



CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL
RHONDDA CYNON TAF
COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMITTEE SUMMONS

C Hanagan
Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
2 Llys Cadwyn
Taff Street
Pontypridd
CF37 4TH

Meeting Contact: Emma Wilkins (07385406118)

YOU ARE SUMMONED to a **Virtual** meeting of **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL** to be held on **WEDNESDAY, 7TH FEBRUARY, 2024** at **5.00 PM.**

It is the intention to live stream this meeting, details of which can be accessed [here](#)

AGENDA

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No's**

TIME	ITEM	PAGE(S)
5 minutes	<p>ITEM 1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST</p> <p>To receive disclosures of personal interests from Members in accordance with the Code of Conduct</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">Members are requested to identify the item number and subject that their interest relates to and signify the nature of the personal interest; andWhere Members withdraw from a meeting as a consequence of the disclosure of prejudicial interest they must notify the Chairman when they leave.	
40 minutes	<p>ITEM 2. CARDIFF CAPITAL REGION CITY DEAL</p> <p>To receive a PowerPoint presentation from the Director of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD) providing Members with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">An update on the work of the CCRCD, and its wider priorities and impact to date.An overview of the transition to a Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) and the wider governance arrangements	

5 minutes	ITEM 3. MINUTES To approve as an accurate record, the minutes of the virtual Council Meeting held on the 17 th January 2024.	3 - 28
	ITEM 4. ANNOUNCEMENTS	
	OPEN GOVERNMENT:	
10 minutes	ITEM 5. STATEMENTS In accordance with Open Government Council Meeting Procedure Rule 2, to receive any statements from the Leader of the Council and/or statements from Cabinet Portfolio Holders:	
20 minutes	ITEM 6. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS To receive Members questions in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9.2. (N.B a maximum of 20 minutes shall be allowed for questions on notice.)	29 - 38
	COUNCIL WORK PROGRAMME - FOR MEMBERS INFORMATION Council Work Programme 2023/2024	
	OFFICERS' REPORTS	
45 minutes	ITEM 7. NOTICE OF MOTION To consider the Notice of Motion which has been submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10.1 of the Constitution.	39 - 42
	ITEM 8. URGENT BUSINESS To consider any items which the Chair, by reason of special circumstances, is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.	

Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication

To: All Members of the Council

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



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Council held on Wednesday, 17 January 2024 at 5.00 pm

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

County Borough Councillors – The following Councillors were present online:-

Councillor G Hughes (Chair)

Councillor Sheryl Evans	Councillor B Stephens
Councillor L Addiscott	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 A Dennis	Councillor V Dunn
Councillor E L Dunning	Councillor J Edwards
Councillor J Elliott	Councillor S Emanuel
Councillor D Evans	Councillor P Evans
Councillor Sera 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 Jones
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 D Parkin
Councillor S Powderhill	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 W Treeby
Councillor J Turner	Councillor G L Warren
Councillor K Webb	Councillor M Webber
Councillor T Williams	Councillor D Wood
Councillor R Yeo	

Officers in attendance

Mr P Mee, Chief Executive

Mr B Davies, Deputy Chief Executive and Group Director of Finance, Digital and Frontline 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 A Wilkins, Director of Legal Services and Democratic Services

Mr P Griffiths, Service Director – Finance & Improvement Services
Ms L Lawson, Performance Manager

Apologies for absence

Councillor R Davis Councillor A J Ellis
Councillor L Ellis Councillor S Trask
Councillor D Williams Councillor G E Williams
Councillor R Williams

78 Welcome

The Presiding Member welcomed everyone to the virtual Council meeting.

79 Declaration of Interest

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

ITEM 5. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

County Borough Councillor K Johnson – Personal – “I am an employee of Transport for Wales”

County Borough Councillor J Brencher – Personal- “ My son works for Transport for Wales”

ITEM 7. WELSH CHURCH ACT FUND ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23

County Borough Councillor W Lewis –Personal - “ I am a Director of E Siop Fach Zero and my daughter-in-law works for Home Rescue, both are mentioned in the report”.

County Borough Councillor W Treeby –Personal - “I sit on cthe Nos Galan Committee that receives money from the Welsh Church Act Fund”

Councillor M Maohoub –Personal - “I am a member of Nos Galan committee that receives funding form the Welsh Church Act Fund”

County Borough Councillor D Grehan –Personal- “ I am Treasurer for Friends of Tyn Y Bryn Park which is named in the report”

County Borough Councillor G Jones- Personal – “I am Chair of the Trecynon Free Library & Institute, which receives funding from the Welsh Church Act Fund”

County Borough Councillor D Owen-Jones –Personal- “Tyn Y Bryn Park is mentioned in the Welsh Church Act Fund report”

County Borough Councillor A Crimmings –Personal - “I am involved in an organisation that is a recipient of funding from the Welsh Church Act”.

County Borough Councillor S Rees – “I am involved in an organisation that is a

recipient of funding from the Welsh Church Act”.

County Borough Councillor A Morgan- Personal –“I sit on the Dan-Y-Las Environmental Building Committee, Dan-Y-Las Environmental Group and the Fernhill and Glenboi Community Centre and the Nos Galan Committee, all of which have benefitted from the Welsh Church Act Fund”.

County Borough Councillor L Tomkinson –Personal - “I am involved in an organisation that receives funding from the Welsh Church Act”

County Borough Councillor M Norris-Personal - “I am on the board of a community group that is referred to within the report”

County Borough Councillor A S Fox –Personal - “I am Chair and Trustee of Penrhiwceiber Lee Gardens Pool Committee and Treasurer of St Winifred’s Church Penrhiwceiber both of which have received Welsh Church Act funding”

County Borough Councillor M Webber –Personal - “A Group I Chair is a recipient of the Welsh Church Act Fund”

County Borough Councillor R Lewis – Personal – “Cylch Meithrin Seren Fach is on the same site as YGG Abercynon of which I am a Governor”

(Further declarations of personal interest were later declared (Minute No’s. 84/89 refers)

County Borough Councillor A Morgan- Personal – “ I am directly involved in two committees that receive funding and I have assisted another group with the funding application”

County Borough Councillor S Bradwick – Personal- “I am chair of the South Wales Fire & Rescue Committee”

County Borough Councillor A Roberts – Personal- “I sit on the South Wales Fire & Rescue Committee”

County Borough Councillor G Holmes – Personal- “I sit on the South Wales Fire & Rescue Committee”

County Borough Councillor J Smith – Personal – “I sit on the Alliance Committee”

County Borough Councillor G Jones – Personal- “I am Chair of the Alliance Committee”

80 Minutes

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the 29 November 2023 as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

81 Announcements

The following announcements were made:

- Councillor M Webber paid tribute to the late Mr Dennis Gethin who had passed away in November 2023. Mr Gethin was Chief Executive of Taff Ely Borough Council from 1982 until his retirement in 1996 and was former Welsh Rugby Union President. She extended her sympathy to his family on behalf of the Council.
- Councillor D R Bevan wished to pay tribute to JPR Williams, former Wales & British & Irish Lions player who sadly passed away on the 8th December 2023. He shared fond memories of the rugby star who will be sadly missed.
- Councillor M Ashford announced he would be running the London Marathon in April and raising money for Macmillan.

82 **Members' Questions**

1. **Question from County Borough Councillor G. Stacey to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:**

“Can the Leader update Members on the work and preparations to welcome the National Eisteddfod to Rhondda Cynon Taf in 2024?”

Response of Councillor A. Morgan OBE

The Leader responded that a School strategy has been created and circulated to all schools, with input from the Eisteddfod team. General info about Eisteddfod also still being circulated to parents/guardians to ensure all children and young people and their families can participate and fully understand what Eisteddfod is. He added that Officers continue to support local appeal committees in each valley to raise money towards the £400k target. He confirmed that the current total is likely to have surpassed £100k with further fundraising events planned.

