



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL
CABINET**

Minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Cabinet held on Monday, 23 October 2023 at 10.30 am.

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

County Borough Councillors – The following Councillors were present:

Councillor A Morgan (Chair)

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

Non-Committee Members in attendance

Councillor K Morgan
Councillor C Lises

Officers in attendance

Mr P Mee, Chief Executive
Mr A Wilkins, Director of Legal Services and Democratic Services
Mr D Powell, Director of Corporate Estates
Ms G Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Ms L Davies, Director, Public Health, Protection and Community Services
Mr R Evans, Director of Human Resources
Mr S Gale, Director of Prosperity & Development
Mr S Williams, Director for Highways, Streetcare and Transportation Services
Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Mr P Griffiths, Service Director – Finance & Improvement Services
Mr N Elliott, Director of Social Services
Ms A Richards, Service Director for 21st Century Schools and Transformation
Ms C Jones, Head of Access & Inclusion
Mr T Jones, Service Director – ICT & Digital Services
Ms S Nowell, Head of Transformation

Trade Union Representatives in Attendance

Mr P Crews - Unison
Mr G Morgans – GMB

Apologies for absence

Councillor M Webber

50 Welcome and Apology

The Leader welcomed attendees to the meeting and an apology for absence

was received from the Deputy Leader, County Borough Councillor M Webber.

51 Declaration of Interest

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

- The Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care declared a personal interest in respect of Item 3 (Future Commissioning of Domiciliary Home Care): "My younger sister has worked in long term home care for many years";
- The Cabinet Member for Development and Prosperity declared the a personal interest in respect of Item 12 (Update Report on Empty Homes Strategy): "I am a recipient of an Empty Property Grant";
- The Director of Highways, Streetcare and Transportation Services declared a personal and pecuniary interest in respect of Item 17 (Cynon Valley Waste Disposal Company Limited and Amgen Rhondda Limited Annual General Meeting): "I am a Director of Amgen and will leave the meeting when the item is discussed and voted upon."; and
- The Service Director of Finance and Improvement Services declared a personal and pecuniary interest in respect of Item 17: "I am a Director of Amgen and will leave the meeting when the item is discussed and voted upon."

52 Minutes

The Cabinet **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 18th September 2023 as an accurate reflection.

53 Future Commissioning of Domiciliary Home Care

The Director of Social Services presented the report to Cabinet, which proposed recommendations with regards to the commissioning of domiciliary home care services.

The Leader thanked the Director for the report and advised that in advance of the proposals being presented, he had met with officers several times and also with Trade Unions to discuss the proposals contained within the report and to gain a further understanding of TUPE arrangements and the potential impact on staff and individuals.

The Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care stated that the officer proposals before Members sought to respond to increasing demand for long-term home care and would address issues of capacity experienced by all providers. The Cabinet Member stated that the revised approach aimed to achieve a sustainable model that in no way reduces the availability of the service, but would, instead, enable long-term commissioning arrangements to be improved, enhancing the experience of service users and home care workers.

The Cabinet Member commented that through the new approach, the Council would continue to support people to be as independent as possible by continuing to provide an in-house reablement and intermediate care service.

The Cabinet Member noted that the Council currently delivered just a small proportion of the long-term home care provision in Rhondda Cynon Taf, and the

changes would see the remaining ten-percent transfer to external providers. It was added that reablement and intermediate care services through the Council's 'Support@Home' Service would continue to be provided by the Council.

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure advised of questions received from residents in respect of the impact the proposals could have on those individuals who need more complex care. The Cabinet Member spoke of the concern that the independent sector would not support such individuals and questioned whether the independent sector, which currently provide most of the support, include supporting the most complex of care needs to ensure independence for those individuals is maintained in their own homes.

The Director of Social Services advised the Cabinet Member that most of the long-term home care services were already delivered by existing independent sector providers. The Director acknowledged the concerns of residents but emphasised that the independent sector providers can and do successfully support many individuals with complex needs.

The Cabinet Member also sought assurance that the independent sector have access to the same level of training as Council staff. The Director confirmed that independent providers can and do access the same training and development through the Regional Workforce Development Partnership, which was hosted by the Council.

In respect of the query highlighted with training and development, the Leader further questioned whether the independent providers access the training available and the Director confirmed that regional workforce meetings take place on a quarterly basis, whereby performance is monitored in respect of both in-house training attendance and equally, the independent sector.

