



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the virtual Council meeting held on Wednesday, 7 October 2020 at
5.00 pm

County Borough Councillors - Council Members in attendance:-

Councillor S Powderhill (Chair)

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

Officers in attendance

Mr C Bradshaw, Chief Executive
Mr B Davies, Director of Finance & Digital Services
Ms G Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Mr R Evans, Director of Human Resources
Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Mr P Mee, Director, Public Health, Protection & Community Services
Mr N Wheeler, Group Director – Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services
Mr A Wilkins, Director of Legal Services

13 Apologies

An apology of absence was received from County Borough Councillors S Belzak, J Davies, M Fidler Jones, J Harries, K L Jones, W Owen, S Pickering, M Tegg, G D Williams and C Willis.

14 Minutes Silence

- On behalf of the Leader, the Deputy Leader, County Borough Councillor M Webber took the opportunity to announce the sad passing of former County Borough Councillors John David and Alby Davies MBE. The Deputy Leader also announced the passing of former Taff Ely Councillor and Community Councillor Alan Watts. The Deputy Leader led a personal tribute to both former Councillors who were dedicated Members of the Council for many years and sympathies were passed to all the family members.
- The Presiding Officer read aloud a resume outlining the longstanding careers of both former County Borough Councillors J David and A Davies and acknowledged the sad passing of Community Councillor A Watts in advance of calling on the following Members who wished to pay their own personal tributes:-
- Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities, Well-being & Cultural Services County Borough Councillor R Lewis, local member for Abercynon who had worked closely with former Councillor A Davies;
- County Borough Councillor G Stacey, local Member for Tonteg and close friend of former Councillor J David;
- County Borough Councillor P Jarman, who led a personal tribute to former Councillors J David and A Davies (and of the passing of former Councillor and Community Councillor A Watts) on behalf of the Plaid Cymru Group.

(Following the above announcements a minutes silence was held as a mark of respect for the sad passing of former Councillors A Davies, J David and A Watts)

15 Declaration of Interest

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, the following declaration of personal interest was made:

County Borough Councillor S Rees-Owen in respect of Agenda item 6 - Update in respect of the Coronavirus in Rhondda Cynon Taf – "I have a family member who caught Covid-19 whilst in hospital"

16 Announcements

The Presiding Officer acknowledged receipt of two petitions from County Borough Councillor J Brencher in respect of traffic concerns on behalf of the residents of Pencoedcae Highlands and from County Borough Councillor E Griffiths on behalf of the residents of Trehafod calling for the reduction in the speed of traffic through the village.

17 Suspension to Standing orders

The Deputy Leader made a statement in respect of moving the suspension of Council Procedure Rule 15.1 and advised that in order to facilitate the smooth running of the Council meeting through Zoom, Group Leaders have agreed in advance that where a vote is taken on any item, the individual Group Leader will exercise the vote on behalf of all their Members present for the item in question.

In order to implement the revised voting procedures the Deputy Leader moved the suspension of Council Procedure Rule 15.1, which states that a matter will be decided by a simple majority of those Members voting and present in the room at the time the question was put.

Following consideration of the matter it was **RESOLVED** to suspend Council Procedure Rule 15.1

18 Minutes

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the 29th July 2020 as an accurate reflection of the meeting subject to confirmation that County Borough Councillor A S Fox was present at the meeting.

19 Statements

The Deputy Leader, County Borough Councillor M Webber reminded Members that two years ago Council was asked to support a Notice of Motion for 'Lucy's Law' which would introduce Legislation in Wales against third party puppy sales. The motion which had cross party support was passed unanimously and subsequently all other Local Authorities also passed similar Notices of Motion through their respective Council meetings. On Monday, 5th October 2020 it was announced that Legislation will be introduced with details to follow.

The Deputy Leader thanked Council for its support and extended her gratitude to the organisation 'Friends of the Animals' for its continued work.

20 Members' Questions

Question from County Borough Councillor G R Davies to the Leader of the Council County Borough Councillor A Morgan:

"A gwnnech chi ddatganiad ar yr effaith ar y Cyngor os mae'r Deyrnas Unedig yn gadael yr Undeb Ewropeaidd heb cytundeb?"

"Will you make a statement on how the UK leaving the European Union without a deal will impact the Council?"

