



CABINET

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN ON WEDNESDAY, 27TH FEBRUARY 2019 AT 10.30 A.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor D. Poole – Chair

Councillors:

C. Cuss (Social Care and Wellbeing), N. George (Neighbourhood Services), C.J. Gordon (Corporate Services), Mrs B.A. Jones (Finance, Performance and Governance), P. Marsden (Education and Achievement), S. Morgan (Economy, Infrastructure and Sustainability), L. Phipps (Homes and Places) and E. Stenner (Environment and Public Protection).

Together with:

D. Street (Corporate Director - Social Services and Housing), M. S. Williams (Interim Corporate Director - Communities) and R. Edmunds (Corporate Director – Education and Corporate Services).

Also in Attendance:

R. Kyte (Head of Regeneration and Planning), M. Headington (Green Spaces and Transport Services Manager), R. Tranter (Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer), M. Williams (Interim Head of Property Services), C. Forbes-Thompson (Interim Head of Democratic Services) and A. Dredge (Committee Services Officer).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from C. Harry (Interim Chief Executive).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor D. V. Poole declared a personal and prejudicial interest in relation to agenda item 4 - Bedwellty School Playing Fields. He left the room when the report was presented and did not take part in the debate or vote.

3. CABINET - 13TH FEBRUARY 2019

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 13th February 2019 (minute nos. 1 - 9) be approved and signed as a correct record.

MATTERS ON WHICH EXECUTIVE DECISIONS WERE REQUIRED

4. BEDWELLY SCHOOL PLAYING FIELDS

Councillor D. V. Poole declared a personal and prejudicial interest in relation to this item as he resides in close proximity to the site. Councillor S. Morgan presided as Chair whilst the report was presented and considered.

The Green Spaces and Transport Services Manager presented the report that sought the views of Cabinet on the proposed disposal of two football fields situated within the grounds of the former Bedwellty Comprehensive School, Aberbargoed (hatched red on the Plan that was appended to the report) for residential development.

In January 2018, the Local Authority sold the site of the former school, outlined in blue on the site plan (Appended to the report), for residential development. The pavilion that supported the playing pitches was situated on the land sold for residential development. As the purchaser required vacant possession by the end of May 2018, the pavilion (a modular style building) was subsequently removed from the site and scrapped. Members noted that the pavilion was not fit for purpose and had been sited at several other locations. At its meeting on 25th April 2018, Cabinet resolved that the playing fields would be declared surplus at the end of the season (20th May 2018). The process of complying with the Playing Fields (Community Involvement in Disposal Decisions) (Wales) Measure 2010 and Playing Fields (Community Involvement in Disposal Decisions) (Wales) Regulations 2015 would commence.

Cabinet were referred to paragraph 4.5. and 4.6. in the report that summarised the 7 week consultation process undertaken in respect of the playing fields. The consultation commenced on the 4th October 2018 and the responses received were also appended to the report. The Officer advised that three responses were received from local residents and all were supportive of the site being disposed of. One local resident expressed concerns over congestion from car parking during fixtures. A joint response was received from Sport Wales and Fields in Trust who both objected to the potential loss of the facility. The objection centres on the fact that Fleur-de-Lys AFC will be sharing facilities with Fleur-de-Lys RFC and one pitch cannot be considered equivalent provision. In terms of local provision, it was explained that there are 7 playing fields located within the local vicinity. The Officer referred to Appendix 3 that demonstrates that there is no shortage of provision within the locality and all the local teams are/can be accommodated. In addition, despite positive dialogue with Fleur-de-Lys AFC, written representation was received in relation to the facilities at Trelyn Park and reference was also made to safeguarding concerns within the pavilion. Cabinet were reassured that Officers have already met both clubs on site to consider options to amend/restrict access inside the pavilion. If there are any other concerns, Officers will continue to work with the club(s) to resolve any issues. Members were advised of the process to be undertaken by Officers, should the recommendation be endorsed. It was explained that the Council may not proceed with a proposed disposal until a period of 12 weeks has lapsed from the day on which the notice is first published. This is intended to provide a reasonable minimum period in which objectors may initiate a legal challenge to the Authority's decision.

The Officer confirmed that local ward Members had been consulted at the initial stages of this process and no objections had been raised.

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

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officer's report, the playing fields shown hatched red on the plan attached at Appendix 1, be sold for residential development.

