

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, Clydach Vale on Wednesday, 24 February 2016 at 5 p.m.

PRESENT

County Borough Councillor B.Stephens – in the Chair

County Borough Councillors

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

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.C.B.Jones – Service Director, Legal & Democratic Services
Mr.C.Hanagan – Service Director, Cabinet & Public Relations

101 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors (Mrs) M.E.Davies, J.S.James, M.J.Powell, S.Rees, S.Rees-Owen, P.Wasley and W.D.Weeks.

102 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

In accordance with Members' Code of Conduct, the following declarations of personal interests in matters pertaining to the agenda were received from:

- (1) County Borough Councillor S.Bradwick in relation to Agenda Item No.7 – Presentation – Deliberate Fires & Wild Fires – “I am a member of the South Wales Fire & Rescue Service”
- (2) County Borough Councillor B.Morgan in relation to Agenda Item No.7 – Presentation – Deliberate Fires & Wild Fires – “I am a member of the South Wales Fire & Rescue Service”
- (3) County Borough Councillor (Mrs) S.J.Jones in relation to Agenda Item No.7 – Presentation – Deliberate Fires & Wild Fires – “I am a member of the South Wales Fire & Rescue Service”
- (4) County Borough Councillor S. Pickering in relation to Agenda Item No.7 – Presentation – Deliberate Fires & Wild Fires – “I am a member of the South Wales Fire & Rescue Service”
- (5) County Borough Councillor K.Morgan in relation to Agenda Item No.10(b) – Notice of Motion – “My Son uses Home to School Transport”.

County Borough Councillor P.Jarman also declared that she had been granted a dispensation by the Standards Committee to speak and vote on all matters for the duration and adoption of the 2016/17 budget process.

103 PETITION

County Borough Councillor M.O.Weaver presented the Mayor with a petition calling on the Council to include the Moel area of Pentre in the 121 bus service route.

104 ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements on this occasion.

105 MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve as an accurate record, the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 27 January 2016 subject to a correction to Minute No.99 – Notice of Motion - to include reference to the need to immediately remove the published minutes from the Council's website and that they be replaced by minutes that did not risk breaching the Data Protection Act and that an apology be made to the named person.

OPEN GOVERNMENT

106 STATEMENTS

- (1) The Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A.Morgan, updated Members on the ongoing situation regarding essential works being undertaken on the A4233 – Maerdy Mountain Road – following a landslip. More detailed information on the extent of the work needed to rectify the existing problems would be known in April 2016 following investigations. In the meantime, the situation was being monitored daily and if further significant movement occurred, appropriate action would be taken.
- (2) The Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure & Culture, County Borough Councillor A. Crimmings, was pleased to inform Members that the new recycling centre in Treherbert was opening on 29th February 2016. Councillor Crimmings also informed Members that over the last nine months, provisional figures show that recycling within the County Borough is close to 62%.

107 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

(1) From County Borough Councillor M.O. Weaver to the Cabinet Member for Health & Adult Social Services (County Borough Councillor M. Forey)

“Councillor Forey, will you make a statement on the service priorities for older people in the County?”

Response from Councillor Forey:

“In alignment with the aims of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act which goes live on 6th April, our service priorities for older people involve a focus on preventative services and promoting independence through the provision of appropriate support to enable people to achieve their own well being. We will also continue to focus on safeguarding adults whose circumstances make them vulnerable.

We will ensure that carers and helpers have a stronger voice. We are looking at closer collaboration and partnership working, working more closely with the Cwm Taf Health Board and the third sector. We are developing at home services and MASH provision. It is also important to align priorities very closely with the Council’s Corporate Plan recognising that there are issues about sustainability in the longer term.”

Supplementary Question from Councillor Weaver:

“As a former Nurse with 42 years service in the NHS, I am well aware of the need to up-skill staff throughout their career to improve their practical academic knowledge to help retain sound nursing practice. The Alzheimers Society in Wales supports independent advocacy services for people with dementia as well as the need for compulsory mandatory dementia training for

Home Care workers. Does this Council support these developments and when will they be implemented?"

Response from Councillor Forey:

"This is a feature of the Act and yes, it will be looked at."

(2) From County Borough Councillor C. Leyshon to the Deputy Leader of the Council (County Borough Councillor K. Montague)

"What is the Council doing to tackle empty properties in the County Borough?"

Response from Councillor K.Montague:

"Empty properties are a blight in our communities and is a key priority for the Council. I would like to give thanks to the Scrutiny Working Group that did work on the Tackling Poverty agenda last year and a meeting was reconvened last month to look at the response going forward.

We have employed a dedicated Empty Housing Officer who will give specialist advice on what people can do to bring houses back into use and use enforcement powers.

We have also got a number of other programmes such as 'Health In Action' in Tylorstown using grant funding from the Welsh Government to bring homes back into use."

