



SPECIAL EDUCATION FOR LIFE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH
ON THURSDAY 18TH SEPTEMBER 2014 AT 5:30PM**

PRESENT:

Councillor W. David - Chairman
Councillor J. Pritchard - Vice-Chairman

Councillors:

Mrs A. Blackman, H.R. Davies, C. Durham, D.M. Gray, D. Havard, G. Johnston,
Mrs G.D. Oliver, J.E. Roberts, R. Saralis, Mrs M.E. Sargent

Cabinet Member for Education and Leisure: Mrs R. Passmore

Together with:

S. Aspinall (Acting Deputy Chief Executive), T. Maher (Assistant Director Planning and Strategy), K. Cole (Manager, Learning, Education and Inclusion), T. Cunnick (Community, Youth and Adult Services Manager), G. Evans (Interim Manager Community Education), S. Hawkins (Community Leisure Officer), L. Travis (Senior Community Education Manager), J. Jones (Democratic Services Manager) and R. Barrett (Committee Services Officer)

Co-opted Members: Mr A. Farina Childs (Parent Governor), Mrs A. Goss (Parent Governor)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P.J. Bevan, C. Gordon, M.P. James and D.W.R. Preece, together with Mrs E. Ashton (UCAS), Mrs S. Evans (Caerphilly Governors Association), Mrs J. Havard (NUT), Mrs P. Ireland (NUT), Mr P. Jones (NAHT), Mr J. Short (NASUWT) and Mr M. Western (Cardiff ROC).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Mrs A. Blackman, H.R. Davies, C. Durham, W. David, D. Havard, G. Johnston, J.E. Roberts and Mrs M.E. Sargent, together with Mrs A. Goss, declared an interest in Agenda Item 3 (CCBC Community Centre Service MTFP 2015/17). Details are minuted with the respective item.

Councillors Mrs A. Blackman, C. Durham, D. Havard and Mrs R. Passmore, together with Mrs A. Goss, declared an interest in Agenda Item 4 (Caerphilly Adult Community Learning MTFP 2015/17). Details are minuted with the respective item.

Councillors C. Durham, Mrs R. Passmore and J. Roberts, together with Mrs A. Goss, declared an interest in Agenda Item 5 (Caerphilly Youth Centre MTFP 215/17). Details are minuted with the respective item.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

3. CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COMMUNITY CENTRE SERVICE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2015/17 - ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION.

The following Members declared an interest in this item in that they are part of a Community Centre Management Committee:-

Councillors Mrs A. Blackman (Nelson Community Centre), H.R. Davies (Penyrheol, Trecenydd and Energlyn Community Centre), C. Durham (Cwmfelinfach Community Centre), W. David (Tiryberth, Penybryn and Cascade Community Centres), D. Havard (Graig-y-Rhacca Community Centre), G. Johnston (Penyfan Community Centre), J.E. Roberts (Abertridwr Community Centre) and Mrs M.E. Sargent (Penyrheol Community Centre). In that they had a personal but not prejudicial interest, they remained in the room and took part in the discussion and voting thereon.

Parent Governor Mrs A. Goss declared a personal interest, in that she sits on the Management Committee for the Connections Community Hub and holds regular meetings with Officers presenting the report, and remained in the room during discussion of the item.

Gareth Evans, Interim Manager Community Education, and Steve Hawkins, Community Leisure Officer, presented the report, together with Tony Maher, Assistant Director - Planning and Strategy. The report sought Members' views on the suggested Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) savings options for the Council's Community Centre Service to support the agreed budget strategy in accordance with the Cabinet report of 16th April 2014 ("Next Stages of the MTFP – 2015/16 & 2016/17").

Officers outlined the current format of the Community Centre Service and presented five options for the future delivery of the service. The impact and viability of each of these options were outlined in detail to Members, with each option detailed fully within the report, together with achievable savings for 2015/17:-

- (1) Maintain present Community Centre network as it is, resulting in £140,000 of efficiency savings – status quo option;
- (2) Council withdraws from delivery of Community Centre provision, resulting in £558,000 of savings – no service option;
- (3) Community Centre network is reconfigured to a smaller, more economically sustainable, number of venues in village and town centre locations, resulting in £244,000 of savings - reduced network option;
- (4) Community Centres are offered to local groups via some form of Asset Transfer approach where the economic model and suitable capacity of the Management Committee/Governance body can sustain - alternative delivery option;
- (5) Community Centre Service transferred via grant aid arrangement wholly to a Third Sector lead body or equivalent, resulting in a minimum of £218,000 savings - delivered by others under client / contractor 'arms length' arrangement option.

