



CABINET

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN ON WEDNESDAY, 16TH MAY 2018 AT 2.00 P.M.

PRESENT

Councillor D. Poole – Chair

Councillors:

C. Cuss (Social Care and Wellbeing), N. George (Neighbourhood Services), Mrs B.A. Jones (Finance, Performance and Governance), P. Marsden (Education and Achievement), S. Morgan (Economy, Infrastructure and Sustainability), L. Phipps (Homes and Places) and E. Stenner (Environment and Public Protection).

Together with:

C. Harry (Interim Chief Executive), M. S. Williams (Interim Corporate Director - Communities), M. Williams (Interim Head of Property Services), L. Donovan (Head of People Services), K. Cole (Chief Education Officer), I. Evans (Contracts Manager – Procurement) and A. Dredge (Committee Services Officer).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor C. Gordon (Cabinet Member for Corporate Services) and D. Street (Corporate Director – Social Services and Housing).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. CABINET MINUTES - 25TH APRIL 2018

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 25th April 2018 were approved and signed as a correct record.

MATTERS ON WHICH EXECUTIVE DECISIONS WERE REQUIRED

4. PROPERTY REVIEW REPORT 2018

The report sought Cabinet's endorsement of the Property Review Report 2018. The report attempts to provide a succinct overview and record of what is a very large and diverse non domestic property portfolio. It presents some key metrics, highlights in period trends, summarises disposals and acquisitions and sets out some of the challenges that lay ahead. It

makes no recommendations. The report follows on from the State of the Estate Report issued in May 2016 but is based on a more structured format intended to ease updating and comparison with subsequent versions. It is proposed that the Property Review Report is updated and reissued annually.

Cabinet discussed the Statutory Compliance of inspections and testing of buildings, the majority of which are managed by the Property Services Team. It was explained that training has been provided to Building Manager's and a Building Manager's Handbook has been produced. This contains a compliance checklist as the Council now operates a zero tolerance approach. Members were advised that outstanding cases of statutory testing has improved significantly and these figures are monitored quarterly by the Corporate Management Team.

Clarification was sought in relation to the status of sale of the former Ty Darran Site in Risca and it was confirmed that a report will be brought shortly regarding the future use of this site and other Council buildings.

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 Property Review Report 2018 be endorsed.

5. PROGRAMME FOR PROCUREMENT (STRATEGY) 2018 – 2023

The report sought Cabinet's endorsement for the implementation of the Procurement (Strategy) 2018 – 2023.

Cabinet were advised that the Authority is committed to ensuring it achieves value for money from its third party procurement expenditure currently circa £170,000.000 per annum. The value of using Procurement is recognised and this supports wider cultural, social, economic and environmental objectives. This offers real long term benefits to the Community it serves and the people of Wales whilst balancing the issues of Value for Money. The Programme will ensure the Authority has a current direction of travel for Procurement which supports the Authority's Wellbeing Objectives and Corporate Plan, whilst maintaining flexibility. This will address the developing Procurement landscape following Brexit and the outcome of the Welsh Government's National Procurement Review.

It was explained that the Authority's last Procurement Strategy was in 2015. There has been a delay in setting out a vision for Procurement due to the development of the National Procurement Services and the uncertainty around Local Government Reform, Collaboration and Welsh Governments own Programme for Procurement. The Wales Audit Office Report "Public Procurement in Wales – October 2017" was critical of Local Authorities failure to maintain an active Procurement Strategy. The report also concluded that there was clear scope for improvements in Public Bodies' procurement arrangements. The proposed Programme for Procurement (Strategy) defines what is meant by Procurement and the current capability status following the latest Welsh Government Fitness Check in 2014. A 5 year timescale has been set for the delivery of the Programme, however the key strategic goals are far reaching and may well extend beyond 2023. The Authority signed up to the Code of Practice: Ethical Employment in Supply Chains in November 2017 ('CoP'). The Programme supports the principles set out within the CoP.

Cabinet thanked Officers for the excellent framework that has been developed in moving forward. Discussion took place regarding the Key Performance Indicators and it was explained that the Contracts Manager and Head of Procurement would monitor the progress of the Indicators and that they will also be included in the Annual Review that will be presented to Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee. In terms of the Dynamic Purchasing

System (DPS) used it was confirmed that this is a useful process and an example was provided relating to the WHQS Scheme. It allows the Team to streamline processes and to visit and assist local businesses and suppliers that link in with Economic Development.

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 Programme for Procurement (Strategy) 2018 – 2023, be endorsed;
- (ii) an annual progress update be received in relation to the Programme for Procurement (Strategy), Code of Practice and Ethical Employment in Supply Chains.

6. NOTICE OF MOTION – THAT CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL INTRODUCE FREE FEMALE HYGIENE SUPPORT FOR ALL YOUNG FEMALES WITHIN OUR SCHOOL SETTING

The report sought Cabinet's support in establishing a Task and Finish Working Group to consider introducing free female hygiene support for all young females within school settings. A Notice of Motion was received from Councillor E. Forehead, with the support of Councillor J. Pritchard, which meets the criteria set out in the Council's Constitution and, in accordance with the Council's Rules of Procedure.

