



CABINET

MINUTES OF THE REMOTE MEETING HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON WEDNESDAY, 21ST APRIL 2021 AT 10.30 A.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor P. Marsden (Leader) - Chair

Councillors:

S. Cook (Social Care), N. George (Waste and Public Protection), C. Gordon (Corporate Services), S. Morgan (Economy and Enterprise), L. Phipps (Homes and Places), J. Ridgewell (Environment and Infrastructure), E. Stenner (Performance and Customer Services) and R. Whiting (Learning and Achievement).

Together with:

C. Harry (Chief Executive), R. Edmunds (Corporate Director – Education and Corporate Services), and M.S. Williams (Corporate Director – Economy and Environment).

Also in Attendance:

K. Cole (Chief Education Officer), P. Hudson (Business Enterprise Renewal Team Leader), R. Kyte (Head of Regeneration and Planning), K. Peters (Corporate Policy Manager), S. Richards (Head of Education Planning and Strategy), R. Roberts (Business Improvement Manager), N. Rutter (Digital Communications Officer), R. Tranter (Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer), M. Harris (Committee Services Support Officer/Chauffeur) and C. Evans (Committee Services Officer).

Councillors C. Mann and K. Etheridge

RECORDING AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Leader 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 D. Street (Corporate Director – Social Services and Housing).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor L. Phipps declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 5 – Education Achievement Service (EAS) Business Plan 2021-2022 as a Local Authority appointed Company Board Director for the EAS and was able to remain in the meeting and take part fully.

Councillor S. Cook declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 5 – Education Achievement Service (EAS) Business Plan 2021-2022 as a Local Authority appointed Company Board Director for the EAS and was able to remain in the meeting and take part fully.

Councillor S. Cook declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 8 – Regeneration Board – Project Proposals as a relative is employed by Coffi Vista and left the meeting during its consideration.

Councillor R. Whiting declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 5 – Education Achievement Service (EAS) Business Plan 2021-2022 as a Local Authority appointed member of the Joint Executive Group for the EAS and was able to remain in the meeting and take part fully.

3. CABINET – 7TH APRIL 2021

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 7th April 2021 were approved as a correct record.

4. CABINET FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – TO NOTE

Cabinet were provided with the Cabinet Forward Work Programme, which detailed the scheduled reports for 21st April 2021. Members were reminded that the Cabinet Forward Work Programme is a working document and therefore subject to change.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the Forward Work Programme be noted. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Forward Work Programme be noted.

5. EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT SERVICE (EAS) BUSINESS PLAN 2021-2022

The report, which was considered by the Education Scrutiny Committee on 10th March 2021 provided Cabinet with the EAS Business Plan 2021.

It was noted that the EAS is required to submit an annual overarching regional Business Plan on an annual basis. The report asked for members to consider the full contents of the EAS Business Plan. The document contains the main priorities that the EAS believe will be relevant to focus upon in the next iteration of the regional Business Plan for 2021- 2022.

The document contained the main priorities that the EAS believe will be relevant to focus upon in the next iteration of the regional Business Plan for 2021-2022. It is challenging to try to predict the way in which society will be operating from summer 2021 with regards to managing the spread of coronavirus. The priorities contained within the document assume that the EAS will build upon the learning and momentum from the past few months. It was noted that Members of the scrutiny committee were asked to consider the main strengths and areas for development within Caerphilly, and to consider how LA services can be aligned with the priorities contained within the document.

Cabinet thanked the Officer and Cabinet Member for the report and discussion ensued.

Members raised a number of queries surrounding the data within the report and clarification on plans to achieve the plan. Officers explained that there will be a change in the data collection to quantitative data which will demonstrate the health of the schools and quality of teaching and identify best practice.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved. By way of electronic voting this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officer's Report: -

- i) Cabinet ensures that the Business Plan enables appropriate support and challenge for schools and that it addresses the areas for improvement that have been identified within Caerphilly County Borough Council's Education Strategic Plans; and
- ii) The EAS Business Plan 2021-2022 be approved.

6. **TEAM CAERPHELLY-BETTER TOGETHER TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY 6-MONTH UPDATE**

The report, which was considered by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny on 6th April 2021 provided Cabinet with an update on progress under *Team Caerphilly – Better Together* Transformation Strategy.

