

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council held at the County Borough Council Offices, The Pavilions, Clydach Vale on Wednesday, 27th January, 2016 at 5 p.m.

PRESENT

County Borough Councillor B.Stephens – in the Chair

County Borough Councillors

L.M.Adams	P.Griffiths	S.Rees
P.Baccara	(Mrs.)E.Hanagan	S.Rees-Owen
(Mrs.)T.Bates	G.Holmes	(Mrs.)A.Roberts
D.R.Bevan	G.E.Hopkins	J.Rosser
H.Boggis	P.Howe	R.W.Smith
J.Bonetto	J.S.James	G.Stacey
S.A.Bradwick	P.Jarman	(Mrs.)M.Tegg
J.Bunnage	(Mrs.)S.J.Jones	R.K.Turner
S.Carter	R.Lewis	L.Walker
(Mrs.)A.Crimmings	(Mrs.)C.Leyshon	(Mrs.)J.S.Ward
W.J.David	C.J.Middle	P.Wasley
A.L.Davies, MBE	A.Morgan	M.J.Watts
C.Davies	B.Morgan	M.Weaver
J.Davies	K.Morgan	M.Webber
G.R.Davies	M.A.Norris	E.Webster
(Mrs.)M.E.Davies	I.Pearce	C.J.Williams
J.Elliott	S.Pickering	D.H.Williams
S.Evans	S.Powderhill	T.Williams
M.Forey	M.J.Powell	C.J.Willis
M.Griffiths	K.A.Privett	R.Yeo

Officers in Attendance

Mr.C.Bradshaw – Chief Executive
Mr.C.Lee – Group Director, Corporate & Frontline Services
Mr.P.J.Lucas – Director, Legal & Democratic Services
Mr.G.Isingrini – Group Director, Community & Children's Services
Mr.T.Wilkins – Director, Human Resources
Mr.C.Hanagan – Service Director, Cabinet & Public Relations
Mr.N.Jones – Service Director (Operational Finance)
Ms.K.May – Head of Democratic Services

87 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors A.Calvert, (Mrs.)L.De Vet, S.M.Evans-Fear, A.S.Fox, S.Lloyd, G.Smith, G.Thomas and W.D.Weeks.

88 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, the following Members declared personal interests in the under-mentioned items:-

- County Borough Councillor L.M.Adams – Agenda Item 7 – Welsh Church Act Fund – Annual Report 2014/15 – “My church Holy Trinity was a recipient of a grant from said fund”.
- County Borough Councillor D.R.Bevan – Agenda Item 7 – Welsh Church Act Fund – Annual Report 2014/15 – “My Cabinet responsibilities involve me in signing off the grant applications”.
- County Borough Councillor G.R.Davies – Agenda Item 7 – Welsh Church Act Fund – Annual Report 2014/15 – “My church has received £2,400
- County Borough Councillor G.Hopkins – Agenda Item 7 – Welsh Church Act Fund – Annual Report 2014/15 – “There is an organisation that I am a Trustee, which has received £10,000”.
- County Borough Councillor P.Jarman – Agenda Item 8 – Financing of the 21st Century Schools Programme Using Prudential Borrowing – “the Standards Committee has granted me dispensation to speak and vote at meetings of Council and Overview and Scrutiny Committees on matters that may affect the budget”.
- County Borough Councillor (Mrs.)S.Jones – Agenda Item 7 – Welsh Church Act Fund – Annual Report 2014/15 – “I am a Trustee of Crossroads Cwm Taf, Pontypridd”.
- County Borough Councillor A.Morgan declared a personal interest later on in the meeting – Agenda Item 12 – Notice of Motion – “I am the Chair of the Governing Body of the school that is being suggested”.
- County Borough Councillor J.James declared a personal interest later on in the meeting – Urgent Notice of Motion – “I am involved in a community forum of which I am the Treasurer and a customer of HSBC Bank, Porth”

89 PETITION

County Borough Councillor C.J.Williams handed to the Mayor a petition signed by 224 residents of Trehafod together with 196 individually signed letters requesting for better road safety measures throughout Trehafod and the introduction of a 20 mph limit (in particular through Trehafod Road).

