

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, 22nd April, 2015 at 5 p.m.

PRESENT:

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

County Borough Councillors

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

Officers in Attendance

Mr.C.Lee – Group Director, Corporate & Frontline Services
Mr.G.Isingrini – Group Director, Community & Children's Services
Mr.C.Bradshaw – Director, Education & Lifelong Learning
Mr.T.Wilkins – Director, Human Resources
Mr.C.B.Jones – Service Director, Legal & Democratic Services
Mr.C.Hanagan – Service Director, Cabinet & Public Relations
Ms.K.May – Head of Democratic Services

134 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors J.Bunnage, A.Calvert, C.Davies, J.Davies, S.M.Evans –Fear, J.S.James, S.Lloyd, S.Powderhill, K.A.Privett, C.J.Williams and T.Williams.

135 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Declarations of Interests by County Borough Councillors

- (1) In accordance with the Code of Conduct, the following declarations of personal interests were made by the under-mentioned County Borough Councillors:-
- County Borough Councillor S.A.Bradwick – Agenda Item 11 – Notice of Motion – “I am a member of South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, I represent RCT Council as one of their members. The Notice of Motion relates to fire-fighters, so it is only a personal interest”.
 - County Borough Councillor (Mrs.)S.J.Jones – Agenda Item 11 – Notice of Motion – “I am a member of South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, the Notice of Motion relates to fire-fighters”.
 - County Borough Councillor B.Morgan – Agenda Item 11 – Notice of Motion – “I am a member of South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, the Notice of Motion relates to fire-fighters”.
 - County Borough Councillor (Mrs.)S.Pickering – Agenda Item 11 – Notice of Motion – “I am a member of South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, the Notice of Motion relates to fire-fighters”.
 - County Borough Councillor S.Rees-Owen – Agenda Item 11 – Notice of Motion – “I have a sister who works for the South Wales Fire Authority and a brother-in-law who is a fire-fighter (in another county)”.
 - County Borough Councillor (Mrs.)E.Hanagan – Agenda Item 13 – Chief Executive Post and Associated Matters – “It is a personal interest as I am related to a Senior Officer”.

Declarations of Interests by Council Officers in relation to Agenda Item 13 – Chief Executive Post and Associated Matters

- (2) Mr.C.B.Jones, Service Director, Legal & Democratic Services and Mr.T.Wilkins declared personal and pecuniary interests in Agenda Item 13 and both informed Members that they would be staying in the meeting for this item to advise on any matters of process and procedure and that other Senior Officers would be withdrawing for the item as they may have personal connections with it.

136 MAYOR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (1) The Mayor announced that in accordance with paragraph 23 of Part 4 – Rules of Procedure of the Council’s Constitution, he would allow the use of social media at this meeting.
- (2) The Mayor welcomed to the public gallery some of the players of Rhondda School Rugby under 15s together with their Coaches, namely Chris Jones, Neil Boobier, Lewis Crabbe and Jack Dunning. He reported that this their 11th consecutive debar of the final Shield. Rhondda School Rugby was inaugurated in 1904, which is the oldest school’s trophy and comprises a group area of - Treorchy, Porth, Cymmer, Ferndale, Tonypany and

Tonyrefail. Rhondda School Rugby play against other group areas including Cardiff (24 schools), Swansea (16 schools) and Bridgend (12 schools) amongst others.

They have recently returned from a successful tour of South Africa, where they played against three schools from Capetown, all the games of which they won, one being the `middle` school in Captown which is the strongest school in South Africa, where Rhondda won by 19 – 0.

Prior to their visit to South Africa, the Mayor invited Rhondda Rugby School to the Chamber in Pontypridd where he presented them with ties and three plaques to be given to the three schools.

The Mayor finally wished the team all the best for their forthcoming game against Pontypool School at the Millennium Stadium, Cardiff on Wednesday, 29th April, 2015.

Members and Officers stood and applauded Rhondda School Rugby for their achievements over the years.

- (3) The Mayor wished every success to Pontypridd RFC, Cambrian RFC, Ystrad Rhondda RFC and all other borough teams who would be taking part in the Swalec Finals in the Millennium Stadium on the 3rd May, 2015.
- (4) The Mayor informed Members that former Councillor Ted Hancock, who had been a long serving Member and a Chair of the Council's Audit Committee had recently passed away. Members and Officers stood in a minute's silence as a mark of respect.

