

COUNCIL

(Civic Centre, Port Talbot)

Members Present:

30 May, 2018

The Mayor: **Councillor D.Keogh**

Councillors: A.R.Aubrey, S.Bamsey, D.Cawsey, H.C.Clarke, C.Clement-Williams, S. ap Dafydd, A.P.H.Davies, D.W.Davies, O.S.Davies, R.Davies, J.Evans, S.E.Freeguard, C.Galsworthy, W.F.Griffiths, J.Hale, S.Harris, M.Harvey, N.T.Hunt, S.K.Hunt, C.James, H.N.James, C.J.Jones, D.Jones, R.G.Jones, E.V.Latham, A.Llewelyn, A.R.Lockyer, A.McGrath, R.Mizen, J.D.Morgan, S.Paddison, S.M.Penry, D.M.Peters, M.Protheroe, L.M.Purcell, S.Pursey, S.Rahaman, P.A.Rees, S.Renkes, S.H.Reynolds, A.J.Richards, P.D.Richards, A.J.Taylor, R.L.Taylor, A.L.Thomas, J.Warman, D.Whitelock, R.W.Wood and A.N.Woolcock

Officers in Attendance: S.Philips, A.Evans, H.Jenkins, C.Griffiths, K.Jones, A.Manchipp and J.Woodman Ralph

Representatives of the Translation Service: Present

1. **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

It was with great sadness that the Mayor advised Council that former Councillor Pam Thomas had recently passed away. Mrs Thomas had been Mayor of the County Borough for 2009/10.

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

2. **THE LEADER OF COUNCIL'S INAUGURAL SPEECH**

The Leader of Council, Councillor R.G Jones, gave Council his inaugural speech.

The Leader confirmed that since he was elected Leader of Council he had undertaken to meet with Leaders of the Opposition Groups to exchange information about key issues. Cabinet Members had been encouraged to bring before Council matters that fell within their portfolios.

In addition, the scrutiny function within the Council had further developed and strengthened. Members of Council had been involved in the development of the Corporate Plan. The Valleys' Task and Finish Group had been convened to look at issues within valley communities and draft proposals had been shared with the Leadership.

Partnership working has been strengthened. A work programme had been developed with the local voluntary sector so that both sectors can work together on shared priorities.

All of this demonstrated an inclusive approach to Council business.

The Leader confirmed that the focus had and would continue to be on ensuring that the priorities contained within the Corporate Plan would be delivered for the benefit of communities.

A report on the Authority's performance for 2017-18 would be brought before Council shortly.

The Leader highlighted the emphasis for the next 12 months which included:

- To extend the Digital Programme. A revised Digital Strategy would be brought for Members' consideration before the summer recess;
- To further investigate ways to generate additional income.
- Details of a pilot project seeking to identify new and different ways in which the Council can work with communities;
- A further report on the City Deal;
- The next Phase of the 21st Century Schools programme would be brought forward which would include the outcome of the consultation on education provision for the Afan Valley;

- Work would continue to progress the work started at Pantteg;
- A range of announcements would be made in relation to regeneration projects.

The Leader also confirmed that as a result of issues raised in the Budget process last year, some specific issues would be revisited:

- A proposal would be brought forward for consideration in regard to developing Tourism in the County Borough;
- Proposals from the Friends Group at Pontardawe Arts Centre were awaited;
- Further input was also awaited in relation to Cefn Coed Museum;
- Proposals from the Valleys Task and Finish Group had been received in draft form. Consideration would be given on how to progress;
- The Budget Strategy for 2019-20 would be initiated prior to the summer recess. This would enable Members to be briefed on the forecast for the next financial year and beyond with specific budget proposals subsequently being progressed through the autumn period. Members were asked to submit any ideas for saving money or raising income as early as possible so that they could be included in the budget process.

The Leader thanked his Cabinet Members, all Members of Council, staff and the Chief Executive for all the work that had been undertaken throughout the year. In addition, the Leader thanked all partners for their support.

Both Leaders of the opposition parties were supportive of the issues that were covered by the Leader and emphasised the many challenges the Council faced in setting future budgets.

RESOLVED: That the Leader's inaugural speech be noted.

3. **THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION/GREEN PAPER RESPONSE**

Council was provided with a briefing on the Welsh Government's Green Paper "Strengthening Local Government, Delivering for People" issued on 20 March 2018 as detailed in Appendix 1 to the circulated report and the terms of a proposed response.

Members were supportive of the response to the Green Paper and asked that a copy of the report be appended to the letter that was proposed to be sent to the Cabinet Secretary.

RESOLVED: That the proposed response from Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council to the Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public Services be approved and that a copy of today's report be appended to the letter.

4. **CHANGES TO THE COMMITTEE CYCLE**

RESOLVED: That the proposed changes to the Committee Cycle for 2018/19, as contained in the circulated report, be approved.

5. **MEMBERSHIP OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

Council received an addendum to the report of the Head of Legal Services on the proposed Membership of the Standards Committee following the interviews carried out on the 29 May 2018.

RESOLVED: That the following candidates be appointed as independent members to the Standards Committee:

Louise Fleet

Tom Ward

CHAIRPERSON