



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL
CABINET**

Minutes of the Hybrid meeting of the Cabinet held on Monday, 15 May 2023 at 10.30 am.

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 A Morgan (Chair)

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

Non-Committee Members in attendance

Councillor C Lises

Officers in attendance

Mr P Mee, Chief Executive
Mr B Davies, Director of Finance & Digital Services
Mr A Wilkins, Director of Legal Services and Democratic Services
Mr D Powell, Director of Corporate Estates
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 S Gale, Director of Prosperity & Development
Mr R Waters, Director – Frontline Services
Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Mr D James, Service Director – Prosperity & Development
Mr N Elliott, Interim Director of Social Services
Ms C Jones, Head of Access & Inclusion
Ms P McCarthy, Head of Legal Property and Estates
Ms A Richards, Service Director for 21st Century Schools and Transformation

Apologies for absence

Councillor M Webber

1 Declaration of Interest

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Corporate Services declared the following personal and prejudicial interest in respect of Item 6 of the agenda - Potential to create an additional event space at Ynysangharad Park: "I am a Trustee of Ynysangharad War Memorial Park"; and

The Cabinet Member for Environment & Leisure declared the following personal

and prejudicial interest in respect of Item 6 of the agenda - Potential to create an additional event space at Ynysangharad Park: "I am a Trustee of Ynysangharad War Memorial Park".

N.B: Both Cabinet Members left the meeting whilst the item was discussed and voted upon.

2 Minutes

The Cabinet **RESOLVED**: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 27th March 2023 as an accurate record.

3 The Council's Office Accommodation Strategy Workspace Plan: Fit for the Future and Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Operating Model and Working Arrangements Policy

The Chief Executive presented the report, which sought approval from Cabinet to agree the Council's Office Accommodation Strategy, Workspace Plan: Fit for the Future, for the period 2023-2030 and the Council's Operating Model and Working Arrangements Policy.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Corporate Service was pleased to note that the Accommodation Strategy before Members was in line with carbon footprint work of the Climate Change Cabinet Sub-Committee. The Cabinet Member noted that the report recognises the importance of hybrid workings but that there was still a need for front facing staff for some services. As such, the Cabinet Member recognised the need to monitor the working arrangements and how it meets the needs of both the Council and the staff.

The Cabinet Member voiced her support of the proposals and commented that the relocation of the Council HQ would bring footfall to Pontypridd and would give staff greater opportunity to use public transport, which would support the green agenda.

The Cabinet Member for Development and Prosperity welcomed the proposals and the opportunity to explore the feasibility of releasing the site at the Pavilions, Clydach Vale for the redevelopment of the site for a new Special School. The Cabinet Member spoke of Welsh Government's policy through the Transforming Towns scheme to bring people and public services back into town centres so this would align well with Welsh Government's future plans.

The Leader took the opportunity to thank officers for the work undertaken to establish the proposals. The Leader noted that many of the offices aren't public facing and explained that although Committee meetings are held at Clydach Vale, it's current use is for Members, the Senior Leadership Team and different departments. The Leader was of the view that the move from Clydach Vale to Pontypridd town centre would be more central with better links to public transport and noted that the majority of the changes in the report would be more accessible for staff.

In terms of revenue savings, the Leader noted that it would be over £400,000 a year, which would benefit the budget going forward; and over £3M worth of capital savings. In terms of Llys Cadwyn, the Leader clarified that rental income on the model meant that there had been no cost to the Council and explained

that due to the increase in rental income, the Council were largely on course to cover the vast majority of the income figure with no detriment to the Council.

