



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CABINET

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Tuesday, 24 September 2019 at 10.30 am at the Council Chamber, The Pavilions, Cambrian Park, Clydach Vale, Tonypandy, CF40 2XX.

County Borough Councillors - Cabinet Members in attendance:-

Councillor A Morgan (Chair)

Councillor M Webber	Councillor R Bevan
Councillor A Crimmings	Councillor G Hopkins
Councillor M Norris	Councillor J Rosser
Councillor R Lewis	Councillor C Leyshon

Officers in attendance

Mr C Bradshaw, Chief Executive
Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Mr G Isingrini, Group Director Community & Children's Services
Mr P Mee, Director, Public Health, Protection & Community Services
Mr R Evans, Director of Human Resources
Mr A Wilkins, Director of Legal Services
Mr B Davies, Director of Finance & Digital Services
Ms G Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Ms L Davies, Service Director – Public Protection Services
Mr A Griffiths, Service Director – Highways & Engineering

Others in attendance

Councillor E Webster

36 CHAIRMANSHIP

The Deputy Leader opened the meeting of the Cabinet and advised Members that the Leader was stuck in traffic due to heavy flooding on the roads and advised that she would chair the meeting in his absence.

37 APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from County Borough Councillor A Crimmings due to other Council duties, however Councillor Crimmings was in attendance for the final item on the agenda.

38 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, there were no declarations made pertaining to the agenda.

COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN - INVESTMENT PRIORITIES

The Director of Finance & Digital Services presented his report which set out the position with regard to one-off resources which had become available following a review of the Council's earmarked reserves post completion of the audit process of the Council's 2018/19 Statement of Accounts.

Members were advised that a risk assessment has been undertaken on the Council's earmarked reserves and the opportunity had been presented to release resources, adding that in light of the one off nature of these resources, they could now be considered for use to support the Council's investment priorities, as aligned to the Corporate Plan.

The Deputy Leader spoke positively of the investment priorities available and commented on the fortunate position that the Council were in to consider such investment in austere times and welcomed the opportunity to present the report to the Council meeting on the 23rd October 2019.

Members **RESOLVED**:

1. That following review, to propose the release of earmarked reserves and resultant investment priorities as detailed at Appendix A of the report to Council at its meeting on 23rd October 2019.
2. To receive a further update in early 2020 on earmarked reserve availability as part of the normal budget strategy work being undertaken in preparation for the 2020/21 financial year.

COUNCIL PERFORMANCE REPORT – 30TH JUNE 2019 (QUARTER 1)

The Service Director, Finance & Improvement Services referred members to his report which provided an overview of the Council's performance, both from a financial and operational perspective, based on the first three months of this financial year (to the 30th June 2019). The service Director advised Members of the information contained within the Executive Summary which included financial data and progress against the Council Corporate Plan priorities, highlighting exception reporting to assist Members.

Members were advised that the first quarter revenue budget position was a period variance, as at 30th June 2019, of £0.589M with the overspend primarily as a result of key pressures across Adult Social Care. This represented the continuation of the position reported during 2018/19, with the Service Director advising that the Council was working with Welsh Government to highlight the importance of providing increased and permanent funding for this sector to meet on-going current and forecasted future demand. The Service Director also advised of the confirmation received from the South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority of Central Government funding to cover the 2019/20 increase in pension costs.

Capital investment as at 30th June 2019 was £16.7M, with a number of schemes being re-profiled during the quarter to reflect changes in costs and also new external grant funding approvals received.

The Service Director concluded his update with reference to performance across the Council's Corporate Plan priorities, informing Members that positive progress has been made during the first three months of the year, with on-going close monitoring of each priority continuing in preparation of the half-yearly position as at 30th September 2019.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services commented on the pressures with Adult Social Care and the lobbying being taken forward to Welsh Government for the need for additional funding to alleviate such budget pressures. The Cabinet Member welcomed the news in respect of the pension implications which would be funded by central government. The Cabinet Member concluded by referencing the investment taken forward across the County Borough for the benefits of its residents.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Community Services & Welsh Language referenced the pressures in respect of children and adult services, advising that the demand was increasing with further complexity issues arising, which was not withstanding the good work being provided by the Council in this area.

