

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, Cambrian Park, Clydach Vale on Wednesday, 30 September, 2015 at 5 p.m.

PRESENT

County Borough Councillor B.Stephens – in the Chair

County Borough Councillors

L.M.Adams	(Mrs) E.Hanagan	K.A.Privett
D.R.Bevan	G.Holmes	S.Rees
H.W.Boggis	G.E.Hopkins	(Mrs) A.Roberts
S.A.Bradwick	P.Jarman	J.Rosser
S.L.Carter	(Mrs) S.J.Jones	R.W.Smith
(Mrs) J.Cass	R.Lewis	G.Stacey
A.Crimmings	C.J.Middle	R.K.Turner
W.J.David	K.J.Montague	G.P.Thomas
(Mrs) A.Davies	A.Morgan	L.G.Walker
C.Davies	B.Morgan	M.J.Watts
J.Davies	K.Morgan	M.Webber
(Mrs) L.De Vet	M.A.Norris	E.Webster
S.M.Evans	I.Pearce	C.J.Williams
M.Forey	S.Pickering	T.Williams
M.Griffiths	S.Powderhill	C.J.Willis
P.Griffiths	M.J.Powell	R.Yeo

Officers in Attendance

Mr.C.Bradshaw – Chief Executive

Mr.C.Lee – Group Director, Corporate & Frontline Services

Mr.T.Wilkins – Director, Human Resources

Mr.P.J.Lucas – Director, Legal & Democratic Services

Mr.C.Hanagan – Service Director, Cabinet Office & Public Relations

39 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors P.Baccara, J.Bonetto, J.Bunnage, A.L.Davies, MBE, G.R.Davies, (Mrs) M.E.Davies, S.M.Evans-Fear, A.S.Fox, P.Howe, J.S.James, (Mrs) C.Leyshon, R.B.McDonald, S.Rees-Owen, G.Smith, (Mrs) M.Tegg, (Mrs) J.S.Ward, M.O.Weaver, W.D.Weeks and D.H.Williams.

40 PETITIONS

The Mayor was presented with a Petition by County Borough Councillor S.A.Bradwick, on behalf of residents of Aberdare, requesting the Council to open the public toilets located at Aberdare Park at the same time as the Park opens at 7 a.m. and not later as is currently the case.

The Mayor also presented at Petition on behalf of residents of Llanharry (via Llanharry Community Council) requesting the Council to provide traffic calming measures on Llanharry Road from Brynsadler to the centre of Llanharry due to the road being used with a complete disregard of speed limits.

41 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Members had no declarations of personal interests in matters pertaining to the agenda at this point in the proceedings.

42 ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (1) The Mayor announced that his Civic Day was taking place on Saturday, 3rd October 2015 in Llanharry.
- (2) The Leader of the Council announced that on 12 November 2015, he would be taking part in a national fund raising event for Homeless People in Cardiff and he asked Members to consider sponsoring him.
- (3) County Borough Councillor (Mrs) S.J.Jones announced that Crossroads Care Cwm Taf was urgently seeking new Trustees to sit on its Management Board along with volunteers to help out at events, information stands and also, to undertake administrative roles in their office. Members were asked to assist in this matter.

43 MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve as an accurate record, the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 22 July 2015.

OPEN GOVERNMENT

44 LEADER'S STATEMENT

The Leader made a brief statement advising Members that the Cabinet had taken a decision to implement a Living Wage and the first phase of implementation would start on 1st October 2015. As a result over 3,500 Council employees, currently earning less than £7.50 an hour, would benefit. The second phase would be implemented from 1st April 2016.

The Leader stated that the Council had worked closely with the Trade Unions on this matter and any additional costs involved had been included in next year's Council Budget.

45 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

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

Following the recent opening of the Lido, Pontypridd, the feedback I have received has been overwhelmingly positive. Council the Leader please comment on the first month of operations for the Lido?

