



## CABINET

### MINUTES OF THE REMOTE MEETING HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON WEDNESDAY, 9TH FEBRUARY 2022 AT 10:30A.M.

#### PRESENT:

Councillor P. Marsden (Leader) - Chair

#### Councillors:

S. Cook (Social Care and Housing), N. George (Waste, Public Protection and Street Scene), C. Gordon (Corporate Services), J. Pritchard (Infrastructure and Property), Mrs E. Stenner (Performance, Economy and Enterprise), R. Whiting (Learning and Leisure) and A. Whitcombe (Sustainability, Planning and Fleet).

#### Together with:

C. Harrhy (Chief Executive), D. Street (Corporate Director, Social Services and Housing), R. Edmunds (Corporate Director Education and Corporate Services), M.S. Williams (Corporate Director – Economy and Environment), and S. Harris (Head of Financial Services & S151 Officer).

#### Also in Attendance:

R. Tranter (Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer), L. Allen (Principal Group Accountant, Housing), N. T. Williams (Head of Housing) M. Lloyd (Head of Infrastructure), S. Isaacs (Rents Manger), D. Smith (Principal Engineer, Traffic Management), M. Harris (Committee Support Officer/Chauffer) and M. Afzal (Committee Services Officer).

## 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.

There were no apologies for absence received.

### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

Cllr J. Pritchard declared a personal and prejudicial interest in relation to Agenda Item No. 5 - Housing Revenue Account Charges - 2022/2023 in that his grandparents are Council tenants and as such he would leave the meeting when the matter was considered and take no part in the debate and vote.

Cllr E. Stenner declared a personal and prejudicial interest in relation to Agenda Item No. 5 - Housing Revenue Account Charges - 2022/2023 in that her

brother-in-law has a garage tenancy with the authority and as such she would leave the meeting when the matter was considered and take no part in the debate and vote.

Cllr. N. George declared a personal and prejudicial interest in relation to Agenda Item No. 5 - Housing Revenue Account Charges - 2022/2023 in that he has a garage tenancy with the authority and as such he would leave the meeting when the matter was considered and take no part in the debate and vote.

Cllr S. Cook declared a personal and prejudicial interest in relation to Agenda Item No. 5 - Housing Revenue Account Charges - 2022/2023 in that his cousin is a Council tenant and as such he would leave the meeting when the matter was considered and take no part in the debate and vote.

**3. CABINET – 26<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2022.**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2022 were approved as a correct record.

**4. CABINET FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – TO NOTE.**

Cabinet was provided with the Cabinet Forward Work Programme, which detailed the scheduled reports until the 6<sup>th</sup> of April 2022. 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. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT CHARGES – 2022/2023.**

**Councillors S. Cook, N. George, J. Pritchard and E. Stenner having declared personal and prejudicial interests left the meeting and took no part in the debate or vote.**

Consideration was given to the report which proposed a rent increase for Council properties, including garages. The increase, if approved will take effect from the 2022/2023 financial year. Cabinet was advised that the Housing Revenue Account budget is separate to the work involved in setting the General Fund Budget and Council Tax as it is funded by rental income received from county tenants, rather than the Council Taxpayer. However, it should be noted that most of the proportion of council tenants rent is funded from financial support in the form of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit and therefore value for money must always be sought.

It was noted that the report was considered by the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022. Members of the Scrutiny Committee recommended that Cabinet approve the recommendations set out in 3.2 (iii), 3.2 (vi) 3.2 (vii), of the report. Cabinet Members welcomed the recommendations especially the review around affordability. Members felt strongly about this recommendation given the cost of living and energy crisis.

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 Officer's report: -

1. A 2% increase in Housing Revenue Account Charges 2022/2023 be approved – (£93.62/52 week - additional £1.84/wk) which is additional income of £1m, allowing for a small margin to reflect the unprecedented increase in material costs.
2. The level or rent for garages from April 2022 be increased by 2% to £8.39 per week.
3. A review of the current rent policy to reflect affordability be approved.

**6. FINAL REPORT FROM THE TASK AND FINISH GROUP ON NON-RESIDENTIAL CARE CHARGES.**

This item stood deferred to a future meeting of Cabinet, date to be agreed.