The Deputy Leader commented on the positive position in respect of the PI performance and the work undertaken by HR with the reduction of sickness across all departments.

Following discussions it was **RESOLVED:**

Revenue

1. To note and agree the General Fund revenue position of the Council as at the 30th June 2019 (Section 2 of the Executive Summary of the report) including the amended level of Transition Funding following confirmation of Central Government funding to cover additional Fire Fighters pension costs.

Capital

2. To note the capital outturn position of the Council as at 30th June 2019 (Sections 3a – e of the Executive Summary of the report).
3. To note the details of the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators as at the 30th June 2019 (Section 3f of the Executive Summary of the report).

Corporate Plan Priorities

4. To note the quarter 1 position regarding progress made against the agreed Corporate Plan priorities (Sections 5 a – d of the Executive Summary of the report), Other National Measures (Section 5e of the Executive Summary of the report) and comparison of 2019/20 targets set against prior year and 'All Wales Average' performance information (Section 5f of the Executive Summary of the report).

N.B at the conclusion of this item, the Leader of the Council entered the meeting and took forward the Chair.

41 ADDITIONAL CHILDCARE OFFER CAPITAL GRANT FUNDING

The Director of Education & Inclusion Services advised Members of the receipt of additional capital grants to support the implementation of the Welsh Government Childcare Offer in RCT.

Members were reminded that a funding bid had been submitted to Welsh Government in September 2018 for 11 projects to support the development or creation of childcare facilities on, or near, school sites. The Director advised that funding had also been requested for a Project Officer post, funded until 31st March 2021 and for a 'Small Capital Works' grant scheme to enable childcare providers delivering the Childcare Offer to apply for funding to support small capital projects. In February 2019, the Council were advised that they had been successful in receiving funding for four of the 11 capital projects, as well as funding for the small capital grant scheme / Project Officer post. The Director continued by advising that in June 2019, Welsh Government released further funding to support delivery of some of the unsuccessful projects, and Members were advised that RCT had been awarded a further £1,000,000 to refurbish and expand the current childcare provision based in Treorchy Primary School.

The Cabinet Member for Education & Inclusion Services welcomed the additional funding received which was in addition to the £2.5million already awarded. The Cabinet Member spoke of the opportunities to further invest within the schools for the benefit of the young people of the County Borough.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. To note the information contained in this report.
2. To note the receipt of an additional £1 million of capital funding from Welsh Government in addition to the £2.5 million already awarded in February 2019.
3. To add the funded project to the capital programme.

42 SCHOOL PERFORMANCE 2018/19

The Director of Education & Inclusion Services advised Cabinet that the

Welsh Government had been developing new evaluation and improvement arrangements to ensure that performance and accountability measures align with the new Curriculum for Wales 2022. Members were informed that the new arrangements would assist in raising standards, reduce the attainment gap, and deliver an improved education system in preparation for 2022. These new arrangements were evolving in a planned way to support schools to build a self-improving system and plan for sustained improvements.

The Director advised that the new interim performance measures, based on points scores, had removed the emphasis on threshold measures and the associated negative unintended consequences previously associated with these, namely the narrowing of curriculum choice, the excessive focus on particular group of learners at the expense of others and the competition created across schools and local authorities which has mitigated against a culture of self-improving schools.

Moving forward a wider range of performance measures and contextual information would be utilised during 2019/20 to inform self-evaluation and school improvement planning and to make judgements about school effectiveness.

Provisional performance outcomes on the new interim key stage 4 measures suggested that there has been a slight dip in standards in 2019 on most measures. The Director added that it was difficult to make meaningful comparisons across 2018 and 2019 datasets due to the fact that the 2019 outcomes included the 'first award' data only. This was not the case for the re-calculated 2018 datasets. She added that provisional data suggests that there was scope for further improvements in standards in 2019.

The Cabinet Member for Education & Inclusion Services commented on the significant changes and information reporting in relation to school performance, highlighting that these changes were only an interim measure, with potential further changes being brought forward. The Cabinet member commented on the importance of disseminating the correct information in respect of school performance reporting to Committee members and governing bodies to assist them in their understanding of the new reporting methods.