The Cabinet Member for Development and Prosperity questioned whether it would be possible for independent providers to be mandated to both recognise Trade Unions and encourage staff membership, if the proposal were to be approved. The Cabinet Member questioned whether the current independent providers recognise Trade Unions and whether it could be built into the wider tender process going forward, if supported. The Director of Human Resources advised that in terms of the requirement, it could be included within the tender documentation but not necessarily, legally enforced. The Director added that, to the best of his knowledge, the independent sector already work alongside Trade Unions so did not anticipate any issues with the Cabinet Member's suggestions.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Corporate Services noted that the financial implications from the proposal would be built into the Medium-Term Financial Plan and requested further information.

The Service Director of Finance and Improvement Services noted that the report set out the hourly rate differential between the independent sector and the in-house service; and emphasised that this was based on current rates enforced. It was explained that, whilst multiplying the differential by the number of hours currently provided by the internal service was straight forward and amounted to around £1.5M, it needed to be considered in the broader context of:

- The tender exercise, market forces and how the independent sector responds;
- The new geographically zoned arrangements being offered to the market; and

- The fact that tenderers would be instructed to accept the requirements of TUPE and continued Local Government Pension Scheme membership for transferring staff.

The Service Director continued and explained that the above-mentioned 'unknowns' make it difficult to project with certainty the financial implications, albeit the proposal as packaged does provide the market with a more efficient operating model to tender for. The Service Director concluded by explaining to Cabinet Members that a more cost-effective service was expected, this being set against the £35M budget gap faced by the Council for next financial year.

The Cabinet Member for Public Health & Communities acknowledged the concern amongst the workforce in respect of the proposals. The Cabinet Member noted that, if approved, eligible staff would transfer through TUPE and questioned whether the existing terms of conditions would be protected and whether access to the Local Government Pension Scheme would be maintained. The Director of Human Resources confirmed that TUPE would protect staff's existing terms and conditions of employment. In respect of the Local Government Pension Scheme, the Director advised that whilst TUPE regulations do not state access to the Local Government Pension Scheme, the Council would follow the current Welsh Government's guidance on TUPE, which stipulates that Local Authorities include access to the Local Government Pension Scheme. Therefore, if approved, the Council would include the requirement within any tender documentation which would mean that staff would continue to have access to the scheme.

The Leader questioned whether the pension would be protected in the same way as the Council's pension scheme and sought assurance that there would be no risk of this being changed in the future. The Director advised that individuals would have 'admitted body' status into the RCT pension fund and would have the option to transfer their current RCT service into the new pension fund. The Director advised that as far as he was aware, once admitted body status is achieved, there would be no risk of this being changed in the future but that he would clarify this with the Council's pension section.*

The Leader questioned whether this could be stipulated within the contract monitoring to ensure individual's pensions aren't adversely affected. The Director of Social Services confirmed that it could be ensured, through the Council's in-house contract monitoring service, that any providers are compliant with tender specification and contract specification.

The Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation and Welsh Language noted that concerns had been expressed that the proposals would affect the Council's ability to safely respond and manage any future social care crisis.

The Director of Social Services advised that he had confidence that the market would be able to meet any future service pressures. The Director explained that during times of increased pressure, the Council already work with the independent sector to meet demand based on assessed need and risk. It was noted that whilst it was proposed that the Council transfers the remaining 10% of its in-house long-term home care services to commissioned independent sector providers, the Council would not be depleting the overall capacity of long-term home care provision. The Director felt that making the proposed changes would result in increased capacity that would help to better deal with increase demand pressures in the future.

The Cabinet Member for Development and Prosperity spoke of the current financial climate and the situation which required Members to make difficult decisions, which includes ensuring the delivery of services is as effective and efficient as possible. The Cabinet Member stated that the level of care provided in communities should be the key consideration and that the report before Members proposes that the Council continues to deliver all reablement and intermediate care in-house.

With the agreement of the Leader, the following Non-Committee Members were granted permission to address the Cabinet:

- County Borough Councillor K. Morgan
- County Borough Councillor C. Lises

With the agreement of the Leader, the following Trade Union representatives were granted permission to address the Cabinet:

- Mr P Crews (Unison)
- Mr G Morgans (GMB)

N.B- Following the contributions of the speakers listed above, the Leader was handed a petition in respect of the matter.