The Leader advised that the ‘Let’s Talk Eisteddfod’ feedback has been crucial with engagement with local businesses and a meeting held recently involving Council Officers and the local traders, the Chief Executive of the Eisteddfod. At the meeting traders showed an interest in having a stand at the event as well as decorating their businesses in advance of the Eisteddfod. Liaison with Pontypridd Town Council, as well as with the Pontypridd, Aberdare and Treorchy BIDs to gather feedback on the support local businesses would like in the lead up to the Eisteddfod.

The Leader referred to the benefits of the Eisteddfod coming to Pontypridd extending to beyond the town to other areas within the region and the whole of Wales having a longer lasting legacy. He commented that the car parking strategy is being developed, encouraging visitors to use Park and Ride and public transport with increased train frequency and discouraging the use of cars in the town. He also referred to the number of Caravan/camping sites which are being identified and developed over recent months.

The Leader commented that work is being undertaken behind the scenes which is heavily led by the Eisteddfod Board with local input from the Council. The team approach with businesses, other local organisations, and the Council has

been positive and will continue. The Leader commented that the Eisteddfod is for everybody to attend and enjoy and an opportunity for the Welsh language, Welsh culture and the town of Pontypridd to shine.

2. Question from County Borough Councillor M. D. Ashford to the Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation and Welsh Language, County Borough Councillor R. Lewis:

“Will the Cabinet Member provide an update on the progress of the new school for Pontyclun Primary?”

Response of Councillor R. Lewis:

Councillor Lewis advised that works are progressing well on site to redevelop Pontyclun Primary School and deliver a new school building, and external facilities for the community. He added that Morgan Sindall Construction are advising that the new net zero carbon in operation school is on target for its scheduled opening date in early 2025. Following the opening of the new building, the remaining existing school buildings will be demolished to facilitate the construction of the new Multi Use Games Areas.

Councillor Lewis commented that despite the recent poor weather conditions, the erection of the steel frame is well underway and will be completed over the coming weeks, to be followed by the installation of the new roof. During the Spring term, learners and staff will have an opportunity to leave their mark on the new school at a steel signing event.

As part of efforts to acknowledge the history of the school, the construction contractor has committed to the preservation and relocation of the date stone from the original school building, which was demolished in 2023, to be sited at a prominent location near the new main entrance to the school site.

In conclusion, the Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation and Welsh Language, confirmed that local residents are kept up to date on the progress of the new school through regular project newsletters, meanwhile Council officers continue to work closely with the construction contractor to ensure the smooth progress of works on site.

There was no supplementary question

The Presiding Member advised that an apology of absence had been received from Councillor D Williams and therefore question 3 would not be put to the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Corporate Services, County Borough Councillor C Leyshon.

4. Question from County Borough Councillor J. Brencher to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure, County Borough Councillor A. Crimmings:

“Can the Cabinet Member please make a statement on the significant investment to Ynysangharad War Memorial Park?”

Response of Councillor A. Crimmings

Councillor A Crimmings advised that the latest phase of significant improvements to Ynysangharad War Memorial Park, focusing on the former Pitch and Putt area, has been completed having received support from the Visit Wales Brilliant Basics Fund and the Council.

Councillor Crimmings outlined the project which included flattening the upper plateau of the former pitch and putt course and utilising a soft landscaping approach to enhance its usability as a green space. The transformation provides a more functional area and creates a versatile venue for events and similar activities with a new footway which has also been introduced to enhance accessibility and overall amenity within the park.

To ensure the ground's long-term stability following these improvements, Councillor Crimmings explained that a barrier has been put in place to help the ground settle which will provide a good outcome for public enjoyment of the area during the upcoming summer months. She commented that with regards to the National Lottery Heritage Fund investment, the project has received substantial support totalling £1.9m from NLHF, WG Transforming Towns, and the Council.

Councillor Crimmings further advised that the construction of Canolfan Calon Taf is successfully completed, with only snagging works remaining, and the centre is now fully operational. It has a dedicated space with classroom, outdoor garden featuring raised flower beds, and a greenhouse. It serves as a vibrant community hub, fostering a spirit of learning and encouraging active community engagement. The Project Co-ordinator based at Calon Taf continues to actively facilitate the delivery of courses and activities within the park, ensuring its continued role as a dynamic and engaging community space.

Councillor Crimmings confirmed that the restoration and conversion of the old disused toilet block into a Parks staff welfare facility has been completed, leading to the successful relocation of Parks staff to this facility. In addition, the Bandstand and its surrounding area have undergone complete restoration, with planting works finished, and the Bandstand floor's timeline design is set to be implemented shortly.

In conclusion, Councillor Crimmings commented that progress is ongoing in restoring the Sunken Garden area, with completion nearing for the perimeter walls and pathway repairs. Planting is scheduled to commence in the Spring.

There was no supplementary question

5. Question from County Borough Councillor C. Middle to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure, County Borough Councillor A. Crimmings:

“Can the Cabinet Member make a statement on this administration's ambitious plan to deliver 10 new MUGAs across RCT?”

Response of Councillor A. Crimmings

Councillor Crimmings advised that improving community facilities for our young people continues to be a key Council priority to promote healthy outdoor exercise and the well-being benefits that come with this. In view of this, the Council's plan is to deliver two MUGA's each year, where a need is identified, totalling ten new games areas over a 5-year period.

Councillor Crimmings explained that to date, the two MUGA's for 22/23 have been successfully delivered by the Council, utilising the allocated £200k of funding. The locations for these are Penygraig Park and Albert Road play area on the Graig. She added that both games' areas have been well received by the children and young people of the area and in Albert Road the local primary school has been using the facility for a game's session.

Members were advised that the two projects allocated funding in this financial year are underway, with the installation at Ynyscynon Park in Llwyn-Y-Pia completed before Christmas. The line marking of the surface will be undertaken in the spring when the temperature rises. Councillor Crimmings also provided an update on the second chosen location for this year is on land adjacent to the Aberdare skate park near the Michael Sobell sports centre. As well as there being an identified need in this area, it is hoped that the positioning of the MUGA will help to stop children and young people accessing the 3G pitch when its locked.

Councillor Crimmings concluded that due to poor weather in the last month work has yet to start but contractors are hoping to complete before the end of financial year if the conditions allow. Locations for 2024-25 are still being assessed by officers and will be announced shortly.

There was no supplementary question

6. Question from County Borough Councillor A. J. Dennis to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure, County Borough Councillor A. Crimmings:

"Can the relevant Cabinet Member outline what investment has been made in children's play areas across the Borough?"

Response of Councillor A. Crimmings

Councillor Crimmings responded by stating that play areas and outdoor play facilities work to encourage health, wellbeing, and serve as a vital part of our community for families, friends, and children to enjoy. She added that Rhondda Cynon Taf Council proudly own and maintain 217 play areas across the County Borough, and during 2023, a further £250k was successfully allocated for the improvement and refurbishment of play areas.

Councillor Crimmings provided an update on the latest full refurbishments which include Parc Nant Celyn in Llantwit Fardre, Sgubor Goch in Llanharry, and added that she was sure the local member would be extremely pleased with the recently completed scheme at Martins Terrace in the ward of Abercynon which brings the total investment since 2015 up to £6m.

Councillor Crimmings added that this meant that to date, 76% of the 217

facilities have now received targeted investment from the Council, resulting in a partial or full refurbishment of the park. She concluded that going forward, this administration has a commitment to the residents of RCT to continue this investment over the course of this Council term with a further seventy-five facilities to be improved.

There was no supplementary question

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

“With the announcement that essential works are to be carried out on Rhigos Mountain Road, can the Cabinet Member outline what the scheme is involved and what residents can anticipate in terms of travel disruption?”

Response of Councillor A. Morgan OBE

The Leader advised that the significant wildfire on the Rhigos Mountain Road in 2022 caused severe damage to a large area of the hillside with extensive damage to a rock netting installation that was installed to mitigate the risk of rocks and stones falling from the exposed sandstone rock face, and loose stones on the hillside above, onto Rhigos Road. There has been much temporary work and investigation work carried out to date with traffic control in place which has been frustrating.

