



## COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON TUESDAY, 4TH JUNE 2019 AT 5.30PM

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PRESENT:

Councillor J. Simmonds - Mayor  
Councillor C. Andrews - Deputy Mayor

Councillors:

Mrs E. Aldworth, P.J. Bevan, C. Bezzina, L. Binding, A. Collis, C. Cuss, M. Davies, D.T. Davies, K. Dawson, C. Elsbury, K. Etheridge, M. Evans, A. Farina-Childs, Mrs C. Forehead, Ms E. Forehead, J.E. Fussell, N. George, C. Gordon, R.W. Gough, D.T. Hardacre, L. Harding, D. Harse, D. Havard, A. Hussey, V. James, M. James, L. Jeremiah, Mrs B. Jones, S. Kent, G. Kirby, Mrs A. Leonard, Ms P. Leonard, C.P. Mann, B. Miles, S. Morgan, Mrs G. Oliver, B. Owen, T. Parry, Mrs L. Phipps, D.V. Poole, D.W.R. Preece, Mrs D. Price, J. Pritchard, J. Ridgewell, R. Saralis, Mrs M.E. Sargent, G. Simmonds, S. Skivens, Mrs E. Stenner, J. Taylor, C. Thomas, A. Whitcombe, R. Whiting, L G. . Whittle, T. Williams, B. Zaplatynski.

Together with:-

C. Harray (Interim Chief Executive), M.S. Williams (Interim Corporate Director of Communities), R. Edmunds (Corporate Director of Education and Corporate Services), L. Donovan (Head of People Services), R. Tranter (Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer), L. Lucas (Head of Customer and Digital Services) and E. Sullivan (Senior Committee Services Officer).

#### **WELCOME – COUNCILLOR DIANNE PRICE**

The Mayor on behalf of Council welcomed back Councillor Dianne Price to this her first meeting since her recent illness and wished her a continuing and full recovery. Councillor Price thanked Members for all their support and good wishes; she also thanked Council for supporting her request for an extension to the six month rule and in particular her appreciation for the card from Plaid Cymru Members and letter from the Interim Chief Executive.

#### **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. She advised that decisions would be made via the electronic voting system.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M. Adams, A. Angel, S. Cook, D. Cushion, W. David, N. Dix, A. Gair, J. Gale, A. Higgs, G. Johnston, P. Marsden, G. Oliver, B. Owen, J. Roberts, J. Scriven and W. Williams and D. Street (Corporate Director Social Services and Housing)

**2. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor outlined the events he and the Deputy Mayor had undertaken since his election at the Annual Meeting of Council and referred Members to the list of engagements included under Item No. 2 of the agenda pack. He explained his intention to include such a list for all forthcoming meetings, which he hoped Councillors would find informative.

**3. TO RECEIVE PETITIONS UNDER RULE OF PROCEDURE 28(3)**

Councillor G. Kirby on behalf of Councillor M. Adams presented a petition which called for a review of the double yellow lines on Penmaen Road, Pontllanfraith.

**4. PRESENTATION OF AWARDS**

IASME Governance and Cyber Essentials Plus Awards

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services announced that Caerphilly County Borough Council had been successful in achieving both the Cyber Essentials Plus certification and a Gold Award for the IASME Governance Standard which covers Governance and GDPR.

Council was advised that the achievement of this standard was truly a team effort across every services area led by Customer and Digital Services. The Cabinet Member welcomed Liz Lucas, Joanne Jones, Wesley Colyer, Carl Evans, Bev Griffiths, Neil Rich, Wayne Turner, Rachel Hawker and Helen Hotchkiss and asked that they come forward so that Council could recognise their awards.

LABC Regional Building Excellence Awards

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Protection announced that the Council's Building and Control Team have, through their excellent working relationship with Residents and Building Firms, had projects recognised by the Local Authority Building Control Regional Building Excellence Awards. The Cabinet Member welcomed Jason Lear (Building Control Team), Gary Cosgrove (M & J Cosgrove), Jatinder Khehra (Redwood Court), Steve Collins (Steve Collins Builders and Shop Fitters), Jamie Morris, Adam Morris and Tom Morris (Morris Properties) and asked that they come forward so that Council could recognise their awards.

