



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Council held on Wednesday, 21 October 2020 at 4.30 pm.

County Borough Councillors - Council Members in attendance:-

Councillor S Powderhill (Chair)

Councillor M Adams	Councillor R Bevan
Councillor H Boggis	Councillor J Bonetto
Councillor S Bradwick	Councillor J Brencher
Councillor A Calvert	Councillor G Caple
Councillor A Chapman	Councillor A Cox
Councillor A Crimmings	Councillor J Cullwick
Councillor G Davies	Councillor J Davies
Councillor L De Vet	Councillor M Diamond
Councillor J Edwards	Councillor J Elliott
Councillor S Evans	Councillor M Fidler Jones
Councillor M Forey	Councillor A Fox
Councillor H Fychan	Councillor D Grehan
Councillor E Griffiths	Councillor J Harries
Councillor G Holmes	Councillor L Hooper
Councillor G Hopkins	Councillor P Howe
Councillor G Hughes	Councillor J James
Councillor P Jarman	Councillor G Jones
Councillor L Jones	Councillor W Jones
Councillor R Lewis	Councillor W Lewis
Councillor C Leyshon	Councillor A Morgan
Councillor K Morgan	Councillor S Morgans
Councillor M Norris	Councillor D Owen-Jones
Councillor W Owen	Councillor S Pickering
Councillor M Powell	Councillor S Powell
Councillor S. Rees-Owen	Councillor S Rees
Councillor A Roberts	Councillor J Rosser
Councillor G Stacey	Councillor E Stephens
Councillor G Thomas	Councillor W Treeby
Councillor E Webster	Councillor M Webber
Councillor T Williams	Councillor J Williams
	Councillor R Yeo

Officers in attendance

Mr B Davies, Director of Finance & Digital Services
Ms G Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Mr R Evans, Director of Human Resources
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 N Wheeler, Group Director – Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services
Mr A Wilkins, Director of Legal Services

25 Apologies

Apologies of absence were received from County Borough Councillors S Belzak, A Davies-Jones, Sera Evans, E George, M Griffiths, K Jones, M Tegg, R K Turner, M Weaver, L Walker, D Williams, G Williams and C Willis.

26 Declaration of Interest

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, the following declarations of personal interest were made:

Agenda item 2 - Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board

- County Borough Councillor J Davies – “I work for Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board”
- County Borough Councillor K Morgan – “I work for Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board, I won't take part in the discussion”
- County Borough Councillor G Caple – “My son is a doctor and works in Bridgend and for Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board”
- County Borough Councillor G Caple – “I am a member of the Community Health Council”
- County Borough Councillor S Evans – “I work for the NHS”
- County Borough Councillor M Forey – “I am a former Elected Member representative on the Health Board”
- County Borough Councillor P Jarman – “I am a former member of the Cwm Taf LHB”
- County Borough Councillor R Yeo – “My wife is employed by Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board”
- County Borough Councillor G Jones – “I am a member of the Community Health Council”

Agenda item 8 - Medium Term Financial Plan Update

- County Borough Councillor P Jarman – “Dispensation to speak and vote on all matters for the duration and adoption of the 2020-21 Budget process in my capacity as Leader of the Opposition”

(Note : A further declaration of personal interest was made later in the meeting (Minute No.36 refers)

- County Borough Councillor E Griffiths – “ I am a trustee of Evan James's Cylch Meithrin (Nursery Group) in Pontypridd”

27 Minutes Silence

The Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A Morgan announced that it was the 54th Anniversary of the Aberfan disaster and Members were asked to reflect on the anniversary by observing a minute's silence.

28 CWM TAF MORGANNWG UNIVERSITY HEALTH BOARD

Council received Mr Mick Giannasi, Chair of the Independent Maternity Services Oversight Panel, who delivered a Power Point presentation which addressed the following areas:-

- Purpose of the briefing
- Progress timeline – Headlines
- September 2020 Progress Report
- Evidence of Further Progress against Maternity Improvement Plan
- Sustaining Improvements Longer Term – Other Developments
- Assessment of Progress Against IPAAF
- Key Priorities for next period
- Consequences of Covid-19
- Independent Clinical Review Programme
- Clinical Review Feedback – Risks and Opportunities
- Summary of key messages

The Leader of the Council thanked the Chair of the Independent Maternity Services Oversight Panel for his presentation which had delivered an update relating to the specific matters and showed that significant progress has been made. He also acknowledged the frankness shown by the Health Board through discussions and presentations and the progress which has been demonstrated through the independent panel.