90 ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (1) County Borough Councillor G.Hopkins, Cabinet Member for Children's Social Services, Equalities & the Welsh Language, announced that tomorrow (28th January) at 1.30 p.m. a Holocaust Memorial Day event will be held at the Park and Dare Theatre, Treorchy and that all Members would be welcomed.
- (2) County Borough Councillor M.J.Watts announced that during his year as Mayor in 2014/15 the funding raised totalled £35,547 which would be divided equally to his chosen charities, namely: MacMillan Cancer Support (RCT),

The Royal British Legion (RCT) and local charities in the Rhondda. He wished to thank the Leader, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Members for their support and also all other elected Members who had made donations and especially to those that had contributed their 1% increase to Members basic salaries during that year following the determination by Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales.

On behalf of all Members, the Leader of the Council thanked Councillor Watts for his hard work and efforts in raising such a large amount of money as it had been an especially difficult year for Councillor Watts as he had suffered periods of ill health.

- (3) County Borough Councillor (Mrs.)T.Bates announced that a sponsorship form was being circulated amongst Members as her daughter is to run in the Marathon and all money raised would be donated to "Wish Upon a Star".

91 MINUTES

RESOLVED – to approve as accurate records the minutes of the following meetings:-

- (a) Council Meeting held on the 25th November, 2015.
(b) Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held on the 16th December, 2015.

OPEN GOVERNMENT

92 STATEMENTS

- (1) The Leader of the Council informed Members that Welsh Leaders had met recently with Edwina Hart,AM, Minister for Economy, Science and Transport to discuss the job losses at Tata Steel Plant, Port Talbot which currently stands at 750 (350 Office Staff and 400 Frontline Staff). A number of contracts would also not be renewed. He stated that the Welsh Government are in consultation with the UK Government and Officers of this Authority are liaising with various stakeholders. The Council has also offered its support and assistance.
- (2) Following the briefing made to Members at the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held on the 16th December, 2015 (Minute No.76 refers). The Leader of the Council updated Members on the progress being made on the City Deal. A report will be presented to Council where Members will have the opportunity to discuss the matter in more detail, in due course.

93 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

- (1) **From County Borough Councillor S.Powderhill to the Leader of the Council of the Council (County Borough Councillor A.Morgan)**

“Will the Leader update Council on the progress of the 12 million pound investment recently announced by Cabinet for roads, regeneration, play facilities, apprentices and infrastructure?”

Response from the Leader

“The money which has been announced and bolstering our Capital Programme, most of that has not been spent as currently going through the planning phase and working with Officers e.g. around highways matters. As soon as we get past the bad weather we will be getting on with those schemes.

Play areas are progressing very well – almost 20 play areas during this financial year have either been partly refurbished or completely renewed.

Thirty Apprentices were taken on by the Council last year and since 2012, 90 individuals have been involved in the scheme, 75% of Apprentices have secured jobs with the Council and others have gone on to do degrees etc. It is hoped that further Apprentices will be taken on in September of this year.

£1.5M has been set aside for Taff Vale Precinct and this has generated a huge amount of interest, including companies being interested in mixed use – office and retail. A consultation process will be undertaken.

Cabinet will be considering some of the Capital Programme in March and Members will see the rest of this programme clearly set out, the bulk of the work is going to start in April”.

Supplementary Question from County Borough Councillor S.Powderhill

“Is there any likelihood of further investment in other areas, in the future?”

Response from the Leader

“Just to clarify as announced at a previous Council Meeting, we are looking at every opportunity to maximise investment e.g. leisure rates etc., which also stimulates the local economy”.

(2) From County Borough Councillor J.Bonetto to the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Planning (County Borough Councillor D.R.Bevan)

“How will the proposal to introduce a local development order for Trefforest support inward investment in the County Borough?”

