

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, 11th January, 2017 at 5.00 p.m.

PRESENT

County Borough Councillor R.Lewis – in the Chair

County Borough Councillors

L.M.Adams	G.E.Hopkins	G.Smith
(Mrs.)T.Bates	P.Howe	R.W.Smith
D.R.Bevan	P.Jarman	G.Stacey
H.Boggis	(Mrs.)S.J.Jones	B.Stephens
J.Bonetto	(Mrs.)C.Leyshon	(Mrs.)M.Tegg
S.A.Bradwick	S.Lloyd	R.K.Turner
J.Bunnage	C.J.Middle	G.P.Thomas
A.Calvert	K.Montague	L.G.Walker
(Mrs.)A.Crimmings	A.Morgan	(Mrs.)J.S.Ward
W.J.David	B.Morgan	P.Wasley
A.L.Davies,MBE	M.A.Norris	M.J.Watts
C.Davies	I.Pearce	M.Weaver
G.R.Davies	S.Pickering	M.Webber
(Mrs.)M.E.Davies	S.Powderhill	E.Webster
J.Elliott	M.J.Powell	C.J.Williams
S.Evans	K.A.Privett	D.H.Williams
S.M.Evans-Fear	S.Rees	T.Williams
A.S.Fox	S.Rees-Owens	C.J.Willis
(Mrs.)E.Hanagan	(Mrs.)A.Roberts	R.Yeo
	J.Rosser	

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.C.B.Jones – Director, Legal & Democratic Services
Mr.T.Williams – Director, Human Resources
Mr.C.Hanagan – Director, Cabinet & Public Relations
Mr.N.Jones – Service Director, Operational Finance
Ms.K.May – Head of Democratic Services

89 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors P.Baccara, (Mrs.)J.Cass, J.Davies, (Mrs.)L.De Vet, G.Holmes, J.S.James, K.Morgan and W.D.Weeks.

90 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct the following declarations of personal interests were received from:-

Agenda Item 8 – Welsh Church Act Fund – Annual Report 2015/16

- County Borough Councillor L.M.Adams – “I am a communicant of Holy Trinity Church, Tylorstown who received a funding grant from the fund”.
- County Borough Councillor D.R.Bevan – “I have a duty to approve/not approve Welsh Church Act Fund applications in my capacity as Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Tourism and Planning”.
- County Borough Councillor G.R.Davies – “I am a member of Hebron Evangelical Church and Rhondda Lawn Tennis Club”
- County Borough Councillor K.Montague – “I have involvement with Maerdy Boxing Club and The Friends of Ferndale, who have both received monies from the fund”.
- County Borough Councillor S.Rees-Owen – “I am a Trustee with the Ton Pentre & District Recreation Association CIO”
- County Borough Councillor R.K.Turner – “I am the Chair of the Mountain Hare Neighbourhood Watch Committee”
- County Borough Councillor M.Weaver – “I am a Trustee of Ton Pentre & District Recreation Association CIO”
- County Borough Councillor T.Williams – “I am a volunteer of Cwmaman Public Hall & Institute Ltd.”

Agenda Item 10 – Financing of the 21st Century Schools Programme Using Prudential Borrowing

- County Borough Councillor (Mrs.)A.Calvert – “I am Chair of the Federated Governing Body of Cwmaman Infants and Glynhafod Junior schools”.
- County Borough Councillor P.Jarman – “I have been granted a dispensation by the Standards Committee to speak and vote on all matters for the duration and adoption of the 2017/18 budget process”.

91 **PETITIONS**

The following petitions were handed to the Mayor at the meeting:-

- By County Borough Councillors A.S.Fox and (Mrs.)J.S.Ward on behalf of the residents of Penrhiwceiber requesting the upgrade of the Zebra crossing outside the Lee Gardens to a Puffing crossing, if approved, the proposal would see the installation of traffic lights which would be controlled by a press button and sensor designed to detect the presence of any pedestrians on the crossing.
- By County Borough Councillor S.M.Evans-Fear on behalf of the residents of Cwmparc requesting improvements to Cwmparc playground.

