

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND ON WEDNESDAY, 5 FEBRUARY 2014 AT 3.00PM

Present:

Councillor C J James - Mayor and Chairperson

<u>Councillors</u>	<u>Councillors</u>	<u>Councillors</u>	<u>Councillors</u>
S Aspey	D M Hughes	J R McCarthy	G Thomas
M W Butcher	E M Hughes	H E Morgan	M Thomas
N Clarke	P James	L C Morgan	H J Townsend
H J David	R M James	M E J Nott OBE	E Venables
P A Davies	R D Jenkins	G Phillips	K J Watts
G W Davies MBE	P John	D R Pugh	C Westwood
E Dodd	B Jones	C E Rees	D B F White
D K Edwards	C L Jones	C Reeves	P J White
L Ellis	M Jones	M Reeves	H M Williams
E P Foley	R C Jones	D Sage	R Williams
C A Green	D R W Lewis	C E Smith	R E Young
M Gregory	J E Lewis	J C Spanswick	

Officers:

D Mepham	-	Chief Executive
M Shephard	-	Corporate Director - Communities
D McMillan	-	Corporate Director - Children
P A Jolley	-	Assistant Chief Executive - Legal and Regulatory Services and Monitoring Officer
M A Galvin	-	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees
G P Jones	-	Head of Democratic Services (Electronic Support)

295 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of an ordinary meeting of Council held on the 8 January 2014 were approved as a true and accurate record.

296 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the following Members for the reasons so stated:

Councillor R Thomas	-	Training
Councillor J H Tildesley	-	Holiday
Councillor A Owen	-	Work Commitments
Councillor D Owen	-	Holiday
Councillor G Davies	-	Unwell
Councillor C E Rees	-	Unwell

297 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Head of Finance and Performance declared an interest in Agenda item 6(a), JNC Officer Structure, as an existing Officer that is affected by the report's proposals, and she left the meeting whilst this item was being discussed.

298 MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (1) The Mayor extended his thanks to everyone who helped to spread the word about this year's Mayor's Citizenship Awards. Nominations had now closed and he was happy to report that the Council had received more than thirty submissions, including several that came in from local members. These would be looked at in closer detail and a shortlist of successful nominees would be drawn up ahead of the awards ceremony in March.
- (2) The Mayor announced that he was very pleased to attend the opening of a brand new 3G all-weather pitch at Heronsbridge School recently, which had laid the foundations for the future of disability football in the county borough. Provided by the council in partnership with the Friends of Heronsbridge, Johnson and Johnson and Sport Wales, the pitch was unveiled at a special event featuring Swansea City legend Lee Trundle, who took up an unfamiliar position in goals as members of the Bridgend Herons Disabled Football Club christened the pitch with a penalty shoot-out. This was a first-rate facility for both pupils at the school and the wider community, so he extended thanks to everyone who had played a part in making it a reality.
- (3) The Mayor stated that local businesses were being sought to help support a very worthwhile social enterprise called Liberty Horses. Based at Nottage in Porthcawl, Liberty Horses had already helped around 200 young people who were vulnerable or disadvantaged, and had developed their confidence, self-esteem and social skills by encouraging them to care for and look after horses. Now the organisation is looking for businesses and traders who may be interested in supporting or sponsoring their work. He asked Members to spread the word about this very worthwhile cause, more details on which were available from the corporate website.
- (4) Finally, the Mayor gave a quick reminder that the next charity lunch in aid of the mayoral appeal fund would take place on Friday 21 February at the Great House in Laleston. Tickets cost £25 and were available from the Mayor's Charity Committee. He hoped Members would show their support for the function.

299 CABINET MEMBERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS

(1) Deputy Leader

The Deputy Leader announced that colleagues may have seen or heard the announcement last Friday, which he was happy to confirm, that the Council's application to the Welsh Government for a share of Vibrant and Viable Places funding had been successful, and the Authority was due to receive nearly £6m pounds worth of regeneration funding which will be invested in the ongoing regeneration of Bridgend town centre.

He was delighted that BCBC had been chosen as one of the successful areas to receive this funding particularly as there was a lot of tough competition in terms of bids for this. While we have been awarded less than we originally hoped for, this funding was still fantastic news and will contribute towards the ongoing aim of making Bridgend town centre a more vibrant and attractive place to live, work and visit.

The Deputy Leader also wished to advise Members that BCBC had submitted a bid for funding to the Welsh Government for the establishment of a Business Improvement District covering Bridgend town centre.

If successful, this would see the establishment of a non-profit making organisation run by traders with support from the Council where businesses could regularly contribute towards a fund. The fund could then be used to provide a variety of improvements within the town centre with traders deciding how the money would be used, for example, if they wanted to promote free Sunday car parking, introduce new signage or carry out advertising for specific town centre events.

