



COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON TUESDAY, 13TH APRIL 2021 AT 5.00PM

PRESENT:

Councillor C. Andrews - Mayor
Councillor J. Gale - Deputy Mayor

Councillors:

M. Adams, E.M. Aldworth, A. Angel, P. Bevan, C. Bezzina, L. Binding, A. Collis, S. Cook, C. Cuss, W. David, M. Davies, T. Davies, N. Dix, K. Etheridge, M. Evans, A. Farina-Childs, C. Forehead, A. Gair, N. George, C. Gordon, R. Gough, L. Harding, D. Havard, A. Higgs, A. Hussey, V. James, L. Jeremiah, G. Johnston, B. Jones, S. Kent, G. Kirby, A. Leonard, P. Leonard, C. Mann, P. Marsden, B. Miles, S. Morgan, B. Owen, T. Parry, L. Phipps, D. Poole, D. Preece, D. Price, J. Pritchard, J. Ridgewell, R. Saralis, M.E. Sargent, J. Simmonds, G. Simmonds, S. Skivens, E. Stenner, J. Taylor, C. Thomas, A. Whitcombe, R. Whiting, L. Whittle, T. Williams, W. Williams, B. Zaplatynski.

Together with:-

C. Harry (Chief Executive), R. Tranter (Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer), D. Street (Corporate Director Social Services and Housing), R. Edmunds (Corporate Director Education and Corporate Services), M.S. Williams (Corporate Director Economy and Environment), R. Kyte (Head of Planning and Regeneration), R. Thomas (Planning Development Manager) and E. Sullivan (Senior Committee Services Officer)

Also Present:

K. Bernie and F. Holmes (Cardiff Capital Region City Deal)

WEB-CASTING FILMING AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Chief Executive reminded those present that the meeting was being filmed but would not be live streamed, however a recording would be available following the meeting via the Council's website – [Click Here to View](#). She advised that decisions would be made by Microsoft Forms.

IN MEMORIUM

It was with great sadness that the Mayor announced the recent passing of Councillor Carmen Bezzina's mother and joined with the rest of the Country in expressing her sadness at the passing of His Royal Highness, Prince Philip the Duke of Edinburgh. Council held a minute silence in memory and respect.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J. Bevan, C. Elsbury, J.E. Fussell, D. Hardacre, D. Harse, M. James and G. Oliver.

2. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor referred to an online event for Abercarn Scouts, the event celebrated 5 Scouts who had received the Scouts Highest Award although unable to attend, the Mayor was able to provide a short video message to congratulate them on their outstanding achievement.

STATEMENT FROM COUNCILLOR L. BINDING

The Mayor confirmed that she had given approval for Councillor Lyndon Binding to make a short statement to Council.

Councillor Binding advised Council that due to an ongoing health issue he would be resigning as a County Borough Councillor at the end of month. He thanked Members and Officers for their friendship, help and support over the years, particularly to Democratic and Committee Services and the Social Services Corporate Management Team.

Ward Colleagues, Group Leaders and the Chief Executive expressed their fondest wishes for both Councillor Binding and his Husband and shared memories of the time they have spent with him as a friend and colleague as well as an experienced and professional Committee Chair and hardworking Elected Member for the Aber Valley.

3. TO RECEIVE PETITIONS UNDER RULE OF PROCEDURE 28(3)

Councillor Walter Williams presented a petition on behalf of Argoed Residents in objection to the proposed development of all year-round refuge and night shelter at the Argoed Baptist Chapel.

Councillor Andrew Farina-Childs presented a petition on behalf of Blackwood Residents requesting action against anti-social behaviour at Cefn Forest Welfare Park.

Councillor Kevin Etheridge presented a petition requesting action and resources in relation to a Tenancy Enforcement Issue.

The Mayor accepted the petitions which would be actioned in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

4. PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

Councillor Walter Williams introduced Mr Gerwyn Price, World Darts Champion to Council and outlined his many achievements in recent years, culminating in him winning the World Dart Championship. The Mayor welcomed Mr Price to the meeting and Council formally recognised Mr Price and congratulated him on his fantastic achievement.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor P. Marsden and Councillor S. Morgan declared a personal interest in relation to Agenda Item No. 9 – Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, Connected, Competitive, Resilient -

Presentation in that they are Members of Cardiff Capital Regional Cabinet and Associated Boards.

Councillor A. Whitcombe also declared a personal interest in relation to Agenda Item No. 9 – Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, Connected, Competitive, Resilient – Presentation as he is a Member of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Joint Scrutiny Committee.

6.7.8 MINUTES

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the meetings held on the 24th February 2021, 2nd March 2021 and 18th March 2021 be approved as a correct record and by way of Microsoft Forms this was unanimously agreed.

In relation to the minutes of the meeting held on the 2nd March 2021, Councillor Sean Morgan referred to page 14 and asked if Councillor Fussell and Councillor Mann had the opportunity to review the recording of the meeting referred to in this section of the minutes.

