



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CABINET

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday, 17 June 2021 at 10.30 am 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 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 A Wilkins, Director of Legal Services
Mr B Davies, Director of Finance & Digital Services
Ms G Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Mr D James, Service Director – Prosperity & Development
Mr M Crumbie, Head of Procurement Delivery
Ms W Edwards, Service Director – Community Services
Ms A Richards, Temporary Service Director - 21st Century Schools and Transformation
Ms J Parry, Trading Standards & Registrar Services Manager

1 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

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

- The Deputy Leader declared the following personal interests in Item 6 of the agenda – Consideration for Family Engagement Roles: “I am on the Governing Body of Heol Y Celyn which is referenced within the report” and in Item 8 of the agenda - 21st Century Schools Programme - Proposals to Reorganise Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and Sixth Form Provision in the Greater Pontypridd Area: “Cardinal Newman School is within my ward and is referenced within the report”;
- The Cabinet Member for Enterprise Development and Housing declared the following personal interest in Item 6 of the agenda – Consideration for Family Engagement Roles: ‘I am on the Governing Body of Tylorstown Primary School which is referenced within the report’;
- The Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities, Well-being & Cultural Services declared the following personal interest in Item 6 of the agenda

- Consideration for Family Engagement Roles: ‘I am on the Governing Body of YGG Abercynon which is referenced within the report’;
- The Cabinet Member for Education & Inclusion Services declared the following personal interest in Item 6 of the agenda – Consideration for Family Engagement Roles: ‘I am on the Governing Body of Trealaw Primary School which is referenced within the report’;
- The Cabinet Member for Adult Community Services & Welsh Language declared the following personal interest in Item 6 of the agenda – Consideration for Family Engagement Roles: ‘I am on the Governing Body of Llanharan Primary School which is referenced within the report’; and
- The Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure & Heritage Services declared the following personal interest in Item 8 of the agenda - 21st Century Schools Programme - Proposals to Reorganise Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and Sixth Form Provision in the Greater Pontypridd Area: ‘I am employed by Coleg Y Cymoedd which is referenced within the Impact Assessment’.

2 MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 29th April 2021 as an accurate reflection.

3 LEADER'S SCHEME OF DELEGATION

The Cabinet **RESOLVED** to note for information the Leader's Scheme of Delegation for the 2021/22 Municipal Year, following the changes reported to the 26th Annual General Meeting of the Council.

4 CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

The Service Director, Democratic Services & Communication provided Cabinet Members with a draft work programme for the 2021-2022 Municipal Year, which listed matters requiring consideration by Cabinet.

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 Service Director reminded Members that in response to the requirements of the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021, at the Council's 26th Annual General Meeting, it was agreed that further detail would be provided within the Cabinet Work Programme going forward to allow sufficient opportunity for consultation and pre-scrutiny and as such, the Council's constitution had been amended to reflect those changes.

The Service Director informed Members that the content of the Work Programme would support discussions between Scrutiny Chairs and Cabinet Members at future engagement sessions and subsequently assist development of the future Work Programmes of the Scrutiny Committees.

The Deputy Leader noted the content of the draft work programme and commented that the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 requires

information about forthcoming executive decisions must be made available to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to ensure the Committees are best informed to undertake and better plan their work. The Deputy Leader acknowledged that the development of an accurate and robust Cabinet Work Programme would further strengthen the robust Governance arrangements within the Local Authority.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Work Programme for the 2021-2022 Municipal Year (with appropriate amendment where necessary) and to receive a further update on a 3 monthly basis.

5 COVID-19 SPEND

The Head of Procurement provided the Cabinet with a summary of the expenditure that was not on contract but was required in order to facilitate critical and timely support in respect of the Council's corporate responsibilities to both its residents and workforce, in addressing the Covid-19 pandemic risks.

The officer spoke of the options made available to public sector organisations in March 2020, under the Regulation 32(2)(c) under the Public Contract Regulations 2015, to assist with the response to the COVID-19 outbreak. Members' attention was drawn to Section 5 of the report, which detailed the Council's application of Regulation 32. The officer emphasised that the key priority was to ensure that all frontline staff (both Council staff and staff working for Council commissioned services) had sufficient PPE that met the required safety standards to protect its residents.

The Leader was happy to note the report and took the opportunity to thank the officers for the work undertaken through the pandemic and spoke of the vigorous checks of PPE to ensure the standards were met for the safety of staff and residents.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services was pleased to note that despite the urgency of the situation, officers maintained up to date records and noted that due diligence was undertaken to ensure product specification and certificates of conformity were met. The Cabinet Member was also pleased to note that the vast majority of contracts were met by either companies based within RCT or the surrounding regions, which supported the local economy. Upon concluding, the Cabinet Member echoed the Leader's thanks to officers and commended staff and regional businesses for their innovation and stepping up to the challenge.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

1. To note that all procurement actions detailed within the report were undertaken to ensure that safety and wellbeing of our frontline staff; and
2. To acknowledge that wherever possible, and appropriate supply is available and deliverable (option to collect) within sometimes very tight timescales, the Council has targeted the engagement of local businesses to fulfil its supply requirements.

