

Public Document Pack
Bridgend County Borough Council
Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr



Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB / Swyddfeydd Dinesig, Stryd yr Angel, Pen-y-bont, CF31 4WB

Legal and Regulatory Services /
Gwasanaethau Cyfreithiol a Rheoleiddiol
Direct line / Deialu uniongyrchol: 01656 643148
Ask for / Gofynnwch am: Mr Mark Anthony Galvin

Our ref / Ein cyf:
Your ref / Eich cyf:

Date / Dyddiad: Thursday, 11 February 2016

Dear Councillor,

COUNCIL

A meeting of the Council will be held in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices Angel Street Bridgend CF31 4WB on **Wednesday, 17 February 2016 at 3.00 pm.**

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
To receive apologies for absence from Members
2. Declarations of Interest
To receive declarations of personal and prejudicial interest from Members/Officers in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct adopted by Council from 1 September 2008.
3. Approval of Minutes 5 - 14
To receive the minutes of a meeting of Council of 20 January 2016
4. To receive announcements from:
(i) Mayor (or person presiding)
(ii) Members of the Cabinet
(iii) Chief Executive
5. To receive the report of the Leader
6. Wales Audit Office - Corporate Assessment Report on Bridgend County Borough Council, January 2016 15 - 54
To be accompanied by a presentation from Mr S Barry from the Wales Audit Office.
7. Flexible Retirement Policy and Early Retirement Ill Health Retirement and Redundancy Policy 55 - 72
8. Discretions within the Local Government Pension Scheme 73 - 80

9. Pay Policy Statement 2016/17 81 - 108
10. Consultation on the Local Government (Wales) Draft Bill 109 - 132
11. Debate on the Impact and Causes of Redundancies within the Steel Industry 133 - 142
12. To receive the following question for the Leader/Members of the Executive
Question from Councillor R C Jones to the Deputy Leader
- “How many parents in Bridgend County Borough have registered to home school their children and how many children are currently being home schooled? What action is the authority taking to support parents who choose to educate their children at home?”
13. Urgent Items
 To consider any item(s) of business in respect of which notice has been given in accordance with Part 4 (paragraph 4) of the Council Procedure Rules and which the person presiding at the meeting is of the opinion should by reason of special circumstances be transacted at the meeting as a matter of urgency.
14. Exclusion of the Public
 The report relating to the following item is not for publication as it contains exempt information as defined in Paragraph 12 of Part 4 and Paragraph 21 of Part 5 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information)(Variation) (Wales) Order 2007.
- If following the application of the public interest test the Council resolves pursuant to the Act to consider this item in private, the public will be excluded from the meeting during such consideration.
15. Application for VER 143 - 146

Yours faithfully

P A Jolley

Assistant Chief Executive Legal and Regulatory Services

Distribution:

Councillors

Councillors

Councillors

S Aspey	R D Jenkins	M Reeves
M W Butcher	P John	D Sage
N Clarke	B Jones	C E Smith
H J David	C L Jones	J C Spanswick
G Davies	R C Jones	G Thomas
P A Davies	M Jones	M Thomas
G W Davies MBE	D R W Lewis	R Thomas
E Dodd	J E Lewis	J H Tildesley MBE
D K Edwards	J R McCarthy	H J Townsend
L Ellis	H E Morgan	E Venables
N Farr	L C Morgan	K J Watts
E P Foley	M E J Nott OBE	C Westwood
C A Green	A D Owen	D B F White
M Gregory	D G Owen	P J White
E M Hughes	D Patel	H M Williams

C J James	G Phillips	R Williams
P James	D R Pugh	M Winter
R M James	C Reeves	R E Young

This page is intentionally left blank

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB ON WEDNESDAY, 20 JANUARY 2016 AT 3.00 PM

Present

Councillor RE Young – Chairperson

G Thomas	D Sage	HJ David	M Gregory
MEJ Nott OBE	PJ White	E Dodd	M Butcher
N Clarke	G Davies	GW Davies MBE	DK Edwards
EP Foley	EM Hughes	CJ James	P James
RM James	RD Jenkins	PN John	B Jones
CL Jones	M Jones	RC Jones	DRW Lewis
JE Lewis	JR McCarthy	HE Morgan	G Phillips
DR Pugh	CL Reeves	M Reeves	CE Smith
JC Spanswick	M Thomas	RL Thomas	HJ Townsend
C Westwood	DBF White	HM Williams	R Williams
LC Morgan	CA Green	N Farr	D Patel

Officers:

Susan Cooper	Corporate Director - Social Services & Wellbeing
Randal Hemingway	Head of Finance & ICT
Andrew Jolley	Assistant Chief Executive Legal & Regulatory Services and Monitoring Officer
Gary Jones	Head of Democratic Services
Deborah McMillan	Corporate Director - Education & Transformation
Darren Mepham	Chief Executive
Andrew Rees	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Zak Shell	Head of Neighbourhood Services
Ness Young	Corporate Director - Resources & Section 151 Officer

569. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

Councillor S Aspey – Work commitments
Councillor PA Davies – Unwell
Councillor AD Owen – Work commitments
Councillor DG Owen - Work commitments
Councillor JH Tildesley – In hospital
Councillor E Venables – Unwell
Councillor KJ Watts – Unwell
Mark Shephard – Corporate Director Communities – Hospital appointment.

570. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were made:

Councillor DBF White declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 6 – Council Tax Reduction Scheme as he a close relative in receipt of the scheme and he withdrew from the meeting during consideration of this item.

Councillor CL Jones declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 6 – Council Tax Reduction Scheme as his grandmother and mother in law are in receipt of the scheme and he withdrew from the meeting during consideration of this item.

Councillor HJ Townsend declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 6 – Council Tax Reduction Scheme as her sister is in receipt of the scheme and she withdrew from the meeting during consideration of this item.

Councillor PJ White declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 6 – Council Tax Reduction Scheme as his mother and mother in law are in receipt of the scheme and he withdrew from the meeting during consideration of this item.

Councillor RM James declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 6 – Council Tax Reduction Scheme as his sister is in receipt of the scheme and he withdrew from the meeting during consideration of this item.

571. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of Council of 16 December 2015 be approved as a true and accurate record subject to the following amendments:-

to Minute No. 558 – That the initials in the Declaration of Interest made by Councillor CL Jones be amended to be “CLP”.

to Minute No. 560 – the word “ass” being replaced with the word “is” in the first line of the second paragraph of the announcement made by the Cabinet Member Resources.

572. TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM:

Mayor

The Mayor announced his first engagement as Mayor for 2016 was a particularly enjoyable one as he had the pleasure of officially opening the Bridgend Branch of Baby Sensory. This is an award winning national baby development initiative being run locally from the Coity Higher Community Centre. It offers activities designed to support a baby’s sensory development and classes include baby signing, music, light shows, bubbles and puppets. He stated that the aim of the classes is for them to be both educational and fun and it was a joy to meet all the parents and babies, and was a positive start to January.

The Mayor had also attended a presentation evening at the Kenfig Hill Girl Guides where he was honoured to present two Guides with the Baden Powell Challenge Award. This is the highest award that a Guide can achieve and takes two years of dedication to complete. The evening also turned out to be an emotional one as Sarah Madden, the group’s long serving Brown Owl, was saying a last farewell before heading to Australia to start a new and exciting chapter in her life.

The Mayor stated that on a more sober note, after the Paris terror attacks of 13 November he had written to the French Ambassador in his capacity as Mayor to express on behalf of everyone across the County Borough of Bridgend, the collective and sincere sympathy on the dreadful events. He had received a letter of reply which thanked the citizens of Bridgend warmly for their expression of solidarity and appreciation of the County Borough’s continued support. The Mayor stated that he would arrange for a copy of the reply to be placed in the Members’ room for anyone who wished to read the full response.

The Mayor also informed Members of the sad passing of Cheryl Bridgman, who was a longstanding member of Mental Health Matters Wales, which is one of his chosen charities. He stated that Mrs Bridgman served as chair of this organisation for many years and was latterly employed as a senior officer. She had worked for over 20 years to raise awareness of mental health issues and he was honoured to have known and worked alongside her and she would be sorely missed.

The Mayor reminded Members that the closing date for the Mayor's Citizenship Awards is Friday 29 January 2016. He stated that that is a wonderful chance to inform the rest of the County Borough about the amazing things that local people do and he urged Members to submit nominations, or encourage others within their communities to do so. He stated that nominations can be for an individual, a group or a local business and there is downloadable form and further details on the BCBC website or alternatively via the Mayoral office.

Deputy Leader

The Deputy Leader was pleased to start announce that five local schools have been removed from the list of those requiring monitoring by Estyn. Inspectors have judged that good progress had been made to address a series of key recommendations at Archbishop McGrath Catholic School, St Mary's and St Patrick's Primary School, Nantymoel Primary School, Garth Primary School and Ffaldau Primary School. All five schools had worked very hard to make the improvements that were recommended during their initial inspections, and they will therefore be removed from the Estyn monitoring category.

The Deputy Leader announced that a national accolade for quality has been awarded to Porthcawl Primary School for its work in improving the well-being, resilience and self-esteem and achievement of pupils. Developed by leading education charity 'Achievement for All', the Quality Mark Award recognises the impressive work being done by the school to improve progress in reading, writing and maths for all pupils. He congratulated everyone at the school for setting such high standards.

The Deputy Leader was also pleased to announce that Robert Edwards has been appointed as the new Head of School at Coleg Cymunedol Y Dderwen following a very competitive recruitment process. Having previously been Deputy Head at Willows High School in Cardiff, Mr Edwards has a strong record of leading and delivering improvements in standards, and will now work very closely with Coleg Cymunedol Y Dderwen's Executive Headteacher Nick Brain. He stated that the Phoenix Centre had recently opened at the school to support particularly vulnerable pupils and this has already made a significant impact on the level of fixed term exclusions. He informed Council that other priorities that are being implemented by the new leadership include initiatives to improve transition arrangements with all 10 cluster primary schools, and learning from good practice in other schools and curriculum changes. He welcomed Mr Edwards and wished him every success in his new role.

Cabinet Member Communities

The Cabinet Member Communities was delighted to announce that funding has been confirmed for Porthcawl's 'concrete beach' to be replaced by a brand new sea defence capable of standing up to the harshest of conditions for the next 100 years. The Welsh Government had last week allocated £2.25m for the construction of a new design that will feature a terraced revetment in a similar style to the sea defences found in other coastal towns across the UK including Margate. The asphalt on Porthcawl's town beach was put in place in 1984 to prevent erosion and reduce the chance of waves breaking

over the top of the promenade. As it now needed increasing maintenance, he was pleased to note that there would be an opportunity to introduce a fresh new sea defence. Approval was received last for the proposal to progress to the detailed design and development stage, and it was excellent news that the construction funding has now been confirmed.

The Cabinet Member Communities was pleased to inform Members of the introduction of a new initiative for potential traders at Bridgend Market in that all stalls, regardless of their size, are being offered at the special rate of £27 per day. He stated that this was a great opportunity for people to see if their business ideas have the potential to be successful. He also stated that there is already a fantastic range of products and services on offer in Bridgend Market and new stalls would help to expand that even further. The discounted rate will be available until April, but may be extended to a later date.

He informed Members that a public consultation is currently underway on a new long-term vision for local housing. The Council's new Local Housing Strategy sets out the direction for housing over the next two years so that the quantity and quality of homes meet the needs of local people. This new strategy outlines a number of proposed priorities, such as making the best use of existing homes, helping vulnerable people stay safe and independent, working with partners to deliver the right type of new housing, and creating sustainable town centres through housing-led regeneration. He stated that the public consultation runs until 23 March 2016, and further details can be found online at www.bridgend.gov.uk/consultation.

Cabinet Member Adult Social Care and Wellbeing

The Cabinet Member Adult Social Care and Wellbeing informed Council that as the number of people in Bridgend County Borough with dementia is predicted to rise to over 3,000 by the year 2030, a new strategy has been created so that those people and their families can receive the respect, help and support they need to enjoy a better quality of life. He stated that the new 'Dementia Strategy 2015 – 2018' has been prepared by the local authority together with colleagues from the ABMU Health Board following extensive consultation with service users, their families and carers. The strategy analyses the current provision, looks at the local and national challenges, and highlights key priorities for work to be undertaken over the next three years.

He stated that recent research has found that the projected number of people with dementia here is greater than in many other local authorities elsewhere in Wales, and the Council faced some specific challenges. The Council wanted to make a positive difference for local people living with dementia, and for those who care for them.

The Cabinet Member Adult Social Care and Wellbeing informed Council that an early diagnosis is essential and this is one of the key priorities in the strategy. Improved training for those delivering care is also important, as is research. He stated that better joint working across health, social care, the third sector and other agencies is a priority, while other key local priorities are to support independence in communities, to make transport as accessible as possible, and improve the accommodation available for people with dementia, such as suitable care homes and respite care. He also stated that the long-term vision is to create 'dementia supportive communities', and to achieve this will require a change in attitudes and behaviour towards dementia at all levels of society. He informed Council that the 'Dementia Strategy 2015 – 2018' can be downloaded from the Council's website.

Cabinet Member Children's Social Services and Equalities

The Cabinet Member Children's Social Services and Equalities informed Council that the all-new Assia Newton Suite was officially opened last Monday by Minister for Public Services Leighton Andrews. Home to the Domestic Abuse Support and Information Service, this multi-agency hub is based within the customer services centre and has been named after Assia Newton, a Pencoed resident who was tragically murdered in 2013 following decades of domestic abuse. She stated that relatives of Assia were present at the event and her sister Nadia gave a very moving speech in which she described the horrendous impact that domestic abuse can have and also talked about the family's belief that the new service is going to be of huge help in the fight back against domestic violence.

The Leader, Chief Executive, Minister and Councillor Marlene Thomas as the domestic abuse champion also spoke at the event, and were united in their belief that this trailblazing project is going to help people throughout Bridgend County Borough by bringing together all of the help and support they might need to escape domestic abuse within a single, easily accessible location. The Cabinet Member Children's Social Services and Equalities informed Council that as a community a united stance needs to be taken against domestic abuse, and the Assia Suite is going to be central to those joint efforts.

The Cabinet Member Children's Social Services and Equalities announced that the latest phase of ongoing efforts to recruit more foster carers has begun and people have been asked to consider fostering as part of their New Year resolutions for 2016. She stated that so many children are unable to remain with their birth family for many reasons, and fostering is one of the best ways of giving them a new or better life, whether that is in the short or long term. Throughout 2016, a new fostering campaign will focus on helping foster children to reach their full potential. It will promote the idea that no matter what their interests or goals may be, their dreams can come true with help. The campaign is already underway and she hoped Members will look out for the eye-catching posters that have been set up on the back of local buses as well as online and on social media.

Cabinet Member Resources

The Cabinet Member Resources announced that the next Pre-Council presentation will be before February's meeting and will be delivered by the Bridgend Citizens Advice Bureau and calendars will be updated accordingly.

He announced that an interactive 'Show Racism The Red Card' workshop is taking place tomorrow morning in the committee rooms, and children from the Y Dderwen cluster of schools have been invited to take part. He stated that Members are very welcome to come and participate with a view to the charity providing more sessions for local schools. Members who wish to attend should contact Paul Williams, Equalities and Engagement Officer to confirm their attendance.

The Cabinet Member Resources announced that a Treasury Management training session has been arranged for elected Members for the afternoon of Wednesday 10 February. This will be provided by the Council's treasury adviser, Arlingclose, and is a one-off session. He stated that the session would be most beneficial for members of the Audit Committee. He requested that Members accept or decline the appointment that has been placed in their calendars so that officers can gauge the numbers attending.

The Cabinet Member Resources informed Council of the date for the joint Disability Wales training with Swansea and Neath Port Talbot has now been agreed as taking place on the morning of Tuesday 23 February. This one-off session will be held at the

Civic Offices and is being delivered on behalf of Welsh Government to support understanding of the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, the Wales Specific Equality Duties and the UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People and how they can be used to underpin a human rights based approach to service delivery. He stated that the appointment has been put into calendars but places are limited so it would be appreciated if Members could confirm their attendance by accepting or otherwise the appointment so that Democratic Services can track numbers.

The Cabinet Member Resources informed Members that works to improve the disabled access in the Civic Suite are planned to start in February. The works will be scheduled around key meetings and activities to minimise any disruption but obviously there will be times when some inconvenience will be experienced and we would ask for your patience during this period.

Cabinet Member Regeneration and Economic Development

The Cabinet Member Regeneration and Economic Development announced that Kenfig National Nature Reserve is one of the local jewels, and he was excited about some new developments which will make it easier for people to explore the reserve and learn more about its fascinating habitats. Thanks to a grant from Natural Resources Wales, together with funding from BCBC's rural development programme, new signage and interpretation boards are being installed, while a large mural on the side of the visitor centre will provide an extra burst of colour to welcome visitors. The mural will be an impressive sight and will depict seven of the key species that are found at the reserve. Work has started on the mural and it will be completed in the next few weeks. School visits to the reserve will also be enhanced with a new teacher pack being produced, while a number of new bins are being added around the site too.

