



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CABINET

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Monday, 12 December 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 M Norris

Officers in attendance

Mr P Mee, Chief Executive
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 C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Mr A Wilkins, Director of Legal Services
Mr. M. Phillips, Revenues Services Manager
C Emery, Interim Head Of Community Safety and Community Housing
Ms C O'Neill, Strategic Arts & Culture Manager

90 Welcome and Apology

The Leader welcomed attendees to the meeting and an apology for absence was received from the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Communities.

91 Declaration of Interest

On behalf of all Chief Officers present at the meeting, the Director of Legal Services declared a personal and pecuniary interest in respect of agenda item 7 due to the report referencing officer posts in the proposed Senior Leadership Team restructure.

The following Chief Officers left the meeting whilst the item was discussed and voted upon:

- * The Director of Legal Services
- * The Director of Education and Inclusion Services
- * The Director of Finance and Digital Services
- * The Director of Public Health, Protection and Community Services
- * The Director of Prosperity and Development
- * The Service Director of Democratic Services and Communication

The Chief Executive who authored and presented the report (as part of their statutory responsibilities) remained in the meeting.

92 Minutes

The Cabinet **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 29th November 2022 as an accurate record.

93 Cabinet Work Programme

The Service Director of Democratic Services and Communication provided the Cabinet with an update on the Cabinet Work Programme, which included the proposed list of matters requiring consideration by Cabinet over the 2022-23 Municipal Year.

The Deputy Leader commented that the Work Programme was a fluid document and could be amended according to the budget situation.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

1. To approve the updated Work Programme for the 2022-23 Municipal Year (with appropriate amendment where necessary) and to receive a further update on a 3 monthly basis.

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

The Director of Finance and Digital Services provided Cabinet with the results of the public consultation, which it agreed to initiate in respect of the introduction of a Council Tax Premium on long term empty properties and second homes in the County Borough.

The Director spoke of the Cabinet meeting on 17th October 2022, whereby the Cabinet considered and agreed a new Empty Homes Strategy for 2022-2025 and agreed to undertake a consultation on the proposal to introduce a Council Tax Premium on Long Term Empty Properties. It was proposed that the premium for long term empty properties would be introduced and effective from 1st April 2023, while the premium for second homes would be effective from 1st April 2024 (in line with the requirements of the Act). The Council would write to each homeowner, once a decision is made, to advise them of the forthcoming changes, thereby providing as much advance notice as possible.

The Director drew Cabinet's attention to Appendix 1 of the report, which detailed the responses to the consultation exercise that took place between 24th October and 21st November 2022.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Corporate Services stated that the Council has discretionary powers to charge higher amounts in relation to council tax for long-term empty dwellings and second homes with a view to bringing empty properties back into use, increasing the supply of affordable housing and enhancing the sustainability of local communities. The Cabinet Member added that empty properties have a detrimental impact on communities and was in support of moving the original proposal which had been consulted upon.

The Leader spoke in support of the original proposal and noted that although most owners were against the proposals, the majority of the public were in support as the empty properties were considered to be a blight on communities. The Leader noted that the owners would have two years to renovate or sell the

property before the significant increase.

The Leader spoke of the Empty Property Grant which had been successful and advised that there would be an all-Wales programme for empty properties funded by the Welsh Government in the New Year.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

1. To note the consultation feedback as attached at Appendix 1 of the report; 2. Having considered the consultation feedback, to proceed with the introduction of a premium as set out in the original proposal;
3. In line with the above to recommend the proposed way forward to Full Council; and
4. Subject to the above, to authorise the Director of Finance and Digital Services to put in place the necessary implementation arrangements.

95 Support to Refugees, Ukraine Nationals and Asylum Seekers in RCT

The Director of Public Health, Protection and Community Services provided Cabinet with an update on the support being provided by the Council to refugees, Ukraine nationals and asylum seekers in Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) and outlines the considerable work undertaken by the Council and partner organisations, to respond positively and as effectively as possible across all the resettlement schemes.

Members were informed that, to date, over 320 refugees, asylum seekers and Ukraine nationals had been supported into accommodation in RCT with new arrivals weekly under the various schemes listed within the report. As a result of the UK Asylum Dispersal Scheme, the numbers were expected to increase significantly in the next 12 months.

The Director advised that many of the arrivals had been supported to secure employment, education, health services and sustainable housing through the multi-disciplinary work of a wide range of Council Departments and the support of external partners including the local health board.

