



CABINET

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN ON WEDNESDAY, 15TH MARCH 2017 AT 2.00 P.M.

PRESENT

Councillor D.V. Poole - Chair

Councillors:

Mrs C. Forehead (Human Resources and Governance/Business Manager), N. George (Community and Leisure Services), D.T. Hardacre (Performance and Asset Management), K. James (Regeneration, Planning and Sustainable Development), Mrs B. Jones (Corporate Services), T.J. Williams (Highways, Transportation and Engineering) and R. Woodyatt (Social Services)

Together with:

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

Also in Attendance:

S. Harris (Interim Head of Corporate Finance), L. Donovan (Acting Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development), S. Couzens (Chief Housing Officer), M. Lloyd (WHQS and Infrastructure Manager), S. Richards (Principal Finance Officer), A. West (School Admissions and Exclusions Manager), S. Mutch (Early Years Manager) C. Forbes-Thompson (Interim Head of Democratic Services) and C. Evans (Committee Services Officer).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor K.V. Reynolds.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor B. Jones declared an interest in the item relating to Re-Profiling of WHQS Programme and HRA Capital Programme 2017/18. Details are minuted with the respective item.

3. CABINET – 1ST MARCH 2017

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 1st March 2017 (minute nos. 1 - 6) be approved and signed as a correct record.

MATTERS ON WHICH EXECUTIVE DECISIONS WERE REQUIRED

4. INVEST TO SAVE BIDS

The report provided Cabinet with details of a range of bids for one-off repayable funding from the Invest to Save reserve.

Heads of Service were asked to submit bids for one-off funding that will result in cashable on-going revenue savings. The projected balance on the Invest to Save reserve as at the 31st March 2017 is £477k.

Bids have been received totalling £668k, which exceeds the available funding by £191k. As a result, the bids have been reviewed by the Corporate Management Team in consultation with the Deputy Leader/Cabinet Member for Housing and the Deputy Leader/Cabinet Member for Corporate Services. As a result, the report sought approval for bids totalling £465k, which included the replacement of fitness equipment at Risca Leisure Centre (£160k), an addition 3 Glamping Units at Cwmcarn Forest Drive (£124k), A Catering Kiosk to be provided at the Centre of Sporting Excellence (£20k), PV Panels to be installed at both Newbridge and Risca Leisure Centres (£113k) and PV Panels to be installed at Tir-Y-Berth Depot (£48k).

Members were asked to note that, whilst it is recommended not to support bids for PV Panels on Blackwood Comprehensive School and Cwrt Rawling Primary School, approval was given at a previous Cabinet meeting for £100k investments to be made to install solar PV systems on 20 schools across the borough.

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 recommendation not to support the bids totalling £203k, as detailed in the table in paragraph 4.2 of the report, be agreed;
- (ii) the remaining bids totalling £465k be approved for funding on a repayable Invest to Save basis.

5. ANNUAL LEAVE PAYMENTS

The report sought approval from Cabinet with regards to payments for annual leave for employees that receive payments in addition to their basic salary, to ensure that the Council is compliant with case law whilst having regard to the Council's Single Status Agreement 2009.

It was noted that since 2010, various cases have been considered by the European Court of Justice (ECJ) where employees have argued that their holiday pay should include all elements of their pay and not just their basic salary. These cases relate to the principle that when an employee is on leave, they should be paid the same as when they are in work.

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 it be recommended to Council that the current Well-being Objectives and Well-being Statement be approved and further reviewed by the new administration after the local government elections.

6. RE-PROFILING OF WHQS PROGRAMME AND HRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2017/2018

The report, which was considered by Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 28th February 2017 and Caerphilly Homes Task Group on 16th February 2017, outlined that there has continued to be progress and slippage with the WHQS delivery programme during 2016/17. As such it has been necessary to review and update the current delivery programme.

It was noted that the majority of the internal work changes have resulted in work being brought forward in the programme. In regard to the external works programme, the majority of the changes have results in works being moved to future years. The Sheltered Housing Scheme approach has now altered with the works being delivered by the in-house teams. This work has now been built into the forward works programme.

The HRA Capital Programme budget allocates the necessary resources based on the Savills cost plan. Work is underway to amend this approach so that in future it will be based on actual costs being achieved for works undertaken which provides a more realistic projection in relation to the proposed budget expenditure. These figures will be continually reviewed and assessed to provide the most accurate forecast possible for budget planning.

Cabinet noted that concerns were raised by both Representatives from the Caerphilly Homes Task Group and Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee in relation to in relation to tenant involvement in future contracts and the continued use of the Savills Survey. It was noted that assurances have been provided that, where possible Tenant involvement will continue with the new DPS process and the Savills Survey will shortly be replaced with actual costs and is no longer being used for internal works, and were assured that Savills Surveys will no longer be in use after 6 months, should sufficient data be collected, for external works.

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 Re-Profiling of WHQS Programme and HRA Capital Programme 2017/18 be approved.

7. EDUCATION CAPITAL 2017/18

The report sought approval for the proposals for the 2017/18 Education Capital Programme and identified proposals for the allocation of Capital Budgets for the 2017/18 financial year in the context of the 3 year capital programme 2016/17 – 2018/19.

It was noted that there are continued budget pressures in relation to ongoing electrical works within schools and an additional sum of £2m was allocated, over a 3 year period 2014/15 – 2016/17 and funded from Asset Management, Health and Safety and School Security and Boiler Replacement budgets, however these works are progressing well.

