



CABINET

MINUTES OF THE REMOTE MEETING HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON WEDNESDAY, 13TH APRIL 2022 AT 10:30A.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor P. Marsden (Leader) - Chair

Councillors:

N. George (Waste, Public Protection and Street Scene), C. Gordon (Corporate Services), J. Pritchard (Infrastructure and Property), Mrs E. Stenner (Performance, Economy and Enterprise) and R. Whiting (Learning and Leisure).

Together with:

C. Harrhy (Chief Executive), R. Edmunds (Corporate Director Education and Corporate Services) and M.S. Williams (Corporate Director – Economy and Environment).

Also in Attendance:

R. Tranter (Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer), M. Lloyd (Head of Infrastructure), A. West (21st Century Schools, Admissions and Exclusions Manager), S. Richards (Head of Education, Planning and Strategy), G. Roberts (Team Leader, Transport Officer ITU), J. Southcombe (Finance Manager), J. Carpenter (Finance Manager, Revenues), M. James (Principal Valuer), M. Harris (Committee Support Officer/Chauffer) and M. Afzal (Committee Services Officer).

RECORDING AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Leader reminded those present that the meeting was being filmed but would not be live streamed, however a recording would be available following the meeting via the Council's website – [Click Here To View](#). She advised that decisions would be made by Microsoft Forms.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr A. Whitcombe (Sustainability, Planning and Fleet), D. Street (Corporate Director for Social Services and Housing) and S. Harris (Head of Financial Services & S151 Officer).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. CABINET FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – TO NOTE

Cabinet was provided with the Cabinet Forward Work Programme, which detailed the scheduled reports until the 13th of April 2022. 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.

4. WITHDRAWAL FROM CRUMLIN INSTITUTE.

Consideration was given to the report which updated Cabinet on the current position regarding dilapidation costs linked to the termination of the lease for Crumlin Institute. The report also sought Cabinet approval to settle with the landlord with additional costs being funded from the projected underspend in the 2021/22 Education and Lifelong Learning revenue budget.

It was noted that Cabinet had supported a recommendation to progress withdrawal from the lease agreement relating to the Crumlin Institute building at its meeting on the 9th of June 2021. This approval supported the necessary lease withdrawal deadline of 25th June 2021. To support this exit, funding of £195k was earmarked, as due to the terms of the lease the Authority would be liable to undertake dilapidation works or secure a cash settlement arrangement in lieu of the dilapidation work. A surveyor has been engaged to assess the value of the settlement to be agreed with the Landlord to enable Caerphilly CBC to exit the lease agreement and return the building to the Landlord. Following assessment and negotiation between the parties, a sum of £300k was proposed. Cabinet noted that this was an additional cost of £105k to the initial estimate.

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 settlement sum of £300k be approved with the additional cost of £105k being funded from the Education & Lifelong Learning revenue budget projected underspend for 2021/22.

5. WELSH GOVERNMENT COST OF LIVING SUPPORT SCHEME.

Consideration was given to the report which provided Cabinet with details of the Welsh Government Cost of Living Support Scheme and presented proposals for consideration in respect of the discretionary element of the Scheme.

The package of support included £152m to provide a £150 cost of living payment to eligible households and £25m to provide discretionary support for other purposes related to living costs. Cabinet noted that this would put a suite of measures in place to assist residents throughout the borough who were facing a cost-of-living crisis.

The Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer advised that Cabinet Members were not required to declare an interest in relation to the report as the proposals were anticipated to affect majority of council taxpayers within individual wards as well as the County Borough as a whole.

The report was welcomed by Cabinet Members as a way of supporting those struggling with escalating living costs.

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: -

1. The details of the WG Cost of Living Support Scheme be noted.
2. The proposals in the report in respect of the discretionary element of the Scheme be considered and approved.

6. HOME TO SCHOOL/COLLEGE CONTRACTS – CONTRACT VARIATION.

Consideration was given to the report which sought Cabinet approval for additional funds to support the variations of the Council's home to school transport service contracts. The contracts will be varied in accordance with UK Public Contract Regulations and the Council's Standing Orders for Contracts.

Cabinet was advised that the cost of fuel has increased by approximately 25% since the beginning of the new academic year in September 2021. Thus, home to school transport operators have requested an increase to their contract rates due to the increasing costs they are having to pay. It was noted that all other local authorities were looking at increases and the impact of the global market supply chain. In order to maintain a robust supply chain, the Council were working with local operators to meet the challenge that the fuel crisis presents. To ensure there would be no disruption in service for the remainder of the academic year agreement had been sought to vary existing rates to reflect the increase costs being experienced by the transport industry.

The impact of increasing fuel costs on transport operators was recognised by Cabinet Members and to ensure continuation of service provision, it was agreed that the recommendations in the report be approved.

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: -

1. Additional funds to support the necessary contract variations in relation to home to school transport be agreed.
2. A one-off in-year virement of £172k from the RCCO budget in Miscellaneous Finance for 2022-23 be approved.

7. PUBLIC INTEREST TEST.

Members considered the Public Interest Test and concluded that on balance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest 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.

8. 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS BAND B PROPOSAL – UPDATE YSGOL GYMRAEG CWM GWYDDON.

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 recommendations at 3.1 (a) and (b) be approved.

The meeting closed at 10:57A.M.

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any corrections made at the meeting held on 15th June 2022.

CHAIR