



## CABINET

### MINUTES OF THE MULTI-LOCATIONAL MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON WEDNESDAY 3<sup>RD</sup> APRIL 2024 AT 1PM

PRESENT:

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), S. Cook (Cabinet Member for Housing), C. Andrews (Cabinet Member for Education) and E. Forehead (Cabinet Member for Social Care).

Together with:

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

Also in Attendance:

R. Tranter (Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer), K. Cole (Chief Education Officer), A. West (Place Shaping and Sustainable Communities for Learning Service Manger), S. Richards (Head of Education Planning and Strategy and Transformation Manager), A. Dallimore (Regeneration Services Manager), H. Munro (Caerphilly Place-Making Programme Manager), F. Wilkins (Housing Services Manager), C. Davies (Private Sector Housing Manager), I. Raymond (Principal Project Officer), M. Lloyd (Head of Infrastructure), L. Lane (Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer)

## RECORDING AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Deputy 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. Morgan (Leader of the Council) and C. Harray (Chief Executive) and G. Jenkins (Interim Director for Social Services).

### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Corporate Director for Corporate Services and Education, R. Edmunds declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 11 - UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund - Virements and Project Approvals in that he is a Governor at Coleg Y Cymoedd.

**3. MINUTES – WEDNESDAY 21<sup>st</sup> FEBRUARY 2024**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 21<sup>st</sup> February 2024 be approved as a correct record.

**4. MINUTES – WEDNESDAY 27<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2024**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 27<sup>th</sup> February 2024 be approved as a correct record.

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

Cabinet was provided with the Cabinet Forward Work Programme, which detailed the scheduled reports until 26<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

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.

**6. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUSINESS PLAN 2024/25**

Consideration was given to the report which sought to Cabinet to consider and take views on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2024/25.

Cabinet noted that the HRA Business Plan is an annual requirement from Welsh Government (WG) as part of the annual submission of the Major Repairs Allowance (MRA) grant application.

Cabinet further noted that the report was considered by the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee on the 26<sup>th</sup> March 2024 and noted the verbal update of The Scrutiny Committee Members from the Officer.

Following comments made regarding inflation figures within the report the Housing Services Manger advised Cabinet that it is difficult to give an accurate representation because there is so much variation regarding different aspects. Cabinet was further advised that this is an active, live document so can be changed to reflect inflation rates periodically.

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 consideration was given to the 2024/25 HRA Business Plan and its submission to Welsh Government be approved.

**7. PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING RENEWAL AND ADAPTATION POLICY**

Consideration was given to the report which sought Cabinet views and agreement regarding the Private Sector Housing Renewal and Adaptation Policy 2024 and to realign the existing Private Sector Housing capital budgets accordingly to support delivery of the Policy from 2024/25.

It was noted that the Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee considered this report on the 26<sup>th</sup> of March 2024 and noted the verbal update on the comments from The Scrutiny Committee Members from the Officer.

Reference was made to paragraph 3.4 of the Officers report and clarification was sought to why the formal request of the Welsh Government Minister was not adopted and how would this effect the residents and further clarification was sought on how the in-house Agency service will target the most vulnerable households. The Housing Services Manger advised Cabinet that the reason for not adopting the request by WG was that moving away from means testing would have a significant negative impact on the Organisation from a capital and revenue resource perspective and it would also significantly impact on Social Service's capacity. If the means testing were to be removed it would cause a significant influx in applications and ultimately it would significantly negatively affect the most vulnerable applicants, who are least able to pay.

The Private Sector Housing Manager advised Cabinet the Agency Service would be a one stop shop for anyone who requires assistance, it would provide technical expertise, professional and admin support. This would ensure all the forms are filled out correctly and the individual will be provided with dedicated Liaison and technical officers to ensure all works required are carried out properly at their property.

Responding to a query raised the Officer advised Cabinet that all LA's offer grant aid in relation to adaptations and Caerphilly intend to continue with that in relation to home improvements and maintenance issues. Other LA's have already removed Grant Aid and are relying on loans, apart from grants that externally funded.

Cabinet requested further information on how the Council will meet the new priority in the policy to improve the energy efficiency of homes. The Officer advised there are several ways that this can be achieved. For example, the Council have Statutory Enforcement powers to ensure private landlords meet the legislation. The Council also maximises external funding, including to support grant assistance and can refer people to the WG 'Nest Scheme'. There are also staff available to give energy efficiency advice.

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

RESOLVED that for reasons contained in the Officers report:

1. The comments of the Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee of the 26<sup>th</sup> of March 2024 be noted.
2. The change in approach to delivering financial assistance from a mainly grant-based policy to a more sustainable repayable loan-based policy in relation to property maintenance and regeneration be noted.
3. The Private Sector Housing Renewal and Adaptation Policy 2024 be approved.
4. Continuing to deliver medium adaptations via means tested mandatory DFGs in line with statute, noting that this recommendation does not comply with the formal request of the Welsh Government Minister for Housing and Local Government, Julie James of the 10.03.2021 with regards to medium adaptations be approved.
5. The proposed policy be introduced with immediate effect, that discontinued products cease to be offered from 31 March 2024 with new financial products introduced from 1 June 2024 to allow for implementation planning and training

be approved.

