



## **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CABINET**

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday, 25 March 2021 at 10.30 am

### **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

### **Others in attendance**

Councillor G Caple  
Councillor P Howe  
Councillor P Jarman

### **Officers in attendance**

Mr C Bradshaw, Chief Executive  
Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication  
Mr N Wheeler, Group Director – Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services  
Mr P Mee, Group Director Community & Children's Services  
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  
Ms L Davies, Director, Public Health, Protection and Community Services  
Ms G Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services  
Mr N Elliott, Director of Adult Services  
Ms M Warburton, Diversity & Inclusion Manager  
Mr P Griffiths, Service Director, Finance & Improvement  
Mr R Waters, Service Director Frontline Services

## **72 Declaration of Interest**

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

County Borough Councillor R Lewis – 'I declare a Personal Interest in respect of Item 12 – Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Update 2021 and Item 13 - Education & Inclusion Services Planned Capital Programme 2021/22 'I am Chair of Governors YGG Abercynon, which is referenced within the reports'

County Borough Councillor J Rosser - 'I declare a Personal Interest in respect of Item 13 - Education & Inclusion Services Planned Capital Programme 2021/22 'I am on the governing body of Alaw Primary School, which is referenced within the reports'

County Borough Councillor P Howe - 'I declare a Personal Interest in respect of Item 17 - Acquisition of Former Chubb Factory Site, Maerdy Industrial Estate, Ferndale, RCT, CF43 'I am on the governing body of YGG Lyn Yr Forwyn'.

### **73 Minutes**

Members **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on the 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021 as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

### **74 Cabinet Work Programme**

The Service Director, Democratic Services & Communication provided Cabinet Members with a draft work programme for the 2020-2021 Municipal Year, which listed matters requiring consideration by Cabinet.

The Service Director spoke of the current circumstances, commenting that there was a greater need for flexibility of the programme.

Members were referred to Appendix 1 of the report and were advised that the programme is a live document to allow for any additional / deletion of reports throughout the year.

The Deputy Leader commented that utilising the programme assists with openness and transparency of the decision-making process within the Council and gives greater opportunity for Pre-Scrutiny.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Work Programme for the 2020-2021 Municipal Year (with appropriate amendment where necessary) and to receive a further update on a 3 monthly basis.

### **75 The Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021**

The Service Director, Democratic Services & Communication provided Members with an overview of the duties placed upon the Authority through the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, which received royal assent on the 20<sup>th</sup> January 2021. Members were advised that in accordance with the requirements of the Act, a number of actions would need to be addressed to ensure RCT comply with the legislative requirements.

The Service Director provided Members with a general overview of the Act which will change the way the Council operates across a range of areas from electoral reform, public participation, governance and performance management, democratic processes and stronger working arrangements with Town and Community Councils. Members were advised that the 'Coming into Force' provisions of the Act were complex, with some provisions coming into force within days of Royal Assent, others within two months and the majority via Ministerial statutory instruments.

The Deputy Leader welcomed the report and spoke of the work of the

Democratic Services Committee working group looking at aspects of the Act in respect of diversity within democracy. The Deputy Leader agreed that different elements of the Act would be reported to respective Committees when appropriate.

The Leader spoke positively on the introduction of the youth vote which is contained within the Act and spoke of the importance of encouraging diversity within democracy, to ensure all residents are represented equally.

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

1. To note the update provided in the report.
2. To note the Council's position statement outlined within the report in respect of the requirements of the Act and agreed that the appropriate officers identified are charged with taking forward the required actions in line with the timescales stipulated within the Act or as relevant regulations are made by Welsh Government.

#### **76 Pre-Scrutiny - Annual Equality Report 2019-2020**

The Diversity and Inclusion Manager provided Members with the Annual Equality Report that had been developed to fulfil the Council's legal duties and obligations to report on its progress in delivering the General and Specific Equality Duties. Members were advised that the report contained progress made in year 2019/20 in meeting the equality objectives contained in Council's Strategic Equality Plan.

The Service Director, Democratic Services & Communication advised Cabinet that Members of the Overview & Scrutiny were provided with the opportunity to undertake pre scrutiny on the Annual Equality Report in advance of Cabinet's consideration.

The Deputy Leader thanked the Diversity and Inclusion Manager and her team for the work carried out on behalf of the Council and referenced a number of initiatives the Council has driven forward in driving to achieve an equitable Council.

Following discussions, it was **RESOLVED**:

1. To note the comments and observations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
2. To endorse the recommendations outlined within the Annual Equality Report 2019/20 as attached to the report.

