



COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON TUESDAY, 17TH APRIL 2018 AT 6.30 PM

PRESENT:

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

Councillors:

Mrs E.M. Aldworth, A. Angel, P.J. Bevan, C. Bezzina, A. Collis, S. Cook, D. Cushing, C. Cuss, W. David, D.T. Davies, M. Davies, N. Dix, C. Elsbury, K. Etheridge, M. Evans, Mrs C. Forehead, Ms E. Forehead, 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, G. Johnston, Mrs B.A. Jones, S. Kent, G. Kirby, Ms P. Leonard, C.P. Mann, Mrs P. Marsden, B. Miles, S. Morgan, Mrs G.D. 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, J. Scriven, G. Simmonds, J. Simmonds, S. Skivens, Mrs E. Stenner, J. Taylor, C. Thomas, R. Whiting, L.G. Whittle, T.J. Williams, W. Williams, B. Zaplatynski

Together with:

C. Harry (Interim Chief Executive), M.S. Williams (Interim Corporate Director of Communities), D. Street (Corporate Director - Social Services), L. Donovan (Acting Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development), R. Hartshorn (Head of Policy and Public Protection), S. Harris (Interim Head of Corporate Finance), M. Lloyd (Acting Head of Engineering Services), D. Marr (Deputy Monitoring Officer - Cardiff Council), L. Lane (Interim Monitoring Officer), C. Forbes-Thompson (Interim Head of Democratic Services) 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 C. Andrews, L. Binding, K. Dawson, A. Farina-Childs, J.E. Fussell, M.P. James, V. James, L. Jeremiah, Mrs A. Leonard, J. Ridgewell, Mrs M.E. Sargent, and A. Whitcombe.

3. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

It was noted that this was the last meeting of Council that Councillor J. Bevan would be chairing prior to the Annual General Meeting and he referred to his remaining Mayoral engagements and duties over the course of the next few weeks.

4. PETITION

The Mayor received a petition presented by Councillor Mrs G.D Oliver, on behalf of local residents of Pontlottyn, which requested an overhead shelter for the walkway at Idris Davis School 3-18. The Mayor indicated that it would be referred to the appropriate directorate for attention.

5. PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

There were no awards to be presented on this occasion.

6. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In referring to Agenda Item No. 10 (Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Annual Report 2018/19), the Interim Chief Executive explained that a personal interest applies to all Members for this item but that they would be able to consider the report by way of the specific exemption within the Members' Code of Conduct which relates to payments (by virtue of Section 12 paragraph (b)(iv)).

It was noted that for Agenda Item No. 12 (Contract Arrangements of the Interim Chief Executive), Mrs C. Harry (Interim Chief Executive) and Mr M. S. Williams (Interim Corporate Director of Communities) would be required to declare a personal and prejudicial interest and leave the meeting during consideration of the item.

The Interim Chief Executive referred to Agenda Item 13 (Internal Investigation of Senior Officer – Additional Financial Provision) and reminded Members that there should be no discussion regarding the ongoing internal investigation referenced in the report. She also explained that as the report was seeking approval of an additional financial provision for legal costs (and did not address the investigation itself) there was no requirement for Members or Officers to declare a prejudicial interest and leave the meeting on that basis. However it was a matter for individual Members as to whether they wished to declare a personal and/or prejudicial interest.

Councillors M. Adams, A. Angel, D.T. Davies, N. George, C. Gordon, J. Simmonds and J. Taylor declared an interest in Agenda Item 13 (Internal Investigation of Senior Officer – Additional Financial Provision). Details are minuted with the respective item.

7. SPECIAL COUNCIL - 22ND FEBRUARY 2018

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

Special Council held on 22nd February 2018 (minute nos. 1-6).

8. COUNCIL - 6TH MARCH 2018

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

Council held on 6th March 2018 (minute nos. 1-12).

REPORTS REFERRED FROM CABINET

Consideration was given to the following reports referred from Cabinet.

