



## COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS, ON TUESDAY 19TH JANUARY 2021 AT 5.00PM

#### PRESENT:

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

#### Councillors:

M. Adams, Mrs E.M. Aldworth, A.P. Angel, P.J. Bevan, C. Bezzina, L.J. Binding, A. Collis, S. Cook, D. Cushing, C. Cuss, W. David, D.T. Davies, M. Davies, K. Dawson, K. Etheridge, M. Evans, A. Farina-Childs, Mrs C. Forehead, J.E. Fussell, A. Gair, N. George, C. Gordon, R.W. Gough, L. Harding, D. Havard, A.G. Higgs, A. Hussey, 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, Mrs L. Phipps, D.V. Poole, D.W.R. Preece, Mrs D. Price, J. Pritchard, J. Ridgewell, R. Saralis, Mrs M.E. Sargent, J. Simmonds, S. Skivens, Mrs E. Stenner, J. Taylor, C. Thomas, A. Whitcombe, R. Whiting, L G. Whittle, W. Williams, B. Zaplatynski

#### Together with:-

C. Harray (Chief Executive), R. Tranter (Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer) D. Street (Corporate Director Social Services), M.S. Williams (Interim Corporate Director of Communities), S. Harris (Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer), L. Lane (Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer), R. Kyte (Head of Planning and Regeneration), R. Thomas (Planning Manager), S. Pugh (Head of Communications), L. James (Principal Planner), D. Lucas (Team Leader Strategic Development), I. Mullis (Principal Planner) and E. Sullivan (Senior Committee Services Officer).

#### **IN MEMORIAM**

The Mayor with sadness advised that since the last meeting of Council, Councillor John Roberts has lost his partner Menna and Mrs J. Thomas, PA to the Civic Office had also lost her husband Wayne. Council held a minute's silence as a sign of respect.

#### **WEB-CASTING FILMING 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 – [Click Here to View](#). She advised that decisions would be made by Microsoft Forms.

#### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J. Bevan, N. Dix, C. Elsbury, E. Forehead, D. Hardacre, D. Harse, M. James, G. Oliver, J. Roberts, J. Scriven, G. Simmonds, T. Williams and R. Edmunds (Corporate Director Education and Corporate Services).

## **2. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor referred to her recent visits and her attendance at a banner unveiling which declared Caerphilly as an honorary Quidditch Town, she was accompanied by 2 Primary School Pupils who were avid Harry Potter fans. The Mayor advised that along with Cllr Shayne Cook she had taken part in a video highlighting this year's Operation Santa Appeal and thanked all those who played a part in making it such a success under such difficult circumstances. Finally, the Mayor, congratulation to G. Price of Markham, on becoming Darts World Champion.

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

There were no petitions received.

## **4. PRESENTATION OF AWARDS**

Council were advised of a major national award achieve by the Communications Team at the recent *Public Service Communications Excellence Awards*. The team won the prestigious Gold Award for the impressive work they have been doing to promote and encourage take up of our Free School Meal service since the start of lockdown.

Council congratulated Steve Pugh, Sarena Ford and their colleagues for this outstanding achievement.

## **5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor B. Miles declared a personal interest in relation to Agenda Item No. 12 – Regional Technical Statement for the South Wales Regional Aggregate Working Party (SWRAWP), Second Review – in that a family member is landlord to a quarry business within the region.

## **6. COUNCIL – 17<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2020**

Subject to an amendment in that Councillor J.E. Fussell was noted in the minutes of the meeting held on the 17<sup>th</sup> November 2020 as being present at the meeting but had given apologies the minutes were approved as a correct record by the majority present.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2020 be approved as a correct record.

## **7. SPECIAL COUNCIL – 24<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2021**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the special meeting held on the 24<sup>th</sup> November 2020 be approved as a correct record.

## **8. TO RECEIVE AND TO ANSWER QUESTIONS RECEIVED UNDER RULE OF PROCEDURE 10(5)**

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

It is now 10 months into the pandemic, how confident are you, that our education live lesson learning – ‘blending learning’ initiative across the county borough is providing equal opportunities, no inequalities, engagement, staff support and access for all our pupils in Caerphilly with all schools and pupils engaged in the process?