He also announced that in further Kenfig news, the reserve's popularity is shown by the fact it has been shortlisted as one of only five nature reserves from across the UK to be in the running to be named as BBC Countryfile Magazine's Nature Reserve of the Year. Voting closes on 31 January and the public can show their support for Kenfig by voting at www.countryfile.com.

The Cabinet Member Regeneration and Economic Development also announced that the Bridgend Business Forum recently welcomed Ian Jessopp, the Managing Director at KKsolutions, as its new chairperson. He stated that Mr Jessopp who was previously vice-chair, has succeeded Alison Hoy, Chief Executive at Berry Smith Lawyers, who stepped down after three years in the role. A key council priority is to support local businesses, and the Bridgend Business Forum plays a major part in this, providing a range of information and advice for its current membership of 663 businesses. BCBC supports the forum and the work undertaken to establish and maintain strong links between the public and private sector. He wished Mr Jessopp the very best of luck in his new role and he looked forward to working with the forum again this year to the benefit of the business community in the County Borough.

Announcement by the Monitoring Officer

The Monitoring Officer announced that further to the report considered by Council at its last meeting on revisions to the Political balance, the Labour Group has confirmed that Councillor Cherie Jones will take the vacant seat on the Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Chief Executive's Announcements

The Chief Executive advised Members that the Council has received some very good news from the Wales Audit Office who have now completed and published the Corporate Assessment.

He stated that following the Corporate Assessment of how the Council is planning to deliver future improvements in services, the Auditor General Huw Vaughan Thomas has concluded that Bridgend County Borough Council is making good progress, and that the Council is developing appropriate plans that will help it achieve this.

The Auditor General's report found that the Council has effective governance arrangements in place, and that its performance management arrangements are helping drive improvement in key service areas. The Auditor General had also concluded that the Council has strong arrangements for supporting improvement and driving change, and sound financial and asset management arrangements.

The Auditor General had said that Bridgend County Borough Council is making good progress in developing a vision of how the Council will operate in the future and has recognised the need to consult, to both establish and then develop key priorities, and that he would encourage the Council to continue this in order to inform decision making and to improve outcomes for citizens.

In total, Bridgend received eight proposals for improvement which included issues such as developing ICT and HR services to support the transformation agenda, and adopting measures for evaluating the success of collaborative activities by building on the current Local Service Board arrangement. Proposals for improvement are the lowest level of response that a Council can expect from the Welsh Audit Office when it comes to corporate assessments and it would be extremely unusual if the Auditor General could not find any areas where improvements can be made. Bridgend is one of just five local authorities to receive proposals for improvement. All other Councils in Wales received formal recommendations, which are more serious and require an official Council response. The Chief Executive concluded that this is a very good result indeed.

He informed Members that the Wales Audit Office will be presenting their report to the Audit Committee in due course and would also like to present their findings to Council. The Chief Executive informed Members that he would provide further updates as to how the Council will implement and develop the Auditor General's recommendations.

The Chief Executive also updated Council on developments with the Capital Region City Deal whereby negotiations are on-going with both the Welsh and UK Government. He stated that the Chancellor George Osborne announced his desire to see a deal signed before the 16th March budget date. The Chief Executive informed Members that it remains to be seen if that date is achievable but it is important to note that a deal at that stage would be non-binding and negotiations are expected to extend way beyond any signing.

Part of the ongoing discussions concern the exact financial model to be applied, in that there are alternatives to the payment by results model, including the awarding by government of a direct grant. This had the advantage of de-risking the deal significantly; however the pros and cons of different approaches were still being explored.

The Chief Executive informed Council that Bridgend's on-going contribution could not be determined at this stage as it depends entirely on the precise projects chosen and where the benefits fall and would not be known for a while yet. Ideas and proposals were being developed across the region for the deal. Some of these are infrastructure but

many are about skills, land use, better strategic coordination, jobs growth and targeting of existing funding. As part of that, schemes are being identified which may be appropriate for Bridgend specifically. He anticipated a further report coming to Cabinet in the next few weeks and there would be an opportunity for all Members to be further updated on progress.

573. TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE LEADER

The Leader announced that Members will have seen the terrible news earlier this week concerning job losses at Tata Steel in Neath Port Talbot. This move is going to have a serious impact on communities up and down the coast, with the impact on Bridgend County Borough likely to be substantial. He stated Tata had confirmed in November that there were 596 employees working in their Port Talbot plant whose home addresses had Bridgend County Borough post code areas.

The Leader informed Members that the Council has been in touch with local government colleagues in preparation for a task force meeting that the Economy Minister Edwina Hart has called today. Whilst progress that the task force can make is awaited, the Council has pledged whatever practical support it can offer to workers who have been affected by this decision.

The Leader stated that there is also a wider issue to consider, and as such he had written to the Prime Minister David Cameron calling on urgent interaction from the UK Government.

He informed Members that the fact of the matter is that Tata Steel is one of Wales' most significant employers, and has a total economic impact of £3.2 billion. More than 10,000 full time equivalent jobs are supported off-site in the Tata supply chain, and it attracts inter-regional export revenues of more than £2 billion for Wales. Any disruption in the manufacturing of steel will have a major effect on small-to-medium sized businesses with supply links into Port Talbot. Urgent action was called for to ensure that the UK steel industry is not unfairly disadvantaged on the international markets.

The Leader stated that when the banking sector collapsed in 2008, the UK Government stepped in with decisive action and while some of those actions divided opinion, it was true to say that the City of London was thriving again within five years. He informed Members that the steel industry deserves no less than the banking industry.

The Leader informed Members that he would be making a media statement to this effect later today, and will also be writing to the Prime Minister to urge him to consider this and impress upon his Ministers and Government colleagues just how important this situation really is.

The Leader reminded Members that the consultation on changes that need to be made as to how Bridgend County Borough Council collects refuse and recycling in the future will close on 8th February. He stated that the changes are necessary as the current kerbside collection system needs to be upgraded so it can recycle more waste and avoid financial penalties for not meeting the Welsh Government's new statutory recycling targets. The current target is 58%, but this will increase to 64% in 2019-20, then 70% in 2024-25. If the target of 64% is missed even by just 1%, the Council will be issued with a penalty of around £100,000.

The Leader stated that it for this reason the system has to change, and why the Council is consulting on things like altering how often black bags are collected, introducing nappy recycling, providing householders with fresh equipment to maximise recycling and minimise inconvenience, and more besides. He informed Members that some tough

decisions are called for, and the Council would like as many people as possible to have their say so a final scheme can be developed. To date, around 1400 completed responses and it was hoped there would be more than 2,000 by the end of the consultation. He urged Members to encourage as many of their constituents as possible to take part, by visiting the consultation pages of the corporate website by calling the consultation team on 643664 or by emailing them at consultation@bridgend.gov.uk

The Leader informed Members they may be aware that Councillor Jeff Tildesley is currently receiving treatment at the Princess of Wales Hospital and he was sure Members would like to send him their best wishes for a speedy recovery.

574. **COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME**

The Head of Finance and ICT submitted a report to implement the 2016-17 Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTR), the requirement to adopt a CTR scheme by 31 January 2016, together with the funding implications.

He reported that the CTR provides assistance for those on low incomes who have a liability to pay Council Tax. He stated that the Welfare Reform Bill detailed the intention to localise the allocation and administration of Council Tax Benefit (CTB) from 2013-14. The UK Government devolved to the Welsh Government the establishment of localised schemes in Wales and stated its intention to reduce expenditure on CTB by the equivalent of 10%. As a result, the Welsh Government decided to develop a single nationally defined scheme, set out in the regulations, for the provision of Council Tax Support in Wales, which would also provide for a small number of discretionary elements individual Councils could choose to adopt, with any additional associated costs funded locally.

The Head of Finance and ICT reported that the Council adopted the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2015-16 in accordance with the Council Tax Reduction Schemes and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2013 which would end on 31 March 2016. He informed Council that there were currently 14,628 households in the Borough receiving CTR, 8,733 are of working age and 5,895 of pensionable age and out of 14,628 households in receipt of CTR, 11,092 are entitled to a full CTR reduction.

The Head of Finance and Performance reported that the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 have now been laid which make amendments to:

- Reflect the new arrangements in relation to care and support needs which have been introduced in Wales by the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014;
- Take into account terminology changes used in legislation as a consequence to the national Insurance Contributions Act 2015 and new arrangements and terminology introduced via the Pension Act 2014.

The Head of Finance and ICT explained that within the Prescribed Requirements Regulations, there is limited discretion given to the Council to apply discretionary elements that are more generous than the national scheme. These are:

- The ability to increase the standard extended reduction period of four weeks given to persons after they return to work where they have previously been receiving CTR that is to end as a result of their return to work;

- Discretion to increase the amount of War Disablement Pensions and War Widows Pensions which is to be disregarded when calculating income of the claimant; and
- The ability to backdate the application of CTR with regard to late claims prior to the new standard period of three months before the claim.

The Head of Finance and ICT reported that the Council is obliged to adopt a scheme by the 31 January 2016 regardless of whether it chooses to apply any of the discretionary elements. The Council can only apply discretion if it makes its own scheme under the Prescribed Requirements Regulations.

The Head of Finance and ICT informed Council that consultation on the Prescribed Requirement Regulations has taken place and as it was proposed not to change the discretionary elements, a further consultation exercise has not been completed. The following was proposed:

- The extended payment period is maintained at the minimum standard of four weeks;
- War Disablement Pensions and War Widows Pensions are fully disregarded when calculating entitlement to CTR;
- Backdating is extended beyond the minimum standard of three months to a maximum of six months.

He advised that the estimated total cost to the Authority of these proposals is £35,500 for 2016-17 and that the Council must consider whether to replace or revise its CTR scheme and is obliged to make a scheme under the requirements of the Prescribed Requirements Regulations.

The Head of Finance and ICT advised that Bridgend's 2014-15 provisional settlement from the Welsh Government would include £12.695 million to fund the CTR scheme, which does not take into account any increase in Council Tax charges or variations in caseload, and is distributed on a fixed rather than a demand-led basis. Any shortfall between the amount provided in the final settlement and the amount of CTR awarded, including any discretionary elements, would fall on the Council. Based on the current caseload, the cost of the Scheme for 2016-17 is estimated at £13.9 million. Additional funding of £1 million to meet the full cost of the CTR Scheme has been included in the MTFS 2014-15 to 2017-18 and would be kept under review throughout the MTFS period.

RESOLVED: That Council:

1. Noted the Council Tax Reductions Schemes and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2013 and the 2014, 2015 and 2016 amendment regulations.
2. Adopted the Scheme, as detailed under paragraphs 4.18 to 4.23 of the report.

575. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

The meeting closed at 3.57 pm

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO COUNCIL

17 February 2016

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

WALES AUDIT OFFICE – CORPORATE ASSESSMENT REPORT ON BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL, JANUARY 2016

1. Purpose of Report.

1.1 To introduce the Auditor General's report (attached as Appendix 1) to Council.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives / Other Corporate Priorities.

2.1 The report includes an assessment of whether or not the authority is capable of delivering its priorities and improved outcomes for citizens.

3. Background.

3.1 In April 2015, the Wales Audit Office began an in-depth corporate assessment of Bridgend County Borough Council.

3.2 The purpose of the assessment was to provide a position statement on the authority's capacity and capability to deliver continuous improvement. The focus of the assessment was on the extent to which arrangements are helping to improve service performance and outcomes for citizens.

3.3 The assessment considered the authority's track record of performance and outcomes as well as examining the key arrangements necessary to underpin improvements in services and functions.

3.4 The auditors interviewed, met with, observed, and conducted online surveys of elected members, senior officers and frontline staff, both individually and collectively.

4. Current situation / proposal.

4.1 The Auditor General's report is positive and balanced, reflecting the Council's current position.

Overall conclusion

4.2 The Auditor General's overall conclusion is that *"the Council is developing appropriate plans for the future and subject to aligning ICT and human resource functions with the transformation programme, is well placed to secure improvement"*.

Key positive findings

- 4.3 The Auditor General found that the Council was developing key strategic themes for the future in consultation with its citizens and other key stakeholders. These themes - supporting a successful economy, helping people to be more self-reliant and making smarter use of resources - will sharpen the Council's focus on priority activities and drive the changes necessary to enable the Council to operate effectively in the future, the Auditor General notes.
- 4.4 The Auditor General found that the Council had effective governance arrangements in place to support improvement and drive change, with Cabinet members fully engaged in the development of the new vision and playing an active role in considering the options for change and in establishing new policy direction and alternative methods of delivery.
- 4.5 The Auditor General found that Cabinet members and the Corporate Management Board were working closely together to develop the options for the future role of the Council and to identify new opportunities for engaging with local communities.
- 4.6 The Auditor General acknowledged the strengths of the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy from which, he noted, a range of projects and activities has evolved that play a role in helping to shape the Council's change agenda.
- 4.7 At the directorate level, the Auditor General found that the Council had adopted different methods of delivering services in recent years and gained experience in improving delivery standards and arranging for their scrutiny. Examples quoted by the report include the Cultural Trust partnership model, the Halo/GLL contract and Kier Group Waste management contract.
- 4.8 The Auditor General found that the Council had clarified roles and responsibilities and established effective arrangements for holding people to account. For example, the Council holds the Chief Executive to account by means of a Cross Party Panel that agrees his personal objectives for the year, and reports to Council on his performance as measured against those objectives. The arrangement enables members to highlight key issues and agree relative priorities with the Chief Executive.
- 4.9 The report recognised that committees appointed by the Cabinet "were making a positive contribution to improvement".
- 4.10 The report acknowledged that the Council's scrutiny function was transparent and accessible. Its meetings are well run; formal processes are observed; and it is effectively chaired.
- 4.11 The Auditor General found that Elected Members enjoyed a range of opportunities that equipped them with the skills they needed to discharge their roles effectively.
- 4.12 The Auditor General found that "the Council has a clear focus on performance management, which has enabled services and directorates to work in a way that puts performance improvement at the heart of their work". Performance

management arrangements, the report concluded, drive improvement in key service areas, and measurable improvements were made in 2014-15.

- 4.13 The report acknowledged the strengths of the council's Performance Management Framework which, it concluded, "gives a clear and unequivocal structure to the way performance is assessed and managed, linking plans, strategies and service areas".
- 4.14 The report singled out the Council's Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA) as "positive practice in performance management" (p.17). The CPA meetings were said to be "a very effective means of holding directorates to account for performance and facilitating cross-directorate dialogue". The broadening of the scope of the CPA, so that it extends to value for money, service-user outcomes, internal processes and organisational capacity, would (added the report) be particularly important in improving performance in the context of priorities and available resources.
- 4.15 The Auditor General found that the Council handled financial and asset management well, and that this would help it remain resilient in the face of big financial challenges. The monthly budget monitoring process adopted by the CMB enables effective financial planning and management of risks, the report noted.
- 4.16 The report found that the Council had policies to support financial management. These include rules and financial procedures that clearly specify the responsibilities of Members, Officers and budget holders.
- 4.17 The ICT service was found to be supporting the delivery of Council operations. Despite being under resourced, its staff were supporting colleagues and ensuring continuity of service during office moves, the report noted.
- 4.18 The Council's Human Resource service was found to be supporting the delivery of Council operations through a range of policies and procedures.
- 4.19 The Auditor General found that the Council had devised an effective system for managing corporate assets and was on course to achieve its long-term goals. The report acknowledged that the Council had made significant progress in rationalizing its property portfolio since adopting the Asset Management Plan in 2009.
- 4.20 The report acknowledged that the Council was collaborating across a wide range of activities and that some of those activities had resulted in identifiable improvements.

Proposed Areas for improvement

- 4.21 Given the wide range of services provided and the challenges facing the Council, the Auditor General noted, it would be unusual if the auditors did not find things that could be improved. Generally, when conducting a corporate assessment of an authority, the Auditor General is able to do the following based on his findings:
 - a. Make proposals for improvement. If proposals are made, the Auditor General will follow up what happens.

- b. Make formal recommendations for improvement. If a formal recommendation is made, the Council must prepare a response to that recommendation within 30 working days.
- c. Conduct a special inspection and publish a report and make recommendations.
- d. Recommend to Ministers of the Welsh Government that they intervene in some way.

4.22 In the case of Bridgend, the Auditor General found no reason to make any formal recommendations, conduct an inspection, or recommend that Ministers of Welsh government intervene. He did, however, make eight proposals for improvement. These proposals include:

- Establishing a vision of the Council for 2020 that will support a strategic approach to service delivery and guide service planning;
- Review measures of success to ensure they enable an evaluation of intended performance and that the expectation of performance is based upon that measure;
- Develop both its ICT and its human resource services so they can support the Council's transformation agenda;
- Ensure that service business plans take into consideration future property requirements; and
- Develop measures to evaluate the success of key activities performed in collaboration with the Local Service Board.

A summary of the proposals for improvement is included in the attached report (p.5).

The Auditor General's findings also suggest a need to ensure clarity of communications with all members and staff particularly about potential new models of delivery and the impact on current ways of working.

4.23 The authority has already started addressing the areas that the report said needed improving. The Wales Audit Office will "keep track of developments through progress updates".

5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules.