9. INTEGRATED COMMISSIONING AND SECTION 33 AGREEMENT FOR CARE HOMES FOR OLDER PEOPLE IN GWENT REGION (POOLED FUNDS)

The report, which was presented to Cabinet on 28th March 2018 and subsequently endorsed, provided an update on the development of arrangements to pool funds for care home arrangements between the 5 local authorities in the Gwent Region. This has arisen from Part 9 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act (2014) which places a statutory requirement on local authorities and health boards regarding partnership working and collaboration.

The report recommended to Cabinet the establishment of a regional pooled budget in relation to the exercise of care home accommodation functions between Caerphilly County Council, the other Gwent Local Authorities (Blaenau Gwent, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen) and Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB), which will be overseen by the Regional Partnership Board (RPB). It also outlined the progress made in developing other key elements required by Welsh Government guidance in support of the pooled budget arrangements, namely common contracts and developing an integrated approach to commissioning and in the Gwent region.

Council were referred to the Officer's covering report which explained that having received Cabinet endorsement, authority was sought to amend the Council's Constitution to give effect to the delegated powers given to the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Well-being, as set out in paragraph 1.1(iii) of the report recommendations

During the course of the debate, a query was received on the income received from client contributions and partners in relation to care home budgets. The Corporate Director for Social Services and Housing confirmed that the income, which is in the region of £4.5m per annum, is received by Caerphilly Council, and that charges for such services are identical across the 22 local authorities in Wales.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation from Cabinet as set out in the Officer's covering report be approved. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the report, the Principal Solicitor be given delegated authority to make the necessary changes to the Council's Constitution to give effect to the delegated powers given to the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Well-being, as Caerphilly County Council member of the Regional Partnership Board, in the exercise of care home accommodation functions, and consideration of any specific arrangements that need to be put in place to meet statutory duties at local and regional level.

10. CORPORATE PLAN INCLUDING WELL-BEING OBJECTIVES 2018-2023

The report, which was presented to Cabinet on 11th April 2018 and subsequently endorsed, sought Council approval of the Local Authority's Corporate Plan and its Well-being Objectives for 2018-2023.

The report set out the requirement of the Local Government Measure 2009 for all local authorities in Wales to set and publish a set of priorities called Improvement Objectives as soon as is 'practicably possible' in the new financial year. However, the introduction of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WBFGA) also places a legal requirement for 'public bodies' to set and publish Well-being Objectives. As there is a cross over between the two pieces of legislation, local authorities are treating the two requirements as one outcome to publish one set of Well-being Objectives. This approach has been endorsed by the Wales Audit Office and Welsh Local Government Association.

The Plan introduces the Local Authority's new set of 6 Well-being Objectives to run for five years from 2018-2023 and sets out how these will be measured and achieved. In view of WBFGA statutory guidance, it is intended for the Council to review the Well-Being Objectives annually, in line with reporting progress on their performance to the public. The Plan also introduces 7 'Cabinet Commitments' and 'Medium-Term Financial Plan Principles'. Further details were contained within the Corporate Plan 2018-2013 that was appended to the report.

It was noted that Cabinet had endorsed the Corporate Plan, subject to an addition to Well-being Objective 5 (Create a county borough that supports a healthy lifestyle) to include the wording "in accordance with the Sustainable Development Principle within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015".

Members placed on record their thanks to those Officers involved in the preparation of the Corporate Plan and acknowledged the realm of detail in the document and the extent of the work involved in converting the Council's Improvement Objectives into a longer-term strategy.

Detailed discussion took place on the contents of the Corporate Plan and the intended actions to achieve the 6 Well-being Objectives. A Member referred to Well-being Objective 1 (improving education opportunities for all) and the Welsh Government funding for the 21st Century Schools Programme Band B programme, and queried whether this will be awarded if local authorities are unable to achieve the programme aims. The Cabinet Member for Education and Achievement confirmed that she would make enquiries on the matter but that funding bids are submitted via a business case and examined on a case by case by Welsh Government. A Member enquired how the aims of the Objective would be delivered in view of a reduced budget for schools. The Cabinet Member requested that the details of the reductions be sent to her so that she could discuss with the Member further.