The Leader commented that the next stage of permanent repairs are scheduled to commence in summer 2024, and due to the risk to road users as elements of the work may be so significant that the road will have to be closed temporarily at this time. The works required are replacement of netting and bolts, anchors and cables, and the installation of a permanent rock fall protection barrier to allow for the removal of the traffic lights.

The Leader advised that work will commence this year with the tender process and consideration given to the funding. He added that the delay to date has been caused by the necessary and extensive surveys which have been carried out together with work to understand the potential for rock falls as well as design work. He concluded that further announcements will be made in due course.

8. Question from County Borough Councillor L. A. Tomkinson to the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Communities, County Borough Councillor B. Harris:

“Will the Cabinet Member make a statement on the Muni Arts Centre redevelopment scheme?”

Response of Councillor B Harris:

Councillor Harris commented that the redevelopment will repair and conserve the 1890s building, with the project designed to expose elements of its stunning gothic architecture. He added that works include refurbishment of the auditorium; remodelling of the entrance foyer, bar and mezzanine; and the installation of new features such as passenger lifts and dressing rooms; as well as associated

improvements to back of house areas.

Members were advised that internally, the strip out of the building, which includes demolition work, continues to progress well. Scaffolding has also recently been installed in the main auditorium area to access the ceiling with important progress having been made with elements of the exterior of the building. Councillor Harris provided examples such as trays being installed to the rear elevation of the roof, which will support new integrated photovoltaic panels and stonework repairs have also started to the building's tower, while stonework cleaning across the building exterior is progressing.

Councillor Harris explained that the Council is continuing to work with Awen Cultural Trust, who will operate the venue once the redevelopment work has been completed. He concluded that the project is being delivered using UK Government Levelling Up funding, after £5.3m was secured by the Council during late 2021, and is due to finish this Summer, in readiness for the National Eisteddfod.

There was no supplementary question

9. Question from County Borough Councillor T. Williams to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:

"Can the Leader provide an update on the Council's almost £4.3m Cost of Living Support Scheme?"

Response of Councillor A. Morgan OBE

The Leader advised that with regards to the £125 Family Scheme: Over 20,000 households were identified as being eligible for a payment from this scheme and, to date, the Council has paid out almost £2.5M to 19,500 families. He added that 17 Resident Fuel Vouchers have been issued for residents struggling with fuel costs with 240 Resident small appliance and supermarket vouchers having been issued, The four main RCT Foodbanks have each received £10,000 and 153 Community Facilities – Energy Support grants have been paid which support venues to pay their energy bills so they can remain open. In addition, 58 Community Winter Welcome centres have received a share of the available funding, in addition to the Council's libraries. Monitoring reports due at the end of the financial year to be submitted by Mid-April.

The Leader highlighted a case study :

A resident contacted the Leader on 2nd Jan because of hardship they were facing, , and was struggling to meet costs of fuel, food and maintaining employment. Following the conversation, Officers responded by contacting the individual directly, undertaking a "What Matters" conversation and they were provided a fuel and food voucher within 24 hours which is immediately redeemable against utility bills and in a supermarket of choice.

The Leader advised that this is just one case and there are many more similar cases receiving support from Council Officers to help explain what grants and support is available to them. He added the good work being carried out by the Citizens Advice Bureau who have opened a new premise in Pontypridd and work closely with the Council.

There was no supplementary question due to the lapse of the allotted time (The Presiding Members assured Members that the clock was stopped during periods of technical difficulties).

83 Council Work Programme 2023-2024

The Service Director Democratic Services & Communication advised that representatives of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD) would be in attendance at the February Council meeting to provide an update on the inception and transition of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD) into the CJC. He also advised that the Leader's Debate (State of the County Borough Debate) would now take place in the Council meeting to be held in April.

The Service Director Democratic Services & Communication confirmed the attendance of the Cwm Taf University Health Board at the Council meeting scheduled for the 6th March 2023 (in advance of the 5pm meeting). He also advised that the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Council scheduled for the 22nd May 2024 will now take place at the earlier date of the 8th May 2024 at 4pm.

In conclusion, the Service Director Democratic Services & Communication confirmed that there would be an induction opportunity for all Members to attend and view the new facilities at Llys Cadwyn in Pontypridd. With regards to hybrid meetings, these would be undertaken on an incremental basis with a view to the next Council meeting in February to be held virtually and the meeting in March as a hybrid meeting.

84 Council Revenue Budget 2024/25 - Provisional Local Government Settlement

The Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director - Finance, Digital And Frontline Services provided Members with information in respect of the 2024/25 Provisional Local Government Settlement, and initial comments on its likely implications for the delivery of Council services.

- Members were advised of the "headlines" of the Provisional 2024/25 Settlement which were set out in the report as:
- The overall increase in Revenue Support Grant (RSG) and Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) funding for 2024/25 (of unhypothecated funding) at an all Wales level, after adjusting for transfers is 3.1% (+£169.8M).
- The settlement for Rhondda Cynon Taf, amounts to an increase of 2.8% which is below the average all Wales increase. Settlement figures across Wales range from 2.0% to 4.7%.
- A funding 'floor' protection has been included for 2024/25 so that no Council receives a settlement below 2.0%.
- There are no transfers into / out of the Settlement for 2024/25.
- The Settlement provides no indication of future year settlement levels.
- Provisional figures and indicative estimates for 2024/25 are also included

for specific grants, at an all Wales level. The Social Care Workforce Grant will reduce from £45M to £35M (all Wales level), a reduction of £0.815M for this Council. This funds our core base budget.

- The Council's General Capital Funding allocation is reduced by £0.086M to £13.800M

The Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director - Finance, Digital And Frontline Services commented that the combined effects of the means the Council has a budget gap of £36.654m which in preparing for the settlement officers have agreed to budget reduction measures in the region of £10.74m leaving a remaining budget gap of £25.911m. Members were informed that it will now be for the Cabinet to consider the implications of the above scenario in the preparation of its draft budget strategy. As part of this, consideration will be given to the outcome of the first phase of the budget consultation process

In summing up The Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director - Finance, Digital and Frontline Services concluded that Council Reserves ensure the long term sustainability and are set aside for specific purposes and financial risks. He continued that the Council has an excellent record of using these sensibly and proportionately and should not be used to deal with underlying base budget revenue issues.

The Leader thanked officers for the comprehensive report. He commented that the forthcoming year will be extremely challenging and will continue to be challenging year on year as the council faces ongoing pressures. He continued that no officer or Member wants to cut or reduce services knowing that our communities need investment but with the Local Government settlement at 2.8% tough decisions need to be taken to set a balanced budget. The Leader commented that whilst the Council will need to use reserves to close the budget gap, it is important that they are carefully considered before a decision on their use is taken as these are used year on year for long lasting investment into our Capital Programme. The Leader made clear, that while the reserves are classified as usable, the Council still has commitments in the Capital Programme such as building Extra Care facilities, new Special Schools, purchasing properties for Children's Care Homes and Infrastructure Projects which are all itemised in the Councils published accounts.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Corporate Services thanked officers for the robust report and commented that the Council will continue to invest in communities for our resident's future.

The Leader of the Opposition asked what the levies Council's pay for the South Wales Fire and Rescue cover. Since the independent report published on the 3rd January which was commissioned at the request of the Deputy Minister for Social Partnership and by the Chair of the South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority which relates to the failure in office management and would be unfair to expect Councillors to be aware of every failure in management practice but the LA is nonetheless the employer and statutory body. She asked if the levy this year will include the cost of the review and how much the review cost the public purse and if the costs of the review will be clawed back.

The Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director - Finance, Digital And Frontline Services replied that he was not in a position to confirm what the levy would seek to recover which are matters for the Fire Authority and the Council has been consulted on a level of levy for the forthcoming year which enables the Fire

Service to set a legal budget.

Another Member sought clarity on what the proposed increase of 3.9% meant in real terms for the average Band D property and if any of the costs identified are negated by the higher premiums that the Council are set to receive from Long Term Empty Properties and second home ownership.

The Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director - Finance, Digital And Frontline Services confirmed that the additional premiums from second homes and long term empty properties had been factored into the figures. He also confirmed that the Band D property currently pays £1614 per annum with a proposed increase of 3.9%, this equates to £1.20 per week.