6. Applicants with active enquiries for discontinued products be given a time limited opportunity to progress applications to formal approval be approved.
7. The introduction of targeting of the In-House Agency Service to vulnerable households and amendments to Agency fees be approved.
8. Realignment of the Private Sector Housing annual capital budget of £2,167,000 and associated slippage monies £6,916,280 (as at period 9 monitoring report 2023/24) to deliver the proposed Policy in agreement with the Section 151 Officer and Cabinet Member for Housing. The slippage money and agency income to be ringfenced for a period of 5 years to allow the effective implementation of the proposed Policy be approved.
9. Assignment of £322,019 of the Private Sector Housing slippage monies referenced in 3.8 to support the delivery of the Bryn Carno Targeted Regeneration scheme be approved.

#### **8. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FOR LEARNING BAND B PROGRAMME - STATUTORY OBJECTION REPORT: YSGOL Y LAWNT AND UPPER RHYMNEY PRIMARY SCHOOL.**

Consideration was given to the report which updated Cabinet in relation to the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme in respect of the proposal to relocate Ysgol Y Lawnt and Upper Rhymney Primary School, through the creation of sustainable school buildings with shared facilities.

Cabinet noted that following Cabinet approval a Statutory Notice for the proposal relating to Ysgol Y Lawnt and Upper Rhymney Primary School was published, and the formal objection period ran between 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024 and the 5<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

In response to a query raise, the Place Shaping and Sustainable Communities for Learning Service Manger advised Cabinet that there are a prescribed list of consultees within the Welsh Government School Organisational Code, who were made aware of the Statutory Notice. The Notice was displayed within the school, on the school gate and within the public foyer. The school also alerted parents and pupils through its own internal mechanisms as the pupils voice is very important. The Authority also displayed the Statutory Notice on their Social Media pages and the Councils Website.

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

RESOLVED that for reasons contained within the Officers report:

1. Consideration was given to the information contained in the Objection Report
2. Proceed to Planning Application stage and subsequent Welsh Government business case approvals be approved.

#### **9. SCHOOL ORGANISATION CODE 2018 - STATUTORY OBJECTION REPORT: PROPOSAL FOR THE CLOSURE OF CWM GLAS INFANTS SCHOOL.**

Consideration was given to the report which updated Cabinet in relation to the proposal in respect of the closure of Cwm Glas Infants School, effective from 20<sup>th</sup> July 2024. Cabinet was

asked to consider the information contained in the update report and Cabinet approval was sought to proceed to full implementation.

Following consideration, 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. Consideration was given to information contained in the update report.
2. Proceed to full implementation be approved.

#### **10. POST 16, SINGLE SEX AND SURPLUS PLACES BOARD - FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET.**

Consideration was given to the report which sought Cabinet approval on two linked proposals that have been made by the Post 16, Single Sex and Surplus Places Board.

Cabinet agreement was sought to undertake a formal consultation on moving from Single Sex provision to co-education in the Upper Rhymney Valley and locating Lewis catchment pupils at the Lewis School Pengam site. Cabinet also received information on a proposal to address some long-standing issues of Surplus Places across Secondary School provision in the Upper Rhymney Valley area.

It was noted that the report had been considered by the Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024 and their comments were noted.

Cabinet sought further information on whether the views of the pupils and teachers would be considered and what are the views of the head teachers at the schools that will be affected. The Place Shaping and Sustainable Communities for Learning Service Manager and The Chief Education Officer assured Cabinet that the pupils voice is very important, and the consultation will take into account both primary and all secondary school pupils views. It is proposed that pupils in years 5 and 6 within the primary schools that are affected will take part in the consultation. The feedback from the head teachers at both secondary schools and feeder schools are all unanimously in support of the principles within the consultation and considered that the change is overdue. The Chief Education wished to place on record her appreciation for the staff that have been able to have these discussions putting aside their personal agendas and personal interests. They all really believe that this is in the best interests of the pupils and their future education and wellbeing.

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

RESOLVED that for reasons contained within the Officer report:

1. The unanimous support from the Post 16, Single Sex and Surplus Places Board (the Board) on the proposals set out in within 5.7(1), 5.7(2) and 5.18(1) of this report be noted.
2. Proceed to consultation as outlined in the report be approved.

## **11. UK GOVERNMENT SHARED PROSPERITY FUND - VIREMENTS AND PROJECT APPROVALS.**

Consideration was given to the report which provided Cabinet with an update on the delivery of the UK Shared Prosperity FUND (SPF)

The report also provided feedback to Cabinet on the effectiveness of the SPF 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.