A Member queried how the visions against Well-being Objective 5 (creating a county borough that supports a healthy lifestyle) will be measured and asked whether consideration had been given to reducing carbon monoxide emissions via the implementation of 20mph speed limits in urban areas. The Head of Policy and Public Protection explained that it is difficult to measure improvements in health due to generational changes, but this can be monitored through actions such as participation in sports, outdoor leisure and healthy schools programme. It was also confirmed that the reduction of carbon monoxide via 20mph speed limits was not an area considered to be within the remit of this particular Well-being Objective.

Several queries were received in respect of Well-being Objective 4 (promote a modern, integrated and sustainable transport system that increases opportunity, promotes prosperity and minimises the adverse impacts on the environment). A Member sought clarification on the data source for the number of daily commuter trips taken in and out of the borough, and queried if businesses would be actively encourage to tender for new connective routes.

Specific reference was made to the role and involvement of local bus companies in delivering the Metro plan, and also the potential reinstatement of the Cwmbargoed train line and a new railway station for Nelson. The Member referred to the reducing number of bidders for the Wales and Border rail franchise due for renewal in 2018 and queried whether Welsh Government had confidence in the successful tender being able to deliver the franchise services and the relevant elements of the Metro. Reference was also made to the steps being taken to achieve this Well-being Objective and the timescales for when the visual impact would start to become apparent to local residents.

The Interim Chief Executive explained that the commuter figures had been gathered by the Independent Growth and Competitiveness Commission and included in reports previously provided to Council. She confirmed that Welsh Government are considering the role of local transport companies in delivering the Metro and will place a specific focus on the needs of the region and the control and support required in this regard. Members were reminded that the 10 City Deal local authorities each have a representative within the Regional Transport Authority who will put forward the transport needs for their county borough. In regards to the Cwmbargoed line, it was explained that the Council are currently considering a location for the Nelson rail site. The Interim Chief Executive also confirmed that Welsh Government are comfortable with the remaining tenders for the Wales and Borders rail franchise and that the preferred bidder is due to be announced in the near future.

Several Members queried the development and feasibility of individual rail routes referenced in the Corporate Plan, including the Newport to Ebbw Vale link and the Caerphilly to Newport link. It was confirmed that the former is included within the Metro Plan but that there is no guarantee when this will be delivered, and that a SEWTA study had outlined the potential for the latter, but that this long term project is dependent on factors such as land availability and whether it fits in with the mode of rail transport selected by Welsh Government. Reference also was made to the scale of the investment for this line and it was confirmed that the scheme fits in with the aims of the Metro in regards to reducing pollution and congestion.

A Member suggested that it would be useful to incorporate the progress already made on the Objectives into the Corporate Plan. In respect of Well-being Objective 2 (enabling employment), he queried whether there was a mention of plans to build more small business units in order to increase occupation rates and promote employment opportunities. The Member queried the specifics of the support to improve housing conditions as referred to in Well-being Objective 3 (address the availability, condition and sustainability of homes throughout the county borough and provide advice, assistance or support to help improve people's well-being) and expressed a need to enable processes to bring long term empty homes back into use. He also highlighted a need for ownership of the individual Metro transport schemes in order to achieve these aims, a need for joined up working and for pressure to be placed on Welsh Government in this regard. He offered to forward additional comments on the Corporate Plan to the relevant Officers following the meeting.

The Head of Policy and Public Protection confirmed that achievements against previous Improvement Objectives have been reported to the relevant Scrutiny Committees twice-yearly and that the annual review of the Corporate Plan will allow the Council the opportunity to view its development and measure how performance is being achieved against these Objectives. He explained that the Well-being Objectives contribute to the Well-being Goals set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act and focus on long term solutions with an emphasis on prevention.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that subject to the foregoing addition in respect of Well-being Objective 5, the recommendation in the report be approved. By a show of hands, this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that subject to the amendment to Well-being Objective 5 (to include "in

accordance with the Sustainable Development Principle within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015”), the Corporate Plan with Well-being Objectives 2018-2023 as appended to the report be approved.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

11. IMPLEMENTATION OF WELSH GOVERNMENT LAND DRAINAGE BYELAWS

Consideration was given to the report, which was presented to the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee on 27th March 2018, and sought Council approval for the implementation of the Land Drainage Byelaws as recommended by Welsh Government (WG).

