



COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON TUESDAY, 17TH NOVEMBER 2020 AT 5.00PM

PRESENT:

Councillor C. Andrews - Mayor
Councillor J. Gale – Deputy Mayor

Councillors:

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

Together with:-

C. Harrhy (Chief Executive), M.S. Williams (Interim Corporate Director of Communities), D. Street (Corporate Director Social Services and Housing), R. Edmunds (Corporate Director Education and Corporate Services), R. Tranter (Head Legal Services and Monitoring Officer), S. Harris (Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer), J. Williams (Assistant Director Adult Services), J. Lougher (Sports and Leisure Development), D. Lucas (Team Leader, Strategic Planning), L. Morgan (Licensing Manager), N. Thomas (Schools Sports Coordinator), R. Thomas (Planning Services Manager) and E. Sullivan (Senior Committee Services Officer)

RECORDING AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Chief Executive reminded those present that the meeting was being filmed but would not be live streamed, however a recording would be available following the meeting via the Council's website. She advised that decisions would be made by Microsoft Forms.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M. Davies, D. Harse, G.D. Oliver, L. Phipps, D.W.R. Preece, J. Simmonds.

2. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor detailed the visits and presentations she had undertaken since the last meeting.

3. TO RECEIVE PETITIONS UNDER RULE OF PROCEDURE 28(3)

There were no petitions.

4. PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

The Cabinet Member for Learning & Achievement asked Council to recognise the fantastic achievements of Jonah Jones who had been named Young Person of the Year at the Tennis Wales Awards on behalf of Caerphilly Tennis Club. Council paid tribute to the Jonah's coaching and voluntary work and thanked him for all his efforts.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors D. Havard, G. Johnston and A. Whitcombe declared a personal interest in relation to Agenda Item No. 13 as they are current Members of the Royal British Legion. Full details are minuted with the respective item.

6. STATEMENT FROM THE LEADER OF COUNCIL

The Leader of Council paid tribute to Councillor D. T Davies and Mrs P. Scourfield who had been recognised by Queen in this year's Honours List.

The Leader then provided Council with an update on the ongoing response to the COVID Pandemic and the amazing achievements made over the past few months to support communities during these unprecedented times. Councillor Marsden expressed her pride in the work that had been undertaken and the way in which staff had responded to the many demands placed upon them.

In concluding her statement, the Leader outlined the next stages and key priorities for the coming months.

Councillor Marsden then called on Deputy Leader to make a brief statement. Councillor Sean Morgan provided an update on some recent correspondence received in relation to the Caerphilly Tourist Association (CTA). He reassured Members that there was absolutely no intention of Council removing its support for the CTA and advised that this had been confirmed with the Association.

7. SPECIAL COUNCIL – 10TH SEPTEMBER 2020

RESOLVED that the minutes of Special Council held on 10th September 2020 be approved as correct records and signed by the Mayor.

8. COUNCIL – 6TH OCTOBER

RESOLVED that the minutes of Council held on 6th October 2020 be approved as correct records and signed by the Mayor.

9. TO RECEIVE AND TO ANSWER QUESTIONS RECEIVED UNDER RULE OF PROCEDURE 10 (2)

Question to the Cabinet Member for Learning and Achievement Councillor R. Whiting from Councillor K. Etheridge.

To ask the Cabinet Member to give an update on the Councils intention for Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre including the full amount to date of the sums paid in Legal Costs as referenced in a media article where the Leader was quoted dated 15/10/20 "Whilst we welcome the decision, we also regret the amount of money it has cost the Council to defend this case".

Response from Councillor R. Whiting to Councillor K. Etheridge.

As part of our agreed phased reopening plans, Sue Noake, Heolddu, St. Cenydd and Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre will be fully reopened as soon as we are able to do so in light of the present COVID-19 risk, and in accordance with Welsh Government guidance.

Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre's outdoor 3G pitch has already re-opened following the national fire-break for affiliated clubs and organisations, as are many of our other 3G pitches. The indoor sports and leisure facilities are currently closed, however our aim and intention is for a partial re-opening in Sue Noake, Heolddu, St. Cenydd and Pontllanfraith Leisure Centres to take place in the week commencing 23rd November. This will depend on the COVID-19 risk and Welsh Government guidance, which currently only allows for 15 people indoors in an organised setting, hence the partial reopening.

The longer term position regarding Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre, as stated by the then-interim leader Cllr Barbara Jones on 15th October 2019, is that the decision to permanently close it remains deferred as we consider new options for the future of the site, as part of the Council's placeshaping plan. This remains the current position. This placeshaping plan will of course rightly be the subject of broader discussion with members and consultation with the public, in due course.

I would like to clarify that legal costs were incurred defending our Sports and Active Recreation Strategy, not the potential closure of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre. No costs for the High Court case have been paid to date. The Lord Chancellor has accepted liability for the Council's costs in the Court of Appeal case. The Council's legal costs totals £64,813.80 and whilst 100% costs recovery is almost never achieved in practice, we do expect to recover a substantial proportion of this figure. The costs of the Supreme Court case have been estimated at £2,287.20. These have not yet been submitted for assessment, as we are hoping to resolve these informally without further input from the Court. Again, it is likely that we will recover most of this. The amount of public money it has cost the council to defend this case is regrettable.