Another Member referred to the Budget Strategy which lists perimeters for setting the Budget and asked when the list was drawn up and agreed and if the perimeters are the same as those used for 23/24, and is it known if the public agree to the use of the perimeters. The Member also referred to the efficiency savings that had been delivered early and asked what those referred to

The Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director - Finance, Digital And Frontline Services replied that the perimeters are the same used as in previous years and are included in Budget Strategy Reports that are used for Public Consultations. He also confirmed that the early efficiency savings were set out in the Cabinet report in November 2023

Another Member commented on other reports of other Council's throughout the UK facing financial difficulties and stated that he was confident that RCTCBC's Leader and Officers will put the residents of RCT first. He asked that the Leader reach out to Town and Community Council's and ask them to help with Services. He commented in his capacity of the Leader of Pontyclun Town Council that they are all there to help and support and all want to put residents first. He stated that they would like to work together to explore any possibilities that the Community Councils can take on services that the Council are having to cut.

The Leader welcomed the comments and advised that he will take up the offer to meet with them.

The Leader of the RCT Independent Group asked how many long term empty properties are in RCT compared to recent years and also asked if the recent new rollout of the 20mph speed limit was funded in part by the Council.

The Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director - Finance, Digital And Frontline Services advised that the Council has committed to take a review at end of first year of rollout of the Long Term Empty Properties so this will take place at the end of this financial year. He also confirmed that the 20mph rollout was fully funded by Welsh Government

Following consideration and conclusion of the report it was **RESOLVED** to:

1. Note the Provisional 2024/25 Local Government Settlement, announced by the Minister for Finance and Local Government on the 20th December 2023;
2. Note that the Final 2024/25 Local Government Settlement is expected during early March 2024; and
3. Note the approach to budget consultation for 2024/25 as already determined.

85 Welsh Church Act Annual Report and External Audit Report 2022/2023

In his report the Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director - Finance, Digital And Frontline Services advised that the report provides Council with the Audited accounts of the Welsh Church Act Fund and of the External Audit opinion which is an unqualified, clean opinion with the Audit process requiring a minor disclosure amendment only. He sought approval of the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Welsh Church Act Fund for the financial year ended 31st March 2023.

Following the completion of the audit process and an unqualified audit opinion; and it was **RESOLVED** to:

1. Consider the External Auditor report – “2022- 23 Audit Plan” (Appendix 1);
(b) Consider the External Auditor report – “Audit of Accounts Report” (Appendix 2);
2. Approve and note the Welsh Church Act Fund Annual Report and Financial Statements for the financial year 2022/2023 (Appendix 3); and
3. Approve and note the Letter of Representation relating to the Welsh Church Act Fund (Appendix 4).

86 Council Tax Reduction Scheme

The Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director - Finance, Digital and Frontline Services advised that the report represents the annual requirement for Council to adopt a council tax reduction scheme (CTRS) by 31st January 2024. He added that it is a national Welsh Government scheme with a small number of local discretions as set out in the report. He confirmed that there are no changes proposed to the scheme for the next financial year confirmed that the Council has consulted on the local discretions as part of the Council’s general budget consultation process and the feedback included in the report.

A Member noted that at section 4.3 of the report it states that the majority of respondents are in favour of keeping the three discretions but at section 5.4 of the report information is provided that residents were not given at the time of consultation which is the total number of persons that has benefitted from these discretions. The Member asked if the information for the number of take up of these discretions can be included in the consultation next year so that residents can make a more informed judgement. The Member also asked if it were possible for the existence of the discretions can be mentioned in the letter that accompanies the Annual Council Tax bill

The Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director - Finance, Digital and Frontline Services noted the Members comments for consideration

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

1. Note and adopt the provisions of the Prescribed Requirements Regulations and the amendments made to those regulations by the Amendment Regulations as the Council’s local CTRS for 2024/25, subject to the local discretions that the Council is able to exercise and

subject to the regulations being approved by Welsh Government on 16th January 2024 and coming into force on 19th January 2024;

2. Note the outcome of the consultation exercise undertaken by the Council on the local discretions applicable to the CTRS for 2024/25; and
3. Confirm the discretions applicable to the Council's local CTRS for 2024/25 as set out at paragraph 5.3 (Table 2) of this report.

87 Rhondda Cynon Taf Revised Local Development Plan 2022-2037 - Preferred Strategy

The Director of Prosperity and Development presented a report to Members which set out the Preferred Strategy for the Revised Local Development Plan (RLDP) 2022 – 2037, (shown in full at Appendix 1.) The report sought Members approval to carry out statutory public consultation on the RLDP Preferred Strategy that has been prepared in accordance with legislation and national planning policy.

The Director continued that the report sets out the key Issues, Vision, Objectives and strategy options; before presenting a Preferred Strategy. At this strategic level, it will seek to address the needs of RCT by proposing levels of development growth and where this should be spatially distributed across the County Borough. It is considered that several key elements of the current LDP strategy are sound; particularly a need to continue with the different strategy approach for the north and south of the County Borough.

The Leader thanked the officers for the report which is now proposed to move to the next stage for statutory consultation. He advised that feedback from the consultation will then be considered before progressing through to the next stages. He commented that whilst the targets for housebuilding are realistic, there is a need to ensure that infrastructure is planned alongside this to ensure medical facilities, schools and sufficient green spaces for leisure and play are available as well as the expansion to the South Wales Metro

The Leader of the Opposition sought clarity around candidate sites, urged all members to input into the candidate sites to avoid contentious issues going forward when planning applications are received. The Member referred to the two train stations mentioned in the LDP at Hirwaun and Rhigos and asked for the exact location of these stations and asked if there would be consultation with local residents.

The Director of Prosperity and Development advised that he could not confirm the location of the stations at present and the role of the LDP will be to protect available land for the proposed line extension and stations but the process of determining where those will be a separate exercise carried out by Transport colleagues including Highways and Transport for Wales.

The Leader of the RCT Independent Group asked if there is opportunity for the Council to engage with residents on flood mitigation matters. The Member also raised concerns that the proposed 9,000 extra properties to be built will be served by a single carriageway and with the roads already congested this would result in a huge increase in congestion in and around the area. He asked if

alternative options are being considered in the Active travel plan encourage residents to leave their cars at home and use public transport. He also commented that as part of reducing the amount of traffic on the roads and with the relocation of the Council's Head Office to Pontypridd, whether a flexible approach to staff required to attend the office should also be considered so they attend only when necessary

The Director of Prosperity and Development advised that the role of the LDP will be to promote development that protects existing communities from flooding and where possible to prevent new development in areas that are liable to flooding and where development is needed in areas liable to flooding that it is done in a way that is resilient to flooding as possible. The Director continued that in terms of the 9,000 properties that need to be delivered, he clarified that he is not yet in a position to confirm the sites but any sites identified for development are likely to have some form of issue around infrastructure, flooding or Biodiversity which will be addressed throughout the draft stages of the plan. In terms of the Railway halt at Pontypridd, he commented that Pontypridd is seen as one of the Strategic principal growth areas but determining individual projects like a rail halt was not the role of the preferred strategy at this stage.

A Member raised concern with the Strategy as the Eastern side of the proposed development in Llantwit Fardre has been called in by Welsh Government and that planning permission had been overturned due to it being a C2 Flood Plane and the planning inspectorate also reporting that building on this site would be a breach of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act Wales, therefore the plan is not deliverable. He also sought clarification on the £8m being invested towards the clearance of the coal colliery in Beddau.

The Director replied that he takes on board the Members comments, he advised that to get to this stage the flooding issue has been overcome and this is the preferred strategy that is for public consultation and we will take on board comments that come back before sites are taken forward for development.

A Member, who is also a member of the LDP Steering Group, commented on making the list of the potential three hundred sites public as soon as possible. He further requested that consideration is given to the natural environment and refrain from overdeveloping communities so if the demographic changes the targets will be revised to reflect the data in order to preserve green spaces where possible. The Member also requested that the Council considers, where possible, that new developments have the supporting infrastructure in place, with sufficient affordable housing and adequate public transport links are considered as part of the planning process. The Member concluded that support for the Welsh language is key and opportunities should be available for pupils in the new developments to attend a Welsh school in their community.

