

## **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, 30 October 2013 at 5 p.m.

### **PRESENT**

County Borough Councillor A.Crimmings – in the Chair

### **County Borough Councillors**

L.M.Adams	A.S.Fox	M.J.Powell
(Mrs) T.A.Bates	M.Griffiths	K.A.Privett
D.R.Bevan	P.Griffiths	S.Rees
H.Boggis	(Mrs) E.Hanagan	S.Rees-Owen
J.Bonetto	G.Holmes	(Mrs) A.Roberts
S.A.Bradwick	P.Howe	J.Rosser
J.Bunnage	P.Jarman	G.Smith
A.Calvert	(Mrs) S.J.Jones	R.W.Smith
P.Cannon,QPM	R.Lewis	G.Stacey
S.Carter	(Mrs) E.Leyshon	B.Stephens
(Mrs) J.Cass	S.Lloyd	(Mrs) M.Tegg
W.J.David	R.B.McDonald	R.K.Turner
A.L.Davies,MBE	C.J.Middle	G.Thomas
(Mrs) A.Davies	A.Morgan	L.Walker
C.Davies	B.Morgan	(Mrs) J.S.Ward
J.Davies	K.Morgan	P.Wasley
(Mrs) M.E.Davies	M.A.Norris	M.O.Weaver
(Mrs) L.De Vet	I.Pearce	M.Webber
J.Elliott	S.Pickering	W.D.Weeks
S.M.Evans-Fear	S.Powderhill	T.Williams
		C.J.Willis
		R.Yeo

### **Officers in Attendance**

Mr.K.Griffiths – Chief Executive  
Mr.G.Jones – Group Director, Environmental Services  
Mr.E.Williams – Group Director, Community & Children's Services  
Mr.P.J.Lucas – Director, Legal & Democratic Services  
Mr.T.Wilkins – Director, Human Resources  
Mr.C.Bradshaw – Director, Education & Lifelong Learning  
Mr.C.Hanagan – Head of Strategy, Public Relations & Tourism  
Mr.P.Griffiths – Service Director, Performance & Resources

**64**     **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors P.Baccara, A.Christopher, G.R.Davies, M.Forey, G.E.Hopkins, J.S.James, W.L.Langford, K.Montague, M.J.Watts, E.Webster, C.J.Williams and D.H.Williams.

**65**     **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interests in matters pertaining to the agenda.

**66**     **PETITION**

County Borough Councillor D.R.Bevan presented the Mayor with a petition on behalf of residents of the Rhondda Fach area, requesting the redevelopment of the old Rest Assured Site in Pontygwaith for retail purposes.

**67**     **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- (1)     The Deputy Leader (County Borough Councillor P.Cannon,QPM) announced that the Leader (County Borough Councillor A.Christopher) was recovering well from his recent operation and the Council wished him a speedy recovery and return to office.
- (2)     The Cabinet Member for Frontline Services (County Borough Councillor A.Morgan) wished to place on record thanks to all staff involved, in particular highways and emergency planning, for the preparatory work they undertook in readiness for the storms predicted earlier this week. Thankfully, the weather did not turn out to be as bad as forecasted but in the run-up, staff dealt with over 100 calls for assistance.
- (3)     County Borough Councillor L.Walker informed the Council that two pupils of Ysgol Ty Coch, Natasha Stone and Leir Rockett, had recently received the Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award along with two pupils of Maesgwyn School, Alun and Daniel Rees.

**68**     **MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** to approve as an accurate record, the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 25 September 2013 subject to it being noted that County Borough Councillor H.Boggis and A.Roberts had been in attendance but their names had not been recorded.

**69**    **STATEMENTS**

There were no statements from the Leader of the Council or Cabinet Portfolio Holders on this occasion.

**70**    **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

(1)    **From County Borough Councillor L.Walker to the Leader of the Council (County Borough Councillor A.Christopher)**

“What steps is this administration taking to introduce Mandatory C.R.B. checks for all Councillors in R.C.T. as a Freedom of Information request shows only 2 Councillors are currently holder C.R.B. Certificates?”