In response to the comments made by Non-Committee Members and Trade Union representatives, the Director of Social Services advised that, to his knowledge, the Council had not stopped providing in-house packages of care and that he would investigate the matter. In terms of communication and information sharing, the Director stated that, given the size of the workforce, it was extremely difficult to ensure staff receive the information first-hand and at one time but, in this case, staff had been contacted through the mobile app and email; and confirmed that service users had been contacted later that day. Despite this, the Director acknowledged that some service users were aware before some staff members.

*Following clarification of the Leader's question in respect of whether the pension would be protected in the same way as the Council's pension scheme, the Director of Human Resources advised that as part of the admitted body status, a Pension Fund Admission Agreement would be put in place. It was explained that the agreement is a legal binding triparty document between the Provider, the Council and the Pension Fund. As such, between this and the TUPE wording, which would be included within the Tender documentation, the Provider would not be permitted to withdraw for the Fund so staff would remain in the Local Government Pension Scheme.

The Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care acknowledged the difficult decision before Members. However, the Cabinet Member noted that, if approved, the local authority would continue to deliver all reablement and intermediate care in-house; would make the sector more resilient; and by providing the service in more co-ordinated way, should improve staff recruitment and retention. The Cabinet Member was satisfied by the advice received by officers at the meeting and felt that the plans would have no impact upon the level of care in the community.

The Chief Executive took the opportunity to summarise comments to assist the Cabinet in its deliberation. The Chief Executive reiterated that the Director of

Social Services was advising Cabinet that, in recommissioning its long-term support, the Council would move to a more efficient model that secures the provision for the most vulnerable residents going forward. The Chief Executive clarified that the proposal was primarily a recommissioning exercise for long-term care and support across the County Borough and stated that it was incumbent on the Director of Social Services to review the operating model at such times, to ensure that it is fit for purpose. The Chief Executive continued and explained that the proposal would move to a new operating model for care and support, which includes the small, but nonetheless valuable, in-house provision. The Chief Executive clarified that, if approved, the move would shift to an outcome-based model and would introduce a geographical zoning proposal to maximise efficiency and in doing so, increase much needed capacity in the sector. The Chief Executive assured the Cabinet that if approved, the staff affected would have full protection through TUPE and would continue to access the Local Government Pension Scheme. The Chief Executive emphasised that the proposals before Cabinet Members would not reduce or cut domiciliary care services but would protect the service through a more resilient service model, during the challenging financial climate.

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure recognised that the proposed changes would cause anxiety amongst staff but hoped that the reassurance provided by officers at the meeting would alleviate the concerns to a degree. The Cabinet Member was satisfied, based upon the information contained within the report and the responses of officers, that the proposal would have no impact on the care provided.

The Leader noted that a small number of staff would not be eligible for TUPE and suggested that an additional recommendation be added to ensure that no compulsory redundancies are taken forward through the implementation of these proposals. The Director of Human Resources confirmed this and explained that any individuals identified as ineligible would be provided with options such as redeployment and voluntary early redundancy.

Prior to any decision being made by the Cabinet, the Leader emphasised the importance of referencing the three points made by Members at the meeting in respect of the protection of membership for staff within the Local Government Pension Scheme, the recognition of Trade Unions to be factored in and that no compulsory redundancies are to be taken forward. As such, the Service Director of Democratic Services and Communication put forward the following **additional** recommendations for Member consideration:

- 2.5 *The protection of membership for staff within the Local Government Pension Scheme to be factored into the procurement process to be taken forward;*
- 2.6 *The recognition of Trade Unions to be factored into the procurement process to be taken forward; and*
- 2.7 *That no compulsory redundancies are taken forward through the implementation of these proposals.*

Members were content with the assurances and additional recommendations proposed by the Leader.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To consider the information provided in this report, the Equality Impact Assessment (including Socio-Economic Duty) and Welsh Language Impact Assessment;
2. To approve that **all** reablement and intermediate care services continue to be delivered by the Council's in-house 'Support@Home' Service as set out in paragraph 5.1 of the report;
3. To approve that **all** long-term home care is commissioned from external home care providers as part of a full retender of the current framework contract and a new contract awarded from 1st October 2024 as set out in paragraph 5.2 of the report;
4. To approve the retender of the long-term home care on the basis of outcomes to be achieved and organised within specified geographical zoned areas as set out in paragraph 5.6 of the report; and
5. That the Director of Social Services is delegated authority, in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder, to award contracts following completion of the retender process and to make all necessary arrangements for the subsequent transfer.

