



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL

Minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Council held on Wednesday, 18 January 2023 at 5.00 pm

This meeting was live streamed, details of which can be accessed [here](#)

County Borough Councillors – The following Councillors were present in the Council Chamber:-

Councillor G Hughes (Chair)

Councillor Sheryl Evans	Councillor P Binning
Councillor S Bradwick	Councillor J Brencher
Councillor G Caple	Councillor A Crimmings
Councillor S J Davies	Councillor R Davis
Councillor E L Dunning	Councillor S Emanuel
Councillor B Harris	Councillor S Hickman
Councillor G Holmes	Councillor W Hughes
Councillor K Johnson	Councillor G O Jones
Councillor W Jones	Councillor R Lewis
Councillor W Lewis	Councillor C Leyshon
Councillor M Maohoub	Councillor A Morgan
Councillor N H Morgan	Councillor D Owen-Jones
Councillor M Powell	Councillor S Trask
Councillor M Webber	Councillor R Williams

The following Councillors were present online:-

Councillor B Stephens	Councillor L Addiscott
Councillor M Ashford	Councillor J Barton
Councillor R Bevan	Councillor J Bonetto
Councillor J Cook	Councillor A Dennis
Councillor V Dunn	Councillor J Edwards
Councillor J Elliott	Councillor A J Ellis
Councillor L Ellis	Councillor D Evans
Councillor P Evans	Councillor Sera Evans
Councillor D Grehan	Councillor H Gronow
Councillor G Hopkins	Councillor G Jones
Councillor C Lises	Councillor C Middle
Councillor K Morgan	Councillor S Morgans
Councillor W Owen	Councillor M Norris
Councillor D Parkin	Councillor S Rees
Councillor A Roberts	Councillor A O Rogers
Councillor J Smith	Councillor G Stacey
Councillor W Treeby	Councillor G L Warren
Councillor K Webb	Councillor G E Williams
Councillor T Williams	Councillor D Wood
Councillor R Yeo	

Officers in attendance

Mr P Mee, Chief Executive

Mr B Davies, Director of Finance & Digital Services
Mr R Evans, Director of Human Resources
Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Mr A Wilkins, Director of Legal Services and Democratic Services

Apologies for absence

Councillor R Evans Councillor A Fox
Councillor S Powderhill Councillor C Preedy
Councillor L A Tomkinson Councillor J Turner
Councillor D Williams

63 Welcome & Apologies

The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting and apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors R Evans, A S Fox, C Preedy, S Powderhill, L Tomkinson, J Turner and D Williams.

64 Declaration of Interest

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

ITEM 7. WELSH CHURCH ACT FUND ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

Councillor W Treeby – “I sit on two committees that receive money from the Welsh Church Act Fund”

Councillor M Maohoub – “I am a member of one of the committees that receive funding form the Welsh Church Act Fund”

Councillor D Grehan – “ I sit on a committee that has received money this year from the Church Act Fund”

Councillor A Morgan – “ I am directly involved in two committees that receive funding and I have assisted another group with the funding application”

Councillor G Jones – “I am Chair of the Trecynon Free Library & Institute, which receives funding”

Councillor D Owen-Jones – “The Tonyrefail Skate Park receives funding from the Welsh Church Act Fund”

ITEM 15. THE COUNCIL'S SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM STRUCTURE

The Director, Legal Services advised that the Chief Officers present at the meeting will declare a personal interest relating to Agenda Item 15, 'The Council's Senior Leadership Team Structure'. The Chief Officers will leave the meeting for the duration of the item, except for the Chief Executive, as the author of the report and the Director of Human Resources, who will present the report and advise on any procedural queries.

65 Minutes

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Council meetings held on the 23rd November 2022 at 3.30pm and 5.00pm as an accurate reflection subject to it being noted that Councillor H Gronow was in attendance at 3.30pm and Councillor Amanda Ellis was in attendance online.

Matters Arising – As raised by Cllr P Evans and confirmed by the Leader of the Council in the meeting held on the 23rd November 2022 at 3.30pm, the Service Director Democratic Services & Communication advised that an invitation would be extended to the Welsh Ambulance Service Trust NHS to attend a future council meeting. The date would be considered in accordance with the council business needs and in consultation with the Presiding Officer but would likely take place as an extraordinary council meeting.

