

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND ON WEDNESDAY, 13 NOVEMBER 2013 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	M Gregory	J R McCarthy	M Thomas
M W Butcher	D M Hughes	H E Morgan	R Thomas
H J David	E M Hughes	L C Morgan	J H Tildesley MBE
G Davies	P James	M E J Nott OBE	E Venables
P A Davies	R M James	A D Owen	K J Watts
G W Davies MBE	P John	D R Pugh	C Westwood
E Dodd	C L Jones	C E Rees	D B F White
D K Edwards	R C Jones	D Sage	P J White
L Ellis	M Jones	C E Smith	H M Williams
E P Foley	D R W Lewis	J C Spanswick	R Williams
C A Green	J E Lewis	G Thomas	M Winter

Officers:

D Mepham	-	Chief Executive
N Young	-	Corporate Director - Resources and Section 151 Officer
S Cooper	-	Corporate Director - Wellbeing
D McMillan	-	Corporate Director - Children
S Pryce	-	Head of Regeneration and Development
D Llewellyn	-	Group Manager Development
C Hamm	-	Team Leader, Conservation and Design
B Davies	-	Principal Solicitor
G Jones	-	Head of Democratic Services (Electronic Support)
J Monks	-	Democratic Services Officer - Committees

258 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of an ordinary meeting of Council held on the 16th October 2013 were approved as a true and accurate record.

259 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the following Members/Officers for the reasons:

Councillor C L Reeves	-	Holiday
Councillor M Reeves	-	Holiday
Councillor N Clarke	-	Holiday
Councillor R D Jenkins	-	Hospital
Councillor G Phillips	-	Work Commitments
Councillor H J Townsend	-	Unwell
Councillor B Jones	-	Work Commitments
Councillor D G Owen	-	Work Commitments
Councillor R E Young	-	Holiday
P A Jolley	-	Other Council Business

260 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

261 MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. The Mayor announced the passing of Councillor Idris Jones who died recently. He informed Members that Councillor Jones had a long and distinguished career working and caring for deprived children and with his late wife Joyce, ran a number of facilities for young people, including Preswylfa Cottage Homes in the 1950s. In the 1970s he served as an advisor to Social Services, and later acted as Bridgend Town Mayor as well as Mayor of Bridgend County Borough. In 1998 Councillor Jones was presented with an MBE by Prince Charles for his services to the community. The Mayor commented that it had been very moving to hear Councillor Jones' favourite Max Boyce song "Hymns and Arias", played during his funeral. Councillor Jones had a positive impact on the lives of many people, and was an exemplary Councillor, who would be sadly missed.
2. The Mayor reminded Members of the Mayor's Citizenship Awards; details on how to nominate could be located on the BCBC website, or by contacting the Communications Team. The Awards are open to residents of the Borough as well as community groups and businesses, and the deadline for returning nominations was the 24th January 2014.
3. The Mayor announced his attendance at a number of local events during the month, including the Remembrance Day Service at the Cenotaph in Bridgend and the recent Poppy Appeal concert. He informed Members that he had been especially pleased to take part in the Fire and Rescue long service and Good Conduct medal awards last week.
4. The Mayor informed Members of forthcoming events he was due to attend:
 - a) He would be accompanying Chief Superintendent Joe Ruddy on a tour of local police stations later this month.
 - b) On the 22nd November 2013 he would be attending with the Cabinet Member – Communities, the Regeneration Team burial of a Time Capsule, to be opened in the year 2100. Contributors to the capsule include Bridge FM, the Glamorgan Gazette and Studio 14 who had made a film of the town which had been entered into the National Schools Media Compilation, to be used as part of the curriculum. Children had also been asked to write stories on what they think life would be like in a 100 years' time. The stories were currently on display in the Civic Offices.
5. The Mayor thanked everyone who attended his charity luncheon at the Great House in Laleston recently. Forthcoming events in aid of his Mayoral charity includes a coffee morning at the Heronston Hotel this Friday and a Christmas Fayre to be held in the Customer Service Centre on the 20th and 21st November 2013.
6. The Mayor announced that Councillor Megan Butcher had raised £6,000 in sponsorship for her charity walk on Halloween, in aid of local cancer charities. He advised that Councillor Butcher had raised a total of £30,000 for those charities over the last four years.
7. Finally, the Mayor announced that he would be writing a letter on behalf of the Council to the local Filipino Society, showing the Authority's support following the recent disaster in their Country.
8. The Mayor asked Members for donations to the food banks in Bridgend.

