



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL

Minutes of the virtual meeting of Council held on Thursday, 10 September 2020 at 4.00 pm

County Borough Councillors - Council Members in attendance:-

Councillor G Hughes -Chair

Councillor M Adams	Councillor R Bevan
Councillor H Boggis	Councillor J Bonetto
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 L De Vet	Councillor M Diamond
Councillor J Edwards	Councillor J Elliott
Councillor S M Evans	Councillor S Evans
Councillor M Fidler Jones	Councillor M Forey
Councillor A Fox	Councillor H Fychan
Councillor M Griffiths	Councillor E Griffiths
Councillor G Holmes	Councillor J Harries
Councillor G Hopkins	Councillor L Hooper
Councillor P Howe	Councillor J James
Councillor P Jarman	Councillor A Davies-Jones
Councillor W Jones	Councillor G Jones
Councillor W Lewis	Councillor K Jones
Councillor L Jones	Councillor R Lewis
Councillor A Morgan	Councillor C Leyshon
Councillor S Morgans	Councillor K Morgan
Councillor D Owen-Jones	Councillor M Norris
Councillor S Pickering	Councillor S Powderhill
Councillor S Powell	Councillor W Owen
Councillor S Rees	Councillor M Powell
Councillor J Rosser	Councillor S. Rees-Owen
Councillor E Stephens	Councillor A Roberts
Councillor W Treeby	Councillor G Stacey
Councillor L Walker	Councillor G Thomas
Councillor M Webber	Councillor R Turner
Councillor D Williams	Councillor M Weaver
Councillor T Williams	Councillor E Webster
Councillor R Yeo	Councillor J Williams

Officers in attendance

Mr B Davies, Director of Finance & Digital Services
Ms G Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Ms L Davies, Service Director – Public Protection 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

182 Welcome & Introductions

Introductions were made by the Group Leaders present:-

County Borough Councillor A Morgan (Labour Group)
County Borough Councillor P Jarman (Plaid Cymru Group)
County Borough Councillor M Powell (RCT Independent Group)
County Borough Councillor J James (Conservative Group)

183 Declaration of Interest

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, there were no declarations made pertaining to the agenda.

184 Apologies

Apologies of absence were received from County Borough Councillors S Belzak, S Bradwick, J Davies, E George, D Grehan, M Tegg, G Williams and C Willis.

185 Update from the Leader of the Council & Chief Executive in respect of the Coronavirus in Rhondda Cynon Taf

The Leader of the Council, Councillor A Morgan thanked Members for attending this special Council meeting to receive an update in respect of the Coronavirus in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

The Leader provided an update on the work of the Test, Trace & Protect team which has assisted to map and identify 'hot spots' and clusters across the County Borough such as in the lower Rhondda area, Pontypridd and in parts of the Cynon Valley. The Leader confirmed that the mobile testing centre in Porth would soon be relocated and Members notified accordingly. This new location would allow for drive-in as well as walk-in tests to be undertaken with capacity to conduct between 400-500 tests per day. The Leader added that the volume of tests enables a much better understanding of the situation across RCT and it may prevent a local lockdown. The importance of basic hygiene and regular hand washing in addition to wearing face masks (which may become mandatory within shops and supermarkets) as well as adhering to the social distancing measures was reiterated.

Members were provided with an update on the seven Premises Improvement Notices that have been issued recently to retail outlets across the County Borough for failing to adhere to COVID-19 Regulations and posing a risk to the public. The Leader has supported the Council's Public Health and Protection team to undertake further enforcement action including the option to upgrade the Improvement Notice to a Premises Closure Notice to those businesses that fail to correct the issues that have previously been highlighted to them.

The Leader advised that all internal visits to Care Homes, except in the cases of end of life care, have now ceased (Private Sector Care Homes are also following this measure). Care Home staff are now being offered weekly Covid-19 tests to support them further.

Ongoing inspections have been undertaken with the County's Licensed Premises and in cases of non-compliance, further enforcement action has been taken and Improvement Notice or Premises Closure Notices have been issued. Common breaches include no available hand washing facilities, lack of track and trace details being recorded at the premises and lack of or no appropriate signage. The Leader called on the support of local Members in the event of Licensed Premises within their wards being served with improvement or closure notices.

The Leader reported that the thirteen confirmed positive cases of Covid-19 within schools are a result of school based transmissions but highlighted that robust procedures are in place should school transmissions occur. Regular continue to be held with the Director of Education & Inclusion Services

The Chief Executive and Service Director, Public Protection Services reiterated the information relayed by the Leader in supporting the Public Health & Protection teams with their enforcement work across the local communities to ensure the safety of residents and spoke of the support of South Wales Police and other Council Services such as Licensing and Trading Standards to address the potential breaches.

County Borough Councillor P Jarman (Plaid Cymru Group) asked for clarification on the following matters:

1. Care Homes and visitors in light of recent comments made by the Older Person's Commissioner
2. The Track and Trace process, particularly with regards to registering the details of clients attending Licensed Premises.
2. Local discretion to introduce a statutory need for staff and customers to wear face masks in stores in order to reduce infection rates.
3. Monitoring the attendance and health and wellbeing of the young passengers who can't be accommodated on the Council's home to school transport (the numbers amounted to 800 last year).
4. The supply of recycling bags to residents.

County Borough Councillor M Powell (RCT Independent Group) raised queries in relation to the following matters:-

1. Details on the location of the hot spots.
2. Could a precise, local lockdown be implemented to avoid impacting on areas not identified as a hotspot?
3. Additional social distancing measures around schools where there are narrow roads and paths.

County Borough Councillor J James asked whether lockdown is likely in RCT and how much notice would be given should it be implemented.

The Leader of the Council responded to all the queries raised and advised that

Older People's Commissioner had praised the Council's communications processes in relation to the Council's recent measures. With regards to Home to School Transport, the Leader reminded Council that social distancing measures on all school transport has resulted in reduced seating capacity but the sale of spare seats will be undertaken following a review.

The Leader explained that a precise, local lockdown would not be advisable as many residents travel county wide to shop, work and visit family. He also warned against publishing the aforementioned maps of the 'hotspots' as this would not provide a full context to the residents of RCT. In conclusion the Leader assured Council that a joint statement on behalf of RCT and Merthyr Tydfil Councils would shortly be circulated to all Members of the Council before wider publication in respect of preventing a local lockdown.

In closing the Council meeting the Deputy Presiding Officer reminded Members that any further questions should be directed through their respective Group Leaders.

This meeting closed at 4.55 pm

**Cllr G Hughes
Chair.**