



CABINET

MINUTES OF THE MULTI-LOCATIONAL MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON WEDNESDAY, 27TH JULY 2022 AT 1PM

PRESENT:

Councillor S. Morgan – Chair

Councillors:

J. Pritchard (Cabinet Member for Prosperity, Regeneration & Climate Change), C. Andrews (Cabinet for Education & Communities), N. George (Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Property), S. Cook (Cabinet Member for Housing), E. Forehead (Cabinet Member for Social Care), P. Leonard (Cabinet Member for Planning & Public Protection) and C. Morgan (Cabinet Member for Waste, Leisure & Green Spaces), Cllr. J. Simmonds (Cabinet Member for Highways & Transportation).

Together with:

C. Harchy (Chief Executive), D. Street (Corporate Director - Social Services and Housing), M. S. Williams (Corporate Director – Economy and Environment) and R. Edmunds (Corporate Director – Education and Corporate Services).

Also in Attendance:

R. Tranter (Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer), L. Lane (Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer), S. Harris (Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer), K. Cole (Chief Education Officer), S. Mutch (Early Years and Partnerships Manager), R. Hartshorn (Head of Public Protection, Community and Leisure Services), M. James (Interim Estates Manager) and E. Sullivan (Senior Committee Services Officer).

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

An apology for absence was received from Mrs E. Stenner (Cabinet Member Finance & Performance).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

3. CABINET – 13TH JULY 2022

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 13th July 2022 be approved as a correct record.

4. CABINET FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – TO NOTE

Cabinet was provided with the Cabinet Forward Work Programme, which detailed the scheduled reports until 21st September 2022.

Members were reminded that the Cabinet Forward Work Programme is a working document and thus 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.

5. SHARED AMBITIONS STRATEGY 2019-2022

Consideration was given to the report which sought to update Cabinet on the outcome of the progress since the Peer Review in 2018. It was noted that the original peer review had been led by Aled Evans together with a team that consisted of three Directors of Education, one Assistant Director and Welsh Local Government Association representatives. The review highlighted the priorities within the draft 'Shared Ambitions Strategy'. Mr Evans was commissioned again to conduct a review of the progress made since January 2019 and this was carried out between November 2021 and February 2022.

Cabinet was referred to the Executive Summary as attached in Appendix 1 of the report and noted that the process had included a documentation review and interviews with stakeholders. The findings from the review had been shared with Head Teachers, Corporate Management Team, Education Scrutiny Committee and Estyn and the actions arising from these discussions would be used to inform future strategic plans.

As the Local Authority prepares for a new 5-year strategy for September 2022, it was felt important to capture the learning from the past 3 years and to reflect on the priorities and action for the next strategic plan.

Members welcomed the review and the acknowledgements contained therein that endorsed that both 'politically and corporately that there was a clear commitment to support the wellbeing of learners and staff, to ensure that every setting develops a learning environment that is inspiring and ambitious to each individual pupil or student, that is inclusive and supports the holistic needs of all learners.'

It was also noted that the review had concluded that 'Caerphilly Education Services are in safe hands' and that this had not been the conclusion of the reviewer but had been very coherently and honestly articulated by all stakeholders interviewed.

The Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services placed on record his thanks to the Leader and Deputy Leader for their support and reflected on the commitment of all those that had worked so tirelessly throughout the pandemic to maintain learning and to support the needs of all learners and staff. He advised Cabinet of the next steps and the work underway on the next strategy, which would be presented to Scrutiny in September with a final draft to Cabinet in the Autumn Term to continue the good works detailed within the review.

Cabinet placed on record all those who had worked so hard on the strategy, had contributed to the review process, and been so dedicated throughout the pandemic.

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 attached document (Appendix 1) be reviewed, and the information contain within it be discussed, challenged and scrutinised.

6. CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT REPORT 2022-27

Consideration was given to the report which sought Cabinet approval to submit the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2022-2027 to Welsh Government.

Cabinet noted that the Childcare Act 2000 (Local Authority Assessment) (Wales) Regulations requires Local Authorities to prepare assessments of the sufficiency of childcare provision in their area and to keep these under review. It was noted that data had been collected over the Summer and Autumn in 2021 and analysed to write the assessment. The assessment report was subject to a 28-day public consultation and is required to be submitted to Welsh Government by September 22.

Reference was made to section 2.8 of the report and the need for an increased workforce and clarification sought as to any significant difficulties in recruiting to these posts and what training was being made available. Officers confirmed that like other areas, since the pandemic, the childcare sector were experiencing difficulties in the recruitment and retention of staff. Cabinet noted the 2 issues having the biggest impact were salary scales against the level of responsibility for the role. The Officer confirmed that private childcare sector providers were likely to pay minimum wage and with every sector recruiting made it a very competitive job market, with a choice of roles that often came with better remuneration and less responsibility.

The Officer confirmed that a lot of funding was being directed into childcare training and the local authority were working closely with Welsh Government on training opportunities. Investment in apprenticeship schemes and careers fairs were being utilised to highlight childcare as a career path.

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 submission of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2022-2027 to Welsh Government and its publication on the Council's website be approved.

7. PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF A MULTI-FUNCTIONAL CADET AND SPORTS PAVILION AT MORGAN JONES PARK, CAERPHILLY

Consideration was given to the report which sought Cabinet's views on a joint project with the Ministry of Defence (MOD) to construct multi-functional cadet and sports pavilion at Morgan Jones Park, Caerphilly and seek Cabinet approval for a capital funding contribution of £258K for support the delivery of the joint venture with the MOD.