#### **77 The Socio Economic Duty (Equality Act 2010)**

The Diversity and Inclusion Manager provided Members with details of the Socio economic Duty which comes into force on 31 March 2021. Members were advised that the Socio economic Duty is viewed as a key mechanism to support the most vulnerable within society.

Members were advised that the duty needed to be applied to all Council Key

decisions and the process for taking forward this duty was outlined, including the creation of a review panel to strengthen and safeguard the decision-making process. It was advised that the Panel will act as an independent review mechanism to scrutinise the proposal being considered.

The Deputy Leader spoke of the importance of the duty placed upon the Council and the need for this duty to strengthen the impact assessment process undertaken to ensure that no one was disadvantaged from any decision taken forward by the Council.

With the agreement of the Chair, County Borough Councillor P Jarman addressed the Cabinet on this item.

In response to Councillor Jarman's address the Leader and Chief Executive advised of the work and discussions already undertaken in respect of electric vehicle charging points, which was detailed within the draft climate change strategy.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. To note the content of the report in respect of the requirements of the Socio economic Duty and the need to ensure that the duty is incorporated into key Council decisions, to reduce the inequalities of outcomes from socio economic disadvantage.

## **78 Draft Council Tackling Climate Change Strategy 2021-2025 for Public Consultation**

The Chief Executive provided Members with an overview of the work of the Council in respect of Climate Change, advising of the positive commitment made to meet and contribute to global, national and local targets to reduce carbon across the Council's services. Members were advised that the Council already purchases 100% of its electrical energy supply from renewable energy sources and has reduced its carbon footprint by 37% or 12,725 tonnes over the past five years.

Reference was made to the work of the Climate Change Steering Group, a sub-committee of the Council's Cabinet, which is charged with developing the Council's response to the Climate Change agenda and supporting Cabinet to achieve the 2030 Net Zero target. The focus of the Steering Group has been on understanding the various carbon issues within the County Borough, making a series of recommendations to the Council's Cabinet and gathering information to inform the development of the Council's Tackling Climate Change Strategy.

The Chief Executive referred Members to the Council's draft Tackling Climate Change Strategy set out in Appendix A of the report, which set the overall direction for the Council over the coming five years, describing its vision, purpose and ambition as local authority in respect of the Council's carbon footprint and the carbon footprint for the County Borough.

Members were advised that subject to Members determination, the draft Tackling Climate Change Strategy would be subject to a comprehensive public consultation over the two months to 31 May 2021. It was also the intention for the strategy to be scrutinised by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, also noting

the importance of involving all elected members in the consultation process.

The Deputy Leader welcomed the engagement with the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the local communities to ensure that the strategy was focused in the right direction.

The Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities, Well-being & Cultural Services commented on the wide ranging and ambitious draft strategy presented which incorporated both long- and short-term objectives. The Cabinet Member commented on the planned robust consultation process and the need for such engagement. He added that the strategy would be reviewed periodically to ensure it was always 'fit for purpose' and reacted to changing climate priorities.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and the Leader also spoke on the item and welcomed the consultation process on the strategy.

Following discussions, it was **RESOLVED**:

1. To note the contents of the report and the Draft Council Tackling Climate Change Strategy appended to the report.
2. To the draft 'Council Tackling Climate Change Strategy' and the recommendations arising from the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group on [17th March](#), in particular that officers engage and consult with residents and businesses on the Council's response to Climate Change.
3. To request that the results of the consultation on the 'Draft Council Tackling Climate Change Strategy' is presented to a future meeting of Cabinet.

## **79 Local Authority Arrangements to Safeguard Children and Adults at Risk**

The Group Director, Community and Children's Services provided Members with an update on the progress made in respect of the Council's corporate safeguarding arrangements in the last 12 months. Reference was made to the Wales Audit Office review conducted in 2019 which had found that the Council had met, or partially met, most of the previous recommendations and proposals for improvement. However, the Group Director added that some further proposals for improvement were made to strengthen aspects of the Council's Corporate Safeguarding arrangements and details of the six proposals were provided.

The Group Director confirmed that the Council continues to make progress in delivering its Corporate Safeguarding responsibilities as evidenced by the information provided within his report and the ongoing nature of the actions being delivered.

The Deputy Leader spoke of the work of the Council to ensure its responsibilities for Corporate Safeguarding were adhered to and spoke of the partnership work with the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board, which is the multi-agency statutory partnership that has the responsibility for safeguarding across the region.

With the agreement of the Leader, County Borough Councillor P Jarman spoke on this item. On response to the points raised by Councillor Jarman the Group Director referenced the work being undertaken in respect of the draft suicide prevention strategy.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. To review the progress made against the improvement actions to support Corporate Safeguarding requirements and to request any further information on any areas where this is deemed insufficient.

