

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, 29 October 2014 at 5.00 p.m.

PRESENT

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

County Borough Councillors

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

Officers in Attendance

Mr.S.Merritt – Chief Executive
Mr.C.Lee – Group Director, Corporate Services
Mr.G.Isingrini – Group Director, Community & Children's Services
Mr.P.J.Lucas – Director, Legal & Democratic Services
Mr.T.Wilkins – Director, Human Resources
Mrs.J.Cook – Director, Regeneration & Planning
Mr.N.Wheeler – Service Director, Streetcare
Mr.P.Mee – Service Director, Public Health & Protection
Mrs.E.Thomas – Service Director, Schools & Community

72 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors S.A.Bradwick, (Mrs) J.Cass, (Mrs) A.Davies, C.Davies, (Mrs) M.E.Davies, S.M.Evans-Fear, G.Holmes, R.B.McDonald, B.Morgan, S.Rees, W.D.Week and D.H.Williams.

73 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Declaration of Interest by an Elected Member

(1) County Borough Councillor (Mrs) E.Hanagan in respect of Agenda Item No.12 (Urgent Business) – Review of the Council’s Senior Management Structure – “ A close member of my family is being discussed, it is also a prejudicial interest and I will leave the meeting for this item.”

Declaration of Interest by Council Officer

(1) Mr.C.Lee in respect of Agenda Item No.12 (Urgent Business) – Review of the Council’s Senior Management Structure - “I wish to declare a personal interest in this matter, whilst it is only a personal interest, I will leave the meeting for this item.”

74 ANNOUNCEMENTS

(1) The Mayor announced that on Friday, 31 October, members of ‘Dynamic Fitness’ will be undertaking the Western Front Cycle Challenge, a 440 miles bike ride in aid of charity. County Borough Councillor Craig Middle was taking part in the event and the Mayor wished him and his fellow team members all the very best in their efforts.

(2) The Council Leader, County Borough Councillor Andrew Morgan, was sad to announce the recent bereavement of former Council Officer, Jeff Higgins, who had worked in the Highways Department before his retirement earlier this year. The funeral was tomorrow and all Council Members had been notified of the arrangements. Members stood for a minute in silence as a mark of respect.

(3) County Borough Councillor Shelley Rees-Owen informed the Council that her daughter was taking part in an 18 miles walk from Bridgend to Cardiff to raise money for a young person, who had suffered brain damage, to modify his home to help make his life more comfortable. Members were asked to sponsor her efforts for this worthy cause.

- (4) The Mayor wished to place on record his personal thanks to Members, Officers and the public for all their kind 'Get Well' messages during his recent short illness which he and his family appreciated very much.

75 MINUTES

To approve as accurate records, the minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 24th September 2014 and 1st October 2014.

76 OPEN GOVERNMENT – STATEMENTS

There were no statements made by the Leader of the Council or Cabinet Members on this occasion.

77 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

- (1) From County Borough Councillor J.Bunnage to the Cabinet Member for Service Delivery, Communities and Housing (County Borough Councillor K.Montague)**

"It is evident that the status quo in terms of service delivery is potentially no longer sustainable due to the budget gap we face and the subsequent need to cut costs, will the Cabinet Member, therefore, provide an update on how the Council intends to engage the community to maintain local services?"

Response from County Borough Councillor K.Montague:

"We have to recognize the size of the challenge facing us. As a Cabinet we went out and engaged with communities over the last couple of months. In terms of changes and cuts coming forward, we had a positive response and the public took on board the scale of the problem. It will mean real service changes and cuts. However, as a Cabinet we are looking to save services where possible and working with the third sector. I have already met with that sector and a paper is before the Cabinet tomorrow. We are looking to work with the third sector to take things forward."

Supplementary Question from County Borough Councillor J.Bunnage:

"Can you support social enterprises in the future to take over Council facilities and services where appropriate?"

