

COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY, 19 OCTOBER 2022

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD HYBRID IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND/REMOTELY ON WEDNESDAY, 19 OCTOBER 2022 AT 15:00

Present

Councillor M Jones – Chairperson

S Aspey	H T Bennett	A R Berrow	F D Bletsoe
S J Bletsoe	JPD Blundell	E L P Caparros	N Clarke
RJ Collins	HJ David	C Davies	C L 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	RM James	P W Jenkins	M R John
MJ Kearns	W J Kendall	M Lewis	J Llewellyn-Hopkins
RL Penhale-Thomas	J E Pratt	R J Smith	JC Spanswick
I M Spiller	T Thomas	JH Tildesley MBE	G Walter
A Wathan	A Williams	AJ Williams	HM Williams
I Williams	MJ Williams	R Williams	E D Winstanley
T Wood			

Apologies for Absence

E Richards

Officers:

Debra Beeke	Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisational Development
Gareth Denning	Policy Team Leader
Mark Galvin	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Carys Lord	Chief Officer - Finance, Performance & Change
Claire Marchant	Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing
Richard Matthams	Development Planning - Team Leader
Janine Nightingale	Corporate Director - Communities
Jonathan Parsons	Group Manager Development
Michael Pitman	Technical Support Officer – Democratic Services
Adam Provoost	Senior Development Planning Officer
Andrew Thomas	Group Manager Sports & Physical Activity
Mark Shephard	Chief Executive
Kelly Watson	Chief Officer, Legal and Regulatory, HR and Corporate Policy
Lindsay Harvey	Corporate Director – Education and Family Support
Jackie Davies	Head of Adult Social Care
Laura Kinsey	Head of Children’s Care

40. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interests were made by Members/Officers. It should be noted that where prejudicial interests were declared, those that made them retired from the meeting whilst the item(s) were being discussed:-

Councillor R Williams – Item 9 – Personal interest due to there being reference in the report to the Pencoed Level Crossing and as a member of the Development Control Committee and Pencoed Town Council.

Councillor I Williams – Item 9 – Prejudicial interest on the grounds of pre-determination of an element of the Local Development Plan proposals.

Councillor JP Blundell – Item 9 – Prejudicial interest on the grounds of pre-determination of an element of the Local Development Plan proposals.

Councillor S Bletsoe – Item 9 – Personal interest due to his paid employment in the private rented sector.

Councillor H Bennett – Item 6 – Personal interest as an employee of an organisation referenced as a Delivery Partner in the report. Item 9 – Personal interest in the Local Development Plan report.

Councillor M Evans – Item 9 – Personal interest as there was reference in the report to the Penprisk Road Bridge and as a member of Pencoed Town Council.

Councillor E Winstanley – Item 10 – As her employer receives monies from the Capital Programme.

Councillor F Bletsoe - Item 9 – Personal interest due to his paid employment in the private rented sector.

Councillor T Thomas – Item 9 – Personal interest due to his employment in the housing sector.

Councillor HJ David – Item 12 – Personal interest as a member of the WLGA

Councillor J Gebbie – Item 12 – Personal interest as a member of the WLGA, as well as a member of the workforce who lobbied local authorities to agree the proposals of the report.

Councillor JC Spanswick – Item 12 - Prejudicial interest as his wife works for BCBC

Councillor M Kearn – Item 12 – Prejudicial interest as his son works for BCBC.

Chief Executive – Item 14 – Personal and prejudicial interest.

41. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of a meeting of Council held on 20 July 2022, be approved as a true and accurate record.

Councillor S Bletsoe noted from page 20 of the Minutes in response to his question regarding the number of homelessness cases in April of this year were registered in the response as being 3. However, in correspondence he had exchanged with the Leader since the meeting, the actual number of homeless at this time had in fact been 8. He asked if this could be added with the Leader's consent as a correction to the minutes. The Leader agreed to this request.

42. **TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM:**

Mayor

And other dignitaries, as follows:

As this is the first meeting of full Council since the death of Queen Elizabeth II, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the solemn occasion.

Queen Elizabeth II was our longest-reigning British monarch, and while her passing is an enormous loss to the United Kingdom and Commonwealth, she leaves behind a lasting legacy of strength and inspiration.

As soon as we learned of her passing, the authority expressed its heartfelt sympathies to His Majesty, King Charles, and the Royal Family.

Flags were flown at half-mast outside our civic buildings, and as a mark of respect, the Civic Offices, Grand Pavilion and Maesteg Town Hall were all illuminated at night in purple, the late sovereign's favourite colour.

Books of condolence were quickly made available to enable the local community to record their personal messages, and an area below the flagpole at the Civic Offices was reserved for the display of floral tributes that many people wanted to offer.

We observed a series of formal events as part of the period of national mourning, including the Royal Proclamation ceremony which was held outside the Civic Offices.

To ensure that we could all participate in the state funeral, a huge number of council services were rearranged which included schools, council offices, libraries, leisure centres, waste, recycling and more.

On behalf of all Members, Officers of BCBC and the citizens of the County Borough, I would like to thank staff and managers for their efforts in accommodating all of this, and for arranging the wide number of events that took place during the period of national mourning which ensured that the people of Bridgend County Borough were able to pay their respects in an appropriate and effective manner while still benefitting from essential services.

I would particularly like to thank the Democratic Services team for the support that I received personally as Mayor. This was first class in every respect, and I am very grateful for their ongoing efforts.

During the Queen's funeral, the nation fell silent as we all observed a minute's silence, and I would like to invite members to join me now in observing a further minute's silence in memory of Queen Elizabeth.

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member – Social Services and Early Help

I would like to draw members' attention to a new initiative which has been launched as part of the Bridgend Young Carers Service.

It is designed to help children and young people in Bridgend County Borough who act as unpaid carers for a relative, neighbour or friend, and provides them with direct support as well as practical advice, guidance and more.

Operating out of a new centre on Five Bells Road, it looks after the health and well-being of young carers, and includes opportunities for them to gain new qualifications, develop important life skills and take part in issue-based workshops as well as signposting them to further support.

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The service also provides a youth club with various social activities, and a home transport service that ensures the service and its facilities remains available to all young carers on a weekly basis.

Run in partnership between Whitehead-Ross Education, Welsh Government and Bridgend County Borough Council, the service forms part of the Families First programme, which as you know supports the most vulnerable children and adults within our communities.

This fantastic new service is already proving to be a major source of support, and I hope that members will help spread the word about it.

More information is available at the council website alongside further support and advice for unpaid carers of all ages.

As it is National Adoption Week, I would also like to briefly mention that there are a wide range of activities taking place to mark the occasion, including an informative series of podcasts called 'Truth Be Told' which are available to view online.

These follow a set of adoptive families and the children they care for, and as they offer a true insight for anyone who may be considering adoption, they are highly useful if members are aware of any individuals, couples or families within their wards who may want to find out more.

You can view the podcasts and find out more about the National Adoption Week by visiting their website at WWW.adoptcymru.com.

I would also like to say thank you to all foster carers who I spent the day with discussing any concerns that they have as individuals, as well as issues relating to new policies and the implementation of these. Also subject of discussions, was the increase in allowances, their 2 week respite provision that will be paid and our foster carers Charter, as examples.

I have received numerous emails since the above, thanking me for the engagement here and expressing how valued they feel now we are developing our provision.

Whilst we are acknowledging the challenges in our social care provision, our Corporate Parenting Event with our stakeholders throughout the County Borough proved fruitful, as this not only developed their understanding of the corporate parenting responsibilities, it also involved listening to the voices of our care experienced children and very definitely realised the opportunities that their organisations can offer to those children, in order to enrich their young lives.

Cabinet Member – Resources

I have no doubt that members will all be following the ongoing difficulties that are currently taking place within UK Government.

In the fallout of the mini-budget, newspapers such as the Financial Times are already talking about the return of austerity measures, and new chancellor Jeremy Hunt has warned us to expect harsh decisions on spending and tax.

Against this backdrop, it should come as no surprise when I tell members that our own forthcoming budget consultation for 2023-24 must also carry a very stark warning.

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Based on current predictions, it looks likely that we may have to make budget reductions. Our current financial modelling is showing a £20m shortfall in the revenue budget for the coming financial year, and we are going to have to make some tough decisions of our own in order to meet our legal responsibility of delivering a council budget that is fully balanced.

This is, of course, in addition to the budget reductions that we have already made over the last ten years, reductions that add up to a massive sixty-two million pounds.

Making further reductions is not going to be easy at all. We already face increasing demand upon many of the 800 different services that we provide, including unprecedented numbers of referrals to our social services teams and record numbers of homeless people seeking temporary accommodation.

When you take into account the ongoing recovery from the pandemic, the current cost of living crisis, rising inflation and rocketing energy costs, the council's finances are under massive strain.

