



COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON TUESDAY, 16TH NOVEMBER 2021 AT 5.00PM

PRESENT:

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

Councillors:

M. Adams, E.M. Aldworth, C. Bezzina, C. Bishop, A. Collis, S. Cook, C. Cuss, W. David, M. Davies, D.T. Davies, N. Dix, C. Elsbury, K. Etheridge, M. Evans, A. Farina-Childs, E. Forehead, J.E. Fussell, A. Gair, N. George, C. Gordon, R. Gough, D. Hardacre, L. Harding, A. Higgs, A. Hussey, M. James, V. James, L. Jeremiah, G. Johnston, G. Kirby, P. Leonard, C. Mann, P. Marsden, B. Miles, S. Morgan, B. Owen, T. Parry, L. Phipps, D.W.R. Preece, J. Pritchard, J. Roberts, R. Saralis, J. Scriven, G. Simmonds, S. Skivens, E. Stenner, A. Whitcombe, R. Whiting, L. Whittle, T.J. Williams, W. Williams, B. Zaplatynski

Together with:-

D. Street (Acting Chief Executive), R. Tranter (Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer), R. Edmunds (Corporate Director Education and Corporate Services), M.S. Williams (Corporate Director Economy and Environment), G. Jenkins (Acting Corporate Director Social Services), S. Harris (Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer), D. Gronow (Audit Manager), J. Morgan (Trading Standards. Licensing and Registrars Manager), D. Harris (Senior Trading Standards Officer), S. Richards (Head of Education Planning and Strategy), J. Williams (Assistant Director Social Services), E. Sullivan (Senior Committee Services Officer), S. Hughes (Committee Services Officer), Lisa Lane (Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer).

RECORDING, FILMING AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Corporate Director for Social Services and Housing reminded those present that the meeting was being filmed but would not be live streamed, however a recording would be available following the meeting via the Council's website – [Click Here to View](#). He advised that decisions would be made by Microsoft Forms.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A. Angel, J. Bevan, P.J. Bevan, D. Cushing, K. Dawson, C. Forehead, D. Harse, B. Jones, S. Kent, A. Leonard, G. Oliver, D. Price, J. Ridgewell, M.E. Sargent, J. Simmonds, and J. Taylor and C. Thomas together with Mrs C. Harry (Chief Executive)

2. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor referred to the many events and visits that she has undertaken since the last meeting.

The Mayor expressed her pleasure in being able to represent Caerphilly County Borough Council along with Caerphilly's Armed Forces Champion Councillor Alan Higgs at the Armed Reserved Forces and Cadets Annual Briefing.

The Mayor also attended the unveiling for the Display Board at Morgan Jones Park, Bargoed and along with the Leader of Council attended the Senghenydd Colliery Disaster Memorial Service which including performances from local school children. The Mayor was also able to attend the 1st Cray Scouts Presentation Evening and was very impressed with the children and young people present and was even able to present Duke of Edinburgh Awards to some of them. Finally, the Mayor attended Remembrance Day Services in Caerphilly, Bargoed and Deri.

In concluding her announcement, the Mayor congratulated Councillors Julian Simmonds and Adrian Hussey who were both celebrating milestone birthdays.

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

Councillor Kevin Etheridge presented a petition on behalf of local residents requesting a Children's playground at Plas Mawr Field in Blackwood.

The Mayor accepted the petition which would be actioned in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

4. PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

Mrs Dilys Harris – Chartered Trading Standards Institute - CTSI Hero Award

Members were advised that Dilys Harris, Senior Trading Standards Officer in the Public Protection Division together with her team are responsible for a wide variety of functions including Food Standards. Over the last year Dilys and her colleagues in the Greater Gwent Food Group worked tirelessly to develop a multi-lingual allergen awareness resource for food businesses, to help protect the estimated two million people living with a diagnosed allergy in the UK. The resources were launched in September and are available on the internet to watch and download free of charge for all food business operators, their employees and local authorities all over the UK.

