

CABINET

Minutes of a Remote meeting held on 30th November, 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.D. Perkes, S. Sivagnanam, E. Williams and M.R. Wilson.

Also Present: Councillors W.A. Hennessy, Dr. I.J. Johnson and N.C. Thomas.

C162 ANNOUNCEMENT –

The Leader welcomed all parties to the first Vale of Glamorgan Cabinet meeting using the Council's new hybrid solution.

Members and Officers were reminded that the meeting was being livestreamed, recorded and would be uploaded to the Vale of Glamorgan Council's website as soon as practicable after the meeting.

She asked if all participants to ensure that if participating in person in the Chamber that their microphone not be activated and for remote attendees to 'mute' themselves when not speaking to avoid any background noise or feedback when other participants were speaking, and if a participant wished to speak if they could activate their respective request to speak function or use the 'raise hand' function if attending remotely.

Members were asked to ensure that all debate be 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 Officers.

C163 MINUTES –

RESOLVED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 16th November, 2023 be approved as a correct record.

C164 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

No declarations of interest were received.

C165 Q2 UPDATE: AUDIT WALES WORK PROGRAMME AND TIMETABLE 2023/24 - VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL (REF)

The reference from Governance and Audit Committee on 23rd October, 2023 was presented.

The Leader said that the Chair queried the timing of the review into financial sustainability and agreed that some flexibility may be required given that the Council would be required to set its budget during March. The Committee had referred the matter to Cabinet for oversight.

Having considered the reference, it was subsequently

RESOLVED – T H A T the comments of the Governance and Audit Committee be noted.

Reason for decision

Having regard to the contents of the reference and discussions at the meeting.

C166 PROGRESS AGAINST EXTERNAL REGULATORY RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENT (SEPTEMBER 2023) (REF)

The reference from Governance and Audit Committee on 23rd October, 2023 was presented. The Leader said that Governance and Audit Committee had oversight of such matters within the terms of their remit.

The Committee made a recommendation to Cabinet to consider the recommendation of the Governance and Audit Committee for the inclusion of a Priority Status Tracker. The Leader said that worth looking at but noted that the Committee had to have oversight of the entire report and would discuss the matter with the Chair to agree a way forward.

Having considered the reference, it was subsequently

RESOLVED – T H A T the comments of the Governance and Audit Committee be noted, and that the Leader would discuss the inclusion of a Priority Status Tracker with the Chair of the Governance and Audit Committee.

Reason for decision

Having regard to the contents of the reference and discussions at the meeting.

**C167 VALE OF GLAMORGAN POLLING DISTRICT AND PLACES
REVIEW 2023 (REF) –**

The reference from Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 15th November, 2023 was presented.

The Leader said that a range of comments had been made during the Committee meeting focused around the geography of polling districts themselves rather than the polling stations, in particular polling stations in Cowbridge. It was considered appropriate to await the outcome of the ongoing Community Review before making any minor changes to the make-up of polling districts.

With regard the polling stations themselves, comments had been made concerning the lack of a polling station in Plymouth ward in Penarth for districts JE0 and JF0, and a request made to assess if there were any options that could be included in lieu of stations at Stanwell Road Baptist Church and All Saints Church which were close to the boundary but not in Plymouth ward, however despite best endeavours no alternative had been found and as such the status quo would remain. Subsequently, it had been established that the Windsor Bowling Club was an option that was able to be moved forward. As such, a recommendation when the matter was to be considered by Cabinet could be for the Plymouth ward that the following arrangements be proposed:-

- Lower Penarth Community Hall – would continue to serve polling district JJ0.
- Cwrt-Y-Vil Community Centre – would continue to serve polling district JK0.
- Windsor Bowling Club – would become a new polling station to serve polling district JF0 and JE0, lying immediately adjacent to polling district JE0.
- Stanwell Road Baptist Church – would continue to serve polling district JD0 for St Augustine’s only, rather than a double station.
- All Saints Church Hall – would continue to serve the polling district LA0 for Stanwell only, rather than a double station.

The matter would go to Full Council for a final decision and polling stations were kept under constant review, in particular access to public transport to access polling stations. Councillor Wilson said that transport accessibility was an important consideration and any polling station had to be fully accessible.

