



## **CABINET**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN ON WEDNESDAY 1ST JUNE 2016 AT 2.00 P.M.**

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#### **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), D. Havard (Education and Lifelong Learning), K. James (Regeneration, Planning and Sustainable Development), B. Jones (Corporate Services), D. Poole (Housing), T.J. Williams (Highways, Transportation and Engineering) and R. Woodyatt (Social Services).

#### **Together with:**

C. Burns (Interim Chief Executive), C. Harray (Corporate Director Communities) and N. Scammel (Acting Director of Corporate Services and Section 151).

#### **Also in Attendance:**

D. Whetter (Interim Head of Regeneration), K. Williams (Private Sector Housing Manager), S. Couzens (Chief Housing Officer), R. Hartshorn (Head of Public Protection) and C. Evans (Committee Services Officer).

#### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

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

#### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

#### **3. CABINET – 18TH MAY 2016**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 18th May 2016 (minute nos. 1 - 4) be approved and signed as a correct record.

#### **4. REGENERATION AND PLANNING DIVISION CAPITAL ALLOCATION 2016/17**

The report sought the approval of Cabinet for the 2016/17 capital budget allocation to Regeneration and Planning as required in section 4.8.2 and table 10 of the Budget Proposals 2016/17 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016/2021 which was approved by Council on 24th February 2016. In addition, Cabinet were asked to note the Supplementary Report, which was published and distributed on 1st June 2016

The main report focused on the provisional capital allocations and the projects that the Regeneration and Planning Division capital budget for 2016/17 would fund during the financial year. As advised by the Interim Head of Finance, Cabinet approval was sought in order to release the budget to the service area. The Supplementary report provided Cabinet with additional information and further clarification on specific projects, such as Urban Renewal, as outlined within the main Cabinet Report.

Cabinet were asked to note that details on the review of the Business Support and Commercial and Industrial Grants, and their possible merger into one Business Growth grant, has been removed from the main Cabinet report as this will be the subject of a separate report.

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 Main and Supplementary Report (and Council Budget Report): -

- (i) the 2016/17 capital allocation of £217,000 to Countryside's Environmental Schemes Programme be agreed;
- (ii) the 2016/17 capital allocation of £50,000 to Urban Renewal to Commercial and Industrial Grants Scheme be agreed;
- (iii) the 2016/17 capital allocation of £30,000 to Urban Renewal's Town Centres projects be agreed.

#### **5. PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL SUPPORTED TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION – LLYS TABERNACLE, RHYMNEY**

The report sought the approval of Cabinet to enter into a partnership arrangement with Wales and West Housing Association in respect of the use of their premises at Llys Tabernacle, Rhymney for the purposes of supported accommodation for single homeless persons.

The Council has a statutory duty to provide emergency accommodation for persons identified as being homeless and in priority need. Due to a lack of supported accommodation a number of single homeless persons have, to date, had to be placed in Bed and Breakfast (B&B) accommodation both within and outside the county borough.

Members noted that since November 2014, the Authority has made a conscious effort to reduce its reliance on B&B accommodation for emergency housing. This has been done, in the main, by the creation and use of additional supported accommodation at Ty Croeso, Newbridge and Maes Y Derwen, Tredomen which together have provided 28 rooms for use as emergency accommodation for single persons. Such provision provides greater support for homeless persons whilst at the same time affording the communities within which such accommodation is located a degree of reassurance in respect of any safety concerns they may have.

Currently the Authority has the use of 55 rooms within 4 units of accommodation which provide 24hr support. One of these units, the Countryman, Bedwellty which caters for 16-24 year olds, was recently the subject of a joint inspection by HM Inspectorate of Probation, Ofsted (Social Care) and the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW). Unfortunately their findings suggest the premises is no longer suitable for the placing of younger persons. There are also concerns about the physical condition of the property which, it is felt, will require substantial investment from its private owners for the property to have any realistic medium to long term use as emergency accommodation which is compliant with relevant statute. For these reasons Officers feel that an alternative, better located, facility should be considered.

