



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Wednesday, 15 January 2020 at 5.00 pm at The Council Chamber, The Pavilions, Cambrian Park, Clydach Vale, Tonypany, CF40 2XX.

County Borough Councillors - Council Members in attendance:-

Councillor S Powderhill (Chair)

Councillor M Adams	Councillor S Belzak
Councillor R Bevan	Councillor H Boggis
Councillor J Bonetto	Councillor S Bradwick
Councillor J Brencher	Councillor A Calvert
Councillor G Caple	Councillor A Chapman
Councillor A Cox	Councillor A Crimmings
Councillor J Cullwick	Councillor G Davies
Councillor J Davies	Councillor M Diamond
Councillor J Edwards	Councillor J Elliott
Councillor S Evans	Councillor M Forey
Councillor A Fox	Councillor H Fychan
Councillor E George	Councillor D Grehan
Councillor M Griffiths	Councillor J Harries
Councillor G Holmes	Councillor P Howe
Councillor J James	Councillor P Jarman
Councillor L Jones	Councillor W Jones
Councillor R Lewis	Councillor C Leyshon
Councillor A Morgan	Councillor S Morgans
Councillor M Norris	Councillor W Owen
Councillor S Pickering	Councillor S Powell
Councillor S. Rees-Owen	Councillor S Rees
Councillor J Rosser	Councillor G Stacey
Councillor E Stephens	Councillor G Thomas
Councillor W Treeby	Councillor L Walker
Councillor M Weaver	Councillor M Webber
Councillor D Williams	Councillor G Williams
Councillor J Williams	Councillor T Williams
Councillor C Willis	Councillor R Yeo

Officers in attendance

Mr C Bradshaw, Chief Executive
Mr B Davies, Director of Finance & Digital Services
Mr R Evans, Director of Human Resources
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 A Wilkins, Director of Legal Services

95 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors A. Davies-Jones, L. De Vet, S. M. Evans, M Fidler Jones, E. Griffiths, L. Hooper, G. E. Hopkins, G. W. Hughes, G. Jones, K. L. Jones, W. Lewis, K. Morgan, D. Owen-Jones, M. J. Powell, A. Roberts, M. Tegg, R. K. Turner, E. Webster,

96 Declaration of Interest

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, following personal declarations of interest were made pertaining to the agenda:-

In respect of agenda item 8 - Welsh Church Act Annual Reports 2018/19:-

County Borough Councillor M. Webber – "I have an arm's length working connection with Valleys Kids"

County Borough Councillor A. Morgan – "I am a member of the Nos Galan Committee and Darran Las Environmental Group"

County Borough Councillor R. Bevan – "I have Cabinet responsibility for the Church Acts Grants Scheme"

County Borough Councillor A. Crimmings – "I am on the Nos Galan Committee which has previously applied for funding."

County Borough Councillor R. Lewis – "I am the Vice-President of Abercynon Male Choir (Côr Meibion Abercynon)."

County Borough Councillor J. Brencher – "I am Director of the YMCA in Pontypridd"

County Borough Councillor G. R. Davies – "I am the Secretary of Blaencwm Church which has previously received funding and Trustee of the Rhondda Tennis Club."

County Borough Councillor J. Edwards – "

County Borough Councillor T. Williams – "I am a member of the Aberdare Cricket Club"

County Borough Councillor W Treeby – "I am on the Nos Galan Committee which has previously applied for funding."

In respect of agenda Item 6 – Council Revenue Budget 2020/21 – Provisional Local Government Settlement:

County Borough Councillor P Jarman referred to her dispensation granted by the Standards Committee on the 29th November 2019 providing the member. "Dispensation to speak and vote on all matters for the duration and adoption of the 2020-21 Budget process in her capacity as leader of the Opposition

In respect of agenda item 10 – Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill:

Mr A. Wilkins, Director, Legal Services – "In my capacity as the Council's Returning Officer as referenced in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill"

(Note: A declaration of Interest was made later in the meeting by County Borough Councillor S. Rees-Owen (Minute No.111 reflects) in respect of the Notice of Motion

