



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL**

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Wednesday, 4 March 2020 at 4.00 pm at The Council Chamber, The Pavilions, Cambrian Park, Clydach Vale, Tonypany, CF40 2XX.

**County Borough Councillors - Council Members in attendance:-**

Councillor M Adams	Councillor R Bevan
Councillor H Boggis	Councillor J Bonetto
Councillor S Bradwick	Councillor J Brencher
Councillor A Calvert	Councillor G Caple
Councillor A Cox	Councillor A Crimmings
Councillor J Cullwick	Councillor G Davies
Councillor J Davies	Councillor L De Vet
Councillor J Edwards	Councillor S Evans
Councillor M Forey	Councillor H Fychan
Councillor E George	Councillor E Griffiths
Councillor M Griffiths	Councillor J Harries
Councillor G Holmes	Councillor L Hooper
Councillor P Howe	Councillor G Hughes
Councillor P Jarman	Councillor G Jones
Councillor W Jones	Councillor R Lewis
Councillor W Lewis	Councillor C Leyshon
Councillor A Morgan	Councillor K Morgan
Councillor S Morgans	Councillor M Norris
Councillor D Owen-Jones	Councillor W Owen
Councillor S Pickering	Councillor M Powell
Councillor S Rees	Councillor A Roberts
Councillor J Rosser	Councillor G Stacey
Councillor M Tegg	Councillor G Thomas
Councillor W Treeby	Councillor M Webber
Councillor D Williams	Councillor G Williams
Councillor J Williams	Councillor T Williams
Councillor C Willis	Councillor R Yeo

**Officers in attendance**

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

## **126 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors S. Belzak, A. Chapman, A. Davies-Jones, M. Diamond, J. Elliott, S. M. Evans, M. Fidler Jones, A. S. Fox, D. Grehan, G. E. Hopkins, J. James, K. L. Jones, L. Jones, S. Powderhill, S. M. Powell, S. Rees-Owen, E. Stephens, R. K. Turner, L. Walker, M. Weaver, E. Webster.

## **127 Declaration of Interest**

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

## **128 Major Incident Recovery Board Update**

The Chair took the opportunity to thank the Local Authority staff, the Emergency Services and the community for working together following the significant damage as a result of the recent floods. He acknowledged the kindness of local residents during this difficult time and said he was proud to live in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

The Leader of the Council advised that he would present an update since the unprecedented weather conditions hit the County Borough causing flooding in local communities a few weeks ago.

Members were informed that a meeting had been convened to prepare for Storm Dennis with key officers and partners such as Emergency Planning and Highways. The Leader of the Council emphasised that advance warnings had not prepared the Council for the actual events which followed although the Council had put in place over and above what it needed to do at that stage.

County Borough Councillor A. Morgan advised that since the major weather incident 'Storm Dennis' the Council had established a Major Incident Recovery Board which has since met regularly to discuss the immediate recovery process following the exceptional event. The Leader added that it could take between 2-3 years for the County Borough to fully recover from the damage caused.

With the aid of Power Point the Leader demonstrated the impact of the flooding on communities across the County Borough with each of the rivers recording their highest levels in decades – breaching their banks and causing not only devastating flooding to hundreds of businesses and households, but also significant damage to important highway structures.

The presentation included a number of photographs and videos of those affected areas such as Mountain Ash comprehensive School, Mountain Ash train station (where more than 400 tonnes of material had been removed), Sion Street in Pontypridd, Ynysangharad Park and footbridge in Pontypridd (and the damage to the Lido and play area), Nantgarw, Treforest Industrial Estate and Pentre which was cited as one of the worst affected communities.

The Leader of the Council provided an update on the Council's response immediately following the floods which had been declared a 'Major Incident' by South Wales Police. A total of 1600 calls were logged with the RCT Call centre and all available staff were deployed to those areas in need of immediate

support. Despite opening five rest centres, the large majority of residents chose to stay in their homes or stay with friends and family.

An update was provided by the Leader in respect of the financial commitment by the Council to those residents and businesses affected by the floods with priority given to households and small businesses. £1.5 million has been released from the General Reserves with a further commitment of £500K (large businesses are being referred to Welsh Government for support due to the scale of the problems faced by them).

The Leader of the Council referred to the specific details of both financial and practical assistance which is available to families and households such as £500 for households with internal flood damage (with a further £500-£1,000 available from Welsh Government), free removal of damaged goods/property, free replacement bins, free school meals for up to a month for families affected and £100 school uniform grant for each school child. A number of available financial and support initiatives are also available for small to medium businesses. He advised that those affected residents are required to fill in the dedicated e-form on the Council's website or contact the dedicated staff for support to complete the registration process.

The Leader of the Council advised that the task of assessing the damage to the infrastructure across the County Borough is underway so that repairs may be undertaken as soon as possible. Further detail was provided in respect of the landslides which have occurred as a consequence of the floods both on and off former coal spoil sites. The Leader of the Council assured Members that all the Council's category C and D tips (43 in total) have been inspected by qualified consulting engineers and where necessary streams re-routed to alleviate the impact. An immediate task is to compile a list of the coal tips in the County Borough to determine who owns/manages them as some are owned by RCT Council, some are privately owned and others owned by Natural Resources Wales or the Coal Authority, before assessing their long-term plans. He concluded that this needed to be done in partnership with UK Government, Welsh Government and the Local Authority.

The Leader of the Council advised that the next stages included prioritising the repair work and requesting emergency powers to demolish two bridges (Castle Inn and White Bridge) due to the high risk they pose. He stressed the importance of understanding the power and extent of damage that can be caused by storms which are more frequent. In conclusion, the Leader of the Council paid tribute to the staff whose actions saved lives and he thanked them for their continued help and support.

The Leader of the Opposition thanked the Leader of the Council for his update, she concurred with the sentiments in his presentation and commended staff, contractors and the Emergency Services for their support and actions. Councillor Jarman understood the effect on those

residents affected to be immeasurable and hailed the community response as phenomenal.

In response to a concern regarding the status of the Council's current Emergency Plan on its website, the Leader gave assurances that this would be updated as a matter of urgency. He confirmed that in time, an internal review in respect of the recent events would be undertaken.

The Leader of the Alliance Group suggested that a central hub from which all operations could be co-ordinated in the event of a future similar incident would enable Elected Members to receive better and more consistent information and updates. He also asked if those local Members of the affected areas could be included in any meetings to discuss future plans and lessons learned. The Leader of the Council acknowledged the need for one designated centre from which to conduct operations in the event of an emergency which would better facilitate communication and a coordinated response.

The Leader responded to a number of queries and reported that the Council is currently profiling approximately 180 vulnerable families to assess their need for additional support. With regard to the coal tips, Councillor Morgan advised that there are a raft of measures in place to re-profile the tips and drain the water rather than remove them altogether which may not be feasible.

In conclusion, Councillor Morgan emphasised that the council had responded to the warnings in place before Storm Dennis and had done all that was required at that time. He stressed that the culverts had failed but the pumps had not, they had been overwhelmed by the high levels of water. He added that the Council needed a long term plan to address this level of unprecedented weather conditions in the future.

**This meeting closed at 5.00 pm**

**Cllr G Hughes  
Chairman.**