It was noted that under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, local authorities in Wales were given additional powers and responsibilities for managing flooding from surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourse. As part of the new powers, the responsibility for issuing ordinary watercourse consents passed from Natural Resources Wales to the Lead Local Flood Authorities in 2012.

Since taking on these duties and functions, local authorities have noted that powers under current legislation are limited and certain activities which are not currently consented could potentially increase the risk of flooding, especially in more built up areas. To address this issue WG has recently ratified the updated set of its Ordinary Watercourse Byelaws created under Section 66 of the Land Drainage Act 1991, which will enable local authorities to supplement existing powers and help with their land drainage and flood risk management functions. All local authorities are being encouraged to adopt the model byelaws (appended to the report) to ensure consistency across Wales and comply with statutory objectives.

Members expressed their support for the new Byelaws as a means to overcoming drainage issues that may arise during the development of new housing estates.

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 report, the implementation of the Land Drainage Byelaws as recommended by WG be approved.

12. INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

The report detailed the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales’ final determinations relating to Councillors and Co-opted members for 2018/19 and sought a decision from Council on certain aspects of the Members remuneration scheme for 2018/19. A copy of the Annual Report for 2018/19 was appended to the Officers report.

Members noted that the Panel’s determinations include a 1.49% increase in the basic salary for Councillors for 2018/19, which represents a £200 increase in the basic salary for councillors to £13,600. The Panel also proposed that the previous option to set salary levels be removed and have set the salaries at the previous higher level, plus the £200 basic salary uplift. Therefore in that Caerphilly County Borough Council previously determined the senior salaries would be set at the lower band, there will be increased expenditure for senior salaries in 2018/19. Details of these were set out in paragraph 4.5 of the report.

The determinations of the Panel were set out within their annual report and a summary of the key determinations of note were detailed in the Officer's report and presented to Members. It was noted that the determinations and recommendations contained in the report will take effect in April 2018, and individual Members or Co-opted Members may forgo any part of their remuneration entitlement for the year ahead by giving notice in writing to the Interim Chief Executive.

Members were referred to the report recommendations which sought a decision from Council in respect of the level of Civic Salary and other aspects of the Members remuneration scheme, including travel claims and care expenses, together with approval of the Panel's determinations.

Debate took place with regards to recommendation 10.7 and Officers confirmed that individual expenses could be made available via the FOI process if Council were minded to approve Option 2. Some Members expressed the need for transparency in respect of publishing the cost of care expenses claimed by individual members, whilst others referred to the sensitivity of the issue and the need to have regard for the privacy of Members' individual circumstances.

It was moved and seconded that recommendation 10.2 be approved, in that the determinations of the Panel including, the basic salaries, Leader and Deputy Leader salaries, Cabinet Members and Committee Chairs, reimbursement of care costs, travel and subsistence allowances and fee payments to Co-opted Members be noted and implemented. By a show of hands (and in noting there were 6 against with 1 abstention) this was agreed by the majority present.

In regards to recommendation 10.3, it was moved and seconded that the Level 2 salary, as detailed in paragraph 4.6 of the report, be set as the appropriate level of Civic Salaries for 2018/19. By a show of hands (and in noting there were 3 against with 4 abstentions) this was agreed by the majority present.

In regards to recommendation 10.4, it was moved and seconded that as detailed in paragraph 4.26 of the report, the maximum number of days payable to co-opted Members of the Education for Life Scrutiny Committee, Co-opted (lay) Members of the Standards and Audit Committees, remain at 10 days per year. By a show of hands (and in noting there were 4 abstentions) this was agreed by the majority present.

