



CABINET

MINUTES OF THE MULTI-LOCATIONAL MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON WEDNESDAY 20TH SEPTEMBER 2023 AT 1.00PM

PRESENT:

Councillor S. Morgan – Chair

Councillors:

J. Pritchard (Cabinet Member for Prosperity, Regeneration and Climate Change), C. Andrews (Cabinet Member for Education and Communities), N. George (Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Property and Highways), E. Forehead (Cabinet Member for Social Care), P. Leonard (Cabinet Member for Planning and Public Protection), C. Morgan (Cabinet Member for Waste, Leisure and Green Spaces) and E. Stenner (Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance).

Together with:

R. Edmunds (Corporate Director Education and Corporate Services) and D. Street (Deputy Chief Executive).

Also in Attendance:

S. Harris (Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer), R. Tranter (Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer), R. Kyte (Head of Regeneration and Planning), M. Lloyd (Head of Infrastructure), R. Hartshorn (Head of Public Protection, Community & Leisure Services), A. West (Sustainable Communities for Learning Manager), G. Richards (Highway Services Group Manager), P. Hudson (Business Enterprise Renewal Team Leader), K. Peters (Corporate Policy Manager), S. Wilcox (Programme Development Manager), J. Roberts-Waite (Head of Strategy and Development), M. Noakes (Development Manager), N. Taylor-Williams (Head of Housing)

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 S. Cook (Cabinet Member for Housing) C. Harray (Chief Executive) and M.S. Williams Corporate Director Economy and Environment).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

3. MINUTES – 26 JULY 2023

RESOLVED the minutes of the meeting held on the 26th July 2023 be 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 13th December 2023.

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. DEVELOPMENT AND GOVERNANCE STRATEGY – HOUSING

The Cabinet Member for Social Care presented the report on behalf of the Cabinet for Housing. The Cabinet Member stated that there are currently 6300 people on the Council Common Housing Register, and of those, 360 people are in temporary accommodation and are awaiting homes that better suit their needs it is clear from the continuing effects of COVID and the Cost of Living Crisis with the increase in rents and mortgages that there will be further demand for Council homes as one of 11 Councils across Wales who have retained their housing stock, Caerphilly Homes, is in an advantageous position of having the ability to build new low carbon affordable homes in response to the ever pressing need.

Consideration was given to a report that sought Cabinet approval for Caerphilly Homes to deliver 100 low carbon affordable home per annum and to approve the Caerphilly Homes adopts the Design Commission for Wales' Placemaking Charter, which sets out high level quality and design standards that will inform and underpin each Caerphilly Homes development.

Cabinet noted the report had been considered at the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday 18th July, 2023, and noted the comments that were made.

The report provided Cabinet with details of the content of the first Development and Governance Strategy for Caerphilly Homes.

It was noted that the Strategy sets out the governance arrangements that are required by Caerphilly Homes to underpin the development of new build homes, the core objectives, the development process, and overall Strategy to increase delivery.

It was further noted that the report proposed the creation of a Development and Governance Project Board (DGPB) that would oversee the delivery of the development programme and will have delegated responsibility for agreeing a range of decisions that are necessary to underpin the creation of an agile, fleet of foot, development programme similar to the TACP programme Board. The TACP Programme Board will be assumed within the DGPB.

Following a query raised the Head of Housing advised Cabinet that general principles of the Placemaking Charter would benefit all residents of Caerphilly in the future not only individual developments but would generally improve the surroundings and neighbourhoods throughout the Borough by looking at local communities and choosing the most suitable locations for new

developments, prioritizing sustainable travel, walking, cycling and public transport creating well defined safe and welcoming streets and public spaces promoting sustainable mix of uses to make places vibrant and also making sure there's value and respect to the positive distinctive qualities and different spaces.

Cabinet sought clarification on whether, the Monitoring Officer and the S151 Officer have any objections or views for the development of the Governance Project Board and financial pressures.

Cabinet noted that the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer have been consulted regularly while developing the report and are in support of the formation of the Governance Project Board and advantages of having the Board in place.

Cabinet further noted that the Cabinet Member for Housing will form part of this Board, if they feel there is a need for full Cabinet to consider a particular issue then it will be presented to the Cabinet. Also, within the report, there is a mechanism for Cabinet to receive regular updates on what the decisions the Board has made.

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 for reasons contained within the Officers report:-

1. The comments of the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee be noted.
2. The establishment of the Development and Governance Project Board (DGPB) be approved.
3. The responsibilities of the Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme (TACP) Board are assumed by the Development and Governance Project Board.
4. The delivery of 100 low carbon affordable homes per annum be approved.
5. The Design Commission for Wales' Placemaking Charter be adopted by the Council as it underpins the design quality for all Caerphilly Homes Developments, and the Council becomes a signatory to the Charter.

