



CABINET

MINUTES OF THE MULTI-LOCATIONAL MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON WEDNESDAY 18TH SEPTEMBER 2024 AT 1PM

Councillor S. Morgan – Chair

Councillors:

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

Together with:

D. Street (Deputy Chief Executive), R. Edmunds (Corporate Director of Education and Corporate Services), M.S. Williams (Corporate Director of Economy and Environment) and G. Jenkins (Interim Corporate Director of Social Services).

Also in Attendance:

L. Lane (Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer), S. Harris (Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer), L. Sykes (Deputy Head of Financial Services and Deputy S151 Officer), M. Lloyd (Head of Infrastructure), H. Lancaster (Transformation Manager - Engagement), K. Cole (Chief Education Officer), P. Cooke (Transformation Manager (Lead) – Decarbonisation), B. Winstanley (Head of Land and Property Services), C. Edwards (Environmental Health and Community Safety Manager), N. Kenny (Senior Community Safety Officer), R. Roberts (Business Improvement Manager), K. Peters (Corporate Policy Manager), S. Richards (Head of Education Planning and Strategy and Programme Director), A. West (Place Shaping and Sustainable Communities for Learning Service Manger) and J. Green (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.

Apologies for absence were received from C. Harray (Chief Executive).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

No declarations of interest were received.

3. MINUTES – WEDNESDAY 17TH JULY 2024.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 17th July 2024 be approved as a correct record.

4. MINUTES – WEDNESDAY 25TH JULY 2024.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 25th July 2024 be approved as a correct record.

5. CABINET FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – TO NOTE.

Cabinet was provided with the Cabinet Forward Work Programme, which detailed the scheduled reports until December 2024.

The Deputy Chief Executive assured Members that the Cabinet Forward Work Programme would detail the scheduled reports until the end of March 2025 at the next meeting of the Cabinet.

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.

6. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT END OF YEAR REPORT 2023/24.

Consideration was given to the report which provided Cabinet with the Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA) which is part of the Council's Performance Framework. The CPA provided a summary of information and analysis for the period April 2023 to March 2024. Cabinet noted that the CPA forms part of the overall Council 'self-assessment' activity.

Cabinet further noted that prior to the CPA being submitted for endorsement it was presented to Joint Scrutiny on 18 July 2024 where members were invited to discuss, challenge, and scrutinise the information within the report.

A Cabinet member expressed concerns regarding the recruitment pressures and retention of staff mentioned in the report within Caerphilly Homes and sought further information on measures in place to mitigate the issue.

The Deputy Chief Executive explained that the recruitment issues identified were long-standing and also affected other service areas who are struggling to be competitive.. He explained that whilst the issues could not be resolved immediately, a different approach to recruitment adopted in the Fleet Service recently had been successful. Cabinet was assured that the Authority will continue to build on and improve on the traditional way of recruitment in the hope that this will result in an increase in staff recruitment and retention.

Cabinet was pleased to note that the report detailed 63 separate cases where residents within the Borough had their risk of homelessness prevented by being assisted to remain in an existing accommodation. Further information was sought on what services are provided by the Council to support residents and assist them stay in their own homes.

The Deputy Chief Executive advised Cabinet that within the Council there are a number of services where tenancy support is at the forefront. The Supporting People service is about identifying individual residents' difficulties and providing the support they require. There is a dedicated team within housing who work with residents to maximise their benefits to minimise the risk of them getting into arrears with their rent.

Following consideration and discussion of the report, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms confirmation and verbal vote, this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for reasons contained within the Officers report

1. The comments and challenge of the Council's Corporate Performance Assessment for the period April 2023 to March 2024 from Joint Scrutiny as set out within section 10 be noted.
2. The Corporate Performance Assessment for the period April 2023 to March 2024 as set out in Appendix 1 be endorsed.

7. POST 16, SINGLE SEX AND SURPLUS PLACES BOARD – CONSULTATION REPORT: PROPOSAL TO CLOSE LEWIS GIRLS SCHOOL AND MAKE A REGULATED ALTERATION TO LEWIS SCHOOL PENGAM.

Consideration was given to the report which provided Cabinet with an update in respect of the Post 16, Single Sex and Surplus Places Board recommendation to close Lewis Girls School and make a regulated alteration to Lewis School Pengam to change from single sex to co-education with effect from September 2025.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms confirmation and verbal vote, this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for reasons contained within the Officers report:

1. Consideration was given to the information contained in the Consultation Report.
2. The recommendations to proceed to Statutory Notice in relation to the proposal to close Lewis Girls School and make a regulated alteration to Lewis School Pengam to change from single sex to co-education with effect from September 2025 be approved.

8. INTERIM STRATEGY FOR SERIOUS VIOLENCE PREVENTION FOR GWENT 2024-25.

Consideration was given to the report which provided Cabinet with an update on the introduction of the Serious Violence Duty and the development of the Interim Strategy for Serious Violence Prevention for Gwent 2024-25.

The Senior Community Safety Officer provided Cabinet with a verbal update from the Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee held on 17 September 2024. Cabinet noted that there were no questions or queries raised by the Members regarding the implementation of the strategy. However, there were questions regarding what preventative measures are currently in place for domestic abuse and some clarification around some crime categories.

Cabinet noted that there was only limited funding available from the Home Office for the strategy and sought further clarification on whether the Council was expected to contribute anything financially to it.

