

## **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CABINET COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> February, 2017 at 10:30am at the Council Headquarters, Clydach Vale.

### **County Borough Councillors – Cabinet Members in attendance:-**

A.Morgan (Chair), M Norris

R Bevan M Forey A Crimmings G Hopkins

J Rosser M Webber E Hanagan

### **Other County Borough Councillors in attendance**

P Jarman C Davies B Morgan I Pearce

E Webster J Bonetto S Bradwick

### **Officers in attendance**

Mr C Bradshaw – Chief Executive

Mr C Jones – Director, Legal & Democratic Services

Mr C Hanagan – Director, Cabinet & Public Relations (Secretary to the Cabinet)

Mr C Lee – Group Director, Corporate & Frontline Services

Mr G Isingrini – Group Director, Community & Children Services

Ms E Thomas – Temporary Director, Education & Lifelong Learning

Mr N Wheeler – Director, Highways & Streetcare Services

Mr B Davies – Director, Financial Services

Mr P Mee – Service Director, Public Health & Protection

Mr T Wilkins – Director, Human Resources

Tim Jones – Head of ICT

Ms S Nowell – Head of Transformation

Ms W Edwards – Head of Community Learning

Mr M Hughes – Head of Finance

Ms N Kingham – Business Manager, Cwm Taf Safeguarding Boards

Ms D Humphries – Childcare Officer

## 121 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, County Borough Councillors, A Morgan, R Bevan and P Jarman declared a personal interest in item 6 – Welsh Government 30 Hour Education/Childcare offer for 3 and 4 year olds, due to their wards being identified as pilot areas.

## 122 MINUTES

The Cabinet **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2017 as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

## 123 THE COUNCIL'S CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2017/18 – 2019/20

The Group Director, Corporate & Frontline Services provided the Cabinet with a report outlining the Council's three year Capital Programme for 2017/18 – 2019/20 which if agreed, would be presented to Council on 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2017.

The Cabinet Members were referred to Appendix A of the report, where the draft three year Capital Programme was outlined.

The Cabinet Members were reminded that each year the Council is allocated a sum of unhypothecated "Supported" borrowing and General Capital Grant from the Welsh Government and that although the funding for 2017/18 has increased by £0.068M since 2016/17, the level of funding has decreased by over £6m since 2010/11.

The officer explained that the core programme had been maintained at £15.934M per year and that the three year capital programme presented was fully funded. A risk remained that the projected capital receipts would be less than anticipated but it was assured that capital receipts projections would continue to be closely monitored.

The Cabinet Members were referred to section 5 of the report, where the additional investment and earmarked reserves were outlined. Section 5.3 highlighted the results of a detailed risk assessment of earmarked reserves and provided a view on the extent to which any amounts could be released:

- a) Prior Year Commitments (£13.604M as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016)
- b) Financial Management and Human Resources Risk Management (£21.592M as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016)
- c) Other Specific Reserves (£2.387M as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016)
- d) Insurance Reserve

Section 5.7 of the report detailed Cabinet's proposal to Council to further invest in infrastructure, in order to support the aspirations and priorities of the Corporate Plan. These included:

- Highways Infrastructure
- Structures
- Outdoor Leisure Facilities
- Play Areas
- Schools
- Transport Infrastructure
- Parks & Green Spaces

The Deputy Leader spoke of previous engagement held, commenting that the local people were pleased with the investment in leisure centres and infrastructure across RCT.

The Cabinet Member for Education & Lifelong Learning referenced section 6 of the report, stating that it was pleasing to see the Council continuing to deliver its commitment to improving school standards. The Leader added that the proposals would have a substantial impact on schools; ensuring young people have the best learning provision and environments.

The Cabinet Member for Health & Adult Social Services spoke positively on the contents contained within the report, commenting that it was incredible to see such investment in infrastructure despite times of austerity.

The Leader took the opportunity to thank the officers who have continued to provide commitment to supporting the Council's Corporate Plan priority of 'Economy – Building a strong economy.'