97 Announcements

- The Chairman formerly welcomed the new Member, County Borough Councillor J. Edwards to her first meeting of Council
- County Borough Councillor E. Stephens congratulated an Ystrad resident, Sammy Jay Frary as she will be participating in a television show to be aired over the coming weeks. Sammy will be involved in walking challenges and providing food which will be assessed and the programme will showcase several Rhondda walks. Councillor E. Stephens added that Sammy Jay Frary will be a great Ambassador for Rhondda Cynon Taf by participating in the TV programme.
- County Borough Councillor W. Jones announced that Wayne Warren won the WDO World darts Championship at the O2 London on Sunday, 12th January 2020 in an all Wales final. He has become one of the oldest recipients of the Championship and follows in the footsteps of fellow Welshman Leighton Rees.
- County Borough Councillor A. Morgan announced that the water bottles and hot beverage containers left on Members' tables this evening would replace the plastic cups available to Members in the Council meetings. In the future, and in order to reduce the Council's use of plastic, there will be no more disposable cups available to Members in meetings of the Council. The water bottles/cups had been provided by Transport for Wales and from the Council's own resources, following a recycling campaign.
- County Borough Councillor J. James wished to congratulate A. Davies-Jones on becoming the new MP for Pontypridd following the Election.
- County Borough Councillor J Harries presented the Chairman with two petitions on behalf of residents of Maerdy:-
 - Requesting traffic calming measures in and around Maerdy to avoid any accidents and/or casualties; and
 - Requesting Christmas lights in Maerdy
- County Borough Councillor G. Holmes presented the Chairman with a petition on behalf of residents of Llantrisant in respect of unnecessary and unacceptable noise levels caused along the A4119.
- County Borough Councillor G. Stacey presented a petition on behalf of the residents of Church Village requesting that the Garth Olwg Residential Care Home is kept open.

98 Minutes

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the 27th November 2019 as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

99 Members' Questions

Question from County Borough Councillor H. Boggis to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor Andrew Morgan :

“Will the Leader make a statement on the extension to the Aberdare Bypass?”

Response from County Borough Councillor A Morgan:

“The Leader explained that the project was progressing well and preliminary designs are ongoing to extend the Aberdare Bypass and link the A4059 to the A465 Heads of the Valley Road. Collaboration has been ongoing with Welsh Government, local Members and the public to determine the details of the Bypass linking into the Heads of the Valley.

The Leader explained that this is a major, multi-million-pound project to be delivered to construct and develop an extension and he confirmed that the Council’s significant investment has seen the Highways Capital Programme commitment in excess of £30m with the overall investment in the A465 scheme totalling between £300-400m which will significantly improve the connectivity and make a difference to residents and commuters.”

Supplementary question from County Borough Councillor H. Boggis

“Councillor Boggis welcomed the update and the information concerning (Welsh Government) financial contributions to the scheme and enquired as to the timescale for completion.”

Response from County Borough Councillor A Morgan:

“Councillor Morgan advised that following completion of the preliminary work and agreement of the final plans the scheme would be open by the end of 2023. The aim is to fast track the link road so that both open at the same time (although delivered as two separate contracts).”

Question from County Borough Council G. Caple to the Cabinet Member for Enterprise Development and Housing County Borough Councillor D. R. Bevan:-

“Can the Cabinet Member please make a statement on the extension of the Council’s Empty Property Strategy and its extension to a regional footprint under the Valleys Taskforce?”

Response from County Borough Councillor D. R. Bevan:

“Councillor Bevan reminded Members that back in July 2019, the Deputy Minister for Economy and Transport, in his capacity as Chair of the Valleys Taskforce, agreed to provide funding of £10M to tackle the issue by rolling out the RCT’s Empty Homes Grant Scheme across all 10 Valley Taskforce local authorities (Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Caerphilly, Carmarthenshire, Merthyr Tydfil, Neath Port Talbot, Swansea, Torfaen, Powys and RCT). The Valleys Taskforce members also approached RCT to take the lead and manage the scheme.

Councillor D. R. Bevan added that the Valleys Taskforce Empty Homes Grant Scheme was officially launched in October 2019. From the 120 applications from residents living in RCT, 87 were valid applications and met the criteria, 33 have

been approved and 54 are awaiting approval. Other local authorities have submitted a further 80 expressions of interest. Of the 33 approved the total Grant spend will be £523K, with a further £747K bringing the total spend to £1.3m to tackle the issue.”

Supplementary question from County Borough Councillor G Caple:

“Councillor Caple stated that the initiative was to be commended and asked for clarification relating to empty corporate buildings, specifically Barclays Bank in Porth and its outline plans for demolition.”

Response from County Borough Councillor D. R. Bevan:

“Councillor Bevan stated that the Barclays building is an empty property in a key location, it was a purpose built premises which the local authority had the opportunity to purchase. He added that demolition on the building will commence this week.

Councillor Bevan advised that the site of the building forms part of the council’s regeneration strategy for Porth with the Transport Hub to be located there. As part of the process, two public consultations were undertaken, there were no adverse comments to arise from the consultation work.

In conclusion, Councillor Bevan stated that he was pleased to confirm that the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal has recently awarded funding to support the delivery of the first phase of the Porth Interchange in supporting the Park and Ride facility”.

Question from County Borough Councillor J Brencher to the Cabinet Member for Enterprise Development and Housing, County Borough Councillor R. Lewis:-

“Can the Cabinet Member please provide an update on the progress of Awen in regard to the Muni as a cultural centre in Pontypridd?”