137 MINUTES

RESOLVED – to approve as an accurate record the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 25th March, 2015.

138 STATEMENTS

In accordance with Procedure Rule 2 of the Council's Constitution, the Leader of the Council made the following statement:

“Over the last few weeks, Members will see from press and TV coverage that the Local Authority is playing its part in working with other authorities such as the Police and Fire Service as a result of the deliberate mountain and grass fires. The Fire Service are going out to schools, especially comprehensive schools to undertake training and spelling out the dangers of such fires. By the end of next week the Council's staff will be liaising with Head Teachers and asking them to hold special assemblies.

A meeting is being held on Monday with Ministers, the Community Safety Partnership, Natural Resources Wales etc, in the hope that we can increase our involvement through `Operation Berni`. Our off-road motor cycle

team are also being utilised to patrol the mountains. It is a problem that we need to tackle and hopefully on Monday we will be in a position whereby all agencies will be working together”.

139 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

(1) From County Borough Councillor P.Jarman to the Chair of the Licensing Committee (County Borough Councillor A.Fox)

“Will you make a statement on the work of the Licensing Committee?”

Response from County Borough Councillor A.Fox

“Thank you Councillor Jarman for your question. The Licensing Committee and the Licensing Act Sub-Committee carry out vital work in dealing with Licensing issues for the benefit of residents to ensure the appropriateness of Gambling, Alcohol and Taxis etc. The Committee is also consulted on important policy matters before they are approved and implemented. One recent policy change, for example, was the amendment to the Vehicle Specification for licensed vehicles which was implemented in September, 2014. This sets out the requirements for vehicle type, age and safety requirements”.

Supplementary Question from County Borough Councillor P.Jarman

“You will be aware of recent examples of licensed taxis, vehicles and premises and the sexual exploitation of children. Has training for Members of your Committee dealt with child exploitation awareness?”

Response from County Borough Councillor A.Fox

“It is one of the main, if not the main issue where licensing regimes have to deal with. I have had a copy and read in depth the report on licensing regimes. Members of my Committee receive training to ensure that they have current and appropriate skills to perform their duties on the Committee. The most recent training was in March, 2015, which concentrated on the importance of `Fit and Proper Person Criteria` when dealing with Taxi licence applications. This is particularly important in the context of the recent Rotherham Report. As Chairman of the Committee, I also attend training with the Institute of Licensing on an annual basis and more recently with the LGA on current concerns relevant to licensing and Child Sexual Exploitation”.

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

“Will the Leader make a statement about the investment taking place in highways?”

Response from the Leader, County Borough Councillor A.Morgan

“I can cover a number of areas of highways investment since 2011 maintenance programme – it takes it to £35.5M for improvements to highways, bridges, resurfacing roads, culverts etc. We have a long way to go to make significant improvement on maintenance of our roads. However, some improvements have been made on A and C roads and there is some way to go on B roads.

We will continue to put in bids, two bids we are waiting to hear of and design and preparatory works are being undertaken for three major projects.

Supplementary Question from County Borough Councillor A.Fox

“I welcome the continued investment in highways. Please could you provide an update on the cross valley link from Penrhiwceiber to the A4059?”

Response from the Leader, County Borough Councillor A.Morgan

“We are exploring a number of bids, a bid has gone in for local transport funding, some is preparatory work for the cross valley link improvements. A bid has also been made for A4059, but it is a package. Some of the bids are pending outcomes from Welsh Government and Members will be updated”.

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

“Will the Leader give an update on the progress being made with the Lido in Pontypridd?”

Response from the Leader, County Borough Councillor A.Morgan

“I have made a number of visits to the Lido over the past months. The works are progressing very well, I am excited on what is going on there and the works that are going on behind the scenes with new look café etc. It will be a regional tourist attraction, however, there has been limited marketing so far but we plan to capitalise on this. We are already getting people from far and wide who are contacting us. We are looking to have a facebook page to market it”.

Supplementary Question from County Borough Councillor J.Elliott

“As a unique attraction in Wales, how will the lido be further promoted?”

Response from the Leader, County Borough Councillor A.Morgan

“We have had a lot of interest shown, we are planning to launch a facebook page to get as much information out there as possible. I recently visited the Royal Mint with Councillor Bevan as there is to be a new Visitor Centre and

one of the representatives of the Royal Mint mentioned the lido. With the Royal Mint's new Visitor Centre and the interest shown in the lido, other attractions such as the Rhondda Heritage Park will be boosted".