66 Announcements

The following announcements were made:

- Councillor M Webber announced that Mr Chris Bryant, Member of Parliament for Rhondda and Chair of the Commons Committee on Standards, received a Knighthood for Political and Public Service and Councillor A Roberts – Local Member for Gilfach Goch – also received an MBE for Political & Public Service.
- Councillor S Bradwick wished to congratulate Dr Mike Thomas who was awarded an MBE for his services to the Welsh Male Voice Choirs of the Pelenna Valley and the Cynon Valley in the King's Honour's list. He praised Dr Mike Thomas's work in the community working with many choristers across the Pelenna, Cwmdare and Cwmbach choirs, and raising money for many charities too.
- Councillor S Bradwick also announced the sad passing of Mrs Margaret Blainey, a former officer for Gladlys and Tegfan Homes, based in the Cynon Valley. He referred to her as an outstanding Officer.
- Councillor D Owen-Jones submitted a petition on behalf of residents of Tonyrefail, citing environmental concerns regarding a local development.

67 Statements

Statement from the Leader of the Council:

The Leader of the Council, Councillor A Morgan extended his thanks to Council staff for their hard work during the period of recent severe weather and flooding. He acknowledged that while not as severe as Storm Dennis, over a 24hr period in both Cwmdare and Maerdy, 104mm of rainfall was recorded with a total of 60 properties, including commercial properties, being flooded. A number of properties, in Taff Street, Pontypridd experienced basement flooding due to drains backing up and other properties in isolated areas were also flooded. The Leader confirmed that these updates have been passed to Natural Resources Wales (NRW) as the flood management authority.

The Leader advised that since Storm Dennis, the Council has invested significantly in upgrading culverts (separate to the £20m of repairs carried out as a result of funding from Welsh Government investment). Every upgraded culvert held during the recent flooding. He added that recently, the Council has submitted bids for flood risk management projects to Welsh Government, totalling £8m which will be match funded should they be approved.

The Leader thanked staff for their dedication and advised that on many occasions staff have been working through the night/morning gritting the roads due to low temperatures and there have been a number of contractors also supporting council staff with these duties to ensure they take the required breaks. The Leader advised that work has also been being carried out on the A4048 in Tonypany where staff have often been working through the night to overcome the problems on the road and then resuming their duties salting the roads.

In view of some criticism of the salting operations and occasional closure of mountain roads, the Leader wished to thank staff for their hard work gritting roads and surfaces during icy weather and low temperatures in often dangerous driving conditions.

68 Members' Questions

The Service Director Democratic Services & Communication advised that question 7 will fall due to the absence of County Borough Councillor S Powderhill.

1. Question from County Borough Councillor K. Johnson to the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Corporate Services, County Borough Councillor T. Leyshon:

"Please can you advise of a go live date for the Electric charge points that have been installed throughout RCTCBC, with support from Cardiff Capital Region funding? These assets have been sitting idle after installation for a considerable period, when provision across RCTCBC is very limited?"

Response from County Borough Councillor Leyshon:

Councillor Leyshon agreed that the situation is frustrating but added that the Council has secured funding from Welsh Government and recently secured an additional round of U.K. Government funding, however, National Grid (formerly Western Power Distribution) have not done the connections despite the Council's Corporate Estates ordering the facilities well within the timeframe.

Councillor Leyshon commented that in terms of the programme itself, the Council continues to focus its efforts on publicly available charging at Council car park facilities via the Cardiff Capital Region partnership. To date, over 70 EV charge points have been installed at 31 Council car parks across the County Borough at the present time. Councillor Leyshon reiterated that the Council is waiting on National Grid for the connections and Officers are working with them to try and ensure a swift and positive completion to the installation process before the end of the financial year.

In addition, Councillor Leyshon advised that the funding from the U.K. Government's Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) has been awarded to facilitate a further phase of installations across an additional 28 Council-owned car parks throughout the County. In anticipation of future funding, the Council has proposed an additional list of potential sites for charge point installation, primarily across Council workplaces.

In conclusion, Councillor Leyshon stated that there are a variety of grant funding schemes available from Welsh Government and OZEV, which the Council is actively looking to utilise to bid for monies to put towards the cost of EV charge point installation and associated works.

There was no supplementary question

2. Question from County Borough Councillor M. D. Ashford to the Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation and Welsh Language, County Borough Councillor R. Lewis:

"With the Welsh Government recently announcing funding under the MIM for the new school in Pontyclun, can the Cabinet Member outline a timeframe for the works and when pupils and residents can expect the new facility to open?"

Response from County Borough Councillor Lewis:

Councillor Lewis advised of the Welsh Government granted funding approval for three new school projects, including the brand-new facility for Pontyclun Primary and added that the scheme will be delivered under the Mutual Investment Model, or MIM, which is the revenue element of the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme (formerly 21st Century Schools and Colleges programme).