Included in each of the options under consideration were the long list of possible additional Community Centre Service efficiencies that were outlined to Members in the MTFP Seminar of 21st November 2013. These efficiency savings related to 2015-16 and 2016-17 and

involved the review of water rates and public indemnity insurance, together with the review of repairs and maintenance budgets. These totalled £70,000 per year, bringing about a total saving of £140,000 for 2015-17.

Officers were thanked for their presentation and discussion of these options ensued. With regard to Option 3 (reduced network), Members queried how venues for closure would be identified and also raised concerns of the impact that closures could have on local communities. Officers explained that the assessment criteria could include factors such as proximity of community centres to each other, occupancy levels, and the required level of investment in regards to repairs. Members also made suggestions in regards to identifying centres for closure and assessing whether there were suitable facilities availability in alternative community centres.

A query regarding Option 2 (withdraw service) was raised and Officers confirmed that if this were to happen, alternative venues would have to be sourced in relation to the Council's Emergency Plan and emergency rest centres.

The possibility of establishing a Working Group to examine the feasibility of specific options was discussed, with it suggested that it be comprised of Members, Officers, and management committee representatives of the Community Centres. Officers also suggested initial steps that could be established in order to develop a criteria to examine these options.

Following consideration of these options, Members unanimously endorsed the proposal to establish a Working Group to further examine a combination approach to Option 3 (reduced network of community centres) and Option 4 (alternative delivery method), and the Chair requested that progress on this be reported back to a future meeting of the Education for Life Scrutiny Committee. Members also unanimously endorsed the £70,000 efficiency saving for 2015/16 identified within the Community Centres Repairs and Maintenance budget.

4. CAERPHILLY ADULT COMMUNITY LEARNING MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2015/17 - ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION.

Councillors Mrs A. Blackman declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item, in that she has a relative who is employed within Bargoed Institute. Councillor Blackman, together with Councillor Mrs G.D. Oliver, offered apologies for the remainder of the meeting and left at this point.

Councillor C. Durham declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the remaining items under consideration (in that he is a member of the Lower Sirhowy Valley Partnership) and left the meeting at this point.

Councillor D. Havard declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item (in that he is a Community Councillor for Bedwas, Trethomas and Machen with links to Bedwas Workmans' Hall) and left the room during consideration of this item and for the remainder of the meeting.

Councillor Mrs R. Passmore declared a personal interest in this item (in that she is a member of the Ty Sign Community Partnership) and remained in the room during discussion of the item.

Parent Governor Mrs A. Goss declared a personal interest, in that she sits on the Management Committee for the Connections Community Hub and holds regular meetings with Officers presenting the report, and remained in the room during discussion of the item.

Tony Maher and Lyn Travis, Senior Community Education Manager, presented the report, which sought Members' views on the suggested Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) savings options for the Council's Adult Community Learning Service to support the agreed budget strategy.

It was explained that Adult Community Learning had received significant reductions in budgets from Welsh Government and franchise partners for delivery in 2014. It was anticipated that this trend would continue in future years but could not be estimated at the present time, and therefore the savings options presented for consideration to Members only related to the financial year 2015/16.

Officers outlined the current format of the Adult Community Learning Service and presented four options for the future delivery of the service. The impact and viability of each of these options were outlined in detail to Members, with each option detailed fully within the report:-

- (1) Maintain Present Adult Service Network 'as it is' by retaining the core budget of £258,605 – status quo option;
- (2) Remove 20% of the core budget, via removing a senior management layer of the Adult Community Learning Service structure, resulting in a £47,000 saving – reduced infrastructure option;
- (3) Remove 50% of the core budget, via closing some buildings and further reduce all levels of management and administration staffing, resulting in a £129,302 saving – reduced infrastructure option;
- (4) Remove 100% of the core budget, via Council withdrawal from the delivery of Adult Community Learning Service provision, resulting in a £258,605 saving – no service option.

Each of the options took account of the other areas of Adult Community Learning Service savings as a result of reduced Welsh Government funding

Officers were thanked for their presentation and Members discussed the listed options. Reference was made to Option 2 (reduced senior management infrastructure) and Officers clarified that it would be difficult to split the responsibilities of this post across remaining staff.