In addition to the above-mentioned recommendations (2.1 to 2.5) as contained within the report, the Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

6. The protection of membership for staff within the Local Government Pension Scheme to be factored into the procurement process to be taken forward;
7. The recognition of Trade Unions to be factored into the procurement process to be taken forward; and
8. That no compulsory redundancies are taken forward through the implementation of these proposals

54 Future Commissioning of the Council's Supported Living Service for People with a Learning Disability

The Director of Social Services presented Cabinet with the report, which made recommendations with regards to the commissioning of Supported Living Services for people with a learning disability.

The Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care commented that the Council has substantial experience and a good track record of commissioning Supported Living Services from external providers. It was noted that with the current 10-year contract due to end this year, the retendering process was already underway, to start the new contract from April 2024.

The Cabinet Member continued and noted that the proposed changes would transfer the small percentage of Supported Living Services currently provided in-house to the external market, which already provides around 90% of the service. The Cabinet Member acknowledged officers' advice, which was that the changes would ensure best value and future sustainability of the service, without reducing its availability to help people who rely upon it. The Cabinet Member emphasised the importance of this in the context of the significant budget gap, the rising cost pressures, and the rising demand within the service.

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure questioned how the Council would engage with the individuals affected, including service users, their families, and staff members.

The Director of Social Services advised that, if agreed, the Council would provide regular engagement and communication with all affected individuals to ensure that they are kept fully informed of the process and timescales for service transfer. This would include sharing information, including easy read format, and holding meetings supported by social work staff and advocates, such as Cwm Taf People First and DEWIS Centre for Independent Living and in the case of staff, Trade Unions. It was added that, following the procurement process and contract award, the Council would engage with all affected individuals to address any anxiety they may have about the change of provider. There would also be opportunities to meet with the new providers to discuss any concerns.

The Cabinet Member for Public Health & Communities acknowledged the concern amongst the workforce in respect of the proposals and questioned whether the same reassurance could be provided as per the last item of the agenda (Minute No. 53), in respect of what TUPE means, and the protection it affords. The Cabinet Member also asked if the same assurance could also be provided in respect of job protection as a result of the changes, if agreed.

Alongside the Cabinet Member's suggestion, the Leader asked if the same assurance could be provided as the last item of business (Minute No. 53) in respect of no compulsory redundancies.

The Director of Human Resources confirmed that the same protection would be applied in terms of TUPE and staff's membership within the Local Government Pension Scheme. The Director advised the from an initial review, it was anticipated that all staff would be eligible for TUPE but should that not be the case, no compulsory redundancies would be undertaken as part of the process and that staff would be provided with options such as redeployment and voluntary early redundancy.

The Leader sought clarification that the three providers that would be tendering were not private sector companies and were not for profit, to which the Director confirmed.

Similarly, to the last item of business, the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Corporate Services noted that the financial implications from the proposal would be built into the Medium-Term Financial Plan and requested further information.

The Service Director of Finance and Improvement Services advised that the report highlighted the current hourly rate differential between the independent sector and the in-house service, and when applied to the number of hours currently provided by the internal service, this equates to an estimated saving of around £650k per year.

The Service Director advised that the estimated saving would come with a number of caveats and that it needed to be considered in the broader context of the points made in the previous item in terms of:

- The retender exercise, market forces and how the independent sector responds;
- The fact that tenderers would be instructed by the Council to accept the requirements of TUPE and continued Local Government Pension Scheme membership for transferring staff; and
- With specific regard to support living, each scheme is driven by differing

complexities of need, with this informing the number of hours required.

The Service Director continued and explained that the above-mentioned 'unknowns' make it difficult to project with certainty the financial implications, but it was expected that the proposal, alongside the re-tender process underway with the independent sector for existing contracts, would provide opportunity for a more cost-effective service, this being set against the £35M budget gap faced by the Council for next financial year.

The Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation and Welsh Language questioned whether the services users and their families would see change in the small number of settings the Council currently provides.

The Director of Social Services assured the Cabinet that the proposal, if agreed, would involve no change to an affected individual's home or to the level of care and support they receive. It was explained that TUPE would also mean that eligible staff employed in the remaining 9 in-house supported living homes would transfer to the new commissioned providers. As such, this would help to maintain stability for the individual and continuity of staff support around the provision of activities and their care and support during any transition.