Newbridge Staff

The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services welcomed colleagues from Newbridge Leisure Centre who through quick thinking and the availability of a defibrillator saved a person's life. Having been alerted that a gentleman jogging near the leisure centre had suffered a cardiac arrest Georgia and Jamie administered life-saving treatment until the emergency services arrived. The Cabinet Member also thanked everyone involved including the Members of the Public who were first on the scene, Paramedics and Police Officers that attended and confirmed that the gentlemen has since been discharged from hospital and is doing well. The Cabinet Member called forward Georgia Haines and Jamie Evans so that Council could recognise their considerable efforts.

## **5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor John Taylor, Mrs C. Harry (Interim Chief Executive) and Mr M.S. Williams (Interim Corporate Director of Communities) declared an interest in Agenda Item No. 12 - Contract Arrangements for the Interim Chief Executive. Details are minuted with the respective item.

## **6. COUNCIL – 16TH APRIL 2019**

RESOLVED that the minutes of Council held on the 16th April 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

## **7. ANNUAL MEETING OF COUNCIL – 9TH MAY 2019**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Annual Meeting of Council held on the 9th May 2019 be approved as correct records and signed by the Mayor.

## **8. TO RECEIVE AND TO ANSWER QUESTIONS RECEIVED UNDER RULE OF PROCEDURE 10 (2)**

To the Leader of Council from Councillor Adrian Hussey:

Can the Leader offer the latest position with regards to the introduction of a strategic development plan and how this and the associated new 'light touch' LDP can help improve our GVA performance?

Response from the Leader

Following extensive work by the South East Wales Strategic Planning Group (SEWSPG) and the Cardiff Capital Region Cabinet, an in-principle agreement to proceed with a Strategic Development Plan (SDP) for the Cardiff Capital City Region was reached at the Regional Cabinet Briefing held on the 29th April 2019.

A report, which will subsequently go to all 10 Councils to seek authorisation to formally proceed with the SDP, will be considered by CCR Cabinet on the 10th June 2019. If the CCR Cabinet agree the report it is intended that all 10 Local Planning Authorities will present the report to their respective Councils, seeking agreement to commence the SDP thereafter.

If all 10 authorities agree to commence, then an expression of interest in commencing work on the SDP for the Cardiff Capital Region will be submitted to Welsh Government. This is the first stage in the commencement of the preparation of the SDP.

The SDP is a statutory land use policy document that will, when adopted, provide the strategic policy framework for the delivery of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal objectives. A cornerstone of the City Deal aspirations is the realisation of significant economic growth, by building on competitive advantage and opportunity, and targeting strategic employment sectors. The SDP will provide the spatial land use expression of the region's Industrial and Economic Plan delivering on the regional growth aspiration which will result in an increase overall of GVA.

LDPs and LDP Lites, the term for an LDP that is prepared when an Adopted SDP is in place, will provide the local expression on land use policy for delivering the strategy of the SDP at local authority level.

The SDP and LDP/LDP Lites taken together will provide the statutory land use policy basis for delivering the City Deal economic growth objectives that will realise the 5% increase in overall GVA required by the City Deal.

There is also an indication that Caerphilly's economic competitiveness is increasing. The 2019 edition of the UK Competitiveness Index (UKCI) provides a means of comparison and an examination of Caerphilly's changing competitiveness when compared to other Local Authority Areas in Wales. The index indicated that Blaenau Gwent remains the least competitive locality in the UK (ranked 379). On a positive note Caerphilly has moved up the ranks from 376 in 2015 or 369 in 2019, reducing the Welsh dominance among the 10 least competitive localities in the UK.