Response from the Leader of the Council

Since its opening, the Lido has been hugely successful with user numbers increasing every day. Every week there has been over 1,600 visitors to the swimming pool, the visitor centre and the play area. Almost 20,000 people have visited the Pool since it opened. The business plan for the site anticipated 30,000 would visit over a full season and although the opening of the Lido was delayed, I hope that this figure will be surpassed by the close of the season.

Supplementary Question from County Borough Councillor Powderhill

Seeing the success of the Lido and what it has brought to Pontypridd, I would like to ask if, in future, we will still be considered for more funding for other ventures?

Response from the Leader of the Council

I can tell you that I have had conversations with Officers regarding further Heritage Lottery Funding and these discussions are ongoing. Discussions have also taken place with external ventures and we hope to get further funding for Pontypridd and the Park in particular. The success of the Lido in terms of the pool facility, visitor centre and play area will all add to a strong business case to get further funding over the next couple of years. We would like to put the Park back to its former glory.

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

We are all aware of the significant fines facing Councils who do not meet Welsh Government recycling targets. Given the financial situation we currently operate in as a result of continued public sector cuts, it is clear that the Council can ill afford to pay such fines. Could the Leader, therefore, please make a statement on the Council's current recycling performance?

Response from the Leader of the Council (County Borough Councillor A.Morgan)

Members may have seen some incorrect headlines about RCT not achieving its target as these figures related to the year before last.

Last year's target of 52% was the statutory target and I can tell you for last year, we hit 54% so we were over the target. On last three monthly data, we are in excess of 60% recycling which would put us 4th- 5th best in Wales.

We are best in the speed of recycling and that is down to the staff in the Streetcare Awareness Team. Today they were in Asda and are out speaking to people every day.

We need to improve on Food Waste collection along with other areas of recycling, like the Nappy Scheme.

Supplementary Question from County Borough Councillor Norris

I understand loads of good work is coming from the staff themselves and also the Council are investing in lots of facilities. I know the new Community Recycling Centre in Treherbert will be welcomed by people. Can you tell us when it will be open to the public?

Response from the Leader of the Council

The anticipated opening to the public is late February/early March 2016. I understand work in progressing well on site. We will have the Llantrisant site open before Christmas and after Christmas, we will be opening the Treherbert site.

We take thousands of tonnes through our Community Recycling Centres.

If not the best in Wales, we are amongst the best.

(3) From County Borough Councillor R.Lewis to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure & Culture (County Borough Councillor A.Crimmings)

I welcome the recent announcement regarding planned investment in Leisure Centres, particularly in my own Ward of Abercynon. Could the Cabinet Member please advise what the substantial investment will mean for residents and visitors to Abercynon, Bronwydd and Rhondda Sports Centres?

Response from County Borough Councillor A.Crimmings

I think I can demonstrate from the experience we have had in Sobells, Llantrisant and most recently Hawthorn, the positive impact investment in our leisure centres has had on residents as the number of people using these centres has increased following the investment made.

With this investment, we are taking the view that rather than closing leisure centres we invest in them and by making them more attractive to potential users, more people will use them resulting in a reduced leisure subsidy.

Supplementary Question from County Borough Councillor Lewis

What communication strategy will the Council employ to promote these new facilities and investment in these facilities?

Response from County Borough Councillor Crimmings

In the last year or so, we have used social media and a Facebook Page. We also use more traditional channels including the Council's website and are looking at the possibility of quarterly e-news letter.

(4) From County Borough Councillor S.L.Carter to the Cabinet Member for Economic Development & Planning (County Borough Councillor D.R.Bevan)

Can the responsible Cabinet Member please provide an update on progress being made with the Taff Vale Precinct following the Council's recent purchasing of the Lease?"

Response from County Borough Councillor D.R.Bevan

Many thanks to the Welsh Government for supporting us in securing the lease of this site which gives us the levers and mechanisms we need to develop the site further. Since securing the site, our Officers have been developing a Business Plan with options for the development of the site and development brief that we can explore in more details. We will come back with this detail.

Supplementary Question from County Borough Councillor Carter

Will stakeholders be invited to have their say on this important development?

