



CABINET

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN ON WEDNESDAY 16TH MARCH 2016 AT 2.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor K. V. Reynolds – Chair

Councillors:

C. Forehead (Human Resources and Governance/Business Manager), N. George (Community and Leisure Services), D.T. Hardacre (Performance and Asset Management), K. James (Regeneration, Planning and Sustainable Development), B. Jones (Corporate Services), R. Passmore (Education and Lifelong Learning), D. Poole (Housing), T.J. Williams (Highways, Transportation and Engineering) and R. Woodyatt (Social Services).

Together with:

C. Burns (Interim Chief Executive) and D. Street (Corporate Director – Social Services).

Also in Attendance:

D. Harteveld (Interim Managing Director – EAS), J. Elias (Service Manager – ALN), S. Pugh (Corporate Communications Manager), J. Carpenter (Council Tax and NNDR Manager), S. Harris (Interim Head of Corporate Finance), K. Cole (Chief Education Officer), P. Hudson (Marketing and Events Manager), D. Smith (Principal Engineer), N. Russell (Run4Wales) and C. Evans (Committee Services Officer).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from C. Harray and N. Scammell.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor D. Hardacre declared an interest in item 4 (Education Achievement Service (EAS) Business Plan), as Chairman of the Board but as it was a personal and not prejudicial interest, he was advised that there was no requirement to declare an interest.

3. CABINET – 2ND MARCH 2016

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd March 2016 (minute nos. 1 - 8) be approved and signed as a correct record.

MATTERS ON WHICH EXECUTIVE DECISIONS WERE REQUIRED

4. EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT SERVICE (EAS) BUSINESS PLAN 2016 - 2017

The report provided Members with the South East Wales Education Achievement Service (EAS) Business Plan 2016-2019, which sets out the priorities, programmes and outcomes to be achieved by the EAS on behalf of the South East Wales Consortium (SEWC).

SEWC is required to submit to the Welsh Government (WG) a three-year Business Plan that will be updated annually, which is set out in the WG's National Model for Regional Working. This is the third iteration of the plan first submitted in 2013. The plan covers the period 2016-2019.

Members noted that the Business Plan has undertaken an extensive consultation process, with over 600 key partners and highlighted the revised Regional Key Stage targets for 2016-2019, which are the outcome of detailed work in each school and are based on robust analysis of pupil level data for each cohort. The report detailed the long term regional priorities and how they will be delivered within the framework of the national context and the detailed programmes required in order to deliver the priorities. In addition, Members were asked to note the appendices to the report, of which a Bespoke Annex detailed the progress and forward plan, specific to Caerphilly CBC schools.

Following discussion and debate, the report was deferred to the next available Cabinet Agenda, in order to receive additional information.

5. CLOSURE OF THE KEY STAGE 2 SPECIALIST RESOURCE BASE FOR CHILDREN WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENT AT HENDRE JUNIOR SCHOOL, AND RE-DESIGNATION OF THE SOCIAL INCLUSION CLASS AT CEFN FFOREST PRIMARY SCHOOL: OUTCOME OF THE FORMAL CONSULTATION PROCESS

The report provided Cabinet with an update on the formal consultation process and sought approval to proceed to Statutory Notice in respect of the proposal to close the Key Stage 2 Specialist Resource Base for children with hearing impairment at Hendre Junior School and the re-designation of the social inclusion class at Cefn Fforest Primary School.

A formal consultation process (accompanied by consultation documents) took place between 4th January and 14th February 2016.

Members noted that, in relation to the closure of the Key Stage 2 Specialist Resource Base (SRB) for children with hearing impairment (HI) at Hendre Junior School, six responses were received. Of the responses received, two were in favour of the proposal, two were against and one was unsure. The sixth response did not express an opinion but asked for clarification on a number of points.

In relation to the re-designation of the key stage 2 Social Inclusion class at Cefn Fforest Primary School two responses were received. Both responses expressed the view that they were not sure about the proposal. Both respondents chose to use the online form and indicated they would like more information regarding the proposal. One respondent noted that Cefn Fforest offered a good service which did not make children feel different or discriminated against for having special educational needs.

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, and having consideration for the outcome of the consultation process, the Statutory Notice proceed.

6. VELOTHON WALES 2016 – PROPOSED ROAD CLOSURES

The report provided Cabinet with the responses to the public consultation on road closures for the proposed Velothon Wales 2016 event and sought approval to proceed with implementing and advertising a temporary road closure order.

