

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOMS 1/2/3, CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB ON TUESDAY, 12 APRIL 2016 AT 2.30 PM

Present

Councillor MEJ Nott OBE – Chairperson

HJ David
HM Williams

M Gregory

CE Smith

HJ Townsend

Officers:

Darren Mephram	Chief Executive
Deborah McMillan	Corporate Director Education & Family Support
Susan Cooper	Corporate Director - Social Services & Wellbeing
Andrew Jolley	Corporate Director Operational & Partnership Services
Sarah Daniel	Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Martin Morgans	Group Manager - ICT
Zak Shell	Head of Neighbourhood Services

882. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor P White

883. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of Interest were received from the following Members

Councillor M E J Nott – Personal Interest in Item 4
Councillor H Williams – Personal Interest in Item 4
Councillor H Townsend – Personal Interest in Item 4
Councillor C E Smith – Personal Interest in Item 4

884. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of a meeting of Cabinet held on 15 March 2016 were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

885. TRANSFER OF HOUSING STOCK TO VALLEYS TO COAST (V2C) - UPDATE ON COMPLIANCE OF TERMS OF DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT AND TENANT OFFER DOCUMENT PROMISES

The Chief Executive gave a report to Cabinet on the process of the delivery of the original Offer Document made by the Council in 2002 which led to the positive tenant ballot and subsequent transfer of stock to Valleys to Coast (V2C) in 2003.

The Chief Executive stated that the Council undertook formal consultation on its proposal to transfer all of its homes to V2C by way of an Offer Document to tenants in 2002 'your home, you future, your choice'. There were a number of promises made, from various property improvements to guarantees on rent increases and other charges, the details of which were provided in the report, along with the schedule of qualifying works which summarised the Development Agreement dated the 12 September 2003

The Chief Executive stated that the Offer Document which also included a 5 year rent guarantee for tenants with an indication that rents would not exceed a guideline increase in the second 5 year period had been met. He added that the Offer Document stated that there were to be no further demolitions over those already planned and that, in the early years, V2C would concentrate on repairs and improvements, but may consider building new homes in the future.

The Cabinet Member Childrens Social Services and Equalities was concerned that there was a shortage of homes available in the Bridgend area and since ownership was transferred to V2C there appeared to be more homes demolished than have been built. The Chief Executive stated that V2C would have to have made the investment programme feasible but that he could report back to Members the net impact. The Cabinet Member Resources stated that the right to buy process may have also contributed to the reduction in the number of properties in the area available to rent through V2C.

The Deputy Leader stated that whilst we have not seen the increase we would like in the housing stock we should reflect on the achievements. He added that the housing stock was in poor condition when BCBC were the landlords and that the investment programme has seen a big improvement with new windows, kitchens and bathrooms being installed in properties bringing them up to the higher standards that were necessary to make for comfortable living.

The Cabinet Member Regeneration and Economic Development stated that it was realistic that the refurbishment would continue in the immediate future and stated that new builds were a small part of the programme. He added that the investment had brought many properties into a state where they could now be mortgaged if required.

The Cabinet Member Communities stated that V2C had spent the last 10 years refurbishing the housing stock. He added there were ambitious plans to increase the housing stock which we could expect to see happen within the next 10 years.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

1. Noted the achievements of V2C in delivering improvements to the housing stock since 2003; and
2. Confirmed that, in all material respects, the transfer process promises made to tenants by the Council had been met and in some cases exceeded.

886. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY 2016-2020

The Group Manager ICT provided a report to Cabinet that sought approval for a revised Information and Communications Technology strategy for the period 2016-2020.

He informed Cabinet that the format of the ICT strategy had been significantly changed. The new document aimed to form explicit links with the Corporate Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy. Furthermore, the purpose of the draft strategy was to set out the corporate approach to the delivery of ICT, in a way that was:

- Easily understood by key stakeholders from across the Council and its citizens: and
- Sets a clear approach to address new challenges and opportunities which arise during the strategy.

The Group Manager ICT informed Members that the duration of the strategy had been increased from three years to five. This was deliberately aligned to two key external factors which would influence its future development:

- The need to vacate Sunnyside House at the end of the strategy period as the lease expires. The building currently contains the Council's core ICT infrastructure. It is the Council's key access point to the Public Sector Network and is internally networked with Civic Offices and Ravens Court.
- The need to integrate and align systems with one or more potential partners under Local Government Reorganisation

The Cabinet Member Resources thanked the Group Manager ICT and his team for their hard work in forming the revised strategy; he added that he felt it was important that the Authority keep up with modern technology.

