

**MEETING OF THE CABINET OF TORFAEN COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
held on Tuesday 15 June 2010 at 10.30am to 12.55pm
in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Pontypool**

NB the agenda for and the reports presented to this meeting are available to view at <http://www.torfaen.gov.uk/CouncilAndDemocracy/CouncillorsDemocracyAndElections/CouncilMinutesAgendasAndReports/CouncilMinutes/Cabinet/15-06-2010a.pdf>

MINUTES

1. **Attendance:** Councillor Bob Wellington (Leader) (in the Chair)

Executive Members (with portfolios): Councillors:

Mary Barnett - Children and Young People
Cynthia Beynon MBE - Equalities and Community Safety
Gwyneira Clark - Planning, Public Protection and Housing
Richard Clark - Corporate Governance
John Cunningham MBE, KSG - Neighbourhood Services
Lewis Jones - Deputy Leader
Brian Mawby - Health, Social Care and Well-being
Marlene Thomas - Resources

Officers:

Nigel Aurelius - Assistant Chief Executive (Resources)
David Congreve - Assistant Chief Executive (Communities)
Farooq Dastgir – Director of Technology-led Transformation
Peter Durkin - Deputy Chief Executive
Richard Edmunds - Head of Strategic Services
Sue Evans – Chief Officer, Social Care and Housing
Richard Gwinnell – Lead Officer, Council and Member Support
Christina Harray – Chief Officer, Neighbourhood Services
Pauline James – Head of Asset Management
Tim James – Assistant Chief Legal Officer
Kevin Mulcahy – Group Leader, Transportation
Mark Provis – Chief Education Officer
Duncan Smith - Chief Planning and Public Protection Officer
Alison Ward - Chief Executive
Lynda Willis - Chief Legal Officer and Monitoring Officer

Also attending:

Sally Church – Head of Leisure and Community Services
Fiona Ford – Countryside Access Officer
Ben Hunt (ICT – Digital Cabinet support)
Craig Mead – Development Planner

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David Weaver – Group Accountant (in the public gallery)

7 members of the press and public (in the public gallery)

Action

2. Apologies for Absence

2.1 No apologies for absence were received.

3. Declarations of Interest

3.1 Councillor Brian Mawby declared a personal interest in agenda item 9 (the Shared Resource Centre) as he was a member of the Board of Aneurin Bevan Health Board (who may be a potential future partner in the venture). He remained in the meeting, spoke and voted, as this was not a prejudicial interest.

3.2 Councillor Mary Barnett (later in the meeting) declared a personal interest in agenda item 13 (Shepherd's Hill caravan site and the Race FC study) as she was a governor of Coleg Gwent (who were mentioned in debate in respect of the red-gra area which belonged to the college). She remained in the meeting, spoke and voted, as this was not a prejudicial interest.

4. Minutes – Cabinet – 18 May 2010

4.1 **AGREED – that the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 18 May 2010 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.**

5. Update on actions agreed at the above meeting

5.1 The updates were **noted**.

6. Financial results 2009/10

6.1 Cabinet considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Resources), (ACXR) providing members with the key financial results of the authority for the last financial year.

6.2 The ACXR outlined the report in detail, commenting particularly:

- that the council's financial health continued to improve
- on the General Fund balance of over £4 million (which was up from £1.9 million in 2004 and heading for the target of £5 million)
- on the current public sector funding environment, which was very

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challenging, and on the emergency budget expected next week, which could involve significant and immediate funding cuts

- on the anticipated squeeze on public funding for years to come
- on the need to maintain reserves and not use them to prop up revenue spending
- that the housing revenue account (HRA) balance would revert to the General Fund with effect from 2010
- on the service-specific reserves
- on the extra resilience built in for Neighbourhood Services and the good progress being made on savings in that service area
- on the £2.3 million service underspend (and the specifics of that)
- that the education/social care underspend enabled a further budget of £500,000 to be created for service transformation, in light of the spending cuts on the way
- this meant that the £1 million transformation fund already created could be used for other service areas
- that the underspend on members allowances and expenses was being put in reserve for the next county borough elections
- that £9 million of loans had recently been paid off, saving hundreds of thousands in interest charges
- that income collection and recovery remained very good
- that there remained much to be done, but this was a very good out-turn position and
- that the statement of accounts would be reported to Council.

