



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CABINET

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Monday, 15 November 2021 at 10.00 am Hybrid.

County Borough Councillors - Cabinet Members in attendance:-

Councillor A Morgan (Chair)

Councillor M Webber
Councillor A Crimmings
Councillor J Rosser
Councillor C Leyshon

Councillor R Bevan
Councillor M Norris
Councillor R Lewis
Councillor G Hopkins

Others in attendance

Councillor A Davies-Jones

Officers in attendance

Mr C Bradshaw, Chief Executive
Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Mr P Mee, Group Director Community & Children's Services
Mr D Powell, Director of Corporate Estates
Mr R Waters, Director of Frontline Services
Mr S Gale, Director of Prosperity & Development
Mr A Wilkins, Director of Legal Services
Mr B Davies, Director of Finance & Digital Services
Ms G Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services

74 Declaration of Interest

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

75 Minutes

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the 18th October Cabinet meeting as a true and accurate record.

76 Council's Performance and Resources (Quarter 2)

The Service Director – Finance & Improvement Services provided a report that provided Members that set out the financial and operational performance of the Council as at Quarter 2 2021/22.

Members were advised that the Quarter 2 revenue budget position was projecting a £0.726M overspend and reflected the continuation of key pressures primarily within Adult and Children's Services. He added that work was underway across all services, as part of the Council's robust service and financial management arrangements.

Members were referred to the projected revenue budget position in the context of the significant on-going impact of Covid-19 on service delivery and were advised that it took into account additional Welsh Government funding to support additional costs and income losses, as a direct result of the pandemic.

Members were reassured that work will continue, to closely monitor the Council's financial position, refresh financial forecasts as updated information becomes available and continue to engage with Welsh Government to highlight the importance of providing additional funding to support the financial implications of Covid-19 and also on-going permanent cost pressures.

Capital investment as at 30th September 2021 is £31.718M, with a number of schemes being re-profiled during the quarter to reflect changes in costs and also new external grant funding approvals received. The progress made during the first 6 months of the year continues the Council's approach of long term and sustained investment in infra-structure, the impact of which is supporting visible improvements in assets across the County Borough, taking account of Covid-19 safety requirements.

The Cabinet Member Corporate Services commented that it was pleasing to see that work was underway across all services as part of the Council's robust Service and financial management arrangements to contribute to bringing the financial position closer in line with the budget. He added that it was important that we continue to engage with Welsh Government to highlight the importance of providing additional funding to support the financial implications of COVID-19 and also on-going pressures. He concluded that it was pleasing to see progress being made with capital investment projects despite the pandemic.

The Leader added that he was also pleased to see progress with the projects and, and was able to visit a few schools in the Borough to see the progress first hand. He referred to the ongoing pressures in Adult and Children's Social Care was heavily linked to hospital discharges. He reassured that they were still pressuring Welsh Government for additional funding in that area

It was **RESOVLED:**

1. To note the on-going impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on service delivery and, in parallel, the re-introduction of services as Covid-19 restrictions are lifted. Revenue
2. To note and agree the General Fund revenue outturn position of the Council as at the 30th September 2021 (Section 2 of the Executive Summary) and to note the incorporation of Welsh Government Covid-19 funding into this position to support on-going service delivery. Capital
3. To note the capital outturn position of the Council as at the 30th September 2021 (Sections 3a – e of the Executive Summary)
4. To note the details of the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators as at the 30th September 2021 (Section 3f of the Executive Summary). Corporate Plan Priorities
5. To note the Quarter 2 progress updates for the Council's 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).

77 Council Tax Base For 2022-23

The Director Finance and Digital Services provided a report that sought to formally set the Council Tax Base for the financial year 2022/23 which is a statutory requirement to agree and set the Council Tax Base for the forthcoming financial year prior to 31st December each year.

The Council is required to calculate the Tax Base for the County Borough as a whole, in addition to making separate calculations for defined community areas that may have their own Community Council. The Council Tax Base for all parts of the County Borough

He continued that the gross Council Tax Base calculated for 2022/23 is £79,904.37. Therefore, it was proposed that the collection rate is estimated to be 97.25%. This would produce a net Council Tax Base of £77,707.00. This meant that for every £1 levied in Council Tax next year, a sum of £77,707 will be generated to meet the budget requirement of the Council.

The Cabinet Member Corporate Services commented that as an annual report which forms part of the budget setting process he was content to support the recommendations in the report

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (Wales) Regulations 1995 as amended, the amount calculated by the Council as its net tax base for the financial year 2022/23, shall be £77,707.00.
2. That for each defined community area of the County Borough, the 2022/23 tax base for Council Tax setting purposes, shall be as set out at Appendix 1 of the report

78 Public Services Ombudsman For Wales - Annual Report and Letter 2020-2021

The Director of Legal Services advised Members of the publication of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales' ('PSOW') Annual Report and Annual Letter to this Council for 2020- 2021.

Members were advised that during the reporting period the overall number of complaints about public bodies had reduced by 16%, albeit there was an increase in the number of complaints about how complaints were handled by public bodies. He added that new complaints about local authorities had decreased by 11% compared to the previous year.