With regard to previous concerns around recruitment, staff morale and continuity of staff, the Leader asked whether staffing issues are being managed and maintained appropriately. He also acknowledged the importance that staff have the time, care and attention to dedicate to families.

Mr Giannasi advised that there are two broad issues to address, the culture of the organisation, which is changing slowly, and how the organisation responds to adversity. He added that the significant improvements have been evidenced and supported by independent reviews such as those undertaken by the Community Health Council and Care Inspectorate Wales. Aside from staff behaviour, Mr Giannasi added that management behaviour has also changed from that previously reported but change would continue to take time. The Health Board has recently launched its Values and Behaviours Programme and leadership change programmes are in place and complaints and feedback from women and families continue to be monitored carefully.

Mr Giannasi raised concern regarding how those long standing situations where individuals and families have suffered loss are resolved, where the impact on individuals and on the reputation of the Health Board can be significant. Albeit there are a small number of these cases, measures are in place to encourage the Health Board to move beyond litigation into mediation and to consider new ways of helping people to find closure.

Council was advised that Birth Rate Plus is the standard by which Health Boards are assessed in terms of their level of staffing. The report was published in October 2019 which demonstrated then that the Health Board was slightly ahead of the necessary level.

Mr Giannasi confirmed that there is a regime of daily, weekly and monthly monitoring of staffing levels by the Health Board and it is held to account on these issues by the Welsh Government. The Health Board has been asked to produce a long term work force planning strategy to ensure it is safe, manageable and fit for purpose and tackles the key issues such as overtime and bank nursing. Mr Giannasi advised that staffing levels are appropriate and that mechanisms are in place to ensure they are maintained.

Councillor P Jarman (Plaid Cymru Group)

Councillor Jarman described the scandal as having cost a lot in terms of human misery but acknowledged the positive news delivered by Mr Giannasi via his presentation because of the intervention which has provided a safe environment, as safe as can be predicted, for those who are about to become parents in the next few months.

Councillor Jarman questioned whether the high incidents of hospital acquired infections, Covid-19 has affected the Maternity Department or was it excluded from the high figures that have been recently reported?

Councillor Jarman referred to her comments in the Council meeting in February 2020 to the Chair of the Health Board calling for a Police Investigation into whether there are any criminal offences relating to Corporate Manslaughter, whether conversations with the Police had resulted in a formal investigation being launched and if so, would it form part of the clinical review findings? Will the affected individuals be the first to know their findings before they are presented to Welsh Government, including the First Minister?

In response Mr Giannasi advised that the maternity services and its improvement plan is sustained although Covid has impacted on sickness levels which has created operational issues for the Health Board but he was unable to provide further comment on infection rates.

Mr Giannasi confirmed that there is a Memorandum of Understanding in place between South Wales Police, the Health Board and the Independent Oversight Panel and there are processes in place should the panel believe that a criminal investigation was necessary. There are similar mechanisms for the panel to make referrals to the police and where appropriate a similar mechanism for reporting to professional bodies and to the Coroners if necessary. Mr Giannasi confirmed that regular meetings between the Panel, Health Board and the Police are undertaken and they would be meeting shortly to discuss the emerging evidence from the review.

Mr Giannasi confirmed that the individuals and families involved in the clinical review findings would be contacted immediately following the outcome of the review. They will be written to over the next few weeks with a broad overview of the findings. They will be invited to receive a full copy of the report. Two weeks later they will receive a full response from the Health Board which will set out what they will or have already done in response to the review findings. The

findings will address both clinical and personal issues. All the women have been asked if they wished to tell their story, if they choose to, the Community Health Council has provided advocacy to help and support them through the process. There will also be an opportunity for the families to have a one to one consultation with either the Independent Panel or the Health Board. In conclusion, Mr Giannasi stressed that the women and families are front and centre of the review.

Councillor M Powell (RCT Independent Group)

Councillor Powell raised the following questions:-

Did the issues regarding the maternity provision within the CTMHB come to light prior to the forced reorganisation of the unit at the Royal Glamorgan Hospital and Prince of Wales Hospital by Welsh Government or after the current First Minister made the Health Board implement the changes? Would any of the changes have taken place if not for the call for the Independent review?

