

**AGENDA ITEM 2**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CABINET COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet meeting held on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> April, 2016 at 10.30am at the Council Headquarters, Clydach Vale.

**County Borough Councillors – Cabinet Members in attendance:-**

A.Morgan (Chairman),

R.Bevan

M.Forey

G. Hopkins

J. Rosser

M Webber

**Officers in attendance**

Mr C Bradshaw – Chief Executive

Mr C Lee – Group Director, Corporate & Frontline Services

Mr G Isingrini – Group Director, Community & Children's Services

Mr T Wilkins – Director, Human Resources

Mr P J Lucas - Director of Legal & Democratic Services

Mr C Hanagan – Service Director, Cabinet & Public Relations (Secretary to the Cabinet)

Mr P Mee – Service Director, Public Health & Protection

Mr N Wheeler - Director, Highways and Streetcare Services

Mr R Waters – Service Director, Highways & Streetcare.

Ms A Richards – Head of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools

**1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors A.Crimmings, E. Hanagan & K Montague.

**2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct the following declarations were made:

- Agenda Item 9 - County Borough Councillor J Rosser declared a personal and non prejudicial interest: - "I am on the Governing Body of Trealaw Primary School, but my interest is non prejudicial because of the exemption set out in paragraph 12(2)(a)(iii) of the Code of Conduct.
- Agenda Item 9 - County Borough Councillor G Hopkins declared a personal and non prejudicial interest: - "I am on the Governing Body of Llanharan Primary School, but my interest is non prejudicial because of the exemption set out in paragraph 12(2)(a)(iii) of the Code of Conduct.
- Agenda Item 9 - County Borough Councillor R Bevan declared a personal and non prejudicial interest: - "I am on the Governing Body of Pontygwaith Primary School but my interest is non prejudicial because of the exemption set out in paragraph 12(2)(a)(iii) of the Code of Conduct.
- Agenda Item 9 - County Borough Councillor M Webber declared a personal and non prejudicial interest: - "I am on the Governing Body of Heol Y Celyn School, but my interest is non prejudicial because of the exemption set out in paragraph 12(2)(a)(iii) of the Code of Conduct.

### **3 SOCIAL SERVICES & WELLBEING ACT: IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMME CWM TAF SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING.**

The Group Director, Community & Children's Services advised Members of the regional arrangements in place to meet the statutory guidance relating to Part 9 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.

As part of the report, the officer advised of the establishment of the Cwm Taf Social Services & Wellbeing Partnership Board, and the two workshops undertaken by the Board to develop a Memorandum of Understanding, which was presented with the report for Cabinet endorsement.

The Cabinet Member for Health & Adult Social Services spoke positively on the work being undertaken in respect of the implementation of the Act which came into effect on the 6<sup>th</sup> April and the proactive work being undertaken with partners to meet the statutory guidance.

It was **RESOLVED:-**

- a. To endorse the proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the Cwm Taf Social Services and Wellbeing Partnership Board.

### **4 SOCIAL SERVICES & WELLBEING ACT: IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMME CWM TAF CARERS STRATEGY**

The Group Director, Community & Children's Services referred Members to the report which provided an update on the development of a draft Cwm Taf Carers strategy, and the consultation undertaken to date.

Members were reminded that as part of the SSWB Act and following the repeal of the Carers Strategies (Wales) Measure 2010, one of the workstreams taken forward in

the Cwm Taf SSWB regional implementation plan was the requirement to develop a new Cwm Taf wide Carers Strategy.

The Group Director advised Members of the carers measure allocation and the funding available to take forward this work.

The Cabinet Member for Health & Adult Social Services spoke of the importance of the strategy and welcomed the consultation undertaken and the need for Carers to help inform and shape the plans being taken forward, to ensure that not only do they meet the requirements of the Act but they are 'fit for purpose' to support the carers themselves.

Following discussions it was **RESOLVED:-**

- a. To note that a consultation exercise was undertaken on the draft Cwm Taf Carers Strategy.
- b. That the Members comments provided at the meeting on the Strategy be taken forward as part of the consultation process.

## **5 PROPOSAL TO DELIVER A DISCRETIONARY EMPTY PROPERTY GRANT ACROSS RHONDDA CYNON TAF.**

The Service Director, Public Health & Protection provided Members with details of a proposed discretionary Empty Property Grant that would support and deliver the recent council decision to invest £1.5m to bring back into use long term empty properties in 2016/17 and 2017/18 across Rhondda Cynon Taf. The officer continued to advise that the scheme would provide an effective grant mechanism that would enable the community housing section to deliver the Council's investment priority as it relates to empty properties.

