



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CABINET

Minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Cabinet held on Monday, 17 October 2022 at 1.00 pm.

County Borough Councillors - Cabinet Members in attendance:-

Councillor A Morgan (Chair)

Councillor M Webber Councillor G Caple
Councillor A Crimmings Councillor R Lewis
Councillor C Leyshon Councillor B Harris

Officers in attendance

Mr C Bradshaw, Chief Executive
Mr B Davies, Director of Finance & Digital Services
Ms G Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Mr L Davies, Director, Public Health, Protection and Community Services
Mr R Evans, Director of Human Resources
Mr S Gale, Director of Prosperity & Development
Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Mr D James, Service Director – Prosperity & Development
Mr P Mee, Group Director Community & Children's Services
Mr D Powell, Director of Corporate Estates
Mr R Waters, Director – Frontline Services
Mr A Wilkins, Director of Legal Services
Mr. M. Phillips, Revenues Services Manager

50 Welcome and Apology

The Leader welcomed Members and Officers to the meeting of the Cabinet and an apology for absence was received from the Cabinet Member for Development and Prosperity.

51 Declaration of Interest

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

- The Leader declared a personal interest in respect of agenda item 16, All Wales Interim Joint Mileage Protocol – “As Leader of the WLGA, I was involved in the development of the protocol, which was signed off by myself and the other Group Leaders within the WLGA. All Political Parties were happy to support and sign this”; and
- The Director of Frontline Services declared a personal and prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 14, Cynon Valley Waste Disposal Company Limited and Amgen Rhondda Limited Annual General Meeting - “I am a Director of Amgen Cymru and I will leave the meeting whilst the item is discussed and voted upon”

52 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 26th September 2022 as an accurate record.

53 Engagement on the Council's Budget

The Service Director of Democratic Services and Communication informed Cabinet of the proposed approach to resident engagement and consultation in respect of the 2023/24 budget setting process.

The Deputy Leader spoke positive of the content of the report and was pleased to note that Cabinet Members and Senior Officers could now have face to face conversations with residents in respect of the Council's budget, following the previous Covid-19 prevention measures.

The Deputy Leader added that this year's budget would be a concern to all Local Authorities because of the cost-of-living crisis and the increase in utility bills and as such, the outlook moving forward was dire with difficult decisions to be made.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

1. To support the further development and continuation of the approach to the Council's budget consultation introduced in last years consultation for 2023/24, using the Councils Let's Talk Engagement website, as well as community face-to-face engagement. As part of the suggested approach, we will continue to provide alternative means of engagement for those having reduced or no access to the Internet and those who prefer to engage through traditional methods;
2. To support the Council's statutory requirements regarding consultation on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Council Tax levels and that these will be met via the proposed approach;
3. To support the phase 1 budget consultation process taking place during the autumn of 2022, with the dates to be confirmed following clarification of the Welsh Government budget settlement timescales; and
4. To authorise the Service Director – Democratic Services & Communications to plan the necessary timeline of engagement once the details of the Provisional Local Government Settlement are known, in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Member & Director of Finance & Digital Services.

54 Pre-Scrutiny: Community Infrastructure Levy Annual Monitoring Report

The Service Director of Democratic Services and Communication provided the Cabinet with the feedback and comments of the Climate Change, Frontline Services & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee following its pre-scrutiny of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Annual Monitoring Report at its meeting on the 29th September 2022.

The Head of Planning went onto provide Members with the details of the report which included the of the CIL Annual Monitoring Report and the proposed changes to the Regulation 123 List.

The Deputy Leader took the opportunity to thank the Community Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee for its feedback of the report.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the comments and observations of the Climate Change, Frontline Services & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee, as detailed in paragraph 5 of the report; and
2. To endorse the recommendations outlined within the Community Infrastructure Levy Annual Monitoring Report as attached to this report at Appendix A.

55 Pre-Scrutiny: Draft - Director of Social Services Annual Report 2021-2022

The Service Director of Democratic Services and Communication provided the Cabinet with the feedback and comments of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee following its pre scrutiny of the Director of Social Services Annual Report 2021/22 at its meeting on the 5th October 2022.

The Group Director of Community and Children's Services went on to provide the Cabinet with the details of the report. The Director of Social Services Annual Report 2021/22 set out how the Council's Social Services performed last year and highlights the direction and priorities set for the current year.

The Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care noted the comments of the Scrutiny Committee and commented that moves towards the integration of social care and health care must be accelerated; a matter which had been discussed at a recent meeting of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership Board.