That is why it will be so important for everyone taking part in the forthcoming budget consultation to maintain a realistic view.

We need to be very clear that the council will have no choice but to make extremely difficult decisions over the next few years.

While these decisions will always seek to protect the most vulnerable members of the community, we will inevitably have to look at reducing services and streamlining our operations.

This is also why feedback on budget setting from our local communities is so important.

We want to ensure that we can make realistic, workable decisions for our county borough, and we want to achieve this by working closely together.

The budget consultation is currently being finalised, and members can expect to receive more information on it very soon.

Cabinet Member – Future Generations

I'm sure that members will have noted that a few weeks ago, the council and our partners successfully found alternative accommodation for thirty-nine homeless residents in the space of four days, who had previously been accommodated at two seafront hotels in Porthcawl as part of the national response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This was a positive result from a less than ideal situation that was placed before us with little warning, and I would like to send my thanks to the BCBC housing team and everyone who helped to ensure that the accommodation could be found so quickly.

Now, with the weather starting to turn colder, I would like to ask members to remind residents that they can report anyone they think may be a rough sleeper to the housing team and help us to ensure that they can access support and help.

The easiest and simplest way of doing this is to visit the Streetlink website where you can provide details including a rough sleeper's location and a description. The website can be found at www.streetlink.org.uk

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This information is then shared with the local council team and homelessness agencies so that appropriate support can be offered to them.

Thankfully, the number of rough sleepers who are in Bridgend County Borough at any one time is relatively small.

The individuals in Bridgend are generally well known to the services who continue to try and help them, and to balance their often complex needs with those of the wider community.

We work closely alongside a number of partners to ensure that anyone who is homeless or who is at risk of becoming homeless can receive comprehensive support.

The council's own website features a wide range of information on what we do to prevent people from having to sleep rough, and if you haven't already done so, I would strongly recommend familiarising yourself with the details.

Cabinet Member – Education

Members may want to let their constituents know that applications are now open for admissions to secondary schools in September 2023.

Parents, guardians and carers of primary school pupils who are currently in Year 6 are being advised that the fastest and easiest way of submitting an application is by filling in an online form which is available in the 'My Account' section of the council's website.

The website also features a school admissions page which offers information about applying for a space at a local secondary school, including catchment area maps and more.

The deadline for submitting an application will be 4pm on 20 January 2023, and notifications will be issued on 1 March 2023.

Please note that as there is no automatic or guaranteed admission to any secondary school in the county borough, applications that are not submitted by the deadline 20 January deadline risk missing out on a preferred school.

This covers all schools apart from Archbishop McGrath Catholic High School, where a slightly different process is in place.

Anyone seeking to apply to this school should contact them directly to request an application form.

Cabinet Member – Regeneration

I was delighted to attend the recent opening of a new support hub for jobseekers in the Porthcawl area.

Run by Employability Bridgend and based at the Old Portway Surgery, the service offers local people expert advice, support and mentoring across all aspects of training and developing new skills, seeking new jobs, and securing new employment.

The hub is available on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays between 9:30am and 2:30pm, and is also planning to hold monthly coffee mornings for Ukrainian refugees and their host families.

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It follows the opening last summer of another support hub for jobseekers, this time based at Tŷ Llynfi in Maesteg, which is open on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30am to 3:30pm.

Both hubs are equipped with training rooms, a job club, ICT access and more, and I hope that members will help to spread the word about their availability.

Since 2016, Employability Bridgend has supported more than five thousand individuals, including 740 young people.

They have provided training to 1,800 individuals, have helped 360 secure volunteering posts, and have supported 1,740 into new jobs.

These new hubs offer people an opportunity to benefit from expert advice and support, and I would like to thank the Employability Bridgend team for their efforts.

Cabinet Member – Communities

I am sure members will have noted the recent incidents where heavy rainfall caused sewage to be discharged off the coast of Porthcawl.

This prompted a 48 hour precautionary 'no swimming' order to be issued, and understandably drew widespread concern from local residents.

Following the discharge of the waste, we wrote to Dwr Cymru to seek clarification on why it happened, and to enquire whether any action is being taken.

Their response has explained that the problem occurred because much of the current drainage system has its origins in the Edwardian or Victorian eras, so some drains that are designed to carry surface water also feed into the foul sewage system.

This means that during periods where there has been particularly heavy rainfall, the storm overflows may discharge in order to prevent homes and businesses from being flooded.

This may have been acceptable when the system was introduced, but it is clearly not suitable now.

However, Dwr Cymru is also carrying out work to tackle all storm overflows which have been identified as causing environmental harm.

With more than £840 million invested into wastewater management between now and 2025, the company has expressed its commitment towards mitigating the impact of overflows on beaches and watercourses.

Working with environmental regulators to prioritise investment in areas which have seen the most adverse impact, the company has made a further commitment on its storm overflows to Welsh Government and has plans in place to invest an additional £130 million through 'financial headroom'.

Its Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan, which is currently out for consultation, sets out how Dwr Cymru intends to work alongside local councils to deal with issues such as flooding, climate change, removing surface water from the sewer network, improving the environment and more.

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I'm sure that members will welcome this commitment, and I will keep you updated on further developments.

Can I also briefly advise members that as a result of urgent remedial works taking place at the Brackla One car park in Bridgend town centre, the Shopmobility service will be temporarily unavailable.

Users of the service have already been informed of this temporary measure, which is necessary to ensure their ongoing safety, and every effort will be made so that it can resume as normal once the works have been completed.

Chief Executive

I have a very brief update that I think will be of interest to members.

You will be aware that as part of the local authority's Future Service Delivery programme, a significant amount of work has been carried out in support of our aspirations to adopt new ways of working and providing services.

An important part of this has involved ensuring that our meeting rooms are properly equipped to support the introduction of hybrid working, including within the council chamber and the main committee rooms.

I'm please to confirm that this is now in place, and that the upgrade has been completed.

Members will shortly receive a new schedule for meetings where you will be able to attend either virtually or in person.

The initial schedule will cover the remainder of the current month and the whole of November, and you can expect to receive further schedules thereafter.

43. TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE LEADER

Members may be interested to hear that initial discussions have taken place between a number of local support organisations to identify ways in which we can work together to help our communities during the cost of living crisis.

Representatives - which have to date included the council, BAVO, Awen Cultural Trust, Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board, Bridgend College, Valleys to Coast Housing Association and South Wales Police - met recently to discuss coordinating and sharing information on the various support that they can offer residents.

Investment is also being made into developing a website called "Stronger Together Bridgend" which once completed will provide an online resource that will signpost people to support ranging from free activities in their communities to warm spaces.

To ensure that it is organised and co-ordinated efficiently, we have facilitated a temporary secondment for a member of the Employability team to oversee and coordinate the group's activities.

Working closely alongside the council and BAVO's community co-ordinators and resilient communities staff, we will be engaging with local residents to develop a joined-up programme of support.

At the same time, they will avoid duplicating efforts, for example, in areas where food or warm banks may already be running and will ensure that local residents take full

advantage of all existing support ranging from community transport to school uniform grants.

With an action plan under development, new initiatives will be announced as part of this project very soon.

Following the accolade of being recognised with a Police and Crime Commissioner's Award for the leading role that they have played in a prominent animal welfare case, the Shared Regulatory Service has been further recognised at the 2022 RSPCA national Paw Prints awards.

This time, the partnership was presented with gold-level status for their work in the categories of dealing with stray dogs, and animal related licensing issues.

They also achieved success in the category of kennelled dogs where they were presented with a bronze level award.

Members may recall that the service also scored highly in the 2021 awards, but this is the first time that they have achieved gold in the animal licensing category, the only service of its kind in Wales to do so.

I am sure members will want to join me in congratulating the team, and in thanking them for their hard work and commitment.

Members may also want to remind their constituents that the free parking offer that the council has maintained throughout the pandemic has now been extended until 1 April 2023.

This is aimed at supporting local businesses and shoppers while we contend with the pandemic and cost of living crisis and means that the first three hours will be free at the Rhiw multi-storey car park in Bridgend, and between noon and 3pm at John Street in Porthcawl.

Free parking also remains available at the Llynfi Road multi-storey in Maesteg and the Penprysg Road car park in Pencoed, and the situation will be reviewed again before the start of summer next year.

44. **SOCIAL SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22**

The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing, presented a report, the purpose of which was to present to Council the Director of Social Services' draft Annual Report for 2021/22, and request that Members endorse the report, the analysis therein of the strengths and areas for improvement in Bridgend social services, and the next steps set out.

By way of background, she explained that following the implementation of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act (SSWBA) 2014, Welsh Government developed a performance framework which aimed to ensure that authorities report, on and performance evaluated against, the well-being outcomes of the SSWBA. The SSWBA has two key policy objectives:

- to improve the well-being outcomes for people who need care and support;
- and to reform social services law.