Councillor Lewis explained that the works for Pontyclun Primary, will entail that all existing buildings (including temporary classrooms) will be demolished to construct a new two-storey school building, sports and recreation facilities – including landscaping, drainage and infrastructure work. It will accommodate two rooms for nursery, two for reception, five infant classrooms, nine junior classrooms, a central 'heart space' area and a main hall with various supporting facilities and areas. Hard play areas will be provided externally, along with two Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs) and other informal grass play areas. Two car park areas will support 40 spaces (10% of which will include EV charging) and extensive cycle storage will be provided. The site will also benefit from a Sustainable Urban Drainage System.

In conclusion, Councillor Lewis advised that construction of the facility commenced in December last year and is due to be completed by early 2025.

There was no supplementary question

3. Question from County Borough Councillor J. Edwards to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:

“Can the Leader outline what support is available to help RCT residents with the cost- of-living crisis?”

Response from the Leader of the Council, Councillor A Morgan:

Councillor Morgan advised that in terms of financial support, Council staff have provided assistance accessing the Winter Fuel Support Scheme, the Family Payments scheme (where eligible), as well as national support schemes.

Councillor Morgan commented that to date a total of £16.7m has been paid to residents and households since April 2022 in relation to the Welsh Government Cost of Living Schemes. In addition to this, £5.8m has been paid to nearly 29,000 households since October 2022 through the Welsh Government’s Winter Fuel Support Scheme. He added that the Council is doing all it can to support families and households, including offering additional financial support via the Discretionary Cost of Living Schemes. This includes the following payments:

- Two Family Payments (£50 & £75) to families that have children of compulsory school age;
- Further funds of £50,000 to make Discretionary Housing Payments to households most in need with support for their housing costs;
- This is in addition to the £404,000 of Discretionary Housing Payments made from the grant monies allocated to the Council by the DWP;
- Further to this, provided an extra £50,000 to local foodbanks to help them continue to deliver their vital work.

The Leader concluded that residents are able to request support at any time via the Community Resilience Hubs by completing a ‘request for support form’ online and support will be provided by Council Staff, Community Resilience Volunteers, 3rd Sector organisations, and community partners. Since October 2022, the Hubs have seen a total of 287 resident requests for support.

Supplementary Question from Councillor J Edwards:

“Can the Leader provide further information on the Winter Welcome Centres?”

Response from the Leader of the Council, Councillor A Morgan:

The Leader provided an update and confirmed that the Council provides support to community organisations to open as Winter Welcome Centres which are places where residents can go to keep warm, feel safe, have a chat and gain information and advice on what to do if they are struggling. There are 92 Winter Welcome Centres operating across RCT and since the centres opened late last year, an estimated 3,200 people have visited or accessed the facilities. The Leader advised that over £459,600 has been allocated to support the services available.

4. Question from County Borough Councillor S. Morgans to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:

“Can the Leader outline what measures are being considered to help bridge the funding gap that this Council faces in the next financial year?”

Response from the Leader of the Council, Councillor A Morgan:

The Leader commented that the budget position facing not just RCT Council, but all Councils across Wales and the U.K. is truly unprecedented. He acknowledged the Welsh Government prioritising and passporting as much money as possible to local government in the provisional settlement announced in December. However, the Leader considered this to be a sticking plaster in view of the way the Westminster Government is treating public services.

The Leader provided Council with the latest projection, that the Council is facing a £38.3m budget gap, slightly up from the £36.5m reported in September. This is due to ongoing significant cost pressures the Council is facing. The Leader stressed the importance of protecting and prioritising the Council’s core statutory services as much as possible, including schools and social care. He added that the school’s budget has already increased by 28% over the last 10 years whilst the Council’s budget has increased by 11%.

The Leader advised that phase 1 of the budget consultation process has recently closed and Officers are now working to bring a report to Cabinet before consultation takes place on the final proposals in the run-up to March. In total, 1,300 people were engaged, including 515 survey responses and 525 ‘quick poll’ responses.

The Leader provided detail around some of the consultation responses:

- 72.6% of respondents agreed the Council should fully-cover increased pay and non-pay costs in schools
- 91.7% felt the current approach to efficiencies is a good strategy
- 84.3% said that individual reviews of fees and charges is a reasonable approach
- 68.3% felt that protecting services through a reasonable Council Tax increase was preferable, and it is likely that RCT Council will once again implement one of the lowest Council Tax rises in Wales.

There was no supplementary question

5. Question from County Borough Councillor N. H. Morgan to the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Corporate Services, County Borough Councillor T. Leyshon:

“Will the relevant Cabinet Member please make a statement on the Council’s biodiversity policy?”