6.3 The Executive Member for Resources stated that she had met with trade union representatives before this meeting, as she usually did before Cabinet meetings, and that they had (1) expressed concern at the overspend in Neighbourhood Services (2) hoped that any budget cuts would not be in front-line service areas and (3) stated that they would be taking up the offer to sit on the Stakeholder Panel (in relation to the leisure options review). She (the Executive Member) welcomed this report; stated that it was a good basis on which to go forward; and referred to the importance of maintaining reserves.

6.4 Other members commented and/or questioned:

- that the finances of the authority were very well managed and good strategic decisions had been taken, but the problems ahead should not be under-estimated
- with disappointment that the savings in education were not being released back to the General Fund
- that relations and collaborative working were very good with schools and the School Budget Forum
- that any substantial cuts would have a devastating impact on schools
- that the current position was comforting but there were difficult choices ahead and no room for complacency
- that the situation was very good, compared to that which the

- authority could be facing if budgets were managed less well
- with congratulations to the ACXR and his team for their work
- that the level of debt was of concern and should be explained more clearly and
- that the auditor had praised Torfaen recently for its debt collection performance.

6.5 The ACXR replied in brief that:

- the HRA balance should help improve the position on the General Fund further
- engagement with chief officers was better in relation to reserves held within services – so ensuring they were used for transformation, rather than spending on day to day services
- the authority's debt, of around £10 million, was a tiny proportion of the amount raised each year and was made up mostly of debt which was outstanding from previous years and
- he would provide more details about the authority's debt on request and in the report to Council on 29 June.

6.6 For the reasons set out in the report, Cabinet:

agreed to note:

- (i) the Authority's financial standing within the context of the financial risks facing the Council**
- (ii) the position in respect of the individual service areas**
- (iii) the position in respect of Income Collection and Recovery and**
- (iv) that the Council will consider the Accounts for 2009/10 at its meeting on 29 June 2010**

and approved:

- (i) the contributions to specific reserves and provisions outlined in the table in paragraph 5.4 of the report**
- (ii) the contribution from the General Fund Balance of £131,250 as set out in paragraph 5.3 of the report and**
- (iii) the contribution from the former HRA balance of £1,569,480 as set out in paragraph 5.3 of the report.**

7. Leisure Services: options appraisal

7.1 Cabinet considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Communities) (ACXC), seeking approval to undertake a formal appraisal of the management options for Leisure Services, as the next stage of the review commissioned by Council in 2009.

7.2 The ACXC outlined the report, commenting particularly:

- that the Green Team considered it appropriate to look at a range of options for the future of leisure services in Torfaen – so a formal options appraisal was recommended
- on the large scale of leisure services – with £1.9 million annual net expenditure, a turnover of £4 million, an asset base of £15 million and 101 (full-time equivalent) staff
- on the need for capital investment in the leisure offer and other pressures for change referred to in the report
- that the “base case” presumption was that in-house provision was best: all other options would be assessed against the in-house provision and the service should remain in-house unless a clear case for change was demonstrated and
- that trade union representatives would be welcome to join the Stakeholder Panel: such an offer had been made.

7.3 Members commented and/or questioned (in summary):

- in support of the stakeholder panel to look at the options
- that the number of leisure facilities had reduced over the years
- that it was important to assess how much money leisure facilities were losing, in order to assess their future viability
- that the asset base must be more than £15 million: more than that had been spent on the facilities in the last few years
- how many staff were actually employed (as many were part time)?
- with congratulations to the staff for the turnaround in leisure centres in the past year (as demonstrated by the positive financial out-turn referred to in the previous report)
- that the stakeholder panel should include representatives from education and youth services.

7.4 The ACXC responded that:

- £15 million was probably an under-estimate of the value of the assets
- the options appraisal would involve looking at the financial position in a lot more detail
- approximately 300 people in total were employed, most on a part-time basis, in leisure services – 101 was the full-time equivalent
- that the stakeholder panel would comprise a mix of people; key groups/people would be needed, such as user representatives, employees and trade unions and there would also probably be an open invite, for people to put themselves forward if they were interested in having a say and
- the detail of the panel membership would be worked up with the Deputy Leader in due course but it would need to be strategic.

7.5 **AGREED – for the reasons set out in the report that Cabinet:**

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- notes the work undertaken to date
- commissions a formal appraisal of the options outlined in paragraph 6.2 of the report and
- delegates authority to the Assistant Chief Executive (Communities) in consultation with the Deputy Leader to progress the matter, with an expectation of a further report outlining feasible and preferred options to Cabinet in the autumn cycle.

