



COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON 9TH JUNE 2015 AT 5.00 PM

PRESENT:

Councillor L. Gardiner - Mayor
Councillor Mrs D. Price - Deputy Mayor

Councillors:

Miss L. Ackerman, Mrs E.M. Aldworth, H.A. Andrews, Mrs K.R. Baker, Mrs G. Bevan, J. Bevan, P.J. Bevan, L. Binding, D. Bolter, D.G. Carter, Mrs P. Cook, C.J. Cuss, H.W. David, W. David, H.R. Davies, D.T. Davies, N. Dix, C. Elsbury, Mrs C. Forehead, Miss E. Forehead, J.E. Fussell, Ms J. Gale, N. George, C.J. Gordon, R.W. Gough, Mrs P. Griffiths, D.T. Hardacre, D. Havard, C. Hawker, G.J. Hughes, K. James, M.P. James, Ms J.G. Jones, S. Kent, G. Kirby, Ms P. Leonard, A. Lewis, C.P. Mann, S. Morgan, Mrs G. Oliver, D.V. Poole, D.W.R. Preece, M.J. Prew, J. Pritchard, D. Rees, K.V. Reynolds, J.E. Roberts, R. Saralis, Mrs M.E. Sargent, Mrs E. Stenner, Mrs J. Summers, J. Taylor, L.G. Whittle, T.J. Williams, R. Woodyatt

Together with:-

C. Burns (Interim Chief Executive), N. Scammell (Acting Director of Corporate Services and Section 151 Officer), D. Street (Corporate Director of Social Services), G. Williams (Interim Head of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer), G. Hardacre (Head of Workforce and Organisational Development), R. Hartshorn (Head of Public Protection), C. Jones (Head of Performance and Policy), A. Price (Interim Deputy Monitoring Officer), C. Evans (Committee Services Officer) and R. Barrett (Committee Services Officer)

Also present:-

Mr I. Johnston (Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent), Mrs S. Bosson (Chief Executive, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent)

1. WEB-CASTING FILMING AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Interim Chief Executive reminded those present that the meeting was being filmed and would be made publicly available in live and archive form via the Council's website. He advised that decisions would be made by a show of hands.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A.P. Angel, Mrs A. Blackman, C. Durham, A.G. Higgs, G. Johnston, Mrs B.A. Jones, K. Lloyd, Mrs R. Passmore, J.A. Pritchard, A. Rees and S. Skivens.

3. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor referred to the many events and visits that he and the Deputy Mayor have undertaken since the last meeting and personally thanked Council staff for their hard work and the welcome they had given to visitors of the recent National Urdd Eisteddfod 2015. Reference was also made to work undertaken by Council staff at the recent Senghenydd Mining Memorial Service.

The Mayor referred to the recent event to commemorate the rededication of the Aberbargoed War Memorial and congratulated all those involved in this event. Members were also informed of the success of the recent 'Go Wild!' event held at Panside Community Woodland Park.

Members were reminded that the launch of the Mayor's charity appeal (Ty Hafan Children's Hospice and MacMillan Nurses) would be held on Wednesday 1st July 2015 in Penallta House and he encouraged everyone to attend.

4. GARETH HARDACRE – HEAD OF WORKFORCE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Interim Chief Executive announced that Gareth Hardacre, Head of Workforce and Organisational Development, would shortly be leaving the Authority to take up a senior position within Cwm Taf University Health Board as the Assistant Director of Workforce. The Interim Chief Executive and Members referred to the high esteem in which Mr Hardacre was held by Members and Officers alike and paid tribute to his accomplishments over the last twelve years. They referred to Mr Hardacre's contribution to the Authority and to the professional way in which he had dealt with a number of difficult matters, and he was wished well in his future endeavours.

5. PETITION – NOISE LEVELS AND PARKING ISSUES, CCBC CENTRE FOR SPORTING EXCELLENCE

The Mayor received a petition presented by Councillor M. James on behalf of local residents of Ystrad Mynach, which requested that the noise levels and parking issues within Ynysglyn Street, Edward Street and Main Road arising from the CCBC Centre for Sporting Excellence be addressed. The Mayor indicated that it would be referred to the appropriate directorate for attention.

6. PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

Welsh Local Government Association Charter for Member Support and Development

Members were informed that Caerphilly Council has once again been awarded the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) Charter for Member Support and Development.

The criteria for Charter status has increased over the years and the Council had very positive feedback from WLGA in relation to this year's submission. The Charter status acknowledges the comprehensive arrangements put in place to support Members in their various roles and the quality training and development opportunities available to them.

Emma Sullivan (Democratic Services Officer) and Joy Thomas (Mayor's Assistant) came forward to receive the award from the Mayor. Members wished to place on record their appreciation to those involved with achieving the award.

National School Chef of the Year Award

Members were informed that Kate Davies, the primary school cook at St. Gwladys School in Bargoed, had recently won the prestigious title of National School Chef of the Year.

To win this accolade, she had to prepare a two-course meal in an hour and a half. The meal was based on a 'street food' theme and included dishes such as Fire Cracker Chicken Curry, Cauliflower Pilau Rice and Mango Yoghurt Lassi served with Coco Bombs, and was achieved on a budget of £1.60. It was noted that the standard of competition was as high as the 'Masterchef' final and Members were very pleased with Kate's achievement.

Kate Davies came forward to receive the award from the Mayor and Members congratulated her on her achievement.

7. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

During the course of the meeting, a query was received in respect of a declaration of interest relating to Agenda Item No. 8 (Corporate Improvement Plan - Improvement Objectives 2015/16). Details are minuted with the respective item.

It was noted that with regards to Agenda Item No. 9 (Contract Arrangements of Interim Chief Executive), a number of Officers would be required to declare an interest and leave the meeting. Details are minuted with the respective item.

8. COUNCIL - 21ST APRIL 2015 AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF COUNCIL – 14TH MAY 2015

With regards to the minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Council on 14th May 2015, it was noted that Councillor J. Taylor had been recorded as being in attendance but had given his apologies, and that the appointment of the two Deputy Leaders of Council had not been itemised (Councillors Mrs B. Jones and D.V. Poole) within minute no. 13 (Membership of Cabinet).

Subject to the above amendments, it was

RESOLVED that the following minutes be approved as correct records and signed by the Mayor.

Council held on 21st April 2015 (minute nos. 1 - 15) and Annual General Meeting of Council held on 14th May 2015 (minute nos. 1 - 21).

9. PRESENTATION – POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR GWENT

Mr Ian Johnston, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent, was welcomed to the meeting to provide an update in respect of his role and his work with Gwent Police.

Mr Johnston opened his presentation by referring to the last question and answer session that he had held with Members and summarised the main discussion points arising from that seminar in December 2013. He referred to issues surrounding public confidence in regards to the reporting of crime and explained that this feedback had been extremely useful to Gwent Police. The closure of police stations had been a matter of extended debate, together with the use of mobile police stations. Discussion had taken place regarding police attendance at PACT meetings, together with the issue of attendance at community/town council meetings. Some Members had raised concerns regarding a lack of interaction with local police sergeants, although the Commissioner had also noted positive comments from several local

ward members in this respect. The Commissioner had received comments from Members in respect of improvements needed to the 101 service, and discussion had also taken place regarding a proposed All Wales Police Force and the retention of the OWL system.

The Commissioner outlined how the issues relayed by Members had been addressed by Gwent Police. He explained that the focus was now very much centred on victim support and providing a service to those in need. He acknowledged the difficulties faced in changing the police culture and explained that a new working model has been implemented within Gwent Police. The new model contains a definitive change of focus and operation style, which involved moving away from the previous focus of recording crime statistics, and is centred around localism, ownership and an increased connection with local communities.

Members were informed that as part of the new working model, Gwent Police would be recruiting a number of new police constables. The Commissioner explained that a management restructure is being introduced which would reduce the number of senior police staff but would be complemented by an increased police presence on the streets. A number of centralised units have also been streamlined, including the domestic abuse department at the contact centre. Members were advised that Gwent Police considered domestic violence to be a priority issue and that streamlining the department would result in it becoming more efficient and accessible to those people in need.

Mr Johnston referred to the Gwent Police budget and explained that the new constables would be funded via the reorganisation of existing staff, which would involve a number of police staff and community support officers moving across the force to take up a new role as police constables. Mr Johnston also referred to the challenges that lay ahead in respect of the budget in future years.

