

COUNCIL

(Civic Centre, Port Talbot)

Members Present:

11 May, 2016

The Mayor: **Councillor A.P.H.Davies**

The Deputy Mayor: **Councillor Mrs.S.M.Penry**

Councillors: A.Carter, Mrs.A.Chaves, Ms.C.Clement-Williams, M.Crowley, Mrs.R.Davies, J.S.Evans, M.Harvey, H.N.James, Mrs.L.H.James, M.L.James, R.James, A.Jenkins, E.E.Jones, M.Jones, Mrs.D.Jones, R.G.Jones, S.Jones, E.V.Latham, A.Llewelyn, Mrs.K.Lloyd, A.R.Lockyer, J.Miller, Mrs.S.Miller, C.Morgan, J.D.Morgan, Ms.C.Morgans, Mrs.K.Pearson, L.M.Purcell, S.Rahaman, P.A.Rees, P.D.Richards, J.Rogers, A.Taylor, A.H.Thomas, A.L.Thomas, R.Thomas, J.Warman, D.Whitelock, I.D.Williams, Mrs.L.G.Williams and A.N.Woolcock

Officers in Attendance: H.Jenkins, A.Evans, G.Nutt, N. Jarman, M.Roberts, D.Michael, Mrs.K.Jones, Ms.C.Furlow, R.George and Mrs.A.Manlipp

Representatives of the Translation Service: Present

1. **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

It was with deep regret that the Mayor advised Council that the following had passed away since the last meeting of Council:-

Mr Jackie Myers former Councillor with the Authority;

Mr George Griffiths, Chief Executive and Freeman of the former Neath Borough Council;

Ms Moira Lewis Councillor and Mayor of the former Neath Borough Council;

Mr Jeffrey Llewelyn Councillor in the former Lliw Valley Borough Council.

As a mark of respect Members stood for a minute's silence.

As this was the last ordinary meeting of Council that Cllr. A.P.H.Davies would preside over, he took the opportunity to thank all Members for their support in carrying out his Civic duties.

2. **MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following Members made declarations of interest at the commencement of the meeting:-

Councillor P.A.Rees	Re Decision Record of the Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Board of 7 April 2016 as it refers to the Schools Admission Policy 2017/18 as he took part in the decision to commend the Policy to the Cabinet Board.
Councillor Mrs.K Pearson	Re Decision Record of the Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Board of 23 March 2016 as it refers to the appointment of school governors at Creunant Primary School as she is a school governor.
Councillor M.Harvey	Re Report of the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services in relation to the Corporate Improvement Plan as it relates to CCTV as he is employed by South Wales Police.

3. **MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETINGS 2015/16**

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the following meetings of Council be confirmed:-

Council	10 March 2016
Council	30 March 2016

4. **STREET LIGHTING**

Members received a comprehensive presentation by the Head of Streetcare on the work carried out on upgrading the Authority's street lighting stock.

Members noted the work carried out by Officers since the original decision to upgrade had been taken in 2010. Extensive work had been carried out to assess the condition of the existing stock, the process of procurement together with the installation throughout the County Borough. It was anticipated that the new stock would last between 25 to 40 years.

Members also noted that Officers were looking into the installation of solar/ wind powered lights for use on street signage, etc.

Following the presentation Members were pleased with the outcome of the process to date and in particular that the use of private sector finances had not been required.

Members praised the flexibility of the system, in that it was possible to change the brightness, etc. of individual units, or groups of units, from a control centre with immediate effect. In addition there was now minimum delay in repairing units as the system highlighted when units were not working and repairs were effected as soon as possible.

Members also noted that this Authority was the first in Wales to address the '2 wire line problem' and that other Local Authorities had not addressed the deteriorating condition of the posts, etc.

5. **CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

Members received a detailed presentation on the Draft Corporate Improvement Plan which had been commended to Council, subject to agreed amendments, by Cabinet at its meeting on 27 April, 2016. Members were advised that a summary of the document could be

found at Appendix 2 to the circulated report, and that copies would be made available to Members, on request, to circulate to their constituents.