Our Sports and Active Recreation Strategy sets a long-term, ambitious direction of sport and recreation in Caerphilly, to ensure our residents can live healthier lifestyles, and to be 'more active, more often'. This vision aims at promoting high quality, sustainable opportunities to use our formal and informal leisure spaces.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

10. HEADS OF THE VALLEY REGENERATION AREA MASTER PLAN

Consideration was given to the report which detailed the representations received as part of the public consultation exercise on the Heads of the Valley Regeneration Area Master Plan as set out in Report of Consultation and sought Council approval for formally adopt the plan as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Adopted Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan as a tool for guiding regeneration activity in the Heads of the Valley Regeneration area.

Members acknowledged the value of Master Plans for driving forward potential funding streams for regeneration and noted the opportunities developed as a result of the Caerphilly Basin and Ystrad Mynch Master Plans which they hoped would be mirrored. Although concerns were expressed at the small number of responses received, Officers confirmed that the significant pre-consultation process may have had an impact on response levels. The consultation process was outlined to illustrate the massive amount of work undertaken to reach as many people as possible.

The Local Ward Member for the Twyn Carno Ward expressed his hopes for the Plan and the positive impact it would have on his ward and referenced the success of initiatives implemented in the Lansbury Park area and sought clarification as to whether Twyn Carno as the 8th most deprived area in Wales could benefit from the same attention. The Corporate Director for Communities confirmed that he would be happy to put this to the Valleys Task Force and work with the Local Ward Member going forward.

Members noted the relevance of a plan of this kind and hoped that it would secure benefits for the Heads of the Valley area.

For the reasons given in the Officers report it was moved and seconded that the recommendations contained therein be approved by verbal confirmation and Microsoft Forms and in noting there was 1 abstention, this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) the representations received as part of the public consultation exercises as set out in the Report of Consultation be endorsed.
- (ii) the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area Masterplan be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Adopted Caerphilly County Borough Council Local Development Plan as a tool for guiding regeneration activity in the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area.

11. CARE INSPECTORATE WALES (CIW) – INSPECTION FEEDBACK

Consideration was given to the report which summarised the Care Inspectorate Wales review of Caerphilly County Borough Council's performance in carrying out its Social Services functions from April 2019 to March 2020. Members were referred to the recording of the scrutiny meeting which included a presentation from the Inspectorate.

Council noted the views of the Scrutiny Committee and congratulated the Director of Social Services on the positive outcome achieved. The Corporate Director detailed the fundamental changes made to service provision during the pandemic particularly around engagement with young people, now that face-to-face interaction was no longer possible. Members were advised that this report was very much a reflection of the excellent work being undertaken but there was still a lot more work to do.

Members congratulated Social Services on their efforts and hard work and recognised the importance of cross party and partnership working in order to achieve positive and impactful outcomes for services users.

It was moved and seconded that for the reasons given in the Officers report the recommendation contained therein be approved and by verbal confirmation and Microsoft Forms this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the findings of the Care Inspectorate (CIW) Local Authority Performance Review for Caerphilly County Borough Council be accepted and noted.

12. LICENSING ACT 2003 – STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY

Consideration was given to the report which presented the revised Statement of Licensing Policy for Council approval. Members noted that the Licensing Act requires every Authority to have a Statement of Licensing Policy which must be reviewed every five years. A consultation had been undertaken and any comments received had been reflected in the report and the reviewed document.

It was noted that the policy had been presented the Licensing and Gambling Committee on the 5th November 2020 who had recommended its approval to Council.

It was moved and seconded that for the reasons given in the Officers report the recommendation contained therein be approved and by verbal confirmation and Microsoft Forms this was unanimously agreed.

RESOVLED that the revised Statement of Licensing Policy be approved and adopted.

13. FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH – ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

Councillors D. Havard, G. Johnston and A. Whitcombe declared a personal interest as they are Members of the Royal British Legion, as this was a personal interest only, it was confirmed that there was no requirement for them to leave the meeting and they could take part in the debate and vote.

Consideration was given to the report from Cabinet which recommended to Council that they admit as Honorary Freemen of the Borough the Royal British Legion, in recognition of their 100 Year Anniversary on the 15th May 2021.

Members acknowledged the eminent and exemplary work of the Royal British Legion in supporting ex-service men and women and their families and paid tribute to the organisation for its many years of charitable service.

It was moved and seconded that in pursuance of Section 249(As Amended) of the Local Government Act 1972 the Council confers upon the Royal British Legion in 2021, the Freedom of the County Borough of Council and by verbal confirmation and Microsoft Forms this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that in pursuance of Section 249(As Amended) of the Local Government Act 1972 the Council confers upon the Royal British Legion in 2021, the Freedom of the County Borough of Council.

The meeting closed at 18:25pm

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 19th January 2021 they were signed by the Mayor.

MAYOR