Response from County Borough Councillor R. Lewis:

“Councillor Lewis thanked Councillor Brencher for her question as one of the local Members within Pontypridd. He advised that the improvement strategy for the Muni would focus on the building’s unique gothic architecture which would vastly improve the offer for visitors to the venue. Councillor Lewis added that Awen have an ambitious vision for the Muni and have engaged with Purcell, the architects who specialise in the restoration of heritage buildings. He advised that in the short term, the venue will re-open in the early summer, following the completion of initial building works which will then permit the granting of a short-term lease for the Muni to Awen. In the longer-term, the strategy can be implemented to make the venue a Hub for the Arts and Cultural sector”.

County Borough Councillor J. Brencher had no supplementary question for the Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Development and Housing.

Question from County Borough Councillor A. S. Fox to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:-

“Following the publication of the Provisional Local Government Settlement, what priorities for investment will the Cabinet seek to prioritise as part of its draft budget strategy for 2020/21?”

Response from County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:

“Councillor Morgan stressed that the Council’s primary objective continues to be the protection of jobs and key services as well as ensuring continued investment in Schools and Social Care despite the demands and cost pressures such as the increase in pupil numbers, the Teachers’ pay award and the reopening of the Muni Arts Centre in June 2020.

Councillor Morgan added that the Council has made a commitment to tackle poverty as well as providing additional assistance to community groups such as those working to support the paddling pools.

The Leader reminded Members that despite significantly higher cost pressures than in previous years, the Council will have due regard to the level of Council Tax increases and keep them as low as possible.”

Supplementary question from County Borough Councillor A. S. Fox:

“Councillor Fox welcomed the Leader’s response and added that as Penrhiwceiber is ranked 1st in the top ten most deprived LSOA’s, would the strategy extend to Penrhiwceiber and other similar communities?”

Response from County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:

“Councillor A. Morgan confirmed that the proposals to tackle poverty to be considered in the budget will extend to Penrhiwceiber and other similar communities (he provided clarification that Penrhiwceiber is now ranked 4th most deprived in Wales). He added that additional support from the 3rd Sector/other Public Bodies would strengthen the support packages to these areas. Councillor Morgan added that he would shortly be announcing a set of long-term proposals to tackle poverty in Councillor Fox’s ward.”

Question from County Borough Councillor M. Griffiths to the Leader of the Council County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:-

“Climate change is the responsibility of us all. But we don’t all know what we can do. What steps is the Council taking to engage communities in responding to the challenge of climate change?”

Response from County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:

“Councillor Morgan confirmed that a report to the next Climate Change Steering Group would outline how the Council can work better and smarter with local communities to push the green agenda forward. He added that the recycling targets had improved and it was important to continue to support residents by making their choices easier. Councillor Morgan stated that collaboration with partners such as leading environmental groups is key to engaging with residents and communities.”

County Borough Councillor M. Griffiths had no supplementary question for the Leader of the Council, Councillor Morgan.

Question from County Borough Councillor S. Powell to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:-

“What steps is the Council taking to become a carbon neutral organisation?”

Response from County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:

“Councillor Morgan explained that the Council has significantly reduced its carbon footprint by reducing its energy consumption. The Council has made a number of changes such as upgrading all street lights to LED lighting and installing heat and power units and solar panels in many schools and other Council buildings. The Council has also committed to working with housing providers to ensure that in the future new housing infrastructure minimises our carbon footprint. Councillor Morgan stressed the importance of working with residents and businesses to deliver against the Council’s commitments.”

County Borough Councillor S. Powell had no supplementary question for the Leader of the Council, Councillor Morgan.

Question from County Borough Councillor S. Rees to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure & Heritage Services, County Borough Councillor A. Crimmings:-

“Please will the Cabinet Member provide an update on the improvements and investment into Dare Valley Country Park?”

Response from County Borough Councillor A. Crimmings:

“Councillor Crimmings advised that the Council has committed £1.4m to the project and good progress has been made in several areas such as the implementation of additional drainage. Councillor Crimmings added that the refurbishment of the hotel facilities has started along with improvements to the shower blocks with enhanced accessible features installed such as hoists, and extending the number of caravan pitches which will help to increase the number of visiting caravans. In conclusion, Councillor Crimmings stated that the Dare Valley Country Park is in a beautiful location and an important key visitor attraction.

100 Council Work Programme

The Service Director, Democratic Services and Communications provided Members with an update on the forward Council work programme. He advised that the following items would be considered at the February Council meeting:-

- An invitation has been extended to the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board to attend the next Council meeting; and
- A report will be forthcoming to consider improvements to the council’s public engagement and webcasting facilities.

Following discussion of the Council forward work programme and in light of the invitation to the Cwm Taf UHB to attend the next Council meeting, the Leader responded to a concern regarding the recent refusal of his request to speak at a Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board meeting. Councillor A. Morgan confirmed that his three page letter had been submitted in advance of the meeting as had

his request to address the meeting. Councillor Morgan advised Members of the forthcoming documentary concerning the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board, to be broadcast on the 27th January 2020.

