



CABINET

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN ON WEDNESDAY, 15TH MAY 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) and L. Phipps (Homes and Places) and E. Stenner (Environment and Public Protection).

Together with:

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

Also in Attendance:

M. Williams (Interim Head of Property Services), C. Edwards (Environmental Health Manager) and C. Evans (Committee Services Officer).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence received.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Cabinet Members declared personal interests in the following items:

Councillor C. Cuss in items 4 and 5 (Asset Management Strategy – Property and Land; Property Review Report 2019) as a Committee Member for a Community Centre and School Governor.

Councillor N. George in items 4 and 5 (Asset Management Strategy – Property and Land; Property Review Report 2019) as a Governor of a School and Community Councillor.

Councillor C. Gordon in item 5 (Property Review Report 2019) as a School Governor.

Councillor B. Jones in items 4 and 5 (Asset Management Strategy – Property and Land; Property Review Report 2019) as a Community Councillor and School Governor.

Councillor S. Morgan in items 4 and 5 (Asset Management Strategy – Property and Land; Property Review Report 2019) as a Committee Member for a Community Centre, Community Councillor and School Governor.

Councillor L. Phipps in item 5 (Property Review Report 2019) as a Committee Member for a Community Centre, School Governor and Trustee of Blackwood Miners Institute.

Councillor D. Poole in items 4 and 5 (Asset Management Strategy – Property and Land; Property Review Report 2019) as a School Governor.

Councillor E. Stenner in item 5 (Property Review Report 2019) as a Committee Member for a Community Centre, School Governor and Trustee of Blackwood Miners Institute.

As these were personal and not prejudicial interests, Members were not required to leave the room, could take part on the debate and vote.

3. CABINET – 24TH APRIL 2019

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 24th April 2019 were approved as a correct record.

MATTERS ON WHICH EXECUTIVE DECISIONS WERE REQUIRED

4. ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY – PROPERTY AND LAND

The following Cabinet Member declared personal interests in this item:

Councillor C. Cuss as a Committee Member for Ael-Y-Bryn Community Centre, Governor and Vice Chair of Upper Rhymney Primary School and Governor of Idris Davies School 3-18.

Councillor N. George as a Governor of Risca Comprehensive and Ty Sign Primary School and a Community Councillor for Risca.

Councillor B. Jones as a Community Council Chair of Van Community Council and School Governor of St. James and St. Cenydd.

Councillor S. Morgan as a Governor of Llanfabon Primary School, Chair of Nelson Community Centre and Community Councillor for Nelson.

Councillor L. Phipps as a Governor on Bedwas high School and Graig-Y-Rhacca Primary and Community School, Council Representative of Graig-Y-Rhacca Community Centre and Trustee of Blackwood Miners' Institute.

Councillor D. Poole as a Governor of Pengam and Fleur-De-Lys Primary Schools.

Councillor E. Stenner as a Governor of Phillipstown Primary School and White Rose Primary School, Community Councillor for Phillipstown and Trustee of Blackwood Miners Institute.

As these were personal and not prejudicial interests, Members were not required to leave the room, could take part in the debate and vote.

The report sought Cabinet approval to implement the Asset Management Strategy – property and Land.

Cabinet noted that the current Asset Management (Land and Property) Strategy was adopted in 2011 and does not fully reflect current and anticipated societal, service area, staffing and financial trends and pressures. As a result, the revised Asset Management Strategy – Property and Land (appended to the Cabinet report) outlined the strategy for the management of the Authority’s property and land assets for the period 2019 to 2024.

Cabinet thanked the Officer for the report and discussion ensued.

Members discussed the assets and premises owned by the Council and sought clarification on budget management. Officers confirmed that there are a number of premises including Schools, Adult Education Premises, Public Toilets, Tourism Buildings and Sheltered Housing Accommodation in which the budget is managed by the tenant, information for which will be included within the Asset Management Strategy – Property and Land Report for clarification.

Discussions took place around Non Operational Land with No Strategic Purpose, with particular reference to Disposal of Land for Residential Development and Cabinet requested that Caerphilly Homes be offered first refusal on vacant parcels of land under consideration for redevelopment, in consultation with Cabinet, Registered Social Landlord, or sale on the open market.

Members discussed Options Appraisals and discussed the proposed option to convert Freeholds to Leaseholds. Officers explained that this refers to buildings which are not currently in use, for which tenants would be preferred in order to increase revenue. Officers however assured Members that this will be clarified within the report.

Discussions took place around the Asset Management Group – Property and Land Terms of Reference and Members requested that the relevant Cabinet Member(s) also form part of the Group composition. Officers agreed to amend as requested.

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, subject to the amendments as outlined at the meeting, the Asset Management Strategy – Property and Land 2019-2024 be adopted and implemented.

5. PROPERTY REVIEW REPORT 2019

The following Cabinet Member declared personal interests in this item:

Councillor C. Cuss as a Committee Member for Ael-Y-Bryn Community Centre, Governor and Vice Chair of Upper Rhymney Primary School and Governor of Idris Davies School 3-18.

Councillor N. George as a Governor of Risca Comprehensive and Ty Sign Primary School and a Community Councillor for Risca.

Councillor C. Gordon as a Governor of Bryn Primary School.

Councillor B. Jones as a Community Council Chair of Van Community Council and School Governor of St. James and St. Cenydd.

Councillor S. Morgan as a Governor of Llanfabon Primary School, Chair of Nelson Community Centre and Community Councillor for Nelson.

Councillor L. Phipps as a Governor on Bedwas high School and Graig-Y-Rhacca Primary and Community School, Council Representative of Graig-Y-Rhacca Community Centre and Trustee of Blackwood Miners’ Institute.

Councillor D. Poole as a Governor of Pengam and Fleur-De-Lys Primary Schools.