The Director thanked the Member for their comments and advised that all evidence currently points towards needing the nine thousand homes and stated that the more of these that the Council is able to deliver upon, the more affordable housing it can offer. He added that the Council is statutorily required to review the plan every four years and reassured that if the housing need changes, adjustments to the figures can be made. He confirmed that the candidate sites will also be made available at time of the public consultation. He also reassured the Member that Biodiversity occupies a higher priority in the planning process than it has ever before and applicants will be required to evidence mitigations or enhancements to biodiversity before development is

approved.

A Member sought clarity on the section of the report that suggests that more affordable housing is required than can be built on. The Director replied that of the nine thousand homes planned for, in effect over five thousand of those would be required to deal with the people currently on the housing waiting list which is a significant amount. He confirmed that there is a very high demand for affordable housing more than can be realistically delivered.

A Member raised concern at the number of large empty buildings in Pontypridd town centre and asked what the Council is doing to attract good quality businesses to take over those units. The Director replied that the LDP promotes Pontypridd as a town and encourages the conversion of large empty buildings. He added that this has been successful in terms of regeneration and most recently the Council has seen private developers take on the old HSBC Bank to bring it back into commercial use. He confirmed that the Council will continue with those programmes to promote regeneration schemes.

A Member referred to the support available to businesses that are affected by roadworks in the valleys and asked if this has been considered as part of the plan. The Director replied that the Council will look to maximise the benefit of the investment of the dualling of the A465 and the Strategic site at Hirwaun is one of the ways the LDP is proposing that this is done. He added that the Northern Strategy will promote these opportunities for sustainable growth and communities in village centres across our Northern valleys.

A Member conveyed their disappointment that Treorchy is not being appointed as principal town, the Member commented that the term key settlement was inadequate and requested that this to be reviewed as part of the consultation process.

Following the conclusion of the discussions, it was **RESOLVED** to:

Approve the RLDP Preferred Strategy for statutory public and stakeholder consultation

(**Note:** Councillor K Johnson wished to have it recorded that he voted against the recommendation).

88 **REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS, POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATIONS**

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services (and Electoral Registration / Returning Officer) presented his report and advised of the requirement on the local authority to undertake a review every five years of parliamentary polling districts, places and stations and to complete the current review by the 31st January 2025. In view of the recent UK Parliamentary constituency boundary changes it was considered prudent to undertake the review as soon as possible and in advance of the next general election.

The Director advised that the aims, purpose and timeline of the review are set out in section 5 of the report and the consultation exercise undertaken with the

public and key stakeholders, including Local Members. The public responses to the consultation exercise are set out in Appendix 2 to the report. All consultation responses and Member submissions have been reviewed by the Returning Officer and Electoral Services team and the Director referred Members to the recommendations to approve the proposals to amend any existing polling districts, places and stations as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report and that any consequential changes will be implemented to the register of electors.

The Director pointed out that there is one polling district where a suitable location for the polling station has not been achieved as yet but he added that work will continue in conjunction with the local member to find a suitable location ahead of the next election.

In conclusion, the Director advised that he will continue to monitor all polling districts, places and stations, particularly those being used for the first time in advance of the up and coming Police & Crime Commissioner elections in May. He assured Members that should any station become unavailable or deemed to be unsuitable, for whatever reason, between the statutory review periods, any changes will be made in consultation with the local Members.

Following discussion it was **RESOLVED** to:

1. Note the responses received in relation to the Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations Review which are summarised at Appendix 2 to the report;
2. Approve the proposals to amend existing Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report and notes that the Electoral Registration Officer would implement any consequential changes to the register of electors; and
3. Note that the Returning Officer will continue to monitor Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations as outlined in Appendix 1 and/or where no suitable alternative venue is available at any relevant time note any changes would be made in consultation with the relevant Local Member(s).

89 The Annual Self-Assessment 2022/23 Incorporating the Council's Corporate Performance Report

The Chief Executive presented his report which set out the Council's draft Annual Self-Assessment for 2022/23 following its consideration at the Governance and Audit Committee on the [19 December 2023](#) and the Joint Consultative Committee on [20th December 2023](#) (the minutes from both committees being included in the appendices for Members' reference).

The Chief Executive advised that the purpose of the statutory Self -Assessment is to provide assurance that the Council is exercising its functions effectively, using its resources efficiently and economically and ensuring its governance arrangements are effective. In undertaking the annual self-assessment, the Council is discharging its duty to do so under the Local Government Elections

Wales Act 2021.

The Chief Executive commented that this is the second year the Council has undertaken its statutory self-assessment which incorporates its annual corporate performance report. He added that the assessment brings together a wealth of information used to keep the Council's performance under review, including the progress made against the themes for improvement identified in the previous year, how the priorities have been delivered in the corporate plan, an assessment of the Council's corporate functions, the self-evaluation of council services and how the sustainable development principle has been applied.

The Chief Executive advised that the assessment brings together a huge amount of evidence from across the Council, gathered through its performance management framework and quarterly reports and the many reports brought together from Cabinet, Scrutiny Committees and Council meetings, which have been considered by Members throughout the year. It represents thousands of pages of information and throughout the assessment hyperlinks are available to the supporting evidence and data.

The Chief Executive commented that the report demonstrates the remarkable diversity of Council functions, the scale and scope of the services it delivers, and the considerable progress made in delivering its commitments throughout 2022/2023. He advised that sections 2 and 3 of the self-assessment provide an overview of the many commitments that have been met during this period. The Chief Executive stated that, across the themes of people, places and prosperity, he is satisfied through the self-assessment and via the challenge sessions he has held with the relevant Directors, that the Council has made good progress during the year, and in simple terms, this is a Council that delivers on its commitments.

In terms of priorities for improvement going forward, the Chief Executive advised That the nine themes were identified in the self-assessment for the preceding year (listed in paragraph 5.61 of the report) good progress has been made as described in section one of the assessment but they remain long term priorities for the Council. The Chief Executive commented that in addition, following the self-assessment exercise, the Council must continue to strengthen its arrangements for service user engagement and participation, including the evaluation of outcomes, and to build on the work carried out by the Council to strengthen the organisational culture in respect of diversity, equality and inclusion. The self-assessment includes evidence that the Council is well run, but the Chief Executive stressed the importance of the Council being prepared to challenge itself and to change its ways of working where needed.

The Chief Executive commented that he is satisfied that this comprehensive and robust self-assessment demonstrates that the Council is discharging its functions effectively and using its resources efficiently and wisely and that the robust governance and performance management arrangements are in place to ensure that it continues to do so. He added that he is happy to commend the self-assessment for approval ahead of its publication within four weeks and he acknowledged the work of the Performance Team, in particular Ms Lesley Lawson, for producing the report and for keeping the Council on track throughout the year.

The Leader of the Opposition referred to part 6 of the Act and paragraph 4.3 of the report and she sought clarification on the closing remarks on improving pupil

attendance, set out on page 241 of the report. She paid particular reference to school attendance continuing to be a strong area of focus within the prosperity priority of the Corporate Plan. She queried whether, in the hope that pupil attendance will return to its pre pandemic level, any regard is paid to this mission for improvement to attendance. Furthermore, should the Council decide that pupils need to live a greater distance from the school to qualify for school transport she considered this would impact on families and undermine the very spirit of the challenge to improve attendance. The Leader of the Opposition asked whether any regard is paid to such proposals by the Corporate Senior Management team and is the human cost ever a consideration or does the financial argument prevail to further improve school attendance.

The Chief Executive responded that there is a section within the report which outlines how the Council delivers against its priorities. It also highlights those areas where progress has not been as advanced as we would like, including improving school attendance which is an area that continues to prove challenging in terms of attaining the pre pandemic attendance figures. The Chief Executive added that there are a number of factors that influence school attendance and it relates directly to the Council's educational attainment outcomes and therefore remains a priority for the Council's education services. He commented that in recent months a slow and steady improvement has been evidenced in school attendance rates as a result of the efforts being made.

