



## **COUNCIL**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON TUESDAY, 29TH JANUARY 2013 AT 5.00 P.M.**

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**PRESENT:**

Councillor Mrs. G.D. Oliver - Mayor  
Councillor D.M. Gray - Deputy Mayor

**Councillors:**

Miss. L. Ackerman, M. Adams, Mrs. E.M. Aldworth, H.A. Andrews, A.P. Angel, Mrs. K.R. Baker, J. Bevan, P.J. Bevan, Mrs. A. Blackman, Mrs. A. Collins, C.J. Cuss, H.W. David, H.R. Davies, D.T. Davies, R.T. Davies, K. Dawson, C. Durham, C. Elsbury, Mrs. C. Forehead, Mrs. J. Gale, L. Gardiner, N. George, C.J. Gordon, R.W. Gough, D.T. Hardacre, D. Havard, C. Hawker, A.G. Higgs, K. James, M.P. James, Mrs. B.A. Jones, G. Jones, S. Kent, G. Kirby, A. Lewis, K. Lloyd, C.P. Mann, S. Morgan, Mrs. R. Passmore, D.V. Poole, D.W.R. Preece, M.J. Prew, Mrs. D. Price, J. Pritchard, K.V. Reynolds, J.E. Roberts, Mrs. M.E. Sargent, Mrs. E. Stenner, Mrs J. Summers, L.G. Whittle, T.J. Williams, R. Woodyatt

**Together with:-**

A. O'Sullivan (Chief Executive), N. Barnett (Deputy Chief Executive), S. Aspinall (Corporate Director - Education and Lifelong Learning), A. Heaney (Corporate Director - Social Services), D. Perkins (Head of Legal and Governance), G. Williams (Principal Solicitor), G. Hardacre (Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development), N. Scammell (Head of Corporate Finance), D.K. Regan (Lead Officer, Benefits and Finance WRA), R.J. Thomas (Committee Services Officer)

#### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs. G. Bevan, L. Binding, D. Bolter, D.G. Carter, Mrs. P. Cook, W. David, N. Dix, Mrs. D. Ellis, Ms E. E. Forehead, J.E. Fussell, Mrs. P. Griffiths, G.J. Hughes, G. Johnston, Ms. J.G. Jones, J.A. Pritchard, D. Rees, R. Saralis and J. Taylor.

#### **2. MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor referred to the many events and visits that she had undertaken since the last meeting and she thanked the Deputy Mayor for his support during this time. She highlighted that she had been invited to functions across the whole county borough and thanked everyone for their warm welcome. She then made specific reference to meeting the Agent General for Western Australia and of her poignant visit to the Holocaust Memorial in Cardiff.

The Mayor then welcomed comments from the Leader of Council, Councillor Harry Andrews. Councillor Andrews voiced his thanks for the hard work and achievements by officers and volunteers during the recent adverse weather conditions. This statement was supported by all Members.

### **3. PRESENTATION OF AWARDS - CWMCARN GYMNASTICS CLUB**

Members were advised that members of Cwmcarn Gymnastics Club, Olivia Hillman and sisters Allana and Keira Sparkes, were recently awarded their "Welsh Feathers" after being chosen to represent Wales in an international competition held in Zurich, Switzerland.

Olivia Hillman, Allana Sparkes and Keira Sparkes came forward and in recognition of their accomplishment, Members wished to place on record their appreciation for their hard work and dedication to the sport.

### **4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received at the commencement or during the course of the meeting.

### **5. COUNCIL - 20TH NOVEMBER 2012 AND 17TH JANUARY 2013**

RESOLVED that the following minutes be approved as correct records and signed by the Mayor:-

- (i) Council held on 20th November 2012 (minute nos. 1 - 14, on page nos. 1 - 7); and
- (ii) Special Council held on 17th January 2013 (minute nos. 1 - 6, on page nos. 1 - 5).

### **REPORT REFERRED FROM CABINET**

Consideration was given to the following report referred from Cabinet.

### **6. REVIEW OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

The report, which was considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 15th January 2013, gave Members feedback following the consultation process required to update the Authority's Financial Regulations. Three comments received as part of this consultation process were outlined within the report.

Following consideration of the report, and subject to an amendment to paragraph 21.02 (1), as set out below, Cabinet endorsed the Officer's recommendation that Council adopt the revised Financial Regulations attached at an appendix to the report:

"The precise scope *and timetable* of the commission (the relevant Director *and relevant Cabinet Member(s)* will also determine and document the employment status of individuals involved, having regard to Guidance issued from time to time by the Head of Corporate Finance)."