Response from County Borough Councillor D.R.Bevan

“Trefforest Industrial Estate has huge development potential given its location in the heart of the South East Wales region and proximity to Cardiff and the

M4. I attended meetings there recently. The Local Development Order (LDO) will take down some of the planning barriers. Businesses can take very quick decisions on how they want to invest and this can be progressed by having a LDO, it will enable businesses and this Council to act very quickly and very flexibly. The LDO that we are seeking to implement will nail the business and put us on a sound footing for other initiatives such as the City Deal”.

Supplementary Question from County Borough Councillor J.Bonetto

“If the LDO works, will there be an opportunity for other areas in RCT?”

Response from County Borough Councillor D.R.Bevan

“Yes. Currently undertaking consultation on the current LDO on the website. We are leading the way as we are the first Authority to have a LDO on an industrial site. We will be looking at other industrial areas and town centres and potential housing sites”.

- (3) **From County Borough Councillor S.Bradwick to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure and Culture (County Borough Councillor A.Crimmings)**

“Will Councillor Ann Crimmings, Cabinet Member for Environmental Services, provide an update of recycling rates in the County Borough to Council?”

Response from County Borough Councillor A.Crimmings

“Over the festive period we collected approximately 1,000 tonnes of food waste and 1,600 tonnes of recycling and over the last few months, hundreds of residents have signed up for food waste recycling caddies thanks to our recent campaign on social media. In 2015, we were the fastest improving Authority in Wales in terms of recycling figures and was ranked in the top five for Wales. We cannot rest on our laurels though and we will continue to work hard and focus on sustaining these levels of improvement”.

- (4) **From County Borough Councillor S.Carter to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure and Culture (County Borough Councillor A.Crimmings)**

“How does the Council intend to build upon the success of the Lido in the coming year?”

Response from County Borough Councillor A.Crimmings

“The Lido welcomed 25,000 people last year, not to mention the many thousands who visited and continue to visit the play area and visitor centre. We have learnt a lot from the 2015 season and continue to have lots of interest from clubs and for party and event bookings. Officers are currently finalising the detail of the programme for the 2016 season which promises to be just as popular with residents and visitors to RCT. We expect to make an

announcement very soon about when the National Lido of Wales will be opening for 2016”.

Supplementary Question from County Borough Councillor S.Carter

“Following the success of the two Christmas events, there are opportunities for further events and for others to use this facility such as the University of South Wales?”

Response from County Borough Councillor A.Crimmings

“Yes, as this is the only facility of its kind in Wales. We trialled two festive events which were successful and currently finalising the events for 2016”.

(5) **From County Borough Councillor J.S.Ward to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure and Culture (County Borough Councillor A.Crimmings)**

“Will the Cabinet Member provide an update on leisure investment in the County Borough?”

Response from County Borough Councillor A.Crimmings

“We are investing £1.2M in improving leisure facilities with work completed at Hawthorn Leisure Centre and with gym improvements underway at Bronwydd. Over the next six months, Abercynon Sports Centre and Rhondda Sports Centre in Ystrad will be the next to benefit from this investment. This is a good point to raise which demonstrates why we are looking to invest in leisure as a means of making the service more sustainable as we know that where and when we have invested previously in our leisure facilities, usage has gone up. For example, following investment in Llantrisant Leisure Centre, the gym usage is up by 44%, class usage is up by over 70% and membership is up by an amazing 84%. It is a similar story in Sobell’s, where gym usage is also up by over 40% and class usage by 60% with membership up by over 50% following investment there.

Supplementary Question from County Borough Councillor J.S.Ward

“What is the impact of previous investment in leisure centres such as Sobell and Llantrisant ?”

Response from County Borough Councillor A.Crimmings

“We have improved our services at Sobell and Llantrisant Leisure Centres and in tandem with our Leisure for Life membership options, we are attracting more and more users to our Leisure Centres. Not only is this good in terms of sustaining the service, it has wider benefits in terms of residents leading fit and healthy lifestyles which in the long run will place less demand on other services.