262 CABINET MEMBERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (1) Deputy Leader

The Deputy Leader thanked everyone for their kind words and support over his recent injury. He informed Members that he was pleased to be back at Council today and would continue to work hard on behalf of the Authority.

The Deputy Leader was pleased to announce that six of the Borough's local companies had been included on the 'Wales Fast Growth 50' list. The Fast Growth 50 accolade was firmly established as Wales' most successful business and entrepreneur listing. Track Training Ltd, Ract IT, Data-Kom, the N-Ergy Group, ITCS and Accelero Digital Solutions all made it onto the list which had led to Bridgend County Borough being described as a "magnate for growing firms". The Economic Development team had supported five of the six companies with grants from the Local Investment Fund, which recently reached the milestone of having provided more than £1m of support for local firms. The team had also approved more than 200 grants to assist with capital investment and the creation of 311 local jobs. He asked Members to join him in congratulating the Economic Development team for their efforts.

(2) Cabinet Member - Resources

The Cabinet Member - Resources announced the following pre-Council briefings:

11th December 2013 - Independent Professional Advocacy for Children/Adoption Service
8th January 2014 - Private Rented Sector

The following topics were being planned and scheduled for pre-Council briefings in the following months:

- Mental Health
- ADHD Bridgend

The following Member Development events were scheduled:

21st November 2013 (10.00-13.00) - School Performance
26th November 2013 (14.00-17.00) - School Performance
5th December 2013 (14.00-17.00) - Dealing with Conflict
11th December 2013 (09.00-12.00) - Dealing with Conflict

The following topics were identified for inclusion for delivery as part of the Member Development Programme:

- Supporting People Programme
- Risk Management (How the Council manages its risks)
- Performance Management

The Cabinet Member - Resources further reported that out of the 52 Members eligible to complete their Annual Reports for 2012-13, 36 had been submitted and published to the website. He advised that Democratic Services were working with a further seven elected Members to compile their reports. Once those reports were completed, the total would be 43 Members (82.69%) who would have their Annual Reports published. He requested those Members who were planning to submit their Annual Reports to contact the Head of Democratic Services, who would provide assistance as necessary. He concluded that it was hoped all eligible Members would publish their 2012-13 Annual Reports by the 1st December 2013.

Finally, the Cabinet Member - Resources reported that 43 (82.69%) Personal Development - Reviews (PDRs) had been received by the Head of Democratic Services. He requested that outstanding PDRs should be completed and copied to the Head of Democratic Services in order that any training and/or support requirements could be assessed for the Member Development programme.

(3) Cabinet Members - Communities

The Cabinet Member – Communities announced that the Authority had approved its first loan payment for £75,000 under the Houses into Homes Scheme to bring three empty property units into residential use. To qualify for funding, local authorities work collaboratively in line with the Welsh Government's public service footprint for regional collaboration and the Authority forms

part of regional collaboration with Swansea and Neath Port Talbot Councils. The Scheme allows property owners to access an interest free loan to bring empty properties back into use, and could also be used to renovate a property either for sale or for renting out. The loan is for a period of up to two years if the property is to be sold, or three years if the property is for rent, and will be repaid back to the Council to be recycled into future loans to bring more empty properties back into use. He advised that there were currently a further nine properties suitable for the loan, in various stages of the application process. The Cabinet Member - Communities thanked the Officers involved in this important scheme, and urged Members to identify empty properties in their Wards and pass on the information to the Housing Department.

(4) Cabinet Member - Children and Young People

The Cabinet Member - Children and Young People commended Mynydd Cyffig Infants and Cefn Cribwr Primary Schools on successfully completing Phase 5 of the Bridgend Healthy Schools Scheme. Cefn School was commended for their excellent eco-committee which links with parents, whilst the green ambassadors' contribution to Stopover was recognised at Mynydd Cunffig as being particularly effective.