Dave
Congreve

8. Effectiveness in meeting social care needs – annual report

8.1 Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Officer, Social Care and Housing, presenting the annual Social Care effectiveness report and seeking agreement to present it to Council and publish it.

8.2 The Chief Officer, Social Care and Housing outlined the report in detail, commenting particularly:

- that the report was prepared to reflect self-assessed performance but also the views of colleagues, peer evidence and user evidence, and was externally validated
- that she proposed to deliver a powerpoint presentation at the Council meeting
- that all local authorities were now required to report annually on the effectiveness of their social care services, using the same evidence grid, so that performance could easily be compared and audited; making it transparent, open and useful
- on the main priorities of the service (principally, continuously monitoring caseloads and ensuring that resources were diverted to protecting the children, young people and vulnerable adults who were most at need at any given point in time)
- that working in collaboration was increasingly vital, as was ensuring the maximum quality and minimum price from bought-in services
- on the need for maximum efficiency and effectiveness - for example the proposal to locate an occupational therapist within customer care, so as to deal with simple queries at the first point of contact and the need for staff increasingly to use ICT solutions
- that the number of complaints was low, with 47 at stage 1, 4 progressing to stage 2 and only 1 going to stage 3; demonstrating that the service listened to its customers, treated complaints seriously and was improving
- that the staff were dealing with extremely sensitive issues – in which complaints were sometimes inevitable (e.g. from parents whose children had to be taken into care)
- that the staff were extremely professional, demonstrating good judgements and managing significant risks effectively

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- that there was however a remaining legacy in some areas of high staff sickness rates and some levels of defensiveness amongst staff (with clients) – both of which were being tackled
- that the benefits advice service had obtained £1.2 million extra income for Torfaen families in the last year
- on the new “Have Your Say” Group and the potential to collaborate with health services in this area (as many of the customers of social care services were also customers of health services)
- on the robustness of procedures (e.g. child protection case audits)
- on the improvements in collaboration with education – dedicated social workers had been appointed for schools and meetings were held regularly between herself and the Chief Education Officer
- that the service had been assessed as learning very well from serious incidents, and risk assessment processes were good, but there was no room for complacency
- that the number of children in residential care was low, as was the rate at which children moved between foster placements
- that Torfaen’s foster carers were very good and relationships between the council and carers healthy
- that adult services were good, as was collaboration with the NHS
- that the number of people delayed in hospital (awaiting transfer to a care setting) was down – but there were still 20+ people affected: it was suspected that Torfaen may be measuring differently from other authorities however, so performance could look worse than it actually was in reality
- that the transition for people moving from the care of children’s services to that of adult services was improving, with much greater working together between teams and streamlined processes
- that Torfaen was being watched by other areas in the UK due to its good practice – for example in supporting young people to live independently
- that Torfaen was demonstrably taking a lead in changing traditional ways of doing things and breaking down age-old barriers, which was difficult but necessary if done in collaboration with others
- that Torfaen was also an exemplar in Wales in the way it worked with external service providers under the quality and fees framework (ensuring, if the price went up, so did the quality)
- that the falls prevention service was also leading the way in Wales – although it’s financial sustainability was not guaranteed
- that support to carers was good in Torfaen: supporting carers could be as important as supporting vulnerable people themselves and
- in conclusion, that social care was a complex and demanding environment; Torfaen had had some good successes and had enjoyed a good year, but there remained many challenges ahead (e.g. growing demand with reducing resources).

8.3 The Executive Member for Health, Social Care and Well-being commented that this was a very positive process, which involved engaging with clients and getting their views, and that this year’s report

was even better than last year's. He stated that there remained delays with occupational therapy assessments and disabled facilities grants, but these were being worked upon, and that the service overall was improving and demonstrating that it was doing the best possible with limited resources. In summary, he was pleased with the report, but there was no room for complacency, given the risks to vulnerable people.

8.4 Other members commented and/or questioned (in summary):

- whether any of the complaints received were in relation to children at risk?
- on the excellent foster carers in Torfaen
- on the risks to children living with domestic violence and the lack of specific services for them
- that they were reassured by the collaboration between education and social services
- on the very challenging role of social care
- on the successful challenge day and the lack of serious criticism of the service
- that the transition of care from children's services to adult services had improved significantly and lessons had been learnt from previous cases
- that young people were successfully involved in planning ahead.

