

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD HYBRID IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER
CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND, CF31 4WB /REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT
TEAMS ON WEDNESDAY, 21 JUNE 2023 AT 16:00**

Present

Councillor W J Kendall – Chairperson

S Aspey	H T Bennett	A R Berrow	F D Bletsoe
S J Bletsoe	E L P Caparros	N Clarke	RJ Collins
HJ David	C Davies	P Davies	S Easterbrook
M J Evans	N Farr	P Ford	J Gebbie
W R Goode	RM Granville	H Griffiths	S J Griffiths
D T Harrison	M L Hughes	D M Hughes	M R John
M Jones	MJ Kearns	M Lewis	J Llewellyn-Hopkins
J E Pratt	E Richards	R J Smith	JC Spanswick
I M Spiller	T Thomas	G Walter	A Wathan
A Williams	AJ Williams	HM Williams	I Williams
MJ Williams	R Williams	E D Winstanley	T Wood

Apologies for Absence

JPD Blundell, C L C Davies, RM James, P W Jenkins, RL Penhale-Thomas and
JH Tildesley MBE

Officers:

Mark Galvin	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Lindsay Harvey	Corporate Director Education and Family Support
Rachel Keepins	Democratic Services Manager
Will Lane	Operational Manager Shared Regulatory Services
Carys Lord	Chief Officer - Finance, Performance & Change
Claire Marchant	Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing
Michael Pitman	Technical Support Officer – Democratic Services
Alex Rawlin	Corporate Policy & Public Affairs Manager
Zak Shell	Head of Neighbourhood Services
Mark Shephard	Chief Executive
Kelly Watson	Chief Officer Legal, HR and Regulatory Services

139. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor E Winstanley declared a personal interest in Agenda item 8, due to the fact that Maesteg Town Hall was operated by Awen Trust of which she was an employee.

140. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the following meetings of Council
be approved as a true and accurate record:

12 April 2023
17 May 2023

141. **TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM:**

Mayor

The Mayor listed a series of events he had recently attended including:

- Bridgend College Fashion Show.
- The Bridgend Forces Festival.
- Children's Literary Festival - Magic Gareth Grand Pavilion (Esplanade Avenue, Porthcawl, Wales, CF36 3YW).
- The Bridgend Unsung Hero Awards 2023, on Friday 2nd June at the Heronston Hotel.
- Bridgend Carers Garden Party.
- Bridgend Carers Centre, 87 Park Street CF31 4AZ.
- Steam Awards, Pencoed College, Thursday 8 June.
- Libraries County Book Quiz Grand Pavilion, Porthcawl, on behalf of Awen Cultural Trust, on Wednesday 14th June.

He also highlighted the Pyle & Kenfig Hill Veterans Association event held on Saturday, 10th June 2023 at the association headquarters located at Pyle Royal British Legion Club, as well as his invite to attend the Mayor's Civic Sunday held at Newport Cathedral on Sunday 11th June.

Finally, the Mayor stated that Sarah Murphy, the Leader, Councillor Jon-Paul Blundell, BCBC colleagues, CSC colleagues, Governors, PFA members, Keep Wales Tidy representatives and volunteers are excited to be invited to the Opening Ceremony of Cefn Glas Gardens school, highlighting the Local Places for Nature grant which has helped to make the grounds even more 'purposefully beautiful'. The School have recently won the 'Eco School Innovation Award' in the 'Tidy Wales Awards'.

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member – Social Services and Health

The Cabinet Member for Social Services and Health confirmed how honoured she was to represent all 22 local authorities in the Senedd yesterday. This was for the launching of the Social Partnership Act or what is now termed as the Welsh Way. This will strengthen the involvement of the workforce and trade unions. This would also allow communities to be at the heart of our what we do, in order to promote wellbeing in our communities.

The inaugural Fostering Recognition Awards had recently been held, marking Foster Care fortnight, bringing local authorities together with Council Fostering Teams, to celebrate all their hard work and commitment that gives young people a beneficial start in life.

The Cabinet Member for Social Services and Health expressed her wholehearted gratitude to carers who made a huge difference and greatly improved the quality of life for those in care, through the unrelenting work they undertook in communities, which also made a huge impact on the lives of the young people in question.

Cabinet Member – Housing, Planning and Regeneration

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Regeneration provided Members with a brief update on the latest developments with the regeneration programme at Porthcawl. This incorporated information related to the new sea defences, as well as the new Cosy Corner development which includes a new seafront play area.

Cabinet Member – Climate Change and the Environment

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment provided updates on the following:

A public consultation over plans for how irresponsible dog ownership could be tackled in the future with a closing date of 18 July is now open. Full details are available to view on the consultation pages of the council website.

- The 2023 Love 2 Walk Festival is currently taking place and features a range of different walks that take in areas such as Blackmill, Blaengarw, Bridgend, Porthcawl, Rest Bay and Kenfig Hill. Advance booking is necessary, and further details and a full list of the planned walks can be found on the Love 2 Walk website.

Cabinet Member – Finance, Resources and Legal

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Legal made an announcement regarding Hybont and the recent public meeting he had attended, to gather information and understand what concerns residents held regarding the Hybont proposal.

He explained that at the time it was my understanding that the only by-product to be piped off site would be excess hot water, and that this would be used to help heat local community facilities. However, following the meeting, and clarification regarding the Hydrogen pipeline he learned that his original understanding was incorrect, and that alongside a heat network of water pipes there is a proposal to include a hydrogen pipeline to supply a hydrogen boiler for schools and other buildings around Ynysawdre.

The Cabinet Member expressed regret that his comprehension of Hybont was inaccurate and that subsequently his challenge regarding the pipeline was based on a misunderstanding of the project.

He stated that it was only right to offer an unreserved apology for any upset or anxiety his actions may have caused.

He continued to provide a further update regarding the repayment of loans that had been made to Thurrock Council as part of our Treasury Management Strategy.

Cabinet Member – Community Safety and Wellbeing

The Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Wellbeing provided an update on the community hub scheme that is being trialled in the Garw and Ogmere valleys.

Available between 10am and 1.30pm on both days, the customer service advisors can help with queries and applications for Blue Badges, housing and homelessness applications and council tax enquiries. They can also support people who want to access pest control services or report highways issues such as street lighting or potholes, or waste issues like fly-tipping, graffiti or dog fouling.

This same level of support is also available at all Awen-staffed libraries across the county borough.

For all other matters, residents are advised to visit our website for more information or to use the council's digital self-service options, or to phone the council directly on 01656 643643.

