



CABINET

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON TUESDAY, 4TH SEPTEMBER 2012 AT 2.00 PM

PRESENT:

Councillor H.A. Andrews - Chairman

Councillors:

D.T. Hardacre (Performance and Asset Management), K. James (Regeneration, Planning and Sustainable Development), G. Jones (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing), R. Passmore (Education and Lifelong Learning), D.V. Poole (Community and Leisure Services), K.V. Reynolds (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services), T.J. Williams (Highways, Transportation and Engineering), R. Woodyatt (Social Services).

Together with:

A. O'Sullivan (Chief Executive), N. Barnett (Deputy Chief Executive), A. Heaney (Corporate Director Social Services).

Also present:

S. Couzens (Head of Housing), R. Hartshorn (Head of Public Protection), C. Jones (Head of Performance and Property), G. Hardacre (Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development), L. Allen (Group Accountant, Housing), S.M. Kauczok (Committee Services Officer).

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Mrs C. Forehead, Cabinet Member for HR and Governance/Business Manager and Mrs S. Aspinall, Corporate Director Education and Lifelong Learning.

34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

35. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 31st July 2012 (minute nos. 24-33; page nos. 12-15) be approved and signed as a correct record.

MATTERS ON WHICH EXECUTIVE DECISIONS WERE REQUIRED**36. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUDGET PROPOSALS 2012/2013**

The report had been considered and endorsed by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 31st July 2012.

The preparation of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget is quite separate to the work involved in setting the General Fund Budget and Council Tax. The HRA is a ring fenced account and as a result needs to generate income, which covers the expenditure costs needed to provide an effective and efficient housing service.

The majority of the income generated is in the form of rent charged to Council tenants. Increases in rent are dictated by the Welsh Government annually and the 2012/13 increase is 4%. Appendix 1 to the report sets out the proposed HRA estimates for 2012/13.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the officer's report, the report and the proposals contained therein, be approved.

37. FORMER NELSON BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB

The report sought approval to amend a decision taken by Cabinet on 2nd August 2011 to develop the site of the former Nelson Boys and Girls Club and to issue a letter of intent to lease the site for 25 years to the Nelson Development Trust, subject to appropriate conditions.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the officer's report:-

1. Cabinet agreed to the provision of a letter of intent to lease the site of the former Nelson Boys and Girls Club to the Nelson Development Trust for a minimum period of 25 years, subject to the terms of the lease making the Trust responsible for all repairs and maintenance of the existing building. The letter of intent to be issued as soon as practicable following the Cabinet decision on the recommendations within the report.
2. Subject to the above the following conditions be attached to the letter of intent.
 - The Trust be able to demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the council, that it has sufficient funding to restore the building to a condition suitable for its planned use, with all statutory H & S certificates in place and fully DDA compliant. A progress update be presented to the appropriate Cabinet Member and Head of Service within a maximum of 24 months. The 24 month period to commence from the date of the letter of intent described in Recommendation 1.
 - The Trust demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the council, that its business projections are realistic and robust and the provision of a youth facility is sustainable. A progress update be presented to the appropriate Cabinet Member and Head of Service within a maximum of 24 months.
 - On the matter of reverting the lease to the Community Council should the Development Trust be wound up, it is recommended that this is not considered initially but it is given further consideration at the 24 month review period described above.
 - Should the Trust fail to satisfy the council following that period of 24 months, or are not prepared to consider alternative options for youth provision on the site, the former Boys & Girls Club building will be demolished and the site offered for development in accordance with the council's LDP.

38. FORMER WOOLWORTH BUILDING, BARGOED

The former Woolworth building at Bargoed was originally acquired with a HoV grant of £325k in March 2010 with the intention to convert to offices in order to 'kick start' the Business Quarter designated in the northern part of Bargoed Town Centre.

The original intention was to convert the building with EU grant, however, this didn't materialise and in January 2011 it was agreed to let the upper level to a retailer. The middle and lower floors with 600 square metres of useable space remain vacant. There has been a lack of private interest in such a development and this has encouraged officers to consider the role that the authority has, as the largest employer in the county borough, in utilising this potential office space by transferring existing services into the building.

It is estimated that some 50 members of staff and equipment could be accommodated within the space available and the presence of such numbers will inevitably contribute to the regeneration of the town centre and hopefully, stimulate future interest in the Business Quarter. To achieve this the middle and lower floors will need significant investment particularly in terms of IT and telecommunications.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the officer's report, a budget of £500k be allocated from Corporate Services Reserves for the creation of office space at the former Woolworth building, Bargoed.

39. AMENDMENTS TO AUTHORISATION OF OFFICERS WITHIN THE PUBLIC PROTECTION DIVISION

Officers within the Public Protection Division require additional authorisation under a number of Acts of Parliament in order to enforce the legislation and carry out their duties. The report outlined the required changes and sought the necessary authorisation.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the officer's report: -

1. The relevant changes to the constitution and terms of reference be endorsed.
2. The Council's Constitution and terms of reference be amended by adding the following:

House to House Collections Act 1939, Charities Acts 1992 and 2006, Powers of the Criminal Courts (Sentencing) Act 2000, Fireworks Act 2003, Intoxicating Substances (Supply) Act 1985, Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, Tattooing of Minors Act 1969 and The Sunbeds (Regulation) Act 2010 and the Local Government Act 2003.

40. REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S TIME OFF FOR RESERVISTS POLICY

The report was considered by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 31st July 2012. The Scrutiny Committee endorsed the revised Time Off for Reservists Policy.

The current Time Off for Reservists Policy has been in operation since 1997 and is now very out of date. The legislative requirements placed on employers have changed considerably along with the amount of time that reservists must spend at training camps. The policy has been reviewed in line with the most up to date legislation and this has now been translated into the policy to ensure that the Council is legally compliant and not treating any employees who are reservists in an unfair manner.

Whilst endorsing the revised policy, Members requested that consideration be given to how the Authority could support reservist employees who may experience Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and/or life changing injuries.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the officer's report:-

1. The revised Time Off for Reservists Policy be approved.
2. Consideration be given to how this Authority could support reservist employees who may experience Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and/or life changing injuries.

41. REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S MANAGING SICKNESS ABSENCE PROCEDURE

The report was considered by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 31st July 2012. The Scrutiny Committee endorsed the proposed amendments to the Managing Sickness Absence Procedure.

The new Managing Sickness Absence Procedure was introduced in April 2010 with a commitment that a review be undertaken after 12-18 months to establish how it was being used, how successful it was in supporting employees and managers in dealing with sickness absence issues and whether there were any issues or concerns with the Procedure.

The review has resulted in limited change to the Procedure overall and a renaming of the sanction process. The Procedure continues to make a significant impact in reducing sickness absence levels across the organisation.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the officer's report, the amendments to the Managing Sickness Absence Procedure be approved.

The meeting closed at 2.33 pm.

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any corrections made at the meeting held on 18th September 2012.

CHAIRMAN