Every year the CTSI present an award to the Trading Standards Hero, an Officer who has demonstrated exceptional dedication to consumer protection, who has gone above and beyond their duty and whose commitment has ensured vital work had been completed. In recognition of her work on this resource CTSI have designated Dilys Harris the 2021 Trading Standards Hero and presented her with the award at a ceremony in London on the 19th October 2021.

Council congratulated Dilys on this tremendous accolade and commended her on all her hard work on a resource that will have a positive impact on food businesses and those living with food allergies.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor C. Elsbury declared a personal and prejudicial interest in relation to Agenda Item No. 12 – Notice of Motion Day Centres in that close family and friends use day services and

as such would leave the meeting when the item was discussed and would take no part in the debate or vote.

6. MINUTES - COUNCIL HELD ON 5TH OCTOBER 2021

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 5th October 2021 (minute nos. 1-19) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

7. MINUTES - SPECIAL COUNCIL HELD ON 14TH OCTOBER 2021

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Special Council meeting held on 14th October 2021 (minute nos. 1-4) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

8. TO RECEIVE AND TO ANSWER QUESTIONS RECEIVED UNDER RULE OF PROCEUDRE 10(2)

Question to the Leader of Council from Councillor G. Simmonds.

To ask the Leader of Council what sanctions are available to the Leader, Cabinet and Council where public servants in the employ of Caerphilly County Borough Council are shown to have acted outside the approved policy or strategy of the Authority.

Response from the Leader of Council.

The Council, as the employer of staff, has agreed policies and procedures in place to investigate members of staff, if their conduct or behaviour is deemed to necessitate such action. The sanction available to the Council will depend upon the findings of the disciplinary process but could range from no action to dismissal.

Should you, or any other Elected Member, have any specific examples of officers acting outside approved policies or strategies of the Authority, you should forward your concerns to Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services.

Supplementary Question from Councillor G. Simmonds.

I am concerned about that despite spending millions on policies, strategy and planning public servants in the employ of Caerphilly can ignore the Council's planning policy and strategy, I'm referring to planning where public servants can recommend for acceptance areas clearly outside the settlement boundary of our land use strategy document i.e. the LDP which is a statutory development policy.

I am also concerned about the declared carbon neutrality strategy of Caerphilly the first 6 houses built by this Council in decades have been outfitted with gas boilers and I wondered where this leaves the Code of Conduct for Public Servants of Caerphilly Council in regard to Policy, Strategy and Planning?

The Leader advised that she would provide a response to the Councillors supplementary question in writing following the meeting.

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

1. Question to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Property from Councillor C. Bezzina.

Can the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Property tell us what steps this Council is going to take to promote public transport?

Response from the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Property

From the outset I would like to stress that as Cabinet Member for Infrastructure I'm very keen to promote public transport as a viable option for residents across the borough. I have quite a bit of experience boarding busses for most of my life. Having only gained a driving licence in March 2020, travelling by public transport was how I got about my day to day business. I'm therefore aware of the pros and cons of public transport service as things stand.

There are some significant challenges ahead of us. Bus travel has been severely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, with passenger numbers plummeting, and the requirement for social distancing and additional cleansing requirements adding further burdens and costs on operators. While the Council and Welsh Government have stepped in to support the sector with substantial financial assistance, officers from the Council sit on the South East Wales Bus Funding Group, the number of passengers currently travelling remains low and is approximately 60% of the pre pandemic figures.

In addition to the difficulties as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the bus industry is currently experiencing a critical shortfall of drivers, which is resulting in many short notice service cancellations and full-service withdrawals across the South East Wales region. As a result of both of these issues the bus network has not returned to the levels enjoyed by residents prior to March 2020. Sickness absence is also an issue facing operators in the region.

Throughout the pandemic, the Council's Integrated Transport Unit has endeavoured to keep public transport information updated as much and as quickly as possible, even against a background of reduced/changing bus frequencies and has administered whatever financial support has been available for the industry from Welsh Government as quickly as possible.

Since becoming Cabinet Member for Infrastructure I've been Caerphilly's member on the Regional Transport Authority. This authority is one of ten local authorities in the Cardiff Capital Region that meets to discuss integrated transport across the region. My role is to put Caerphilly's case forward, and this is what I have done to date, and this is what I intend to keep doing.