Response from County Borough Councillor K.Montague:

“Myself and Councillor Robert Bevan have discussed this many times but in terms of the cuts, we are looking to hold an engagement event, probably after Christmas, where we will engage with key partners and as part of the Cabinet paper tomorrow, we are looking to set up a strategic group to deal with this and make sure they are part of the change.”

(2) From County Borough Councillor J.Bonetto to the Leader of the Council (County Borough Councillor A.Morgan)

“Could the Leader confirm if Opposition Groups have submitted any alternatives to the proposals they have spoken against which seek to address the £30m budget gap we face?”

Response from County Borough Councillor A.Morgan:

“I haven’t had any alternatives to what we have put forward from any Member but Councillor Pauline Jarman has been in correspondence with me this afternoon. The Plaid Cymru Group have put forward some suggestions and I will meet with Councillor Jarman to see if some of these are feasible. Other than that there has been no contact from Members on alternatives to what has been put forward.”

Supplementary Question from County Borough Councillor J.Bonetto:

“Would you agree that it is incumbent upon all Members, whether they form part of the Executive or not, to bring forward alternatives?”

Response from County Borough Councillor A.Morgan:

“Yes. Unfortunately, somebody out there will be affected by cuts but whatever we do we have to make cuts, it’s as simple as that. We haven’t got to like the cuts and no one wants them but we have to balance the budget. If Members want to argue against what we are cutting then, yes, they should seek other alternatives and put them forward to us to consider and cost them. It is incumbent on all Councillors, it is the collective responsibility of all Councillors to set a balanced budget to go forward.”

(3) From County Borough Councillor M.J.Powell to the Leader of the Council (County Borough Councillor A.Morgan)

“Are Cabinet Members’ attendances in performance of their Cabinet duties at Council Offices or elsewhere recorded?”

Response from County Borough Councillor A.Morgan:

“The attendance of Cabinet Members in performance of their official duties is recorded in the same way as it is for all members.”

Supplementary Question from County Borough Councillor M.J.Powell:

“Can I request Councillor Morgan that you have a register of activities of the Cabinet so that people can see what activities they are taking part in for the benefit of the Council Borough?”

Response from County Borough Councillor A.Morgan:

“I have absolutely no problem at all with the effort, time and commitment of my Cabinet in what they do as duties and they are remunerated in accordance with the Remuneration Panel’s decision. Cabinet Members work far in excess of 37 hours a week. I would say that I have kept a record of my time over the last week, I am currently around 56 hours of dealing with core Cabinet responsibilities not including my own Ward duties. Cabinet Members don’t have to be in the Cabinet Office to do their job. No Cabinet Member around this table has a full time job elsewhere. Cabinet Members have taken reductions in working hours where they work and also Cabinet Members don’t do 9-5, Monday to Friday. I correspond with my Members and Officers at all times and they are always available to correspond with me at any time. Maybe you should consider the role of the Cabinet more closely, this is not a 9-5 job.”

(4) From County Borough Councillor M.J.Powell to the Leader of the Council (County Borough Councillor A.Morgan)

“Why are there no elected Members from the Pontypridd area sitting on the Development Control Committee?”

Response from County Borough Councillor A.Morgan:

I find the question rather odd because you fail to understand that the new Development Control Committee is a strategic Committee. It is more streamlined and it’s not about where you live but the policies we have in place in dealing with applications rather than having local member knowledge. We are moving forward in accordance with the new Planning Bill and have a more streamlined planning system so geographically I fail to see your argument.”

Supplementary Question from County Borough Councillor M.J.Powell:

“Would Councillor Morgan agree that Pontypridd being the major town of the County Borough should have a member from that area sitting within the Development Control Committee because of the economic importance of the town?”

Response from Councillor A.Morgan:

“I could possibly agree but the Development Control Committee is as it is and I have nothing further to add.”

(5) From County Borough Councillor M.J.Powell to the Leader of the Council (County Borough Councillor A.Morgan)

“Why were non Cabinet Members barred by you from attending your “Engagement Sessions” with Council Officers being in attendance?”