Following the presentation Members raised the following points:-

- The Corporate Improvement Plan raised expectations of achievements that could be met during the last year of the current administration;
- The perception of many residents that the Authority had control over the economic viability of town centres and the decisions reached by some retailers to relocate – this was not the case and the town centres within Neath Port Talbot were as vibrant as any other;
- Members asked the Director for assurances that the Recycle+ Scheme currently being rolled out would not adversely affect the amount of recycling, and were advised that, although there had been initial teething troubles, the Authority had improved. The Authority was currently 7th across Wales, however there was no room for complacency as the Welsh Government's target would increase year on year;
- Concern was expressed at the number of days lost due to pupil exclusion in particular in secondary schools (1255) and how this would be monitored going forward. The Director advised that the number of exclusions had decreased significantly over recent years, however there was still a need for improvement. Work would be undertaken in partnership with schools and also with parents addressing any issues where possible. It was however stressed that the Authority was the best across Wales at Key Stage 4;
- In relation to the Authority's schools and the results of the Estyn's inspections, it was noted that one of the schools was in Special Measures. Members asked what would be done to improve the school's performance and were advised that both Estyn and the Authority itself were providing significant support. Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council was however one of the lowest in Wales with any statutory follow up by Estyn and that 80% of its pupils were in schools classed amber or green;
- Members questioned whether, due to its historical importance, the Cefn Coed Museum would be reopening during the summer, and were advised that there was an application to remove the Head Gear at the site for health and safety reasons and possibly the 2 big wheels. Officers would be reassessing

the site at the end of May with a view to removing the exclusion zone and reopening for the summer;

- Members expressed concern at the lack of framework for middle to long term financial planning and asked whether the WLGA could exert any influence on Welsh Government to address this potential issue. In response the Director advised that Welsh Government was expected to announce its Revenue budget for 2017/18 and 2018/19 in September/October along with the 3 year Capital budget. It was expected that the Welsh Government would receive an increased budget from Central Government until 2020/21, although it was not known how this would be disaggregated between local government, health and other partners. Officers would be reporting to Members in July/September in relation to budget proposals to address the shortfall in the region of £36m over the next 3 years;
- Members requested details of the provision for Welsh Medium education and were advised that the demand did not exceed the number of vacant places. The Strategic School Improvement Plan sought to promote Welsh Medium provision and meet demand. Officers would seek to address any issues surrounding accessibility;
- Members sought clarification on how the Authority would meet any employees' skills gap and were advised that an appraisal process was in place to identify any such issues. This was particularly important in the current economic climate, where the policy of the Authority was to redeploy staff and to avoid compulsory redundancies wherever possible;
- Members sought details of the Valley Regeneration Project and noted that there was a range of projects throughout the County Borough including Rheola and Afan Argoed;
- In relation to the bilingual content of the Authority's website it was noted that 95.7% was also available through the medium of Welsh, although the Authority had no control on interfaces with partner agencies.

The Leader of Council then summed up, highlighting the Authority's focus on children and young people, education, adult social services, Recycling+, Digital By Choice and the Regeneration Programme. The Leader then gave the Chief Executive's apologies from today's meeting due to his involvement in discussions with Tata Steel.

The Leader then thanked Cabinet, all Members of Council, partners, Trade Unions and staff for their support in the Authority's

achievements to date and the work going forward and commended the report to Council.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That having given due regard to the Equality Impact Assessment, Council adopt the Corporate Improvement Plan 2016-2019;
 2. That the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services be given delegated authority, in consultation with the Leader, Deputy Leader and Chief Executive to make any further changes that are necessary prior to final publication and which do not materially change the content of the report.

6. REVISED MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT

Members received the Report of the Head of Legal Services in relation to the revised Member Code of Conduct.

Members questioned the process of publicising complaints where the alternative resolution procedure was used and were advised that should the Monitoring Officer be able to resolve any issues between Members, through the procedure, a report containing statistics would be submitted to the Standards Committee. If this was not the case and the matter was referred to the Ombudsman it would be contained in his annual report which is submitted to the Standards Committee and the Policy and Resources Cabinet Board for information.

- RESOLVED:** That the revised Member Code of Conduct, as contained in Appendix 1 to the circulated report, be adopted.

7. EXECUTIVE DECISIONS OF THE CABINET AND CABINET BOARDS

- RESOLVED:** That the following Executive Decisions of Cabinet and Cabinet Boards, be noted:-

Cabinet	2 March, 2016
Cabinet	10 March, 2016
Cabinet	16 March, 2016

Children, Young People and Education	23 March, 2016
Children, Young People and Education	7 April, 2016
Economic and Community Regeneration	22 April, 2016
Environment and Highways	14 April, 2016
Social Care, Health and Housing	17 March, 2016
Social Care, Health and Housing	14 April, 2016
Policy and Resources	31 March, 2016

CHAIRPERSON