101 Council Revenue Budget 2020/21 - Provisional Local Government Settlement

The Director of Finance and Digital Services referred Members to his report which provided them with information in respect of the 2020/2021 Provisional Local Government Settlement, and initial comments on its likely implications for the delivery of Council services.

The Director provided Members with the headline data from the settlement advising that the provisional reported settlement for Rhondda Cynon Taf, shows an increase of 4.5% which is above the average of 4.3%. Settlement figures across Wales range from 3.0% to 5.4%. The Director advised that no 'floor' protection has been included for 2020/21.

Members were advised that the settlement figures for 2020/21 include transfers into the settlement in respect of NHS Funded Nursing Care (£1.9M), the Teachers Pay Grant (£12.0M) and the Teachers Pensions Grant (£39.1M). The Director alluded to the continuation and increase (from £30M to £40M) in the Social Care Workforce and Sustainability Pressures Grant which funds the core of the Council base budget.

Members were informed that the Provisional Settlement is better than modelled in the most recent Medium Term Financial Plan and recognises some of the funding pressures across local government and within Rhondda Cynon Taf.

The Director advised Members of the revised budget gap at provisional settlement as set out at table 3 within the report and in conclusion reported the efficiency target having been set at £6M has been met and will be included in the Council's base budget requirement for next year.

Members welcomed the increase in revenue funding for the Council at +4.5% and a slight increase in capital support and following discussion, it was

RESOLVED:

- 1.To note the Provisional 2020/2021 Local Government Settlement, announced by the Minister for Housing and Local Government on the 16th December 2019.
- 2.To note that the Final 2020/2021 Local Government Settlement is expected during late February 2020; and
- 3.To note the approach to budget consultation for 2020/21 as already determined

102 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 (NAfW) of two sets of regulations (as set out in the report) on the 26th November, 2013, the Director, Director of Finance and Digital Services sought the approval of Members

to adopt a Council Tax Reduction Scheme by the 31st January, 2020.

The Plaid Group expressed its disappointment that the Welsh Government will not fully disregard all of the War pensions in the National Scheme but continue with the £10 prescribed disregard for War disablement Pensions and War widows pensions.

Following consideration of the report it was **RESOLVED** to agree the following recommendations and the additional recommendation which reflected the concerns of the Plaid Group–

- 1.To note and adopt the provisions of the Prescribed requirements Regulations and the amendments made to those regulations by the Amendment Regulations (as approved by NAFW on 7th January 2020) as the Council’s local CTRS for 2020/21, subject to the local discretions that the Council is able to exercise;
- 2.To note the outcome of the consultation exercise undertaken by the Council on the local discretions applicable to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) for 2020/21;
- 3.To confirm the discretions applicable to the Council’s local CTRS as set out at paragraph 5.3 (Table 2 below) of this report; and
4. That this Council writes to the First Minister of Wales asking him to remedy this grave injustice by varying the National Council Tax Reduction Scheme to provide for a prescribed full disregard in future years and that his response be reported back to this Council at a future date.

Table 2

Discretionary Parts of the Prescribed Requirements Regulations <i>(Part 5 – Other Matters that must be included in an authority’s scheme)</i>	Prescribed Requirements 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>	4 Weeks	<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>	3 Months	<p><u>Pensioners:</u> A period of 6 months will apply,</p> <p><u>Non-Pensioners:</u> A period of 6 months 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>

103 Welsh Church Act Fund Annual Report 2018/2019

In his report, the Director of Finance and Digital Services sought the approval of Members of the Statement of Accounts for the Welsh Church Act Fund for the financial year ended 31st March, 2019; and it was **RESOLVED:**

- 1.To approve and note the Welsh Church Act Fund Annual Report and Financial Statements for the financial year 2018/2019 (Appendix 1);
- 2.To approve and note the Letter of Representation relating to the Welsh Church Act Fund (Appendix 2); and
3. Consider the External Auditor report (Appendix 3).

104 Climate Change Report

The Chief Executive presented his report which provided an update in respect of the Council's response to Climate Change in discussions with the Leader of the Council (Councillor Andrew Morgan) and the Cabinet's Climate Change Champion (Councillor R. Lewis).

The report confirmed the Council's commitment to becoming a Carbon Neutral organisation by 2030 and set out the challenges facing the Council to be able to respond to the commitment. The Climate Change Steering Group, a sub-committee of the Council's Cabinet, has developed its forward work programme for the next six months which responds to the Climate Change agenda. Members were advised that the Steering Group will identify and tackle a number of key areas for consideration such as the elimination of single use plastics in all Council contracts and premises (which it was confirmed would be considered as soon as possible).