8.5 The Chief Officer and Executive Member responded in brief:

- that some complaints may have been from parents whose children were taken into care: this was inevitably a difficult situation
- nevertheless, the interest of the child must always be put first, even if that led to a complaint from the adults involved
- it would be more concerning if the authority received complaints that children were not being protected adequately
- each child was assessed individually and services were provided according to need and risk
- some of the children dealt with by Social Care would be children of domestically-violent parents
- however, resources were limited, so those at greatest risk were the highest priority
- Social Care supported Torfaen Women's Aid and other similar organisations as much as possible
- this week was Carer's Week: members were encouraged to attend the Carer's Centre and demonstrate support and
- without so many people voluntarily caring for others, society would not function.

8.6 **Cabinet AGREED – for the reasons set out in the report, to:**

- **note the content of the annual report, attached as Appendix 1 to the report**

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	Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• recommend that Council approve this report on 29 June 2010 and• support the publication of this report, promoting general awareness of its content.	Sue Evans Ditto
9. Shared Resource Centre (SRC) – treatment of surplus income	
9.1 Councillor Mawby reiterated his personal, non-prejudicial interest in this matter which he had declared earlier.	
9.2 Cabinet considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (DCX), seeking approval to the collaborative agreement for the SRC; for any surplus income to be retained for reinvestment in and development of the SRC; and for delegated powers in relation to the SRC budget.	
9.3 The DCX outlined the report, commenting particularly that: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the SRC involved significant and high speed innovation, as well as a high degree of service integration and consequent savings• the recommendations required some amendment (which the Chief Legal Officer and Monitoring Officer would explain later), but there was no change of substance• this was about putting in place a governance structure and process in relation to the SRC, pending long term formal joint arrangements (for example a public limited company or a joint committee of the constituent public services)• it was also about any financial surplus being reinvested in the SRC, rather than being returned to the General Fund• since the report was written, Monmouthshire County Council had also decided to take part in the SRC.	
9.4 The Chief Legal Officer and Monitoring Officer (CLO&MO) outlined the revised recommendations (the wording of which was subsequently approved and is listed in the decision below and not repeated here).	
9.5 The Leader and other members commented and/or questioned: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• whether, if another organisation wished to join the partnership, the Cabinet would have to agree that (before it could happen)?• that the SRC project was by its nature fast-moving and needed to be able to react to changes in circumstance: it was important to avoid any bureaucracy or delay of decision-making• that Cabinet should visit the SRC and (following advice from the DCX) the next meeting of the Cabinet should be held at the SRC (that suggestion was agreed)• that it was hoped that Aneurin Bevan Health Board would also join the SRC venture in the near future	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• with tribute to the officers involved, led by Farooq Dastgir• that this venture was leading the way in Wales and possibly the UK as a whole• that a delegation to the Leader (to agree the participation of other partners) would be welcome, subject to Cabinet being kept informed of progress• that progress reports should be submitted to Cabinet three or four times a year• on the remarkable, transformational, progress and huge potential of the SRC.		
9.6	During the above discussion, the CLO&MO confirmed that the current proposal was to enter into an agreement with Gwent Police and Monmouthshire County Council, but that the Leader could be given delegated power to agree the participation of further partners if Cabinet so decided.	
9.7	The DCX confirmed that any decisions he proposed to take in relation to other partners would only be taken after consultation with the Leader and that it would be feasible to (and he suggested that Cabinet should) hold the next Cabinet meeting at the SRC.	
9.8	AGREED - for the reasons set out in the report:	
	1. that Torfaen enters into a Collaborative Agreement (substantially in the form attached as Appendix 1 to this report) with Gwent Police Authority and Monmouthshire County Council	Peter Durkin
	2. that Council be asked to approve the budget provision for the Shared Resource Centre which allows any surplus funds in the Shared Resource Centre (SRC) to be retained to develop growth, reinvest and improve the shared service environment at the SRC	Peter Durkin
	3. to delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive, to take Category A “Executive Member” decisions (as defined in the report to Council on 3 November 2009) in relation to SRC staffing structures, joint arrangements and fees and	
	4. to delegate authority to the Leader of the Council to agree to add further partners to the collaborative arrangement.	
10.	Former Trevethin Community School, Penygarn, Pontypool	
10.1	Cabinet considered a report of the Head of Asset Management (HoAM), updating Cabinet on the negotiations with regard to the disposal of this site and proposing an alternative course of action.	

