



COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON TUESDAY, 23RD JANUARY 2018 AT 5.00 PM

PRESENT:

Councillor J. Bevan - Mayor
Councillor M. Adams - Deputy Mayor

Councillors:

Mrs E. Aldworth, C. Andrews, A. Angel, P.J. Bevan, C. Bezzina, L. Binding, S. Cook, D. Cushing, C. Cuss, W. David, D.T. Davies, M. Davies, K. Dawson, N. Dix, C. Elsbury, K. Etheridge, M. Evans, A. Farina-Childs, Mrs C. Forehead, J.E. Fussell, A. Gair, Ms J. Gale, N. George, C. Gordon, R.W. Gough, D.T. Hardacre, L. Harding, D. Harse, M. James, V. James, L. Jeremiah, Mrs B. Jones, S. Kent, G. Kirby, Ms P. Leonard, C.P. Mann, Mrs P. Marsden, B. Miles, S. Morgan, Mrs G. Oliver, B. Owen, T. Parry, Mrs L. Phipps, D.V. Poole, D.W.R. Preece, Mrs D. Price, J. Pritchard, J.E. Roberts, R. Saralis, Mrs M.E. Sargent, J. Scriven, G. Simmonds, S. Skivens, Mrs E. Stenner, C. Thomas, A. Whitcombe, R. Whiting, L G. Whittle, T. Williams, W. Williams, B. Zaplatynski

Together with:

C. Harry (Interim Chief Executive), M.S. Williams (Interim Corporate Director – Communities), D. Street (Corporate Director - Social Services, R.M. Harris (Internal Audit Manager and Acting Deputy Monitoring Officer), S. Harris (Interim Head of Corporate Finance), D. Marr (Deputy Monitoring Officer, Cardiff Council), T. Stephens (Development Control Manager), C. Forbes-Thompson (Interim Head of Democratic Services), E. Sullivan (Senior Committee Services Officer) and R. Barrett (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 publicly available in live and archive form via the Council's website. She advised that decisions would be made by a show of hands.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A. Collis, Ms E. Forehead, D. Havard, A. Higgs, A. Hussey, G. Johnston, Mrs A. Leonard, J. Ridgewell, J. Simmonds and J. Taylor.

3. INTRODUCTION FROM INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Mayor welcomed Mrs Christina Harray to her first Council meeting in her capacity as the new Interim Chief Executive of Caerphilly County Borough Council. Mrs Harray expressed her thanks to Council and paid tribute to the work of her predecessor, Mr Chris Burns. In referring to the recent challenges faced by the Council, she praised the commitment of staff during this difficult time and spoke of her intention to take forward the ambition and priorities set out by the Leader in order to establish firm foundations upon which to move the organisation forward to achieve excellence.

The Interim Chief Executive explained that her first priority would be to put in place a revised senior management structure to deliver the new agenda, with an update to be provided to Members shortly, and that this work had already begun with the recent appointment of Mr Mark S. Williams as the Interim Corporate Director of Communities. Mrs Harray also outlined her priorities for the months ahead, including working to shared goals to establish an overall direction of travel, progression of the Medium Term Financial Plan, placing a focus on specific outcomes in relation to educational attainment and the 21st Century Schools programme, meeting the Welsh Quality Housing Standard by 2020 and managing increasing demand across Social Services.

In closing, the Interim Chief Executive spoke of her commitment to the role and welcomed the opportunity to work with elected Members moving forward. Council congratulated Mrs Harray and Mr Williams on their recent appointments.

4. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor referred to the many events held across the county borough since the last meeting and thanked the Deputy Mayor, Councillor M. Adams, for attending the majority of these engagements on his behalf during a period of convalescence. He thanked the Members who had attended his Christmas Carol Service held at Rhymney Comprehensive School and paid tribute to the talent of the pupils from participating schools.

5. PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE) Award - Most Improved Performer

Members were informed that the Council's Building Cleaning department recently won the 'Most Improved Performer in Building Cleaning Service' award at the APSE Performance Networks Awards 2017. This award recognizes the significant improvements implemented by the team, which covers areas such as quality, performance, cost, promoting excellence and commitment to front line service provision.

Viv Jones, Kirsty Thomas, Sian Phelps, Nicola Jenkins, Rhian Evans and Julie Howe from the Building Cleaning Team came forward to receive the award from the Mayor and were congratulated by Council on their achievement.

6. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

7. COUNCIL – 21ST NOVEMBER 2017

RESOLVED that the following minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by

the Mayor.

Council held on 21st November 2017 (minute nos. 1-20).