The Cabinet Member referenced both the increase and decrease in performance adding that the verified data would be presented in forthcoming months.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the information contained within the report.
2. To consider the implications of the change in Welsh Government performance measures on future school performance reporting.

3. That further reports will be presented on receipt of the final, verified data from Welsh Government.

43 PARTNERSHIP WITH UNITED WORLD COLLEGES (UWC) ATLANTIC COLLEGE

The Director of Education & Inclusion Services provided Members with an update in respect of partnership working with United World Colleges (UWC) Atlantic College in relation to the potential post-16 residential placement of children who are looked after in Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT).

Members were reminded of the process for selecting potential learners for placement and Members were advised that despite a visit to Atlantic College and further discussion with all agencies and the college leadership team, it was not considered an appropriate placement for the young people selected as potential learners. It was however agreed that a more robust induction programme devised for KS3 and KS4 learners was required to introduce a wider range of potential candidates to Atlantic College.

The Cabinet Member for Education & Inclusion Services commented on the opportunities available through the partnership although commented that such courses available through the college were not suitable to all. She commented on the stringent application process and spoke of the opportunity to relook at the selection process to allow for an earlier and wider footing, to allow young people to become more familiar and accustomed to the college environment.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That officers continue to work in partnership with Atlantic College and schools so that the potential opportunities can be explored.
2. That officers from Education and Children's Services work with the College to identify suitable candidates for potential placement in the College.
3. That the parameters should be extended to include a wider group of vulnerable learners, such as adopted children or children in need of care and support.
4. To consider whether earlier induction opportunities should be implemented in KS3.

44 REPRESENTATIONS, COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES ANNUAL REPORT

The Group Director, Community & Children's Services provided Cabinet with an overview of the operation and effectiveness of the Council's statutory Social Services complaints procedure between 1st April 2018

and 31st March 2019. The Group Director advised that the report contained information on the background of the Social Services statutory complaints procedure, information on lessons learnt from complaints and performance data for Adults & Children's Social Services, together with achievements for 2018/19 and future developments.

The Cabinet Member for Children & Young People thanked the Group Director for the report and spoke of the positive work of the service as reflected within the contents of the report.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. The contents of the Social Services Annual Complaints report, attached as Appendix 1 of the report.
2. To note the work undertaken by the Social Services Complaints Unit.

45 CUSTOMER FEEDBACK SCHEME - COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

The Director of Legal Services presented Members with the inaugural Annual Report relating to the operation and effectiveness of the Council's corporate Customer Feedback Scheme ('CFS') between 1st April 2018 and 31st March 2019, which provided an appraisal of the nature of feedback received by the Council's customers, detailing how that feedback had been used and, where appropriate, utilised to ensure service improvement across the Council.

Members were advised of the two stage complaints process which was in line with the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales Model Complaints Policy that was adopted by all Local Authorities in 2011. The Director also spoke of the improvements taken forward by the Council with the Council Feedback Service and further improvements that would be provided through the procurement of a new I.T. system for capturing both Customer Contacts and Customer Feedback.

The Director advised that Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had also considered the report the appropriate levels of future reporting and the recommendations of the committee were set out within section 6 of his report.

The Deputy Leader spoke of the importance of the customer feedback scheme and recommended that incorporation of reporting of the customer feedback scheme should be taken forward within the quarterly performance and resources reports and in addition that progress reports are presented to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on a biannual basis

(to include the CFS Annual report).

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. To agree the inaugural Annual Report relating to the operation and effectiveness of the Council's Customer Feedback Scheme (Comments, Compliments and Complaints) ('CFS') between April 1st 2018 and March 31st 2019, annexed at Appendix 1 to the report;
2. To note the work being undertaken by the Customer Feedback and Engagement Team and recent improvements made to the management and operation of the CFS scheme; and
3. That following consideration of the feedback from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting held on the 3rd September 2019 that the following suggested areas for improvements in respect of the contents and publication of future CFS Annual Reports, together with CFS reporting mechanisms more generally are taken forward:

Incorporation of reporting of the customer feedback scheme within the quarterly performance and resources reports.