92 ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (1) County Borough Councillor G.E.Hopkins informed Members that over 1,500 children residing in the county borough received gifts from the Santa Appeal and he wished to thank Members, staff and the public for their generosity.
- (2) The Mayor wished to thank those that took part in the Nos Galon Race on New Year's Eve.

93 MINUTES

RESOLVED – to approve as accurate records the minutes of the meetings of the Council held on the 30th November, 2016 and the 15th December, 2016, subject to the following amendments being made to the minutes of the meeting held on the 30th November, 2016:-

- (a) Minute No.76(a) the supplementary question from County Borough Councillor Jarman to read as follows:-

“Your main areas of responsibility as portfolio holder for Elections also extend to Council Business, Communications, Corporate Policy and Legal and Democratic Services, which is a wide ranging but logical brief. It is in that context that I ask my supplementary question relating to elections. Can you confirm, that under your watch, there will be no breach of the pre election and purdah rules relating to statements and press releases issued by the Council as there was in 2012 and that no arrangements will be made with the local Labour Party to use the Council's Corporate resources for political purposes for a financial consideration, as was the case in 2012. Will you speak to the Returning Officer on these matters?”

- (b) Minute No.76(c) the opening sentence to the supplementary response from County Borough Councillor to read as follows:-

“Grammar schools were fine but they are now not fit for existing purposes.....”

- (c) Minute No.76(d) the supplementary question from County Borough Councillor G.R.Davies the word to be inserted at the start of the second sentence to state **thirty hours** and not thirty years.

94 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

- (a) **From County Borough Councillor S.A.Bradwick to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A.Morgan**

“Will the Leader of the Council provide an update on the situation with Maerdy Mountain?”

Response from County Borough Councillor A.Morgan

“I met with Highways this morning. We are progressing plans for the Capital Programme. The scheme is being developed and ground testing works etc. are being carried out. It is hoped that works will start on site in June and the necessary traffic management systems will be put in place. The road will be required to close for a certain amount of time but will be kept to a minimum”.

Supplementary Question from County Borough Councillor S.A.Bradwick

“I receive a number of calls about this. Is there anyway in which the Council can promote what you just said?”

Response from County Borough Councillor A.Morgan

“We have put out a number of press releases and it has been put on social media. I will ask them to look at it again. Signs will also be put up outlining the development plans”.

(b) **From County Borough Councillor C.J.Williams to the Chair of the Licensing Committee, County Borough Councillor A.S.Fox**

“Would you support the concept of a paperless approach to the Licensing Committee?”

Response from County Borough Councillor A.S.Fox

“I would definitely support the roll out of a paperless approach, especially when you consider the volume of paper that is used for my Committee, for example there are 240 pages attached to the agenda for consideration at the meeting being held next week. The approach of the Cabinet is going extremely well, which is supporting the Council’s drive for efficiency savings and the further reduction in paper and print costs would benefit if this approach was made by my Committee”.

Note: A supplementary question was not asked.

(c) **From County Borough Councillor B.Morgan to the Cabinet for Children’s Services, Equalities and the Welsh Language, County Borough Councillor G.Hopkins**

“Will the Cabinet Member make a statement on the Welsh Language?”

Response from County Borough Councillor G.Hopkins

“The Council continues to work with partner organisations in terms of our duties under the Welsh Language Measure, and in relation to the standards being applied by the Welsh Language Commissioner.

Responsibility for monitoring the Council's compliance with the standards rests with the Cabinet Sub-Committee, and we are currently working with Council Services and external partners in preparing our Welsh Language strategy for the coming years. The input from bodies such as Forum Iaith, for example, has been key in shaping our work.

The Council has much to celebrate in its actions to promote the language and its usage within the Council, such as the welcome increase in opportunities for staff to learn Welsh and to access training courses through the medium of Welsh, and there have been notable expansions in Welsh education throughout the County Borough.