The Cabinet Member also highlighted June as Pride month, congratulating the organisers and volunteers who helped to make the recent Pride Cymru event in Cardiff such a resounding success and stressing the importance of the Council's work in supporting the LGBTQ+ community and helping to promote equality and diversity as part of the Proud Councils network. The Summer Pride event was scheduled for the 24th June.

Chief Executive

The Chief Executive announced the return of Armed Forces Week in Bridgend County Borough, and how this will be marked in different ways including a ceremonial re-signing of the Armed Forces Covenant on Friday 23 June at the Civic Offices to mark its tenth anniversary.

There will also be the raising of the Armed Forces flag outside the Civic Offices, followed by a parade featuring serving troops as well as cadets, veterans and their families, through Bridgend town centre on Saturday the 24th of June. It will begin from Carnegie House at 11am and will head down Wyndham Street and Dunraven Place.

The event will also feature military vehicles, activities, live music and stalls representing the Armed Forces, charities, local organisations and more. It will finish at approximately 1.45pm with a 'drumhead' service.

The Chief Executive also highlighted that the local authority were actively encouraging former members of the armed forces and those who are preparing to re-enter civilian life to consider applying for roles within Bridgend County Borough Council. The current scheme guaranteed an interview to former armed forces personnel.

142. TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE LEADER

The Leader provided an update on the Neath Port Talbot £250 million adventure resort in the upper Afan Valley on the border with Bridgend County Borough, on the edge of the upper Llynfi valley. Intended to trigger a new wave of employment and tourism in the valleys, major works are taking place to prepare the site, and around £20 million will have been invested into the project by autumn 2023.

The Leader provided updates on the temporary closure of footpaths that would be required, the engagement with local residents that had taken place as well as the employment opportunities that would be created from the development.

A site meeting with all Llynfi Valley Members, Afan Valley Members and Wildfox Resorts will be arranged and Caerau members have been invited as the local members to a new quarterly stakeholder forum.

The Leader also provide an update on the Bus Transition Fund, which has been developed as part of a collaboration between local authorities, Welsh Government, Transport for Wales and the public transport industry. The fund provides immediate financial support to bus operators in Wales so that vital services have been able to continue.

Plans are being revised as Welsh Government develop a longer term, sustainable funding model that bridges the gap to a franchising of services.

The Leader made reference to the recent incident in which a light aircraft crashed in shallow waters just 50 yards off Porthcawl's Town Beach as well as the large tracts of

land in the Garw Valley sadly destroyed by wildfire, recognising and thanking the various emergency services that had swiftly responded in both cases.

Finally, the Leader highlighted the deliberate nature of the wildfire and that of over 400 others and mentioned the work the Local Authority was doing alongside South Wales Police and South Wales Fire and Rescue urging residents to report any suspicious activity to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111, and to follow some very simple rules that are designed to keep everybody safe by avoiding accidental fires.

143. **PRESENTATION BY THE CHIEF COMMISSIONER OF SOUTH WALES POLICE**

The Chief Executive presented a report that introduced the South Wales Police Chief Commissioner Alun Michael and the Deputy Commissioner Emma Wools to the meeting, in order to give a presentation on the work of the Police, including some new initiatives.

The Chief Commissioner gave an introduction and referred to the Police and Crime Plan that had been introduced a number of years ago and developed year on year since that time. This reflected what the Police were getting in terms of feedback from the likes of the public and local Councillors and how the South Wales Police were looking to react to change.

He emphasised that partnership working with key stakeholders and partners such as BCBC was at the heart of the work of the Police. He added that in recent times, confidence in policing had become an issue, following events that had taken place in the Metropolitan Police, which had cast a dark shadow over policing in general. However, he wished to make the point that South Wales Police had a different reputation with regards to protecting the public at a high level.

He wished to point out, that levels of crime in the area had reduced and these compared favourable on an All Wales level.

In today's presentation the Deputy Commissioner and himself, would look at 3 main aspects of work, namely Neighbourhood Policing, with funding having been received from Central Government for further Police Officers and PCSO's, a number of whom had been promoted to Police Constables since there had been made additional funding for these positions. Also, topics of discussion would revolve around Violence against Women, including sexual violence and work ongoing to reduce Racism.

The Deputy Commissioner then shared with Members some slides that covered the above areas of ongoing Police work, following which the Mayor invited questions from Members.

The Deputy leader and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Health confirmed that she was pleased to see the strides that had been made in relation to Domestic Violence against women in particular and, that lived experiences are being used to formulate policy, but sought some explanation on how this was being carried out. She also asked if there would be Performance Indicators put in place to gauge the success of this work. She also asked if she could have some reassurance how the Police were actively dealing with any referrals made to them in respect of the welfare of young people. She also pointed out that if there were a lot of repeat offenders re-offending, then did this not reflect that the processes in place were not as effective as they should be.

In terms of repeat offending the Police Crime Commissioner advised that repeat offenders were educated through the form of Agency working, ie with partners as well as involvement through a number of key Criminal Justice bodies, working on this and the

issue of lived experiences. The Deputy Police Commissioner stated that issues such as the above examples were not resolved through form filing or the completion of questionnaires, but more involved victims and survivors of abuse talking to the likes of the Police, Probation service and other key partners. For younger people who were the subject of abuse, there was a piece of work entitled 'Young Voices' that a pathway for those suffering from abuse to speak personally to higher dignitaries in the Police including up to the level of herself, the Chief Constable and the Chief Commissioner, where the issues they had experienced would be addressed if need be, at the highest possible level. There were statutory services that provided avenues of support (in between Court Orders), to both support and intervene with the aim of reducing offenders and changing their behavioural patterns. There were also a number of different metrics used that measured and evaluated various impacts and outcomes, with again, a view to reduce re-offending and cases of harm. She was able to share examples of this with Members on request.

The Police Commissioner added, that the Police also targeted cases of low level violence as this was often a precursor to violence of a higher level then subsequently occurring. He added that a lot of individuals developed this type of nature due to their upbringing or subsequent life's events having a detrimental impact upon them.

A Member pointed out that she was very pleased with the work of the PCSO's in Coity Higher. She was aware that Hate Crime was seemingly fairly low in the County Borough, though she questioned if all incidents relating to this were actually being recorded. The likes of bullying, trolling and on-line toxicity seemed to be becoming more and more apparent in society. Some Councillors including herself, sometimes felt vulnerable to the above. She asked therefore, how the Police could work with Councillors and other politicians in order that they may in turn, feel more protected. The Member also stated that the Council's Highway Authority needed to work more closely with the Police, in order to fully resolve reported highway issues.