**7. REVIEW OF EXPERIMENTAL PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE ZONES OUTSIDE SCHOOLS (SCHOOL STREETS).**

Consideration was given to the report which provided an update on the effectiveness and outcomes of the experimental pedestrian and cycle zone traffic regulation orders implemented outside three primary schools. The report was presented to the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2022. Members of the Scrutiny Committee were asked to consider the report. Although some concerns around enforcement were raised, it was confirmed that Members of the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee were in support of the recommendations within the report.

In terms of the concerns that were expressed, the Cabinet Member informed Members that he welcomed further discussions with Local Members to address the enforcement issues and promote the important concept of safe access to schools.

The Cabinet Member advised Cabinet of the consultation exercise which took place in June 2020. The Member explained that the exercise sought the views of Local Members at this time and that the outcome of the consultation was positive as no objections were received. Statutory Partners were then consulted, and no objections were received. The Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Property confirmed that comments summarising the views of an open online questionnaire were sent to him and Local Ward Members, and two comments from Local Members in response to the summary were outlined in the report. As with the previous consultations, Members did not ask for any of the proposals to be withdrawn. The Cabinet Member emphasised the need for safe access to school and that these proposals would also help with the reduction in carbon emissions across the borough.

Concerns in relation to enforcement were raised by some Cabinet Members. It was stated that enforcement by the police was required for the traffic regulation orders to be effective. Members placed on record their appreciation for Gwent Police. The police were praised for their fantastic work and for their involvement in every aspect of the community, despite being under resourced. Members called for more resourcing from central government in London and referenced how this was a prime example of how decisions on resourcing on a national level impact at a local level and representations should continue to be made to central government for increased resources for the police. The Deputy Leader placed on record his thanks to the Gwent Police and outlined his own very good working relationship with them, working collaboratively to carry out a number of projects across the County Borough.

The Officer explained that although the Council did not have powers for moving traffic offences there is an opportunity to do further research into enforcement powers, and they were looking to collaborate with the police as to how carry out enforcement activities in the future, including possible transfer of powers further down the line. The Officer proposed that digital and electronic

ways of carrying out enforcement could be utilised to do this in the near future. This approach was welcomed by Cabinet Members.

The importance in engaging with our residents in terms of patterns of behaviours regarding transport journeys was discussed and it was agreed that this would be a vital component in combating climate change.

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 Officer's report: -

1. The views of the Scrutiny Committee be noted.
2. The experimental traffic regulation orders (pedestrian and cycle zones, and one-way traffic) be made permanent.
3. No new/additional pedestrian and cycle zones be considered for other school sites within the borough as part of a future programme of works at this point in time.

## **8. B4251 YNYSDDU TO WYLLIE HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT.**

Consideration was given to the report which summarised the position in relation to road safety measures already implemented along with B4251 between Wyllie and Ynysddu and set out options for further safety works for Cabinet consideration in light of the substantial removal of tree cover adjacent to the road.

The Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Property provided a summary of the report. He touched upon the safety improvement study that was commissioned by AMEY Consultants in March 2020 and talked Members through the outcome of the study.

The Cabinet Member highlighted the speed restrictions and advised that since 2014 there had been nine recorded accidents within the area of the study and the data showed that the accidents had taken place throughout the length of the study area. It was stated that although the majority of the accidents had occurred on the straight sections, it should be noted that these sections were relatively short, and that drivers would be encountering bends in rapid succession.

Cabinet Members were pleased to see the recommendations of the report that set out to improve the safety of the B4251 particularly given the accidents that have occurred on this route and thanked Officers for compiling the report.

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 Officer's report: -

1. The installation of a concrete post and chain-link fence along the B4251 Highway be supported.
2. Funding from the Corporate Projects capital budget be approved and allocated to enable the design and construction of the B4251 Highway Safety Improvement scheme to progress at an estimated cost of £350k.
3. Funding from the Corporate Projects capital budget be approved for the advance design fees already incurred in undertaking this study of £50k.

The meeting closed at 10:59A.M.

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any corrections made at the meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2022.

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CHAIR