Response from County Borough Councillor A.Morgan:

“They were Community Engagement events. No Members other than the Executive were allowed to attend because of capacity and it was face to face discussions with Officers and Members. I know you tried several times to ask to attend and other Members were turned away from my own Group as well. I think Councillors Bradwick, Calvert, Bonetto and Bates were turned away so all non Executive Members were turned away. As a Councillor you can ask me questions at any time like you are doing now”

Supplementary Question from County Borough Councillor M.J.Powell:

“Am I not a member of the public and if so, why was I not allowed to attend the meeting?”

Response from County Borough Councillor A.Morgan:

“I will just reiterate my point and you are wrong as normal. Members of the public can write in to ask questions around specifics. There is no facility for members of the public to sit here, look at details of reports and then challenge them. There is also no opportunity for members of the public to discuss Officers’ presentations. It is difficult for the public when they want to engage in a Council meeting as it isn’t a public forum. I find this frustrating for them so by doing these events and I plan more in the future, they can sit through presentations, ask questions and challenge things. There was an open mike session and every single one of those

events ran over sometimes by one hour. The public could ask whatever questions they wanted to and Officers were there to support.”

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

78 WALES PROGRAMME FOR IMPROVEMENT - THE COUNCIL'S ANNUAL DELIVERY REPORT FOR 2013/14

In his report, the Chief Executive presented for consideration, the Council's Annual Delivery Report for 2013/14 to meet the Council's responsibility under Part 1, Section 15(2) of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and related guidance issued by the Welsh Government.

The Council's Annual Delivery Report aimed to provide a fair and balanced assessment of each improvement priority for 2013/14, setting out areas of positive performance and also, areas that require attention and improvement and following consideration of the matter, the Council **RESOLVED** to approve the Annual Delivery Report for 2013/14 for publication by the statutory publication date of 31st October 2014.

REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, CORPORATE SERVICES

79 THE COUNCIL'S 2015/2016 REVENUE BUDGET – THE PROVISIONAL SETTLEMENT

In his report, the Group Director, Corporate Services provided the Council with information in respect of the 2015/2016 provisional local government settlement and initial comments on its likely implications for the delivery of Council services. Also provided, was important information for use in respect of this year's general budget strategy consultation exercise.

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

- (1) To note the provisional 2015/2016 local government settlement, announced by the Minister for Public Services, on 8th October 2014.
- (2) To note that the final 2015/2016 local government settlement is expected on 10th December 2014.
- (3) To note that in response to the Minister's request for local authorities' comments, as part of his local government settlement consultation process, this Council's response includes the following, which is amended wording to that recommended in the report:

“Whilst clearly all parts of the Public Sector nationally are feeling the continued effects of the UK Government’s austerity measures, we are concerned that local government services which relate to and support the health and wellbeing of our communities will be compromised unless cross cutting on health and social care funding is better provided for.

The decision to again provide a damping/floor adjustment is, we feel, an equitable approach and we continue to argue that during this period of funding uncertainty and volatility, that formula changes should be kept to a minimum.

A recurring theme, as per previous years, is a request that in order to fully assess the impact on the Council of the settlement, we would ask that the detail on outstanding specific grants is provided as soon as possible.

The Council requires urgent confirmation of its allocation of the Outcome Agreement Grant for 2015/16.

The absence of any indication of future settlement levels beyond 2015/16 continues to present a forward planning challenge for this Council.”

- (4) To note that the initial general budget strategy consultation exercise will commence pre-Christmas 2014.

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR, LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

79 REVIEW OF UK PARLIAMENTARY POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES

In his report, the Director, Legal & Democratic Services informed the Council of the outcome of a Statutory Review of Polling Districts and Places as well as a Review of Polling Stations and following consideration of his comments, it was **RESOLVED** –

- (1) To approve the outcome of the Review with regard to Polling Districts and Polling Places.
- (2) To note the outcome of the Review of Polling Stations as set out in the Appendix to the report.
- (3) That the result of the Reviews be published as appropriate in accordance with Electoral Commission Circulates and Guidance.