We have recently significantly increased the capacity of the Council's own Welsh Language Translation Unit to respond to the higher demand from service areas for bilingual materials, in compliance with the Commissioner's requirements.

All of us recognise the significance of the Welsh language, in shaping our culture and heritage, even many who do not speak Welsh would have heard sung softly in our infant ears *lesu irion, gwell yn awr blentyn bach yn plygu i lawr*. But more than that, the importance not simply of seeing it as a precious memory of the past, but of maintaining its living, breathing use in our communities well into future generations".

Supplementary Question from County Borough Councillor B.Morgan

"Would you agree with the sentiments of the Minister in respect of Welsh Standards?"

Response from County Borough Councillor G.Hopkins

"Yes, I have heard the statement made by Mr.A.Davies, Minister and I welcome very much his announcement that he is going to review, not just the standards but the interpretation and application of those standards set by the Welsh Language Commissioner. This Council has not been alone in Wales in dealing with the complexities of the Standards to be adhered to. Concerns have been expressed to both the Welsh Government and the Commissioner on the practicalities and reasonableness. Notwithstanding the support for ambitious targets set for millions of Welsh speakers in order to progress the language with us in a way that maintains goodwill but we would appreciate a more light touch to the standards.

(d) **From County Borough Councillor G.Smith to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A.Morgan**

"Can the Leader make a statement on town centre car parks?"

Response from County Borough Councillor A.Morgan

“A consultation exercise was started before Christmas around possible changes to car parking charges, the consultation period has now closed and Cabinet will be considering those proposals shortly”.

Supplementary Question from County Borough Councillor G.Smith

“I think it is great that you are looking at car parking charges to support town centres. Is there anything else we can do to support them?”

Response from County Borough Councillor A.Morgan

“There are a number of things, for example improvements to the street scene. We are considering a number of regeneration projects and Councillor Bevan and myself met with Traders on a number of occasions and those discussions were positive”.

(e) **From County Borough Councillor L.De Vet to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Services, County Borough Councillor M.Forey**

“Please can you make a statement as to how the Council is supporting independent living?”

Note: In the absence of County Borough Councillor Forey, the Mayor reported that a written response would be made and emailed to all Members.

95 MR.A.MICHAEL – POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

The Mayor welcomed Mr.A.Michael, Police and Crime Commissioner together with his Assistant, Mr.L.Jones, Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner and Mr.M.Jukes, Deputy Chief Constable.

Mr.Michael reported that he is a frequent visitor to the areas within Rhondda Cynon Taf and holds regular meetings with the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive which are of substantial value.

He reported that during the elections last year, he made a promise to continue to concentrate on making South Wales safer and to that end he would build further on the relationships and foundations established since taking up office in November, 2012.

The most frequently question that is asked is “are you going to take away our PCSO?” and Mr.Michael reported that whilst there has been a reduction in the Police Grant, the Welsh Government have funded 205 Police Community Support Officers thus enabling South Wales Police to work closer with local communities and delivering strongly in neighbourhood policing across Wales. This was at a time when some English boards were reducing significantly. South Wales Police have moved from being one of the worst performing

forces for victim satisfaction to one of the top forces in England and Wales and was achieved in a period of austerity with further cuts to be made.

The creation of the Public Service Boards under the Future Generations and Wellbeing Act, 2015 has brought about further collaboration and partnership working and whilst the Police are devolved, Mr. Michael together with the Chief Constable are statutory "invitee" members and have seized the opportunity to be involved in the process.

Mr. Michael outlined the work that is being done in supporting young people through the Police Youth Volunteer Programme for 18 – 25 year olds, where schemes have been funded to support a reduction in offending behaviour by young people. Tackling domestic abuse was also key to keeping people safe and the Police have worked with partners such as GPs in sharing information and to train professionals to know what to look for and how to respond so victims get the services they need.

