



COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON 24TH JANUARY 2017 AT 5.00PM

PRESENT:

Councillor Mrs D. Price - Mayor
Councillor J. Bevan - Deputy Mayor

Councillors:

Miss L. Ackerman, M. Adams, Mrs E.M. Aldworth, Mrs K.R. Baker, P.J. Bevan, L. Binding, Mrs A. Blackman, D. Bolter, D.G. Carter, Mrs. P. Cook, C.J. Cuss, H.W. David, W. David, H.R. Davies, D.T. Davies, N. Dix, C. Elsbury, M. Evans, Mrs C. Forehead, J.E. Fussell, Mrs J. Gale, N. George, C.J. Gordon, R.W. Gough, Mrs P. Griffiths, D.T. Hardacre, L. Harding, D. Harse, D. Havard, C. Hawker, K. James, M.P. James, Mrs B.A. Jones, Ms J.G. Jones, S. Kent, G. Kirby, Mrs A. Leonard, Ms P. Leonard, A. Lewis, K. Lloyd, C.P. Mann, P. Marsden. Mrs. G. Oliver, D.V. Poole, D.W.R. Preece, M.J. Prew, J. Pritchard, J.A. Pritchard, A. Rees, K.V. Reynolds, J.E. Roberts, Mrs M.E. Sargent, J. Simmonds, S. Skivens, Mrs E. Stenner, J. Taylor, L.G. Whittle, T.J. Williams, R. Woodyatt

Together with:-

C. Burns (Interim Chief Executive), D. Street (Director of Social Services), N. Scammell (Acting Director of Corporate Services), C. Harry (Corporate Director - Communities), G. Williams (Interim Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer), S. Harris (Interim Head of Corporate Finance), R. Kyte (Team Leader, Strategic and Development Plans), Lisa James (Senior Planner (Strategic and Development Plans), K. Peters (Corporate Policy Manager), A. Rees (Senior Policy Officer (Equalities and Welsh Language), H. Morgan (Senior Committee Services Officer)

1. WEB-CASTING FILMING AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Interim Chief Executive reminded those present that the meeting was being filmed and would be made publically available in live and archive form via the Council's website. He advised that decisions would be made by show of hands.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A.P. Angel, K. Dawson, Miss E. Forehead, L. Gardiner, A.G. Higgs, G.J. Hughes, G. Johnston, S. Morgan, Mrs L. Phipps, D. Rees, R. Saralis and Mrs J. Summers.

3. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

In opening her announcements, the Mayor and those present offered their congratulations to both Councillors Lisa Phipps and Arianna Leonard on their recent marriages.

The Mayor then referred to the many events and visits that she and the Deputy Mayor have undertaken since the last meeting and made specific reference to the Community Carol Service in Newbridge with Rev Peter Cho, a 100th birthday presentation and a number of events over the Christmas period.

4. PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

National Care Awards 2016

Members were advised that Caroline Davies, Registered Manager of Ty Iscoed Residential Home, Newbridge has won the prestigious 'National Care Manager' award 2016.

The National Care Awards are organised by Caring Times magazine and are well recognised across the United Kingdom. The award is a tribute to Caroline's hard work and dedication in caring for the elderly. Caroline was also nominated for 'Best Dementia Care Manager' at the National Dementia Care Awards.

Caroline Davies came forward in order that Members could recognise the award and they congratulated her on her achievement.

Tidy Wales Awards 2016

It was announced that the Sirhowy Valley Honeybee Hive House Project has won the 'Eco Schools in the Community Award' at the recent Tidy Wales Awards 2016. The project is a partnership between the Sirhowy Valley Honeybee Company, Ynysddu Primary School and the Policy Unit. The pioneering project, which is the first of its kind in the UK, involves an interactive beehive house in the school grounds of Ynysddu Primary School. The scheme also won the Best Community Project and was overall winner in the 'Pride in your Place' Awards.

Schools from across the borough will also have the opportunity to visit the project to learn about bees up close, and their importance for sustainability and wildlife preservation.