The Leader was in support of the recommendations and commented that it would be a positive for the taxpayer, staff and the environment. The Leader added that there was potential for future opportunities to enhance the existing buildings detailed within the report.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To approve the Office Accommodation Strategy (2023-2030), which includes:
 - i. Relocating the Council's headquarters into the heart of Pontypridd town centre, utilising vacant floor space at Llys Cadwyn;
 - ii. Exploring the feasibility of releasing the site at the Pavilions, Clydach Vale for the redevelopment of the site for a new Special School (n.b. Any proposal would be subject to the requirements set out in Welsh Government 's School Organisation Code (011/2018));
 - iii. Relocating services and staff currently at Ty Trevithick, Abercynon; Rhondda PSSO, Berw Road, Tonypany; Municipal Offices Pentre and Rock Grounds, Aberdare, by either disposing of or repurposing the assets to generate capital receipts, reduce operating costs or secure community/social value and support regeneration within our communities;
 - iv. Relocating services and staff currently located at Ty Sardis, Pontypridd (excluding the Housing Solutions Services); and
 - v. Retaining Ty Sardis as the Council's Housing Advice and Support Centre and facilitating the co-location of other specialist support and transitional housing accommodation provision currently in Pontypridd at a single, improved location.
2. To authorise the Chief Executive to assign suitable and sufficient office accommodation to services and staff to meet service requirements and support the needs of staff.
3. To authorise the Head of Democratic Services to assign suitable and sufficient office accommodation and services to meet the resource and facility requirements of Elected Members.
4. To approve the Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Operating Model and Working Arrangements Policy as detailed at Appendix II of the report.
5. To note the overall revenue savings of £0.435M generated as a result of this proposal plus the removal of a backlog maintenance liability of £2.9M.

4 Cabinet Work Programme

The Service Director of Democratic Services and Communication presented, for

Cabinet Members' comment and approval, an update on the Cabinet Work Programme on the proposed list of matters requiring consideration by Cabinet over the 2023-2024 Municipal Year.

The Service Director emphasised the document before Members was a live document, which would be subject to change, dependent on business needs.

The Service Director advised the Cabinet that the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee would consider the Cabinet Work Programme at its next meeting, to inform the wider Scrutiny Committee work programmes.

The Cabinet Member for Environment & Leisure thanked the Service Director for the update and acknowledged that the content of the work programme would be flexible dependent on Council business and operational requirements. The Cabinet Member emphasised the importance of the engagement which takes place between Cabinet Members and Scrutiny Chairs, which had positively developed through the years to allow for better opportunity for scrutiny.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To approve the Work Programme for the 2023-2024 Municipal Year (with appropriate amendment where necessary) and receive a further update on a 3 monthly basis.

5 Pre Scrutiny: Learning Disability Day Services Offer

The Service Director of Democratic Services and Communication introduced the report and provided Cabinet with the feedback and comments of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee following its pre scrutiny of the Learning Disability Day Services Offer at its meeting on the [24th April 2023](#). The Service Director drew Members' attention to Section 5 of the covering report, which highlighted several key observations of the Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

The Interim Director of Social Services then provided the Cabinet with an update on the engagement activity undertaken in the development of a new co-produced draft Day Services Strategy and operating model proposal for people with a learning disability and seeks approval to undertake targeted consultation on the proposals to enable the Cabinet to make informed decisions on the future of the Council's Day Services in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

The Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care spoke positive of the proposals to reform and transform the Council's Day Services offer for individuals with learning disabilities, in line with the Council's wider transformation agenda. The Cabinet Member commented that the offer would be transformed from a predominantly building based traditional day centre model, to a more innovative service, which would provide opportunity for individuals to improve independence, build relationships and avoid social isolation. The Cabinet Member took the opportunity to extend his gratitude to the Community Services Scrutiny Committee Members for their comments and observations.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the comments and observations of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee as advised within section 5 of the report; and
2. To endorse the recommendations outlined within the Learning Disability Day Services Offer as attached to the report as Appendix A, and for ease of

reference listed below:

