



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CABINET

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Cabinet held on Friday, 18 December 2020 at 1.00 pm.

County Borough Councillors - Cabinet Members in attendance:-

Councillor A Morgan (Chair)

Councillor M Webber	Councillor R Bevan
Councillor A Crimmings	Councillor M Norris
Councillor J Rosser	Councillor R Lewis
Councillor C Leyshon	Councillor G Hopkins

Officers in attendance

Mr C Bradshaw, Chief Executive
Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Mr N Wheeler, Group Director – Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services
Mr P Mee, Director, Public Health, Protection & Community Services
Mr R Evans, Director of Human Resources
Mr D Powell, Director of Corporate Estates
Mr A Wilkins, Director of Legal Services
Mr B Davies, Director of Finance & Digital Services
Mr R Waters, Service Director, Frontline Services

Others in attendance

Councillor M Adams
Councillor J Brencher
Councillor H Fychan
Councillor E Griffiths
Councillor M Weaver

39 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, there were no declarations made pertaining to the agenda.

40 MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 17th November 2020 as an accurate record.

41 CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

The Service Director, Democratic Services & Communication provided Cabinet Members with a draft work programme for the 2020-2021 Municipal Year, which listed matters requiring consideration by Cabinet.

The Service Director spoke of the current circumstances, commenting that there

was a greater need for flexibility of the programme.

Members were referred to Appendix 1 of the report and were advised that the programme is a live document to allow for any additional / deletion of reports throughout the year.

The Deputy Leader commented that utilising the programme assists with openness and transparency of the decision-making process within the Council and gives greater opportunity for Pre-Scrutiny.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Work Programme for the 2020-2021 Municipal Year (with appropriate amendment where necessary) and to receive a further update on a 3 monthly basis.

42

A4119 ELY VALLEY ROAD DUALLING - LLANTRISANT BUSINESS PARK TO COED ELY ROUNDABOUTS

The Service Director Frontline Services provided Cabinet with an update on the current progress related to the development and delivery of the major transportation project: A4119 Ely Valley Road Dualling, Llantrisant Business Park to Coed Ely Roundabouts.

Members were informed that Preliminary design of the project had been completed and was now at detailed design stage which was due to be complete in Spring 2021. The Service Director advised that as part of the continual value engineering of the project, the roundabout servicing the South Wales Fire Service Headquarters had been retained as the accommodation work required for a new entrance required extensive engineering works which would have resulted in increasing the cost of the project by a further £2m.

Details of an agreed partnership approach with Welsh Government to provide an Active Travel compliant foot/cycle bridge instead of an underpass at the Coed Ely roundabout were also advised upon. Members learnt that the bridge would serve the development site as well as providing an Active Travel route. Members were advised that Welsh Government were working with the Council to address the additional costs.

The Cabinet Member for Enterprise Development and Housing welcomed the update report and commented upon the many benefits people from the County Borough would experience through the project and welcomed the additions outlined by the Service Director.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services commented on the benefits the scheme would have for the Rhondda Valley and queried whether the retained roundabout at the Fire Headquarters would link into a dual carriage way as he spoke of the bottleneck situation currently experienced. The Service Director confirmed that the intention was to have a dual carriage way layout to prevent any future congestion.

The Leader spoke positively of the project and again reiterated the benefits the project would have for lots of residents and commuters in and out of the County Borough adding that the project would be complimented by future work with the Coed Ely development site.

Following discussions it was **RESOLVED**:

- (i) To note the progress made and endorse the next steps in the programme for the project.
- (ii) To give delegated authority to the Group Director Prosperity, Development and Frontline Services to submit a planning application on behalf of the Council for the proposed Active Travel bridge at Coed Ely roundabout.

43 WELSH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION: DRAFT REGULATIONS TO ESTABLISH CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEES

The Director of Legal Services referred Members to the Joint report before them advising that through the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill, provisions had been included to create via regulations, a vehicle for consistent regional collaboration between principal councils through the use of Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs). Members were advised that Welsh Government recognise that collaboration is not new to local government, with principal councils collaborating effectively in a range of areas for a long time. The Director referenced the significant role Rhondda Cynon Taf Council had played in establishing collaborations across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg footprint and wider South Wales region.

Members were advised that the aim through CJCs was to ensure there were consistent, resilient and accountable regional arrangements for the delivery of three important functions (i) strategic land use planning (ii) strategic transport planning and (iii) economic development. It was added that Welsh Government believe that by establishing CJC's through regulations it would provide more coherence and less complexity in the approach to regional governance arrangements in exercising the three functions proposed.

The Director provided Members with a brief overview of the key functions of a CJC including membership, establishment, voting rights, co-opted Members, staffing and resources and scrutiny. Members were advised that initial start up funding would be provided for and that the inaugural meeting of the CJC would need to be undertaken by September 2021.

Before concluding the Director advised that the Draft Regulations shaping CJCs was currently out for Consultation and informed Members that at the Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting on the 9th December 2020, Members of the Committee discussed the draft regulations and feedback from that meeting would form part of the overall response to the consultation.