5.1 There is no effect upon the Policy Framework and the Procedure Rules.

6. Equality Impact Assessment.

6.1 No equality impact assessment has been undertaken as the Auditor General's report is essentially an assessment of the authority's performance and outcomes as well as examining the key arrangements necessary to underpin improvements in services and functions.

7. Financial Implications.

7.1 There are no financial implications in this report.

8. Recommendation.

8.1 That Council notes the Corporate Assessment Report produced by the WAO.

Darren Mepham
Chief Executive
4 February 2016

Contact Officer: Yuan Shen, Corporate Improvement Manager
Telephone: (01656) 643224
E-mail: yuan.shen@bridgend.gov.uk

Postal Address Level 4, Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB

Background documents

None

This page is intentionally left blank



WALES AUDIT OFFICE
SWYDDFA ARCHWILIO CYMRU

Corporate Assessment Report 2015

Bridgend County Borough Council

Issued: January 2016

Document reference: 683A2015



This Corporate Assessment has been prepared on behalf of the Auditor General for Wales by Steve Barry, Samantha Clements, Catryn Holzinger, Ron Price, Melanie Williams, Avril Watkins, Ena Lloyd and Dyfrig Williams of the Wales Audit Office and Melanie Watson and Matthew Arthur of KPMG UK LLP under the direction of Jane Holownia.

Huw Vaughan Thomas
Auditor General for Wales
Wales Audit Office
24 Cathedral Road
Cardiff
CF11 9LJ

The Auditor General is independent of government, and is appointed by Her Majesty the Queen. The Auditor General undertakes his work using staff and other resources provided by the Wales Audit Office, which is a statutory board established for that purpose and to monitor and advise the Auditor General. The Wales Audit Office is held to account by the National Assembly.

Together with appointed auditors, the Auditor General audits local government bodies in Wales, including unitary authorities, police, probation, fire and rescue authorities, national parks and community councils. He also conducts local government value for money studies and assesses compliance with the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

Beyond local government, the Auditor General is the external auditor of the Welsh Government and its sponsored and related public bodies, the Assembly Commission and National Health Service bodies in Wales.

The Auditor General and staff of the Wales Audit Office aim to provide public-focused and proportionate reporting on the stewardship of public resources and in the process provide insight and promote improvement.

Contents

Summary report	4
Proposals for improvement	5
Introduction	6
Detailed report	7
The Council is developing appropriate plans for the future and, subject to aligning ICT and human resource functions with the transformation programme, is well placed to secure improvement	7
The Council is consulting on key strategic themes designed to improve its focus on priority activity for the future	8
Effective governance arrangements are in place to support improvement and drive change	10
Performance management arrangements are driving improvement in key service areas but the way in which performance evaluation is presented is inconsistent	15
Strong financial and asset management arrangements are in place but the Council needs to develop its HR and ICT services so that they are aligned with the transformation agenda	21
The Council collaborates across a wide range of activities and, whilst it is able to identify improved outcomes from some activities, it is not yet able to evaluate the impact of Local Service Board activity	29
Appendices	
Appendix 1 – Status of this report	31
Appendix 2 – Annual Audit Letter	32

Summary report

- 1 In 2013-14, staff of the Wales Audit Office began a four-year cycle of corporate assessments of improvement authorities in Wales. This means that, in addition to an annual programme of improvement studies and audits of councils' approaches to improvement planning and reporting, each authority will receive a corporate assessment once during a four-year period. In the intervening years, we will keep track of developments through progress updates.
- 2 The purpose of the corporate assessment is to provide a position statement of an improvement authority's capacity and capability to deliver continuous improvement. It will, by its nature, consider an authority's track record of performance and outcomes as well as examining the key arrangements that are necessary to underpin improvements in services and functions.
- 3 Our fieldwork for the corporate assessment focused on the extent to which arrangements are contributing to delivering improved service performance and outcomes for citizens. The corporate assessment sought to answer the following question: 'Is the Council capable of delivering its priorities and improved outcomes for citizens?'
- 4 The Auditor General has concluded that: The Council is developing appropriate plans for the future and subject to aligning ICT and human resource functions with the transformation programme, is well placed to secure improvement. He came to this conclusion because the Council:
 - a is consulting on key strategic themes designed to improve its focus on priority activity for the future;
 - b has effective governance arrangements in place to support improvement and drive change;
 - c has performance management arrangements that are driving improvement in key service areas but the way in which performance evaluation is presented is inconsistent;
 - d strong financial and asset management arrangements are in place but the Council needs to develop its HR and ICT services so that they are aligned with the transformation agenda; and
 - e collaborates across a wide range of activities and whilst it is able to identify improved outcomes from some activities it is not yet able to evaluate the impact of Local Service Board (LSB) activity.

Proposals for Improvement

Proposals for Improvement	
The Council of the future	
P1	Establish the vision of the Council for 2020 that will support a strategic approach to service delivery and guide service planning.
Performance management	
P2	Explain the reason for an improvement target and the scale of improvement expected. (Annual Improvement Report 22 September 2015).
P3	Review 'measures of success' to ensure they enable an evaluation of intended performance and that the explanation of performance is based upon that measure. (Annual Improvement Report 22 September 2015).
P4	Ensure performance rating reports clearly state whether the Council has achieved what it intended.
ICT	
P5	Develop the ICT service to ensure it supports the Council's transformation agenda.
Human Resources	
P6	Develop the HR service and, specifically, workforce planning so that they support the Council's transformation agenda and ensure workforce considerations are embedded in service business planning.
Asset Management	
P7	Ensure service business plans incorporate consideration of future property requirements.
Collaboration	
P8	Build upon the current development of Local Service Board arrangements by adopting measures to evaluate the success of the key collaborative activities.

Introduction

- 5 Under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (the Measure), the Auditor General must report each year on how well Welsh councils, fire and rescue authorities, and national parks are planning for improvement in delivering their services. [Appendix 1](#) provides more information about the Auditor General's powers and duties under the Measure.
- 6 In 2013-14, staff of the Wales Audit Office began a four-year cycle of corporate assessments of improvement authorities in Wales. This means that, in addition to the annual programme of improvement studies and audits of councils' approaches to improvement planning and reporting, each authority will receive a corporate assessment once during a four-year period. In the intervening years, we will keep track of developments through progress updates.
- 7 This report states whether the Auditor General believes that the Council is likely to comply with the requirements of the Measure. This judgement of 'likelihood' will be based on work carried out and previous accumulated knowledge, and therefore reflects performance at a particular point in time. It should not be seen as a four-year clean bill of health or as a definitive prediction of future success. Rather, it should be viewed as providing assurance as to whether the arrangements currently in place are reasonably sound insofar as can be ascertained from our work and the work of relevant regulators.
- 8 Given the wide range of services provided and the challenges facing the Council, it would be unusual if we did not find things that can be improved. The Auditor General is able to:
 - a Make proposals for improvement – we make such proposals in this report and we will follow up what happens.
 - b Make formal recommendations for improvement – if a formal recommendation is made the Council must prepare a response to that recommendation within 30 working days. We find no reason to make such recommendations.
 - c Conduct a special inspection and publish a report and make recommendations. We find no reason to conduct such an inspection.
 - d Recommend to Ministers of the Welsh Government that they intervene in some way. We find no reason to make such a recommendation.
- 9 We want to find out if this report gives you the information you need and whether it is easy to understand. You can let us know your views by e-mailing us at info@audit.wales or writing to us at 24 Cathedral Road, Cardiff, CF11 9LJ.

Detailed report

The Council is developing appropriate plans for the future and, subject to aligning ICT and human resource functions with the transformation programme, is well placed to secure improvement



The Council is consulting on key strategic themes designed to improve its focus on priority activity for the future

- 10 By 2020 the Council anticipates that it is likely to have 70 per cent of its current resources to provide services. This is based upon expecting continued funding reductions requiring savings of around £49 million by 2017-18 and increasing demand with service user needs becoming more complex.
- 11 During April 2015 workshops were held for elected members which developed the principles for establishing what the Council should aim to be by 2020. Having established guiding principles during these workshops three strategic themes were developed and adopted by the Council in June 2015. During August 2015 a staff survey and engagement events were held to obtain staff views about the need for change; to determine how clear staff were about the future 'look' of the Council, and about the proposed strategic themes.
- 12 At the time of this assessment the Council was consulting citizens and other stakeholders on the three strategic themes that would guide decision making and help prioritise activity over the next two to four years:
 - a Supporting a successful economy: taking steps to make the county a good place to do business and ensure that our schools are focused on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions of all young people in the county.
 - b Helping people to be more self reliant: taking early steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services.
 - c Smarter use of resources: ensuring that all Council resources (financial, physical, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible; and supporting the development of resources throughout the community that can help deliver the Council's vision.
- 13 The strategic themes are not intended to replace the Council's focus on: safeguarding its most vulnerable people; to be financially accountable and have regard to value for money; to have regard to equality and diversity and manage risk. The themes are intended to act as the means of highlighting and prioritising those activities that will drive the changes necessary to enable the Council to operate effectively in the future.
- 14 In September 2015 we sought the views of the 53 elected members of the Council and of 53 senior managers by means of a survey. During October 2015 we held meetings with groups of elected members, managers and operational staff as well as conducting interviews with individuals. The alignment of priorities in the Corporate Plan with service activity meant the majority were clear about what the Council was trying to achieve and engagement with members and staff about the financial position meant all were clear about the necessity for the Council's savings strategy.

- 15 Despite engagement in the identification of the three strategic themes, feedback we received suggested less clarity about the 'look' of the future Council and more particularly, precisely what it meant for service planning and delivery. For example, this was illustrated by some respondents offering a perspective that referred to a more negative picture of the Council working towards 30 per cent cuts in services rather than seeking to respond to local needs utilising 70 per cent of the resources currently available.
- 16 The need for a clearer 'picture' of what the Council might look like by 2020 was recognised and it is intended that this will be further developed having regard to the feedback obtained from consultation.

Proposal for Improvement

The Council of the future

- P1 Establish the vision of the Council for 2020 that will support a strategic approach to service delivery and guide service planning.

Effective governance arrangements are in place to support improvement and drive change

Appropriate governance arrangements are in place to drive change

- 17 Building upon the workshops for all members during 2015, Cabinet members continue to be fully engaged in the development of the new vision and have played an active role in consideration of options for change, establishing new policy direction and alternative methods of delivery. Cabinet members and the Corporate Management Board are working closely to develop the options for the future role of the Council, what it will mean for specific services and identifying new opportunities for engagement with local communities.
- 18 The Corporate Management Board (CMB) comprises the Chief Executive, the four Corporate Directors and the Assistant Chief Executive. In January 2015 responsibilities of Corporate Directors were adjusted and the Chief Executive created a Transformation team, drawn from across Directorates, headed up by the Director of Education and Transformation. This team will be:
 - a exploring innovative and flexible ways of delivering services, including approaches to commissioning and working with the Third Sector;
 - b maximising the use of assets and technology;
 - c developing a stronger organisational development function to increase the skills of existing employees and allow greater flexibility; and
 - d improving communication with citizens so that they better understand their needs and are able to access appropriate information and, when required, services.
- 19 The CMB has recognised the need to bring together existing streams of work in order to provide clarity about the purpose of activities and their alignment with the transformation process. It has also been recognised that additional capacity to drive the programme needs to be found. CMB has been balancing the use of existing managers with the necessary skills against the impact on day-to-day activity, and has also specifically recruited people with expertise not available within the current workforce to drive particular activities.
- 20 We have previously reported on the strengths of the Council's medium term financial strategy. A range of projects has evolved from this strategy and during 2015 a range of activity influencing change could be identified from three sources, the Medium Term Financial Strategy, the Annual Governance Statement and the emerging 'transformation' projects. The transformation projects, identified as those that will drive change, are now being assembled under 'Shaping Bridgend's Future'. Other projects remain important in terms of achieving savings targets and improving operational efficiency.

Exhibit 1: Delivery of change

'Shaping Bridgend's Future' provides a structure for delivery of transformation projects aligned to the three strategic themes.

Shaping Bridgend's Future Transformation projects
Supporting a successful economy Successful economy programme – including Rhiw redevelopment and regeneration schemes including Porthcawl, Parc Afon Ewenni and Llynfi sites' reclamation. City Deal – development of proposals with south east Wales councils.
Helping people to be more self reliant Re-modelling Adult Social Care. Re-modelling Children's Services. Third Sector Programme, improving third sector engagement; working in partnership with communities; Community Asset Transfer; engagement with town and community councils.
Smarter use of resources Digital transformation programme – improving access to services. Rationalising the Council's estate – asset disposal; community asset transfer. School modernisation programme.

- 21 The CMB has recognised the need to ensure clarity about the purpose of these activities and ensure staff capacity to deliver them efficiently. Our findings suggest a need to ensure clarity of communications with all members and staff particularly about potential new models of delivery and the impact on current ways of working.
- 22 At Directorate level the Council has adopted different methods of service delivery in recent years and has gained experience in developing delivery standards and putting appropriate arrangements in place to scrutinise performance, for example:
 - a Since October 2015 the transfer of cultural services including libraries by means of a partnership agreement with Awen Cultural Trust Ltd, a charity limited by guarantee formed specifically for the purpose. The partnership agreement is intended to run for 20 years until 2035 and includes outcome measures connected with the three strategic themes together with key performance indicators.

- b Since April 2012 a contract with Greenwich Leisure Ltd with their local delivery partner Halo Leisure Ltd (a registered charity and social enterprise) for the management of leisure centres and swimming pools. The contract has the potential to run until 2027 and includes for investment by Halo/GLL in new facilities. Contract arrangements include performance reporting against five strategic outcomes agreed with the Council. Quarterly performance reports are provided to the Council and considered by the Community, Environment and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- c Since 2010 a contract with Kier Group plc for the provision of household waste collection and recycling services. The contract runs until 2017 with the option of extending to 2024. Performance reports are provided to the Council and considered by the Community, Environment and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Roles and responsibilities are clear and effective arrangements are in place for holding people to account

- 23 The Council operates a Leader and Cabinet system within which the Council sets the overall budget and appoints the Leader of Council. The Leader appoints the Cabinet Members and allocates their portfolios. Individual Cabinet members agree their portfolio priorities with the Leader and progress is reviewed during the year. Cabinet members with 'cross cutting' portfolios meet regularly to co-ordinate planning, identify potential issues participate in joint discussions with Corporate Directors.
- 24 The Cabinet has appointed two Cabinet Committees to support executive decision making and enable engagement and development of a wider understanding of priority issues. The Cabinet Committee Equalities is chaired by the Cabinet member for Children's Social Services and Equalities. The Cabinet invites 10 elected members to join this committee reflecting the political balance of the Council. The Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting is chaired by the Deputy Leader and includes six other elected members and one lay member. Our observation of meetings of these Committees indicated there was good discussion and that these forums were making a positive contribution to improvement.
- 25 The Council holds the Chief Executive to account by means of a Cross Party Panel that agrees his personal objectives for the year ahead, and performance against those objectives is reported to Council. The arrangement enables members to highlight key issues and agree relative priorities with the Chief Executive.

- 26 The Chief Executive holds Corporate Directors and the Assistant Chief Executive to account by means of the formal appraisal system. In the past it has been relatively straight forward to clarify expectations in the context of the delivery of the improvement priorities within the Corporate Plan and the connection with service directorate activity. CMB officers have recognised collective responsibility for management of the Council and driving the transformation agenda roles in respect of these expectations are being incorporated into their appraisal process.
- 27 On 8 April 2015, the Council approved changes to the scrutiny function with the aim of improving the efficiency of arrangements having regard to the Council's priorities and the reduction in officer capacity. Key changes have included:
- a rebalancing the responsibilities of the committees and assigning responsibility for scrutiny of performance, budget, business planning and delivery of the corporate plan to one scrutiny committee (with provision to co-opt member specialised knowledge from other committees as necessary);
 - b improved programme planning to ensure coordination of activity and improving meetings management by structuring them to allow time for honing questions; discussion with those invited; determine conclusions and review the forward programme;
 - c ending requirements for scrutiny officers to produce covering reports which freed up officer time and enabled members to develop their own lines of enquiry;
 - d formalising the arrangements and meeting frequency of the Budget Review and Evaluation Panel, the School Engagement Review and Evaluation Panel and the Social Services Annual Reporting Framework Review and Evaluation and the LSB Review and Evaluation Scrutiny Panel; and
 - e trialling processes by one Overview and Scrutiny Committee prior to adoption by all.
- 28 Our observation of scrutiny meetings identified a range of positive characteristics:
- a the majority of members clearly understood the topic and asked appropriately challenging questions;
 - b officers attending were familiar with the topic and able to provide relevant responses to questions; and
 - c members were generally satisfied with the quality of information they received.

- 29 The Council has taken steps to ensure that scrutiny is transparent and information is accessible. Forward work plans are published for each committee, minutes and papers are made available and committee pages are up to date. Meetings we observed were well-run, with formal processes in place and overall effective chairing. The tone of discussions was constructive.