Cabinet were advised that it is widely accepted that some women and girls in Wales cannot afford to buy essential feminine hygiene products when they need them. In March 2018, the Authority accepted a one off discretionary grant payment from Welsh Government of £41,657 to be spent in relation to the investment in the improvement of toilet facilities and feminine hygiene hardware in schools. In addition, Welsh Government has made available revenue grant funding of £13,206 for the 2018/19 and 2019/20 financial years. This funding must be used to provide feminine hygiene products to those women and girls most in need in the Authority.

It was explained that on the most recent pupil data, there are currently 4,774 girls in Secondary Schools (Years 7 to 11). On this data alone it is estimated that the cost to provide feminine hygiene products for all would be in the region of £100k. This is based on a monthly cost of £2 per pupil. It is crucial that all pupils (including boys) have appropriate equal access to a high quality Personal Social Education (PSE) curriculum that is delivered well and consistently across schools and other educational settings.

In the latest research on 'Period Poverty', it is acknowledged that this inequality impacts upon attendance rates of up to 2%, as there is evidence that girls have been unable to stay in school when they cannot access products or adequately dispose of products. Members discussed paragraph 4.8. of the Officer's report in detail. This provides a list of actions to be considered in the of absence of a comprehensive audit of how equipped schools and education settings are to distribute and dispose of sanitary products and as such it is difficult to assess the need for additional resources.

Cabinet supported the recommendation to establish a Task and Finish Working Group and to include a further recommendation that the Terms of Reference to be agreed by the Group be brought back for Cabinet's endorsement. Emphasis was placed on the urgency for establishing the Working Group and it was confirmed that the first formal Meeting is scheduled for Thursday 17th May 2018 where an end date would be agreed. The Group consists of Officers, Members and Stake Holders that include Aneurin Bevan University Health Board.

RESOLVED that subject to an additional recommendation in paragraph 10.1. in the Officer's report to include, the Terms of Reference to be agreed by the Task and Finish Working Group be brought for Cabinet's endorsement and for the reasons contained in the Officers report: -

- (i) the Notice of Motion be supported and a Task and Finish Working Group be established;
- (ii) the Terms of Reference to be agreed by the Task and Finish Working Group be brought for Cabinet's endorsement.

7. SCHOOL'S WORKFORCE FLEXIBILITIES POLICIES

The report sought Cabinet approval for the Education - Human Resources (HR) Team to Consult Schools on the Council's Voluntary Severance Scheme and the School Specific Strategy that supports the redirection of funds earmarked for redundancy payments back into Caerphilly Schools, Workforce Flexibility Strategies.

Cabinet were advised that School closure, amalgamation, and internal reorganisation of a school's staffing structure relating to budget, including reductions in grant funding, and falling rolls can all lead to a redundancy consultation. For all of these reasons there has been a defined need in the Council to support some schools to reduce the costs of their staffing structures. This year, a number of Caerphilly Schools have been affected by the funding formula linked to sixth form and smaller pupil numbers. Also, the Pupil Deprivation Grant funding levels that rely solely on Free School Meal (FSM) numbers. A drop in FSM numbers in Schools has a significant impact on the overall funding allocation for that school. It was noted that Cwmcarn High School will also officially close on the 10th October 2018.

It was explained that prior to declaring a redundancy situation in any capacity, Schools actively work with the Council's HR and Finance Teams to take all reasonable steps to avoid redundancies and Schools have largely had to rely on the Council's Voluntary Early Retirement (VER) Scheme to support this aim. The Council's VER Scheme is a popular scheme but as Pension Regulations change and the costs associated with a VER scheme increase in line with the statutory state pension ages of staff (i.e. 65 – 68 years of age), the costs associated with pension release on a voluntary basis can become prohibitive, circa £100K+. The Council's VER and Redundancy Schemes are the only Workforce Strategies that have been recommended to Schools thus far and Schools rely heavily on the VER Scheme to avoid declaring a redundancy situation.

The Workforce Strategies will give Schools considerably more freedom to attract applicants from all age ranges who wish to exit their employments. With the introduction of these Strategies, the Schools and the Council will continue to work collaboratively to provide crossmatch opportunities that will benefit Caerphilly Schools to retain teachers and support staff who can deliver the curriculum in the best interest of the pupils' education.

Cabinet were pleased to note that this process is intended to avoid compulsory redundancies wherever possible, and to have a positive impact on the schools affected by retaining Teachers and Support Staff who wish to remain in the profession and who can deliver the curriculum in the best interest of the schools. In doing so, the Council will be investing funding for the continued improvement of education wherever possible rather than making a financial payment to support employees to leave the Council's employment.

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 scope of Schools' Workforce Flexibilities Strategies be widened by using the funding arrangements outlined in Section 7 of the Officer's Report, to include the Council's Voluntary Severance Scheme and the recommended School Specific Strategy as detailed in paragraph 4.7, be agreed;
- (ii) the Human Resources (HR) Education Team be authorised to consult with Head Teachers and recommend these Strategies to Schools.

The meeting closed at 2.47 pm.

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any corrections made at the meeting held on 30th May 2018.

CHAIR