



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Wednesday, 18 March 2020 at 5.00 pm at The Council Chamber, The Pavilions, Cambrian Park, Clydach Vale, Tonypany, CF40 2XX.

County Borough Councillors - Council Members in attendance:-

Councillor S Powderhill (Chair)

Councillor M Adams	Councillor R Bevan
Councillor J Bonetto	Councillor G Caple
Councillor A Cox	Councillor A Crimmings
Councillor J Edwards	Councillor J Elliott
Councillor S Evans	Councillor M Fidler Jones
Councillor A Fox	Councillor E George
Councillor D Grehan	Councillor J Harries
Councillor G Hopkins	Councillor G Hughes
Councillor J James	Councillor W Jones
Councillor R Lewis	Councillor W Lewis
Councillor M Norris	Councillor A Morgan
Councillor S. Rees-Owen	Councillor M Powell
Councillor E Stephens	Councillor S Rees
Councillor W Treeby	Councillor G Thomas
Councillor L Walker	Councillor E Webster

Officers in attendance

Mr C Bradshaw, Chief Executive
Mr B Davies, Director of Finance & Digital Services
Mr R Evans, Director of Human Resources
Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Mr G Isingrini, Group Director Community & Children's Services
Mr A Wilkins, Director of Legal Services

143 Apologies

In light of recent developments and the continued uncertainty caused by Coronavirus, the Council meeting was convened with a reduced number of Councillors in attendance following discussions between the Service Director, Democratic Services and Communications and the respective Group Leaders. As a result of this attendance arrangements agreed, the following members of the Council were not in attendance:-

S. Belzak	L. De Vet	P. Jarman
H. Boggis	M. Diamond	G. Jones
S. A. Bradwick	S. M. Evans	K. L. Jones
J. Brencher	M. Forey	L. Jones
A. Calvert	H. Fychan	C. Leyshon
A. Chapman	E. Griffiths	K. Morgan
J. L. Cullwick	M. Griffiths	S. Morgans
G R. Davies	G. Holmes	W. Owen
J. R. Davies	L. Hooper	D. Owen-Jones
A. Davies –Jones	P. Howe	S. Pickering

S. M. Powell
A. Roberts
J. Rosser
G. Stacey
M. Tegg
R. K. Turner
M. Weaver
M. Webber
G. D. G. Williams
D. H. Williams
J. Williams
T. Williams
C. J. Willis
R. Yeo

144 Declaration of Interest

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, there were no declarations made pertaining to the agenda.

145 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meetings held on the 4th March 2020 at 4pm and 5pm as an accurate reflection subject to it being noted that in the Minutes of the 5pm meeting, Cllrs Hooper and James wished to have it recorded that they refrained from taking part in the discussions relating to the Notice of Motion to deal with Storm Dennis as they felt that the matter did not comply with the Council's standing orders (Minute No. 142 refers).

146 Announcement

The Service Director Democratic Services and Communications advised that in an effort to keep the Council meeting brief, it was the intention to reduce the number of agenda items for consideration. It was therefore proposed to suspend the Council's Standing Orders and to deal only with the Officer reports (to include the Urgent Item relating to the dispensation for Councillor leave of absence) and not to consider Members' Questions on Notice or the Notice of Motion.

RESOLVED to agree to suspend the Council's Standing Orders as proposed.

147 Statements

The Leader of the Council, Councillor A. Morgan provided an update in respect of the Coronavirus.

The Leader commented on the unusual circumstances whereby a reduced number of Members had been invited to attend the Council meeting and those present had been asked to practice safe, social distancing.

