

CABINET

Minutes of a Remote meeting held on 8th June, 2023.

The Committee agenda is available [here](#).

The Meeting recording is available [here](#).

Present: Councillor L. Burnett (Chair); Councillors R.M. Birch, B.E. Brooks, G. John, S. Sivagnanam, E. Williams and M.R. Wilson.

Also Present: Councillors E. Goodjohn and Dr. I.J. Johnson.

C18 ANNOUNCEMENT –

The Leader welcomed all parties to the Cabinet meeting and reminded everyone present that the meeting was being Live Streamed as well as recorded via the internet and this recording archived for future viewing.

She asked if all participants please ‘mute’ themselves when not speaking in order to avoid any background noise or feedback when other participants were speaking, and if a participant wished to speak if they could put their hand up (to be seen on screen) or use the ‘raise hand’ function.

Members were asked to ensure that all debate was raised verbally and not via the ‘chat’ function for the sake of the recording. The ‘chat’ function could be used to highlight any technical issues and/or to get the attention of the Chair or Democratic Services Officer.

C19 MINUTES –

RESOLVED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 25th May, 2023 be approved as correct record.

C20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

No declarations of interest were received.

C21 USE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S EMERGENCY POWERS (EL/PR) (SCRUTINY – ALL) –

The Leader presented the report, the purpose of which was to notify Cabinet of the exercising of Emergency Powers by the Chief Executive since the last report on 27th April, 2023. The report was the latest update to Cabinet and section 2 of the report

advised of such matters as amendments to budgets, changing revenue to capital expenditure and acceptance of grant funding.

This was a matter for Executive decision.

Cabinet, having considered the report and all the issues and implications contained therein

RESOLVED – T H A T the use of the Chief Executive's Emergency Powers be noted.

Reason for decision

To inform Cabinet.

C22 HYBRID MEETING PLATFORM UPDATE (EL/PR) (SCRUTINY – CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES) –

The Leader presented the report, the purpose of which was to inform Cabinet of the findings of the Civico Hybrid Meeting platform regression testing and recommended decision on how to proceed with hybrid public meetings. Since the pandemic when complex decisions on matters had to be taken via telephone exchanges, meetings had evolved to allow people to attend in person, at home or in the office and still allowed people to fully participate in a hybrid or multi-location way. Members were visible to the public and the meetings recorded and livestreamed to remain open and transparent. The Part I and Part II reports being considered were an update on the latest position.

The report linked in to a Part II report later on the agenda which contained commercially sensitive data, but highlighted the considerable work undertaken by Officers on the regression testing of the Civico Hybrid meeting platform, the data gathering undertaken across Welsh Local Authorities and suppliers in the market space which informed the functional requirements detailed in Appendix A to the report, against which existing products had been assessed with the outcome of the assessment stage of the project addressed in the Part II report.

Paragraphs 2.10 and 2.11 of the report stated that Civico were no longer developing the platform that they were currently under contract with the Council to provide, and instead had developed a new solution with additional functionality such as hybrid voting to the Microsoft Teams platform. That solution had been demonstrated to the project team but was not able to be fully demonstrated as expected.

The report detailed the preferred option going forward as set out in paragraphs 2.18 and 2.19 with associated costings detailed in the Part II report, which would allow further testing during the initial year to build confidence in the new system in advance of entering into a longer-term contract arrangement. Paragraph 2.26 of the report advising that Microsoft Teams and live stream via OBS and YouTube would continue to be used to facilitate remote meetings until a replacement Hybrid Meeting

platform capable of providing suitable translation requirements had been identified and implemented.

Paragraph 2.22 aligned to the work undertaken by Officers for a proposal to invest in a dedicated 500Mbps (megabytes per second) broadband link to be installed in the Council Chamber's Audio / Visual Room and Paragraphs 2.27 to 2.35 of the report referred to practical and resource implications and recommended a feasibility study be undertaken regarding a fixed layout in the Council Chamber and Committee Rooms, giving further consideration to the Council's current approach towards live streaming and the uploading of meeting recordings and canvassing all Elected Members to establish their choice of language when participating in Council and Committee meetings of which they were a member to inform proposals regarding Welsh translation; these elements being matters to be addressed in potential revisions to the Council's Multi-Location Meetings Policy.

