

ANNUAL REPORT

MAY 2018 - MAY 2019



Councillor David Poole

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ELECTORAL WARD: Pengam

PARTY: Labour

PROFILE: Leader of Council and Leader of Labour Party

COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Council
Cabinet
Cabinet as Trustees of Blackwood Miners Institute

SUBCOMMITTEES/WORKING PARTIES/PANELS

Corporate Joint Consultative Committee

OUTSIDE BODIES AND ASSOCIATIONS

Cardiff Capital Region Joint Committee (Regional Cabinet)
Consortium of Local Authorities of Wales (CLAW)
Local Government Association
Welsh Local Government Association
Welsh Local Government Association – Executive Board

SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY

Pengam Primary School
Fleur-de-Lis Primary School

ATTENDANCE

From May 2018 to May 2019 my attendance at Council meetings was as follows:

<u>Meeting</u>	<u>No. Attended</u>	<u>No. Held</u>
Council	11	11
Cabinet	20	23
Cabinet as Trustees of Blackwood Miners Institute	2	3
Joint Consultative Committee	3	3

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

I undertook the following training and development seminars and courses: -

Sport and Active Recreation Strategy (Seminar)

New Curriculum and Performance indicators for Education (Recommended)

Corporate Safeguarding Briefing (Seminar)

Medium Term Financial Plan (Seminar)

Unconscious Bias in Decision Making (Requested)

Gwent Police Station Closures (Seminar)

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

The start of this year coincided with Foster Care Fortnight and I was keen to emphasise the importance that fostering makes to a child's life, by encouraging people who may be interested in becoming a foster carer to get in touch with the Council's Foster Care Team.

I am pleased to see the progress with the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) improvement works on our council homes which well on target to meet Welsh Government standards by 2020 and ensuring that homes will have up to date kitchens, bathrooms, heating systems and electrics, along with external improvements.

The Council's Corporate Plan sets out the key commitments that myself and my cabinet colleagues have made to Caerphilly county borough residents. Our commitments are around protecting jobs and services within the current financial climate, building on the council's reputation as a high performing, innovative local authority, ensuring we have a motivated workforce, striving to ensure we deliver value for money, protecting the vulnerable, welcoming feedback and considering the views of residents and being open, honest and transparent in everything we do.

I'm really pleased that the council's Cabinet allocated £530,000 of savings to provide up to 23 apprenticeship opportunities across a range of council services. Apprenticeships are crucial in enabling people to obtain key skills and experience which can be used to secure long term employment and therefore help boost our economy. This scheme will also go some way to helping ensure that skills shortages are addressed to meet the future needs of the council.

Over the last year, the council also successfully secured £5.4 million for the development of places in Welsh medium schools and £850,000 for expanding places in Welsh medium childcare settings. A further £5.1 million was also secured for childcare setting development and £194,750 Flying Start capital maintenance work for several sites.

I was honoured to be invited to celebrate the annual Sport Caerphilly Sports Awards, organised by the council's Sport and Leisure Service, which recognises and celebrates the valuable contribution that volunteers make to grassroots and community sport across our area.

It has been another challenging year with a savings requirement of almost £14 million (£13.921m) for 2019/20. We did however receive a slightly better than anticipated final settlement from Welsh Government, which allowed us to reconsider a number of key savings proposals – including Community Safety Wardens, the Meals on Wheels service, the closure of two household recycling centres, rat treatment charges, community centre cuts and funding for community schemes such as Bargoed Ice Rink and Senghenydd Splash Pad. These were the things our residents told us would be unpalatable; we've listened and responded, and for the time being at least, have been able to take these off the table.

WARD ACTIVITY

Unfortunately the meeting of the Britannia, Pengam & Fleur de Lis Residents Association no longer take place. I miss this forum as it gave the community an opportunity to discuss issues with me.

The long legal process of making Francis Street and Warne Street a one way system is still ongoing.

A grant has been awarded to Caerphilly Council for safe routes to school; in this case Ysgol Cwm Rhymni. This will allow the traffic lights to be pedestrian controlled and for a refuge island to be installed in the main road.

I had changes made to the cenotaph with more year long flowers and shrubs planted. I also arranged for restraining wires to be installed. It was pleasing to see that wreaths are not now blown off the cenotaph during storms.

I am pleased to receive emails and visits from residents seeking advice and requests for service. I always respond to all such requests.