**Response from the Deputy Leader (County Borough Councillor P.Cannon)**

“As the Leader is absent, you will receive a response in writing.”

(2)    **From County Borough Councillor S.Rees-Owen to the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Community Safety (County Borough Councillor P.Cannon,QPM)**

“Will you make a statement on the Council’s Economic Development Strategy?”

**Response from County Borough Councillor P.Cannon:**

“Despite the tough economic circumstances the policies of the UK Government are creating here in Wales and Rhondda Cynon Taf, this Council is committed to attracting inward investment and supporting our local economy. I refer you to the Council’s Single Integrated Plan.”

**Supplementary Question from County Borough Councillor S.Rees-Owen:**

“Thank you for your response. I am aware that the principles of the Economic Development Strategy were subsumed into the Strategic Improvement Plan and under the heading “Prosperity”, the Plan says that we will know we’re making a difference by the percentage of economically active people unemployed and by the percentage of children living in poverty amongst other outcomes. People are concerned that the proposal to make the education of 3 & 4 year olds part time could cause more parents to become, or continue to be, unemployed and more children to live in poverty as a consequence. How would you respond to that?”

**Response from County Borough Councillor Cannon:**

“I am not going to respond in relation to the Nursery Education issue that is out to consultation. However, at every opportunity, this Council will be looking to attract inward investment and we will be there at the head of the queue.”

- (3) **From County Borough Councillor M.Weaver to the Cabinet Member for Human Resources and Service Improvement (County Borough Councillor C.J.Willis)**

“Will you make a statement on the future workforce planning strategy?”

**Response from County Borough Councillor C.J.Willis:**

“Can I refer you to the recent letter issued by the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive which was copied to all Members. As was made clear in this correspondence, the public sector funding cuts being imposed on Wales by the Tories with the help of the Liberals totalling £1.7 billion are set to have a devastating impact on local public services and public sector jobs.”

**Supplementary Question from County Borough Councillor M.Weaver:**

“Can you tell us how many staff both teaching and support staff will need to be made redundant by Schools to meet the £4.3m cut in School Budgets as set out in the 21<sup>st</sup> October report?”

**Response from County Borough Councillor C.J.Willis:**

“No, I can’t give you an answer to that question.”

- (4) **From County Borough Councillor K.Morgan to the Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning (County Borough Councillor (Mrs) E.Hanagan)**

“Will you make a statement on Post 16 Education and Skills Development?”

**Response from County Borough Councillor (Mrs) E.Hanagan:**

“I refer you to the report considered by Cabinet on 26 September where a five year plan was agreed to improve post 16 provision through stronger

collaborative working between schools and the Further Education College in R.C.T.”

**Supplementary Question from County Borough Councillor K.Morgan:**

“With specific reference to the provision of Post 16 Education for young people with severe autism in RCT, the Council currently pays for out of area provision. I am informed that fees can range from £25k plus transport costs per year per child with one provider having fees of £60k. I am aware that the Council is considering making provision available within the County Borough. Will the Cabinet Member explain the likely timetable for any such provision, how the timetable will allow enough time to ensure smooth transfer for those already in their transition year and whether the Council’s cuts programme will delay a much needed local provision which would be better value for money?”

**Response from County Borough Councillor Hanagan:**

“The report will be going to both Cabinet and all the details then will be give to all Councillors”.

(5) **From County Borough Councillor S.Evans-Fear to the Cabinet Member for Social Justice (County Borough Councillor C.Middle)**

“Will you make a statement on Sheltered Housing?”

**Response from County Borough Councillor C.Middle:**

“The Council undertook a Local Housing Market Assessment in 2012, which included an assessment of the need for sheltered housing provision across the County Borough. Overall, a surplus of sheltered accommodation was identified across all areas and property sizes. The Council will continue to work the Housing Associations and the private sector to meet the accommodation needs of our older residents.

