



## **CABINET**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN ON WEDNESDAY, 15TH JANUARY 2020 AT 10.30 A.M.**

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#### **PRESENT:**

Councillor P. Marsden - Chair

#### **Councillors:**

C. Cuss (Social Care and Well Being), N. George (Environment and Neighbourhood Services), C.J. Gordon (Corporate Services), Mrs B. Jones (Education and Achievement) S. Morgan (Regeneration, Transportation and Sustainability), L. Phipps (Homes, Places and Tourism) and E. Stenner (Finance, Performance and Planning).

#### **Together with:**

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

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

S. Couzens (Chief Housing Officer), R. Hartshorn (Head of Public Protection, Community & Leisure Services), P. Hudson (Business Enterprise Renewal Team Leader), H. Jones (Waste Strategy and Operations Manager), R. Kyte (Head of Regeneration and Planning), J. Roberts-Waite (Strategic Coordination Manager), S. Harris (Interim Head of Business Improvement Services and Acting S151 Officer), R. Tranter (Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer) and C. Evans (Committee Services Officer).

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

There were no apologies for absence received.

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

Following clarification from the Monitoring Officer in relation to Cllr Barbara Jones, there were no declarations of interest.

#### **3. CABINET – 11TH DECEMBER 2019**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 11th December 2019 were approved as a correct record.

#### **4. CABINET FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – TO NOTE**

Cabinet were provided with the Cabinet Forward Work Programme, which detailed the scheduled reports from 15th January 2020 to 10th June 2020. Members were reminded that the Cabinet Forward Work Programme is a working document and therefore subject to change.

The Interim Chief Executive advised Cabinet that the Corporate Volunteering report, which was scheduled for 29th January 2020 was to be deferred, and a further meeting date be scheduled shortly.

A Member requested that the responsible Cabinet Member be changed for Consultation and Engagement Strategy report. Officers agreed to update this accordingly.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the Forward Work Programme be noted. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that subject to the aforementioned amendment, the Cabinet Forward Work Programme be noted.

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

#### **5. WASTE AND RECYCLING COLLECTION SYSTEMS**

The report advised Cabinet of the findings of the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee Waste Review Working Group and sought Cabinet approval for recommendations relating to the Authority's waste and recycling services.

Cabinet noted that the Authority has been actively engaged in Welsh Government's Collaborative Change Programme (CCP) since 2015. A series of reviews have been undertaken by Waste Resources Action Programme (WRAP) and their appointed consultants on a key range on waste management services including kerbside collection services, household waste recycling centre provision and waste transfer station/depot infrastructure.

In 2018 Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee established a cross party Waste Review Working Group to make recommendations regarding the future of waste and recycling services in the county borough. The Working Group findings were reported to the meeting of Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee on 12th February 2019 when the Committee made a number of recommendations to Cabinet. The Committee's recommendations to Cabinet regarding waste collection and recycling systems have been developed further and Cabinet approval is now sought for the Recommendations in section 3 of the Officers Report.

Officers explained that that currently all households in the borough receive a weekly co-mingled dry recycling collection, using a fleet of 9 standard Refuse Collection Vehicles (RCVs) to provide this service along with a smaller tipper vehicle to collect from areas of restricted access. The dry recycling vehicles offload at the authority's bulking station prior to material being sent for sorting to a Materials Recycling Facility (MRF), which is based in Warwickshire. Officers explained that there are risks associated with the current service, largely related to the volatility of the market and quality of materials being presented by the householder.

Cabinet were asked to note that a number of measures have been implemented over previous years in order to improve the quality of recycling including the distribution of leaflets, door-stepping campaigns and warning stickers to encourage participation. As a result, the Authority has exceeded targets of 58% in 2015-16 and the increased target of 64% in 2019/21, however, it was felt that further work would be required in order to meet the increase target of 70% in 24/25. Further concerns were raised as a result of an estimated recycling

target of 80% by 2034/35 and as a result, Welsh Government (WG), along with WRAP have developed a “Blue Print” system which includes a ‘kerbside sort’ in which households sort the materials into boxes prior to collection, weekly separate collection of food waste and fortnightly collection of residual waste.

It was noted that the Waste Review Working Group, having been provided with extensive details of the Blueprint, were not in support of this option, and whilst there are risks identified, which were detailed within the Officers Report, recommended that Cabinet support the recommendation to maintain the current co-mingled collection system. In addition, it was noted that Rhondda Cynon Taff (RCT) County Borough Council is in the process of developing a Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) in close proximity to the border at Llwydcoed. RCT has a similar demographic and system to Caerphilly and as a result, a collaboration is being explored.

Cabinet thanked Officers for the report and discussion ensued.