The Police Commissioner acknowledged that the last point the Member made was a common issue and that any action required resulting from any issue or complaint, needed to be taken ownership of and dealt with by either or both organisations jointly, as opposed to this falling between two stools and not resolved by either. In terms of Hate Crime, there was a problem now in what was allowed to be acceptable in terms of placing in Social Media platforms, for example, the 'Dark Web' which had originated abroad.

The Deputy Commissioner added that the Police were actively focussing on hate crime/incidents. Some Scrutiny work had been carried out in terms of how data was recorded in order to improve accurate levels of incidents, to actively take action to improve methods of dealing with these. There had also been further work done with Welsh Government on the subject of Hate/Race crime. Women were 27 times more likely to face hate crime than men. The Police were also scoping some work with two key partnership providers and as part of this work, were looking to consult with a range of different community groups and partners and she added that it would be beneficial if there was some elected Member involvement in this too.

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Regeneration, confirmed that an Action Plan had just been released by Welsh Government, called the LGBTQ Plus. He asked the police representatives what work had been done to ensure homophobia, misogyny, biphobia and transphobia is being combated both within the community and in the forces, ie such as the South Wales Constabulary, so that when job applications are made to the Police they are considered not just on their own merit, but also with a level of understanding and compassion.

The Chief Commissioner advised that there were a number of younger Police Officers and PCSO's now with the new recruitment surge having taken place, resulting in some of the older Officers having retired and the recruitment process had involved applicants with some of those attitudes and values firmly in place. He assured that there was a strong commitment from both the Chief Constable and himself, to root out and deal with some of the above examples given. The main ethos of the Police was to 'prevent acts of crime', so that's why a police force was needed in the first instance, hence eradicating bad habits and attitudes some people have in society against others. He added that Police Officers now actually participate in activities such as PRIDE, to promote groups such as this and assist in combating any hate crime and disorder.

A Member pointed out that sometime ago in 2009, Sir Paul Stephenson recommended that police patrols didn't need to include 'doubling up' of Officers. However, lone Police Officers can generate some anxiety, particular with vulnerable groups and in winter hours of darkness. We also have transport providers, ie railway stations and community bus stops and bus stations, where some people feel similarly vulnerable using these in the evenings or later at night. He asked if there was any partnership working taking place, that could address issues such as this.

The Chief Commissioner confirmed that lone policing was an operational issue that was considered by the Chief Constable of Police. There was a balance to be struck in terms of the point just made, in that if for example, two PCSO's worked together in one specific location, then this would take one of them away from patrolling another area of that community. This could then be looked at as a method whereby the Police were not fully utilising the resources available to them. However, in terms of the transport issue so raised, representatives of British Transport Police were represented on the Task Force and at an All Wales level, so he confirmed that he would raise this issue with them. Looking more at community safety in general, the Police Commissioner advised that the Police were continually actively working with local authorities with the aim of making streets safer, particularly for women and younger people and this included at main transport hubs, bus stops and bus/railway stations.

For more information on debate that took place at the meeting please click [here](#)

As this concluded consideration of this item, including the question answer session, the Mayor thanked the Police representatives for attending Council, following which, they retired from the meeting.

RESOLVED: That Council noted the report and the accompanying presentation from the South Wales Police representatives.

144. **REVENUE BUDGET OUTTURN 2022-23**

The Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change submitted a report, in order to provide Council with an update on the Council's revenue financial performance for the financial year ended the 31st of March 2023.

She advised that in February 2022 Council approved a net revenue budget for the financial year 2022-2023 of £319.5m. Due to a technical adjustment in the final settlement the Council's settlement was increased by £4,336 and this was reported to Council on 9th March 2022.

The final outturn position for 2022/2023 was shown in Table 1 of the report. The overall outturn for the last financial year is a net underspend of £2.057m and this has been utilised to supplement earmarked reserves, primarily to supplement the cost of living

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fund for known pressures in the current financial year. The underspend is small in comparison to the overall net budget (0.6%) for 2022/2023 and therefore no transfers have been made to the council fund.

Within the outturn position directorate budgets provided a net overspend of £8.2 million whilst council wide budgets had a net underspend of £9.5 million. The out-turn position also takes into account the additional council tax income which was collected over budget during the financial year.

The 2022/23 financial year was a difficult one for the Council advised the Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change. The overall underspend on the council budget significantly masked underlying budget pressures which were reported during the year. The main financial pressures are in the service areas of social services and well-being, homelessness and home to school transport.

During 2022-2023 social services experienced significant pressures to meet statutory duties against a backdrop of an exponential increase in demand in children social care and an increase in the number of independent residential placements within children services, alongside pressures in learning disability and older persons residential placements. The council will need to give further consideration to the sustainable resource required specifically in children services to improve the quality of outcomes for children and families in Bridgend.

The council has seen a significant increase in the provision of temporary accommodation to support individuals who become homeless. It did receive grant funding from Welsh Government during the last financial year to support this service, however £2.5m of this was on a one off basis. This is another service that will require close financial monitoring during the current financial year.

In addition, the council had to address funding pressures during the last financial year in relation to pay and price costs that had not been anticipated earlier in the year. Elected members were briefed on this in year pressure in the Autumn of last year. These pressures are likely to continue into the current year and therefore money has been carried forward to meet those pressures.

The Welsh Government Hardship Fund which supported local authorities during the pandemic period ended on the 31st of March 2022. However local authorities did continue to administer four elements of this funding in the last financial year. The details of this are shown at Table 2 in today's report and the total claim made in 2022 - 23 was £6.2m.

The report detailed progress made against the savings requirements for the period prior to 2022/2023 and those identified in the last financial year . These were detailed at section 3.2 of the report.

There is a great deal of information in the report in section 3.3 which details the position for each main service area. The financial position of many of these services has been reported throughout the last financial year. Whilst there are some service specific issues, there are savings reported in all revenue budgets in relation to staff vacancies. Throughout the year many services have been unable fill vacancies at all levels despite advertising posts on many occasions. Directorates continue to look at how these vacancies can be filled to maintain service levels therefore these savings are not likely to continue into this financial year.

In terms of the wider council budget, there is some detail in Table 1 in the report with regards to these. The other Corporate Budgets line shows an underspend of £5.9m.