8. SPECIAL COUNCIL – 5TH DECEMBER 2017

Minute No. 5 - Designation of Interim Head of Paid Service

In referring to the discussion minuted on the backfilling of relevant posts within the Executive Office, the Leader provided an update in relation to appointments. He explained that the Authority were now in a position to consider the appointment of a permanent Deputy Chief Executive and Head of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer and confirmed that details of the proposals in relation to these and the appointment of other senior posts would be circulated to Members shortly, with it intended for the proposals to offer structure and stability moving forward.

Clarification was sought on the timescales, advertisement and interview processes for the appointment of these posts and whether the proposals would be presented to Council for consideration. The Leader confirmed that it was intended to commence implementation of the new structure as soon as possible and the Interim Chief Executive confirmed that her report to Members would outline the rationale against each of the posts and whether these would be advertised and appointed on an internal or external basis.

Following discussion on the above it was:

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

Special Council held on 5th December 2017 (minute nos. 1-5).

9. CABINET 15TH NOVEMBER 2017 - URGENT ITEM NOT SUBJECT TO CALL IN - FREE CHRISTMAS PARKING FOR CAERPHILLY TOWN

Members noted the recommendations of the report and the decision taken by Cabinet on 15th November 2017 to approve the introduction of a 2 hours free parking period across all Caerphilly town pay and display car parks for two weeks in the run up to Christmas 2017. This decision had been taken as a matter of urgency due to the unique set of circumstances that resulted from the highway improvement works at Pwllypant roundabout.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

10. WLGA CHARTER FOR MEMBER SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

Consideration was given to the report which had been endorsed by the Democratic Services Committee on 23rd November 2017. The report sought approval for reaffirmation of the Council's commitment to the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) Wales Charter for Member Support and Development.

Caerphilly County Borough Council was the first in Wales to be awarded the Welsh Local Wales Charter for Member Support and Development in 2007, which has since been successfully renewed twice in 2011 and 2014. The Welsh Local Charter aims to develop, recognise and share good practice in the support and development of elected Members, and

is a public statement and quality standard benchmark for delivering effective Member support and development.

Members were pleased to recognise the Council's continued achievement in meeting the requirements of the Charter as appended to the report and expressed a need for the good practice being carried out in this area to continue.

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

RESOLVED that that for the reasons set out in the report, Caerphilly County Borough Council's commitment to the Wales Charter for Member Support and Development be re-affirmed.

11. PLANNING CONSULTATION PROCEDURE FOR APPLICATIONS THAT INVOLVE TELECOMMUNICATION MASTS

Consideration was given to the report, which had been presented to the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee on 12th December 2017. The report sought the approval of Council on a proposal to amend the local planning authority's current procedure with regard to telecommunication masts.

It was noted that Council resolved in 2005 to adopt a consultation procedure whereby any application for planning permission for, or a notification about telecommunication masts, should be subject to a public consultation process with all local education establishments within 300m and all residential development within 250m of the proposed site. Given the considerable administration costs involved in these consultation exercises when compared to a very low response rate and low statutory application fees, it was proposed that the requirement be reduced so that telecommunication masts are subject to similar consultation procedures to other developments. This would result in only adjoining properties being sent a consultation letter, but a site notice would be posted in every case and the need to consult local schools would be retained.

Council were referred to industry guidelines associated with telecommunication masts and advised that developer compliance with these would meet requirements from a planning point of view. A Member queried whether the area around telecommunication masts would be subject to supplementary planning guidance and the Officer explained that whilst there is no specific consultation required on this matter, all such applications have to be accompanied by a certificate of compliance with the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection guidelines, which are regarded as sufficient assurance that such masts are acceptable from a public health point of view.

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 set out in the report, the level of planning consultation for applications that involve telecommunications masts be reduced to that associated with other applications and notifications, subject to an amended procedure to include a site notice in each case and the consultation of all local education establishments within 300m.

12. COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2018/19

Consideration was given to the report, which sought Council approval of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for the 2018/19 financial year. The report recommended continuing to operate a Council Tax Reduction Scheme for the 2018/19 financial year on the same basis as

the scheme used in 2017/18.

As the 2018 regulations do not contain any significant changes for claimants, it was proposed that the Council continues its local scheme in line with the regulations as recently amended for the financial year 2018/19, effective from 1st April 2018, and continues to exercise the previously agreed local discretions as provided for within Part 5 of the Prescribed Requirements Regulations as set out in the report.

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 set out in the report, the Council Tax Reduction Scheme should continue for the 2018/19 financial year, along with the previously agreed local discretions.