Members sought further information on the collaboration with RCT and whether there would be any form of ‘get out clause’ written into the terms and conditions of the contract. Officers explained that the process is still in the discussion stage and the term of the contract is to be determined, however, officers will incorporate within the agreement during the legal and procurement processes.

In discussing the contract, Members queried the length of the contract and it was noted that a 10 year term has been proposed as a result of the similarity of the authorities and positive working relationships currently in place. In addition, it was noted that shorter contracts could be implemented; however the procurement process can be long and could cause service disruption.

In expressing that the Labour manifesto made a commitment maintain the waste collection service, sought clarification that there would be no change to the method of collection as a result of using the MRF at RCT. Officers explained that there would be no change to the method of collection, but there may be some changes to the logistics of the service, however this would have no noticeable impact on residents. It was noted however that there would be a number of costs incurred to move to the Blue Print, including the implementation of the kerbside boxes and change in the fleet to accommodate the new system.

Cabinet discussed the need to provide additional education and enforcement to meet the increasing targets set by WG over coming years and it was queried where the education would be targeted, as it was felt that a whole authority approach may not be necessary. Officers explained that resources will be targeted in areas in which the biggest difference can be made. Further discussions took place in which Members requested examples of authorities in which education and enforcement has had an impact on performance and officers agreed to provide details from Swansea and any other Local Authorities in which this has been successful.

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 current kerbside collection system for co-mingled (mixed) materials be retained (subject to continuous satisfactory performance attainment and market sustainability);
- ii) that officers bring forward a further report detailing education and enforcement solutions in order to improve the quality of materials and increase participation in recycling services;

- iii) the frequency of residual waste collection be reviewed in the light of actual and projected recycling performance following implementation of the Working group's recommendations, noting that there would be a lead-in time to any changes and having regard to the requirement to meet the statutory recycling target of 70% in 2024/2025;
- iv) that, subject to agreement of a Memorandum of Understanding, the Authority's responsibility for the treatment of dry recyclables be delegated to Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council under Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 and section 19 of the Local Government Act 2000 with effect from 1st April 2020 for a period of 10 years;
- v) the Interim Corporate Director for Communities be authorised to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding regarding the treatment of dry recyclables in Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council subject to consultation with the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer, and the Section 151 Officer.

## **6. VALLEYS TASK FORCE CROWDFUNDING PARTNERSHIP PROPOSAL**

The report sought Cabinet agreement for a partnership funding arrangement with Welsh Government and a number of neighbouring local authorities including Merthyr Tydfil, Neath Port Talbot, Torfaen, Bridgend and Blaenau Gwent to support the development of a crowdfunding platform aimed at delivering community and civic led projects.

A proposal has recently been initiated by the Heads of the Valleys group of Local Authority Regeneration Managers to initiate a single civic crowdfunding programme for the Valleys region to deliver improved civic and community spaces. The aim of the programme is to create a funding platform that will generate project 'creators' and project 'backers' and to match the two together.

It was noted that local communities will be encouraged to come forward with their ideas on how they can improve their local areas. These project 'creators' could be individuals within the community, local businesses or community groups.

Officers explained that supported by a core funding allocation from Welsh Government's Valley Task Force, and enhanced by equal financial contributions from local authorities across the Valleys area, the target of the initiative is to lever in additional funds through a 'coalition of willing funders'. The project backers could be local businesses, national institutions, philanthropic grant makers and others.

Cabinet thanked the Officers for the report and discussion ensued.

In noting the scheme and the benefits it could bring to the areas around the A465, a Member queried targets and whether there will be goals set. Officers explained that should a project not reach the desired target, then the funding will not be taken. In addition, the Local Authorities will set the goals for the projects, providing funding, along with local businesses and community groups, encouraging community empowerment with an aim to providing projects and services to meet the needs of the community.

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 project be funded from Corporate/Directorate reserve balances.

## 7. CAERPHILLY HOMES - #BUILDINGTOGETHER

The report which was considered by Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee on 26th November 2019 outlined the vision to build new homes and increase housing supply in the county borough following the completion of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard in 2020.

Cabinet were advised that the Caerphilly Local Housing Mark Assessment had identified a requirement of 282 units per annum over a period of 5 years in order to meet local demand. Members were advised that this is made up of 169 social housing rented units and 113 intermediate units. It was noted that there is a particular need for one bedroom accommodation.

It was noted that although there is currently a surplus of older person's accommodation throughout the county borough, the current provision does not meet the needs in terms of size, facilities and surrounding environment. This would need to be taken into account with any planned programme of development in order to ensure suitable accommodation is available for anticipated growth in demand for older persons.

Cabinet were informed of the research already undertaken in terms of the way forward by looking at what has already been done in other areas, discussions with industry experts on good quality and precision engineered homes and an ambition to produce zero carbon homes, in line with Welsh Government expectations. The report outlines plans for 400 new homes in the first instance which is considered a realistic target as these proposals will take time to develop.

