

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOMS 1/2/3 - CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB ON TUESDAY, 15 MAY 2018 AT 14:30

Present

Councillor HJ David – Chairperson

CE Smith
RE Young

PJ White

HM Williams

D Patel

Apologies for Absence

Officers:

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Gill Lewis | Interim Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer |
| Kelly Watson | Group Manager Legal & Democratic Services |
| Mark Shephard | Corporate Director - Communities |
| Susan Cooper | Corporate Director - Social Services & Wellbeing |
| Andrew Rees | Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees |
| Lindsay Harvey | Corporate Director Education and Family Support |

201. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

202. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet of 24 April 2018 were approved as a true and accurate record.

203. EMPTY PROPERTIES OFFICER

Councillor N Clarke presented the recommendations of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 in relation to the recruitment of the Empty Properties Officer which the Committee had considered at its meeting on 21 March 2018. She stated that the report considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee set out the role of the Empty Properties Working Group and specifically the benefits of creating a role of Empty Homes Officer and what remit the role would hold.

Councillor Clarke informed Cabinet as at December 2017 there were 1233 private sector residential properties empty for 6 months or longer, 50% of those properties had lain empty for 6 to 12 months, however, 31% of properties have been empty for 2 or more years. Councillor Clarke also informed Cabinet that there are currently 18 derelict chapels and churches across the county borough, the majority of which (72%) are in the valleys areas and could be considered for conversion into residential accommodation.

The Leader placed on record his thanks to the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 on the work it had undertaken in producing recommendations on the recruitment of the Empty Properties Officer and he advised that Cabinet would be considering the recommendations in due course. He stated that consideration would need to be given as to where the resource of an Empty Properties Officer best fits as it is one which cuts across all Directorates. The Deputy Leader also stated that Cabinet would consider the recommendations and tackling empty properties was part of the manifesto of Cabinet and Labour Group. He commented that the issue of empty

properties was not only confined to this Borough but was one which stretched across the region with different approaches being taken to tackle the problem and there was a need to look at best practice elsewhere in the region.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet agreed to consider the recommendations of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 and receive a further report from officers on the following recommendations:

- (1) to recruit a dedicated Empty Properties Officer to address the problems with Empty Homes in Bridgend County Borough;
- (2) that once the Empty Properties Officer is appointed they become the co-ordinator of the Empty Properties Working Group.

204. RATIONALISATION OF SUPPORTED BUS SERVICES 2018/2019

The Corporate Director Communities reported on the outcome of the public consultation exercise undertaken to reduce the amount of subsidy by the Council for bus services by £188,000 as agreed in the Medium Term Financial Strategy. He also sought the views of Cabinet as to whether on the basis of the consultation exercise and the comments made by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee; any changes should be made to the original proposal.

He reported that the Council and Welsh Government support the provision of regional and local bus services by subsidising routes that are not commercially viable. These services serve routes that enable residents who live along them to access employment, education, health care and social activities. He informed Cabinet that a savings target of of £188,000 in 2018/19 was identified in Medium Term Financial Strategy, which would leave £130,000 for supported bus services.

The Corporate Director Communities outlined a table which identified bus routes which it was proposed will have their financial subsidy removed and which formed the basis of consultation. Consultation on the proposed service reductions has been implemented to gather views and opinions on the potential impact of the reductions in order to meet the proposed budget reduction of £188,000 in 2018/19, as part of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy. He highlighted the responses received to the consultation and commented that it was clear that the majority of respondents considered that the loss of local bus services is of concern to communities. He informed Cabinet that it was unknown at the present time if the commercial element of bus services would continue to operate on the partly funded routes, or if the commercial element would be extended into the currently subsidised services. It was also unknown whether the current Community Transport operator would be able to replace any or all of the proposed bus routes identified for withdrawal. Officers will continue to work and liaise with the Community Transport operator to focus on the areas of Bridgend which have reduced local bus services and seek to ensure that the community transport service provided is as effective as possible. The consultation was considered by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee and he highlighted the matters raised by the Committee and the responses by officers to those points for consideration by Cabinet.