Having considered the reference, it was subsequently

RESOLVED –

(1) T H A T the report before Cabinet be referred to Full Council on 4th December, 2023 as an urgent item, whilst recognising that the matter had already been considered by the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

(2) T H A T the comments of the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee be noted, while acknowledging that any changes to polling districts in advance of the outcome of the ongoing Community Review would be premature.

(3) T H A T in referring the matter to Full Council for consideration on 4th December, 2023, attention be drawn to the amended arrangements for Plymouth ward as set out.

(4) T H A T the use of the urgency procedure as set out at section 15.14 of the Council's constitution be agreed to refer the report to Full Council on 4th December, 2023 for consideration.

Reason for decisions

(1-4) Having regard to the contents of the reference and discussions at the meeting to enable the matter to be considered at Full Council on 4th December, 2023.

C168 CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL –

Councillor Williams, who Chaired the Panel, referred to the discussions that had taken place concerning the Corporate Parenting Charter which was an initiative from Welsh Government designed for Authorities to sign up to and improve the set standards of Corporate Parenting care. The Panel's response had subsequently been sent to Welsh Government.

The Panel also discussed school attendance and the complex issues that often cause young people to miss school and heard from different agencies working together to combat attendance issues. Consideration was also given to the latest available figures concerning the numbers of Children Looked After.

RESOLVED – T H A T the minutes of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on 11th September, 2023 be noted.

Reason for decision

In noting the minutes.

C169 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 21st September, 2023.

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.

Reasons for decisions

To inform Cabinet.

C170 NOMINATIONS FOR THE ROLES OF INDEPENDENT BOARD MEMBER REPRESENTING LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO THE CARDIFF AND VALE UNIVERSITY HEALTH BOARD AND THE NATIONAL JOINT COMMITTEE FOR THE NATIONAL ADOPTION SERVICE AND FOSTER WALES (EL/PR) (SCRUTINY – HEALTHY LIVING AND SOCIAL CARE) –

The Leader presented the report, the purpose of which was to submit a nomination to the two relevant bodies from the Vale of Glamorgan Council before the associated December closing dates. Suitable nominations were proposed for candidates with the depth of experience required for the two responsible roles.

Councillor Williams thanked Cabinet for his nomination and said that Councillor Lloyd-Selby had proven her competence and ability in dealing with health issues and was happy to second her nomination, as was Councillor Wilson. Councillor Sivagnanam was happy to second the nomination of Councillor Williams.

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 Councillor Susan Lloyd-Selby be the Vale of Glamorgan Local Authority nomination for the role of Independent Board Member on the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board.

(2) T H A T subject to Resolution (1), the associated CV and personal statement for Councillor Lloyd-Selby stating how they met the Person Specification for the role be submitted to the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board (UHB) before the 15th December, 2023 closing date.

(3) T H A T Councillor Eddie Williams be the Vale of Glamorgan Local Authority nomination to the National Joint Committee for the National Adoption Service and Foster Wales.

(4) T H A T subject to Resolution (3), that Foster Wales be provided with the details of the nomination before the 8th December, 2023 closing date to proceed with setting up an inaugural meeting.

(5) T H A T the use of the urgency procedure as set out at section 15.14 of the Council's constitution be agreed to enable the submission of a nomination to the two relevant bodies from the Vale of Glamorgan Council before the associated December closing dates.

Reason for decisions

(1-5) To submit the nominations from the Council before the relevant closing dates.

C171 DRAFT VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL ANNUAL DELIVERY PLAN 2024-25 (EL/PR) (SCRUTINY – ALL) –

The Leader presented the report, the purpose of which was to seek Cabinet endorsement of the draft Annual Delivery Plan 2024-25 for the purpose of consultation.

The Leader said it was an important document to measure and guide activities moving forward. Organisational Resilience was a key critical challenge as it was important to have people with the right skills in the right organisational structure to be able to deliver against many challenges that the Authority faced. Work on the new Corporate Plan would also commence shortly. The Annual Delivery Plan would go to all Scrutiny Committees as part of the wider programme of consultation.

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 draft Annual Delivery Plan (Appendix A to the report) be approved as the basis for consultation as described in the report.
- (2) T H A T the consultation approach and timetable as set out in the report be approved.
- (3) T H A T the approach taken to draft the Annual Delivery Plan and the relationship with Annual Service Plans be noted.
- (4) T H A T the report be referred to all Scrutiny Committees as part of the programme of consultation requesting any comments to be shared with the Director of Corporate Resources to inform revisions to the Annual Delivery Plan, prior to Cabinet considering a final draft in due course.