In regards to recommendation 10.5, it was moved and seconded that the the Officers listed at paragraph 4.29 of the report continue to act as the 'appropriate officer' for Co-opted Members as indicated therein. By a show of hands (and in noting there were 4 abstentions) this was agreed by the majority present.

In regards to recommendation 10.6, it was moved and seconded that as detailed in paragraph 4.37 of the report, no allowance payment be made for travel claims for journeys made within Members' wards. By a show of hands (and in noting there were 2 abstentions) this was agreed by the majority present.

In regards to recommendation 10.7, it was moved and seconded that Option 2 be approved, in that the Council publish the total costs of care expenses reimbursed to Members by the Authority during the year but not attribute these to any named Member. By a show of hands (and in noting there were 9 against with 3 abstentions) this was agreed by the majority present.

It was therefore RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the report, the aforementioned recommendations be approved.

13. UPDATE ON COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION – TERMS OF REFERENCE OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Consideration was given to the report, which asked Council to note and endorse the changes to the Council's Constitution as appended to the report and marked in italics to give effect to the changes to the Scrutiny Committees' terms of references as a result of changes to Directorate responsibilities on an interim basis. The report also sought Council approval to delegate authority to the Interim Monitoring Officer to amend the Constitution to incorporate the changes as set out in the appendix.

The Council's Constitution was formally adopted by the Council in May 2002, and sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure that the decision making processes are efficient, transparent and available to local people. The Constitution is a 'living document' in that it is constantly being updated and revised to reflect new government legislation and improvements and changes in procedures gained in light of experience.

Members were asked to note and endorse the changes, which in the main reflected the change of Director responsibilities within Communities and Housing, and subsequently involved changes to the Terms of Reference across the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee, the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee, and the Health, Social Care and Well-being Scrutiny Committee.

During the course of the ensuing debate, a Member queried whether there were plans to begin webcasting Scrutiny Committee proceedings, and it was confirmed that consideration is being given to the matter for a future point in time. In response to a Member's observations, it was also confirmed that minor gender-based references to key Officer posts within the Constitution would be updated accordingly.

Following consideration of 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 contained in the report:-

- (i) the changes to the terms of reference for the Scrutiny Committees as shown in italics and bold on the relevant extracts of the Constitution appended to the report be noted and endorsed;
- (ii) the Council's Interim Monitoring Officer be given delegated authority to amend the Constitution to incorporate the changes set out in the report appendix.

14. CONTRACT ARRANGEMENTS OF INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND CONTINUATION OF INTERNAL MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Christina Harray and Mark S. Williams declared an interest (being the subject of the report) and left the meeting during consideration of this item.

Dave Street (Corporate Director Social Services) presented the report, which sought approval to further extend the contract arrangement for the post of Interim Chief Executive in order to comply with legislative requirements, and to delegate the extension of the interim contract arrangements for the Corporate Director of Communities.

Members were reminded of the current interim arrangements in place within the Authority since the suspension of the substantive Chief Executive in March 2013. The Council is required by law to have in place a Head of Paid Service, which is designated to the Chief

Executive. Following the decision of the former Interim Chief Executive to not extend his interim contract beyond the end of December 2017, expressions of interest to undertake the post were invited from the Council's three Corporate Directors and on 5th December 2017, Council confirmed Mrs Harry's interim appointment to the post of Interim Chief Executive for a period of 6 months effective from January 2018. The interim contract is therefore due to end on 30th June 2018.

It was explained that the Designated Independent Person (DIP) appointed to undertake a comprehensive investigation of the allegations in relation to the Chief Executive, has indicated that it is likely to take until the end of the calendar year to conclude the investigation. As the Authority is currently engaged in a number of significant projects, including City Deal, 21st Century Schools, management of the Medium Term Financial Plan and the collaboration agenda, the report asked Members to agree the extension of the current Interim Chief Executive to 30th June 2019 (at which time it will be reviewed again) in order to provide ongoing continuity for the organisation. The timeframe takes account of the estimated period for the investigation and allows the Council to progress the DIP recommendation whilst maintaining stability for the organisation.

