



COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MULTI-LOCATIONAL MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON TUESDAY, 20TH MAY 2025 AT 5.00PM

PRESENT:

Councillor C. Gordon – Presiding Member
Councillor E.M. Aldworth – Deputy Presiding Member

Councillors:

M. Adams, C. Andrews, A. Angel, C. Bishop, C. Bissex-Foster, A. Broughton-Pettit, M. Chacon-Dawson, R. Chapman, P. Cook, D. Cushing, E. Davies, D.T. Davies MBE, K. Etheridge, M. Evans, A. Farina-Childs, C. Forehead, E. Forehead, A. Gair, N. George, D. Harse, T. Heron, A. Hussey, D. Ingram-Jones, M. James, L. Jeremiah, G. Johnston, J. Jones, S. Kent, A. Leonard, P. Leonard, C. Mann, A. McConnell, C. Morgan, S. Morgan, B. Owen, T. Parry, L. Phipps, M. Powell, D.W.R. Preece, H. Pritchard, J. Pritchard, J.A. Pritchard, J. Reed, J. Roberts, R. Saralis, S. Skivens, E. Stenner, J. Taylor, C. Thomas, A. Whitcombe, L. Whittle, S. Williams, W. Williams and J. Winslade.

Together with:

R. Edmunds (Chief Executive), R. Tranter (Director of Legal, Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer), M.S. Williams (Executive Director Corporate and Regeneration), R. Hartshorn (Executive Director Education and Social Services), M. Lloyd (Executive Director Housing and Environment), G. Jenkins (Director of Children's Services), L. Lane (Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer), R. Thomas (Planning Services Manager), L. James (Principal Planner), K. Peters (Service Manager, Service Improvement and Partnerships), J. Pearce (Business Improvement Manager), P. Cooke (Transformation Manager - Decarbonisation), L. Woolley (Decarbonisation Project Officer), S. Pugh (Head of Communications), S. Hughes (Senior Committee Services Officer) and A. Jones (Committee Services Officer).

RECORDING, FILMING AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Presiding Member reminded those present that the meeting was being live streamed and a recording would be made available to view via the Council's website, except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items – [Click Here to View](#). He advised that decisions would be made by Microsoft Forms.

ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE LEADER

The Leader of Council announced the appointment of Marcus Lloyd as Executive Director for Housing and Environment and Robert Hartshorn as Executive Director for Education and Social Services. The Leader expressed how they both have extensive experience in local government and demonstrated passion and drive during the selection process.

1. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S. Cook, C. Cuss, N. Dix, G. Ead, C. Elsbury, G. Enright, J.E. Fussell, B. Miles, J. Rao, J. Scriven, J. Simmonds, K. Woodland and C. Wright.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received at the commencement or during the course of the meeting.

3. PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

There were no awards presented.

4. COUNCIL HELD ON 8TH APRIL 2025

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 8th April 2025 be approved as a correct record.

5. CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH 2ND REPLACEMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2020-2035 - PRE-DEPOSIT PLAN (REVISED PREFERRED STRATEGY) - INITIAL CONSULTATION REPORT

Consideration was given to the report which outlined to Council the issues raised through representations received during the public consultation exercise undertaken in January and February 2025 in respect of the Caerphilly County Borough 2nd Replacement Local Development Plan 2020 - 2035 (2RLDP) Pre-Deposit Plan (Revised Preferred Strategy). The report advised Council of the representations from Welsh Government and sought Council approval for the actions in respect of the issues set out in the Initial Consultation Report. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Public Protection provided an overview of the report.

A Member asked about the potential building on greenfield sites and Welsh Government's stance on this. In response, the Planning Services Manager informed Council that national guidance prioritises brownfield site development, and that sites will be assessed accordingly.

A Member raised concerns about the timing of the 3rd call for Candidate Sites, which coincided with the deadline for the consultation responses. The Member felt that this was undemocratic as residents were unaware of the new sites and could not comment on them. The Member questioned whether this was a Council decision or imposed by Welsh Government. The Planning Services Manager clarified that the consultation process was a Council decision. It was explained that there will be further opportunities for public consultation at the deposit stage, allowing residents and Members to comment on the Candidate Sites. The Member also expressed concerns regarding a lack of consideration for private vehicle users, particularly the elderly and disabled, emphasising that modal shift to cycling, walking and public transport may not be practical for everyone.

