



## **CABINET**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN ON WEDNESDAY, 19TH JULY 2017 AT 2.00 P.M.**

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#### **PRESENT**

Councillor D.V. Poole – Chair

#### **Councillors:**

C.J. Cuss (Social Care and Well Being), N. George (Neighbourhood Services), C.J. Gordon (Corporate Services), P.A. Marsden (Education and Achievement), L. Phipps (Homes and Places) and Mrs E. Stenner (Environment and Public Protection).

#### **Together with:**

C. Burns (Interim Chief Executive), C. Harry (Corporate Director – Communities) and N. Scammell (Acting Director of Corporate Services and S151 Officer).

#### **Also in Attendance:**

R. Hartshorn (Head of Public Protection), S. Couzens (Chief Housing Officer), G. Jenkins (Assistant Director – Children's Services), C. Forbes-Thompson (Interim Head of Democratic Services), A. Dallimore (Team Leader - Urban Renewal & Conservation) and C. Evans (Committee Services Officer).

#### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs B.A. Jones (Finance, Performance and Governance), S. Morgan (Economy, Infrastructure and Sustainability) and D. Street (Corporate Director – Social Services).

#### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received at the beginning or during the course of the meeting.

#### **3. CABINET – 5TH JULY 2017**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 5th July 2017 (minute nos. 1 - 8) be approved and signed as a correct record.

## **MATTERS ON WHICH EXECUTIVE DECISIONS WERE REQUIRED**

### **4. CORPORATE RISK MONITORING**

The report provided Cabinet with an update on the Corporate Risk Register in accordance with the Council's Risk Management Strategy.

The Corporate Risk Register update sought the views and approval of Cabinet prior to its presentation to Audit Committee on 13th September 2017.

The report outlined Members critical role played in evaluating the council's risk management arrangements and in particular understanding how the Council identifies, manages and, where possible, mitigates/ removes risk. Risk Management is crucial to the effective delivery of council services.

Under the Council's Risk Management Strategy, Corporate Management Team (CMT) monitor the Council's Corporate Risks and Audit Committee have the role of reviewing and challenging the risk register and resultant action plans for the council's key strategic and corporate risks. The role of Cabinet has been formalised and moving forward Cabinet will receive six monthly progress reports on the Corporate Risk Register. The Risk Register has been received after the review by CMT on 22nd June 2017 and the changes made summarised in the table below.

Cabinet noted that the Corporate Risk Register is a 'living document' and changes at every review as new risks are introduced, existing risks are closed or their RAG (Red, Amber Green) assessment is updated. Members noted that some of the risks identified within the Corporate Risk Register include Medium Term Financial Planning, School Attainment, Sustainability of Service Provision via Grant Funding, Secondary School Rationalisation, Wales Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) Programme, Waste Management Service Continuity and Target Achievement, Fragility of the Social Care Market, Local Climate Impacts Profile, Exit from the EU, Local Development Plan, Local Government Reform, Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and Asset Management.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officers report the Corporate Risk Register be endorsed and referred to the Audit Committee for consideration.

### **5. REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES IN RESPONSE TO INCREASED DEMAND WITHIN CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

The report provided Cabinet with contextual information to explain the increase in workload pressures across Children's Services Locality Teams, the Fostering Team and the Legal Team and sought Cabinet approval for the use of service reserves to fund additional posts on a time limited basis.

The report outlined the current workload pressures, explained the pressures relating to Public Law Outline (PLO) and provided the evidence to support the proposal to recruit the following additional staff to support Children's Services and Legal Services:

- 2 Qualified Social Workers – Locality Teams
- 2 Qualified Social Workers – Fostering Team
- 1 Grade 5 Administrator – Legal Team

Members sought assurance that the additional staff requirement would be sufficient to meet the increasing demands on the service and whether Officers were confident that the posts could be filled. Officers outlined that this is unclear at present, there is a hope that the demand will reach a plateau, however, a number of other Local Authorities are in a similar position. It was noted that Caerphilly CBC has a good reputation, both for Service provision and within the Court System, therefore, Officers are confident that positions would be filled.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations contained in the report be approved. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officers report the information therein be noted and the use of Service Reserves to fund the additional posts for an initial 12 month period from date of appointment at a maximum cost of £205,917 be approved.

## **6. REVIEW OF HOUSING SERVICE CHARGES**

The report, which was presented to Caerphilly Homes Task Group (The Task Group) on 6th July 2017 and Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 19th July 2017, sought the views of The Task Group and the Scrutiny Committee on the review of how service charges are collected within Sheltered Housing and the need to review service charges for General Needs accommodation, which was unanimously supported.

The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 imposed a new duty for local authorities to comply with standards for housing quality, rents and service charges. Local Authorities are required to review the way in which charges for services are claimed to ensure that tenants are only charged for services that they receive. Detailed guidance has not been provided but it is required that service charges fairly reflect costs incurred and be transparent with a detailed breakdown provided to tenants so they can see what they are paying for.