Cabinet noted the detailed proposals for 2017/18, which included Additional Accommodation, Asset Management, Health and Safety, School Security, School Boiler Replacements and Revenue/Capital funding, many of which are to be allocated on a 50/50 funding basis with the relevant school and include a number of upgrades and improvements to the schools.

It was noted that the proposals in their entirety would commit virtually the entire available budget before the commencement of the financial year. In order to provide for in year requests for finding, it is recommended to fund £100,000 from LMS contingency to supplement the 50/50 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 proposals to utilise the Education Capital budget for 2017/18, as outlined in the report be noted;
- (ii) the proposal to supplement the 50/50 budget with a £100,000 contribution from the LMS Contingency to support in-year bids, be agreed.

8. CONSULTATION – PROPOSED ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS 2018/19

The report, which was considered by Education for Life Scrutiny Committee on 27th February 2017, set out the proposed changes to the Schools Admission Arrangements for the academic year 2018/19.

It was noted that the consultation process had concluded on 1st March 2017 and, in accordance with the School Admissions Code (2013), the admission arrangements must be determined by 15th April 2017. It was noted that there are no proposed changes to the Admission Arrangements appended to the report.

Discussion ensued and Members commended the work of the Department, especially in light of the closure to Cwmcarn High School, that there are no proposals to change the catchment areas and that currently there is sufficient capacity for admission numbers. In addition, Cabinet noted that on the 28th February 2017, 4500 letters were sent out to parents who have applied for admission and every child whose parent had applied by the closing date for their catchment school have been offered placement for September 2017.

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 Proposed Admission Arrangements for 2018/2019 be approved.

9. CONSULTATION – PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A RHYMNEY 3 – 18 SCHOOL

The report, which was considered by Education for Life Scrutiny Committee on 27th February 2017, outlined the proposals as part of the consultation process.

Members were reminded that, at its meeting on 30th November 2016, Cabinet agreed to proceed to formal consultation process which was undertaken between the 3rd January 2017 and 16th February 2017, through a series of meetings.

It was noted that 13 written responses had been received (3 in favour of the proposal with 7 against and 3 who did not feel strongly either way). The responses were largely consistent with those outlined during the consultation meetings and included concerns such as safe routes to schools, mixing of children from both schools, success over 3-18 schools in Wales and Teaching across age ranges. The main issues raised both written and verbally were summarised, many of which did not directly relate to the 3-18 school, including distance criteria.

Cabinet noted some of the benefits of a 3-18 facility which included access for primary pupils to the excellent facilities in the secondary school (science laboratories, sports facilities etc) and the reduced impact of the transition of pupils from Primary to Secondary School. In addition, Members were referred to Appendix 2 of the report, which highlighted the views of Estyn in relation to the proposal, and noted that there were no objections from the Inspectorate.

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 noting the comments from Education for Life Scrutiny Committee and consultation process, it be agreed to move to Statutory Notice.

10. CHILDCARE OFFER EARLY IMPLEMENTATION PROPOSAL

The report sought the endorsement of Cabinet to participate in the Welsh Government's Early Implementers Scheme for the proposed Community planning area of Mid Valleys East.

The Welsh Government (WG) Manifesto in 2016 launched a new Childcare offer of 30 hours of childcare and early education for up to 48 weeks of the year, for working parents of 3 and 4 year olds. Following more detailed information on the initial pilot local authority areas planned for September 2017, Caerphilly was approached as an additional area to join this initial early implementation of the offer.

WG recognised that childcare is one of the biggest challenges facing working families in Wales, and developing an enriched childcare offer is a top priority. Supporting families with quality, flexible and affordable childcare supports economic regeneration, can reduce pressure on family income and help parents to participate in work, thus reducing a family's risk of poverty. It also supports the wellbeing of children through positive and rich childcare experiences.

It was noted that WG proposes to provide 30 hours of funded early education and childcare per week, for working parents of 3 and 4 year olds, for up to 48 hours per year by the end of their term in Government 2020/21 and Caerphilly has recently been invited to join the Early Implementers for the Childcare offer to begin implementation in September 2017.

Following detailed consideration, Mid Valleys East was selected as the community planning area to identify the school catchment areas to be part of the scheme. This is because the area has sufficient existing childcare provision, a significant number of working families who would be eligible to take up this childcare offer, 17 primary schools in both English and Welsh offering Foundation Phase Nursery Provision, 4 non-maintained childcare settings offering Foundation Phase early education places (3 Welsh Medium and 1 English Medium) as well as 7 Flying Start catchment areas, which could support those who are suffering disadvantage to take up employment opportunities, if childcare costs were then removed as a barrier. Mid Valleys East would also give the mixture of rural and town centre economies and so would test transport/ travel issues connecting childcare provision to the local Foundation Phase provision.

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, it be agreed that the proposed Community planning area of Mid Valleys East be submitted for inclusion in the Welsh Government Early Implementers offer.

11. CABINET FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The report sought the endorsement of the Cabinet Forward Work Programme for the period April 2017 to June 2017. Members were asked to note that, since its publication there have been a number of changes to the Cabinet Forward Work Programme, which included the cancellation of a meeting and movement of reports.

Cabinet thanked the Officer for the report and verbal updated and agreed that the updated version, as presented at the meeting, be published on the Council website.

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 noting the amendments outlined at the meeting, the Cabinet Forward Work Programme be approved.

The meeting closed at 2.50 p.m.

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any corrections made at the meeting held on 22nd March 2017.

CHAIR