REPORTS OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, CORPORATE & FRONTLINE SERVICES

94 WELSH CHURCH ACT FUND ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15

In his report, the Group Director, Corporate & Frontline Services sought the approval of Members of the Statement of Accounts for the Welsh Church Act Fund for the financial year ended 31st March, 2015; and it was **RESOLVED** –

1. To approve and note the Welsh Church Act Fund Statement of Accounts for the financial year 2014/15, as shown at Appendix 1 to the report;
2. To approve and note the Letter of Representation relating to the Welsh Church Act Fund, as shown at Appendix 2 to the report.
3. To note the contents of the External Auditor report, as shown at Appendix 3 to the report.

95 FINANCING OF THE 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS PROGRAMME USING PRUDENTIAL BORROWING

Following consideration of the report of the Group Director, Corporate & Frontline Services, it was **RESOLVED** –

1. To agree to the inclusion in the Capital Programme of the major capital works at Porth, Tonypandy, Tonyrefail and Treorchy secondary school sites together with the further development of Welsh medium primary provision at YGG Llwyncelyn and YGG Tonyrefail at a combined total cost of £79.752M;
2. To agree that the net cost to the Council of £39.876M is funded through borrowing, using the Council's powers under the Prudential Code, with the annual revenue cost of £1.971M being met from savings from this and other recent school closures and amalgamations.

(Note: In response to a comment made by the Leader of the Democratic Alliance Group in respect of his concerns on the closure of Tonypandy Community College and removing the Sixth Form education and thus asking parents to take their children from Tonypandy to another school and mixing three year old children with 16 year olds; the Leader of the Council stated that there would be no mixing of these ages and that they would be offered to go to other schools. The Leader commended the work of Officers within Corporate Estates and the Education Departments in delivering the 21st Century Schools Programme. He further stated that the rumour that schools had over-run on costs was not the case, in fact Abercynon was underspent and this money had been used in other schools. The Cabinet Member for Education & Skills also reported that eight new schools had opened and 10 schools had been completely refurbished).

96 LOCAL COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME

In accordance with the Council Tax Reduction Scheme in Wales as set by regulations made under Schedule 1B of the Local Government Finance Act, 1992 (as inserted by the Local Government Finance Act, 2012) and the

approval by the National Assembly for Wales of two sets of regulations (as set out in the report) on the 26th November, 2013, the Group Director, Corporate & Frontline Services sought the approval of Members to adopt a Council Tax Reduction Scheme by the 31st January, 2016.

Following consideration of the report, it was **RESOLVED** –

1. To note the amendments to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2013 (“the Prescribed Requirements Regulations”) by the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2016;
2. To note the outcome of the consultation exercise undertaken by the Council on the local discretions applicable to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2016/17;
3. To adopt the provisions of the Prescribed Requirements Regulations (as amended) as the Council’s local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2016/17 subject to the local discretions that the Council is able to exercise as set out in (4) below.
4. To confirm the following as local discretions applicable to the Council’s local CTRS as provided within Part 5 of the Prescribed Requirements Regulations:-

Discretionary Parts of the Prescribed Requirements Regulations (Part 5 – Other Matters that must be included in an authority’s scheme)	Prescribed Requirement Regulations (Minimum Requirement)	Recommended Discretion to be adopted
<p>Ability to increase the standard extended reduction period of 4 weeks given to applicants where they have previously been receiving a Council Tax reduction that is to end, as they have ceased receiving qualifying benefits as a result of returning to work, increasing their hours of work, or receiving increased earnings.</p> <p><i>Regulation 32 (3) paragraph (33) of Schedule 1 and Regulation 33 (3), paragraph (35) and (40) of Schedule 6.</i></p>	<p>4 Weeks</p>	<p><u>Pensioners:</u> The standard period of 4 weeks specified in paragraph (33) of Schedule 1 will apply, and</p> <p><u>Non- Pensioners:</u> The standard period of 4 weeks specified in paragraph (35) and (40) of Schedule 6 will apply,</p>
<p>Ability to backdate an application for CTR with regard to late claims prior to the standard period of 3 months before the claim is made.</p> <p><i>Regulation 34 (4) and paragraph (3) and (4) of Schedule 13.</i></p>	<p>3 Months</p>	<p><u>Pensioners:</u> The standard period of 3 months specified in paragraph (3) of Schedule 13 will apply,</p> <p><u>Non-Pensioners:</u> The standard period of 3 months specified in paragraph (4) of Schedule 13 will apply,</p>