Supplementary Question from Councillor Leyshon:

"How do you feel our finances are about carrying this good work forward?"

Response from Councillor Montague:

"Some Politicians think we have had a massive windfall but finances are still tight. However, I think what we have done is where there is strategic priorities, we can make strategic investment as well. We have shown this in our leisure centres."

(3) From County Borough Councillor H. Boggis to the Deputy Leader of the Council (County Borough Councillor K. Montague)

"What support is the Council giving to third sector organisations?"

Response from Councillor K.Montague

"We offer a range of support for the voluntary sector and they play a huge part in community life. They are important partners for us. We offer grant schemes, SLAs with third party providers and also provide in-kind Officer support. I feel we offer a lot of support for the voluntary sector which are well engaged with delivering services in partnership with the Council."

Supplementary Question from Councillor Boggis

“Would you agree with me that the third sector will continue to play a vital role in providing service delivery in future years?”

Response from Councillor Montague

“I have been leading up the ‘RCT Together’ approach and we have worked through a hundred applications to help deliver services. Voluntary sector, third sector and the community sector will provide greater role in providing services going forward. However, particularly on implementation around the Health and Well Being Act, I see the role of voluntary sector working in partnership and collaboration with the Council as growing. It is about improving communities’ needs and not organisational interests.”

(4) From County Borough Councillor G.Thomas to the Cabinet Member for Children’s Social Services, Equalities and the Welsh Language (County Borough Councillor G.E.Hopkins)

As County Borough Councillor G.Thomas was not present at the meeting to ask his question, i.e. “How is the Council seeking to support outside organisations in supporting the provision of the Welsh Language?” – it was noted that he would receive a written response from County Borough Councillor Hopkins.

(5) From County Borough Councillor M.J.Watts to the Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Services (County Borough Councillor M.Forey)

“Please could you provide an update on Rhondda Care Home?”

Response from County Borough Councillor M.Forey

“I think Members are familiar with the situation and background circumstances of what was a Private Residential Home in the Rhondda. Difficulties were experienced by the Home in providing sustainable services because of a lack of nursing staff. The CSSIW issued a closure notice which was appealed against but subsequently the Home was closed and there was a very short period of time for Social services and the Council to react to placing all the residents. Both Council and Health Board staff had to find placements for all 52 residents by last Friday. They completed this task with a day to spare. I would like to thank the staff for the collaborative work undertaken in this matter.”

Supplementary Question from Councillor Watts

“It seems to me that potentially very traumatic times for residents and families have been handled sensitively and effectively with the minimum disruption and the staff involved should be applauded. Is a review going to be undertaken to inform new working practises?”

Response from Councillor Forey

“There are indeed. We do have ‘lessons learnt’ meetings ensuring all reviews of placements are dealt with in a timely way. We will meet with other residential homes to try and prevent another situation like this occurring in the future.”

108 PRESENTATION - DELIBERATE FIRES & WILD FIRES

The Council received Mr.H.Jakeway - Chief Fire Officer, Garry Davies - Head of Community Safety & Partnerships and Chris Barton - Treasurer of the South Wales Fire & Rescue Service.

During the full and informative presentation, Members were informed of various aspects of the Fire & Rescue Service including budgets, funding, incident statistics and risk reduction through community safety and partnerships.

It was noted that Rhondda Cynon Taf had experienced a 0.46% increase in fires attended over the past three years. Deliberate fires increased by 3.39% and accidental fires decreased by 7.64%. In 2014/15 over 75% of fires attended in the County Borough were deliberately set. The initiatives being undertaken to try and educate the public on the dangers of setting fires deliberately were outlined and welcomed by the Council.

Following a question and answer session, the Fire & Rescue Service representatives were thanked for attending the meeting and providing Members with very useful information. Mr. Jakeway was asked to take back to his Authority, the Council’s thanks for the all the work being done especially in trying to prevent people from deliberately light fires in the future.

REPORT OF THE CABINET

109 THE COUNCIL’S 2016/17 REVENUE BUDGET STRATEGY

The Group Director, Corporate & Frontline Services presented the report of the Cabinet which provided information on the implications for the Council of the Local Government Settlement for 2016/17 together with recommendations of the Cabinet in response to the Council’s resourcing requirements in order to assist Members to determine specific service allocations within the Council’s Revenue Budget together with the level of Council Tax for the year ending 31st March 2017.

In accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rule 2(b), the following had to be considered in conjunction with the Cabinet’s Report:

“Please accept the following budget amendment on behalf of the Plaid Cymru Group within the timescale allowed for such amendments.