He further reported that the Police have returned to the founding principle of Sir Robert Peel in first priority of the Police is to reduce and prevent crime.

Following the comments made by Mr. A. Michael, Mr. M. Jukes, Deputy Chief Constable spoke on the operational challenges together with future plans in putting victims at the heart of the service and ensuring that PCSOs are visible on the streets will be an important part in these plans going forward. However, in many ways children were now more vulnerable as in 2007 they were playing in the streets and are now in their bedrooms playing on-line and therefore vulnerable to exploitation. A partnership action plan has been set up to help keep children safe from on-line grooming and other forms of abuse.

In response to a query raised by a Member in respect of Programme Fusion, Mr. Jukes stated that Police Officers no longer use pocket books and are now using the latest technology and recording information digitally on 'Smart' devices and giving them the information they need, when they need it.

Following responses to further comments/queries raised by Members, the Leader confirmed that meetings are held on a regular basis between the Commissioner, the Chief Executive and himself which were very productive and covered a diverse range of issues that the Police deal with on a daily basis such as cases of domestic abuse and working closely with Social Care. He also wished to place on record his thanks to local Police Officers and to Sally Burke, Chief Superintendent of South Wales Police and Divisional Commander for RCT and Merthyr Tydfil.

The Mayor thanked Mr. Michael, Mr. Jukes and Mr. Jones for their attendance at they then left the meeting.

REPORTS OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, CORPORATE & FRONTLINE SERVICES

96 WELSH CHURCH ACT FUND ANNUAL REPORT

In his report, the Group Director, Corporate & Frontline Services sought the approval of Members of the Statement of Accounts for the Welsh Church Act Fund for the financial year ended 31st March, 2016; and it was **RESOLVED** –

1. To approve and note the Welsh Church Act Fund Statement of Accounts for the financial year 2015/16, 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.

97 LOCAL COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME

In accordance with the Council Tax Reduction Scheme in Wales as set by regulations made under Schedule 1B of the Local Government Finance Act, 1992 (as inserted by the Local Government Finance Act, 2012) and the approval by the National Assembly for Wales of two sets of regulations (as set out in the report) on the 26th November, 2013, the Group Director, Corporate & Frontline Services sought the approval of Members to adopt a Council Tax Reduction Scheme by the 31st January, 2017.

Following consideration of the report, it was **RESOLVED** –

1. To note the amendments to the Council Tax Reduction Schemes and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2013 (“the Prescribed Requirements Regulations”) by the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2017 (the “Amendment Regulations”) that will come into force on 18th January 2017, subject to being approved by the National Assembly for Wales (NAfW) on 17th January 2017;
2. To note the outcome of the consultation exercise undertaken by the Council on the local discretions applicable to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2017/18;
3. To adopt the provisions of the Prescribed Requirements Regulations and subject to 2.1(e) below, any amendments made to those regulations made by the Amendment Regulations as the Council’s local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2017/18 subject to the local discretions that the Council is able to exercise as set out in (d) below;
4. 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>

5. To delegate to the Chief Executive (in consultation with the Leader) authority to consider, approve and/or deal with as necessary any amendments which may be made to the Amendment Regulations as

defined in 2.1(a) following consideration by the NAFW on the 17th January 2017.

98 FINANCING OF THE 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS PROGRAMME USING PRUDENTIAL BORROWING

In his report, the Group Director, Corporate & Frontline Services sought the approval of Council for a new Community Primary School in Cwmaman to be financed by the Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools Programme funding and the Council's use of the Prudential Code; and it was **RESOLVED** –

1. To agree to the inclusion in the Capital Programme of a new Community Primary School in Cwmaman at a total cost of £7.242M;
2. To agree that the net cost to the Council of £3.621M is funded through borrowing, using the Council's powers under the Prudential Code, with the annual revenue cost of £0.179M being met from savings from this and other recent school closures and amalgamations.