6 CONSIDERATION FOR FAMILY ENGAGEMENT OFFICER ROLES - FEEDBACK

The Director, Education and Inclusion Services presented the report to Cabinet which sought to consider the impact and potential extension of the Family Engagement Officer (FEO) pilot currently in six secondary/through schools to help tackle barriers to engagement in education.

The Director advised that following Cabinet's approval on 13th February 2020 to fund a pilot across six secondary/through schools, the role of the Family Engagement Officer had been invaluable and had supported improvement in a number of key areas such as attendance and learner and family wellbeing. The Director advised that due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it was difficult to acquire data in respect of the role's impact on attendance and therefore a full rollout of the role was not requested but the Director felt it would be beneficial to consider the impact of the roles in some of the primary settings with pupils from high deprivation areas and with low historic attendance.

Based on a simple ranking/scoring system of those with the highest percentage of pupils living within the top 20% of deprived communities as identified in the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation and the ranking of overall attendance in the last complete academic year in 2018/19, the Director proposed that the following primary schools were included within the pilot:

- Pontygwaith Primary School;
- Penywaun Primary School;
- Perthcelyn Community Primary School;
- Treallaw Primary School;
- Maerdy Primary School;
- Penrhys Primary School;
- Pontrhondda Primary School;
- Tref-y-Rhyg Primary School;
- Tylorstown Primary School;
- Heol y Celyn Primary School;
- Pengeulan Primary School;
- Penpych Primary School; and
- Penrhiwceibr Primary School.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Inclusion took the opportunity to thank officers for the detailed report. The Cabinet Member was pleased with the initiative and acknowledged that despite the inability to fully measure or gauge improvements in school attendance due to the pandemic, all six secondary schools reported some improvement in attendance and in engaging learners.

The Cabinet Member was in support of the rationale detailed within the report and commented that there was a need to continue with the roles in the secondary sector, in order to improve attendance levels and to support wellbeing. Referring to Appendix 2 of the report, the Cabinet Member was of the view that there was justification in piloting the roles in primary schools where, particularly in the most deprived areas, the pandemic had had a significant impact on attendance.

The Deputy Leader was in support of the proposals and subject to Cabinet approval, questioned when the additional schools would be informed of the pilot. The Director informed the Cabinet that contact had been made with the schools and agreement of the match funding had been made in principle, pending

Cabinet's decision.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services noted that non-attendance was often linked with vulnerable families and emphasised the importance of the role in addressing the different scenarios experienced by families which may then affect attendance and wellbeing.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the information contained in the report;
2. To agree to the extension of the Family Engagement Officer pilot programme in six secondary/through schools for an additional 12-month period until August 2021; and
3. To agree to the introduction of a primary phase pilot for 24-months within thirteen primary schools.

7 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS PROGRAMME - PROPOSALS TO IMPROVE EDUCATION PROVISION FOR YSGOL GYNRADD GYMRAEG LLYN-Y-FORWYN

The Director, Education and Inclusion Services advised Cabinet Members of the outcome of the recent consultation in respect of proposals to carry out a regulated alteration to Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Llyn-y-Forwyn ("YGG Llyn-y-Forwyn"), by way of transferring the school to a new building on a new site.

Referring to Appendix 1, which detailed the consultation responses, the Director advised that out of the 72 responses received, 70 were in agreement with the proposal, 1 respondent was not and 1 respondent was unsure.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Inclusion Services was happy to support the recommendations and was pleased to note the positive Estyn report and consultation responses. The Cabinet Member commented that progressing the proposals would increase capacity and improve the quality of Welsh Medium Primary education within the County Borough.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the information contained within the attached Consultation Report, which includes a summary of correspondence received during the consultation exercise, including the full response from Estyn, feedback received from the online survey, and notes of the meetings held; and
2. To progress the proposals to the next stage of the consultation process by issuing an appropriate Statutory Notice which will trigger the start of the Objection Period.

8 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS PROGRAMME - PROPOSALS TO REORGANISE PRIMARY SCHOOLS, SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND SIXTH FORM PROVISION IN THE GREATER PONTYPRIDD AREA

The Temporary Service Director of 21st Century Schools and Transformation provided Cabinet Members with an update on the proposals to reorganise schools in the Greater Pontypridd area.

