



CABINET

MINUTES OF THE MULTI-LOCATIONAL MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON WEDNESDAY 30TH NOVEMBER 2022 AT 1PM

PRESENT:

Councillor S. Morgan – Chair

Councillors:

J. Pritchard (Cabinet Member for Prosperity, Regeneration and Climate Change), C. Andrews (Cabinet Member for Education and Communities), S. Cook (Cabinet Member for Housing), E. Forehead (Cabinet Member for Social Care), N. George (Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Property), C. Morgan (Cabinet Member for Waste, Leisure and Green Spaces), Cllr. J. Simmonds (Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation) and E. Stenner (Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance).

Together with:

C. Harthy (Chief Executive), R. Edmunds (Corporate Director Education and Corporate Services) and D. Street (Corporate Director Social Services and Housing).

Also in Attendance:

P. Cooke (Senior Policy Officer), L. Donovan (Head of People Services), I. Evans (Procurement and information Manager), S. Harris (Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer), L. Lucas (Head of Customer and Digital Services), S. Mutch (Early Years Manager), K. Peters (Corporate Policy Manager), R. Roberts (Business Improvement Manager), S. Richards (Head of Education Planning and Strategy) and P. Warren (Strategic Lead for School Improvement) R. Tranter (Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer) and J. Thomas (Committee Services Officer).

RECORDING AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Leader reminded those present that the meeting was being live streamed, and a recording would be made available to view via the Council's website, except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items. [Click Here To View](#).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor P. Leonard (Cabinet Member for Planning and Public Protection) and M.S. Williams (Corporate Director Economy and Environment).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES – 16TH NOVEMBER 2022

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 16th November 2022 be approved as a correct record.

4. CABINET FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

Cabinet was provided with the Cabinet Forward Work Programme, which detailed the scheduled reports until 19th April 2023.

Members were reminded that the Cabinet Forward Work Programme is a working document and thus subject to change. The Leader reminded the Cabinet that that as a live document it would be subject to change.

Cabinet noted the Forward Work Programme.

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.

5. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT 2021/22

Consideration was given to the report which sought to present Cabinet with the Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA) for the year ending 2021/22 a period impacted by both the pandemic response and the pandemic recovery. The Cabinet noted that the CPA forms part of the overall Council 'self-assessment' activity and is submitted to Cabinet for endorsement.

In response to a query raised by a Member, The Corporate Director for Social Services and Housing, Dave Street advised the Cabinet that there are significant issues within Domiciliary Care and assured Members that the Council is doing everything possible in relation to the recruitment and retention fund and are utilising some of the resources currently available to assist with the issue. The Cabinet were advised that any resolution to the current recruitment issue needed to be sustainable. Cabinet noted the recruitment issue is not isolated to Caerphilly and that it was a Nation-wide issue.

Clarification was sought in relation to vacant posts and how Officers were looking to resolve this issue. The Corporate Director advised the Cabinet that a number of key roles were currently out to advert, and proposals will be brought forward in the New Year around market supplements, which will hopefully ease some of the pressure and get a workforce able to tackle some of the challenges going forward.

Cabinet was assured that the situation with recruitment and retention was a priority and that a new agile working policy being brought forward in the coming weeks would provide greater flexibility in terms of work/life balance.

Cabinet queried how agile working has affected sickness levels since the pandemic. The Corporate Director of Education and Corporate Services, Richard Edmunds confirmed that sickness levels had worsened. However, this is not unique to Caerphilly, with the vast majority of Local Authorities in Wales in the same position. Currently Officers are working to identify the causes for example, whether this is linked to capacity issues. Cabinet was

assured that once the position has been identified then proposals would be put forward to address the issue.

Lynne Donovan (Head of People Services) addressed the Cabinet and advised that work is currently being undertaken, prior to the implementation of the Recruitment Team. The Officer advised Members that a recruitment campaign within care commences on the 12th December 2022, that will be run into the New Year. There will be adverts on buses, in train stations and in the local cinema. There will also be a lot more advertising on social media.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved and by way of Microsoft Forms this was unanimously agreed.

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

1. That the Cabinet noted the comments and challenge of the Council's Corporate Performance 2021/22.
2. That Cabinet endorsed the Corporate Performance Assessment for 2021/22 as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

6. SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR 2021/22

Consideration was given to the report which sought to present Cabinet with the Annual Self-Assessment Report for 2021/22. The report also included an update of the Well-being Objectives for 2021/22. The Cabinet were informed that the Local Government and Election (Wales) Act 2021 required a draft of the self-assessment to be reviewed by Governance and Audit Committee prior to coming to Cabinet. Cabinet noted that the draft attached to the report as (Part 1, Appendix 1) was approved by Governance and Audit Committee on 11 October 2022. The Cabinet also noted that the report was presented to Joint Scrutiny on 10th November 2022 for their scrutiny and challenge.

