



SPECIAL MEETING OF COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON 28TH MARCH 2018 AT 5.00PM

PRESENT:

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

Councillors:

Mrs E. Aldworth, P.J. Bevan, A. Collis, S. Cook, D. Cushing, C. Cuss, M. Davies, D.T. Davies, K. Dawson, C. Elsbury, K. Etheridge, M. Evans, A. Farina-Childs, Mrs C. Forehead, Ms E. Forehead, J.E. Fussell, A. Gair, Ms J. Gale, N. George, C. Gordon, R.W. Gough, D.T. Hardacre, L. Harding, D. Harse, D. Havard, A. Higgs, A. Hussey, 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. Ridgewell, J.E. Roberts, R. Saralis, Mrs M.E. Sargent, G. Simmonds, J. Simmonds, Ms E. Stenner, J. Taylor, C. Thomas, A. Whitcombe, R. Whiting, L G. . Whittle, T. Williams, W. Williams.

Together with:

C. Harry (Interim Chief Executive), D. Street (Director of Social Services), M.S. Williams (Acting Corporate Director Communities), L. Donovan (Acting Head of Human Resources), K. Cole (Chief Education Officer), L. Lane (Corporate Solicitor), S. Harris (Interim Head of Corporate Finance) and E. Weale (Cardiff City Council) and E. Sullivan (Senior Committee Services Officer).

TRIBUTE TO COUNCILLOR HARRY ANDREWS FORMER LEADER OF COUNCIL

It was with great sadness that the Mayor announced the passing of Councillor Harry Andrews former Leader of Council and Ward Member for Gilfach. Members and Officers stood for a minutes silence as a mark of respect.

Councillor D.T. Davies was called upon to pay tribute to Former Councillor Andrews who had been a friend and colleague for many years. Councillor Davies referred to Councillor Andrews' dedication which encompassed all aspects of his life including serving as President of Bargoed YMCA, Magistrate, Footballer, Family Man and Politician, a role in which he won every election and topped every poll. The many achievements of his political career were referenced with the completion of the Penallta House building and Ystrad Fawr Hospital being named as two of his greatest accomplishments in office. Councillor Davies reminisced on Harry's unerring ability to get things done for his ward, his unfaltering commitment to his constituents, his good humour and acknowledge there were too many stories and too many acts of kindness to recall them all. With sadness Councillor Davies recalled his final visits to Harry in hospital and his surety that the thoughts of all the Council, Members and Officer alike are now with Harry's family, in particular for his wife Doreen and their children and grandchildren.

Councillor C.P. Mann expressed his condolences on behalf of his party and paid homage to a wonderful servant of local government as both a Ward Member and previous Leader of Council. Respected in every role, dedicated and with a good word for all, he would be sadly missed.

Councillor K. Etheridge expressed his sadness at the loss of such a knowledgeable, helpful and compassionate man, a genuinely caring person and man of principle.

In conclusion Councillor E.M. Aldworth expressed her sadness at the loss of a determined and visionary leader who will be sadly missed by all. She recalled their first meeting and his compassion, his politeness and professionalism and above all the respectful way he related to others. The Interim Chief Executive passed on her condolences and reinforced the messages already conveyed on behalf of the staff.

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. She advised that decisions would be made by show of hands.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs C. Andrews, A. Angel, C. Bezzina, L. Binding, W. David, N. Dix, G. Johnston, A. Leonard, J. Scriven, S. Skivens and B. Zaplatynski.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mrs L. Lane (Corporate Solicitor) and Ms E. Weale (Cardiff City Council) declared a prejudicial interest in Agenda Item no. 4; details are minuted with the respective item.

ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR ECONOMY, INFRASTRUCTURE AND SUSTAINABILITY

Councillor S. Morgan, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy, Infrastructure and Sustainability provided an update on the Pwll-y-Pant Roundabout works.

Reference was made to the impact that the recent inclement weather had on the progress of works and he confirmed that as of this morning both lanes had been reopened. The time lost due to the snow and freezing temperatures would mean a return to single lane running for a few weeks, however this was planned to take place during the school holidays in August when traffic levels would be reduced and would be completed before the school term resumed.

In relation Heol Pwll-y-Pant, Councillor Morgan gave reassurances this this road would not be closed for two months; the works required in this area would be undertaken utilising a traffic management system. Similarly for the Bedwas and Trecenydd arms changes to the layout meant that traffic management would not be required during peak times. Commencing the 4th April 2018 these works would take approximately four weeks.

As a result of the weather and comments from the public in relation to single lane running the original 52 week programme would take longer than previously anticipated in order to keep two lane running open for as long a period as possible but is currently scheduled for completion in November 2018. The contractor Walters and the Engineering Team continue to work together in order to make swift progress. The Deputy Leader hoped that this announcement would help to allay any fears with regard to the ongoing works.