Within this is underspend against a redundancy budget, pay and price (this is fully allocated for the current year), contingency budget and the Covid funding that was agreed in the 2022/23 budget when we did not know the financial impact for the Council of the pandemic. These will be reviewed as part of the budget planning process for the 2024/2025 revenue budget.

The report also provides an update with regards to the earmarked reserves that the council is currently holding. During 2022/2023 directorates drew down funding from specific earmarked reserves and these were reported to members through the quarterly monitoring reports. The final drawdown from reserves was £18.9m and this was summarised in table 5 of the report.

The net under spend position of £2m in the last financial year along with the unwinding of some existing earmarked reserves that were no longer required, has enabled funding to be put back to some reserves. The most significant of these was £1.3m towards the Cost of Living Fund, £530,000 contribution to capital for refurbishment works undertaken by valleys to coast and other sums to support minor works and feasibility studies in the new year.

A full breakdown of the movements on Earmarked reserves at 31 March 2023 was provided at Appendix 4 to the report. It should be noted that the monies the Council has in reserves has fallen over the past year by a net figure of £14m. This is a change to the position in recent years when the council was able to increase its reserves due to underspends in the revenue budget. The council received financial support during the pandemic and a number of the grants that it has received for many years are not now being paid. This funding masked the pressures in certain service areas which is reflected in the outturn position for 2022/2023. This position will have to be closely monitored in future years as services cannot be funded from reserves in the longer term.

The Cabinet Member – Finance, Resources and Legal welcomed the £2m to support the cost of living pressures, but he asked for some reassurance that the underspend in the Corporate Base budget is available if required, to cover the Council's liabilities going forward.

The Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change reiterated that some of the underspend was in relation to Pay and Inflation costs that were not accounted for in the budget of the last financial year, though these costs would be incorporated in the MTFs this current year. Therefore, that allocation would be fully required.

She added that the cost of living crisis is still very much evidenced and there may be more requests for support for that area of the budget during the present financial year. We would therefore look very closely at our central budgets in order to ascertain whether we require to make any adjustments to these in the future.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member – Social Services and Health emphasised that whilst noting the financial pressures of £8.174m, currently the Authority was nearly £11m in terms of an overspend in Children's Services, which as Members were aware, was a statutory service that the local authority were obligated to meet in order to fully support these financial challenges.

A Member expressed his concern over the level of vacancies in the Council Directorates that were at present not being filled, even though there was scope within the budget to fill these positions.

The Chief Executive confirmed that the Council's Workforce Strategy had accounted for this and that there were a varying number of proposals that the Authority would look to

put in place to address this. These included amongst others, recruiting from within, including through the apprenticeship scheme and looking at the grading of jobs where there was a very competitive market, such as in the area of Social Care.

RESOLVED: That Council noted the revenue outturn budget position for 2022/23.

145. **CAPITAL PROGRAMME OUTTURN 2022-23**

The Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change presented a report, to provide members with an update on the capital outturn position for the financial year 2022-2023 and to note the actual Prudential and Other indicators for 2022/23.

She advised that on 23 February 2023, Council approved a capital budget of £69.9m for 2022/23 as part of the capital programme covering the period 2022/23 to 2031/32. This programme has been revised and approved by Council during the year and the programme approved in March 2023 totalled £58.4m.

The programme was to be met by £21.8m of BCBC resources, including the use of capital receipts, contributions from earmarked reserves and borrowing. The balance of £36.5m was to be funded from external sources.

The details of the individual schemes showing the budget available last year compared to the actual spend, was detailed at Appendix A to the report. Since the last report was considered by members in March 2023, there had been some minor amendments made to the programme and these were detailed in paragraph 3.1.2 of the report. The revised budget for 2022/23 explained the Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change was, therefore, £58.76m.

The total capital spend in the last financial year was £29.2m and after slippage into 2023/24 of £27.9m and some adjustments to grant funded schemes, this represented an underspend of £795,000.

She explained that slippage has occurred for a number of reasons including delays in starting projects to enable more detailed survey works to be completed, supply chain issues and discussions with external funders. These issues were reported to members during the year. Details of the main areas of slippage were provided for Council at paragraph 3.1.4 of the report.

The majority of the underspend will be returned to the Council's capital funding provision to contribute to future capital schemes, added the Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change.

The Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change confirmed that the Capital Strategy gives an overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contributes to the provision of services, along with an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future sustainability. To ensure that we monitor this, a number of prudential indicators were included in the Strategy which was approved by Council. In line with the requirements of the Prudential Code for Capital Financing, the Council is required to establish procedures to monitor both performance against all forward-looking indicators and the requirements specified.

She concluded by stating that Appendix B of the report, detailed the actual indicators for 2022/2023 based on the capital programme outturn. These confirmed that the council is operating in line with the approved indicators.

A Member referred to page 80 of the report and the £1.115m from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and asked the Executive if it was fact that BCBC were the only local authority part of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, not to use this fund in 2022/23.

The Chief Executive advised that Cabinet had recently considered revisiting the manner by which it protects its finances including the ways in which it commits to projects etc, in future. Presently, our budget principles were predicated on not becoming involved in projects and funding opportunities etc, until any finance for these was fully committed. BCBC had always been cautious and prudent when it came to protecting its finances, he added. Any change to the above, would require firstly adopting an alternative approach to the Council's financial rules and regulations presently adopted.

RESOLVED: That Council noted the Capital Outturn 2022/23 (Appendix A to the report) and the actual Prudential Indicators and other Indicators for 2022/23 (at Appendix B).

146. **TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN 2022-23**

The Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change submitted a report, the purpose of which, is to comply with the requirement of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, to provide an overview of Treasury Management activities for the last financial year and to report on the Treasury Management Indicators for 2022/23.

She advised that Treasury Management is the management of the council's cash flows, borrowing and investment, and its associated risks. The Council is exposed to financial risk and therefore, the successful identification, monitoring and control of that risk are central to the Council's prudent financial management.

The treasury management strategy for 2022/2023 was approved by Council on the 23rd of February last year, she confirmed.

The report outlined the economic context within which the Treasury Management activity took place last year. The issues included:

- The war in Ukraine that kept global inflation rates high;
- The economic backdrop in January to March 2023 was characterised by high energy and commodity prices, high inflation which has impacted on household budgets and spending. The Consumer Price Index rose to 10.1% in the 12 months to March 2023;
- Interest rates were increased on a number of occasions during the year to try to curb inflation. The bank rate started the year at 0.75% and increased 8 times during the year to 4.25%, as at 31st March 2023.

The Council's Treasury Management activities are undertaken in line with the requirements of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and our Treasury Management activities were reported to the Governance and Audit Committee, Cabinet and Council throughout 2022-2023.

