

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Education and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee held at the County Borough Council Offices, The Pavilions, Cambrian Park, Clydach Vale on Wednesday, 3rd December, 2014 at 5.30 p.m.

Present:

County Borough Councillor (Mrs.)C.Leyshon – in the Chair

County Borough Councillors:

L.M.Adams	R.Lewis
(Mrs.)J.Bunnage	B.Morgan
(Mrs.)A.Calvert	G.Smith
P.Jarman	B.Stephens
(Mrs.)S.Jones	L.Walker

Members making the Call in:

County Borough Councillors

1st Call-in:

L.M.Adams (also a Member of the Committee)
(Mrs.)S.Jones (also a Member of the Committee)
P.Baccara

2nd Call-in:

E.Webster
I.Pearce
L.Langford

Co-opted Members:

Mr.M.Cleverly – Representing NASUWT and Teachers Panel
Mr.J.Fish – Voting Elected Parent/Governor Representative
Mr.J.Horton – Voting Elected Parent/Governor Representative
Mrs.S.Jones – Voting Elected Parent/Governor Representative

Officers:

Mr.C.Lee – Group Director, Corporate & Frontline Services
Mr.P.J.Lucas – Director, Legal & Democratic Services
Mr.C.Bradshaw – Director, Education & Lifelong Learning
Mr.C.Hanagan – Service Director, Cabinet Office & Public Relations
Mr.R.Waters – Service Director, Highways & Streetcare Services
Ms.K.May – Democratic Services Manager

Cabinet Members:

County Borough Councillors

A.Morgan – Leader of the Council
(Mrs.)E.Hanagan – Cabinet Member for Education & Lifelong Learning

County Borough Councillors in Attendance:

(Mrs.)A.Davies
Mr.M.J.Powell
(Mrs.)M.Webber – Cabinet Member for Council Business & Corporate Affairs

41 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors A.L.Davies MBE, S.Evans-Fear, M.Griffiths, G.Thomas and Mr.C.Jones (GMB).

42 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting pertaining to the agenda.

43 PROCEDURE

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services explained the process and purpose of a Call-In and indicated that this meeting would be slightly different in that two separate call-ins had been received in respect of the same decision that was made by Cabinet at its meeting held on the 20th November, 2014 in respect of “Improving Primary Education Provision in Wattstown”. He indicated that the six Members who had instigated the two call-ins were in attendance and as Councillors L.M.Adams and (Mrs.)S.Jones were Members of the Committee they would be able to vote. The Co-opted members present at the meeting could take part in the proceedings but only the co-opted members representing Parent Governors had voting rights.

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services reported that before commencing the debate it was important to agree the procedure to be adopted and he drew Members attention to paragraphs 2.7 and 2.8 of his report and in view of the second Call-in that had been received following the publication and circulation of the agenda on Monday of this week (1st December), he respectfully suggested that those Members who had

submitted the first call-in form be asked to provide their comments; following which, those Members who had signed the second form, which had been circulated and published on the 2nd December, be asked to make their statements. He further suggested that one signatory from each call-in be given five minutes to make a final address to the Committee. Whilst the two call-ins would be merged together they would be separately voted upon, later on in the meeting i.e. whether or not to refer the decision back for further consideration by the Cabinet for the reasons set out either or both of the call-in forms. Members were further advised that if both of the proposals to refer the matter back to Cabinet were unsuccessful, then the Cabinet decision would take effect from the date of this meeting i.e. 3rd December, 2014.

Members were advised of the information before them, namely:

- Appendix A – Copy of report presented to Cabinet on the 20th November, 2014.
- Appendix B – The decision notice of Cabinet
- Appendix C – Extract from the Council's Constitution of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules re: Call-In.
- Appendix D – Copy of prescribed Call-in (first) form duly completed by three Members
- Copy of prescribed Call-in (second) form duly completed by three Members.

RESOLVED – to adopt the procedure as set out in paragraphs 2.7 and 2.8 and as suggested at the meeting by the Director of Legal and Democratic Services.

44 CALL-IN – IMPROVING PRIMARY EDUCATION PROVISION IN WATTSTOWN

The three Members who had made the first call-in of the Cabinet decision, namely County Borough Councillors L.M.Adams, (Mrs.)S.Jones and P.Baccara were afforded the opportunity to address the Committee and the proceeded to elaborate on the following reasons as indicated in the call-in form:

- The Equality Impact Assessment and other information considered by Cabinet does not fully address issues raised in the consultation such as the impact of employment for parents (and in particular mothers) who might be unable to work due to the extra school distance needed to be travelled;
- The fact it is a deprived area;
- There does not appear to be any assessment of the impact on looked after children.

Following the comments made by the three Members of the first call-in, the Chair called upon County Borough Councillors L.Langford, I.Pearce and E.Webster the signatories to the second call-in form, to address the Committee, in respect of the following reasons as stated on their form:

- Breach of due process. The proposed Highways Improvements have commenced despite the fact that the Cabinet's decision cannot be implemented until the 3rd December, 2014 to allow for Call-in.
- The decision is premature in advance of a follow up Estyn inspection of the school within three months from 10th November, 2014.
- Concerns on highway safety regarding children's safety.

Following the comments made by the six Members, the Chair invited the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning and the Service Director for Highways and Streetcare to respond to the issues raised, following which the Leader and the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning also addressed the Committee,

Having heard the arguments from those Members who had made the Call-ins and the responses from the Officers concerned, the Chair invited the Committee and the Co-opted Members to ask questions of the Officers, the Leader and the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning.

The Chair then invited County Borough Councillors L.M.Adams (first call-in) and L.Langford (second call-in) respectively to sum up the arguments in favour of referring the Cabinet decision in relation to the proposed closure of Aberllechau Primary School on the 31st December, 2014 and transferring the pupils and the Learning Support Class to Pontygwaith Primary School back to the Cabinet for reconsideration.

Following separate votes being taken in respect of each of the Call-ins, it was **RESOLVED –**

1. Call-in 1 – to refer the matter back to the Cabinet for reconsideration.
2. Call-in 2 – to refer the matter back to the Cabinet for reconsideration.
3. That in view of the fact that both call-ins had been successfully referred back to the Cabinet for reconsideration, the decision remains not implemented.

Note: County Borough Councillors L.M.Adams and P.Jarman wished to have their recorded that they voted in favour of both call-ins being referred back to the Cabinet for reconsideration.

**(Mrs.)C.Leyshon
Chair**

The meeting closed at 6.49 p.m.