The Corporate Director Communities informed Cabinet that if the full level of saving of £188,000 approved in the MTFs, as a result of the proposal to remove subsidies for the identified routes is not met, it would need to be met from elsewhere, either from additional savings elsewhere in the Communities Directorate or offset by allocating funding from the small unallocated budget as a result increasing the Council Tax from 4.2% to 4.5%.

The Cabinet Member Communities thanked the citizens of the Borough for engaging in the consultation process and that the public meetings which he had attended were well conducted and measured. He believed there was scope for maintaining subsidy to the 3 services which had scored the highest following assessment by officers, namely services numbered 51, 803 and 61 for 1 year only, to allow officers to engage with bus operators and engage with Town and Community Councils. He informed Cabinet that many local authorities had removed all subsidies from local bus routes and he asked that bus operators work with the Council in order to salvage services.

The Deputy Leader stated that the Council was not cutting bus routes, but was removing subsidies from routes and he encouraged the public to use public transport. He also stated there was a duty on the Council to use public funds wisely and that discussions could be held with the Health Board and Town and Community Councils in order to make a contribution towards the subsidy of routes to assist the public in accessing health care and community facilities. The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration commented on the need to sustain services and to work with the bus operators, especially those routes which have a long history, are well used and are strategically important.

The Leader commented on the need for the Council to make savings of £32m over the next 4 years and it was important that Cabinet respond to the consultation in order to try and sustain some of the services. He stated that officers will work with developers of new housing to seek contributions in order to sustain bus routes where possible.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- (1) Considered the content of the consultation report and Equality Impact Assessment, together with the comments made by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- (2) Determined that it wished to maintain the subsidy to the 3 services which had scored the highest following assessment by officers, namely services numbered 51, 803 and 61 for 1 year and approved that unallocated funding set aside from the additional increase in Council Tax is used to offset any reduction in the approved saving in the MTFS of £188,000;
- (3) Authorised officers to enter into vigorous dialogue with bus operators to maintain other services the subject of subsidy.

205. **CAPITA GLAMORGAN CONSULTANCY LIMITED**

The Corporate Director Communities sought approval to make a change to the Council's nominated Director on the Joint Venture Board; delegate to the Chief Executive the powers to agree and execute proposed amendments to the Articles of Association of the Company and to enter into the Variation Agreement and powers to agree and execute any future amendments to the Articles of Association and to enter into any future Variation Agreements in consultation with the Head of Finance; delegate any shareholder rights (including voting rights) of the Council and other powers of control available to the Council as a shareholder in the company and delegate authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Head of Finance where any such consents will have any financial ramifications for the Council to give any consents any required from the Council to ensure any statutory compliance by the Company.

The Corporate Director Communities reported that the Capita Joint Venture demonstrates collaborative partnership working between local authorities and the private sector in developing and delivering services. It also supports the Council's priority of supporting a successful economy by retaining quality jobs in the area and having the expertise available locally to tackle highway, transportation and regeneration projects in the region.

The Corporate Director Communities reported that Capita Glamorgan Consultancy is a Joint Venture Company between Capita Symonds Limited (51% shares), RCT Council (28% shares), Bridgend County Borough Council (15% shares) and Merthyr Tydfil Council (6% shares). The JV Company commenced trading from 1 September 2008 and now trades under the brand name 'Redstart' since 2017.

He reported that in February 2016, it was agreed that the Articles of Association need amendment, the amendments had now been negotiated and agreed which had also led to amendments to the Joint Venture Agreement and Services Agreement. He also confirmed that the delegation of powers is in line with the way the other local authorities are operating.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

