



## **CABINET**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN ON WEDNESDAY 14TH OCTOBER 2015 AT 2.00 P.M.**

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**PRESENT:**

Councillor K.V. Reynolds - Chair

**Councillors:**

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

**Together with:**

C. Burns (Interim Chief Executive), C. HARRY (Corporate Director Education and Community Services), D. Street (Corporate Director Social Services), N. Scammell (Acting Director of Corporate Services & S151).

**Also in Attendance:**

B. Hopkins (Assistant Director - Education), S. Couzens (Chief Housing Officer), J. Green (Housing Manager - Older Persons Services), H. Morgan (Team Leader - Integrated Transport Unit), G. Williams (Interim Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer) and S. Harris (Interim Head of Corporate Finance).

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Mrs B. Jones (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services) and D.T. Hardacre (Cabinet Member for Performance and Asset Management).

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor K. James declared an interest in Agenda Item 6 – CCBC Education Transport – MTFP 2015/18 Update. Details are recorded with the respective item.

**3. CABINET – 30TH SEPTEMBER 2015**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 30th September 2015 (minute nos. 1 - 8) be approved and signed as a correct record.

## **MATTERS ON WHICH EXECUTIVE DECISIONS WERE REQUIRED**

### **4. REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 (RIPA CORPORATE POLICY REVIEW)**

The report, which was considered at Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 30th September 2015, sought the views of Cabinet on proposed changes to the Council's Corporate Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) Policy.

Members noted that the Council is under an obligation to comply with legislative requirements and is subject to the provisions of the Regulations of Investigatory Powers Act 2000, Protection of Freedom Act 2012, and the Regulation of Investigatory Powers (Directed Surveillance and Covert Human Intelligence Sources) (Amendment) Order 2012 (S1 2012/1500). In order for the policy to remain fit for purpose, the report recommended changes to the Council's current Corporate RIPA policy.

An internal review was undertaken by the Council's Interim Monitoring Officer, in which it was proposed that the current policy be reviewed in its entirety to strengthen the governance arrangements around the RIPA process.

Members were asked to note that the Policy is not intended for use in connection with the surveillance of its employees and were reminded that the surveillance of employees is currently suspended pending on the implementation of a specific policy and there are no current plans to progress this issue. Officers gave assurance that the policy had been thoroughly reviewed and that all associated procedures are and will continue to be stringently monitored.

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

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officers report:

- (i) the contents of the report be noted;
- (ii) the changes to the Council's Corporate Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act Policy, as detailed in the report, be approved.

### **5. CCBC EDUCATION TRANSPORT – MTFP 2015/18 UPDATE**

Councillor K. James declared an interest in this item as a Governor for Abercarn Primary School and left the meeting during its consideration.

The report presented Cabinet with an update on the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) following the outcome of reports to Scrutiny Committee on 20th May and 7th July 2015 and options in assisting the Local Authority to meet its obligations in respect of the 2015/18 MTFP, to achieve a 20% general reduction in overall spend which notionally provides for a £1.3m reduction.

The report and appendix provided Cabinet with the range of discretionary home to school and college transport services, which were considered in detail at the Special Scrutiny Committee on 19th June 2014 and again on 20th May 2015. Members noted that at Scrutiny on 20th May, Members agreed to receive further information on ET1 (post-16 mainstream), ET2 (review of walking distances), and ET11 (review of hazardous routes – negligible or low risk) and these were considered by Scrutiny on 7th July 2015.

Any changes made to education transport policy are covered by the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 that states that a local authority must agree and publish the information before 1st October of the year preceding the start of the academic year they will apply from.

Councillor C. Gordon was welcomed to the meeting and invited to make representation.

Councillor Gordon thanked Cabinet and in acknowledging the financial pressures and savings requirements of the Authority, highlighted the concerns of the Scrutiny Committee on the proposal to introduce a daily charge of £1.50 with full concession for FSM students. Concerns were highlighted for the additional financial pressures for families on low income and proposed a daily charge of £1.

In addition, Councillor Gordon referred to the proposal to provide a further exemption of a maximum of 4 years for the new 21<sup>st</sup> Century School Projects, Y Gwindy and Islwyn West, which was supported at Education for Life Scrutiny Committee. It was noted that Scrutiny had considered the options in detail, and whilst they acknowledged the financial constraints due to cuts in funding from Welsh Government, urged Cabinet to consider the recommendations from Scrutiny, as outlined in the Officers report.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the Officers recommendations in the report be approved. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officers report:

- (i) the policy changes proposed for consultation as part of the MTFP process be approved;
- (ii) It be noted that the outcome of the consultation process will be presented in due course in order to make policy decisions, in readiness for the 2017/18 academic year.

## **6. CAERPHILLY HOMES COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY & IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

The report, which was considered by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 30th September 2015 and Caerphilly Homes Task Group on 2nd July 2015, sought the views of Cabinet on a new Caerphilly Homes Communications Strategy and action plan.

The draft Strategy and action plan proposed to replace the former 'Housing and Welsh Quality Housing Standard Communications Strategy' which elapsed in 2015. The new draft Strategy strongly advocates a 'one housing service' approach to communications in order to more effectively embed the Caerphilly Homes ethos throughout the division.

Members discussed the report and in noting concerns raised by the Caerphilly Homes Task Group, acknowledged the need for the Council's Recharge Policy to be clearly communicated to Caerphilly Homes tenants.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officers report:

- (i) the Caerphilly Homes Communications Strategy and action plan, as appended to the report be adopted;
- (ii) the method of communication of the Council's Recharge Policy to Caerphilly Homes Tenants be determined.