It also seeks to:

- transform the way in which social services are delivered, primarily through promoting people's independence and giving them a stronger voice and control;
- promote partnership working in social care;
- and, enhance the preventative role of social care and health, setting out overarching well-being duties to reduce or delay the need for care and support.

The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing confirmed, that SSWBA, places strong emphasis on promoting the well-being of people who need care and support and carers who need support. It is important that the views and voices of people and their carers are heard.

The aim of the Annual Report she added, (Appendix 1 to the report) was to provide the Council and people living in Bridgend County Borough with an overview of social care. It aims to highlight the progress made over 2021/22, being clear about strengths as well as areas for improvement, and identify priorities for 2022/23.

The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing, stated that preparation of the report involved an analysis, based on evidence of effectiveness. Workforce across the services had contributed to the development of this report and there is evidence within the report of feedback from people who use social services and carers together with feedback from third sector partners.

The guidance for the report sets out the sections in relation to the six national quality standards for well-being:

- Working with people to define and co-produce personal well-being outcomes that people want to achieve;
- Working with people and partners to protect and promote people's physical and mental health and emotional well-being;
- Taking steps to protect and safeguard people from abuse, neglect or harm;
- Encouraging and supporting people to learn, develop and participate in society;
- Supporting people to safely develop and maintain healthy domestic, family and personal relationships;
- Working with and supporting people to achieve greater economic well-being, to have a social life and live-in suitable accommodation that meets their needs.

The report provided a summary of the main achievements in 2021/22 considering the challenges faced and the report also highlighted the priorities for social services in 2022/23.

The report evidenced key service developments and improvements made during 2021/22, whilst recognising those areas where improvements and change are required. The report also identified the significant risks and challenges faced as the Council moves forward. This information has informed BCBC's key priorities for 2022/23.

The report also highlighted some key information upon Regulatory analysis of performance, by the Care Inspectorate for Wales (CIW).

The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing finally confirmed that the priorities for 2022/23 were detailed in the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate Business Plan. The 10 overarching priorities for Social Services and Wellbeing in 2022/23 were shown in more detail at paragraph 4.10 of the report.

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There were additional specific next steps identified at the end of each of the 6 standards which are reported upon.

The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing explained in more detail about aspects of the Social Services Annual Report 2021-22 and future expectations, aims and objectives through a supporting power point presentation.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Services, wished to place on record her thanks to the Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing and her team for what had been an incredibly difficult 12 months across the Directorate, resulting from significant incidents with residents and the direct impact of these upon staff and the residents themselves.

There were continuing challenges that would be addressed as the Directorate moved forward and these challenges were significant as we function also within the confines of a cost of living crisis, the aftermath of the war, as well as Covid on our citizens health.

This afternoon, other agenda items would continue to give a flavour of the challenges BCBC faced, not only in its budget setting processes, but also in the recruitment and retention of key staff.

She added that since she had been appointed to her Cabinet role, she had become increasingly aware of these challenges that we faced. She had worked in Health and Social Care for in excess of 30 years and had never experienced the lack of funding forthcoming after years of experiencing austerity.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Services, had also never before experienced the current demands on the front door from residents, nor had she ever before experienced the difficulties in recruiting suitably qualified and experienced social care staff.

As Cabinet Member for this portfolio, she concluded by advising that she would continue to advise and update Members on these ongoing pressures, as well as making herself available for any Councillor outside of the meeting, should they wish to discuss these issues further, in more detail.

A Member referred to page 71 of the report and noted, that only 20 carers had engaged in the Wellbeing improvements and she asked why this was so low. She also asked how we could further engage with young carers, in order to take their view on the above and to look at ways to generally identify more young carers.

The Group Manager – Sports and Physical Activity advised that the engagement with 20 young carers had just been the first phase of a longer term programme, which had seen us working with Secondary schools, with us now moving to Primary schools also as well as the Young Carers Network. Since work had developed further, the engagement with young carers had increased from 20 to 190.

The Member was also concerned with the increased number of referrals in Social Services and the pressure on already pressurised staff supporting these, including in the area of Occupational Health. She noted particularly that there was pressure in terms of people trying to get into initial contact with staff, for example via the telephone. She therefore asked, if the push for further recruitment would cover this as well as accessing the Referral System.

The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing confirmed that the work area of Occupational Therapy had shown some improvements, such as waiting times for

assessments and this had been acknowledged by an Internal Audit undertaken the result of which was excellent. There were challenges however, in relation to the Telephony System at our 'front door' common access point(s). She added that BCBC would continue striving though to ensure initial contact levels are improved.

The Leader added that our young carers provision was evolving in-keeping with an increase in need and that the Authority and its key partners were endeavouring to identify more of the County Borough's young carers.

The Member asked a further follow-up question, namely were the Council trying to reduce Agency staff and look to more recruit the likes of Social Workers, as well as 'growing our own' from within the workforce.

The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing responded by saying that areas of the service were still highly reliant upon Agency staff, particularly in respect of our 'front door' service which was 60% higher than it should be at present. It was a challenge to look to reduce this reliance on such staff over the next few years, especially as professionally qualified people in this work area were not at a premium currently.

A Member referred to page 46 of the report and welcomed the Strategy in respect of Adult Mental Health and the cross collaboration in terms of working with Health Partners to support this. He hoped that the work here in order to best deliver the Strategy, included with primary care partners, as social prescribing provided support for individuals suffering from mental health issues.

The Head of Adult Social Care advised that partnership working in relation to the support and future delivery of the Strategy, included working with General Practitioners and the likes of key stakeholders such as BAVO, etc.

The Leader concluded debate on this item, by advising that there were pressures and challenges being experienced in the area of Social Services not only at an All Wales level, but right across the UK also. The Minister for Health and Social Care in order to attempt to alleviate this pressure, had introduced a Care Action Committee in order to address these pressures, so as to support care for older people within our communities.

RESOLVED: That Council endorsed the Director of Social Services' Annual Report for 2021/22.

45. **REVIEW OF CORPORATE PLAN TARGETS FOR 2022-23**

The Chief Executive presented a report, in order to seek Council approval of the proposed changes to Corporate Plan targets for 2022-23 as outlined in Appendix A.

He explained that as part of the recovery planning process, each directorate had the opportunity to re-consider targets for 2022-23, based on verified year end data.

He referred Members to Appendix A to the report, which set out the proposed changes to the Corporate Plan targets, endorsed by Cabinet yesterday and if approved by Council today, these will be published as an addendum to the current Corporate Plan. The new or amended targets were highlighted for ease of reference.

As part of a wider review of performance and governance due to the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, Council approved this approach to target setting in future planning cycles. This will ensure that the published corporate plan remains up to date with the most recent year end data and avoids the issue of publishing the Corporate Plan without targets due to lack of available data.

The Chief Executive reminded Council that this was the last year of the Council's current Corporate Plan, which would be reviewed then for the next 5 years following this.

The Chief Executive advised Members that the draft self-assessment report had previously been presented to the Governance and Audit Committee on 13 October 2022 for consideration.

At the Cabinet meeting yesterday, he finally confirmed that there had been some minor amendments to some supporting data information. These were on the top of page 127 of the report, the first two performance indicators relating to Care Leavers and Education and Employment training. The adjustments here, were that the percentage shown in terms of 12 months since leaving care would now be 65% with this then being 55% following 24 months since leaving care.

The Leader advised that as the Chief Executive had made reference to, some targets had been changed at Cabinet yesterday, in order to make these more challenging going forward.

The Cabinet Member – Communities further added, that the performance indicator target for the recycling of waste could also be considered to be set higher in future, notwithstanding the fact that BCBC were attaining already high targets in terms of performance in this area.

A Member referred to Appendix A to the report – Growth and Prosperity – and he welcomed the new performance indicator for 2022-23 in terms of footfall figures to Maesteg town centre as part of a number of wider new benchmarking targets. As we were 6 months into the year, he asked when evidence will be available to see how we are measuring against the targets so set, as part of these performance indicators.

The Corporate Director – Communities advised, that she was pleased to see that over 900,000 people had been registered as visiting Maesteg town as part of footfall figures recorded. In terms of overall benchmarking data, figures were being awaited and would be reflected in the next year quarter. This was due to accuracy in data statistics, lagging from one quarter into the next. With the new Corporate Plan proposed for next year, she added that this would include new, revised indicators and objectives to include town centre indicator data and associated information.

As a supplement to this, a Member felt that if data was more up to date on certain performance indicator information as detailed in the report, then some of the performance indicators showing as red on the RAG status, may actually reflect some of these as being completed (green) or partly completed (amber), which would then give for more accurate and positive outcomes in relation to some of the performance indicator data being shown.

