



CABINET

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN, ON WEDNESDAY, 16TH APRIL 2014 AT 2.00 PM

PRESENT:

Councillor H.A. Andrews - Chairman

Councillors:

Mrs C. Forehead (HR and Governance/Business Manager), D.T. Hardacre (Performance and Asset Management), K. James (Regeneration, Planning and Sustainable Development), G. Jones (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing), Mrs 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).

Together with:

Mrs S. Aspinall (Acting Deputy Chief Executive), Mrs N. Scammell (Acting Director of Corporate Services and Section 151 Officer), Mr D. Street (Corporate Director Social Services).

Also in Attendance:

T.Shaw (Head of Engineering Services), D.A. Thomas (Senior Policy Officer (Equalities and Welsh Language), T. McMahon (Community Regeneration Manager), M.S. Williams (Head of Community and Leisure Services), G. Jenkins (Assistant Director Children's Services), S. Harris (Acting Head of Corporate Finance), S.M. Kauczok (Committee Services Officer).

333. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor R. Woodyatt (Cabinet Member for Social Services) and Mr S.A. Rosser, Interim Chief Executive.

334. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor D.T. Hardacre declared an interest during consideration of agenda item 4(8).

335. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the following meeting be approved and signed as a correct record: -

1. Cabinet held on 2nd April 2014 (minute nos. 322-332; page nos. 163-167).

MATTERS ON WHICH EXECUTIVE DECISIONS WERE REQUIRED**336. SPEED MANAGEMENT STRATEGY - EVALUATION AND REVIEW**

The report, which detailed the evaluation and review of the current adopted Speed Management Strategy, was presented to the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee on 1st April 2014.

The Speed Management Strategy was adopted in May 2009 with the main aim of making a positive contribution to casualty reduction and encouraging slower speeds. The Strategy has since been reviewed and evaluated and a number of changes have been recommended in order to incorporate current legislation and national guidance. The review has shown that the Speed Management Strategy remains largely fit for purpose. The main recommended change is to incorporate a 20mph advisory limit appraisal for routes on the classified network that have a main attractor of vulnerable road users i.e. schools.

Following consideration and discussion, the recommendations in the report were moved and seconded. By a show of hands they were unanimously approved.

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

1. The Speed Management Strategy be amended to include the new Road Safety Framework for Wales casualty reduction targets, reflect the change to the Wales Road Casualty Reduction Partnership name and current practice/liaison regarding road traffic matters with Gwent Police and other changes as a result of legislation and changes as detailed in Appendix C of the report.
2. The use of an advisory 20mph speed limit be included where a mandatory speed limit cannot be promoted.
3. Bidding continue for Safe Routes in Communities funding and Road Safety Grant and 20mph limits and zones be included in the form where they can be supported and satisfy the existing Speed Management Strategy criteria.
4. The Speed Management Strategy continue to be used as an efficient and effective approach to speed management on roads in the Caerphilly County Borough.
5. Other road safety concern sites for vulnerable people eg. playgrounds, be reviewed and assessed as part of the duties under the Active Travel (Wales) Act.

337. RENEWAL OF AUDIO VISUAL EQUIPMENT FOR THE COUNCIL CHAMBER

The report sought approval to purchase new audio visual equipment for the Council Chamber, Penallta House.

The Council Chamber, Penallta House is equipped with audio visual equipment which should enable sound amplification, electronic voting and presentation facilities. The system has proved to be unreliable for a number of years with numerous audio failures experienced. A tender exercise has been undertaken for a replacement audio visual system, the outcome of which is outlined in paragraph 4.5 of the report. The one off costs associated with the purchase can be funded from service reserves.

Following consideration and discussion, the recommendations in the report were moved and seconded. By a show of hands they were unanimously approved.

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

1. The purchase of a replacement audio visual system with electronic voting (option 2) be approved.
2. The purchase of the replacement equipment be funded from service reserves held by Democratic Services.

338. WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS INVESTIGATION

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 includes a commitment to set a common standard for Welsh Language service across public bodies, thus facilitating the public's understanding and access to those services. The related action plan will replace the Council's Welsh Language Scheme from July 2015 according to the current timetable.

During the period January to April 2014, in addition to the evidence being gathered, some members and officers expressed concerns about the potential impact some of the standards would have on the Council during times where cuts to services were having to be considered. These comments are set out in paragraph 8.2 of the report. The format of the investigation document does not lend itself to be able to reflect such concerns as it follows a set format based on current evidence. It had therefore been agreed that they would be reflected in the covering letter that would accompany the submission of evidence.

Following consideration and discussion, the recommendation in the report was moved and seconded. By a show of hands it was unanimously approved.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the officer's report, the submission of the evidence document to the Welsh Language Commissioner by the deadline date be approved along with a covering letter to be sent by the Chief Executive on behalf of the Authority.

