



## COMMUNITY COUNCIL LIAISON SUB-COMMITTEE

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT COUNCIL OFFICES, PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON WEDNESDAY 2ND DECEMBER 2015 AT 7.00PM

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PRESENT:

Ms J. Rao - Chair

Councillors:

Mrs A. Blackman, D. Bolter, C.J. Cuss, C. Hawker, J.A. Pritchard, J.E. Roberts

#### Community/Town Council Representatives

Aber Valley	-
Argoed	-
Bargoed	-
Bedwas, Trethomas and Machen	- Ms L. Jones,
Blackwood	-
Caerphilly	- Mrs J. Hibbert
Darran Valley	-
Draethen, Waterloo and Rudry	-
Gelligaer	- Ms. C. Mortimer (Clerk)
Llanbradach	- Mrs. A. Reed, Mr. W.M. Thompson (Clerk)
Maesycwmmmer	- Miss. J. Rao
Nelson	-
New Tredegar	-
Penyrheol, Trecenydd and Energlyn	- Mrs. H. Treherne (Clerk)
Rhymney	-
Risca East	-
Risca Town	- M. Parker, B. Campbell (Clerk)
Van	- Mrs. E. Macey

Together with

S. Harris (Interim Head of Corporate Finance), H.C. Morgan (Senior Committee Services Officer)

#### 1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors H. Davies, A.G. Higgs, G.J. Hughes, A. Lewis, J. Pritchard and J.A. Pritchard, Community Councillors H. Llewellyn, J.B. Criddle, Mrs T. Parry and B. Allen and Mrs. S. Hughes, Mr. G. James, Mrs. L. Tams, Mrs. S. Chick, Mr. J. Hold, Mr. K. Williams, Mr. G. Williams, Mrs. G. Thomas and Mr. J. Dilworth (Clerks of Aber Valley, Argoed and Risca East, Bargoed, Bedwas, Trethomas and Machen and Draethen, Waterloo and Rudry, Blackwood, Caerphilly, Darran Valley and Rhymney, Maesycwmmmer and Van Community/Town Councils respectively).

## **2. MINUTES - 29TH JULY 2015**

The minutes of the meeting held on 29th July 2015 (a copy had been sent to each member) were received and noted. There were no matters arising.

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

Mr S. Harris (Interim Head of Corporate Finance) gave a presentation on the draft savings proposals for 2016/17. In order to put the budget into context, he gave an overview of the financial outlook and advised that details of the Welsh Government Provisional 2016/17 Local Government Settlement would not be received until the 9th December 2015. In anticipation of this a report had been presented to Cabinet on the 14th October 2015. Copies of this report had been circulated with the agenda and previously distributed to each Clerk.

By way of background, Mr Harris advised that at the meeting of Council on the 25th February 2015, a report had been presented which, based on information available at that time, identified a potential savings requirement of £26.14m for 2016/17 and 2017/18. This assumed a 3.3% cut in Welsh Government funding for both years.

Mr Harris referred to the UK Government Comprehensive Spending Review undertaken during the summer and autumn of 2015 and noted that savings of between 25% and 40% had been indicated for non-protected areas. This was likely to impact on the level of Welsh Government funding for Local Government in Wales and as a result the report presented to Cabinet on the 14<sup>th</sup> October included details of an updated potential savings requirement of £35.19m for the three-year period 2016/17 to 2018/19.

With the aid of a pie chart Mr Harris demonstrated how Caerphilly CBC currently spends its money in each service area (£325.62m - revenue budget 2015/16). He advised Members that throughout the process of identifying potential savings the Council had agreed a number of principles. These were to protect front-line services where we can, reduce expenditure on management and administrative costs, increase fees and charges where appropriate, reduce rather than remove services where possible, to focus on priorities and to look at alternative ways of delivering services (collaboration, partnerships, community trusts, etc.).

Mr. Harris then made further reference to the report presented to Cabinet on the 14th October 2015 and advised of the draft savings proposals for 2016/17 (£12.432m) with a proposed 3.9% increase in Council Tax. It was confirmed that 69.7% (£8.661m) of the proposed 2016/17 savings have a nil impact on the public. However, the proposed savings will result in the loss of up to 130 posts (51 of which are currently vacant). It was noted that potential savings for 2017/18 were included as an appendix to the Cabinet report although; apart from agreement to consult on Home to School/College Transport, agreement of these savings proposals was not being sought at this stage.

Reference was then made to the consultation process which was launched on 19th October 2015 and runs to 8th January 2016 (12 weeks) and to the methods that are being used to engage the public and enable them to have an opportunity to provide comments on the list of draft savings for 2016/17: -.

- Online and paper consultation.
- Articles in Newline.
- Use of Social Media.

- Face to Face: Making use of the Customer Service Vehicle, series of Drop-In Sessions across the borough, Viewpoint Panel, Community Groups, Special Interest Groups, Youth/Junior Forums, 50+ Forum etc.
- Engagement with employees and the Trade Unions.
- Consultation with Town and Community Councils.
- Consultation with the Voluntary Sector.

In addition to the above, there has been a series of special scrutiny committee meetings where Members have considered detailed reports on the savings proposals that will have an impact on the public (copies have been made available to each Clerk). Following the closure of the consultation process, a further detailed report will be presented to Cabinet and Council in February 2016. This report will include details of the Welsh Government Provisional 2016/17 Local Government Settlement and revised savings requirements.

A query was raised in relation to match-funding. Mr Harris advised that a community schemes budget was established in 2015/16 to provide some match-funding where cuts have previously been made.

In view of the unprecedented financial situation, concerns were expressed at proposals to look at alternative ways of delivering services (collaboration, partnerships etc) and a query was raised as to whether community/town councils would be invited to participate. Mr Harris advised that a decision would be required to take this forward and that any such concerns should be submitted as part of the consultation process. He indicated that he would accept responses until the third week of January in order that they can be incorporated into the Cabinet/Council reports in February.

Those present thanked Mr. Harris for his informative presentation and for responding to the queries raised during the course of the debate.

#### **4. COMMUNITY/TOWN COUNCIL CHARTER**

It was agreed that a Group be established (comprising of Ms C. Mortimer, B. Thompson and B. Campbell) to consider any revisions that may be required to the Charter.

#### **5. DATA PROTECTION/FREEDOM AWARENESS RAISING SESSION**

Reference was made to an offer from the Information Commissioners Office to provide Data Protection/Freedom of Information Awareness Raising Sessions for community/town councils. Members welcomed such training and it was agreed that the necessary arrangements be made with the respective Officer.

The meeting closed at 8pm