The report sought that the Cabinet approve the Self-assessment Report (including Well-being Objectives) 2021/22 (Appendix 1) as a final position on organisational performance for the year 2021/2022, following the reports being scrutinised by Governance and Audit and Joint Scrutiny Committee.

The Chief Executive addressed the Cabinet to emphasize the importance of the report which captures the performance of the organisation. The Chief Executive confirmed that there was a need for the organisation to be reframed and remobilised but believed that the Council has a very solid foundation to meet challenges that will present themselves.

A Cabinet Member expressed how proud they were to see that the Council have supported over 4000 council tenants, by generating more than £3m in savings minimising the effect on welfare reform. The Member requested further information on whether extra resources will be used for staffing to increase the savings now that the time of hardship will worsen.

The Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer, Steven Harris advised the Cabinet that significant funding has been set aside for the Caerphilly Cares Team. This as well as other priorities will be looked at when determining budgets over the coming months.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved and by way of Microsoft Forms this was unanimously agreed.

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

1. That Cabinet approved the Self-assessment Report (including well-being Objectives) 2021/22(Appendix 1) as a final position on organisational performance for the year 2021/2022.

7. UPDATE ON DECARBONISATION OF FLEET VEHICLES AND RELATED POLICIES

Consideration was given to the report which sought to update Cabinet on the work to review the Council's vehicle fleet and the transition to ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEV). The report also sought to seek Cabinet approval to develop a policy for employees and visitors to be able to use the electric vehicle charging infrastructure for their own vehicles, at cost and to seek approval to implement the actions identified as the next steps to reduce carbon emissions from our fleet.

Following a query raised by Cabinet the Senior Policy Officer, Paul Cooke confirmed that there is currently an issue with lead times on electric vehicles, which vary but they can be between 9 to 12 months. The Authority have not yet placed any orders for the new vehicles as the infrastructure hasn't been in place. However, this would be completed in the very near future and at this point the order will take place. The Officer advised the Cabinet that the new electric vehicles will initially be managed and maintained by the manufacturer as the current workforce wouldn't have the necessary skills to maintain them. However, in the future it will become more economically viable to do so as an Authority, but that would involve a significant change in the way that the Council currently operates.

The Leader was pleased to note that Council is rolling out the decarbonisation of the fleet and the introduction of charging points.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved and by way of Microsoft Forms this was unanimously agreed.

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

1. That the Cabinet noted the progress made to date as part of the fleet review and transition to ultra-low emission vehicles work.
2. That Cabinet approved the principle that employees and visitors should be allowed to use the vehicle charging infrastructure for their personal vehicles, and for a policy to developed to that effect.
3. That Cabinet approved he proposed actions set out in this report to continue the transition to ultra-low emission vehicles.

8. CYBER SECURITY STRATEGY 2022-2025

Cabinet noted that the report had been considered by the Governance and Audit Scrutiny Committee as its meeting on the 14 June 2022.

Consideration was given to the report which sought to update Cabinet on the draft Caerphilly CBC ('Council') Cyber Security Strategy 2022 – 2025 ('Strategy') and for Cabinet to approve the endorsement and implementation of the Strategy.

Cabinet noted that the Council works closely with an external company to protect the Council against cyber-attacks. The Council has recently undertaken its annual IT Health check, part of this health checks looks at the security procedures that are in place such as passwords for Staff and Members. The health check had identified that there were a significant number of passwords that could be easily compromised.

Following a query from a Member, the Officers advised Cabinet that due to the serious risk to the Council, mandatory training would be put in place for all staff and Members to raise awareness and this could be achieved internally through online training or through training by external bodies. The Leader agreed that this was something he would endorse.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved and by way of Microsoft Forms this was unanimously agreed.

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

1. That the Cabinet approved the Cyber Security Strategy 2022-2025 be endorsed and implemented.

9. UPDATE ON THE PROCUREMENT REFORM AGENDA AND TO EXTEND THE COUNCIL'S PROGRAMME FOR PROCUREMENT (STRATEGY) FOR A PERIOD OF UP TO EIGHTEEN (18) MONTHS

Cabinet noted that the report had been considered by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 8 November 2022.

