



CABINET

MINUTES OF THE REMOTE MEETING HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON WEDNESDAY, 9TH JUNE 2021 AT 10.30 A.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor P. Marsden (Leader) - Chair

Councillors:

S. Cook (Social Care), N. George (Waste, Public Protection and Street Scene), C. Gordon (Corporate Services), L. Phipps (Housing), E. Stenner (Customer, Performance and Property Services), R. Whiting (Learning and Leisure) and A. Whitcombe (Sustainability, Planning and Fleet).

Together with:

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

Also in Attendance:

A. Cullinane (Senior Policy Officer), S. Foley (Regional Community Cohesion Officer), L. Lucas (Head of Customer and Digital Services), J. Lougher (Sport and Leisure Development Manager), K. Peters (Corporate Policy Manager), S. Richards (Head of Education Planning and Strategy), S. Pugh (Communications Manager), S. Ellis (Lead for Inclusion and ALN), K. Cole (Chief Education Officer), P. Warren (Strategic Lead for School Improvement), R. Tranter (Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer), J. Lloyd (Committee Services Officer), M. Harris (Committee Services Support Officer/Chauffeur) and C. Evans (Committee Services Officer).

Councillors C. Mann

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 S. Morgan (Economy and Enterprise and Infrastructure) and S. Harris (Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest at the beginning or during the course of the meeting.

3. CABINET – 21ST APRIL 2021

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 21st April 2021 were approved as a correct record.

4. SPECIAL CABINET – 19TH MAY 2021

RESOLVED that the minutes of the special meeting held on 19th May 2021 were approved as a correct record.

5. CABINET FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – TO NOTE

Cabinet were provided with the Cabinet Forward Work Programme, which detailed the scheduled reports for 21st July 2021. Members were reminded that the Cabinet Forward Work Programme is a working document and therefore subject to change. As a result, Cabinet agreed that the Provisional Revenue Report scheduled for 23rd June 2021 be deferred to be 7th July 2021.

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.

6. PROPOSED ICT STRATEGY

The report presented Cabinet with the draft Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Strategy and associated delivery roadmap.

It was noted that the Digital Services draft ICT Strategy (the Strategy) as attached to the Officers report provided the roadmap, direction, and guidance for ICT developments within Caerphilly County Borough Council for the next five (5) years.

The Strategy outlined how Digital Services will develop its service to support the Authority's Customer and Digital Strategy through innovative technologies that will transform service delivery and highlighted how Digital Services will aspire to provide a good customer experience across all council services by putting customers at the heart of the organisation.

The Strategy has been developed in partnership with support partner RedCortex, who engaged with colleagues from across the Authority to develop the key themes and strategic principles.

The Strategy sets out its vision for the Authority by defining the transformational journey for the next five (5) years by:

- Enabling the Authority to meet its current and future priorities.
- Enabling and encouraging flexible working patterns.
- Providing a better experience and level of customer care for all customers.
- Migrating a modern, more cost efficient and environmentally friendly technologies and devices
- Providing a secure, resilient infrastructure environment which we can build upon in the future.
- Migrating to modern solutions that improve customer experience, enable better use of information, and deliver improved services.

Cabinet thanked the Officer and Cabinet Member for the report and discussion ensued. Members noted a number of projects within the report and thanked the Officers for their hard work.

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 Officers Report: -

- i) The proposed ICT Strategy for taking ICT and Digital forward as a strategic enabler be approved;
- ii) The financial implications as detailed in section 8 of the report be noted;
- iii) That £320k of the £1.482m WG Covid-19 Hardship Fund digital transformation funding allocated to Caerphilly CBC be agreed to be set aside in an earmarked reserve to fund projected one-off revenue costs to support delivery of the strategy.

7. WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021

The report informed Members and sought their endorsement of the progress made during the financial year 2020-2021 against four specific areas of Welsh language work, as required under the regulatory framework for implementing the Welsh Language Standards.

The report will then be published online by the deadline date of 30th June 2021, as required by Welsh Language Standard 158.

It was noted that the Council has a statutory duty to produce an annual monitoring report on implementing Welsh language issues under current legislation and in compliance with Standard 158.

The information required for 2020-2021 covers four required key areas.