Response of Councillor Leyshon:

Councillor Leyshon commented that the Council has an extensive track record in

delivering biodiversity enhancements right across the County, primarily under the framework of its general biodiversity duty. She added that this will draw together all of the Council's biodiversity work, the land use policies contained in the LDP and through Action for Nature, the local biodiversity plan which was considered by the Cabinet Climate Change Sub-Committee at its last meeting.

Councillor Leyshon outlined the Living Landscape Project which is a landscape-scale project which aims to link a network of biodiversity rich and sustainably managed sites throughout RCT with local communities. The first phase of the project focusses on 29 sites in Council ownership, located across 23 wards and includes countryside and parks, cemeteries and Council-adopted S106 sites, all of which provide crucial habitat connectivity for a range of priority species.

Councillor Leyshon explained that managing peatlands and grasslands is important both for biodiversity and carbon storage and currently 39 wards within RCT Council have areas for wildflower management. Furthermore, the Planning and Countryside teams continue to successfully secure funding & S106 contributions for schemes that restore the Council's peatbogs and their rich habitats. A recent project in Hirwaun was highlighted in the COP26 summit.

Councillor Leyshon advised that ecological mitigation secured through planning agreement is an area that RCT Council has a significant 'track-record' in delivering. Long-term habitat management agreements, usually through S106, have been used to secure largescale habitat mitigation and enhancement provision. As a result, over 1,000 hectares of habitat management area has been negotiated

In conclusion, Councillor Leyshon explained that the Action for Nature programme is a web-based resource outlining current plans for nature recovery and provides information to communities and professionals. It also gives a number of habitat actions that people can take and provides case studies on a variety of local projects.

There was no supplementary question

6. Question from County Borough Councillor S. J. Davies to the Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation and Welsh Language, County Borough Councillor R. Lewis:

"Can the Cabinet Member make a statement on the three new school developments for the south of the County Borough?"

Response of Councillor Lewis:

Councillor Lewis refrained from providing the same detail in his response as he had done with his earlier response to Councillor Ashford in terms of the funding model and the delivery arrangements for the scheme. He added that the projects will deliver brand new education facilities at each school and will further demonstrate the Council's significant recent investment via the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme, formerly known as the 21st Century Schools Programme.

Councillor Lewis confirmed that Morgan Sindall (contractors) have started work at all three sites but added that there are slightly different timescales involved for

Llanilltud Faerdref and Penygawsi. The first phase of the works will see the construction of the new school buildings on each site, with external works taking place once the buildings are open.

Councillor Lewis provided detailed updates for both the Llanilltud Faerdref Primary School (delivered by spring 2024) and Penygawsi Primary School (delivered by summer 2024) and described both the interior and exterior proposals at the Llanilltud Faerdref Primary School which will comprise one nursery classroom, one reception classroom, four infant classrooms and five junior classrooms – along with a central ‘heartspace’ area and main hall with various supporting facilities and areas.

Externally, there will be landscaped areas and hard and soft play areas set around the school with a total of 23 parking spaces (four of which will include EV charging) and extensive cycle storage spaces will be provided.

In the case of the Penygawsi Primary School Councillor Lewis explained that all its buildings will be demolished to construct a new two-storey building at the north-east corner of the site and will accommodate two nursery, one reception, three infant and six junior classrooms, along with a central ‘heartspace’ area and main hall with various supporting facilities and areas. Hard play areas will be provided externally, along with a grass sports pitch (7-a-side), two MUGAs and informal play areas at the southern end of the site. A total of 28 parking spaces (four of which will include EV charging) and extensive cycle storage will be provided, and the site will also include a Sustainable Urban Drainage System.

Supplementary Question from Councillor S J Davies:

“Can the Cabinet Member explain what environmental benefits the new buildings will bring?”

Response of Councillor Lewis:

Councillor Lewis confirmed that all three new buildings will be built in accordance with the Council’s Climate Change goals with the aim of achieving Net Zero carbon. This is also a required condition for the Welsh Government on all Sustainable Communities for Learning projects.

7. Question from County Borough Councillor D. Owen-Jones to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:

“Can the Leader please provide an update on the progress of schemes awarded funding under the Levelling Up fund?”

Response from the Leader of the Council, Councillor A Morgan:

Councillor Morgan confirmed that the Council was successful in receiving approval for three projects in Round 1 of the UK Government Levelling Up Fund in late 2021 with funding totalling £20.3 million. Councillor Morgan provided an update on the three successful bids. The first that work on the Muni Redevelopment in Pontypridd is due to start imminently following work undertaken behind the scenes by the Council’s Corporate Estates in collaboration with external partners on the design and tendering process. The A4119 Dualling –work is progressing with completion due in Spring next year. The Porth Transport Hub is also developing well and will be completed shortly. Discussions with Transport for Wales have taken place with a view to them managing the site. This will provide a major new transport interchange next to

Porth railway station with bus and interchange and passenger facilities and a much-needed facility for the Rhondda Fach. The Leader confirmed all three are progressing well, two are underway with the third commencing shortly and the fourth bid awaiting UK Government approval. The Leader outlined the fourth as the Robertstown project in the Cynon Valley with the construction of much needed industrial units together with a Park and Ride facility alongside the units. The Leader concluded that the Council was eagerly awaiting the outcome of the fourth bid.