## **7. REMODELLING OF SHELTERED HOUSING SCHEMES**

The report, which was considered by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 30th September 2015 and Caerphilly Homes Task Group on 17th September 2015, sought the views of Cabinet on proposals for an in-principle agreement, for feasibility studies to be undertaken for six sheltered housing schemes (Castle Court, Waunfawr House, Ty Melin, Ynyswen, Britannia Court and St Mary's Court) for remodelling.

In addition, the report sought the views of Cabinet on proposals for the six schemes to be omitted from the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) works programme, unless funding is available within the business plan to undertake work to one or two schemes depending on the detailed costs being within this budget.

Members noted that a review of all housing stock identified that some schemes include properties and amenities that are inadequate and do not meet acceptable space standards. This information was considered alongside void levels and the ability to remodel, and six sheltered housing schemes were selected for feasibility studies. Members were advised that postponing remodelling of these particular schemes would result in works commencing after 2020 (with completion of all properties to the Welsh Quality Housing Standard by 2025), but that works to some of these schemes could be completed prior to 2020, subject to feasibility and funding considerations.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officers report, and in noting an additional recommendation:

- (i) the views of the Caerphilly Homes Task Group on the proposal be noted;
- (ii) a full and comprehensive feasibility study be commissioned for the six sheltered housing schemes identified in the report;
- (iii) following a positive outcome of the feasibility study, the schemes be removed from the Welsh Quality Housing Standard Programme with the intent of remodelling them post 2020 (with one or two before this time if financially viable), with completion of all properties by the end of 2025;
- (iv) following a positive outcome of the feasibility study, a report be presented to Cabinet highlighting detailed expenditure and plans for the schemes.

## **8. DRAFT SAVINGS PROPOSALS FOR 2016/17**

The report provided Cabinet with an updated Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) based on a range of assumptions pending receipt of the Provisional 2016/17 Local Government Financial Settlement, draft savings proposals for the 2016/17 financial year to allow for a focussed period of consultation prior to a final decision in February 2016 and provided details of projected savings requirements for the period 2016/17 to 2018/19 pending confirmation of the Welsh Government (WG) Local Government Financial Settlement.

The report also sought Cabinet endorsement of an updated MTFP, draft savings proposals for 2016/17 and a proposed 3.9% increase in the Council Tax, along with a brief update on progress in relation to potential savings for the 2017/18 financial year.

Members noted that the updated MTFP included a number of assumptions and adjustments, which included an assumed reduction in AEF of 4.3% for 2016/17 and 2017/18, with further reduction of 3% for 2018/19, a proposal to increase Council Tax to 3.9%, a 1% pay award in each of the 3 years and an assumed annual increase of 20p per hour for the living wage, as detailed within the Officers report. Draft savings proposals were detailed within the appendices, which included Vacancy Management proposals, Reduction in posts and Home to School Transport.

In addition, two seminars were provided to Members during the summer, with an additional seminar scheduled for November, Cabinet noted that, in light of updated Budget information not being available until December and agreed that the November seminar be cancelled and MTFP and Savings proposals be considered in the new year by Scrutiny.

Members thanked the Officer for the update and acknowledged the extensive work by Officers across the Authority to provide detailed proposals. Authorities across Wales are experiencing unprecedented financial times, however, with the extensive work by Officers to provide savings proposals and the proposal for a much wider consultation process, residents of the borough will have an opportunity to provide any comments and proposals in order to meet the savings requirements.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations be approved. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officers report:

- (i) The updated MTFP as detailed in paragraph 4.1.4 and Appendix 2 of the report be approved;
- (ii) The proposed package of 2016/17 savings totalling £12.432m, as detailed in Appendices 4 to 8 be endorsed;
- (iii) The 2016/17 savings proposals be subject to a further period of consultation prior to final 2016/17 budget proposals being presented to Cabinet on the 3rd February 2016 and Council on 24th February 2016;
- (iv) the proposal to increase Council Tax by 3.9% for the 2016/17 financial year be supported, to ensure that a balanced budget is achieved;
- (v) the current savings proposals for 2017/18 totalling £6.930m be noted, as set out in Appendix 9 of the report;
- (vi) A consultation process be undertaken in relation to proposed savings in 2017/18 for Home to School/College Transport.

## **RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL**

### **9. CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY**

The report presented Cabinet with the final draft Corporate Safeguarding Policy for comments, decision and endorsement.

In the period March to May 2014 the Welsh Audit Office (WAO) completed a review of Caerphilly County Borough Council's (the Council) assurance and accountability arrangements for ensuring that safeguarding policies and procedures were in place and being adhered to.

The findings of the Review were published in October 2014 and reported to Cabinet on 10th December 2014, where it was agreed that a cross Directorate group of key Officers would be established to implement the recommendations made by WAO. The report provided Cabinet with an update on the actions taken to meet the WAO requirements through the production of an overarching Corporate Safeguarding Policy.

Members noted that following the review, WAO identified 5 key areas for improvement, mainly around Governance, which included updating the Safeguarding Policy, accountability and reporting and including Safeguarding within the Internal Audit work programme.

Cabinet discussed the item and it was noted that there have been some amendments to the Policy since the time of printing. Cabinet agreed the changes and it was moved and seconded that Councillor R. Woodyatt be named Lead Cabinet Members for Safeguarding.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the Chief Executive be given delegated authority to make minor amendments to detail within the policy as indicated during the meeting and that it be RECOMMENDED to Council that for the reasons contained in the Officers report, the draft Corporate Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy be approved.

The meeting closed at 3.05pm

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any corrections made at the meeting held on 28th October 2015.

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CHAIR