



CABINET

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN ON WEDNESDAY, 27TH NOVEMBER 2019 AT 10.30 A.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor P. Marsden - Chair

Councillors:

C. Cuss (Social Services and Well Being), N. George (Neighbourhood Services), C.J. Gordon (Corporate Services), Mrs B. Jones (Finance, Performance and Governance), S. Morgan (Economy, Infrastructure and Sustainability), L. Phipps (Homes and Places) and E. Stenner (Environment and Public Protection).

Together with:

C. Harry (Interim Chief Executive), R. Edmunds (Corporate Director – Education and Corporate Services), D. Street (Corporate Director – Social Services and Housing) and M.S. Williams (Interim Corporate Director – Communities).

Also in Attendance:

C. Edwards (Environmental Health Manager), M. Godfrey (Team Leader - Pollution Control and Emergency Planning & Resilience), R. Kyte (Head of Regeneration and Planning), M. Headington (Green Spaces and Transport Services Manager), S. Harris (Interim Head of Business Improvement Services and Acting S151 Officer), R. Tranter (Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer) and C. Evans (Committee Services Officer).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence received.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. CABINET – 13TH NOVEMBER 2019

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 13th November 2019 were approved as a correct record.

MATTERS ON WHICH EXECUTIVE DECISIONS WERE REQUIRED

4. REGENERATION BOARD – PROJECT PROPOSALS

The report recommended the allocation of £370k Regeneration Project Board Development Funds towards two previously endorsed and re-evaluated projects, namely Llanbradach and Ystrad Mynach Park and Ride Schemes.

It was noted that at the meeting on 30th May 2018, Cabinet agreed that a Regeneration Project Board would be set up with a cross party political representation of Councillors plus key officers. This group is supported by a Regeneration Assessment Panel consisting of officers from a range of service areas.

Cabinet noted that the Regeneration Assessment Panel have met on numerous occasions to consider the prioritised list of capital projects, which have been identified by the Board to move to the Assessment Stage. Following subsequent Cabinet Approvals, on the 13th February 2019, 29th May 2019, 10th July 2019 and most recently 2nd October 2019 numerous projects have been endorsed with financial assistance provided (where necessary) from the Regeneration Project Board Development Funds.

During January 2019 Cabinet resolved to release £1.2m of reserves for the Regeneration Board prioritised projects, bringing the Total Development Fund budget allocation to £1.5m. To date, £492,500 has been allocated towards prioritised capital regeneration schemes, across the County Borough.

Cabinet were therefore asked to consider the report and approve the allocation of a further £370k Development Funds towards two previously endorsed and re-evaluated projects, namely Llanbradach and Ystrad Mynach Park and Ride Schemes, which would leave an active Development Fund of £637,500.

Cabinet thanked the Officer for the report and discussion ensued.

In noting the projects, Cabinet felt it was imperative to have “shelf-ready” projects for fit for purpose public transportation links, connecting communities and which will clarify any local concerns with both Llanbradach and Ystrad Mynach Park and Rides. It was noted that a feasibility study will be undertaken, defining the size and requirements of each Park and Ride. In addition, it was noted that as a result further investment opportunities can be sought, alongside Welsh Government.

Following consideration and discussion it was moved and seconded that the recommendation contained with the Officer’s report be approved and by a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in Officer’s report :

- i) The recommendations of the Regeneration Project Board towards the review of both the Llandradach and Ystrad Mynach Park and Ride projects be endorsed;
- ii) That £370,000 of the remaining Regeneration Project Board Development Fund of £1,007,500 be allocated to these revisited priority schemes, as approved by the Regeneration Project Board.

5. #TEAM CAERPHILLY – BETTER TOGETHER TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY – 6 MONTHLY UPDATE

The report, which was considered by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 12th November 2019, provided an update on the progress under the #Team Caerphilly – Better Together Transformation Strategy.

The Strategy was approved by Cabinet on the 12th June 2019 and as part of the programme management arrangements, six-monthly progress reports will be presented to both the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.

It was noted that much of the focus during the early months has been on firming up governance arrangements and recruiting to the three fixed-term Transformation Manager posts.

The Team Caerphilly Programme Board has been established and is now meeting on a monthly basis and a new Programme Co-ordination Group has also been created to provide day-to-day oversight and to support the Programme Board. The Terms of Reference for these Groups were appended to the report.

Cabinet noted that the Transformation Manager (Innovation) and the Transformation Manager (Commercial Investment) have both been appointed and commenced in their posts on the 1st October for a fixed-term period of 2 years. The Principal Officer (Workforce Development) has also recently been appointed for a fixed-term period of 2 years with a start date to be confirmed.

Communication and engagement capacity has been added to the overall Transformation Team with the Senior Communications Officer having recently been seconded to support the staff and community engagement strands of the Strategy.

It was noted that there are 26 action areas in the strategic action plan for the Transformation Programme. However, there has been some slippage in the programme, primarily due to the time taken to make the key appointments required to drive forward the programme at pace.

Cabinet thanked the Officer for the report and discussion ensued.

Discussions took place around the staff roadshows, of which 8 sessions were undertaken and attended by almost 800 staff members across the organisation. The key focus was to update staff on a number of recent events, including budget proposals and the #Team Caerphilly working model, which aims to change and improve the way we work; enhance relationships with communities and partners and develop proud and trusted staff. Cabinet thanked the Chief Executive for providing the informative sessions and enabling staff to see the senior management team as caring and approachable.

A Member sought further information on how the changes will be communicated to the public. It was explained that there has been a recent focus on governance and staffing to deliver the Transformation Strategy, which will begin to take shape and mobilise in early 2020. It is intended that initially, the workforce will be the focus, however, engagement has begun in respect budget proposals in which members of the public, Councillors and Town and Community Councillors are being consulted in various forms over the coming weeks.

Following consideration and discussion it was moved and seconded that the recommendation contained within the Officer's report be approved and by a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officer's Report the content and progress against the strategy be noted.

6. HAFOD-YR-YNYS AIR QUALITY PROJECT – COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER, LAND AND BUILDINGS AT WOODSIDE TERRACE, HAFOD-YR-YNYS

The report sought Cabinet approval for the making and implementation of a Compulsory Purchase Order to acquire all interests in the land and buildings known as 1-20 Woodside

Terrace, 1&2 Woodside Shops and Yr Adfa at Hafod-Yr-Ynys Road (as denoted on the map in Appendix 1) (“the Site”) together with ancillary rights to achieve compliance with the Air Quality Direction 2019 and the EU Ambient Air Quality Directive (2008/50/EC) in the shortest possible time.

It was noted that the national nitrogen dioxide air quality objectives are being exceeded at receptor locations on Hafod-yr-ynys Road. In February 2018 Welsh Government issued an Air Quality Direction to Caerphilly CBC to undertake a feasibility study for the area and to determine a preferred option or basket of options which will achieve compliance with the Ambient Air Quality Directive (2008/50/EC) air quality limit values for nitrogen dioxide in the ‘shortest time’.

On 26th June 2019 Cabinet approved its fair air quality plan for Hafodyrynys Road for submission to Welsh Government. The plan included the preferred option of purchase and demolition of the properties at 1-20 Woodside Terrace, 1&2 Woodside Shops and Yr Adfa on the south side of the A472 together with re-alignment of the footway for achieving compliance with the Ambient Air Quality Directive (2008/50/EC) at Hafod-yr-ynys. On the 31st July 2019, Welsh Government issued a new Direction to Caerphilly County Borough Council, in accordance with the ‘Environment Act 1995 (Feasibility Study for Nitrogen Dioxide Compliance) Air Quality Direction 2019’. The Direction stated that the demolition option should proceed immediately and without delay.

It was noted that whilst many of the residents at the Site have shown willingness to voluntarily dispose of their interests in the Site to the Council, a Compulsory Purchase Process is required to ensure the preferred option is delivered within project time scales and compliance is achieved with the Air Quality Direction 2019 and the EU Ambient Air Quality (2008/50/EC) in the shortest possible time.

Cabinet thanked the Officers for the report and their continued dedication and support offered to the residents of the area. In addition, it was noted that the primary intention of Cabinet was to protect residents from financial hardship, which has been achieved as result of hard work and dedication from staff and excellent working relationships and collaboration with Welsh Government.

Following consideration and discussion it was moved and seconded that the recommendations contained in the Officer’s report be approved and by a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

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

- (i) The making of a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) be authorised pursuant to statutory powers contained in section 226 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1991 (as amended), and section 13 of Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 to acquire all interest and rights within the land and buildings edged red on the plan attached to this report at Appendix 1 and known as 1-20 Woodside Terrace, 1 & 2 Woodside Shops and Yr Adfa at Hafod-Yr-Ynys Road for the purpose of implementing the scheme set out in this report to achieve compliance with the Air Quality Direction 2019 and the EU Ambient Air Quality Directive (2008/50/EC) in the shortest possible time.
- (ii) Notwithstanding recommendation 3.1 above that, pending the making of the CPO, officers be authorised to continue negotiations to purchase the land and buildings identified in this report by agreement.
- (iii) Delegate to the Head of Public Protection, Community, and Leisure Services authority to:
 - Agree and approve the final form of plans to be annexed to the CPO delineating the exact boundaries of the land and properties at the Site;

- To undertaken appropriate land referencing work to identify all interests affected by the proposed order identified in the table of properties annexed at Appendix 2. Appendix 2 is attached as an item exempt from publication.
 - To make amendments where necessary to the draft Statement of Reasons at Appendix 3.
- (iv) To authorise the Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer:
- To make and seal the CPO and to submit the same to the Welsh Ministers for confirmation;
 - Sign all notices in connection with the CPO and, if objections are received, to take all actions in connection with the arrangement of a Public Inquiry and where necessary the appointment of Counsel to represent the authority;
 - To serve notices to treat and enter and to take all other requisite steps pursuant to the compulsory acquisition procedures to obtain possession of the Site if it is considered appropriate to do so, and in conjunction with the Head of Property services to deal with any compensation issues, if necessary, by reference to the Lands Tribunal.
- (v) to authorise the Head of Public Protection, Community, and Leisure Services or the Head of Legal Services and Monitoring officer (as appropriate) to take any further actions required to make and implement the CPO and acquire all interests in the Site.

7. CABINET FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – TO NOTE

Cabinet were provided with the Cabinet Forward Work Programme, which detailed the scheduled reports from 27th November 2019 to 10th June 2020. Members were reminded that the Cabinet Forward Work Programme is a working document and therefore subject to change.

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.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Forward Work Programme be noted.

URGENT ITEM - NOT SUBJECT TO CALL-IN

8. APPROPRIATION OF RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES

In accordance with the Council's Constitution the Mayor has agreed that the decision proposed is reasonable in all circumstances and has agreed that the decision should be treated as a matter of urgency and therefore exempt from Call-in.

Members were asked to note that the report was deemed urgent on the basis that it needs to be implemented to ensure the Council can benefit from Affordable Housing Grant from Welsh Government, to contribute towards the cost of the appropriation and improvement works, by completing the transfer no later than 29th November.

The report sought approval to appropriate two formally tied residential properties currently, held by Bereavement Services (General Fund) for Housing purposes to Caerphilly Homes (Housing Revenue Account). The properties are surplus to their original requirements and therefore tenancies and other operational matters will be managed by Caerphilly Homes.

It was noted that the properties known as Cemetery House, Abercarn, which is situated within the grounds of Abercarn Cemetery and 65 Cromwell Road, Risca were previously let as tied tenancies by Bereavement Services for members of their staff. Following the ending of the tied tenancies the tenants have held a secure tenancy under the Housing Act 1985 and Bereavement Services have certain duties and responsibilities as part of this contract.

The report outlined that providing, managing and maintaining tenanted accommodation is not the primary role of Bereavement Services. Consequently they are highly reliant on other services to support them in this regard so it is proposed to transfer this responsibility by appropriating the assets for housing purposes to be held in the Housing Revenue properties to their stock at market value and would improve the properties to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard. However financial viability of the proposal is dependent on the success of applications to Welsh Government for Affordable Housing Grant assistance. In order to achieve funding for both the transfer and improvement costs it is anticipated that the transfer of the properties would be required to be completed by 29 November 2019. The report seeks urgent Cabinet approval for appropriating both properties from the General Fund to the Housing Revenue Account for housing purposes.

Cabinet thanked the Officer for the report and discussion ensued.

It was queried whether additional works would need to be taken at the one property to separate it from the cemetery. Officers explained that this would not be necessary as access arrangements are currently in place.

Members sought reassurance that there would be no negative impact on the current tenants of the properties. Officer assured Members that there would be no detriment to the current tenants and as a result of the transfer to the Housing Revenue Account, any necessary improvements to comply with the Welsh Housing Quality Standard would be undertaken and these properties would be additional assets to the current housing stock.

Following consideration and discussion it was moved and seconded that the recommendation contained in the Officer's report be approved and by a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officers report the appropriation of the tenanted assets known as Cemetery House, Abercarn and 65 Cromwell Road, Risca from Bereavement Services to Housing be agreed, pursuant to S.122 of the Local Government Act 1972 and at an agreed market value.

The meeting closed at 11.05am.

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any corrections made at the meeting held on 11th December 2019.

CHAIR