A summary of the Treasury Management activities during last year were shown in Appendix A to the report, whilst Table 1 in the report, summarised the Council's position with regards to External Debt and Investments.

In summary therefore advised the Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change:

- No long term debt was taken out during the year;

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- No debt was rescheduled during the year as there was no financial benefit to the Council to do this. This would be kept under review in the current year;
- There was a small increase in the number of Salix interest free loans the Council has;
- The total external borrowing that the Council is managing was £99.93m at the end of March 2023;
- The balance of Investments at the year end was £74.5m which is reduction of £10 million as compared with March 2022;
- The income being earned via the investments is increasing as the base rate has increased.

When investing the Council's monies, due regard is given to ensure the security and liquidity of the investments before seeking the highest rate of return.

Finally, explained the Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change, the Treasury Management Code required the Council to set and report on a number of Treasury Management indicators. The indicators either summarised the expected activity or introduced limits upon that activity. Details of the estimates for 2022/23 set out in the Council's Treasury Management Strategy compared to the actual at year end were shown at Appendix A of the report. This detail indicated that the Council operated within the approved limits throughout the financial year.

The Cabinet Member – Finance, Resources and Legal confirmed that he was pleased to confirm, that the loan the Council had made to Thurrock Council had now been paid back in full, with interest of almost £9k.

RESOLVED: That Council:

- Noted the annual treasury activities for 2022/23.
- Noted the actual treasury management indicators for 2022/23 against those approved in the treasury management strategy for that year.

147. LICENSING ACT 2003 - APPROVAL TO PUBLISH CUMULATIVE IMPACT ASSESSMENT - BRIDGEND TOWN CENTRE

The Operational Manager – Shared Regulatory Services presented a report, asking Council for approval the publication of a Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA) to cover Bridgend Town Centre. This matter was reported to Cabinet for noting on 20 June 2023.

At its meeting on 18 December 2019 Council approved the publication of a Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA) for Bridgend town centre to inform decision making within the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy. The CIA expired in December 2022.

The effect of publishing a CIA is significant and it makes it clear to prospective applicants, that the licensing authority is of the opinion that the number of venues in a specified area is such that it is likely that granting further licences would be inconsistent with the authority's duty to promote the licensing objectives.

A copy of the CIA for 2019 to 2022 was attached at Appendix A to the report. A review commenced in 2022 and South Wales Police has requested that the CIA remain in its current form, details of which are attached at Appendix B. Premises names had been removed from this Appendix.

A review commenced following a request from South Wales Police. It included a statutory consultation as required by Section 5 of the Licensing Act 2003 and a public consultation. The consultation took place between 14 December 2022 and 8 March 2023. The purpose of the consultation was to gather evidence on the problems being experienced to inform the adoption of a CIA for the next three-year period. Given that a CIA has the potential to prevent any new licensed premises in an area, the Council must set out the evidential basis for adopting such a policy. It must be satisfied that the number of licensed premises in Bridgend Town Centre has reached such a critical point that granting further licences would be inconsistent with the authority's duty to promote the licensing objectives.

The CIA currently applies to the following Bridgend town centre streets

- Market Street;
- Derwen Road;
- Wyndham Street;
- Nolton Street (from its junction with Ewenny Road, to its junction with Merthyr Mawr Road, but not the area between Merthyr Mawr Road and the junction with Court Road Bridgend).

The South Wales Police had determined that there had been an increase of 34% of crime and disorder during the night time economy period in Bridgend town centre.

The format of a CIA is that it should be evidential, setting out the statistics and evidence of problems obtained through local consultation. A draft CIA was attached at Appendix C to the report. This included the South Wales Police data comprising recorded crime in the area, and occurrences within the area.

A Member asked how the Licensing Authority ensured that premises licence holders adhered to their conditions of licence.

The Operational Manager – Shared Regulatory Services, confirmed that this was monitored through inspection by the Council's Enforcement Officers in conjunction with the South Wales Police Enforcement team.

A Member asked in terms of Door Control staff at licensed premises, if they still had radio contact with each other through portable hand radios in order to assist each other if anti-social behaviour took place at such premises.

The Operational Manager – Shared Regulatory Services confirmed that he would check this point and come back to the Member with a response outside of the meeting.

A Member felt that it would benefit town centres if Public Orders could be brought back into operation to prevent the consumption of alcohol in streets.

The Cabinet Member – Housing, Planning and Regeneration advised that this type of Order was very difficult to enforce, hence why they were no longer in being.

A Member felt that whilst it was beneficial to look at the night time economy situation in town centres, the day time economy should also be looked at in order to boost inward investment.

A Member added that the regulatory services also needed to look at drunken behaviour in the day time in Bridgend town centre, as this activity did not always just occur in the evenings/early hours of the next day.

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The Leader concluded debate, by confirming that he would address some of the above points particularly those that related to anti-social behaviour with the Police as part of the joint working Safer Streets Initiative.

RESOLVED: That Council approved the publication of a CIA for Bridgend Town Centre to run from 21 June 2023 to the expiry of the current Statement of Licensing Policy in December 2024. The CIA to have effect in the following streets:

Market Street;
Derwen Road;
Wyndham Street;
Nolton Street (from its junction with Eweny Road, to its junction with Merthyr Mawr Road, but not the area between Merthyr Mawr Road and the junction with Court Road Bridgend).

148. REVIEW OF COMMUNITY ARRANGEMENTS OF ALL TOWN & COMMUNITY COUNCILS

The Chief Executive presented a report, in order to seek the agreement of Council to approve the Terms of Reference for a review of Community Arrangements of all Town & Community Councils in the Bridgend Council area and set up a Member Panel to oversee the review.

By way of background, he advised that the last full Community review was finalised in 2009 and would normally follow a 10-year cycle. The delays to the completion of the Bridgend Electoral Review and the pandemic resulted in insufficient time to undertake a full review in time for the Local Elections in May 2022, though reviews were undertaken in three County Borough locations before this date.

The Chief Executive advised, that a review can consider one or more of the following options:

- creating, merging, altering or abolishing communities;
- the naming of communities and the style of new communities and the creation of town councils;
- the electoral arrangements for communities (for instance, the council size; the number of councillors to be elected to the council, and community warding);
- grouping communities under a common community council or de-grouping communities

Whilst having a Terms of Reference for the review is not a statutory requirement, it was certainly best practice. This would set out the scope of the review, and include a timetable for carrying out the review, including dates for public consultation. The proposed Terms of Reference were attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

The adoption of the Terms of Reference by Council will commence the review. If Council chose to accept the final recommendations of the review, concluded after public consultation, it would be necessary to submit the recommendations to the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales which, following a final 6 week period for representations, will prepare an Order to implement the changes.