In July, the leader sent a letter to Lee Waters MS, Deputy Minister for Climate Change in relation to the Welsh Government's commitment to lift the ban on local authorities running municipal bus companies during this Senedd term. We both support legislation to pave the way for more opportunities for public transport to be taken into public ownership as we believe public transport, run locally, will provide greater stability for the industry.

In recent months I have been engaged in constructive talks with the Aneurin Bevan Health Board, Transport for Wales, Operators, Officers and the Senedd Member for Caerphilly, who approached me in my cabinet capacity to discuss potential bus services to the Grange University Hospital. These talks are still at a preliminary stage, but Transport for Wales have supplied myself and all parties around the table and indicative map they're considering. In order to advance these talks further, more meetings are in

the pipeline. It is my job as Cabinet Member for Infrastructure to work to ensure all avenues are pursued, so I will update members further.

In spite of the challenges we face as a local authority, I'm keen that we consider innovative schemes that promote bus travel. We're considering launching a temporary fares reduction scheme to encourage and increase long – term patronage. Going forward, we want to link any potential scheme with supporting our town centres and to improve our climate change obligations. I'm aware that for many residents, travelling by public transport is not even presently considered. I want to help to change this view by promoting schemes that will offer residents a reason to board public transport”.

2. Question to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Property from Councillor K. Etheridge.

To ask the Cabinet Member to explain and define the exploratory talks he and the Caerphilly Member of the Senedd have had with the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board including the content in regard to a potential transport routes from all areas within the Caerphilly County Borough locations to the Grange Hospital, as correspondence I have received refers to Caerphilly only?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Property.

Thank you, Cllr Etheridge for your question. I can confirm that in my role as Cabinet member for Infrastructure I have been engaged in constructive talks with the Aneurin Bevan Health Board, Transport for Wales, Operators, Officers and the Senedd Member for Caerphilly, who approached me in my cabinet capacity to discuss potential bus services to the Grange University Hospital. These talks are still at a preliminary stage, but Transport for Wales have supplied me and all parties around the table an indicative map they're considering. Whilst discussions are still at any early stage, I can confirm that a potential cross valley route to travel through Nelson, Ystrad Mynach, Blackwood, Pontllanfraith, Newbridge and Crumlin are being considered. I am in discussions with all parties about the potential new service reducing travelling times for passengers boarding the service. I can inform members that today I have been in discussions with Transport for Wales regarding current bus services. For members attention I can confirm the number 29 Newport bus runs from Friars Walk in Newport to the Grange University Hospital. The estimated journey time is 26 minutes. Notable bus services from within Caerphilly Borough to Newport include the number 50, 56, and 151. The current situation is not something that I'm content with, so In order to advance talks further, more meetings are in the pipeline.

I recognise that public transport to the Grange University Hospital is an issue that some members have also raised in the press and have actively supported. As is usually the case with any proposed changes, many discussions take place prior to announcements being made. It is my job as Cabinet Member for Infrastructure to work to ensure all avenues are pursued, so I will keep members updated.

10. NOTICE OF MOTION – REVIEW OF COUNCIL CONSTITUTION AND MEMBER PROTOCOL

Consideration was given to the Notice of Motion which was received from Councillor K. Etheridge and was supported by Councillors D. Cushing, N. Dix, A. Farina-Childs, C. Mann, B. Owen, G. Simmonds, T. Parry, J. Taylor and L. Whittle. It was noted that the Notice of Motion had been considered by the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 28th September 2021 and was not supported.

Councillor Etheridge outlined his Notice of Motion which called on Council to review the Councils Constitution and Members Protocol with an emphasis on the procedure of delegated powers within the Authority on major decisions made, which may have implications for all elected members during their term of office, with the remit of looking at engagement and consultation with respective ward Members prior to implementation and called for the establishment of an all-party working group to be set up and report recommendations with the implementation taking place prior to the May 2022 elections of changes which are required.