Following further discussions, it was **RESOLVED:**

- a) To propose the three year capital programme to Council in March which includes:
  - A review and proposed release of earmarked reserve balances as detailed in paragraph 5.3 of the attached report;
  - Proposed investment priorities as detailed in paragraph 5.7 of the attached report;
  - The Council's core capital programme;
  - The Council's total capital programme including additional non core funding.

## **124 PRE-SCRUTINY: DIGITAL WORKPLACE – AGILE WORKING**

The Group Director, Corporate & Frontline Services provided the Cabinet with feedback from the meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> December, 2016 in respect of the ambitious and major programme to digitally transform the Council's Services.

Members were reminded that digitalisation and the development of agile working opportunities were key corporate priorities, in line with the vision set

out in the Welsh Government's Digital First Strategy to deliver responsive and consistent public digital services.

The officer advised that at their meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> December, 2016, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee Members challenge the current and planned developments and form a view on the adequacy and appropriateness of them.

Members were referred to the minutes of the meeting at Appendix 2 of the report for their information.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services expressed his thanks to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for undertaking the complex review. The Member commented that the digital workplace – agile working programme would bring huge benefits to the Council, allowing the services to improve and develop with time.

It was **RESOLVED**:

- a) To consider the following feedback from the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 13<sup>th</sup> December, 2016 together with the additional comments made at that meeting as outlined in the minutes attached at Appendix 2 of the report:-
- That the vision for transforming the way the Council works through Agile Working is clear going forward;
  - That the 'key building blocks' and 'design principles' are appropriate;
  - That the Council's Pilot Agile Working Policy Scheme is considered adequate subject to the following points:-
    - (i) That all employee contracts adequately reflect Section 14 (i) of the Policy Compliance & Review and;
    - (ii) That lessons from the Agile Working Policy Pilot scheme are captured and reviewed;
  - That a monthly review is undertaken in respect of the specific pathfinder projects between January 2017 and March 2017 thereon a quarterly review is adopted;
  - That the approach taken around Document Management is appropriate.

## **125 WELSH LANGUAGE PROMOTION STRATEGY**

The Secretary to the Cabinet provided Members with the outcome of the recent meeting of the Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group, in respect of the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy and Action Plan.

The officer reminded Members that the proposed Strategy and Action Plan had been developed over the course of the year in collaboration with Elected

Members, Council Services, Sbectrwm, Menter Iaith and Fforwm Iaith. It was explained that a consultation took place between April and July 2016, where residents had the opportunity to provide feedback on their priorities for Welsh Language services.

It was advised that Standard 145 of the Compliance notice issued by the Welsh Language Commissioner stated that the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy must include:

- A target (in terms of the percentage of speakers in the county) for increasing or maintaining the number of Welsh speakers in the county by the end of the 5 year period;
- Statement setting out how the Council intends to reach that target
- The strategy must be reviewed and a revised version placed on the Council's website within 5 years of its publication.

Members were advised that on the 25<sup>th</sup> January, 2017, the Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group met to consider amendments to the Strategy and Action Plan and recommended it to Cabinet for final approval.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Equalities & the Welsh Language took the opportunity to thank officers for their commitment in ensuring that the Local Authority complies with the amended Compliance Notice issued by the Welsh Language Commissioner in September, 2016. The Member commented that balancing ambition with the demographics of society was a difficult task and one which would remain a challenge for years to come, but that the plan was clear in its aims to provide the best possible way to do this.

The Cabinet Member for Education & Lifelong Learning added that the Council remained committed to promoting the use of the Welsh Language across the County Borough and that it remained a fundamental priority within education.

With the agreement of the Chairman, County Borough Councillor C Davies spoke on this item, expressing the need for the authority to plan ahead for new growth in new areas.

Following further discussions, it was **RESOLVED:**

- a) To consider the objectives contained within the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy and Action Plan.
- b) To approve the document submitted by the Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group.

## **126 WELSH GOVERNMENT PILOT OF 30 HOUR EDUCATION/CHILDCARE OFFER FOR 3 AND 4 YEAR OLDS**

The Temporary Director, Education & Lifelong Learning provided Members with information on the Welsh Government offer of 30 hours free education/childcare for eligible 3 and 4 year olds.

