



## **CABINET**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN ON WEDNESDAY, 3RD JUNE 2015 AT 2.00 P.M.**

---

---

#### **PRESENT:**

Councillor K.V. Reynolds - Chair

#### **Councillors:**

Mrs C. Forehead (HR and Governance/Business Manager), D.T. Hardacre (Performance and Asset Management), N. George (Community and Leisure Services), K. James (Regeneration, Planning and Sustainable Development), R. Passmore (Education and Lifelong Learning), D.V. Poole (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing), T.J. Williams (Highways, Transportation and Engineering), R. Woodyatt (Social Services).

#### **Together with:**

N. Scammell (Acting Director of Corporate Services), R. Hartshorn (Head of Public Protection), A. Price (Interim Head of Democratic Services).

#### **Also in Attendance:**

C. Jones (Head of Performance and Property Services), S. Harris (Interim Head of Corporate Finance), A. Main (Acting Benefits Manager), S.M. Kauczok (Committee Services Officer).

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

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Mrs B. Jones (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services), Mr C. Burns (Interim Chief Executive), Mr D. Street (Corporate Director Social Services).

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

Councillor N. George declared an interest in Agenda item 5 – Land adjoining Islwyn Indoor Bowls Centre - in that he is a member of the Executive Committee.

#### **3. CABINET**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 20th May 2015 (minute nos.1-5) be approved and signed as a correct record.

## **MATTERS ON WHICH EXECUTIVE DECISIONS WERE REQUIRED**

### **4. LAND AT TROEDYRHIW, YSTRAD MYNACH**

The report sought approval to dispose of land at Troedyrhiw, Ystrad Mynach, as shown edged black on the plan attached to the report.

Mr J. Pritchard (representing Mr J. Cuthbert AM) had been granted permission by the Leader to address Cabinet in respect of this item. Mr Pritchard outlined the concerns and objections expressed by local residents and local members in relation to the proposal to sell the land, which is used by members of the community for recreational use. Seventy four letters of objection had been received by the Council following advertisement and a petition bearing the signatures of 135 local residents was presented to Council on 22nd April 2014. It was noted that Mr W. David MP for Caerphilly had also submitted concerns on behalf of local residents.

The report outlines the background to the proposal and details the objections received from local residents and local members during the consultation process. Details of the objections received are condensed under the following headings in paragraph 5.8 of the report: The loss of a local play area, highway issues and visual amenity.

In presenting the officer's report, Mr C. Jones, Head of Performance and Property Services, referred to the rationalisation of the Council's land and buildings portfolio in terms of its Medium Term Financial Plan which includes cost saving targets resulting from the disposal of assets. Since the land is considered to be an area of informal open space, any proposal would need to adhere to Policy CW7 on the Protection of Open Space: In summary, it is considered that the release of this site for residential development is acceptable as sufficient open space within the area will remain and the value of the site in recreational and visual amenity terms is not significant. Members' attention was drawn to paragraph 11 which sets out the reasons for the officer's recommendation viz. The land is not required operationally and is regarded as surplus. There is sufficient open space nearby to serve the needs of the community and the sale of the land will produce a capital receipt.

It was noted that whilst the land in question has no allocation within the adopted LDP, it does lie within the settlement boundary which defines the area within which development would normally be acceptable subject to all other material considerations being met and subject to planning permission being granted.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation in the report be approved. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the officer's report, the land be sold on the open market for residential development.

### **5. LAND ADJOINING ISLWYN INDOOR BOWLS CENTRE**

Having declared an interest in this item at the start of the meeting Councillor George left the meeting during its consideration.

The report sought Cabinet's views on the proposal to sell a plot of land adjoining Islwyn Indoor Bowls Centre which is surplus to the Leisure Division's requirements. The land edged black on the plan attached to the report was considered for residential use during the preparation of the LDP but was ruled out at that time as there were aspirations to extend the Bowls Centre. However, during 2013, the Sports and Leisure Services Manager confirmed that there were no plans for expansion and declared the site surplus to requirements.

The Bowls Centre Committee has objected to the sale of the land as they still wish to extend the existing premises in the future. The sale of the land was put on hold while Leisure Officers worked with the Bowls Centre Committee to establish a sustainable proposal and produce a robust business case to support the expansion of the existing facility by developing an outdoor bowling rink adjacent to the Indoor Bowls arena. This work has now been completed. Whilst such a development would be desirable and could help support the Bowls Centre through the summer months, officers consider it to be not viable financially.