A Member asked whether the key dates for the preparation of the Deposit Plan was realistic, given the total of 63 sites submitted as part of the 3rd call for Candidate Sites. In response, the Planning Services Manager acknowledged that the key dates for the preparation of the Deposit Plan are challenging, however Members were informed that as part of the process a number of sites would likely be ruled out at the first stage of assessment making the timetable more manageable.

A Member referred to the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 (Well-being Act). The Member raised concerns regarding access to amenities for new housing developments and questioned the effectiveness of the Council in ensuring these amenities are provided. The Planning Services Manager explained that the Local Development Plan sets the framework for delivering development and associated infrastructure. Issues are addressed at the development management stage, and the plan seeks to identify sites that can be delivered with the necessary infrastructure.

A Member referred to the public consultation exercise, noting that it ended the same day as the 3rd call for Candidate Sites, and questioned its use in the process. The Executive Director for Corporate and Regeneration and the Planning Services Manager provided clarification on the public consultation exercise and the 3rd call for Candidate Sites. It was explained that the 3rd call for Candidate Sites allowed developers to submit further proposals. It was further explained that the public consultation exercise was undertaken in respect of the Revised Preferred Strategy, and there will be a detailed public consultation in the new year, allowing residents and Members to comment on the Candidate Sites. Another Member questioned the sufficiency of the six-week consultation period. The Planning Services Manager advised that the six-week period is statutory, but alternative periods can be considered, although the current timetable was already very challenging.

Clarification was sought on the preference for brownfield sites over greenfield sites, noting that whilst building on brownfield sites is generally seen as more environmentally friendly, some brownfield sites may be more hazardous due to contamination. The Planning Services Manager explained that brownfield sites often present significant challenges due to contamination and require extensive site investigation and remediation efforts, but priority is given to them over greenfield sites.

Following consideration of the report it was moved and seconded that the recommendations be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation (and in noting there were 41 For, 5 Against and 7 Abstentions) this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that: -

1. The content of the ICR be noted.
2. The actions in respect of the issues set out in the Annexes of the ICR be endorsed.
3. The work on the preparation of the 2RLDP be continued to prepare the Deposit Plan in accordance with the Delivery Agreement (DA) between Caerphilly CBC and Welsh Government be agreed.

6. PANEL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

Consideration was given to the report which informed Members of the Panel Performance Assessment that is due to take place in September 2025. Council agreement was sought to delegate the right to determine membership of the panel and agreement of the scoping document to the Leader and the Chief Executive. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance provided an overview of the report.

A Member asked how the panel will be selected and whether elected Members will have any input. The Chief Executive explained that the panel will be composed of highly qualified and experienced individuals proposed by the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA). Members were informed that the panel will focus on the Council's transformation agenda, and that there are other methods for Members to raise additional issues. In response to

further questions, Members were informed that they will have the opportunity to engage with the panel during the assessment stage, before the panel send their final report to Council.

Following consideration of the report it was moved and seconded that the recommendations be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms (and in noting there were 54 For, 1 Against and 0 Abstentions) this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that: -

1. The requirements of the panel performance assessment be noted.
2. The right to determine membership of the panel and agreement of the scoping document be delegated to the Leader and the Chief Executive.

7. CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH NET ZERO CARBON 2050 STRATEGY

Consideration was given to the report which sought Council endorsement of the Caerphilly County Borough Net Zero Carbon 2050 Strategy, which has been developed and approved by the Caerphilly Local Delivery Group of the Gwent Public Services Board. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Prosperity, Regeneration and Transformation provided an overview of the report.

The Decarbonisation Project Officer delivered a presentation to talk Members through the Net Zero Carbon 2025 Strategy.

A Member asked how the Council has worked with businesses and organisations on the Caerphilly Net Zero Carbon 2050 Strategy. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Prosperity, Regeneration and Transformation spoke about collaboration with 80 businesses and highlighted specific examples of support provided.

A Member emphasised the importance of making residential and commercial buildings more energy efficient and inquired whether there are any schemes or initiatives in place to help residents improve the energy efficiency of their homes. The Transformation Manager for Decarbonisation acknowledged the challenge of retrofitting existing homes to make them more energy efficient. It was highlighted that the Strategy is primarily focused on behaviour change and encouraging residents to take action themselves. Members were informed that there are grant funding schemes available, providing means-tested support for energy efficiency improvements. The Transformation Manager for Decarbonisation also noted that part of the Strategy's action plan is to collate information on available funding and make it accessible to residents in a user-friendly manner. This will help residents identify and access the support they need to improve the energy efficiency of their homes.