Particular reference was made to the Call-In Process and whether some form of appeal procedure could be implemented that Members could go to should a request be refused by the Monitoring Officer. Reference was also made to the Leader's Statements to Council which did not currently allow questions and queried if these could be shared with Group Leaders to encourage collaborative working.

Members expressed their confidence in the Council's constitution which had served the Council well for many years and which they accepted as a working document being updated as and when required in terms of changes to legislation, terms of reference, delegated powers or policy documents, with revisions reported to the Annual Meeting of Council. Members pointed out that there were numerous avenues available to Councillors to become involved in decision making processes be that via pre-decision scrutiny, forward work programming, addressing Cabinet and Scrutiny and via notices of motion and questions to Council.

A Member expressed concern that there were issues within certain areas, delegated powers and member officer protocol was felt to be two such areas, and the Member explained what he considered to be a lack of response to questions he had raised. Reference was made to Section 10.5 of the Officer's report and the work being done by the All Wales Monitoring Officers Network on a draft standardised constitution to be adopted by all Local Authorities and it was felt that a standardised constitution would be a positive step forward.

A Member emphasised the need for the constitution to be an evolving document moved on with proper process in an open and transparent manner.

Members debated constitutional processes and procedures and the various opportunities available to Members to bring forward constructive arguments and opposing positions.

The Monitoring Officer detailed the call-in process and reiterated the grounds, as contained within the constitution, for the consideration of a call-in request and confirmed with Members that judging the validity of a call-in was the responsibility of the Monitoring Officer. Where a call-in request had been refused in the past it was primarily because pre-decision scrutiny had already taken place.

In terms of the draft standardised constitution, the Monitoring Officer confirmed that work was ongoing, but the document should be able to be brought forward for consideration at the end of this Council term. Members were asked to note that there would be some regional variations but were assured that it would incorporate all the new provisions contained within the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

Following consideration and discussion it was moved and seconded that the notice of motion be supported and by way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation and in noting that there were 16 For, 36 Against and 2 Abstentions the motion was declared lost.

RESOLVED that the motion not be supported.

11. NOTICE OF MOTION – NINE MILE POINT PLANNING DECISION

Consideration was given to the notice of motion received from Councillor K. Etheridge and supported by Councillors M. Davies, N. Dix, A. Farina-Childs, R. Gough, C. Mann, B. Owen, T. Parry and G. Simmonds.

Members noted that the notice of motion had first been considered by the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee on the 26th October 2021 and was not supported.

Councillor Etheridge introduced his notice of motion which requested that Council undertake a full investigation into the Hazrem planning decision.

This investigation should include within its remit any advice given by Planning Officers and advice given on the procedures and policy prior to and during the Planning Committee meeting when the application was originally considered, and any subsequent advice given to Hywel and Hazrem on conditions. Any relevant information provided to Planning Committee Members prior to the decision (including views of objectors and agents). We request that the investigation also consider any discussions or information provided prior and after the submission of the Judicial Review and during if information requested by residents.

This investigation should also detail any potential costs incurred as a result of the legal proceedings and provide a full account of the case law and finding of the advice given by the Monitoring Officer and outside counsel in regard to all matters especially the decision that no Environment Impact Assessment was required and to the oral hearings of Judicial Review. This will include information given to the Leader / Cabinet and the Corporate Management Team, and why members and residents were refused discussion and communication to achieve a compromise prior to a judicial review submitted by a Dr Platt.

Councillor Etheridge emphasised his view that a full public enquiry was only right and proper on this matter which he felt, warranted more than an investigation under the Corporate Complaints process. Councillor Etheridge also referenced Freedom of Information requests that he had made in relation to the minutes of certain meetings.

Members were advised that a comprehensive review had taken place under the Corporate Complaints process and this had subsequently been referred to the Ombudsman. Members believed this next stage in the process should be completed before consideration was given to any further action.

Members of the Planning Committee that considered the original application and were present for this matter, requested clarification as to whether there was a conflict of interest that they needed to declare, particularly as they were the decision makers at the time and asked if would it be appropriate for them to take part in the debate and vote. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that there was nothing that would negate nor stop their participation, as this was not a matter of a closed mind and furthermore, they could add value to the debate.