10.2 The HoAM outlined the report, commenting particularly that:

- one of the parties referred to in the report believed that the report omitted some important facts and had asked that a number of points be considered, so she intended first to present the report in detail and then cover the other points identified so that members had the full facts in front of them
- Cabinet agreed to dispose of the site in June 2009
- the site had been marketed in summer 2008, at the lowest point of the housing market, and only 3 bids had been received
- the highest bid was from a nursing home operator, who just beat a volume house builder with their bid
- the decision regarding the sale of the site had been challenged (on the grounds that the council could potentially get more for the site) and the Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee had debated the matter, eventually endorsing the decision of Cabinet (to sell the site)
- the economy was very difficult to predict
- the successful bidder claimed that 100 jobs would be created locally, as it intended to build a nursing home and housing on the site
- it was originally expected that the site would be sold for housing
- the site was marketed in the expectation that social housing grant (SHG) would be available to assist with the building costs of affordable housing
- it became clear in March 2010 that SHG would not be available for this site
- the lack of SHG affected the potential sale price of the site (as it increased the cost of development)
- the sale price was also affected by the Council's change of policy (i.e. the Housing Needs Strategy, produced late last year), which reduced the amount of affordable housing required in this area (from 30% to 25%)
- the amount required by the Council in Section 106 contributions for the site was high, at nearly £1 million (having been developed before the recession)
- the prospective purchaser had now introduced a third party housing developer into the arrangement
- both the prospective purchaser (PP) and the house builder had agreed to honour the agreed sale price, despite the changes in the circumstances of the deal (around the SHG and affordable housing requirement), if the Section 106 contribution was reduced (by around £670,000)
- hence, a year ago, the disposal terms were the best available at the time – but it was difficult to argue that they were the best terms available now
- the economy had changed since the Trevethin site sale price was agreed – with volume house-builders coming back to the market and indicating that competition was high, new housing sales and

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- housing developments were increasing in number and speed and site values in some areas consequently increased
- future markets could not be predicted with confidence, given the public sector funding squeeze, but market activity had increased significantly in the last few months, which was an indicator that the value of the Trevethin site should have increased
 - she therefore recommended that the situation was reviewed, the planning guidance revised, and new bids for the site sought
 - she could not guarantee a better price but this would ensure better transparency
 - the sale price had been agreed when the market was at its lowest, in autumn 2008 – and the price along with the other terms agreed represented best consideration at the time
 - if Cabinet went ahead with the sale now, on the basis agreed last year, it would be difficult to demonstrate (e.g. to auditors) that the terms represented best consideration in the current market - and a decision to dispose of the site at less than best consideration would be required before the sale could proceed
 - the PP felt that the report submitted to Cabinet today was not clear and that it omitted key facts: the HoAM was specifically responding to the comments submitted by the PP
 - contrary to the PP's view, the report was clear and factual – that the SHG was not going to be available, that the sale price was still agreeable to the PP, that they agreed to provide 25% affordable housing, without the benefit of the SHG, but that the Section 106 contribution would have to be reduced (by some £672,000 – which was a considerable reduction), and that although the PP had given assurances in relation to overage and other matters, these would only apply in certain circumstances
 - the PP stated that they had prepared fully integrated site layout plans, but the Chief Planning Officer had not seen any plans of sufficient detail for a planning application
 - the PP had taken exception to the reference in the report to delays
 - there had been significant delays in progressing the transaction, even though all the documents and checks requested by the PP's solicitor in May 2009 had been supplied and completed by the authority within a matter of weeks (in early July 2009)
 - the authority had asked in July 2009 for an undertaking from the developer to underwrite the council's legal fees (which the PP had offered to do), as an indication of their solid commitment – but that was not received until November 2009
 - following receipt of the undertaking, the draft contract had been sent to the PP's solicitor, in November 2009
 - there had been no contact from the PP's solicitor since January 2010 and the contract had not been signed: neither had the PP entered into any meaningful debate on it
 - the PP stressed the benefits to Torfaen of their offer (e.g. local jobs, a nursing home etc) but those considerations were not relevant to the value of the land transaction, and the council had

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not sought a new nursing home on that site

- Melin Homes had not had a chance to comment on the allegations made by the PP in their recent letter (that they (Melin Homes) did not negotiate in good faith) - but Melin had told the HoAM that the PP's affordable housing proposals were not acceptable to them in financial terms
- in conclusion, she had been happy to recommend the sale terms last year as they represented best consideration at the time, but a number of things had changed since, to reduce the value of the deal and there was a significant degree of uncertainty now of further progress; there was no guarantee that the site would now sell for a higher price, but it was not advisable to delay any further; she no longer had confidence in the agreement reached; and, if the site was re-marketed, there was nothing to stop the current PP from bidding again.