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

This pandemic has been a huge challenge for our schools and I would like to start by thanking all our school staff and education professionals for the incredible work they have done in responding to this pandemic, and for their commitment to identifying and meeting the diverse range of our learners’ needs.

While there has been some facilitation of live online learning where appropriate, high quality learning will depend upon matching the provision to the diverse needs of the child or young person. One size does not fit all, and it is important for schools to employ a broad range of techniques and tools, just as they do in the classroom.

To meet this challenge, schools have been actively developing their learning offer and investing in appropriate professional learning and training for teachers, in addition to the right resources, to ensure the highest possible impact for pupils.

Weekly meetings are held between Head Teachers, the Local Authority and the Education Achievement Service to identify priority areas for support. A working group has also been established to support the provision and use of technology in remote learning.

The Local Authority and the EAS have worked with schools to support this development with several key investments.

For example:

- We have installed publicly available WiFi across our schools; improved internet connections in classrooms and upgraded broadband connection speeds to ensure that blended and distance learning materials can be accessed on site under supervision, such as is currently the case with vulnerable and key worker children.
- The ‘Stay Safe, Stay Learning’ initiative to upgrade devices for use by digitally excluded learners as well as providing hundreds of free to use MiFi devices for those without home broadband.
- The distribution of over 1,300 devices to secondary schools in the Autumn to help pupils’ access and engage in online learning, and the procurement of around 7,700 Chromebooks through the EdTech programme, which are now available to schools to boost access.
- Funding of £300k to secondary schools so they can purchase core textbooks and revision guides for our 4,000 KS4 learners.

The EAS have published a detailed guide to blended learning on their website which sets out the wide range of tools and techniques that schools can deploy and have helped share examples of good practice. They have also developed a dedicated support website and blended learning toolkit for parents and carers.

In September they held a seminar on blended learning for Education Scrutiny Committee Members, and this could be re-run for all elected members if this would be helpful.

In short, I am confident that these actions being taken by our schools, the EAS and our expert education staff have promoted continuity, parity and equality of learning for our pupils through this difficult time.

That being said, if a parent or carer has concern about the provision their child is receiving, it is important that these concerns are shared and discussed in the most appropriate place - the individual school - in the first instance.

#### **9. COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2021/22**

Consideration was given to the report which sought Council approval to continue a Council Tax Reduction Scheme for the 2021/22 financial year on the same basis as the scheme used in 2020/21 along with the previously agreed local discretions.

Council noted that it is a formal requirement to approve a Council Tax Reduction Scheme on an annual basis.

Having been fully considered it was moved and seconded that for the reasons given in the Officers report the recommendations contained therein be approved and by way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the current Council Tax Reduction Scheme continue for the 2021/22 financial year along with previously agreed local discretions.

#### **10. 2<sup>ND</sup> REPLACEMENT CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN UP TO 2035 – DRAFT DELIVERY AGREEMENT**

Consideration was given to the report which sought Council approval to consult on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Replacement Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2035, Draft Delivery Agreement for nine weeks, commencing Monday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021 and concluding Monday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

Council noted the impact that the unprecedented circumstances surrounding COVID-19 had on the process which had resulted in the cancellation of the original six-week consultation. Due to continuing restrictions it was now proposed to hold the consultation over a nine-week consultation to allow more time for engagement in the process.

Having been fully considered it was moved and seconded that for the reasons given in the Officers report the recommendations contained therein be approved and by way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) the Draft Delivery Agreement be approved for consultation.
- (ii) the Draft Delivery Agreement now be subject of a nine-week consultation period commencing Monday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021 and concluding Monday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

#### **11. CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN – HOUSING DELIVERY STATEMENT**

Consideration was given to the report which had been previously presented to the Planning Committee on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020 and sought Council approval to adopt the Housing

Delivery Statement and its recommendations as the basis for forming future planning decisions by this Local Planning Authority.