Response from Councillor A Morgan:

Councillor Morgan referred to 'Operation Yellow Hammer' and the work that has been undertaken to consider the potential impact on food supplies, on Food Banks in particular, food chains and procurement services. The Leader advised that a key consideration has been the Council's own supply chains in respect of services regarding school meals, residential and community meals. Until a deal or no deal has been confirmed the Council will need to keep information and signposting up to date on the webpages for any transition action required by local businesses. In the event of a no deal, the Council's contingency plans will be implemented..

Supplementary question from Councillor G Davies:

"According to Grant Thornton, a Business Advisor, RCT is in the highest 20% of the Community Vulnerability index, so it's important that the Council focusses on the communities and holds discussions with them. Local Authorities have a key role in working with partners in responding to tensions and hate crimes. In some areas the report shows that Brexit may make this worse and the Leaders of our communities will have to ready to respond. A high percentage of jobs in RCT are in production and retail, these are the sectors that are likely to suffer the most from effects of Brexit. The report foresees a reduction of 2.1 in the GVA of Rhondda Cynon Taf if there is a hard Brexit. This is on top of the effects of Covid. The economic impact of a no deal on trade is likely to also have an effect on homes and businesses. This is more likely to lead to more pressure on public services. There is a problem with procurement and there are concerns that prices will rise because of rates and there will be a lack of medicine and food because of delays in the ports. This is likely to impact Council services especially those that are provided to the elderly and the young. There is a need for quite broad plans. I know the Leader has spoken of procurement but its more than just procurement and other things. Are you going to have something comprehensive to discuss the huge problems that Brexit will cause for RCT"

Response from Councillor A Morgan:

The Leader reiterated his earlier point about the council engaging with those businesses that have been earmarked for support and that RCT will look at its contingency plan when a clear understanding of the deal is known. In conclusion, the Leader suggested that should Councillor Davies wish to submit a definitive supplementary question by email, he would be happy to respond.

From County Borough Councillor J. Brencher to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure and Cultural Services, County Borough Councillor A. Crimmings:

"Can the Cabinet Member please provide an update on the work to repair the damage sustained at the Ponty Lido?"

Response form Councillor Crimmings:

Councillor Crimmings confirmed that the project is underway and is currently 50% complete with a slight delay in the acquisition of materials due to Coronavirus. Councillor Crimmings provided an update in respect of the work to the pool, all three pools are being re furbished and the new liner is being installed on the main pool, the painting of the poolside is almost complete, the

village changing room and both male and female toilets are well underway with their refurbishment, the café area is being progressed with all walls being reinstated, painted and new flooring installed. Work is also ongoing to the visitor centre. There are also new fully functioning disability changing rooms which will be of benefit. All outside areas have been repainted and outside toilets have been completed to ensure that the public has access to the amenities while the park is open”

Supplementary question from Councillor J Brencher:

“Has the council anticipated a reopening date for the Lido providing the current covid restrictions permit?”

Response from Councillor Crimmings:

Councillor Crimmings advised that the Lido would be reopening at the end of January 2021 which is ahead of schedule.

From County Borough Councillor S. Bradwick to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure and Cultural Services, County Borough Councillor A. Crimmings:

“Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on the various projects ongoing at Dare Valley Country Park as part of the Valleys Regional Park initiative?”

Response from Councillor A Crimmings:

Councillor Crimmings provided an overview on some of the developments such as the play areas where work has been completed to the significantly upgraded play areas which reflects the natural beauty of the country park and encourages physical challenge. The new bike hire and workshop are due to be delivered mid-November for completion by late December. The two bike trails are nearing completion. The refurbishments to the hotel are complete and the independently run hotel has benefitted from refurbishments to its bathroom and bedroom. Works have completed to the camping and caravan shower block and all external work to the shower block has been completed.”

No supplementary question was put to the Cabinet Member.

From County Borough Councillor M. Forey to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor Morgan:

“How is this Council communicating with residents and ensuring that messages around social distancing, hand hygiene practices and wearing a face covering in the necessary situations are conveyed?”

Response from Councillor Morgan

The Leader advised that social media has been the most effective way of ensuring the messages around social distancing and wearing of face masks and hand hygiene practices with 8,763 specific posts relating to Covid over Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, 99,210 clicks on the Council website and the reach is 80, 277, 457. Town centre teams have been distributing posters to

shops and businesses promoting the messages. Businesses are able to download posters from the Council website. There has been a high level of engagement with the voluntary sector, videos have been circulated and there have been two question and answer sessions via social media. In conclusion the Leader advised that it was important to reiterate the key messages.