6. WINTER SERVICE PLAN UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report that sought Cabinet approval for the Winter Service Plan (WSP) as policy and as part of fulfilling our statutory duties under the Highways Act 1980, to provide a safe highway network and provided Cabinet with an update on key winter service activities and priorities in relation to winter maintenance and flooding.

Cabinet noted, Highways Operations has produced a Winter Service Plan since the inception of Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC). The purpose of the plan is to explain the Council's responsibilities for maintaining the highway infrastructure network during the winter maintenance period (currently October to April). The plan also provides guidance to elected councillors, council staff and the public on operational procedures and contact points during the winter maintenance period.

Cabinet raised a query on whether the new 20mph speed restrictions would impact the Winter Plan, for example gritting in the winter months. The Head of Infrastructure advised Cabinet there will be an impact. There has been a trial undertaken on the restricted routes and there has been an increase of 15 to 20 minutes to each route. This year monitoring will be undertaken in the winter months, and should there be a requirement, there could potentially be an additional route which will be an increase to 9 routes. If this is the case, it will require a

lot of work to change because route optimisation is used to get the efficiencies of the routes. There are also software updates that will have to be implemented to the software used in the vehicles.

Clarification was sought on whether Climate Change has an impact on the Winter Plan. The Officer confirmed that it does have an impact. The Officer explained that although we are seeing warmer temperatures in winter, when there is an event, it is extreme for example there could be more extreme flooding or extreme snow fall.

Cabinet acknowledged that the Winter Maintenance Plan is incredibly complex and an excellent piece of work.

Subject to the inclusion of an additional recommendation 3.2 to read: Future annual reviews will be reported to CMT and should any significant amendments to the plan be identified Cabinet endorsement will be sought it was moved and seconded that the recommendation be approved.

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 for reasons contained within the Officers report and subject to an additional recommendation:

1. The Winter Service Plan be approved.
2. Future annual reviews be reported to CMT and should any significant amendments to the plan be identified Cabinet endorsement be sought.

7. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

Consideration was given to a report which presented Cabinet with the Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA) which is part of the Council's Performance Framework.

The report provided Cabinet with a summary of information and analysis for the period April 2022 to March 2023. Cabinet were advised the CPA forms part of the overall Council 'self-assessment' activity.

It was noted that the CPA was presented to Joint Scrutiny on 20th July 2023 where members were invited to discuss, challenge, and scrutinise the information within the report. Following Joint Scrutiny, the CPA is now submitted to Cabinet for endorsement.

It was further noted that the Council's Performance Framework was endorsed by Cabinet in February 2020 and the report introduces one of the key components of the Framework, the Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA). The CPA is a 'self-assessment' of the Authority's progress across a wide range of information types. The CPA is an opportunity for members to ask, how well we are performing? and what evidence are we using to determine this.

In response to a query raised the Corporate Director Education and Corporate Services advised Cabinet that CCBC sickness levels are in the lower quartile compared to other LA's. However, not all Councils submit their figures, which is carried out on a yearly basis. It was noted that the level of sickness is declining, however, there is a further work to be carried out.

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 for reasons contained within the Officers report;

1. The comments and challenge of the Council's Corporate

Performance Assessment for the period April 2022 to March 2023 from Joint Scrutiny as set out within section 10 be noted.

2. The Corporate Performance Assessment for the period April 2022 to March 2023 as set out in Appendix 1 be endorsed.

8. PUBLIC PROTECTION ENFORCEMENT ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2022/23

Cabinet noted that the report had been considered by Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee on 13th June 2023.

Consideration was given to a report which sought Cabinet approval of the review of progress and performance of Public Protection enforcement and advice activity in compliance with the adopted Public Protection Enforcement Policy, including outcomes of investigations undertaken under the auspices of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act. Cabinet were also asked to consider, in accordance with the Surveillance Camera Commissioner's Code of Practice, the Council's CCTV surveillance camera system to ensure that it remains necessary, proportionate and effective.

In response from a query raised, the Head of Public Protection and Community & Leisure Services advised Cabinet, that Gwent Police do request information from Public Protection in relation to any CCTV footage that may be available, this could be in relation to any crimes or antisocial behaviour that has occurred.

Cabinet sought clarification on why there have been such a high number of dogs that have been impounded and what is the cost to the Local Authority.