That progress reports are presented to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on a biannual basis (to include the CFS Annual report)

46 LLANHARAN BYPASS

The Service Director, Highways and Transportation provided Members with an update on the scheme which would provide a bypass to the A473 to the east of Llanharan from the existing first phase of the bypass constructed as part of the Llanilid Studios development to a point west of the existing petrol service station located alongside the A473 opposite Llanharan House (approximately). Members were reminded that the proposal was to create a 7.3m wide carriageway with Active Travel provision.

The Service Director commented that the construction of the Llanharan Bypass was integral to the regional strategic highway network of the Borough. It was also linked to the Strategic Opportunity Area (SOA) Llanilid on the M4: Driving the Regional Economy and is important to the wider economic opportunities for the western area of the County Borough and the Cardiff Capital Region.

Members were referred to the public consultation undertaken in respect of the scheme with the Service Director advising that in total 449 responses supported the Llanharan Bypass proposals with 453 supporting Option 2 as the final leg of the Llanharan Bypass (four responses did not include a preference on the options as presented). A number of issues / concerns were raised during this process and the Service Director added that the preliminary / detailed design would therefore consider the response and,

where appropriate and reasonable, mitigation measures would be incorporated

The Cabinet Member for Adult Community Services and Welsh Language and local Members for the area welcomed the scheme commenting on the local benefits and improved connectivity within the region the scheme would provide, delivering greater economic opportunities.

The Leader also welcomed the work undertaken to date and spoke of the consultation results, also highlighting the importance of the active travel route that would be incorporated within the scheme.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the progress made and contents of the report;
2. That Option 2 – Eastern Route (as identified at Appendix A of the report) to be taken forward as the preferred route option for further development;
3. To the removal of the safeguarding of route SSA18.1 (western, Option 1, see Appendix A of the report) i.e. through the Welfare Ground in the Local Development Plan.

47 NEW POLICY GUIDANCE ON RELEVANCE OF CONVICTIONS IN DETERMINING THE SUITABILITY OF APPLICANTS AND LICENSEES IN THE HACKNEY AND PRIVATE HIRE TRADES

Following consideration by the Council's Licensing Committee, the Service Director – Public Protection Services presented her report which sought Cabinet approval of the implementation of a new policy of guidance on relevance of convictions for the determination and suitability of applicants and licence holders in the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire trade.

Members were advised that the Institute of Licensing (IOL) has published Guidance (April 2018) in response to concerns about the disparity in the criteria used by local authorities across the country to determine the suitability of applicants for hackney carriage and private hire licences. She advised that the IOL believed that widespread adoption of the Guidance would effectively achieve a level of consistency when considering such applications. The Guidance had been produced in partnership with and endorsed by the LGA (and on behalf of the WLGA).

The Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities, Well-being & Cultural Services spoke of the importance the additional guidance would bring, with a consistent policy across the UK. The Cabinet Member spoke of the importance of public safety and the additional reassurances implementation of the policy would provide.

The Deputy Leader spoke of the importance of the policy and commented on her previous role as Chair of the Councils Licensing Committee and the important decisions taken by the Committee, commenting on the importance of regular training for Committee members to assist them in their role going forward.

Following discussions it was **RESOLVED**:

1. To approve the new policy of guidance on relevance of convictions for the determination and suitability of applicants and licence holders in the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire trade, further to the recommendation made by the Licensing Committee held on the 29th July 2019, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.
2. To approve the implementation of the new policy of guidance with effect for all new applications received and existing licences in place on and after 1st November 2019.

N.B During consideration of this item County Borough Councillor A Crimmings entered the meeting.

48

SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS: WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT - DEVELOPMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT LOW CARBON VEHICLE OWNERSHIP

The Service Director, Democratic Services & Communication advised Cabinet of the findings and ten recommendations of the Scrutiny Working Group which was established to consider the development of Infrastructure to support Low Carbon Vehicle Ownership in Rhondda Cynon Taf following the Notice of Motion considered by Council at its meeting held on the 28th February 2018.