Regarding the deaths at the RGH, the Cwm Taf Health Board did not make the 15 point plan and it seems that the Health Board has a focus on Merthyr and Bridgend and this County Borough isn't being served by the RGH. This seems unfair when it should be a Health Board for us all.

Councillor Powell queried what should have been done to prevent the situation arising in the first place and whether those responsible would be named in the report?

Mr Giannasi advised that he was unable to comment on events which had taken place before the reconfiguration and which had already taken place and services had already been brought together in advance of the work of the Oversight panel

He reiterated that this is not an investigation or an independent inquiry but it is an independent oversight panel which has been charged by the Minister with ensuring that progress is made against the Royal College's recommendations.

This is a process to ensure the Health Board addresses those failings and provides a service that people are entitled to.

The Presiding Officer thanked Mr Giannasi for his attendance and presentation to Council.

29 Suspension of Standing Orders

The Deputy Leader made a statement in respect of moving the suspension of Council Procedure Rule 15.1 and advised that in order to facilitate the smooth running of the Council meeting through Zoom, Group Leaders have agreed in advance that where a vote is taken on any item, the individual Group Leader will exercise the vote on behalf of all their Members present for the item in question.

In order to implement the revised voting procedures the Deputy Leader moved the suspension of Council Procedure Rule 15.1, which states that a matter will be decided by a simple majority of those Members voting and present in the room at the time the question was put.

Following consideration of the matter it was **RESOLVED** to suspend Council

Procedure Rule 15.1

Based on the numbers of Members logged into the virtual Council meeting the Service Director Democratic Services & Communications advised of the numbers of Elected Members present by Group:-

Labour – 38

Plaid – 15

Conservative – 1

RCT Independent Group - 5

30 Announcements

- The Presiding Officer acknowledged receipt of a petition from County Borough Councillor D Owen-Jones on behalf of residents in Coedely objecting to Proposal T2020/191/1 - Prohibition of Waiting at any Time Restrictions between Ely Valley Road and Tylcha Fach Terrace.
- The Leader congratulated Mr Nigel Wheeler, Group Director – Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services for his award for the British Empire's Medal (BEM) on the Queen's Honour's List. He referred to Mr Wheeler's long history of working for the council and for his hard work and recognition in promoting the Council's recycling initiatives such as Bryn Pica and Enviro Park.
- The Leader of the Opposition praised the unsung heroes and volunteers in RCT following the floods and covid-19. She hoped the council would recognise their work through the Mayor's 'Good Citizen Award'. Councillor Jarman congratulated all the recipients of the BEM including Mr Wheeler and Julie Cook, who she knew, the latter a community champion who worked hard to support many vulnerable groups.
- Councillor G Hughes congratulated Elizabeth Buffy Williams from Pentre who was awarded with the BEM who did her utmost to assist the community during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Councillor T Williams congratulated James and Dylan Piper from Aderdare on getting through to the finals of Britain's Got Talent and representing RCT.

31 Minutes

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the 10th and 16th September 2020 as an accurate reflection of the meetings.

The Service Director Democratic Services & Communications provided an update on the action requested by Members following the Notice of Motion at the council meeting on the 7th October 2020. He advised that SLT colleagues are compiling the content of the agreed briefing note which would be shared with Members in the coming week to reflect the new restrictions in place.

32 Members' Questions

Question from County Borough Councillor Jarman to County Borough

Councillor Councillor M. Diamond, Chair of Democratic Services.

“Can you advise what role you and the Democratic Services Committee play in promoting good governance?”

Response from Councillor M Diamond

“Councillor Diamond stated that the Democratic Services Committee plays an important role in the governance of this authority, as defined by the Local Government Measure 2011, which includes ensuring that the appropriate level of support and measures are in place for Elected Members to be able to undertake their roles efficiently and champion the importance of the democratic process and decision making role”.

Supplementary question from Councillor P Jarman:

“Councillor Jarman stated that the support councillors receive shows a wide range of practices but sometimes the council barely recognises members outside the Executive and they are treated as if they don't matter, not being able to participate in a question and answer session on maternity services is just one example. Where secretarial administrative and technology support is provided, the balance is often heavily focussed on the Executive.

Councillor Jarman asked whether the Chair of the Democratic Services Committee would support a peer review to test whether the arrangements in place in this council are providing parity of esteem and provision so that no Member feels overlooked”.