Response from County Borough Councillor Bevan

Yes, this is a really important part of the process as we are looking to develop the site. We will have one attempt to get quality development on this site and public engagement, Local Member engagement and involvement is critical to the process. Can I thank Councillor Carter and other Members who have shown interest and support for this project.

(5) From County Borough Councillor P.Jarman to the Leader of the Council (County Borough Councillor A.Morgan)

I have been asked by my constituent, Ann, to ask if your Cabinet will be adopting the anti austerity agenda leading up to the next budget round?

Response from the Leader of the Council

Obviously, we have to deliver a legally balanced budget. I do have, sometimes, people saying why are you making cuts and but as you know legally we have to set a balanced budget. Whilst we don't support austerity, we would say that we are trying to be more creative and selective in what we invest to sustain services and not close places down. There are a number of areas we are looking at so I certainly would not say we have signed up to austerity agenda but we have to have a balanced budget.

Supplementary Question from County Borough Councillor Jarman

My question is topical and my constituent, Ann, has given me a supplementary to ask.

It has been confirmed by the Leader of your Party and his shadow Chancellor that austerity is a political choice not an economic necessity. Bearing that in mind and your recent announcement on the Living Wage transitional pledge which means a minimum hourly rate of £7.50 for Council staff from October, despite voting against Plaid Cymru's Notice of Motion on the introduction of the Living Wage on the 14th November 2012, do you agree with Stephen Kinnock MP for Aberavon when he, in relation to working tax credit claims, said and I quote "that the crystal clear, sustainable way in which to curtail the unacceptable and pernicious practice of the taxpayers having to subsidise poverty pay is to increase the minimum wage to £10 per hour for all workers over the age of 18 and above with immediate effect".

Response from the Leader of the Council

If that was affordable then great but as you clearly know we can't afford to do that. It wasn't planned and it was brought as a Motion before Council regarding introducing subsidy as part of the Living Wage. As Leader, one of the things I did in the early days was I said it was right thing to do. Officers were tasked with doing it and that's why we are implementing it in a phased and costed way.

Note: At this point in the proceedings, the Mayor (County Borough Councillor B.Stephens) vacated the Chair in favour of the Deputy Mayor (County Borough Councillor R.Lewis) and left the meeting in order to attend another Civic event.

REPORTS OF THE DIRECTOR, LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

46 CHANGE IN MEMBERSHIP OF THE CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

In accordance with Minute No.14(2) (Council, 20 May 2015), the Director, Legal & Democratic Services advised of changes to the Labour Group representation on the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee and the Audit Committee and it was **RESOLVED** to note that County Borough Councillor R.K.Turner will replace County Borough Councillor R.Lewis on the above-mentioned Committees, with immediate effect.

47 WELSH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION – DRAFT DIRECTIONS TO THE LOCAL DEMOCRACY AND BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES

In his report, the Director, Legal & Democratic Services sought the views of Council on the Welsh Government's Draft Directions to the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales which were based on the Minister's merger map published in June 2016.

Following consideration of the report, it was **RESOLVED** that this matter be deferred for detailed consideration to be given to the Draft Directions by a Cabinet Working Group and a Scrutiny Working Group (to be appointed) and that a further report on their findings be submitted to the next meeting of the Council on 28 October 2015 for consideration in order to formally respond to the Draft Directions by the deadline date of 9th November 2015.

48 REVIEW OF THE CORONER SERVICE

In his report, the Director, Legal & Democratic Services updated Members on progress to date in pursuing the amalgamation of the Powys, Bridgend and Glamorgan Valleys and Cardiff and The Vale of Glamorgan Coroner Areas, as agreed by Council on 26 February 2014.

The Director, Legal & Democratic Services reported orally that the recommendations contained within his report were endorsed by the Cabinet at its meeting on 24th September 2015 and in addition, that the name of the merged Coroner Area should be "South Wales Central".

