



## CABINET

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

PRESENT:

Chair:

Councillor S. Morgan – Chair

Councillors:

J. Pritchard (Cabinet Member for Prosperity, Regeneration and Climate Change), 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:

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), L. Lane (Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer), L. Kabza (Youth Participation and Curriculum Projects Coordinator), P. O'Neil (Senior Youth Service Manager), S. Harris (Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer), L. Donovan (Head of Peoples Services) and E. Townsend (Health and Safety Manager)

Also in Attendance:

I. Beecham (Youth Forum Cabinet Member for Safer Caerphilly)

### 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 N. George, C. Harry (Chief Executive) and D. Street (Deputy Chief Executive).

## **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None received.

## **3. MINUTES – WEDNESDAY 6<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2024.**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024 be approved as a correct record.

## **4. MINUTES – WEDNESDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2024**

RESOLVED that subject to the inclusion of Councillor C. Andrews to the list of those in attendance, the minutes of Special Cabinet held on the 20<sup>th</sup> March 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 24<sup>th</sup> July 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. YOUTH FORUM PRIORITIES**

Cabinet welcomed Members of the Youth Forum.

Consideration was given the report which informed Members of the issues raised by Young People via the Youth Services Youth Forum and sought the view of Cabinet on how to address the issues outlined within the report.

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 at that meeting the Scrutiny Committee requested that an All-Member Seminar on Vaping be organised, the Cabinet Member was pleased to confirm that this had been arranged for the 13<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

Youth Forum Cabinet Member for Safer Caerphilly, Ioan Beecham, outlined the process undertaken each year to identify its priority issues. It was noted that young people identified and voted on their priority issues under the 5 key banners, Learning Caerphilly, Prosperous Caerphilly, Safer Caerphilly, Healthier Caerphilly and Greener Caerphilly. Issues identified in these areas included raising awareness around the dangers of drugs and vaping, the cost-of-living crisis, personal safety on public transport and walking home at night, educating young people about positive body image and the reality vs social media influence, and littering particularly the need for more visible bins in our communities and encouraging people to be more environmentally aware. Cabinet noted that with 28% of the vote Learning Caerphilly was the overall priority issues for young people.

Cabinet noted that the Youth Forum had undertaken a consultation in relation to its priority issues and what they could realistically do to address the priority issue, raise awareness and work together with decision makers to give due regard to the issue and achieve a positive

outcome.

Cabinet thanked Mr Beecham for his very informative presentation and discussion ensued.

A Member queried how the Council would be supporting the Youth Forum in achieving the priorities they have raised. Members were advised that the local authority Youth Service support the work of the Youth Forum and planned to work in partnership with Trading Standards, the Police, Public Health Wales, and Healthy Schools, to raise awareness of the issues raised.

A Member queried if there had been any change in legislation in relation to the style of company advertising of vapes that seemed to be very much targeted at young people and what the Council could do assist. Cabinet noted that a working group had been established to investigate this issue.

The Officer advised Cabinet that following a suggestion made by a Member of the Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee on whether the Youth Forum could refer the matter of vaping to their local MP or Senedd Member, this had been investigated and for the matter to be debated the Youth Forum would need to get 10,000 signatures. Cabinet suggested a regional approach with other Youth Forums and getting local ward Members on board and contacting sports clubs to achieve this. The Officer agreed that a regional approach would be possible and would take this forward to the next regional meeting.

Cabinet sought clarification as to whether the new provision at Virginia Park provide an opportunity for a greater youth voice. Officers confirmed that all the priority issue had been absorbed into the Youth Services curriculum, with a focus on vaping as the foremost priority issue. It was noted that Virginia Park was in the first phase of its operation with the number of young people being supported was in the hundred, however this would double within the year and within 3 years there would be about 3000 young people being supported. Curriculum resources had been developed on this priority issue and were circulated for Cabinet's information.

Cabinet thanked the Vice Chair of the Youth Forum Cabinet Member for Safer Caerphilly.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation, this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee:

1. The presentation of Youth Forum Issues, by young people be supported.
2. How to support the Youth Forum in addressing their Priority Issue be considered.
3. Due regard was given to the issues raised within the report by Young People when making decisions which impact upon their lives.

**7. SIX MONTH UPDATE ON THE CORPORATE COMPLAINTS RECEIVED FOR THE PERIOD 1<sup>ST</sup> APRIL 2023 TO 30<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2023.**

Consideration was given to the report that provided Cabinet with an overview of the complaints dealt with under the Corporate Complaints policy for the six-month period 1<sup>st</sup> April to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023 together with the outcomes and lessons learned.

It was noted that this report was presented to the Governance and Audit Committee on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

Cabinet requested further information on whether any of the complaints detailed within the report had been upheld by the Ombudsman. The Officer advised out of the 14 complaints that had been referred to the Ombudsman none had been investigated. However there had been 2 early resolutions.

Cabinet asked the Officer to explain an early resolution. The Officer explained that these were commonly referred to as “quick fixes” which are voluntary settlements agreed with the Ombudsman for example to provide an apology and take certain actions to resolve the complaint and avoiding the need for a formal investigation.

Cabinet noted that the overall average when dealing with a complaint was 85.54% and sought clarification on the barriers in reaching 100%. The Officer clarified that these would be things like staff absence and awaiting further information, or could simply be that a matter takes longer to investigate than originally envisaged. The Officer assured Cabinet that officers are considering ways in which to enhance and improve target response times, such as providing verbal responses followed by written confirmation, which complies with timescales and gives the complainant more timely outcome to the complaint raised...

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 Cabinet reviewed and assessed the effectiveness of complaints handling for the six-month period 1<sup>st</sup> April to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023 and noted the complaints data contained within the report.

## **8. RE-PURPOSING OF SOCIAL SERVICES EARMARKED RESERVES**

Consideration was given to the report which asked Cabinet to consider an alternative use of Social Services earmarked reserves in order to extend a number of fixed term arrangements put in place to alleviate capacity issues across the directorate.

The report identified around £793k of Social Services Reserve balances that were earmarked for specific purposes in earlier years which, as a result of recent events, are no longer required for their original purpose. It was consequently proposed to re-invest those earmarked balances to continue to provide a range of temporary arrangements that are currently in place to address workforce pressures across the directorate.

This re-purposing of earmarked reserves would allow these temporary arrangements to remain in place throughout 2024/25 and in some cases, into 2025/26. This would allow some time for the longer-term future of these temporary arrangements to be considered in the context of other financial pressures faced by the directorate in 2025/26 and subsequent years.

Cabinet sought confirmation that the Head of Finance was content with the movement of the reserves within Social Services. The Officer confirmed that he had been fully consulted on the report and was supportive of the proposals.

Cabinet referred to the report and sought clarification on how the additional posts within MyST would be funded from the Children’s Services revenue. The Interim Director for Social Services clarified that the MyST project was set up on an invest to save basis. The team pays for itself then makes savings on placements by returning children into County from out of County placements, or by stepping children down from residential care to foster care or by going home. Last year the team made savings of around £1.m after funding itself.

Cabinet acknowledged the fantastic work by the MyST project and noted there was not just a monetary value but more importantly an outcome for children value.

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 the proposed re-purposing of Social Services reserves set out in the report and summarised in appendix 1 be approved.

## **9. HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES**

Consideration was given to the report which sought Cabinet agreement in relation to three updated Health and Safety policies.

It was noted that the Council has in place a number of policies setting out its approach to managing key health and safety risks. The Corporate Health and Safety Policy, Display Screen Equipment Policy and Corporate Asbestos Management Plan have all been reviewed as part of a programme of Health and Safety policy reviews. These policies have been considered by Corporate Health and Safety Group and all feedback has been included in the policies included within the report.

The Head of Peoples Services addressed concerns raised by Cabinet regarding the Display Screen policy and advised that it is the responsibility of each employee to ensure they carry out their individual risk assessments at home and confirmed that there is a video available on the Councils Intranet pages explaining how to make the assessments. With regards to how long an employee is looking at a screen this is also the responsibility of each employee, and appropriate breaks should be made throughout the day.

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. The Corporate Health and Safety Policy attached at Appendix 1, the Display Screen Equipment policy attached at Appendix 2 and the Corporate Asbestos Management Plan attached at Appendix 3 be approved.
2. The approval of revised Health and Safety and HR policies and procedures be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Property and Highways, the Corporate Director Education and Corporate Services and the Head of People Services. The consultation process will not change, and new policies and procedures will continue to be presented to Cabinet for approval be agreed.

The meeting closed at 13:45 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