Members were informed that since the last Council meeting when the Leader had provided an update on the impact of Storm Dennis, the situation regarding the Coronavirus had escalated. The Leader confirmed that through regular meetings with Partners and other Local Authority Leaders to discuss the current impact of the Coronavirus he was able to provide the following updates:-

- The Council has developed a swift response to the Coronavirus and priority will be afforded to those key frontline services;
- Every effort had been made to keep schools open as long as possible to avoid contact between children and older, high risk age groups such as grandparents and to avoid burdening healthcare workers with childcare issues during this time;
- The decision had been taken by Welsh Government to cease statutory education provision after Friday, 20th March 2020;
- The Council is working quickly to ensure that all pupils that are eligible will continue to receive Free School Meals (FSM's) perhaps in the form of a packed lunch so as to avoid gatherings for a prolonged period;
- Childcare arrangements are also being sought for those key workers possibly from existing school sites;
- Currently, a number of Council employees are homeworking due to voluntary self-isolation or having presented themselves as high risk categories (pregnant or over 70 years of age);
- Only six of the Council's libraries remain open and it is likely that they will operate as community hubs from which to co-ordinate emergency responses;
- The Council will look to reduce provision in some service areas rather than remove the service completely but this will be determined by the diminishing resources as staff need to self-isolate;
- Both Dare Valley Country Park and Gilfach Goch Day centre will shortly close for the foreseeable future which will free up valuable staff resources;
- The Council will not take any further bookings for bulky waste collections;
- There may be a need to close parks and there will be an impact on litter picking as more pressing issues are attended to;
- All elective surgery has been cancelled in an effort to free up bed space for those requiring medical attention;
- Food supplies are still being delivered successfully and arrangements will be made in the future to ensure that the essential provisions are directed to those priority groups such as the elderly;
- Regular updates will be provided to all Elected Members with relevant links to Public Health Wales/WLGA/ Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board;
- This was likely to be the last Council meeting for the foreseeable future.

All Political Parties expressed their support for the Leader of the Council in his continued efforts to put in place appropriate measures to deal with the Coronavirus and support staff and local residents.

In conclusion, the Leader confirmed that in the absence of formal meetings, decisions would continue to be made in accordance with the officer and members' schemes of delegation and urgent decision-making procedures and would be published on the Council website as usual.

148 Council Work Programme

The Service Director Democratic Services & Communications advised that the Council meeting scheduled for the 1st April 2020 had been cancelled.

149 Treasury Management Strategy Incorporating Investment Strategy, Treasury Management Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision Statement for 2020/21

The Director of Finance and Digital Services presented his report which set out the Council's:-

1. Treasury Management Strategy for 2020/21;
2. Investment Strategy for 2020/21;
3. Treasury Indicators for 2019/20 (actuals to date) and 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23; and
4. Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy Statement.

Following consideration of the report it was **RESOLVED** to approve the Treasury Management Strategy, Investment Strategy, Treasury Indicators and the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy Statement as set out in the report.

150 2020/21 Capital Strategy Report Incorporating Prudential Indicators

Members were presented with the report of the Director of Finance and Digital Services which set out a high level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of Council services along with an overview of the associated risk, its management and the implications for future financial sustainability.

Following consideration of the report it was **RESOLVED** to approve the Capital Strategy incorporating the Prudential Indicators.

151 Urgent Business – Dispensation for Councillor Leave of Absence

The Service Director Democratic Services & Communications outlined the arrangements for dispensation in respect of Councillor leave of absence in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Having had regard to UK, Welsh Government and Public Health Wales guidance relating to Covid-19 virus, the majority of council committees requiring Councillor attendance have now been cancelled. In view of this it is proposed that in the event of any Councillor (listed in Appendix A to the report) not attending a Council meeting for a period of 6 consecutive months due to the Covid-19 virus, they will be granted dispensation in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972.

The Service Director Democratic Services & Communications concluded by pointing out that although this allows for councillors to be absent due to the corresponding advice relating to the Covid-19 pandemic, should a meeting be called arrangements would be put in place to quorate via the respective Group Leaders. Following consideration of the report it was **RESOLVED** to:-

1. Note the current need to cancel all non-time critical meetings following guidance issued by UK, Welsh Government and Public Health Wales in relation to the Covid-19 virus; and
2. Agree that in the event that any Councillor (listed in Appendix A to the report) is unable to attend a council meeting for a period of 6 consecutive months due to the Covid-19 virus, they will be granted dispensation in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972.

This meeting closed at 17:40pm

**Cllr S Powderhill
Chairman.**