Consideration was given to the report which sought to update Cabinet on the UK Central Government and Welsh Government Procurement reform agenda via The Procurement Bill and the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill. Cabinet was also asked to endorse the recommendation to extend the Council's Programme for Procurement ('Strategy'), for a period of up to eighteen (18) months to allow the future Strategy to incorporate the requirements of The Procurement Bill and Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill.

Clarification was sought on whether following Brexit there are any immediate changes in relation to going from the European Legislation to the British Legislation. Ian Evan the Procurement and Information Manager advised the Cabinet that EU Procurement Directives flow down to the UK Public Procurement Law. Therefore, there will be certain aspects that the UK have never adopted in terms of the EU Directives. However, the Cabinet were advised that in terms of the Procurement Professional and Practitioner there will be significant changes in relation to the number of procedures and flexibility around the rules going forward.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved and by way of Microsoft Forms this was unanimously agreed.

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

1. That Cabinet noted the current status of The Procurement Bill and the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill.
2. That Cabinet endorsed the recommendation to extend the Council's existing Procurement Strategy for a period of up to eighteen (18) months.

10. EDUCATION STRATEGY

Cabinet noted that the report had been considered by the Education Scrutiny Committee 19th October 2022.

Consideration was given to the report which updated Cabinet on the revised Education Strategy

2022-2025 building on the successes of the Shared Ambitions Strategy which shifted decision-making from short-term to long-term and school improvement approaches from 'challenge' to 'support'. The report also sought Cabinet approval to formally adopt and subsequently launch the new Education Strategy.

Clarification was sought on what support was being provided to schools within the area, that have Ukrainian children that may have limited English language skills and may also be suffering PTSD. The Early Years Manager Sarah Mutch advised the Cabinet that a weekly meeting takes place to look at the children coming into the Borough and the level of support they may require. An Education Psychologist forms part of this group to ensure the correct support is being given. Schools do receive extra funding to assist in this area.

Paul Warren the Strategic Lead for School Improvement advised the Cabinet that the Education Advisory Service (EAS) were involved with the development of the Education Strategy from the start and will stay involved going forward. The Officer informed the Members that there was a large piece of work included within the strategy which focuses on the learner's journey. The EAS worked with curriculum teams to identify what the self-evaluation journey should look like. The work that was carried out by the EAS was then QA'd with a group of Headteachers within the Authority to see if it fitted within the model of working. The work has focused on strengthening the working partnership between the Local Authority and the EAS.

Clarification was sought on how the strategy provides mental health support provisions for young adults. The Early Years Manager advised the Cabinet that Youth Services provides a Youth Forum which works with young people across the Borough. Youth Workers have all been trained in Mental Health First Aid and there has been a significant push around school-based counselling with the schools themselves doing a lot of work around well-being.

The Corporate Director Education and Corporate Services thanked Keri Cole, Paul Warren and all of their teams for the huge amount of work involved in putting the strategy together.

Following consideration and discussion it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved and by way of Microsoft Forms this was unanimously agreed.

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

1. That Cabinet approved the publication of the new Education Strategy 2022-2025.

11. CHRISTMAS CLOSEDOWN ARRANGEMENTS

Consideration was given to the report which sought Cabinet approval for the Christmas closedown arrangements for 2022 and for the years thereafter.

Cabinet noted in previous years the Council implemented a closedown for offices over the Christmas period. Cabinet also noted the report only applies to Council Staff employed under Section 112 of the Local Government Act 1972 and for whom the Council has the power 'to appoint and manage staff on such reasonable terms and conditions as the Authority thinks fit'. The report does not apply to School appointed staff for whom the Council does not hold this power.

Cabinet noted that Trade Unions had been consulted on the report and supported the recommendations.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved and by way of Microsoft Forms this was unanimously agreed.

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

1. That Cabinet approved that the Corporate Offices close at 12noon on Friday 23rd December 2022 and reopen on Tuesday 3rd January 2023.
2. That Cabinet approved all staff receive 2 hours' credit for Friday 23rd December 2022 as per the arrangements detailed in paragraph 5.5 of this report.
3. That Cabinet approved this principle of Christmas shutdown and the 2 hours credit for future years; the dates affected will be agreed by the Leader and the Chief Executive.

The Chief Executive and The Leader took the opportunity to put on record they're thanks to all the staff across the workforce for their hard work.

The meeting closed at 2.18p.m.

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any corrections made at the meeting held on 25th January 2023.

CHAIR