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR, REGENERATION AND PLANNING

80 FUNDING PACKAGE FOR THE VIBRANT AND VIABLE PLACES PROGRAMME

In her report, the Director, Regeneration and Planning outlined the funding package for the Vibrant and Viable Places Programme in the Pontypridd Settlement Area.

The Programme consisted of the following projects that were led by both the Council and Third Sector organisations:

- Homes Above Retail Premises
- Homestep Plus
- Heat and Save Ponty
- Regenerating Lady Windsor Colliery
- The YM Centre of Creativity and Wellbeing
- Townscape Enhancement Programme

Members noted that the £5.980 million funding approval from Welsh Government now allowed the programme to proceed and the projects would add value to the significant regeneration investment that had already taken place and would act as a catalyst for further regeneration activity in the area.

Following a discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to note the programme package and to agree to the inclusion of the projects within the Council's Capital Programme.

81 OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2013-14

The Council was presented with the Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report for 2013-2014.

The Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, County Borough Councillor R.K.Turner, outlined the work undertaken during the last twelve months and the Chair of the Environmental Services Scrutiny Committee wished to place on record his thanks to his Committee Members for all their hard work during the year.

Following a discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to accept the report.

82 NOTICE OF MOTION

The following Notice of Motion was moved by County Borough Councillor A.S.Fox and seconded by County Borough Councillor (Mrs) J.S.Ward:

- “1. This Council believes domestic abuse, particularly violence against women but also not forgetting violence against men, is an issue of grave and rising concern in our communities.
2. The Council is especially concerned of the effects of domestic abuse on children, noting that 198 (39%) out of the 511 Children at Risk in Rhondda Cynon Taf are registered as such due to emotional abuse, much of which is linked to their exposure to domestic abuse.
3. The Council resolves to work within the Council and with other partners to continue to raise public awareness of the issue of domestic abuse and its effects on the men, women and children of Rhondda Cynon Taf.
4. The Council resolves to endorse the White Ribbon Campaign.”

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

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR, LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

83 URGENT REPORT **CHANGE OF MEMBERSHIP OF THE DEVELOPMENT CONTROL** **COMMITTEE AND APPOINTMENT OF A NEW CHAIR**

In view of the urgency of the matter and with the permission of the Mayor, the Council considered the report of the Director, Legal & Democratic Services which informed Members of a change to the membership of the Development Control Committee resulting from the resignation of County Borough Councillor R.B.McDonald as a Member and Chair of the Committee.

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

- (1) To note that County Borough Councillor S.Powderhill will replace County Borough Councillor R.B.McDonald on the Development Control Committee, with immediate effect.
- (2) To appoint County Borough Councillor G.Stacey as Chair of the Development Control Committee for the remainder of the 2014-15 municipal year.
- (3) As a result of the resolution contained in (2) above, to appoint County Borough Councillor M.A.Norris as Chair of the Corporate Services

Scrutiny Committee in place of County Borough Councillor G.Stacey for the remainder of the 2014-15 municipal year.

- (4) As a result of the resolution contained in (3) above, to appoint County Borough Councillor (Mrs) J.S.Ward as Vice-Chair of the Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee in place of County Borough Councillor M.A.Norris for the remainder of the 2014-15 municipal year.

84 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 13 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Act”.

(**Note:** County Borough Councillors M.J.Powell, P.Wasley and L.G.Walker wished to have recorded that they voted against the above-mentioned motion to exclude the press and public for the next item of business).