There was no supplementary question due to the lapse of the allotted time.

69 Council Work Programme 2022/23- For Information

The Service Director Democratic Services & Communications presented the Council Work Programme for the 2022/23 Municipal Year and advised that the Leader's Annual Debate due to take place at the February Council meeting would now form part of a specially convened meeting before the conclusion of this municipal year. The Service Director also stated that the Cwm Taf PSB Wellbeing Plan would be added to the Council work programme following consideration by the PSB and the pre scrutiny of that report by the Cwm Taf Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee. Through the Group Leaders, an update will be provided regarding the demands of council business between now and the Annual General Meeting (AGM) before the updated work programme is published.

70 RHONDDA CYNON TAF STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS AND EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

The Director of Finance & Digital Services presented the report which provides the Annual Statement of Accounts for the financial year 2021/2022 which have been audited and are for Full Council to note and approve along with the Audit Wales opinion on the accounts.

The Director commented that the account approval process has been delayed this year due to a national issue impacting across local government relating to accounting for infrastructure assets and the requirement for regulation which was not passed until the 2nd December 2022. The Director advised that Audit Wales are unable to attend the meeting this evening and have offered their apology, however, they have provided their report on the accounts which is a clean and unqualified audit opinion. He added that a small number of amendments have been made which have been included in the accounts as presented.

In conclusion, the Director advised that the Governance & Audit Committee have reviewed the accounts and concluded that there were no issues raised to prevent Council from approving the accounts before them.

Following consideration of the reports, it was **RESOLVED** to:

- (a) Approve and note the Statement of Accounts of Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC (Appendix 1), and associated Letter of Representation (Appendix 2).
- (b) Approve and note the audited final out-turn position for the Council with

regard to the financial year 2021/22 and the level of General Fund Balances (paragraph 8.4); and

- (c) Note the considerations and comments of the 7th September 2022 Governance and Audit Committee meeting as required by the Local Government Measure (paragraphs 11.1 and 11.2).

71 WELSH CHURCH ACT FUND ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

In his report, the Director of Finance and Digital Services sought the approval of Council of the annual report and financial Statement of Accounts for the Welsh Church Act Fund for the financial year ended 31st March 2022; following the completion of the audit process and an unqualified audit opinion; and it was **RESOLVED** to:

- (a) Consider the External Auditor report – “2021- 22 Audit Plan” (Appendix 1);
- (b) Consider the External Auditor report – “Audit of Accounts Report” (Appendix 2);
- (c) Approve and note the Welsh Church Act Fund Annual Report and Financial Statements for the financial year 2021/2022 (Appendix 3); and
- (d) Approve and note the Letter of Representation relating to the Welsh Church Act Fund (Appendix 4).

72 COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME

The Director of Finance & Digital Services advised that the report represents the annual requirement for Council to adopt a council tax reduction scheme (CTRS) by 31st January 2023. He added that it is a national Welsh Government scheme with a small number of local discretions as set out in the report. The Director confirmed that the Council has consulted on the local discretions as part of the Council’s general budget consultation process.

In conclusion, the Director advised that the proposed scheme is in line with that adopted for the current financial year with appropriate updates which are in line with national upratings.

Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to:

- a) Note and adopt the provisions of the Prescribed Requirements Regulations and the amendments made to those regulations by the Amendment Regulations as the Council’s local CTRS for 2023/24, subject to the local discretions that the Council is able to exercise;
- b) Note the outcome of the consultation exercise undertaken by the Council on the local discretions applicable to the CTRS for 2023/24; and
- c) Confirm the discretions applicable to the Council’s local CTRS for 2023/24 as set out at paragraph 5.3 (Table 2) of this report.

Council Tax Premium

The Director of Finance & Digital Services presented his report which provided Council with the opportunity to consider the recommendation of Cabinet with regard to the proposed introduction of a Council Tax Premium for Long Term Empty Properties and Second Homes.

The Director advised that the proposal has already been consulted upon and the feedback from the consultation process was attached to the report. He added that the overriding objective, as set out within the report, is to maximise the availability of affordable homes across the county borough in line with the updated Empty Homes Strategy and in light of the local housing market assessment.