At this juncture in the meeting the Leader called upon County Borough Councillor M Adams, as Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee who proceeded to provide the Cabinet with an overview of Scrutiny's comments in respect of the draft regulations.

The Deputy Leader thanked the Scrutiny Committee for their feedback

and echoed some of the concerns raised. The Deputy Leader commented on the maximum discretion needed in regional Local Authorities when working within CJsCs in respect of governance arrangements and functionality. The Member also reiterated concerns in respect of co-opted members and the implications this would have on democracy; the ambitious timescales set out with the September 2021 start date and the lack of scrutiny arrangements outlined within the draft regulations which she added was a must for any accountability.

The Leader commented that he was happy in principle with the concept of CJsCs and spoke of some potential concerns with mandating of functions exercised by CJsCs. He added that for CJsCs to be successful they needed to be shaped and driven forward by Local Government.

The Cabinet Member for Enterprise Development and Housing agreed that Elected Members needed to drive the agenda forward in respect of CJsCs and also raised concerns in respect of the proposed elected and non elected membership. The Cabinet Member saw the benefits that co-opted members would bring in respect of expertise but felt that this would be better served on a sub committee of a CJC, rather than reducing democratic accountability on the CJC itself.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services commented positively on the sharing of best practices and the further opportunity to minimise duplication adding that CJsCs provided further scope for financial savings for Authorities. The Cabinet Member welcomed the financial support to be provided in respect of initial start up costs which would take away the burden from Local Authorities.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Community Services and the Welsh Language queried how the CJsCs would relate to other established joint working arrangements referencing the Joint Education Service and Regional Partnership Board. The Director of Legal Services advised that such arrangements would continue as is although there could be potential future scope for these to be included within the CJC arrangements. The Leader commented that the WLGA's view in respect of this was that the Local education footprint was already delivering through its own arrangements and should therefore not be touched and that CJsCs should take forward smaller areas first.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Inclusion concluded the discussions by also paying tribute to the high standard of work delivered by the existing collaborative arrangements and commented on the importance for Local Authorities to shape the needs for delivery in order to maximise the outcomes achieved.

Following detailed discussions it was **RESOLVED**:

- I. To note the [Welsh Government \(WG\) Consultation document](#), attached at Appendix 2 to the report, which relates to draft

regulations that would establish the South East Wales CJC and then exercise the following functions across the region; (1) economic well-being, (2) strategic development planning, and (3) developing transport policies;

- II. To give delegated authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, to complete the final written response to the WG consultation based on Members' feedback at the meeting and feedback received from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 9th December 2020 and submit that response to WG prior to the consultation closing.

44 REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO STORM DENNIS

The Chief Executive provided Members with a detailed overview of the Council's response to Storm Dennis, one of four major storms to hit Wales at the start of 2020 which resulted in 1,070 households being flooded within RCT. Within his overview, the Chief Executive further provided a series of recommendations for Cabinet's consideration that would enhance the Council's short term and long term response to extreme weather events and which limit the impact of flooding on those communities most at risk.

The Chief Executive commented upon the extreme weather event of Storm Dennis that happened after a series of other events. He also referenced the topography of the County Borough which was also a factor to the events that unfolded and the devastating impact the storm had on local communities across the County Borough. The Chief Executive spoke of households and businesses that were flooded, the significant landslide at Tylorstown and the storm damage caused to highways infrastructure assets, drainage systems, and Council buildings such as the National Lido for Wales.

Members were provided with an overview of the work undertaken by the Council in preparation for the Storm, the work undertaken during and the immediate aftermath.

The Leader thanked the Chief Executive for his detailed report and also thanked Members for their submissions contained with Appendix 3 of the report, advising that two late submissions had also been received since publication of the report with these being circulated to Cabinet Members for information. The Leader also thanked the work and comments provided by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to date and the emerging themes identified.

The Leader commented on the recommendations contained within the report which would require significant funding and also spoke of the cost of damages to date exceeding £80million. Members were advised of the level of investment and number of projects already taken forward by the Council, the mapping exercises already underway and individual surveys needing to be taken forward to ensure things are done correctly and that infrastructures, such as culverts are still fit for purpose. The Leader advised of discussions taken forward with National Resources Wales and the preventive measures that need to be strengthened commenting on an 'Emergency control room' which would monitor flood devices and be equipped with an independent telephone line and the added intelligence this would provide if such a situation arose again. The Leader commented on the need to make properties more resilient and added

that the robustness of the Council systems in place had further improved following the event and he thanked all the staff and the communities that had contributed to the efforts, before, during and after Storm Dennis. The Leader concluded his remarks by requesting that a further report on the Council's position in respect of Storm Dennis be provided to Cabinet or Council in the New Year.