The Authority currently recovers its costs for services it provides to tenants in sheltered housing schemes by smoothing the cost of these services between all tenants within all of the schemes. This is contrary to Welsh Government Policy. It is proposed that, in future, the Authority recovers from tenants the actual cost of providing services in their individual scheme, based on the calculated cost of providing the services in the previous financial year.

Cabinet noted the queries raised by the Task Group in relation to impact on tenants and the support available, affordability and communication methods to keep tenants informed and were satisfied with the assurances provided by Officers.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation contained in the report be approved. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officers report:-

- (i) the proposal to charge tenants of sheltered housing schemes the actual costs of providing them with services per scheme be approved;
- (ii) the proposal to introduce transitional arrangements for two years, prior to a review, and to cap service charges in line with the rent policy during the transitional period be approved.

## 7. VISIT WALES ERDF PROJECT – THE MONMOUTHSHIRE AND BRECON CANAL ADVENTURE TRIANGLE UPDATE

The report provided Cabinet with details of progress made since January 2016 in respect of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) capital infrastructure proposal – The “Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal Adventure Triangle”, which has been developed as a regionally prioritised destination management project and led by Visit Wales.

The proposal was first considered and endorsed by Cabinet on the 20th January 2016. However, the passage of time and ongoing discussions with Welsh Government (WG), Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) and project partners Torfaen CBC and Visit Wales has highlighted the need to revise and refocus the scope of the Authority’s original project proposals and to revisit the Council’s match funding allocation to the project.

Visit Wales is leading on a regional project proposal for ERDF funding, entitled “Tourism Attractor Destinations”, which aims to “...deliver a series of regionally prioritised strategic tourism infrastructure projects that will help raise the quality and perception of destinations in Wales and encourage business investment and employment growth within the tourism sector in the region”.

The Destination Management Group (a regional group with representation from each of the SE Wales Local Authorities) has identified the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal as one of the regional priority destinations. During the last 2 years officers from Caerphilly CBC and Torfaen CBC have collaborated to develop a suitable project proposal with Torfaen CBC acting as the lead partner. This proposal was considered and approved by Cabinet on 20th January 2016. ERDF approval has been awarded to Visit Wales for the umbrella regional operation. By working collaboratively with Visit Wales and Torfaen CBC, a joint project with total costs of approximately £4.56m overall has been developed, with the Caerphilly area elements totalling circa £2.026m.

The overall aims and objectives of the collaborative project remain as set out in the January 2016 Cabinet report, i.e. to enhance the tourism/leisure offer of Cwmcarn within the region and implement infrastructure improvements to the Canal. However, the scope of projects that that the Council will now seek to implement via the overall programme has changed and the Council’s match funding proposals need to be reviewed and reconfirmed. Revised project proposals for the CCBC and TCBC elements were submitted to Visit Wales by the 5th May deadline and the CCBC element requires Cabinet approval before the project is formally approved by WEFO, particularly the revised scope and updated match funding requirement of the project. The report outlined the current funding position, including changes to anticipated capital funding availability that has been confirmed since May 2017.

In addition to submitting a detailed Business Plan to Visit Wales for the collaborative “Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal Adventure Triangle” project by the early May deadline, WG’s Regeneration Panel, comprising WG officers with technical, financial and regeneration expertise, will assess the project (date of which remains to be confirmed) to determine the request for award of Welsh Government Targeted Match Funding (TMF).

The updated financial implications, as outlined within the report included the anticipated funding contributions from ERDF, Welsh Government TMF and Caerphilly County Borough Council, including recent changes to the Council’s core capital allocations, which have been highlighted and confirmed during the consultation process.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation contained in the report be approved. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officers report:-

- (i) £542k of the Engineering budget indicatively allocated for canal improvement

works in 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20 be approved as match funding for this proposal, on the basis that it is used to carry out canal restoration work that compliments the wider Visit Wales Project submission;

- (ii) the use of £60k of Countryside Services core Capital budget as match funding through the course of the 3 year project be approved;
- (iii) the indicative list of Revised Projects, as outlined in appendix 1 to the report be noted and approved;
- (iv) in the event of further changes to the scope of the revised projects referred to in Appendix 1, these be considered under the Scheme of Delegation by the relevant Head of Service or Director in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member.

## **8. CABINET FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The report sought the endorsement of the Cabinet Forward Work Programme for the Period July 2017 to December 2017.

The report outlined the proposed Forward Work Programme of future Cabinet reports.

The Cabinet Forward Work Programme is updated on a regular basis to reflect any amendments that are made to it since it was first agreed on 22nd January 2014.

Cabinet were asked to note that, since the publication of the report, there were some changes and additional items added to the Programme, which were highlighted by the presenting Officer.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation contained in the report be approved. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officers report and in noting the amendments to the Forward Work Programme as outlined in the meeting, the Forward Work Programme be approved.

The meeting closed at 2.45 p.m.

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any corrections made at the meeting held on 6th September 2017.

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CHAIR