The programme management arrangements stipulate that a six-monthly update is provided to Scrutiny Committee followed by Cabinet.

It was noted that a member's seminar was delivered for all members on the 19th April 2021 to update on progress. This follows a scrutiny report on strengthening the role of members that was taken to Policy and Resources Scrutiny on the 10th November 2020. All member's seminars will be offered on a six-monthly basis in line with the update reports to Scrutiny and Cabinet.

The Cabinet Member explained that the Council's *Team Caerphilly – Better Together* Transformation Strategy was adopted by Cabinet on the 12th June 2019, subsequent to its consideration by Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on the 28th May 2019. The report provided an update on actions to deliver the strategy to date. It included a summary of progress against the strategic actions, including the well-being and place-shaping framework, and the current series of corporate reviews, the commercial and investment strategy, and the continuing Caerphilly Conversation.

The report updated Cabinet on the additional capacity agreed by Council on the 24th February 2021.

Cabinet thanked the Officer and Cabinet Member for the report and discussion ensued.

Members were assured that progress of the Corporate Reviews will be provided to Cabinet and Scrutiny in due course. Members were pleased to see the changes progressing and the collaborative work underway to deliver the Transformation Agenda.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved. By way of electronic voting this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officer's Report the report and comments of the Scrutiny Committee be noted.

7. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT SIX MONTH UPDATE 2020

The report presented Cabinet with the Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA), which is part of the Council's new Performance Framework following the presentation of the Directorate Performance Assessments to Scrutiny.

The CPA provided a summary of information and analysis for the 6-month period April to September 2020. The CPA forms part of the overall Council 'self-assessment' activity, of which members are invited to discuss, challenge, and scrutinise the information in the CPA.

It was noted that, as the Council embarked on its ambitious Transformation Programme, Team Caerphilly, alongside the emergence of new legislation such as the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill 2019, the Council took the opportunity to redevelop and enhance the Performance Framework.

The new Performance Framework was endorsed by Cabinet February 2020 and the report introduced one of the key components of the Framework, the Corporate Performance Assessment, (CPA). The CPA is a 'self-assessment' of Authority's progress across a wide range of information types.

It was noted that beneath the CPA are the Directorate Performance Assessments (DPA) which are detailed sources of information for each Directorate. Information from the DPA's is fed up into the CPA. Both the CPA and the DPA are an opportunity for Cabinet and Scrutiny to ask, how well we are performing? and what evidence are we using to determine this.

As part of the Performance Framework, the report presented to Cabinet the CPA, which was attached at Appendix 1 Corporate Directorates Performance Assessment up to September 2020.

It was noted that the dates the DPA's were received by Scrutiny were noted in paragraph 5.7 and the report provides feedback from those Scrutiny's.

Cabinet thanked the Officer for the report and discussions ensued, in which Members sought clarification on a number of data sets within the report and progress to meeting targets, for which officers provided a detailed response and noted that the Council continues to meet the ongoing demands of the global pandemic and meeting the needs of residents within the borough. Further work will be underway to consider the impacts of Brexit and the potential savings which will be required in the future.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved. By way of electronic voting this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officer's Report the document attached at Appendix 1 of the report be discussed, challenged and scrutinised.

8. REGENERATION BOARD – PROJECT PROPOSALS

The report recommended the allocation of up to £107,000 from the Regeneration Project Board Development Fund towards a recently endorsed and evaluated project for Bedwas Bridge, for Cabinet to note the allocation of £20,689 Licence to Innovate Funding towards the provision of a Gelato Counter for Coffi Vista, Caerphilly and recommended that a further £1m be allocated to the Regeneration Project Board Development Fund.

Cabinet, at its meeting on 30th May 2018 agreed that a Regeneration Project Board would be set up with a cross-party political representation of Councillors plus key officers. This group is

supported by a Regeneration Assessment Panel consisting of officers from a range of service areas. An initial sum of £300,000 was allocated to the Project Board.

The Regeneration Assessment Panel have met on numerous occasions to consider the prioritised list of capital projects, which have been identified by the Board to move to the Assessment Stage. Following subsequent Cabinet Approvals, since February 2019 numerous projects have been endorsed with financial assistance provided (where necessary) from the Regeneration Project Board Development Funds.

