

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, 14th January, 2015 at 5 p.m.

PRESENT

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

County Borough Councillors

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

Officers in Attendance

Mr.S.Merritt – Chief Executive
Mr.C.Lee – Group Director, Corporate & Frontline Services
Mr.G.Isingrini – Group Director, Community & Children's Services
Mr.P.J.Lucas – Director, Legal & Democratic Services
Mr.C.Bradshaw – Director, Education & Lifelong Learning
Mr.C.Hanagan – Service Director, Cabinet Office & Public Relations
Mr.M.Phillips – Recovery Assistant (Finance)
Ms.K.May – Head of Democratic Services

102 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors P.Baccara, (Mrs.)A.Calvert, (Mrs.)A.Crimmings, A.L.Davies, MBE, G.Holmes, S.Lloyd, K.Morgan, S.Pickering, J.Rosser, P.Wasley, W.D.Weeks and D.H.Williams .

103 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with the Code of Conduct, declarations of personal interests were made by the under-mentioned County Borough Councillors in relation to Agenda Item 7 – Welsh Church Act Fund:

- County Borough Councillor L.M.Adams – “I am a regular communicant at Holy Trinity Church, Tylorstown, which received funds from the fund but I am not a Committee member and make no decisions on or applications for funding”.
- County Borough Councillor D.R.Bevan – “In my role as Cabinet Member, I am a counter-signature to either approve or reject an application to receive a grant from these funds – the report is only to approve the final annual audit of the administration of the fund”.
- County Borough Councillor G.Davies – “I am the Secretary of Eglwys y Bedyddwyr, Blaenycwm, which was in receipt of a grant”
- County Borough Councillor K.Montague – “I am the Manager of Georgetown Boys & Girls Club, Merthyr Tydfil”
- County Borough Councillor G.Smith – “My wife is a member of St.John’s Church, Porth who received a grant during 2013/14”.
- County Borough Councillor R.K.Turner – “I am an ex officio Member of the Brynna Community Centre Management Committee who received £10,000”.
- County Borough Councillor M.J.Watts – “I am the Vice-Chair of the Rhondda Taf CAB, Pontypridd”
- County Borough Councillor C.J.Williams – “I am a Trustee/Director of Rhondda Cynon Taf CAB, Pontypridd an organisation which benefitted from a Welsh Church Fund award”.

104 ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor welcomed back County Borough Councillor Pauline Jarman following the bereavement of her husband. In response Councillor Jarman thanked those who attended the funeral and for the cards and letters she had received.

The Mayor also informed Council that Councillor Paul Wasley’s Mother had recently passed away and the funeral had taken place today. Members stood in silence as a mark of respect.

105 MINUTES

RESOLVED – to approve as an accurate record the minutes of the meeting of Council held on the 10th December, 2014, subject to Councillor S.Rees-Owen’s name being included in the list of apologies for absence.

106 OPEN GOVERNMENT – STATEMENTS

There were no statements made at the meeting by the Leader of the Council or Cabinet Members.

107 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

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

“Why has RCTCBC barred residents of the Borough, many of whom pay Council tax to sustain the service that you propose being axed, from fully completing the online process entitled “Current Service Change proposals Council Funded Music Service and Funding for Nursery Education (consultation extended until 30th January, 2015)”?

Response from the Leader, County Borough Councillor A.Morgan

“The consultation process including online doesn’t bar anyone in taking part. It is there to seek the views of anyone including service users who could be potentially directly affected. Those individuals and/or organisations not directly affected are as entitled to do so. Consultees can submit their views through email, letter, online or at engagement events which will form part of the consultation and will carry the same weighting.”

Supplementary Question from County Borough Councillor M.J.Powell

“I attempted to fill it in myself and got as far as question 8, you are asking people to go down this route and then change the methodology – not having a fair crack of the whip. Would you consider changing it so that they can fill it in fully when going through another mechanism as they are barred from completing online. Seems slightly skewed if allowing people to do it in another method.”

Response from the Leader, County Borough Councillor A.Morgan

“There is no additional cost, if not part of the service user and don’t fill in the questionnaire on line you can submit your views as a resident, you can send an email in or at an engagement event. On the website it is more service specific for those that are service users so more direct with them.”