The Leader took the opportunity to thank the staff for going over and above despite the challenging timescales.

The Deputy Leader echoed the Leader's comments and expressed her profound thanks to the teams for the enormous amount of work undertaken. The Deputy Leader stated that it was heart-warming to witness the welcome and support delivered by RCT staff and partners; and went on to speak of an individual who was part of a scheme within the Ynysangharad War Memorial Park. The Deputy Leader was delighted that the individual had not only received a positive welcome and integrated well within the team but had won an award. The Deputy Leader was pleased to note that RCT Council were contributing to ensuring Wales is a nation of safe sanctuary.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Corporate Services reiterated earlier comments and was proud to note the Council's long-established commitment to helping those unable to stay safely in their home country.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

1. To note the increasing numbers of refugees, Ukrainian nationals and asylum seekers being resettled in RCT and the emerging housing, support and financial

demands this presents; and

2. To note the significant actions being taken to support and welcome people resettling in RCT by the Council, our partners and stakeholders.

96 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 paragraphs 12 and 13 of Part 4 of the Schedule 12A of the Act".

97 Review of the Council's Senior Leadership Team Structure

Following the consideration of the report of the Chief Executive containing exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 12 and 13 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended), namely information relating to the financial affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information), the Chief Executive presented the report and it was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the revised directorate structures shown at Appendices 2(i), 2(ii) and 2(iii) of the report be implemented from 19 th January 2023 and Appendix 3(i) from 1st September 2023, subject to the necessary staff consultation process; 2. To note that implementation of the revised structures would provide an overall estimated reduction in annual management costs at the Senior grade levels of £78,000 (inclusive of on-costs);

3. To note that, as part of the ongoing efficiency savings programme, then subject to any required approval of the Council's Appointment's Committee, it would result in the deletion of the following posts from the Council's structure, in line with the above structural amendment dates in paragraph 2.1 of the report: i) Deputy Chief Executive and Group Director – Community & Childrens Services (Group Director grade); ii) Director of Finance & Digital Services (Director Level 1). iii) Director of Frontline Services (Director Level 1). iv) Service Director – Frontline Services (Level 2).

4. To note that emanating from the proposal in 2.1, Cabinet would be authorising: a) the amendment of the post Director – Prosperity & Development (Director Level 2) to Director – Prosperity & Development (Director Level 1); b) the amendment of the post Director – Public Health, Protection & Community Services (Director Level 2) to Director – Public Health, Protection & Community Services (Director Level 1); c) the amendment of the post Director – Legal Services (Director Level 2) to Director – Legal & Democratic Services (Director Level 1); d) the creation of the post of Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director – Finance, Digital & Frontline Services (Group Director grade); e) the creation of the post of Director – Social Services (Director Level 1); f) the creation of the post Director – Highways, Streetcare & Transportation Services (Director Level 2); g) a change of post title only from Head of Safeguarding & Standards (Head of Service Level 1) to Head of Service – Partnerships (Head of Service Level 1).

5. To, authorise the Chief Executive, in conjunction with the Director of Human Resources, to commence the staff consultation process in accordance with the Council's agreed Managing Change Policy and, thereafter implement the proposals;

6. That subject to the completion of the consultation process referred to at 2.5 of the report, and where necessary, refer the matter of the terms and conditions of employment and remuneration of the posts included in the proposed revised directorate's structure, shown at Appendices 2(i) to 2(iii) and Appendix 3(i) to the

Appointments Committee and/or full Council as appropriate;

7. To note that consequential changes would be required to the Council's Constitution in terms of the removal and creation of Chief Officer posts. directorate's structure, shown at Appendices 2(i) to 2(iii) and Appendix 3(i) to the Appointments Committee and/or full Council as appropriate; and

8. To note that consequential changes would be required to the Council's Constitution in terms of the removal and creation of Chief Officer posts.

N.B- *The following Chief Officers left the meeting whilst the item was discussed and voted upon:*

** The Director of Legal Services*

** The Director of Education and Inclusion Services*

** The Director of Finance and Digital Services*

** The Director of Public Health, Protection and Community Services*

** The Director of Prosperity and Development*

** The Service Director of Democratic Services and Communication*

This meeting closed at 1.30 pm

**Cllr A Morgan
Chairman.**