It was explained that Welsh Government has committed to provide 30 hours a week of free early education and childcare for working parents of 3 and 4 year olds, for 48 weeks of the year. To support Welsh Government in implementing this offer, all local authorities were invited to submit an Expression of Interest and the Minister announced that Rhondda Cynon Taf had been chosen as one of the early implementers for the offer. It was explained that RCT officers were working closely with Welsh Government to work through the different aspects of the offer, such as:

- Identifying eligible families
- Identifying each families' needs and hours of provision required - and how this can be accommodated
- How payments will be made to childcare providers
- How children with additional learning needs can be supported to access the offer
- How to increase childcare provision capacity in areas where it is needed (particularly Welsh medium)
- How the childcare element will link into the Foundation Phase nursery education that schools and REP's offer

Members were referred to section 5 of the report where the progress to date, within RCT was outlined. The Officer advised that after discussions, the Ferndale, Mountain Ash, Bryncelynnog and the Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun clusters had been chosen, for reasons outlined in Appendix 2 of the report.

The officer advised that a further briefing paper would be distributed to Cabinet in April 2017 to update on the progress of the pilot.

Cabinet Members recognised that childcare was one of the biggest challenges facing working families and that there was a need to enhance this to reduce poverty in the local area.

The Cabinet Member for Prosperity, Wellbeing and Communities spoke positively on the report, commenting that it would encourage work and reduce pressures on income. The Member noted that the pilot would need to be thoroughly monitored as no area was the same.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Equalities and the Welsh Language was pleased that RCT had been chosen for the pilot. The Cabinet

Member referred to Section 4.2 of the report, stating that it was pleasing to see the rationale behind the pilot areas outlined.

The Leader of the Council explained that the offer was an opportunity not to be missed and would be the most generous in the UK if it was to be fully implemented in the future. The Leader stated that there was currently a lot of unanswered questions but assured that the progress would be closely monitored, with details publicised in the future for residents to determine whether they would be eligible for the scheme. It was added that a Welsh Medium school was included in the offer, which could only be beneficial to the Council's Welsh Language Promotion Strategy and Action Plan.

With the agreement of the Chairman, County Borough Councillor P Jarman spoke on this item, reiterating that there were still many unanswered questions surrounding the pilot but that the proposals would be welcomed.

It was **RESOLVED**:

- a) To note the contents of the report.
- b) That the pilot areas are acceptable.

## **127 WELSH GOVERNMENT'S VIBRANT & VIABLE PLACES REGENERATION FRAMEWORK: PROPOSALS FOR POTENTIAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES**

The Director, Regeneration & Planning provided Cabinet Members with details of project proposals for potential funding opportunities for the Pontypridd settlement area, seeking approval for the submission of proposals to Welsh Government should further funds become available.

The officer explained that Welsh Government had advised that there was likely to be a transitional year between the current VVP Programme which would end in March 2017 and a new Programme which was likely to commence in April 2018. Although transitional funding arrangements are unknown at this stage, Welsh Government advised that it is likely that funding will be available during 2017/18 and local authorities will be required to submit bids for consideration.

Members were referred to section 4 of the report, where the regeneration programme benefits and schemes were outlined.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Tourism & Planning commented that the VVP framework was highly supportive of Welsh Government's tackling poverty agenda and that it was clear to see the economic growth benefited from it in past years such as the 500k for the Taff Vale site and 198k for Townscape Enhancement Programme.

It was **RESOLVED**:

- a) To approve and submit proposals for potential further funding opportunities to Welsh Government should further funds become available.
- b) To authorise the Director of Regeneration and Planning to make revisions to the proposals provided it does not fundamentally alter their composition or impact, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Tourism and Planning.