A Member outlined his comments to scrutiny, as he had been part of the Planning Committee that had considered the application in 2015. He expressed agreement with the comments made by previous Members that Council should await the findings of the Ombudsman the matter having rightly been through the Corporate Complaints process.

Members debated whether the Corporate Complaints process could be viewed as independent when it is conducted and governed by internal processes and Officers. A Member expressed the opinion that an internal investigation could not be viewed as independent and the public needed to have confidence that when mistakes are made this Council would acknowledge them, apologise and learn from them and the most open and transparent way to do this would be through a full public enquiry and external investigation.

Members further debated the veracity and motivation for the notice of motion and a plea was made for all Members to treat each other with respect. Members were reminded that the Ombudsman was an independent body and the matter now rested with the Ombudsman's Office, assurances were given that should the outcome of that investigation identify any failings they would be looked at.

Having been fully considered it was moved and seconded that the motion be supported.

In accordance with Rule of Procedure 15.4 (1) a request was made for a recorded vote and was supported by 10 Members.

For the Motion

Councillors: C. Bishop, M. Davies, N. Dix, C. Elsbury, K. Etheridge, A. Farina-Childs, J.E. Fussell, R. Gough, M. James, P. Leonard, C. Mann, B. Owen, T. Parry, J. Roberts, G. Simmonds, S. Skiven, L. Whittle (17).

Against the Motion

Councillors: M. Adams, E.M. Aldworth, C. Andrews, C. Bezzina, A. Collis, S. Cook, C. Cuss, W. David, D.T. Davies, M. Evans, A. Gair, J. Gale, N. George, C. Gordon, D. Hardacre, L. Harding, D Havard, A. Higgs, A. Hussey, V. James, L. Jeremiah, G. Johnston, G. Kirby, P. Marsden, B. Miles, S. Morgan, L. Phipps, D.W.R. Preece, J. Pritchard, R. Saralis, E. Stenner, A. Whitcombe, R. Whiting, T. Williams, W. Williams, B. Zaplatynski (36)

The motion was declared lost.

RESOLVED that the motion not be supported.

12. NOTICE OF MOTION – DAY CENTRES

Consideration was given to the notice of motion received from Councillor C. Mann and supported by Councillors A. Angel, P. Bevan, C. Bishop, D. Cushing, M. Davies, J.E. Fussell, R.W. Gough, S. Kent, M. James, T. Parry, J. Roberts, M.E. Sargent, S. Skivens, J. Taylor and L. Whittle. The motion proposed that in view of significant public concern about suggested changes to the council's day care services, the Plaid Cymru group calls on the council to return to providing a full service of hours at day centres, pending an extensive review. We also call on CCBC not to withdraw previous transport arrangements for service users.

The proposals, as they stand, have caused immense distress and anxiety for carers and some of the most vulnerable members of our society which is having a detrimental effect on their Mental Health and Wellbeing.

We are concerned that the existing consultation exercise has not gone out to all Carers and those vulnerable individuals they care for. A better system of communication with service users and families is badly needed so that they are a proper part of the decision-making process.

In the meantime, there should be a moratorium on any changes taking place for at least 12 months with a final decision on any changes being considered by the full council.

Councillor Mann presented his notice of motion and confirmed that he had amended the wording to the second paragraph since its presentation to the Social Services Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 1st November 2021.

The Member referred to concerns expressed to him on the pressures faced by families and carers in respect of the revised service provision which he felt were not proportionate leaving carers unable to cope. The Member queried whether a reasonable compromise could be reached that would bring a move back to a restoration of hours.

Concerns were expressed that given the current infection rates that any increase in hours would put vulnerable service users at high risk and the Council would also be placed in the position of breaking Welsh Government regulations and its own risk assessments.

Members noted the regulations that applied within a social care setting and how the maintenance of social distancing regulations restricted the number of service users that could be safely accommodated in a room. It was noted that provision was prioritised, and assurances were given that no day centres would be closed, however Welsh Government guidance would be followed, and Members were advised that social services were currently providing 1577 hours of day services.