A range of opportunities are provided to equip elected members with the skills they need to discharge their roles effectively

- 30 The Council is seeking to support members to undertake their roles through training and Personal Development Reviews. All members have agreed to undertake personal development reviews which are organised on a political group basis. Cabinet and other Senior members undertake peer reviews of up to six 'back bench' members from their political groups with whom their personal development needs are discussed.. Development needs are subsequently met by means of a mix of training, member briefings and mentoring.
- 31 There are activities to increase diversity in democracy – there is a diversity champion, shadowing at election time and the mentoring scheme. However, equality monitoring is not complete.

Performance management arrangements are driving improvement in key service areas but the way in which performance evaluation is presented is inconsistent

- 32 The Welsh Government requires all councils to report on a common set of national strategic indicators (NSIs) to enable a comparison of performance in key service areas across Wales. Thirty national strategic indicators have been set that cover the Welsh Government's strategic priorities. Councils in Wales have also adopted 13 public accountability measures (PAMS) because they reflect issues of local importance such as support for carers, school attendance and the condition of highways.
- 33 Comparison with the previous year could not be made for two indicators. Importantly, the Council made measurable improvements in performance in 2014-15. This is demonstrated by improvements in the majority of NSIs and PAMs of which;
- a 27 of 41 indicators improved;
 - b 13 of 41 indicators declined; and
 - c one of 41 indicators remained the same (where the Council sustained best possible performance).
- 34 The Council's performance against NSIs and PAMs also compared favourably to other Welsh local authorities. In 2014-15, the Council achieved more indicators in the top two quartiles than the bottom two quartiles, including 31.7 per cent in the upper quartile of performance. The Council also performed well against its own targets, achieving 27 of the 39 it set. Of the 12 it did not achieve, performance still improved for eight of those indicators.
- 35 Considering the NSIs and PAMs in the context of the Council's improvement objectives for 2014-15 shows the Council has made progress towards 'Raising aspirations and driving up educational achievement' and 'Working with children and families to tackle problems early'. This is borne out when the more extensive range of indicators published alongside the Council's Annual Report 2014-15 are also considered. Similarly, when looking across the broader set of indicators, actual performance continued to improve for 'Working together to help vulnerable people to stay independent'. There was progress against key success measures under 'Working together to make best use of resources', but some targets related to wider performance measures were missed. Progress towards 'Working together to tackle health issues and encourage healthy lifestyles' and 'Working together to develop the economy' was more mixed.

- 36 The Council has a clear focus on performance management, which has enabled services and directorates to work in a way that puts performance improvement at the heart of their work. The Council revised its corporate performance management framework in 2013 and, in 2014, the Wales Audit Office reviewed those arrangements. It published a document that defines the Council's approach, explains roles and accountabilities and provides guidance to all those involved in the process. Our review concluded that the framework gives a clear and unequivocal structure to the way performance is assessed and managed, linking plans, strategies and service areas. Findings from the Corporate Assessment further support that view, suggesting the framework has continued to promote improvement, through clear lines of accountability and effective challenge.
- 37 The framework includes quarterly Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA) meetings that are attended by Cabinet members, the Corporate Management Board, Heads of Service and are supported by corporate performance and finance staff. Our previous observation of these meetings has led us to conclude that they have proved to be a very effective means of holding directorates to account for performance and facilitating cross-directorate dialogue. The Council is continuing to build on this arrangement and is planning to broaden the information presented at that meeting to include value for money, service-user outcomes, internal processes and organisational capacity. This should further enable consideration of the quality of performance in the context of priorities and available resources and facilitate discussion of what constitutes 'acceptable' performance. This will be particularly important, as it may not be possible for the Council to sustain the pace of improvement against key indicators given current and future savings requirements and service pressures.

Exhibit 2: Positive practice in performance management

The Council's quarterly corporate performance assessment meeting provides a solutions-focused forum for performance improvement

Positive Practice:

Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA) meetings are held quarterly.

Meetings are solutions focused and provide the opportunity to consider options for improving weak performance drawing in the expertise of Cabinet members and senior officers.

The sessions have proved to be a very effective means of holding directorates to account for performance, facilitating cross-directorate dialogue and developing improvement solutions.

The Council is continuing to build on this arrangement by improving the range of information provided, to: test value for money, identify service user outcomes, analyse internal processes and assess organisational capacity prior to change.

This improvement will enable consideration of the quality of performance in the context of priorities and available resources and facilitate discussion about what constitutes the 'acceptable' level of performance for the future.

- 38 While there is regular reporting and good oversight of performance, this could be strengthened if the Council ensured information was presented as accurately and consistently as possible. The Council, like many others, uses a 'RAG rating' system ('red' 'amber' and 'green') to assess levels of success or failure. The RAG rating system is commonly adopted as a means of readily identifying performance issues but having reviewed reports to the Corporate Resources and Improvement Scrutiny Committee on 22 September 2015 and the Annual Report for 2014-15, we have identified scope for improvement of the system. [Exhibit 3](#) shows different methods of applying the RAG ratings within reports.

Exhibit 3: 'RAG' ratings

A number of different definitions are are applied to aspects of performance.

Aspect of performance	Green	Amber	Red
Commitment – activity associated with the delivery of an improvement objective	All key milestones are on track. No reason for concern	Most key milestones are on track, but some are at risk	Most key milestones are missed
Indicator – data used to measure success and it is possible to make a comparison over a three-year period	Better than previous year	Same as previous year	Worse than previous year
Performance indicator – data used to measure success against a target set for a given year	Performance is equal to or better than target	Performance is worse than target by under 10 per cent	Performance is worse than target by 10 per cent or more
Performance Indicators (Trend arrows)	Performance improved vs same quarter of previous year	No change in performance vs same quarter of previous year	Performance declined vs same quarter of previous year

- 39 Previous audit work has identified discrepancies between measures of success and the accompanying explanation of performance, as well as inconsistencies in the application of the RAG rating. We made proposals for improvement in the Annual Improvement Report published in September 2015, which remain relevant and are included with our current proposals for ease of reference. There is still evidence to suggest the presentation of performance information could be clearer. One simple improvement would be to ensure that definitions are included in each report to enable all readers, including members of the public, to see how the RAG ratings have been determined.

- 40 The Council's RAG rating system for performance indicators is based on achieving the target alone. This can result in indicators being awarded the same rating, where more detailed contextual information would highlight important differences. The Council does include commentary and a trend arrow, but information such as national rankings and previous targets could also be useful in providing the reader with a more accurate picture of performance.
- 41 For example, the following two performance indicators were both rated 'amber';
- a 'Percentage of adults aged 60 or over who hold a concessionary bus pass' – performance was lower than the target but had improved on the previous year's performance. The target was higher than the previous year and the all-Wales ranking improved from 7th to 6th.
 - b 'Percentage of statutory visits to Looked After Children due in the year that took place in accordance with regulations' – performance was lower than the target but improved on the previous year's performance. However, the Council was ranked 21st in 2013-14 and 20th in 2014-15.
- 42 Performance in these two areas is very different but there is a risk that readers may rely on the RAG status to highlight issues, particularly when there is a large volume of information to assimilate within the report. Ensuring there is sufficient contextual information should help ensure some of the subtleties of the performance information are not obscured.
- 43 Furthermore, there are some examples of the evaluation of 'commitments' where the RAG rating could be questioned, based on the evidence provided. For example;
- a 'Review the Private Sector Housing Renewal and Disabled Adaptations Policy to ensure it is meeting needs and delivering value for money' – was rated as 'amber' despite the fact the policy was not reviewed, nor value for money assessed, as intended. Given these key milestones were missed a 'red' rating would seem to be more appropriate. While information is included on the Healthy Homes Assistance Grant, this does not relate to the specifics of the commitment.
 - b 'Improve transport, pedestrian and cycle links between the bus and rail network and employment sites' – was rated as 'green', though the description of activity relates to the review of bus services and ongoing discussions with Network Rail. There is no reference to pedestrian or cycle links or, more generally, to improvements in transport. By contrast, evidence against the same commitments in the annual report relates to improving the pedestrian and cycle infrastructure, as well as referencing reductions in bus services (although to schools, not employment sites). Despite the additional evidence, the commitment was awarded a lower rating of 'amber' in that report.

- c 'Continue to work with partners to mitigate the impacts of UK Government Welfare Reforms' - was given a 'green' rating, although the narrative only reflects the 'Get Bridgend Online' project and not any wider activity to mitigate the impacts of welfare reform. (Annual Report 2014-15).
- 44 Where commitments appear to be broader than the evidence of progress provided against them, it suggests that either the commitment was not adequately defined or it has only been partially fulfilled. Ensuring commitments define the parameters of success and the evidence reflects that will help internal and external readers evaluate progress with ease.
- 45 In addition, there are some inconsistencies in the RAG ratings applied to the same commitments in different reports. Specifically, there are three examples of green RAG in CRI report that are amber in the Annual Report 2014-15 and one example of a red in the CRI report which is an amber in the Annual Report. While there may be reasons for the RAG ratings needing to be changed, the information that is presented to members for scrutiny should as far as possible be the same as that which is published for the public.
- 46 Given all of the above, the Council could build on its effective performance management framework and culture by continuing to refine the presentation of performance information. As part of this, consideration should also be given to how information on performance indicators and commitments could be aligned. The Council is currently redeveloping the information presented to CPA, the Council could ensure the dashboard report links activity and results (including value-for-money measures and service-user outcomes). There is potential that this format could also meet the needs of scrutiny, which would ensure the consistency and quality of information being assessed and scrutinised.

Proposal for Improvement

Performance management

- P2 Explain the reason for an improvement target and the scale of improvement expected. (Annual Improvement Report 22 September 2015).
- P3 Review 'measures of success' to ensure they enable an evaluation of intended performance and that the explanation of performance is based upon that measure. (Annual Improvement Report 22 September 2015).
- P4 Ensure performance rating reports clearly state whether the Council has achieved what it intended.

Strong financial and asset management arrangements are in place but the Council needs to develop its HR and ICT services so that they are aligned with the transformation agenda

Whilst the Council faces significant financial challenges, its current arrangements for achieving financial resilience are sound

- 47 The expectation is that councils will continue to face reduction of funding in the foreseeable future. The Council has calculated that annual reductions of 4.5 per cent will mean it needs to make revenue budget reductions of £49.592 million over the period 2016-17 to 2019-20. It has already identified £23.639 million of savings and in July 2015 recognised a further £25.953 million needed to be found.
- 48 The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is reviewed and amended regularly and covers all service activity enabling a connection between financial strategy decisions and service delivery. The Council's framework ties the delivery of corporate objectives to financial planning. During 2014-15, the Council implemented a project to connect delivery of each improvement objective to the financial ledger; this facilitates year-on-year monitoring of the financial aspects of each objective.
- 49 The monthly budget monitoring process adopted by the CMB enables effective financial planning and the management of financial risks. Elected members are engaged by means of quarterly reporting and the Corporate Performance Assessment meetings with directors which include an assessment of financial risks. In addition, the Director of Resources has monthly meetings with Heads of Service to assess performance against budget, and to identify budget risks. Risks are escalated to the Corporate Risk Register if required.
- 50 The Council applies a prudent approach to forecasting. Although the MTFS includes a 'worst', 'best' and 'most likely' case scenario for the net budget reduction requirement, most of the detail reported to the Council has a focus on the 'most likely' case scenario. The Council exercises prudence in its assumptions for this scenario, for example, assuming a 4.5 per cent reduction in external funding.
- 51 Savings proposals are documented on a template document, which requires a risk assessment, impact assessment, and the linking of the impact of a savings proposal to an improvement objective, thereby ensuring coherence between the two.
- 52 The Council has a number of policies to support management of its finances, including financial procedures rules which clearly outline responsibilities of Members, Officers and budget holders. Currently, Directors are responsible for budget monitoring within their own Directorate, although in practice this is delegated informally to Heads of Service, Group Managers, and sometimes Service Managers. However, this is set to change by 1 April 2016, with the introduction of delegated financial management responsibilities below Director

level. This will be rolled out in conjunction with financial training, and an upgrade of the Collaborative Planning System. This is a financial software tool which allows Directorates to undertake more financial management activities, improving their access to financial information, as well as generating efficiencies within the central Finance department. Delays in availability of the software prevented the Council rolling out these changes during 2014-15.

- 53 Effective financial control over Reserves is crucial for sustainable financial management. In 2014-15, the Council adopted a new Protocol for its Reserves and Balances. For many years, the Council has had a policy of maintaining the General Fund reserve at £7 million. The new Protocol develops this by providing a clear justification for the creation and maintenance of reserves. In addition, the Protocol outlines important principles, such as how to assess the adequacy of reserves, the rationale for establishing reserves, the monitoring of the reserves, the relevance of risk assessment within all Reserves-related decisions, and includes forecasts for earmarked reserves. This Protocol marks a significant improvement in the Council's financial control procedures. In addition, the Council is able to report on transfers to, from or between reserves during the three years ending in 2014-15. Our review has noted that this reporting was more robust and had greater clarity in 2014-15 than in previous years, which again reflects the improvements made over the past year.
- 54 The budget challenges mean the Council needs to consider both potential cost-cutting opportunities and income generation (including charging) opportunities. For example, with the aim of retaining services at lower cost the Council has already adopted alternative methods of delivery described earlier in this report. However, the Council's register of charges has not been updated since 2013.
- 55 Income and charging procedures are currently the responsibility of individual Directorates. The Council has recognised the need for a more strategic approach and undertaken a survey examining Directorate approaches. One of the aims is to encourage Directorates to consider new strategic directions, such as the provision of professional services to outside organisations, for example, HR services, finance services, or property advice. We have been advised officers are preparing a corporate policy for income generation and charging which is due to be presented to the Council in March 2016. Our review of the draft document confirms it includes relevant income generation and charging principles, and advice on when to charge and on the setting of charges, to ensure they are fair, consistent, and that concessions are offered where appropriate.

The ICT service is supporting delivery of Council operations but is not sufficiently aligned to the transformation agenda

- 56 The Council's most recent ICT Strategy ran from April 2012 until March 2015. The strategy was aligned to support the strategic direction of the Council. At the time of this assessment a new strategy was in the process of being drafted. The absence of a strategy giving a clear vision of the nature of ICT as a service for the future and aligned to the Council's transformation programme means that the focus of the service is on current processes and operations rather than service development.
- 57 During the summer of 2015 the Council had advertised to fill six vacancies in the ICT staff establishment. By the time of this assessment the Council had been able to fill only two of the vacancies, so the Council was operating with fewer people, and without the full range of skills it has identified as necessary. Despite being under resourced, we found that the ICT service staff were supporting colleagues and ensuring continuity of service during office moves, however, this has meant there was little capacity within the department for identifying and progressing opportunities for modernisation and improvement.
- 58 The Council subscribes to SOCITM, which is the network and representative body for professionals delivering public services through the effective use of information digital technology. Amongst its services SOCITM assess the performance of a Council's website and provides a star rating – one star being the lowest and 4 stars being the best in terms of performance for citizens. In 2014 the Council's website was given a one star rating.
- 59 The need for improvement is recognised and the Council's Digital Transformation Programme aims to improve access to services and reduce operating costs by enabling citizens to undertake a range of transactions online. However, at the time of the assessment it was also recognised that the staff resource available to manage current service needs already faced challenges because of vacancies, meaning the pace of developing new arrangements was likely to suffer. Options for implementing improvement were being developed by the CMB at the time of the assessment.
- 60 ICT risks are reported and managed via the Information Governance Board. At the time of the assessment the Council lacked an ICT risk register to specifically monitor and manage ICT risks. This meant there was no clear record of ICT risks and therefore the impact of the ICT risks on the organisation or services, the actions the ICT department is taking to mitigate or resolve the risks, and the link between the ICT risks identified and the Corporate Risk Register could not be effectively monitored nor progress measured and demonstrated. The Council has since put an ICT risk register in place.

Proposal for Improvement

ICT

- P5 Develop the ICT service to ensure it supports the Council's transformation agenda.

The Human Resource service is supporting delivery of Council operations but is not sufficiently aligned to the transformation agenda and the delivery of Council services in the future

- 61 At an operational level we found that the Council had the range of policies and procedures that we would expect to see in place. This included a Workforce Plan, as well as job descriptions supported by a person specification (including skills/knowledge requirements and the means of assessment).
- 62 The Workforce Plan covers the period 2015 to 2018-19 and reflects the Medium Term Financial Strategy by recognising that 50 per cent of planned savings are likely to be achieved by means of a reduction in the Council's workforce. The Plan provides useful analysis of the Council's workforce but it does not make a connection with implementation at directorate/service level so that workforce planning becomes integrated with service planning.
- 63 Whilst the Workforce Plan anticipates a significant reduction in staff numbers over time this has not yet been planned out. The Council has recognised the need for new skills in its workforce and has responded by both utilising existing skills (through re-deployment if necessary) or recruiting in specialist areas such as asset disposal. However, the Council has not yet planned out the numbers of staff and skills required across the Council going forward, linked to service reviews and other planned changes to the organisation. This includes establishing clarity of expectations of the corporate HR function and those HR-related responsibilities of service managers.
- 64 In some service areas the Council has experienced significant challenges in recruiting staff and has been developing ways of attracting and retaining staff in these services.
- 65 Data for recent years shows an overall reduction in the workforce arising from a combination of the outsourcing of certain functions and a voluntary redundancy process. In 2014-15, 117 redundancies in total were effected, with 38 being voluntary and 79 compulsory.

