



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CABINET

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Tuesday, 28 July 2020 at 2.30 pm at the Virtual.

County Borough Councillors - Cabinet Members in attendance:-

Councillor A Morgan (Chair)

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

Officers in attendance

Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Mr G Isingrini, Group Director Community & Children's Services
Mr N Wheeler, Group Director – Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services
Mr P Mee, Director, Public Health, Protection & Community Services
Mr R Evans, Director of Human Resources
Mr D Powell, Director of Corporate Estates
Mr S Gale, Director of Prosperity & Development
Mr A Wilkins, Director of Legal Services
Mr B Davies, Director of Finance & Digital Services
Mr P Griffiths, Service Director – Finance & Improvement Services
Ms A Richards, Head of 21st Century Schools

134 Declaration of Interest

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

135 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 25th June 2020 as an accurate record.

136 Proposals to approve an amended delivery agreement for the preparation of the Rhondda Cynon Taf revised Local Development Plan

Following Council's approval of the Delivery Agreement (DA) for the Revised Local Development Plan (LDP), for Rhondda Cynon Taf in November 2019, the Director, Prosperity and Development sought Cabinet approval for an amended DA, which proposes a postponement of the official start date by 3 months, to start in September 2020.

Members were informed that due to the Coronavirus pandemic, it had not been possible to formally start the preparation as set out in the original DA and the ability to successfully procure external consultants to undertake key pieces of

evidence base work had been compromised and it had not been possible to commit to early engagement with the public and other stakeholders in the process.

The Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Development and Housing voiced his support for the amended DA, acknowledging that the impact of Covid-19 had been prevalent across all Council services.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To approve the proposed amended DA for the Revised LDP for Rhondda Cynon Taf. This outlines the revised timetable and method of community involvement and engagement for the revision preparation process; and
2. That, Once Full Council approval is subsequently sought, the DA will then be submitted to Welsh Government for approval.

137 Standard Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

The Temporary Service Director, 21st Century Schools and Transformation provided the Cabinet with information on the Council's statutory duties to establish a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE), including the Annual Report of the RCT SACRE for the academic year 2018-2019.

The Service Director reminded the Cabinet that Every Local Authority (LA) has a statutory duty to establish a permanent body, called a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE), to advise on matters concerned with the provision of Religious Education (RE) and collective worship (Education Reform Act 1988). The Service Director added that each SACRE must complete an Annual Report, which was attached at Appendix 1.

(Note: At this point in proceedings, County Borough Councillor C Leyshon joined the meeting.)

Members were informed that in 2018, the overall percentage of A* - C grades for RCT was 70.4%, which was higher than the previous year and higher than the all Wales average. In respect of the A* - A grades for RCT, Members were informed that the overall percentage was 26.8%, which was an improvement on the previous year, but below the all Wales average.

The Deputy Leader spoke of the ever-changing times and the change of the curriculum in Wales, suggesting that it would be beneficial for the Central South Consortium to look at the role of the SACRE in the future, in order to identify any improvements that can be made.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the content of the Annual Report 2018-2019.

138 Changes to the rules of association - Trivallis Housing Limited

The Director, Public Health, Protection and Community Services advised that following their decision to adopt the Community Housing Cymru model rules 2017, Trivallis were seeking Cabinet's consent to amend the rules of the association in respect of tenant representation on their Board. This follows

Members were informed that Trivallis had reduced the size of their Board to

between a minimum of 6 and a maximum of 10 members (excluding co-optees) and had removed the previous requirement for three constituent groups; tenant, local authority and independent. The Director explained that, instead, appointment to the Board would be made on the basis of skills, knowledge and experience. The Council would still be able to appoint up to two Board members as was current practice, although this would now be subject to those nominated persons meeting the Board's skills requirements.

The Director continued and explained that the proposal meant that the current requirement for four tenant representatives would be removed and under the new rules one space on the Board would always be available for a tenant Board member subject to the candidate meeting the skills requirements as assessed by the Board. The Director added that it would still be possible for more than one tenant to be a Board member, however the requirement for four spaces would be removed.

The Leader spoke of the discussions which had taken place between the Local Authority and Trivallis, commenting that he was pleased that the Council had secured two Board representatives as part of their constitution.

The Deputy Leader raised concerns in respect of the reduction of tenant participation and commented on the importance of the voice of the tenant. The Deputy Leader suggested that Trivallis introduce a tenant scrutiny group to keep tenant participation at the forefront of the organisation.

Both the Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Development and Housing and Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities, Wellbeing and Cultural Services echoed the comments made by the Deputy Leader and were assured that the two representatives on the Board would hold Trivallis to account.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To confirm consent to the proposed change to Trivallis' rules of the association concerning tenant representation on Trivallis' Board.

139 The Council's Corporate Safeguarding Arrangements

The Group Director, Community and Children's Services provided the Cabinet with the report, which sought approval of an Action Improvement Plan in respect of the Council's Corporate Safeguarding arrangements and a revised Corporate Safeguarding Policy. The Policy had been compiled to reflect current legislative requirements as well as the recent Audit Wales findings.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services took the opportunity to thank officers for the substantial piece of work before Members. The Cabinet Member continued by commenting that the work would support the Council's continuing work to strengthen its Corporate Safeguarding arrangements and provides assurance that the Council is fulfilling its safeguarding duties, especially in the current uncertain time.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Community Services and the Welsh Language also voiced his support, commenting that the Council had already established a strong position on safeguarding, both within the Local Authority and with its Regional Partners and that the work would further strengthen it.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To approve the Action Improvement Plan in respect of the Council's Corporate Safeguarding arrangements;
2. To approve and adopts the new Policy as the Council policy;
3. That the policy is translated, published on the Council's website and embedded into associated Council policies and strategies as appropriate;
4. That a wider Communications and Awareness raising plan is developed to make sure that all staff and Managers are reminded of their responsibilities in respect of the new Policy;
5. That the new Policy is reflected in future training for Safeguarding training; and
6. To refer to Overview and Scrutiny Committee for scrutiny and monitoring.