Response from Councillor Diamond

“Councillor Diamond advised that he would be happy to support a peer review although there is a lot of support for Elected Members such as the Members Portal which is currently in development. He commented that the council was willing to do whatever it could do to support Members”.

Question from County Borough Councillor J Cullwick to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A Morgan:-

“Yng nghynhadledd y Blaid Geidwadol ddydd Mawrth y 6ed o Hydref, dywedodd Mr Boris Johnson ei fod am wneud y DU yr hyn a ddisgrifiodd fel "Saudi Arabia o wynt", a dywedodd y byddai'r sector yn darparu "cannoedd o filoedd, os nad miliynau, o swyddi." Beth yw eich barn am y cyhoeddiad hwn a sut y gall Rhondda Cynon Taf fanteisio i'r eithaf ar gyfleoedd ac osgoi 'grab' arall o'r ardal fel glo yn yr 2 ganrif diwethaf?”

“At the Conservative Party conference on Tuesday, 6th October, Mr Boris Johnson said he wanted to make the UK what he described as “the Saudi Arabia of wind”, and said the sector would provide “hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of jobs”. What are your thoughts about this announcement and how can RCT maximise opportunities and avoid another asset grab like coal in the last couple of centuries?”

Response from Councillor Morgan:-

“Councillor Morgan explained that RCT has done a lot to generate its own

energy and being as efficient as possible such as solar panels on all its council and school buildings as well as LED street lighting and conserving energy. The council has explored plans around hydro and whether it is suitable in some locations in the county and is talking to local partnerships and the council is open to all the opportunities available to improve efficiency and generate green energy. Council Morgan also advised that projects do need to be supported with funding and incentives to make sure that if there are further green areas to be developed that our county borough reaps the benefits”.

Supplementary question from Councillor J Cullwick:

“Can I ask why so many political parties in Wales, the Labour party, the Conservative Party, the Liberal Democrats talk and sing about ‘The land of Our fathers’ but claim the United Kingdom as their country or home. It is important to note that Mark Drakeford’s words in this week’s briefing. Mr Drakeford called it a National effort and was talking about Wales of course. The First Minister also referred to Keir Starmer as his Leader, rather than Boris Johnston. My Question is, who do you think is responsible for Wales at the moment? Is it Mark Drakeford, Keir Starmer or Boris Johnston, Simon Hart, the Prince of Wales or somebody else?”

Response of Councillor Morgan:

“Councillor Morgan referred to the Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon project which was supported by the Welsh Government, £200m of support was offered towards it, it was the UK Government who pulled back from the project. RCT is still looking at initiatives where there is a return for the local authority and Wales is developing green options. In conclusion the Leader stated that the supplementary question was not linked to the first question posed.”

Question from County Borough Councillor H Fychan to the Cabinet Member for Education & Inclusion Services, County Borough Councillor J Rosser:-

“All yr Aelod Cabinet ddiweddarau'r Cyngor ar y cynnydd sy'n cael ei wneud ar y targedau addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg sydd wedi eu gosod gan Lywodraeth Cymru i gyrraedd miliwn o siaradwyr Cymraeg erbyn 2050?”

“Could the Cabinet Member update us on the progress the Council is making on its Welsh medium education targets related to the Welsh Government’s target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050?”

Response from Councillor J Rosser :-

“Councillor Rosser stated that the council is fully committed to both English and Welsh medium schools and childcare provision throughout the county borough and continuing to progress towards the WG targets in RCT.

The Cabinet member added that since 2012, 400 additional Welsh medium primary school places have been created through our investments and where demand is close to outstripping supply we are targeting these areas with 21st Century Schools funding as a priority as with Penderyn Community School and other proposals at YGG Rhydywain and Dolau Primary. In 2018 RCT secured £4.5m funding from WG enabling investment at 7 Welsh Medium Early Years provision on our school sites and schemes have been completed at Ysgol

Llanharri, YGG Ynyswen and YGG Evan James with the remaining 4 schemes for completion by 2022”.

Supplementary question from Councillor H Fychan:

“Councillor Fychan stated that her question was around the council’s progress against its targets but that could be picked up later on. Councillor Fychan asked that, with regard to the administrative court judgement in the case of Driver versus this council, does the council accept the judgment and also how does the council intend to work with parents, teachers, pupils and the local community to find an alternative way forward in relation to educational reorganisation in Pontypridd?”