Local residents have objected to the proposed sale and based on these representations, ward members have also objected. The main grounds of their objections are set out in paragraph 4.9 of the report and relate to the loss of a safe place for young children to play; the wider community uses the land for informal recreation; loss of an area of natural beauty and a habitat to various species; concerns that access to the new development will be through Dan-y-bryn which will dramatically increase traffic flow. A representative of the Bowls Centre also expressed the concerns of the Club regarding access to the site and noise issues. Officers consider that the majority of the objections are planning matters which would be dealt with at the planning application stage.

In terms of consultation, disposal of public open space requires an advertisement to be placed in a newspaper circulating in the area for two consecutive weeks (4th and 11th September 2013). Ward members were advised of the proposed sale, notices were posted on site and members of the Bowls Centre Committee were notified of the proposal.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation in the report be approved. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the officer's report, the land be sold on the open market for residential development.

## **6. DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENTS POLICY**

The report was considered by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 2nd June 2015. It was reported to Cabinet that members of the Scrutiny Committee had unanimously endorsed the Policy.

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) are additional short-term payments made towards rent. They are only paid to customers already receiving Housing Benefit who need more help with their housing costs over and above their benefit award. Every Local Authority is required to have a written policy that provides clear guidelines on the assessment of DHP applications.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation in the report be approved. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the officer's report, the draft Discretionary Housing Payments Policy be endorsed.

## **7. CABINET FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The report sought approval of the Cabinet Forward Work Programme for the period June to September 2015. The Forward Work Programme is updated on a monthly basis to reflect any changes that are made to it.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation in the report be approved. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the officer's report, the Cabinet Forward Work Programme for the period June to September 2015, as outlined in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL**

### **8. ANTI POVERTY STRATEGY**

The report, which relates to a proposed Anti Poverty Strategy for the Council, was considered by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 2nd June 2015. The draft Anti Poverty Strategy sets out the Council's position and aims, actions and measures in relation to tackling poverty. It is intended that the Strategy will be reviewed annually and progress reported. It is also proposed that an Anti Poverty Board is established to provide oversight of the Strategy.

It was reported to Cabinet that the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee offered comments on four aspects of the draft Anti Poverty Strategy i.e.

1. The Anti Poverty Strategy must operate within current austerity measures and therefore there is a need to be aware of the consequence of further cuts which may undermine the Strategy.
2. Members highlighted the link between Health and Wellbeing and poverty. Members recognised that some areas were addressed within the Strategy but requested a more specific focus and requested that further consideration be given to existing activities which contribute to this agenda.
3. Members consider that there is a need to target those directly affected with a view to influencing the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation; there is a need to be confident that areas can show improvement.
4. Members requested greater clarity in relation to how successful implementation of the Strategy will be demonstrated.

Cabinet were advised that in response to the views expressed at the Scrutiny Committee it was proposed that a working version of the Anti Poverty Strategy would be developed with an additional column setting out the budget associated with each area in order to allow for more informed consideration of any future potential or actual changes to funding.

Members were also informed that the proposed Anti Poverty Board would be asked to note and address the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee in relation to strengthening links to health and well being activities, influencing the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation and in terms of demonstrating progress against the Anti Poverty Strategy.

Cabinet supported the comments of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee and requested that the lead service for each action also be identified in a working version of the Anti Poverty Strategy for the proposed Anti Poverty Board. Cabinet also requested the inclusion of an additional performance measure in relation to improving the performance of those pupils in receipt of Free School Meals to include Key Stage 4 (GCSE).

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation in the report be approved. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RECOMMENDED that for the reasons contained in the officer's report, the proposed Caerphilly County Borough Council Anti Poverty Strategy be endorsed and referred to Council for approval.

**9. CORPORATE PLAN AND IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVES 2015/16**

The Local Government Measure 2009 requires all local authorities in Wales to set and publish Improvement Objectives. Additionally in June 2014 the Council published a Corporate Plan which detailed its longer term priorities and aspirations and this plan, duly reviewed will be the vehicle for publishing the Improvement Objectives for 2015/16.

The Council is required to set or review its Improvement Objectives annually to ensure they remain relevant and current. The report details the outcome of this process and identifies the recommended set of Priorities and Improvement Objectives for 2015/16.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation in the report be approved. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RECOMMENDED that for the reasons contained in the officer's report, the draft Corporate Plan that details the Improvement Objectives for 2015/16, be endorsed and referred to Council for approval.

The meeting closed at 2.56 pm.

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any corrections made at the meeting held on 17th June 2015.

---

CHAIR