The Director summarised the proposals as follows: for long term empty properties to charge a council tax premium of plus 50% for properties which have been empty between 1-2 years which would increase to plus 100% for properties which have been empty for more than 2 years. This would take effect from the 1st April 2023. There are approximately 1700 such properties, 1300 of which have been empty for more than 2 years. For second homes, a premium of plus 100% is proposed to take effect from 1st April 2024 and there are approximately 350 such properties.

In conclusion, the Director commented that Cabinet has considered and recommended such a premium to Council as set out in the report.

Members welcomed the proposals to introduce a Council Tax Premium for Long Term Empty Properties and Second Homes, as recommended by Cabinet and following discussion the Director responded to a number of queries. He confirmed that should the proposals be agreed by Council, they would be kept under review as part of the Empty Homes Strategy. The Director also confirmed that the exceptions as listed in table one within the report are set out by Welsh Government and he also confirmed that with regard to the exceptions and as part of the consultation process every owner has been contacted and signposted to information and reports as appropriate.

It was **RESOLVED** that Council agrees to the introduction of a Council Tax Premium for Long Term Empty Properties and Second Homes, as recommended by Cabinet at its meeting held on 12th December 2022.

Annual Self-Assessment 2021/22 (Incorporating the Council's Corporate Performance Report)

The Chief Executive presented his report which set out the Council's annual self-assessment for 2021/22 following its consideration by the Governance & Audit Committee on the 7th December 2022. The Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 requires that a draft of the self-assessment must be made available for review by the Governance & Audit Committee prior to Council's consideration and once agreed by Council it must be published within 4 weeks of being finalised.

The Chief Executive referred to paragraph 3.2 of the report which sets out the relevant duty within the Act which is met by self-assessment and requires each Council in Wales to keep under review the extent to which it is meeting the performance requirements of the Act, that it is the extent to which it is exercising

its functions effectively, is using its resources economically, efficiently and effectively and its governance is effective.

The Chief Executive added that as Members are aware that this Council has a strong track record of self-awareness and self-reflection and is therefore well placed to respond to the requirements of the Legislation. He advised that as this is the first statutory self-assessment under the legislation with no prescribed model in place, the report before Members includes the huge volume of performance information which is routinely reported to Members in a number of ways, such as the quarterly performance reports as well as many other reports to Council and Cabinet concerning policies and stakeholder feedback

The Chief Executive commented that as the assessment period covers the Pandemic, it reflects the change to the Council's performance arrangements during this time and details its immediate and direct focus on services and its response and recovery whilst maintaining robust monitoring of the delivery of its priorities, which is detailed in the report. He referred to the Councils' requirements to take ownership of their improvement, to build reflection on performance and action to improve into the system. He added that this Council is well placed to meet that requirement due to its strong self-evaluation performance arrangements which have been in place since 2016.

The 2021/22 self-assessment represents the opportunity to take stock of the council's services and corporate functions and consideration of the robustness of the management and monitoring arrangements in place and provides Members with the assurance that the council is meeting its statutory requirements to reflect on performance and take action to improve where necessary.

The Chief Executive referred to the comments of the Governance & Audit Committee upon its consideration of the Council's self-assessment which sought no material changes to the assessment but did seek assurance that the Council is able to address the challenges described in the nine key themes emerging from the self-assessment and the cross-cutting partnership which is required to deliver the council's response to the themes.

In conclusion, as supported by the evidence provided, the Chief Executive advised that the Council can demonstrate that it meets the performance requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Act 2021.

Following discussion and consideration of the report, it was **RESOLVED** to:

1. Consider that the draft Self-Assessment is an accurate and robust reflection of the position of the Council and its services and meets the requirements of the [Local Government and Elections \(Wales\) Act 2021 Part 6](#);
2. Consider the observations of the Governance and Audit Committee on 7 December 2022; and
3. Approve the Annual Self-Assessment 2021/22 incorporating the Council's Corporate Performance Report, and its publication within four weeks of approval.

Following a recommendation from the Council's Voluntary Early Retirement (VER) Panel the Director of Human Resources advised that Council approval was sought for a Chief Officer severance package (as detailed in the report) in accordance with the Council's approved 2022/23 Pay Policy statement.

Following consideration of the report it was **RESOLVED** to approve a Chief Officer severance package (as detailed at Appendix 1 of the report) in accordance with the Council's approved 2022/23 Pay Policy statement.

76 Changes to Membership

The Service Director Democratic Services & Communication advised of the changes to the RCT Independent Group's representation on both the Planning & Development Committee and Overview & Scrutiny Committee for the 2022/23 Municipal Year.