(4) From County Borough Councillor G.Davies to the Chair of the Development Control Committee (County Borough Councillor G.Stacey)

"What has been the most significant change in the responsibilities and conduct of Members of the Development Control Committee during the last 12 months given its regulatory status?"

Response from County Borough Councillor G.Stacey

"Thank you. Fundamentally the responsibilities of Members of the Development Control Committee have not changed during the last 12 months but the new Committee structure has had a number of benefits supplemented by a comprehensive programme of monthly training for Committee and non Committee Members. This has seen a reduction in Member overturns and appeals lost over the last 12 months. It also allows non Committee Members to become more involved as they don't have to take the opportunity to vote".

Note: The supplementary question from County Borough Councillor G.Davies was deemed inappropriate and was not allowed by the Mayor.

(5) From County Borough Councillor I.Pearce to the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (County Borough Councillor R.K.Turner)

"How diverse is the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee?"

Response from County Borough Councillor R.K.Turner

"Within the Council's Scrutiny arrangements, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a unique role in that it deals with the cross cutting themes which sit across the terms of reference of the four service Scrutiny Committees.

It also provides an important safeguard mechanism, if you like, in its oversight of the scrutiny quarterly budget and performance reports and provides a legitimate voice for the Council's Scrutiny mechanism as its membership includes the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the four Service Scrutiny Committees and the Leader of the main opposition Party. In this role, it has undertaken valuable work in responding to numerous consultations over the years – most recently, as is being reported here tonight is the White Paper on Reforming Local Government.

However, in terms of diversity, yes I can honestly say that during my 11 years as the Chair of the Committee, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has scrutinised a wide range of topics, which include – Domestic Abuse, the removal of BT telephone boxes, scrutiny of the LSB, the need for a DPPO in Pontypridd Town Centre, Pay Day Loans and Welfare Reform to name but a

few in my 11 years as Chair. A major piece of work was also undertaken on Child Poverty which won national recognition and the Authority achieving the "Good Scrutiny" awards in 2010

A recently published handbook for Scrutineers titled "Step by Step to Joint Scrutiny" makes reference to the work undertaken by RCT's LSB Scrutiny Working Group in respect of domestic violence.

More recently, in response to a Notice of Motion, we are looking at fuel poverty".

Supplementary Question from County Borough Councillor I.Pearce

"In recognition of the diversity of the work of the Committee, whereby the Plaid Cymru Group through the submission of Notices of Motions has resulted in the establishment of Working Groups to look at Pay Day Loans, Zero Contract Hours. In view of this would you support an increase in the number of Notices of Motions at the AGM to the Plaid Cymru Group?"

Response from County Borough Councillor R.K.Turner

"In my 11 years as Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, it has always been an arena of being non political. As far as Notices of Motions are concerned, it is not within my remit and something that I will leave with you as I am stepping down as Chair at the AGM after 11 years and would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your support in this Chamber".

REPORTS OF THE DIRECTOR, LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

140 RE-APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBER OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

In his report, the Director, Legal & Democratic Services informed Members that the term of office of the "independent" members to the Standards Committee is six years with provision for re-appointment for one further term.

He reported that the term of office of one of the "independent" members on the Standards Committee was due to expire on the 5th June, 2015 and in view of the fact that the individual concerned, Mr.Guy Smith had built up considerable experience and in order to maintain a balance of continuity on the Committee, Members consideration was sought to the re-appointment of Mr.G.Smith.

RESOLVED – That Mr.Guy Smith be re-appointed as an independent member of the Standards Committee for a period of three years from 5th June, 2015.

141 INTERIM REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP DEALING WITH `FUEL POVERTY`

Following the meeting of Council held on the 4th March, 2015 and the establishment of the Scrutiny Working Group at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 18th March, 2015, the Director, Legal & Democratic Services presented Members with the Working Group's interim report on their findings in respect of the matters outlined in the Notice of Motion regarding `fuel poverty` following its first meeting held on the 9th April, 2015.

RESOLVED –

1. To note the contents of the interim report of the Scrutiny Working Group.
2. That a further report be presented to Council outlining the further findings and recommendations of the Scrutiny Working Group at a future meeting.