RESOLVED that subject to the proposed amendment to paragraph 21.02 (1), the revised Financial Regulations attached as an appendix to the report be adopted.

## REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

### 7. ADOPTION OF A COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME

Consideration was given to the report that detailed the UK Government's abolition of Council Tax Benefit and its replacement with the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, which must be adopted by 31st January 2013. It also explained the UK and Welsh Government's policy objectives, the key components of the scheme, the requirements placed upon the Council, the local discretionary options for consideration, the consultation outcomes and the funding implications.

Members were advised of the changes made by the Welsh Government, on 23rd January 2013, to increase the maximum entitlement from 90% to 100% of council tax liability and they were requested to approve a Council Tax Reduction Scheme to commence on 1st April 2013.

Members discussed the report and welcomed the agreement by the Welsh Government to fund the 10% funding shortfall.

RESOLVED that, for the reasons contained in the report:-

- (i) the making of the Council Tax Reduction Schemes and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2012 ('the Prescribed Requirements Regulations') by the National Assembly for Wales on 19th December 2012, as amended on the 23rd January 2013, be noted;
- (ii) the outcome of the consultation exercise undertaken by the Council on the introduction of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme be noted;
- (iii) subject to the local discretions that the Council is able to exercise as set out below, the provisions of 'the Prescribed Requirements Regulations', as amended by the 'the Prescribed Requirements Regulations (Amendment)', as the Council's Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2013/14 be adopted;
- (iv) taking into account the responses to the consultation exercise, together with existing arrangements, the following be approved as local discretions as provided for within Part 5 of 'the Prescribed Requirements Regulations';

| Discretion   | Recommended Discretion to be Adopted   |
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| The ability to increase the standard extended reduction period of 4 weeks given to persons who have ceased to receive qualifying benefits after they return to work, where they have previously been receiving a Council Tax reduction that is to end as a result of their return to work; | <p><u>Pensioners:</u><br/>The standard period of 4 weeks specified in paragraph (33) Schedule 1 will apply, and</p> <p><u>Non - Pensioners:</u><br/>The standard period of 4 weeks specified in paragraph (35) and (40) Schedule 6 will apply.</p> |

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| <p>The ability to backdate the application of Council Tax reduction for periods longer than the new standard period of 3 months before the claim is made;</p>  | <p><u>Pensioners:</u><br/>The standard period of 3 months specified in paragraph (3) Schedule 13 will apply, and</p> <p><u>Non - Pensioners:</u><br/>The standard period of 3 months specified in paragraph (4) Schedule 13 will apply.</p>                                       |
| <p>Discretion to disregard more than the statutory weekly amount of £10 of income received in respect of War Disablement Pensions and War Widow's Pensions (disregarded when calculating the income of the applicant);</p> | <p><u>Pensioners:</u><br/>The total value of any pension specified in paragraphs 1(a) and 1(b) Schedule 4 will be disregarded, and</p> <p><u>Non - Pensioners:</u><br/>The total value of any pension specified in paragraphs 20(a) and 20(b) Schedule 9 will be disregarded.</p> |
| <p>Discretion to provide more than the minimum information prescribed in the Prescribed Requirements Regulations when issuing notification of decisions of an award of Council Tax Reduction.</p>                          | <p>To supplement the minimum requirements specified in the Prescribed Requirements Regulations, where appropriate.</p>  |

## 8. PENSION AUTO ENROLMENT

Consideration was given to the report that advised Members of the key requirements and actions required regarding pension auto-enrolment and requested Members' direction on options presented.

Caerphilly County Borough Council's auto enrolment staging date is 1st April 2013, and will be phased in over the coming years with eligible employees automatically enrolled into a qualifying pension scheme without any active involvement from the employee. While the delivery of auto-enrolment is a statutory duty, as prescribed by the Pensions Act, a number of decisions from Council are required in order to move the project forward.

RESOLVED that, for the reasons contained in the report:-

- (i) the auto-enrolment for existing employees be postponed to October 2017. This is in the context of allowing current employees to opt into the pension scheme independently should they wish to. New starters will have to be auto-enrolled after April 2013;
- (ii) contracts be auto-enrolled on an individual basis, not on an aggregated basis, as each contract is a separate relationship;
- (iii) the content of the report and the administrative workload to undertake the project be noted.

**9. QUESTIONS UNDER RULE OF PROCEDURE 10(2)**

There were no questions submitted under Rule of Procedure 10(2).

The meeting closed at 5.25 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 12th March 2013 on they were signed by the Mayor.

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MAYOR