



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL

Minutes of the virtual extraordinary meeting of the Council held on Wednesday, 26 May 2021 at 5.00 pm.

County Borough Councillors - Council Members in attendance:-

Councillor S Powderhill (Chair)

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

Officers in attendance

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

15 Apologies

An apology of absence was received from County Borough Councillors S Belzak, A Davies-Jones, M Fidler Jones, K L Jones, J James, M Griffiths, S Pickering, S Rees-Owen, M Tegg, R K Turner, J Williams and C Willis.

16 Welcome to New Members

The Presiding Member extended a welcome to the two new Members of the Council County Borough Councillors S Trask and R Williams.

17 Declaration of Interest

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

Agenda Item 2

FINANCING OF THE 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS CAPITAL PROGRAMME USING PRUDENTIAL BORROWING

- County Borough Councillor P Jarman referred to her dispensation granted by the Standards Committee on 29th November 2019 providing the member "dispensation to speak and vote on all matters for the duration and adoption of the 2021-22 Budget process in her capacity as Leader of the Opposition"
- County Borough Councillor R. Williams – "My daughter attends YG Rhydywaun School"

18 Council Procedure Rule 15.1

The Deputy Leader moved the suspension of Council Procedure Rule 15.1 which states that a matter would be decided by a simple majority of those Members voting and present in the room at the time the question was put in order to facilitate the smooth running of the virtual meeting.

Following consideration of the matter it was **RESOLVED** to suspend Council Procedure Rule 15.1

The Service Director Democratic Services & Communications provided the numbers in attendance for each of the Political Groups as follows:-

Labour Group– 38 members
Plaid Cymru Group – 14 members
Conservative Group – 2 member
RCT Independent Group – 4 members

19 Financing of the 21st Century Schools Capital Programme Using Prudential Borrowing

The Director of Finance & Digital Services presented his report which sought Council's approval for a capital investment of £12.135M to increase the capacity and improve the educational facilities at Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun. The report also sought agreement to finance the project through the Welsh Government's (WG) 21st Century Schools Band B grant, and to fund the Council's contribution from Council borrowing using its powers under the Prudential Code.

Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED**:

1. To agree to the inclusion in the capital programme of a new teaching block at Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun at a total cost of £12.135M.
2. To agree that the net capital cost to the Council of £4.247M is funded through borrowing, using the Council's powers under the Prudential Code, with the annual revenue cost of £0.159M being met from savings from previous school reorganisations.

(**Note:** The Conservative Group abstained from voting on the matter)

20 WAIVER OF SIX MONTH COUNCILLOR ATTENDANCE RULE

Through his joint report with the Director of Legal Services, the Service Director Democratic Services & Communication requested that Council consider granting permission for absence from all Council and Committee meetings to Councillor Clayton Willis due to his current ill health. The permission for absence, in accordance with section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972, would be for a period of up to six months ending on the 26th November 2021 or until Councillor Willis resumes attendance,

The Service Director advised that communication has been maintained with Councillor Willis's family and with his Group Leader, following which it has been deemed appropriate to seek the permission of council for the six-month rule.

Following discussion and a request that Council's best wishes are sent to Councillor

Willis's family, it was **RESOLVED** that permission for absence from all Council and Committee meetings be granted to Councillor Clayton Willis due to his current ill-health for a period of up to six months ending on 26th November 2021, or

until he resumes attendance if that is sooner, in accordance with section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972.

(**Note:** the RCT Independent Group wished to abstain from voting on the matter but wished to extend their best wishes to Councillor C Willis and his family).

21 Diversity in Democracy

In his report, the Service Director Democratic Services & Communication presented the WLGA Council 'Diversity in Democracy' report which outlines the work undertaken

by the WLGA Cross Party Working Group on Diversity in Local Democracy. The Service Director advised that the proposals are supported by all WLGA Group Leaders which seek the support of all councils within Wales to endorse the

principles within the declaration which are aimed at increasing participation and widening the diversity of candidates for the 2022 Elections.

The Service Director also advised of the work undertaken by the Diversity Working Group of the Council's Democratic Services Committee and the interim report which Committee had recently adopted. The report sets out the actions the Democratic Services will progress next year to support the diversity of candidates and of the provision required, through political groups, to realise the ambitions within the interim report and the WLGA declaration.

The Service Director extended his thanks to Ms Emma Wilkins for producing the detailed interim report.

In conclusion, the Service Director advised that if Council supports the WLGA declaration to become a 'Diverse Council' this evening, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council would be the first Council to do so.

The Cabinet Member for Council Business and the Council's Equalities & Diversity Champion praised the report and work of the WLGA led by Co-Chair - Cllr Mary Sherwood, WLGA spokesperson for Equalities, Welfare Reform and Anti-Poverty, City and County of Swansea and Co-Chair - Cllr Susan Elsmore, WLGA Spokesperson for Equalities, Welfare Reform and Anti-poverty, Cabinet Member for Social Care, Health and Well-being, Cardiff Council. The Cabinet Member also thanked members of the Democratic Services Committee for their contributions to the interim report and to the diversity agenda which resonates with the work the council has been looking to achieve for a number of years.

The Cabinet Member for Council Business welcomed and acknowledged the importance of supporting the WLGA diversity declaration and the recommendations of the Democratic Services Committee which would promote diversity within the council.

Through her discussions particularly around the data set within the interim report of the Democratic Services Working Group, the Leader of the Plaid Cymru Group commented on the missed opportunity to recently appoint a female Chair to the Democratic Services Committee and a female Chair of the Democratic Services Working Group the need for the Council to improve its ratio of female to male Committee Chairs. The Opposition Leader wished to formally correct the name of Councillor E Stephens within the report.

Through further discussion, the Council's positive approach to the promotion of the Welsh language was acknowledged. Further comment on the importance of all Members being treated equally regardless of their age, gender and background was made and the importance of committing to and measuring the outcomes to arise from the recommendations within the Diversity report.

The Chair of the Diversity Working Group was pleased to present the interim report and support the diversity declaration to be taken forward by the Council. The Chair commented that the recommendations within the report would progress the engagement needed to reach out to potential candidates and youth voters through the voting awareness raising campaigns that have been taken forward for the Senedd elections.

The Leader of the Council provided comment on the positive track record to date of the Council in terms of diversity and highlighted the number of female chairs of committees as being 54.5% compared to 45.3% of male chairs. He added that diversity means more than the consideration of male/female representation to committees and acknowledged that all political parties need to improve. The leader commended the report supported the WLGA declaration to become a 'Diverse Council'.

RESOLVED:

1. To note the work of the Democratic Services Committee and the interim report of the Working Group produced to promote the diversity agenda within the Council attached at Appendix A;
2. To note the actions outlined within the WLGA Council report, as attached at appendix B.
3. To endorse in principle a 'Diverse Council' declaration and agree for a bespoke RCTCBC diversity declaration to be brought forward to the July Council meeting.
4. To receive updates and progress reports on the work needed to be undertaken by the Council in respect of the actions outlined within the WLGA Council report and the ongoing work of the Democratic Services Committee as and when appropriate.

This meeting closed at 5.40 pm

**Cllr S Powderhill
Chairman.**