## **80 The Safety of Women in Public Spaces**

The Director of Public Health, Protection & Community Services provided a Verbal Update on the Safety of Women and Girls in Public Places following the tragic abduction and murder of Sarah Everard's in London on the 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021.

The Director assured Members that keeping the people of RCT safe remains a key priority of the Council and its Partners and proceeded to outline some of those actions already in place to ensure the safety of people in RCT.

Members were advised of the investment of high quality, digital CCTV cameras following almost £400K of investment in the last three years. Details were also provided of The Pub Watch scheme, Public protection orders and the Comprehensive Strategy in place for RCT to tackle violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

The Director advised that following a request by Cabinet a review by the Council, Police and through the wider Community Safety Partnership was currently being undertaken to ensure strengthened collective arrangements were in place to keep women and girls safe in communities and in particular as the night time economy opens up in coming weeks.

The Deputy Leader referenced the positive work already undertaken by the Council and key partners in respect of ensuring the safety of all people within RCT and the need to work with key buildings and businesses to ensure staff are trained and able to recognise when a female is feeling unsafe.

The Leader referenced the importance of taxi marshals and the importance of registered taxis and also commented on the positive investment with CCTV which should be a reassurance to residents. The Leader welcomed the review and any opportunities that might come forward as an outcome of the review.

With the agreement of the Chair, County Borough Councillor P Jarman addressed the Cabinet on this item.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. To note the verbal update provided
2. To receive a future report on the review currently being undertaken with partners in respect of safety of women in public spaces.

**81      A Proposal to deliver Shared Regional Education Advisory Services for Children and Young People with a Sensory Impairment**

The Director of Education & Inclusion Services provided Members with information regarding a proposal for Rhondda Cynon Taf's Sensory Team within the Access and Inclusion Service to move from a separate and autonomous sensory service to a shared sub-regional, educational advisory service for children and young people with a sensory impairment. Member were advised that it was proposed that the new sub-regional service would be developed in partnership with the two other Councils from the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region; Bridgend and Merthyr County Borough Council for at least the next three years.

The Director commented that the opportunity would enable the Council to drive forward and improve the way in which current sensory impairment services operate. Regionalising the resources and expertise across the three Councils would enable the Council to realise efficiencies in travel, equipment, training and direct support to families and schools. However, the main driver for the proposal was to provide resilience in the system to meet a growing area of ALN.

The Cabinet Member for Education & Inclusion services spoke of the independent review previously conducted and the shortfalls highlighted. The Cabinet Member commented that the proposal before members would address such shortfalls and would provide families, schools and local authority staff with assurance, during a period of significant insecurity, in respect of ALN within the educational sector in Wales.

With the agreement of the Leader County Borough Councillor P Jarman address the Cabinet on this item to which the Leader responded too.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. To note the contents of the report.
2. To support the proposal developed in partnership with the Education Directors from Rhondda Cynon Taf, Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Councils in the Cwm Taf Morgannwg area, to deliver sub-regional, shared educational advisory services for children and young people with a sensory impairment, for at least the next three years.

**82      Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Update 2021**

The Director Education & Inclusion Services referenced the duty placed on Council's to secure 'as far as is reasonably practicable' sufficient childcare to meet the requirements of parents in its area who require childcare to enable them to take up, or remain in, work, or to undertake education or training which could reasonably be expected to assist them to obtain work. In respect of this duty, Councils are required to undertake a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) every five years, with annual reviews of the assessment and accompanying action plan. Members were advised that the last full CSA report was published in 2017 by the Council and that Officers are now starting to plan for the next full report, due in Spring 2022.

The Director provided Members with a detailed overview of the assessment adding that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the childcare sector across Wales has been significant. The Director commented that the Council were incredibly proud of all childcare providers in RCT who have continued to deliver safe, quality care for children and their families throughout the last year in a professional and compassionate manner. The Director concluded by adding that despite the challenges of the last 12 months, the Council continues to be well placed with its existing childcare provision to meet the current needs of most working parents. Development work continues to be undertaken in response to parental demand and in areas where there is an identified need

The Cabinet Member for Education & Inclusion Services commented on the positive feedback provided in respect of the CSA and reiterated the comments of the Director in respect of the delivery of childcare provision during an extremely difficult 12 months and the safe environments and quality of care provided to the Children of the County Borough.

With the agreement of the Leader, County Borough Councillor P Jarman addressed the Cabinet on this item.