Reference was made to the debate at Social Services Scrutiny Committee and the concerns expressed by the Co-opted Members to the committee with regarding any increase in numbers that would be service users at risk of infection, and Council was advised that they had not supported the motion.

Councillor Mann confirmed that he would not advocate any breaking of COVID regulations but sought a realistic return to full occupancy for the benefit of service users, carers and families. Reference was made to the initial wording of the motion and concern was expressed that the language used might have been upsetting for those working in a social service setting. This was acknowledged by the Member and regret was expressed in this regard.

The Acting Chief Executive thanked the Member for the change in wording of the motion and outlined the tremendous work being done by Social Services staff. He confirmed that there were specific regulations that related to Health Care provision, and these were dramatically different to those that governed hospitality and sporting events. He emphasised that day service users were extremely vulnerable individuals, and he would not put a single service user at risk of infection and with infection rates increasing, service provision would continue to be provided in line with risk assessments and statutory regulations.

A Members referenced the greater level provision being provided by other Local Authorities and queried if hours of provision could be increased by even the smallest amount to ease the burden on families, without increasing risk.

A Member referenced her personal experience of COVID as a nurse on a COVID ward and the impact of the virus on vulnerable people and emphasised the continued need to be vigilant against infection.

Clarification was sought on the liability position of the Council should it break COVID regulations and the Acting Chief Executive confirmed that should the Council go against regulations and its own risk assessment it would be liable for any injury or death. Members were advised that as it was his statutory responsibility to ensure the safety of the Councils service users, he would not allow any person to be put at risk. In response to the Members question on increasing provision he confirmed that 1570 hours were currently being provided and these hours would be increased as quickly and as safely as possible. The

Officer reminded Members that the virus had and continues to have an impact on staff, both through illness and isolation requirements which would in turn impact on service delivery levels. In terms of provision levels at other authorities it was noted that 21 of the 22 were offering similar levels to Caerphilly with 1 Council not opening any centres at all.

Members expressed their thanks to all NHS Staff and to Councillor Andrews for her and her colleague's efforts. Councillor Andrews confirmed that she would pass these on to her colleagues.

In terms of the consultation, the Acting Chief Executive confirmed that this would be reviewed, revised and would be conducted in conjunction with People First.

A Member acknowledged that there were huge issues facing social services, families and service users and there would be no easy solution and clarification was sought as to what support was being provided to carers. The Acting Chief Executive advised that the Unpaid Carers Team were identifying and accessing carers and this data would be used to try and rectify any issues and help in any way possible.

Councillor Mann as proposer voiced his thanks and appreciation for those providing front line services and in conclusion asked Members to recognise the impact on families and carers and support the motion.

Having been fully considered it was moved and seconded that the motion be supported, by way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation and in noting there were 11 For, 35 Against and 1 Abstention the motion was declared lost.

RESOLVED that the notice of motion not be supported.

13. NOTICE OF MOTION – LOCAL ENERGY BUSINESS CAMPAIGN

Consideration was given to the Notice of Motion presented by Councillor C. Mann and jointly supported by the Leader of Council and Leader of the Independents Group and also supported by Councillors P. Bevan, S. Cook, C. Gordon, N. George, L. Phipps, E. Stenner, R. Whiting, A. Whitcombe, J. Roberts, M. Adams, C. Andrews, D.T. Davies, J. Taylor, W. Williams, C. Elsbury, G. Johnston, P. Leonard, E. Forehead, R. Gough, T. Parry, C. Thomas and G. Kirby.

The motion sought Council approval to recognise the very large financial setup and running costs involved in selling locally generated renewable electricity to local customers resulting in it being impossible for local renewable electricity generators to do so, that making these financial costs proportionate to the scale of a renewable electricity supplier's operation would create significant opportunities for local companies, community groups and councils to be providers of locally generated renewable electricity directly to local people, businesses and organisations, if they wished, and that revenues received by such local companies, community groups or councils that chose to become local renewable electricity providers could be used to help improve the local economy, local services and facilities and to reduce local greenhouse gas emissions.

