



CABINET

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN ON WEDNESDAY, 2ND NOVEMBER 2016 AT 2.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor K.V. Reynolds - Chair

Councillors:

N. George (Community and Leisure Services), D. Hardacre (Performance and Asset Management), K. James (Regeneration, Planning and Sustainable Development), Mrs B. Jones (Corporate Services), 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) and C. Harry (Corporate Director - Communities).

Also in Attendance:

Community Councillor Mrs Ann Gray, S. Harris (Interim Head of Corporate Finance), 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 Mrs C. Forehead, D. Havard and N. Scammell (Acting Director of Corporate Services and Section 151 Officer), and D. Street (Corporate Director – Social Services).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor D. Poole declared an interest in the item relating to Former Nelson Boys and Girls Club. Details are minuted with the respective item.

3. CABINET – 19TH OCTOBER 2016

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 19th October 2016 (minute nos. 1 - 7) be approved and signed as a correct record.

MATTERS ON WHICH EXECUTIVE DECISIONS WERE REQUIRED

4. ADDITIONAL CAR PARKING – PENALLTA HOUSE

The report sought the approval of Cabinet to extend the current car parking facilities at Penallta House using Corporate Service reserves to fund the cost of the works.

Cabinet noted that the closure of Pontllanfraith House has seen an increase in parking requirements and has reached the point where on occasions demand exceeds availability. In addition, with the forthcoming sale of Dyffryn House, it is anticipated that the situation would worsen. The report recommended an extension to the existing car parking facilities within the curtilage of Penallta House by providing circa 85 additional car parking spaces.

Officers outlined that, whilst the additional parking provision would not resolve these pressures alone, coupled with the Council's move towards a more flexible approach to working practices as part of its office rationalisation programme, Members were assured that the current parking issues being faced will be overcome.

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 proposal to increase car parking facilities at Penallta House and allocate funding from Corporate Service reserves be approved.

5. FORMER NELSON BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB

Councillor D. V. Poole declared an interest (as his partner is a Member of the Nelson Development Trust) and left the meeting during consideration of this item.

The report afforded Cabinet with details of the actions taken in accordance with the terms of the lease, of the former Nelson Boys and Girls Club, to Nelson Development Trust (NDT).

At its meeting of the 2nd July 2014 Cabinet agreed to lease the former Nelson Boys & Girls Club to Nelson Development Trust for a minimum period of 25 years, subject to conditions. One of those conditions was that "the lease should include a time limit (18 months) after which, if adequate funding has not been secured, the lease will revert back to the council."

A further decision from the same meeting was that "All former recommendations (Cabinet Meeting 4th September 2012) be retained but the time limits previously being 24 months from the date of the issue of the Letter of Intent being extended to within 18 months of the signing of the lease.

Cabinet noted that the NDT had failed to provide evidence of securing funding and despite two requests for a progress update from the Head of Property Services there has been no communication from the NDT and the 18 month time limit elapsed on the 25th July 2016. Consequently the lease has been terminated.

Members thanked the Officer for the report and invited Community Councillor, Mrs Ann Gray to make representation on behalf of the Nelson Development Trust.

Cabinet were asked to note that following discussions in 2014, an extended lease was agreed for a period of 18 months, however, keys were not exchanged on the property until February 2015. Since this time, extensive work has been conducted by the NDT, questionnaires were sent to residents, business plans developed and a sub-committee was established in order to complete applications for Lottery Funding.

Mrs Gray outlined that correspondence had not been received requesting a progress report on the premises and as such, one had not been provided. Having outlined the response to the report, Mrs Gray urged Cabinet Members not to support the Officers recommendation.

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 in light of the termination of the lease to the Nelson Development Trust, the contents of the report be noted and the decision of the 4th September 2012, that the former Boys and Girls Club building be demolished and the site offered for development in accordance with the Council's LDP be approved.

6. FORMER RISCA COLLIERIES WORKMEN'S INSTITUTE

The report sought the approval of Cabinet to dispose of the former Risca Collieries Workmen's' by way of a Community Asset Transfer (CAT).

Cabinet noted that the Council acquired the asset in June 1996, for community education purposes, with the ground floor being occupied by Oxford House Industrial History Society (OHIHS). In 2014, Community Education determined that the asset was surplus to its operational purposes; officers engaged with OHIHS, which remained in occupation, to explore the possibility of a Community Asset Transfer (CAT).

It became apparent that OHIHS was not in a position to sustain a CAT and officers engaged with Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations (GAVO) to explore whether a viable CAT could be promoted. After consultations with the community, and Town Council, Newport & South Wales Railway Museum (NSWRM) emerged as a suitable prospect.

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 Officer's report: -

- (i) the former Risca Collieries Workmen's Institute be leased to Newport and South Wales Railway Museum, at a peppercorn, by way of a Community Asset Transfer;
- (ii) that Newport and South Wales Railway Museum is granted early entry, with immediate effect;
- (iii) the detailed terms of the lease be delegated to the Head of Property Services in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Performance and Asset Management, for the purposes identified in the report.

7. WRITE-OFF OF DEBT OVER £20,000 – BRINDAVON CARE HOME LTD

On the 15th September 2009, Cabinet approved a write-off procedure for debts that are material, where the individual debt is greater than £20,000. The report sought approval to write-off an outstanding debt exceeding £20,000 for Brindavon Care Home Ltd.

Members noted that the Council collects very large sums of money from residents and local businesses each year and inevitably there are instances of non-payment. A 'firm but fair' approach has always been adopted and all legal means are pursued to recover monies owed.

However, where the chances of recovery are slim and/or all legal means available have been exhausted the write-off of debts needs to be considered.

The regular writing-off of uncollectable debts is an important financial discipline. The Council would be criticised by External Audit if debts remained in the accounts when there is little likelihood of recovery.

Brindavon Care Home Ltd was a private care home of 32 residential rooms in Commercial Street, Aberbargoed. The home had been utilised by Caerphilly Social Services for the placement of residential care clients since its' opening in July 2009. However, on the 24th June 2014, the company was placed into liquidation and the outstanding debts owed to the Authority amount to £40,510.97 in respect of 7 service users that were awarded Continuing Healthcare status and these debts were not recoverable during the liquidation process.

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 Officer's report the write-off of the outstanding debt of £40,510.97 in respect of Brindavon Care Home Ltd be approved.

EXEMPT ITEMS

Members considered the public interest tests 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 paragraph 14 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

8. WRITE-OFF OF DEBTS OVER £20,000

On 15th September 2009, Cabinet approved a write-off procedure for debts that are material, where the individual debt is greater than £20,000. The report sought the approval to write off two separate outstanding debts which each exceed £20,000.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations 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 paragraphs 10.1 of the report be approved.

The meeting closed at 2.50pm

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any corrections made at the meeting held on 16th November 2016.

CHAIR