The Deputy Leader commented on the 30hour childcare provision and the benefits this provided for many working families. The Leader also paid thanks to the childcare sector.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. To note the contents of the report.
2. For the Director of Education and Inclusion Services to discuss with Welsh Government the future role of RCTCBC in delivery of the Childcare Offer for Wales.
3. To receive a further report and updated action plan in June 2021

### **83 Education & Inclusion Services Planned Capital Programme 2021/22**

The Director of Education & Inclusion Services provided Cabinet Members with details of the capital works for approval for 2021/22 as part of the Council's three-year Capital Programme.

The Director reminded Cabinet Members that an amount of £7.170M has been allocated to the planned capital programme (minor works) for 2021/22, as agreed by Council on the 10<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

The Director continued by advising that continuation of the three-year rolling Capital Programme and sustaining the level of funding would continue to make significant enhancements to the quality of the Council's school premises and has been a vital part of the Council school modernisation programme which has undoubtedly contributed to improved standards.

Members were referred to section 5 of the report where the proposed allocations of the planned capital programme funds for 2021/22 were outlined. It was advised that further details of the programmes of work were detailed in appendices 1 –10 of the report.



Cabinet Member for Education & Inclusion Services welcomed the report and the investment being taken forward within the schools identified, which she felt would help modernise the buildings and improve the environment for children to learn.

The Leader also commented on the additional investment and the significant progress made with the programme, during a difficult year.

With the agreement of the Leader, County Borough Councillor P Jarman also spoke on this item.

Following discussions the Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

1. To approve the Education Capital Programme priority schemes for 2021/22 as outlined in Appendices 1-9 of the report and to approve scheme commencement.

#### **84 Highways, Transportation and Strategic Projects Supplementary Capital Programme 2021/22**

The Service Director, Frontline Services provided Cabinet Members with the detailed capital programme for Highways, Transportation and Strategic Projects for 2020/21.

Members were provided with the detail against the specific 2020/21 capital allocations of £12.949M in favour of Highways Technical Services and of £12.076M in favour of Strategic Projects. It was added that these allocations were being made in order to safeguard the long-term integrity of the highways and transportation network and to enhance it, so as to deal with ever increasing travel demands. Specific regard was given to promoting safer and more sustainable travel and to enabling economic activity.

The Service Director referred Members of section 4.1.4 of his report which provided details of the programme and funding allocation and also confirmed that a number of the grant allocations referenced within the report had been confirmed from Welsh Government.

The Leader welcomed the investment and advised Members that the programme was a rolling programme of work. He welcomed the recognised improvements to highways infrastructure based on the data in the report and spoke of the unprecedented year and the effects on the County Borough in respect of Storm Dennis and the effects on the highways and infrastructure.

With the agreement of the Leader, County Borough Councillor G Caple and P Jarman addressed the Cabinet on this item.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. To note and approve the Supplementary Capital Programme for Highways, Transportation and Strategic Projects as detailed within the report.
2. To note that the current allocations are part of a 3-year capital

programme and agreed to delegate authority to the Group Director, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Director of Finance and Digital Services, to extend activity to deliver additional projects during the financial year, where capacity exists for accelerated delivery in accordance with the purpose of the wider programme, or to suspend programmes/projects and reallocate funding to optimise delivery.

## **85 Non Domestic Rate (NDR) Relief Scheme for Retail, Leisure and Hospitality**

The Director of Finance & Digital Services reminded Members of the Welsh Government financial support package for businesses which was developed due to the coronavirus pandemic. The Director advised that the package included a new temporary business rates relief scheme for the financial year 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. He continued by advising that the scheme, provided a business rate “holiday” for all qualifying businesses for the whole period and was fully funded by WG. During 2020/21, around 1,300 businesses in Rhondda Cynon Taf had benefitted from £16M of rate relief through the scheme. Members were informed that an extension of this rate relief had been announced by Welsh Government and details of the extension were provided for Members consideration.

The Leader welcomed the rate relief extension which he added would provide further much needed financial support and certainty for local businesses to meet their 2021/22 rate liability and would supplement the Council’s wider commitment to maintain vibrant town centres across Rhondda Cynon Taf.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. To note the details of the RLH (Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Rate Relief) Scheme and formally adopt the scheme for the year 2021/22.

(**N.B** The Service Director, Democratic Services and Communications advised Members that the item would be exempt from call in due to the need for Non Domestic Rate demands to be dispatched in line with requirements.)

## **86 Council Performance Report - 31st December 2020 (Quarter 3)**

The Service Director, Performance and Improvement provided an overview of the Council’s performance, both from a financial and operational perspective, based on the first nine months of this financial year (to the 31st December 2020).