Amendment tabled in the names of Councillors P.Jarman, G.Davies, C.Davies, S.Rees-Owen, M.Weaver, S.Evans-Fear, E.Webster, I.Pearce, K.Morgan

That all fees and charges that the Council are currently in receipt of be frozen at their present level for the Financial Year 2016/17. The effect of this amendment is that the estimated £450k that would be generated by adopting the proposed average 3% above RPI increase would instead be met from the General Fund Balances, reducing them from £10.5m to £10.05m which is still above the minimum level of General Fund Balances that the Council should hold”.

A vote took place, for or against the above-mentioned budget amendment and as a result, the amendment was lost.

Following a discussion on the recommended budget proposals as presented in the Cabinet’s report, it was **RESOLVED** –

- (1) Note the written statement from the Minister for Public Services and the table on the 2016/2017 Provisional local government settlement, reproduced at Appendix 1 and the update at Appendix 1A;
- (2) Note the allocation of £0.500M from General Fund Balances to the Medium Term Financial Planning & Service Transformation Reserve as detailed at Section 3;
- (3) Note the base budget adjustments impacting in 2016/17 as summarised in Table 1;
- (4) Note the budget adjustments following Cabinet approval on the 4th February 2016 in respect of :
 - Library Services
 - Youth Engagement & Participation Services
 - Day Nursery Services
- (5) Approve the budget strategy proposals as summarised in Table 2, including:
 - I. An agreed general efficiency target of £6.350M for 2016/17;
 - II. The continued implementation of the Social Care Transformation Programme that will off set projected increased cost pressures by £2.985M in 2016/17;
 - III. The delivery of further management cost savings totalling £0.123M for 2016/17;
 - IV. Use of the ‘Medium Term Financial Planning & Service Transformation Reserve’ as transitional funding, totalling £2.147M for 2016/17.

- (6) Approve Tables 3 and 4 in Section 10 of the report as the basis of allocating resources to the Individual Schools Budget (ISB), to other Council Services, and to meet its corporate financing requirements;
- (7) Agree the Council Tax increase for the financial year ending the 31st March 2017 at 2.75%;
- (8) Agree the Council's overall budget for 2016/2017, in order to set the Council Tax for the forthcoming financial year by the statutory deadline of the 11th March 2016.
- (9) Note that the final settlement will not be announced until the 2nd March 2016, that is, after the Council's budget has been set on the basis of the Provisional Settlement. Accordingly, any changes to Welsh Government funding levels in the Final Settlement will be dealt with by means of adjustment to the level of the use of Transitional Funding (details of which will be included in the Council Tax Resolution to be considered by Council on the 10th March 2016).

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

110 THE COUNCIL'S DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN 2016-2020

The Chief Executive presented his report setting out the new draft Corporate Plan from 2016-17 – 2019/20 which:

- was informed by the priorities and concerns of residents, identified through the Budget and community consultation undertaken by the Cabinet during 2015 and 2016;
- provided a vision for the County Borough in 2020 including a set of priorities and measures of success for 2020 which would be used to ensure that services provided to residents were effective and efficient;
- set out how the delivery of the Corporate Plan would be monitored.

Following consideration of the report, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the Corporate Plan 2016-2020.

111 NOTICE OF MOTION

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

“Because of the benefits to the County Borough of RCT, this Council supports the UK's continued membership to the European Union”

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10.4 the following Amendment to the Motion was moved by County Borough Councillor A.Morgan and seconded by County Borough Councillor M.Webber:

“Because of the benefits to the County Borough of RCT, the Council will publically commit its cross party support to the `Stronger In’ campaign and the IK’s continued membership to the European Union.”

In response to the amended motion, Councillor P.Jarman and her seconder, Councillor G.R.Davies withdrew the original motion, with the agreement of the Council.

A vote was, therefore, taken on the amended motion and it was **RESOLVED** that because of the benefits to the County Borough of RCT, the Council will publically commit its cross party support to the `Stronger In’ campaign and the IK’s continued membership to the European Union.

112 NOTICE OF MOTION

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

“That this Council requests the Cabinet to reconsider its decision to introduce charging for Home to School transport”.

Upon the matter being put to the vote, it was **RESOLVED** not to adopt the Notice of Motion.

(**Note:** County Borough Councillor K.Morgan wished to have recorded that she voted in favour of adopting the Notice of Motion)

URGENT ITEM

113 THE CARIDFF CAPITAL REGION CITY DEAL

In view of the urgency of the matter (as explained in the report) and with the permission of the Mayor, the Chief Executive presented his report updating Members on progress made to agree a `City Deal’ with the Welsh and UK Governments.

It was pointed out that the timescales to complete the `City Deal’ for the Cardiff Capital City Region were very short when compared to other City Deals across the UK and it was, therefore, essential that local authorities Members were kept up to date of the progress being made and understood how the `City Deal’ mechanism worked in practice.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the contents of the report.

**B.STEPHENS
MAYOR**

The meeting terminated at 7.50 p.m.

