



CABINET

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN, ON WEDNESDAY, 18TH JUNE 2014 AT 2.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor K.V. Reynolds - Chair

Cabinet members:

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

Together with:-

S.A. Rosser (Interim Chief Executive), S. Aspinall (Acting Deputy Chief Executive), N. Scammell (Acting Director of Corporate Services and Section 151 Officer), J. Williams (Assistant Director)

Also in Attendance:

Sarah-Jane Byrne (PricewaterhouseCoopers), C. Jones (Head of Performance and Property), M. Lloyd (Highways Operations Group Manager), M. Williams (Head of Community and Leisure Services), H. Morgan (Senior Committee Services Officer)

1. WELCOME

The Chair welcomed Sarah-Jane Byrne (PricewaterhouseCoopers) to the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from D. Street (Corporate Director Social Services).

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Several Members sought advice as to whether they were required to declare an interest on the report to be presented on Capita Gwent Consultancy Ltd - Closing Valuation (agenda item 5(1)) as they were in receipt of a Local Government Pension. They were advised that given the nature of the Report they were not required to declare a prejudicial interest.

4. MINUTES - 4TH JUNE 2014

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 4th June 2014 be approved and signed as a correct record.

MATTERS ON WHICH AN EXECUTIVE DECISION WAS REQUIRED

5. CCBC PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT FEEDBACK

Sarah-Jane Byrne gave a slide presentation on the audit of the assessment of performance for 2012-13 (the findings of which will be summarised in the Annual Improvement Report 2014). She advised of the self-evaluation arrangements and the processes of assessing planning improvement, managing performance, assessing performance and reporting performance.

It was accepted that the assessment of performance is for 2012-13 and noted that much of the information provided has already been presented and considered in conjunction with the Annual Governance Statement 2013/14, as part of the Corporate Governance Review and progressed through the Improving Governance Programme. As such, the findings in each of the four areas have previously been debated and the proposed areas of improvement have been addressed, although it was acknowledged that there are still improvements that could be made.

During the course of the presentation, slides were produced which gave an analysis of performance against both National and Welsh strategic indicators and public accountability measures and identified the percentage change in the values compared with the previous year, and the ranking of each.

A query was raised in relation of sources that are available to assist in improving quality and Sarah-Jane Byrne referred to the quality assurance arrangements that are already in place and how they can be taken forward. She referred to the key areas of the findings and, in view of that measures that have been put in place since the review, recognised the amount of work that has been undertaken to taken forward the areas for improvement, particularly in the area of data gathering and the self assessment process (further details of other authority processes would be provided to the Head of Performance and Property).

Members noted the position and reference was made to the later report on improving governance that evidenced the improvements and the council's positive response to previous audit concerns.

In noting the information provided and the progress made on the findings and areas for improvement, Sarah-Jane was thanked for her informative presentation and for responding to questions and issues raised by Members during the course of the debate.

6. NON-RESIDENTS BURIAL FEES

The report, which was considered by the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee on 20th May 2014, had sought Members' views on the proposal to cease the current policy of charging double fees for non-residents of the County Borough who wish to be interred in one of its ten municipal cemeteries. The proposal to cease the policy will protect the Authority from potential legal challenges.

Following consideration of the report the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee recommended to Cabinet that it should be agreed to cease the policy of charging double fees for non-residents who wish to be interred in one of the ten municipal cemeteries, if they have not been resident in the County Borough for more than one year prior to death.

Members were advised that at the moment, the Head of Community and Leisure Services has discretion to waive the charge and an increasing number of applications are being received. It was also noted that the proposals to cease the policy protects the Authority from potential legal challenges in the grounds of discrimination.

Following discussion on the content of the report, the recommendation from the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee was moved and seconded. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officer's report it be agreed to cease the policy of charging double fees for non-residents who wish to be interred in one of the ten municipal cemeteries, if they have not been resident in the County Borough for more than one year prior to death.