142 COMMUNITY AND ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS REVIEW – RESPONSE OF BOUNDARY COMMISSION

In his report, the Director, Legal & Democratic Services sought the views of Council on the responses received from the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales (LDBCW) affecting the numbers of Community and Town Councils in Pontypridd, Llantwit Fardre and Llantrisant areas.

At the meeting, the Service Director, Legal & Democratic Services orally reported on the comments received from the Clerks of the respective Town/Community Councils.

Following a discussion, it was **RESOLVED –**

1. To endorse the proposals of the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales (LDBCW) with regards to Town and Community Councillor numbers as set out in paragraphs 5, 6 and 7 of the report.
2. To agree the original proposal C1(Llantrisant Town/Talbot Green) as submitted by Llantrisant Community Council.
3. To agree the new proposal L1 (Aberaman – Cwmbach Boundary Change)
4. To defer proposal F2 (Llanharan/Llanilid Boundary Change)

JOINT REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR, LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, CABINET & PUBLIC RELATIONS

143 CONSULTATION ON THE WELSH GOVERNMENT'S WHITE PAPER – REFORMING LOCAL GOVERNMENT: POWER TO LOCAL PEOPLE

In accordance with Minute No. 132 of the Council Meeting held on the 25th March, 2015, the Director, Legal & Democratic Services and the Service Director, Cabinet & Public Relations advised Members of the comments of both the Cabinet and Scrutiny Working Groups following their meetings held on the 9th and 13th April, 2015 respectively.

Members of both Working Groups were provided with an overview of the nine chapters within the White Paper, together with the draft response of the WLGA, as shown at Appendix 1 of the report.

Attached to the report at Appendices 2 and 3 were the comments of the Working Groups, both of which endorsed the response of the WLGA but did not support the new power for Standards Committees. At the meeting the Service Director, Legal & Democratic Services informed Members of the comments of Members of the Standards Committee following its meeting on the 13th April, 2015, which were akin to the Working Groups.

Following a discussion, it was **RESOLVED –**

1. To endorse the response of the WLGA as shown at Appendix 1 to the report.
2. That the comments of the Cabinet and Scrutiny Working Groups, as shown at Appendices 2 and 3 respectively, be included in the Council's response to the Welsh Government by the deadline of the 28th April, 2015 together with the following comments made at the meeting:

“Page 10 of the White Paper makes proposals for balancing the responsibilities of National and Local Government. The White Paper accepts that in some few, unspecified areas local authorities can exercise local choices and local priorities. However, it asserts that over 80% of its expenditure covering those areas of education, social services, waste and planning there is a primary accountability to the Welsh Government which will intervene “swiftly and decisively” wherever it judges that the standards it sets are not met by local authorities. This assertion makes local authorities entirely subservient to Welsh Government and Members do not believe that it would be made by a national Government in any other developed democracy. This Council therefore asks that the Welsh Government reconsiders the patronising and disdainful approach that characterises this proposal and so much else in this White Paper.

This Council asks the Welsh Government to consider whether it would be acceptable for its paymaster, the UK Government, to claim the same balance of responsibilities in its relationship with devolved administrations.

The Welsh Government should accept that local authorities are primarily accountable to local communities for the fulfilment of its responsibilities. RCT Council accepts that it is also accountable in different ways to a wide range of regulators, professional bodies and the Welsh Government but this must stand alongside its accountability to local people.

On pages 14 to 16 the White Paper argues that it is inappropriate for Welsh local authorities to play the role in regional planning and regional economic development that is commonplace elsewhere in the world and is currently being proposed for regions in England. RCT Council has a proud record of participating and leading in collaborative action across South East Wales and regrets the nationalisation of the powers once exercised by the South East Wales Transport Alliance. This Council looks forward to new initiatives which would allow all the local authorities in South East Wales to share responsibility for the developing the infrastructure and the relationships with business that foster economic success. Members very much regret the unfounded allegation in the White Paper that local authorities are too parochial to perform these roles and are unable to share leadership with our business partners.

On page 22 the White Paper asserts that no further powers may be devolved to Welsh local authorities until the Welsh Government is satisfied with local authorities' performance of existing functions. RCT Council asks whether this subjective criteria, arbitrarily judged, is appropriate in the balancing the responsibilities between national and local government. Would the Welsh Government advocate that the same criteria should be applied in the same way when there is a judgement to be made in devolving further responsibilities from the UK Government to the Welsh Government?"