Councillor Mann confirmed that Councillor Fussell was not present at the meeting, however he had reviewed the recording which confirmed Councillor Morgan's version of events and advised that he had spoken to Mr Tranter in this regard. Councillor Mann on behalf of the Plaid Cymry Group offered an apology to Councillor Morgan on this matter.

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

- (1) Special Council held on 24th February 2021
- (2) Council held on 2nd March 2021
- (3) Special Council held on 18th March 2021

9. CARDIFF CAPITAL REGION CITY DEAL – CONNECTED, COMPETITIVE, RESILIENT – PRESENTATION

Councillor P. Marsden, S. Morgan and A. Whitcombe declared personal interest only as such there was no requirement for them to leave the meeting for the consideration of this item.

The Mayor welcomed Kellie Bernie and Frank Holmes from the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal to the meeting and Councillor Philippa Marsden introduced the presentation.

The presentation detailed the progress made by the Cardiff Capital Region over the last four years and its key priorities going forward. Members were advised that quality of life, opportunity and societal impact would be the drivers with economic ambitions matching progressive social policies that would lead the generalised prosperity. The investment and intervention framework and opportunities for collaboration were detailed and funding priorities explained as the region moved from start-up to scale-up.

Governance and partnership structures were outlined, and Members noted how working practices had been transformed speeding up decision making processes. The work of Regional Boards showed a strong balance of business and local leadership with a clear strategy that serves the region. The future investment funds and how they would be best utilised in shaping and creating new markets and opportunities were outlined. Joint venture opportunities and projects were noted, and the successes already achieved like CSC Foundry Ltd, Creo-Plasma Technology and Pharmedelligence were highlighted. Projects already in the pipeline were detailed and it was noted that the wider investment profile would include rural connectivity, digital clinical innovation and a cyber innovation hub. The wider impact of investment projects

like CSC Foundry Ltd were explained and Members were advised that 110 high value jobs had been created as a result, 95% within the Cardiff Capital Region. 545 jobs had been safeguarded and an estimated 956 indirect and induced jobs created.

In terms of the impact for Caerphilly, the Cardiff Capital Region were working with the Council on the Metro Plus Caerphilly Interchange, Valley's Regional Park Discovery Gateway and Housing Viability Gap Fund with 2 sites on the indicative list. The future for Caerphilly included industrial support A465 and M4 Corridor, investment in Med-Tech, Devices and Diagnostics, Housing Innovation, Energy and Carbon Neutrality, Strategy Rail Priorities with priorities for future growth in Research and Development and this was just getting started.

The role of the new Corporate Joint Committees was explained and would provide a new model of regional economic governance. Members reservations on the CJC footprint in terms of collaboration and communication were acknowledged but they had a pivotal role to play working on a different scale and at a regional level. Enabling the already maturing model to optimise structures, develop new funds and programmes and deliver a greater impact by removing barriers and blockages to growth.

In concluding the presentation Members were asked to note the 5 key areas for the next five years and the benefits that acting as a region brought in terms of economic growth and positive outcomes as the City Deal evolved into the City Region with a clear prospectus for change and evolution closing the gap between the least and most deprived communities.

The Chief Executive and the Leader of Council provided a summary of the Caerphilly focus and the approaches that would need to be taken to ensure progress. Members noted the solid footing that the borough already had in terms of manufacturing but there were real gains to be made in Research and Development, Food and Technology. The role that Masterplans such as the Heads of the Valley and Caerphilly Basin, already approved by Council, played in securing sustained funding opportunities was explained. The importance of innovative approaches to investment and development opportunities were outlined and the possible economic gains across the board were summarised. All these factors would ensure both local and regional competitiveness and make Caerphilly County Borough a great place to live, work and enjoy.

Members expressed their thanks for the presentation and clarification was sought in relation to the funds shown for the Metro proposal, which at £15m seemed to be a relatively small amount. It was confirmed that this amount related to the Metro Plus scheme to support local, sustainable transport schemes.

Proposal for electric and hydrogen vehicles were also noted and further information was sought in relation to this. Reference was made to the 'Riversimple' project and the strides being made in this area. It was noted that Siemens were supporting the project which did not look simply at vehicle or infrastructure but at a new model for mobility, furthermore the project provided a fantastic opportunity for Wales to take the lead. Members also noted the opportunities to transform the Council's own fleet of vehicles.

A Member expressed concern in what he perceived, as a lack of an audit trail in relation to European Structural Funding and was worried about accountability. Reassurances were given that the CCR investment framework was constantly scrutinised and reviewed through various avenues include test and challenge processes.

Members expressed their support for the CCR and how it was maturing and the impact that this would have on GVA and wellbeing improvements for the area.

Members noted the jobs created and sought clarification as to whether they were direct or indirect and it was confirmed that both has been secured, the emphasis would be on the quality of the

jobs created not just the quantity. In order to achieve wellbeing impacts then quality job creation would be key not simply a matter of generating job numbers.

Clarification was sought in relation to the role of the private sector and how their involvement would be policed. Assurances were given that extensive due diligence was undertaken, and clear processes were in place regarding regulation and declarations.

The presentation was noted.

