



SPECIAL COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON 26TH SEPTEMBER 2012 AT 5.30PM

PRESENT:

Councillor Mrs. G. Oliver - Mayor
Councillor D.M. Gray - Deputy Mayor

Councillors:

Miss. L. Ackerman, M. Adams, Mrs. E.M. Aldworth, A.P. Angel, Mrs. G. Bevan J. Bevan, L. Binding, P. Cook, C.J. Cuss, H.W. David, W. David, H.R. Davies, D.T. Davies, R.T. Davies, N. Dix, Mrs. C. Forehead, J.E. Fussell, Mrs. J. Gale. L. Gardiner, N. George, R.W. Gough, Mrs. P. Griffiths, D. Havard, C. Hawker, A.G. Higgs, G.J. Hughes, K. James, M.P. James, S. Jenkins, G. Johnston, G. Jones, Ms. J.G. Jones, G. Kirby, A. Lewis, K. Lloyd, C.P. Mann, S. Morgan, Mrs. R. Passmore, D.W.R. Preece, M.J. Prew, Mrs. D. Price, J. Pritchard, J.A. Pritchard, K.V. Reynolds, J.E. Roberts, R. Saralis, Mrs J. Summers, J. Taylor, L.G. Whittle, T.J. Williams, R. Woodyatt

Together with:-

A. O'Sullivan (Chief Executive), A. Heaney (Corporate Director - Social Services), D. Perkins (Head of Legal Services and Governance), G. Williams (Principal Solicitor), N. Scammell (Head of Corporate Finance), R. Tanner (Strategic Planning and Urban Renewal Officer), P. Evans (Head of ICT), L. Jones (ICT Operation Manager), Shaun Sansom (ICT – E Government Team Leader), J. James (NT Server Support Officer), D. Beecham (Electoral Service Manager), H.C. Morgan (Senior Committee Services Officer)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors H.A. Andrews, Mrs. K.R. Baker, P.J. Bevan, Mrs. A. Blackman, D. Bolter, D.G. Carter, Mrs. A. Collins, K. Dawson, C. Durham, Mrs. D. Ellis, C. Elsbury, Ms E. E. Forehead, C.J. Gordon, D.T. Hardacre, Mrs. B.A. Jones, S. Kent, D.V. Poole, D. Rees and Mrs. M.E. Sargent.

2. BEREAVEMENT

The Mayor referred to the recent death of the wife of Councillor Phil Bevan. Members and Officers stood in silence as a mark of respect and extended their condolences to the bereaved family.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mrs. J. A. Pritchard declared an interest in agenda item 2 (1) in relation to the appointment of a lay person to the Audit Committee. Details are minuted with the respective item.

4. APSE AWARD - BEST WASTE AND RECYCLING SERVICE TEAM OF THE YEAR AWARD

It was noted that the Waste Management Service has won an APSE Award - Best Service Team of the Year (Waste and Recycling). The award recognises the continuous improvement made by the Waste Management Team over recent years.

Hayley Evans (Principal Waste Management Officer), Mark Miller (Supervisor, Refuse and Cleansing), Nicole Kirke (Trainee Waste Management Officer), Gary Hennessey (Household Waste Recycling Centre Attendant), Malcolm Kilbey - Recycling Collection Driver) and Gavin Thomas (Waste Advisory Warden) received the award on behalf of the service and in recognition of the achievement. Members wished to place on record their appreciation to all those involved in achieving the award and for their commitment to the service.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

5. APPOINTMENT OF LAY MEMBER - AUDIT COMMITTEE

Councillor Mrs. J. A. Pritchard declared an interest (as the applicant is known to her). As the item was for information only she remained in the chamber when the report was discussed.

Consideration was given to the report which advised that following the interview process the Panel of Members selected Nigel Donald Yates as an independent member of the Audit Committee for a term of office to run concurrently with the current administration.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officer's report, the appointment of Nigel Donald Yates as an independent member of the Audit Committee for a term of office to run concurrently with the current administration be noted.

6. COMMUNITY COUNCILS - RISCA EAST AND RISCA WEST

Consideration was given to the report which sought approval for the electoral arrangements for the Community Councils of Risca East and Risca West and make the necessary Order to establish the said Community Councils.

