



CABINET

MINUTES OF THE MULTI-LOCATIONAL MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON WEDNESDAY 15TH NOVEMBER 2023 AT 1PM

PRESENT:

Councillor S. Morgan – Chair

Councillors:

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

Together with:

D. Street (Deputy Chief Executive), R. Edmunds (Corporate Director of Education and Corporate Services), M.S. Williams (Corporate Director of Economy and Environment) and G. Jenkins (Interim Director of Social Services)

Also in Attendance:

R. Tranter (Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer), S. Pugh (Communications Manager), R. Kyte (Head of Regeneration and Planning), P. Hudson (Business Enterprise Renewal Team Leader), S. Richards (Head of Education Planning and Strategy), R. Roberts (Business Improvement Manager), J. Penfold (Transformation Manager (Lead) – Innovation), S. Harris (Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer), L. Sykes (Deputy Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer), J. Carpenter (Finance Manager (Revenues)), N. Rutter (Digital Communications Officer), J. Reynolds (Sports and Leisure Facilities Manager), J. Lougher (Sport & Leisure Development Manager), L. Lane (Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer), R. Hartshorn (Head of Public Protection, Community and Leisure Services) and J. Thomas (Committee Services Officer).

Also in Attendance:

Mr R. Lloyd (in relation to Agenda Item 5)

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 C. Harrhy (Chief Executive).

ANNOUNCEMENT

Cabinet placed on record their thanks to John Carpenter (Finance Manager (Revenues)) for all his many years' service and congratulated him on his forthcoming retirement.

Cabinet thanked John and his team for their hard work throughout the COVID 19 pandemic and the current cost of living crisis and wished John a long and happy retirement and best wishes for the future.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor C. Andrews declared a personal interest in relation to Agenda Item No. 6 Sport and Active Recreation Strategy (SARS) Implementation in that her husband works at a local leisure centre. As this was a personal interest only there was no requirement for her to leave the Chamber and she could take full part in the debate and vote.

3. MINUTES – WEDNESDAY 18TH OCTOBER 2023

RESOLVED that subject to the inclusion of Councillor E. Forehead to the list of those in attendance, the minutes of Cabinet held on 18th October 2023 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 21st February 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. PONTLLANFRAITH LEISURE CENTRE

Consideration was given to the report which sought Cabinet approval to undertake a consultation exercise on a proposal for Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre to remain permanently closed, with sporting facilities at the adjacent Centre for Vulnerable Learners including a 4-court sports hall, with associated changing facilities, and a 3G pitch being made available for community use outside of school hours upon opening in Spring 2025. The proposal would also see use of the 3G pitch on the Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre site cease once the 3G pitch at the adjacent Centre for Vulnerable Learners is open for community use.

Cabinet Welcomed Mr Lloyd, a local resident speaking against the closure of the Leisure Centre.

With the permission of the Chair, Mr Lloyd addressed Cabinet and referenced an email that had been sent to the Council outlining concerns regarding the closure of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre. Clarification was sought regarding the significant investment to carry out a refurbishment at Heolddu Leisure Centre, which is around the same age as the building used at Pontllanfraith, which the Council have considered is viable to carry out such works.

Concerns were raised regarding the significant demand for the full size 3G pitch at the site and what alternatives will be offered as replacements. Concerns were also raised regarding the current issues with making bookings for the 3G pitches at the schools throughout the Borough, in particular not being able to use the 3G pitch at Islwyn High School on the weekends.

Cabinet Thanked Mr Lloyd for his comments and discussions ensued.

The Sports and Leisure Facilities Manager responded to questions raised and advised Cabinet that CCBC currently has the largest and oldest Leisure Centre Portfolio in Wales, with most of them being built in the late 1960s and early 1970s. They are surveyed once every five years to assess the maintenance issues, the next survey is scheduled for 2024. Currently there is around £4m outstanding maintenance throughout the current leisure portfolio. The Sports and Leisure Facilities Manager set out the position per leisure centre and confirmed that the costs apportioned to the current Caerphilly Leisure Centre would be addressed as part of the new Caerphilly Leisure & Wellbeing Hub project. The maintenance required at Pontllanfraith is significantly greater than a Centre of a similar size and age. To bring Pontllanfraith up to a modern-day standard it is estimated to cost around £15m.