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It was proposed that Council delegate the determination of Members to sit on the Panel to Group Leaders, with the Panel having 9 Members (5 Labour Members and 4 Opposition Members), including representation from the 4 towns and 3 valleys. The Chief Executive added, that the Panel would hopefully also be as far as possible, both politically and gender balanced.

He concluded his submission by confirming that any changes to the arrangement of communities will take effect at the next scheduled Town and Community elections in May 2027.

Members asked a number of questions, which were responded to by the Chief Executive and/or the Group Manager – Business Support, following which it was

RESOLVED: That Council agreed to:

- (1) Adopt Terms of Reference for a Community Arrangements Review of all Town & Community Councils in the Bridgend Council area.
- (2) Set up a Community Review Member Panel to review responses to the consultation and agree the draft and final proposals for any changes. The Member Panel will make their recommendations to Council for final approval.
- (3) Delegate the membership of the Panel to the Group Leaders to determine.

149. TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS FROM:

Cllr E Caparros to the Leader

I am aware that Welsh Government are introducing legislation which will change the default speed limit from 30mph to 20mph in built up areas from the 17th of September this year. Whilst Members received a briefing on this in March this year, could you please outline the progress to date within BCBC, how the public consultation was received and whether we will be ready for the roll out of this legislation in Bridgend in September?

Response

The authorities Traffic Management section have been working with Welsh Government on producing maps that detail roads that would comply with the Welsh Government Scheme as well as those roads that may be considered as an exception to the general rollout.

These maps can be viewed on the Data Map Wales Website:
<https://datamap.gov.wales/maps/roads-affected-by-changes-to-the-speed-limit-on-re/view#/>

The preparation for the changes to the speed limit requires 100's of signs to be purchased and erected in advance of the changeover which need to be obscured until the changeover date.

Apart from new speed limit signage there will also be new signage in relation to traffic calmed areas and where a 30mph limit is to remain. As well as the circa 1,400's of signs to be erected there is also the requirement to remove a similar number of signs and road markings that are currently in place and this will all have to occur on or shortly after 17th September 2023.

Work is currently ongoing with designing to new locations for signage and agreeing locations so members and the public will see posts going into place and signs erected but covered over until that date.

Application of Welsh Government guidelines for exceptions to the 20mph default limit identified locations that meet the exception criteria and improve road safety. Initial engagement suggests support for proposals for roads that meet the exception criteria as well as suggesting minor amendments to the original proposals. Apart from exceptions revocation of certain traffic orders will need to follow a statutory process to make a road enforceable at the new 20mph default limit.

To advance these exceptions and revocations to the statutory consultation stage, data is being gathered that is required for the legal to commence the Traffic Order making process as the specific locations are measured subject to suitable sites being identified for positioning the highway signage.

It is anticipated that the majority works will be completed for the 17th September when the change will take place, however, due to the thousands of signs involved it is anticipated that there will be ongoing works post that date, and potential amendments subject to how the proposals operate in practice.

Supplementary question from Cllr Caparros

The proposed change in speed limits has been a hot topic on social media. I welcomed the BCBC on-line consultation on the proposals and so am asking how successful was this and will the feedback given impact on what we see on the ground in our communities?

Response

There were a high number of responses received to the consultation which were in the process of being considered, however, as a result of these Officers have made certain changes to that which was originally proposed. The Head of Operations – Community Services advised that there had been a positive feedback to the first stage of the consultation. This was not the legally required stage of the consultation though, as that would take place under the traffic order implementation stage of proceedings. A large number of the public are supportive of 20mph zones though there had been a general lack of support for some of the proposed exemptions. Officers are therefore looking at all of these consultation responses and making some adjustments, particularly with regard to amending some of the proposed exemptions.

We are also consulting on the exemption roads that are to be kept at 30mph, as opposed to them automatically reducing to 20mph zones. Some of the feedback revealed that that residents were not saying that they disagreed with a specific street being affected by a reduction to 20mph, but more that they did not agree to any speed reduction, full stop.

Supplementary question from Cllr M Evans

It has been mentioned that the majority of the works to be undertaken as part of the scheme will be completed by the deadline date of 17 September 2023. However, I understand that work will be ongoing following this date, erecting road signage and associated works that go with this. Have you a deadline when all such works will be completed.

Response

No, but work in relation to posts being erected for the signage has already commenced. There is a considerable amount of work to be carried out, as there are nearly 1,400 signs to be displayed. Some of the signs that presently display 30mph will require changing to 20mph and there will not just be one change of sign required at a given road, but repeater signs also. However, it is the intention to complete most of the work by the September date.

Cllr T Thomas to the Leader

Will the Leader briefly outline his policy proposals to adopt '15 minute towns' within the County Borough?

Response

National planning policy (Future Wales & Placemaking Charter) is trying to ensure that people can meet most of their daily needs within a reasonable walk or cycle ride from home, with safe cycling and local transport options.

The '15-minute town' concept has recently hit the headlines with some people viewing it as a conspiracy theory to control the movements of our communities.

Please let me assure you, this is not the case. There are no restrictions on movement at all, and we do not have the powers to restrict people's movements. This is an established principle of placemaking and planning that has re-emerged across the world as we try to tackle the climate emergency and move towards a 'net zero' society.

In the context of the county of Bridgend, we want our residents to be able access services within a 20-minute period either by walking or cycling, with public transport provision also available as a fallback option to ensure there is a range of sustainable travel options available within each neighbourhood.

Again, in the context of Bridgend, this principle will help enable our residents to access retail, leisure, education, primary healthcare and employment close to their place of residence and within the local neighbourhood. It also means having access to greenspace nearby and a local environment that encourages active travel to promote health and wellbeing. It is a place where people want to live, so affordable housing must be part of it.

The Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) aims to make neighbourhoods across the Borough more liveable. Therefore, the 20-minute neighbourhood principle has been considered and embedded into the RLDP from the outset of plan preparation.