1. approved the appointment of the post holder of Head of Service for Adult Social Care to replace the Corporate Director of Communities as Director of the Company, to be confirmed at the next Board meeting of the Company.
2. delegated to the Chief Executive Officer the powers to agree and execute the proposed amendments to the Articles of Association of the Company in consultation with the Head of Finance on behalf of the Council and to enter into the Variation Agreement to amend the Joint Venture Agreement and Services Agreement.
3. delegated to the Chief Executive Officer the powers to agree and execute any future amendments to the Articles of Association of the Company in consultation with the Head of Finance on behalf of the Council and to enter into any future Variation Agreements to amend the provisions of the legal documentation entered into by the Council regarding the establishment of the Joint Venture Company and where the Chief Executive Officer deems it necessary, the Chief Executive Officer shall report to Cabinet on such amendments to the Articles of Association or such Variation Agreements.
4. delegated any shareholder rights (including voting rights) of the Council and other powers of control available to the Council as a shareholder in the Company as specified in the Joint Venture Agreement and (Articles of Association) where they are not specified in the agreement as being exercisable by the Council's appointed Director, to the Chief Executive Officer in consultation with the Head of Finance, including those shareholder rights referred to as Shareholder Protection rights in the Joint Venture Agreement.

5. delegated authority to the Chief Executive Officer in consultation with the Head of Finance where any such consents will have any financial ramifications for the Council to give any consents required from the Council to ensure any statutory compliance by the Company.

206. CAR PARKING REVIEW

The Corporate Director Communities reported on proposals for Cabinet to consider management of parking within Bridgend County Borough and options and strategies going forward.

He informed Cabinet that the Council is responsible for 28 off-street car parks, of which 10 are run as pay and display car parks, 3 of those being short stay, 2 short and long stay and 5 being long stay. He stated that the Council has received many requests for residential parking control but due to issues associated with enforcement and cost, has been unable to accede and implement such requests. Cabinet at its meeting on 1 April 2014 agreed recommendations on a strategy for the introduction of residents permit parking. The Council also commissioned a review of public car parks as well as the staff / member car parking scheme. However this was deferred due to the Rhiw development and staff moves as a result of the closure of the Sunnyside building.

The Corporate Director Communities reported that the current tariff structure for off-street parks has not changed since 2007. He stated that as the Rhiw car park has returned to use, following re-development, it was appropriate to re-institute the parking management review to include a number of other issues which had been brought to officers' attention.

He outlined in detail proposals along with recommendations in each of the following issues:

- Current tariffs for all the Council's Pay and Display Parking and Staff Parking
- Residents Parking in Bridgend Town
- Limited Waiting Parking for on Street Parking, Porthcawl
- Possibility of user payment in other car parks within the County Borough
- Provision of Electrical Charging points in the Rhiw Car park
- Methods of payment for existing pay and display machines
- Welsh Language Act compliance for Pay and Display machines
- Charging for dispensation permits for Contractors in Bridgend Town Centre
- Security- Opening and locking of car parks and callout
- Community Asset transfer of car parks
- Structural resilience of all Bridgend car parks

The Corporate Director Communities reported that the changes in parking tariffs identified were not expected to result in a significant abstraction or migration of current users within the car parks although this remained a risk. He stated that the simplification in the tariff structure was seen as supporting visitors to the town centre and may encourage a longer stay. It was currently forecast, although not guaranteed, that the changes proposed may create a surplus over the current charging regime in the region of £50,000, which would be used to reduce the deficit on the budget and make general repairs to existing car parks where possible. He informed Cabinet that the change in tariff at Rest Bay Car Park was estimated to create a surplus of approximately £20,000; however any increase must be reinvested within Locks Common. He stated that there is currently a capital allocation of £128,000 for the introduction of residents parking in Bridgend Town which would be used to introduce the proposed scheme. The

introduction of a Limited Waiting Traffic Order to the front in Porthcawl had a cost implication of £40,000, while the introduction of electrical charging points in the Rhiw Car Park had a cost implication of £20,000. However, their introduction could not take place until funding had been secured and in the case of the parking proposal to the front in Porthcawl, consultation had taken place. The Corporate Director Communities stated that there is currently a budget of £110,000 for remedial measures to car parks within the capital programme and works associated with the structural resilience of the Brackla 1 car park would be utilised to carry out minor works.