Lorne East (Sirhowy Valley Honeybee Company), Tracy Evans (Policy Unit), David Witchell, Liam Haynes, Phoebe Miller and Macie Edwards from Ynysddu Primary School Eco Committee came forward in order that Members could recognise the award and they congratulated all those involved in the project.

Best Performing Authority, Housing Maintenance

It was then announced that the Council's Housing Maintenance Team "Housing Repair Operations" has won the title of 'Best Performing Authority' in the Building Maintenance category of the Association for Public Service Excellence Performance Networks Awards 2016. This award recognises the exceptional commitment to frontline service provision and is a well-deserved recognition for such an outstanding team.

Members were advised that feedback from customer satisfaction surveys also confirm that the service is being provided efficiently and to a good standard, with 95% of those surveyed reporting that they are satisfied or very satisfied with the service they receive.

Jason Fellows, Faye Jones, John Gittins, Jennifer Phibben and Wayne Caswell came forward to receive the award from the Mayor. Members placed on record their congratulations to the staff involved in achieving the award.

5. PETITIONS

The Mayor received a petition presented by Councillor K. Lloyd on behalf of local residents requesting that Crown Street, Crumlin be made a one-way street. She advised that it would be referred to the appropriate directorate for attention.

6. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

7. COUNCIL - 22ND NOVEMBER 2016

RESOLVED that the following minutes be approved as correct records and signed by the Mayor.

(minute nos. 1 - 14 on page nos. 1 - 7)

REPORTS REFERRED FROM CABINET

Consideration was given to the following reports referred from Cabinet.

8. REVIEW OF MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION POLICY

Consideration was given to the report presented to both the Special Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on the 7th December 2016 and Cabinet on the 18th January 2017 which provided Members with options for proposed changes to the Council's Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy. Members were asked to consider 2 options available for charging the MRP on supported and unsupported borrowings i.e. the Straight Line Method and Annuity Method based on a number of assumptions as detailed in paragraph 4.5.3 of the report. It was reported that it has been confirmed via the External Auditors that the Wales Audit Office does not have any particular comments on the proposed changes and recognises that it is an approach similar to that adopted at other Authorities.

Members were advised that the MRP is the method by which Local Authorities charge their revenue accounts over time with the cost of their capital expenditure that was originally funded by debt. From 2007/08 onwards, Local Authorities have been free to set their own policy on calculating MRP, with the sole legislative proviso being that the amount calculated must be one that the Council considers to be "prudent". The review of the MRP policy will generate significant savings to support the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

It was explained that an immediate recurring saving of circa £3.5m is available to support the 2017/18 revenue budget through adopting either of the proposed options. In addition to the revenue budget saving, if the change in the MRP policy is back-dated to the 1st April 2016 the straight-line approach will generate additional one-off sums of circa £3.9m in 2016/17 and £0.232m in 2017/18 to support the Capital Programme. The annuity approach will generate an additional one-off sum of circa £5.5m in 2016/17 and additional annual one-off sums to support the Capital Programme for a number of years as detailed in paragraph 4.6.8 of the report. The total MRP charge required to fully extinguish the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) is the same under both the straight-line and annuity methods.

Following consideration of the report it was moved and seconded that the recommendations of the Special Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet (as tabled at the meeting) be endorsed. By show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that in light of discussions at the Special Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 7th December 2016 and Cabinet on 18th January 2017, the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy, as set out in the approved 2016/17 Treasury Management Strategy, be revised with effect from the 1st April 2016 as follows:-

- (i) MRP on historic debt liability as at the 31st March 2007 and subsequent capital expenditure funded from supported borrowings be charged to revenue over 50 years;
- (ii) the MRP charge for individual assets funded through unsupported borrowing be based on the estimated life of each asset or 25 years where this cannot be determined;
- (iii) the MRP charge for supported borrowing be based on an assumed annuity rate of 2%;
- (iv) the MRP charge for unsupported borrowing be based on the average Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) interest rate for new annuity loans in the year that an asset becomes operational.