- Considers the information provided in the report and, in particular, the feedback from the engagement activity undertaken in the development of a new co-produced Day Services Strategy and operating model proposal for people with a learning disability;
- Approves to undertake targeted consultation on a new co-produced draft learning disability Day Services Strategy and operating model proposal, as set out in Section 5 of the report, with people who use day services, their families and carers, staff and other associated stakeholders;
- Approves to undertake targeted consultation with service users, their families and carers, staff and other associated stakeholders on a proposal to permanently decommission Treforest Day Centre with the continuation of the existing current provision received by people who previously accessed the Centre prior to its temporary closure in February 2020, as set out in paragraph 5.7 of the report; and
- Agrees to receive a further report detailing the outcome of the proposed targeted consultation, including an updated full Equality Impact Assessment prior to any final decision being made in relation to the future of day services for people with a learning disability in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

6 Potential to create an additional event space at Ynysangharad Park

The Director of Prosperity and Development presented the report, which sought approval from the Cabinet on progressing the potential redevelopment opportunity for an event space within Ynysangharad War Memorial Park, which would support the delivery of major events; and to submit a formal application for funding to the Visit Wales Brilliant Basics Programme.

The Director drew Members attention to Section 5 of the report, where details of the proposal were outlined.

The Director advised Cabinet that the report had been considered by the Ynysangharad War Memorial Park Cabinet Sub-Committee at its meeting on 11th May 2023, whereby Trustees had supported the proposal.

The Cabinet Member for Development and Prosperity voiced his support in relation to the proposal and commented that it would add to the tourism offer in both the park and the town centre of Pontypridd, making it an even more vibrant place to visit. The Cabinet Member referred to the comments of the Trustees and reiterated that, if approved, the development area would be a grass public realm used for leisure and events only and not for vehicle parking or turning.

The Leader spoke of the fantastic event, Parti Ponty, which was held at the park over the weekend and reaffirmed the position that the proposal before Members was for soft landscaping.

The Cabinet RESOLVED:

1. To consider the concept design proposal presented in the report and to authorise officers to proceed with its further development and submit a formal application for funding to

the Visit Wales Brilliant Basics Programme.

N.B: The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Corporate Services and the Cabinet Member for Environment & Leisure left before this item was discussed and voted upon, having previously declared an interest (Minute No. 1). Following this item, both Cabinet Members returned to the meeting.

7 Pontypridd Placemaking Plan - Southern Gateway Project Progress Update

The Director of Prosperity and Development provided the Cabinet with an update on the development of projects within the Southern Gateway area of the Pontypridd Placemaking Plan; outlined the proposed next steps and sought Cabinet approval to move to the next development stages on the projects within the Southern Gateway area and to carry out publicity with the community and key stakeholders on the agreed next steps.

The Director outlined the proposals to put forward provide a high quality entrance to the town, enhancing the setting within the Conservation Area, and a clear and legible route from the top of the town, Sardis car park and train station through to the town centre itself. The proposals would also open up the town to the green, riverside area and provide a much more inviting access into Ynysangharad Park and the National Lido.

The Cabinet Member for Development and Prosperity commented that whilst he would have liked to have seen a large hotel as part of the rejuvenation of the town centre, it was clear from the private market responses received, that it would not be a viable venture at this time. The Cabinet Member was pleased with the revised proposals, commenting that it would open up the bottom end of the town centre, bring in light, integrate seating areas, open spaces and planting and make better pedestrian, disabled and transport access. In respect of the proposal to open the Marks & Spencer side of the town, the Cabinet Member commented that it would create an airy, modern square, whilst making it more resilient to flooding. The Cabinet Member concluded and stated that both ends of the town would have multiple retail and tourism offerings going forward.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Corporate Services spoke positive of the report and reiterated the comments about the proposals improving access to the town, park and National Lido.