- 66 At present the Council is not managing vacancies with a view to connect anticipated vacancies with the pool of staff that are affected by changes arising in methods of service delivery or the scaling down of services. Council workforce data also shows that it is significantly under-represented in the age group 16 to 25 and that the number of apprenticeships are small (12 to date). There is a lack of reference to succession planning in current plans or the means by which the Council might recruit to establish its workforce for the future.
- 67 The Council has an appraisal system in place and acknowledges that it needs to move from a situation in which it can determine the numbers of appraisals undertaken to one in which it can be satisfied that the process has resulted in development needs being identified and met. Staff views about the appraisal process were mixed – whilst everyone we spoke to confirmed their involvement in the process, some considered that it generally led to support (particularly if necessary to secure planned improvements), others that the system was inflexible and budget limitations restricted opportunities for skills development.
- 68 Improving the management of sickness absence has been identified as a key corporate priority and a priority for the Chief Executive. The HR service has provided absence management tools to support operational managers to implement the Council’s policy. Management of sickness absence features at Cabinet member discussions with Corporate Directors and in directorate management teams.
- 69 At the time of the assessment the Chief Executive was awaiting a report from the Welsh Local Government Association which reviewed the Council’s data capture, policies and procedures, to identify potential areas for improvement.
- 70 The Council has a range of data about sickness absence and at Directorate level management teams are seeking to focus on their specific issues. However, whilst the majority of those we spoke to appreciated the need to address sickness absence concerns were also expressed about inconsistent approaches adopted on return to work, as well as inconsistency in dealing with staff reporting absence due to sickness, in particular with regard to the application of the guidelines, allowing a member of staff to request annual leave as an alternative on the first day of a sickness absence.

Proposal for Improvement

Human Resources

- P6 Develop the HR service and, specifically, workforce planning so that they support the Council’s transformation agenda and ensure workforce considerations are embedded in service business planning.

The Council has an effective approach to corporate asset management and is on course to achieve its long-term goals

- 71 The Council has in place a strategic plan (the Plan) for its land and buildings which was developed in 2006 and covers the period to 2021. The vision for property is 'to have a lean, sustainable estate that supports delivery of the 'Best Local Services in Wales' and enables the Council to live within its means'. The vision is supported by five objectives:
- a Retain a 'lean' sustainable property portfolio that allows BCBC to live within its means.
 - b Fit-for-purpose property to support delivery of the Best Local Services in Wales – ensuring property solutions are appropriate to service and customer needs.
 - c Delivery of Capital Projects effectively and efficiently.
 - d Maximise return from the non-operational estate.
 - e Continuous improvement through Performance Management.
- 72 Delivery of the Plan is supported by structures to provide for effective corporate property decisions. The Strong Communities Connecting Services (SCCS) group provides strategic challenge and opportunities for representation from LSB partners. The Corporate Property Group (CPG) is an operationally focused forum. For example, maximising space and technology, asset release and minor capital works are agenda items and all directorates are invited to be represented on the group. There is also a non-operational property working group and enhanced portfolio working group which links in with CPG as and when needed.
- 73 Service Business Plans form a key part of the Council's delivery arrangements. Each plan template includes a section on resources covering finance and staffing but does not include reference to property requirements or how each service intends to invest or divest of its portfolio in the future. Given the current pace of activity, the Council will need to ensure service business plans incorporate consideration of future property requirements so that it is able to sustain its effective approach to asset management.
- 74 Schools have a detailed Service Asset Management Plan warranted by virtue of the size of the portfolio which constitutes 60 per cent of the Council's overall property portfolio. The school modernisation team recently transferred from the Children's directorate to a central Property team to bring together property professionals and improve liaison between the management of the school estate and central property professionals. The team reports to the group manager for property and is responsible for overseeing the delivery of the schools improvement programme.

- 75 The Council has made significant progress in rationalising its property portfolio since adopting the Asset Management Plan in 2009:
- a releasing over 60 surplus assets;
 - b reducing the maintenance backlog by circa £8 million;
 - c generating average annual income of £1.8 million;
 - d generating over £2.5 million capital receipts plus £4 million income from asset sales in 2014-15 and a projected £6 million for 2015-16; and
 - e achieving rating savings of £1.1 million.
- 76 The Plan was refreshed in December 2013 with the intention of providing a framework to facilitate delivery of the change programme. The key intended benefits being to further reduce revenue costs, deliver capital receipts and achieve a sustainable estate.
- 77 The Council has developed and implemented a successful Office Accommodation Strategy called Improving Your Space (IYS). The second phase of activity will focus on increased opportunities for flexible working, selling Raven's Court and moving more staff to Civic Offices.
- 78 As part of Phase 2 of the accommodation strategy the Council is adopting a model of one main Council headquarters and three community hubs. The main headquarters at the Civic Offices will provide a visible service hub for the community concentrating front facing services in the customer contact centre and operating a one stop shop for the public. Discussions are being held with South Wales Police about the co-location of the Police at the Bridgend Civic Offices.
- 79 Three community hubs, otherwise referred to as Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs, linking Health, Social Care, Schools and the Police are to be established. There will be one in the North, East and West of the County Borough supported by facilities located in libraries, schools and health clinics with a view to linking all public sector services to provide a more cohesive approach to the delivery of those public services needed by the community in the community.
- 80 The central location for staff is also seen as a contributor to town centre regeneration, for example, by potentially increasing footfall in addition to the Rhiw redevelopment and new occupancy at Raven's Court.
- 81 Other key action areas linked to the strategic change programme include:
- a The Council is also seeking to be more proactive and strategic in its approach to Community Asset Transfer (CAT). This is to be supported by recruitment of a CAT officer who will act as the key point of contact for communities.

- b Generation of £11 million of capital receipts to help support the schools modernisation programme to provide the Council's match funding requirement for the Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools programme.
 - c Disposals Programme assumes that £8.9 million of new capital receipts will be generated over the next two years, including receipts anticipated from Ogmores Residential Centre and Bridgend Day Centre along with the sale of other surplus sites within the County Borough.
- 82 The Council has adopted plans to improve the pace and extend the number of CATs. The CAT has been undertaken in line with the Asset Management Plan 2021, the CAT Guidance Document and in response to a request from a community group or Town and Community Council.
- 83 There have been a number of successful CATs. Transfer of the asset has offered an opportunity to maintain and preserve valuable community services. Community Asset Transfer Guidance has been updated to ensure due diligence in considering the transfer process and a dedicated CAT Officer post has been established to expedite arrangements.

Proposal for Improvement

Asset Management

- P7 Ensure service business plans incorporate consideration of future property requirements.

The Council collaborates across a wide range of activities and, whilst it is able to identify improved outcomes from some activities, it is not yet able to evaluate the impact of Local Service Board activity

- 84 In earlier sections of this report we have described a range of activities being undertaken by the Council in collaboration with others. For the majority of these a clear purpose can be identified and the Council is able to review the impact being achieved. In summary:
- a Service delivery is being sustained by means of collaborating with existing or newly created organisations to operate cultural services and in the delivery of leisure services.
 - b The Council has been working in partnership with Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board for a number of years integrating staff teams to improve the planning and development of social work, therapy and community nursing.
 - c Joint Regulatory services (Environmental Health, Trading Standards and Licensing) are being provided in partnership with two other councils as is a Shared Internal Audit service.
- 85 Local Service Boards bring together key personnel from a range of organisations providing services or support to people living within local authority boundaries. The Bridgend LSB has been in place since 2009 and currently comprises representatives of 11 organisations engaged in the provision of services across the county .
- 86 Having undertaken an assessment of the needs of the county, in April 2013 the LSB published 'Bridgend County Together April 2013 – March 2018'. This five-year plan set out priority outcomes intended to address needs and described proposed actions. Governance arrangements were put in place intended to drive delivery of the plan and annual reports have been produced for 2013-14 and 2014-15.
- 87 In December 2014 the LSB revised governance and operational practices following its own review of arrangements. The review found that too many activities were being tracked which were often delivered by one organisation rather than there being a focus on more significant activities that required the collaboration of partners. During 2015 a revised structure is being implemented to focus upon those key activities likely to make a difference; that require collaboration of at least three partners and reflect the availability of resources or initiatives that enable re-direction of resources.
- 88 In order to improve focus and the efficiency of meetings the number of meetings of the LSB was reduced with two meetings scheduled in 2015. The Council also reviewed its scrutiny arrangements and in September 2015 revised the terms of reference of its LSB Overview and Scrutiny Panel to reflect the changes made by the LSB. The review of the arrangements is a positive step in terms of ensuring more efficiency at governance level and introducing a more focussed approach

(on key activities requiring collaboration) but at the time of this assessment work was underway to identify the key activities and as a consequence there were no examples of results arising or of the role of scrutiny in the arrangement.

Proposal for Improvement

Collaboration

- P8 Build upon the current development of Local Service Board arrangements by adopting measures to evaluate the success of the key collaborative activities.

Appendix 1 – Status of this report

The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (the Measure) requires the Auditor General to undertake an annual improvement assessment, and to publish an annual improvement report, for each improvement authority in Wales. This requirement covers local councils, national parks, and fire and rescue authorities.

This report has been produced by staff of the Wales Audit Office on behalf of the Auditor General to discharge his duties under section 24 of the Measure. The report also discharges his duties under section 19 to issue a report certifying that he has carried out an improvement assessment under section 18 and stating whether, as a result of his improvement plan audit under section 17, he believes that the authority has discharged its improvement planning duties under section 15.

Improvement authorities are under a general duty to 'make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of [their] functions'. Improvement authorities are defined as local councils, national parks, and fire and rescue authorities.

The annual improvement assessment is the main piece of work that enables the Auditor General to fulfil his duties. The improvement assessment is a forward-looking assessment of an authority's likelihood to comply with its duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement. It also includes a retrospective assessment of whether an authority has achieved its planned improvements in order to inform a view as to the authority's track record of improvement. The Auditor General will summarise his audit and assessment work in a published Annual Improvement Report for each authority (under section 24).

The Auditor General may also in some circumstances carry out special inspections (under section 21), which will be reported to the authority and Ministers, and which he may publish (under section 22). An important ancillary activity for the Auditor General is the co-ordination of assessment and regulatory work (required by section 23), which takes into consideration the overall programme of work of all relevant regulators at an improvement authority. The Auditor General may also take account of information shared by relevant regulators (under section 33) in his assessments.

Appendix 2 – Annual Audit Letter

Councillor M E J Nott
The Leader
Bridgend County Borough Council
Civic Offices
Angel Street
Bridgend
CF31 4WB

Dear Councillor Nott

Annual Audit Letter – Bridgend County Borough Council 2014-15

This letter summarises the key messages arising from the Auditor General for Wales' statutory responsibilities under the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 and my reporting responsibilities under the Code of Audit Practice.

The Council complied with its responsibilities relating to financial reporting and use of resources

It is the Council's responsibility to:

- put systems of internal control in place to ensure the regularity and lawfulness of transactions and to ensure that its assets are secure;
- maintain proper accounting records;
- prepare a Statement of Accounts in accordance with relevant requirements; and
- establish and keep under review appropriate arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

The Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 requires me to:

- provide an audit opinion on the accounting statements;
- review the Council's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources; and
- issue a certificate confirming that I have completed the audit of the accounts.

Local authorities in Wales prepare their accounting statements in accordance with the requirements of the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom. This code is based on International Financial Reporting Standards.

On 29 September 2015, I issued an unqualified audit opinion on the accounting statements confirming that they present a true and fair view of the Council's financial position and transactions. My report is contained within the Statement of Accounts. The key matters arising from the accounts audit were reported to members of the Audit Committee in my Audit of Financial Statements report on 25 September 2015.

This report stated that:

- we had no concerns about the qualitative aspects of your accounting practices and financial reporting, although our audit identified a material difference in relation to the movement in the fair value of the Council's property portfolio between the latest valuation on which the initial carrying value was based and the fair value at year-end as assessed by the Council's valuers; this was adjusted and the Council will need to continue to review its approach to the valuation of the Council's property portfolio to be able to ensure and demonstrate that the carrying value of assets is not materially different to fair value at each year-end;
- we did not encounter any significant difficulties during the audit; and
- there were no significant matters discussed and corresponded upon with management which we needed to report.

Officers have agreed actions to address this property portfolio issue in future years.

I am satisfied that the Council has appropriate arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources

My consideration of the Council's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness has been based on the audit work undertaken on the accounts as well as placing reliance on the work completed as part of the Improvement Assessment under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009. My Annual Improvement Report will highlight areas where the effectiveness of these arrangements has yet to be demonstrated or where improvements could be made.

I issued a certificate confirming that the audit of the accounts has been completed on 29 September 2015.

My work to date on certification of grant claims and returns has identified no significant issues that would impact on the 2015-16 accounts or key financial systems.

A more detailed report on my grant certification work will follow in 2016 once this year's programme of certification work is complete.

The financial audit fee for 2014-15 is £201,430, which is £5,730 higher than the agreed fee set out in the Annual Audit Outline as a result of additional work performed over the valuation issue outlined above and work performed relating to a question raised by an Assembly Member.

Yours sincerely



Darren Gilbert, KPMG LLP

For and on behalf of the Auditor General for Wales

Wales Audit Office
24 Cathedral Road
Cardiff CF11 9LJ

Tel: 029 2032 0500

Fax: 029 2032 0600

Textphone: 029 2032 0660

E-mail: info@audit.wales

Website: www.audit.wales

Swyddfa Archwilio Cymru

24 Heol y Gadeirlan

Caerdydd CF11 9LJ

Ffôn: 029 2032 0500

Ffacs: 029 2032 0600

Ffôn Testun: 029 2032 0660

E-bost: post@archwilio.cymru

Gwefan: www.archwilio.cymru

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO COUNCIL

17 FEBRUARY 2016

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR - RESOURCES

FLEXIBLE RETIREMENT POLICY &

EARLY RETIREMENT ILL-HEALTH RETIREMENT AND REDUNDANCY POLICY

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report details a small number of proposed changes to the Flexible Retirement and Early Retirement, Ill Health Retirement and Redundancy Policy and recommends the adoption of the revised policy.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities

- 2.1 The action necessary under employment and pension legislation meets the Council's statutory duties in respect of equalities.

3. Background

- 3.1 This Flexible Retirement policy was adopted by Cabinet on 22nd June 2010 and the Early Retirement, Ill Health Retirement and Redundancy Policy was adopted by Cabinet on 3rd March 2009.

4. Current Situation/Proposal

- 4.1 It The Flexible Retirement Policy and Early Retirement, Ill Health Retirement and Redundancy Policy require some amendments following the changes in pension regulations.
- 4.2 It is proposed that the Early Retirement, Ill Health Retirement and Redundancy Policy is amended to incorporate the option to allow employees (under the 85 year rule) who are aged *under* 60 to apply for early retirement. Early retirement will only be allowed if this would be of benefit in terms of service delivery to the Council, as determined on the merits of the individual application by the VER Panel.
- 4.2 It is proposed the Flexible Retirement Policy is amended to include a specified reduction of a minimum of 40% in working hours.
- 4.3 Trade union colleagues have been consulted on the proposed amended policies. GMB and Unite have confirmed their agreement whilst confirmation of Unison's position is awaited."

5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules

5.1 This report proposes to revise the Flexible Retirement and Early Retirement, Ill Health Retirement and Redundancy Policy and the amended versions are attached at appendix 1 and 2.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 The policy has been subject to initial equality impact screening.

7. Financial Implications

7.1 There are no financial implications as a result of amending the Flexible Retirement Policy. In relation to the Early Retirement, Ill Health Retirement and Redundancy Policy there will be no additional financial cost to the Council.

8. Recommendations

8.1 It is recommended that Cabinet approve the revised the Flexible Retirement and Early Retirement, Ill Health Retirement and Redundancy Policy as appended to this report

Ness Young
Corporate Director - Resources
Date 10 FEBRUARY 2016

Contact Officer:- Paul Miles
Pensions and Pay Grading Manager
Human Resources

E-mail: paul.miles@bridgend.gov.uk

Telephone: 01656 643208

Postal Address: Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend

Background documents - None

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL PEN-Y-BONT AR OGWR

FLEXIBLE RETIREMENT POLICY

SCOPE

This policy will apply to all members of the Local Government Pension Scheme, except those employed by Governing Bodies in educational establishments under delegated powers.

FLEXIBLE RETIREMENT POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Council is committed to providing more choice and flexibility to employees who wish to transition into retirement or stay in work beyond normal retirement age.
- 1.2 The provisions of this policy are based on employee choice.
- 1.3 Flexible Retirement occurs where an employee draws their pension at any time after age 55 and carries on working.
- 1.4 Applications will need to reflect a proposal to reduce contractual hours normally by a minimum of 40%.
- 1.5 Any costs associated with early release of pension will be reflected in the actuarial reduction of retirement benefits to the employee.
- 1.6 In exceptional circumstances subject to a satisfactory business case the Service may decide to waive part or all of the actuarial reduction that would have been applied to the early payment of retirement benefits. The cost of this will be met by the Service.