**9. TO RECEIVE AND TO ANSWER QUESTIONS RECEIVED UNDER RULE OF PROCEDURE 10(4)**

**To the Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Protection from Councillor Carl Thomas:**

Can the Cabinet Member provide me with an update regarding the Welsh Government latest position, concerning valuations relating to Hafodyrynys Air Quality consultations?

Response from the Cabinet Member

Members will be aware that Welsh Government has issued an Air Quality Direction requiring the Council to undertake a feasibility study to determine a preferred option which will achieve compliance with the Ambient Air Quality Directive air quality limit value for nitrogen dioxide at Hafodyrynys in the 'shortest time possible'.

The draft Final Plan identified that demolition of the properties on the south side of the A472 would achieve compliance in the shortest possible time by 2023. However, under the 'Do Minimum' option modelling predicts delivery of air quality compliance by 2025. At its meeting of the 27th March 2019, Cabinet expressed strong concerns at the prospect of residents being pushed into financial hardship by any compulsory purchase process and resolved to undertake a public consultation on the 'Do Minimum' option; that consultation closes next week.

Welsh Government has subsequently confirmed that it will make adequate funding available for purchase and demolition of the properties, should this prove necessary, including the potential for applying the value of new similar property as opposed to market value of the house being demolished. This would address Cabinet's previously expressed concern that residents should be placed in financial hardship.

This is a positive change in circumstances and Officers are developing an approach to valuations for inclusion in a report to Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee on the 25th June for a decision.

**To the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy, Infrastructure, Sustainability and Wellbeing of Future Generations Champion from Councillor Andrew Whitcombe:**

Can the Deputy leader and Cabinet Member share with me what progress the Council is making towards becoming a 'greener' Council and County Borough?

Response from the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member

Caerphilly Council has a really positive track record in introducing and implementing measures to reduce energy consumption and has already introduced a Carbon Reduction Strategy with its focus on reducing carbon emissions.

The Council has invested in Photo Voltaic (PV) on 64 schemes many at our schools. We are currently rolling out program to convert all the county borough's street lanterns to LED. Reducing energy consumption is a key objective of the Council much of the Council's

housing stock has now benefitted from external wall insulation, more efficient condensing boilers, loft insulation and double glazing.

Progress has been made in reducing electricity consumption at many council owned sites. For example Ty Penallta has 108 roof top PV panels. Along with changes to the heating and cooling controls and the lights being replaced with LED is Ty Penallta is becoming more sustainable and more economical to run.

Looking forward, the Council is developing an Energy Plan to continue the good work of the current Carbon Reduction Strategy. If the Climate Change Notice of Motion is approved by council tonight we will be committing to make Caerphilly County Borough Council a net zero carbon local authority by 2030 this motion has already been signed by all the Cabinet and the Leaders of all political groups. There are a number of projects that the Council can incorporate into this evolving Energy Plan to reach this target and these opportunities are outlined in a report scheduled to go to Regeneration and Housing Scrutiny Committee on the 11<sup>th</sup> June.

Opportunity areas that the Council are looking to explore include using its land assets for solar farms, wind turbines or tree planting and the use of heat from a local anaerobic digester to reduce our carbon usage.

The Authority recently approved an Electric Vehicle Strategy which aims to introduce electric vehicle infrastructure across the borough. We are also leading on a feasibility study to determine the most suitable sites for electric vehicle charge points in the 5 Gwent local authorities. This study will form the basis of a bid from the Office for Low Emission Vehicles funding. Feasibility work is being undertaken to install charge points at the Tredomen Campus for fleet vehicles and visitors. This builds on the recent news that Stagecoach will deliver one of Europe's largest single investments in electric buses here in Caerphilly, after securing £2.9m in grant funding from the UK Government. This comes on top of the £740m+ investment in the Valleys Metro. This will stimulate a change in people's attitude to travel.

The Council is developing an Agile working plan which will reduce the need for staff to travel unnecessarily and could reduce the need for office space, again prompting a reduction in energy consumption.

