



CABINET

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN ON WEDNESDAY, 30TH NOVEMBER 2016 AT 2.00 P.M.

PRESENT

Councillors:

Mrs C. Forehead (Human Resources and Governance/ Business Manager), N. George (Community and Leisure Services), D. Hardacre (Performance and Asset Management), D. Havard (Education and Lifelong Learning), 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), C. HARRY (Corporate Director - Communities) and N. Scammell (Acting Director of Corporate Services & S151 Officer).

Also in Attendance:

S. Harris (Interim Head of Corporate Finance), B. Hopkins (Assistant Director – Education) and C. Evans (Committee Services Officer).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors K. James and K. Reynolds 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 – 16TH NOVEMBER 2016

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 16th November 2016 (minute nos. 1 - 8) be approved and signed as a correct record.

MATTERS ON WHICH EXECUTIVE DECISIONS WERE REQUIRED

4. PROPOSED RHYMNEY 3-18 ALL THROUGH SCHOOL

The report sought approval to commence a consultative process to establish a Rhymney 3-18 school.

The Council is committed to developing and establishing innovative approaches to teaching and learning, which includes securing better outcomes through increased continuity in pupil learning and a joined-up strategy to learning, pastoral care and support.

Cabinet noted that during the summer term 2016, meetings took place with local Members and representatives from Abertysswg and Pontlottyn Primary Schools and Rhymney Comprehensive School, all of which supported the proposal of establishing the Rhymney 3-18 school. The proposal would incorporate the new Abertysswg/Pontlottyn Primary School and the existing Rhymney Comprehensive on their sites. No additional build is proposed specifically for this proposal.

Officers explained that, in order to progress the proposal, a statutory consultation process is required, which is envisaged to take place over a 6 week period between 3rd January and 16th February 2017. Following consultation, a report will be presented to Cabinet to consider the views expressed and then decide whether to proceed with the proposal. If the decision is taken to proceed, a statutory notice will be published. The statutory notice will last for 28 days from the date of notice and enables people to express their views in the form of supporting or objecting to the proposal.

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 commencement of a consultative process, in order to establish a Rhymney 3-18 School be agreed.

5. CWMCARN HIGH SCHOOL – PLANNED CLOSURE

The report provided Cabinet with an update on the planned closure of Cwmcarn High School and associated developments.

On 27th June 2016, the Governing Body of Cwmcarn High School made the decision to seek to close the school, despite their best efforts to keep the school open and due to the unprecedented circumstances (asbestos, relocation, falling pupil rolls) that the school has found itself in since 2012. This decision was sought in line with Section 80 of The Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.

Welsh Government's Cabinet Secretary for Education wrote to the Chair of Governors providing consent to issue notice under the Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 to discontinue the school. As a result, on 10th October 2016 the Chair of Governors, on behalf of the Governing Body, wrote to Welsh Government's Cabinet Secretary for Education to give Welsh Ministers two years written notice of their intention to discontinue the school. The Council was also informed of this decision at that time by letter.

Cabinet noted that a £3million business case has been approved in principle by Welsh Government, subject to 50% match funding being provided by Caerphilly County Borough Council, in order to plan for the closure. The bid includes plans for additional classrooms at Newbridge School to manage the initial pupil increase and undertake demolition works at both Cwmcarn High school and Newbridge School.

Members were assured that the Council, along with the Education Achievement Service (EAS) and the school, are working collaboratively to ensure the pupils' education is not disadvantaged and further update reports would be provided as detail emerges in relation to the Governing Body's decision.

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 update in respect of the Governing Body's decision to discontinue the school in 2 years be noted;
- (ii) the capital investment in relation to Newbridge and Cwmcarn Schools and the allocation of £1.5million as CCBC's 50% match funding be agreed;
- (iii) Officers continue to work with the Governing Body and staff at the school regarding the planning of the school budget, staffing and admission issues;
- (iv) regular update reports be provided as the situation develops.

6. DRAFT BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2017/18

The report provided Cabinet with details of draft budget proposals and draft savings proposals for the 2017/18 financial year to allow for a period of consultation prior to a final decision in February 2017.

Cabinet noted the Headline issues in the Provisional Statement, which was published on 19th October 2016 and the 2017/18 Draft Proposals including a proposal that Council Tax is increased by 1%. The report outlined detailed Whole Authority Cost Pressures (totalling £2.745m), Inescapable Service Pressures (totalling £6.186m), and the Reduction in Welsh Government Funding (totalling £0.608m). In addition, the report outlined the Draft Savings Proposals 2017/18 (totalling £8.653m) and Council Tax Uplift ((1%) totalling £0.886), which will ensure that a balanced budget is deliverable for 2017/18.

Cabinet thanked the Officer and all staff on their hard work and efforts in order to identify further savings and offer a balanced budget.

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 draft 2017/18 budget proposals including the proposed savings totalling £8.653m be endorsed;
- (ii) the proposal to increase Council Tax by 1% for the 2017/18 financial year to ensure that a balanced budget is achieved (Council Tax Band D being set at £1,011.96) be agreed;
- (iii) the draft budget proposals be subject to consultation prior to final 2017/18 budget proposals being presented to Cabinet and Council in February 2017.

7. CAPITAL BIDS

The report sought Cabinet approval of proposals to utilise the capital earmarked reserve of £7.9m that was agreed as part of the Capital Programme approved by Council at its meeting on the 24th February 2016.

The report provided details of bids that have been prioritised for utilising the £7.9m capital earmarked reserve approved by Council at its meeting on the 24th February 2016.

The total value of the prioritised bids is £8.763m which exceeds the capital earmarked reserve by £863k. It is proposed that the additional £863k is funded from a one-off insurance rebate received from the contractor for the Sirhowy Enterprise Way (SEW) PFI Scheme.

Cabinet noted that the bids include a number of projects across the borough, such as the purchase of 9 Twin Pack Refuse Collection Vehicles, to enable the separation of food and garden waste; the demolition and replacement of Longbridge Baths, Risca (Phase 1 and 2); Convert the Former Meals on Wheels Centre, Pengam into office space; Upgrade the Children's Centre for Children with Complex Needs; A drainage scheme to be implemented in the closed Landfill site at Ty Llwyd and Match-funding for Newbridge/Cwmcarn Schools, following the announcement that Cwmcarn High School will close in 2-years.

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 prioritised bids presented in the report be approved;
- (ii) it be agreed that the £863k additional cost in excess of the £7.9m approved capital earmarked reserve should be funded from the one-off insurance rebate of £919k received from the contractor for the Sirhowy Enterprise Way (SEW) PFI scheme.

The meeting closed at 2.31pm

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any corrections made at the meeting held on 14th December 2016.

CHAIR