REPORT OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

4. POTENTIAL REINSTATEMENT OF DEFERRED 2018/19 SAVINGS PROPOSALS

Mr S. Harris (Interim Head of Corporate Finance) presented the report which detailed the 2018/19 deferred savings that may need to be reinstated depending on the outcome of Cabinet's consideration of a further report on the future of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre.

At its meeting on the 22nd February 2017 Council noted that alternative savings totalling £107K would need to be identified during the 2018/19 financial year in the event that the proposed closure of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre did not proceed. Furthermore additional budgetary growth of circa £17K would be required due to the Leisure Centre now being classified as a single premises for the purpose of rating assessments. Since the Council meeting further annual costs of £12K have also been identified in relation to standing charges for utilities and for security of the vacated schools premises.

At its meeting on the 28th March 2018 Cabinet agreed to defer the decision to close the Leisure Centre until later in 2018, and to consider the proposal as part of the wider 10 Year Sport and Leisure Strategy. As a consequence £136K of alternative savings that would be required so Cabinet therefore also supported a recommendation to Council that the following deferred savings should be reinstated for the 2018/19 financial year. Cabinet also support the recommendation that the deferred savings detailed in section 4.12 of the report be reinstated for the 2018/19 financial year.

- £66K from vacant posts in Language Support in Primary Schools; and
- The partial reduction in proposed savings on Highways Maintenance to be reduced from £212K to £142K.

Mr Harris referred Members to paragraph 4.21 of the Council report and the recommendation in paragraph 10.2 and sought their approval to reinstate the aforementioned deferred savings proposals for the 2018/19 financial year.

It was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved.

An amendment was moved and seconded that the £136K be secured from the 'Capital Reserves Balances' and the 'Invest to Save funds', rather than make further cuts to education services or the road maintenance programme.

Mr Harris emphasised the need to secure sustainable savings and stressed that using the balances or invest to save funds would only allow for a one-off saving on the 2018/19 financial year.

Clarification was sought in relation to the definition of unallocated reserves and Mr Harris confirmed that the correct definition is as usable reserves as referenced within the statement of accounts. Further clarification was sought in relation to the proposals within the proposed amendment.

In this regard Officers sought a brief adjournment in order to confer with the Interim Head of Corporate Finance and provide the clarification being sought from Members in relation to the financial implications of said amendment.

The meeting stood adjourned.

On reconvening the meeting the clarified amendment was moved and seconded that the £136K of savings be secured solely from the Capital Earmarked Reserves.

Mr Harris reminded Members that this would only secure a one off saving and this money had been earmarked to potentially draw down funding for projects such as the 21st Century Schools Programme.

By a show of hands and in noting there were 44 against and 0 abstentions the amendment was declared lost.

By a further show of hands and in noting there were 17 against and 0 abstentions the motion was declared carried.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officer's report the deferred savings proposals be reinstated for the 2018/19 financial year as set out in section 4.12 of the report.

5. APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM MONITORING OFFICER

Mrs L. Lane (Corporate Solicitor) declared a personal and prejudicial in that the report directly related to her and left the Chamber when the item was discussed.

Ms E. Weale (Cardiff City Council) declared a personal and prejudicial interest in that Cardiff City Council provided legal advice to this authority via a service level agreement and left the Chamber when the item was discussed.

Mrs C. HARRY (Interim Chief Executive) presented the report which sought approval to appoint an Interim Monitoring Officer whilst recruiting to the permanent post. The Interim Chief Executive confirmed that there was a statutory requirement to have a designated post of Monitoring Officer and with the retirement of Mrs G. Williams and in the absence of Mr R. Harris who had been acting as Council's Deputy Monitoring Officer this needed to be revisited at this time.

Following a ring fenced recruitment process Mrs L. Lane had expressed an interest in taking up the role and it is now proposed that she be appointed until the new post holder takes up the vacant Head of Legal/Monitoring Officer post. It was noted that the recruitment process for the vacant post would be concluded in April.

A Member requested clarification as to the cost to the authority of the service level agreement. Mr Harris confirmed that he did not have that information to hand but would email to the Member following the meeting.

Following consideration of the report and for the reasons given in the Officer's report it was moved and seconded that the recommendations contained in section 10.1 (i) and 10.1 (ii) be approved and by a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) Lisa Lane, Solicitor, be appointed to the post of Interim Monitoring Officer, until time the new post holder takes up the post of Head of Legal/Monitoring Officer;
- (ii) the service level agreement with Cardiff Council to provide support to Lisa Lane if required and/or directly to other Officers and Members if needed, continue until such time the new post holder takes up the post of Head of Legal/Monitoring Officer.

6. APPROVAL OF CARDIFF CAPITAL REGION CITY DEAL JOINT WORKING AGREEMENT BUSINESS PLAN

Mrs C. Harrhy, Interim Chief Executive presented the report which sought Council agreement to adopt the Draft Joint Working Agreement Business Plan (JWA Business Plan) as its formal JWA Business Plan.