Many opportunities exist to use housing as a focus to deliver a greener authority. We will continue to work with our active Registered Social Landlords to deliver innovative housing schemes such as Pobl's Chartist Village scheme at Pontllanfraith. We will continue our efforts with our own council stock in reducing fuel poverty, improving insulation and investigating ways of producing clean energy. When we complete the WHQS work in 2020, resources will thereafter be focused on the energy agenda. The Council have recently opened a dialogue with Welsh Government Energy Services to explore how the authority could act as a pilot authority on any new initiatives.

We brand ourselves as a "Green" council, but now we need to increase pace in reducing our carbon footprint further. This will enable us to respond to Welsh Government's recent statement of intent referring to decarbonisation entitled Prosperity for All, A Low Carbon Wales and also influence the work being undertaken by the Cardiff Capital Region. The best way to achieve this is to develop an overarching energy strategy that reflects this ambition and sets out a route-map on how we can deliver on being a net carbon neutral local authority by 2030.

## **10. NOTICE OF MOTION - CLIMATE CHANGE**

Consideration was given to the notice of motion received from Councillor S. Morgan and supported by Councillors D.V. Poole, B. Jones, C. Cuss, C. Gordon, L. Phipps, N. George, P. Marsden, E. Stenner, C. Mann and K. Etheridge. It was noted that the motion had been

considered by the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 14th May 2019 and had been supported by its Members.

Councillor Morgan requested in his Notice of Motion that Council: -

- (i) Declare a Climate Emergency;
- (ii) Commit to making Caerphilly County Borough Council a net zero carbon local authority by 2030;
- (iii) Within 12 months develop a clear energy plan for a route towards being net zero carbon;
- (iv) Ask that Welsh and UK Government call on World Leaders to acknowledge the overwhelming scientific evidence that Climate Change has been created by human activity;
- (v) Call on Welsh and UK Governments to provide the necessary support and resources to enable effective carbon reductions and move to a less resource intensive future;
- (vi) Call on Welsh Government to move to measure out countries progress in a way that supports and reflects decarbonisation and the ambitious and forward thinking Well Being Of Future Generation Act, rather than simply measuring resource use and consumerism;
- (vii) Work with Public Services Board and Cardiff Capital Region City Deal partners to develop opportunities to delivery carbon savings and to take advantage of the wider benefits of a green economy;
- (viii) Collaborate with experts from the private second and 3rd sectors to develop innovative solutions to becoming net zero carbon.

Members supported the ambitious targets set within the notice of motion and agreed that as Climate Change presented the biggest threat to future generations then it must be made a priority. A Member referred to the use of Photo Voltaic Panels and the need for this technology to be taken further. However concerns were also expressed in relation to infrastructure improvements and associated cost, which would be needed to take forward the various projects. The Member requested further information in relation to electric vehicles and emission reduction targets and it was agreed that these would be circulated after the meeting.

Clarification was sought in relation to GDP as detailed in point 6 of the motion and whether this was an accurate indicator in terms of the impact of climate change. The Cabinet Member advised that GDP as an indicator for climate change was far too narrow and blunt a measure as its criterion focused on production and output and did not take into account how production was achieved or the public's wellbeing. GDP does not take into that the impact of plastic waste on the environment, only that by increasing plastic production GDP increases. He advised that a Wealth Measure provided a more complete picture as its focus was not primarily financial but more holistic in its make-up.

Members referenced the work being done by children in local schools in relation to climate change and their determination that previous generations' actions should not ruin their future environment.

A Member expressed concern that a cost analysis had not been considered in terms of achieving carbon neutrality. Reference was made to tree planting and on what areas of land this could be accommodated, budgetary constraints, lack of necessary infrastructure or investment to enable homes to run on renewables and so on. The Member questioned the need to declare a Climate Emergency when real change cannot be affected and posed that the Council would perhaps be better investing other areas such as educational attainment.

Members disagreed with the 'do nothing' proposition and acknowledged that there would be costs involved however it would be more costly to future generations not to do anything. The importance of exploring every avenue possible was emphasised, including working differently

in order to protect our children's future. Reference was then made to the need to avoid carbon production at source and take a responsible position in reducing emissions.

