



## **CABINET**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN ON WEDNESDAY, 5TH OCTOBER 2016 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. Hardacre (Performance and Asset Management), D. Havard (Education and Lifelong learning), K. James (Regeneration, Planning and Sustainable Development), D.V. Poole (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing), T.J. Williams (Highways, Transportation and Engineering), R. Woodyatt (Social Services).

#### **Together with:**

C. Burns (Interim Chief Executive), N. Scammell (Acting Director of Corporate Services and Section 151 Officer) and C. Harry (Corporate Director - Communities).

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

J. Elias (Service Manager – ALN), R. Thurlbeck (Head of Sensory and Communication Services – Torfaen CBC), D. Whetter (Interim Head of Regeneration), C. Jones (Head of Performance and Property Services) and C. Evans (Committee Services Officer).

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

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Mrs B. Jones (Corporate Services) and D. Street (Corporate Director – Social Services).

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

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

#### **3. CABINET – 21ST SEPTEMBER 2016**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 21st September 2016 (minute nos. 1 - 6) be approved and signed as a correct record.

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

### **4. PROPOSAL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COMBINED SENSORY AND COMMUNICATION SERVICE (SENCOM) MADE UP OF THE VISUAL IMPAIRMENT (VI) SERVICE, HEARING IMPAIRMENT (HI) SERVICE AND THE COMMUNICATION INTERVENTION TEAM**

The report provided Cabinet with details of a proposal for the development of a combined Sensory and Communication Services (SenCom), made up of the Visual Impairment (VI) Service, Hearing Impairment (HI) Service and the Communication Intervention Team. The service would be situated under a single employer and governance structure, operated by Torfaen County Borough Council.

The report sought the agreement of Cabinet to proceed with a consultation to transfer Gwent Visual Impairment Service, currently hosted by Caerphilly CBC, to Torfaen CBC. Torfaen CBC currently manage the Hearing Impairment Service and the Communication Intervention Teams on behalf of the South East Wales Region. In addition, it was noted that the proposal would involve the transfer of some staff from Caerphilly CBC to Torfaen CBC necessitating appropriate consultation.

Cabinet noted that, should permission be granted to proceed, a consultation with Sensory and Communication Service staff and partners will commence on 6th October 2016 with the proposal that all employees of Caerphilly CBC who work in the Sensory and Communication Service (SenCom) transfer their employment to Torfaen CBC as of 1st April 2017.

Members thanked the Officers for the report and discussion ensued. A Member sought further information on the financial implications, with particular reference to the Employment Terms of Conditions and if there were any significant differences between the Employment Terms and Conditions of Torfaen CBC and Caerphilly CBC. The Officer explained that advice is currently being sought from HR as the Terms and Conditions between Authorities are not identical, which could present some equalities issues, however, it was noted that Tupee supersedes these concerns. In addition, Members were assured that all options would be explored during the consultation exercise and within the Business Plan, and full details would be provided in a future report to Cabinet.

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 Officer's report: -

- (i) the report be noted;
- (ii) the proposal to commence consultation on the proposed transfer of all SenCom Caerphilly CBC based staff to Torfaen CBC in connection with the proposal to create a combined Sensory and Communication Service be agreed;
- (iii) a further report to be presented in the new year on the outcome of the consultation, together with a full Outline Business Case in relation to the proposals to create the combined service.

### **5. WELSH GOVERNMENT TOWN CENTRE LOANS FUND**

The report provided Members with an update on the progress and challenges faced in relation to the delivery of the Welsh Government (WG) £0.5million Rhymney Town Centre Loans Fund (TCLF).

In February 2015 WG launched a new initiative, restricted to towns located within WG's Tackling Poverty Fund areas, offering long term loans to Local Authorities to provide capital funding for key regeneration projects. In October 2015 Cabinet approved the delivery of WG TCLF of £500,000 for Rhymney Town Centre, following a successful funding bid submitted by the Council's Urban Renewal Team. The "interest free" WG loans were available to Local Authorities for a maximum period of 15 years, with loans being recycled every five years until the specified repayment date in 2031.

Despite attempts to progress projects there have been very few opportunities to utilise and recycle the loan funding within Rhymney and other local authorities have also experienced a lack of interest in the loan scheme. Consequently, WG have confirmed that the TCLF can be extended to include two additional town centres (subject to final approval by WG).

The report outlined the attempts made to launch the Rhymney TCLF, and in taking account of the WG conditions associated with the TCLF, the level of funding available, potential alternative funding sources and the opportunities within each town centre for the reinvestment of the TCLF funding, over a 15 year period, the report recommended that alongside Rhymney, Blackwood and Risca are considered to be best placed to be the Council's focus for the extended TCLF.

In addition, Cabinet noted the recent opportunity presented by WG for all Welsh Authorities to bid for a share of an additional £10 million allocation under its "2016/17 Town Centre Repayable Funding Scheme" and highlighted the fact that senior officers have determined that the opportunity should not be pursued in light of the challenges encountered to date in utilising the current allocation.

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 Officer's report: -

- (i) the contents of the report be noted;
- (ii) in addition to Rhymney town centre, Blackwood and Risca town centres be the focus of the Council's activity in relation to the existing WG Town Centre Loans Fund;
- (iii) it be agreed that officers to explore the options presented by working in a partnership with Registered Social Landlords to develop potential projects for the Town Centre Loan Fund;
- (iv) the opportunity to bid for additional funding from the 2016/2017 "Town Centre Repayable Funding" Scheme be not pursued but alternative efforts to focus on the existing allocation and its expansion to the two additional town centres (subject to agreement with 9.2 above) be noted.

## **RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL**

### **6. ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2015/16**

The report provided Cabinet with the Authority's Annual Self-Assessment called the Performance Report for 2015/16 and sought the views and approval of Cabinet, prior to its presentation to Council on 11th October 2016.

Cabinet noted that the Performance Report is a statutory requirement under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and an important part of the Council's Performance Framework. The Council is required to assess its own performance and provide the public with a balanced picture of that performance.

The report demonstrated how the council performed against the Improvement Objectives it set itself for 2015/16.

In addition, it was noted that for 2016/17 Improvement Objectives will be called Well-Being Objectives, however, as the report covers the time period of 2015/16 the term Improvement Objectives has been used for consistency and audit purposes.

Members thanked the Officer for the positive report and the excellent work undertaken across the Authority in both the preparation of the report and for the work of Officers. Whilst the report was very positive the areas for improvement were noted.

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.

RECOMMENDED to Council that for the reasons contained in the Officer's report the Annual Performance Report be accepted.

The meeting closed at 2.30pm

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any corrections made at the meeting held on 19th October 2016.

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CHAIR