**Supplementary Question from County Borough Councillor S.Evans-Fear:**

“What discussions have you had with Housing Associations following or prior to the report presented to Cabinet on 21<sup>st</sup> October to come to joint arrangements under the Supporting People Fund to retain day centre services?”

**Response from County Borough Councillor Middle:**

“None, no reference to Day Centres only Sheltered Housing”.

## **REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

### **71 WALES PROGRAMME FOR IMPROVEMENT – THE COUNCIL’S ANNUAL DELIVERY REPORT FOR 2012/2013**

In his report, the Chief Executive presented the Council with its Annual Delivery Report for 2012/13 (Appendix 1) to meet its responsibility under Section 15(2) of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and related guidance issued by the Welsh Government.

The report set out how the Council had contributed to the Community Strategy “Promoting Achievement, Tackling Disadvantage” for the County Borough with the over-riding aim of supporting improved outcomes for the residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Following a discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the Annual Delivery Report for 2012/13 (Appendix 1) for publication by the statutory publication date of 31<sup>st</sup> October 2013.

## **JOINT REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR, LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND THE DIRECTOR, HUMAN RESOURCES**

### **72 RESIGNATION OF THE SENIOR CORONER FOR POWYS, BRIDGEND AND GLAMORGAN VALLEYS**

In the joint report, the Council was advised of the resignation of the Senior Coroner for Powys, Bridgend and Glamorgan Valleys and the interim arrangements whereby the Assistant Coroner would assume the role of Acting senior Coroner to ensure continuity of Service Delivery.

The Council was also advised of the resignation of the Senior Coroner for the Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Area and the potential opportunity to merge with Powys, Bridgend and Glamorgan Valleys. Discussions were currently ongoing in this regard and a further report would be submitted to the Council on the outcome.

It was noted that whatever the outcome of the discussions, it would be necessary to appoint a successor as soon as reasonably practicable.

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

- (1) To note the resignation of the Senior Coroner for the Powys, Bridgend and Glamorgan Valleys Area.

- (2) To note the interim arrangement whereby the existing Assistant Coroner will assume the role of Acting Senior Coroner to ensure continuity of Service Delivery.
- (3) To note the consideration of possible amalgamation with the Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Coroner Area.
- (4) That a Panel of 3 Members, i.e. The Leader of the Council, the H.R. & Service Improvement Portfolio Holder and the Leader of the largest Opposition Group (or substitutes) be constituted as a Coroner Appointment Panel.

## **REPORTS OF THE DIRECTOR, LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

### **73 REVIEW OF THE CURRENT MEMBERS' DECLARATION OF INTERESTS AT MEETINGS FORM – RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

In his report, the Director, Legal & Democratic Services advised the Council of recommendations from the Standards Committee in relation to Members' Declaration of Interests at meetings and comments were sought on a proposed revised form in respect of recording such declarations.

The Director, Legal & Democratic Services also advised the Council of the circumstances when the Standards Committee may grant dispensations to Members and stated that as part of its Work Programme, the Standards Committee was investigating how other local authorities in Wales were dealing with the granting of dispensations with a view to amending the current form following the review.

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

- (1) To note that the Standards Committee has reviewed examples of completed declaration of interest at meetings forms and as a result, the several recommendations it wishes to communicate to Members as set out in paragraph 4 of the report.
- (2) To note the draft revised form, annexed to the report as Appendix 1, in relation to recording declaration of interests at meetings and that the new form is proposed to come into effect from 1 December 2013.
- (3) To agree that Members should receive refresher training in respect of declarations of interests at meetings together with guidance on using the amended form, with such training scheduled to be provided before the Development Control Committee

meetings scheduled for 7<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> November 2013 at which time Members feedback/comments on the proposed form will be considered.

- (4) To note the statutory framework in respect of the granting of dispensations by the Standards Committee, the circumstances when the Standards Committee may grant such dispensations, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report, and that the Council's current application form will be shortly amended.

