

Minutes of a Meeting of the Policy & Finance Committee of Cwmbran Community Council held on Monday 10 September 2018

Present Councillor SWJ Ashley (in the Chair), Councillors AL Bird, Rh M Bennett, PJ Cathcart, M Day, M Johnston, WJ Walker and DH Williams.

Also David Collins (Clerk to the Council) and Clare Facey (Administrative Officer)

PF18/027 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were accepted from Councillors SJ Brooks (civic duties), N Hopkins (illness) KK Manneh (work commitments) and M Villars (holiday).

PF18/028 Declarations of Interest

Members were 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.

PF18/029 Itemised Schedule of Receipts & Payments (June 2018 and July 2018)

Members considered the above information, including bank reconciliations.

Issues raised by Members included:

- Pension Lump Sum Payment 18/19 (code C01)
- Unpresented Cheque 10672
- Reimbursement of Payroll (code C01)

It was **recommended** that the information is noted.

PF18/030 Quarterly Financial Monitoring 2018/19: Quarter 1 April, May, June 2018

Members considered the above information. Members noted that information included details of variances against budget. The Clerk referred to information about variances included within the report and undertook to annotate future reports to further explain variances and the way in which expenditure was incurred, such as via standing monthly payments or as expenditure was incurred.

It was **recommended** that the information is noted.

PF18/031 Computerised Accounts

Members noted that the Clerk and Administrative Office had arranged to visit Pontypool Community Council on 11 September 2018 to inspect the accounts software used there. Visits to other nearby councils were also planned. The Clerk reported that he would also be taking observations from Councillor M Johnston in view of his role in relation to Financial Regulation 2.2.

It was **recommended** that

(1) the information is noted.

(2) details of progress are reported to Full Council on 3 October 2018.

PF18/032 Annual Review of Internal Audit and Audit Plan 2018/19

Members considered a report which reviewed the Council's audit arrangements. The report followed consultation with the Council's Internal Auditor. All Members of the Council had been provided with a copy of the report.

The Clerk highlighted key features of the Council's internal environment. In particular, Members noted measures which were in place in relation to anti-fraud and corruption.

It was **recommended** that Review of Internal Audit and Audit Plan are approved.

PF18/033 Risk Register 2018/19

Members considered a report, including Executive Summary, which reviewed the Council's Risk Register. All Members of the Council had been provided with a copy of the report. The Clerk described some minor updates to the draft Risk Register which reflected developments since the report had been drafted. In particular, Members noted that the report of the Independent Panel referred to in item 6.9 had now been published. (Minute PF18/038 below refers). The Risk Register would be amended accordingly.

It was **recommended** that Risk Register 2018/19, as amended, is approved.

PF18/034 Review of Financial Regulations 2018

Members considered revised Financial Regulation, which were based upon model regulations published by One Voice Wales. The Clerk highlighted the key changes from the Council's existing regulations. All Members of the Council had been provided with a copy of the draft regulations.

Members approved minor amendments to the draft regulations 4.9, 5.8 and 11.1 (g). Members also highlighted the need for the format of the regulations to be reviewed to ensure standard use of fonts and paragraph numbering etc.

It was **recommended** that Financial Regulation 2018, as amended, are approved.

PF18/035 Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2018

Members noted that the Clerk had responded to the outstanding points raised by the Council's external auditor in relation to the above. The report of the auditor was now awaited. The Council was required to publish Notice of Conclusion of the Audit by 30 September 2018.

It was **recommended** that:

(1) the information is noted.

(2) details of progress are reported to Full Council on 3 October 2018.

PF18/036 Well-being

Members noted that the Leader and Clerk had attended a workshop in July hosted by Welsh Government. The workshop had provided practical insights for town & community councils on working together to help deliver local Well-being Plans.

The event had confirmed the good progress which the Council had already made in relation to reporting annually against the Local Well-being Plan. It had also allowed the Council to benchmark with other, similar sized Councils.

Following on from the workshop, Clerks from town & community councils in Torfaen had discussed potential ways in which local councils could continue to demonstrate progress in delivering Well-being.

It was **recommended** that:

- (1) the information is noted.
- (2) the appointment of Councillor SJ Brooks to represent town & community councils on the Torfaen Public Service Board is noted.

PF18/037 Torfaen County Association of Local Councils

Members considered the minutes of the meeting of Torfaen County Association of Local Councils held on 7 August 2018. Some of the ways in which dialogue with Torfaen County Borough Council and Torfaen Public Service Board would be taken forward were set out in the minutes. A workshop had been arranged for 25 October 2018 to take forward the arrangements referred to. The minutes also confirmed the appointment of Councillor SJ Brooks to represent town & community councils on the Torfaen Public Service Board.

It is **recommended** that the minutes are noted.

PF18/038 Independent Review Panel on Community and Town Councils in Wales Outline Findings and Recommendations

Members considered the findings and recommendations of the above Panel. Details of the findings and recommendations had been circulated in advance to Members. The Clerk had attended a workshop on 15 August 2018 at which the findings and recommendations were presented. A number of Members had taken the opportunity to follow the workshop proceedings via a live streaming of the event.

The Clerk highlighted some of the key findings and recommendations of the Panel. In particular, Members noted the Panel's recommendation that "place based services" should become the responsibility of Community and Town Councils. The Clerk referred to a forthcoming workshop he had been invited to attend by the Chief Executive of One Voice Wales. One Voice

Wales was part of a consortium working on a Welsh Government programme to make information and data available at the town level across Wales. The workshop would discuss with a small group of council representatives the sort of data town/ larger communities would find useful for community planning purposes.

Members also discussed partnership arrangements with unitary authorities, which had been the subject of consideration by the Panel. Members considered that partnership arrangements with Torfaen County Borough Council could be improved. The Clerk drew attention to opportunities in place locally for dialogue between the Council and its partners, including the Public Service Board.

It was **recommended** that the findings and recommendations of the Panel are noted.

PF18/039 “Police Academy”

Members noted that Gwent Police had created a Citizens’ Police Academy based on an idea that had proved popular in the USA.

The project would allow people access to the Police so that they could learn about different aspects of the work, the challenges faced and how people could work with the Police to solve problems. It would educate the public about Gwent Police, increase trust and enable the public to better manage their expectations when dealing with the Police. It would also enable the Police to benefit from intelligence and knowledge from members of the public.

The Council had been invited to participate in this project, which was free to attend and ran from mid-October for 5 weeks. The sessions would be once a week for two hours (6.00 pm to 8.00 pm). A number of Torfaen County Borough Council Members and some Members from other Town & Community Councils have already indicated their support.

A number of Members indicated their interest in taking part in the work of the Academy.

It was **recommended** that Members notify the Clerk if they wish to participate in this project.

PF18/040 Seminars & Outside Bodies

Members considered reports in relation to seminars and meetings of outside bodies, attended by representatives of the Council:

- (i) Northville Underpass Steering Group 19 July 2018

Councillor Bird reported orally to update Members on the work of the above group, including a further meeting of the group held on 6 September 2018. He outlined the aims of the project, which focussed on the eradication of anti-social behaviour in the vicinity of the underpass. He described the role of the local community in leading on the project. An Expression of Interest had been submitted to the Police and Crime Commissioner for funding.

Policy & Finance Committee 2018/19
Subject to Confirmation by Full Council

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| (ii) | One Voice Wales Gwent Valleys
Area Committee AGM | 24 July 2018 |
| (iii) | One Voice Wales Gwent Valleys Area Committee
2018 | 24 July |

It was **recommended** that the above information is noted.

Signed (Chairman, Cwmbran Community Council)