Following consideration of the report it was **RESOLVED** to note that:

1. County Borough Councillor M. Powell is to be nominated in place of County Borough Councillor W. Owen on the Planning & Development Committee; and
2. County Borough Councillor W. Owen is to be nominated in place of County Borough Councillor M. Powell on the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

77 Notice of Motion

To consider the under-mentioned Notice of Motion standing in the names of County Borough Councillors R. Williams, S. Emanuel, L. Addiscott, M. D. Ashford, J. Barton, D. R. Bevan, J. Bonetto, S. Bradwick, J. Brencher, G. Caple, J. Cook, A. Crimmings, S. J. Davies, R. Davis, A. J. Dennis, V. Dunn, E. L. Dunning, J. Edwards, J. A. Elliott, L. Ellis, R. Evans, A. S. Fox, B. Harris, S. Hickman, G. Holmes, G. Hopkins, W. Hughes, G. Jones, G. O. Jones, R. R. Lewis, W. Lewis, C. Leyshon, M. Maohoub, C. Middle, A. Morgan, N. H. Morgan, S. Morgans, M. A. Norris, D. Owen-Jones, D. Parkin, S. Powderhill, C. Preedy, S. Rees, A. Roberts, J. Smith, G. Stacey, L. A. Tomkinson, W. Treeby, J. Turner, G. L. Warren, K. Webb, M. Webber, D. Williams, G. E. Williams, T. Williams, R. Yeo.

Whilst it was not obvious from an initial reading of the Chancellor's recent Autumn Statement, the UK Government has confirmed that their review of the Energy Bill Relief Scheme for businesses and non-domestic customers will not extend beyond March 2023.

As yet, the Westminster Government has not announced whether a substitute scheme will be implemented, or indeed what form of support this would provide. This is naturally problematic to many businesses and public organisations.

This cessation of energy support will mean most funding for public services will need to go straight back in to paying significant energy bill increases for leisure centres, community centres and potentially other public buildings. Here in Rhondda Cynon Taf, the Council is facing a 355% hike in energy costs. Until an announcement is made, public organisations will have no clarity and not be able to plan for future budget pressures.

The UK government has rightly committed to uprate benefits (with the notable exception of local housing allowance). But by starving communities of the funding they need to keep the lights on in vital community buildings, this is like robbing Peter to pay Paul.

We urge the UK Government to reconsider their unclear policy of public sector energy support beyond March 2023.

On top of this, the Government has announced a cut in the support available to households in fuel poverty next winter.

While the Energy Price Guarantee will continue to cap the unit cost of energy, all energy bills will increase from 1 April 2023 – at the same time as the Energy Bills Support Scheme finishes.

This Council notes:

- That the removal of the Energy Bill Relief Scheme for Councils and public sector organisations will cause significant financial hardship at a time when a number of other factors are contributing to unprecedented budget challenges.

This Council therefore resolves to:

- Ask that the Council Leader writes to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Prime Minister.
- Calls on the UK Government to provide urgent clarity on its plans to implement a scheme to offer public sector energy relief beyond March 2023.
- Calls on the Westminster Government to go further to help the millions of homes in fuel poverty throughout 2023.

At the meeting the Chair announced that in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10.4.1 the following amendment to the Notice of Motion had been received from County Borough Councillors K Morgan, D Grehan, S Evans, A Rogers, A Ellis, H Gronow, D Wood and P Evans.

The amended motion read:

Whilst it was not obvious from an initial reading of the Chancellor's recent Autumn Statement, the UK Government has confirmed that their review of the Energy Bill Relief Scheme for businesses and non-domestic customers will not extend beyond March 2023.

As yet, the Westminster Government has not announced whether a substitute scheme will be implemented, or indeed what form of support this would provide. This is naturally problematic to many businesses and public organisations.

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need to go straight back in to paying significant energy bill increases for leisure centres, community centres and potentially other public buildings. Here in Rhondda Cynon Taf, the Council is facing a 355% hike in energy costs. Until an announcement is made, public organisations will have no clarity and not be able to plan for future budget pressures.

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We urge the UK Government to reconsider their unclear policy of public sector energy support beyond March 2023.

On top of this, the Government has announced a cut in the support available to households in fuel poverty next winter.

While the Energy Price Guarantee will continue to cap the unit cost of energy, all energy bills will increase from 1 April 2023 – at the same time as the Energy Bills Support Scheme finishes.

This Council notes:

- That the removal of the Energy Bill Relief Scheme for Councils and public sector organisations will cause significant financial hardship at a time when a number of other factors are contributing to unprecedented budget challenges.