(Note: The Legal Officer advised against Members discussing the detail of any current, ongoing legal action and urged Members not to discuss anything that may prejudice the Council’s position in the proceedings mentioned by Councillor Fychan)

Response of Councillor J Rosser:

“Councillor Rosser stated that the overriding objective of the council is to transform the delivery of education through the medium of both English and Welsh in the greater Pontypridd area by delivering significant investment to create a 21st learning environment. As a result of the consequential impact the court’s decision may have on future school reorganisation proposals across Wales, the Council has sought advice to appeal the court’s decision which has been reflected in the WG’s decision to support the Council’s position”.

Question from County Borough Councillor K Morgan to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A Morgan:-

“How many parking enforcement officers does the Council employ and how much income was generated from them during the last financial year?”

Response of Councillor A Morgan:

“Councillor Morgan stated that there are 2 parking enforcement officers, civil parking enforcement Team Leaders which cost £63,351, 12 civil enforcement officers at grade 6 which cost £306,355, additional costs for vehicles which equates to £17,000 per year, the total income figure for the parking enforcement activity the council undertook is £690, 907.”

Supplementary question from Councillor K Morgan:

“Councillor Morgan suggested that there will never be enough parking enforcement officers to cover RCT 24/7 and asked whether the council could use the income generated to look at other solutions such as fixed cameras on the known hotspots and think outside the box and more investment in traffic management schemes so we can avoid the reliance on non-enforced yellow lines in the borough?”

Response of Councillor A Morgan:

“Councillor Morgan suggested that the funding is used in the overall Transportation and Highways department because the funding is ring fenced by

law. He welcomed suggestions as to which other areas should be cut to re direct and allocate the funding”.

Question from County Borough Councillor W. Lewis to the Deputy Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor M. Webber:-

“Can the Deputy Leader please provide an update on the work to facilitate webcasting capabilities for Council and Scrutiny business meetings?”

Response from Councillor M Webber:

“Councillor Webber advised that due to the forthcoming changes to the firebreak measures coming into force from 6pm on Friday there would be a short delay in the completion of the work to the Chamber. The improvements will provide the ability to facilitate the broadcasting of meetings and to integrate and connect our virtual meetings into the new infrastructure. The improvements are about providing improved access for all members and providing support for digital devices and enabling electronic voting and give all members a better work/life balance. The improvements will also provide a better quality of translation services in the Chamber. Councillor Webber explained the she would attend the Chamber together with the Chair of the Democratic Services to see the work first hand.”

No supplementary question was put to the Cabinet Member.

From County Borough Councillor A. S. Fox to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:-

“Will the Council Leader outline what impact the coronavirus pandemic has had on the Council’s finances and what support has been provided by the Welsh Government?”

Response from Councillor A Morgan:

“Councillor A Morgan responded that in the first quarter of this year the total loss equates to £13.6m. The council has received good support from WG to date in the form of two tranches of funding (almost £1/2 billion to support local government) to support PPE, social care placements, agency and staffing pressures (to back fill posts or where staff are self-isolating). There have been losses in leisure (almost £2m) and school dinner money intake but the council has been able to make use of the furlough scheme but only in areas where there are fee generated staff such as leisure and school based kitchen staff. Councillor Morgan stated that he is confident that if WG continues to support the council at the current level it will be able to get through to the end of the year without huge pressures from Covid-19. He alluded to other winter pressures but added that the situation is being closely reviewed and managed”.

No supplementary question was put to the Cabinet Member

(Note: It was confirmed that as Councillor E George was not in attendance the member’s question would fall).

Question from County Borough Councillor D. Owen-Jones to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:-

“Will the Council Leader please make a statement on the progress made by the Council in delivering on its priorities?”

Response of Councillor A Morgan:

“Councillor Morgan stated that this year has brought its own challenges from the Coronavirus shutdown with reduced working hours due to social distancing and other issues which have all impacted. The impacts of the flooding have put a strain on staff but the delivery of the capital programme, which is significant, is ongoing. Even during lockdown the work will continue, more in fact with road re surfacing while the traffic is light on the roads, a multimillion pound programme of flood works will continue with work on culverts and river walls and work is about to commence on the Marks and Spencer’s bridge.