The Leader further advised that the report would be referred to Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee for its consideration

This was a matter for Executive decision.

Cabinet, having considered the report and all the issues and implications contained therein

RESOLVED –

(1) T H A T the position as outlined within the report be noted and that Cabinet would consider the data provided in the Part II report before making a decision on the way forward regarding the Council's contractual arrangements and options going forward later in the agenda.

(2) That the report and the Part II report on the same matter, later on the agenda, be referred to Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee for its consideration.

Reasons for decisions

(1) To ensure that Cabinet was aware of the work that had been carried out since the last update to Cabinet on Thursday 17th November, 2022 and to approve a way forward.

(2) For Scrutiny Committee's consideration.

C23 DISPOSAL OF A SMALL PARCEL OF HOUSING OWNED LAND AT TRE-BEFERAD, BOVERTON (NBS) (SCRUTINY – HOMES AND SAFE COMMUNITIES –

The Cabinet Member presented the report, the purpose of which was to seek Cabinet approval to dispose of a small parcel of non-operational housing land

suitable for use incidental to the enjoyment of the adjacent dwelling house only (as identified at Appendix A).

The Council's Strategic Insight Board had been consulted to ascertain if there was a use for the parcel of land within the Council. There had been no expression of interest from any parties in retaining the land. Consultation had been conducted with the local Ward Members who had raised no objections to the land sale and the land was therefore considered surplus to the wider Council's requirements.

This was a matter for Executive decision.

Cabinet, having considered the report and all the issues and implications contained therein

RESOLVED –

- (1) T H A T the parcel of Housing land shown at Appendix A to the report be declared as surplus to Council requirements.
- (2) T H A T authority be given to the Head of Housing and Building Services to dispose of the land shown on the plan at Appendix A to the report under Sections 32-34 of the Housing Act 1985 subject to compliance with the relevant legislative provisions, any statutory consents required and Resolutions (3)-(5) below.
- (3) T H A T delegated authority be granted to the Director of Environment and Housing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood and Building Services and Head of Finance / Section 151 Officer/Operational Manager Financial Services to agree the appropriate terms and conditions for disposal of the parcel of land.
- (4) T H A T the Council relied on Consent E of the General Consents for the Disposal of Houses and Land 1994 made under the Housing Act 1985 for the disposal to comply with the relevant legislative provisions and any statutory consents required.
- (5) T H A T the Monitoring Officer/Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to prepare, complete and execute the required legal documentation to formalise any disposal subject to Resolutions above.

Reasons for decisions

- (1) To comply with the Council's Constitution
- (2) To ensure compliance with the relevant legislative provisions, any statutory consents required and the Resolutions above.
- (3) To allow for the land to be disposed on suitable terms and conditions.
- (4) To ensure compliance with the relevant legislative provisions and any statutory consents required.

(5) To legally formalise the disposal of the land and to ensure compliance with statute and subject to the Resolutions above.

C24 CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL – UPDATE TO TERMS OF REFERENCE (SCH) (SCRUTINY – HEALTHY LIVING AND SOCIAL CARE) –

The Cabinet Member presented the report, the purpose of which was to amend the Terms of Reference for the Council's Corporate Parenting Panel.

The previous Terms of Reference for the Corporate Parenting Panel described the agreed membership of the Panel but did not state for how long those appointed / nominated would serve, as was the case with other Outside Bodies / Joint Committees.

The Leader said it was sensible to align the Corporate Parenting Panel with other Council Committees and Bodies to allow sitting Members to develop their expertise.

This was a matter for Executive decision.

Cabinet, having considered the report and all the issues and implications contained therein

RESOLVED – T H A T the Terms of Reference for the Corporate Parenting Panel, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, be amended to confirm that Members appointed or nominated to serve on the Corporate Parenting Panel would do so until the local government elections in 2027.

Reason for decision

To confirm the duration of membership for those Members nominated to sit on the Corporate Parenting Panel.