He added that the Council would also seek to work with traders and property landlords to improve shop fronts, especially for vacant premises, and carry out a comprehensive marketing exercise designed to identify unique selling points. Ultimately, the establishment of a Business Improvement District would give traders the ability to speak with a single voice while providing them with a co-ordinated approach for airing views, raising concerns and making recommendations.

He concluded by advising that more information will be made available as the bid developed.

(2) Cabinet Member - Resources

The Cabinet Member - Resources advised that the following Pre-Council Presentation has been scheduled:-

5 March 2014 - Digital Office

This would focus on the move away from paper based to electronic solutions beginning with the hybrid mail out service.

Subsequent pre-Council presentations were being arranged on Mental Health Support, Community Transport and South East Wales Community Economic Development, and once dates had been confirmed for these they would be placed in Members calendars.

Member Development Sessions

The Cabinet Member - Resources confirmed that due to the budget, other meetings and school holidays, no training activities had been scheduled for February. From March onwards sessions were being finalised on Performance and Risk Management, the Supporting People Programme and a round robin event to include Data Protection, PACT and the SARA model.

In relation to Date Protection, all Members had been enrolled on an e-learning module created to explain the responsibilities of being a Data Controller and will have recently received an email to this effect. It is hoped that all Members will complete this module before they are re-registered as data controllers in May 2014. If Members had any problems with access or completion of this he suggested that they contact Democratic Services Section.

(3) Cabinet Member - Children and Young People

The Cabinet Member - Children and Young People advised that in February half term, Geese Theatre Company will run a week-long drama boot camp for looked-after children, which aims to help the youngsters to find their voices and benefit from interacting with each other. Their work will also be presented at a special awards celebration of the educational achievements of looked-after children at the Grand Pavilion.

The Sports Council for Wales had highlighted Bridgend Schools for real improvements in the level of girls participating in sport through the creation of a Girls Network. With representatives from Sport Wales Board and the college, young girls from schools had been supported to represent their peers to change the way sport was being delivered and making it more appealing. For example in a number of the schools the girls have secured a change in PE kit policy to help their peers feel more comfortable during schools sport sessions. Whilst others have challenged local sports centres to provide the activities young girls want to participate in.

The Cabinet Member - Children and Young People extended his congratulations to Mr Anthony Morrison who had been appointed as the new head teacher at Trelales Primary School in Laleston following the retirement of Mr Clive Evans. Mr Morrison is the Deputy Head at Llangewydd Juniors which received an excellent Estyn inspection report last year, in which the school was recognised for its outstanding work and sector leading practice. The deadline for applications for a new head teacher at Ogmere Vale Primary School where there is also a vacancy, was today.

The Cabinet Member - Children and Young People then congratulated staff and pupils at both Blaengarw Primary School and Garth Primary School for earning the prestigious Platinum Green Flag awards. The eco-accolade was awarded to Blaengarw in recognition of the various 'green' initiatives that pupils had been involved in, including a 'banana flinging competition' to raise awareness of Fair Trade and the creation of a greenhouse out of recycled plastic bottles. Garth Primary in the Llynfi valley were also proudly flying the Platinum flag after Keep Wales Tidy rewarded their efforts, which included an initiative that monitors energy use at the school.

A team from Cynffig Comprehensive School had won the final of a national enterprise competition, run by the WJEC in partnership with the National Museum Wales, after creating and marketing a new bilingual board game about the history of Wales.

The all-girl team had to write a business plan, develop a prototype, create a trade stand to showcase their game, and pitch their idea to a panel of Welsh entrepreneurs, in the 'Dragon's Den' style set up. The Cynffig students wowed the judges with their outstanding creativity and enterprise. He extended his thanks to the Cynffig students on a tremendous achievement.

Finally the Cabinet Member - Children and Young People advised that young offenders would soon begin work on a new music studio at the Court House in Maesteg and the Youth Offending Team was also keen to hear from any other community groups or schools who were interested in finding out more about how young offenders could support their projects. He recommended that Tyrone Hughes or Kevin Reeves be contacted on 01656 815655 for this purpose.

(4) Cabinet Member - Wellbeing

The Cabinet Member - Wellbeing reminded Members of the Council's Rota Visiting Scheme. This was a programme of visits for Social Services of the Residential Care Homes and Children's homes in the County Borough.

He advised that correspondence would shortly be available to ask Members to participate in this Scheme, with full training and guidance being made available.

The new Rota programme would be available from April 2014, he added.

300 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chief Executive confirmed that Members will be well aware that like all public services the Authority are heavily regulated and inspected. For instance we had teams in looking at adoption services before Christmas and we have CSSIW back next week to inspect the Council's arrangements for certain categories of looked after children and care leavers.

These inspections quite rightly tended to be very high profile, but there were many others that receive less publicity but were nonetheless very important.