The Chief Executive concluded his presentation by emphasising the need for collaboration with residents, businesses and community groups of Rhondda Cynon Taf to achieve the Council vision.

Both the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet's Climate Change Champion (Councillor Rhys Lewis) reiterated the points raised by the Chief Executive and alluded to the number of insightful recommendations which the Cabinet Steering

Group had already implemented and an update on the Council's progress would be reported to Council biannually.

Following discussion, it was acknowledged that managing and maintaining the trees after planting is crucial to the success of the tree-planting programme, to help tackle the effects of climate change. Collaboration would continue with Natural Resources Wales (NRW) to ensure the long term success of the Tree Strategy for RCT.

Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to:-

1. Note the contents of the report; and
2. Agree the Council's progress towards achieving its Climate Change target of being a Carbon Neutral by 2030 is reported biannually to Council for the foreseeable future.

105 Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill

The Service Director Democratic Services and Communications presented his joint report with the Director, Legal Services, which provided Members with details of the initial submission by the Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in response to the proposals within the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill by the deadline of the 3rd January 2020.

The Service Director also referred to the submission of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee which had met two days prior to the Council meeting (previously circulated as a supplementary paper to the original Council report). Members were informed that following a representation by this Council an extension to the original deadline had been extended to the 14th January 2020 to allow the committee to contribute to the scrutiny of the important legislation and to be considered by the Welsh Assembly's Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee in due course.

Members were appraised of the salient points within the submission as follows:-

- All Members were in support of the franchise for voting to 16 and 17 year olds;
- The majority of Members were against the proposal to extend the local government franchise to prisoners;
- All Members were in support of the single, consistent voting arrangement in Wales and felt the option available to individual local authorities to select a different voting system was not productive;
- All Members supported the proposals for electronic broadcasting of meetings with the necessary support and funding from Welsh Government; and
- All Members were clear that all statutory posts should be distinct and separate (including that of Chief Executive and Chief Finance (s151) Officer) and there should not be an opportunity for an officer to undertake two statutory roles.

Following consideration of the report, the Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee thanked those Members who attended the meeting to formulate a

response to the proposals within the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Bill.

RESOLVED to acknowledge the initial submission of the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee by the 3rd January 2020 and that of the whole committee response to the proposals contained within the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Bill which met the revised and exclusive deadline for RCT Council of the 14th January 2020 (appended to the report as a supplementary item).

106 Review Of Polling Districts, Polling Places And Polling Stations 2019

Through his report, the Director of Legal Services advised Members of the requirement of local authorities to conduct a review of parliamentary polling districts, places and stations at least every five years. The Director explained that the matter, originally scheduled for reporting to Council in November 2019 had been delayed because of the General Election.

Members were referred to the appendices which at Appendix 1, forms a summary of the responses to the Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations Review and at Appendix 2 which outlines the proposals to amend existing Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations.

The Director notified Members of one amendment to the published information:-

- The RMB in Tylorstown to revert to the Welfare Hall which was unavailable at the time due to flooding (an amendment agreed by the local Members)

The Director acknowledged that the winter elections had raised some issues with particular polling stations but he assured Members that where appropriate, alternative venues would be identified and investigated for future elections and this would be done in consultation with the relevant Local Member(s).

Following discussions it was **RESOLVED** to:-

1. Note the responses received in relation to the Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations Review which are summarised at Appendix 2 to the report;
2. Approve the proposals to amend existing Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report and notes that the Electoral Registration Officer would implement any consequential changes to the register of electors; and
3. Notes that the Returning Officer will continue to monitor Polling Districts, Polling Places and polling Stations as outlined in Appendix 2 and/or where no suitable alternative venue is available at any relevant time note any changes would be made in consultation with the relevant Local Member(s).

107 Audit Committee - Appointment of Lay Member

The Service Director Democratic Services and Communications presented his report which served to advise Council of the decision of the current Lay Member of the Council's Audit Committee to resign from his position at the end of the

2019-2020 Municipal Year. The report further sets out the arrangements to appoint a replacement Lay Member in accordance with the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.

The Service Director extended his thanks to the current Lay Member, Mr Roger Hull, for his long standing service to the Audit Committee. He further directed Members to section five within the report which set out the process for the appointment of the replacement Lay Member through the Council's cross-party Appointments Committee which would subsequently seek Council's ratification of its recommendation following the interview and selection process.

A number of Members extended their gratitude to the current Lay Member for his services to the Audit Committee.

It was **RESOLVED** to:-

1. Acknowledge the decision of the Lay Member of the Audit Committee to resign from his position at the end of the 2019/20 Municipal Year;
2. Implement the arrangements as set out in the report, relating to the appointment of a new Lay Member to the Audit Committee for a term of office commencing from the beginning of the 2020/21 Municipal Year until the next ordinary Local Government Elections in 2022; and
3. Note that the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill contains provisions amending the constitution of the Audit Committee and its terms of reference.