Mr Street outlined the agreed salary and terms and conditions as published in the Council's Pay Policy Statement and confirmed that Welsh Government have been notified of the proposed extension. He also explained that as a consequence of Mrs Harry's appointment to the post of Interim Chief Executive, an interim appointment has been made to her substantive post (Corporate Director of Communities). Members were therefore asked to delegate authority to the Interim Chief Executive to extend this Interim Corporate Director appointment in consultation with the Leader and the two Deputy Leaders. It was noted that should circumstances change, both interim contracts can be quickly reviewed.

Members were advised of the financial implications and the revenue budgets established for the posts of Chief Executive and Corporate Director of Communities, with the postholders currently fulfilling these duties being funded from these revenue budgets.

During the course of the ensuing debate, Members commented on the proposed extension period of the Interim Chief Executive contract to June 2019, given the estimated completion date of December 2018 for the DIP investigation, and suggested that the contract could be extended to December 2018 instead with an option to review towards the end of that year. Members were reminded of the provision in place to review the arrangements in place at any time.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved. By a show of hands (and in noting there were 2 against with 4 abstentions) this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that for the reasons set out in the report:-

- (i) the contract of the current Interim Chief Executive be extended until 30th June 2019;
- (ii) the decision to extend the interim contract arrangements for the Corporate Director of Communities be delegated to the Interim Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader and the two Deputy Leaders.

Following the decision of Council, Mrs Harry and Mr Williams returned to the meeting.

15. INTERNAL INVESTIGATION OF SENIOR OFFICER – ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL PROVISION

Councillors M. Adams, A. Angel, D.T Davies, C. Gordon, J. Simmonds and J. Taylor declared a personal and prejudicial interest as Members of the Investigating and Disciplinary Committee and left the meeting during consideration of the item.

Consideration was given to the report which sought approval of additional financial provisions in relation to the ongoing internal investigation of a Senior Officer. Members were reminded of the interim arrangements previously in place within the Authority arising from the internal investigation of three Senior Officers and of the additional associated costs, which have been funded from provisions established using the General Fund Reserve as approved by Council.

Settlement agreements were approved in respect of two of the Senior Officers at a Special meeting of Council on 31st October 2017, and these settlements drew matters to a close for these two individuals. However, Council were informed that it would be necessary to engage a Designated Independent Person (DIP) in respect of the allegations that require formal investigation in respect of the remaining Senior Officer.

Council approved a further financial provision on 21st November 2017 to meet the costs of the ongoing investigation in respect of the remaining Senior Officer and the ongoing salary costs in respect of this post to 30th June 2018. These additional estimated costs totalling £340k were partially offset by a balance of £190k that remained from provisions previously approved by Council, resulting in a further provision of £150k being approved.

A DIP has now been engaged to undertake the formal investigation and has indicated it is likely to take until the end of the calendar year to conclude the process. As a result, it is necessary to establish a further financial provision of £94k to meet the salary costs of the Senior Officer for the period from 1st July 2018 to 31st December 2018. It is currently anticipated that the previously approved provision of £60k for the DIP will be sufficient. However, based on actual expenditure in recent months and the balance remaining on previous provisions, it is anticipated that a further provision of £99k will be required in respect of legal costs. Approval was therefore sought for an additional financial provision of £193k to be funded from Corporate Services Retained Reserve Underspend and Counsel Fees Reserves as detailed in the report.

Members expressed their continued frustration regarding the length of the process and the increasing cost to the Authority and local residents. In response to a query regarding the potential for further provisions to be made, Officers explained that the estimates are based on the information available at the present time and that in line with process to date, further reports will be brought back if the need arises. It was also confirmed that the legal costs are for Counsel advice to the Authority. Clarification was sought on the calculation of the estimated costs associated with the DIP and Officers explained that although the revised amount was established in October 2017, the DIP had only recently commenced their investigation and so the £60k provision should be sufficient to December 2018.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation in the report be approved. By a show of hands (and in noting there were 14 against with 1 abstention) this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that for the reasons set out in the report, and to ensure that sufficient funding is set aside to meet the potential costs of the ongoing investigation process, should matters not be concluded by 31st December 2018, a further financial provision of £193k be funded from the Corporate Services Retained Underspend Reserve (94k) and Counsel Fees Reserve (99k) to meet these costs.