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

- (1) That Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council confirms its decision to act as Relevant Authority for the merged Coroner Area on the terms set out in the Business Case attached as Appendix 2 to the report and that the name of the new Area will be "South Wales Central".
- (2) That a Collaboration Agreement be entered into with Merthyr, Bridgend, Powys, Cardiff and The Vale of Glamorgan Councils as set out in paragraph 14 of the Business Case.
- (3) That the Appointments Panel for the post of Full-time Senior Coroner for the newly merged Area comprise the Leader of the council, Cabinet Portfolio Holder and the Leader of the largest Opposition Group (or substitutes).
- (4) That the Director, Legal & Democratic Services be authorised to appoint the Area Coroner and Assistant Coroners for the merged Coroner Area in consultation with the newly appointed Senior Coroner and the Cabinet Portfolio Holder.
- (5) That if the merger is not approved by the Lord Chancellor, the post of Full-Time Senior Coroner for the Powys, Bridgend and Glamorgan Valleys Coroner Area be advertised as soon as possible.

REPORTS OF THE EXTERNAL AUDITOR

49 (1) AUDIT OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS REPORT – RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL (2) AUDIT OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS REPORT – RHONDDA CYNON TAF PENSION FUND

Mr. John Herniman of the Wales Audit Office presented the above-mentioned reports to the Council.

Following his presentation, Mr. Herniman informed Council that he had received an objection to the accounts from a member of the public and this objection was currently being investigated. As a result, it might have the effect of delaying the issuing of the audit certificate on the accounts.

RESOLVED to receive and note the contents of the two reports.

REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, CORPORATE & FRONTLINE SERVICES

50 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2014-15

The Group Director, Corporate & Frontline Services presented the Council with the Statement of Accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2014 and following consideration thereof, it was **RESOLVED** –

- (1) To approve and note the Statement of Accounts for the financial year 2014/15 (Appendix 1) and associated Letters of Representation of the Authority (Appendix 2) and Pension Fund (Appendix 3).
- (2) To approve and note the audited final out-turn position for the council with regard to the financial year 2014/15 and the level of General Fund Balances.
- (3) To note the considerations and comments of the Audit Committee on 7th September 2015, as required by the Local Government Measure.

51 URGENT CABINET DECISION

RESOLVED to note the urgent decision taken by Cabinet at its meeting on 23 July 2015 in respect of the Welsh Language Statutory Standards : Draft Compliance Notice : Section 47 Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

URGENT ITEM

52 TRADE UNION BILL 2015

(Note: The following declarations of personal interests in relation to the above-mentioned matter were received from:

- (1) County Borough Councillor L.M.Adams – “I am a representative of the NUSUWT”, it is also a prejudicial interest and I will not take part in the debate or vote”.
- (2) County Borough Councillor S.L.Carter – “I am a member of a Trade Union”
- (3) County Borough Councillor - A.Crimmings – “I am a member of UNISON”

- (4) County Borough Councillor S.Evans – “I am a member of UNISON”
- (5) County Borough Councillor (Mrs) S.Jones – “I am a member of the GMB Trade Union”
- (6) County Borough Councillor R.Lewis – “I am a member of the GMB Trade Union”
- (7) County Borough Councillor R.W.Smith – “I am a member of UNISON (retired)”
- (8) County Borough Councillor G.Thomas – “I am a member of UNITE”.

With the permission of the Deputy Mayor, in view of the urgency of matter, i.e. the urgent need to respond to the introduction of the Trade Union Bill 2015, the Council considered the report of the Director of Human Resources advising on the recent decision of the WLGA Council in relation to the Government’s proposals and following consideration of the impact thereof, it was **RESOLVED -**

- (1) That the Council opposes the introduction of the Trade Union Bill 2015.
- (2) That the Council write an urge Central Government to abandon the Bill and make a commitment to work in partnership with the Trade Union movement to achieve a fairer society.
- (3) That all M.P.s and A.M.s in the County Borough area be advised of the Council’s opposition to the Bill.

B.STEPHENS
Mayor

R.LEWIS
Deputy Mayor

The meeting terminated at 6.15 p.m.