Cabinet thanked the Officers for the report and discussion ensued.

A Cabinet Member thanked the Officer for the report and presentation and queried the surplus older persons accommodation identified within the report. Officers explained that there are some surplus units in the east of the borough which are no longer fit for purpose as more people are looking for more independent living accommodation. However, as part of the post 2020 scheme, these units will be looked at to remodel in order to ensure that they are fit for purpose and reduce voids, whilst meeting the needs of people on the Housing Register.

A Cabinet Member sought reassurance that brown field sites would be given priority for development. Officers confirmed that brown field sites would be given priority, however Cabinet were asked to note that this may not always be possible if the site is deemed not fit for purpose or has significant issues under the ground, and alternative sites would need to be sought.

In noting the carbon efficiency agenda, a Member queried the costs of building new properties to a higher standard, which ultimately reduces carbon output. Officers explained that there is an additional 20-30% costs to that of a current build, which will reduce as properties are built on a larger scale, however the environmental impact has been the priority.

Discussions took place around the in-house workforce, who were heavily relied upon during the WHQS Programme, and it was noted that discussions have been undertaken with Coleg Cymoedd to look at options for possibly upskilling a number of WHQS staff, including the development of skills to support the decarbonisation agenda and retrofitting of energy efficiency measures to existing properties, contributing towards the future new build programme and to continue the post 2020 asset maintenance programme. It was noted in addition, that the internal staff received better feedback from tenants for the work conducted during WHQS.

Cabinet thanked the Officers and all staff involved for the report and the extensive work that has been put into both its writing and future planning for Caerphilly Homes.

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 development be agreed, subject to planning approval of the HRA site in Nelson in order to access AHG (Affordable Housing Grant) prior to the end of March 2020 via a direct award to a partner Registered Social Landlord;
- ii) the development of the HRA sites in Bedwas and Trecenydd be agreed subject to viability testing and planning approval as set out in the report;
- iii) the principle of Caerphilly Homes acquiring new build affordable homes be agreed, via Section 106 Agreements in areas of housing need, subject to financial viability in terms of the Housing Business Plan;
- iv) the purchase via Section 106 Agreements of up to 10 affordable units per development be delegated to the Head of Service in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Homes and Places. Section 106 Agreements involving more than 10 affordable units will be subject to a report to Cabinet;
- v) proposals for General Fund land to be considered and appropriated to Caerphilly Homes for the development of affordable housing be agreed, subject to suitability and affordability. Further reports will be submitted as and when required on specific site proposals requesting appropriation from the General Fund to Caerphilly Homes for housing purposes;
- vi) that where HRA land is sold for new development it be approved that, 100% of the capital receipt be kept within the HRA and recycled to finance the Council's new build programme. Where there is no commitment to develop the land, there is an option to retain 25% of the receipt within the HRA and 75% utilised to repay debt (as in previous years with regards to the Right to Buy sales);
- vii) the exploration of innovative and commercial opportunities to facilitate the delivery of new affordable homes be supported, including the possibility of market sales, which on some sites may be necessary to ensure viability;
- viii) the engagement and commissioning of consultants and a development partner via recognised and compliant public sector procurement instruments i.e. via the SCAPE and Welsh procurement Alliance framework agreements (further explained in 5.5/6) be agreed. Each separate procurement arrangement will be undertaken with support and advice from the Council's Procurement Team and will be subject to separate reports being brought forward as appropriate.
- ix) the use of Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) including modular or partially modular homes together with a 'fabric first' approach to deliver the most energy efficient homes possible and respond to the zero carbon agenda be approved;
- x) the commissioning of an independent consultancy via a compliant framework agreement to undertake viability assessments of all suitable HRA land in order to develop a catalogue of commercially viable sites that can be developed over a 5 year period and form the basis of the Council's new build strategy be approved. This information will be used as the basis to develop 'shelf ready' schemes in preparation for the announcement of new Welsh Government Funding in 2021;

- xi) the creation of a Caerphilly Homes Development Team be approved to develop and drive forward the new #BuildingTogether programme as noted in 5.32 and 5.33 of the Officers Report;
- xii) the submission of a report to Council be approved which includes a request to borrow a further £14m to kick start the new build programme and other proposals contained in this report. Further details are contained in section 10 of the Officers Report;
- xiii) any unused borrowing from the £61m originally earmarked for WHQS be transferred to support the delivery of the new build programme. Further details are contained in section 10 of the Officers Report;
- xiv) it be noted that further reports will be submitted as and when required and details of specific schemes are known in order to advise members and where necessary seek Cabinet approval.

The meeting closed at 11.48am.

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

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CHAIR