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

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

(i) LEISURE STRATEGY REVIEW

To the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services Councillor Nigel George from Councillor Kevin Etheridge.

To ask the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services after reading the Cabinet Forward Work Programme for the 11th July 2018 meeting which lists the future of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre in the context of the Leisure Review would he please define what criteria, scoring mechanisms, consultation methods will be used when evaluating each premises in regard the forthcoming Leisure Review and to confirm each location will have equal status.

Also can he please confirm the estimated timescale in this regard and when the matter will be brought before Full Council for a discussion in the interests of openness and transparency.

RESPONSE FROM COUNCILLOR NIGEL GEORGE, CABINET MEMBER FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

Members will be aware that at their meeting of 28th March Cabinet resolved to consider the future of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre later in 2018 once the 10 year Sport and Leisure Strategy for Authority has been adopted.

I can confirm that we will be seeking Cabinet agreement to undertake a full public consultation on the draft Sport and Leisure Strategy. It is proposed that there will be a 10 week public consultation process which will involve a variety of methods including direct consultation with a range of stakeholders, use of our website, social media, and Newline.

There will be every opportunity for respondents to comment upon the proposed priorities, outcomes, and actions contained within the draft Strategy.

There will be full Member involvement in the process beginning with a report to Regeneration and Scrutiny Committee in June, to be followed by a Members Seminar, with a decision on the final Strategy, following the consultation exercise, being put before Cabinet later this year.

(ii) GREEN LIGHT FOR PROJECTS ACROSS CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH – PRESS RELEASE, FRIDAY 30TH MARCH 2018

<http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/News/News-Bulletin/February-2018/Environmental-projects-given-green-light>

<http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/News/News-Bulletin/September-2017/Communities-asked-to-%E2%80%98Shape-Your-Place%E2%80%99>

To the Cabinet Member for Homes and Places Councillor Lisa Phipps from Councillor Graham Simmonds.

1. Given the above press release, which claims projects throughout Caerphilly CBC have

- been given the green light. Will the Cabinet Member please make clear what action has been taken to explain to the press Caerphilly CBC is not just the Rhymney Valley, but also includes the old Islwyn Constituency council area?
2. Will the Cabinet Member please make clear the projects itemised in the Islwyn Area identified under the WHQS environmental improvement programme?
 3. Will the projects identified to benefit from the ten million pounds be distributed evenly on a percentage of population basis?
 4. Given the absolute fact that “The environmental standard is a key element of the WHQS and the council is committed to helping create communities’ tenants feel proud of and want to live in. Engaging communities and partner agencies is vital in ensuring projects are sustainable and meet the needs of local people”. Can the residents of Islwyn be assured projects committed to Islwyn will be in accord with the WHQS environmental improvement programme, to the benefit of the communities of Islwyn?

RESPONSE FROM COUNCILLOR LISA PHIPPS CABINET MEMBER FOR HOMES AND PLACES

- Q1** In response to Cllr Simmonds question posed, I would firstly like to establish that the WHQS environmental programme is an important element of the overarching WHQS programme which aims to improve the condition of our council housing stock across the whole county borough. As such both officers and members involved in the programme are not focussed upon the former Islwyn and Rhymney valleys, however they are focussed upon a comprehensive, strategic and holistic approach to the programme that addresses the county borough as a whole and the component elements of Caerphilly East and Caerphilly West.

In relation to the press release referred to, we would advise that the Council issued the statement to the press, which is one of many that has been issued in relation to the WHQS programme. Although it is accepted that the release referred to does focus on the west of the county borough, this is because the projects included had only recently been approved and was a means of providing feedback to the community. Similar releases have been made which include other areas of the county borough, as from the outset, the environmental programme was established as a county borough wide approach to improving all communities in which our council tenants reside. All Councillors were informed and provided with a copy of the programme in October, 2016 and a copy is attached for information. The budget was allocated on this basis and three Environmental Officers have been employed to undertake engagement with communities throughout the county borough hence, each community will have the opportunity to identify projects for consideration.