The Director noted that people with a learning disability had been involved in the development of the new contract documentation and the evaluation methodology, which would help to ensure that the right person-centred service is being commissioned, which is more consistent and equitable across Rhondda Cynon Taf.

The Leader sought clarification that the individuals at the properties have their own tenancies to which the Director confirmed. The Director advised that as part of the proposal, the tenancy arrangements would not change for the individuals, only the care provider as part of a procurement exercise.

With the agreement of the Leader, Non-Committee Member, County Borough Councillor K. Morgan was granted permission to address the Cabinet.

Similarly, to the last item of business, prior to any decision being made by the Cabinet, the Leader emphasised the importance of referencing the three points made by Members at the meeting in respect of the protection of membership for staff within the Local Government Pension Scheme, the recognition of Trade Unions to be factored in and that no compulsory redundancies are to be taken forward. As such, the Service Director of Democratic Services and Communication put forward the following **additional** recommendations for Member consideration:

- 2.4 *The protection of membership for staff within the Local Government Pension Scheme to be factored into the procurement process to be taken forward;*
- 2.5 *The recognition of Trade Unions to be factored into the procurement process to be taken forward; and*
- 2.6 *That no compulsory redundancies are taken forward through the implementation of these proposals.*

Members were satisfied with the information contained within the report, the responses of officers and the additional recommendations proposed by the Leader.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To consider the information provided in this report, the Equality Impact Assessment (including Socio-Economic Duty) and Welsh Language Impact Assessment;
2. To approve the transfer of the Council's remaining nine Supported Living Services for people with a learning disability to specialist providers through the retender of the Council's current Supported Living contract and commence from April 2024; and
3. That the Director of Social Services is delegated with the authority, in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder, to award contracts following completion of the retender process and to make all necessary arrangements for the subsequent transfer.

In addition to the above-mentioned recommendations (2.1 to 2.3) as contained within the report, the Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

4. The protection of membership for staff within the Local Government Pension Scheme to be factored into the procurement process to be taken forward;
5. The recognition of Trade Unions to be factored into the procurement process to be taken forward; and
6. That no compulsory redundancies are taken forward through the implementation of these proposals.

55 Pre-Scrutiny Committee Feedback

The Service Director of Democratic Services and Communication provided Cabinet with the feedback and comments of the items that were pre-scrutinised by the Council's thematic Scrutiny Committee's following the last Committee cycle.

During the cycle, the following reports were pre-scrutinised and the key comments and observations were noted in Section 5 of the report:

- Proposals to develop a new School in Rhondda Cynon Taf;
- Representations, Compliments and Complaints Procedures Annual Report – 2022/23; and
- Community Infrastructure Levy Annual Monitoring Report.

The Service Director noted that, in respect of the Community Infrastructure Levy Annual Monitoring Report which had been pre-scrutinised by the Climate Change, Frontline Services & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held on 18th October 2023, comments had been circulated to Cabinet Members.

The Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation and Welsh Language took the opportunity to thank the Scrutiny Committees for their respective work.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the comments and observations of the Scrutiny Committees following pre-scrutiny of the items listed within section 5 of the report.

56 Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board Annual Report 2022-2023

The Director of Social Services presented Cabinet with the 2022/23 Annual Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board Report.

The Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care recognised the importance of the report, which seeks to ensure individual of all ages are protected; and provides prevention of harm and abuse. The Cabinet Member noted that the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board has a statutory duty to provide an annual report which outlines its priorities.

The Cabinet Member noted the greater need and focus to improve approaches to public sector concerns and stated that all partnership agencies have their part to play.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note and endorse the content of the 2022/23 Annual Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board Report.

57 Social Services Representations, Compliments and Complaints Procedures Annual Report 2022/23

The Director of Social Services provided Cabinet with an overview of the operation and effectiveness of the Council's statutory Social Services complaints procedure between 1st April 2022 and 31st March 2023.

The Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care thanked the Director for the report and stated that both complaints and compliments are valuable feedback, which drives service improvement and planning. The Cabinet Member added that it was reassuring for staff to receive compliments for all their hard work and dedication.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the content of this report and the Social Services Annual Representations and Complaints report for 2022/23; and
2. To note the work undertaken by the Customer Feedback, Engagement and Complaints Team.