10.3 The Leader asked the Chief Legal Officer and Monitoring Officer (CLO&MO) for a view on the legality of the proposal to go back to the market. The CLO&MO stated that the risks of doing so had been addressed sufficiently and that the case had been properly made.

10.4 The Executive Member for Resources stated that she was happy to support the proposal (to withdraw from the current negotiations and go back to the market) in light of the detailed reports from the HoAM which had been presented at this meeting and previously.

10.5 Other members commented, in brief, that:

- the proposal to go back to the market was supported but it was hoped that the site would be redeveloped quickly as it, and the former hospital site at the other end of Trevethin, had lain derelict for too long
- he (one member) had not been given sufficient time to fully consider all the facts presented orally at this meeting – for example the reduction of £670,000 from the section 106 contribution and its impact on the deal as a whole: he asked whether Cabinet should defer consideration of the proposal to a later date, to allow more detailed consideration, or whether the matter should be referred to Council for determination, and stated that he was reluctant to decide one way or the other, without more time
- further delay would not help get a better deal or change the minds of members
- substantial and sufficient information had been provided in order for members to make a decision: it was difficult to see what else could be needed
- progress was needed quickly – negotiations had already taken a year and the lack of progress was of great concern
- furthermore, land prices were possibly now at a peak – so best consideration was likely to be obtained quickly

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<ul style="list-style-type: none">the prospective purchaser had “moved the goalposts” – and not signed a contract – so the council was within its rights to change its mind too.	
10.6 In answer to a further query from the Leader, the CLO&MO stated that there may be reputational implications, but reasons had clearly been laid out by the HoAM, that the best option was to go back to the market. There may be a legal challenge from the prospective purchaser, but the risk of a successful challenge was negligible and manageable in her view.	
10.7 AGREED – for the reasons set out in the report (with 8 members voting in favour and 1 abstaining) that:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">the Council withdraws from current negotiations in respect of the sale of the site	Pauline James
<ul style="list-style-type: none">the site is re-marketed, seeking best consideration and	Ditto
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Cabinet notes that the S106 and affordable housing requirements for the site are to be reviewed and that the Supplementary Planning Guidance will be revised by Council as appropriate.	Duncan Smith
11. North Torfaen Highway and Regeneration Study	
11.1 Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Officer, Neighbourhood Services (CONS), informing members of the recommendations of the consultants following this study and seeking approval to the next stage.	
11.2 The CONS outlined the report, commenting particularly:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">on the significant progress with regenerating the north of the borough: the highway network could limit further progresson the large amount of public engagement (and ward member consultation) undertaken by the consultantson the £9 million cost of the “long list” of optionson the £2 million cost of and the detail of some of the short-listed options andthat there was no funding available to undertake the works involved but that the short-listed options would be further modelled, with a view to seeking funding from the Heads of the Valleys fund and South East Wales Transport Alliance for example in due course.	
11.3 Members commented and/or questioned:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">that a number of seminars had been held on this subjectwhether a seminar was proposed with the community councils?that the real solution was a new road, linking up to the Heads of the	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valleys Road, but that was not realistic • that the road from Pontypool to Blaenavon (through Abersychan) was dangerous in places and severely congested on a daily basis • that the public consultation events had been very well attended • that speedy progress was required and long overdue • the detail of the traffic signals proposed for the Albion Road junction • whether traffic signals should be added to the roundabout? • that traffic signals often delayed traffic, rather than speeding it up • that traffic was flowing more freely through Pontypool since the traffic lights had been out of commission • that this may help car drivers, but added significant danger and delay for pedestrians, particularly people with disabilities • that more progress should be made further up the borough (for example in Abersychan, not in Pontypool) and it was hoped that works could be extended northwards when funds were available. 	
11.4	The CONS stated that a joint seminar with the community councils for the areas affected was scheduled and that the list of possible schemes would be revised when and if (and depending how much) funding was available.
11.5	AGREED – for the reasons set out in the report –
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) to note the Highway and Regeneration Study report undertaken by the approved consultants (AECOM) ii) to approve the accompanying officer recommendations detailed in paragraph 4.12 of the report iii) to authorise the Chief Officer Neighbourhood Services to progress the study and seek funding for both detailed design work and construction for future improvements, as outlined in paragraph 5.3 of the report and iv) that a further report be presented to Cabinet when funding has been secured and a timeframe for implementation of the schemes can be proposed.
	Christina Harrhy
	Christina Harrhy
12.	Application to register a public footpath (no. 287) between Ty Bwmpyn Road and Tal-Ocher Farm, Pentrepiod, known as Watery Lane
12.1	Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Officer, Neighbourhood Services, who outlined it briefly, seeking approval to make an order to modify the definitive map and statement in respect of the above application.
12.2	For the reasons set out in the report, Cabinet AGREED to make a Modification Order to add Public Footpath No. 287 to the Definitive
	Christina Harrhy