The Officer explained that the Home Office has released some funding for three years. However, the Police & Crime Commissioner has taken the lead on the funding and this year has split the funding equally between the five Local Authorities. The Officer advised Cabinet that they are submitting a bid with the intention of putting in place some preventative projects to address knife crime, youth related crime and nighttime economy projects.

The Officer explained that the funding is limited. Therefore, they are looking at ways to work with partners to make the projects sustainable over the coming years.

Cabinet sought clarification on the processes in place to develop data gathering and analysis. The Officer explained that the Regional Working Group are looking at ways to improve data gathering in the coming months. There have been large gaps identified in the VAWDASV data for domestic abuse. Therefore, there is an independent strategic assessment currently taking place for the data to be fed into the serious violence strategy next year. The Council is also looking at working closer with partners with the Police, Health Board, neighbouring Local Authorities and the Area Planning Board.

Following consideration and discussion of the report, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms confirmation, this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for reasons contained within the Officers report:

1. Consideration was given to the Interim Strategy for Serious Violence Prevention for Gwent 2024-25 and the views of Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee which were presented verbally.
2. The Interim Strategy for Serious Violence Prevention for Gwent 2024-25 be approved.

9. WHOLE-AUTHORITY REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT (PERIOD 3).

Consideration was given to the report which provided Cabinet with details of projected whole-authority revenue budget expenditure for the 2024/25 financial year as at 30 June 2024.

The Deputy Chief Executive addressed Cabinet to state that the projected overspend, at this point in the financial year, is an unprecedented situation for the Council, and it should not be underestimated.

The Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer assured Cabinet that Caerphilly is not the only Local Authority in this position.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms confirmation, this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for reasons contained within the Officers report the content be noted.

10. DRAFT WASTE STRATEGY AND FEEDBACK FROM 12-WEEK PUBLIC CONSULTATION.

Consideration was given to the report which provided Cabinet with an update on key findings from the 12-week public consultation on the council's draft waste strategy.

The Corporate Director for Economy and Environment provided Cabinet with a verbal update stating that since preparing the report the Council has received final written approval for funding from Welsh Government.

Cabinet sought clarification on the revenue implications of borrowing £26 Million pounds. The Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer advised Cabinet that if this does not happen there will be risks of fines to the Council.

Cabinet placed on record their thanks to officers involved in the fantastic consultation.

The Transformation Manager for Engagement addressed Cabinet and provided an update on the key messages received from residents through the consultation. On the whole residents understood and were on board with the reasons behind the strategic objectives. However, a frequent concern that was raised was in relation to the frequency of collections and how this would impact the environment that they lived. This created a separate much broader piece of work which was endorsed by the Cross-Party Working Group and then by the Joint Scrutiny Committee.

Following consideration and discussion of the report, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms confirmation, this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for reasons contained within the Officers report:

1. Consideration was given to the key findings from the 12-week public consultation on the council's draft waste strategy and subsequent comments from the cross-party member working group and Joint Scrutiny Committee. This included some initial operational recommendations – described in detail at 5.9 of the report - to help mitigate the public impact of some of the proposals.
2. The proposed final draft of the waste strategy and OBC be approved.
3. The update on the OBC also outlined in the financial implications section (section 8 of this report) which set out a total capital requirement of £54.804m and Welsh Government's approval in principle of funding support for £27.559m plus additional funding (amount to be confirmed) to support the Council's transition to ultra-low emission and electric vehicles be noted.
4. A recommendation to Council that the Council's total capital requirement of £24.868m should be funded through borrowing, £0.636m of which would be required in 2024/25 be endorsed.
5. Prior to Council consideration, the proposed purchase of the mid valley site that has been identified as the preferred option and the proposal to delegate the negotiation and completion of the acquisition to the Head of Land and Property in consultation with the Corporate Director for Economy and Environment and relevant Cabinet member be endorsed.
6. Any in year Waste Service revenue underspends are ringfenced to smooth revenue operation variations as the strategy is implemented over the next five years be approved

11. CAPITAL OUTTURN 2023/24.

Consideration was given to the report which provided Cabinet with details of actual capital expenditure for the 2023/24 financial year and slippage that has been requested to be carried forward into 2024/25.

Following a query raised, the Head of Financial Services and Section S151 Officer, advised Cabinet that future capital budget monitoring reports would set out a three-year timeline of financial commitments, and will highlight which years the funds will be committed to spending in each area.

Following consideration and discussion of the report, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms confirmation, this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for reasons contained within the Officers report the content be noted.

12. TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND CAPITAL FINANCING PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS OUTTURN REPORT FOR 2023/24.

Consideration was given to the report which provided Cabinet with details of Treasury Management activities and Capital Financing, together with the related Prudential Indicators for 2023/24.

Having fully considered the report, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms confirmation, this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for reasons contained within the Officers report the content be noted.

13. PUBLIC INTEREST TEST.

Members considered the Public Interest Test and concluded that on balance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interests 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 12 and 14 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

14. CWM IFOR SOLAR FARM FINAL BUSINESS CASE REPORT.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved and by way of Microsoft Forms confirmation this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for reasons contained with the Officers report recommendations 3.1.1 to 3.1.3 be agreed.

The meeting closed at 1:50 p.m.

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any corrections made at the meeting held on 16th October 2024.

Chair