No supplementary question was put to the Cabinet Member.

From County Borough Councillor T. Williams to the Deputy Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor M. Webber:

“Can the Deputy Leader please provide an update on the Council’s apprenticeship and graduate programme?”

Response from Councillor M Webber:

The Deputy Leader advised that this phase, the second part of the Apprenticeship scheme is now open for this year’s intake and is currently live online. Fourteen apprenticeship roles are available including the following council services:-Pensions, Tourism, Events and Leisure. Prior phases of this year’s programme have seen 12 apprenticeships and 18 Graduates recruited.

Supplementary question from Councillor T Williams:

“Has the Labour Group’s commitment to deliver 150 positions over the course of the Council term be achieved?”

Response from Councillor Webber:

Councillor Webber advised that the intake this year will see that figure surpassed and honour that commitment made. The Council is proud that a large proportion of Graduates remain in employment within the Council. Some take advantage of further opportunities within the council and the council has a good reputation for promoting that. The number of applications is huge and the calibre is high so the commitment will be honoured.

From County Borough Councillor G. W. Hughes to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan:

“How is the Council engaging with partner organisations to respond to coronavirus clusters identified in our communities?”

Response from Councillor A Morgan:

The Leader explained that is happening through the Incident Management Team which includes the Local Authority, Local Health Board, South Wales Police and other partners who are now meeting every day. The contact tracing staff feed in the intelligence and identify where there are clusters or community transmissions to the IMT . The Leader advised that he has regular contact with the Local Health Board and that is testament to the strong working relationships between the Local Health Board and Public Health and amongst teams on the ground where

information is shared.

No supplementary question was put to the Cabinet Member.

From County Borough Councillor D. Owen-Jones to the Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities, Wellbeing and Cultural Services County Borough Councillor R. Lewis:

“How is the Council supporting vulnerable residents, particularly with mental health issues, during the coronavirus pandemic?”

Response from Councillor R Lewis:

The Cabinet Member advised that the negative impact on people’s mental health had been recognised early on in the pandemic, therefore a community support steering group was set up to analyse over 15, 000 contacts with residents with whom friendly phone calls were made looking to tackle loneliness and isolation. The contact was welcomed by residents. Proposals have been drafted by the support steering group for submission to the Regional Commissioner to see if further funding can be accessed to assist residents who may be experiencing difficulties with their mental health during this difficult time.

Supplementary question from Councillor D Owen-Jones:

“In our communities we do have a number of third parties and voluntary sectors also providing help to the most vulnerable and those who may require, what support do we offer these bodies and individual from RCT?”

Response from Councillor Lewis:

Councillor Lewis advised that the community support group previously mentioned consists of 18 different partners and use 7 community resilient centres across the county, each led by a coordinator, a member of council staff who is supported virtually by other organisations. Cllr Lewis stated that partnership working is essential and it is vital. Following the shielding programme that was paused, food support is still being offered to residents from either the council or welsh government and the lifeline plus service which is being managed by Adult Services. Residents are also being referred to Age Connect Morgannwg and Citizens Advice for concerns relating to financial matters and furlough arrangements. The council received 1,200 volunteer applications initially who are still working with the council to assist the most vulnerable. In conclusion Cllr Lewis advised that the third sector and volunteers are key to assisting the council at this time.

County Borough Councillor D. Williams to the Leader of the Council, Councillor A. Morgan:

Can the Council Leader make a statement on the damage sustained to the infrastructure across the County during the flood events earlier this year?”

Response from Councillor Morgan: “Will the Council Leader make a statement on the damage sustained to infrastructure across the County during the flood events

earlier this year?"

Response from Councillor Morgan:

Councillor Morgan reported that ongoing discussions are ongoing with Welsh Government about the costs to the damage of the infrastructure. The current estimate is £70 million of damage to bridges, roads and culverts which excludes the cost for work for the damage to the Tylorstown tip. £2.5 million has already been spent this year on phase 2 and 3 with phase 4 will come into commission next year. The Leader advised that the council has commissioned many design consultants, engineers, contractors in addition to the council's own teams.

- £2million of the council's own resources has already been spent at the time of the floods and afterwards;
- £2.5 million from WG from emergency assistance;
- Over £3 million from the Environment Minister towards further emergency works, preparation for the winter and capital grants;
- Over £3 million of Resilient Roads funding (which was a bid put forward at the beginning of the year, in February this year towards key transport corridors and making a more resilient flood in the future);
- A letter of support has been received from WG to confirm that it will underwrite between £6-7m which will be required to repair damage, start the preparation work for designs for repairs and major culvert infrastructure. Assurance has been given by WG to this and other local authorities that this will be underwritten.