In relation to the Home to School transport issue, the Chief Executive advised that the proposals have been put to Members around the potential changes which have been subject to consultation, Officers are currently considering the responses before further recommendations are proposed. He assured all Members that the budget is a vitally important consideration and is one of the key priorities identified within the self-assessment in terms of the Council's ongoing financial viability. In conclusion, the Chief Executive confirmed that the implications of service changes are serious consideration for the senior leadership team and all Members.

In response to a query regarding the impact of road traffic and air quality, the Chief Executive advised that the Council has statutory responsibilities around local air quality management. There are local air quality management areas which have been declared as a consequence of nitrogen dioxide pollution derived from vehicle omissions which are closely monitored and work is undertaken across the Council, including the Council's highways and traffic teams to manage and mitigate the impact.

A Member commented that the numerous links to other documents contained within the report, which need to be read in conjunction with the report to understand whether the Council has met its performance requirements during the year, detract from the overall judgement and make it difficult to see where we have not made as much progress. She added that the bullet point format also proves difficult to identify an 'honest reflection'. The Member queried the definition of a 'wicked issue' and asked for further information in relation to what is described as inadequate in terms of service user engagement and participation (which is also referenced in the Minutes of the Governance & Audit Committee) and how the Council intends to improve the evaluation of outcomes.

The Chief Executive provided an explanation to the term 'wicked issues,' which are the key priorities and themes that emerge from the self-evaluation on an annual basis which the Council needs to focus on, of which nine were identified

from the previous self-evaluation, such as the cost-of-living crisis, financial planning and resilience and supporting those in housing need. The Chief Executive commented that he had also highlighted a further two priorities in his presentation, those being strengthening our work on equality and diversity and improving service user engagement and participation. He added that the links serve to support the huge volume of information and enhance the document should Members wish to analyse the summary in greater depth. In section three of the self -assessment, he explained that further areas are explicitly identified where we have not made as much progress as we would like and the Council needs to focus its attention. Given that the report refers to the previous year, it is pleasing to note that progress has been made in many of these areas during his year. With regard to the two specific points raised around service user engagement and participation, the Chief Executive acknowledged that this is an area recognised where more consistency and improvements are required across some areas of the Council (with some service areas already achieving good levels of engagement).

The Leader of the Independent Group paid thanks to the Chief Executive and the Senior Leadership team for steering the council through some very difficult times.

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

1. Consider that the draft Self-Assessment at Appendix 1, is an accurate and robust reflection of the position of the Council and its services and meets the requirements of the [Local Government and Elections \(Wales\) Act 2021 Part 6](#).
2. Note the progress made in respect of the improvement themes identified in the 2021/22 Self-Assessment.
3. Consider the observations of the [Governance and Audit Committee on 19 December 2023](#) and the [Joint Consultative Committee on 20 December 2023](#).
4. Approve the Annual Self-Assessment 2022/23 incorporating the Council's Corporate Performance Report, and its publication within four weeks of approval.

90 Notice of Motion

To consider the under-mentioned Notice of Motion standing in the names of County Borough Councillors A. J. Dennis, C. Preedy, 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, 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, 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, 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.

A few months ago, it was announced that TATA Steel – a major employer in South Wales (in particular), and the U.K. Westminster Government had agreed a package of support to “secure the future of Welsh steel.”

Despite the overall package amounting to a headline-grabbing £1.25bn, the reality is that the package and transition ambitions have fallen well short and the announcement amounts to little more than a sticking plaster for the continued production of steel in Wales.

The investment only supports the transition from blast furnaces to Electric Arc Furnaces, which will mean that the site at nearby Port Talbot will no longer have the ability to produce primary steel as the quality and grade of production will not be up to the necessary standard due to the fact that Electric Arc Furnaces recycle scrap steel.

This short-sighted investment plan should instead have focussed and made provisions for a transition to the Direct Reduced Iron (DRI) method of production. DRI can be supported by the use of Natural Gas before opening up the possibility of Hydrogen-powered steel production, which is a more sustainable method of steel production and considerably more ambitious in terms of decarbonisation.

In addition, and most importantly, the investment package is also estimated to lead to 3,000 job losses, with the majority of those coming from the Port Talbot plant. There are RCT residents working at the steel works in Port Talbot and it is likely that a significant proportion of that number will be affected – either directly or indirectly.

Since the announcement, it has emerged that neither the Trade Unions nor the Welsh Government formed any part of these discussions, yet they are the very organisations who will have to pick up the pieces and provide support to those affected when these anticipated job losses occur.

This Council therefore notes:

- That the “investment package” for TATA Steel falls well short of what is required and does little to secure the future of the industry in Wales.
- That the U.K. Government’s bilateral dealings with TATA have no regard for the significant workforce impact that will form part of the expected job losses.
- That the transition to solely Electric Arc Furnace production will be a short-sighted move for British steel production capacity and is a considerable missed opportunity in terms of decarbonising a vital part of the British (and Welsh) economy.

This Council resolves to:

- Request that the Council Leader writes to the Members of Parliament and Members of the Senedd that represent the communities in Rhondda Cynon Taf and ask that they jointly support the representations made by this Council to the relevant U.K. Government Minister(s) to express this

Council's view that the investment package announced falls woefully short.

- Notes the findings of the “Wrong Deal for Steel” and supports the steps laid out by Industrial Communities Alliance.

At the meeting the Chair announced that in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10.4.1 the following amendment to the Notice of Motion had been received from Councillors K Morgan, A O Rogers, S Evans, D Grehan, D Wood, H Gronow, P Evans, A Ellis

The amended motion read:

A few months ago, it was announced that TATA Steel – a major employer in South Wales (in particular), and the U.K. Westminster Government had agreed a package of support to “secure the future of Welsh steel.”

Despite the overall package amounting to a headline-grabbing £1.25bn, the reality is that the package and transition ambitions have fallen well short and the announcement amounts to little more than a sticking plaster for the continued production of steel in Wales.

The investment only supports the transition from blast furnaces to Electric Arc Furnaces, which will mean that the site at nearby Port Talbot will no longer have the ability to produce primary steel as the quality and grade of production will not be up to the necessary standard due to the fact that Electric Arc Furnaces recycle scrap steel.

This short-sighted investment plan should instead have focussed and made provisions for a transition to the Direct Reduced Iron (DRI) method of production. DRI can be supported by the use of Natural Gas before opening up the possibility of Hydrogen-powered steel production, which is a more sustainable method of steel production and considerably more ambitious in terms of decarbonisation.

In addition, and most importantly, the investment package is also estimated to lead to 3,000 job losses, with the majority of those coming from the Port Talbot plant. There are RCT residents working at the steel works in Port Talbot and it is likely that a significant proportion of that number will be affected – either directly or indirectly.

Since the announcement, it has emerged that neither the Trade Unions nor the Welsh Government formed any part of these discussions, yet they are the very organisations who will have to pick up the pieces and provide support to those affected when these anticipated job losses occur.

This Council therefore notes:

- That the “investment package” for TATA Steel falls well short of what is required and does little to secure the future of the industry in Wales.
- That the U.K. Government's bilateral dealings with TATA have no regard for the significant workforce impact that will form part of the expected job losses.
- That the transition to solely Electric Arc Furnace production will be a short-sighted move for British steel production capacity and is a considerable

missed opportunity in terms of decarbonising a vital part of the British (and Welsh) economy.

This Council resolves to:

- Request that the Council Leader writes to the Members of Parliament and Members of the Senedd that represent the communities in Rhondda Cynon Taf and ask that they jointly support the representations made by this Council to the relevant U.K. Government Minister(s) to express this Council's view that the investment package announced falls woefully short.
- Notes the findings of the "Wrong Deal for Steel" and supports the steps laid out by Industrial Communities Alliance.
- Request that The Leader of the Council writes to the Leaders of the other 9 Councils in the Alliance (The Industrial Communities Alliance) and ask that they agree to be a party to further approaching the UK Government to improve their investment in the steel Industry so that any job losses are minimized across Wales and can be managed effectively on a voluntary basis in agreement with TATA and the relevant Trade Unions.