Reasons for decisions

- (1) To ensure that consultation could be undertaken on the draft Annual Delivery Plan.
- (2) To ensure that effective consultation is undertaken within the necessary timeframes for publishing the Annual Delivery Plan.
- (3) To ensure Cabinet were aware of how the Annual Delivery Plan had been developed and how it would provide the framework for Annual Service Plans.

(4) To ensure that all Scrutiny Committees had the opportunity to consider the draft Annual Delivery Plan and provide feedback as part of the programme of consultation.

**C172 SCHOOL ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS 2025/26 (EAWL)
(SCRUTINY – LEARNING AND CULTURE) –**

The Cabinet Member presented the report, the purpose of which was to seek Cabinet approval to consult on the Local Authority's school admission arrangements as required by the Welsh Governments School Admission Code issued in July 2013.

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 Local Authority's draft school admission policy at Appendix A be approved for consultation on the Local Authority admission arrangements for all community schools in the Vale of Glamorgan for the academic year 2025/2026. The outcome of the consultation exercise would be reported to Cabinet in March 2024 for consideration and approval of the Local Authority admission arrangements for the academic year 2025/2026.

Reason for decision

Para 2.3 (page 6) of the School Admissions Code (Wales) July 2013 stated that "Admission Arrangements must be consulted on for each maintained school between 1st September and 1st March and be set by 15th April of the school years beginning two years before the school year in which the arrangements would apply".

**C173 VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL TREE STRATEGY (NBS/SP)
(SCRUTINY – ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION) –**

The Cabinet Member presented the report, the purpose of which was to consider the first draft of the Vale of Glamorgan Council Tree Strategy 2024/39 and to agree arrangements for public consultation.

Councillor Wilson said that although the Strategy was in Draft, it was thorough and had not been rushed, with considerable input from numerous Officers and external experts. Attached to the Strategy was a Technical Report which included a methodology, a study of tree canopy and ground cover. The Strategy also considered the benefits of trees in reducing the likelihood of flooding by excess surface water run-off, the removal of air pollution, the capturing of carbon and the enhancements of habitats for wildlife. A repeat of the survey was also recommended in ten years' time.

To ensure that an increase in tree canopy could occur, an analysis of where tree planting could occur had to be undertaken, considering the deprivation of the area,

the impact of reduction of air pollution and improving the quality of green spaces. Use of websites such as Treezilla would monitor the health of trees.

Community engagement was important in raising awareness of the importance of trees, with many external groups in and around the Vale of Glamorgan who have an interest in the matter. Trees enhanced a sense of place, enhanced wellbeing and made towns and villages attractive places to live.

The Strategy set out a number of aims and objectives, including a net increase of canopy by 5% by 2039, as well as looking at policy context such as the Future Generations Act 2015.

Councillor Wilson encouraged external stakeholders to make their views known as part of the external consultation.

The Deputy Leader said that a huge amount of work had gone into the Draft Strategy, with some exciting strategic elements going forward, particularly around Placemaking, and she looked forward to seeing the consultation responses.

Councillor John referred to Paragraph 2.15 of the report which referred to ensuring that the right tree be planted in the right place, which was such an important consideration. Councillor Perkes agreed with Councillor John.

Councillor Wilson said that Members needed to work together to embrace trees as assets in the fight against climate change.

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 Vale of Glamorgan Draft Tree Strategy 2024-39, attached at Appendix B to the report, be agreed in principle.
- (2) T H A T the draft Strategy be subject to public consultation for a period of 12 weeks.
- (3) T H A T as part of the consultation process the draft Strategy be presented to the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee for consideration and comment.
- (4) T H A T on conclusion of the 12-week consultation period the consultation responses would be considered by Cabinet and the final Vale of Glamorgan Tree Strategy 2024/39 agreed.

Reasons for decisions

- (1) To agree the start of a process to develop a robust framework for all tree related decisions and activity in Vale of Glamorgan over the next 15 years. The draft Tree Strategy set out standards for the management of the tree resource under the stewardship of the Vale of Glamorgan Council which complied with nationally recognised codes of practice and would mitigate third party risks, as well as increase the urban tree canopy and help to protect trees and woodlands as a valuable natural asset.
- (2) To ensure that a wide cross section of views was sought on the Strategy.
- (3) To seek views from the relevant Scrutiny Committee.
- (4) To consider all the consultation responses prior to agreeing the final Strategy.