The Corporate Director – Communities, confirmed that as part of Quarter 2 data to be issued in November, this would reflect a more up to date position on the performance indicator information. Also, she added that in terms of the future, it may be a good option to provide the data to members throughout the year, as opposed to sharing information less frequently. This would also give more accurate status in terms of performance at a given moment in time.

A Member stressed that footfall figures in terms of target setting for 2022-23, should not be based on 2021-22 data, due to the fallout of Covid and resulting lockdown. He asked how the data for 2021-22 compared with more historic data figures set pre-pandemic.

The Corporate Director – Communities confirmed that footfall into our town centres was high in terms of numbers pre-Covid and obviously this reduced during the pandemic in 2020, but then rose back up in 2021-22. The figures were approximately 3 million and 4.5 million when comparing the two periods.

A Member referred to page 126 of the report and asked for details regarding data on empty properties being brought back into use to support homeless people.

The Corporate Director – Communities confirmed that she would obtain this information outside of the meeting and update Members on this, at the earliest convenience.

RESOLVED: That Council approved the revised Corporate Plan targets for 2022-2023.

46. **CORPORATE SELF-ASSESSMENT**

The Chief Executive submitted a report, the purpose of which, was to provide an update on the Council's corporate self-assessment report, as required by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and to seek approval for the report attached at Appendix 1 to the covering report, endorsed by Cabinet at its meeting yesterday.

By way of some background, he confirmed that the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act which received royal assent in January 2021, sets out a new local government improvement regime, which puts more onus on the Council to demonstrate improvement rather than on Audit Wales and other regulators. One of these requirements in the Act is for the Council to make and publish a self-assessment report once each financial year, starting from the 2021-22 financial year. He added that this was also a legal requirement and that this Self-Assessment was for last year as opposed to the current one.

He explained that the Governance and Audit Committee agreed the process outlined for developing the self-assessment in June. The process utilised existing performance management and governance processes within the Council as much as possible, including the use of corporate performance assessment (CPA).

The process was subsequently followed as agreed and draft findings were presented to CPA members in June and July. The findings and judgements had now been collated into a single, simple, accessible report. In line with WG and WLGA guidance, the self-assessment report and annual well-being assessment have now been merged into a single document, the Chief Executive added.

The Chief Executive proceeded by stating that Welsh Government provided updates on already published reports and their evolving thinking about self-assessment reports at a meeting with the Council on 12 August 2022. WG asked that reports provide clarity on the real, high-level issues around performance in the Authority, for example, in Bridgend they would expect to reference to the inspection work underway around social services.

It added that there is minimal value in conducting formal consultation/ engagement on the self-assessment report. The preference would be a summary of key engagement/consultation work over the year, relating to the wellbeing objectives. This feedback has been integrated into the draft report.

The draft self-assessment report was presented to the Governance and Audit Committee on 13 October 2022 for consideration, as well as Cabinet on 18 October 2022, he reiterated.

The Corporate Self-Assessment moving forward would also benefit in terms of some consultation and engagement with our communities, key stakeholders and the Overview and Scrutiny process, all of which would in turn assist in the Council improving its ways of working moving forward.

The Chief Executive concluded his submission, by advising of some of the comments made by the Governance and Audit Committee on the Corporate Self-Assessment at its meeting on 13 October 2022.

The Leader thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Chairpersons for their active involvement in this document as part of the Corporate Assessment Framework, which would no doubt strengthen the Council's Overview and Scrutiny process in the future. He added that both Wales Audit Office and Welsh Government would assess the Corporate Self-Assessment at a future date.

A Member had seen from reading draft WLGA guidance that the Council when forming some conclusions of its Corporate Self-Assessment, should take into account some views of its residents, local businesses and staff. He asked if any such consultation had taken place on the current version and whether or not it was felt that the Self-Assessment should possibly be more evidence based.

The Chief Executive advised that this was the early stages of the life of the Corporate Self-Assessment and therefore the process regarding a more improved adaption of this was still to a degree evolving. He added that that there was links with the document as far as consultation was concerned, for example through the Authorities Annual staff survey and its budget consultation exercise that included consultation with the general public, as well as certain service focused consultations, that shaped what the Council thought of key Council services, with a view to the Authority taking some of these on board in order to achieve improvements in terms of service delivery.

A Member also felt the Corporate Self-Assessment needed to drill more into service levels, and for the Self-Assessment to perhaps contain less narrative, with it including more credible and robust indicators.

RESOLVED:

That Council approved the corporate self-assessment report 2021-22, attached at Appendix 1 to the report, subject to the modifications to certain performance indicator information as referenced above by the Chief Executive.

47. REPLACEMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN SUBMISSION DOCUMENT

The Corporate Director – Communities submitted a report, in order for Council to consider the Deposit Plan Consultation Report Summary Document (Appendix 1 to the report) and the proposed submission version of the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) as amended following public consultation (Appendices 2 and 3) and to agree the amended RLDP be submitted to Welsh Government and Planning and Environment Decisions Wales (PEDW) for independent examination.

She advised, that the LDP Strategy covers the period 2018 to 2033 and is one of the most important strategies this Council will prepare to address the key challenges of a growing population and to ensure the long-term resilience of the County Borough.

It had been developed over 4 years since 2018 and has gone through two extensive public consultations in 2019 and in July 2021 and a Scrutiny Session on the preferred strategy, prior to the pandemic.

It had also been prepared with a detailed evidence base which is summarised in paragraph 4.4 of the report. This included a number of important appraisals including Sustainability and Health Impact Assessment. It was also based on over 40 supporting documents which detail information on areas such as Transport Assessments, Economic Studies, Retail Assessments, a Green Audit and Demographic Studies. These outlined the Corporate Director – Communities, were all critical to ensure BCBC were developing in line with the Wellbeing of the Future Generations Act.

The Corporate Director – Communities reminded Members, that there was still a process to be undertaken. The LDP whilst having been through a number of public consultations, would if approved today, then progress to Welsh Government where an independent Planning Inspector will be appointed to hold an Examination in Public. Therefore, the LDP its policies, plans and supporting evidence would be scrutinised on a national scale and the public, developers and Members should they desire, can attend the Examination and make representations.

She further added, that the Planning Inspector if content with the Plan after the Examination in Public, will then refer it to the Minister for approval. Following this, it would be referred back to BCBC for adoption. This could be next summer should it be approved today.

In terms of why the LDP was so important explained the Corporate Director – Communities, was because an up-to-date Local Development Plan (LDP) is an essential part of a plan-led planning system in Wales and a statutory duty for all local authorities to discharge.

It sets the framework to ensure that the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development in a co-ordinated manner, enabling a wider, problem-solving outlook than would be possible by dealing with local issues in isolation.

Therefore, without an up to date LDP, it would become progressively difficult for the Council to focus on integrating and addressing multiple land use concerns, resulting in the local planning process becoming fragmented, un-co-ordinated and reactive.

Within the LDP there is provision for over £116m of financial contributions from developers to deliver the plan and should we not have a new adopted LDP we would not be able to lever these contributions.

It was also important to note Bridgend population was also rapidly growing, in comparison with other neighbouring local authorities in Wales

The Corporate Director – Communities confirmed that the existing Bridgend LDP (up to 2021 was now out of date), so the material weight attached to the this and its evidence base had progressively diminished now that the original plan period has concluded. Some of this evidence was prepared over a decade ago & cannot be relied upon to justify planning decisions to the same extent that it was.

Therefore, inaction will place the Council in an increasingly tenuous position, open to challenge from the development industry, and there will be ongoing implications for rational, co-ordinated and consistent planning decisions across the County Borough. This has been the case in Caerphilly County Council where the LDP was not adopted by the Council and they now face the position where developments are coming forward in an unco-ordinated way and S106 contributions cannot be levered at the recommended levels, as there is no LDP to provide an evidence base.

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The Written Statement in the report at Appendix 2, outlined the local planning policies, land use allocations and associated justification based on the supporting evidence.

The proposal map, also included within Appendix 2 illustrated the land allocations, settlement boundaries planning designations proposed in the plan, which are key to delivery of the spatial strategy.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Chapter 2 Spatial and Strategic Context – an area profile & context

Chapter 3 – Key Issues & Drivers which are those things that have directly informed the development of the vision and objectives of the plan.

Chapter 4 – Sets out the Strategic Framework – This is the vision that the LDP is working towards.

The Corporate Director – Communities at this point, summarised the key elements from Chapter 4 for Members' information, that covered:-

- A Growth and Spatial Strategy (Placemaking)
- Details regarding Employment Land Strategy:
- Examples of wider Strategic Infrastructure Improvements and Community Investment, the updated LDP would provide:
- Education provision:
- Highways Infrastructure issues:
- Affordable housing options:
- Public Open Space provision:
- Health Care proposals:
- Residential Allocations and their new supporting infrastructure:

The Corporate Director – Communities gave a resume upon each of these elements of the Plan, for the benefit of Members.