Councillor Morgan referred to the Council’s wider programme, the next round of apprentices has gone out to advert with another tranche due before Christmas. With regard to capital investment, the Cross Valley link has opened and Llys Cadwyn has just opened which represents a significant £38m scheme. It has delivered a new library and gym for the council using £10m of European funding and additional borrowing which is funded from the rental income, The development of Coed Ely and the Robertstown Industrial sites are both underway. Discussions are ongoing with developers around social housing to ensure social housing grant spends. The council has helped to sustain a huge amount of employment. There has been funding for projects in Cynon Valley and in the Rhondda which will be announced shortly. A whole raft of projects are either being delivered or are due to start. A positive message can be delivered which is important and should be remembered”.

33 Council Work Programme

The Service Director Democratic Services & Communications advised that following the recent work of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in respect of flooding in RCT during 2020, the Scrutiny Inquiry Session would be held after Half Term and will also be considered at the council meeting on the 25th November 2020.

34 UPDATE IN RESPECT OF THE CORONAVIRUS IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF

The Leader of the Council provided an update in respect of the Coronavirus in Rhondda Cynon Taf including the forthcoming ‘firebreak’ which will come into effect from 6pm on Friday, 23rd October.

The Leader confirmed that there are still significant number of cases coming through the Track and Trace process, the numbers are approximately 150-200 per day and he paid tribute to the continued hard work of the teams who are on the front line and chasing contacts. He advised that the recent local lockdown certainly reduced and flattened off the incline in numbers and for three or four days there was a slight decline. The local measures were not enough to curb the growth.

The Leader was supportive of the approaching measures but acknowledged the difficulty for all those residents on the job retention/furlough schemes because they will now only receive 67% under the new scheme from the 1st December 2020. He stated that the council has lobbied the welsh government to top up a proportion of the current furlough scheme but that has been unsuccessful.

The Leader advised that there are on average 1,000 new cases per day in Wales at the moment, these new cases could potentially escalate up until Christmas so the exponential growth that is referred to now could be dwarfed in January and February following the festive Christmas period. Intervention is needed.

Local government will be administering the £300m business support packages, £280m of which is based on the last package of support offered. Businesses who previously received grants to the value of between £10,000 and £25,000 based on their rateable value, will be able to claim if they are forced to close. The maximum grant is £5,000, with a £1,000 base payment. There are payments of £500 for those on benefits or low income should they need to self-isolate. Over £11m has been secured to pay for free school meals which will now continue to be paid over the half term holiday and the Christmas school holidays and plans for next year. The payment to the value of £19.50 per week will be of substantial benefit to many families during this difficult time. There have been over 1,000 additional applications for Free School meals during the pandemic.

The Leader advised that during the firebreak community recycling centres and libraries will close, public toilets will have reduced hours from 10-4pm to attract residents into the town centres to support the town centre businesses. Community centres will close and there will be no large gatherings but single individuals can join to form a bubble with another household. The message is clear, stay at home from 6pm on Friday for two weeks.

The Leader confirmed that all Primary Schools will remain open and in Secondary Schools only years 7 and 8 will attend School, years 9, 10, 11 and 12 will receive remote learning. Flying start and nurseries will remain open. More information will be forthcoming and guidance will be issued, details around what is classed as essential and details about grant funding will be published tomorrow. The business support package will be launched on Monday, 26th October and which will be managed by the Council's Finance section, to get all the necessary packages out to businesses. Food takeaway premises will receive a certain payment as during the last lock down many take away businesses qualified for a grant yet remained open for business. That will be reviewed this time.

The Leader advised that there are ongoing meetings with Ministers and at a local level to discuss additional support for Food Banks and in respect of additional support for Mental Health and counselling provision.

The Leader acknowledged that it would be an anxious time for many over the next two weeks with further restrictions in place but it would provide some normality in the longer term, particularly over the festive period. Members were urged to note the contents of the guidance when it is published.

The Leader of the Opposition, Councillor P Jarman (Plaid Cymru Party) asked the following questions:

1. From Friday the local arrangements are superseded by the firebreak regulations in terms of a cross boundary movement?
2. Isolation payment of £500 – I am reliably informed that the additional payment is only available in England and started on the 12th October where the local

councils administer it but Welsh Government is working through the administration of the payment. It is related to benefit payments such as Universal Credit, Working Tax Credits, Housing Benefits and if you are unable to work from home and have been told to self-isolate by NHS Track and Trace you will be entitled to the payment. As far as I am aware those individuals would only be eligible for the payment if they had been told to isolate by the NHS Track and Trace but my further information confirms that not a farthing of that has been awarded.