**128 SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING ACT: IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMME, WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT: IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMME. UNDERSTANDING OUR COMMUNITIES: THE POPULATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND THE WELLBEING ASSESSMENT**

The Head of Transformation provided an update from the Cwm Taf multi agency work stream who were tasked with producing the Population Needs Assessment required under part 2 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act and the Well-being Assessment required under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

The officer explained that although the specific statutory consultation and approval requirements for each assessment were different, a combined approach had been taken to manage the project, meaning consistent presenting to the various organisations and committees.

Cabinet Members were advised that the assessments would be presented to Council at the meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2017 for final approval and it was noted that the Cwm Taf PSB had approved the Wellbeing Assessment at their meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2017 and that the document presented before Members had not been updated yet to reflect the amendments made.

Cabinet Members were referred to section 4 of the report where the background of the Population Needs Assessment and the Wellbeing Assessment was outlined.

The Leader advised the Members of the work of the PSB, commenting that the partners were changing the way they work with people in the communities to improve wellbeing. The Leader advised that the draft wellbeing assessment was considered at the last meeting of the PSB and that there would be some amendments made prior to it being presented to Council on the 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2017.

The Cabinet Member for Health & Adult Social Services recognised the hard work which had been put into the assessments before Members and took the



opportunity to express his gratitude to officers for laying foundations for future generations. The Member added that it was pleasing to see that extensive consultation had taken place, which included feedback from OPAG.

The Cabinet Member for Prosperity, Wellbeing & Communities was pleased to see that the assessments included quantitative and qualitative information.

Following further discussions, it was **RESOLVED:**

- a) To note the progress made;
- b) To note the current stage of engagement and consultation as part of the various governance and approval processes;
- c) To consider the draft Assessments and Briefing documents and provide any comments to inform the final versions;
- d) To note the Well-being Assessment will be approved by the Cwm Taf Public Services Board on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2017;
- e) To note the Population Needs Assessment will need to be approved by RCT Full Council on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2017; Merthyr Tydfil Full Council on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2017 and Cwm Taf University Health Board on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2017, with any other reasonable adjustments being approved by the Cwm Taf Social Services and Well-being Partnership Board on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2017.

## **129 CWM TAF MASH (MULTI AGENCY SAFEGUARDING HUB) ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16**

The Group Director, Community & Children's Services provided the Cabinet with the Cwm Taf MASH Annual Report 2015/16.

It was explained that Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs had become increasingly prevalent across England and represent a partnership response aimed at ensuring the protection of adults and children at risk. The Cwm Taf MASH was set up in 2015 to ensure more efficient and effective safeguarding service is provided to the communities of Cwm Taf.

The officer referred the Cabinet Members to Appendix 1 where the annual report outlined the positive difference made to multi-agency safeguarding and positive outcomes for children and adults at risk.

The officer assured the Cabinet Members that improvement priorities had been set out for year two, to ensure the excellent work continues. These included further consideration to improvements linked to prevention and early intervention, response times; and the reduction of repeat referrals.

The Cabinet Member for Health & Adult Social Services commented that the Cwm Taf MASH was an innovative approach, resulting in huge success stories. The Member added that the core function of sharing information between agencies was vital in facilitating early intervention.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Equalities & the Welsh Language praised the report, commenting that it promotes the welfare of vulnerable people within the communities of Cwm Taf.

The Leader of the Council was pleased with the performance of the Cwm Taf MASH in its first year of operation, commenting that it was a positive step in the right direction. The Leader commented that although the developments were undeniably successful, it was important to be clear that it is not a safety net and unfortunately, things could slip through in the future.

The Leader added that this report would be presented to a future meeting of the Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee for further comment.

Following further discussions, it was **RESOLVED:**

- a) To note the content of the Cwm Taf MASH Annual Report 2015/16.
- b) To consider the recommendations/priorities identified for 2016/17 and onwards.
- c) That the Cwm Taf Annual Report be presented to the Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee for consideration

### **130 DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL FOSTERING FRAMEWORK**

The Group Director, Community & Children's Services updated the Cabinet Members on the work that was being undertaken to develop a National Fostering Framework across Wales.

