



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CABINET

Minutes of the Hybrid meeting of the Cabinet held on Monday, 28 February 2022 at 12.00 pm

County Borough Councillors - Cabinet Members in attendance:- Chamber:

Councillor A Morgan (Chair)

Councillor M Webber
Councillor C Leyshon
Councillor M Norris

Councillor R Bevan
Councillor G Caple

Virtual:

Councillor R Lewis
Councillor A Crimmings

Councillor J Bonetto

Others in attendance

Councillor P Jarman

Officers in attendance Chamber:

Mr C Bradshaw, Chief Executive
Mr B Davies, Director of Finance & Digital Services
Mr A Wilkins, Director of Legal Services
Mr C Hanagan, Service Director Democratic Services and Communications
Mr R Evans, Director of Human Resources
Mr D James, Service Director Prosperity and Development

Virtual:

Ms G Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Ms L Davies, Director, Public Health, Protection and Community Services
Mr R Evans, Director of Human Resources
Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Mr D Powell, Director of Corporate Estates
Mr R Waters, Service Director – Frontline Services
Ms A Richards, Service Director 21st Century Schools and Transformation
Ms J Parry, Trading Standards and Registrar Service Manager

110 Declaration of Interest

Cllr R Bevan declared a personal interest in item 3 as he has a family member who works for the Authority but has been granted dispensation from the Standards Committee

Cllr M Webber declared a personal interest in item 7 as a governor on the interim governing body for the new welsh medium primary school in Rhydfelin.

111 MINUTES

The Cabinet **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the 27th January 2022 as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

112 COUNCIL FEES AND CHARGES POLICY 2022/23

The Director Finance and Digital Services presented the report to Members which set out Proposed revisions to Council fees and charges levels for the financial year 2022/23 (all to be effective from 1st April 2022 or as soon as is practicable thereafter); and also details of fees and charges decisions previously approved and included in the 2022/23 proposed Budget Strategy.

He continued that it was a requirement to agree the Council's fees and charges for 2022/23, as part of the annual budget setting process.

He advised Cabinet that the outcome of Cabinet's review is a proposed 2.50% standard increase to fees and, with the Council absorbing the implications of not applying a standard uplift in line with the CPI rate of inflation. In addition, a number of areas are proposed to be subject to specific treatment, as set out in the report. He added that the impact of the proposals set out in Table 1 of the report would reduce income by £45k in a full year (compared to the Council's budget modelling for 2022/23). In addition, a number of fees and charges decisions have previously been approved and accordingly have already been incorporated into the Council's 2022/23 proposed Budget Strategy.

Cllr M Norris agreed that the proposal to protect a wide range of areas from cost increases were recognition of the rising cost of living faced by all residents. He added that the last consultation feedback that lots of residents had asked for pest control to be frozen so Cabinet have listened and this forms part of the proposal.

The Deputy Leader spoke positively of the proposals and stated that she was very supportive of the proposals outlined in the report

At this juncture in the meeting and with agreement of the Leader, Councillor P Jarman addressed the Committee on this item to which the Leader responded too.

The Service Director Democratic Services and Communications confirmed that as the matter is for determination at Council, the report is exempt from call-in procedures.

Following discussion it was agreed:

1. To approve the proposed revised levels for all areas of the Council's fees and charges as set out at section 5 and detailed at Appendix 1 of the report
2. Subject to 1 above being agreed, to build the net budgetary impact (£45k for 2022/23) into the budget strategy proposals for consideration by Cabinet and Council as appropriate (paragraph 5.3).

3. To note the fees and charges decisions previously approved and included in the 2022/23 proposed Budget Strategy (paragraph 5.4 / Table 2).

113 THE COUNCIL'S 2022/23 REVENUE BUDGET

The Director Finance and Digital Services presented the report to members on the draft budget proposals for the 2022/23 revenue budget strategy. The proposals have now been consulted upon as part of a second phase of budget consultation and the results are now available for Cabinet to consider and amend as necessary the draft budget strategy which they would wish to recommend to Council.

The Director continued that for 2022/23, the full proposals detailed in the report are recommended to Council. The reserve currently stands at £4.607M, having been replenished during this year (2021/22) by £0.988M to quarter 2. Accordingly, to address the remaining budget gap, it is proposed that an allocation of £0.971M is made from this reserve for 2022/23. This would facilitate a balanced budget for 2022/23 and would leave £3.636M in the reserve

The Cabinet Member Corporate Services spoke positively of the proposals and stated that a great deal of good work had been undertaken to achieve an ambitious programme for the next period. He continued the budget needs to be balanced against the rising cost pressures and urged caution going forward.