<p>Ability to disregard more than the statutory weekly £10 of income received in respect of War Disablement Pensions and War Widow's Pensions (disregarded when calculating income of the applicant);</p> <p><i>Regulation 34 (5), paragraphs 1(a) and 1(b) Schedule 4 and paragraphs 20(a) and 20(b) of Schedule 9</i></p>	<p>£10</p>	<p><u>Pensioners:</u> The total value of any pension specified in paragraphs 1 (a) and (b), Schedule 4 will be disregarded.</p> <p><u>Non-Pensioners:</u> The total value of any pension specified in paragraphs 20 (a) and (b), Schedule 9 will be disregarded.</p>
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REPORTS OF THE DIRECTOR. LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

97 CHANGES TO THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

In accordance with the decision taken by Minute No.14(2) of the Council meeting held on the 20th May, 2015, the Director, Legal & Democratic Services advised Members that he had received notification from the Labour Group of changes to its Members on the Audit Committee.

At the meeting, the Director, Legal & Democratic Services also informed Members that Councillor J.Rosser wished to be removed from the Welsh Books Council.

RESOLVED –

1. That County Borough Councillors W.J.David and G.Stacey replace County Borough Councillors A.Davies,MBE and M.Griffiths on the Audit Committee, with immediate effect;
2. That County Borough Councillor G.Hopkins replace County Borough Councillor J.Rosser on the Welsh Books Council, with immediate effect.

98 WELSH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION – DRAFT LOCAL GOVERNMENT (WALES) BILL

Following the Extraordinary Meeting of Council held on the 16th December, 2015 (Minute No.85 refers), the Director, Legal & Democratic Services set out in his report the comments of Members of both the Overview & Scrutiny Committee (including non-executive Members and Co-opted Members) and the Cabinet Working Group at meetings held on the 7th and 14th January, respectively in respect of the Welsh Government's Consultation Document – Draft Local Government (Wales) Bill.

Following a discussion, it was **RESOLVED** – that the comments of Members of the Cabinet Working Group and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as outlined in the report be submitted to the Welsh Government by the deadline of the 15th February, 2016 together with the following additional comments as expressed at the meeting:-

- Paragraph 4.8 of the report (Part 4 of the Bill) - `Performance duties` should also apply to AMs and MPs
- Paragraph 5.4.1 of the report (Part 3 of the Bill) – the creation of Community Area Committees would remove an element of democracy.
- Paragraph 5.3.3 of the report (Part 3 of the Bill) – Improvement Requests – whilst the Authority is already engaged with Improvement Requests, it is on an informal basis and would not therefore welcome a formal bureaucratic process.
- Paragraph 5.4.7 of the report (Part 4 of the Bill) –Recall of Councillors – this should also apply to AMs and MPs
- Paragraph 5.7.3 of the report (Part 6 of the Bill) – the monitoring of Members’ performance should not be responsibility of the Clerk and this proposal is likely to reduce the number of Clerks and neither should it be the responsibility of the Standards Committee as that Committee deals with behaviour and not performance.

(Note: County Borough Councillors J.James and M.J.Powell wished to have their names recorded to the fact that they voted against the above decision).

99 **NOTICE OF MOTION**

The following Notice of Motion standing in the names of County Borough Councillors P.Jarman, G.Davies, I.Pearce, C.Davies, S.Evans-Fear, E.Webster, M.Weaver and K.Morgan was considered:-

“That this Council changes the terms of reference of the LEA Governor Appointment Panel to provide for an appeal process in the event of any LEA Governor being removed from their Governorship by the Panel”.