The Cabinet Member noted the commitment and breadth of work undertaken by social services staff and whilst referring to case studies, spoke of how intervention had improved various aspects of the clients' lives such as confidence and independence.

The Deputy Leader took the opportunity to thank the Community Services Scrutiny Committee for its comments and observations in respect of the report.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the comments and observations of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee; and
2. To endorse the recommendations outlined within the Director of Social Services Annual Report 2021/22 as attached to the report.

56 Representations, Complaints and Compliments Procedure Annual Report

The Group Director of Community and Children's Services provided the Cabinet with an overview of the operation and effectiveness of the Council's statutory Social Services complaints procedure between 1st April 2021 and 31st March 2022. The report contained information on the background of the Social Services statutory complaints procedure, information on lessons learnt from complaints and performance data for Adults & Children's Social Services, together with achievements for 2021/22 and future developments.

The Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care thanked the Director for the comprehensive report, which emphasised the Council's positive attitude in dealing with complaints to maintain and improve its standards. The Cabinet Member spoke of the wide-ranging compliments detailed within the report, which emphasised the commitment of the staff, despite challenging times.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To agree the contents of the Social Services Annual Complaints report; and
2. To note the work undertaken by the Social Services Complaints Team.

57 The Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for Rhondda Cynon Taf 2022-2027

The Director of Public Health, Protection and Community Services sought Cabinet approval of the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for Rhondda Cynon Taf 2022-2027 and inform Cabinet about the feedback from consultation in relation to the new Strategy.

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure took the opportunity to thank the officers for both the report and the Strategy. The Cabinet Member spoke positive of the Strategy and its focus to provide a wide range of activities and ensure that the sporting facilities are maintained to a high standard, in line with the priorities of the Corporate Plan.

The Cabinet Member noted that the previous Strategy focussed on investment over five years and that as a result, over 10,000 Leisure for Life Members were achieved. It was, however, noted that the tough times ahead could create a barrier going forward.

Referring to the consultation, the Cabinet Member advised that, although the 'Let's Talk' website figures were disappointing, she was encouraged to note that 93.5% of residents thought that RCT has a vision of encouraging residents to lead an active lifestyle. The Cabinet Member also recognised the work and comments of the former Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To approve the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for Rhondda Cynon Taf 2022-27.

58 Local Housing Market Assessment 2022-2037

The Service Director of Prosperity and Development provided Cabinet with a summary of the Local Housing Market Assessment 2022 – 2037 and seek approval to utilise the Assessment as part of the evidence base for the Council's Corporate Plan, Local Development Plan and Housing Delivery Plan. This document updated the findings of the last Local Housing Market Assessment completed in 2017/18 and had been produced in accordance with Welsh Government Guidance.

The Cabinet Member for Public Health & Communities thanked the Director for the report and recognised the work to date. The Cabinet Member was pleased to note that the annual targets had already been met.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To approve the Local Housing Market Assessment 2022 – 2037 as a key source of evidence to support the delivery of housing policies in the Council's Corporate Plan, Local Development Plan and Housing Delivery Plan;
2. To approve the Local Housing Market Assessment 2022 – 2037 as a tool to negotiate affordable housing provision on planning applications and to identify how housing need translates to different sizes and types of

- affordable housing (e.g. social rent and low cost home ownership); and
3. To approve the Local Housing Market Assessment 2022 – 2037 for use to inform funding bids (including Social Housing Grant) and to influence residential development in the County Borough.

59 New Empty Homes Strategy for 2022-2025

The Service Director of Prosperity and Development provided Cabinet with an update on the progress made in bringing empty homes back into use in line with the current RCT Empty Homes Strategy (2018 – 2022), and sought approval from Members to agree the Council's new Empty Homes Strategy for the period 2022 -2025.

The Cabinet Member for Public Health & Communities spoke of the success of the scheme to date, which had brought 20% of properties back into use and had been commended by Welsh Government.

The Leader spoke of the work undertaken in respect of the Empty Property Grants and noted that Welsh Government had requested that RCT take the lead in the Valleys Task Force at the time, and now wished for RCT to lead in the further roll-out.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To consider the information contained within this report and the progress made in bringing empty homes back into use in line with the current RCT Empty Homes Strategy (2018 – 2022); and
2. To approve the new Empty Homes Strategy (2022-2025).

60 Council Tax Premiums - Long Term Empty Properties and Second Homes

The Director of Finance and Digital Services provided the Cabinet with information concerning discretionary powers that the Council must charge higher amounts of Council Tax (a premium) on certain properties provided for by the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. The Director requested that Cabinet, having regard to these powers, consider a formal period of consultation on a proposal to introduce a premium.

