



# Cwmbran Community Council Cyngor Cymuned Cwmbrân

You are summoned to attend the following meeting:

## **Policy & Finance Committee**

**Monday 12 March 2018 @ 6.00pm**

Venue: Council Chamber Council House, Ventnor Road, Cwmbran NP44 3JY

To: Councillors:

- (i) Councillor AL Bird (Vice Chairman)
- (ii) Councillor Rh Bennett
- (iii) Councillor M Day
- (iv) Councillor N Hopkins
- (v) Councillor LG Johnston
- (vi) Councillor M Johnston
- (vii) Councillor RD Kemp
- (viii) Councillor KK Manneh
- (ix) Councillor M Villars
- (x) Councillor WJ Walker

Also Councillors:

Councillor R Jones  
Councillor PJ Cathcart  
Councillor SJ Brooks  
Councillor SWJ Ashley (Chairman)  
(Ex Officio Members)

*3 Members must be present for the meeting to be quorate.*

To: ALL OTHER MEMBERS FOR INFORMATION

1. **Apologies for Absence**

(Must be submitted by the Member concerned in advance of the meeting)

2. **Members' Declarations of Interest**

Members are asked to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interests that they may have and sign the Interests Sheet to give details of the nature of the interest.

(Must be declared in writing at the meeting)

### ***Finance and Audit Items***

3. **[Itemised Schedule of Receipts & Payments \(January 2018\)](#)**

Schedules of receipts & payments and bank reconciliation are attached for members only. (Members of the public may obtain this information from the Clerk to the Council).



#### 4. **Statement of Accounts 2017/18**

As the end of the financial year approaches, work is in hand in relation to the preparation of the annual accounts. Members are asked to consider the following:

- (i) The Council's internal auditor carried out an interim audit of the Council's systems of internal control on 5 February 2018. This is an important aspect of the Council's internal control environment, as a satisfactory interim audit reassures Members that the Council's systems are sound.

The internal auditor's report on the outcome of the interim audit is awaited.

- (ii) The Council's existing financial systems are maintained in house. Members scrutinise this information at key intervals.

The preparation of the end-of-year accounts and Annual Return though, calls for specialist accounting expertise. In recent years, enquiries have therefore been made about options to improve the process.

DCK Accounting Solutions Ltd provide a specialist service for the sector. Their knowledge is recognised by One Voice Wales and the National Association of Local Councils (NALC). They provide an accounting service for several large town & community councils in Wales.

DCK Accounting Solutions Ltd have quoted to provide support in relation to accounts year-end closedown and preparation of Year End Financial Statements (including information for the Annual Return.) Their quote is £1545.80.

- (1) In view of the added assurance this would give to Members and their expertise & reputation, it is **recommended** that the quote is accepted.
- (2) It is also **recommended** that discussions continue with DCK Accounting Solutions Ltd about potential software tools with a view to eventually moving to a computerised accounting system. This would further improve the Council's internal control environment.

#### 5. **Earmarked Reserves: Staffing Salaries (inclusive)**

The sum of £60,000 is identified within the Council's Earmarked Reserves for Staffing Costs. This is to help meet any expenditure which was unforeseen when budgets were set. Members have discussed the potential to utilise Earmarked Reserves to meet additional "one off" staffing costs which have been approved during 2017/18 (Minute PF17/052 refers). This would reduce pressure on budgets.

It is **recommended** that a contribution from Earmarked Reserves (Staffing) of £15,000 is approved to meet additional expenditure approved during 2017/18.

#### ***Governance Items***

#### 6. **Governance Items**

It is important that the Council keeps its governance arrangements under review. The Council has a good record in this respect. Members are asked to consider the following:

(i) [Investment Strategy](#)

This should be approved each year. The 2018/19 Strategy is therefore attached.

It is **recommended** that the Council approve the attached Strategy.

(ii) Standing Orders

The Council approved a minor change to standing orders in 2017 but has not confirmed them in their entirety since 2014. An updated copy is therefore attached, which also corrects a minor inconsistency in relation to the threshold for initiating formal tenders. Contract Standing Orders have also been amended to ensure consistency.

It is **recommended** that the Council approve the attached [Standing Orders](#) and [Contract Standing Orders](#).

### ***Other Items***

7. **Vacancies on Governing Bodies**

There is currently a vacancy on the Council's representation on the Governing Body of Henllys Church in Wales Primary School.

The Governing Body has confirmed that a parent who works at the school is interested in becoming a Governor. The lady's name is Katie Davies and she recently nominated herself for Parent Governor but was unsuccessful.

It is **recommended** that the Council consider the vacancy.

8. [\*\*One Voice Wales Membership Fees 2018/19\*\*](#)

To consider the attached letter.

9. **Torfaen Draft Well-being Plan**

To report progress in relation to the above.

Following consideration at the meeting held on 22 January 2018, Members asked to receive regular reports on progress (Minute PF17/056 refers).

The following information is reported.

- (i) Following the above meeting, informal discussions have taken place at officer level with other town & community councils locally about potential ways to demonstrate how we contribute to the objectives in the Well-being Plan. Details will be reported.
- (ii) Town & Community Councils are represented on the Torfaen Public Services Board (PSB) by Councillor Steve Harris of Pontypool Community Council. Councillor Harris has confirmed his commitment to this role. A copy of the draft minutes of the Joint Meeting of the PSB & Officer Support Group of 24 January 2018 has been sent to Members under separate cover however they are not in the public domain until approved at subsequent meetings.

10. **Requests for Financial Assistance**

To consider the attached report.

11. **Council House Matters**

(i) **Annual Health & Safety Inspection**

To consider the attached report. The report also provides an update on the recent Fire Safety Risk Assessment.

(ii) **Supply of Electricity.**

To consider the attached report.

12. **Seminars & Outside Bodies**

To consider the attached reports in relation to seminars and meetings of outside bodies, attended by representatives of the Council.

(i) **One Voice Wales Larger Councils Committee** 24 January 2018

(ii) **South Wales Larger Councils Forum** 30 January 2018

13. **Guidance for Principal Councils on the Review of Communities**

The Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales (the Commission) has been asked by the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government to provide updated guidance on the conduct of community reviews by principal councils to support greater consistency in the manner in which community reviews are conducted.

The Commission has published the guidance in its final form. The Guidance is available on the Commission website <http://ldbc.gov.wales/publications/guidance/commrevguide/?jsessionid+0714C02801543F5F18C2E1C556BF6C7F;jsessionid=DC8069E9C6EEDD45436226275F6D6227?skip=1&lang=en> Hard copies (20 pages) are available from the Clerk.

Primarily this is a guide for principal council officers in the conduct of a review of their communities. It has also been drafted to inform interested parties, in particular town and community councils, as to how the process should operate.

The Commission is aware that in the *Reforming Local Government: Resilient and Renewed* White Paper the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government confirmed the commissioning of a comprehensive review of the community and town council sector.

The review will take around a year and any recommended changes following the review will be implemented after due consideration. This guidance will therefore be an important document for officers of principal councils and interested parties in the intervening period.

14. **Exclusion of the Press & Public**

*In view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, it is recommended that the following matter be considered in private and that the power of exclusion of the public under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act, 1960 be exercised.*

15. **Staffing Matter**

To consider an oral update from the Clerk re current staffing matters.



**David Collins DMS, FSLCC**  
**Clerk to the Council/Clerc i'r Cyngor (Proper Officer / Swyddog Priodol)**  
**Cwmbran Community Council/Cyngor Cymuned Cwmbrân**

*5 March 2018/ 5 Mawrth 2018*

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