In conclusion the Leader advised that between £12-13m this current year will be spent on upgrading culverts and repairing the storm damage. A further business case has been submitted to WG.

21 Council Work Programme 2020-21

The Service Director Democratic Services & Communications provided an update in respect of the published Council work programme for the 2020-21 municipal year and advised that there may be a requirement for an additional council meeting in February 2021 to take account of the forthcoming business being considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee but also recognising that the business proposed for the next Council meeting on the 21st October 2020 may be better spread over further council meetings. Members would be advised if this is required.

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

The Chief Executive through a power point presentation showed the data across Wales for the two key indicators the week ending the 25th August 2020. The first outlining the case incidents per 100,000 of population and the second showing the proportion of positive tests. The slide showed that the number of positive cases was low compared to the following month which demonstrated that the positivity rate which had quickly increased across Wales. During the period commencing 14th May to the end of August, the number of case incidents per 100,000 population was repeatedly low (the spike represented the cases in Merthyr Tydfil as a result of the incident in the meat factory, an isolated incident which was well contained and managed effectively by the test, track and trace teams.)

From the end of July to the end of August into September the cases remained

consistently low, below 25% in terms of the cases rate until after the August Bank Holiday when there is a dramatic and quick spike.

The Director Public Health Protection and Community Services continued with the presentation which highlighted the daily new cases identified between the period 17th September to the 2nd October, the absolute number of new Covid cases per day. In RCT for the period, there had been a sustained period of high levels of new cases identified, up to 80 in a single day. Being relative to population size, the expectation is that that the levels are higher in RCT than in Merthyr Tydfil and Bridgend.

The Director advised that over the period of two weeks, there had been a gradual increase in the positivity rate which confirmed there are a more cases in the community than expected. As of today (7th October 2020) the positivity rate in RCT is 10.2%. To put the findings into context the Director reported that the threshold for action, according to directives from Welsh Government and the Chief Medical Officer, is 5%.

The slide showing the rolling seven day average cumulative case rate demonstrated the swift increase to the middle of September. In Cwm Taf Morgannwg and in RCT overall, there had been a gradual upward trend in terms of the cumulative case rate. The Director highlighted that from the 17th September, the start of lockdown restrictions in RCT, there would be an expectation that the restrictions would impact upon the figures.

The Director advised that community cases are not driving the number of cases in the Royal Glamorgan Hospital. There has been a continuing upward trend in the growth rates for the number of infections from the middle of September in RCT which suggests that the number of infections is continuing to grow in our communities. The Director advised that of concern is the 40-49 and 50-59 age groups who are not engaging as much as other age groups in undertaking testing in our communities.

The Director Public Health, Protection and Community Services concluded the power presentation and provided an update on the enforcement work that has been undertaken by the council. Members were reassured that the council's public protection team and its partners have been proactive and in the last four months have taken in excess of 3,000 positive post lock down interventions to support a range of businesses. One area of focus has been high risk industrial industries, such as food manufacturers, others include schools, colleges and the University. The town centre team has visited numerous businesses to provide a wide range of advice and support to them.

Nearly 500 premises have been visited to review the Covid prevention measures and compliance with the Covid regulations and since July over 200 settings have been visited some jointly with the Police.

The Council has issued 11 formal warnings and 37 premises improvement notices (which give a premises 48hrs to improve the measures they have in place where the vast majority of premises have complied with the notices there have been 8 occasions where premises have had to be closed following evidence of non-compliance). Additional enforcement officers will soon be recruited, a further 23 staff to work alongside existing enforcement officers and the Police to support businesses to comply with the regulations and take action where necessary.

There have been 155 confirmed cases across 53 schools in RCT where a large amount of support has been provided to the Head teachers from the Director of Education & Inclusion Services as well as Public Protection Services. The schools have been proactive with regards to this issue and the whole track and trace process has become much more efficient and effective.

In Social Care there have been 6 reported cases across the 26 private care homes, only one has been confirmed as a positive test. Of the 12 cases in residential homes, 7 have been confirmed. There have been 16 in Homecare of which 13 have been confirmed and 5 cases have been confirmed in supported living accommodation. There are proactive testing arrangements in respect of care homes and in the Royal Glamorgan Hospital.