The Director noted that there was a typographical error at paragraph 10 which references '5 years' and that recommendation 2.2 should include reference to 'second homes'; and with Cabinet's agreement the minor amendments would be made to the original report so that there is no confusion through the consultation process.

The Leader was happy to include the above-mentioned amendments and noted that the consultation would be targeted at those directly affected. The Leader added that the report forms part of the Council's drive to reduce the number of long-term empty properties within the County Borough. The Leader stated that a focus should be put on old properties being brought back into use, as well as creating new homes.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Corporate Services hoped that the four week consultation would be diverse and was pleased to note that each empty property owner would receive a written letter from the Local Authority to advise of the consultation.

The Cabinet Member for Public Health & Communities echoed previous comments about bringing the properties back into use and felt that the approach was important in helping the Council meet its wider Housing Strategy needs.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the details of the discretionary powers relating to Council Tax Premiums as outlined in this report;
2. To initiate a consultation exercise on the proposed use of these powers in respect of empty properties and second homes as set out in Section 10; and
3. That a report, including the results of the consultation exercise, be presented to cabinet to consider and determine the proposed way forward which they would recommend to full Council.

61 Public Services Ombudsman for Wales - Annual Report and Letter 2021-2022

The Director of Legal Services advised the Cabinet of the publication of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales' ('PSOW') Annual Report and Annual Letter to this Council for 2021-2022.

The Deputy Leader thanked the Director for the report and commented that RCT was favourable and the third lowest out of the 22 Welsh Local Authorities. The Deputy Leader noted that the suppression of complaints was likely due to the pandemic and as such, there was now an increase.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To consider and note the 2021-2022 Public Services Ombudsman for Wales' Annual Report and Annual Letter to this Council.

62 Highways, Transportation and Strategic Projects Supplementary Capital Programme 2022-2023

The Director of Frontline Services set out the supplementary capital programme for Highways, Transportation and Strategic Projects, further to the approval of additional 2022/23 investment by Council on 28th September 2022.

The Leader noted the £100,000 allocated for drainage within the report and clarified that it was for small scale drainage works and in addition to the £1M for flood risk work identified in the latter part of the report. The Leader advised that this would help build the Local Authority's case for further Welsh Government funding next year.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note and approve the Supplementary Capital Programme for Highways, Transportation and Strategic Projects as detailed within this report; and
2. To note that the current allocations are part of a 3-year capital programme and delegate authority to the Director of Frontline Services, 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.

63 Change to the order of the agenda

At the request of the Leader, the Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To change the order of the agenda, to consider the 'late' item before the exclusion of press and public from the meeting.

64 All Wales Interim Joint Mileage Protocol

The Director of Human Resources provided the Cabinet with details of an all-Wales Interim Joint Mileage Protocol, recently approved by the WLGA Executive Board and NJC Trades Unions, that has been circulated to all twenty-two authorities in Wales for formal consideration.

The Deputy Leader spoke in support of the recommendations and commented that the approach was in recognition of the volatility of the current market.

The Leader paid tribute to the Trade Unions, which were involved with the WLGA Working Group in respect of the protocol. The Leader added that the UK Government were being lobbied to increase the HRMC mileage from 45p to 50p and explained that as present, the additional 5p is taxable.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To formally consider the adoption of the interim joint protocol, which will result in the Council's mileage rate temporarily increasing by 5p from the current 45p to 50p per mile, effective from 1st November 2022.

65 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".

66 Cynon Valley Waste Disposal Company Limited and Amgen Rhondda Limited - Annual General Meeting

Following the consideration of the report of the Director of Legal Services containing exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended), namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding the information) it was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the current intention to continue the operation of Cynon Valley Waste Disposal Company Limited and Amgen Rhondda Limited (the 'Companies') as Local Authority controlled companies into the future is confirmed;
2. That, subject to the Director of Finance and Digital Services being satisfied that there are no irregularities in the accounts of the Companies that the accounts be received on behalf of the Council;
3. That Azets Audit Services are appointed as auditors to the Companies for the year-ending 31st March 2023;
4. That the Directorships of the Director of Frontline Services and Service Director – Finance and Improvement Services for both Companies continue;
5. To note the continuation of the non-executive director position on the

- Board of the Companies through to the 2023 Annual General Meetings;
6. That the Director of Legal Services and/or his nominee be authorised to exercise the Council's vote at the Annual General Meetings of the Companies in accordance with recommendations 2(ii) to 2(iv) above; and
 7. That the Council be represented at the Companies' Annual General Meetings by a Cabinet Member.

This meeting closed at 2pm

**Cllr A Morgan
Chairman.**