Further information is provided in the RLDP Background Paper 19: The 20-Minute Neighbourhood

<https://www.bridgend.gov.uk/media/14775/background-paper-19-20-minute-neighbourhood.pdf>

Supplementary question from Cllr Tim Thomas

I think that anything that encourages local services to be as close to people's homes as possible, should be warmly encouraged. I further note with interest, the inclusion of employment opportunities and spatial planning. What we have here is a policy juxtaposition between the 15 minute towns and the Cardiff City Regional Deal and on

one hand, we have been told that the main benefits of the Cardiff City Regional Deal might not be in direct investment to our County Borough, though through jobs in neighbouring local authority areas, our residents can travel to. On the other hand, we have potentially signed up to the principle of 15 minute towns. How can these conflicting policies be reconciled?

Response

There is no conflict in respect as referred to above, the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal is actually funding the re-development of for example the Ewenny site in Maesteg, the largest brownfield site in our valleys and as part of that development, there will be an Enterprise Hub providing incubation space for brand new spaces as a result of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal investing in our valleys, our communities and in the development of new areas for new businesses.

Supplementary question from Cllr Jonathan Pratt

There is a 15 minute village in Porthcawl which is a blueprint, though my area of Newton does not fit into this. Are there any thoughts how we can improve this geographically rather than just having a 15 minute radius from the centre of town and how will that fit in 15 minutes over a particular geographical area.

Response

If you look at our Replacement Local Development Plan which the above is included within, the new communities that we are going to develop will have employment opportunities, educational provision, community provision and green spaces. These will therefore be very much aligned to the principles of 15 minute towns. I acknowledge that there is more work to do though, particularly in existing settlements. It is more difficult in areas where development has already taken place, particularly where there are settlements surrounded by protected countryside such as in Newton. We will be aspiring though to continue with this type of initiative. Newton is in close proximity to Porthcawl though and you can see there is a very good example of how we are trying to ensure that some of those services are in one place, as part of the new major Waterfront development. The replacement LDP as Members will recall, was considered by Council at it's October 2022 meeting.

Cllr Maxine Lewis to the Cabinet Member - Housing, Planning and Regeneration

Where are we with the development of a Valleys Regeneration Strategy, as it is identified in the new corporate plan.

Response

As you state, the new Corporate Plan 'Delivering Together' for 2023-28 puts the Valleys at the centre of our priorities. We've already started by significantly investing in schools, our country parks, Maesteg Town Centre and digital connectivity.

In order to continue reviving and regenerating our Valleys to meet their potential we are leading on the development of a strategy document. The strategy will include detailed actions and projects, that harnesses the valleys potential and guide the opportunities which will bring about a series of high quality developments that will contribute to a wider, cohesive vision for the Bridgend Valleys.

The plan will be flexible and have the ability to adapt to changing economic/market conditions and meet the requirements and aspirations of the community, private, third and public sector.

We are at the point of commissioning the strategy, and following further direction by Cabinet last week, the Objectives that we will be commissioning on the basis of are:

- Reviewing relevant studies, plans and strategies developed over the past 10 years relevant to the Bridgend Valleys of the Llynfi, Garw and Ogmore.
- To create a coherent basis for securing future funding, attracting investors and delivering a comprehensive range of regeneration projects.
- To design a dynamic long-term masterplan document that guides future growth and development for the three valleys areas, whilst respecting and reinforcing its strengths.
- To identify and focus on key sites and to produce an action plan for delivery including estimated overall project costs, phasing, funding, timing, and delivery organisations.

We want to create a strategy which incorporates mixed use regeneration, which includes proposals for improved infrastructure within and around the valleys.

We also critically want to work with key partners in the development of the strategy and reinforce their respective roles in delivering against any proposal as: developers, police, community councils, funders, designers, the community, tenants, transport providers, the local planning authority and other relevant internal departments.

There are various projects already in motion, being developed as part of our new Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) programme, which includes investment in commercial properties in our valley communities, and support property owners and prospective tenants in improving our Valley high streets.

We are also preparing a programme to support resilient communities, encouraging a locally- led bottom up approach, which follows on from our previously successful Leader Rural Development, Reach programme. This would seek to deliver value for money projects with local community groups, various organisations and Community Councils.

Our new SPF Programme will also provide opportunities to fund local feasibility studies to support locally led community project ideas with the aim of leading into future funding bids. It will support a variety of grants to business, and support for local tourism.

These will fit well within the objectives of the strategy and enable us to hit the ground running, while a longer term approach is being considered.

Supplementary question from Cllr Lewis

Can you tell me how the Shared Prosperity Fund will compliment the Valleys Regeneration Strategy?

Response

Properties within our valleys have deteriorated over the past few years and the above Fund will assist in the renovation and refurbishment of both residential and commercial properties, in order to bring them back into use. The Fund will further our aim of restoring the valleys to make them more vibrant. There are two funds for the Llynfi, Ogmore and Garw valleys. The first fund is the Bridgend Valleys Placemaking Property Improvement Grant. This will assist in enhancing building frontages and bringing

commercial floor space back into beneficial use. The grant will also help to convert vacant upper floor space into new residential accommodation above commercial units. The second fund is called Empty Property Survey Grants. This will offer those eligible who apply, the opportunity to undertake building condition surveys, architectural assessments and concept design, in order to progress the re-development of empty commercial properties.

Supplementary question from Cllr D Hughes

I welcome the development of a Strategy document to revive and regenerate the valleys and agree that it is critical that work here is done alongside Community Councils, organisations and the general community to meet the requirements and aspirations of these communities. When the Leader visited Ogmores Valley Life Centre for its 30th Anniversary celebrations, he said that BCBC were proud to support sports activities in the Ogmores Valley. The independent survey that was carried out and funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and Welsh Government, which formed the basis for the Ogmores Valley Community Council Strategy and Action Plan 2022-27, it revealed that the second highest priority for residents there was the provision of parks and sporting facilities. Residents reaffirmed this at a public meeting on 17 June, when they endorsed the submission of EOIs for the redevelopment of 2 sites in Ogmores Vale. One for use as a memorial park and the other for a MUGA. What also came through loud and clear, was the support for an all weather pitch facility and improvements at the Planka playing fields. Something residents believe they have been promised for many years. Will this Strategic Plan be able to provide support for current and future proposals such as these. Finally, I know that the Cabinet Member is passionate about regeneration of the valley areas and therefore I look forward to all stakeholders working together for the benefit of our communities.