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE CONTAINING EXEMPT INFORMATION

85 REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL’S SENIOR MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

(**Note:** Having previously declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the above-mentioned matter (Minute No.73(1) refers), County Borough Councillor (Mrs) E.Hanagan left the meeting for this item)

(**Note:** Mr.C.Lee, Group Director, Corporate Services also left the meeting for this item – Minute No.73(2) refers)

In view of the urgency of the matter and with the permission of the Mayor, the Council considered the report of the Chief Executive, containing exempt information, which sought ratification of recommendations emanating from decisions taken at the meeting of the Appointments Committee held on 27 October 2014 in respect of the review of the Council’s Senior Management Structure and Chief Officer positions within the Council.

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

- (1) To note the revised Council Chief Officer structure as shown at Appendix as agreed by Cabinet.
- (2) To note the formal decisions taken by the Appointments Committee as follows:

- (i) In accordance with the Council's Change Management Policy that Mr.Nigel Wheeler be assigned to the post of Director – Highways and Streetcare Services (Director – Level 2), effective from 1st November 2014;
 - (ii) In accordance with the Council's Change Management Policy that the Appointments Committee endorsed the contractual changes for Mr.Robert Gatis and Mr.Neil Elliott in their revised roles of Service Director – Adult Locality Services & Short Term Intervention (Service Director – Level 1) and Service Director – Direct Services, Business & Housing (Service Director – Level 1) respectively, effective from 1st November 2014;
 - (iii) In accordance with the Council's Change Management Policy that the Appointments Committee endorsed the contractual changes for Mr.Paul Mee in his revised role of Service Director – Public Health & Protection (Service Director – Level 1), effective from 1st November 2014.
- (3) That Mr.C.Lee undertake the role of deputy to the Chief Executive assuming responsibility during any period of absence of the Chief Executive, effective from 1st November 2014.
- (4) That in accordance with the Council's Change Management Policy and the recommendation of the Appointments Committee, the Council endorse the contractual changes for Mr.C.Hanagan in the revised role of Service Director – Cabinet Office & Public Relations (Service Director – Level 2), effective from 1st November 2014.
- (5) That the Director, Legal & Democratic Services be authorised to make all appropriate amendments to all or any consequential changes to the Council's Constitution to reflect the Senior Management Structure as approved by Cabinet and the recommendations as approved including, inter alia, the deletion of the following posts from the Council's existing Chief Officer structure:
- (i) Group Director – Environmental Services (Group Director Level)
 - (ii) Service Director – Streetcare (Service Director – Level 1)
 - (iii) Service Director – Highways, Transportation & Strategic Projects (Service Director – Level 1)
 - (iv) Service Director – Health & Social Care (Service Director – Level 1)

- (v) Head of Looked After Children's Services (Head of Service – Level 2)
- (vi) Head of Early Years and Family Support (Head of Service – Level 2)
- (vii) Head of Direct Services (Head of Service – Level 2)
- (viii) Head of Catering and Schools Facilities Services (Head of Service – Level 2)
- (ix) Head of Behaviour Support (Soulbury Grade)
- (x) Head of Performance Improvement (Head of Service – Level 1)
- (xi) Head of Benefits, Awards & Revenues (Head of Service – Level 1)
- (xii) Head of Finance Services – Community (Head of Service – Level 2)
- (xiii) Head of Finance Services – Education (Head of Service – Level 2)
- (xiv) Head of Finance Services – Environmental (Head of Service – Level 2)
- (xv) Head of Financial Reporting (Head of Service – Level 2)
- (xvi) Head of Management Accounting (Head of Service – Level 2)

(Note: County Borough Councillors J.S.James, P.Howe, M.J.Powell, L.G.Walker and P.Wasley wished to have recorded that they voted against the above-mentioned resolution)

(Note: County Borough Councillors G.R.Davies, P.Jarman, K.Morgan, I.Pearce, S.Rees-Owen, M.O.Weaver and E.Webster wished to have recorded that they abstained from voting on the above-mentioned matter)

**M.J.WATTS
MAYOR**

The meeting terminated at 7.45 p.m.