A discussion ensued when it was felt that the identity of an individual could be revealed and it was therefore **RESOLVED** - that the press and public be excluded from the meeting under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 13 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act (as amended), namely, information relating to a particular individual. Transparency in the conduct of Local Authority business is desirable, however, personal data relating to the conduct and capabilities of individuals will be discussed and considered. Consequently, it is not considered the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs and the public interest in disclosing the information.

Following a lengthy discussion, it was **FURTHER RESOLVED** – not to adopt the Notice of Motion.

(Note – County Borough Councillors C.Davies, G.R.Davies, J.S.James, P.Jarman, K.Morgan, I Pearce, M.J.Powell, M.Weaver and E.Webster wished to have their names recorded that they voted in favour of adopting the Notice of Motion).

Note: At this juncture in the proceedings, the members of the public were invited back into the meeting.

100 URGENT NOTICE OF MOTION

In accordance with paragraph 10.5.1 of Part 4 of the Council's Constitution, the following Notice of Motion standing in the names of County Borough Councillors (Mrs.)M.Davies, C.Williams, G.Smith, L.M.Adams, (Mrs.)T.Bates, D.R.Bevan, H.Boggis, J.Bonetto, S.Bradwick, (Mrs.)J.Bunnage, A.Calvert, P.Cannon, S.Carter, J.Cass, A.Crimmings, W.J.David, A.Davies, MBE, (Mrs.)A.Davies, J.Davies, (Mrs.)L.De Vet, J.Elliott, S.Evans, M.Forey, A.Fox, R.Lewis, M.Griffiths, P.Griffiths, (Mrs.)E.Hanagan, G.Holmes, G.Hopkins, (Mrs.)S.Jones, L.Langford, (Mrs.)C.Leyshon, S.Lloyd, B.McDonald, C.Middle, K.Montague, A.Morgan, B.Morgan, M.Norris, S.Pickering, S.Powderhill, K.Privett, S.Rees, (Mrs.)A.Roberts, J.Rosser, R.Smith, G.Stacey, B.Stephens, (Mrs.)M.Tegg, G.Thomas, R.K.Turner, T.Williams, C.J.Willis and R.Yeo was considered, the reason for the urgency being that only within the last 24 hours it had come to light that certain HSBC branches were to be closed:-

"This Council places on record its opposition to the closure of HSBC bank branches in Treorchy and Porth.

These branches provide a vital service to local residents and will disenfranchise many people from both communities from accessing banking facilities. The proposal is likely to also have an impact on footfall in both town centres and as a result may potentially harm the local economy in both town centres.

The Council acknowledges that HSBC has committed to offer its banking services through local Post Office branches but believes a wider reconsideration of the decision is required in the interest of the wider community.

This Council therefore calls upon HSBC to undertake a meaningful consultation with residents, customers and businesses before making any decisions".

During consideration of the above Notice of Motion, it came to light that announcements had been made to the closure of further branches i.e. HSBC, Aberdare and NatWest, Aberdare and in accordance with paragraph 12.7 of Part 4 of the Council's Constitution, it was **RESOLVED** – to adopt the following altered Notice of Motion:-

"This Council places on record its opposition to the closure of HSBC bank branches in Treorchy, Porth and Aberdare as well as the NatWest bank in Aberdare that is due to close on the 22nd April, 2016.

These branches provide a vital service to local residents and will disenfranchise many people from valley communities from accessing banking facilities. The proposals are likely to also have an impact on footfall in the three town centres and as a result may potentially harm the local economy in each of these town centres.

The Council acknowledges that HSBC has committed to offer its banking services through local Post Office branches but believe a wider reconsideration of the decision is required in the interest of the wider community.

This Council therefore calls upon HSBC and NatWest to withdraw its plans to close these banks”.

**B.STEPHENS
MAYOR**

The meeting closed at 7.25 p.m.