It was agreed that further information and responses to questions raised by Members during the course of debate would be circulated independently to those concerned following the meeting.

It was moved and seconded that notice of motion be support and by way of the electronic voting system and in noting there were 54 for, 1 against and 1 abstention this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) Council declare a Climate Emergency;
- (ii) Commit to making Caerphilly County Borough Council a net zero carbon local authority by 2030;
- (iii) Within 12 months develop a clear energy plan for a route towards being net zero carbon;
- (iv) Ask that Welsh and UK Government call on World Leaders to acknowledge the overwhelming scientific evidence that Climate Change has been created by human activity;
- (v) Call on Welsh and UK Governments to provide the necessary support and resources to enable effective carbon reductions and move to a less resource intensive future;
- (vi) Call on Welsh Government to move to measure out countries progress in a way that supports and reflects decarbonisation and the ambitious and forward thinking Well Being Of Future Generation Act, rather than simply measuring resource use and consumerism;
- (vii) Work with Public Services Board and Cardiff Capital Region City Deal partners to develop opportunities to delivery carbon savings and to take advantage of the wider benefits of a green economy;
- (viii) Collaborate with experts from the private second and 3rd sectors to develop innovative solutions to becoming net zero carbon.

## **11. RESPONSE TO CAERPHILLY ELECTORAL REVIEW 2019**

Consideration was given to the report which detailed the outcome of the Electoral Review Working Group and the proposed response to the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales' review of electoral arrangements.

Members of the Working Group referenced the challenges faced when putting together the proposals before Council and acknowledged that the response detailed was not perfect but presented the best way forward under the circumstances. The timing and relevance of the review was questioned given the increasing demands and responsibilities being placed on Elected Members. The impact that reducing the number of Councillors would have on democratic representation was discussed and Members agreed there although the proposals before them were far from ideal, they were preferable to having the Commission make those decisions.

Having fully considered the report it was moved and seconded that the recommendation contained therein be agreed and by way of the electronic voting system and in noting there were 47 for, 2 against and 5 abstentions this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that the submission found at Appendix 1 of the Officer's report be sent to the Commission as the official response of the Council to the consultation exercise on the review of the electoral arrangements within the county borough.

## **12. CONTRACT ARRANGEMENTS OF THE INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

Councillor J. Taylor declared an ongoing interest in that he is an existing Member of the Investigating and Disciplinary Committee and as he had previously done left the Chamber when the matter was discussed.

Mrs C. Harray and Mr M.S. Williams declared interests as their current interim posts were directly affected by the report and left the Chamber when the matter was discussed.

Consideration was given the report which sought approval to extend the contract of the current Interim Chief Executive until the 31st March 2020. Members were advised that there is a statutory requirement to have in place a Head of Paid Service and the proposed extension would ensure that the Council complies with this. The extension would also provide ongoing continuity for the organisation, it was noted that should circumstances change, the interim contact arrangement can be reviewed quickly and can be terminated at any time during the extension period.

The Head of People Services confirmed that the report from the Designated Independent Person had been submitted and a meeting of the Investigating and Disciplinary Committee was being arranged to consider the report, in accordance with the agreed statutory process.

Clarification was sought in relation to paragraph 5.10 of report regarding the notification of Welsh Government and if any response had been received and why the Interim Director of Communities post had not been included in this report. The Officer confirmed that Welsh Government had been notified as a requirement but had not been asked or would be expected to offer any comment on the proposed extension. The post of Interim Director of Communities was not included as a previous decision of Council had determined that it be dealt with by delegated powers to the Interim Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader and two Deputy Leaders.

Having fully considered the report it was moved and seconded that the recommendation contained therein be agreed and by way of the electronic voting system and in noting there were 15 against this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that the extension of the contract of the current Interim Chief Executive be extended until 31st March 2020.

The meeting closed at 18:45pm

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd October 2019 they were signed by the Mayor.

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MAYOR