The motion further asked Council to Note that the Parliamentary Environmental Audit Committee, as a result of its 2021 Technological Innovations and Climate Change inquiry, recommended that a Right to Local Supply for local energy suppliers be established to address this.

That Council is accordingly asked to resolve to support the Local Electricity Bill, currently supported by a cross-party group of 264 MPs and which, if made law, would establish a Right to Local Supply which would promote local renewable electricity supply by making the setup and running costs of selling renewable electricity to local customers proportionate to the size of the supply company; and inform the local media of this decision, write to local MPs, asking them to support the Bill, and write to the organisers of the campaign for the Bill, Power for People, (at Camden Collective, 5-7 Buck Street, London NW1 8NJ or info@powerforpeople.org.uk) expressing its support.

Councillor J. Pritchard confirmed that he had supported the notice of motion formally although his name had not been recorded on the motion. Councillor B. Owen also advised Council that he would have formally supported the motion but had been on holiday when it had been circulated, both Members requested that their support for the motion be recorded.

Councillor Mann introduced the motion and detailed the reasons for its proposal, he thanked the Mayor for allowing the motion to be dealt with, without being first discussed at Scrutiny.

Members expressed their full support for the motion and acknowledged the headway the Council was already making in terms of green energy production projects. Members emphasised the importance of carrying communities with us in terms of green initiatives and how they integrated with planning and place shaping proposals. The importance of bringing in stakeholders from the private sector was commented on and Members welcomed and were reassured by the comments on partnership and community involvement.

Having been fully considered it was moved and seconded that the motion be supported, by way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the notice of motion be supported.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

14. PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES ANNUAL LETTER 2020/21

Consideration was given to the report which sought to inform Council of the publication of the Annual Letter for 2020/21 in respect of Caerphilly Council by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

Members noted that the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales issues an Annual Letter to each Local Authority in Wales which sets out a summary of all complaints received and investigated by his office during 2020/21. Members were referred to Appendix 1 of this report which detailed the letter in respect of Caerphilly County Borough Council.

Following consideration and discussion it was moved and seconded the report and the content of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual Letter be noted.

RESOLVED that the content of the Annual Letter be noted.

15. MEMBERSHIP AND CHAIRING ARRANGEMENTS OF THE GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE TO TAKE EFFECT FROM MAY 2022

Consideration was given to the report which asked Council to determine the size and composition of the Governance and Audit Committee to meet the requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. Council was also asked to note that in accordance with the Act, the Chair of the Committee must be a lay member and that both changes would be implemented following the elections in May 2022 and the Council's Constitution would be updated accordingly at this time.

Members noted the recruitment process for the appointment of the lay members and the proposal for a panel consisting of three members of the Governance and Audit Committee, who would make the appointments without a requirement to seek subsequent approval at meetings of the Governance and Audit Committee and Council.

Following consideration and discussion it was moved and seconded that the recommendations contained within the Officer's report be approved and by way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation and in noting there were 40 For and 1 abstention this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that: -

1. Following the elections in May 2022 the revised composition and size of the Governance and Audit Committee will be 12, comprising 8 Elected Members and 4 Co-opted Lay Members (currently 13 with 1 lay member and 12 elected members).
2. The Governance and Audit Committee Chair will be one of the Co-opted Lay Members.
3. A Panel of the Governance and Audit Committee comprising of 3 Members will undertake the entire recruitment process of the lay members including shortlisting, interviewing and appointment (with support from relevant Officers) be agreed.

16. PURCHASE OF LAND AT GROVESIDE ROAD, OAKDALE, BLACKWOOD FOR ALTERNATIVE ALLOTMENT PROVISION

Consideration was given to the report which had been considered as an urgent item by Cabinet on the 27th October 2021.

The constitution requires that any decision taken as a matter of urgency must be reported to the next available meeting of Council, giving the reason for its urgency. There the report was presented to Council for Members' information.

Members noted the reasons for the urgency and the decision taken by Cabinet

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 19.40 p.m.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 26th January 2022 they were signed by the Mayor.

MAYOR