



## **CABINET**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN ON WEDNESDAY, 19TH 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), 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) C. Harry (Corporate Director - Communities) and D. Street (Corporate Director – Social Services)

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

S.J. Byrne (Wales Audit Office), S. Harris (Interim Head of Corporate Finance), T. Shaw (Head of Engineering), C. Jones (Head of Performance and Property) and C. Evans (Committee Services Officer)

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

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors D. Havard, Mrs B. Jones and N. Scammell (Acting Director of Corporate Services and Section 151 Officer).

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

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

#### **3. CABINET – 5TH OCTOBER 2016**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 5th October 2016 (minute nos. 1 - 6) be approved and signed as a correct record.

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

### **4. WAO REVIEW OF ARRANGEMENTS TO ADDRESS EXTERNAL AUDIT, INSPECTION AND REGULATION RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENT – CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

The report provided Cabinet with the Wales Audit Office (WAO) report on its review of arrangements to address external audit, inspection and regulation recommendations and proposals for improvement of Caerphilly CBC.

In the 2015-16 Audit Plan, the WAO identified that they would assess the Council's progress in implementing recommendations from their previous work. As part of this follow-up work, they stated they would seek assurance that the Council has appropriate corporate processes for responding to their reports, tracking implementation of their recommendations and reporting this to the appropriate committee. The WAO did this by undertaking specific follow-up work to determine progress in addressing the recommendations made in areas for improvement arising from the Special Inspection Report, the Follow-up of the Special Inspection and previous audit work relating to:

- Self-evaluation
- HR and Workforce planning
- Internal Audit
- Scrutiny

The review concluded that the Council's response to their recommendations and proposals for improvements is supporting improvement in its self-evaluation and scrutiny arrangements, but further work remains to fully address weaknesses in Internal Audit and Human Resources, some of which are longstanding.

Cabinet Members thanked the Officers for the report, and discussion ensued. It was noted that, whilst the report was positive and it was evident that there have been a number of improvements made over the past 3 years, there is still some further improvement to be made and the Council is happy to work closely with the Wales Audit Office in order to meet the recommendations, as outlined within the report.

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 and as outlined at the meeting : -

- (i) the Officer responses to the WAO proposal for improvement as detailed in Appendix 2 (Management Response) of the report be noted;
- (ii) the monitoring arrangements, as outlined in paragraph 4.3 of the report be endorsed, with the addition that minutes from the Corporate Governance Panel also be reported to Cabinet.

### **5. CAPITAL OUTTURN 2015/16**

The report, which was considered by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 4th October 2016, provided information relating to the capital outturn for the 2015/16 financial year and presented details of proposals to fund overspends on specific schemes.

It was noted that the approved Capital Programme for the 2015/16 financial year totalled £49.15m, consisting of £12.86m for the General Fund and £36.29m for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). During the year specific grants, slippage and contributions were received for various service areas taking the total available capital resources for 2015/16 to £91.11m. A summary of the 2015/16 outturn against each service area was included within the report. The 2015/16 Housing Revenue Account underspend of £7.4m will be carried forward into the 2016/17 financial year to support the ongoing programme of works to meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS). The General Fund variance of £22.69m can be split into £14.7m for schemes that are ongoing or have been delayed in 2015/16 (slippage), underspends on ring-fenced budgets totalling £7.6m, additional underspends totalling £868k that have now been released into capital balances and overspends against capital schemes to the value of £478k.

Officers refers to details of the overspends as at the 31st March 2016 relating to Bargoed Regeneration (£197k), Newbridge Regeneration (£75k) and the refurbishment of Hafod Deg (£67k). It was noted that these overspends remain unfunded due to expenditure which was ineligible for recovery from funding sources, and therefore the report sought the approval for the £339k overspend to be met via a number of sources from related service areas (as outlined in paragraph 4.12 of the report).

In addition, Members noted details of additional liabilities in 2016/17 for Bargoed and Newbridge regeneration schemes totalling £85k and approval was sought to fund these costs from a Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay (RCCO).

Members thanked the Officer for the report and clarification was sought on the Ringfenced Budget for Urban Renewal, with reference to the Bargoed Cinema Development. It was noted that the funding remains in the Capital Fund at present.