She then also reiterated that the RLDP document was a critical strategic document for the Council. It has been produced over 4 years with a significant evidence base in terms of its development.

It had also been through a number of public consultations and, if approved today, would be subject to an Examination in Public by an independent Welsh Government Inspector.

There was an opportunity to make representation at the Examination in Public from residents, developers or local members if they wish to do so. These would be considered by the Inspector prior to any approval of the plan by Welsh Government, the Corporate Director – Communities added.

Council would then be responsible for adopting the LDP, at the end of this process.

The Cabinet Member – Communities commended the Replacement LDP and the amount of work committed to this by Officers from the Planning Department. The revised document would secure in the region of £116m from S106 contributions, as well as a considerable net increase also of accessible green open space. Without the implementation of the LDP he stressed that the Council would experience uncontrolled development, as well as planning by appeal.

A few Members felt that it was regrettable that the new administration, which was in its infancy, was having to make a decision on the Replacement LDP. Some of the newer

County Borough Councillors felt that this should have been the responsibility of the predecessor Authority.

Members then in turn made the following comments and asked the following questions in relation to the Replacement LDP:

- There are 5 Candidate sites in the area of Laleston. The upgraded work to the Broadlands roundabout is welcomed. Connectivity from the areas of Island Farm and land west of Bridgend with increased development being proposed there, necessitates an Active Travel route put in place prior to construction works being developed for the safety of children when cycling from Laleston to Broadlands;
- Could it be clarified that proposals for the Waterfront Development, Porthcawl, takes account of a maximum of 1,100 residential units and that any future proposals for the Salt Lake Development will be in-keeping with its scale and building height;
- In respect of the 850 houses proposed for the circus field, Laleston and with the gridlock traffic situation at Bryn Hill and Park Street together with the current air quality situation at the latter, will the Replacement LDP look to remedy further traffic congestion and poorer air quality issues the extra development is likely to generate;
- Could you confirm that the moratorium for the level crossing at Pencoed will be retained in the Replacement LDP and that the new residential site proposed to the east of Pencoed will come with an Active Travel route in order to ensure there is connectivity to/from the development, as well as assurances on other suitable transport links/interventions;
- Social and Affordable housing are at a critical low level both locally and nationally. Is there any percentage or guidance on how much of this type of development is proposed for inclusion at different CB locations in the LDP;
- In terms of Primary Healthcare, could BCBC link in with Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Authority to ensure provision is maintained and possibly improved, particularly in relation to the Integrated Community Health Centre proposed for Bridgend and at North Cornelly and Porthcawl (South Road);
- It's pleasing to note that that long term Regeneration sites have been planned within Maesteg at the Coegnant Road Reclamation location and the Maesteg Washery site. Further endeavours for avenues to obtain external funding will hopefully see work at these sites commence sooner rather than later;
- Future housing is very much required in the Llynfi Valley and this should just not be proposed but realised also. There is also a lack of Education and Leisure provision in this valley area;
- With regards to land west of Bridgend, should this scheme progress will this account for a Primary School in the short term, together with Secondary Education provision more longer-term;
- The Valleys Gateway area is considered within the LDP as an area where there will be little or no Residential Growth. In terms of Appendix 43 to the report – Strategic Transport Assessments, how does this assessment and the Replacement LDP itself, address the chronic issue in terms of traffic in relation to the M4/Junction 36 and the subsequent A4061, connecting some of the Valley Gateway communities. Would also any improvements to the A4061 which is within the local authorities gift, involve a knock-on measure for improvements to the M4 junction;
- A number of developments in Coity Higher have resulted in being bigger than firstly proposed, eg Parc Derwen as well as some sites at the location being developed upon contrary to a provision of the existing LDP, eg Ffordd Cadfan. Lessons need to be learnt here for the Replacement LDP and developers held to account on their original proposals that should conform with the new LDP.

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Civic amenities also need to be provided out of S106 monies in-keeping with the size of new housing developments, which should be provided wherever possible, in the early stages of development construction works;

- Concern was expressed regarding the impact excess traffic and air pollution issues in the centre of Bridgend may have on adjoining/adjacent Wards. S106 monies should also be allocated and spent in the relevant Wards rather than elsewhere;
- Could consideration be given in the Replacement LDP for the provision of a Safe Route to School, linking the west side of Broadlands, through Gypsy Lane to Trelales.

The above points and representations were responded to by the Corporate Director – Communities and Planning Officers. Further details regarding these responses are available via the following link - [Council](#)

It was then moved, seconded and agreed by way of assent, that an electronic vote be taken on the recommendation of the report.

The result of the vote was as follows:-

<u>For</u>	<u>Against</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
39	4	2

RESOLVED: That Council:

- (1) Considered the Deposit Plan Consultation Report Summary Document (Appendix 1 to the report) and the proposed submission version of the Replacement Local Development Plan as amended following public consultation (Appendices 2 and 3), agreed the amended Replacement Local Development Plan and further agreed that the amended Replacement Local Development Plan be submitted to Welsh Government and Planning and Environment Decisions Wales for independent examination.
- (2) Authorised the Corporate Director - Communities and Group Manager - Planning & Development Services to make any refinements to the Replacement Local Development Plan, supporting background papers and technical evidence required, prior to submitting the plan to Welsh Government and Planning and Environment Decisions Wales.

48. CAPITAL PROGRAMME UPDATE QUARTER 2 2022-23

The Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change presented a report, the purpose of which, was to:

- comply with the requirement of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) 'The Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities' (2017 edition);
- provide an update on the capital programme position for 2022-23 as at 30 September 2022 (Appendix A to the report);
- seek approval for a revised capital programme for 2022-23 to 2031-32 (Appendix B);
- note the projected Prudential and Other Indicators for 2022-23 (Appendix C)

She explained that the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (Wales) Regulations 2003, as amended, contains detailed provisions on capital finance and

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accounting controls, including rules on the use of capital receipts and what is to be treated as capital expenditure. They modify accounting practice in various ways to prevent adverse impacts on authorities' revenue resources.

The Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change, reminded Council that on 23 February 2022, it approved a capital budget of £69.979 million for 2022-23 as part of a capital programme covering the period 2022-23 to 2031-32. The programme was last updated and approved by Council on 20 July 2022.

This report provided an update on the following:

- Capital Programme monitoring quarter 2 2022-23;
- A revised Capital Programme for 2022-23 to 2031-32;
- Capital Strategy monitoring; &
- Prudential and other indicators

With regards to the Capital Programme 2022-23 Quarter 2 update, she referred Members to paragraph 4.1 of the report, which provided Members with an update on the programme for this period since it was last approved by Council, and which incorporated any new schemes and grant approvals. The revised programme for 2022-23 currently totals £89.539 million, of which £54.043 million is met from Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) resources, including capital receipts and revenue contributions from earmarked reserves, with the remaining £35.496 million coming from external resources, including Welsh Government General Capital Grant.

The Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change, also referred then to the Tables on page 191 of the report, namely Table 1 that contained the Capital Programme per Directorate for 2022-23, with Table 3 summarising the current funding assumptions for the Capital Programme 2022-23.

Appendix A to the report, then provided details of the individual schemes within the Capital Programme, showing the projected spend at 30 September 2022 against the budget available.

She advised that a number of schemes had already been identified as requiring slippage of budget to future years (2023-24 and beyond). At quarter 2 the total requested slippage is £7.207 million, which comprised the schemes shown at paragraph 4.4 of the report.

In terms of the Capital Programme 2022-23 onwards, the Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change confirmed that since July 2022, a number of new externally funded schemes approved and internally funded schemes had been incorporated into the Capital Programme, as was illustrated in paragraphs 4.5 and 4.6 (of the report).

Paragraph 4.7 then made reference to the revised Capital Programme at Appendix B to the report, whilst Appendix C detailed the actual indicators for 2021-22, the estimated indicators for 2022-23 set out in the Council's Capital Strategy and the projected indicators for 2022-23 based on the revised Capital Programme. These show that the Council is operating in line with the approved limits.

The final part of the submission of the Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change, referred to issues regarding Capital Strategy Monitoring, which she expanded upon for the benefit of Council.

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A Member referred to the proposal to extend Coety Primary School and asked if the cost of the works exceeded the estimated £1.6m, then would this extra monies be found in order for the project to go ahead.

The Corporate Director – Education and Family Support confirmed subject to the consultation process for the enlargement of the school proceeding as part of the usual statutory processes for schemes of this nature and planning consent being approved for the school's proposed extension, then the scheme would be proceeded with.

A Member referred to an allocation of £500k of Capital Funding to be committed for un-adopted roads and asked for a progress update on this.

The Corporate Director – Communities advised that she did not have the finer details of this to hand, but she would be pleased to share this with the Member outside of the meeting.