2. Procedure for Application

- 2.1 The employee must send a written request to their manager, copied to Human Resources, at least three months but not more than six months before their proposed retirement date.
- 2.2 The manager will consider the business case for the request following consultation with Human Resources. The manager may give provisional approval where it is considered that:
 - there is no detrimental effect on service delivery;
 - the arrangement is fair and equitable to other team members.

The VER Panel has the discretion to approve or not approve the request.

4. Compassionate Cases

- 4.1 If an employee wishes to take flexible retirement from the age of 55 on compassionate grounds they should set out the details in writing to their manager. Human Resources will consider all applications in consultation with the Service.
- 4.2 In exceptional circumstances the Council may decide to waive part or all of the actuarial reduction that would have been applied to the early payment of retirement benefits. The cost of this will be met by the Service.

5. Pensions Implications

- 5.1 Where an employee varies their working arrangement they may elect to continue to pay pension contributions based on their new contractual arrangements. Pension rights accrued before the reduction in hours will be unaffected by the change.
- 5.2 Employees who remain in the scheme should be aware that a reduction in hours prior to normal retirement age may also affect their ill-health benefits, or redundancy and compensation payments if they are made redundant or leave on efficiency grounds.
- 5.3 Employees should be mindful of the decisions they have to take before the date when their pension becomes payable (this is known as a “benefit crystallisation event”) and the tax implications of those decisions. Any tax liability incurred by such decisions is for the employee to resolve with Her Majesty’s Revenue & Customs (www.hmrc.gov.uk)
- 5.6 In all cases where employees receive pension benefits whilst working, they must seek advice as to how flexible retirement will affect their net pay and pension entitlement. This is important, as an employee’s pension will normally be actuarially reduced if paid before normal retirement age. In addition, any job held while in receipt of pension benefits may attract a higher rate of tax. The employee may seek pay and pension figures from Human Resources and is encouraged to seek independent financial advice prior to pursuing flexible retirement.
- 5.7 Pension benefits will be determined by LGPS regulations.

This page is intentionally left blank

EARLY RETIREMENT ILL-HEALTH RETIREMENT AND REDUNDANCY POLICY

SCOPE

This policy will apply to all members of the Local Government Pension Scheme (or those non-LGPS members who are eligible for membership), excluding Schools staff employed by Governing Bodies in educational establishments with delegated powers.

Date of Issue:

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
Introduction	3
General Principles	3
Section 1 Schemes	4
Scheme A 85 Year Rule/Early Retirement	4
Scheme B Retirement in the Efficiency of the Service	4-5
Scheme C Retirement in the Efficiency of the Service with Redundancy	5-6
Scheme D Redundancy	6-7
Ill-Health Retirement	7-8
Section 2 Dependant's Benefits	9
Section 3 Miscellaneous Provisions	10-11

POLICY STATEMENT

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This policy statement is made in accordance with regulation 7 of the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) Regulations 2006 and the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 which require each Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) employer to formulate and review its policy on early retirement.
- 1.2 This policy will be reviewed annually under these provisions and in order to meet other relevant statutory legislation. If the Council decides to change its policy, it will publish a statement of the amended policy within one month of the date of its decision.
- 1.3 In formulating and reviewing its policy, the Council
- (a) has regard to the extent to which the exercise of its discretionary powers (in accordance with the policy), unless properly limited, could lead to a serious loss of confidence in the public service;
 - (b) is satisfied that the policy is workable, affordable and reasonable having regard to the foreseeable costs;
 - (c) has regard to service delivery needs; and
 - (d) recognises the need for consistency, fairness and equity in employee relations.

2 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- 2.1 The Council's application of this policy will have regard to an employee's entitlement under this policy and appropriate pension legislation.
- 2.2 Applications and proposals under these schemes will be made to an Early Retirement Panel constituted by the Section 151 Officer; Assistant Chief Executive (Legal & Regulatory Services); and the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development, or their nominated officers. The Section 151 Officer will report annually to Council on the number and nature of retirements for the previous year.
- 2.3 All applications for early retirement will be considered objectively

SCHEMES

3 **SCHEME A - VOLUNTARY EARLY RETIREMENT (The 85 Year Rule)**

- 3.1 The Local Government Pension Scheme (Amendment) Regulations 2006 removed the 85 Year Rule with effect from 1 October 2006. However, these Regulations allow for a measure of protection for existing scheme members as at 30 September 2006.
- 3.2 Scheme A only applies to those employees protected by the LGPS (Amendment) (No 2) Regulations 2006.
- 3.3 This scheme applies to those employees who are 55 years of age and over (if protected) who apply to retire early and elect to receive immediate payment of retirement benefits.
- 3.4 An employee who qualifies and whose total of age and service (both in whole years) is 85 year or more will receive pension and lump sum benefits based upon actual service, which may be subject to actuarial reductions; as determined on the merits of the individual application by the VER Panel.

4 **SCHEME A - VOLUNTARY EARLY RETIREMENT (Employee Request)**

- 4.1 Employees who are eligible under this scheme and are aged over 55 will be allowed to retire voluntarily and early under the following scheme.
- 4.2 Pension and retirement grant will be reduced by an amount shown as appropriate in guidance issued by the Government actuary.

5 **SCHEME B - EARLY RETIREMENT IN THE INTEREST OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE SERVICE**

- 5.1 This scheme will apply to those employees who qualify for early release of pension under the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 and subsequent legislation and in respect of whom the Council determines that retirement would be in the interests of the efficiency of the service, in that it would meet one of the following criteria:
- **Criterion A:** Retirement would be **beneficial to service delivery and would produce measurable net savings** to the salary bill over a maximum period of five years or would permit a **fundamental improvement to the delivery of services**, which would not be possible by other means such as redeployment, retraining etc. This must take into account any capitalised cost to the pension fund and any additional costs arising from any associated restructuring or re-grading exercise – to be stated at the time of the proposal.
 - **Criterion B:** There are **compelling personal reasons** to release an individual (e.g. on grounds of compassion,) **and release would permit significant service delivery improvements.**
- 5.2 The calculation of any compensatory payment will be based on average weekly earnings.
- 5.3 Those employees who retire early under this scheme will qualify for benefits in line with the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Payments) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006, or where appropriate Regulation 52 of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013, and will be entitled to receive:-

IF QUALIFYING UNDER CRITERION A

- 5.4 The employee who retires under this scheme will be entitled to receive:
- (a) an annual retirement pension; and
 - (b) a lump sum retiring allowance (as appropriate)
(each calculated on the basis of reckonable service) and
 - (c) an award of a compensatory payment based upon actual wage and a multiplication factor of 1.2 applied to the formula for Statutory Redundancy Pay equivalent to a maximum of 36 weeks.
- 5.5 An employee may request, before leaving and whilst an active member of the pension scheme, to convert the full amount of the compensatory payment due into additional pension.

IF QUALIFYING UNDER CRITERION B

- 5.6 The employee who retires under this scheme will be entitled to receive:
- (a) an annual retirement pension; and
 - (b) a lump sum retiring allowance (as appropriate)
(each calculated on the basis of reckonable service)
- 5.7 In very exceptional circumstances an award of a compensatory lump sum payment based upon actual wage and a multiplication factor of 1.2 applied to the formula for statutory redundancy pay equivalent to a maximum of 36 weeks pay may be approved by the VER Panel.
- 5.8 The employee may request, before leaving and whilst an active member of the pension scheme, to convert the full amount of the compensatory payment into additional pension.

6 SCHEME C – EARLY RETIREMENT IN THE INTEREST OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE SERVICE WITH REDUNDANCY

- 6.1 This scheme will apply to pensionable employees who are eligible to retire early under the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013, but who have not reached normal retirement age and whose post becomes redundant in the interest of the efficiency of the service.
- 6.2 Those employees who qualify will be offered benefits in line with Parts II and III of the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Payments) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006.
- 6.3 The employee who retires under this scheme will be entitled to receive:
- (a) an annual retirement pension; and
 - (b) a lump sum retiring allowance (as appropriate)
(each calculated on the basis of reckonable service), together with

- (c) a statutory redundancy payment calculated in accordance with Regulation 5(2) of the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Payments) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006. Payment will therefore be based upon average weekly wage to a maximum of 30 weeks pay according to age and service; and
- (d) a compensatory lump sum payment based upon a multiplication factor of 1.2 applied to the formula for statutory redundancy pay equivalent to a maximum of 36 weeks pay.

6.4 The employee may request, before leaving and whilst an active member of the pension scheme, to convert the full amount of the compensatory payment into additional pension.

6.5 To qualify for redundancy and compensatory payment employees must have a minimum of two years' qualifying service.

7 **SCHEME D – REDUNDANCY (Voluntary or Involuntary)**

7.1 This scheme will apply to those employees whose redundancy will produce measurable net savings, who have a minimum two years' qualifying employment, and who are:

- (a) LGPS Members (or those non-LGPS Members who are eligible for membership) who **do not qualify for early release of pension benefits** under the LGPS Regulations 2013; or
- (b) LGPS Members (or those non-LGPS Members who are eligible for membership) **who are over the permitted age for early retirement.**

7.2 The employee who retires under this scheme will be entitled to receive:

- (a) a statutory redundancy payment calculated in accordance with Regulation 5(2) of the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Payments) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006. Payment will therefore be based upon average weekly wage to a maximum of 30 weeks pay according to age and service; and
- (b) a compensatory lump sum payment based upon a multiplication factor of 1.83 applied to the formula for statutory redundancy pay equivalent to a maximum of 55 weeks pay.

7.3 The employee may request, before leaving and whilst an active member of the pension scheme, to convert the full amount of the compensatory payment into additional pension.

7.4 Exceptions to this scheme outlined above include:

- employees over the permitted age (55 years) to qualify for early release of pension who have opted out of the LGPS in the one year period prior to termination on the grounds of redundancy; and
- re-employed pensioners who return to work following early retirement.

- 7.5 In these instances a compensatory payment will be based upon the average weekly wage to a maximum of 66 weeks according to age and service (a maximum of 30 weeks statutory redundancy pay and 36 weeks compensatory payment in total).
- 7.6 Subject to a minimum of 2 years service, LGPS members who are under the permitted age to qualify for early release of pension (55 years) who are made redundant, will be entitled to preserved pension benefits.

8 SCHEME ON RETIREMENT ON THE GROUNDS OF ILL-HEALTH

- 8.1 The scheme will apply to all employees who have a minimum of 2 years membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme who become permanently or semi permanently unable to work due to ill-health. Any retirement on the grounds of ill-health will be dealt with in line with the Council's Absence Management Policy.
- 8.2 An employee who is absent from duty will be referred to the Council's Medical Adviser in line with the Council's corporate policy and procedure.
- 8.3 The Council's Medical Adviser, in consultation with the employee's physician where appropriate, will make recommendation to the appropriate department regarding the employee's continued employment.

9 *Termination of employment*

- 9.1 If an employee is unable to discharge the duties of the post for which they are employed they will, wherever possible, be offered appropriate alternative employment, in line with the Council's Vacancy Management Procedure. Where alternative employment is not available their employment will be terminated by reason of being unable to efficiently discharge the duties of the post.

10 *Ill-health retirement – seeking medical advice*

- 10.1 In instances where the Council has determined that the employment of a scheme member is to be terminated, the employee will be referred to an independent registered medical practitioner for a medical opinion on whether the Member is permanently incapable of discharging efficiently their duties of employment or that they are not immediately capable of undertaking any gainful employment.
- 10.2 The independent registered medical practitioner will be required to certify whether the employee is capable of obtaining gainful employment before normal retirement age.. If there is no such prospect, then a Tier 1 retirement with full enhancement to benefit is awarded. If there is no prospect of them undertaking gainful employment within 3 years of leaving employment but is likely to undertake gainful employment before normal retirement age, then a Tier 2 retirement with 25% of full enhancement to benefit is awarded. If there is a realistic prospect of obtaining gainful employment within 3 years, then a Tier 3 retirement is awarded without enhancement until such employment is obtained.
- 10.3 Tier 3 retirements are for a maximum duration of 3 years and are subject to review after 18 months. The retiree is obliged to inform the Council of changes to his employment status and repay any overpayment of pension so identified
- 10.4 The employee may be referred back to the independent registered medical practitioner with a view to reviewing the Tier awarded.

- 10.5 Employees who have less than 2 years total pension membership will receive a refund of contributions.
- 10.6 An employee who has over 2 years total pension membership will be entitled to immediate payment of a pension and a tax free lump sum (as appropriate). These benefits are calculated in the same way as normal retirement benefits and increased in line with the Tier awarded to compensate for early retirement.
- 10.7 The enhancement to pension will be in accordance with the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations.
- 10.8 The retired employee will be eligible to a period of notice in accordance with the individual's contractual rights, or statutory entitlement whichever is the greater. Where it would be impractical to serve such notice, e.g., due to a person's continued absence, a payment in lieu of notice will be payable.

DEPENDANT'S BENEFITS

11 The LGPS Regulations provide for certain benefits to be payable on the death of a scheme member.

11.1 Benefits are payable, when qualifying conditions are met, to the spouse, civil partner or cohabiting partner, together with dependent childrens pensions.

Death in service

11.2 If an employee were to die in service as a member of the LGPS, subject to qualifying conditions, following benefits are applicable:

- A lump sum death grant: A lump sum death grant of three times the pensionable pay no matter how long they had been a member of the scheme.
- If the employee had accrued 3 months total membership or if they had brought a transfer value into the scheme then there would be a long-term pension payable to the spouse, civil partner or nominated cohabiting partner.
- Pensions for eligible children: A long-term children's pension would be payable for so long as eligible children remain following an employee's death. Eligible children is defined as children to the age of 18, together with those in full time education or vocational training up to a maximum of age 23.

MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

12 GENERAL CONDITIONS

Reduction in pension benefits

- 12.1 If any employee is entitled to compensation upon retirement under any other Regulations, their pension and lump sum retiring allowances under this scheme could be reduced in accordance with the provisions of such regulations, or the regulations of the Local Government Pension Scheme.

Making application under the Schemes

- 12.2 An employee wishing to retire under Scheme A must make a written request to the appropriate Corporate Director for initial consideration prior to submission to the VER Panel.
- 12.3 Any proposal under Schemes B, C or D will be initiated by the appropriate Corporate Director.
- 12.4 Should the number of approved applications under Scheme A need to be limited for financial or other reasons, selection will be on the basis of economy, effectiveness and the efficiency of the service.

Notice periods

- 12.5 In normal circumstances the retiring or redundant employee will serve a notice period in accordance with the individual's contractual rights or statutory entitlement, whichever is the greater, although the entitlement to notice (or pay in lieu of notice) may be waived by the employee concerned. Only in cases where operational considerations make it impracticable for a period of notice to be served (e.g., closure of an establishment) will pay in lieu of notice be made.

Re-engagement of those in receipt of Pension

- 12.6 Employees whose employment terminates under these Schemes may only be re-engaged with the specific approval of the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development.

Re-engagement of employees made redundant

- 12.7 In instances of termination under Scheme B, C and D employees will be prevented from being re-engaged until the expiration of a period equivalent to the discretionary element of the redundancy payment.

Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (IDRP)

- 12.8 When a decision is made under the LGPS Regulations 2013 relating to the rights or liabilities of an employee under the scheme, that employee must be notified of the decision as soon as is reasonably practicable.
- 12.9 If the decision is disputed by the employee they should first contact the employing department who should review their decision after taking appropriate advice.
- 12.10 The notification sent to the employee must contain the address from which they may request an appeals application form to make an appeal against the decision under the formal Internal Disputes Resolution Procedure (IDRP).
- 12.11 The Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (IDRP) will apply to prospective and active members of the LGPS and to others, such as deferred members, pensioner members and pension credit members, whose position may be affected by decisions of the Council.
- 12.12 On receipt of an appeal application form the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development will pass the appeal to the nominated person(s) for adjudication under stage 1 of the appeals procedure.

Implementation of Policy Statement

- 12.13 The revised schemes will come into operation on the **TBC** and will continue in force until such time as the Council resolves that it should be discontinued or amended.
- 12.14 Nothing in this policy statement or its schemes can override the statutory provisions of the Local Government Superannuation Acts, or any other relevant legislation or regulations.

This page is intentionally left blank

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO COUNCIL

17 FEBRUARY 2016

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR - RESOURCES

DISCRETIONS WITHIN THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This report details a number of discretions within the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) which have resulted in a draft policy statement being compiled setting out the general position of this Council in respect to each one which requires Council approval prior to implementation.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Plan/Other Corporate Priorities

- 2.1 The action necessary under pensions legislation facilitates compliance with the Council's statutory duties in respect of equalities.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Local Government Pension Scheme (Benefits, Membership and Contributions) Regulations 2007 and 2013 introduced changes to the LGPS. This has meant that the published discretions under the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 1997 have been superseded.
- 3.2 The Local Government Pension Scheme contains many areas where the employer, or the Administering Authority, can or must exercise a discretion. Some of these are already covered by existing policies. However, the Council is required to document the position on the remaining mandatory discretions together with any optional discretions it wishes to include.