13. QUESTIONS RECEIVED UNDER RULE OF PROCEDURE 10(2)

Consideration was given to the following Question under Rule of Procedure 10(2). In accordance with the revisions to the constitution, the answer is also provided.

REGENERATION AREA FORUM - TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOMES AND PLACES FROM COUNCILLOR K. ETHERIDGE

To ask the Cabinet Member for Homes and Places how much total money was allocated to the Regeneration Area Forum since March 2017 - 2018 and

1. Allocating to each Ward
2. How was the money spent, and what criteria was used and can projects be defined
3. Can Ward Members bid for projects which benefit their wards and residents
4. Is the procedure and funding agreed after discussion with the Town Centre Management Committees where one exists, and is there any discussion with Town Councils
5. What happens in Wards when point 4 is not applicable
6. Define any underspends for this period across the Borough
7. Confirmation that future allocations will be available from March 2018

RESPONSE FROM COUNCILLOR L. PHIPPS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HOMES AND PLACES

Q1 Allocating to each Ward.

As a result of decisions made at Special Council on 25th February 2015 in relation to the budget proposals 2015/16 and medium term financial strategy 2015/2018 the Area Forum revenue budget did not receive a budget allocation for 2017/2018. Consequently, for 2017/18 there was no Area Forum revenue budget allocation to Wards.

Whilst several Wards have fully utilised their previous funding awards from the Area Forum revenue budget a number of Wards maintain a residual budget allocation resulting from underspends in their previous funding awards. As at the 31st March 2017 the residual underspent of Area Forum budget totalled £70,498.72.

Q2 How was the money spent, and what criteria was used and can projects be defined.

To date in 2017/18 expenditure on projects within those Wards with a residual Area Forum budget has been:-

- Cefn Fforest – Upper Trelyn Bus Stop Repair £2,454
- Risca East - Schools Solar Panel Installation £4,396.50
- Penyrheol - Schools Solar Panel Installation £10,000
- Ty Sign - Schools Solar Panel Installation £3,582.50
- Trinant - Schools Solar Panel Installation £1,885

Total 2017/18 Area Forum budget expenditure to date = £22,318

In addition to the above within Wards with a residual Area Forum budget allocation there are ongoing commitments to a number of projects that remain to be fully implemented and paid for. The estimated total of Area Forum funding identified to support previously committed projects is £14,423.31

Currently the uncommitted residual Area Forum budget totals £33,757.41, comprising £29,345.25 from previous budget allocation to specific Wards and an additional £4,412.16 that has not been previously been allocated to specific Wards.

There are no specific criteria that a project seeking Area Forum funding must satisfy. However, the projects previously brought forward have sought to implement local environmental enhancements in order improve the appearance of local areas and to encourage greater local involvement in order to contribute to efforts to secure more sustainable development.

Q3 Can Ward Members bid for projects which benefit their wards and residents.

In those areas where a Ward has a residual Area Forum budget from previous funding allocations Ward Members can bring forward proposals for projects to the relevant Town Centre Management Group/Community Partnership.

Where a Ward with a residual Area Forum funding allocation is located outside a Town Centre Management Group/Community Partnership area the Ward Members are required to submit their project proposal to the Council's Community Regeneration Manager for consideration and approval in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member on the proviso that all Ward Members are in agreement with the proposal.

Q4 Is the procedure and funding agreed after discussion with the Town Centre Management Committees where one exists, and is there any discussion with Town Councils.

As noted above proposals are considered by Town Centre Management Groups (TCMG) when brought forward from within those Wards that form part of a TCMG. There is no specific liaison with Town Councils on project proposals but the TCMG includes representatives of the appropriate Town Council.

Q5 What happens in Wards when point 4 is not applicable.

Where a Ward with a residual Area Forum funding allocation is located outside a Town Centre Management Group/Community Partnership area the Ward Members are required to submit their project proposal to the Council's Community Regeneration Manager for consideration and approval on the proviso that all Ward Members are in agreement with the proposal.

Q6 Define any underspends for this period across the Borough.

As noted above the uncommitted residual Area Forum budget currently totals £33,757.41, comprising £29,345.25 from previous budget allocation to specific Wards and an additional £4,412.16 that has not been previously been allocated to specific Wards.

Q7 Confirmation that future allocations will be available from March 2018.

The decisions made at Special Council on 25th February 2015 in relation to the budget proposals 2015/16 and medium term financial strategy 2015/2018 ended the award of annual revenue funding allocations to the Area Forum revenue budget.

The meeting closed at 5.22 p.m.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 6th March 2018, they were signed by the Mayor.

MAYOR