A Member noted that there was detailed in the report a slippage of £7m for capital schemes from this financial year to the next. He asked if this amount also took into account, any inflationary cost and material cost increases for the works so proposed, etc.

The Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change, advised that the report contained the reasons for certain schemes having to slip from this year into next, some of which were very near to commencement, so she was confident that these schemes would be costed as they had been estimated. Schemes that were further down the line, could be modified on a cost base basis, with any changes to the works altered as necessary, so she was confident that these schemes would not bring with them any significant increased cost pressures for the Authority.

The Member also noted from the reports pack that in different areas of it there were different estimated costs for the Cosy Corner works at Porthcawl. He sought clarification which one of these was the correct figure, to which the Corporate Director – Communities responded that the allocation available to construct the scheme was £2.675m.

RESOLVED: That Council:

- Noted the Council's Capital Programme 2022-23 Quarter 2 update to 30 September 2022 (Appendix A to the report referred).
- Approved the revised Capital programme (at Appendix B).
Noted the Prudential and Other Indicators for 2022-23 (Appendix C).

49. ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN REPORT 2021-22

The Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change presented a report, the purpose of which was to:

- Comply with the requirement of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's 'Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice' (the Code) to report an overview of treasury activities for the preceding financial year.
- Report on the actual Treasury Management Indicators for 2021-22.

The report provided some background information that included a reminder for Members, that the Council's treasury management advisors were Arlingclose.

The current services provided to the Council in this arrangement, included:

- advice and guidance on relevant policies, strategies and reports;
- advice on investment decisions;
- notification of credit ratings and changes;
- other information on credit quality;
- advice on debt management decisions;
- accounting advice;
- reports on treasury performance;
- forecasts of interest rates; &
- training courses

With regards to the present situation, the Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change, confirmed that the continuing economic recovery from the coronavirus pandemic, together with the war in Ukraine, rising inflation, and higher interest rates were major issues over the 2021-22 financial year. The Bank Base rate was 0.1% at the beginning of the reporting period. April and May 2021 saw the economy gathering momentum as the pandemic restrictions were eased. Despite the improving outlook, market expectations were that the Bank of England would delay interest rate rises until 2022. However, continually rising inflation changed that. UK CPI was 0.7% in March 2021 but thereafter steadily increased. Initially driven by increases in energy prices and by inflation in sectors such as retail and hospitality which were reopening after the pandemic lockdowns, at that time increases to inflation were believed to be temporary. However, CPI for February 2022 registered 6.2% year on year, up from 5.5% the previous month, she added.

In terms of more financial context, she explained that having increased the Bank Base rate from 0.1% to 0.25% in December 2021, the Bank of England raised it further to 0.5% in February 2022 and 0.75% in March 2022. In its March interest rate announcement, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) noted that the invasion of Ukraine had caused further large increases in energy and other commodity prices, with the expectation that the conflict will worsen supply chain disruptions around the world and push CPI inflation to around 8% later in 2022.

The Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change added, that in August 2021 HM Treasury significantly revised guidance for the PWLB lending facility. Authorities that are purchasing or intending to purchase investment assets primarily for yield, or financial return, will not be able to access the PWLB except to refinance existing loans or externalise internal borrowing. Acceptable use of PWLB borrowing includes service delivery, housing, regeneration, preventative action, refinancing and treasury management. Further information in relation to this was shown at paragraph 4.2.2 of the report.

In terms of Treasury Management Outturn, she advised that a summary of the treasury management activities for 2021-22 was shown in Appendix A to the report.

The Council's external debt and investment position for 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 was shown in Table 1 in the report, and further detail was provided in Appendix A Section 2, Borrowing Strategy and Outturn, and Section 3, Investment Strategy and Outturn. No long-term borrowing was taken out in 2021-22 and no debt rescheduling was undertaken as there were no significant savings to be made. However, should the opportunity arise to reschedule any loans at a preferential rate, this would be done. Favourable cash flows have provided surplus funds for investment and the balance on investments at 31 March 2022 was £84.07 million, with an average interest rate of

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0.43%. This was an increase from the balances at 31 March 2021, when the balance held as £51.55 million at a weighted average interest rate of 0.21%.

The Table 4 at Appendix A, detailed the movement of the investments by counterparty types and showed the average balances, interest received, original duration and interest rates for 2021-22.

In presenting the report the Chief Officer - Finance, Performance and Change, referred to the monies invested with Thurrock Council, as a number of members had raised this matter with the service area.

She clarified that investments had been made with that Council previously and the monies had always been returned to Bridgend County Borough Council in accordance with the agreement made. Members expressed concern regarding the placement of the current loans with Thurrock Council, due to their financial difficulties and sought reassurance that the monies would be returned to the Authority on the due dates.

The Chief Officer - Finance, Performance and Change confirmed that the placement of the funds had been done in accordance with the agreed Treasury Management Strategy and that confirmation has been received from Thurrock Council that the relevant sums will be repaid on the due dates.

RESOLVED: That Council:

1. Noted the annual treasury management activities for 2021-22.
2. Noted the actual Treasury Management Indicators for 2021-22 against those approved in the Treasury Management Strategy 2021-22.

50. JOINT PROTOCOL - MILEAGE RATES

The Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisational Development presented a report, to seek Council approval to adopt the Joint Protocol for Mileage Rates in Local Authorities in Wales as a temporary arrangement.

The joint protocol on mileage rates, attached at Appendix 1 to the report, had been approved by Group Leaders on behalf of the WLGA Executive Board, and shared with the Joint Council for Wales (JCW) Executive, and trade unions have formally agreed the proposal and requested its implementation at the earliest opportunity.

She explained that the national protocol is effective from 26 September 2022, which was timely given Council's earlier decision to implement the recommended rate of 50p per mile in the short term, subject to review by 30 September 2022, with the current rate being 46p per mile and having been that for some considerable time.

She advised that the relevant Trade Unions nationally were in support of the increase and that decisions regarding this be made locally by local authorities.

In terms of the reports financial implications, The Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisational Development confirmed that full annual cost of implementing this new rate, based on the 2021/2022 levels of work mileage is estimated at £50,000 per annum. This can currently be funded from within existing mileage budgets as a result of lower than usual mileage at the current time. Should mileage increase then this funding availability may be at risk.

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Most of the reduced mileage was in respect of meetings/training/conferences now being held virtually instead of in-person rather than front line service delivery e.g., social care workers.

As there was a move towards more in-person meetings, spend on mileage will increase and spend against budgets will be closely monitored, she added.

She concluded her submission by stating if the report was approved the increase would be effective immediately and reviewed at 31 March 2023.

The Leader commended the report and was appreciative of the fact that this would benefit the Council home care worker contingency.

A Member asked if petrol prices decreased, would the proposed increase be subject to further review, to which the Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisational Development replied that this would take place at an All Wales level.

RESOLVED: That Council:

- (1) Approved the adoption of the Joint Protocol for Mileage Rates in local authorities in Wales from 26 September to 31 March 2023.
- (2) Delegated authority to the Chief Executive to approve any extension, should the protocol be extended for a period up to 6 months.

51. CONSTITUTION AND CONSTITUTION GUIDE

The Monitoring Officer presented a report, the purpose of which, was for the Council to approve the revised constitution and constitution guides.

She explained that a new model Constitution has been considered by each local authority and has become common place. The style of the new constitution is more intelligible to the public and there is less duplication. Whilst the new model contains detailed provisions, adopting the model constitution does not require all of those detailed provisions to be adopted and therefore following a local review by officers, some of the Council's existing detailed provisions concerning procedure rules, codes of conduct and protocols have been retained in order to preserve continuity and retain the valuable work that has been done over the years in reviewing each part of the existing constitution.

The Monitoring Officer explained, that whilst the revised draft constitution (Appendix 1 to the report) looked quite different from the current version, by its very nature, the document largely comprises the same elements. These include Procedural Rules for Council, the Executive and Scrutiny Committees, Financial Procedure Rules, Contract Procedure Rules and Member Code of Conduct. In reality, the extent of actual changes in terms of how the Council works are quite small as the general view is that significant elements of the current constitution remain "fit for purpose". Consequently, significant elements of the sections governing how the Full Council, the Executive and the Scrutiny Committees operate remain largely the same, if not identical, to the current version.

Attached at Appendix 2 to this report was a constitution guide based on the Browne Jacobson model guide and adapted to reflect the Council's constitutional arrangements. A guide summarising all the provisions of the constitution was also attached as Appendix 3.

The Monitoring Officer informed Members, that the model Constitution and guides were considered by the Democratic Services Committee on 7 July 2022 and the Committee

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recommended that a Working Group be established with support from the Group Manager - Legal and Democratic Services to review all aspects of the constitution as part of its improvement journey.