The City Deal includes a £1.2 billion investment, including the development of the South Wales Metro, support for innovation and digital infrastructure, developing skills and helping people back into work, promoting enterprise and business growth and wider activity in regeneration and housing and helping to deliver 25,000 new jobs in the region.

Members were advised of the strategic themes and emerging opportunities which would be considered and developed within the life of the plan all of which would be assessed in accordance with the Assurance Framework. The three stages of the plan were detailed within section 4.2.1 of the report and it was noted that each stage of the proposals would be submitted to the CCR Programme Board for assessment who will make recommendations to the Regional Cabinet, who in turn will have the responsibility for confirming if the candidate scheme is eligible for inclusion. The Interim Chief Executive emphasised that Members involvement in the development of such schemes would be pivotal.

Mr Steve Harris, Interim Head of Corporate Finance outlined the financial implications of the plan and it was noted that £734m had been set aside for the Metro (£503m from Welsh Government, £125m from the UK Government and £106m from the European Development Fund), with the balance of £495m being made available as the 'Wider Investment Fund'. The Wider Investment Fund is made up of £375m grant from UK Government paid over 20 years and £120m local authority partnership capital contributions to be drawn down as required.

Mr Harris explained that the total maximum revenue cost to the 10 Councils for servicing the debt to fund the £120m capital contribution over the life of the City Deal is £210.8m. It was noted that Caerphilly CBC's share of the £210.8m is £25.2m. It was also noted that Caerphilly's capital contribution would be £6.23m over the initial 5 year programme period. The revenue implications of the borrowing requirements have been factored into the 2018/19 revenue budget and updated Medium-Term Financial Plan approved by Council on the 22nd February 2018.

Councillor D. V. Poole, Leader of Council spoke of the exciting opportunities being presented within the City Deal, increased employment opportunities, housing, building and development, opportunities for SMEs, digital infrastructure, apprenticeships which would be a benefit for years to come and within all this Member involvement would be key. Primarily through scrutiny and the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee the exact nature of Member involvement would be developed as the City Deal progressed.

It was moved and seconded that the JWA Business Plan as attached in Appendix 1 of the Officer's report be approved and the £6.23M in respect of Caerphilly CBC's capital contribution during the initial five-year period covered by the JWA Business Plan be approved.

An amendment was moved and seconded that alongside recommendations 10.1 and 10.2 of the Officers reported an addition recommendation be made to establish a Project Board made up of Officers and Councillors, politically balanced in order to ensure open dialogue and flow of information on the progress of the City Deal.

The Leader gave assurances that he would fully engage with Members throughout the process, the form that this engagement would take, be it by Project Group or other methods of communication to be considered going forward. During the course of debate it was noted that there seemed to be confusion amongst Members with regard to the City Deal and the Cardiff City Development IQE which was completely independent to the City Deal and the report before Members.

It was felt by some Members that this confusion clearly illustrated the need for greater Members involvement in the information sharing process and also for them to be assured of the equity of benefits throughout the borough.

Employment opportunities and nurturing skills for the future were discussed and reference made to apprenticeships. A Member queried a request for information on this subject that was outstanding. The Interim Chief Executive apologised that the information had not been received and assured the Member in question that it would be provided following the meeting.

Members discussed transportation links and regional transport provision including the Metro and reference was made to a statement from Welsh Government that not all of the Metro network would be electrified and queried the impact that a partial electrification would have. The Interim Chief Executive assured Members that she had not heard of any such statement and had no confirmation from Welsh Government in this regard had she done so she would advise Members of any resulting implications.

The Leader provided further assurances of his commitment to fully engage with Members furthermore he was of the opinion that the process would not work without their commitment and knowledge driving it forward and asked the Member to consider withdrawing the amendment.

Clarification was then sought in relation to the Green Paper and proposals for Local Government reorganisation and possible impact on the City Deal. The Leader reassured Members that Caerphilly's response would reflect the feelings in the Chamber that this authority was able to stand on its own and would not welcome any form of reorganisation.

The amendment was again moved and seconded that in addition to recommendations 10.1 and 10.2 a further recommendation that a working group or project development board be established within 3 months of this meeting. By a show of hands and in noting there were 44 against and 1 abstention the amendment was declared lost.

By a further show of hands and in noting there were 17 against and 2 abstentions the motion was declared carried.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) the JWA Business Plan (CCR Strategic Business Plan) as attached at Appendix A of the Officer's report be approved;
- (ii) the borrowing of up to £6.23m in respect of Caerphilly CBC's capital contribution during the initial five-year period covered by the JWA Business Plan be approved.

The meeting closed at 7.00pm

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 5th June 2018 they were signed by the Mayor.

MAYOR