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR, LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

99 APPOINTMENT OF NEW INDEPENDENT MEMBER TO THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

In his report, the Director, Legal & Democratic Services set out the process to be undertaken to fill an Independent Member vacancy that has arisen on the Council's Standards Committee following the resignation of Mr.G.Smith together with a recommendation within the report for the appointment of a reserve Independent member to the Standards Committee.

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

1. To approve the appointments of a reserve Independent Member, a reserve Community Councillor and two reserve County Borough Councillors (1 Labour and 1 Plaid Cymru) of the Standards Committee; **(Note:** the appointment of a reserve Community Councillor is made by Council following consultation with all the Community Councils within Rhondda Cynon Taf)
2. To establish an Appointments Panel to consider applications for the appointment of an Independent Member and the appointment of a reserve Independent Member of the Standards Committee for a term of six years;
3. To nominate three County Borough Councillors to be Members of the Appointments Panel (2 Labour and 1 Plaid Cymru);

4. That the Director, Legal & Democratic Services be given delegated authority to appoint a Community Councillor and an Independent (lay) Member to the Appointments Panel;
5. That the Director, Legal & Democratic Services proceeds with the advertisement in respect of the appointment of the Independent member vacancy and the reserve Independent Members, based on the established criteria.

100 NOTICE OF MOTION

The following Notice of Motion standing in the names of County Borough Councillors (Mrs.)J.S.Ward and (Mrs.)M.E.Davies was considered:-

“This Council lends its support to the campaign of Swansea East MP Carolyn Harris,MP to cover the costs of infant funerals.

This Council believes that burial fees should be waived in these circumstances and will ensure this is reflected in any further fees and charging arrangements.

This Council adds its support to the Campaign to ensure both the UK Government and Welsh Government move to cover the cost of a child’s funeral and legislate accordingly. Request that the Leader of the Council writes to the appropriate Minister to support this cause.

This small move would take away one small burden from grieving families at a hugely emotional time”.

At the meeting the Cabinet Member for Prosperity, Wellbeing and Communities informed Members that this Authority does not charge for burials or cremations of children up to the age of 16.

Following a discussion, it was **RESOLVED** – to adopt the Notice of Motion.

101 NOTICE OF MOTION

The following Notice of Motion standing in the names of County Borough Councillors B.Stephens, R.Yeo, L.M.Adams, T.Bates, R.Bevan, H.Boggis, J.Bonetto, S.Bradwick, J.Bunnage, A.Calvert, P.Cannon, S.Carter, J.Cass, A.Crimmings, W.J.David, A.Davies MBE, (Mrs)A.Davies, J.Davies, (Mrs.)M.E.Davies, L.De Vet, J.Elliott, S.Evans, M.Forey, A.S.Fox, M.Griffiths, P.Griffiths, (Mrs.)E.Hanagan, G.Holmes, G.Hopkins, (Mrs.)S.J.Jones, L.Langford, R.Lewis, (Mrs.)C.Leyshon, S.Lloyd, R.B.McDonald, C.Middle, K.Montague, A.Morgan, B.Morgan, M.A.Norris, S.Pickering, S.Powderhill, K.Privett, S.Rees, (Mrs.)A.Roberts, J.Rosser, G.Smith, R.Smith, G.Stacey, (Mrs.)M.Tegg, G.Thomas, R.K.Turner, (Mrs.)J.S.Ward, M.J.Watts, M.Webber, W.D.Weeks, C.J.Williams, D.H.Williams, T.Williams and C.J.Willis was considered:-

“This Council seeks to support the Welsh Hearts Campaign to provide defibrillators in public places.

This Council notes the difference the availability of such equipment can offer in emergency situations and we already have these at a number of Council sites, such as sports centres, recognising their importance and commits to fund an increased provision of equipment across key Council locations.

We request a report be brought forward for Member approval to locate a number of extra devices at key locations across the County Borough”.

RESOLVED- to adopt the Notice of Motion.

**R.LEWIS
MAYOR**

The meeting closed at 7.10 p.m.