The Temporary Service Director spoke of the following proposals:

- The alteration of the age range of pupils that may be admitted to Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School, from 11–19 years to 11–16 years, resulting in the removal of the sixth form provision;
- The closure of Pontypridd High School and Cilfynydd Primary School and the creation of a new 3–16 'all through' School on the site of the current Pontypridd High School. There will be no sixth form provision at this school;
- The closure of Hawthorn High School and Hawthorn Primary School and the creation of a new 3–16 'all through' School on the site of the current Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary Schools, with the Local Authority designated ALN specialist class located in Hawthorn High School, as well as the current pupils receiving education through the medium of English at Heol y Celyn Primary School transferring to the new school. There will be no sixth form provision at this school; and
- The closure of Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton and Heol y Celyn Primary School and the opening of a new Welsh medium Primary School on the site of the current Heol y Celyn Primary School.

The Temporary Service Director referred Members to Section 4 of the report and reported the changes that had taken place since approval was granted by Cabinet in July 2019. It was explained that following delays, work to progress the proposals had recommenced and a re-programming exercise undertaken, the outcome of which was that the implementation date for the 3 proposals that gained Cabinet approval would be delayed until September 2024.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Inclusion Services commented that it was unfortunate that the Judicial Review had delayed progression of the new facilities. The Cabinet Member commented that the Council is responsible for delivering high educational standards and efficient primary, secondary and sixth form education provision that serves the local community and is achieved by ensuring that the right schools, are the right size, are in the right location, and are fit for the 21st Century learner.

The Service Director, Democratic Services and Communication informed the Cabinet that should the report be approved, agreement would be sought from the Presiding Officer, to exempt the report from the 3 working day call-in period, to allow for the completion and submission of the Outline Business Cases to Welsh Government by July 2021, for the next stage of the funding the 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the information contained within the report;
2. To note the impact of the Judicial Review on programme and costs;
3. To delay the implementation date of the proposals in all schools, with the exception of Cardinal Newman CS School, to September 2024; and
4. To note that Outline Business Cases for each of the projects will be

submitted to Welsh Government for consideration in July 2021 with a decision expected in August 2021.

9 ONLINE ACTIVE TRAVEL CONSULTATION: OUTCOME OF EXERCISE

The Service Director, Frontline Services provided Members with details of the outcome of an online active travel consultation exercise that the Council undertook a few months previous, in collaboration with the Welsh Government.

Members were advised that the level of public response to the Council's online active travel consultation exercise was very encouraging. It demonstrated the interest that exists amongst residents to improve walking and cycling facilities and / or remove the barriers which can cause difficulties for them and prevent additional walking and cycling journeys from being made. The Service Director continued by advising that as well as updating the Integrated Network Map / Active Travel Network Map, where appropriate, and / or forwarding details of the comments received from stakeholders to other parties as necessary, it is intended that the Council will continue to undertake the statutory active travel consultation exercise, as previously reported, later this year.

The Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure & Heritage Services commented on the report and the distinction between the active travel routes as apposed to leisure routes, and commented on the number of responses relating to the latter and comments received in respect of Rights of Way, although she added that the comments would be passed to the relevant services for consideration.

The Cabinet Member spoke of the positive response rate to the consultation with 695 responses although commented on the disappointing number of younger people responding and the need to do more to engage with the young people. The Cabinet Member commented on the opportunity to utilise the 'Lets Talk RCT' which could assist in the future with such engagement. The Cabinet Member concluded by advising of the updates to be taken forward with the network travel maps and positives going forward in relation to active travel across the Authority.

Following discussions, it was **RESOLVED**:

1. To note the comments received during the period the online active travel consultation exercise was live.
2. To note the response of the Council to the comments received.
3. To note the next stage to be undertaken as part of the ongoing active travel consultation process.

10 NORTH WEST CARDIFF CORRIDOR TRANSPORTATION STUDY: UPDATE

The Service Director, Democratic Services & Communication advised Members that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had undertaken pre-scrutiny of the Transportation study at its meeting on the 15th June, and a detailed note of Members comments had been circulated in advance of the Cabinet meeting to assist Members in their deliberations.

The Service Director Frontline Services provided Members with an outline of the report which identified the short-term and long-term public transport options that offer the best business cases in order to improve access through from RCT through North West Cardiff towards the city centre.

Members were advised that the transportation study and related Business Case process had highlighted the advantages of a 'joined-up' approach to developing a range of public transport proposals in the Cardiff Capital Region, many of which will operate cross boundary. It also highlighted the importance of achieving improved connectivity to/from central Cardiff and between local and regional destinations elsewhere.

The Service Director commented that the project was of regional significance and had the potential to attract several hundreds of millions of pounds of funding into the area. If delivered, the public transport solutions would transform travel behaviour and provide a safe, reliable, convenient and sustainable transport option. As well as facilitating transport from Rhondda Cynon Taf into Cardiff, it could also encourage travel into Rhondda Cynon Taf, particularly in association with the development of the new town centre at Talbot Green. It is possible that the wider economic benefits could extend northwards into the Rhondda Valley and Gilfach Goch areas as the creation of new employment in Talbot Green and planned reduction in journey times to/from Cardiff will offer residents in these communities with improved access to new jobs, training and learning opportunities.