Complaints from the Public

The annual report must include the number of complaints that you received during that year which related to your compliance with the standards with which you were under a duty to comply. Standard number and sub clause - 147, 148, 149,156, 158(2), 162, 164(2), 168(a), 170(2)(d)

Staff Language Skills

The number of employees who have Welsh language skills at the end of the year in question (on the basis of the records kept in accordance with standard 151); Standard number and sub clause- 170(2)(a), 151

Welsh Medium Training Provision

The number of members of staff who attended training courses you offered in Welsh during the year (on the basis of the records you kept in accordance with standard 152);

If a Welsh version of a course was offered by you during that year, the percentage of the total number of staff attending the course who attended the Welsh version (on the basis of the records you kept in accordance with standard 152). Standard number and sub clause - 170(2)(b), 170(2)(c), 152

Recruiting to Empty Posts

The number of new and vacant posts that you advertised during the year which were categorised as posts where:

- (i) Welsh language skills were essential
- (ii) Welsh language skills needed to be learnt when appointed to the post
- (iii) Welsh language skills were desirable,
- (iv) Welsh language skills were not necessary (on the basis of the records you kept in accordance with standard 154); Standard number and sub clause - 170(2)(ch), 154

The report provided an update to Members on the Council's current position in relation to the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 statutory requirements.

The report outlined the good progress made by service areas in embedding arrangements for delivering services through the medium of Welsh and increasing the Welsh language skills capacity of the workforce.

It was noted that it is evident from the content of the report that the work done to date is moving in the right direction. The good progress and momentum will be maintained by continuing to work with partners and responding to help, advice, and best practice from the Welsh Language Commissioner and other regional and national bodies.

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

Members discussed several points within the report, in particular one of the complaints received during the Caerphilly Local Lockdown. Officers assured the Cabinet that the correspondence the complaint referred to was in relation to communications issued in response to the Pandemic and weekly updates issued. Members were assured that the Council were not in breach of any standards because of S46 which provides an exemption when issuing statements to the press during an emergency. Cabinet noted however, that the Welsh translation of the correspondence was provided as soon as possible following issue of information.

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

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officers Report the content of the annual report be noted and publication of the information be endorsed as a record of progress towards, and compliance with, the relevant Welsh Language Standards.

8. EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERING SCHEME

The report, which was considered by Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 25th May 2021 sought the views of Cabinet on the proposed Employee Volunteering Scheme and sought Cabinet approval to implement the Scheme with a review carried out at 12- months on the uptake and benefits of the Scheme.

It was noted that the Employee Volunteering Scheme aims to increase volunteering opportunities for employees at Caerphilly County Borough Council, with the benefit of releasing the capacity of employees in supporting local communities and the associated benefits to employee well-being.

The proposed Scheme includes volunteering for a day/part day event or volunteering on a longer-term basis. Employees who have volunteered on a longer-term basis will be able to apply for a maximum of two days leave of absence per year.

Cabinet thanked the Officer for the report and discussions ensued.

Cabinet were provided with comments from the Scrutiny Committee and Officers assured Members that, where possible any barriers employees may experience would be mitigated to offer maximum opportunities to access the scheme.

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

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officers report that the Employee Volunteering Scheme (attached at appendix 1) be approved the Scheme be implemented with a review to be carried out in 12 months on the uptake and benefits of the Scheme.

9. INVESTMENT AT VIRGINIA PARK / 2ND SATELLITE AT ST CENYDD FOR TRINITY FIELDS

The report provided Cabinet with details of 2 proposed building investments, the development of Virginia Park in Caerphilly for both the Youth Service and EOTAS (Education Other Than At School) provision and; investment to provide a 2nd satellite class for Trinity Fields on the St Cenydd High School site.

The report provided Members with details of proposed building related investments at the 2 sites detailed in para 1.1 of the Officers report. This investment will provide an increased capacity to support some of most vulnerable learners. The Virginia Park site has provided an opportunity to create a base in the Caerphilly Basin for the Youth Service, whilst also expanding in-house capacity for some of our EOTAS pupils.

The proposed investment was supported by Education Scrutiny Committee, details provided in the Budget Monitoring Report presented to Scrutiny on 22nd March 2021.

Cabinet thanked the Officers for the report and discussion ensued.