In accordance with the Council's Rules of Procedure 12.7, a vote was taken in respect of the amendment to the Notice of Motion and it was unanimously **RESOLVED** to adopt the amendment which then became the substantive motion, as set out above.

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

To consider the under-mentioned Notice of Motion standing in the names of County Borough Councillors S. Emanuel, S. Rees, L. Addiscott, M. D. Ashford, J. Barton, D. R. Bevan, J. Bonetto, S. Bradwick, J. Brencher, G. Caple, J. Cook, A. Crimmings, R. Davis, S. J. Davies, 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, 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.

This Council condemns the utterly inadequate settlement for Wales announced by the UK Tory government in the Autumn Statement.

This settlement provides only £305 million extra for the Welsh Government over a two year period – and this means that the Welsh Government have around £160 million next year to meet all of the pressures in the NHS, local government and all of the other services it provides for the people of Wales.

To put this into perspective, RCT Council spends more than £258m on education alone. Pressures in just this Council are estimated at £35m and across local government in Wales at £432m, even after council tax rises.

The fact remains that this settlement will go nowhere near meeting the inflationary pressures faced by services in Wales. It is a raw deal for the people of Wales and shows how little the U.K. Tory Government cares about the people of Wales.

This Council therefore calls on the U.K. Tory Government to invest in public services - including health, education, and local government services, and to provide a fair settlement to the Welsh Government in order to ensure that services in Wales can be properly funded.

To this end, this Council resolves to request that the Leader of the Council writes to call upon Tory Government Ministers to announce additional investment in the Budget in March.

At the meeting the Chair announced that in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10.4.1 the following amendment to the Notice of Motion had been received from Councillors D Grehan, K Morgan, A O Rogers, S Evans, D Wood, H Gronow, P Evans, A Ellis

The amended motion read:

This Council condemns the utterly inadequate settlement for Wales announced by the UK Tory government in the Autumn Statement.

This settlement provides only £305 million extra for the Welsh Government over a two-year period – and this means that the Welsh Government have around £160 million next year to meet all of the pressures in the NHS, local government and all of the other services it provides for the people of Wales.

To put this into perspective, RCT Council spends more than £258m on education alone. Pressures in just this Council are estimated at £35m and across local government in Wales at £432m, even after council tax rises.

The fact remains that this settlement will go nowhere near meeting the inflationary pressures faced by services in Wales. It is a raw deal for the people of Wales and shows how little the U.K. Tory Government cares about the people of Wales.

This Council therefore calls on the U.K. Tory Government to invest in public services - including health, education, and local government services, and to provide a fair settlement to the Welsh Government in order to ensure that services in Wales can be properly funded.

This Council resolves that the Leader of the Council writes to and calls upon The Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer to reinstate the funding due to Wales in order to return to the fair funding for Wales as highlighted by the First Minister and the Leader of Plaid Cymru in the Senedd following the Autumn Statement announcement.

The Council further resolves that the Leader of the Council writes to all Political Leaders in Westminster asking them to pledge that if they are part of the UK Government following the General Election, which the Prime Minister has

announced will be held in the second half of 2024. they will commit to bridge the gap in the Welsh Settlement 2024/25 left by the outgoing Tory UK Government.

In accordance with the Council's Rules of Procedure 12.7, a vote was taken in respect of the amendment to the Notice of Motion and it was **RESOLVED** not to adopt the amendment.

Following discussion in respect of the substantive motion and in accordance with the Council Rules of Procedure 12.7, it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the substantive motion.

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

This meeting closed at 7.30 pm

**Councillor G Hughes
Chair.**

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

7 FEBRUARY 2024

MEMBERS QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & COMMUNICATION.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To present the order of questions in respect of the Members Questions on Notice, following the amendment to the process agreed at the [Council AGM 2019](#).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Receive the Questions and any supplementary questions proposed, as in accordance with the running order advised upon in 4.3 of the report, which should not exceed a 20-minute time period.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 As agreed at the Council AGM on the 15th May, 2019, Members agreed to amend Council Procedure Rule 9.2 in respect of Members Questions on Notice. A further amendment was made to Council Procedure Rule 9.2 at the Council AGM on the 26th May 2021 in respect of supplementary questions following expiry of the 20 minute time duration. [Council AGM 2021](#)

4. MEMBERS QUESTION ON NOTICE

- 4.1 The closing date for receipt of Members Questions on Notice to the Council Business Unit for the Council meeting on the 7th February 2024 was 5pm on the 25th January 2024.
- 4.2 34 questions were received and put forward to the Council Ballot held on the 29th January 2024, to determine the running order of the questions at the Council Meeting.
- 4.3 The results of the ballot are outlined below:

Number	Corresponding Question
1	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor Sheryl Evans to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:</p> <p>“Will the Cabinet Member make a statement on the recent awarding of Welsh Government funding under the Resilient Roads and Local Transport Fund?”</p>
2	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor J. Edwards to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:</p> <p>“Would the Leader update on the progress of the Welsh Government funded walking and cycling route along the river through the Rhondda Fach?”</p>
3	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor S. Rees to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:</p> <p>“Can the Leader provide an update on the progress on the delivery of the Labour Group’s manifesto commitments?”</p>
4	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor D. Owen-Jones to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:</p> <p>“Can the Leader provide an update on the progress of the A4119 dualling works?”</p>
5	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor A. Rogers to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure, County Borough Councillor A. Crimmings:</p> <p>“Can the relevant Cabinet Member share how this Council has invested in recreational activity for young residents in the Hirwaun, Penderyn and Rhigos ward please?”</p>

6	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor A. Ellis to the Cabinet Member for Development & Prosperity, County Borough Councillor M. Norris:</p> <p>“Can the Cabinet Member confirm if the Lady Windsor site in Ynysybwl has been identified for development within the draft LDP please”</p>
7	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor S. J. Davies to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:</p> <p>“Can the Leader make a statement on capital investment across Rhondda Cynon Taf?”</p>
8	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor R. Evans to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:</p> <p>“Will the Cabinet Member provide an update on the scheme to upgrade the culvert on the industrial estate in Porth?”</p>
9	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor D. Grehan to the Cabinet Member for Development & Prosperity, County Borough Councillor M. Norris:</p> <p>“Mae nifer o ardaloedd yn fy ward i, sydd yn amlwg wedi eu hadeiladu gan y Cyngor neu wedi eu hadeiladu wrth greu ddatblygiadau newydd – llwybrau, grisiau, ardaloedd gwyrdd. Erbyn hyn mae'r Cyngor yn dweud nad yw'r ardalodd yma yn eiddo i'r Cyngor ac felly nad oes ganddyn nhw gyfrifoldeb dros drwsio neu gadw'r ardaloedd yma. Galla i ofyn i'r Cyngor yma cymryd cyfrifoldeb dros yr ardaloedd yma er diogelwch ein trigolion?”</p> <p>“There are a number of areas in my ward, which have obviously been built by the Council or have been built when creating new developments – paths, stairs, green areas. By now the Council is saying that these areas are not the property of the Council and therefore it has no responsibility for repairing or maintaining these areas. May I ask this Council to take responsibility for these areas for the safety of our residents?”</p>
10	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor M. Maohoub to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:</p> <p>“Can the Cabinet Member make a statement on the Council's preparations and actions taken during the recent period of wet weather?”</p>

11	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor V. Dunn to the Deputy Leader of the Council and Armed Forces Champion, County Borough Councillor M. Webber:</p> <p>“Can the Cabinet Member make a statement on the Council’s programme of events, particularly in the Aberdare area?”</p>
12	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor G. Holmes to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:</p> <p>“Will the Leader make a statement on road maintenance and outline how this Council is tackling the issue of potholes?”</p>
13	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor R. Williams to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:</p> <p>“Can the Council Leader tell this Council if the opposition group have put forward any budget suggestions in the face of what you have described – both in the Council Chamber and publicly in the media - as one of the most difficult budget rounds RCT has faced?”</p>
14	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor R. Yeo to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:</p> <p>“The pressures facing Local Authority budgets are well documented and finances are becoming increasingly strained, but can the Cabinet Member outline what winter maintenance preparations are being considered and confirm whether this remains a priority for the Council?”</p>
15	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor G. O. Jones to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:</p> <p>“Can the Council Leader set out what level of protection our school budgets have in the draft budget being worked on?”</p>
16	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor J. Smith to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:</p> <p>“With the introduction of the Social Partnership and Procurement Bill in Wales, can the Leader please outline what action RCT are taking to ensure compliance with the legislation?”</p>