10. REVIEW OF SERVICE LEVELS AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING ENFORCEMENT FUNCTIONS OF THE PLANNING SERVICE

Consideration was given to the report which reviewed the service delivery and decision making process for the development management and enforcement functions of the Planning Service and sought approval from Council for amendments to the Scheme of Delegation and Member Protocols and size of the Planning Committee.

Members were advised that the report had been considered by Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee and Planning Committee and were referred to section 10 of the Officer's report which detailed the comments and concerns raised by those Committee Members.

Reference was made to the number of Enforcement Officers employed by the Authority and what recruitment was being undertaken to improve this. The Member expressed concern that the protocol included 'inappropriate social contact with objectors' which he did not consider to be appropriate and expressed concern about the reference to an attendance of 2 at site meetings. He was also concerned about the proposed reduction in local ward members speaking at Planning Committee which he did not view as fair or reasonable.

The Member felt that the matter should be deferred for the establishment of a working group to consider both the policy and the process in greater detail, with a report coming back to Council in the Autumn.

It was noted that the report before Council had been through the scrutiny process and considered by the Planning Committee which had given the Member in question ample opportunity to make representations on the report and its proposals. In terms of the Enforcement Officers, the recruitment process was underway, and interviews will be held shortly and further to this a Community Infrastructure Levy Officer had been recently appointed. Officers agreed with Members that the right staffing levels were vital to the delivery of an effective planning service and these appointments would secure that.

Assurances were given that there was no change in relation to statutory consultees the proposals sought to manage public expectation and provide clarity on processes. It was noted that inappropriate social contact already formed part of the Council's constitution so there was no change there. The limit of 2 attendees referred to Officer site meetings and not Planning Committee formal site meetings, Local Ward Members would be encouraged to attend those along with Members of the Planning Committee. The proposals for Planning Committee speakers would help to eliminate repetition and did not impact on the ability of Members from the same ward with opposing views from addressing the committee.

A Members sought clarification in relation to the recommendation from the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee that recommendation 3.1(d) be removed and if this was being considered now or had been disregarded. The Member was advised that when recommendation 3.1(d) was considered by the Planning Committee they had agreed that it should be retained but there was a need to ensure Members ability to call forward smaller applications that had ward importance therefore they proposed an alternative wording be added

to the scheme of delegation to ensure this and it was this rewording as detailed on page 37 of the agenda pack being presented for Council's approval.

The Member queried if this was the case should the comments of the Planning Committee been brought back to the Scrutiny Committee for them to reconsider. The Chair of the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet Member advised that they did not see any reason for this, Scrutiny Members concerns had been that the scheme before them would prevent local ward member bringing smaller applications to committee, this was now possible due to the rewording proposed so he did not see any difference with the outcome the Scrutiny Committee wanted to achieve.

Members debated committee membership and Independent Party representation; an Independent Member expressed his willingness to take up the seat on the Planning Committee currently prohibited by political balance rules. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that a report on the political balance would be presented to the Annual Meeting of Council.

It was moved and seconded that the recommendations contained within the Officer's report be approved and by way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation and in noting there were 45 For, 8 Against and 3 Abstentions this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that: -

- a) The output driven service delivery model proposed for the development management and enforcement function, with a focus on the delivery of its statutory obligations, frontloading, further commercialisation and the delivery of major and strategically significant schemes underpinned by the introduction of a new Wellbeing local performance indicator be endorsed;
- b) Amendments to the Enforcement Charter be endorsed;
- c) Changes to the Planning Committee structure with a reduction from 20 to 16 Members be approved;
- d) Changes to the Scheme of Delegation to provide Planning Committee with a more strategic role and focus be approved;
- e) The Non-Planning Committee Member Protocol for Ward Members be approved.

11. WELSH GOVERNMENT RETAIL, LEISURE AND HOSPITALITY RATE RELIEF SCHEME 2021/22

The Mayor confirmed that the report was considered as an urgent item by Cabinet and under the requirements of the Constitution any decision taken as a matter of urgency must be reported to the next available meeting of Council, giving the reasons for its urgency. Therefore, Council was asked to note the reasons for the report's urgency and the Cabinet Decision.

The report was so noted.

12. WELSH GOVERNMENT STRATEGY SITES PROGRAMME – OPPORTUNITES FOR NESS TAR, CAERPHILLY.

The Mayor confirmed that the report was considered as an urgent exempt item by Cabinet and under the requirements of the Constitution any decision taken as a matter of urgency must be reported to the next available meeting of Council, giving the reasons for its urgency. Therefore, Council was asked to note the reasons for the report's urgency and the Cabinet Decision.

A Member requested an opportunity to ask questions on the report, due to the exempt nature of its content, the Monitoring Officer advised that the Public Interest Test would first need to be considered and approved to allow discussion to take place without the press and public being present.

EXEMPT MATTER

Members considered the public interest test certificate from the Proper Officer and concluded that on balance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information. By way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that in accordance with Section 100A(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 identified in paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Members questions were taken, and points of clarification provided, following which the report was noted.

The meeting closed at 19:50pm

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 1st June 2021 they were signed by the Mayor.

MAYOR