108 Political Balance of the Council

In his report, the Service Director, Democratic Services & Communications advised Members of the outcome of the review of the Political Balance of the Authority, following the Ynyshir Electoral Ward By-Election.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the scheme for the allocation of seats to the different political groups and bodies to which Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 applies, as detailed in the Appendix to this report, be adopted.
2. That the Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication be authorised to make appointments to politically balanced bodies upon receipt by him of notification of the wishes of the political groups subject to any subsequent requests for amendment of membership of Committees, being referred to Council.
3. To note that Members of the Cabinet are not eligible for appointment to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or Scrutiny Committees.
4. To note that at least one Member of the Cabinet can sit on the Audit and Democratic Services Committees but the Council Leader is excluded from these positions.
5. To allocate the 20 Notices of Motion as required by Council Procedure Rule 10.2(a) for the Municipal Year 2019 – 2020 as follows:

Labour: 10
Plaid Cymru: 5
Alliance: 2
Independent: 1
Conservatives: 1
Unallocated:1

109 Chief Officer VER & Redundancy Packages

Following a recommendation from the Council's Voluntary Early Retirement (VER) Panel the Director of Human Resources advised Members of the one Chief Officer severance package (as detailed in the report) in accordance with the Council's approved 2018/19 Pay Policy statement.

Following consideration of the report it was **RESOLVED**:

1.To approve a Chief Officer severance package (as detailed at Appendix 1 of the report) in accordance with the Council's approved 2018/19 Pay Policy statement and following the recommendation from the Council's VER Panel.

110 Urgent Executive Decisions

In accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules 17.2(a), the Service Director Democratic Services and Communications reported on the urgent decisions that were taken forward through key delegated decision during the period October – December 2019 and it was **RESOLVED** to note the information contained within the report.

111 Notices of Motion

A .Members **RESOLVED** – that in view of the Secunder of the Notice of Motion, County Borough Councillor G. Jones providing apologies for the meeting, Council Procedure Rule 10.6 be suspended in order that the under-mentioned Notice of Motion standing in the names of County Borough Councillors S. Rees, G. Jones, L. M. Adams, D. R. Bevan, H Boggis, J. Bonetto, S. Bradwick, J Brencher, A Calvert, G. Caple, A. Crimmings, A. Davies-Jones, L De- Vet, J. Edwards, J Elliott, S.Evans, M Fidler Jones, M. Forey, A. Fox, E. George, M. Griffiths, J. Harries G. Holmes, G. Hopkins, G. W. Hughes, R. Lewis, W Lewis, C. Leyshon, A. Morgan, S. Morgans, M. A. Norris, D. Owen-Jones, S Pickering, S. Powell, S. Powderhill, A. Roberts, J. Rosser, G Stacey, M Tegg, G Thomas, W Treeby, R K Turner, M. Webber, D. Williams, T. Williams, C. J. Willis and R. Yeo be considered.

This Council calls upon the Cabinet's Climate Change Steering Group to consider a report, which explores the opportunities presented through a targeted tree planting programme in our County Borough, to tackle climate change, reduce flooding risk and improve local air quality. This Council believes this could be achieved by:

- 1) Planting trees on council-owned land,
- 2) Growing more trees in public and community spaces,

3) And by working with Natural Resources Wales.

This Council notes that doubling tree cover across the UK could draw down 50 million tonnes of carbon dioxide annually, which is around 10% of current UK emissions.

Trees also provide additional benefits beyond their critical importance in reaching net-zero greenhouse gas emissions: trees create more space for nature, supporting hundreds of species of insects, birds and mammals. Trees are also great for public health, helping clean the air and providing access to nature that's important for our wellbeing.

This Council notes also, the important role of undisturbed soils and natural vegetation in storing carbon. Delivering natural carbon storage solutions, such as those provided by trees, peatbogs, heathlands, dry and marshy grassland and other natural habitats across the County Borough can also help to reduce the impact of greenhouse gasses and enhance our air quality.

Many innovative approaches have already being considered across the UK and as a result of the natural landscape of our County Borough, this Council believes Rhondda Cynon Taf is well placed to take a lead on tree planting for the benefits outlined.