Cabinet highlighted that £20m had been allocated from the 'Levelling Up Fund' towards the cost of the new Caerphilly Leisure and Wellbeing Hub.

Following a query raised the Officer confirmed a recording system had been set up to capture the numbers of service users querying when the indoor leisure suite at Pontllanfraith LC would re-open. Only five requests had been received.

The Officer also addressed the concerns regarding Islwyn High School (IHS) not taking bookings and assured Cabinet that the pitch is used by local sports club on Mondays to Fridays between 5pm to 9pm and that these bookings are currently being managed directly by the school. However, the Officer also explained that the Sport & Leisure Team are currently working with the school to take over the booking system which will permit the use of the pitches on the weekends and the sports facilities within the inside of the school will also be made available for use by the public. This is currently being carried out successfully at Blackwood Comprehensive School.

Following concerns raised the Head of Public Protection, Community and Leisure Services, assured Cabinet that the Equalities Act (2010) had been considered and included when developing the Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) to support them in their decision making. The Officer also drew attention to the proposed consultation questions included at Appendix 2 to the report and advised that responses would be used to develop the impact assessment further.

The Sport and Leisure Development Manager responded to a query raised, advising Cabinet the benefit of synthetic pitches is that the pitches can be used around ten times per week whereas a grassed pitch may only be suitable for once a week if the weather has been particularly wet or if there has been frost the pitch is unusable.

Cabinet noted that the consultation will be extensive for a six-week period, there will be a number of drop-in sessions where residents and stakeholders can have discussions. The Council's online engagement hub will be used, and current users will be contacted directly to receive their feedback and views.

It was further noted that there has been some funding in relation to Heolddu Leisure Centre this is due to the facilities being part of Heolddu Comprehensive School and not a facility that can close, the facility shall remain in place whilst the school is still in use.

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 reasons contained within the Officers report a consultation exercise regarding the proposal that Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre remains closed permanently and that the use of the existing 3G pitch ceases once the 3G pitch at the new Centre for Vulnerable Learners is open for community use be approved.

6. SPORT AND ACTIVE RECREATION STRATEGY (SARS) IMPLEMENTATION

Cabinet noted that the report had been considered by Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee on 31st October 2023.

Consideration was given to the report which provided Cabinet with an update on the substantial activity undertaken to implement the Council's Sport and Active Recreation Strategy 2019-2029 and sought approval of the Implementation Plan.

Cabinet requested further information on the investment into local sports clubs across the Borough through the Be Active Wales funding.

The Sport Leisure Development Manager advised Cabinet that this is a collaborative scheme between Sports Wales and Local Authorities. There is an opportunity for local sports clubs to apply for funding up to £50,000. The Authority's role is to ensure the clubs are aware of the funding and give support filling out grant applications to ensure that the club will meet the criteria and importantly fit in strategically with their outcomes and Sports Wales' vision.

Clarification was sought on whether Sport & Leisure are working collaboratively with schools to maximise leisure facilities within the Borough. The Sports and Leisure Facilities Manager explained that seven out of the eleven Leisure Centres are on school sites, therefore they work extremely closely within school campuses. The Officer confirmed that work has started with three specific schools, which are Blackwood Comprehensive, Islwyn High School and Ysgol Y Gwindy. Currently they have taken over the management from Blackwood and Ysgol Y Gwindy and are supporting Islwyn High through the process. As part of the process, they do not just take bookings, they also support the schools in terms of maximizing the opportunities that exist with some of the other areas of their schools, such as studios and sports halls.