Cabinet noted that currently the Caerphilly squadron of the RAF Air Cadets were based in a building within the curtilage of Morgan Jones Park, the building is leased from the Council and is due for renewal. However, the Ministry of Defence had approached the Council in relation to options for this site as the current building is no longer fit for purpose. Similarly, the Army Cadets hut located within an equally small plot is poorly situated and is also in a poor condition, given the costs involved in replacing both huts the provision of a new facility in partnership with the MOD would create a resource that meets both the needs of the Council and the MOD. The new facility would offer wider community use as well as the creation of a new RAF and Army Cadet Hall and Bowls Pavilion.

Members referred to the consultation section of the report and that the comments of the Bowls Club etc. were not specifically referenced within this section.

Cabinet was reassured although not detailed specifically Local Ward Members and the Bowls Club had been consulted on the proposals and were supportive of the project.

Cabinet welcomed the proposal and expressed how good it was to see a co-operative venture such as this come forward, not only for sustainability reasons but also the opportunities it would offer for wider community use.

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 joint project with the MOD to deliver a Multi-Functional Cadet and Sport Pavilion at Morgan Jones Park, Caerphilly be approved.
- 2) A capital funding contribution of £258K including VAT (this being the Council's contribution) to support the delivery of this joint venture with the MOD be approved.
- 3) £258K be allocated from the Corporate Capital Reserve, if no external funding can be secured.
- 4) Officers be given authorisation to negotiate the terms of the management of the facility with the MOD in relation to how the building will be operated and managed going forward and the finer detail such as rent, utility costs.

8. ADDITIONAL FEE INCREASE FOR SMALL RESIDENTIAL HOME PROVIDERS FOR 2022/23

Consideration was given to the report which sought Cabinet approval to increase the 5% uplift in fees agreed for 2022/23 to 10% for the providers of small home residential services in the Caerphilly Borough.

Cabinet noted that at the time of the award it was felt that at a 5% increase on their fees would suffice, however since the award the providers of these services had made representations that the 5% increase was not sufficient to address the cost increases faced by the social care sector or pay their staff the Real Living Wage as requested by Welsh Government. The proposed increase would ensure that the stability of this sector of care and ensure that support for vulnerable residents is maintained as well as helping to retain the necessary staff within the sector.

The Corporate Director for Social Services updated Cabinet on the fragility of the smaller care home provider sector and explained that the additional 5% would provide stability to the sector to the end of this financial year, without this additional help many would be unable to continue

to operate and this would have a significant impact of the lives of vulnerable adults and children.

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 financial pressures facing small residential home providers at the present be acknowledged and a fee increase of 10% with effect from April 2022 instead of the 5% increase previously agreed be approved.
- 2) A further £310,000 be allocated from the social care growth funding held within the Corporate Finance budget to fund the impact of the additional fee uplift.

9. EXTERNALLY COMMISSIONED DOMICILIARY CARE.

Cabinet noted that this report was being considered as an urgent item and as such would not be subject to call-in.

Consideration was given to the report which sought Cabinet agreement to provide additional time limited funding support to the externally commissioned domiciliary care market providers, due to the recruitment and retention pressures they are facing linked to the cost-of-living crisis and in particular the current impact of increasing fuel prices.

Cabinet was updated on the current crisis in the social care sector in terms of the authority's ability to commission domiciliary care from the independent sector. The report outlined a regional proposal to try to stabilise the sector over the next six months to help recruit and retain care staff. Members were advised that the national pressures facing the health and care sector were being replicated across the Gwent footprint and across the region Directors of Social Services, Heads of Adult Services and Commissioning Leads had been working proactively to consider a number of immediate and longer-term options to not only to sustain and retain the current workforce but also to encourage new carers to enter the profession.

It was noted that over the past few weeks Providers have once again reported that staff are leaving the sector due to the increased cost of using their vehicles for work leaving the domiciliary care market in a fragile position. Without sufficient domiciliary care availability and a sustainable care market the Authority would be unable to support its most vulnerable residents and would also be unable to commission new packages of care to support unpaid family carers who may be struggling and expedite rapid discharges for people in hospital adding to the already congested hospital to home pathway. Cabinet was advised that the authority was currently unable to commission 560 care hours per week.

The need to work on a regional footprint was emphasised and Cabinet were assured that the application of the payment would be monitored by commissioners to ensure it reached front line staff and to monitor the impact.

Cabinet acknowledged the impact that the cost-of-living crisis was having across the board and agreed the need to ensure the sustainability of the sector.

Members reflected on the fact that these pressures would also be facing Local Authority Domiciliary Care staff and reassurance was sought that the impact on the Council's own employers was being monitored. Cabinet was referred to section 5.11 of the report which recognised that these pressure did apply equally to in house services and were advised that this would be the subject of a separate report that would present options for Cabinet's consideration.

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 regional proposal to the current staffing crisis in the independent sector care market be agreed and the current commissioned hourly rate to providers be increased by £1 per hour from the 1st August for six months.
- 2) The use of up to £215k of social services reserves to fund the proposed additional £1 per hour for six months be agreed.

10. 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 and paragraph 16 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

11. WITHDRAWN FROM TY PONTGWINDY (UNIT 7 DE CLARA COURT, PONTYGWINDY INDUSTRIAL ESTATE)

Cabinet noted that this report was being considered as an urgent item and as such would not be subject to call-in.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and second 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 recommendation at 3.1 of the report be approved.

The meeting closed at 13.48pm.

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any corrections made at the meeting held on 7th September 2022.

CHAIR