The Director provided an update in relation to the number of cases in the Royal Glamorgan Hospital which as of today (7th October) stands at 127 confirmed cases with 21 deaths associated with the outbreak. A number of temporary measures have been implemented as a result of the cases which include the suspension of elective surgery, with the exception of some urgent cases, the diversion emergency admissions with the exception of children, diverted Welsh Ambulance Services patients to other hospitals with the exception of children. Some services such as the Mental Health Service remain open. There is a 15 point plan in place which is being applied by the Health Board at the hospital to control the situation. Council was advised that smaller outbreaks have occurred at other hospitals which is putting a collective pressure on all services.

An update was provided in respect of the Track, Trace, Protect initiative for which RCT is the regional host for the service for Cwm Taf Morgannwg, covering the three local authorities, Public Health Wales and the Health Board. The vast majority of people contacted have been supportive and cooperative. The number of cases has increased substantially which has put pressure on the service. Currently there are 100 staff in employment within the services with ambitions to increase the numbers to more than 130 staff. All redeployed and new staff have been working hard to deliver over the past weeks.

In conclusion, the Director summarised the key points of his presentation.

The Leader thanked the staff who are working tirelessly, extended hours and on weekends, the incident Management teams meet every day to provide information to Welsh Government. The Leader stressed that the local authority is now looking at 200 cases per 100,000 which is a significant increase and the 7 day rolling average shows 430 cases over the last seven days. The Leader advised that schools still remain the safest place for children to be as the contact tracing evidence and data reflects what is happening in our communities and not across the schools. He thanked the Education teams for their hard work and for the support that has been provided to all schools which has recently been acknowledged by the Minister for Education.

The Leader also provided an update on the temporary testing centres which have seen a reduction in the numbers of residents attending the temporary sites in Abercynon and Clydach Vale. The testing site in Upper Rhondda Fawr is now operational and there are plans to open another in the Rhondda Fach which will improve access to testing. The Leader urged all Members to encourage local residents to be tested if they have symptoms to better understand community based transmissions.

In conclusion the Leader stressed the importance of those residents who are eligible for flu vaccinations to take the opportunity. The council would be offering all staff the opportunity to have a flu vaccination as usual.

Questions were received initially from the Group Leaders:-

County Borough Councillor P Jarman (Plaid Cymru Group)

1. Where children who are entitled to Free School Meal (FSM) entitlement have to self-isolate, will they still receive their entitlement?
2. How has the Royal Glamorgan infection rate increased, when infection control procedures are in place, how it has such a hold on the hospital, how did it happen?
3. What is the status of the infection? Is this a second wave or not?

The Leader advised that during the height of the pandemic, testing was a fraction of what it is today. There is a rapid increase in some areas, hospital infections and it has been suggested that covid patients are presenting themselves to hospital. However, there is mass testing and further controls in place as well as track and testing in place to be able to quickly identify cases.

The Leader confirmed that the local authority is looking to put in place support for those families who are entitled to FSM and further investments and interventions will be announced over the next few days. To support this, the Director of Education & Inclusion advised that the local authority is waiting for the terms and conditions to be announced by Welsh Government and as soon as they are clarified matters will be progressed. The Director stressed the need to find the safest and most effective way of getting resources to those eligible families and discussions are ongoing with track and trace colleagues and the data team to find ways of identifying the self-isolating learners quickly and those who are eligible. The Director stated that the schools have been outstanding in identifying children who are close contacts and they have been supported by senior officers and specialist staff through the process.

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

1. Why are the heat maps not produced on a ward basis? Why are those areas not affected by the outbreak going into lock down?
2. What isn't be done in the Royal Glamorgan Hospital and why did the hospital not implement the 15 point plan?
3. Have the field hospitals been de commissioned?

The Leader responded to the queries and explained that the field hospital was not converted as it wasn't deemed necessary but the Local Health Board has operationalised a field hospital which can accommodate 250 patients with the ability to extend to 400 if necessary.

The heat maps were designed to show the data captured in lower super output levels and has been broken down in that way. Local lock downs would be

difficult when all the communities are all inter dependent and messaging would be difficult to relay if wards were all at different stages. The Leader confirmed that procedures are followed based on partner discussions with the Health Board and the police.

County Borough Council J James – Leader of the Conservative Group

Councillor James paid tribute to the former councillors who were mentioned at the beginning of the meeting.