7. LOCAL GOVERNMENT BORROWING INITIATIVE BID FOR 2014/15 - UPDATE (HIGHWAY WORKS)

The report, which was considered by the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee on 20th May 2014, had sought Members' views on the Local Government Borrowing Initiative 2014/15 bid proposals prior to presentation to Cabinet. It detailed the proposed funding allocations for works to be undertaken during 2014/15 and advised that savings have been achieved over the previous two years and additional allocations have been proposed for carriageway and footway resurfacing along with street lighting. As previously reported to Scrutiny, Cabinet and Council, Welsh Government's Local Borrowing Initiative would provide the funding for the identified works.

It was reported that as this is the final year of LGBI there is a requirement by Welsh Government that the full allocation of funds is spent before the end of March 2015. In order to facilitate any further efficiency savings it is proposed that any underspend is allocated to carriageway and/or footway resurfacing.

The recommendations from the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee were moved and seconded. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

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

- (i) the bid proposal and works identified in appendices 1 and 3 of the report be approved;
- (ii) a final list of any additional carriageway and/or footway resurfacing schemes from highways prioritised lists be determined by the Head of Engineering Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation, in order to maximise the available funding should any savings be achieved.

8. IMPROVING GOVERNANCE PROGRAMME UPDATE

The report informed Cabinet of progress made against the action plan resulting from the WAO Public Interest Report on Chief Officers Pay published in March 2013, along with the wider Improving Governance Programme, including the action plans resulting from the WAO Public Interest Report on Chief Officers Essential Car Users and Annual Leave Allowance published in December 2013 and the Special Inspection Report published in January 2014.

Members were advised that the majority of the actions resulting from the recommendations included in the original Public Interest Report have been completed. There are five outstanding (of the original thirty seven) but they are approaching completion. Significant

progress has also been achieved in the additional areas of improvement identified by the Authority and included in the wider Improving Governance Programme.

It was noted that the next report is scheduled to be presented in October and it is anticipated that those outstanding will be completed by that time. An assurance was sought that monitoring will continue to be undertaken once all of the recommendations have been completed. Members were advised that procedures would be put in place to ensure that monitoring will continue as part of the corporate governance programme. It will also be monitored externally through the Annual Governance and Financial Statements.

It was agreed that details of how this will be achieved would form part of the report to be presented in October.

Subject to the foregoing, 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, Cabinet noted progress against the WAO Public Interest Report Action Plan and the wider Improving Governance Plan determined in April 2013, along with the action plans recently incorporated in the programme, resulting from the recommendations included in the WAO Public Interest Report on Chief Officers Essential Car User and Annual Leave Allowances (December 2013) and the Special Inspection Report (January 2014).

EXEMPT MATTER

Members considered the public interest test certificate from the Proper Officer and concluded that on balance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and it was:-

RESOLVED that in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting because of the likely disclosure to them of exempt information as identified in paragraphs 14 and 16 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

9. CAPITA GWENT CONSULTANCY LTD - CLOSING VALUATION

Consideration was given to the report which detailed the outstanding pension liability to the Greater Gwent (Torfaen) Pension Fund following the termination of the Gwent Consultancy framework agreement and sought a course of action which would be consistent with each of the Councils who participated within the Gwent Consultancy.

Following consideration of the report, the recommendations therein were moved and seconded. By a show of hands they was unanimously agreed.

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

- (i) the approach taken by the Pension Fund to seek recovery and the current position be noted;
- (ii) the likely outcome as the best achievable within the circumstances be noted;
- (iii) it be noted that a consistent approach is to be followed by each of the Councils who participated within the Gwent consultancy towards this issue;
- (iv) the approach of a negotiated settlement with Capita Gwent Consultancy within the parameters set out in Appendix 1 to the report be endorsed.

The meeting closed at 2.45 p.m.

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any corrections made at the meeting held on 2nd July 2014.

CHAIR