9. WELSH LANGUAGE STRATEGY 2017-2022

Cabinet considered this report on 18th January 2017 and in endorsing its content recommended its acceptance by Council.

The report sought the endorsement for the draft 5-year Welsh Language Strategy as required by Standards 145 and 146 of the Welsh Language Standards (No 1) Regulations 2015. The Authority is required to develop a 5-year strategy that sets out how it proposes to promote the Welsh language and facilitate the use of the Welsh language in the area. The strategy must include a target for increasing or maintaining the numbers of Welsh speakers and a statement setting out how the target is intended to be reached. It must be reviewed and revisited on a 5-yearly cycle and is reviewed on an annual basis.

During the course of the debate, reference was made to the key outcomes in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2017-2020 and as to whether there will be funding available to achieve the outcome required. The Interim Chief Executive advised that there has been a significant increase in Welsh Medium provision with £54m being spent over the last 4 years. Whilst Band A funding for the 21st Century Schools Programme has come to an end it is intended that a report will be presented in May in relation to Band B funding for projects across Wales and will consider local requirements. Preparatory work is being undertaken by the School Board.

Following consideration of the report it was moved and seconded that the recommendation from Cabinet be endorsed. By show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reason contained in the report, the Welsh Language Strategy 2017-2022 be approved.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

10. REVIEW OF LICENSING COMMITTEE STRUCTURE AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

Consideration was given to the report, which had been presented to and approved by Licensing Committee on 16th January 2017. It detailed proposed changes to the Licensing Committee structure and terms of reference in order to comply with legal requirements and guidance.

It was explained that following a review of the existing arrangements as to how the Council discharges its licensing function, it was proposed to replace the existing Licensing structure by setting up two distinct Licensing Committees (to be titled Licensing and Gambling Committee and Taxi and General Committee. It is also proposed to establish a Sub Committee under each Committee (to be titled the Licensing and Gambling Sub Committee and Taxi and General Sub Committee). The report detailed the proposed terms of reference for each of these.

It was explained that the Chair and Members would remain the same for both Committees (with one special responsibility allowance) and that it is just the title of the Committee that will change depending on the nature of the business to be transacted.

Following consideration of the report it was moved and seconded that the recommendations from the Licensing Committee be endorsed. By show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Report:-

- (i) the existing Licensing structure be replaced with two Licensing Committees, titled the Licensing and Gambling Committee and the Taxi and General Committee respectively;
- (ii) the Terms of Reference for each Committee and the arrangements for the Sub-Committees as appended to the report be noted and endorsed;
- (iii) the membership of each Committee remain the same as the current membership of the Licensing Committee;
- (iv) the Interim Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer be authorised to amend the Council's Constitution to reflect the proposals set out above.

11. REVIEW OF POLITICAL BALANCE

The report advised that following the resignation of two members from the Labour group, and with them joining the Independent Group, the political balance has changed and there is a subsequent impact on the allocation of seats on Planning Committee (there is no change required for those Committees with less than 20 members).

It was noted that legislation requires a council to review the political balance and the Council has always applied the legislation to mean that so far as is practicable the allocation of seats is the same as the overall percentage that a party has of the total seats of the authority.

It was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved. By show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the report:-

- (i) the changes in relation to the political grouping on the authority be noted;
- (ii) the changes to allocation of seats as set out in the report be approved.

12. CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN UP TO 2021 - SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

Consideration was given to the report which sought to update and formally adopt the following documents as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2021 and proposed affording Officers delegated powers in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member for future non-material amendments to existing Supplementary Planning Guidance.

1. Supplementary Planning Guidance LDP4 – Trees and Development
2. Supplementary Planning Guidance LDP5 – Car Parking Standards
3. Supplementary Planning Guidance LDP6 – Building Better Places to Live
4. Supplementary Planning Guidance LDP7 – Householder Development

Members were advised that the Guidance is produced to support and strengthen the Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2021 (LDP) and sets out detailed guidance on the way in which the policies of the LDP will be applied in particular circumstances or areas. Due to changes in primary and secondary legislation and national planning policy and guidance, minor modifications are required to be made in order to ensure that the Council's Guidance remains up to date. The report outlined the modifications required for each document.

