Government must now make good on its commitment to provide equitable funding arrangements to "every region outside of London" with the money "saved" from HS2.

This Council resolves:

- To request that the Council Leader writes to the Prime Minister, the Transport Secretary, Secretary of State for Wales, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer to convey this Motion.
- To request that the WLGA make representations as an "all-Wales voice" to outline the case that Wales must receive a fair and proportionate amount of funding from the cancellation of HS2.

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

To consider the under-mentioned Notices of Motion which have been submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10.1 and received by the Proper

Officer, standing in the names of County Borough Councillors:

W Lewis, R. Davis, L. Addiscott, M. D. Ashford, J. Barton D. R. Bevan, J. Bonetto, S. Bradwick, J. Brencher, G. Caple, J. Cook, A. Crimmings, S. J. Davies, A. J. Dennis, V. Dunn, E. L. Dunning, J. Edwards, J. A. Elliott, L. Ellis, S. Emanuel, R. Evans, A. S. Fox, B. Harris, S. Hickman, G. Holmes, G. Hopkins, W. Hughes, G. Jones, G. O. Jones, R. R. Lewis, C. Leyshon, M. Maohoub, C. Middle, A. Morgan, N. H. Morgan, S. Morgans, M. A. Norris, D. Owen-Jones, D. Parkin, S. Powderhill, C. Preedy, S. Rees, A. Roberts, J. Smith, G. Stacey, L. A. Tomkinson, W. Treeby, J. Turner, G. L. Warren, K. Webb, M. Webber, D. Williams, G. E. Williams, R. Williams, T. Williams, R. Yeo.

The Council notes that the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman has made a finding of maladministration by the Department for Work and Pensions in respect of failings in the way it communicated changes to the State Pension age to women born in the 1950s.

The Council also notes that the Ombudsman is intending to send provisional Stage 2 and Stage 3 Reports covering the injustice caused by the maladministration and remedies to the 500 or so women whose cases reached the Ombudsman before he stopped accepting complaints. They, and the DWP, will be invited to comment by an expected deadline of 21st December. These comments will be considered by the Ombudsman who hopes to issue a final report sometime in the new year. It will then be put before Parliament.

The Council supports the actions of the Women Against State Pension Injustice (WASPI) Campaign to secure justice for the 3.8 million women affected, including the 12,800 who live in the Rhondda, Cynon & Taff constituencies.

The Council notes that the Prime Minister has said that the Government will respond appropriately to any recommendations and calls upon the Government to commit to the full, fair, and fast implementation of appropriate compensation.

Following consideration, it was **RESOLVED** to adopt and note the content of the Notice of Motion.

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg / This document is also available in Welsh

This meeting closed at 6.30 pm

**Councillor G Hughes
Chair.**