This Council therefore resolves to:

- Ask that the Council Leader writes to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Prime Minister.
- Calls on the UK Government to provide urgent clarity on its plans to implement a scheme to offer public sector energy relief beyond March 2023.
- Calls on the Westminster Government to go further to help the millions of homes in fuel poverty throughout 2023.
- **Ask that the Council Leader also writes regarding this matter to the Members of Parliament for RCT who are elected to represent us at Westminster.**

In accordance with the Council's Rules of Procedure 12.7, a vote was taken following a roll call in respect of the amendment to the Notice of Motion and it was **RESOLVED** not to adopt the amendment.

(Note: the following Councillors requested that their names be recorded as having voted in favour of the amendment:

County Borough Councillors Sera Evans, D Grehan, H Gronow, K Morgan, A

Rogers and D Wood).

Following discussion in respect of the substantive motion and in accordance with the Council Rules of Procedure 12.7, it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the substantive motion.

(Note: the following Councillors requested that their names be recorded as having voted in favour of the substantive motion:

County Borough Councillors M Maohoub, Sera Evans, D Grehan, H Gronow, K Morgan, A Rogers and D Wood).

78 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 12 and 13 of Part 4 of the Schedule 12A of the Act.

79 THE COUNCIL'S SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM STRUCTURE

The Director of Human Resources provided Members with an overview of his report which contained exempt information.

Following consideration of the report it was **RESOLVED:**

1. To note that:
 - 1.1 Cabinet approved the revised directorate structures shown at Appendices 2(i), 2(ii) and 2(iii) that will be implemented from 19th January 2023 and Appendix 3(i) from 1st September 2023. Please note that for completeness, Appendix 2 (iv) is also listed for Member's attention but that there are no changes to this existing structure.
 - 1.2 Implementation of these revised structures will provide an overall estimated reduction in annual management costs at the Senior grade levels of £78,000 (inclusive of on-costs);
 - 1.3 Emanating from the revised directorate structures outlined in 1.1.1, Cabinet authorised the amendment of the following posts:
 - i. the amendment of the post Director – Prosperity & Development (Director Level 2) to Director – Prosperity & Development (Director Level 1);
 - ii. the amendment of the post Director – Public Health, Protection & Community Services (Director Level 2) to Director – Public Health, Protection & Community Services (Director Level 1);
 - iii. the amendment of the post Director – Legal Services (Director Level 2) to Director – Legal & Democratic Services (Director Level 1);
 - iv. the creation of the post of Deputy Chief Executive & Group

Director – Finance, Digital & Frontline Services (Group Director grade);

- v. the creation of the post of Director – Social Services (Director Level 1);
- vi. the creation of the post Director – Highways, Streetcare & Transportation Services (Director Level 2);
- vii. 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).

2 Council is now being asked to formally consider the following recommendations made by the Appointments Committee at its meeting held on 10th January 2023:

2.1 Formally considers the recommendation made by the Appointments Committee on the 10th January 2023 to Council, that in accordance with the Council's change management process that Mr. Simon Gale be assigned to the post of Director – Prosperity & Development (Director Level 1) effective from 19th January 2023;

2.2 Formally considers the recommendation made by the Appointments Committee on the 10th January 2023 to Council, that in accordance with the Council's change management process that Mrs. Louise Davies be assigned to the post of Director – Public Health, Protection & Community Services (Director Level 1) effective from 19th January 2023;

2.3 Formally considers the recommendation made by the Appointments Committee on the 10th January 2023 to Council, that in accordance with the Council's change management process that Mr. Andrew Wilkins be assigned to the post of Director – Legal & Democratic Services (Director Level 1) effective from 19th January 2023;

2.4 Formally considers the recommendation made by the Appointments Committee on the 10th January 2023 to Council, that following the necessary interview process, that Mr. Barrie Davies is appointed to the post of Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director – Finance, Digital & Frontline Services (Group Director grade); effective from 19th January 2023;

2.5 To note that if the appointment at 1.2.4 is ratified by Council, that Mr. Barrie Davies will continue to undertake the statutory role of Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer), this function having previously been assigned to Mr. Davies by full Council on the 11th March 2019;

2.6 Formally considers the recommendation made by the Appointments Committee on the 10th January 2023 to Council, that following the necessary interview process, that Mr. Steve Williams is appointed to the post of Director - Highways, Streetcare & Transportation Services (Director Level 2), effective from 1st September 2023;

3 It is further recommended Council gives delegated authority to the Director of Legal Services to make the consequential changes that are

required to be made to the Council's Constitution as a result of implementation of the above initiatives.

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg / This document is also available in Welsh

This meeting closed at 7.25 pm

**Councillor G Hughes
Chair.**