The Officer explained that in recent months there has been a high number of warrants exercised in relation to illegal dog breeding. Due to the high numbers of dogs being seized, the nature of the dogs and their poor condition it has created an issue with kennelling. It was noted the Council are working with Hope Rescue who are assisting with the issue, however this has incurred quite a significant cost. Following any prosecution there is an application made to the court to recover any costs, where it is appropriate.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Public Protection congratulated the Trading Standards Team for such a wonderful outcome in regard to the rescuing the dogs.

It was noted that in relation to underage sales of vapes and other age restricted products, such as alcohol and cigarettes, Trading Standards have carried out a number of test purchase with the use of underage volunteers targeting specific premises. In the past few weeks there has been a successful prosecuting against a trader who sold vapes to an underage volunteer. The fine for this offence was £1250.00.

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 for reasons contained within the Officers report;

1. The content of the report including comments made by the meeting of the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee on the 13th June 2023 as detailed in section 11 be considered.
2. The review of progress and performance of Public Protection enforcement and advice activity in compliance with the adopted Public Protection Enforcement Policy including outcomes of investigations

undertaken under the auspices of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act be approved.

3. The Council's CCTV surveillance camera system remains necessary, proportionate and effective in accordance with the Surveillance Camera Commissioner's Code of Practice be agreed.

9. PROPOSAL FOR THE CLOSURE OF CWM GLAS INFANTS SCHOOL

Cabinet noted that the report had been considered by Education and Social Services Committee on 12th September 2023.

Consideration was given to a report which sought Cabinet approval on the recommendation to proceed to consultation in respect of the closure of Cwm Glas Infant School by July 2024.

Cabinet noted that due to the falling rolls at Cwm Glas Infant school which are projected to decrease further, a meeting was arranged by the Head Teacher and the Governing body with Local Authority representatives including the Chief Education Officer, to discuss the future viability of the school. The conclusion of the meeting agreed the school could no longer maintain a balanced budget and an appropriate staffing level, therefore a decision was made by the Head Teacher and Governing Body of the School to pursue closure of Cwm Glas Infant School with effect from July 2024.

It was further noted that at present Cwm Glas Infant School shares a catchment area with Coed Y Brain Primary School where pupils transition to at Key Stage 2 subject to parental preference.

The proposal seeks to transition the pupils at Foundation Phase, to deliver an inclusive all-through primary school provision. Subject to Cabinet approval, this will result in the proposed closure of Cwm Glas Infants School with effect from July 2024.

Cabinet sought clarification on how many surplus places there currently are within Caerphilly schools and are we likely to see school closures in the future. The Sustainable Communities for Learning Manager advised Cabinet there is currently 18% surplus within the Primary Sector and 15% percent within the Secondary Sector, this can be subject to change dependent on a number of factors and provision that we may put in place, such as Community usage, childcare, etcetera. The number of live births is declining all across Wales. The Schools and Local Authority work together to share data on an annual basis and look at ways to address surplus places, such as childcare or community usage.

Following a query raised Cabinet were informed that live birth data is received on an annual basis from the Health Authority. Between 2015 to 2021 there has been a decline in circa 500 children in the live birth data in Caerphilly. In 2023 there has been an indication that there has been a very small increase in live births.

Cabinet noted, that even though the Local Ward Members are disappointed in the situation at Cwm Glas, they fully understand the rationale behind the proposal as do the school and Governing Body.

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 for reasons contained within the Officers report :-

1. The content of the report be noted.

2. Proceeding to consultation on the proposal to close Cwm Glas Infant School with effect from July 2024 be approved.

10. SHARED PROSPERITY FUND – SPF PROGRAMME BOARD AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

Consideration was given to a report which provided Cabinet with an update on the position of CCBC with regards to the role of the UKSPF Programme Board in providing executive leadership to the delivery of the Local Investment Plan under the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund as part of the UK wide Levelling Up programme.

The report sought Cabinet approval for revised Terms of Reference for the SPF Programme Board; and seeks appropriate delegation for the Board to make timely decisions on virement of funding within the Programme in recognition of the extremely tight time constraints associated with the delivery of the SPF Programme by March 2025.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance and the Cabinet Member for Prosperity, Regeneration and Climate Change wished to place on record their support and thanks for Officers in terms of getting the money to the doors as quick as possible, particularly to the business community.

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 for reasons contained within the Officers report the up-to-date Terms of Reference for the SPF Programme Board included in Appendix 1 that outlines the appropriate delegation for the Board to make timely decisions on virement of funding within the SPF Programme be approved.

The meeting closed at 14.04 p.m.

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any corrections made at the meeting held on 18th October 2023.

CHAIR