140 Council Performance Report - 31st March 2020 (Year End)

The Service Director, Finance and Improvement Services provided the Cabinet with an overview of the Council's performance, both from a financial and operational perspective, for the financial year ended 31st March 2020.

The Service Director noted that the Council's year end position was reflective of the significant financial pressures to the Council as a result of Storm Dennis and Covid-19. Members were advised that the revenue budget performance was a £289,000 overspend against a net budget of £483M, which was an improved position from the previous quarter.

In respect of the Capital Budget, the Service Director advised that there had been continued significant capital investment made during the year of £121M.

The Service Director advised that positive progress had been made against the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities and the Council's Investment Priorities; and that 78% of the measures reported within the Corporate Plan Indicator results had been on target.

The Leader thanked the officer for the report, commenting that the overspend for the year was marginal in comparison to many other Local Authorities, especially given the pressures faced. Referring to the Storm Dennis costs outlined on page 199 of the report, the Leader advised that the cost was in relation to emergency assistance, and that the long term impact to the Council was estimated to be in the region of £70M.

The Deputy Leader acknowledged that there would be significant pressures moving forward, due to Covid-19, Storm Dennis and the floods which followed, and commented that performance should be considered on a wider spectrum given the unprecedented events.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services echoed previous comments in relation to the ongoing pressures faced by the Council and commented that the year-end overspend was small taking things into consideration. The Cabinet Member went on to speak of the successful projects outlined within the Capital Programme, such as Llys Cadwyn and the highways and town centre developments.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the unprecedented context the 2019/20 year-end report is set within, in respect of Storm Dennis and the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Revenue

2. To note and agree the General Fund revenue position of the Council as at the 31st March 2020 (Section 2 of the Executive Summary) and note the incorporation of additional one-off Welsh Government funding to support winter and emergency care measures across the health and social care system.
3. To note the net financial impact of Storm Dennis, incorporated into the 2019/20 year-end position.

Capital

4. To note the capital outturn position of the Council as at 31st March 2020 (Sections 3a – e of the Executive Summary).
5. To note the details of the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators as at the 31st March 2020 (Section 3f of the Executive Summary).

Corporate Plan Priorities

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

141 Update on the Covid-19 position in Rhondda Cynon Taf - Recovery Plans

The Group Director, Community and Children's Services presented the Cabinet with an update of the action taken by the Council as a result of the COVID 19 national emergency.

The Group Director assured Members that the Council would continue risk assess in order to move forward slowly and safely, in line with Welsh Government regulations. The Group Director referred the Cabinet to Section 5 of the report, where a list of the proposed service areas due to open in the following 6-8 weeks was listed.

Members were then referred to Appendix A of the report, which contained detailed service recovery plans of each of the Council's Services. The Group Director advised that the information was being developed further to support the compilation of Corporate Plan Priority action plans for 2020/21 and to ensure the Council meets its statutory reporting requirements under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

The Group Director took the opportunity to thank the Cabinet for the support provided to the Social Care sector during the pandemic.

The Leader firstly took the opportunity to thank all Council staff, in particular those on the frontline, for their work throughout the pandemic.

The Leader noted that throughout the pandemic, the vast majority of Council services had continued to run but in a different way, such as emergency childcare hubs and business grants. Looking to the future, the Leader stated that many Council services could look different, whether that be temporarily due to the virus, or because the period had evidenced that services can operate

differently.

The Deputy Leader echoed the Leader's comments and thanked the Council staff for their contribution in such an awful time. The Deputy Leader commented on the need to continue to provide advice to the community, especially on matters such as small group gatherings. The Deputy Leader spoke of the proposal to increase the number of mourners at funerals and cremations, commenting that it would be vital for families. Commenting on the vast amount of community support shown in the difficult times, the Deputy Leader added that it would need to be built upon moving forward.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Inclusion Services extended her praise to all departments during the pandemic and thanked the education team for the huge amount of work put into creating guidance for schools.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services extended her thanks to the Social Services officers and was pleased to note that the respite service would be provided again, commenting that it is vital in keeping families together and children out of statutory services.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To consider the summary Service Recovery Plans and approve the proposed way forward;
2. To consider the list of services proposed to be reopened, in full or in part, over the next 6 - 8 weeks and approve that the restrictions are lifted; and
3. That a further report on the lifting of further restrictions is presented to the following Cabinet meeting.

142 To consider passing the following under-mentioned 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".

143 Corporate Asset Management Plan 2018-2023 Interim Update

Following the consideration of the report of the Director, Corporate Estates 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), it was **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the content of the report; and
2. To receive a further report from the Director of Corporate Estates following a full review of the Council's built assets to ensure optimum use based upon our revised future service needs.

This meeting closed at 3.12 pm

**Cllr A Morgan
Chairman.**