The Deputy Leader stated that the ICT Strategy was critical to the Bridgend Change Programme and critical for the Borough's schools. He added that the strategy recognised the importance of ICT to redesigning and improving services such as cashless catering in schools which reduced the stigma attached to those in receipt of free school meals and also enabled parents to monitor what their children were eating, whilst making a service more efficient and reducing administration and bureaucracy in schools.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet approved the ICT Strategy 2016-20.

887. SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME: OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION ON APPROPRIATION OF LAND FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES AT BETTWS ROAD, BETTWS

The Corporate Director Education and Transformation gave a report to Cabinet to consider the appropriation of land that was currently held for a Leisure Function for educational purposes at Bettws Road, Bettws that forms part of an open space

The Corporate Director Education and Transformation advised that a section 122 (2A) notice was published in the press on two consecutive weeks and copies were placed on site. The notice period commenced on Friday 26 February 2016 and closed on 30 March 2016. She added that no objections were received during the consultation period in respect of the proposed appropriation of land forming an open space for educational purposes.

The Deputy Leader stated that this was a big step forward for Bettws Primary School and the space was very important for the new school. He added that the opening of the new school cannot come quick enough and that the pupils of the school were very excited.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet approved the appropriation of land shown hatched red on the plan in appendix 1 to the report which included land forming part of an open space currently held for a leisure function for educational purposes.

888. AMENDMENT TO THE SCHEME OF DELEGATION OF FUNCTIONS

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report to Cabinet to amend the Scheme of Delegation of Functions in relation to Council Tax.

He advised Cabinet that the Government had combined the investigation teams of the Department for Work and Pensions, HMRC and local authorities into the Single Fraud Investigation Service (SFIS). He added that all matters relating to the investigation of benefit claims, including Housing and Council Tax Benefit were now the sole responsibility of SFIS. However, investigations of potentially fraudulent Council Tax Reduction claims were the responsibility of Councils and they were able to impose financial penalties on those who fraudulently claim or fail to notify changes in their circumstances.

The Monitoring Officer stated that as a result of the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Detection of Fraud and Enforcement) (Wales) Regulations 2013, it was proposed that the following insertion is made to the Scheme of Delegations at Scheme B2 as a function allocated to the Corporate Director Resources:

To take any steps which the Council is empowered to take for the administering of financial penalties in accordance with The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Detection of Fraud and Enforcement) (Wales) Regulations 2013.

It was further proposed that Scheme B2 paragraph 3.3 be amended accordingly:

To recommend to the Assistant Chief Executive Legal and Regulatory Services the commencement of criminal proceedings in respect of The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Detection of Fraud and Enforcement) (Wales) Regulations 2013.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet noted the content of the report and approved the amendments to the Scheme of Delegation of Functions as set out at paragraphs 3.23 and 3.3.

889. INFORMATION REPORTS FOR NOTING

The Assistant Chief Executive Legal and Regulatory Services provided a report to Cabinet of the Information Reports that had been published since its last meeting.

In respect of the report entitled Coleg Cymunedol Y Dderwen – Post inspection Plan, the Deputy Leader was pleased to note that there had been much progress at the School. He added that the local authority, Central South Consortium school and the Welsh Government Challenge Cymru had been working closely with the Executive Head teacher which was reflected in the progress of the report. He further added that he looked forward to receiving a future progress report.

RESOLVED That Cabinet noted the content of the reports.

890. URGENT ITEMS

None

891. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business, i.e. minutes and reports, as they contain exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 14 and 16 of Part 4 and Paragraph 21 of Part 5 of

Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007.

The Assistant Chief Executive Legal and Regulatory Services confirmed that in respect of these items the public interest test would not apply as the minutes and report contained information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.

Following the application of the public interest test for the other items, it was resolved that pursuant to the Act referred to above, to consider these items in private with the public being excluded from the meeting as they would involve the disclosure of exempt information of the nature as stated above.

892. APPROVAL OF EXEMPT MINUTES

893. CONTRACT FOR THE PROVISION OF THE COUNCIL'S COMMUNITY ALARM SERVICE

The meeting closed at 3.10 pm