The Cabinet Member - Children and Young People announced that Brackla Youth Club had re-opened in the Community Centre. He advised that the Youth Service was working together with Brackla Community Association and Brackla Community Council to ensure that activities were on offer in the local area for the young people of Brackla. He thanked Councillors Spanswick, Townsend, Jones and Sage for their vital support as elected Members and Members of the Community Council, which he stated was a good example of a successful partnership.

The Cabinet Member - Children and Young People announced that the NSPCC Cymru/Wales had teamed up with the Authority to launch a local campaign to encourage people to contact the NSPCC helpline if they were concerned about the welfare of a child. He reported that the rate of calls to the NSPCC helpline in Bridgend were amongst the lowest in Wales, which was generally well known was not due to a lack of need. There were currently 130 children in Bridgend who were subject to child protection plans, and recent NSPCC research had shown that for every child known to the Authority, a further eight children were thought to be at risk with no support. The aim of the joint campaign was to help identify and provide support to vulnerable children and their families at an early enough stage in order to prevent such neglect. The public phase of the campaign was supported by the First Minister Carwyn Jones AM, and the launch was due to take place on the 19th November. The campaign was due to run for the five week lead up to Christmas.

He highlighted the message to those constituents who had any concerns about a child, "to trust your instincts, please do not wait until you are certain get in touch now".

The Cabinet Member - Children and Young People announced that the Authority was extremely proud of the sons and daughters of foster carers in the Borough, whose input had proved vital in the creation of a new guide booklet called "Dylan's Story - What's it like to be a son or daughter of a foster carer?" which was now available nationally. He explained that the guide was aimed at encouraging foster carers to talk to their sons and daughters about the changes and challenges that lay ahead as they prepared to share their home with other children. The guide was developed as the result of one of our foster team social workers who worked closely with the British Association of Adoption and Foster Care. He informed Members that foster carers' own children had done a great job in supporting and being a friend to some of the most vulnerable children in the Borough, by helping them feel welcome and part of a loving family.

The Cabinet Member - Children and Young People thanked the Mayor and the First Minister for their support at the launch of the booklet at the Senedd during Sons and Daughters Week.

(5) Cabinet Member - Wellbeing

The Cabinet Member – Wellbeing announced that as part of the Welsh Government’s Annual Council Reporting Framework, the Director of Social Services Annual Report for 2012/13 was presented to Council in September. This was the Council’s own self-assessment of its performance in the commissioning, delivery and quality of adult and children’s social care services. The Authority had recently received the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW)’s Annual Review and Evaluation of Performance for 2012/13 letter, and overall the feedback was positive, reflecting the amount of progress made in the provision of those important services.

The CSSIW report highlighted a number of areas of good progress for 2012/13, including:

- Commissioning arrangements, including focus on quality measures in place for adult services combined with a robust approach to safeguarding adults;
- The modernisation of learning disability services;
- Integrated working with Health;
- Performance in children’s services continued to improve despite a high and increasing number of Looked After Children;
- Good support for children leaving care;
- Connecting Families initiative;
- Member visits to commissioned adult services;
- Timeliness of child protection conferences.

CSSIW also identified a number of areas for improvement such as:

- The development of care and extra care models to support people with dementia;
- Further scoping of the social care market being able to respond to expected changes in demographics and future demand;
- Mitigate the impact of increased numbers of Looked After Children and child protection on workers’ caseloads.

He further announced the commencement of the Authority’s self-assessment for this current year, and informed Members that the areas for improvement would be addressed and reported on to Council during 2014.

263 CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chief Executive announced some changes to senior management. He advised that Deborah McMillan had been appointed Corporate Director - Children and Sue Cooper had been appointed Corporate Director - Wellbeing. The Appointments Committee were due to meet the following day when it was hoped they would be in a position to make an appointment to Corporate Director - Communities. He reported that there had been a number of applicants for that role. He further advised that there would be an adjustment of line responsibility between Directors to balance workloads and to capitalise on the strengths in the team to support the corporate agenda and would keep Members informed on those arrangements.