He was therefore pleased to report that Legal Services had again succeeded in maintaining the Lexcel Practice Standard of the Law Society. The standard is applied across the private and public sectors and was the quality accreditation standard of the Law Society.

The Law Society report particularly highlighted the very high standard of documentation, processes and procedures. Team working was found to be openly praised and morale was found to be high despite the current environment of change.

The Chief Executive added that the report identified a high level of skills and experience in the legal department and stated that sharing of the knowledge base was evident. New arrivals interviewed expressed real appreciation of the team structure and the support received at every level.

The management and development of the people within the department was described as “professionally implemented” and the annual appraisal review process was said to support the development of people at every level and the different specialist legal teams were also regularly trained to increase their skills.

In particular the gathering of client satisfaction information and its evaluation was described as a fine example of how best to improve the service delivery where appropriate.

The Chief Executive was sure that the Council would wish to echo his thanks to the Assistant Chief Executive - Legal and Regulatory Services and Monitoring Officer and his team for the high standards that they were operating to, which was clearly recognised by the Law Society.

301 LEADER'S REPORT

1. The Leader began his report by thanking council staff for their efforts during recent severe weather. He felt they did a fantastic job and helped to keep residents and property safe during some particularly harsh conditions. Most people had seen the famous photographs of giant waves crashing over Porthcawl Lighthouse. Council staff were out there in the thick of it, working around the clock to remove storm debris, keep gulleys clear, distribute sandbags and much more besides he added.

He understood that another big storm was on the way for this weekend, one that forecasters were already referring to as ‘The Beast’, so it was reassuring to know that dedicated council staff would be working, helping local communities.
2. The Leader confirmed that Holocaust Memorial Day was recently remembered with a very moving ceremony in the council chamber. Based around the theme of ‘Journeys’, this year’s event challenged us to consider the upheaval and anxiety that people throughout history have been forced to experience with no certainty of what awaits them at their journey’s end. The special guest speaker was Vimla Patel, who found herself forced out of Uganda by Idi Amin in 1972. As well as speaking of Idi Amin’s campaign of ‘de-indianisation’, Ms Patel spoke of her journey to the UK, how she settled in Cardiff, and how she made a decision to dedicate her new life in Wales towards helping others. It was an extremely moving experience, and the Leader extended his congratulations to Council officers for delivering one of the best HMD events to date. He understood that the event was filmed and was available to view online, and that so far, more than 150 people have watched it, via the corporate website.
3. The Leader, mentioned a couple of significant events that were taking place later this week. On Friday John Griffiths, Minister for Culture and Sport, would carry out the official opening of the all-new Bridgend Library at Bridgend Recreation Centre, then on Saturday National Libraries Day would be celebrated across the county borough, a date which is designed to recognise and celebrate the work of local libraries in promoting learning, literacy and reading for pleasure. A number of events had been arranged to mark the occasion and the Leader was sure that it would be a big success.

The Leader also thought that it was appropriate that National Libraries Day will coincide with the opening of the new Bridgend Library, which is already on track to record a 33 per cent increase in visitor numbers. The number of books borrowed had increased by 39 per cent compared to the same period at its previous location, and children and young people using the library had doubled from 15 to 30 per cent, something which the Leader thought demonstrated that the new design and location was really helping to meet the needs of a key user group.

4. The Leader confirmed that the local Member for Pontycymer had advised him that Paul Taylor from Pontycymer Bowls Club had recently been selected for Wales in Bowls in the fours team for the up and coming Commonwealth Games to be held in Scotland. He was the youngest competitor at aged just 20, to represent his Country in this discipline.
5. Finally, the Leader was pleased to announce that the Deputy Leader had at yesterday's Cabinet meeting been elected as the County Borough Council's Champion for Mental Health. This is an area the Deputy Leader had an interest in for a large part of his life, and the Leader was sure that he would undertake this role enthusiastically and successfully.

302 JNC OFFICER STRUCTURE

The Chief Executive presented a report on the above, and advised that he was currently reviewing the JNC structure as part of a wider senior management review with a view to creating a structure which would provide the organisation with sufficient senior capacity to meet the challenges ahead, while at the same time contributing to Council's savings requirements in future years.

It was envisaged that this would be in place by 1 April 2014.

He confirmed that he had asked Corporate Directors to consider opportunities to reduce the number of Heads of Service to contribute to the MTFs saving requirements, and to balance Chief Officer resources across the organisation as a whole.

There were some specific changes in senior management of the Resources Directorate proposed, and this report sought approval to amend the JNC structure in that Directorate.

The Chief Executive added, that in order to expedite the wider review, he was also seeking delegated authority to make changes to the JNC structure in other Directorates in consultation with group leaders and with JNC officers as required.

Turning to the specific proposals for the Resources Directorate, these were set out in para 4.4 of the report, he added.