The Deputy Leader spoke of the exceptional response witnessed before, during and after the event and advised that due to the excellent flood alleviation scheme already in place within her ward the impact on residents was minimised although added that flooding could not be mitigated against entirely, as unfortunately a small number of residents still did experience flooding within their properties. She further commented on the community resilience and working together noting the importance of the 'voices of the communities' ensuring good communication links with the residents of the County Borough and Elected Members. In respect of Elected Members, reference was made to the importance of the Members portal once fully developed and the opportunity to feed into the Members induction training following the 2022 elections. The Deputy Leader spoke of the invaluable work of scrutiny which had fed into the report before the Cabinet and the importance of the ongoing work in this area by scrutiny. The Deputy Leader conclude her comments by adding that although the Council could never eliminate flooding or control nature the Council would continue to do all that was possible to minimise the risk.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services welcomed the report before them, adding that the report, combined with close working with NRW and the outcomes of the S19 report would provide the Council with sufficient information to act upon. He continued by commenting on the need to mitigate against any future issues that could potentially arise from climate change. The Member spoke positively of the investments and projects already being delivered upon by the Council and the lobbying taken forward to the Westminster government for further flood prevention schemes funding.

The Cabinet Member for Enterprise Development and Housing commented upon the landslide that occurred in Tylorstown, on an area much widely used by the public. The Member thanked the officers for the responsive action taken and the ongoing work to ensure the area is safe. The Cabinet Member commented on the regular monitoring undertaken of all existing coal tips and the importance of funding needed from central government to remove coal tips and alleviate people's concerns of any future disasters.

The Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure & Heritage paid tribute to the staff that worked effortlessly during the events of storm Dennis and the community resilience witnessed, with the offers of help from all. The Cabinet Member spoke of the importance of open communication lines and the reference within the report to the emergency control room which she felt would enhance communication, and utilising the communications teams to provide real time information she felt would be invaluable.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Services & the Welsh Language spoke of the importance of robust systems in place for warning the public and commented on the shortcoming identified within the report. The Cabinet Member highlighted the importance for all agencies to work together, to provide sufficient warnings where water rises quickly. The Leader provide Members with details of monitoring within the new control room, the alarm systems in place for blocked

culverts and the CCTV operations to be taken forward of monitoring rivers at key areas so that if NRW's alert system was to fail the Council could utilise the provisions it has in place to raise awareness.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services commented on the ongoing discussions between the Council and NRW to try to prevent such events occurring again and spoke of the need for other agencies to be involved in such discussions commenting upon the flooding within her own ward and the role played by Dwyf Cymru, Network Rail and Transport for Wales. The Cabinet Member paid tribute to the volunteers that assisted in Trehafod Community Centre ensuring the wellbeing of the village.

The Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities, Well-being & Cultural Services also thanked the staff and local communities for coming together in peoples time of need and providing a strengthened community spirit during difficult times. The Member welcomed the report and the work solutions provided within and spoke of the importance of not only looking at flood defence infrastructures but also as part of the flood strategy going forward the climate change agenda, commenting on water segregation, tree planting, water catchment reviews and peat bogs.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Inclusion Services commented on the unprecedented nature of the weather events that occurred at the start of the year and welcomed the recommendations identified within the report which aligned with the comments provided by scrutiny, adding that she felt this was a fair and balanced reflection of the Council's response to the storm.

At this juncture in the meeting, the Leader called upon County Borough Councillor M Adams in his role as Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee who provided Cabinet with an overview of the work of scrutiny.

With the permission of the Leader, County Borough Councillor J Brencher also addressed the Cabinet.

The deputy Leader took the opportunity to query whether any funding was to be provided by NRW for the flood measures needed, commenting in particular on the flooding that occurred in lower Treforest. The Leader advised that lots of conversations were still taking place with NRW and spoke of the lines of responsibility between the Council and NRW.

The Leader summed up the discussions of the Cabinet, commenting that the costings associated with the proposed recommendations would be factored into the budget strategy. He spoke of the importance of a further report being provided to Cabinet or Council in the New Year once the capital programme had been agreed. He concluded by further commenting on the role of scrutiny and the further work that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee could undertake in respect of scrutinising the implementation of the recommendations outlined within the report.

Following detailed discussions it was **RESOLVED**:

- I. To note the action taken by the Council in respect of Storm Dennis:
 - a) Before the Storm;
 - b) During the Storm;
 - c) Immediately after the Storm;

- d) In the days and weeks following the Storm;
 - e) The longer-term response to repairing and replacing damaged infrastructure and preventing future flooding events.
-
- II. To note the feedback from the work to date of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in respect of its review of the events of Storm Dennis and the multi-agency response as set out in Appendix C of this report.
 - III. To note and approve the recommendations for improvement set out in [Section 11](#) of this report.
 - IV. That progress against the recommendations for improvement are included in the Financial and Performance Management Reports, presented to Cabinet each quarter and to the relevant Scrutiny Committee.
 - V. That a further report which sets out the findings of the Section 19 Investigation Reports of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 currently being undertaken are presented to a future Cabinet in the New Year and that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee scrutinise the section 19 report once published and scrutinise the ongoing work that the Council is undertaking in respect of its recommendations contained within this report.

This meeting closed at 2.19 pm

**Cllr A Morgan
Chairman.**