



CABINET

MINUTES OF THE REMOTE MEETING HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON WEDNESDAY, 21ST JULY 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), J. Pritchard (Infrastructure and Property), E. Stenner (Performance, Economy and Enterprise), A. Whitcombe (Sustainability, Planning and Fleet) and R. Whiting (Learning and Leisure).

Together with:

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

Also in Attendance:

R. Tranter (Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer), S. Richards (Head of Education Planning and Strategy), H. Lancaster (Senior Communications Officer), V. Doyle (Policy Officer), P. Warren (Strategic Leader for School Improvement), HP. O'Neill (Senior Youth Services Manager), S. Ellis (Lead for Inclusion), M. Harris (Committee Services Support Officer/Chauffeur) and E. Sullivan (Senior Committee Services Officer).

Councillor 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. Harris (Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer)

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. CABINET – 7TH JULY 2021

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 7th July 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 29th September 2021. Members were reminded that the Cabinet Forward Work Programme is a working document and therefore subject to change.

Cabinet were asked to consider the addition of an item to the Forward Work Programme for the 1st September 2021 Cabinet meeting, a report on Montclair Avenue – Culvert Repairs.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that subject to the aforementioned additional report 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. COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT FUND

Consideration was given to the report which presented a proposed approach to the delivery of the Council's newly instigated Community Empowerment Fund (CEF) and sought endorsement for its proposed funding criteria and grant management arrangements. The views of Cabinet were sought on the appropriate support required to enable Elected Members to effectively champion the Community Empowerment Fund across their communities.

Cabinet noted that the Council was focussed on further strengthening the relationships between it and its communities, its residents, businesses, voluntary and community groups. Caerphilly County Borough benefits from a vibrant and engaged voluntary and community sector, which offers significant opportunity to maximise community participation.

Reference was made to the recent resident survey 'The Caerphilly Conversation', in which 78% of respondents felt it was a positive suggestion to make a community budget available to residents, to enable them to do more things for themselves in the future. 89% also agreed that offering incentives to communities would likely encourage them to take greater pride in their area.

The report set out the proposed approach to the delivery of the fund together with a draft application form, guidance for the fund and draft guidance for Ward Members.

Clarification was sought as to whether Community Centres and Allotment Committees could make application to the fund and assurances were given that as long as they were formally constituted groups then they could apply to the fund.

Clarification was also sought as to whether Community Councils could make an application and it was explained that although they could not, they could play an important part in raising awareness of the fund and identify community groups that could make application and benefit from it.

Cabinet discussed the implications for sponsoring County Borough Members in terms of declarations of interest. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that Members would need to take care in this regard and ensure that they completed a declaration of interest form to explain

their contact and interest in the group being sponsored. It was noted that Declarations of Interest guidance would form part on the wider training programme on the Community Empowerment Fund taking place throughout the summer. Assurances were given that any such declaration would not prevent or disqualify a group on which a Councillor is an elected committee member. The Monitoring Officer suggested that any Member that is unsure of the nature of the interest contact him for advice.

Cabinet noted that the Fund was an important element of the Transformation Strategy, by delivering local projects identified by residents themselves and Elected Members as Community Leaders would play a vital role in raising the profile of this initiative, which could make an incredible difference to communities. It was noted that there would be a lot of hard work in terms of the administration of the fund and the level of support required for processing would be monitored.

Cabinet placed on record their thanks to Officers for all the hard work in bringing the report forward and welcomed this initiative as a tool to empower and enrich communities. To take ownership of projects that mattered to communities and emphasised the importance of highlighting the fund so that community groups did not missed out on this exciting opportunity.

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: -

1. The proposed approach to the delivery of the Community Empowerment Fund and the funding criteria and grant management arrangements for the fund be endorsed.
2. The views of Cabinet on the appropriate support required to enable Elected Members to effectively champion on the Community Empowerment Fund across their communities be noted.
3. A review of the Community Empowerment Fund after 12 months in order to review take up of the fund to date and to identify and mitigate against any emerging barriers to the scheme be supported.

6. INCLUSION COMPENDIUM

Consideration was given to the report which sought Cabinet endorsement for the new Inclusion Compendium.

Cabinet were advised that the Strategy had been developed in consultation with Local Authority Staff, schools, parents, carers, children, Governors and partners from Health and Social Care.

The Strategy explored the roles and responsibilities of schools and key partnerships with the Education Achievement Service (EAS), local and regional services, schools, child care settings and other education settings, emphasising the importance of working together to understand and support the needs of all children and the commitment to those who are most vulnerable.

Cabinet were referred to Appendices 3-9 of the report which contained the suite of documents of which the Inclusion Strategy was the foundation. It was noted that the strategy can be viewed as stand-alone documents or as part of the compendium as a whole.

Sarah Ellis (Lead of Inclusion) presented a summary of the Inclusion Compendium and its journey so far. Cabinet noted the involvement of Head Teachers, Governors, Education Colleagues and Young People and how this would be used to transform exclusion to inclusion and secure outcomes for children and young people with wellbeing and relationships at its heart.

Cabinet placed on record its thanks to all those involved in this extraordinary piece of work and recognised the challenges in bringing together approaches that would enable and empower schools to provide the right support for the right person and the right time.

The Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services also placed on record his thanks to all those that had worked so hard on the strategy and emphasised that the compendium brought together all those working collectively to secure the very best for our learners, in making that shift from exclusion to inclusion and was a tremendous example of the Team Caerphilly ethos.

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 the Inclusion Compendium be endorsed.

7. ENGAGEMENT AND PROGRESSION (NEETS) STRATEGY

Consideration was given to the report which sought Cabinet approval for the new Engagement and Progression (NEETs – Not in Education, Employment or Training) Strategy and associated matters.

Cabinet noted that the NEETs Strategy had been developed in consultation with Local Authority Staff, Head Teachers, Young People and members of the Caerphilly's Engagement and Progression framework. It clearly stated the collective approach to engaging with the associated issues across multiple agencies, as well as outlining the reasons for young people becoming NEET and the associated consequences.

The Strategy is informed by key internal and external initiatives and realities as well as an increasing focus by Estyn on the performance of secondary schools and Local Authorities with regard to the securing of appropriate destinations for young people who are 16 years of age or more.

Cabinet was advised that as a standalone statement of intent the strategy aims to provide a collective focus by the various contributing services of the fortunes of young people who might otherwise not transition successfully to 6th Form, Further Education, worked based learning or employment and who might otherwise become disengaged from their communities and society. However, accompanying the core document are supplementary resources that help to underpin the nature of the collective effort by defining the NEETs related roles and responsibilities of contributing services and offer guidance as to the workings of the various accompanying systems.

Clarification was sought as to whether a vocational training option was being explored and it was noted that all appropriate options would indeed play an important part in the strategy. Cabinet were advised that a further report would be presented in the Autumn detailing the work currently underway on a website specifically designed to marry with the strategy. The platform would provide access to all vocational and educational activity available to young people and would also be available to parents and teachers. Officers hoped to present a model of the 'Caerphilly Pathways' to Cabinet in the Autumn.

The importance of empowering young people to be able to access this type of information was emphasised as it provided them with the tools to make well informed choices about their futures.

Cabinet placed on record their thanks for all those involved in the strategy and welcomed it as a framework for success providing life changing opportunities for our most vulnerable learners.

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 the new Engagement and Progression (NEETs) Strategy be approved.

The meeting closed at 11.30am

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any corrections made at the meeting held on 1st September 2021.

CHAIR