During 2020-2021 40 complaints were received by the PSOW relating to RCTCBC (for periods 2019/20 – 39 and 2018/2019 – 36) which equates to 0.17 complaints per 1000 residents. He added that this represented the fourth lowest total in Wales out of the 22 local authorities and RCT has consistently been in the lowest quartile for complaints received for several years. 0.25 complaints per 1000 residents was the average across the 22 LA's.

A Model Complaints Handling Policy had been issued to Local Authorities in September 2020, which has been reviewed and the Council's own complaints handling policy updated where necessary.

The Deputy Leader stated the report contained a lot of statistical data with Children and Adult Social Services receiving the highest amount of complaints. She noted however that it was positive to see that the number of interventions required by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales had decreased significantly.

It was **RESOLVED:**

to note the 2020-2021 Public Services Ombudsman for Wales' Annual Report and Annual Letter to this Council.

79 Progress Update on the delivery of Regeneration in Pontypridd Town Centre

The Director of Prosperity and Development provided an overview of the report which detailed the significant progress that has been made in the delivery of major regeneration projects and initiatives within Pontypridd Town Centre.

The Director provided Members with an update in respect of current schemes work to include the former Bingo Hall and Marks & Spencer sites and advised Members that further reports for both schemes will be brought forward to Cabinet in the New Year. The Director further noted the recent good news in respect of the extremely successful Levelling Up Fund Bid for Muni Arts Centre refurbishment and advises Members that work will proceed at pace on this development.

The Director later informed Members of work on the new placemaking plan and anticipates that a draft plan will be reported to Cabinet in the New Year for Members consideration ahead of significant public engagement.

The Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Development and Housing spoke positively of the outcomes of the Regeneration Framework for Pontypridd Town centre 2017 – 2022, referencing the delivery of numerous successful projects. The Cabinet Member commended the local authority for its commitment to Framework delivery and welcomes development of the new placemaking plan, to further regenerate and invest into Town Centres for the benefit of County Borough residents.

The Deputy Leader echoed the comments of The Director and Cabinet Member, in respect of successful regeneration delivery in Pontypridd and the successful Muni Arts Centre Levelling Up Fund Bid for Muni Arts Centre.

The Leader further reflected on the positive impact of investment for regeneration in Pontypridd Town Centre with reference to several Framework schemes.

(N.B County Borough Councillor A Davies-Jones was present for discussion of this item as the local MP for Pontypridd)

Following discussions, it was **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the progress made since September 2017 in the development and delivery of projects and investment opportunities within Pontypridd Town Centre
2. To note the progress made in the development of the Pontypridd Town Centre Placemaking Plan which builds upon the 2017 – 2022 Regeneration Framework. The draft placemaking plan has been developed with Welsh Government and Transport for Wales and provides a bold vision for Pontypridd that is based on a shared ambition for the town and its role within the Capital City Region.
3. To consider a further report in the new year to seek approval of the placemaking plan for consultation and public engagement, alongside further updates on progress of the Muni Arts Centre redevelopment, the former Bingo Hall site and the former M&S store and associated buildings.

80 Update report on Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy & Implementation Plan

The Director of Corporate Estates provided an update to Members in respect of the work undertaken in developing a Council Strategy for Electric Vehicle Charging (EVC) and sought adoption of the strategy and its formal publication by Cabinet.

Members were reminded of the initial recommendation of an EVC Strategy to Cabinet by the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group in March earlier this year, and the Director commended the cross-cutting work of several service groups to implement the Strategy.

The Director informed Members of two successful public consultation exercises that informed the draft and final strategies, and further informed Members of the positive outcome afforded by the review panel in respect of the Impact Assessments prepared in consultation with the Welsh Language and Diversity and Inclusion Services.

The Director provided Members with an update in respect of current work towards an implementation plan to detail the short, medium and long-term targets in respect of the EVC Strategy. He stated that whilst there are no further financial implications, Members should note that the schemes currently underway are fully funded by the Cardiff Capital City Region City Deal. However, additional funding may be required to deliver new work streams in the future.

The Director thanked the officers involved and the review panel for input into the development of the strategy.

The Service Director, Democratic Services and Communications added that the report had been presented to Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group on the 10th November and Cabinet had been provided with the comments. The majority of feedback was positive of the consultation process and how comments were taken into account before the Strategy was presented to Cabinet. He added there had been discussion around providing advice to members of the public and residents who live within terraced properties as part of the delivery of the strategy moving forward. However, majority were in agreement that the strategy

was a positive one and supported the wider discussions on the use of electric vehicles moving forward.

The Cabinet Member Corporate Services endorsed the strategy and thanked officers for their collaborative work on its development to ensure its success and that its aims and objectives would be met. He thanked the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group and members of the public for their consideration and feedback which will now be incorporated into the implementation plan.

The Leader spoke positively of the first stage of rolling out the electric vehicle charging over the coming months and years and said he was sure there will be a vast acceleration towards the use of Electric Vehicles over the next few years. He was also pleased that part of the first phase is funded by the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and that discussions would be ongoing with the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal to draw down more assistance to expand the strategy in the RCT area

Following discussions, it was **RESOLVED:**

1. That following feedback obtained from the public consultation in respect of the Electrical Vehicle Charging Strategy, and the feedback obtained from the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group, Cabinet formally adopted the proposed strategy subject to any suggested amendments and its publication on the Council website.

81 Urgent Items

None

This meeting closed at 10.30 am

**Cllr A Morgan
Chairman.**