The Deputy Leader commented that the proposals were also in line with the budget consultation where over 80% of respondents are in support of a 1% Council Tax rise.

The Cabinet Member Adult Services welcomed the additional £1.5m funding for adult social care which will go towards supporting the Health and Social Care sector who are under financial pressures.

The Cabinet Member Education and Inclusion was pleased to see schools are viewed as a key priority and the proposed budget increase is to cover an increase in staff, additional learning needs and energy costs.

The Leader spoke positively of the areas due to receive investment and is particularly pleased that the proposals included an increase to a minimum of £10 an hour pay increase which included all Health and Social Care staff. He assured that discussions with the sector that all staff benefit from the offer to support the recruitment and retention of staff

The Service Director Democratic Services and Communications confirmed the report is exempt from call-in procedures as the matter will be presented to Council on 9th March for approval.

Following discussions it was **RESOLVED** to:

1. To review their Budget Strategy which they wish to recommend to Council on the 9th March 2022; and
2. To authorise the Director of Finance and Digital Services to amend

the level of contribution from the Medium Term Financial Planning and Service Transformation Reserve as a consequence of any change to the Council's resource levels announced in the Final Local Government Settlement.

114 THE COUNCIL'S CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2022/23 – 2024/25

The Director Finance and Digital Services presented the report to Member on the three year capital programme which includes:

- A proposed reallocation of existing resources, and allocation of new resources as detailed in paragraph 5 of the report;
- Proposed investment priorities as detailed in paragraph 6.2 of the report;
- The Council's core capital programme;
- The Council's total capital programme including additional non-core funding.

The Leader spoke positively at the proposals and commented that the additional investment areas were all linked to Corporate Plan and will save revenue in the future. He added the proposals were well received by the public through the consultation process.

The Service Director Democratic Services and Communications confirmed that the report was exempt from call in procedures as the report would be determined at Council on 9th March 2022

Following discussion it was **RESOLVED:**

1. To authorise the Director of Finance and Digital Services to amend the level of Council Resources required to fund the Core Three Year Capital Programme as shown at Appendix 2 as a consequence of any change to the Council's capital resource levels announced in the Final Local Government Settlement.

115 LOCAL BUSINESS RATE REDUCTION SCHEME 2022/23

The Head of Revenue and Benefits presented Cabinet with details of a proposed local Business Rate Reduction Scheme for Rhondda Cynon Taf and an update on the continuation of the Welsh Government Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Rate Relief (RLH) Scheme for 2022/23. The proposals provided ongoing support to RLH businesses within Rhondda Cynon Taf following two years of restricted trading through the period of the COVID 19 pandemic.

The Head of Service continued that the adoption of the WG RLH Rate Relief Scheme and the Local Discretionary Business Rates Relief Scheme will provide further much needed financial support for local businesses to meet their 2022/23 rate liability and forms part of a wider package of support intended to create and maintain vibrant town centres across Rhondda Cynon Taf, which is something that this Council has committed to in its Corporate Plan.

The Cabinet Member Corporate Services was pleased to add to the support

available for business and also to other sectors that are included in the scheme and is great news for businesses.

The Service Director Democratic Services confirmed the report was exempt from call in procedures

Following discussion it was **RESOLVED** to:

1. Note the changes to the Welsh Government RLH Scheme for the year 2022/23;
2. Adopt the Welsh Government RLH Scheme for the year for 2022/23; and
3. The proposed local Business Rate Reduction Scheme for 2022/23 which will be incorporated into the Council's Revenue Budget Strategy.

116 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FOR LEARNING (FORMERLY 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS) CAPITAL PROGRAMME - NEW WELSH MEDIUM PRIMARY SCHOOL IN RHYDYFELIN

The Service Director Finance and Digital Services provided an update regarding financing of the proposals to build a new Welsh Medium Primary School in Rhydyfelin. The investment in a new Welsh medium primary school in Rhydyfelin can be financed by Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning Band B grant and by borrowing for the Council's contribution by the use of powers available under the Prudential Code

The Deputy Leader spoke positively of the plans of the new state of the art welsh medium school now becoming a reality following a number of delays in the process due to the pandemic.