Appendix 4 summarised the issues identified through discussions from the Working Group and sets out a series of recommendations arising from the Group for consideration as a means of improving the Council's good governance. Since the last meeting of the Working Group, it should be noted that further amendments have been made to the Officers' Code of Conduct (Section 20) following consultation with Trade Unions.

The Chairperson of the Democratic Services Committee commended the input of the Cross-Party Working Group that had been established to review the revised Constitution.

A Member referred to page 266 of the report, paragraph 4.11.4 and announcements from dignitaries and asked if consideration could be given to amend this part of the Constitution, so as to allow questions from Members on these.

He also referred to page 395 and paragraph 9.2.2 where reference was made to Regulatory Committees and asked, that where it specified that one Cabinet Member representative could be a member of the Governance and Audit Committee, this be removed. He also made reference to whipping declarations that applied to Overview and Scrutiny, also applying to other Committees, for example, full Council.

The Monitoring Officer advised that with regard to Regulatory Committees, local authorities were governed by statute which included the recommended composition of bodies such as the Governance and Audit Committee (in line with the above), and therefore we had to abide by this legislation.

She added that there would be further opportunities in the future whereby Members could give consideration to a further review of the Constitution as a working document, should they feel this was required.

A Member made reference to Section 4.20 point 4, paragraph b of the report and where reference was made to a vote of no confidence in the Leader of the Council, where it stated that the removal of the Leader required 'two thirds' of Members voting at the time the question is put. He proposed an amendment to this, namely that reference to 'two thirds' be changed to 'a majority' of Members voting at the time the question is put. This motion was duly seconded.

The amendment went to a vote, the result of which was as follows:-

<u>For</u> (the amendment)	<u>Against</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
16	29	0

The amendment therefore was not sufficiently supported.

Following this vote Members then,

RESOLVED: That Council:

- Approved the recommendations of the Democratic Services Committee Working Group (Appendix 4 to the report);

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- Further approved the revised constitution (Appendix 1) and guide (Appendix 2) and 3) to take effect from 1 December 2022.

52. APPOINTMENT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S APPRAISAL PANEL

The Monitoring Officer presented a report, that sought Council approval for the appointment of Members to sit on the appraisal and performance review of the Chief Executive.

The report outlined some background information following which, it proposed that appointment to the above Panel be made in preparation for the date of the appraisal, which was 3 November 2022.

Members agreed that the Panel consisted of the following membership:-

- The Leader;
- The Deputy Leader;
- Councillor S Griffiths;
- The Leader/a representative of the Bridgend County Independents;
- The Leader/a representative of Democratic Alliance.

- RESOLVED:
- (1) That Council appointed the Panel responsible for the appraisal and performance review of the Chief executive, comprising of the membership detailed in paragraph 4.2 of the report.
 - (2) Noted that the date of the meeting will be 3 November 2022 at 2.00pm.

53. REVIEW OF POLITICAL BALANCE - CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Monitoring officer presented a report, the purpose of which was to:

- advise Council of the outcome of the adjusted political balance of the Authority resulting from Councillor Steven Easterbrook being elected at the recent by-election in the Bridgend Central Ward;
- seek approval of the revised political balance;
- approve the allocation of seats to political groups in accordance with political balance rules, as set out in the Appendix to the report and approve the changes to the membership of the Committees as outlined in paragraph 4.1 of this report.

She explained that there had been a recent change to the membership of political groups, whereby Councillor Steven Easterbrook (Bridgend County Independents) was elected in the recent by-election for the Bridgend Central Ward.

The change outlined above, had therefore affected the overall political balance on Committees within the Authority.

Due to this, the Monitoring Officer proposed the following changes to Committee memberships, in accordance with a provision of the Local Government Act 1972:-

1. Town and Community Council Forum – Democratic Alliance Group to lose a seat, Bridgend County Independents to gain a seat.
2. Development Control Committee – An Independent Member to lose a seat, Bridgend County Independents to gain a seat.

Following the review of political balance, the membership of committees has been updated to reflect the composition of Council accordingly. The updated political balance figures taking into account the above were shown within the attached Appendix to the report.

The Monitoring Officer added, that the Group Leaders of the Bridgend County Independents and the Democratic Alliance together with Councillor Aspey, have been consulted on these changes and were in agreement with them. Both the above Group Leaders had been asked to announce at the meeting of Council on 19 October 2022, the changes required as detailed in the report, reflected in the decision below.

RESOLVED: That Council:-

- (1) Noted the outcome of the revised political balance of the Authority resulting from changes to the membership of political groups following the recent election of Councillor Steven Easterbrook at the by-election in the Bridgend Central Ward;
- (2) Approved the revised political balance (of the Council);
- (3) Approved the revised allocation of seats to political groups and in respect of Councillor Aspey in accordance with political balance rules as set out in the Appendix to this report and the resulting recommended changes to the membership of the Committees, as outlined in paragraph 4.1 of the report, namely that Councillor S Easterbrook gains seats on the Council's Development Control Committee and the Town and Community Council Forum, with these seats being relinquished by Councillors S Aspey and E Richards, respectively.

54. **INFORMATION REPORT FOR NOTING**

The Chief Officer Legal and Regulatory Services, HR and Corporate Policy, reported on the Information Report which had been published since the last meeting of Council.

RESOLVED: That Council acknowledged the publication of the document listed in the report.

55. **TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE**

Question from Councillor G Walter to the Cabinet Member – Social Services and Early Help

Could the Cabinet Member for Social Services & Early Help please tell me what we are doing as Council to recruit into vacant positions?

Retention and recruitment of the social care workforce is the highest priority for the Council.

It is important that Council roles offer a fair and competitive salary given the market for roles in social work and social care. The Council approved a market supplement policy in October 2021 and the market supplement has been applied where the criteria for it has been met in children's social care. In addition, there has been a wider review of job descriptions to ensure that they reflect accurately the duties undertaken and this review has resulted in some roles, such as experienced social workers, being evaluated at a higher grade.

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The Council has also progressed a range of actions to ensure that Bridgend is attractive to potential employees. Workforce charters for key occupations in social work and social care are being progressed which set out the commitment of the Council to employees as a flexible and supportive employer in which people can commence, and develop, their careers. The foundation of support for social care workforce is regular and good quality supervision and the opportunity to develop their careers and access excellent training and development. These aspects are core to the charter.

There is a major focus on workforce well-being with timely access to corporate wellbeing resources and specialist support when required.

Reviews of skill-mix have been undertaken and resulted in the creation of innovative social work support officer roles which mean that professionally qualified social workers undertake duties which only they can and there are opportunities for non-social workers to progress and develop their careers in social care.

Recognising the challenges in the social care and social work recruitment market, Bridgend is investing significantly in growing our own workforce of the future. Apprenticeship roles in social care and business support have been created. In the last 2 years Bridgend has appointed 16 people as social work secondees and trainees to the social work degree course. We work closely with our partners in Bridgend college and Social Care Wales to develop and implement career pathways into social care.

The Council is a flexible employer and promotes hybrid working and family friendly flexibility for the workforce in recruitment literature. Staff working in direct care services in adult and children's services have a choice of contractual hours to reflect their needs. 9- day fortnights are promoted in social work teams and a generous relocation package is available to people moving to the Bridgend area to take up a role.

Barriers to working in particular roles are being addressed, for example, rotas are being changed to open up homecare roles to a non-driving workforce and electric vehicles are being purchased for workforce who can drive but do not have access to a vehicle for work.

In addition to the work to attract workforce from across Wales and the UK to Bridgend, work is also progressing to recruit internationally to shortage occupations. We have engaged with a specialist agency to recruit social workers and are considering international recruitment of social care workers.

Where partners may be better placed to recruit workers, we work closely with them and are progressing work with Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board to recruit care workers and support their work within our integrated teams.

We are enhancing the way we market and promote roles, recognising how competitive recruitment markets are currently, recognising there is more to do to positively promote the opportunities to potential recruits. One newly appointed social worker referred to Bridgend as a 'hidden gem' which highlights the need to better promote the positive experience of people working in social care and social work. A new social care marketing officer post is being created to support this work. Bespoke social care recruitment fairs are being held throughout the County Borough in addition to the recruitment fairs for all Council roles.

I believe it is also important to note that recruitment and retention of our social services workforce is being discussed within the Social Services Cabinet Network across Wales, with Welsh Government Ministers highlighting our grave concerns about workforce planning nationally.

Supplementary question from Councillor G Walter

What role can the Council play, ie as a whole as 51 Members, in assisting with recruitment

We need to look at all our recruitment processes and social media avenues with a view to encouraging candidates. As Councillors, we all have a corporate parenting role and it is up to all of us to recognise and acknowledge this role and the responsibilities that come with it. That responsibility is carried with you wherever you are at any given time. There will be a Member Development session on Corporate Parenting as part of the Member Development Programme currently ongoing and I urge you all to attend this, even longer standing Councillors, for a form of refresher training in this extremely important work area.