A Member inquired about the impact of a private mining company's activities on the Net Zero Carbon Strategy, specifically regarding downstream greenhouse gases. The Executive Director for Housing and Environment explained that the Strategy will account for all emissions within the county borough, but specific guidance from Welsh Government on the new proposed tips legislation, which could consider any impacts on measuring these emissions is still awaited. It was noted that the planning application details from the private mining company are not yet available, so it is difficult to determine the exact impact on the Net Zero Carbon 2050 Strategy.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Prosperity, Regeneration and Transformation concluded by expressing his gratitude to the Decarbonisation Team for their fantastic work in developing the Strategy. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member encouraged Members to reach out to the team with any questions, emphasising their availability and willingness to help.

Following consideration of the report it was moved and seconded that the recommendations be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms (and in noting there were 51 For, 2 Against and 1 Abstention) this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that: -

1. The Caerphilly County Borough Net Zero Carbon 2050 Strategy be endorsed.

8. NOTICE OF MOTION – FAST TRACK GWENT

Consideration was given to the Notice of Motion standing in the name of Councillors E. Forehead and C. Andrews and supported by Councillors A. Hussey, A. McConnell, T. Heron, M. Adams, L. Whittle, J. Simmonds, M. Chacon-Dawson, G. Johnston, K. Woodland, S. Morgan and C. Forehead, which requested that Caerphilly County Borough Council becomes a member of Fast Track Gwent under the umbrella of Fast Track Cymru. Members were informed that Fast Track Cymru is committed to achieving the UNAIDS 95/95/95 targets aiming for 95% of people who are living with HIV to know their HIV status, 95% of people who know that they are living with HIV to be on lifesaving antiretroviral treatment, and 95% of people who are on treatment to be virally suppressed, as well as reaching zero new transmissions of HIV in Wales by 2030 and the goals of the Wales HIV Action Plan. Council was asked to consider the Notice of Motion as set out in paragraph 5.1 of the report and make an appropriate recommendation.

The comments of the Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee were noted.

A Member expressed support for the Notice of Motion and highlighted the importance of fast-tracking compensation for people infected with HIV through contaminated blood.

The Notice of Motion was moved and seconded. By way of Microsoft Forms (and in noting that there were 55 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions) the Notice of Motion was unanimously supported.

RESOLVED that the Notice of Motion be supported.

9. TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR

Councillor D. Ingram-Jones provided her first update since being elected as Mayor. She shared highlights from her recent attendance at the Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace and also mentioned upcoming community and civic events, including a visit from delegates of Ludwigsburg, emphasizing the long-standing partnership and the importance of strengthening ties.

10. TO RECEIVE PETITIONS UNDER RULE OF PROCEDURE 28(3)

There were no petitions received.

11. TO RECEIVE AND TO ANSWER QUESTIONS RECEIVED UNDER RULE OF PROCEDURE 10(2)

There were no questions received under Rule of Procedure 10(2).

12. TO RECEIVE AND TO ANSWER QUESTIONS RECEIVED UNDER RULE OF PROCEDURE 10(3)

Question received from Councillor K. Etheridge to the Cabinet Member for Education and Communities, Councillor C. Andrews.

To ask the Cabinet Member for Education how much has currently been spent on the buyback provision PFI for the Welsh Schools?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Education and Communities, Councillor C. Andrews, to Councillor K. Etheridge.

Following Council's decision to voluntarily terminate the Schools PFI Contract for Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni and Lewis Boys School Pengam, project management and legal support has been provided by Local Partnerships and Bevan Brittan. The total cost of these services to date is £188,563.44 and these costs were factored into the business case for the proposed voluntary termination. The buyout of the PFI Contract is a very complex matter and progress has been slower than anticipated due to delays in the provision of vital financial information from the PFI Contractor. As previously agreed, once the termination process has been completed a further report will be prepared for Council setting out details of the compensation sum paid, all costs incurred throughout the termination process, and the ongoing revenue budget savings achieved.

13. TO RECEIVE QUESTIONS UNDER RULE OF PROCEDURE 10(12) FOR WHICH A WRITTEN RESPONSE WILL BE PROVIDED

There were no questions received to be answered in writing.

The meeting closed at 6.36 pm.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 1st July 2025 they were signed by the Presiding Member.

PRESIDING MEMBER