Members were advised that Section 16 of the Local Government Act 1972 sets out that the number of Councillors shall not be less than 5. However, there is no maximum number and the Government's guidance is that each area should be considered on its own merits having regard to its population, geography and the pattern of communities.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officer's report:-

- (i) an order be made to establish Community Councils for the Risca East and Risca West community areas;

- (ii) the elections take place for the new community councils on 15th November 2012 with subsequent elections reverting to the normal local government cycle;
- (iii) subject to the number of seats identified for the Pontymister Ty Sign community ward (Risca East Community Council) being increased from 3 to 4, the ward boundaries, names and number of community councillors as set out in the tables in the report be approved.

7. FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2012

The Head of Corporate Finance reported that due to unforeseen circumstances PriceWaterhouseCoopers have not been able to conclude the audit of the accounts and as such it was not possible to present the final report for consideration. Mrs. Scammell advised that there have been no new issues raised since the report that PriceWaterhouseCoopers presented to the Audit Committee on 19th September 2012 and as covered at the seminar for all members that evening. She advised that whilst the Auditors still had to agree the Authority's adjustments made to assets, as reported to Audit Committee, these were not cash backed adjustments and there would be no effect on General Fund balances.

Mrs. Scammell reminded members that she advised in the seminar on the 19th September 2012 that Council cannot realistically change anything in the Financial Accounts, as any changes need Audit approval. Therefore the document is basically for information only. She advised that the final document would be placed on the internet and if any Councillors had any questions or required any explanations then they could contact her Accountancy staff. Mrs. Scammell explained that the legislative deadline for approval of the Financial Accounts is 30th September 2012. The members needed to consider whether they wanted to adjourn in respect of this item and meet at 5pm on Friday 28th September, or agree to give delegated powers to herself and the Chief Executive to approve the Accounts on their behalf. Mrs. Scammell was aware from PriceWaterhouseCoopers that this had been a solution recently in another Authority.

RESOLVED that for the reasons explained at the meeting, and once the audit has been completed by PriceWaterhouseCoopers, the Chief Executive and Head of Corporate Finance be granted delegated powers to sign off the financial accounts for the year ended 31st March 2012.

8. DEMONSTRATION OF THE ICT MEMBERS PORTAL

The ICT Operations Manager advised that Members had had an opportunity to view the new equipment options that are available prior to the meeting in order to identify their individual preference and gave an overview of those which can be selected (small CPU, screen, keyboard and mouse, new laptop or Apple Ipad). He referred to the upgrade of broadband, the proposed implementation plan for the roll out of the equipment and the training and instruction guides which will be given during the installation process.

The ICT - E Government Team Leader then demonstrated the new ICT Members Portal (a new information management method which provides a wide range of relevant information and gives the ability to request services and receive bulletins from a specifically designed easy to use unified access point). He explained the inception and development process as the project has progressed and advised that the portal allows easy on-line access to up-to-date relevant information tailored to the individual Members ward. The speed with which Members can navigate the different web pages was demonstrated and the number of views and search options were explained. The different filter options were noted as were those relating to access to committee documents, calendar of meetings, service requests, regularly used forms, the automatic fill facility and the interactive map facility to the planning reports.

Members thanked the Officers for their informative presentations and for responding to questions raised during the course of the debate. In endorsing both the equipment options and the content of the ICT Members Portal they wished to place on record their appreciation to all those who have been involved in their development.

EXEMPT MATTER

Members considered the public interest test certificate from the Proper Officer and concluded that on balance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and it was

RESOLVED that in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting because of the likely disclosure to them of exempt information as identified in paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

9. BARGOED RETAIL DEVELOPMENT PLATEAU PHASE 2

Consideration was given to the report which related to Phase 2 of the Bargoed Retail Development Plateau. Cabinet had considered the report on 11th September 2012 and in endorsing its content recommended its acceptance by Council.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the officer's report, the recommendations as detailed at paragraph 9 be approved.

Members wished to place on record their appreciation to all those who have been involved in the project and made specific reference to the role of Roger Tanner (Strategic Planning and Urban Renewal Officer).

The meeting closed at 6.55 pm.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 9th October 2012 on they were signed by the Mayor.

MAYOR