**74** **THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (WALES) MEASURE 2011 – CONSULTATION DOCUMENT – DESIGNATED PERSONS ORDER (NUMBER 1)**

In his report, the Director, Legal & Democratic Services advised Members of the comments and recommendations made by the Democratic Services Committee at its meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2013 and the Overview & Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2013 following consideration of the Welsh Government's consultation document relating to the proposed list of public service providers to be included in the Designated Persons Order (No.1) under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.

The Council was requested to consider the comments/views of both Committees in response to the consultation document and any others Members' wish to put forward.

Following consideration of the report, it was **RESOLVED** to endorse the comments of the Democratic Services Committee and the Overview & Scrutiny Committee at meetings held on 8<sup>th</sup> October and 16<sup>th</sup> October 2013 respectively for submission to the Welsh Government by the deadline of 21<sup>st</sup> November 2013.

**75** **LOCAL AUTHORITIES (EXECUTIVE ARRANGEMENTS) (FUNCTIONS & RESPONSIBILITIES) (WALES) REGULATIONS 2007 – SCRAP METAL DEALERS ACT 2013 – RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE**

The Director, Legal & Democratic Services sought the Council's approval of the recommendations of the Corporate Governance and Constitution Committee that representation be made to the Welsh Government with regard to amendments of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Functions & Responsibilities) (Wales) Regulations 2007 as detailed in his report and following consideration thereof, it was **RESOLVED** –



- (1) To note the work being undertaken by Members of the Corporate Governance and Constitution Committee in respect of the All Wales Modular Constitution.
- (2) To endorse the comments of the Corporate Governance and Constitution Committee at its meeting held on 10 October 2013 that this Council:
  - (a) request the Welsh Government to amend the Functions Regulations as soon as possible to specify the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 as a Council function; and
  - (b) to request the Welsh Government to amend the Functions regulations to include a regulation that if legislation is re-enacted responsibility for exercise of the functions under the new Act will be the same as the legislation it replaces.

**76 CHANGE TO MEMBERSHIP OF THE L.E.A. GOVERNORS (APPOINTMENTS) COMMITTEE**

In his report, the Director, Legal & Democratic Services advised the Council of a change to the Labour Group representation on the L.E.A.Governors (Appointments) Committee arising from the resignation of County Borough Councillor G.Thomas from that Committee and it was **RESOLVED** to note that County Borough Councillor M.Forey will replace County Borough Councillor G.Thomas on the L.E.A. Governors (Appointments) Committee, with immediate effect.

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR, HUMAN RESOURCES**

**77 APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

In his report, the Director, Human Resources sought ratification of the recommendation of the Appointments Committee in respect of the appointment of Chief Executive and following consideration of the matter, it was **RESOLVED** to ratify the recommendation of the Appointments Committee that Mr.Steve Merritt be appointed to the post of Chief Executive from the 25<sup>th</sup> March 2014, being the day after the retirement date of the current postholder.

(**Note:** County Borough Councillors P.Howe, P.Wasley and L.Walker wished to have recorded that they voted against the appointment of a Chief Executive).

**78**    **NOTICE OF MOTION**

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

“This Council deplores the injustice of the “Bedroom Tax”.

As a consequence, this Council is seriously concerned about its effect on the health and wellbeing of the people who have fallen victim to this iniquitous Condem Government housing benefit change.

In an effort to mitigate against the worst effect of the “Bedroom Tax” regulations, the Council will commit to making official representation to Social Housing Landlords operating in Rhondda Cynon Taf, to not evict tenants for rent arrears which accrues as a consequence of the “Bedroom Tax”.

The Council further commits to making representation to the Welsh Government to issue guidance to stop those same evictions until the “Bedroom Tax” is abolished”

Following a discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the above-mentioned motion.

**A.CRIMMINGS  
MAYOR**

The meeting terminated at 6.55 p.m.