C25 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC –

RESOLVED – T H A T under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 4 of Schedule 12A (as amended) of the Act, the relevant paragraphs of the Schedule being referred to in brackets after the minute heading

C26 HYBRID MEETING PLATFORM UPDATE (EL/PR) (SCRUTINY – CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES) (EXEMPT INFORMATION – PARAGRAPHS 13 AND 14) –

The Leader presented the report, the purpose of which was to inform Cabinet of the findings of the Civico Hybrid Meeting platform regression testing and recommended decision on how to proceed with hybrid public meetings.

Appendix B to the report related to the two options as presented by VP/AV Sound Advice. Option 2 was the preferred option which met all of the functionality which had been identified as part of the function requirements exercise referred to in the Part I report. Option 1 was also supplied by the same company; however, the software was integrated with Microsoft Teams and the product did not meet as many of the Council's functional requirements as Option 2.

Paragraph 2.20 set out the costings from each of the suppliers and Paragraph 2.21 provided the view of the Operational Manager for ICT on the preferred supplier.

Having reviewed the data in consultation with the Council's Procurement Team the Leader proposed an additional recommendation be added to the report that Cabinet authorise the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal and Democratic Services to issue a Voluntary Ex-Ante Notice (VEAT) notice in respect of Recommendation (4), which was agreed.

This was a matter for Executive decision.

Cabinet, having considered the report and all the issues and implications contained therein and noting additional Resolution (5)

RESOLVED –

- (1) T H A T the update as set out in the report be noted.
- (2) T H A T the termination of the Council's existing contract with Civico and the replacement of the current Hybrid Meeting platform with an alternative solution be approved, in light of the results of the regression testing undertaken by officers.
- (3) T H A T the approach proposed to appraise an alternative Hybrid Meeting platform on an up to 12-month performance assessment / proof of concept arrangement be endorsed.
- (4) That delegated authority be granted to the Monitoring Officer/Head of Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Director of Corporate Resources, Chief Executive and Executive Leader of the Council, to execute a 12-month performance assessment / proof of concept pilot contract with MVI – Easy Conf Solution or another supplier with the option to extend at the Council's discretion the contract for a further three-year contract plus an additional year.
- (5) T H A T Cabinet authorises the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal and Democratic Services to issue a Voluntary Ex-Ante Notice (VEAT) notice in respect of Resolution (4).
- (6) T H A T a feasibility study be undertaken regarding the possibility of moving to a fixed layout in the Council Chamber and Committee Rooms.
- (7) T H A T a 500mbps dedicated broadband link be installed into the Audio / Visual Room in the Council Chamber.

(8) T H A T following consideration / approval of the report the relevant aspects contained therein be considered when undertaking the review of the Multi-Location Meetings Policy that was due to commence shortly.

(9) T H A T the report be referred to Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee for its consideration. If no recommendations were forwarded to Cabinet, the decision of the Cabinet would be accepted.

Reasons for decisions

(1) To ensure that Cabinet was aware of the work that had been carried out since the last update to Cabinet on 17th November, 2022.

(2) To authorise the termination of the existing contract with Civico.

(3) To authorise the proposed approach to identify an alternative Hybrid Meeting platform.

(4) To have an appropriate contract in place for the supply and support of an alternative Hybrid Meeting platform that met the requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, the Welsh Government Interim Statutory Guidance on Multi-Location Meetings (August 2021) and the Council's Multiple Location Meeting Policy (as agreed in April 2022 and as amended March 2023), ensuring flexibility should operational difficulties be encountered.

(5) To provide transparency regarding the Council's proposed contractual arrangements.

(6) To consider operational and technical efficiencies regarding adopting a fixed room layout in the Council Chamber and Committee rooms.

(7) To remove the hybrid meeting platform from the Council's computer network to mitigate any potential ICT security concerns and provide a dedicated, non-contended internet link to facilitate quality live hybrid meeting web streaming.

(8) In order that the Multi-Location Meetings Policy can be reviewed appropriately.

(9) For Scrutiny Committee's consideration and / or to progress the matter.