The Mayor, on behalf of Members, congratulated Deborah McMillan and Sue Cooper on their appointments.

264 ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE MONITORING OFFICER

The Principal Lawyer announced on behalf of the Monitoring Officer that the Community Renewal and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee scheduled to take place on the 4th December 2013 would now take place at 10.00am on the 12th December 2013.

265 LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader announced that, together with his fellow Cabinet Members he had viewed the all-new Bridgend Library premises this week ahead of its official opening on Thursday. He informed Members that visitors would be bowled over by the Library's new facilities, which are based across two floors at the Bridgend Recreation Centre. He described how the new library was larger and open for longer, providing visitors with the opportunity to use the latest technology, including Tablet devices and an innovative touch screen table. There are also quiet corners for people to sit and read, as well as work areas, and a dedicated children's space including a giant book in which they could sit and read. He advised that the improved accessibility offered up to two hours free car parking and a new bus stop would soon be installed outside the centre. He commented that it was great to see this brand new facility being provided in partnership with Halo, especially at a time when other local authorities were being forced to look at making savings to their library services. He encouraged Members to call in and see for themselves how good the facility was.

266 2014-15 COUNCIL TAX BASE

The Section 151 Officer presented a report to provide Council with details of the Council Tax base and estimated collection rate for 2014-15. She explained that the estimated Council Tax base for 2014-15 was £52,139.40 and the estimated collection rate was 97%. The net Council Tax was therefore £50,566.20.

She confirmed that the Council Tax element of the Council's budget requirement would be based on the net Council Tax base of £50,566.20. This base was also used by precepting authorities in calculating their precepts. Town and Community Councils based their precepts on the tax base for each community area and details of these were included in Appendix A to the report.

RESOLVED: That Council:

- (1) Approved the Council Tax Base and collection rate for 2014-15 as shown in paragraph 4.1 of the report.
- (2) Approved the tax bases for the community areas set out in Appendix A to the report.

267 HALF-YEAR TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT 2013-14

The Section 151 Officer submitted a report in order to:

- Comply with the requirement of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice (the Code) to report as part of a mid-year review and overview of treasury activities.
- Report on the projected Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators for 2013-14.
- Report on the proposed changes to the Treasury Management Strategy 2013-14 and seek Council's approval of these.

The report provided some background information and paragraph 4.1.1 outlined the treasury position for the 1st April to the 30th September 2013.

The Section 151 Officer reported that the details of the debt maturity on the £96.89m long term borrowing outstanding as at the 30th September 2013 were detailed in Appendix A to the report. It was noted that the long term liabilities figure of £21.60m as at the 30th September 2013 included £20m for the Council's Private Finance Initiative (PFI) arrangement, for the provision of a secondary school in Maesteg. She advised that the £1.29m short term liabilities figure included £0.93m invested on behalf of Bridgend Football Club to provide alternative facilities, which was held in an Escrow account (money held in trust pending the fulfilment of conditions in a contract).

She further reported that favourable cash flows had provided surplus funds for investment, and as shown in paragraph 4.1.1 of the report, the balance on investments at the 30th September 2013 was £17.10m, which included the investment on behalf of Bridgend Football Club.

The Section 151 Officer then referred Members to Appendix B to the report which detailed the estimate for 2013-14 set out in the Council's Treasury Management Strategy and also the projected indicators for 2013-14. She advised that CIPFA's Code of Practice for Treasury Management required all local authorities to conduct a mid-year review of its treasury management policies, practices and activities. As a result of this review only minor revisions to the Investment Strategy would be necessary, which were included in the Treasury Management Strategy in Appendix C to the report. The main proposed changes were highlighted under paragraph 4.8.2 of the report and an extract of the revised Investment Strategy 2013-14, which incorporated all the proposed changes, were highlighted in Appendix D.