Councillor Powell (RCT Independent Group) asked the following questions:

1. The new covid maps show that Trallwn is now part of Cilfynydd and Pontypridd East which encompasses other wards. The maps show that there are 19 cases within that area. Why isn't the map broken down to the individual wards?
2. What happens if the R value has not dropped below 1 after the firebreak period?

Councillor James, Conservative Group asked the following questions:

1. What evidence is there for the firebreak lockdown and what happens afterwards if the 'R' number does not come down?
2. What steps has the Leader of the Council taken to lobby the Welsh Government in terms of how open and transparent it has been with the decision it has taken?

The Leader clarified that the isolation payment of £500 would be administered by the Council and Welsh Government will be making an announcement shortly around how the payments will be administered and potentially backdated.

With regards to the maps as referred to by Councillor Powell, the Leader stated that RCT is still producing its maps based on data being presented according to the super output areas. The Council is trying to produce the information as clearly as possible.

The Leader advised that council staff have been continually working with and advising licensed premises however, a number of those premises will be closed down in the next 24hrs following activity which did not adhere to the measures in place.

Members were advised that Council Leaders have been involved in a number of meetings to discuss the data, the options available, meetings of the Social Partnership Council, meetings with Trade Unions, with Business Leaders and business representatives to make sure all the views are fed back. The Leader advised that he had the opportunity to ask questions directly to scientific and technical advisers and to the Welsh Government team.

The Leader confirmed that the incubation period of the virus is in excess of 10 days potentially from contracting it, presenting symptoms and being tested and therefore the clear message is we won't see an improvement within the firebreak period. It will be in the period following the lockdown where improvements will be seen. In RCT in the last few days, there have been between 150-200 new cases per day hence the reason for the lockdown and infections and deaths in care

homes and hospitals.

The Leader urged all Members to read all the information available to them.

35 Medium Term Financial Plan Update

The Director of Finance & Digital Services presented his report to provide Members with an update on the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2020/21 to 2023/24, based on current modelling assumptions in advance of formulating the detailed budget strategy proposals for 2021/22 during the autumn.

Members were informed that the national economic position remains uncertain with the forthcoming budget now deferred and the comprehensive spending review now likely to be for one year only and not for the three years as originally planned. Welsh Government continues to support the additional cost implications to arise from the pandemic including lost income and additional costs which the council continues to incur outside its core budget.

The Director explained that some of the key assumptions which have been factored into the financial plan includes settlement levels which have been modelled on a range of planning scenarios and compiled based on Welsh Government funding being at +2%, +3% and +4% per year for financial years 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24. The variability of the potential level of the Settlement from Welsh Government has a significant impact on the budget gap, at £3.9M per 1% as illustrated the outcome of the range of modelling assumptions currently applied.

In conclusion, the Director advised that the Council would identify options which will help address the range of potential budget gaps but in doing so the council will ensure it maintains its critical services. The report would be available to the Finance & Performance Committee as consultees to the Council's budget for next year.

The Director of Finance & Digital Services responded to a query in respect of Schools budget which is modelled to cover, in full, pay and non-pay inflation in the context of the projected range of local government settlement levels and also in respect of the allocation of funding towards the period poverty grant.

Following consideration of the report it was **RESOLVED** to note the current position modelled in respect of the 'Medium Term Financial Plan 2020/21 to 2023/24' and receive further updates in the autumn as part of the annual budget setting process.

36 Council's Corporate Performance Report 2020/21

The Service Director, Performance and Improvement presented the report of the Chief Executive which outlined Rhondda Cynon Taf's draft Corporate Performance Report (CPR) which contains progress for 2019/20 and plans for 2020/21 in respect of the Council's strategic priorities. It also sets out how the CPR enables the Council to meet its statutory reporting requirements.

The Service Director advised that the document has been reviewed by senior officers to ensure it is evidence based and balanced in its assessment. It was reported to Cabinet on the 13th October 2020 and endorsed with a recommendation for its approval to Council.

The report has been set within the context of the unprecedented events of Storm Dennis and the Coronavirus pandemic but performance and progress during 2019/20 is noted as being positive.

The proposed actions plans across the refreshed priorities of People, Places and Prosperity focus on key areas for the current year and will form part of the Quarterly Performance Reports which will be considered by Cabinet and to the Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee this year. Audit Wales has a statutory duty to audit the corporate performance reports which will be reported to Council in due course.