Reference was made to positive achievements in a number of areas, including the success of the Strategic Commissioning Board. This has been set up to provide strategic direction to the strategy for commissioning in a number of areas and is comprised of representatives from a number of key organisations across the Gwent area. Mr Johnston also referred to his Positive Futures project which is led by Newport City Council and offers young people fresh and engaging opportunities to become involved in sporting activities which helps them develop life skills and achieve their potential. Mr Johnston outlined plans to expand the project across the Gwent area, and he referred to the support that had been received from Caerphilly Council regarding this project. He also thanked Officers from the Community Safety Department for their work regarding crime prevention and early intervention practices.

Members were informed of a new initiative called Safer Gwent, which will address community safety issues across the whole of the Gwent area and replace existing Community Safer Partnerships. Mr Johnston advised Members of the huge potential of this new initiative. Reference was made to the success of the Commissioner's Partnership Fund, which assists organisations involved in activities that reduce crime or anti-social behaviour or divert people away from related activity, with Caerphilly Council a key recipient in respect of recent funding. The Commissioner also acknowledged the involvement of the Gwent Police and Crime Panel in respect of this Fund.

In closing, Mr Johnston thanked the county borough for granting the use of Penallta House for meetings and conferences and for the warm welcome that is consistently afforded to Gwent Police and the Commissioner's Office on these occasions.

Detailed discussion of the Commissioner's report ensued and a query was raised in respect of dispersal orders. Mr Johnston confirmed that it was his intention, via the new operating model, to utilise them more frequently across the Gwent area. He responded to comments regarding illegal parking and encouraged Members to report any issues to their local Inspector in the first instance and to himself if these were not subsequently resolved. Mr Johnston outlined the processes that would be undertaken to recruit 20 new police officers, including the transfer of existing staff to fill these roles and the costs involved, and also explained how a

number of staff in centralised units would be redeployed to other areas across Gwent.

Discussion took place regarding PACT meetings and the Commissioner outlined his plans for improved engagement between the local community, community support officers and police representatives, together with his expectation that issues would subsequently be resolved in a more productive manner. He encouraged Members to hold local Sergeants and Inspectors accountable at these meetings in respect of improvements for key local issues. Members were pleased to note the news of these proposals, and the Commissioner received a number of positive comments in respect of police attendance at PACT meetings and the work of PCSOs in local wards. A comment was also received in respect of the 'Your Voice' system and the Commissioner asked for Members to inform him if this system was not evident within their local ward, as there was now an agreement in place for senior police officers to attend a required minimum amount of PACT meetings.

A Member made reference to Blackwood Crime and Prevention Panel and the work it carried out with the OWL service, and queried the sources of funding available to the Panel. The Commissioner encouraged the Panel to apply for additional funding from his Office if they could demonstrate a need for it in respect of effective crime prevention initiatives.

Reference was made to the 101 service and the Commissioner outlined his plans for improvements in this area, including the implementation of a new STORM system, with the intention that this will lead to increased public confidence regarding the reporting of crime. Members were encouraged to provide feedback on this new system.

A query was raised regarding the recruitment of new police cadets and Mr Johnston outlined a new initiative located within two comprehensive schools in the area, which would increase the number of recruits and incorporate a new training style. Mr Johnston also responded to a query regarding speeding initiatives and outlined the measures undertaken by Gwent Police in respect of road safety issues.

Members then thanked the Commissioner for his in-depth presentation and responses to questions and commented on the excellent working relationship between Caerphilly Council, the Commissioner's Office and Gwent Police. Reference was made to the recent successful launch of the Victims' Hub, which will have a beneficial effect across the county borough and also to Mr Johnston's contribution to the work of the Caerphilly Local Service Board. Members were pleased that the feedback from the last meeting had been of use to the Commissioner, and hoped that the comments received at Council would continue to assist in the effective policing of Caerphilly County Borough.

The Mayor thanked the Police and Crime Commissioner for his attendance and valued contribution to the meeting and Mr Johnston, together with his Chief Executive, Mrs Shelley Bosson, left the meeting at this point.

REPORTS REFERRED FROM CABINET

Consideration was given to the following reports referred from Cabinet.