- Q2** The following projects have been brought forward in the first phase of the environmental programme which sought to focus on identifying minor works as a result of consultation in the respective communities:

Treowen

Settlement sign and 2 benches – complete

Pantside

Parking Central Ave, mid and lower - approved, replacement of benches and painting of knee rails by the shops - completed landscaping of the Woodland Park area – almost completed

Pentwynmawr

Tarmacking of courtyard areas and installation of dropped kerb at The Ranks - approved

Crosskeys

Parking at Risca Road flats currently with EPG for feasibility and design

Ty Sign

Forsythia Close bin store – completed

Ty Sign Skate Park commencement imminent

Holly Rd window boxes - approved

Ynysddu

Parking in Islwyn Close – with EPG for feasibility

Blackwood

Parking in Lewis Lewis Avenue – with EPG for feasibility

Pontllanfraith

Ty Mynyddislwyn parking – with EPG for feasibility

Croespenmaen

Parking in Shelly Close – complete

Ty Melin benches and raised bed planters approved

Trinant

Parking in Princess Crescent, approved

Resurfacing of pathways in Horeb Court – complete

Horeb Court benches and raised bed planters – approved

Replacement of chain link fencing adjacent to Horeb Court – approved

Springfield

Parking in Meadow Road, approved

Cefn Fforest

Waunborfa Road - Railings , Replace Concrete bollards and 6 Grit Bins – ongoing

Twyn Gardens railings painted and areas grubbed out and potential to concrete over for future maintenance – ongoing

Ty Bedwellty Sheltered Housing Scheme – parking (currently with EPG for feasibility and design), Planters etc ongoing

Bryngoleu Street, Cefn Fforest – railings painted and overgrowth cropped – ongoing

Fairview

Aneurin Close Steps – rebuilt - complete

Markham

Monmouth Walk Railings - and Bollard Painted and overgrown area removed – Complete

Commin Close overgrowth - complete

Mountain View – paint all of the bollards and concrete in some of the grassed areas

Fleur De Lys

Gwent Court – with Area Housing to consider

Upper Trelyn

All Courts in Upper Trelyn – Line marking for the car parks, and overgrowth cut back

Pengam

Installation of Bollards at Islwyn Close - complete

Repair to Drystone wall on Salway Avenue – completed

Hodges Crescent – removal of bollards and maintenance repair at the top end of

Hodges Crescent – half complete

Repairs to fencing on Angel Lane – ongoing

Argoed

Consultation to be carried out for Penylan Road, Argoed

Additional works including replacement benches in Oakdale, installation of barriers and line marking in Ty Sign, Blackwood, Risca, Penllwyn, Panside, Newbridge, Trinant and Springfield have also been undertaken.

Consultations as part of the second phase of the programme which will consider larger scale projects will be undertaken in High Meadow, Waunfawr in Crosskeys, Oakdale, Panside, Trinant, Springfield and Blackwood, Cefn Fforest, Fairview, Upper Trelyn, Fleur de Lys, Pengam and Ty Sign this financial year. Communities in Markham and Argoed will be engaged in Spring 2019.

- Q3** There is an indicative allocation of £1,000 per Council home allocated for each community however, the WHQS Project Board has made the decision that, although the Housing Revenue Account funds will be targeted at benefitting council tenants, the funds will be distributed according to need and feasibility assessments. Each community will be engaged and have the opportunity to highlight any concerns or improvements. The Environmental Officers are contacting ward members prior to undertaking any consultations and also inviting them along to any community events.
- Q4** Yes, the Council is committed to delivering all aspects of the WHQS programme in consultation with ward members, tenants and community groups and as can be demonstrated by the list of projects above, the programme will benefit Council tenants and residents in communities throughout the entire county borough (see attached programme).

The meeting closed at 7.57 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 5th June 2018, they were signed by the Mayor.

MAYOR