339. WELSH GOVERNMENT TACKLING POVERTY SMALL GRANTS FUND

The report sought approval for the process to allocate and administer the Welsh Government's Tackling Poverty Small Grants Fund, which was developed by combining the Communities First Trust Fund (CFTF) and the Community Facilities and Activities Programme (CFAP). It is available to community groups/organisations that are working in or benefiting people from a Communities First Cluster.

An assessment panel will be convened to consider applications received for each funding round. The panel will assess applications and make recommendations with decisions made by the Head of Public Protection under delegated powers. Welsh Government has allocated an in principle amount of £40,000 per Communities First Cluster for the financial year 2014/15 although this has yet to be confirmed.

Following consideration and discussion, the recommendation in the report was moved and seconded. By a show of hands it was unanimously approved.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the officer's report, the suggested mechanism for the allocation, administration and management of the Welsh Government's Tackling Poverty Grant, be approved.

340. YSTRAD MYNACH SPORTS COMPLEX - ALLOCATION CRITERIA AND NAMING

A report was presented to Cabinet on 5th March 2014 seeking approval for the allocation of bookings at the Ystrad Mynach Sports Complex and for an official name for the facility. Whilst endorsing the proposed criteria for allocating bookings at the centre, Cabinet decided to defer a decision on naming it.

The previous report to Cabinet included 3 options that could be used for official signage and a further suggestion has since been made to include the wider area in the name thus reflecting the fact that the facility will have an impact across the whole of the County Borough.

Following consideration and discussion on the options set out in report it was moved and seconded that the official name for the centre be "Caerphilly County Borough Centre for Sporting Excellence" (Welsh translation "Canolfan Rhagoriaeth Chwaraeon Bwrdeistref Sirol Caerffili"). By a show of hands this was unanimously approved.

RESOLVED that for the reasons set out in the officer's report, the official name for the facility be "Caerphilly County Borough Centre for Sporting Excellence" (Welsh translation "Canolfan Rhagoriaeth Chwaraeon Bwrdeistref Sirol Caerffili").

341. NATIONAL MODEL FOR REGIONAL WORKING ON SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

The report, which outlined the developments in relation to the new National Model for Regional Working on School Improvement, was presented to the Education for Life Scrutiny Committee on 8th April. Whilst endorsing the recommendation to note the report, the Scrutiny Committee expressed concerns in relation to the proposals for the governance arrangements and joint committee membership.

The development of the national model is a shared endeavour between schools, local authorities, regional consortia and Welsh Government. It recognises the important role each tier has to play in improving outcomes for children and young people. It is based on a vision of regional school improvement consortia working on behalf of local authorities to lead, orchestrate and co-ordinate the improvement in the performance of schools and in the education of young people. The local authority will have a responsibility to work with the regional consortium whilst retaining its statutory accountability for school performance and the power to intervene if it is felt that a school has issues which if left on its own, it would not be able to resolve.

Following consideration and discussion, the recommendation in the report was moved and seconded. By a show of hands it was unanimously approved.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the officer's report, the National Model for Regional Working on School Improvement be endorsed.

342. FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE FOR SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP ORDERS

The report, which provides details of a revised financial assessment procedure for determining financial support payable by Caerphilly CBC to carers of children under Special Guardianship Orders and Residence Orders, was presented to the Health Social Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee on 25th March 2014.

There are currently separate financial assessment procedures for Special Guardianship Orders and Residence Orders. These were introduced in 2006 and they have not been substantially reviewed since that time. The procedures have now been updated and combined into a single document taking account of best practice and guidance and external legal advice.

The most significant changes to the existing procedures relate to the annual uplifting of allowances payable, linkages to Caerphilly CBC foster rates and the treatment of disposable income where there are sibling groups included in the financial assessment. These changes result in increased costs for the Authority.

A number of other changes have been made to the revised procedure and the most significant of these are set out in paragraph 4.5.8 of the report. As a consequence of some of these changes, the assessed allowance payable for some existing carers will reduce. In these cases it is proposed that the level of allowance currently payable will be protected for the duration of the Order or until further financial assessments result in a higher allowance being payable or there is a significant change in financial circumstances.

The additional cost of the revised financial assessment procedure is £368k per annum and it was noted that this was affordable within existing placement budgets due to reduced commitments against residential and fostering budgets.

It is proposed that the revised financial assessments procedure will be effective from 1st April 2014. However, due to the number of Orders in place, it will not be possible to immediately re-assess every family. It is proposed therefore that a re-assessment will be undertaken at the normal anniversary date for each family but the outcomes from those assessments will be backdated to 1st April 2014.