The officer explained that for a number of years there had been growing concern about the overall effectiveness and sustainability of fostering services in Wales. A proposal was prepared and presented to Welsh Government by ADSS Cymru, WLGA, AFA Cymru and the Fostering Network which outlined the potential contribution that could be made by developing a National Framework for the delivery of Fostering Service. This resulted in the Minister for Health and Social Services endorsing the proposal and provided funding for Phase 1 in 2015-16 and for Phase 2 in 2016-17.

The Cabinet Members were referred to Appendix 1 of the report where the outcomes of the 2015-16 work programme was outlined. The officer explained that this included engagement and consultation results conducted by all the key stakeholders represented.

The officer explained that the feedback provided demonstrated a multitude of opinions about what the National Fostering Framework should consist of, including:

- Increased co-ordination;
- More sector led improvements;

- A means of measuring, monitoring and improving performance and resource management;
- Greater accountability;
- Improvements by economies of scale where appropriate.

The Cabinet Members were referred to section 5 of the report where the implications for the Local Authority were outlined, in terms of comparative expenditure between the cost and number of local authority placements and those in the independent sector.

The officer referred Members to section 7.3 of the report where the work programme aims for 2016-17 were outlined. It was explained that as this was an entirely new initiative, there was a lack of clarity but all involvement was active.

The Leader thanked the officer for his report and commented that it would be beneficial for it to be presented at a future meeting of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee for further comment.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Equalities & the Welsh Language agreed that the area would warrant further scrutiny from Members. The Member added that it was an opportunity for lessons to be learned from the operational concerns of the National Adoption Framework.

It was **RESOLVED:**

- a) To note the content of the report
- b) That the Development of a National Fostering Framework be presented to the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee for consideration

### **131 HACKNEY CARRIAGE (TAXI)/ PRIVATE HIRE DRIVER KNOWLEDGE TEST**

The Service Director, Public Health & Protection presented the report, seeking Cabinet approval for the introduction of a pre requisite condition for application to licence for licensing of Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Vehicle Drivers to incorporate a Hackney Carriage (taxi)/ Private Hire Vehicle driver knowledge test.

The officer explained that, currently, RCT has lower entry standards for licensing its drivers in comparison to neighbouring authorities, in that there is no knowledge test requirement.

The officer explained that the aim of the Driver Knowledge Test is to further enhance the protection of public safety and provide public reassurance.

The Cabinet Members were referred to section 6 of the report, where it was explained that a previous consultation exercise had been undertaken with the licensed taxi trade in 2015. The results of the survey indicated that 91% of drivers agreed that knowledge of the local area was important in their role as a taxi driver and 88% agreed that the Licensing Authority should introduce a knowledge test as part of the process.

The officer explained that the Knowledge Test would be a pre application requirement for new drivers and would cost approximately £30 per applicant, per attempt.

The Cabinet Member for Prosperity, Wellbeing & Communities spoke in favour of the recommendation to implement the Knowledge Test in RCT, commenting that it would be more professional and in line with neighbouring authorities.

The Deputy Leader added that it would take away the perception that it is easier to be a taxi driver in RCT.

With the agreement of the Chairman, County Borough Councillors E Webster and B Morgan spoke on this item, agreeing that the implementation would give RCT a better reputation and prevent further increase in 'out of area' applications.

It was **RESOLVED**:

- a) To approve the implementation of a Hackney Carriage (Taxi) / Private Hire Driver Knowledge Test for Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough and the required amendment to the existing '*Conditions of Application and Schedule of Conditions relevant to Joint Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Vehicle Drivers Licences*'.
- b) To approve the introduction of a charge to cover the costs to the Council of administering the Driver Knowledge Test
- c) To undertake a consultation with the Licensed Taxi trade concerning the operating guidance that will underpin the implementation of the amended '*Conditions of Application and Schedule of Conditions relevant to Joint Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Vehicle Drivers Licences*'.
- d) To authorise the Service Director, Public Health and Protection, in consultation with the relevant portfolio holder, to consider the outcome of the consultation and make the appropriate arrangements to implement the Driver Knowledge Test pre requisite to licence application requirement.

**The meeting closed at 11:55am**

**Cllr A Morgan**

**Chair**