To this end a block of 13 self contained flats located at Llys Tabernacle, Church Street, Rhymney, owned by Wales and West Housing Association, has been identified as being suitable for adaptation to a 12 room, 24hr supported housing scheme. The owners have already secured Planning Permission for such a project which will be managed by the voluntary sector housing support organisation Solas. Solas currently manage the Countryman and Maes Y Derwen and have a proven record locally of delivering high quality housing support.

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, it be agreed that the Authority enter into a partnership arrangement with Wales and West Housing Association, with a view to utilising Llys Tabernacle as an alternative Supported Housing Project to the Countryman..

## **6. TENANT PARTICIPATION STRATEGY 2016 – 19**

The report which was considered and endorsed by the Caerphilly Homes Task Group (CHTG) on 19th May 2016 outlined the draft Tenant Participation Strategy (2016–19) and sought Cabinet approval.

Cabinet were advised that the 2016-19 Strategy defines the purpose (the reason for Tenant Participation) and responds to the challenges and opportunities of the world within which Caerphilly Homes operates. The Strategy has been developed in consultation with tenants and staff (through a number of workshop and feedback sessions).

Members noted the purpose of the Strategy, its 4 Key Objectives, along with information on how it was developed. The Strategy also referred to the development of an Action Plan to support the delivery of the strategic objectives over the next 3 years.

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 Tenant Participation Strategy 2016-2019 as presented in Appendix 1 be endorsed.

## **7. HOUSING REPAIRS – REVIEW OF RECHARGE DISCOUNT**

Following a report to Cabinet on 18th March 2015, a trial was introduced to offer tenants a 25% discount for prompt repayment of invoices for rechargeable repairs and end of tenancy works. Following from a recent review of the impact on income and recovery levels of the recent trial, the report sought Members' approval to withdraw the offer of a discount to tenants for prompt repayment.

Cabinet noted that the aim of the Rechargeable Repairs Policy was to contribute to the efficient and effective maintenance of the Council's housing stock. At the request of the repairs and Improvements Group, a 25% discount to tenants, for the payment of invoices within 35 days of receipt was introduced for a trial period, in an attempt to incentivise tenants to pay their recharges within a reasonable timescale, and to encourage more tenants to pay. If successful this would increase income to the Housing Revenue Account, despite the discount resulting in an under recovery of costs incurred in carrying out the repair works. The trial has run for approximately ten months.

Whilst there has been an improving trend in collections for rechargeable repairs and end of tenancy works over the previous four years, the trial of offering a 25% discount for prompt repayment has not, in itself, resulted in a significant increase in the number or size of payments received. Members noted that, should the trial be extended, a capital outlay would be required for IT improvements, to ensure the process could be administered effectively and the discount would constitute a subsidy to tenants from the HRA.

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, it be agreed that the trial to offer tenants a 25% discount for payments made within 35 days of receipt of an invoice for both rechargeable and end of tenancy repairs be withdrawn.

## **8. VOLUNTARY SECTOR GRANTS CAPITAL ALLOCATION 2016/17**

The report sought Cabinet approval for the 2016/17 capital budget allocation to the Voluntary Sector Capital Grants Fund, as required in section 4.8.2 and table 10 of the Budget Proposals 2016/17 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016/2021 report, which was considered by Council on the 24th February 2016.

The Budget Proposals 2016/17 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016/2021 report (subsequently referred to as the Budget Report) details the capital budget allocation to each service area for 2016/17. It also provided an indicative allocation for 2017/18 and 2018/19. Section 4.8.2 of the Budget Report outlined the requirement for further review and or business cases to be presented to Cabinet in order to justify the capital allocation to five service areas within the Regeneration and Planning Division. Since the Budget Report of 24th February was approved, responsibility for the Voluntary Sector Capital Grants budget has moved from Regeneration and Planning to Public Protection, with effect from 1st April 2016.

Cabinet noted that, as a result of consultation with the Interim Head of Finance, the report only sought approval of capital funding for 2016/17. Subsequent years' indicative capital budget allocations are to be considered on an annual basis.

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 2016/17 capital allocation of £170,000 to the Voluntary Sector Capital Grants Scheme be approved.

The meeting closed at 2.39pm

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any corrections made at the meeting held on 29th June 2016.

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CHAIR