The Service Director advised that the third quarter revenue budget position was projecting a £1.049M overspend, representing an improved picture compared to quarters 1 and 2. He added that this projection reflected the continuation of key pressures primarily within Children’s and Adult Services. Members were reminded that the position was also set in the unprecedented context of Covid-19 and takes into account additional Welsh Government funding received for the first nine months of the year, and that forecasted to be received for the remainder of the year, in respect of additional expenditure incurred and income loss as a result of the pandemic.

As part of the Council’s robust service and financial management arrangements, the Service Director advised that work was continuing across all services to contribute to bringing the financial position closer in line with budget; refresh

financial forecasts for the full year as updated information becomes available; and engagement with Welsh Government to highlight the importance of providing additional funding to meet on-going permanent cost pressures.

Capital investment as at 31st December 2020 was £57.483M, with projects across the programme continuing to progress during Quarter 3, taking account of Covid-19 restrictions and safety requirements. The Service Director concluded his overview by advising of the good progress that had been made across the Council's three Corporate Plan priorities of People, Places and Prosperity with a continued focus on providing essential support to residents and businesses to help counter the significant impact Covid-19 is having on local communities and, alongside this, progressing the delivery of major projects.

The Deputy Leader referenced the positive indicators in respect of sickness absence and thanked all staff for their loyalty and hard work during a difficult year.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Estates welcomed the report and noted the improvements made since the previous quarter report. He referenced the ongoing pressures facing the Council in respect of Social Services and praised officers for the work undertaken to maximise on grant funding opportunities.

The Leader also reiterated his thanks for the work undertaken by Council staff and referenced work and investment in schools, town centres and empty properties across the County Borough. The Leader also commented on the substantial pressures in respect of Social Services.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. To note the continued unprecedented circumstances Council Services are operating within as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

#### **Revenue**

2. To note and agree the General Fund revenue outturn position of the Council as at the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 (Section 2 of the Executive Summary) including the on-going Welsh Government Covid-19 funding to support service delivery.

#### **Capital**

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

#### **Corporate Plan Priorities**

5. To note the Quarter 2 progress updates for the Council's agreed Corporate Plan priorities (Sections 5 a – c of the Executive Summary).
6. To note the progress update to enhance the Council's short term and long-term response to extreme weather events (Section 6 of the Executive Summary).

**87 To consider passing the following Resolution:**

**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 item 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.

**88 Acquisition of Former Chubb Factory Site, Maerdy Industrial Estate, Ferndale, RCT, CF43 4AB**

The Director of Corporate Estates sought authority from Cabinet to acquire the Freehold interest of land comprising the Former Chubb Factory Site, Maerdy Industrial Estate, Ferndale, RCT. Through his exempt report, Members were advised that the land was located in a key position adjacent to private and Council land holdings, and could be used to potentially facilitate the development of a new Welsh Medium Primary School and/ or develop the site to meet the needs of the local community.

With the agreement of the Leader, County Borough Councillor P Howe addressed the Cabinet on this item.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. To purchase the Freehold interest at the Former Chubb Factory site, Maerdy Industrial Estate, Ferndale.

(**N.B** During this item County Borough Councillor P Howe declared a personal interest which minute no.73 refers)

**89 Danymynydd (Porth) Extra Care Development**

The Group Director, Community & Children's Services provided Members with an update on the redevelopment of the former Danymynydd Care Home in Porth for the provision of extra care housing as part of the Council's extra care housing development programme previously approved by Cabinet. Within the exempt report, the Group Director sought Cabinets approval of the budget and required capital funding to deliver the scheme and the temporary relocation of the Specialist Autism Day Centre to Brynnar Jones Day Centre.

With the agreement of the Leader, County Borough Councillor G Caple spoke on this item.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. To approve the funding package as outlined in Section 5 of the report, to redevelop the former Danymynydd Care Home for the provision of extra care housing.
2. To include the Danymynydd Extra Care Housing Scheme within

the 3 year Capital Programme (Modernisation Programme (Adults)).

3. To the temporary relocation of the Specialist Autism Day Centre at Danymynydd Care Home, in Porth to the Brynnar Jones Day Centre facility, located in Gelli and that Social Worker and Day Centre staff continue to engage and work individually with the people who use the Day Centre and their families/carers to assess their needs and support them during and after the proposed move as set out in paragraph 5.7 of the report.
4. To receive update reports on progress in delivering the Council's extra care housing development programme and on individual scheme costs and funding requirements for consideration and approval.

**This meeting closed at 12.30 pm**

**Cllr A Morgan  
Chairman.**