The Service Director concluded his report by advising that the next steps would be the WeITAG Stage 2 process which would be used to inform the final recommendations. However, it should be noted that a proposed transport scheme for the North West Cardiff – Talbot Green / Llantrisant corridor would require further development before any of the transport investment options for serving this area of planned major development could be determined.

The Leader of the Council commented on the large piece of work entailed within the transportation study and the opportunities within to improve communities within RCT. The Leader advised of the long-term projects and the need to plan for the next decade.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. To note the outcome to date of the North West Cardiff Corridor Transportation Study.
2. To note the next stage in progressing this study – WeITAG Stage 2.

11 UK GOVERNMENT LEVELLING UP FUND - OPPORTUNITIES IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF

The Service Director, Prosperity and Development provided Cabinet with a summary of the UK Government Leveling Up Fund and the potential project opportunities and timescales for the development, appraisal, and submission of project applications.

Members were made aware of the 3 staged approach to assessment and decision making and referred Members to section 5 of the report which outlined

the proposed projects.

The Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Development and Planning commented on the significant amount of money across the four schemes and the recognition of the schemes across the County Borough. The Cabinet Member spoke of the tight timescales in respect of the fund and the need for expenditure to be used within the financial year. He also commented on the good working practice of demonstrated pipelines for future schemes in development and took the opportunity and thanked officers for the work involved.

The Leader commented on the opportunities for the County Borough if successful with the funding and how the Authority deserved to be recognised for the funding due to the high level of deprivations within the County Borough, the impact of the floods and the impact in respect of covid.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. To agree to progress development of a project application package for submission as set out in section 5 of the report.

(**N.B.** Due to the timescales in respect of the funding, it was advised that the decision would be taken forward as exempt from call in, subject to the agreement of the Presiding Officer.)

12 HOME OFFICE - WIDENING ASYLUM SEEKER DISPERSAL SCHEME

The Interim Head of Community Safety and Community Housing provided Members with details of the Widening of the Asylum Dispersal Scheme, and the participation by the Council in making a practical and humanitarian commitment to assist some of the most vulnerable persons fleeing conflict in their home country. The Officer added that the strength of partnership working in Rhondda Cynon Taf, along with the support of the local communities has been integral to the success of the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme and the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme. Participation in the Widening Dispersal Scheme would provide the opportunity to build on this success.

The Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities, Well-being & Cultural Services referred to the proud record of support by the Council adding that it was appropriate for the Authority to participate in the scheme. The Cabinet Member spoke of the importance of the distinction of the 'dispersal zone' and 'dispersal scheme'. The Cabinet Member commented on the cross organisation work with Health, education and other providers to ensure individuals are given the right amount of support to live within the County Borough.

The deputy Leader spoke on the importance of the support available within the communities to support individuals within the scheme, referencing the use of the church, community and voluntary groups and the local Member.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. To approve participation in the Widening Asylum Seeker Dispersal Scheme within the County Borough, building on the positive experience and learning gained from the delivery of the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme and the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme.

2. To agree that the Director, Public Health, Protection and Community Services can start discussions with the Home Office, WSMP and Clearsprings Ready Homes to determine how many individuals/families can be supported in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

13 PROPOSED PRIORITY PROJECTS FOR THE UK COMMUNITY RENEWAL FUND

With agreement of the Leader as Chair of the meeting and in accordance with the provision of Section 100(b)4(B) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the Proposed Priority Projects for the UK Community Renewal Fund report was considered as a matter of urgency by reason of special circumstances.

The Trading Standards & Registrar Service Manager provided Members with a detailed overview of the report, concentrating on the identified projects to be put forward to the scheme for approval by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), subject to Cabinet agreement.

The Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities, Well-being & Cultural Services thanked the officers for the work involved within the fund and commented further on the project bids presented before Members. The Cabinet Member commented that the projects identified were aligned to the Council corporate priorities. He added that there were many notable projects that had been put recognised, although unfortunately not all could go forward. He also commented that there was no guarantee that those projects put forward would be approved by the scheme.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. To review the priority projects, summarised at 4.6.1 – 4.6.8 of the report
2. To approve the same, for submission to UK Government via MHCLG; and
3. To acknowledge that submitting an application does not infer that the project will receive funding from UK Government.

(N.B It was reported that due to the timescales for submission of the projects to the UK Government the decision would be exempt from Call In, subject to agreement by the Presiding Officer.)

This meeting closed at 11.51 am

**Cllr A Morgan
Chairman.**