At the meeting the Chair announced that in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10.4.1 the following amendment to the Notice of Motion had been received from County Borough Councillors P Jarman (Proposer) & G R Davies (Seconder), E. Webster, J.Davies, J.Cullwick, J.Williams, A.Cox, H.Fychan, D.Grehan, E.Griffiths, K.Morgan, S.Rees Owen, M.Weaver, S.Evans, A. Chapman, L.Jones & E.Stephens

(Delete: This Council calls upon the Cabinet's Climate Change Steering Group to consider a report, which explores the opportunities presented through a targeted tree planting programme in our County Borough, to tackle climate change, reduce flooding risk and improve local air quality, This Council believes this could be achieved by:

- 1) Planting trees on council-owned land,***
- 2) Growing more trees in public and community spaces***
- 3) And by working with Natural Resources Wales.)***

(Add- This Council welcomes the intention of the Cabinet's Climate Change Steering Group to explore the opportunity to plant more trees in the County to tackle the effects of climate change and to develop a Council tree strategy as set out in paras 5.6 to 5.8 of the Chief Executive's report following discussions with the Leader of the Council, Councillor Andrew Morgan and the Council's Climate Change Champion Councillor Rhys Lewis which was considered as an item of business earlier in today's meeting.

In anticipation of the Steering Group taking evidence in support of this initiative from all interested parties including Full Council we wish to put the following forward for their consideration.

This Council believes that this could be achieved by

- 1. Planting and maintaining trees on Council owned land.*

2. *Growing and maintaining more trees in public and community spaces*
3. *And by working with Natural Resources Wales)*

This Council notes that doubling tree cover across the UK could draw down 50 million tonnes of carbon dioxide annually, which is around 10% of current UK emissions.

Trees also provide additional benefits beyond their critical importance in reaching net-zero greenhouse gas emissions: trees create more space for nature, supporting hundreds of species of insects, birds and mammals. Trees are also great for public health, helping clean the air and providing access to nature that's important for our wellbeing.

This Council notes also, the important role of undisturbed soils and natural vegetation in storing carbon. Delivering natural carbon storage solutions, such as those provided by trees, peatbogs, heathlands, dry and marshy grassland and other natural habitats across the County Borough can also help to reduce the impact of greenhouse gasses and enhance our air quality.

Many innovative approaches have already being considered across the UK and as a result of the natural landscape of our County Borough, this Council believes Rhondda Cynon Taf is well placed to take a lead on tree planting for the benefits outlined.

The amended Motion would then read:

This Council welcomes the intention of the Cabinet's Climate Change Steering Group to explore the opportunity to plant more trees in the County to tackle the effects of climate change and to develop a Council tree strategy as set out in paras 5.6 to 5.8 of the Chief Executive's report following discussions with the Leader of the Council, Councillor Andrew Morgan and the Council's Climate Change Champion Councillor Rhys Lewis which was considered as an item of business earlier in today's meeting.

In anticipation of the Steering Group taking evidence in support of this initiative from all interested parties including Full Council we wish to put the following forward for their consideration.

This Council believes that this could be achieved by

1. Planting and maintaining trees on Council owned land.
2. Growing and maintaining more trees in public and community spaces
3. And by working with Natural Resources Wales}

This Council notes that doubling tree cover across the UK could draw down 50 million tonnes of carbon dioxide annually, which is around 10% of current UK emissions.

Trees also provide additional benefits beyond their critical importance in reaching net-zero greenhouse gas emissions: trees create more space for nature, supporting hundreds of species of insects, birds and mammals. Trees are also great for public health, helping clean the air and providing access to nature that's important for our wellbeing.

This Council notes also, the important role of undisturbed soils and natural vegetation in storing carbon. Delivering natural carbon storage solutions, such

as those provided by trees, peatbogs, heathlands, dry and marshy grassland and other natural habitats across the County Borough can also help to reduce the impact of greenhouse gasses and enhance our air quality.

Many innovative approaches have already being considered across the UK and as a result of the natural landscape of our County Borough, this Council believes Rhondda Cynon Taf is well placed to take a lead on tree planting for the benefits outlined.

In accordance with the Council's Rules of Procedure 12.7, a vote was taken in respect of the amendment to the Notice of Motion and it was **RESOLVED** not to adopt the amendment.

Following further discussion in respect of the substantive motion and in accordance with the Council Rules of Procedure 12.7, it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the motion.

B. To consider the under-mentioned Notice of Motion standing in the names of County Borough Councillors J. Edwards, S. Morgans, L. M. Adams, D. R. Bevan, H Boggis, J. Bonetto, S. Bradwick, J Brencher, A Calvert, G. Caple, A. Crimmings, A. Davies-Jones, L De- Vet, J Elliott, S.Evans, M Fidler Jones, M. Forey, A. Fox, E. George, M. Griffiths, J. Harries G. Holmes, G. Hopkins, G. W. Hughes, G. Jones, R. Lewis, W Lewis, C. Leyshon, A. Morgan, M. A. Norris, D. Owen-Jones, S Pickering, S. Powell, S. Powderhill, S. Rees, A. Roberts, J. Rosser, G Stacey, M Tegg, G Thomas, W Treeby, R K Turner, M. Webber, D. Williams, T. Williams, C. J. Willis and R. Yeo.

The planned cessation of free TV Licences for elderly residents over 75 not in receipt of pension credit is yet another example of the Conservative Government's disregard for our communities.