4. Current Situation/Proposal

- 4.1 Attached as Appendix A is the draft Discretions Policy.
- 4.2 If approved by Council the effective date of the change will be one month following the publication of the policy statement.
- 4.3 Where a discretion has not already been exercised, consideration has been given to each mandatory and optional discretion and a recommendation put in the form of the policy statement.
- 4.4 Trade union colleagues have been consulted on the policy. GMB and Unite have confirmed their agreement whilst confirmation of Unison's position is awaited.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework and Procedure Rules

- 5.1 This report proposes the introduction of a policy statement laying out the position of Bridgend County Borough Council on a range of mandatory and optional discretions so

as to ensure clarity as to the position of the Council in these areas. Other mandatory discretions exercised in other policies are also referred to in this statement, cross referenced to the appropriate policy.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 The Policy has been subject to initial equality impact screening.

7. Financial Implications

7.1 The decision to award additional pension benefits in only very exceptional circumstances is taken with financial considerations in mind. Additional pension awards create further strain on the Pension Fund.

7.2 The decision not to extend the twelve month period for incoming transfers to the LGPS takes into account the potential increased cost to the Pension Fund of career progression and longevity factors to a final salary scheme.

7.3 The decision to review cases where forfeiture of pension benefits in some form is possibly appropriate is to ensure that the Council has the option to make good any financial losses caused by the member.

7.4 There are no direct and quantifiable financial implications to the decisions proposed other than mentioned above.

8. Recommendations

It is recommended that Council approve the Policy Statement on Discretions in the Local Government Pension Scheme as detailed above.

Ness Young
Corporate Director - Resources
Date 10 FEBRUARY 2016

Contact Officer:- Paul Miles
Pensions and Pay Grading Manager
Human Resources

E-mail: paul.miles@bridgend.gov.uk

Telephone: 01656 643208

Postal Address: Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend
Background Documents - none

CORPORATE POLICY

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME

DISCRETIONS

SCOPE

This policy will apply to all members of the Local Government Pension Scheme (or those non-LGPS members who are eligible for membership), excluding Schools staff employed by Governing Bodies in educational establishments with delegated powers.

Date of Issue:

POLICY STATEMENT

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Local Government Pension Scheme legislation contain a number of clauses where the employer has a discretion in how the scheme is applied within that Council. This document sets out the use of the discretions available to the Council under the terms of the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) Regulations 2006 and the 2014 Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations for active employees and the 1995, 1997, and 2007 Local Government Pension Scheme regulations for ex-employees with a deferred benefit.
- 1.2 In formulating and reviewing its policy, Bridgend County Borough Council must have regard to the extent to which the exercise of its discretionary powers could lead to serious loss of confidence in the public service.
- 1.3 The discretions exercised come into force one calendar month after the date of publication of this document.
- 1.4 Whilst this Policy Statement sets out the general position, this Council must consider every application on its merit. Where there are extraordinary or justifiable circumstances, a departure from policy may be appropriate. This would need to be approved by the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development.

2. Mandatory Discretions

2.1 Power of Employing Authority to Award Additional Pension

Employers may resolve to award additional pension.

Policy:

Bridgend County Borough Council will allow active employees to convert the full amount of the compensatory payment into additional pension, where a compensatory lump sum on termination of employment is due.

2.2 Power of Employing Authority to award Additional Pension

An employing authority may resolve to award an active member additional pension of not more than £6,500 a year

Policy:

Bridgend County Borough Council will not allow such awards.

2.3 Flexible Retirement

An Employing Authority will determine whether to grant a member, who has attained the age of 55 and has reduced the hours they work, or the grade in which they are employed, their request to receive all or part of their benefits, and whether to waive part of the actuarial reduction on benefits paid on flexible retirement.

Policy:

This has been approved and published as the Flexible Retirement Policy.

2.4 Employer Consent to apply the '85 year rule' for active employees voluntarily drawing their benefits on or after age 55 and before age 60

Active employees who wish to retire from age 55 onwards can request that the Council apply the 85 year rule and waive the actuarial reduction in full or part, if they are eligible. To be eligible, the employee's LGPS Service and their age must equal 85 years or more, and they must have joined the pension scheme before 1st October 2006.

Policy:

Bridgend County Borough Council will consider each case on its own merits.

3. Optional Discretions

3.1 Contributions Payable by Active Members

Employers will determine the contribution rate payable based on actual pensionable pay for existing members at the commencement of their membership. Where there has been a permanent material change to the terms and conditions of a member's employment which affect their pensionable pay in the course of a financial year, their employing authority may determine that the contribution rate to be applied in their case is not to be calculated.

Policy:

Bridgend County Borough Council will undertake an annual review of employees who are members of the LGPS on 1 April each year, after incremental progression increases and pay awards have been applied. Where a pay award is applied retrospectively the bandings are not revised until the following 1 April. Where an employee moves to a new position within the Council, the banding is revised and new starters during a financial year are allocated to the banding appropriate to their commencement salary.

3.2 Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contribution

Employers may choose to contribute to a shared cost additional voluntary contribution scheme (SCAVC). Employers will need to establish eligibility and how much the employer and employee will jointly contribute.

Policy:

Bridgend County Borough Council does not support the introduction of a SCAVC Scheme.

3.3 Forfeiture of pension rights after conviction of employment-related offences

A person is not entitled to a repayment of contributions under regulation 46 if he left his employment because of an offence of a fraudulent character, or grave misconduct in connection with his employment.

The Council may direct the payment out of the appropriate fund to the employee or, in a case of an offence of a fraudulent character, to him or to his spouse, civil partner, nominated cohabiting partner or any dependant of his, of a sum equal to all or part of his contributions.

Policy:

The council can direct the payment out of all or part of the contributions.

3.4 Extension to Internal Disputes Resolution Panel (IDRP) Appeal

Employers may decide to extend the six month period to lodge a Stage One appeal under the IDRP process

Policy:

Bridgend County Borough Council will not extend the six month period to lodge a Stage One appeal *unless* the appeal relates to access to pension benefits on the grounds of ill-health or other extenuating circumstances that may justify an extension.

3.5 Forfeiture of pension rights after conviction of employment-related offences

If a member is convicted of a relevant offence, his former employing authority may apply to the Secretary of State who may issue a forfeiture certificate.

A relevant offence is an offence, committed in connection with an employment in which the person convicted is a member, and because of which he has left that employment.

Policy:

LGPS DISCRETIONS

DATE OF ISSUE:

Page 4 of 5

Issue 1

Bridgend County Borough Council will consider applying for a Forfeiture Certificate basing each case on its own merits.

3.6 Recovery of Monetary Obligation

The employer has discretion as to whether to recover from the Pension Fund any monetary obligation or, the value of the members' benefits (other than transferred in pension rights or Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVC)), whichever is less, where the obligation was incurred as a result of a criminal, negligent or fraudulent act or omission in connection with the employment and, as a result of which, the person has left employment.

Policy:

Bridgend County Borough Council will seek to recover funds where there has been a criminal, negligent or fraudulent act and there is a monetary obligation arising from the act or omission.

3.7 Inward Transfers of Pension Rights

A member who has previous pension rights in a different pension scheme may transfer some or all his former pension rights, provided they opt to do so within twelve months of joining the scheme. The employer has discretion to extend the twelve month limit.

Policy:

Bridgend County Borough Council will not extend the twelve month limit.

3.8 Final Pay: Fees

Where a variable-time employee's pensionable pay consists of or includes fees, normally fees are averaged over the three year period leading up to the date the employee leaves active membership of the scheme. The employer has the discretion to allow the member to select the average of any three consecutive year ending 31 March in the ten years prior to leaving.

Policy:

Bridgend County Borough Council will allow members to average their earnings over three consecutive year endings 31 March in the ten years prior to leaving.

This page is intentionally left blank

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO COUNCIL

17 FEBRUARY 2016

REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER - RESOURCES

PAY POLICY STATEMENT – 2016/17

Any recommendation expressed in this report reflects only the preliminary view of Cabinet. Where the Cabinet Members participate in the decision making process they will not make a final determination on this matter without consideration of the debate and any other relevant matter.

1. Purpose of Report.

- 1.1.1 This report confirms that the Council is meeting its legal obligation following the Localism Act 2011.
- 1.1.2 The report has been prepared and written by the Chief Executive who is not directly affected by the content of the report as the pay negotiations in respect of Chief Executives' pay are on-going.
- 1.1.3 This Pay Policy statement provides an accurate summary of the Council's policy for the purposes of publication under the Localism Act. Council is not being asked to agree to a new or changed aspect of policy or take any decision that would impact directly upon the terms and / or conditions of the Chief Executive. This policy is not specifically about the author in an individual capacity otherwise than in a way that is commensurate with all staff within the Authority.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities.

- 2.1 None.

3. Background.

- 3.1 The Localism Act 2011 requires English and Welsh Local Authorities to produce and publish a Pay Policy Statement beginning 2012/13 and for each financial year thereafter.
- 3.2 Council has already fulfilled its obligations, as required by Section 39(1) Localism Act 2011, and the first Pay Policy Statement came into effect on 1st April 2012 with the subsequent Pay Policy Statements being published on 1st April 2013, 13th November 2013, 17th September 2014 and 1st April 2015.

4. Current situation / proposal.

- 4.1 The updated Pay Policy Statement for the Council for the year 2016/17 is attached as Appendix A.

- 4.2 This Pay Policy Statement is fully compliant with the Localism Act 2011.
- 4.3 Agreement has not been reached in respect of the NJC pay negotiations for the year 2016/17. However, as the National Minimum Wage will be effective as of 01.04.16, the NJC have confirmed that a temporary increase in salary should be provided to spinal column points 6, 7, and 8 in order that Councils meet their legal obligations in this regard. The increase will be at the level of the National Minimum Wage for all three spinal column points, ie, £13,891 for each full time equivalent.
- 4.4 This temporary increase will continue until such time as the NJC pay negotiations are concluded and the Council's pay policy statement will be updated at that time and represented to Council.
- 4.5 The current Redundancy and Redeployment policy is attached to the Pay Policy Statement as required.
- 4.6 One significant change for Council's attention is the Welsh Government's amendment to the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (Wales) Regulations 2006 and the introduction of new statutory guidance

"Welsh Government recommends that full Council should be offered the opportunity to vote before severance packages of £100,000 and above are approved for staff leaving the organization. However, Members must be aware of the statutory or contractual entitlements due to an employee and the consequences of non approval by Council which may allow an employee to claim damages for breach of contract"

.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules.

- 5.1 None.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

- 6.1 An Initial Screening Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken which indicates that the proposed Pay Policy Statement will positively assist in the delivery of the Council's equality duties.

7. Financial Implications.

- 7.1 There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

8. Recommendation.

- 8.1 Council is requested to approve the updated Pay Policy Statement as attached as Appendix A.
- 8.2 Council is requested to approve the proposals outlined in Paragraph 4.3 and 4.6 above.

Darren Mepham
Chief Executive
25.02.15

Background documents: None

Contact Officer: Sarah Kingsbury
Head of HR, OD and Customer Services
Telephone: (01656) 643201
E-mail: Sarah.Kingsbury@bridgend.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL PAY POLICY STATEMENT – 2016/17

1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

- 1.1 Under Section 112 of the Local Government Act 1972 the Council has ‘the power to appoint officers on such reasonable terms and conditions as the Authority thinks fit’. This Pay Policy Statement outlines the Council’s approach to pay policy in accordance with the requirements of 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011 which requires English and Welsh Local Authorities to produce and publish a Pay Policy Statement for 2012/3 and for each financial year after that, detailing:
- a) The Authority’s policies towards all aspects and elements of the remuneration of Chief Officers;
 - b) Their approach to the publication of and access to information relating to all aspects of the remuneration of Chief Officers;
 - c) The Authority’s policies towards the remuneration of its lowest paid employees (including the definition adopted and reasons for it);
 - d) The relationship between the remuneration of its Chief Officers and other employees.
- 1.2 Local Authorities are large complex organisations and provide and/or commission a wide range of essential services. The strategic approach to remuneration levels may need to differ from one group of employees to another to reflect specific circumstances at a local, Welsh or UK national level. The Council will require some flexibility in its Pay Policy Statement to address changing circumstances which may or may not be foreseeable.
- 1.3 As approved by full Council, as required by Section 39(1) Localism Act 2011, this Pay Policy Statement came into effect on 1st April 2012 and will be subject to review on a minimum of an annual basis in accordance with the relevant legislation above.

2. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

- 2.1 In determining the pay and remuneration of all of its employees, the Council will comply with all relevant employment legislation. This includes the
- a) Equality Act 2010
 - b) Part Time Employment (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000
 - c) Agency Workers Regulations 2010 and where relevant, the
 - d) Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Earnings) Regulations
- 2.2 In respect of the Equal Pay requirements contained within the Equality Act, the Council is currently working to ensure that there is no pay discrimination within its pay structures and that all pay differentials can be objectively justified. The introduction of a new pay and grading system in September 2013, following the conclusion of the job evaluation project, an equality impact assessment and a Collective Agreement with the three recognised trade unions enables the Council to ensure that remuneration is appropriate for the requirements, demands and responsibilities of roles at an individual post level as well as in relative terms across all posts.

3. SCOPE OF THE PAY POLICY STATEMENT

- 3.1 The Localism Act 2011 requires Local Authorities to develop and make public their Pay Policy Statement on all aspects of Chief Officer remuneration (including on ceasing to hold office), and that pertaining to the 'lowest paid' in the Authority, explaining their policy in respect of the relationship between remuneration for Chief Officers and other groups. However, in the interests of transparency and accountability the Council has chosen to take a broader approach, producing a pay policy which covers all employee groups with the exception of School Teachers. The remuneration for this latter group is set by the Secretary of State and not in the control of Local Authorities.
- 3.2 Nothing within the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 detract from the Council's autonomy in making decisions on pay that are appropriate to local circumstances and which deliver value for money for local tax payers. However, the Council will comply with this Pay Policy Statement in setting remuneration levels for all groups within its scope.

4. BROAD PRINCIPLES OF OUR PAY POLICY

4.1 Transparency, accountability and value for money

- 4.1.1 The Council is committed to an open and transparent approach to its pay policy which will enable the tax payer to access, understand and assess information on remuneration levels across all groups of council employees. To this end the following are provided as Appendices to this policy:-

- a) [Employee Pay Scales](#) (Appendix A)
- b) [Chief Officer Pay Scales](#) (Appendix B)
- c) [Soulbury Pay Scale](#) (Appendix C)
- d) [JNC \(Youth & Community\)](#) (Appendix D)
- e) [Policy on Redundancy and Severance Payments](#) (including additional pension payments) (Appendix E)

4.2 Development of a Pay Policy

- 4.2.1 The primary aim of a reward strategy is to attract, motivate and retain suitably skilled employees to enable the Council to perform at its best. One of the biggest challenges for the Council in the current circumstances is to maximise productivity and efficiency within current resources. The Pay Policy Statement outlines the remuneration levels believed to be effective in facilitating a sufficient supply of appropriately skilled employees which can be objectively justified and provide the local tax payer with an assurance of value for money.
- 4.2.2 At the more senior grades in particular, remuneration levels need to effect sufficient interest to enable the attraction of a suitably wide pool of talent and the Council will often be seeking to recruit in competition with other public and private sector employers.
- 4.2.3 The Council's pay policy will, through its design, development and review, seek to balance these factors appropriately to maximise outcomes while managing pay costs appropriately and maintaining sufficient flexibility to meet future needs.

4.2.4 This Pay Policy Statement will be reviewed on an annual basis and approved annually by full Council.

4.3 Pay Structure

4.3.1 The Council uses the nationally negotiated pay spine as the basis for its pay & grading structure. This determines the remuneration of the majority of the non-teaching workforce, together with the use of other nationally defined rates where relevant.

4.3.2 The Council has extended the national pay spine up to spinal column point 55.

4.3.3 All other pay related allowances are the subject of either nationally or locally negotiated rates, having been determined from time to time in accordance with collective bargaining machinery and/or as determined by Council Policy.

4.3.4 New appointments will normally be made at the minimum of the relevant grade, although flexibility exists to ensure the best candidate is secured.

4.4 Pay and Performance

4.4.1 The Council does not employ any performance related pay mechanisms.

4.5 Job Evaluation

4.5.1 Job evaluation is a systematic way of determining the value of a job in relation to other jobs within an organisation. It provides a means of systematic comparison of jobs to assess their relative worth for the purpose of establishing an equitable and justifiable pay structure.

4.5.2 In 2013 the Council established a Collective Agreement in respect of Single Status for all NJC employees in terms of Pay & Grading and Terms & Conditions. Our Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process has been used throughout the process and will continue to be used in the future. The Council, as it is bound to do, engaged an independent assessor to confirm the integrity of our new pay and grading system and this external expertise was provided by NothgateArniso.

4.6 Market Supplements

4.6.1 Job evaluation will enable the council to determine remuneration levels, which reward responsibility in a relative way within the council. However, from time to time it may be necessary to take account of the external pay market to attract and retain employees with particular experience, skills and capacity.