Following discussion it was **RESOLVED**:

1. To note the position, as set out in the report on the submission of a full business case to Welsh Government in respect of a new Welsh medium primary school in Rhydyfelin;
2. To review and agree the updated total costs and funding package for the school; and
3. To review, and if acceptable propose that the Prudential Borrowing report attached at Appendix A to the report is presented to Council on 9th March 2022.

117 PONTYPRIDD PLACEMAKING PLAN

The Service Director Prosperity and Development presented the report to members which set out the draft Placemaking Plan for Pontypridd Town Centre. The report provides a bold vision for the regeneration of the town. He continued that 'Placemaking' is an overarching approach to improving how a place looks, functions and is experienced. The draft Placemaking Plan for Pontypridd Town Centre seeks to replace the existing Regeneration Framework for Pontypridd (2017-2022) building upon the foundations of what has already been delivered and

to provide a framework for delivering further new development and investment that can help improve the prosperity of Pontypridd, enhance the townscape and make it more resilient to future change.

The Cabinet Member Bevan Enterprise Development and Housing commented that the proposals in the report demonstrates the Council's commitment to the development of Pontypridd and noted that £167m had been invested in the area in recent years. He looked forward to receiving feedback from the consultation process.

The Deputy Leader agreed and commented that the development of the Lido, YMCA and the Muni over the last few years demonstrates this Council's level of commitment and investment in this ward.

Following discussions it was **RESOLVED:**

To consider the draft Pontypridd Placemaking Plan and agreed to consultation and public engagement on the overarching Pontypridd Placemaking Plan including engagement on early ideas for the former Marks & Spencer /Dorothy Perkins/Burtons area;

To receive a further report detailing the results from the consultation exercise;

That in addition to consulting on the Placemaking plan, agree to a funding application being submitted to Welsh Government to demolish the vacant Marks & Spencer/Dorothy Perkins/Burtons buildings due to their dilapidated and structural state and general poor quality and to commence the demolition process if and when funding is in place and on the securing of any necessary statutory consents

That in addition to consulting on the Placemaking plan, agree to move to the formal procurement stage to secure a development partner to deliver a hotel on the site of the former Bingo Hall/High Street/Sardis Road.

118 REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 (RIPA) USE OF RIPA IN 2020-21 BY RCTCBC

The Trading Standards & Registrar Services Manager presented the report to members. Acknowledge that investigatory powers in respect of covert surveillance and acquisition of communications data have been used in an appropriate manner that is consistent with the Council's RIPA and IPA policies during the period 1st January – 31st December 2021.

Members were informed that during the period 1st January – 31st December 2021 there were no authorisations in respect of directed surveillance. During the same period, there were no authorisations for the use of covert human intelligence sources.

The Deputy Leader thanked officers for the report which ensures we are using RIPA in an appropriate manner. She added it is a useful tool in flytipping and rogue trader incidences.

Following discussion it was **RESOLVED:**

To note and acknowledge that investigatory powers in respect of covert surveillance and acquisition of communications data have been used in an appropriate manner that is consistent with the Council's RIPA and IPA policies during the period 1st January – 31st December 2021.

119 TO CONSIDER PASSING THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION

It was **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 items 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".

120 ACQUISITION OF 103-110 TAFF STREET, PONTYPRIDD, CF37 4SL AND 13-17 SARDIS ROAD, PONTYPRIDD, CF37 1DX

The Director Corporate Estates presented the report which set out the proposal to acquire ownership of key properties to provide the Council with control of the land and buildings along the main retail area of Taff Street, Pontypridd, to be incorporated into a town centre regeneration scheme development, which will have significant tangible benefits to the town and surrounding area.

To seek authority to acquire the Freehold interest of existing properties known as 103-110 Taff Street, Pontypridd and 13-17 Sardis Road, Pontypridd which are located in a key position in a main retail location, part of which is subject to long leasehold interests.

Following discussion it was **RESOLVED:**

To approve the purchase of the Freehold interest of 103-110 Taff Street, Pontypridd and 13-17 Sardis Road, Pontypridd and the leaseholds of 105-106 Taff Street, Pontypridd of for a sum of £2.412M.

121 URGENT ITEMS

None

This meeting closed at 12.55 pm

**Cllr A Morgan
Chairman.**