17	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor N.H. Morgan to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:</p> <p>“Can the leader update on what flood resilience bids the Council is putting forward to the Welsh Government for the forthcoming year?”</p>
18	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor J. Cook BEM to the Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation and Welsh Language, County Borough Councillor R. Lewis:</p> <p>“Can the Cabinet Member make a statement on school budget funding plans and proposals, particularly in relation to cash amounts and percentages?”</p>
19	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor W. Hughes to the Deputy Leader of the Council and Armed Forces Champion, County Borough Councillor M. Webber:</p> <p>“What support does this Council provide to the local Armed Forces community?”</p>
20	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor D. Williams to the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Corporate Services, County Borough Councillor T. Leyshon:</p> <p>“Would the Cabinet Member provide a further update on the progress of EV charging point rollouts in RCT?”</p>
21	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor D. Wood to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:</p> <p>“On Friday 19th January, whilst in Pontypridd, I met 3 different people of varying demographics, who had great difficulties with paying for parking at the RCT car parks. In each case, all had difficulties because there was no hybrid facility available, only coin payments. This included an RCT officer, a mother with a newborn and toddler and a businessman who was very late for his meeting, whilst trying to obtain cash for the machines. Could RCT parking services please explain whether there are any plans to facilitate a change to hybrid payment because this antiquated system is deterring visitors and businesses from visiting. At this time of year and with a cost of living crisis we really need to make sure that parking is easier not more difficult”</p>
22	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor E. L. Dunning to the Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation and Welsh Language, County Borough Councillor R. Lewis:</p>

	<p>“Will the Cabinet Member please make a statement on outreach work and detached youth service provision in Rhondda Cynon Taf, particularly in the Ystrad area?”</p>
23	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor L. Addiscott to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure, County Borough Councillor A. Crimmings:</p> <p>“Will the Cabinet Member make a statement on investment in our sports centres and outline how this has impacted their usage?”</p>
24	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor L. Ellis to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:</p> <p>“Can the Leader provide an update on the programme of coal tip management across RCT?”</p>
25	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor W. Treeby to the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Communities, County Borough Councillor B. Harris:</p> <p>“Can the Cabinet Member make a statement on what support the Council is providing to Paddling Pool groups in Rhondda Cynon Taf?”</p>
26	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor M. Powell to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:</p> <p>“Could the Cabinet portfolio holder for highways say what measures or proposals the RCT Highways department are considering to alleviate the dire traffic congestion problems that the Pontypridd Town centre has been enduring for many, many years please?”</p>
27	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor S. Emanuel to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:</p> <p>“Will the Leader provide an update on the progress of the South Wales Metro in the Rhondda valley?”</p>

28	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor G. E. Williams to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:</p> <p>“With Storm Dennis now almost 4 years ago, can the Leader give an assessment on the progress made since that Storm, which brought so much devastation to RCT?”</p>
29	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor A. S. Fox to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:</p> <p>“Can the Leader provide an update to Members on the discussions taking place given the significant financial pressures facing the public sector next year?”</p>
30	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor J. Bonetto to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:</p> <p>“Will the Leader provide an update on the progress of the South Wales Metro, and in particular on the depot at Taff’s Well?”</p>
31	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor K. Morgan to the Deputy Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor M Webber:</p> <p>“Has this council formally evaluated the publics’ views on the value of consultation exercises undertaken by the council?”</p>
32	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor C. Preedy to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure, County Borough Councillor A. Crimmings:</p> <p>“Can the Cabinet Member please give an update on the usage of the National Lido of Wales’ and any information on how long the summer season will be this year?”</p>
33	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor S. Hickman to the Cabinet Member for Development and Prosperity, County Borough Councillor M. A. Norris:</p> <p>“Will the Cabinet Member make a statement on investment in Porth town centre?”</p>
34	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor W. Lewis to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure, County Borough Councillor A. Crimmings:</p> <p>“Can the Cabinet Member update on recycling rates in RCT and what progress is being made to improve these?”</p>

- 4.4 At the Council meeting a maximum of 20 minutes shall be allowed for Questions on Notice. Any questions that are not dealt with in this time limit shall fall. Any questions on notice not answered will need to be resubmitted to the Proper Officer for the next full Council meeting in accordance with these rules.

5. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 5.1 The amendments to the Council Procedure Rule in respect of Members Questions was considered and agreed at the Council's AGM 2019 and AGM 2021, following consultation with the Constitution Committee.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The amendment to the Council procedure rule taken forward at the Council AGM, allows the opportunity for more Members to ask a question at Council

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 8.1 The report has been prepared in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9.2.

9. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES.

- 9.1 The opportunity for Members to propose questions at Council meetings allows Members to receive information which potentially detail the Council priorities. It also embraces the Future Generations Act as all work and decisions taken by Council seek to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of the County Borough.

10. CONCLUSION

- 10.1 Detailing the procedure for Members Questions on Notice assists in transparency for both Members and for public engagement.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee – Overview & Scrutiny Committee

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

7 FEBRUARY 2024

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES &
COMMUNICATION.**

Item: MEMBERS QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Background Papers

[Council AGM 2019.](#)

[Council AGM 2021](#)

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2023 - 2024

COUNCIL

7 FEBRUARY 2024

NOTICE OF MOTION

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & COMMUNICATION

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Council is asked to consider the Notice of Motion (NOM) as set out below for which the necessary notice has been provided and make an appropriate recommendation in accordance with Rule 10.1 of the Constitution.

2. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Consider the Notice of Motion as outlined in paragraph 4.2 and make an appropriate recommendation; and
- 2.2 Request that the Service Director Democratic Services & Communication makes the necessary arrangements to record the NOM and provide any updates through the publication of 'information reports' on the Council agenda, as formerly agreed.

3. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 In accordance with the Council's Constitution.

4. NOTICES OF MOTION

- 4.1 To consider the under-mentioned Notice of Motion which has been submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10.1 and received by the Proper Officer, standing in the names of County Borough Councillors:
- 4.2 S. Emanuel, R. Williams, 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.

On 24th February 2022, Russian forces that had massed along the border with Ukraine launched a full-scale invasion, marking the biggest attack on a European country since the Second World War.

The invasion, justified by Vladimir Putin as an attempt to “de-Nazify” Ukraine, has seen millions displaced and hundreds of thousands injured or killed – either in combat or through the devastating air strikes on civilian areas.

As innocent Ukrainian people were forced to flee their homes, Wales and RCT (along with many other countries) welcomed those seeking refuge with open arms and supported them as they tried to adjust to their new lives.

Now, with the War in Ukraine marking its second anniversary and the conflict still raging as Ukraine fights to retain its sovereignty, this Council therefore:

- Condemns the continued aggression of the Russian invaders.
- Reaffirms its unwavering support for Ukraine and its people.
- Commends the efforts of those residents of RCT who welcomed those fleeing the conflict into their homes and also to those who provided support to others who have sought sanctuary.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

6.1 The report has been prepared in accordance with the Council’s Constitution

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no Equality and Diversity implications arising from this report and no Equality Impact Assessment is deemed necessary for the purposes of this report as it relates to a procedural matter under the Councils Constitution.

7.2 The procedural rules regarding a Notice of Motion are contained within Council’s Constitution which sets out the framework for the decision-making roles and responsibilities.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 This report presents for Members’ consideration the Notice of Motion submitted to Council for the period February 2024 for which the necessary notice has been given.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

as amended by

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

COUNCIL

7TH FEBRUARY 2024

NOTICE OF MOTION

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES &
COMMUNICATION**

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