In 2015, a new cycling event called 'Velothon Wales' was held on 14th June 2015 involving three routes affecting the county borough: a 50km and 140km route for 15,000 cyclists to take place as a sportive (mass participation) event followed by a 194km UCI classified race for up to 200 elite (professional) cyclists.

Run4Wales, a social enterprise organisation set up by Welsh Athletes have been given the role of delivering a Velothon Wales 2016 event under licence by the Lagardere Group to be held on 22nd May 2016. In order to cater for the event, extensive road closures will be required along the proposed route, for the duration of the event, to permit the safe passage of the participating cyclists, restricting vehicular access across and along these roads impacting on local communities, businesses, churches and other stakeholders.

A delegated Decision Notice to consult on the route proposal for the 2016 event was published on 1st February 2016 and extensive public consultation on the road closures associated with the route proposal took place between 22nd February and 4th March 2016.

Members considered the report in detail and raised queries regarding local Marshalls and telephone answer service. Officers assured Members that steps have been taken to ensure that Marshalls have local knowledge, and the answering service would be based in Cardiff.

Members noted that a 2 week consultation was conducted, with correspondence sent to 600 businesses within the borough. Of the 52 responses received, 9 provided positive comments for the event, 35 were negative and 8 were neutral. Particular concerns were raised in relation to Stewarding, access for carers due to road closures and the impact of the closures to residents and businesses. Officers assured Members that correspondence would be sent to the respondents, offering assurances. In addition, an article has been published within the latest edition of Newsline detailing the event and proposed road closures, for which only one call has been received to date.

Members discussed the report and queried the plans to prevent parking on Bedwas Road during the event. Officers explained that Clearway Order would be introduced and residents would be offered the opportunity to park their vehicles in Morrisons Car Park, for which security would be provided during the event.

It was queried what plans were in place to mitigate the impact of the road closures to the health professionals, emergency services and carers. Members were assured that extensive planning has been conducted in order to manage the event with minimal disruption to emergency services. Correspondence would be provided to local residents in order to implement alternative arrangements and emergency services will be available at the event, so should there be difficulty in getting an ambulance through, an event ambulance could be sent through, or the race would be stopped if deemed necessary.

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 responses to the consultation summarised in Appendix 2 of the report be noted;

- (ii) based on the consultation responses received and the mitigation measures offered by the Organisers it be agreed that the Council proceed with implementing and advertising a temporary road closure order for the event.

7. COUNCIL TAX DISCRETIONARY REDUCTION POLICY – SECTION 13A (1)(C)

The report, which was considered by Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 1st March 2016, outlined details of a draft Council Tax Discretionary Reduction Policy concerning Section 13A (1) (c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

Members were advised that Section 13A (1) (c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended gives discretion to billing authorities to reduce a liable person's council tax 'to such extent as it thinks fit', even to nil, whether on an individual basis or by prescribing one or more categories

The Section 13A discretion is in addition to various statutory reductions, discounts, disregards and exemptions that are already within existing legislation. The discretionary power was originally envisaged to be used in extreme cases affecting a limited number of council tax payers (such as a crisis or fire/flooding event). However, from 1st April 2013, the way in which support is provided to council tax payers on low income changed with the introduction of Council Tax Reduction Schemes throughout the UK.

In Wales the Welsh Government has committed to a 100% funded Council Tax Reduction Scheme until the end of March 2017. This is not the case in England and consequently an increase in Section 13A applications has been experienced. Any move by the Welsh Government to not fully fund the Council Tax Reduction Scheme from April 2017 may result in a rise in Section 13A applications in Wales. Any change in the Council Tax Reduction Scheme would require a report to full Council along with an assessment of the potential financial implications.

The Section 13A policy (appended to the report in draft form) aims to provide a more transparent and equitable way of determining applications received for discretionary council tax reduction.

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 the Council Tax Discretionary Reduction Policy – Section 13A (1)(C) as set out in the Appendix to the report, be approved.

EXEMPT ITEM

Members considered the public interest test 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 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 defined in paragraphs 14 and 16 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

8. WRITE-OFF OF DEBTS OVER £20,000 – NNDR ARREARS FOR LTD COMPANIES

On 15th September 2009, Cabinet approved a revised write-off procedure for debts that are material, where the individual debt is greater than £20,000. The report sought the approval of Cabinet to write-off a national non-domestic rate (NNDR), also known as business rate, debt

where the individual debt is greater than £20,000. It was noted that the appendix had not been included with the report, but had subsequently been circulated prior to the meeting.

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

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officers report, the recommendation contained in paragraph 9.1 of the report be approved.

The meeting closed at 2.58pm

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any corrections made at the meeting held on 30th March 2016.

CHAIR