In terms of the funding package, the Leader was confident that between the funding already secured and ongoing conversations with Welsh Government, there would no issues securing the further package.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the progress made on project development and delivery at the former M&S and Dorothy Perkins/Burtons buildings, the former Bingo Hall site;
2. To endorse the design and redevelopment options for the Southern Gateway area, including the Bingo Hall Site and M&S and Dorothy Perkins/Burtons buildings; and

3. To authorise Officers to progress implementation of the development options set out in this report, including the proposal to carry out publicity with the community and key stakeholders on the agreed next steps.

8 Progress of the Authority's Review of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and Action Plan

The Service Director for Transportation, Enforcement and Strategic Investment provided the Cabinet with an update on progress of the Authority's review of the revised Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) 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. The Service Director further advised Members of the revised programme of work required to deliver the review of the current LFRMS and Action Plan, in accordance with the updated statutory timeframe stipulated by Welsh Government.

The Leader took the opportunity to thank officers for their review of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy. The Leader advised that a Member had questioned what support is available for businesses within the Pontypridd area in terms of flood risk and the potential for some businesses being unable to obtain insurance for their properties. The Leader advised that the Local Authority had provided grants to businesses in Pontypridd for flood measures; and that a post had been established to raise flood resilience and to engage with the community and businesses on how they can be more robust and where possible, to work with them to secure external funding. The Leader emphasised that it was vital to manage flood risk and to ensure the public recognise the flood risk authorities. The Leader advised that a future report would be presented to cabinet in respect of the progress of the flood recommendations, following Storm Dennis and reiterated that the risk of severe flooding had not gone away.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Corporate Services recognised the amount of work undertaken to review the Strategy and Action Plan, particularly in terms of climate change. The Cabinet Member reiterated that the circumstances would never be eliminated but that the risk could be minimised.

The Cabinet RESOLVED:

1. To note the results and review of the initial public engagement exercise on the revised LFRMS and Action Plan, which was presented to the Climate Change, Frontline Services & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee on 22nd March 2023 as per the programme of work which was agreed by Cabinet on 29th November 2022; and
2. To note the revised indicative timescales, actions and reports being brought to Cabinet and Scrutiny in Appendix 1 of the report.

9 21st Century Schools Programme: Naming of the New Schools

The Service Director for 21St Century Schools and Transformation provided the Cabinet with an opportunity to consider the recommendations made by the temporary governing bodies in relation to the names for the new schools being created as a part of the greater Pontypridd school organisation proposals.

The Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language took the opportunity to thank officers for undertaking the non-statutory consultation and working with governing bodies, teachers, pupils and wider communities associated with the new school developments. The Cabinet Member noted that the recommended school names had been developed with the views and opinions of the pupils at the heart of each school

With the agreement of the Leader, County Borough Councillor C. Lises spoke on this item.

In response to the Non-Committee Member's comments, the Leader advised that officers would make note of the suggestions in terms of ensuring any future consultations are expanded to encourage more engagement but noted that there was a reasonable amount of engagement made. In terms of comments made around distinguishing whether adults or children made the comments, the Leader felt that the general figure showed that all views are recorded in the same way, regardless of who you are in the community.

The Leader informed the Cabinet that he had received an email from a Local Member who wished to support the new names for both the 3-16 school in Cilfynydd and the new Welsh Medium School in Rhydyfelin, as most of the teachers and pupils were in favour.

The Service Director of Democratic Services and Communication informed Cabinet that due to the previous deferment of this report at the February Cabinet Committee meeting, and the urgencies that had been created in terms of progressing these matters before the conclusion of the academic year in July, the approval of the Presiding Officer had been sought to exempt the item from call-in.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To agree to the name put forward by the temporary governing body of the new 3-16 School in Hawthorn, which is due to open in September 2024 – the name put forward is Ysgol Afon Wen;
2. To agree to the name put forward by the temporary governing body of the new 3-16 School in Pontypridd, which is due to open in September 2024 – the name put forward is Ysgol Bro Taf; and
3. To agree to the name put forward by the temporary governing body of the new Welsh Medium Primary School in Rhydyfelin, which is due to open in September 2024 – the name put forward is Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Awel Taf.