It was noted that during January 2019 Cabinet resolved to release £1.2m of reserves for the Regeneration Board prioritised projects, bringing the Total Development Fund budget allocation to £1.5m. To date, £1,392,200 has been allocated towards prioritised capital regeneration schemes, across the County Borough.

In December 2020 Cabinet resolved to allocate £50,000 seed money to the Regeneration Board for 2020/21 to progress concepts and ideas under the Licence to Innovate Initiative.

The report sought Cabinet approval for the allocation of £107,000 Regeneration Development Funds towards Bedwas Bridge; and for Cabinet to note the £20,689 Licence to Innovate Funding for a Gelato Counter for Coffi Vista, Caerphilly. The request would leave an active Regeneration Development Fund of £800 and £29,311 License to Innovate Funding.

Cabinet were also asked to consider a further allocation of £1m to the Regeneration Project Board Development Fund.

Cabinet thanked the Officers for the report and discussion ensued.

Members were pleased to note the plans within the report and keen for updates on progress.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved. By way of electronic voting this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officer's Report: -

- i) £107,000 of the residual Regeneration Project Board Development Fund be agreed to be allocated to the priority highway improvement scheme, as approved by the Regeneration Project Board.
- ii) It be noted that £20,689 Licence to Innovate Funding has been allocated for a Gelato Counter for Coffi Vista, Caerphilly, as approved by the Regeneration Project Board.
- iii) A further allocation of £1m to the Regeneration Project Board Development Fund be agreed, funded from Corporate Services Capital Earmarked Reserves.

9. REOPENING OF CWMCARN FOREST DRIVE

The report seeks Cabinet agreement for a proposed collaborative arrangement with Natural Resources Wales on behalf of the Council to manage the operation of the Forest Drive at Cwmcarn Forest as a visitor attraction for a trial period of 2 years.

It was noted that the Forest Drive is owned and managed by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and has been closed since 2015 to allow for the felling of around 150,000 trees because of the disease Phytophthora Ramorum.

Following a programme of investment to resurface the forest drive and reinstate and enhance the recreational facilities, Natural Resources Wales are looking to reopen the Forest Drive in the spring of this year and are seeking to work in partnership with the Council to ensure a financially sustainable operation is established through a collaboration agreement.

The Council are being asked to take on the operational management of the Forest Drive at Cwmcarn Forest.

It was noted that the commercial and investment strategy adopted by Cabinet on 9th December indicated a commitment to working in partnership with organisations who share our values, working with NRW is a good demonstration of this commitment. The strategy sets the foundations for working in different ways, empowering staff to try new things as well as fundamentals of commercialisation such as business planning. The proposal sits within the strategic context supporting all the main aims of the commercial strategy and the wider transformation strategy ensuring we adopt the commercial mind social heart ethos.

The Leader welcomed Councillor K. Etheridge to the meeting, who sought clarification on a number of points, including concessions for education parties and vulnerable visitors, whether the collaboration plan has been implemented and concessions for regular users. Officers explained that discussions are underway with NRW, the owners of the site, in respect of concessions and the possibility of season tickets for the site. The collaboration plan is currently being developed between NRW and Caerphilly County Borough Council. A consultation Officer has been appointed by NRW who has provided exceptional work during the consultation process.

Cabinet thanked the Officers for the report and discussion ensued.

Members discussed some of the local issues and provided further clarity on the reopening of the site. In addition, confirmation was sought on Members involvement in local issues, with particular reference to the Senedd Election, for which the Chief Executive in her role as Returning Officer, provided clarity.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved. By way of electronic voting this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officer's Report : -

- i) It be agreed that Officers agree a collaboration agreement on behalf of the Council with Natural Resources Wales to support the re-opening of the Forest Drive in 2021 to achieve a financially sustainable operation of the attraction.
- ii) The recommended admission price of £8 per car, £11 for minibuses and £25 for coaches be agreed to include parking fees on Council operated car parks at Cwmcarn as part of the admission fee.

The meeting closed at 12:27pm

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any corrections made at the meeting held on 9th June 2021.

CHAIR