Following consideration and discussion, the recommendations in the report were moved and seconded. By a show of hands they were unanimously approved.

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

1. The revised financial assessment procedure attached at Appendix 1 to the report be endorsed.
2. Payments to those carers whose allowances will reduce as a consequence of the revised financial assessment procedure will be protected at current levels for the duration of the Order, or until future financial assessments result in a higher allowance being payable or there is a significant change in financial circumstances.
3. Re-assessments be undertaken at the normal anniversary date for each family but the outcomes from those assessments be backdated to 1st April 2014.

343. ADULT SERVICES MINI BUS FLEET

Councillor D.T. Hardacre declared an interest in this item and took no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

The report which provides information on the fleet of specially adapted minibuses providing transport for adult social care service users and updates Members on the proposals to replace 4 of the vehicles, was presented to the Health Social Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee on 25th March 2014.

The responsibility and budget for the operation of the minibus fleet for Adult Care transferred to the Integrated Transport Unit (ITU) from Social Services in April 2011, as part of the centralisation of passenger transport provision for education, social services and public transport. Since that time reports and business cases have been presented to the Corporate Management Team identifying the financial and operational issues associated with an aging fleet and proposing a replacement strategy based on contract hire. In the current financial climate it is recognised that resources are scarce and CMT has supported proposals to replace 4 of the minibuses on a contract hire basis subject to funding being identified and to Cabinet approval.

The Authority has recently taken advantage of an opportunity to purchase a low mileage two year old minibus to the specification required at a cost of £46k and this has been funded from underspends in the 2013/14 Social Services revenue budget. It is now proposed that 3 new vehicles will be purchased in the 2014/15 financial year at a total cost of approximately £201k, funded from Social Services service reserves.

Following consideration and discussion, the recommendations in the report were moved and seconded. By a show of hands they were unanimously approved.

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

1. The purchase of a second hand vehicle from 2013/14 Social Services revenue budget underspends be noted.
2. The proposal in paragraph 4.6 of the report to utilise £201k from Social Services reserves to purchase 3 new vehicles, be endorsed.

344. DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOUTH EAST WALES ADOPTION SERVICE

The report was presented to the Health Social Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee on 11th February 2014. The views of the Scrutiny Committee were reported to Cabinet.

The report provides an update on the development of the regional South East Wales Adoption Service, which is a key policy strand for the Welsh Government and is referenced within the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Bill currently proceeding through Parliament. The establishment of the South East Wales Adoption Service will effectively join the three existing Adoption Services covering the five local authorities into one new service managed by Blaenau Gwent. Given the size of the region and the volume of work, it is intended to operate two Adoption Panels, Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen and Monmouthshire already have a joint panel so a new panel will be established to support Caerphilly and Newport.

The cost of the new service is £1,372,851. Based on an agreed funding formula Caerphilly CBC's contribution will be £324,969, which includes the additional accommodation costs. Decisions regarding secondment of staff or TUPE transfer of staff will form part of the formal consultation process with all staff affected.

Following consideration and discussion, the recommendations in the report were moved and seconded. By a show of hands they were unanimously approved.

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

1. Cabinet endorsed and supported the progress made to date.
2. Authority be given to proceed with the operational delivery of the regional Adoption Service.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

345. NEXT STAGES OF MTFP - 2015/16 AND 2016/17

As part of the agreed budget strategy for 2015/16 and 2016/17 estimated savings of £13.4m will be required through a review of discretionary services and the delivery of further efficiency savings. The report sets out the proposed next steps to deliver the strategy focussing in particular on the scrutiny process to ensure that savings proposals are given full and proper consideration prior to firm recommendations being made to Cabinet and Council.

The Budget report presented to Council on 26th February 2014 included an initial list of discretionary services to be reviewed. It was noted that two further amendments had since been made to this list i.e. the addition of 'Urban Renewal' and the 'Review of Community Safety' to read 'Review of Community Safety Wardens'. The updated list will be presented to Council on 22nd April 2014 together with details of a series of special scrutiny committees. Prior to the start of the series of special scrutiny committees a seminar in respect of the MTFP will be held for all Members on 19th May 2014.

The series of special meetings will conclude around the time that the Welsh Government 2015/16 Provisional Local Government Settlement will be announced. This will clarify the savings required for 2015/16 and will hopefully provide firm indicative settlement figures for 2016/17 and 2017/18 to aid financial planning.

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

1. The updated list of discretionary services be noted.
2. A series of special scrutiny committees, as set out in paragraph 4.4 of the report, be held to consider detailed reports on specific savings proposals.

The meeting closed at 15.08 hrs.

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any corrections made at the meeting held on 30th April 2014.

CHAIRMAN