Following consideration of these options, the consensus was that the service should be retained in its current format, and Members unanimously endorsed Option 1 of the report, in that the status quo and core budget of £258,605 be retained.

5. CAERPHILLY YOUTH SERVICE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2015/17 - ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

Councillor Mrs R. Passmore declared a personal interest in this item (in that she is a member of the Ty Sign Community Partnership) and remained in the room during discussion of the item.

Councillor J.E. Roberts declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item, in that he has involvement with the Senghenydd Youth Drop In Centre. Councillor Roberts, together with Councillor H.R. Davies, offered apologies for the remainder of the meeting and left at this point.

Parent Governor Mrs A. Goss declared a personal interest, in that she sits on the Management Committee for the Connections Community Hub and holds regular meetings with Officers presenting the report, and remained in the room during discussion of the item.

Tony Maher and Tanis Cunnick, Community, Youth and Adult Services Manager, presented the report, which sought Members' views on the suggested Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) savings options for the Council's Youth Service to support the agreed budget strategy.

Officers outlined the current format of the Youth Service and presented five options for the future delivery of the service. The impact and viability of each of these options were outlined in detail to Members, with each option detailed fully within the report, together with the savings for 2015/17:-

- (1) Maintain present Youth Service network 'as it is' but undertake £77,900 efficiency savings – status quo option;
- (2) Withdraw from delivery of Youth Service provision and save £1,588,570 - no service option;
- (3) Withdraw the additional Youth Service allocation in 2013/14 to provide youth provision throughout the year and save £100,000 - reduced network option;
- (4) Withdraw delivery of the Connecting Communities Service and save £93,546 - alternative delivery option;
- (5) Withdraw 17 youth club provision and save £206,755 – reduced network option.

The report also advised of a list of possible efficiencies for consideration, relating to the revision of premises formulae, the closure of a premises, the resignation of a part-time manager, and a funding allocation for summer play and youth activities. This would bring about savings efficiencies of £27,900 in 2015-16 and £50,000 in 2016-17.

Consideration of the report followed and discussion took place with regards to Option 1. Members discussed the possible efficiency savings and determined that it would be prudent to withhold consideration of the 2016/17 efficiency saving until an indication of external funding amounts for future years was received.

An amendment to Option 1 was moved and seconded, in that the Youth Service be maintained in its present network but that efficiency savings of £27,900 for the financial year 2015/16 be undertaken. By a show of hands, the amendment was unanimously agreed.

It was moved and seconded that, subject to the above amendment, Option 1 of the report be endorsed, and by a show of hands, this was unanimously agreed.

6. THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2015/17 - ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

Tony Maher and Keri Cole, Manager for Learning, Education and Inclusion, presented the report, which detailed a number of further additional saving proposals to assist in achieving the overall savings target for the Council. These were in addition to the savings proposals from the three discretionary service areas highlighted earlier in the meeting.

These savings proposals from within the Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning, which could bring about an achievable saving of £381,000 for 2015-16, were categorised into four key areas:-

- (1) Realignment of Budgets;
- (2) Vacancy Management/Service Review;
- (3) Redirection of roles to grant funded areas;
- (4) Service reduction.

Officers detailed the planned efficiencies for each of these areas, further details of which were included within the report. Members' attention was also directed to Appendix 1 of the report, which highlighted the impact of these potential savings and efficiencies, and indicated that all the proposed savings would potentially either have a low or medium impact on the Directorate and its services.

Also listed within the report and attached at Appendix 2 for Members information was a list of potential savings and efficiencies previously considered by the Education for Life Scrutiny Committee, and which could bring about an achievable saving of £311,000. The impact of each of these proposals was indicated within the report, with the majority potentially having either a low or medium impact on the Directorate and its services.

Members discussed the potential savings and efficiencies and Officers responded to general queries. The allocation to School Improvement Initiatives within the Service Reduction proposal was discussed and Officers confirmed that this budget was allocated for specialist improvement initiatives, such as the provision of mentors to support schools who were experiencing difficulties.

Following consideration of the report, Members unanimously endorsed the list of potential savings and efficiencies detailed within the report.

The meeting closed at 7:08 p.m.

Approved as a correct record, and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 4th November 2014, they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR