



## **CABINET**

### **MINUTES OF THE REMOTE MEETING HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON WEDNESDAY, 25TH NOVEMBER 2020 AT 10.30 A.M.**

PRESENT:

Councillor P. Marsden (Leader) - Chair

Councillors:

S. Cook (Social Care), N. George (Waste and Public Protection), S. Morgan (Economy and Enterprise), E. Stenner (Performance and Customer Services) and R. Whiting (Learning and Achievement).

Together with:

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

Also in Attendance:

A. Dallimore (Regeneration Services Manager), T. Broadhurst (Estates Manager), P. Cooke (Senior Policy Officer), P. Griffiths (Green Space Strategy and Cemeteries Manager), S. Harris (Head of Corporate Finance and Section 151 Officer), R. Hartshorn (Head of Public Protection, Community and Leisure Services), K. Peters (Corporate Policy Manager), P. Rossiter (Energy and Water Officer), R. Tranter (Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer), C. Evans (Committee Services Officer).

#### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C.J. Gordon (Corporate Services), L. Phipps (Housing and Property), J. Ridgewell (Environment and Infrastructure) and R. Edmunds (Corporate Director – Education and Corporate Services).

#### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations made at the beginning or during the course of the meeting.

#### **3. CABINET – 11TH NOVEMBER 2020**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 11th November 2020 were approved as a correct record.

#### **4. CABINET FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – TO NOTE**

Cabinet were provided with the Cabinet Forward Work Programme, which detailed the scheduled reports from 25th November 2020 to 16th December 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.

## **5. CAERPHILLY GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY**

The report, which was considered by the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee held on 1st October 2020, sought the approval of Cabinet on the adoption of a Caerphilly Green Infrastructure Strategy. The draft Strategy, which was appended to the Officers report summarised the content and methodologies contained within the Strategy.

The report described the need for a Green Infrastructure Strategy for the county borough and the methodology used to prepare the Strategy. Each step in the process was outlined and concluded with a template for the preparation of a 5-year integrated action plan. The value of the Strategy lies in the data sets that underpin it as these allow for more informed and targeted actions that will increase the value of and contribution that green space makes within the County Borough.

It was noted that the Strategy has not been developed in isolation and provides a good fit with other developing environmental strategies of neighbouring authorities and other public sector bodies, notably Natural Resources Wales (NRW). As such a recommendation was made that the Strategy be approved as the core Green Space development and management tool for CCBC.

Cabinet thanked the Officer for the report and discussion ensued.

It was noted that, as a result of the ongoing pandemic, residents have been utilising the greenspaces of the borough more frequently, therefore it is imperative that a flexible strategy is embraced, and greenspaces protected.

A Cabinet Member queried the partnership working between Caerphilly CBC and bordering Local Authorities in respect of their Greenspace Strategies. Officers explained that there are strategies in place in each of the bordering local authorities, some of which have taken up the England model, the same as Caerphilly and others the NRW model, all of which however have the same goal and therefore can be conducive to partnership working and makes the approach more streamlined and seamless.

A Cabinet Member sought further information on the wildflower growth, which increased and was encouraged during early lockdown in many areas which encouraged pollination and bee population. Officers explained that as part of the Gwent Green Grid, there is a zone system proposed in areas across the borough which will include zones for which frequent grass cutting will take place, zones where no cutting will be undertaken in order to increase wild flower growth and a combination approach in another zone area.

The Chief Executive wished it noted that there are significant green assets within the County Borough, including some country parks, farmland and common land, many of which were greatly utilised during the pandemic and demonstrated significant health benefits both physically and mentally for users. In addition, these greenspaces offer other benefits for example, social, economical and environmental, contributing towards the community and investment strategy, and having commercial benefits. As a result, funding can be identified as part of the City Deal programme, and Valleys Task Force to improve and maintain this unique asset.

The Interim Director for Communities wished it noted that correspondence had been received from NRW, highlighting the possible re-opening of Cwmcarn Forest Drive in the Spring, which will further benefit the outdoor asset portfolio and the borough.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation in the report be approved. By way of electronic voting this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officers Report that the Caerphilly Green Infrastructure Strategy, as appended to the report be approved and used as the core guidance document for Green Space development and management within the county borough.

## **6. REDUCE, PRODUCE, OFFSET, BUY (A DECARBONISATION STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN FOR CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL)**

The report, which was presented to the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee on 13th October 2020 and Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee on 27th October 2020, provided an update on the work undertaken since 11th June 2019, when a report was presented outlining the Council's intention to develop a carbon reduction plan that would concentrate on tackling the decarbonisation agenda in order that the Council can achieve its goal of becoming net carbon neutral by 2030.

It was noted that since June 2019, Officers have produced a draft Decarbonisation Strategy as the main tool to achieve its decarbonisation objectives. This strategy is supported by a detailed Action Plan which gives more granular detail on what actions the Council can take in the short, medium and long term to achieve this goal. It also presents an Energy Prospectus which outlines potential commercial projects that will also help towards goals. The report outlined the proposed timeline and milestones towards the adoption/approval of a Council focused Decarbonisation Strategy.

Cabinet noted that in 2019, the Environment and Sustainability scrutiny committee and Cabinet were presented with a report outlining the progress made in respect of energy conservation and carbon reduction, predominantly through the Council's Carbon Reduction Strategy 2009- 2019. It also highlighted the need for a new overarching plan to assist the Council to meet its "Green energy" ambitions whilst also aligning the authority with Welsh Government's and the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) aspirations for decarbonisation.

Since this date, officers have undertaken consultation with a number of stakeholders to develop a draft Decarbonisation Strategy to drive the Council's decarbonisation agenda and ensure that the Council meets its key ambition of becoming net carbon neutral by the year 2030 and the Council has declared a climate emergency.

The strategy has been finalised in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. At the time of writing, the true economic and societal costs for the county borough are unknown. However, as we move from the immediate emergency response to considering our options for economic recovery, the energy strategy has the potential to play a significant role in helping Caerphilly county borough recover and rebuild sustainably.

Cabinet thanked the Officer for the report and discussion ensued.

The Leader wished to include in the recommendation v) of the report that recommendations be made to Cabinet and Scrutiny Committees where necessary.

A Cabinet Member, in noting the detail of the report, sought further information around the lighting of Leisure Centres and Car Parks. Officers explained that this is an area that is currently under review, and where possible, lighting has been switched off in line with the local street lighting. However, where it is not possible to turn off the lights, for insurance or CCTV purposes, a programme is in place to replace lights for more energy efficient LED lights. It was noted that a detailed programme has been developed and Officers agreed to provide this to Members.

A Cabinet Member requested a brief overview of the projects undertaken over the past few years, which contribute to the reduction of the Council's carbon footprint. Officers explained that significant works have been undertaken over a 10-year period, which has resulted in a 45% reduction in carbon. Projects such as the replacement of lighting to more energy efficient and motion sensor in Penallta House, as well as invest to save projects to replace lighting in Leisure Centres and schools. In addition, training and education programmes have been rolled out. Solar PV's and the introduction of Energy management systems have been introduced across some corporate buildings, which manage the heating of premises.

Following consideration and discussion, and in noting the amendment to recommendation v) it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved. By way of electronic voting this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officer's Report: -

- i) That the views of the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee and Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee, on the draft Decarbonisation Strategy and supporting documents be noted;
- ii) the Decarbonisation Strategy and Action Plan was adopted;
- iii) the wide and diverse range of activities that the Council will need to implement to achieve the Decarbonisation objectives be acknowledged;
- iv) the actions, targets and contents contained within the supporting Action Plan and Energy Prospectus are fluid and will respond to external pressures and opportunities as they occur. In particular, that it will be necessary to react to changing legislation from Welsh Government and Central Government;
- v) it be acknowledged that business cases associated with Energy Prospectus projects will be reviewed by the CCBC Regeneration Project Board with recommendations being made to Scrutiny Committees and Cabinet were required.

## **7. GWENT HEALTHY TRAVEL CHARTER**

The report sought Cabinet consideration for the Gwent Healthy Travel Charter, which has been developed by public sector organisations in Gwent and led by Aneurin Bevan University Board. The Charter follows a model, originally developed in the Cardiff Public Services Board (PSB) area, to encourage staff and visitors to sites to use healthy modes of transport and provide a focus for a consistent approach to sustainable travel.

It was noted that all public sector bodies in Gwent and a number of other publicly funded organisations have been given the opportunity to sign up to the Charter.

The Charter was formally launched during Wales Climate Week, 2nd to 6th November 2020, and Caerphilly CBC indicated their willingness to be part of the launch. The report introduced the Charter more fully to Cabinet to allow consideration of the commitments and targets and how they might apply to the activity of the local authority.

The Charter sets out a number of commitments and four targets for the period 2020- 2023. The timeline is the same as the Caerphilly PSB well-being plan and the Council's Corporate Plan.

Partners across Gwent worked in collaboration to develop the commitments, which cover the following areas:

- Communication and leadership

- Walking, cycling and public transport
- Agile working
- Ultra-low emission vehicles

A baseline survey of staff working in the Gwent region took place in February this year with 669 responses given by Caerphilly employees, out of 4,373 across the region.

The baseline survey was used to set four targets:

- Reduce the proportion of journeys commuting to and from work made by car from 87% to 77%
- Increase the proportion of staff who use public transport to travel to and from work from 3% to 8%.
- Increase the proportion of staff who work from home 1 or more days per week from 14% to 25%
- Increase the proportion of vehicles used during the day which are ultra-low emission from <1% to 5%

The intention is that the survey will be repeated annually to measure progress.

It was noted that Caerphilly CBC has a long commitment to sustainable transport initiatives and staff travel and has already put in place many of the actions set out in the Charter. Most recently Cabinet have committed to providing an electric vehicle charging infrastructure for Council fleet vehicles. Staff work patterns have significantly altered due to the current pandemic with increasing use of teleconferencing, more staff working away from offices and reduced travel to and from meetings. As the targets were developed at the start of this year, they may need to alter to reflect changed working patterns, however this should not prevent the local authority's commitment to the principles of the Charter.

Cabinet thanked the Officer for the report and discussion ensued.

A Cabinet Member, in noting the report sought further information around the plans for promoting the Charter within the Council. Officers explained that the Communications Unit are keen to have an input, providing promotion and methods to raise awareness across the workforce. In addition, a vacant Sustainable Development Policy Officer has recently been appointed, one of whose roles will be the active travel charter, and work will be undertaken to promote Champions among the workforce.

A Cabinet Member sought further information on the use of the Electric Bike, which was donated to Caerphilly from its twinned County Ludwigsburg. Officers explained that the bike is still available as part of the pool bike system, however some of the bikes are currently in use by Countryside. Confirmation has been received from HR that the Cycle to Work Scheme will soon be expanded to cover the purchase of electric bikes by staff.

The Chief Executive added that the Pandemic has changed the way in which we now work and has afforded the opportunity to take forward a number of policies, including Agile Working, all of which make the Council more sustainable and work towards being carbon neutral. It is therefore paramount that these new ways of working and the policies surrounding it are embedded to make this the new 'normal' way of doing things. There has been a significant decrease in the collective mileage travelled as a result of the pandemic due to many staff working from home, and there have been a number of decisions taken at Cabinet, including the introduction of electric vehicles into the fleet, the promotion of electric vehicles for staff, all of which contribute to the overall aim to become carbon neutral.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation in the report be approved. By way of electronic voting this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the officer's report the Gwent Healthy Travel Charter be adopted by Caerphilly County Borough Council and that the local authority supports the commitments and targets.

## **8. DISPOSAL OF LAND AT CRESCENT RD CAR PARK, CAERPHILLY**

The report sought Cabinet approval for the sale of land at Crescent Road car park, Caerphilly to developers in order to facilitate the development of a residential scheme aimed at the over 55's at the derelict Llys Ifor site. The development will include a mixture of one and two bedded flats plus a coach drivers rest/welfare facility and space for retail/restaurant use on the ground floor. The land requested to be released comprises circa 268m<sup>2</sup>.

The report requests Cabinet approval to release council owned land located at the eastern edge of Crescent Rd car park Caerphilly (See Appendix 1), to developers who own adjacent land at Llys Ifor. They require the land to accommodate sufficient car parking to allow the proposed development at Llys Ifor to proceed.

The current owners of the Llys Ifor building wish to demolish it and replace it with a new open market sale older persons housing development. Through discussions with the Council, the developer is prepared to provide a small coach drivers' facility in the new complex and possibly space for an A3 café/retail on the ground floor of the development, facing the castle.

The developer is keen to proceed with this development but require the Council owned land in order to provide the necessary car parking associated with the scheme.

Cabinet thanked the Officer for the report and discussion ensued.

Cabinet were also pleased to note the inclusion of the café and coach driver facilities, which will provide the town centre with much needed facilities in order to further promote tourism to the area.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation in the report be approved. By way of electronic voting this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officer's Report: -

- i) The disposal of land (268m<sup>2</sup>) at the eastern edge of Crescent Rd car park Caerphilly be approved to accommodate the wider re-development of the Llys Ifor building, as outlined at Appendix 1 of the Officers Report;
- ii) It be approved that detailed terms of disposal be delegated to the Head of Property Services and the Head of Regeneration and Planning in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Infrastructure.

The meeting closed at 11.22am.

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any corrections made at the meeting held on 9th December 2020.

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CHAIR