Question from Councillor E Winstanley to the Cabinet Member – Social Services and Early Help

Does the Cabinet Member for Social Services and Early Help have confidence that we will be able to meet care and support demands for our vulnerable residents during the winter months?

In Bridgend, as other Council's across Wales, there are significant challenges in providing and securing sufficient care and support at home services to meet the assessed care needs of our most vulnerable residents.

I have confidence that the Cabinet and officers are doing everything we can to try to support and enhance our internal and commissioned homecare services, but we must acknowledge that we are not always able to meet the need for services in a timely a way due to the level of need and the workforce challenges in the social care sector.

To support and help increase capacity within the commissioned sector, independent domiciliary care providers have been funded an extra £1/hr from August 2022 until March 2023, with clear criteria that the extra funding must be passed-on to care workers to help with increasing fuel costs, where this is needed, and/or must be used to assist in the recruitment and retention of staff to increase their capacity to support with current and future pressures.

From an internal services perspective, there is on-going work to care workers, which includes:

- Existing staff given the opportunity to increase their contract hours
- Community based recruitment events/marketing campaigns are taking place
- The service has considered applications from non-driving individuals and recruitment events planned in key areas for non-driving individuals
- Mileage rates have increased to £0.50/mile, which is in-line with health's recent changes in response to the pressures
- Work with Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board to explore the opportunities for joint appointments to our integrated teams.

There are also some longer-term options being looked-into as a method of making internal homecare services more attractive, which includes:

- Review of current working patterns to move away from 'split shifts'
- Consideration of an application under the Market Supplement Policy

- Options are also being explored for the use of pooled, electric vehicles and increased recruitment of 'walkers'.

In terms of overseeing this work during this difficult time, there is an established adult services pressures project board (Chaired by the Corporate Director) who monitor and track progress and effectiveness of various actions on a fortnightly basis, as well as analysing key measures, such as workforce capacity and waiting list information.

Question from Councillor Paul Davies to the Cabinet Member – Social Services and Early Help

Considering recent events in Bridgend reported in the press and through documentaries, Does the Cabinet Member for Social Services and Early Help have confidence that Children's Services is fit for purpose and that the services they deliver are safe and effective?

My response to this question aligns with the recent performance evaluation inspection into Bridgend children's services by Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW). That inspection report recognised that the context for delivering effective children's social care in Bridgend is very challenging and Bridgend is experiencing, and addressing, issues faced by many other local authorities in Wales and beyond.

Children's services across Wales are particularly challenged in responding to the increasing needs of children and families after the pandemic lockdowns, alongside the difficulties of securing a permanent social worker workforce and ensuring there is sufficient accommodation, care and support services for care experienced children when they need it.

I am confident that we have the right priorities for children's services through the strategic plan approved by Cabinet in February 2021. The inspection undertaken in May highlighted a number of improvements had already been delivered since a previous inspection undertaken last year, alongside the areas for significant improvement. CIW acknowledged that the Council has a robust action plan in place, which sets out actions over the next 3 years to improve the workforce, practice, partnerships, provision and how we hear and act on the voice of children and families.

The inspection highlighted that the Council must continue to ensure there is a robust corporate support and prioritised resources to deliver these identified improvements in order to sustainably address variations in the quality services and social work practice. My Cabinet colleagues and I continue to exercise leadership and oversight, alongside senior accountable officers, on the delivery of the improvements required.

I have confidence that political leadership and management oversight is effective through the governance we have established through the Improving Outcomes for Children programme so we are sighted on, and are in a position to ensure, that children's social care is meeting statutory duties and improving outcomes for children and families. The 'fitness for purpose' of children's social care is currently highly dependent on engagement of an interim workforce as Bridgend, in common with other Councils, has engaged an increasing number of agency workers in children's social work teams in order to fulfil statutory duties and provide children and families with the support they need.

We are working closely with Welsh Government, have recently met with the Deputy Minister, to progress priorities for improvement. Workforce has the highest priority in our 3-year improvement plan and as a local authority Bridgend, has taken focused action to retain and recruit children's social workers in the very challenging post Covid

employment market. In addition to a number of short term actions, such as application of the market supplement, we are supporting more of our workforce to become professionally qualified, including a significantly enhanced 'grow your own' scheme of secondees and trainees and international recruitment of social workers and internationally recruiting social workers to Bridgend.

Question from Councillor Alex Williams to the Cabinet Member – Communities

Is the Cabinet Member for Communities satisfied with the way in which Bridgend County Borough's refuse and recycling service is being operated by the current service provider; is he content that the service is fulfilling the agreement as set out in the terms of the contract; and what is being done by BCBC to address the significant challenges faced by the operator during the stop-gap extension to the contract whereby there will be little commercial incentive for the operator to improve service delivery?

The current contract with Kier has 18 months left to run before it ends on 31st March 2024. A specification for a short two-year contract is currently being finalised that will run from April 2024- March 2026. Kier are coming out of the waste market so will not be bidding for this short contract.

In terms of collections and the management of our 3 CRC's, Kier perform very well. Missed collections are also very low at a rate of an average of 43 per 100,000 overall. Typically, just over 430,000 collections are made each month so the rate of missed collections is low. Typical sector best practice is recognised at 50 misses per 100,00 for weekly collections and 80 per 100,000 for fortnightly collections.

In regards to cost, the service also performs well. A report published this month by the WLGA, listed Bridgend as having the 4th lowest household waste and recycling service costs out of the 22 authorities in Wales.

Comparing figures for January to August this year to last year, recycling missed collections are down by just over 20%. Complaints received have almost halved during the same period.

Recycling container requests have increased by 15% comparing this year to last year which is likely to be due to increased promotion of the service by the authority.

Recycling performance of our CRCs is currently averaging at just over 90%. An area where it is recognised that Kier have experienced issues is roll-out delivery of blue refuse sacks and bio bags, resulting in complaints in this specific service area. This has been due to staffing issues due to covid, sickness and the ability to recruit staff.

In August additional resources were used, including weekend working where possible to catchup on the backlog of deliveries. Most recently, continued staffing issues and bank holiday catchup working meant that roll-out deliveries slipped. In order to catch up on deliveries, Kier allocated 5 rounds to deliver on a Saturday and a Sunday in order to get back on track as quickly as possible. This additional resource was implemented at a cost to Kier to enable them to get back on track with deliveries. Kier are now back where they should be with deliveries as per the published schedule. Officers are continuing to monitor this part of the service closely. Default points are also allocated through the payment mechanism of the contract where non-compliance with a number of standards including delivery of containers.

As previously reported to scrutiny, repeated public satisfaction surveys demonstrate a clear high level of satisfaction with the waste service. Our waste contract team will continue to monitor the service to ensure this continues until the end of the contract period with Kier and continues with any future service provision.

Supplementary question by Councillor Alex Williams to the Cabinet Member - Communities

I thank the Cabinet Member for his written response and also noted his appreciation of the engagement with him from the Corporate Director for Communities and her team on the issues raised within the question in the intervening period between now and when the question was first posed.

How will the local authority ensure that Kier meets its contractual obligations until the end of their contract in 2024 and how will the new specification for the two-year contract from 2024 – 2026, ensure that there is a commercial incentive to maintain high performance in some areas (and improve service delivery in others) for the benefit of BCBC residents given the relatively short length of the contract.

The current Contract contains conditions within it that include strict penalties should these conditions not be met, as the Contractor was obligated to. The proposed Contract for the two year extension, would at least contain the same strict conditions as part of this Agreement, in order to ensure a high level of performance going forward.

Note:

The response to the last question to the Executive from Councillor Ian Williams as outlined at Agenda Item 17. had previously been circulated. It was noted that Councillor Williams had lost his broadband connection with the meeting at this point in proceedings. It was further noted, that there were no supplementary questions to the original question posed by Councillor Williams.

56. NOTICE OF MOTION PROPOSED BY COUNCILLOR ALEX WILLIAMS

Councillor Williams put forward an amendment to his original Notice of Motion, as outlined at Item 18. on today's meeting Agenda, following some constructive consultation and collaboration with the Cabinet Member - Education. This amendment resulted in replacing the original motion with that proposed as follows:-

'That this Council:

Confirms that the Cabinet will review Bridgend County Borough Council's School Admission Policy and Arrangements and Learner Travel Policy and that Cabinet acknowledges all of the points raised by him contained within the original motion which would all be considered as part of the review. '

As part of his remarks, Councillor Williams stated that he looked forward to receiving correspondence from the Cabinet on the timetable for the review, so that both policies could be scrutinised through the Overview and Scrutiny process, in due course.

By way of assent, members of Council supported the amended Notice of Motion as submitted by Councillor Williams.

57. URGENT ITEMS

None.

The meeting closed at 21:15