



## **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CABINET**

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Tuesday, 17 December 2019 at 10.30 am at the Council Chamber, The Pavilions, Cambrian Park, Clydach Vale, Tonypany, CF40 2XX.

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

Councillor A Morgan (Chair)

Councillor M Webber	Councillor R Bevan
Councillor A Crimmings	Councillor G Hopkins
Councillor M Norris	Councillor J Rosser
Councillor R Lewis	Councillor C Leyshon

### **Officers in attendance**

Mr C Bradshaw, Chief Executive  
Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication  
Mr G Isingrini, Group Director Community & Children's Services  
Mr N Wheeler, Group Director – Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services  
Mr P Mee, Director, Public Health, Protection & Community Services  
Mr S Gale, Director of Prosperity & Development  
Mr A Wilkins, Director of Legal Services  
Mr B Davies, Director of Finance & Digital Services  
Ms G Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services  
Mr D James, Service Director – Prosperity & Development  
Ms W Edwards, Service Director – Community Services

### **Others in attendance**

Councillor J Brencher  
Councillor H Fychan

## **80 Declaration of Interest**

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

- County Borough Councillor H Fychan declared a personal interest in respect of items 3 and 11 of the agenda: 'I am a former Trustee of the Muni and a Board Member of Artis Community'
- County Borough Councillor J Brencher declared a personal interest in respect of items 3 and 11 of the agenda: 'I am a Trustee of the YMCA'

## **81 Minutes**

It was **RESOLVED** to approve, as an accurate reflection, the minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2019.

## Community Asset Transfer - Muni Arts Centre

Following the Cabinet's decision on the 18<sup>th</sup> June 2019 to take forward a tenancy with Awen Cultural Trust, the Director, Public Health, Protection and Community Services introduced the report to Members, which sought to provide an update on the progress in respect of the community asset transfer of the Muni Arts Centre by way of a leasehold transfer. The Director informed Members that Awen had been working with the Council to determine the short term capital requirements to re-open the Muni in June 2020 and that the requirements, once identified, would be included in the Council's future capital investment programme.

With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, Awen Cultural Trust provided the Cabinet with the long term proposals for the refurbishment and restoration of the building. Awen reiterated the value of the creative industries in supporting the economy and the positive affects it can have on health and wellbeing.

Awen Cultural Trust spoke of the heritage of the building and the constraints of the internal decoration, which did not compliment it. The long term plans included the reinstatement of the internal features, along with improving the capacity issues and accessibility for disabled actors and audience members.

The Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities, Well-being and Cultural Services thanked Awen Cultural Trust for the ambitious and impressive plans, commenting that a lot of work had gone in to producing the exciting vision before Members. The Cabinet Member continued by praising the officers for their commitment to ensuring the building is put back into use to the benefit of the residents of RCT. The Cabinet Member spoke of the wellbeing benefits, which are derived from the Arts and commented that the Eisteddfod would feed into any proposals.

The Leader also took the opportunity to thank Awen and the Service Director for the impressive plans and commented that the target for reopening would be June 2020. The Leader spoke of the YMCA Pontypridd and commented that the two venues would complement and strengthen one another. The Leader went on to speak of the Cabinet's difficult decision to close the building, in order to use the reduced Local Government settlement for social services and other key services for the residents of RCT, but was pleased to note that the Council's RCT Together Programme had since evolved and had been used by Welsh Government as an example of best practice.

The Deputy Leader voiced her support and praised the vision, commenting on the openness and transparency of the presentation. The Deputy Leader spoke of other Council facilities in the Pontypridd area, such as the new footbridge and Lido, and felt that it would all benefit the residents of the wider area and bring tourism from the cities.

The Cabinet Member Children and Young People commented on the great transport links in Pontypridd and hoped to see Pontypridd Youth Club provision included within the future programme.

With the agreement of the Leader, as Chairman of the Committee, County Borough Councillors J. Brencher and H. Fychan spoke on the item.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the progress made with negotiations with Awen Cultural Trust to agree the terms of the lease and the necessary financial support requirements to secure a sustainable future for the Muni Arts Centre;
2. To receive a presentation from Awen Cultural Trust and their architects, Purcell, setting out their proposals for the refurbishment and restoration of the Muni Arts Centre;
3. That longer term proposals for the restoration of the Muni Arts Centre will be the subject of open consultation and engagement with the local community where necessary; and
4. That the Council will seek to engage with the local community where necessary in respect of the longer term proposals for the restoration of the Muni Arts Centre.