58 Customer Feedback Scheme - Comments, Compliments and Complaints Annual Report - 2022/23

The Service Director of Digital and ICT provided Cabinet with an overview of the operation and effectiveness of the Council's Customer Feedback Scheme (CFS) between 1st April 2022 and 31st March 2023.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Corporate Services emphasised the importance of customer feedback and was pleased to note that 95% of complaints had been dealt with at stage 1. The Cabinet Member recognised that the team were always looking for new ways to capture information and noted that the 'You Said, We Did' service was going from strength to strength.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the content of the report, the Customer Feedback Scheme (CFS) Annual Report for 2022/23 and the work undertaken by the Customer Feedback, Engagement and Complaints Team.

59 Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual Report and Letter 2022-2023

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services advised Cabinet of the publication of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales' ('PSOW') Annual Report and Annual Letter to this Council for 2022-2023.

The Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation and Welsh Language thanked the Director for the report and stated that the report allows Cabinet Members to accurately review and monitor how the Council is managing the feedback it receives. The Cabinet Member was pleased to note that, given the size of the Local Authority, a small number of complaints had been made and a small number had been referred to the Ombudsman.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To consider and note the 2022-2023 Public Services Ombudsman for Wales' Annual Report and Annual Letter to this Council.

60 Proposals to Develop a new Special School in RCT

The Director of Education and Inclusion Services advised Cabinet of the outcome of the recent consultation in respect of the proposal to open a new 3 to 19 special school in Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) and introduce catchment areas for all 3 to 19 special schools across RCT, these are:

- Park Lane Special School;
- Ysgol Hen Felin; and
- Ysgol Ty Coch.

Members' attention was drawn to Appendix A of the report, which detailed the outcome of the consultation.

The Director informed Members that the documents noted 38% were against the proposals, but that it should read 37%. The Director advised that, overall, the consultation responses were positive with 56.5% in favour of the proposals and emphasised that some of the parents/carers appeared to have misunderstood the proposals, which was illustrated in Section 5 of the consultation document. It was therefore emphasised that as a result of the proposals, there would be no school closures and that the children in existing placements would remain in their current schools.

The Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation and Welsh Language thanked officers for undertaking the consultation and thanked individuals for their responses. The Cabinet Member was content that officers had been able to answer and address any points raised through the consultation including those of Estyn.

The Cabinet Member was content that the proposal to develop a new special school was the right step forward and would build capacity in an area of increased demand for the future. The Cabinet Member emphasised that pupils already attending special schools within RCT would not be required to move schools and that, if approved, new catchments would be put in place for future arrangements.

The Leader was in favour of the proposals and commented that the special school would be a huge investment, which was desperately needed.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

1. To note the content of the report;
2. To note the information contained within the Consultation Report, which includes a summary of correspondence received during the consultation, including the full response from Estyn, feedback received from the online survey, and notes of the meetings held; and
3. To progress the proposals to the next stage of the consultation process by issuing an appropriate Statutory Notice which will trigger the start of the Objection Period.

61 CIL Annual Monitoring 2022/2023

The Director of Prosperity and Development sought Cabinet's approval in respect of the contents of the CIL Annual Monitoring Report and the proposed changes to the Regulation 123 List and advised Cabinet of the pre scrutiny by the Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee in respect of the Community Infrastructure Levy.

The Cabinet Member for Development and Prosperity was content with the recommendations contained within the report. The Cabinet Member noted the considerations of Scrutiny Committee and looked forward to receiving feedback from the Community Councils.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

1. To approve the CIL Annual Monitoring Report;
2. To approve the Regulation 123 List (Appendix B) for publication on the Council website for a period of 28 days and consultation as set out in paragraph 5.6 of the report; and
3. To approve the subsequent adoption of the Regulation 123 List if no adverse comments are received.

N.B- Following the conclusion of this item, the Cabinet pause for a short break.

62 Update Report on Empty Homes Strategy

The Director of Prosperity and Development provided the Cabinet with an update on the progress being made in bringing empty homes back into use in line with the RCT Empty Homes Strategy (2022-2025).

The Cabinet Member for Development and Prosperity spoke of the success of

the programme in getting homes back on the market or into meaningful use. The Cabinet Member was pleased to note that, to date, just under 700 properties had been brought back into use and was happy to move the recommendations contained within the report.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

1. To consider the information contained within the report and note the positive progress made to date in bringing empty homes back into use in line with the RCT Empty Homes Strategy (2022 – 2025).