Members were advised that all ten recommendations, were endorsed at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 3rd September 2019 (subject to minor amendments to recommendation 9) and were reported to Council on the 18th September 2019.

Members thanked the Overview & Scrutiny Committee for the work undertaken and **RESOLVED**:

1. To note the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee working group as detailed within the Appendix of the report.
2. In principle to each of the ten recommendations listed below, subject to further consideration by the Cabinet Portfolio holders for this area, following which a detailed response is provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- i. 'The Council should seek to enhance the availability and accessibility of public access EV charging in the short term at key Council locations such as leisure centres and tourist destinations'.
- ii. 'The Council should consider steps to facilitate infrastructure to support the predicted increase in electric vehicle usage and consider how these steps might encourage residents across all areas of RCT to opt to purchase an electric vehicle. As part of this the Council should involve residents and collaborate with businesses and the wider public sector in the development of these proposals. The Council should also consider the commercial opportunities available to it.'
- iii. 'The Council should consider developing supplementary planning guidance to ensure that fast-charging infrastructure can be supported both in residential and non-residential development. Looking to the future, the Council should consider now, how wider urban design could complement the evolution to electrified transport and wider changes in mobility and transport behaviour in the longer term. The Council should avoid considering EV infrastructure as a single issue, but instead should take an integrated approach by considering how energy generation and supply to support the wider reduction of carbon footprint. The Scrutiny Working Group believes a proactive approach could prevent any future challenges from the outset and prevent the Council from being penalised financially should strict financial penalties for higher emission vehicles be introduced'.
- iv. 'As part of future fleet renewal, the Council should seek where possible to replace current petrol or diesel vehicles, with Electric Vehicles. Where range of such vehicles may currently cause operational issues, the Council should consider hybrid/mild-hybrid options or the latest technology petrol/diesel options which meet or exceed Euro 6. The Working Group believes that this could be done via a trial of electric/hybrid electric vehicles within an appropriate Council Service such as Meals on Wheels to see how it can be viable and cost effective for the Council going forward. As a result of the pace of improvement in Electric Vehicle range, the Council should continuously review opportunities in the medium to longer term to consciously opt, where possible for electric/hybrid electric options. Such a commitment should be based also upon the potential revenue savings in fleet running costs'.
- v. 'The Working Group believes that a wider partnership

approach to the development of EV infrastructure could reduce some of the operational challenges presented by current EV-range limits. The Group also felt there was huge potential in a collaborative regional approach more broadly across the Capital Region’.

- vi. ‘As technology is changing, the Council should begin now to consider how it responds to a future shift to electric vehicles between now and the UK Government deadline for combustion engine production, not just at a strategic community leadership level. The Council should consider how it can encourage local vocational providers to respond to the shift in the emerging technology and develop relevant courses which will advance the mechanical skills required to maintain and service electric vehicles’.
- vii. ‘The Council should consider placing an onus upon its supply chain to support an EV or LCV approach, in areas such as Home to School Transport and Taxi licences’.
- viii. ‘The Working Group believes the Council should call upon the Welsh Government to take a more proactive approach in facilitating EV infrastructure to ensure that Wales leads from the front and is in the best position to secure the potential economic opportunities. The Group also believed that the Council should call upon the UK Government to take more radical steps in respect of incentivising a shift to electric vehicles, learning from the example set by Scandinavian countries’.
- ix. ‘The Working Group identified that all major events hosted by RCT would benefit from having the appropriate electric charging infrastructure in place to supply visitors for the duration of the event. The Working Group believes that the Council should investigate the implementation of the appropriate (mobile) infrastructure in order to demonstrate its commitment to the local environment, help cater for visitor’s charging needs and exhibit leadership in an emerging industry. The working group also recognised the need to promote the role of public transport & active travel in future event management planning’.
- x. ‘The Working Group also urges the Council to recognise that planning effectively now is key for the longer term sustainability of the local economy”.

N.B The Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Working Group, County Borough Councillor Adams had provided his apologies to the Cabinet for not being able to present the Scrutiny recommendations due to work

commitments.

This meeting closed at 11.15 am

**Cllr A Morgan
Chairman.**

**Cllr M Webber
Vice Chair**