C174 MATTER WHICH THE CHAIRMAN HAS DECIDED WAS URGENT –

RESOLVED – T H A T the following matter which the Chair had decided was urgent for the reason given beneath the minute heading be considered.

C175 HYBRID MEETING PLATFORM UPDATE (REF) – (Urgent by reason of the need to agree a preferred option to inform key decisions required to be made in proceeding with hybrid public meetings and the Committee’s recommendation be referred to Cabinet for further consideration.

The urgent reference from Democratic Services Committee on 27th November, 2023 was presented.

Committee had considered a report on the revised Multi-Location Meetings (MLM) Policy at its meeting on 17th July, 2023 before making recommendations to Cabinet for consideration on 7th September, 2023 where it was that the MLM Policy be adopted but that there be a trial period of six months for Scrutiny Committee meetings being undertaken on a hybrid basis and broadcast live.

The report considered by Committee on 27th November, 2023 provided an update in relation to the implementation of the Easy Conf hybrid system for Committee meetings and the beginning of a phased approach for the introduction of hybrid public meetings.

Officers from Democratic Services would be supporting the hybrid meetings and Members taking part either in person or remotely, which would continue during the trial period. Members had received training on the use of the new hybrid system to try and minimise user-error going forward, but there was increased complexity concerning the provision of Welsh translation at certain meetings, additional screens, use of laptops, etc.

It was hoped that the first Full Council meeting using the hybrid system would be in January 2024, but it was recognised that there would have to be changes made to the Council Chamber. The last Full Council meeting in the Chamber accommodated 47 Members, now there were 54 Members. The shape and dimensions of the Chamber posed challenges in accommodating Members and additionally required Officers at meetings, as well as having to adhere to certain legislation such as Health and Safety requirements and the Equalities Act.

The Committee discussed a range of potential options, each outlining different occupancy levels (based on the current and predicted Council Membership and number of Officers supporting), dimensions of existing and new furniture in various layouts, and resolved to use Option F with a capacity of 40 spaces in the Chamber, using current furniture set out in new layout (circular option). It was not currently known how many of the 54 Members would want to come in and attend meetings in person for every meeting, however early indications were that not all would do so and therefore there was no need to spend unnecessarily whilst the Authority faced budgetary pressures.

There had been discussion that the Chamber should be able to accommodate all Members of the Council, which the Leader understood, but there was a possibility that money could be money spent paying for empty seats. Further discussion centred on all Members of the Council having to be present in the Chamber for Council meetings, but the Leader pointed out that such a requirement was not in current legislation and therefore not in the Council's MLM Policy.

Councillor John reminded colleagues that there were also 12 to 16 Officers that attended Council meetings which had to be considered if in person meetings were taking place, and that the Boundary Commission was currently considering potential further changes which would also have to be accommodated. The Leader agreed those were valid considerations and if the Option to spend £136k had been proposed then the existing furniture in the Chamber would have been repurposed and used in other venues within the Council, such as the Committee Rooms.

Councillor Williams said that the viewpoints and options under consideration were laid out clearly at the Democratic Services Committee meeting and there was a recognition that the way that the Council did business had changed as had the technology used to do that business. He pointed out that the option chosen was for a trial period.

Councillor Perkes said there had been a good discussion at the meeting and felt it was important that the trial period be undertaken while it was ascertained if Members and Officers could be or wanted to be in the Chamber for meetings, as people's personal circumstances had to be considered.

Councillor Sivagnanam agreed with Councillors Williams and Perkes. She said that it was important to be as inclusive as possible for all Councillors from all walks of life which included understanding that not everyone may want to attend meetings in person. ICT had become more widely used post-Covid and was an option to be used to attend meetings.

Having considered the reference, it was subsequently

RESOLVED –

(1) T H A T the comments from the Democratic Services Committee on 27th November, 2023 be noted.

(2) T H A T Option F be agreed as the preferred option for hybrid public meetings.

Reason for decisions

(1-2) Having regard to the contents of the reference and discussions at the meeting.