Members acknowledged and very much supported the need for housing, but that development should not be at the expense of green-field sites and that brown-field sites should be explored and developed first. Clarification was sought in relation to paragraph 5.6 of the Statement. Officers explained that the sites referenced within the statement reflected those that have benefit of planning permission and would deliver a large number of units over the next few years, however even with these sites the forecast for completions for 2020/21 were anticipated to remain well below the annual average requirement. The Officer confirmed that some of the applications referred to in the question had been won on appeal and that any future applications would have to be considered when they are submitted on their individual merits.

Having fully considered the report it was moved and seconded that for the reasons given in the Officer's report the recommendation contained therein be approved and by way of Microsoft Forms and in noting there was 1 against and 3 Abstentions this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) the comments of the Planning Committee be noted.
- (ii) The Housing Delivery Statement and its recommendation be endorsed as the basis for informing future planning decisions by the Local Planning Authority.

## **12. REGIONAL TECHNICAL STATEMENT FOR THE SOUTH WALES REGIONAL AGGREGATE WORKING PARTY (SWRAWP), SECOND REVIEW**

Councillor B. Miles declared a personal interest only in that a family member operated a quarry within the region area.

Consideration was given to the report which sought Council endorsement of the Regional Technical Statement 2<sup>nd</sup> Review as required by Minerals Technical Note (MTAN) 1: Aggregates.

Members noted that Welsh Government had default powers to intervene in the mineral's apportionment process as a last resort and clarification was sought as to the likelihood of this happening. Officers confirmed that this would be highly unlikely and that generally speaking Local Authorities agreed the statement amongst themselves as part of the examination process for LDPs.

Clarification was sought various category levels of quarry's and whether closed quarries could be brought back into use. The Officer confirmed that were different levels such as active, inactive, dormant and closed and although it was possible for dormant or inactive quarries to come back into use this would only be after stringent conditions and reviews had been met.

Following consideration of the report it was moved and seconded that the recommendation contained therein be approved and by way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the RTS 2<sup>nd</sup> Review as required by Minerals Technical Advice Note (MTAN) 1: Aggregates be endorsed.

## **13. PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES ANNUAL LETTER 2019/2020**

Consideration was given to the report which presented the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual Letter for 2019/20.

Having fully considered its content the report was noted.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

**14. INDEPENDENT RENUMERATION PANEL FOR WALES: SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT ON THE PRINCIPLES IN RESPECT OF THE REIMBURSEMENT OF COSTS OF CARE**

Consideration was given to the report which sought Council endorsement of the principles contained therein and authorisation for the Head of Democratic Services to update the Members Schedule of Remuneration to reflect the provisions of the Supplementary Report as necessary in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Democratic Services Committee.

It was noted that the report had previously been presented to the Democratic Services Committee who had unanimously noted and supported the principles set out in the Supplementary Report.

Having been moved and seconded for the reasons given the Officers report the recommendations contained therein be approved and by way of Microsoft Teams and verbal confirmation this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) the principles set out within the Supplementary Report be endorsed and implemented.
- (ii) the Head of Democratic Services be authorised to update the Members Schedule of Remuneration to reflect the provisions of the Supplementary Report as necessary in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Democratic Services Committee.

**15. CAR PARKING CHARGES**

The Mayor confirmed that the report was considered as an urgent item by Cabinet on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2020 and under the requirements of the Constitution any decision taken as a matter of urgency must be reported to the next available meeting of Council, giving the reasons for its urgency. Therefore, Council was asked to note the reasons for the report's urgency and the Cabinet Decision.

Members expressed thanks to the Car Parking Charges Task and Finish Group for all their work in this regard and recognised the efforts of Mrs Cath Forbes-Thompson, Scrutiny Manager. The benefits of free parking were acknowledged however it was noted that those working in town centres had taken advantage of this opportunity often to the detriment of shoppers. Reference was made to the provision of new parking meters and if these could be programmed to offer pre-set limited free parking hours. Officers confirmed that the new machines had been ordered but unfortunately did not know their exact calibration capacity but would provide an update to Members following the meeting.

Clarification was sought as to whether there was potential for the current arrangements to be extended particularly as the full impact of COVID on town centre business was still unknown. Members were assured that this would be monitored until the end of the financial year and could be reviewed then to ascertain the best way forward.

The report was so noted.

The meeting closed at 18:15pm

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021.

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MAYOR