Cabinet approval was sought for 2 proposed funding virements in respect of the following interventions due to their significant value:

- W03 Cleaner and Greener - £995,000
- W24 Retrofit Hub, Coleg Y Cymoedd - £1,000,000

Cabinet sought clarification on what projects would be supported under the cleaner and greener category. The Corporate Director for Economy and Environment advised that this would cover projects that the Council would not normally carry out as part of its maintenance regime, as the SPF requires additionality. Examples of such additionality would be enhancing the 6 main gateways into the Borough that do not regularly get cut right back, roundabout enhancements and enhancements to Town Centres.

With regard to the proposals for the retrofit hub, Cabinet welcomed this exciting project and sought clarification on how long it would take to set up and how many other retrofit hubs are across the Country. The Officer advised Cabinet that there was only one other retro hub that he was aware of and that was in Ireland. The Officer also clarified that it is the intention that the hub will be set up within in the next 12 – 18 months. However, the funding from the SPF would have to be spent by the end of March 2025.

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 Officer report:

1. The progress made on the delivery of SPF be noted.
2. The 2 proposed funding virements in respect of the following interventions:
  - W03 Cleaner and Greener - £995,000
  - W24 Retrofit Hub, Coleg Y Cymoedd - £1,000,000 be approved.
3. Officers to develop a funding agreement with Coleg Y Cymoedd to support the transfer of grant funds as determined in recommendation 2 be Authorised.

## **12. CAERPHILLY FFOS CAERFFILI -WEFO FUNDING UPDATE**

Consideration was given to the report which updated Cabinet on the submission to Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) for funding towards the implementation of the Ffos Caerffili containerised market scheme and to recommend that the Council core reserves freed up by this process are reinvested into the Caerphilly Town 2035 programme.

Following a query raised on how the project would create employment, The Caerphilly Place-Making Programme Manager advised Cabinet that in terms of the market expressions of

interests from local independent companies to take the spaces had been sought and the hope is to generate around 50 employment opportunities at the site.

It was noted that there have been positive messages from companies who are looking forward to opening a business in Caerphilly Town Centre.

Cabinet placed on record their thanks to the Officers involved in the success of this exciting project and thanks for securing the additional external (WEFO) funding.

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 Officer report:

1. The WEFO submission has been successful be acknowledged.
2. Up to £2m will be drawn down from WEFO for the project, releasing initial core contributions from both CCBC and WG Regeneration be acknowledged.
3. The use of the released CCBC element, which could stand at £1.1m, to be reinvested into the Caerphilly Town 2035 programme be approved.

### **13. RESOURCING MOBILISING TEAM CAERPHILLY – DELIVERY**

Consideration was given to the report which sought Cabinet approval to transfer £897k of uncommitted capital earmarked reserves into the Invest to Save Reserve in order to provide ongoing one-off external support to the Council's Mobilising Team Caerphilly Transformation Programme.

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

RESOLVED that for reasons contained within the Officer report:

1. Transfer £897k of uncommitted capital earmarked reserves into the Invest to Save Reserve to support the Council's Mobilising Team Caerphilly transformation programme be agreed.
2. Delegated authority on the use of the Invest to Save Reserve continues to be granted to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader, relevant Cabinet Member and Section 151 Officer be approved.

### **14. REFURBISHMENT OF TWIN PACK ORGANICS COLLECTION VEHICLES**

Consideration was given to the report which sought Cabinet consideration of a proposal to provide funding for the refurbishment of 9no Twin Pack Organics Collection Vehicles to bring them to a standard that will see them operational through to 2027 and align with the potential implementation of the draft Waste Strategy that is currently undergoing public consultation.

Clarification was sought as to whether the Council was looking to reconfigure the back of the lorries given the increase in food waste being collected and whether the refurbishment will see us through the interim period up to mid-2027. The Head of Infrastructure advised there were no plans to change the specification of the vehicles, but that his staff are reviewing the rounds and are considering a zonal approach where specific waste stream vehicles would all operate

in a single area of the County Borough on a given day which would improve efficiency and reduce wasteful travel time. .

Further clarification was sought, as to whether the vehicles would be in a suitable condition to sell on when no longer required and how long the refurbishment process would take. The Officer confirmed that they would be, however they do significantly depreciate overtime and would be unlikely to be worth much after 10-11 years of operation. The Officer further clarified that the process would take around 2 weeks per vehicle so around 4-5 months altogether.

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 Officer report:

1. The request for funding of £148,253.84 for refurbishment of the existing twin pack collection fleet for the reasons outlined in the report be approved.
2. The cost of £148,253.84 should be funded from unallocated capital earmarked reserves be agreed.

The meeting closed at 14.00 p.m.

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any corrections made at the meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

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Chair