Cabinet queried how the investment in Sports and Leisure Facilities in Caerphilly County Borough compares to other Local Authorities. The Officer explained that CCBC is one of the only Leisure providers in the UK that has a dedicated strategy, which is the framework for the report presented to Cabinet. This has allowed Officers to be able to make decisions set against an appropriate framework. The Officer highlighted that CCBC is also one of the small number of Welsh LAs that continues to provide leisure facilities in-house.

Cabinet sought further information on how the National Exercise Referral Scheme has impacted on residents. The Officer advised Cabinet that WG allocate £140,000 to Local Authorities, to allow them to deliver support to some of the most critically ill people within the Authority, that require urgent support. It was noted the feedback from this scheme is that it is a life-line for people, therefore is a really valued scheme.

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 reasons contained within the Officers report:

1. Cabinet considered the content of the report and recommendations made by the meeting of the Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee on 31st October 2023.

2. The Sport and Active Recreation Strategy 2019-2029 Progress and Implementation Plan at Appendix 1 be approved.
3. Cabinet recognised the current budget pressures being experienced by the service and understand that steps will need to be taken to overcome these pressures. The SARS is a key component of addressing this issue.

7. RISCA COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL AND LEISURE CENTRE NEW ARTIFICIAL PITCH PROVISION

Consideration was given to the report which provided Cabinet with an update on the latest position in relation to Risca Comprehensive School and Leisure Centre Artificial Turf Pitch (ATP) and sought Cabinet approval to proceed with a replacement 3G surface as a result of funding secured from Welsh Government to enhance the current provision.

In response to a query raised, the Sport and Leisure Development Manager advised Cabinet that although England Hockey states that 3G surfaces are not considered suitable for competitive hockey, and one of the reasons why hockey is dwindling, it is felt that that this isn't the case, and it is more likely because there is a far broader spectrum of sports now available. It was noted there is an Officer within Caerphilly that works closely with the governing body, trying to grow the sport within the County Borough. WG have a working group called the 'Collaboration Group' which includes hockey, rugby, and football, who take strategic decisions on where is best to invest. Caerphilly have benefited from this funding, which has allowed a hockey hub to be installed in the Sue Noake Leisure Centre.

Cabinet sought clarification on what impact moving from an ATP to a 3G pitch would have on the curriculum at the school. The Officer advised that the existing facility has aged and requires replacing, in addition it was pointed out that across the education portfolio and through the 21st Century Schools, the majority of schools have installed 3G pitches, this is because it gives more opportunities to the schools to use the pitches allowing 10 times more activities to take place through the school day and also allowing matches to take place. The pitches are far more beneficial as football and rugby matches can now be played in all weathers.

Cabinet noted that the installation of the 3G pitch will provide a massive opportunity to the school and wider community as it is planned for the pitch to close at 10p.m.

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 reasons contained within the Officers report:

1. The replacement of the existing Artificial Turf pitch at Risca Comprehensive School and leisure Centre with a new 3G surface be approved.
2. The use of the £1m Welsh Government Community Focused Schools Capital Grant to support the replacement 3G pitch be approved.
3. The use of the £1m SPF funding to support a further 3G pitch at a separate location across Caerphilly yet to be determined be approved.

8. ANNUAL REPORT ON THE CORPORATE COMPLAINTS RECEIVED FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL 2022 TO 31ST MARCH 2023

Consideration was given to the report which provided Cabinet with an overview of the complaints dealt with under the Corporate Complaints policy for the annual period 1st April

2022 to 31st March 2023 together with the outcome and lessons learned.

Cabinet was asked to note the complaints data contained in the report and to review and assess the effectiveness of complaints handling.

In response to a query raised on the number of complaints listed in the report for Education, the Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services clarified that there were very few complaints regarding Education included within the report as complaints relating to schools are dealt with by the schools through a different statutory process.

Cabinet noted the Ombudsman's data included within the report which identified three early resolutions with the remainder of the complaints referred to the Ombudsman not taken to investigation.

Following a query raised the Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer advised Cabinet that in respect of the new digital complaints process it is anticipated that the system will go live at the end of November.

