

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, 23 July 2014 at 5.00 p.m.

PRESENT

County Borough Councillor M.J.Watts – in the Chair

County Borough Councillors

(Mrs) T.A.Bates	M.Griffiths	S.Rees-Owen
D.R.Bevan	P.Griffiths	(Mrs) A.Roberts
H.Boggis	(Mrs) E.Hanagan	J.Rosser
J.Bonetto	G.Holmes	G.Smith
S.A.Bradwick	G.E.Hopkins	R.W.Smith
J.Bunnage	P.Howe	R.K.Turner
S.Carter	P.Jarman	L.G.Walker
(Mrs) J.Cass	(Mrs) S.J.Jones	(Mrs) J.S.Ward
A.Crimmings	R.Lewis	P.Wasley
W.J.David	(Mrs) C.Leyshon	M.Webber
A.L.Davies,MBE	S.Lloyd	E.Webster
(Mrs) A.Davies	R.B.McDonald	C.J.Williams
C.Davies	K.J.Montague	D.H.Williams
J.Davies	A.Morgan	T.Williams
G.R.Davies	B.Morgan	C.J.Willis
(Mrs) M.E.Davies	M.A.Norris	R.A.Yeo
J.Elliott	I.Pearce	
M.Forey	S.Pickering	
A.S.Fox	S.Rees	

Officers in Attendance

Mr.C.Lee – Group Director, Corporate Services
Mr.P.J.Lucas – Director, Legal & Democratic Services
Mr.T.Wilkins – Director, Human Resources
Mr.N.Elliott – Service Director, Direct Services, Business & Housing
Mr.N.Wheeler – Service Director, Streetcare
Mr.P.Mee – Service Director, Public Health & Protection
Mrs.E.Thomas – Service Director, Schools & Community

46 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors L.M.Adams, P.Baccara, A.Calvert, P.Cannon,QPM, (Mrs) L.De Vet, S.M.Evans-Fear, J.S.James, W.L.Langford, K.Morgan, S.Powderhill, M.J.Powell, (Mrs) M.Tegg, G.Thomas, M.Weaver and W.D.Weeks.

47 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Declarations of Interests by Elected Members

- (1) County Borough Councillor (Mrs) E.Hanagan in respect of Agenda Item No.12 – Review of Chief Officer Positions –“ I am related to one of the Officers mentioned in the report, it is also a prejudicial interest and I will leave the meeting for this item.”
- (2) County Borough Councillor H.Boggis in respect of Agenda Item No.5(5) – Question to Cabinet Member – “I work for the Third Sector”.

Declarations of Interests by Council Officers

- (1) Mr.C.Lee in respect of Agenda Item No.12 – Review of Chief Officer Positions – “I wish to declare a personal interest in the matter and whilst it was only a personal interest, I will leave the meeting for this item.
- (2) Mr.N.Elliott in respect of Agenda Item No.12 – Review of Chief Officer Positions – “I wish to declare and personal and pecuniary interest in the matter and I will leave the meeting for this item”.
- (3) Mr.P.Mee in respect of Agenda Item No.12 – Review of Chief Officer Positions – “I wish to declare and personal and pecuniary interest in the matter and I will leave the meeting for this item”.

48 ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor announced that 19 athletes from Rhondda Cynon Taf were representing Wales at the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow which open later today. The Mayor stated that he had met the athletes prior to their departure and on behalf of the Council, he had wished them all every success in competing at the Games.

The Mayor also announced that he had been advised by the Head of Prevention Services – Children’s Services that two young people who came into the Special Care System had recently attained University Degrees. On receiving this news, the Council applauded to the two

young people concerned and wished them all the very best in their future careers. The Chair of the Corporate Parenting Board also wished to place on record his personal congratulations to the two concerned.

49 MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve as an accurate record, the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 25 June 2014.

50 OPEN GOVERNMENT – STATEMENT FROM THE LEADER

Members will be aware a Cabinet Meeting was held a few weeks ago and Leaders of all Opposition Groups were invited along to discuss Medium Term Financial Planning as we have a funding shortfall of £70m over the next three years with next year's shortfall in the region of £30m. I now wish to update you on some of the actions taken and those speeded up since then.

A review of office accommodation is underway and a procurement board has been set up to look for savings. We are looking at all areas of expenditure.

In terms of Senior Management, whilst acknowledging that a large complex organisation like ours needs strong management, I do expect a reduction in management costs within the Authority. Officers have been tasked to look at all areas of management across all departments and Officers will bring forward reviews for consideration. We do have a lean management structure but there is always room for improvements.

With regard to expressions of interests, we asked employees to put these in if they wished to leave the Authority. This has been a complex area of work which has been worked on by Human Resources and Service Managers. So far, 75 individuals have gone through the process of VER over the last couple of weeks with anticipated savings in excess of £1m in a full year.