10 Consultation on the Proposals to realign Additional Learning Needs Mainstream Learning Support Class Provision within Rhondda Cynon Taf

The Head of Inclusion Services provided Cabinet Members with an opportunity to consider proposals for the realignment of mainstream Learning Support Class (LSC) provision within Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT).

The Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language was in support of the recommendations contained within the report. The Cabinet Member noted that the proposals would continue the Council's work to adhere to the Welsh Government's legislation around the ALNET Act and would support the Council's ambitious WESP. The Cabinet Member emphasised the

importance of acting in best interest of learners, including minimising any disruption caused by a change of setting, ensuring pupils have best facilities and opportunities are afforded to learn and develop through both the mediums of English and Welsh.

The Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care echoed earlier comments and applauded the work of the Council in reviewing ALN provision and enhancing more effective main stream inclusion through reorganising learning support classes, in order to meet the needs of the communities and its availability through the medium of Welsh.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To consider the information contained within the report;
2. To consider the proposals for the realignment of Additional Learning Needs (ALN) mainstream LSC provision within the context of the School Organisation Code (2018), the 21st Century School Modernisation Programme and the Additional Learning Needs and Educational Tribunal (ALNET) Act (Wales) 2018.
3. To consider formal approval to commence consultation on the following proposals:
 - To relocate the Observation and Assessment LSC at Penrhiwceiber Primary School to Abercynon Community Primary School taking effect from April 2024.
 - To transfer the LSC for pupils in Years 3-6 with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) at Abercynon Community Primary School to create a through provision in the Primary Phase at Perthcelyn Primary School taking effect from April 2024.
 - To establish one Early Years Assessment and Intervention LSC for pupils under statutory school age with significant presenting needs at Abercynon Primary School. The proposal will take effect from April 2024.
 - To establish two Welsh medium primary phase LSCs at the new Welsh medium primary school in Rhydyfelin for pupils with significant ALN. The proposal will take effect from September 2024.
 - To establish one LSC for pupils in Years 7-11 with ASD at the new 3-16 school on the Hawthorn Primary/High School site taking effect from September 2024.
4. To receive a further report in 2023/24 (academic year) on proposals to establish three Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) LSCs provisions for pupils in Years 7-11, utilising funding already set aside following the suspension of a previous statutory consultation which was started prior to the pandemic. The earliest the provisions will be operational will be September 2024.

The Director of Human Resources updated the Cabinet on the progress taken on the implementation of the Real Living Wage and sought approval to apply to become a Real Living Wage accredited employer.

The Leader thanked the Director for the report and explained that the Local Authority had been, in effect, a living wage employer for a number of years and before Welsh Government had asked Local Authorities. In terms of the accreditation, the Leader was pleased that the Local Authority were in a position to formally apply and spoke of the commitment to work with external contractors and partners to apply.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the content of the report;
2. To provide approval to proceed with an application for the Council to become a Real Living Wage accredited employer.

12 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 14 and 18 of Part 4 of the Schedule 12A of the Act".

13 Update in relation to the Children Looked After: Residential Care Strategy 2022-2027

The Interim Director of Social Services provided the Cabinet with information about Children's Service's plans to reduce the number of children placed in 'Operating without Registration (OWR) settings' as part of the Children Looked After: Residential Care Transformation Strategy 2022-2027.

Following consideration of the exempt report, the Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To consider the information contained within the report;
2. To acknowledge the current action being taken to reduce the number of young people in OWR settings and the financial and legal implications associated with this area of the Children: Services Residential Care Transformation Strategy that was approved by Cabinet on 28th February 2023; and
3. To receive future update reports on progress in delivering the Children Looked After Residential Care Transformation Strategy and the number of children/young people in OWR settings until such time as there are none.

This meeting closed at 11.44 am

**Councillor A Morgan
Chair.**