



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CABINET

Minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Cabinet held on Tuesday, 29 November 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 B Davies, Director of Finance & Digital Services
Ms G Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Ms L Davies, Director, Public Health, Protection and Community Services
Mr S Gale, Director of Prosperity & Development
Mr P Griffiths, Service Director – Finance & Improvement Services
Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Mr P Mee, Chief Executive
Mr D Powell, Director of Corporate Estates
Mr A Wilkins, Director of Legal Services
Mr A Critchlow, Parking Services and Streetworks Manager
Mr S Owen, Service Director – Streetcare
Mr A Stone, Head of Flood Risk Management and Strategic Projects
C Emery, Interim Head Of Community Safety and Community Housing

Two members of the public were also in attendance.

79 Welcome and Apology

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

80 Declaration of Interest

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

81 Service Review of the Community Meals Service

The Director of Education and Inclusion Services provided Cabinet with the report which assessed the Council's Community Meals Service and sought permission to consult on the future of the service.

The Director spoke of the options for consideration of alternative ways of meeting the nutritional needs of the most vulnerable residents in RCT and how the Council could continue to provide the appropriate support for the future.

The Director recommended Cabinet approve the third option, which would consist of providing service users with a choice of either a hot or frozen meal delivery service, which service users could order through a central point of contact within the Council. The frozen meals would be purchased by the Council through a third-party supplier and stored at the central meal kitchen. Part of this option would also entail a proposed price increase of £0.50 to service users, which would increase the price of the meal from £4.05 to £4.55. This would generate potential additional full year income of £0.063M.

The Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation and Welsh Language spoke of the challenging financial situation across all service areas and was in support of consulting upon Option 3. The Cabinet Member noted that RCT CBC was one of few Local Authorities in Wales to offer a community meals service and stated that Option 3 would allow the Council to maintain the service for users, allow greater flexibility for residents and makes the service more sustainable. The Cabinet Member also noted that staff would continue to provide a welfare check to service users during the weekdays, supporting social care for the most vulnerable using the service.

The Cabinet Member moved the recommendations with the following additional recommendation in place of 2.3 of the report: *'Subject to 2.2 above, we agree to receive a further report summarising the results and feedback from the consultation process to determine whether Cabinet wishes to proceed with the proposal or not'*.

The Deputy Leader acknowledged the importance of the service but recognised that all service areas needed review due to the substantial rise in costs faced by the Local Authority. The Deputy Leader was in support of Option 3, to retain the service and allow hot meals to continue for the most vulnerable in the community. The Deputy Leader added that despite the proposed price increase of £0.50, it remained competitive in comparison to neighbouring Local Authorities and private providers.

The Leader was also in support of the third option as it would maintain the valued service and provide clients with an option to have a frozen meal, which may be better suited for those who wish to eat later. The Leader spoke of one neighbouring Local Authority which charges £6 and explained that the preferred option would total £4.55.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To consider the content of the report;
2. To initiate a consultation on Cabinet's preferred service change proposal of Option 3, in respect of the Community Meals Service, as outlined in section 5.4 of the report; and
3. To receive a further report summarising the results and feedback from the consultation process to determine whether Cabinet wishes to proceed with the proposal or not.

N.B- Following the determination of this item, the Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation and Welsh Language left the meeting.

The Head of Flood Risk Management and Strategic Projects advised the Cabinet of the requirements to review and produce a revised Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and Action Plan (formerly known as a Flood Risk Management Plan), as required under Section 10 of the Flood and Water Management Act (FWMA) 2010. Furthermore, the officer advised Members of the program of work required to deliver the review of the LFRMS and Action Plan, in accordance with the statutory timeframe stipulated by Welsh Government.

The Leader welcomed the report and was in support of the recommendations, which fit with the Council's wider Flood Risk Management Strategy and the expectations of Welsh Government. The Leader explained that many internal reviews and investigations had been undertaken following the likes of Storm Dennis. The Leader stated that RCT had the highest surface flood risk across Wales and that the review would help levy future funding, which is allocated across Wales based on risk assessment and need.

The Deputy Leader spoke in support of the recommendations and commented that although the Strategy was statutory, there was no legal obligation to carry out the consultation. The Deputy Leader spoke of the importance of consulting with residents to help eliminate fear.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To commence the review of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and Action Plan; and
2. To note the indicative timescales, actions and reports being brought to Cabinet and Climate Change, Frontline Services & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee in Appendix 1.

83 Waste Services - Revised Waste Management Strategy

The Head of Streetcare Services outlined proposals for revisions to the Council's operational waste management processes with a view to considering future arrangements for the collection of refuse and recycling designed to aid an increase in the rate of recycling across RCT which will also deliver financial efficiencies; and sought Cabinet's approval to initiate a consultation exercise in respect of the options for change as presented in the report.

With the agreement of the Leader, two Members of the public spoke on the item and put forward their views to Cabinet Members.

The Cabinet Member for Environment & Leisure spoke of the Council's current recycling rate of 67.48% and the need to increase it to the Welsh Government target of 70% by 2025. The Cabinet Member spoke of the six Local Authorities, which already have a positive record of refuse collection on a three-weekly basis and felt that there should be very little to place in black bin waste, given RCT collect food, nappies and recycling on a weekly basis. The Cabinet Member welcomed the proposals, which would have benefits in terms of recycling, costs and lowering the carbon footprint.

The Leader and Members took the opportunity to thank the speakers for their contribution and emphasised that if agreed, the proposals would be subject to consultation. In response to the points made by the speakers, the Leader stated that all of RCT's plastic was recycled. In addition to the six Local Authorities

currently collecting refuse on a three-weekly basis, the Leader stated that it was likely many more would consider the move as part of the difficult budget setting process.

The Leader spoke of concerns raised in respect of the potential increase in pests and explained that there was no evidence for this, which had been independently verified; and spoke of Conwy Council, which collect refuse on a four-weekly basis, as an example. The Leader emphasised the importance of recycling and explained that evidence suggests that if done correctly, only 20% of the weekly waste should go in the black bag.

In terms of the trial of the reusable bags, the Leader had reservations about whether it would be a challenge in a typical terrace street and welcomed the opportunity for consultation and a trial.

The Deputy Leader echoed the Leader's comments and noted that the Council purchased 30.2 million single use bags during 2021/22, at a cost of £877k. In addressing the comments of the speakers, the Deputy Leader emphasised that the need for service changes was a result of the budget gap due to the lack of funds from central government. The Deputy Leader stated that staff were the Council's greatest asset and the need to prioritise jobs.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the content of the report and duly resolve to initiate a public consultation and engagement exercise on the option for change, namely:
 - (i) The collection of residual household waste on a 3-weekly basis for all domestic waste collections.
 - (ii) Presentation of waste on a 3-weekly basis will be as follows; strict volume control measures will apply to all domestic waste, namely:
 - (a) a maximum of 3 black bags per household, (for those properties with existing black bag waste collections),
 - (b) no side waste rule continues for those households with large wheelie bin collections; and
2. To initiate a trial of the use of reusable recycling sacks for the collection of dry mixed recycling, (DMR); and
3. That feedback from the consultation/ engagement activity and the trial are each reported back to Cabinet in order for Cabinet to determine whether, and if so how, they would wish to proceed with the option for change.

This meeting closed at 1.45 pm

**Cllr A Morgan
Chairman.**