5. REVIEW OF CCBC REGENERATION GRANTS

The Head of Regeneration and Planning presented the report that sought Cabinet approval to consult on proposals to merge several grant programmes. Following a review undertaken on the revenue and capital grant schemes currently administered by the Council's Regeneration Division, it is recommended that existing grants be amalgamated into a combined "Caerphilly Enterprise Fund" that focuses delivery on developing business growth and creating employment opportunities. To accommodate this, Officers propose merging several grant programmes including the Community Regeneration Fund and focusing their budgets into the Caerphilly Enterprise Fund.

Cabinet were advised that the current grant schemes (summarised in paragraph 2.1 in the report) are administered by both the Urban Renewal and the Business Support and Funding Teams within the Regeneration Division. They offer financial support to both the commercial/business sectors and community/voluntary sectors. As there are a mixture of revenue and capital funded grants there is a requirement to manage and keep them separate.

The potential to combine the grants into a single "Caerphilly Enterprise Fund" will offer improved support to start-up businesses, stimulate economic growth, fill identified supply chain voids and support job creation.

Officers propose discontinuing the Community Regeneration Fund (CRF) programme and focusing its budget into the Caerphilly Enterprise fund. The good work that the voluntary sector and community groups undertake is fully recognised and greatly appreciated but it is apparent that there are a number of external funding mechanisms that they are able to bid into to secure monies for localised community projects. Reference was made to Appendix 1 that sets out the current grants available to these groups. If the CRF fund is closed, Officers will continue to offer support and guidance to groups looking for funding and will actively signpost them to suitable available external grants. The voluntary sector has expressed concerns in relation to the proposals and it was confirmed that Officers will be attending the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee on the 14th March 2019, to address the concerns raised.

The proposed grant limits and intervention rates were set out in paragraph 4.3.1. in the report. It was confirmed that any grant funded project would need to demonstrate that it will contribute to improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of the County Borough. Cabinet noted the proposal that the existing geographical boundary for the Oakdale Community Benefit Fund is extended from 1.5 miles to 2 miles. This would add the communities of Markham, Cefn Fforest, Blackwood, part of Newbridge and Crumlin to the existing eligible communities of Argoed, Croespenmaen, Kendon, Oakdale, Penmaen, Pentwyn and Trinant. It also brings in the communities of Llanhilleth, Brynithel and Aberbeeg in Blaenau Gwent and it was noted that a number of similar schemes across the UK cut across local boundaries. It is not suggested that communities outside Caerphilly CBC should have access to this fund. This fund is provided from a contribution from a private company who would need to agree to the expansion of the boundary.

Cabinet thanked the Officer for the report and felt that the Business Sector should also be considered as part of the wider consultation exercise.

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 subject to an amendment to paragraph 11.2. to include *and the Business Sector* and for the reasons contained in the Officer's report: -

- (i) the content and principles set out in the report, be noted;

- (ii) Officers to undertake a wider consultation exercise with the Voluntary Sector, Community Groups and the Business Sector on the contents of the report, be approved;
- (iii) following the consultation exercise, a further report be presented to Cabinet.

6. FUNDING FOR THE INSTALLATION OF ENERGY EFFICIENT LIGHTING THROUGHOUT TY PENALLTA

The Cabinet Member for Homes and Places introduced the report that sought Cabinet approval of funding arrangements for the installation of energy efficient lighting throughout Ty Penallta offices.

Cabinet were advised that the existing florescent lights within Ty Penallta are to be replaced with modern energy efficient LED fittings. This £175,000 project will reduce the annual electricity bill by £24,000 and reduce the Authority's carbon footprint by 83 tonnes per annum. The upgrade project is approved for funding via the Local Authority Energy Financing (LEAF) invest to save loan scheme and work can start in February 2019. It is proposed that a portion of the projected Miscellaneous Finance underspend be utilised to pay off the loan in 2018/19 which will allow the annual energy cost saving to be declared as a recurring MTFP saving. The released LEAF funds will be diverted to other energy reduction projects on or within Authority buildings.

Members discussed the benefits of the energy efficient lighting that will allow in year underspends to be used to invest in a project which will deliver recurring revenue cost savings with a payback period of approximately 7 years. The projected electricity cost saving is based on 2018/19 unit electricity charges and operational experience relating to operating hours. It is likely that electricity costs will increase and therefore the projected saving is considered conservative.

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

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officer's report, the use of a portion of the projected Miscellaneous Finance underspend to fund the Ty Penallta lighting upgrade project costing £175,000, and the associated energy cost saving of £24,000 be declared as a recurring MTFP saving, be approved.

7. CABINET FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair gave permission for this item to be deferred to the next meeting in order that the forward work programme can be updated. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons discussed at the meeting, the report be deferred to the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 11.00am.

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any corrections made at the meeting held on 13th March 2019.

CHAIR