3. To note the comments of the Standards Committee made at its meeting held on the 13th April, 2015 as reported orally at this meeting by the Service Director, Legal & Democratic Services.

144 NOTICE OF MOTION

The following Notice of Motion standing in the names of County Borough Councillors P.Jarman, G.Davies, S.Rees-Owen, M.Weaver, C.Davies, I.Pearce, E.Webster, S.Evans-Fear and K.Morgan was moved and seconded:-

"This Council wishes to put on record that it values the work of our frontline Ambulance staff, Firefighters and operational Police Officers with whom we have joint Emergency Planning responsibilities.

This Council further pledges that it will co-operate in any way it can, within its powers, to support and assist in the improvement and sustainability of these key public services.

As a consequence this Council will convene a Respect Your Public Service Conference, which the citizens of the County will be invited to attend.

The Council will invite appropriate representatives from all of the emergency services to attend and speak at the Conference on key issues relating to efficient service delivery for the future”.

RESOLVED – to adopt the Notice of Motion.

145 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1972

RESOLVED – that the press and public be excluded from the meeting and that the use of social be not allowed in accordance with Section 100A(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 12 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Act, namely information relating to a particular individual.

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR, HUMAN RESOURCES (CONTAINING EXEMPT INFORMATION)

146 CHIEF EXECUTIVE POST AND ASSOCIATED MATTERS

Following the statement made by the Leader of the Council at the Council Meeting held on the 4th March, 2015 (Minute No.116(1) refers), the Director of Human Resources provided Members with an overview of the options available for appointing to the Chief Executive’s role and a recommended approach to the said appointment, following the announcement by Mr.Steve Merritt of his intention to retire.

Following a discussion, it was **RESOLVED** –

1. That in light of the Welsh Government’s White Paper on the future of Local Government in Wales, to agree to make a temporary appointment to the post of Chief Executive for a period of twelve months in line with the statutory provisions contained within the Local Authorities Standing Orders (Wales) Regulations 2006;
2. To agree to the temporary appointment of one of the existing Chief Officers to the role of Chief Executive and that following a review of the various functions undertaken by the current Chief Officers, that this role be undertaken by Mr.Christopher Bradshaw;
3. That Mr.Bradshaw retains his responsibilities as Director of Education including specifically those in relation to 21st Century Schools, with the balance of his current management responsibilities being assumed by his nominated deputy, Mrs.Esther Thomas. To underpin this arrangement, Mrs. Thomas will receive a one grade increase within the existing Chief Officer salary structure, which will be inclusive on costs;

4. To note that the salary savings to the Council during the period of these temporary arrangements would amount to £132.5k (inclusive of on costs);
5. To further note the savings made on the recruitment and assessment process as a result of this temporary appointment, which are estimated at £25k (figure based on the previous Chief Executive appointment process in October, 2013), with the recognition that such savings may only apply until such time as the post is filled on a substantive basis;
6. That Mr.Paul Lucas undertake the role and responsibilities of Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer;
7. That as orally recommended at the meeting, there will be no fees payable to the Returning Officer for the duties associated with County Borough elections, which will save approximately £15-£18k;
8. That it be agreed that Mr.Merritte can retire on the 31st August, 2015;
9. That the above arrangements become effective upon the retirement of the Chief Executive.

Note: County Borough Councillors G.Davies, P.Howe, P.Jarman, K.Morgan, I.Pearce, S.Rees-Owen, L.Walker, P.Wasley, M.Weaver and E.Webster wished to have their names recorded that they voted against the above motion and voted in favour of the following lost amendment:

“To appoint Mr.C.Lee to the interim post and that Mr.C.Bradshaw be appointed as the Council’s Section 151 Officer and sufficient duties be reallocated to Mr.C.Bradshaw to enable Mr.C.Lee to carry out the Head of Paid Service and Chief Executive duties on an interim basis of one year”.

Further Noted: That the Senior Officers as referred to in Minute No.135(2) left the meeting during consideration of this item.

147 MAYOR’S CLOSING REMARKS

As this would be the last meeting of the Council to be chaired by County Borough Councillor M.J.Watts in his capacity as Mayor, he wished to thank Members and Officers for their support during his year of office.

**M.J.WATTS
MAYOR**

The meeting closed at 6.55 p.m.

These minutes are subject to approval at the Council Meeting to be held in June 2015