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

“Would the Leader make a statement on the pedestrian safety of the Pontypridd Town Centre regeneration since the works have been completed please?”

Response from the Leader, County Borough Councillor A.Morgan

“I have no problem in answering the question, the regeneration works were undertaken from investment of £10M and there is a vast change, put in parking bays etc. Pedestrian safety continues to be of paramount importance and we will continue to work with businesses and residents to ensure the safety of all who visit Pontypridd town centre.”

Supplementary Question from County Borough Councillor M.J.Powell

“I am at a loss to figure out what part of the safety work – kindly tell me how many times people have had to call an ambulance having fallen on bad slabs and how much compensation has been paid?”

Response from the Leader, County Borough Councillor A.Morgan

“If I hadn’t been given such an evasive first question, I would have had the information for you and I will get that information. There was an issue with the original design and some changes have been made to the works especially in one of the side streets. I corresponded with you personally at that time as I was the Cabinet Member. If you had asked a specific question then I would have had an answer but you will get a written response.”

(3) From County Borough Councillor M.J.Powell to the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning (County Borough Councillor (Mrs.)E.Hanagan)

“Could Councillor Hanagan say why, in 2008, she had a Council owned Chauffeur driven Council car to take her to Cardiff Airport please?”

Response from County Borough Councillor (Mrs.)E.Hanagan

“I am more than happy to clarify this matter. It was in 2009 and not 2008, as you state, the Council car took me to Cardiff Airport on official Council business, it was in line with procedures that are in use for the Council car.”

Supplementary Question from County Borough Councillor M.J.Powell

“Could Councillor Hanagan say what official business it was that required her attendance at the Airport at 10.45 p.m.?”

Response from County Borough Councillor (Mrs.)E.Hanagan

“You had the date wrong and now you have got the time wrong. Along with another 10 people, I attended an International Youth Exchange, each group is accompanied by elected Members, this provides many opportunities for young people within the Youth Service. I was asked to take part in a question/answer session which I was delighted to do and to represent RCT”.

REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, CORPORATE AND FRONTLINE SERVICES

108 WELSH CHURCH ACT FUND – ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14

The Group Director, Corporate and Frontline Services appended to his report the Statement of Accounts for the Welsh Church Act Fund for the financial year ended 31st March, 2014 and it was **RESOLVED** –

1. To approve and note the Welsh Church Act Fund Statement of Accounts for the financial year 2013/2014 as shown at Appendix 1 to the report.
2. To approve and note the Letter of Representation relating to the Welsh Church Act Fund as shown at Appendix 2 to the report.
3. To note the contents of the External Auditor Report as shown at Appendix 3 to the report.

JOINT REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, CORPORATE & FRONTLINE SERVICES, DIRECTOR OF LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES

109 RHONDDA CYNON TAF PENSION FUND GOVERNANCE – ESTABLISHMENT OF PENSION BOARD

In their joint report the Group Director for Corporate and Frontline Services, Director of Legal and Democratic Services and the Director of Human Resources sought the agreement of Members to the establishment of a local Pension Board for the Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund as required by the Public Services Pension Act, 2013.

RESOLVED –

1. To note the requirements of the Public Service Pension Act, 2013 (the "PSPA") to establish a local Pension Board and the impact upon the current governance arrangements of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund.
2. To note that the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 made under the PSPA (the "Principal Regulations") are due to be amended by the Local Government Pension Scheme (Amendment) (Governance) Regulations 2014 (the "Amendment Regulations").
3. To establish a Pension Board in accordance with the requirements of the PSPA and the Principal Regulations (as amended by the Amendment Regulations) in order to assist Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council as "Scheme Manager" with achieving effective and efficient governance and administration of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund.
4. To approve the Terms of Reference (incorporating the Code of Conduct) of the Pension Board as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.
5. To delegate to the Director of Human Resources, in consultation with the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, authority to make appointments to the Pension Board.

6. To note the governance structure of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund as set out in Appendix 2 to the report, that would be in place following the establishment of the Pension Board.
7. To delegate to the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, authority to consider, approve and/or deal with as necessary any amendments which may be required to be made in respect of the establishment of the Pension Board and its Terms of Reference following publication of the final version of the Amendment Regulations which at the date of publication of this report are in draft form but due to come into force immediately.
8. To delegate to the Director of Legal and Democratic Services authority to make all appropriate amendments and consequential changes to the Council's Constitution to reflect the establishment of the Pension Board.

REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, CORPORATE AND FRONTLINE SERVICES

110 LOCAL COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME

In accordance with the regulations made under Schedule 1B of the Local Government Finance Act, 1992 (as inserted by the Local Government Finance Act 2012) and the two sets of regulations as approved by the National Assembly for Wales on the 26th November, 2013, the Group Director, Corporate and Frontline Services sought Members consideration to the adoption of the Council's local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for the 2015/16 financial year.

RESOLVED –

1. To note the making of the Council Tax Reduction Schemes and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2013 ("the Prescribed Requirements Regulations") by the National Assembly for Wales ("NAfW") on the 26th November, 2013 (as amended).
2. To note that proposed amendments to the Prescribed Requirements Regulations by the draft Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 ("the Amendment Regulations") are due to be considered by the NAfW on the 20th January, 2015.
3. To note the outcome of the consultation exercise undertaken by the Council on the local discretions applicable to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2015/16.
4. To adopt the provisions of the Prescribed Requirements Regulations and subject to Minute No.110(5) below any amendments made to those regulations by the Amendment Regulations, as the Council's local Council

Tax Reduction Scheme for 2015/16 subject to the local discretions that the Council is able to exercise as set out in Minute No.110(7) below.

5. To confirm the following as local discretions applicable to the Council's local CTRS as provided for within Part 5 of the Prescribed Requirements Regulations:

Discretionary Parts of the Prescribed Requirements Regulations <i>(Part 5 – Other Matters that must be included in an authority's scheme)</i>	Prescribed Requirement Regulations (Minimum Requirement)	Recommended Discretion to be adopted
<p>Ability to increase the standard extended reduction period of 4 weeks given to applicants where they have previously been receiving a Council Tax reduction that is to end, as they have ceased receiving qualifying benefits as a result of returning to work, increasing their hours of work, or receiving increased earnings.</p> <p><i>Regulation 32 (3) paragraph (33) of Schedule 1 and Regulation 33 (3), paragraph (35) and (40) of Schedule 6.</i></p>	<p>4 Weeks</p>	<p><u>Pensioners:</u> The standard period of 4 weeks specified in paragraph (33) of Schedule 1 will apply, and</p> <p><u>Non- Pensioners:</u> The standard period of 4 weeks specified in paragraph (35) and (40) of Schedule 6 will apply,</p>
<p>Ability to backdate an application for CTR with regard to late claims prior to the standard period of 3 months before the claim is made.</p> <p><i>Regulation 34 (4) and paragraph (3) and (4) of Schedule 13.</i></p>	<p>3 Months</p>	<p><u>Pensioners:</u> The standard period of 3 months specified in paragraph (3) of Schedule 13 will apply,</p> <p><u>Non-Pensioners:</u> The standard period of 3 months specified in paragraph (4) of Schedule 13 will apply,</p>
<p>Ability to disregard more than the statutory weekly £10 of income received in respect of War Disablement Pensions and War Widow's Pensions (disregarded when calculating income of the applicant);</p> <p><i>Regulation 34 (5), paragraphs 1(a) and 1(b) Schedule 4 and paragraphs 20(a) and 20(b) of Schedule 9</i></p>	<p>£10</p>	<p><u>Pensioners:</u> The total value of any pension specified in paragraphs 1 (a) and (b), Schedule 4 will be disregarded.</p> <p><u>Non-Pensioners:</u> The total value of any pension specified in paragraphs 20 (a) and (b), Schedule 9 will be disregarded.</p>

6. To delegate to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, authority to consider, approve and/or deal with as necessary any amendments which may be made to the Amendment Regulations as defined in Minute No.110(2) above, following consideration by the NAFW on the 20th January, 2015.

111 URGENT DECISION TAKEN BY THE CABINET AT ITS MEETING HELD ON THE 16TH DECEMBER, 2014

RESOLVED – To note the urgent decision (in accordance with the Overview and Procedure Rules 17.2(a)) taken by Cabinet at its meeting held on the 16th December, 2014 in respect of Medium Term Service Planning – Update Council Revenue Budget 2015/16.

**M.J.WATTS
MAYOR**

The meeting closed at 5.55 p.m.