The Cabinet Member Communities welcomed the consultation on the parking proposals in Porthcawl and for the simplification of parking tariffs and was interested to see how the introduction of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEV) charging infrastructure develops. In commending the proposals, he thanked the officers for producing the report which had been resource intensive. The Leader commented that the proposals at this stage are subject to consultation which he encouraged the public to take part. He commented that there was no reference in the proposals to introduce charging for blue badge holders and he gave a commitment for that to continue.

The Interim Head of Finance informed Cabinet that the maintenance of car parks outweighs the income derived from car parking charges. She stated that all Councils will have to consider increasing charges as part of the budget process and that the Budget Research and Evaluation Panel would be considering income and charges levied.

RESOLVED: (1) That Cabinet authorised the Corporate Director-Communities:

- Recommendation 1:** To consult on the proposal to simplify the parking tariffs on all short stay car parks and if appropriate implement
- Recommendation 2:** To consult on the proposal to simplify the tariffs in all long stay car parks except Rest Bay and Brackla 1 multi-storey (adjacent to Asda) and if appropriate implement
- Recommendation 3:** To consult on the proposal to standardise the times of Brackla 1 (adjacent to Asda) to be the same as other long stay car parks, and also simplify the tariffs to be the same as other long stay car parks and if appropriate implement
- Recommendation 4:** To consult on the proposal to change charging times in Rest Bay Car Park to offer users more choice and flexibility and also to simplify the tariffs and if appropriate implement
- Recommendation 6:** To consult on the proposal to convert all of the Bowls Car Park and Tremains Car Park parking spaces to long stay spaces to simplify the parking experience.
- Recommendation 7:** To consult on the provision of limited Waiting along Porthcawl Front (including Eastern Promenade) and if appropriate introduce new restrictions.
- Recommendation 8:** Implement the introduction of a pilot scheme in the Rhiw to introduce ULEV charging infrastructure charging machines subject to funding being secured.
- Recommendation 9:** Progress upgrading of current pay and display machines.

- Recommendation 10:** To explore and if appropriate introduce an administration charge for permits for vehicles to park on street which require dispensation.
- Recommendation 11:** The Authority investigate and implement if appropriate, the recovery of out of hours release costs for council owned car parks.

(2) That Cabinet noted the following:

- Recommendation 5:** Staff/elected member parking permits be reviewed annually and those staff and elected members who have dedicated parking spaces/zones have a higher differential of £5 per month. All permits will also include Saturdays to encourage use of town centre car parks on the weekend.
- Recommendation 12:** The CAT Officer explores Community Asset Transfers of non-chargeable carparks.

207. **SCHOOL ATTENDANCE STRATEGY**

The Interim Corporate Director Education and Family Support sought approval and adoption of the School Attendance Strategy for 2018-2021.

He informed Cabinet there is a clear link between good educational attainment and high levels of attendance, while poor attendance and also late arrival at school has a detrimental effect on a child's learning and can have a significant impact on their wellbeing. He stated that the school attendance strategy has been reviewed and updated to take into account national guidance and good practice.

The Interim Corporate Director Education and Family Support reported that over the 2013-2016 academic years, school attendance rates had seen an overall improvement. There had been a slight decline in 2016-2017, with primary school attendance being 95.1% and ranked 5th in Wales, while secondary school attendance for the same period was 94.2% and ranked 7th in Wales. The slight decline in attendance remained above the Wales and Central South Consortium averages. He informed Cabinet that support and guidance is provided to all schools by the Education Welfare Service and other support agencies and attendance panels continue to be implemented in order to share good practice in schools, although further work was needed to ensure consistency across all the authority's schools.

The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration in commending the School Attendance Strategy was pleased to note that it was a continuation of the previous strategy. He expressed his concern at the use of Fixed Penalty Notices by some local authorities but was assured by the Interim Corporate Director Education and Family Support that they were used as a last resort. The Interim Corporate Director Education and Family Support informed Cabinet that the authority had served 40 Fixed Penalty Notices in the last 5 years for non-school attendance.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet formally approved and adopted the local authority's school attendance policy for 2018-2021.

208. **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

CABINET - TUESDAY, 15 MAY 2018

The meeting closed at 15:44