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 2015/16 capital outturn position be noted;
- (ii) the overspends in relation to the Bargoed and Newbridge regeneration Schemes and Hafod Deg be funded from the sources detailed in paragraphs 4.12 and 4.13 of the officers report.

## **6. WINTER SERVICE PLAN 2016-17**

A report was presented to the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee on 28th June 2016, which outlined the background and content of the Council's Winter Service Plan and explained the process by which it is reviewed on an annual basis. Cabinet were asked to consider and approve the post-consultation Winter Service Plan.

It was noted that the Winter Service Plan has been in existence since the inception of Caerphilly County Borough Council and outlined the Council's responsibilities for maintaining the highway infrastructure network during the winter maintenance period. The Plan is annually reviewed by Members and Officers, feedback and amendments are incorporated into the final version, which is then circulated to appropriate parties and placed on the Council's website in October. It was noted that, should the plan be approved, this process would continue for the 2016-2017 winter season after the Cabinet endorsement process had been completed.

A number of sections were reviewed which cover key issues within the Winter Service Plan, which included 'Gritting Route and Road Hierarchy', 'Salt Stocks and Location', 'Weather Forecasting' and 'Salt Bin Request Process'. Cabinet were updated on the weather forecasting measures that are utilised in making the appropriate decisions for a freezing or weather event and the consultation process undertaken in order to ensure that essential routes and services were catered for during periods of inclement weather.

Members thanked the Officer and team for the extensive report and the work undertaken to ensure that the main road infrastructure is maintained during inclement weather. Cabinet discussed the detailed plan and it was noted that the schools in Aberbargoed were not listed within the report. Officers agreed to amend the report.

Discussion also took place regarding periods of inclement weather, plans for snow clearance and requests for the supply and refilling of grit bins within the county borough. Officers explained that the routes, as outlined within the plan would be gritted, should there be a requirement, the main roads would be cleared with a snow plough and JCB's would be deployed the following day to remove any excess snow over junctions etc. In reference to the Grit boxes, Members were referred to the flow chart, which highlighted priority areas, should there be a high demand for grit.

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 the draft inter Service Plan be endorsed for consultation.

## **RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL**

### **7. CORPORATE ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

The report, which was presented to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 4th October 2016, sought the views of Members on a Draft Corporate Asset Management Strategy, prior to its presentation to Council for approval.

Officers explained that following a review of the Council's Asset Management (Land and Property) Strategy in 2013, Wales Audit Office (WAO) made 5 proposals for improvement, which included "developing a robust Asset Management Strategy for its property and associated infrastructure" and "developing and implementing arrangements to monitor the delivery of the strategy". In September 2014, the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee accepted that the development of a revised Asset Management Strategy should be delayed until the Council's financial position became clearer, a revised Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) was agreed and services could better plan for the future. Following discussion between the WAO and Officers at Audit Committee in December 2015, it was resolved that a Corporate Asset Management Strategy (CAMS) should be progressed.

Members were advised that the Corporate Asset Management Strategy is an overarching document which aligns with the corporate aims of the Council. It identifies where the Council has appropriate individual service asset plans/strategies in place. Where such asset plans/strategies are not present, the challenge will be to determine whether those assets need supporting strategies and, if so, by when they can be delivered. The CAMS establishes a set of Principles, which are aligned to the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and has developed a number of Outcomes, namely: Compliance, Condition, Suitability, Sufficiency, Accessibility and Sustainability. The expectation is that all individual council asset plans/strategies will reflect these Principles and Outcomes to ensure the effective implementation of the CAMS. Existing individual service asset plans/strategies will be reviewed and revised to align with these Principles and Outcomes.

Members thanked the Officer for the detailed report and discussion ensued. A Member sought further information on the report and the outcome of the review conducted on Community Centres. It was noted that a Task and Finish Group conducted a review into the Community Centre's across the Borough, and as a result, 1 was closed and another is to provide addition information. A further review will be required in the future, on Community Centres and many other property assets the Council holds, in order to ensure that the property portfolio held efficient and not surplus to requirement.

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 Draft Asset Management Strategy be approved.

The meeting closed at 3.08pm

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