### **83 Cabinet Work Programme**

The Service Director of Democratic Services and Communication provided Cabinet Members with a draft work programme for the 2019-20 Municipal Year, which listed matters requiring consideration by Cabinet. The Service Director commented that utilising the programme assists with openness and transparency of the decision making process within the Council and gives greater opportunity for Pre-Scrutiny.

Members were referred to Appendix 1 of the report and were advised that the programme is a live document to allow for any additional / deletion of reports throughout the year. The Service Director added that the consultation outcomes in respect of residential care, as earlier agreed by Members at the days meeting would be added to the work programme going forward.

The Deputy Leader welcomed the programme. It was **RESOLVED:**

1. To approve the Cabinet Work Programme for the 2019-20 Municipal Year and to receive a further update on a 3 monthly basis

### **84 Biodiversity Duty - Recommendations of the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group**

The Service Director of Democratic Services and Communication provided Cabinet Members with the recommendations of the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group, which considered a report on the progress in discharging the Council's Biodiversity Duty.

The Service Director advised that the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group met on the 18<sup>th</sup> November 2019, where they received a presentation, in conjunction with the report of the Director, Public Health, Protection and Community Services, which updated Members on the progress made in discharging the Council's Biodiversity Duty. Alongside Members and key officers were two external representatives from organisations, which have previously engaged with the Council in tackling the issues associated with climate change

The Steering Group were content that the action plan sought to address and monitor the key themes and resolved to recommend to Cabinet the submission of the report to Welsh Government.

The Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure & Heritage Services thanked the officer for the report and commented that although the Council has a statutory duty to prepare a plan of action regarding the Biodiversity Duty, its importance is

evident across many parts of the Council, such as Planning.

The Deputy Leader spoke of the work of the Climate Change Steering Group and advised that meetings were scheduled to take place on a monthly basis to keep up the positive momentum.

The Leader spoke of the need to follow up funding in respect of tree planting and the ongoing work with Natural Resources Wales.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the content of the report considered by the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group on the 18<sup>th</sup> November 2019 (attached as Appendix 1 of the report) and;
2. The recommendation of the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group, which is to agree to submit the report to Welsh Government on the actions undertaken to further the 'Biodiversity Duty' by Rhondda Cynon Taf Council.

## **85 Employment Strategy**

The Service Director, Community Services provided the Cabinet with the proposed Rhondda Cynon Taf Employment Strategy and Action Plan for 2019-2021.

The Service Director drew Members' attention to Section 6 of the report, where the Employment and Skills Strategy, which had been agreed by the Strategic Employment Group, was outlined. The report indicated that in 2018/19, 6500 people who were economically inactive identified that they wanted a job.

It was explained that increasing employability is essential to improving prosperity and reducing inequality. The Service Director stated that people are less likely to live in poverty if they are in employment and if they can sustain and progress in employment and that short-term unemployment can have a significant long-term impact on an individual's financial security and wellbeing.

The Service Director referred Members to the Action Plan, which detailed the actions that the Council will implement to contribute to achieve the strategy.

Members were informed that both the Strategy and Action Plan had been considered by the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee in November 2019 and that the Members were supportive of the recommendation to approve their implementation.

The Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities, Well-being and Cultural Services thanked the officer for the comprehensive report. The Cabinet Member commented on the value of the Employment Strategy, alongside the Tackling Poverty Strategy, which are key for the residents of RCT.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. To approve the Employment Strategy and Action Plan 2019/21.

## **86 Maximising Community Benefits Trial**

The Service Director, Community Services provided the Cabinet with the report, which outlined the work that had been undertaken on maximising Community

Benefits.

The Service Director spoke of a robust piece of work undertaken by one of the Council's Graduate Officers to explore options for maximising Community Benefits derived from procurement contracts. Following, the piece of work, it was agreed to trial the proposed recommendation, in order to test the willingness of tenderers to commit to making a financial contribution to a Legacy Investment Fund and/or to commit to another form of contribution as part of their Community Benefits response.

The Service Director referred Members to Section 5 of the report, where the results of the Community Benefits pilot was detailed. The officer was pleased to advise Members that although the documentation made it clear that commitment to a Community Benefits contribution was voluntary, the tenderers were willing to contribute.

The Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities, Well-being and Cultural Services thanked the Graduate Officer for the valuable and innovative piece of work. The Cabinet Member also took the opportunity to thank the contractors for their valuable contributions, which would be used for wider community benefits.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To approve the inclusion of Community Benefits Clauses in all relevant corporate contracts. This could either be in the form of direct work to be delivered within the community and/or a financial contribution to a 'legacy fund';
2. To approve the establishment of a 'Legacy Investment Fund' that will receive the financial contributions generated through Community Benefits to support wider Community Development activities across the County Borough, in line with this Council's corporate priorities; and
3. To commit the resource necessary to continue developments, co-ordinate and mainstream the approach.

87

### **Review of Learning Support Class Provision for pupils with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) and significant Additional Learning Needs**

The Director, Education and Inclusion Services provided the Cabinet with proposals for the creation of additional mainstream Learning Support Class (LSC) provision for pupils with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) and Welsh medium LSC provision to support pupils with significant additional learning needs within Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Members learned that it is a requirement of Section 315 of the Education Act 1996 for Local Authorities to regularly review arrangements for supporting pupils with SEN and to ensure that provision is sufficient and meets the needs of its communities.

The Director advised that the proposed additional LSCs will ensure that the Council has an enhanced focus on providing more effective mainstream inclusion opportunities for pupils with SEBD and for Welsh medium pupils with significant Additional Learning Needs.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Inclusion Services thanked the Director for the comprehensive report and spoke of the importance of improving

outcomes and providing more effective opportunities for all children and young people, whilst also tying in with the Welsh Government's ALN Transformation Agenda.

**(Note:** County Borough Councillor M. Webber was not present for the vote)

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To consider the information contained within the report;
2. To note the proposals for the creation of three SEBD LSC provisions and one Welsh medium LSC provision to support pupils with significant additional learning needs within the context of the School Organisation Code (2018) and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century School Modernisation Programme; and
3. To formally approve to commence consultation on the following proposals:
  - To create a new Key Stage 3/4 LSC provision for pupils with SEBD at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School;
  - To create a new Key Stage 3/4 LSC provision for pupils with SEBD at Ferndale Community School;
  - To create a new Key Stage 3/4 LSC provision for pupils with SEBD at Mountain Ash Comprehensive School;
  - To create a new Key Stage 3/4 LSC provision for pupils with significant Additional Learning Needs (ALN) at Ysgol Garth Olwg.

## **88 Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) for Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council**

The Director, Prosperity and Development presented the report, which set out proposals for Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCT) to act as the Lead Body for the administration and monitoring of the mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) for Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (MTCBC).

The Director referred Members to Section 5 of the report, which set out the proposal. It was explained that MTCBC's Chief Executive had written to RCT's Chief Executive to explore if there is any potential capacity to enter a collaborative arrangement for RCT to deliver Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's) across Cwm Taf. Following a review, the Director felt that the collaborative arrangement would have little impact on RCT, with any potential fee income offsetting any additional costs the Council may incur in administering and monitoring MTCBC's scheme. The Director added that the proposals would also ensure that MTCBC meet its mandatory duty to consider DFG's, therefore enabling disabled residents to have the opportunity to receive a grant in order to make adaptations to their homes allowing them to live independently.

The Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Development and Housing commented that the proposal was straightforward and was happy to support the recommendation.

**(Note:** County Borough Councillor M. Webber chose not to vote on this item as she was not present for the discussion)

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. To approve the proposal for Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCT) to act as the Lead Body for the administration and monitoring of the mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) for Merthyr

Tydfil County Borough Council (MTCBC) as set out in section 5 of the report.

**89 To consider Passing the Following Resolution:**

It was **RESOLVED:** "That the press and public be excluded from the meeting under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act (as amended) for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of the exempt information as defined in paragraph 14 of Part 4 of the Schedule 12A of the Act".

**90 Council investment into the redevelopment of the YMCA Pontypridd**

The Director, Prosperity and Development provided the Cabinet with the report containing exempt information, which sought a decision on whether the Council should invest and take ownership of the YMCA building.

Following discussion, the Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To invest £383K into the redevelopment of Pontypridd YMCA in order to secure £4M of external funding, and to ensure that the scheme is delivered according to the agreed design, programme and cost plan. This investment can be funded from existing investment priority funding already allocated for Regeneration Investment within the current capital programme.
2. To authorise the Director of Corporate Estates to take ownership of the building for £1, subject to a robust due diligence process. This would then include leasing back the building to the YMCA over a period of 99 years with a review of the arrangements at 25 years through a Lease Agreement supported by a Grant Agreement and Management Agreement.

**This meeting closed at 11.55 am**

**Cllr A Morgan  
Chairman.**