Members were provided with additional information from Officers on the possibilities and additional projects and support the scheme can offer to vulnerable young people, including those at risk of homelessness, sexual exploitation, and mental health. It was noted that the scheme will assist to align the EOTAS Strategy and the Inclusion Strategy and support the aims within.

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

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officers report that the use of £472k of Corporate Services Capital Earmarked Reserves be supported for the development of Virginia Park and for a 2nd Satellite Class for Trinity Fields at St Cenydd High School.

10. CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL ATHLETICS HUB PRICING POLICY

The report sought Cabinet agreement on the pricing policy for the new Caerphilly County Borough Council (Caerphilly CBC) Athletics Hub in Oakdale.

It was noted that at the end of November 2018 Welsh Government (WG) announced a £15million Community Hub Grant. This grant was accessible to all Local Authorities and Further Education establishments via a bidding process.

Officers submitted a Business Case to Welsh Government to access this grant which was successful for the construction of an athletics hub to serve the borough.

Cabinet were pleased to note that the construction of the athletics hub on the school fields located at Rhiw Syr Dafydd Primary School consisting of a 300m x 6 lane plus 6 lane sprint straight is now complete. This also includes a flood lit synthetic running track area, a fan for off field events e.g. high jump, long jump, shot put, javelin and discus. The amount of the works totalled £755k.

Members noted that to fully maximise the new athletics hub provision, officers have sought expressions of interest in relation to the usage of the hub. Prior to allocations of any bookings based on expressions of interest, Members are asked to agree a pricing structure to implement as part of this proposal.

In order to develop a pricing structure, officers have undertaken a bench marking exercise across Wales for provision of a similar nature, to ensure transparency and fairness in compiling a local Caerphilly pricing structure fit for the dimensions of the sporting offer for the County Borough. The information gathered has been included as appendix 1 to this report.

The pricing structure proposed was included in section 5 of the Officers Report.

Cabinet thanked the Officers for the report and discussion ensued and Members thanked officers for the extensive work to provide the facility and were excited for the many benefits it would bring to the local communities.

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 Officers report: -

- i) The pricing structure as outlined in the report for implementation from 1 July 2021 be approved;
- ii) The pricing structure be reviewed every 12 months and any new prices be set by the Corporate Director in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member and Section 151 Officer.

EXECUTIVE DECISIONS THAT ARE NOT SUBJECT TO CALL-IN

11. YOUTH SERVICE REMOVAL FROM LEASE AND USE OF CRUMLIN INSTITUTE

The Monitoring Officer provided Cabinet with details of the urgency of the item. The report outlined that the disposal of Crumlin is the most pressing in building asset terms and there are time limitations attached to the process. Should the necessary actions not be completed within the time-frame, by 25th June 2021, the service will be tied to the current lease arrangements for a minimum of a further 5 years.

The report detailed the rationale for service withdrawal from a building leased from a private owner. The building is the Crumlin Institute, in Crumlin, a former Workingmen's hall leased by the Community Education Service. Crumlin Institute is occupied via a 25-year lease which commenced on 25th December 2011. Prior to 2011, the building was leased on a peppercorn' rental amount. The report recommended to Members that Cabinet approve the withdrawal forthwith, in order to meet the coming lease withdrawal deadline of 25th June 2021.

It was noted that a current lease arrangement would not represent value for money and the retention of the building is not required for the purpose of service continuity.

Cabinet thanked the Officers for the report and discussion ensued.

Members sought clarification on whether the rent was previously reviewed before the last renewal of the lease. Officers explained that at the time of the last renewal, it was becoming clearer that the building may not be required in the coming years, this has been exacerbated during the ongoing pandemic. It was therefore felt that the consultation and view of stakeholders was a priority on the future of the lease of the premises.

Following consideration and discussion and subject to an additional recommendation at *iii*), 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 Officers report and subject to an additional recommendation at *iii*): -

- i) The proposed withdrawal from the lease arrangement be approved;
- ii) That Legal Services issue the correct notice to the property's managing agents Llanover Estates, following Cabinet approval and no later than 25th June 2021.
- iii) *It be agreed that the dilapidation costs currently estimated at between £185k and £195k be funded from the Education and Lifelong Learning reserves.*

The meeting closed at 11.24 am

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any corrections made at the meeting held on 23rd June 2021.

CHAIR