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 reasons contained within the Officers report Cabinet noted the complaints data contained in the report and reviewed and assessed the effectiveness of complaints handling for the annual period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023.

9. REVISED TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT MODEL – UPDATE REPORT

Cabinet noted that the report had been considered by Corporate and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee on 7th November 2023.

Consideration was given to the report which provided Cabinet with an update on the pilot of the Town Centre Stakeholder Meetings which were approved for a 12-month trial and sought Cabinet approval to adopt the new Town Centre Management Model on a permanent basis. The report also sought Cabinet approval to formally disband the old Town Centre Management Groups. Cabinet noted that the revised format is proposed to encourage greater stakeholder participation and communication.

The Business Enterprise Renewal Team Leader advised Cabinet that emails, leaflets, and flyers had been sent to all stakeholders to encourage their attendance to the meetings. However, the most effective form of engagement has been staff personally going to local businesses and having face to face conversations, building relationships with the stakeholders which has led to more attendance at the meetings.

Cabinet placed on record their thanks and support for the Business Enterprise and Renewal Team.

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 in the Officers report;

1. The adoption of the new Town Centre Stakeholder meetings as part of the new Town Centre Management Model be approved.
2. The old Town Centre Management Groups be formally disbanded.

3. The new Terms of Reference for the Town Centre Stakeholder Meetings as set out in Appendix 1 of the report be approved.

10. CORPORATE PLAN (INCLUDING WELL-BEING OBJECTIVES) 2023 TO 2028.

Cabinet noted that the report had been considered by the Joint Scrutiny Committee on 26th October 2023.

Consideration was given to a report that presented Cabinet with the Council's Draft Corporate Plan following its review by Joint Scrutiny. The Plan detailed the new Well-Being Objectives for the next five-year period from 2023 to 2028.

Cabinet noted the Well-Being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 requires all public bodies to set Well-Being Objectives that improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of their area. The Objectives presented to Cabinet are designed to maximise the contribution to the National Well-Being Goals for Wales.

The Corporate Director of Education and Corporate Services placed on record his thanks for the hard work and effort for all of the Team involved in the development of the Plan and although still awaiting a formal response there had been some very positive feedback received from Audit Wales.

In their capacity of the Chair of the Public Services Board (PSB) the Leader was pleased with how the Plan dovetails with the ambitions of the PSB and was pleased to note that the team has met with the MARMOT team.

Cabinet placed on record their thanks for the hard work of the team putting the plan together.

Cabinet highlighted that the plan is looking further than Caerphilly County Borough Boundary. It is ambitious, but Cabinet is positive that some good things can be achieved.

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 reasons contained within the Officers report the Draft Corporate Plan (2023-2028) be approved and recommended it for onward consideration by Council.

11. MOBILISING TEAM CAERPHELLY PROGRAMME – PROPOSED GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

Consideration was given to the report which sought Cabinet approval of the proposed Governance arrangements for the Mobilising Team Caerphilly Transformation Programme.

Cabinet agreed that a governance arrangement needs to be in place and noted that the Portfolio Board Membership has full input from CMT and Lead Officers. It was noted that there is political oversight into the process and the Leader, the Deputy Leader, Portfolio Office Lead and Communications Officer are to be advisors.

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 adoption of the organisational narrative set out in para 5.8 be agreed.
2. The adoption of the transformation principles set out in para 5.10 be agreed.
3. The introduction of the proposed programme management and decision-making structure proposed in para 5.11-5.18 be agreed.

12. PUBLIC INTEREST TEST

Members considered the Public Interest Test and concluded that on balance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interests in disclosing the information and it was: -

RESOLVED that in accordance with Section 100(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting because of the likely disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraph 14 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

13. WRITE-OFF DEBTS OVER £20,000 – BUSINESS RATE ARREARS FOR LTD COMPANIES

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 reasons contained within the Officers report the recommendation be approved.

The meeting closed at 14.55 p.m.

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any corrections made at the meeting held on 13th December 2023.

CHAIR