An estimated 3.7 million older people across the UK will be affected by the changes, whilst the charity Age UK has warned that pushing ahead with the plans, which were delivered under a false assurance by the BBC in agreeing to fund a pensioner benefit under the charter agreement reached with David Cameron's Conservative government in 2015, will thrust more than 50,000 pensioners across the poverty line throughout the UK.

Older residents are particularly at risk of experiencing loneliness and social isolation, as evidenced by 4 in 10 saying that the TV is their main source of company, and removing this will have a hugely negative impact on their wellbeing.

Despite the Government's proclamations that austerity is over, pushing ahead with this move will represent yet another benefit being taken from those who need it most and will come as just another hardship that many of our most vulnerable will have to endure.

This Council therefore calls on the four recently elected Members of Parliament for the respective constituencies covering Rhondda Cynon Taf to write to the appropriate Minister to urge the Government to intervene and provide concrete assurances that universal free TV licences for over-75s will remain.

At the meeting the Chair announced that in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10.4.1 the following amendment to the Notice of Motion had been received

from County Borough Councillors P Jarman (Proposer) & G R Davies (Seconder), E. Webster, J.Davies, J.Cullwick, J.Williams, A.Cox, H.Fychan, D.Grehan, E.Griffiths, K.Morgan, S.Rees Owen, M.Weaver, S.Evans, A. Chapman, L.Jones & E.Stephens

The planned cessation of free TV Licences for elderly residents over 75 not in receipt of pension credit is yet another example of the Conservative Government's disregard for our communities.

An estimated 3.7 million older people across the UK will be affected by the changes, whilst the charity Age UK has warned that pushing ahead with the plans, which were delivered under a false assurance by the BBC in agreeing to fund a pensioner benefit under the charter agreement reached with David Cameron's Conservative government in 2015, will thrust more than 50,000 pensioners across the poverty line throughout the UK.

Older residents are particularly at risk of experiencing loneliness and social isolation, as evidenced by 4 in 10 saying that the TV is their main source of company, and removing this will have a hugely negative impact on their wellbeing.

Despite the Government's proclamations that austerity is over, pushing ahead with this move will represent yet another benefit being taken from those who need it most and will come as just another hardship that many of our most vulnerable will have to endure.

(Add - In an effort to remedy this injustice in the future this Council calls on the UK Government to devolve responsibility for Broadcasting and Welfare to Wales where a more compassionate approach will be taken on such matters)

This Council therefore calls on the four recently elected Members of Parliament for the respective constituencies covering Rhondda Cynon Taf to write to the appropriate Minister to urge the Government to intervene and provide concrete assurances that universal free TV licences for over-75s will remain **(Insert - and that Broadcasting and Welfare are devolved to Wales to better serve and protect the rights of Welsh Citizens)**

The amended Motion would then read:

The planned cessation of free TV Licences for elderly residents over 75 not in receipt of pension credit is yet another example of the Conservative Government's disregard for our communities.

An estimated 3.7 million older people across the UK will be affected by the changes, whilst the charity Age UK has warned that pushing ahead with the plans, which were delivered under a false assurance by the BBC in agreeing to fund a pensioner benefit under the charter agreement reached with David Cameron's Conservative government in 2015, will thrust more than 50,000 pensioners across the poverty line throughout the UK.

Older residents are particularly at risk of experiencing loneliness and social isolation, as evidenced by 4 in 10 saying that the TV is their main source of company, and removing this will have a hugely negative impact on their wellbeing.

Despite the Government's proclamations that austerity is over, pushing ahead with this move will represent yet another benefit being taken from those who need it most and will come as just another hardship that many of our most vulnerable will have to endure.

In an effort to remedy this injustice in the future this Council calls on the UK Government to devolve responsibility for Broadcasting and Welfare to Wales where a more compassionate approach will be taken on such matters.

This Council therefore calls on the four recently elected Members of Parliament for the respective constituencies covering Rhondda Cynon Taf to write to the appropriate Minister to urge the Government to intervene and provide concrete assurances that universal free TV licences for over-75s will remain and that Broadcasting and Welfare are devolved to Wales to better serve and protect the rights of Welsh Citizens.

(Note: County Borough Councillor S. Rees-Owen declared a personal interest at this juncture in the proceedings – “I have a contract with the BBC until the end of January”)

In accordance with the Council's Rules of Procedure 12.7, a vote was taken in respect of the amendment to the Notice of Motion and it was **RESOLVED** not to adopt the amendment.

(Note: County Borough Councillor S. Rees-Owen wished to have it recorded that she abstained from the vote)

Following further discussion in respect of the substantive motion and in accordance with the Council Rules of Procedure 12.7, it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the motion.

This meeting closed at 7.25 pm

**Cllr S Powderhill
Chairman.**