Response

We will work with all stakeholders to progress work as described above as we have an awful lot of very passionate community groups and individuals who look to participate in community events and I am certain that they will look to make their voices heard in this consultation and to this end I look forward to working with all relevant parties to progress and move matters forward. The main part of the Strategy will be focussing on regeneration and we will look to see what we can achieve through SPF and any other available funding available, to encourage growth and renewal of businesses and public space within our valleys for residents who live there and visitors alike. Cabinet has been discussing opportunities here with the Council's Corporate Management Board. The Strategy will also look to bring together regeneration, leisure and play facilities. The MUGA has been long talked about and hopefully through joint working, this can be realised through obtaining funding to progress this further forward. Ogmores Valley Community Council have been involved in discussions on this with BCBC's Community Asset Transfer (CAT) team. The Leader added, that there is an aspiration for the provision of an all-weather pitch in the Ogmores valley and direct support would be provided to the Community Council to take the next stages further forward through CAT, with assistance from the Coalfields Regeneration Trust and Cymru Football Foundation and other valley partners, who wish to be involved in the support of this and any other similar such projects.

Cllr Ian Williams to the Cabinet Member – Climate Change and Environment

Can the Cabinet Member please give me some indication as to what provision is being made in Bridgend for outdoor play and recreational facilities for older children in Bridgend County and when? At a meeting last December it was agreed to provide a play area in Newbridge Fields for older children but in a recent email I was told that this was

not being taken forward at the moment but it could be an option in the future. Could I therefore ask when this important provision will take place?

Response

There is a wide range of outdoor play and recreational provision across the county borough which is provided by us, community councils, private providers and specific interest groups.

Such provision covers many opportunities, for example, recreation pitches for ball sports, to 3G pitches located in schools for community use. There are also skateboard parks, multigame areas as well as open green spaces, cricket, bowls, athletics, skate parks, golf and tennis, as well as recreation centres run through Halo

Many groups are benefitting through community asset transfer in the receipt of grants that have allowed the upgrade of facilities and delivering benefits within the communities they are situated in.

In terms of provision made by the council formalised playgrounds are designed to meet a range of age groups. The council have committed to spending over £2,500,000 to date on refurbishing existing play areas and we have engaged with local councillors on site to discuss the needs at individual areas.

Specifically, at Newbridge Fields the play area accommodates for a range of ages from toddlers to teenagers. The refurbishment discussed keeping those play experiences that were appreciated and where possible refurbishment of the play area to factor in accessibility and inclusivity.

We are aware of the members desire to further improve the offer at Newbridge Fields, but this would entail the creation of new recreational experiences and the current funding is aimed at refurbishing the current play offer. The level of funding to create a new viable experience would require identifying and justifying the recreation theme, provision a suitable location amongst the existing facilities, appropriate design and build and then ongoing maintenance, all of which would have to be suitably funded.

The current focus is on refurbishment of our existing play areas across the borough so whilst there may be an opportunity in the future to examine enhanced recreational facilities at Newbridge Fields we are unable to provide a precise timeline for when this may be advanced

Supplementary question from Cllr I Williams

Can the Cabinet Member explain why the Council has failed to provide our children with a splash park, when all other neighbouring authorities have at least one, with Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC having two. Could I have an assurance that within the current term of this Council, Bridgend will have a splash park for the children in the County Borough, eliminating the need for families to travel to neighbouring County Borough's, which will assist in reducing our carbon footprint.

Response

You are aware from previous Finance reports considered at today's meeting, of the financial position BCBC is currently facing, particularly with the continued and ongoing pressures in Social Care and Children's Services. We would of course love to have a splash pool, but we have recently committed £1.5m to have 22 Children's play areas throughout the County Borough refurbished and this would soon be subject of a tender

process for the works. Should extra finance become available, then of course we could look at the provision of the above facility.

Supplementary question from Cllr M Lewis

I am really excited about the 6 children's play areas being upgraded in the Garw valley this year. Please could you confirm when the works will be completed.

Response

There are 6 such areas where refurbishment works are to be carried out, but actually 7 if you include the play area in Bettws. All 22 areas where work is to be scheduled are to be done in the order of those that are in most need, following the completion of Risk Assessment that have been undertaken. As stated, the tender process is being pursued and when this has been completed, it is anticipated that the works will commence in October 2023. However, in light of the number of areas, the extent of the works and issues of capacity, it is not likely that all areas will be completed until the next spring/summer period. Ward members had been involved previously, in order that it could be established which play areas in their Wards required priority in terms of them being refurbished.

Cllr Mark John to the Cabinet Member - Climate Change and Environment

Could I have a progress report on the Bridgend Heat Network.

Response

The Bridgend Town Heat Network Phase 1 Project proposes to deliver heat and electricity, via a gas powered combined heat and power (CHP) generator located within the Bridgend Life Centre, to the Bridgend Life Centre, Civic Offices, and the Bridgend Bowls Hall. A capital grant application was approved by UK Government via the Heat Network Investment Programme (HNIP) for £1,000,000 capital investment towards the construction of the heat network and £241,000 for pre-construction activities. The full agreed funding package consists of BCBC investment from the capital programme and prudential borrowing in addition to this HNIP grant.

The procurement for a main contractor is complete and a preferred contractor has been selected, however the construction cost has increased due to plant, labour, and material inflation in recent months meaning there is a shortfall of capital. The approved financial model was based on a Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) interest rate of 2.6%. However, interest rates have increased significantly since autumn 2022 resulting in higher financing costs that could result in cash flow difficulties, particularly in the earlier years of the project operation. BCBC officers are in discussion with the contractor to understand how costs can be reduced.

An Outline Business Case (OBC) has been created for Phase 2 of the network and the preferred solution is a water source heat pump system installed within the Glanrhyd hospital boundary, capturing heat from the Ogmere river with gas boilers as backup and to meet peak heat demand. Sites have been identified for private wire connected solar PV, and options exist for sleeved or directly connected wind power and additional solar power. Twenty buildings are included in the current design of proposed scheme including Glanrhyd and Princess of Wales Hospitals, South Wales Police Training Centre, Bridgend College, and schools.

Phase 1 would also be adopted into Phase 2 thereby replacing the gas generator with a zero carbon energy source. The financial modelling underpinning the Phase 2 OBC was

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updated in March 2023 to account for inflationary driven increases in construction costs, and to use the most recent energy price projections and emissions factors. This showed the project is still financially viable.

A number of options were considered for the future development of both phases of the network. The preferred option was to transfer delivery of Phase 1 infrastructure into the Phase 2 development work currently underway and to explore commercial opportunities for ownership, delivery, and operation by a third party. Potential delivery partners could include including Cardiff Capital Region (CCR), Welsh Government (WG), and private sector companies and these are currently being explored and will be reported back in due course.

150. **URGENT ITEMS**

None.

The meeting closed at 19:55.