1. Scottish Government has announced tighter restrictions, will the Welsh Government follow suit?

2. Many sportsmen and women are struggling to find access to sports venues in which to train for competitions next year and are unable to cross county lines. Can consideration be given to these sportsmen and women and to children whose sports clubs are outside the county borough?

The Leader stressed that he could not support that despite having sympathy with sportsmen and women in accordance with the current regulations. There have been queries from swimming clubs and many other sporting associations asking for dispensation.

The Leader also responded to the following questions from other Members:-

- What are the staffing levels on the front line services?;
- Scotland have cancelled all examinations, will Wales follow suit and will there be an additional break over Half Term?;
- Are there additional measures locally or nationwide to fight the virus?
- Those that were instructed to shield are now being advised to return to work by employers, will Welsh Government be taking action on this?
- There have been issues for residents accessing the flu vaccine and being advised to travel to other surgeries, is there a local supply?
- Track and trace is key to containing the spread of the virus, how many contacts are made within 24/48/72 hours? Staffing levels will be increased to 130, what levels have been modelled and are there any pressures on the model?
- What is the current procedure for elective surgery and those on waiting lists?

Whilst responding to all queries the Leader confirmed that the council does have contingency plans in place to maintain services that are on the frontline such as social care. Reference was also made to the staff in Finance who have deadlines and grants to process and hundreds of queries and requests to deal with. The Leader advised that care for council staff remains a priority.

The Leader confirmed that the Director of Education and Inclusion services is in discussions with Welsh Government regarding next year's plans for

examinations and concerns regarding school attainment which potentially affects those more deprived areas.

The Director of HR confirmed that the council undertakes a full medical risk assessment for staff returning from shielding with the staff member and their managers before they are able to return to work safely. Following the review staff are able to return to work, from home where possible or alternative positions are sought where appropriate.

The Leader advised that information would be circulated to all members concerning the flu vaccine and the Health Board would be informed of any pinch points with particular GP surgeries.

The Director of Public Health, Protection and Community Services provided the following data:-

- In the last 7 day period up until the 2nd October 2020, in RCT there were 447 cases, 84% of cases were successfully followed up and there were 1,044 contacts which equates to 82% of cases which were successfully followed up. For the whole region there were 734 cases and 1,836 contacts. Typically between 90-100 cases are coming in daily.

In conclusion, the Leader provided an update on elective surgery and where possible residents who require care, receive it. The Health Board are urging all residents to seek medical attention where required.

23 Notice of Motion

To consider the under-mentioned Notice of Motion standing in the names of Councillors S.Evans, P.Jarman, S.Rees Owen, M.Weaver, E.Webster, A.Chapman, H.Fychan, J.Davies, J. Cullwick,G.Davies, K.Morgan E. Griffiths, D.Grehan, J.Williams, A.Cox, E.Stephens, L. Jones,

The Plaid Cymru Group calls upon the Council to act quickly to support the most vulnerable in our communities who have suffered and who are continuing to suffer due to the effects of Coronavirus.

Many of the elderly are suffering from " lockdown loneliness " and those with mental health difficulties, single parents, as well as carers of children and young people with additional learning needs and disabilities have found themselves, in many instances, unable to access their support networks or services. The impact of the effects of Coronavirus on these vulnerable groups cannot be underestimated.

We call on the Council to provide a written report urgently for Members, outlining the support it currently provides to vulnerable groups such as those outlined in this motion, and also proposed plans on how the Council can further invest and support them.

Following discussion on the original motion and in accordance with the Council's Rules of Procedure 12.7 the mover of the motion moved an alteration to the Motion to include the wording "We call on the Council to provide a written briefing urgently for Members.."

The altered Motion therefore read:

The Plaid Cymru Group calls upon the Council to act quickly to support the most vulnerable in our communities who have suffered and who are continuing to suffer due to the effects of Coronavirus.

Many of the elderly are suffering from "lockdown loneliness " and those with mental health difficulties, single parents, as well as carers of children and young people with additional learning needs and disabilities have found themselves, in many instances, unable to access their support networks or services. The impact of the effects of Coronavirus on these vulnerable groups cannot be underestimated.

We call on the Council to provide a briefing urgently for Members, outlining the support it currently provides to vulnerable groups such as those outlined in this motion, and also proposed plans on how the Council can further invest and support them.

Following discussions it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the Notice of Motion with the alteration.

24 Urgent Business

This meeting closed at 7.25 pm

**Cllr S Powderhill
Chairman.**