On Engagement with Community Groups – I am keen that we do interact with Community Groups better in the future. Councillor Keiron Montague will be leading on this and we will look at how we can deliver this improvement. We will have dialogue with groups and organisations to see how we can manage the transformation of services. If we have to close something down and someone comes up with a plan to re-open it, I want this to be done in a managed and controlled way and we will try to help these Groups succeed.

Another area where we should improve is how we generally engage with the public and make it more effective than in the past. We will have to make tough decisions in the future and, therefore, I want us to engage better with the public in terms of telling them why we are doing things and also having discussions with the public about other possible options. There will be services and facilities out there that in the future, we just can't afford to fund.

We will make sure that the public are kept informed of what is planned and will operate in a different way from that in the past.

Over the coming few months, these matters will be coming to Cabinet for consideration and will be out in the public domain.

51 **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

(1) From County Borough Councillor R.Lewis to the Leader of the Council (County Borough Councillor A.Morgan)

"The recent Williams Report commented 'If every local authority were able to reduce its corporate costs to the level of those in Rhondda Cynon Taf, the total saving across Wales would be in the order of £38 million per year' – will the Leader please comment on this statement?"

Response from County Borough Councillor A.Morgan:

Yes, it is pleasing to see in the Williams Report that Rhondda Cynon Taf was highlighted as having low base management costs compared to other authorities which are both similar and smaller than us. We do have a lean management structure but times are different now than the past and I would expect that our management costs in the coming years continue to reduce and that's why the Officers are undertaking further reviews.

(2) From County Borough Councillor L.M.Adams to the Leader of the Council (County Borough Councillor A.Morgan)

"Will the Leader make a statement on his recent commitment to engage our employees more closely in finding solutions to the public spending cuts the Council faces?"

It was noted that as County Borough Councillor L.M.Adams was not in attendance to ask his question in person, he will, therefore, receive a written response from the Leader of the Council.

(3) From County Borough Councillor M.E.Davies to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure & Sport (County Borough Councillor A.Crimmings)

“Will the Cabinet Member make a statement on the recent review of Leisure Services in the County Borough?”

Response from County Borough Councillor A.Crimmings:

“The recent review relating to Leisure Services will be considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 31st July 2014”

Supplementary Question from County Borough Councillor Davies:

“I along with my fellow colleagues, Councillor Graham Smith, Chris Williams, Margaret Tegg and Lionel Langford, have stressed the value of the pool at Bronwydd for Porth and surrounding areas – will you give them deliberation when you consider the matter?”

Response from County Borough Councillor Crimmings:

“Yes, I along with the Leader visited Bronwydd Pool and am aware of the facilities that it offers. You and the other Members have put forward a strong case for Bronwydd. At this present time, I can’t offer assurances but we are looking at facilities right across the board. The fact is that the level of provision we currently have can’t be the same so we are looking right across the board at the Cabinet meeting on 31 July but because of the cuts we are facing, there will have to be changes.”

(4) From County Borough Councillor T.Williams to the Cabinet Member for Children’s Social Services and Equalities (County Borough Councillor G.E.Hopkins)

“Will the Cabinet Member make a statement on services to support families?”

Response from County Borough Councillor G.E.Hopkins:

“RCT Children’s Services deliver a wide range of Family Support Services including a well established and effective early year’s service. At the heart of this is the local implementation of the Welsh Government Flying Start Programme. Children’s Services provision is complemented by wider early year’s services including those commissioned via the Fframwaith Partnership. To supplement this, the award winning Family Information Service provides a free information and signposting service to all families with children aged 0 – 25 years. There is clearly such a huge

range of services provided by the Council to families and I cannot cover them all”

Supplementary Question from County Borough Councillor Williams:

“The Council clearly provides a wide range of services to support families but what impact are they having on families?”

Response from County Borough Councillor Hopkins:

“The answer to that is, it depends on which services we are talking about. There is evidence to demonstrate that our targeted family support services - the Rapid Intervention Response Team and the Integrated Family Support Teams are providing specialised and intensive support to families. Our latest review from the CSSIW also stated that there is evidence of the positive value that prevention services bring to children and families and we will build on this in the future”

(5) From County Borough Councillor M.Griffiths to the Cabinet Member for Service Delivery, Communities & Housing (County Borough Councillor K.Montague)

“In light of the tough financial circumstances facing the Council, how can we work with communities or the third sector to support service delivery?”

Response from County Borough Councillor Montague:

“We have to be realistic about the cuts coming to us, however, I think we need to be far more active engaging with communities and the third sector. It is vital that the Council works with and supports communities and the third sector in terms of the future of community facilities.”

Supplementary Question from County Borough Councillor Griffiths:

“You will be aware of the efforts of myself and the community of Pontyclun in seeking to ensure a future for Pontyclun Day Centre after the Council could no longer afford to support the facility. When the Council and Cabinet consider services changes in the future can I ask that you work closely with community councils when considering how services can be alternatively delivered?”