10. ANTI POVERTY STRATEGY

The report was presented to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 2nd June 2015 and thereafter Cabinet on 3rd June 2015. Subject to the inclusion of additional information within the Anti Poverty Strategy arising from Members' comments during consideration of the report, the recommendations therein were unanimously endorsed at both meetings.

The report sought Members' approval of a proposed Anti Poverty Strategy within Caerphilly County Borough Council. The Council delivers a significant programme of work that contributes to tackling poverty. However, there are still individuals and households living in poverty and an Anti Poverty Strategy has therefore been developed to set out the Council's position, aims, actions and measures in relation to tackling poverty and to bring together that activity at a high level.

The draft Strategy has been the subject of consultation and a final draft version, together with consultation comments, was appended to the report for Members' views and approval. It is intended that the Strategy will be reviewed annually and progress reported to Members. It is also proposed that an Anti Poverty Board be 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, which were detailed within a covering report tabled at Council. These comments included a need for the Anti Poverty Strategy to operate within austerity measures and have regard to the consequence of further cuts which may undermine the strategy; a need for a more specific focus on the link between Health and Wellbeing and poverty; a need to target those directly affected with a view to influencing the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation and demonstrate improvement in these areas; and a need for greater clarity in relation to how successful implementation of the Strategy will be implemented.

Cabinet Members were advised that in response to the view of 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 in funding. Cabinet 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) and this has now been included within the draft Strategy.

During the course of the ensuing discussion, Members congratulated Councillor Elaine Forehead on her appointment as the Member Anti Poverty Champion, and were pleased to note that the views of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee regarding the Strategy had been taken into consideration.

Subject to the foregoing, 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 report, the Caerphilly County Borough Council Anti Poverty Strategy be endorsed.

11. CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT PLAN – IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVES 2015/16

During the course of the discussion arising from this item, Councillor D. Bolter queried whether he was required to declare an interest in that he is a Council tenant. The Interim Monitoring Officer confirmed that there was a specific exemption within the Members' Code of Conduct relating to this matter and thus there was no need for Members to declare an interest on that basis.

The Local Government Measure 2009 requires all local authorities in Wales to set and publish a set of priorities called Improvement Objectives. The Wales Audit Office will use these to evaluate the Council's likelihood of improvement and following that, the level of actual improvement that is achieved for the citizens of Caerphilly. Additionally, in 2014, the Council published a Corporate Plan which detailed its longer term priorities and aspirations, with this plan the vehicle for publishing the Improvement Objectives for 2015/16.

The Council is required to set or review its Improvement Objectives to ensure they remain relevant and current. The report details the outcome of this process, which included in-depth public consultation, and identifies the recommended set of Priorities and Improvement Objectives for 2015/16. The report was presented to Cabinet on 3rd June 2015 and it was unanimously agreed at that meeting that the draft Corporate Plan that details the Improvement Objectives for 2015/16 (and which was appended to the report) be endorsed and referred to Council for approval.

Members noted that reports would be produced in October 2015 against each of the Improvement Objectives to outline progress in these priority areas, and that this progress will be reported back to the relevant Scrutiny Committee for each Improvement Objective.

During the course of the debate, reference was made to the promotion of good housekeeping measures within corporate buildings and the progress of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) programme of works in relation to two of the Improvements Objectives detailed in the report. The Interim Chief Executive confirmed that housekeeping practices across corporate buildings would be examined with a view to implementing improvements (e.g. light switch timers). The Interim Chief Executive also confirmed that there had been some slippage to the WHQS programme across Council housing in 2014/2015 but that a number of new processes were now in place and there had since been a noticeable acceleration in the rate of weekly internal/external works completions.

Reference was made to the Council's Medium Term Priorities 2013-17 within the Corporate Plan 2015/16, which included a goal to maximise the use of the environment for health benefits in order to promote the benefits of an active and healthy lifestyle. Discussion took place regarding the achievability of this Priority in terms of the amount of land available for school recreational activities.

Reference was made to the link between Improvement Objective 1 (to help people make the best use of their household income and manage their debts) and the Council's Anti Poverty Strategy, and clarification was sought on the support available to those residents experiencing poverty within the private housing sector. Officers outlined the support frameworks and advice services available to residents, including Communities First, Flying Start and the Citizens Advice Bureau. A comment was also received in respect of widening those performance indicator measures relating to poverty against Improvement Objective 1 in future years to include tenants within the private housing sector and enable wider representation of the issue.