The service Director referred Members to section 6 of the report which outlined the proposal in detail, advising that the discretionary empty property grant would be up to a "cost of works maximum" of £20k (with ancillary fees added) across the whole of RCT.

Members commented on the financial contribution required by applicants and the discretion to waiver these in exceptional circumstances. They also spoke of the positive outcomes anticipated with the proposal, highlighting that based on the capital budget allocation of £1.5m that approximately 70-80 empty properties would be brought back into use over a 24 month period. The Leader commented on the need for a proactive marketing campaign to be taken forward in respect of the introduction of the grant.

Cabinet Members **RESOLVED:**

- a. To approve the empty property grant process and eligibility criteria, as set out in paragraph 6 of the report.
- b. To approve the resource requirements to deliver the scheme as set out in paragraph 9.1 of the report.
- c. To approve the amendments to the current 'Private Sector Renewal Policy' as detailed in paragraph 6.2 of the report, to reflect the new empty property grant.
- d. To delegate authority to the Head of Community Housing to waive the 15% financial contribution in exceptional circumstances.

- e. To note the potential 'lead in' periods associated with such projects, as outlined within paragraph 10.1 of the report.
- f. That after 6 months of operation the uptake of the grant be reviewed and should it be necessary, a further report is brought to Cabinet to ensure the grant is delivering the Council's objectives.

## **6 OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE HOUSING STOCK AND SUPPORT A FUNCTIONAL HOUSING MARKET IN TREFOREST.**

The Service Director, Public Health & Protection provided Cabinet Members with a report highlighting an overview of the current housing issues in Treforest and detailed options available to the Council to intervene in the housing market in the ward. Members were advised that such intervention would ensure that the housing market for the area was sustainable, meets the needs of all residents and also ensures that the condition of the housing stock was of good standard overall.

The officer referred Members to section 5 of the report which detailed the opportunities available within Treforest advising of options for dealing with empty properties such as enforced sales and empty dwelling orders; promotion of Houses into Homes Loan Scheme / Home Improvement Loan; Increase in general housing enforcement activity and establishing a property accreditation scheme in Treforest

The Service Director concluded his report by advising that the targeted activity proposed would require additional resources that would need to be identified by the Council and added that the proposed approach would however make a significant contribution to the Council's strategic priority of regenerating town centres and improving communities.

The Deputy Leader welcomed the opportunities highlighted within the report and spoke of the challenges often faced within the Treforest area due to its unique setting. The Cabinet Member spoke of the benefits brought to the local area and the wider County Borough generally with the University and also acknowledged the problems faced by some residents due to the issues identified within the report.

Members queried whether the Voluntary Property Accreditation Scheme highlighted as an opportunity within the report could be rolled out across the County Borough and the Service Director advised that the scheme could be piloted in Treforest initially, with a wider role out across the County Borough following an evaluation of the scheme.

Following discussion it was **RESOLVED:**

- a. To approve the implementation of a Voluntary Property Accreditation Scheme in Treforest in 2016/17.
- b. To approve the appointment of an additional 2.85 FTE officers in the Housing Strategy and Standards Team for a period of two years from 2016/17 in order to increase capacity to undertake more focused and proactive housing enforcement activity in Treforest.
- c. That officer's investigate funding opportunities for a Group Repair Scheme for the Broadway in order to improve the visual amenity of one of the main access roads into Pontypridd.

## **7 CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD – ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16.**

The Service Director, Cabinet and Public Relations in his capacity as Secretary to the Cabinet referred Members to the Annual report of the Corporate Parenting Board, advising that this was a requirement under the Leaders Scheme of Delegation.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Social Services, Equalities and the Welsh Language spoke in his capacity as Chair of the Corporate Parenting Board on the Annual report, highlighting the important work of the Board by ensuring that the Council fulfils its responsibilities as corporate parents to children who are looked after. The Cabinet Member provided a summary of the work undertaken over the Municipal year by the Board and commented on the Board's focus and priority of providing continuous improvement to the services that the Council deliver, for the children and young people within the Looked After System. The report also provided Members with the future intentions of the Board, as well as highlighting the work taken forward by the Council's scrutiny committees in this area and the benefits gained by the Board when welcoming service users to their meetings.

The Cabinet Member took the opportunity to reiterate his thanks to the Members of the Corporate Parenting Board for their work over the Municipal Year and the advice and support provided by officers to assist the Board in undertaking its role.

It was **RESOLVED**:

- a. To note the work of the Board and its future work priorities as outlined in its Annual report.

## **8 CABINET WORK PROGRAMME: MAY – JULY 2016**

The Secretary to the Cabinet provided Members with a draft Work programme for the Cabinet for the period May – July, 2016. Members were advised that in addition to the proposed timetabled Cabinet business, potential items coming forward were also outlined within the programme, although no specific timescales were added to when these would be considered. Members were advised that the addition of these items would allow further transparency with the Cabinet Work Programme and would aid non executive members to undertake pre-scrutiny of an item, if they wish to do so, to assist Cabinet Members in taking any future decisions on an item.