A number of queries were raised in respect of the draft corporate performance report which the Service Director Performance and Improvement addressed, some of which are as follows:-

The Service Director confirmed that the draft corporate performance report before Members was the final version for consideration and sign off. He also confirmed that the document is comprehensive and council services will consider all the information and input necessary actions with a view to addressing areas where there the council needs to make further improvements.

With regards to contributing to the local Development Plan (LDP), the CPR has no remit to making observations from a technical perspective but would reference it from a factual assessment point of view.

A specific query was raised in respect of the definition of 'good progress' with regards to the Welsh medium provision, which would be responded to following the meeting by the service area

The Service Director clarified that the information presented the Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee is a more holistic overview of performance across all the scrutiny committees but there is an opportunity for scrutiny to request further detailed information and to add items to their work programmes subject to there being a clear rationale and outcome.

Following consideration of the report it was **RESOLVED** to approve the draft CPR (as set out at Appendix 1) taking into account the feedback from Cabinet at its meeting on 13th October 2020.

(**Note:** County Borough Councillor E Griffiths declared a personal interest in section 17 of the Corporate Performance Report – “ I am a trustee of Evan James’s Cylch Meithrin (Nursery Group) in Pontypridd”)

37 Presiding officer

At this juncture in the proceedings the Deputy Presiding Officer took the chair for the remainder of the meeting.

38 Council Tax Discount

Through his report the Director of Finance & Digital Services provided Members with the opportunity to review the level of Council Tax discount for prescribed classes of dwellings within the County Borough and to review, amend or reaffirm the level prescribed.

Members were referred to section 3 of the report which outlined the requirements of the Council in respect of the Council Tax discount provision, with the Director advising that the Council has discretion to award up to 50% discount in respect of two prescribed classes of dwellings (usually described as second homes and holiday homes), i.e. Class A and Class B. Members were further advised of Class C dwellings and the Director confirmed that the Council had previously determined not to allow a discount in respect of Class A, B and C properties.

Following discussions and questions which were responded to by the Director of Finance & Digital Services it was **RESOLVED**:

1. To agree the continuation of **no** Council Tax discount in respect of Class A, B and C properties.

39 Response to a Notice of Motion - Fireworks

The Service Director, Democratic Services & Communications provided Members with an update in respect of the Notice of Motion considered by the Council at its meeting on the 27th November 2019 and the RSPCA campaign calling for greater controls. He referred to the outcome of the decision taken by Cabinet at its meeting of the 13th October, following consideration of the recommendations and the attached Cabinet Decision Notice.

Following discussion and an amendment to the motion that the Council writes to its Parliamentary representatives for Rhondda Cynon Taf to help drive forward progress on the U.K. Government's response to the recommendations of the Select Committee report on this issue it was **RESOLVED**

1. To note the recommendations of the Director of Public Health, Protection and Community Services in conjunction with the relevant portfolio holder, as set out in the attached Cabinet report (Appendix 1);
2. To note the outcome of the decision taken by Cabinet at its meeting on the 13th October, following consideration of the recommendations; and
3. That the Council writes to its Parliamentary representatives for Rhondda Cynon Taf to help drive forward progress on the U.K. Government's response to the recommendations of the Select Committee report on this issue

40 Urgent Executive Decisions

In accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules 17.2(a), the Service Director of Democratic Services and Communications reported on the urgent decisions that were taken forward through key delegated decision during the period July – September 2020 and it was **RESOLVED** to note the information contained within the report.

41 Changes to Membership

In accordance with the decision taken by of the Council meeting held on the 16th

September, 2020 the Service Director Democratic Services & Communication reported that he had received notification from the Plaid Cymru group of the following changes in membership:

- A change to its membership for the Licensing Committee in that County Borough Councillor A Cox is to be nominated in place of County Borough Councillor E Webster; and
- A change to its membership for the Audit Committee in that County Borough Councillor E Webster is to be nominated in place of County Borough Councillor A Cox.

It was **RESOLVED** to note:

1. That County Borough Councillor A Cox is to replace County Borough Councillor E Webster on the Licensing Committee; and

2. That County Borough Councillor E Webster is to replace County Borough Councillor A Cox on the Audit Committee.

This meeting closed at 7.15 pm

Cllr S Powderhill
Presiding officer/Cllr G Hughes Deputy Presiding
Officer