Response from County Borough Councillor Montague:

“The short answer is yes and Community Councils are going to have a big role in working with us in partnership. I will be writing to all Community

Councils asking them if they have any ideas and if they would like to discuss them.”

52 **WALES AUDIT OFFICE**
ANNUAL IMPROVEMENT REPORT – RHONDDA CYNON TAF
COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Council received Mr. Colin Davies of the Wales Audit Office who presented the Annual Improvement Report for Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (issued July 2014 and not July 2013 as indicated on the report cover).

Mr. Davies outlined the contents of the Annual Improvement Report and highlighted the key messages contained therein. He also pointed out that no new recommendations were being made this year and the report set out the progress the Council was making to address the proposals for improvement made in previous Annual Reports.

Mr. Davies then responded to a number of questions raised by Members regarding the report and following lengthy discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to note the contents of the Annual Improvement Report and to refer the Report to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to look at the areas highlighted for improvement and report back to the Cabinet and full Council on their findings and recommendations.

REPORTS OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, CORPORATE SERVICES

53 **SINGLE INTEGRATED PLAN – ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14**

In his report, the Group Director, Corporate Services provided the Council with the Single Integrated Plan Annual Report 2013/14 (technical version) which had been approved by the Local Service Board (LSB) on 26 June 2014. The LSB Scrutiny Working Group had also endorsed the document at its meeting on 21 July 2014.

Following lengthy discussion on the report, it was **RESOLVED** to note the contents of the Annual Report 2013/14 (technical version) and the progress made in relation to the three outcomes of “Safety”, “Health” and “Prosperity”.

54 **ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW**

In his report, the Group Director, Corporate Services provided the Council with information on the Council’s Treasury Management activity during 2013/14 and the actual Prudential and Treasury Indicators for 2013/14

and following consideration thereof, it was **RESOLVED** to note the content of the report.

REPORTS OF THE DIRECTOR, LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

55 COMMUNITY BOUNDARIES AND ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS REVIEW

The Director, Legal & Democratic Services sought the Council's approval of the Final Proposals of the Community Review as outlined in his report in order for them to be forwarded to the Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales.

Following consideration of the proposals, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the Final Proposals for the Review of Community Boundaries and Electoral Arrangements as set out in the Appendix to the report (pages 143-154) subject to reference being made in the report to the community of Penycoedcae, where appropriate, prior to the proposals being forwarded on to the Boundary Commission.

56 CHANGES TO THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE AND NOMINATION OF A NEW SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT CO-ORDINATOR

In his report, the Director, Legal & Democratic Services advised the Council of changes to the Labour Group representatives on the Audit Committee and the need to nominate a replacement Member to the post of Scrutiny Performance Management Co-ordinator owing to the resignation of County Borough Councillor (Mrs) J.Cass from the post.

It was **RESOLVED** –

- (1) To note that County Borough Councillors S.Bradwick and (Mrs) S.J.Jones with replace County Borough Councillor C.Middle and M.A.Norris on the Audit Committee with immediate effect.
- (2) To appoint County Borough Councillor C.J.Willis to the post of Scrutiny Performance Management Co-ordinator for the remainder of the 2014/15 municipal year.

57 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting under Section 100(a) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) for the next item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely

disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 12 and 23 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Act”.

JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND THE DIRECTOR, HUMAN RESOURCES CONTAINING EXEMPT INFORMATION

58 REVIEW OF CHIEF OFFICER POSITIONS

(**Note:** Having earlier declared interests in the above-mentioned matter (Minute No.47 refers), County Borough Councillor (Mrs) E.Hanagan, Mr.C.Lee, Mr.N.Elliott and Mr.P.Mee left the meeting for this item).

The Council was provided with a copy of the Joint Report of the Chief Executive and the Director, Human Resources which had been presented to the Appointments Committee for consideration at its meeting on 22 July 2014 in relation to the outcome of a review of a number of Chief Officer posts across the Council’s directorates, including the resultant savings. The Appointments Committee had agreed the recommendations in the report which required ratification by the full Council.

Before consideration was given to the report, the Leader of the Council informed Members that since the meeting of the Appointments Committee, he had received news that Mr.George Jones, the Group Director for Environmental Services, who was currently on sick leave had indicated he will not be returning to work in the future. In the circumstances, it was proposed to defer consideration of the review undertaken to date and the Appointments Committee’s recommendations thereon and instead, request relevant Officers to undertake a further wider Review of the Senior Management Structure within the Authority.

Following a discussion on the proposal put forward by the Council Leader, it was **RESOLVED**

- (1) To defer the matter and to instruct the Chief Executive and the Director, Human Resources to extend the review of Senior Management Positions and submit a fresh report back to the Appointments Committee and to the Council in September 2014.
- (2) To acknowledge the valued contribution Mr.George Jones has made to the Authority over the years and to wish him all the very best for the future.

**M.J.WATTS
MAYOR**

The meeting terminated at 7.15 p.m.

These minutes are subject to approval as an accurate record at the next meeting of the Council