63 Private Rented Sector Strategy 2023-2026

The Director of Prosperity and Development provided the Cabinet with an overview of the proposed Private Rented Sector Strategy 2023 -2026 and seek approval for it to be implemented.

The Cabinet Member for Development and Prosperity spoke positive of the work undertaken in respect of the private rented sector with RCT landlords; and noted that RCT had been proactive with providing advice with legislation requirements and guidance. The Cabinet Member added his thanks to officers and advised that he had received compliments on their behalf.

The Cabinet Member for Public Health and Communities echoed the comments and was in support of the recommendations contained within the report.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

1. To approve the proposed Private Rented Sector Strategy 2023-2026 which supports the delivery of a private rented sector that offers safe, affordable accommodation, that is well managed and of a good standard, creating accessible and sustainable tenancies.

64 Engagement on the Council's Budget 2024-2025

The Service Director of Democratic Services and Communication informed the Cabinet of the proposed approach to resident engagement and consultation in respect of the 2024/25 budget setting process.

The Leader advised that next year's budget would likely be the most challenging for RCT since his time as Leader of the Council; and it was emphasised that public engagement would be vital. The Leader stated that unless UK Government announce additional funding in their Autumn budget, the consequences to Wales and its Local Authorities would be very difficult. The Leader advised that, following a survey, across England, there would potentially be at least 26 Local Authorities issuing 114 notices in the next year; and that although RCT were a long way away from issuing a notice, the careful management of the budget and resources would be key.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Corporate Services added that it would likely be a year which requires an honest conversation with residents in respect of the huge challenge faced by the Council.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

1. To support the further continuation of the approach to the Council's budget consultation introduced in recent years, utilising the Council's Let's Talk Engagement website, as well as community face-to-face engagement. As part of the suggested approach, we will continue to provide alternative means of engagement for those having reduced or no access to the Internet and those who prefer to engage through traditional methods;
2. To support the Council's statutory requirements regarding consultation on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Council Tax levels and that these will be met via the proposed approach;
3. To support the launch of a phase 1 budget consultation during the Autumn of 2023, in advance of the Welsh Government provisional budget settlement timescales, currently expected around mid-December; and
4. To authorise the Service Director – Democratic Services & Communications to plan in detail the necessary timeline for engagement, in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Member & Deputy Chief Executive and Group Director for Finance, Digital and Frontline Services.

65 To consider Passing the Following Resolution:

It was **RESOLVED:** "That the press and public be excluded from the meeting under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act (as amended) for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of the exempt information as defined in paragraph 14 of Part 4 of the Schedule 12A of the Act".

66 Write Off of Irrecoverable Debts

Following the consideration of the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Group Director for Finance, Digital and Frontline Services containing exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended), namely information relating to the financial affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information), the Cabinet was **RESOLVED:**

1. To write-off the accounts to the appropriate Bad Debt Provision contained within the Council's accounts (if further information on any debt becomes available, payment will be pursued).

67 Cynon Valley Waste Disposal Company Limited and Amgen Rhondda Limited - Annual General Meeting

Following the consideration of the report of the Director of Legal and Democratic Services containing exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended), namely information relating to the financial affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information), the Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. That the current intention to continue the operation of Cynon Valley Waste Disposal Company Limited and Amgen Rhondda Limited

(the 'Companies') as Local Authority controlled companies into the future is confirmed;

2. That subject to the Deputy Chief Executive and Group Director – Finance, Digital and Frontline Services being satisfied that there are no irregularities in the accounts of the Companies that the accounts be received on behalf of the Council;
3. That Azets Audit Services are appointed as auditors to the Companies for the year-ending 31st March 2024;
4. That the Directorships of the Director of Highways, Streetcare and Transportation Services and Service Director – Finance and Improvement Services for both Companies continue;
5. To note the continuation of the non-executive director position on the Board of the Companies through to the 2024 Annual General Meetings;
6. That the Director of Legal and Democratic Services and/or his nominee be authorised to exercise the Council's vote at the Annual General Meetings of the Companies in accordance with recommendations 2(ii) to 2(iv) above; and
7. That the Council be represented at the Companies' Annual General Meetings by a Cabinet Member.

This meeting closed at 12.48 pm

**Councillor A Morgan
Chair.**

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