Map and that the Order be confirmed if there are no objections.

13. Funding for consultancy services - Shepherd's Hill caravan park

13.1 Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Officer, Planning and Public Protection (COP&PP), which he outlined briefly, seeking funding for the appointment of an engineering consultant (Capita Symonds) to undertake phase 1 of a study to identify the feasibility of continuing to use (1) Shepherds Hill caravan park as a permanent gypsy travellers site and (2) land in the Race area for football playing fields.

13.2 Councillor Barnett reiterated the personal but not prejudicial interest which she declared at the start of the meeting.

13.3 Members commented and/or questioned (in summary):

- that they supported the proposed move forward
- that there had been erosion and subsidence problems at the Race site for 25 years at least and nothing had been done
- that if the Coleg Gwent site was sold for housing, the red-gra area should be retained for the football club and community generally
- the Assembly Minister had recently agreed that Heads of the Valleys funding could be used more flexibly: this seemed an ideal case where funding could be used creatively and that possibility should be explored.

13.4 The COP&PP stated that discussions had already been held with the college, to the effect that if the site was redeveloped, the council would expect the pitch provision to be retained.

13.5 Cabinet AGREED - for the reasons set out in the report - to the allocation of £18,812.50 (which includes £2000 contingency) from the Council's general reserves in order for an engineering consultant (Capita Symonds) to undertake phase 1 of a feasibility study on the future options for Shepherd's Hill and football pitch provision for Race AFC.

14. Appointments to joint committees, partnership bodies and sub-committees of Cabinet

14.1 Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Executive, seeking appointments to the various bodies which fall within the remit of Cabinet.

14.2 An amendment to the list attached to the report was pointed out. The Leader stated that there were a number of queries in relation to the outside body nominations (dealt with at the annual Council meeting), and that he had asked the Lead Officer for Council and Member Support to consult with Councillor Cunningham over any queries.

THESE MINUTES ARE DRAFT AND WILL REMAIN DRAFT UNTIL CONFIRMED AS A CORRECT RECORD BY THE CABINET AT ITS NEXT MEETING

	Action
14.3 AGREED - for the reasons set out in the report	
(1) the appointments to joint committees and partnership bodies listed in appendix A to the report (with the exception of the Community Safety Partnership, to which Councillor Beynon (not Councillor Gwyneira Clark) should be appointed)	Liz Monk
(2) that it continues to appoint an Equalities Sub-Committee (comprising all the members of Cabinet)	
(3) that it continues to appoint the European and Regional Affairs Sub-Committee (comprising all the members of Cabinet) and	
(4) that these appointments have immediate effect up to (and cease on the date that) Cabinet next amends the appointments or the next Local Government Elections.	
15. Date of next meeting (for information)	
15.1 The next ordinary meeting of the Cabinet was scheduled for Tuesday 13 July 2010 at 10.30am in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Pontypool	

Chair

NB councillors who left the meeting briefly (e.g. for a comfort break) during an officer presentation or a debate are not listed in the minutes above as having left and returned. Councillors are only listed as having left/returned if they were absent from the Chamber when a decision was taken.

Richard Gwinnell

**THESE MINUTES ARE DRAFT AND WILL REMAIN DRAFT UNTIL CONFIRMED AS A
CORRECT RECORD BY THE CABINET AT ITS NEXT MEETING**

**LEAD OFFICER COUNCIL AND MEMBER SUPPORT
16 June 2010**