Specific reference was made to the proposal that any further minor, non-material modifications to Supplementary Planning Guidance would be dealt with under Delegated Powers in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member and an undertaking was given that all Members would be advised of any subsequent changes.

It was moved and seconded that in order to provide a robust policy framework against which to determine planning applications, the recommendations in the report be approved. By show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the report:-

- (i) Supplementary Planning Guidance LDP4 – Trees and Development be formally updated and adopted;
- (ii) Supplementary Planning Guidance LDP5 – Car Parking Standards be formally updated and adopted;
- (iii) Supplementary Planning Guidance LDP6 – Building Better Places to Live be formally updated and adopted;
- (iv) Supplementary Planning Guidance LDP7 – Householder Development be formally updated and adopted;
- (v) Any future minor, non-material amendments to update Supplementary Planning Guidance be undertaken under delegated powers in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member and all Members be advised accordingly.

13. COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2017/18

Consideration was given to the report which sought approval of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for the 2017/18 financial year on the same basis as the scheme used in 2016/17.

It was explained that the Council is required to formally approve a Council Tax Reduction Scheme on an annual basis. The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2017 have now been agreed and these apply in relation to a Council Tax Reduction Scheme made for a financial year beginning on or after the 1st April 2017. The regulations uprate certain figures used to calculate an applicant's entitlement to a reduction under a Council Tax Reduction Scheme, and the subsequent level of reduction. It also makes consequential amendments as a result of changes to the wider welfare system.

As the 2017 regulations do not contain any significant changes for claimants, it is proposed that the Council continues its local scheme in line with the regulations as recently amended for the financial year 2017/18, effective from the 1st April 2017, and continues to exercise the previously approved local discretions as provided for within Part 5 of the Prescribed Requirements Regulations.

It was moved and seconded that the recommendation in the report be approved. By show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the report the current Council Tax Reduction Scheme continue for the 2017/18 financial year along with the previously agreed local discretions.

14. LOCAL WELL-BEING ASSESSMENT FOR THE COUNTY BOROUGH AREA

The report advised that the Caerphilly Public Services Board has published its draft Assessment of Local Well-being for final consultation with comments required by 31st January 2017.

It was explained that the draft Assessment of Local Well-being (Well-being Assessment) was approved by the Public Services Board on the 6th December 2016. The Assessment, which was prepared by the Corporate Policy Unit on behalf of the Public Services Board, is part of the requirements set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to prepare a local assessment of well-being for the area that looks at its economic, environmental, cultural and social situation.

The draft Assessment has been developed by considering the known data for the area and extensive consultation and highlights a number of emerging trends that will be the focus of objective setting and planning across public services. It has been sent for comment to all stakeholders and any statutory consultees who were involved in its preparation. This consultation closes on 31st December 2016.

The subsequent Well-being Plan will be developed over the 16 month period leading up to May 2018.

It was moved and seconded that the recommendation in the report be approved. By show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the report it be noted that Caerphilly Public Services Board has published its draft Assessment of Local Well-being for final consultation with comments on its content by 31st of January 2017.

15. QUESTIONS UNDER RULE OF PROCEDURE 10(2)

There were no questions submitted under Rule of Procedure 10(2).

16. CHARITY CONCERT - CENTRAL METHODIST CHURCH, BLACKWOOD

In closing the meeting, the Mayor advised Members of the concert arranged by Councillor Simmonds in aid of her charity appeal, Velindre Cancer Centre which will be held on Friday 24th February 2107. Aber Valley Male Voice Choir, Blackwood Musical Theatre Society and Georgia Monaghan (soloist) will be performing.

The meeting closed at 6pm

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 7th March 2017 they were signed by the Mayor.

MAYOR