It was essential that there was sufficient senior management capacity within the Resources Directorate to support Members, himself and other Directorates in a range of things including identifying and delivering savings, managing financial, technological, physical and human resources; and to contribute to preparations for reorganisation. That having been said it was possible he felt to reduce the number of Heads of Service in the Directorate by one, but only by deleting the Head of Finance and Performance post and the Head of ICT, Property and Customer Services post and by creating a new Head of Finance and ICT Head of Service post.

Under this proposal as set out in paragraph 4.4 of the report, the existing property and performance functions would report directly to the Corporate Director Resources, and the Customer Services function would transfer to the Head of Service for Human Resources and Organisational Development.

This revised structure would ensure adequate capacity to support the Section 151 Officer and to safeguard the Council's financial position together with ensuring the resilience and future proofing of its ICT systems.

In the Resources Directorate two of the three Heads of Service have recently submitted applications for Early Retirement, the Head of Finance and Performance and the Head of ICT, Property and Customer Services. The Officer Panel that considers such matters has approved the early retirement of these officers, subject to Council's decision on the proposed revised structure outlined in paragraph 4.4 of the report, and a clear implementation plan and timetable being in place.

The financial implications part of the report addresses both the general delegation recommendations and the specific changes to the Resources Directorate.

The Chief Executive confirmed that there would be financial savings arising from the JNC restructure exercise as part of a much wider management review, but it was not possible to provide exact figures for the complete restructure at this stage, as the review had not yet been concluded.

In the meantime added the Chief Executive, the decision to only recruit to one of two vacant posts in the Children's Directorate would provide a saving of around £100,000 in 2014 -15

Approval of the new structure in the Resources Directorate, taking account of the Early Retirement costs, will lead to a £100,000 recurrent saving from 2017-18 onwards.

A Member whilst welcoming the savings that would be made as a result of the proposals within the report, advised that he had some reservation regarding the loss of two very experienced and high calibre Officers, and having these replaced by one post/one officer. To that end, he asked the Chief Executive if he was confident that the duties of both posts would be completely fulfilled through the replacement of one post and postholder.

The Chief Executive replied that he shared the Members admiration of the two Officers in question, and as the report indicated, the proposals were not totally without risk. The report also stated however that certain duties of the two current posts would be allocated to other Chief Officers within the Authority, so it would not be a case of the current duties of two posts totally being undertaken by the incumbent of the newly established post.

The Chief Executive added that he was satisfied with the implementation plan and confident that there were likely candidates in the market that were both qualified and had the necessary skills and ability to successfully carry out the duties of the new post, notwithstanding the fact that with every vacant position that arose in an organisation there was an element of risk in swapping known for unknown skills following a change in the staffing complement.

RESOLVED: That Council:

- (1) Approved the changes to the JNC structure in the Resources Directorate.
- (2) Delegated authority to the Chief Executive to make further changes to the JNC structure before 1 April 2014, subject to consultation with Group Leaders and JNC Officers.

303 INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL (IRP) CONSULTATION - FAMILY ABSENCE

The Democratic Services Committee referred a report to Council, the purpose of which, was to consider the recommendations of the Committee in respect of the draft supplementary IRP report circulated for consultation regarding remuneration for elected Members, during periods of Family Absence.

The Assistant Chief Executive - Legal and Regulatory Services and Monitoring Officer reminded Members that on 11 December 2013, Council approved changes to the constitution and the

establishment of a Panel to be a Sub-Committee of the Democratic Services Committee to undertake appeals in respect of Family Absence.

He advised that since the above date, the IRP had issued a draft supplementary report for consultation and this had been presented to the Democratic Services Committee on 23 January 2014 for its consideration.

This report was attached at Appendix 1 to the covering report, whilst Appendix 2 detailed each of the six draft IRP proposals and the recommendations of the Democratic Services Committee in relation to five of these recommendations.

The Assistant Chief Executive - Legal and Regulatory Services and Monitoring Officer elaborated upon each of these for the benefit of Members.

RESOLVED: That Council noted the draft IRP supplementary report and approved the draft response to the consultation attached as Appendix 2 for submission to the IRP.

304 INFORMATION REPORTS FOR NOTING

The Monitoring Officer presented a report the purpose of which, was to inform Council of any information reports submitted for noting since its last ordinary meeting,

The Information Report in question related to an urgent delegated decision that had previously been made and details of this were outlined in Paragraph 4.1 of the report.

The Monitoring Officer asked Members to note that within the form outlining the Delegated Decision which had been executed under Scheme 'A' paragraph 1.1 of the Scheme, reference was made to an agreement being extended until 31 April 2014. He added that this date should actually read 30 April 2014.

RESOLVED: That Council noted the publication of the document contained in paragraph 4.1 of the report.

The meeting closed at 3.50pm.