Following consideration of the report 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 report, the Corporate Plan that details the Improvement Objectives for 2015/16 be endorsed.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

12. **CONTRACT ARRANGEMENTS OF INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

Chris Burns, Nicole Scammell, Gail Williams and Angharad Price declared an interest and left the meeting during consideration of this item. Dave Street, Corporate Director Social Services, took the Interim Chief Executive's chair for the remainder of the meeting.

Consideration was given to the report which sought approval in respect of the future arrangements of the post of Interim Chief Executive in order to comply with legislative requirements, together with approval of the extension of the interim arrangements for the Director of Corporate Services and the Head of Legal Services/ Monitoring Officer. Council's approval was also sought for a further funding provision to cover the salary costs of the three suspended substantive post holders.

The Council is required by law to have in place a Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service. On 22nd July 2014, Council appointed Mr Chris Burns as Interim Chief Executive to undertake these duties on a fixed term contract ending on 31st August 2015.

As a result of current legal proceedings, it is now clear that interim arrangements will need to continue for a further period of time. A provisional date for the main court hearing has been set for November 2015 but there is always the possibility that this could slip to a later date. The case itself is likely to take 6-8 weeks when it is convened. In order to provide ongoing consistency for the Authority through this difficult period, it was proposed to extend the Interim Chief Executive's contract by a further year to 31st August 2016. The Interim Chief Executive has indicated his agreement to an extension of the contract for a further 12 months, subject to Council approval.

Interim arrangements are also in place in relation to the Director of Corporate Services and the Head of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer and it was agreed by Council on 18th November 2014 that the Interim Chief Executive could extend both these interim arrangements until 31st August 2015 if necessary. Due to the circumstances outlined within the report, Members were also asked to approve the extension of these interim arrangements for the Director of Corporate Services and the Head of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer until 31st August 2016. Members were advised that should the opportunity arise earlier to review these arrangements, then action can be taken to do so.

In respect of financial implications, there is a budget for a Chief Executive post, which will continue to fund the Interim Chief Executive. The salary costs of the three suspended officers are being funded from General Fund reserves. Council were asked to agree the allocation of additional funds from the General Fund balance of £278,000 to cover the salary costs of the three suspended officers to 31st August 2016. There are no additional costs arising from the interim arrangements as these are being met through the existing budgets for the substantive post holders.

Reference was made to the ongoing legal proceedings and it was noted that in consultation with the Chair of the Council's Investigating and Disciplinary Committee, a letter had been sent to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to express the dissatisfaction of Members regarding the ongoing delay to the trial date. A reply had been received from the CPS outlining procedural issues within the legal system as the reason for the delay.

A query was raised in respect of the legal consultation afforded to the report and whether a named Officer should be included in the list of report consultees. The Corporate Director of Social Services assured Members that there had been appropriate legal discussion prior to the report being brought before Council and that the comment would be taken back to the relevant persons to be addressed.

Members expressed concerns regarding the ongoing financial impact to the Council and discussion took place on this matter. It was explained that the three substantive post holders remained on suspension as the Investigating and Disciplinary Committee were unable to

investigate the matter until the legal process was concluded. Reference was also made to the processes regarding the suspended officers. Members were respectfully reminded of the need to refrain from debating this matter in view of the ongoing prosecution and pending disciplinary investigation, and it was suggested that this could be a matter for discussion at a future point in time once the other proceedings are concluded.

It was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved. By a show of hands, this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the report:-

- (i) as outlined in Section 4 of the report, the contract of the Interim Chief Executive, Mr Chris Burns, be extended for a further 12 months to 31st August 2016;
- (ii) a further provision of £278,000 be funded from General Fund balances to cover the anticipated additional costs of the three suspended officers to 31st August 2016;
- (iii) the interim arrangements for the Director of Corporate Services and the Head of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer be extended to 31st August 2016.

13. QUESTIONS UNDER RULE OF PROCEDURE 10(2)

There were no questions submitted under Rule of Procedure 10(2).

The meeting closed at 6.37 pm

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 21st July 2015, they were signed by the Mayor.

MAYOR