Members **RESOLVED** to:

- a. Approve the proposed Cabinet Work Programme for the period May – July 2016 (with appropriate amendments where necessary.)

## **9 HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORTATION AND STRATEGIC PROJECTS – SUPPLEMENTARY CAPITAL PROGRAMME.**

The Director, Highways and Streetcare services provided Members with his report which detailed the capital programme for Highways, Transportation & Strategic projects. Through his report the officer provided details of the allocation of funding provided by the authority for the Highways Investment Programme, Grant approvals from the Welsh Government and the non highways element of the Capital Programme.

The Leader of the Council commented on the highly successful highways investment programme over the last 5 years and the funding of £6.6m which would benefit the highway network in 2016/17. He commented that such investment would continue to improve the fabric of the highways network and also referred to the funding acquired for transportation projects. The Leader also took the opportunity to thank the officers within the service for their work in this area in managing delivery of the programmes.

Cabinet Members **RESOLVED:**

- a. To note and approve the Supplementary Capital Programme for Highways, Transportation & Strategic projects as detailed within the report, by utilising the allocated £6.6M of capital resources for Highways improvements.

## **10 EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING DIRECTORATE PLANNED CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2016/17**

The Head of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools referred Members to the report which provided details of the capital works for the Education & Lifelong directorate as part of the rolling three year Capital Programme. Members were advised that the ongoing programme of work was required in school premises to deal with essential condition and health and safety issues across the school estate, to ensure school buildings were 'safe, watertight and warm'. It was also added that the investment detailed within the programme continued to deliver the council's long term school modernisation improvement programme supporting one of the Council's corporate Plan Priorities: 'Economy – Building a strong Economy'.

Members were referred to the appendices to the report which set out the categories and details on investment, with the exception of asbestos remediation works, improvements to schools and capitalisation of IT hardware / Software & licences.

Members commented on the positive report and the work undertaken by the Authority under 21st Century Schools, which saw a good standard of school buildings across the Authority.

Following discussions on the report it was **RESOLVED:**

- a. To note and approve the Education Capital Programme priority schemes for 2016/17 as outlined within Appendices 1-10 of the report, utilising the allocated £6.896M from the planned capital programme for 2016/17.
- b. To approve commencement of the schemes outlined within the report.

## 11 **CYNON GATEWAY SOUTH – MOUNTAIN ASH SOUTHERN CROSS VALLEY LINK**

Through his report the Service Director, Highways & Streetcare provided Cabinet Members with an update on the developments related to the major highways project: Cynon Gateway South – Mountain Ash Southern Cross Valley Link.

The Service Director also took the opportunity to highlight the main scheme development events and the broad timescales for these elements as well as referencing the funding commitments given to the Scheme – ( £1.95M Council funding commitment and £0.398M Welsh Government funding ( £0.98M 2016/16 and £0.300M for 2016/17).

The Leader thanked the officers for the report and commented on the opportunities the project offers to improve accessibility and connectivity within the area where limited cross valley linkage causes significant congestion on the local and strategic transport network affecting all highway users, including commercial delivery services and public transport.

Members **RESOLVED:-**

- a. To note the progress on developing detailed proposals for the Cross Valley Link and the forthcoming elements of work that will be taking place, as outlined within the report.

## 12 **MEDIUM TERM SERVICE PLANNING UPDATE - COUNCIL REVENUE BUDGET 2016/17.**

The Group Director, Corporate & Frontline Services referred Members to his report which provided Members with an update on the financial impact on the Council's Revenue Budget, following the decision taken not to implement the change in the Home to School Transport Policy.

The Group Director provided details of the options available to close the funding gap and reported that use of the Senior Management Structure budget savings, the savings with the Council Tax Reduction Scheme alongside the existing one off resource created as a hardship fund to support the change in the Home to School transport Policy would fully close the budget gap.

It was **RESOLVED:-**

- a. To note the financial impact on the Council's Revenue Budget for 2016/17 following the decision taken not to implement changes in the Home to School Transport policy; and
- b. To recommend to Council that the budget shortfall arising from the decision not to implement Home to School Transport Policy changes is addressed through:
  - Senior Management Structure Savings (part year 2016/17 impact of £0.280M)
  - Council Tax Reduction Scheme Savings ( £0.600M)
  - Use of £0.04M available resources initially set aside as part of the fund to support hardship requirements in relation to Home to School policy changes

**This meeting closed at 11.20**

**Cllr A Morgan  
Chairman.**