In conclusion, the Section 151 Officer informed Members of the proposed addition being made to the Chief Accountant's role in the Treasury Management Roles of Officers within Financial Services (Schedule D of the TMS 2013-14). The addition specifies that the Chief Accountant would deputise for the Section 151 Officer in the performance of Treasury Management as required. An extract of the Revised Roles of Officers incorporating this change was detailed in Appendix E to the report.

One Member asked whether this would mean that the Chief Accountant would deputise for both roles, and also the Local Investment Officer.

The Section 151 Officer advised that the proposal was being put forward to ensure that there would be cover in place in the event that she, as Section 151 Officer, or the Head of Finance and Performance were unavailable to oversee the day to day running of the Management operations. However, it would not allow provision to enable those individuals to take decisions normally delegated to the Section 151 Officer and Head of Finance and Performance. She assured Members that this proposal would ensure cover was provided should that extraordinary situation occur, but where there needed to be a separation they would be maintained.

RESOLVED: That Council:

- (1) Approved the changes to the Treasury Management Strategy 2013-14 as highlighted in the report and Appendices D and E.
- (2) Noted the Authority's Treasury Management activities for the first half of 2013-14.
- (3) Noted the projected Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators for 2013-14.

268 BUSINESS RATE RELIEF - OPEN FOR BUSINESS AND NEW DEVELOPMENT

The Corporate Director - Resources presented a report to obtain a resolution to two new business rate relief schemes recently announced by the Welsh Government. The report provided some background information and the Corporate Director - Resources informed Members that the "Open for Business" scheme was designed to encourage previously long term empty retail

premises to be brought back into use. The scheme would provide 50% rate relief to the ratepayer on occupied property provided they met the following criteria:

- Occupation must be of 'retail' premises;
- Premises must have been previously vacant for a minimum of 12 months;
- Rateable value must be less than £45k.

She advised that the maximum period for rate relief was 12 months and the property must become occupied after the 1st October 2013 and before the 31st March 2015. She reported that the impact on Bridgend would be minimal with only 25 eligible properties across the Borough. The "New Development" scheme proposed that 100% rate reductions would become available for newly completed properties, and the entitlement to empty rate relief would last for the first 18 months following completion, provided that the property was completed after the 1st October 2013 and before 1st October 2016.

RESOLVED: That Council adopted the two Welsh Government funded reliefs as outlined in Annex 1 of the report, with effect from the 1st October 2013, and these would be made available to business ratepayers of qualifying properties.

269 TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (GENERAL PERMITTED DEVELOPMENTS) ORDER 1995 - THE MAKING OF ARTICLE 4(2) DIRECTIONS

The Group Manager Development presented a report following the recommendation of the Development Control Committee made on the 17th October 2013. The purpose of the report was to seek Council approval for the introduction of an amendment to the Scheme of Delegation to enable the Interim Corporate Director - Communities to make Article 4(2) Directions in Conservation Areas where there is an imminent threat of harm to their character or appearance (minute 289(3) refers).

The making of Article 4 Directions under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended by the Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order 2013) involves the removal of selected permitted development rights within Conservation Areas, and, in consequence, requires property owners or occupiers to apply for planning permission to undertake works that would otherwise be permitted development. The use of Article 4 Directions is usually in response to a known threat to the character of an area, or where additional controls are considered necessary to protect certain aspects of an area. Recent amendments to the General Permitted Development Order have meant that as from 30th September 2013 some categories of development in Conservation Areas are no longer automatically permitted to dwelling houses. This indicates a general move to tighten controls within Conservation Areas, which is in contrast to some relaxation of permitted development rights outside Conservation Areas for dwelling houses.

The Group Manager Development informed Members that a comprehensive assessment of conservation areas in the Borough were already underway and would identify any further necessary controls.

RESOLVED: That Council agreed that the Scheme of Delegation be amended to include a delegation to the Interim Corporate Director - Communities for the making of an emergency Article 4(2) Direction under the Town and Country (General Permitted Development) Order 2013 in conservation areas where there is an imminent threat of harm to the character or appearance of conservation areas.

270 INFORMATION REPORTS FOR NOTING

The Principal Solicitor presented a report to inform Council of any information reports for noting since its last ordinary meeting.

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

The meeting closed at 3.53pm.