



SPECIAL MEETING OF COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON TUESDAY 29TH SEPTEMBER 2015 AT 5.00PM

PRESENT:

Councillor L. Gardiner - Mayor
Councillor Mrs D. Price - Deputy Mayor

Councillors:

Miss L. Ackerman, M. Adams, Mrs E.M. Aldworth, Mrs K.R. Baker, J. Bevan, P.J. Bevan, L. Binding, D.G. Carter, C.J. Cuss, H.W. David, W. David, H.R. Davies, D.T. Davies, K. Dawson, N. Dix, C. Elsbury, M. Evans, Mrs C. Forehead, Miss E. Forehead, N. George, C.J. Gordon, D. Havard, C. Hawker, A.G. Higgs, G.J. Hughes, K. James, G. Johnston, Mrs B.A. Jones, Ms J.G. Jones, Miss L. Jones, S. Kent, G. Kirby, Ms P. Leonard, A. Lewis, K. Lloyd, C.P. Mann, S. Morgan, Mrs. G. Oliver, Mrs R. Passmore, D.W.R. Preece, M.J. Prew, J. Pritchard, A. Rees, D. Rees, K.V. Reynolds, R. Saralis, Mrs M.E. Sargent, S. Skivens, J. Simmonds, Mrs E. Stenner, L.G. Whittle, T.J. Williams, R. Woodyatt

Together with:-

C. Burns (Interim Chief Executive), D. Street (Director of Social Services), N. Scammell (Acting Director of Corporate Services), C. Harry (Corporate Director - Education and Community Services), S. Harris (Acting Head of Corporate Finance), G. Williams (Interim Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer), A. Southcombe (Finance Manager (Corporate Finance)), J. Morgan (Trading Standards and Licensing Manager), M. McSherry (Licensing Manager), H. Morgan (Senior Committee Services Officer)

1. WEB-CASTING FILMING AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Interim Chief Executive reminded those present that the meeting was being filmed and would be made publically available in live and archive form via the Council's website. He advised that decisions would be made by show of hands.

2. WELCOME

Members welcomed newly elected members Mark Evans (New Tredegar Ward), Julian Simmonds (Crosskeys Ward) and Lisa Jones (Bedwas, Trethomas and Machen Ward) to their first meeting of Council.

3. COUNCILLOR MRS GINA BEVAN

In noting that Councillor Mrs Bevan was currently in hospital, Members asked that their best wishes be sent to her.

4. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors H.A. Andrews, A.P. Angel, Mrs. G. Bevan, Mrs A. Blackman, D. Bolter, J.E. Fussell, Mrs J. Gale, R.W. Gough, Mrs P. Griffiths, D.T. Hardacre, M.P. James, D.V. Poole, J.A. Pritchard, J.E. Roberts, Mrs J. Summers and J. Taylor.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Interim Chief Executive advised that as the interest would be personal and not prejudicial, there would be no requirement for those who are Members of Trade Unions to declare an interest in the item that relates to the Notice of Motion -Trade Union Bill 2015.

Councillor D.T. Davies declared an interest in the item relating to Amendments to Taxi Licencing Fees 2015 - 16. Details are minutes with the respective item.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

6. AMENDMENT TO TAXI LICENSING FEES 2015/16

Councillor D.T. Davies declared a personal interest in this item (as having a family member in the licensing trade).

Consideration was given to report which proposed amendments to the Licensing fees in respect of Private Hire Vehicle Operators, Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Drivers following changes to legislation introduced by the Deregulation Act 2015. It was noted that licensing fees are usually reviewed annually to recover reasonable costs of providing the licensing service. The Deregulation Act 2015 places an obligation on the Council to extend the licence periods in respect of Private Hire Vehicle Operators, Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Drivers. The report recommends revised fees as appropriate.

Members were advised that the report had been considered by the Licensing Committee on 24th September 2015 when it had been agreed to support the recommendations and refer them to Council for adoption.

It was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved. By show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the fees in respect of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Drivers, as outlined in the report, be approved and implemented with effect from 1st October 2015 and be valid until 31st March 2017;
- (ii) the proposed fees for Private Hire Vehicle Operator Licences be advertised and the Licensing Committee be given delegated powers to consider any objections received, to determine the fees to be charged and the date they come into force.

7. NOTICE OF MOTION - TRADE UNION BILL 2105

Consideration was given to the report which detailed the following Notice of Motion received from Councillors K .V. Reynolds, Mrs B. Jones and D.V. Poole.

'We the undersigned ask that this Council opposes the introduction of the Trade Union Bill 2015.

We ask this Council write to urge the Conservative Government to abandon this Bill and make a commitment to work in partnership with the Trade Union movement to achieve a fairer society.'

Members considered the reasons for the Motion and, following due debate, it was moved and seconded that its content be supported. By show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that a letter be sent to urge the Conservative Government to abandon this Bill and make a commitment to work in partnership with the Trade Union movement to achieve a fairer society.

8. FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS 2014/15

Consideration was given to the report which detailed the 2014/15 Statement of Accounts and the uncorrected misstatements as reported by the Council's External Auditor (PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC)) in their ISA 260 Report to the Audit Committee on the 9th September 2015. The report also provided details of a further uncorrected misstatement arising from subsequent ongoing audit work.

Mrs Scammell referred Members to the uncorrected misstatements highlighted in the report of PWC (as detailed in paragraphs 4.2 and 4.3 of the report) and they considered the recommendations in relation to the items raised (aftercare costs of the Trehir Landfill Site (the Authority's provision for both revenue and one-off costs is considered adequate to meet future and ongoing requirements), the share of the assets and liabilities and the financial results in joint operations (as many of these arrangements are ongoing the Authority does not have access to these reserves in the short-term), minor works assets (the adjustments are not considered necessary on the grounds of materiality), certain valuation movements in year (the adjustments are not considered necessary on the grounds of materiality).

It was noted that a further misstatement of £162k was identified after the issue of the ISA 260 report in relation to the treatment of non-enhancing capital expenditure included within the Authority's fixed assets in the Balance Sheet. This adjustment is not considered material to the 2014/15 accounts but will be corrected in the 2015/16 financial year.

Members were advised that the Council cannot realistically change anything in the Financial Accounts, as any changes need the approval of the Auditor.

A query was raised in relation to response times to Freedom of Information (FOI) and Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) requests and an assurance was sought that this is being achieved. The Interim Chief Executive advised that an increasing number of requests are being received and, as some maybe complex, a response within the statutory 20 working day period is challenging. A number of measures have been taken to improve performance, including a reminder to all Managers of the importance of prompt responses, and the situation is continually monitored.

It was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved. By show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the content of the report be noted and the recommendations made by the Acting Director of Corporate Services and Section 151 Officer in relation to the uncorrected misstatements detailed in paragraphs 4.2 and 4.3 of the report be approved;
- (ii) the final audited 2014/15 Statement of Accounts be approved.

Members wished to place on record their appreciation to all those involved in the preparation of the accounts.

The meeting closed at 5.35pm

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 17th November 2015 they were signed by the Mayor.

MAYOR