Councillor E. Stenner as a Governor of Phillipstown Primary School and White Rose Primary School, Community Councillor for Phillipstown and Trustee of Blackwood Miners Institute.

As these were personal and not prejudicial interests, Members were not required to leave the room, could take part in the debate and vote.

The report provided Cabinet with a factual summary of the Authority's property (land and building) holdings and sought endorsement of the property review that covers the period 2018-2019.

The Property Review Report aims to provide a succinct overview and record of what is a very large and diverse non domestic property portfolio. It presents some key metrics, highlights in period trends, summarises disposals and acquisitions and sets out some of the challenges ahead. The report follows on from the 2018 Property Review Report which was considered and endorsed by Cabinet in May 2018.

Cabinet thanked the Officer for the report and discussion ensued.

Members considered the report in detail and raised queries around the Condition of the Estate, with particular reference to buildings categorised as "C4 Operational Bad" and plans to rectify this. Officers explained that there are a number of schemes in place outside of the Property Portfolio, such as 21st Century Schools Band B scheme, which will address issues identified within school premises, in addition, there were a number of Leisure Centres identified in this category, which will be addressed under the Sport and Active Recreation Strategy.

Discussions took place around Social Services Premises at Ty Pontygwindy, in which a number of teams are located and work well within the building. Officers explained that a decision was taken, in consultation with staff to relocate staff and dispose of the premises. Relocation sites have been identified for each of the teams and cost analysis was conducted, which Officers agreed to circulate to Members for their information.

A Cabinet Member raised a query around the residential development at Ty Pontllanfraith and it was noted that residents have highlighted that work has commenced and trees been felled. Officers explained that only investigatory works are being conducted at the site, however, this will be looked into further, and feedback provided to Members.

Discussions took place around the buildings listed within the report as Flying Start Premises and it was noted that these were not Council owned but leased buildings, Officers agreed to check with the Estates Team and amend as appropriate.

Cabinet considered the Council's Carbon Footprint and discussions ensued around the Annual Electricity Consumption for Penallta House, a query was raised as for the reason for the downward trend recorded in 2017/18 and the slight increase in 2018/19. Officers explained that a number of factors impacted upon the figures, the initial decrease was due to the implementation of a manual cooling system, allowing greater control over the temperature and energy consumption, however the slight increase was due to a severe winter in 2018/19, resulting in an increase in energy consumption. Officers added however that it is anticipated that these figures will dramatically reduce in the coming year following the implementation of the new lighting system within Penallta House.

In considering the premises details within Elm Drive in Risca, a Member highlighted that there are 12 units within that area. Officers agreed to revise the report where appropriate.

In addition, it was requested that Officers state that assumptions are based on 2018/19, in order to make data more clear.

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 Officer's Report:

- i) the 2019 Property Review Report and the changes in the property portfolio be noted;
- ii) the annual report (as appended to the Cabinet report) be endorsed.

6. LOCAL TOILETS STRATEGY

The report, which was considered by Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee on 14th May, sought Cabinet endorsement to adopt and publish the Local Toilets Strategy (the Strategy).

It was noted that a report was previously presented to Cabinet on the 28th November 2018 detailing the requirement for Caerphilly County Borough Council to produce a Local Toilets Strategy. The report also sought permission to consult on the prepared draft Local Toilets Strategy. Caerphilly County Borough Council must publish its strategy by the 31st May 2019.

The duty to prepare a local toilets strategy does not require local authorities to provide and maintain public toilets directly. The Local Authority must take a strategic view on how facilities can be provided and accessed by their local population. Upon review of this strategy, Caerphilly County Borough Council is required to publish a statement of progress. The strategy should contribute toward achieving accessible and clean toilets wherever people live, work or visit.

During Autumn 2018, an assessment of need, including a public consultation exercise, was completed to identify existing provision, current and future need and gaps in provision. Feedback and findings from this work were incorporated into the draft Strategy. Thereafter, a public consultation exercise was undertaken between the 14th December 2018 and the 8th March 2019 to collect views regarding the content of the updated draft strategy. 83 responses were received and have been analysed and reported at Appendix 1.

The last consultation exercise was run almost in parallel with the public consultation on the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP); which included a proposal to close five blocks of public toilets across the county borough. Consequently, many of the respondents associated the closure of the public toilets with the Strategy, consequently much of the feedback from the consultation exercise related to the removal of existing provision, particularly facilities for disabled persons.

The Strategy makes reference to the closure of the public toilets; therefore it has not been necessary to amend the strategy as a direct result of comments received.

Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee considered the findings of the public consultation exercise and the updated Local Toilets Strategy and provided comments and feedback around the consultation process, publication of the strategy and raised concerns around the user friendliness of the "App", with particular concerns for older people who may not have access to a smart phone. Scrutiny also expressed a number of concerns around signposting of available toilet facilities in town centres, with some concerns raised around the proposed stickers, provided by Welsh Government to inform the public of facilities in specific shops and premises in town centres.

Cabinet thanked the Officer for the report and discussion ensued.

Cabinet discussed the Strategy in detail and communications following its publication. It was requested that a detailed press release be posted in Caerphilly Newslines providing an example of the Welsh Government Sticker to raise awareness, as well as details of availability of facilities.

Discussions took place around the consultation process for closures of public toilets and it was noted that there was a great deal of involvement with Community Councils, premises owners and voluntary organisations, and, since the closure of facilities in town centres, work is underway in Caerphilly, Bargoed, Risca and Blackwood to arrange transferring of responsibility for the provision of facilities.

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 adoption and publication of the Local Toilets Strategy be endorsed.

The meeting closed at 11.08 am.

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any corrections made at the meeting held on the 29th May 2019.

CHAIR