4.6.2 In due course the Council may draft a Market Supplements Policy to ensure that the requirement for such is objectively justified by reference to clear and transparent evidence of relevant market comparators, using appropriate data sources available from within and outside the local government sector. It is the Council's policy that any such additional payments be kept to a minimum and be reviewed on an annual basis so that they can be withdrawn where no longer considered necessary. An EIA would also be carried out on any proposal.

4.7 Honoraria

- 4.7.1 When the Council requires an employee to carry out additional duties to those of their substantive post, for a prolonged period of time, an additional payment commensurate with those duties may be made in accordance with the Council's Acting Rank/Honorarium Protocol, which is attached as Appendix F.

5. CHIEF OFFICER REMUNERATION

5.1 Definitions of Chief Officer & Pay Levels

- 5.1.1 For the purposes of this statement, 'Chief Officers' are as defined within S43 of the Localism Act. The posts falling within the statutory definition of S43 of the Localism Act are set out below: (details of the salary of each are included at Appendix B):

- a) Chief Executive
- b) Corporate Directors
- c) Assistant Chief Executives
- d) Heads of Service

- 5.1.2 The previous national pay award for JNC Chief Officers was in 2015 for only those Chief Officers on a guaranteed FTE basic salary of £99,999 or less as at 31.12.14.

- 5.1.3 Each JNC Chief Officer grade consists of 4 incremental points.

No bonus or performance related pay mechanism exists in respect of Chief Officers' pay.

- 5.1.4 Any decision to vary the remuneration of chief officers [or those to be appointed] must be made by full Council, without the opportunity of delegating it to a committee of the Council.

5.2 Recruitment of Chief Officers

- 5.2.1 The Council's Policy and Procedures with regard to recruitment of Chief Officers is contained within the Officer Employment Procedure Rules as set out in Part 4. Rules of Procedure of the Constitution. The determination of the remuneration to be offered to any newly appointed Chief Officer will be in accordance with the pay structure and relevant policies in place at the time of recruitment.

- 5.2.2 The 2014 Regulations prescribe that where an authority proposes to appoint a chief officer with an annual remuneration package of £100,000 or more the post must be publicly advertised. The only exception to this requirement is where the appointment would be for no longer than 12 months.

- 5.2.3 Where the Council remains unable to directly recruit Chief Officers or there is a need for interim support to provide cover for a vacant substantive Chief Officer post the Council may consider engaging individuals under 'contracts for service'. These will be sourced through a relevant procurement process ensuring the Council is able to demonstrate the maximum value for money.

The Council does not currently have any Chief Officers engaged under such arrangements. The Council is currently sourcing support from the WLGA on an Interim basis to cover the post of Corporate Director Resources.

5.3 Additions to Salary of Chief Officers

- 5.3.1 The Council does not apply any bonuses or performance related pay to its Chief Officers.
- 5.3.2 The Council does pay all reasonable travel and subsistence expenses on production of receipts and in accordance with JNC conditions and other local conditions.
- 5.3.3 The cost of membership of one professional body is met by the Authority.
- 5.3.4 The Chief Executive is also appointed as Returning Officer. This is an Office Holding rather than an employment contract. The Chief Executive will receive a fee from the organisation requiring the election to be carried out in accordance with the Fee Order in force at the time. In the case of a local election the Authority's fee structure will be approved at the time.
- 5.3.5 The Deputy Returning Officer's fees are authorised by the Returning Officer in accordance with the Fee Order or, in the case of local elections, the Council's fee structure at the time.
- 5.3.6 Fees applied for all other Elections and referenda are prescribed by the UK Government or Welsh Government..

5.4 Payments on Termination

- 5.4.1 The Council's approach to statutory and discretionary payments on termination of employment of Chief Officers (and all other employees), prior to reaching normal retirement age, is set out within its Ill Health, Early Retirement & Redundancy Policy in accordance with Regulations 5 and 6 of the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) Regulations 2006. Regulations 12 and 13 of the Local Government Pension Scheme (Benefits, Membership and Contribution) Regulations 2007 do not apply as the Authority does not increase the total membership of active members (Regulation 12) or award additional pension (Regulation 13).
- 5.4.2 Statutory Guidance issued by the Welsh Government states that it

“recommends that full Council should be offered the opportunity to vote before severance packages of £100,000 and above are approved for staff leaving the organization. However, Members must be aware of the statutory or contractual entitlements due to an employee and the consequences of non-approval by Council which may allow an employee to claim damages for breach of contract”.

- 5.4.3 Any other payments falling outside the provisions or the relevant periods of contractual notice shall be subject to a formal decision made by the Council or Committee of Council in the case of the Chief Executive or; Council or Council Committee or Officer with delegated powers at the time, in the case of other JNC Officers. The Chief Executive or officer with delegated power from the Chief Executive will determine such payments in respect of all other staff.

6. PUBLICATION

- 6.1 Upon approval by the full Council, this statement will be published on the Council's Website.
- 6.2 In addition, for posts where the full time equivalent salary is at least £60,000 and where the posts have been designated as a head of paid service or a statutory or non-statutory chief officer, as required under the Accounts and Audit (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2010, the Council's Annual Statement of Accounts will provide information in relation to: salary, fees and allowances; expenses; termination payments and pension contributions. It will also publish the number of employees in the year to which the accounts relate whose remuneration is greater than £60,000 in multiples of £5,000 brackets of scale.

7. PAY RELATIVITIES WITHIN THE AUTHORITY

- 7.1 The lowest paid persons employed under a Contract of Employment with the Council are employed on full time [37 hours] equivalent salaries in accordance with the minimum spinal column point currently in use within the Council's grading structure. As at 1st January 2015, this is £13,500 per annum. The Council employs Apprentices [and other Trainees] who are not included within the definition of 'lowest paid employees' as they are not employed under Contracts of Employment. The temporary uplift [pending agreement on the NJC pay negotiations] raises this figure [for spinal column points 6, 7, and 8] to £13,891
- 7.2 The statutory guidance under the Localism Act recommends the use of pay multiples as a means of measuring the relationship between pay rates across the workforce and that of senior managers, as included within the Hutton 'Review of Fair Pay in the Public Sector' (2010). The Hutton Report was asked by Government to explore the case for a fixed limit on dispersion of pay through a requirement that no public sector manager can earn more than twenty times the lowest paid person in the organisation. The report concluded that the relationship to average earnings was a more relevant measure and the Government's Code of Recommended Practice on Data Transparency recommends the publication of the ratio between highest paid salary and the average salary of the whole of the Authority's workforce.
- 7.3 The current pay levels within the Council define the multiple between:
- 7.3.1 the lowest paid employee (full time equivalent) and the Chief Executive as **1:9.4**
- 7.3.2 the lowest paid employee and average Chief Officer as **1:6.4**
- 7.3.3 the multiple between the average full time equivalent earnings and the Chief Executive as **1:4.3**

7.3.4 the multiple between the average full time equivalent earnings and average Chief Officer as **1:2.9**

8. ACCOUNTABILITY AND DECISION MAKING

8.1 In accordance with the Constitution of the Council, full Council decide upon the organisational structure, recruitment, pay, terms & conditions and severance arrangements for JNC Chief Officers.

8.2 The responsibility for the organisational structure, recruitment, pay, terms & conditions and severance arrangements for NJC, Craft, Youth & Community and Soulbury employees has been delegated to officers.

9. RE-EMPLOYMENT

9.1 Whilst having due regard to the Council's duty under Section 7 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, no Chief Officer who was previously made redundant or granted early retirement from the Council will be later re-employed or re-engaged either as an employee (Contract of Service), as a Consultant (Contract for Service) or through an external contractor commissioned to work on behalf of the Council.

10. REVIEWING THE POLICY

10.1 This Pay Policy Statement outlines the current position in respect of pay and reward within the Council at the time of writing. It will be reviewed and updated and published annually as a matter of course and in the event of any changes taking place during a financial year.

PAY SCALES FOR NJC EMPLOYEES.

Salary	SCP	Grades	
£13,891	6	(-249)	
£13,891	7		
£13,891	8		Grade 2 (250-294)
£14,075	9		
£14,338	10		
£15,207	11		
£15,523	12	Grade 3 (295-320)	
£15,941	13		
£16,231	14		
£16,572	15		Grade 4 (321-349)
£16,969	16		
£17,372	17	Grade 5 (350-379)	
£17,714	18		
£18,376	19		
£19,048	20		Grade 6 (380-409)
£19,742	21		
£20,253	22	Grade 7 (410-439)	
£20,849	23		
£21,530	24		
£22,212	25		Grade 8 (440-469)
£22,937	26		
£23,698	27		
£24,472	28		
£25,440	29	Grade 9 (470-503)	
£26,293	30		
£27,123	31		
£27,924	32		Grade 10 (504-539)
£28,746	33		
£29,558	34		
£30,178	35		
£30,978	36	Grade 11 (540-569)	
£31,846	37		
£32,778	38		
£33,857	39		Grade 12 (570-599)
£34,746	40		
£35,662	41		
£36,571	42	Grade 13 (600-639)	
£37,483	43		
£38,405	44		
£39,267	45		
£40,217	46		
£41,140	47		Grade 14 (640-669)
£42,053	48		
£42,957	49		
£43,858	50		
£44,758	51	Grade 15 (670-697)	
£45,661	52		
£46,562	53		
£47,463	54		Grade 16 (698+)
£48,364	55		

**CHIEF OFFICERS PAY SCALES
1ST January 2015**

CHIEF EXECUTIVE PAY RANGE						
£122,323 - £131,091						
DIRECTORS' PAY SCALES £99,384 - £ 104,068						
Point 1	Point 2	Point 3	Point 4			
£99,384	£101,639	£101,857	£104,068			
ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE £89,445 - £95,534						
Point 1	Point 2	Point 3	Point 4			
£89,445	£91,475	£93,505	£95,534			
HEADS OF SERVICE £74,542 - £79,610						
Point 1	Point 2	Point 3	Point 4			
£74,542	£76,231	£77,921	£79,610			

SOULBURY PAY SCALES

EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS - SCALE A	
SPINE POINT	SALARY FROM 01.03.2015
1.	£35,027
2.	£36,805
3.	£38,583
4.	£40,360
5.	£42,137
6.	£43,914
7.	£45,588
8.	£47,261
9.	£48,829
10.	£50,398
11.	£51,861

NOTES:

1. Salary scales to consist of six consecutive points, based on the duties and responsibilities attaching to posts and the need to recruit, retain and motivate staff.
2. Extension to scale to accommodate structured professional assessment points.

SENIOR & PRINCIPAL EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS - SCALE B	
SPINE POINT	SALARY FROM 01.03.2015
1.	£43,914
2.	£45,588
3.	£47,261
4.	£48,829
5.	£50,398
6.	£51,861
7.	£52,462
8.	£53,584
9.	£54,696
10.	£55,828
11.	£56,937
12.	£58,068
13.	£59,219
14.	£60,330
15.	£61,495
16.	£62,649
17.	£63,810
18.	£64,970

Notes:

1. Salary scales to consist of not more than four consecutive points, based on the duties and responsibilities attaching to posts and the need to recruit, retain and motivate staff.
2. Normal minimum point for the Principal Educational Psychologist undertaking the full range of duties at this level.
3. Extension to range to accommodate discretionary scale points and structured professional assessments
4. Principals are paid on a 4 point scale 8-14 [this also includes 3 spa points]

EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PROFESSIONALS	
SPINE POINT	SALARY FROM 01.03.2015
1.	£33,396
2.	£34,592
3.	£35,721
4.	£36,865
5.	£38,003
6.	£39,142
7.	£40,338
8.	£41,487
9.	£42,828
10.	£44,023
11.	£45,203
12.	£46,346
13.	£47,640
14.	£48,792
15.	£50,066
16.	£51,219
17.	£52,373
18.	£53,507
19.	£54,646
20.	£55,280
21.	£56,441
22.	£57,452
23.	£58,566
24.	£59,564
25.	£60,633
26.	£61,674
27.	£62,740
28.	£63,819
29.	£64,902
30.	£65,983
31.	£67,054
32.	£68,143
33.	£69,232
34.	£70,347

35.	£71,458
36.	£72,603
37.	£73,728
38.	£74,866
39.	£75,988
40.	£77,109
41.	£78,237
42.	£79,362
43.	£80,488
44.	£81,619
45.	£82,747
46.	£83,876
47.	£85,010
48.	£86,134
49.	£87,262
50.	£88,391

Notes:

Salary scales to consist of not more than four consecutive points, based on the duties and responsibilities attaching to posts and the need to recruit and motivate staff.

APPENDIX D

YOUTH & COMMUNITY SUPPORT WORKER

JESC 172

Pay Points	w.e.f 1.03.15
1	14,597
2	15,207
3	15,817
4	16,431
5	17,041
6	17,651
7	18,267
8	18,880
9	19,659
10	20,269
11	21,254
12	22,219
13	23,213
14	24,243
15	24,945
16	25,678
17	26,398

Professional Range

Pay Points	w.e.f 1.03.15
11	21,254
12	22,219
13	23,213
14	24,243
15	24,945
16	25,678
17	26,398
18	27,125
19	27,845
20	28,566
21	29,378
22	30,298
23	31,193
24	32,092
25	32,999
26	33,904
27	34,811
28	35,728
29	36,639
30	37,549

Bridgend County Borough Council
Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr

www.bridgend.gov.uk



REDUNDANCY AND REDEPLOYMENT POLICY

Date of Issue: March 2010

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy is designed to assist with the management of redundancy and redeployment situations within the Authority. It should be read in conjunction with: the Authority's Early Retirement, Ill Health Retirement and Redundancy Policy and the Managers' Guidelines attaching to this policy.
- 1.2 Whilst the Authority's policy is to avoid redundancies wherever possible, the needs of the business may from time to time require a reduction in the overall number of staff employed or organisational changes that result in some employees being made redundant.
- 1.3 The Authority, in consultation with the Trade Unions, will seek to avoid or minimise redundancies by exploring alternative options, such as
 - "Natural wastage"
 - Redeployment
 - Retraining
 - Restrictions on recruitment [inc use of agency staff]
 - Early retirement
 - Voluntary redundancy, including "bumped redundancy" where someone other than the postholder's post is made redundant
 - Reduction or elimination of overtime
- 1.4 Where redundancy is inevitable the Authority will handle the matter in the most fair, consistent and sympathetic manner possible in order to minimise any hardship that may be suffered by the employee(s) concerned. The Authority will ensure that:
 - the total number of redundancies made is kept to a minimum;
 - employees and their representatives are fully consulted on any proposals and their implementation;
 - selection for redundancy is based on clear criteria that will be determined objectively and fairly applied;
 - every effort is made to redeploy or find alternative work for employees selected for redundancy; and
 - support and advice is provided to employees selected for redundancy to help them find suitable alternative work.

2. Consultation

- 2.1 When a potential redundancy situation has been identified it will be necessary to write to the recognised trade unions and issue notice of formal consultation.

2.2 Selection criteria will be identified, where necessary, and where possible agreed with the employees/Trade Unions in advance.

2.3 Consultations will be carried out with affected employees and with the recognised Trade Unions over the proposals and the process to be followed. The consultation should start as soon as practicable and at least:-

Number of affected employees	Period of consultation
• Less than 20 employees	30 days
• 20 to 99 employees	30 days
• 100 or more employees	45 days

2.4 At the start of the consultation, written details of the following will be provided to employees and recognised Trade Unions:-

- the reasons for the proposals
- the numbers of employees affected by the consultation and descriptions of employees that could potentially be dismissed as redundant
- the total number of employees of any such description employed at the service unit in question
- the criteria to be applied for selection for redundancy
- how the redundancies are to be carried out, including the period over which the redundancies are to take effect.

2.5 Formal consultation meetings with employee(s) will be held with those potentially affected by the proposed redundancy.

2.6 Where an agreed position has not been reached by the end of the consultation period a further notice of formal consultation will be issued. The length of the second consultation period will be the same as the original. It is necessary for all parties to have undertaken genuine consultation with a view to avoiding redundancy and reaching agreement. Consultation should continue until all issues have been aired and parties have had a reasonable amount of time to comment on information provided and proposals made.

2.7 Following the completion of the consultation process, if no satisfactory resolution has been agreed to avoid a redundancy, the selection criteria will be applied to determine which employees will be issued with notice of redundancy.

3. Voluntary Redundancy

3.1 In order to minimise the need for compulsory redundancies, the Authority may consider inviting expressions of interests from employees for voluntary redundancies. However, the Authority reserves the right at its discretion to decline all or some of such expressions of interests.

4. Redundancy Selection

4.1 Where the need for redundancies arises, selection will be made on the basis of objective criteria, which will be reasonably, fairly and consistently applied. The Authority will ensure that the selection criteria are applied to the affected employees.

4.2 The criteria to be used will normally include but is not limited to:

- Absence record
- Disciplinary record
- Qualifications
- Skills
- Standard of work performance

4.3 Where an employee in the pool for selection has declared themselves as being disabled, the Authority will ensure that full consideration is given to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and that he/she is not put at any disadvantage on account of the selection criteria and will make reasonable adjustments as appropriate.

5. Redeployment

- 5.1 The Authority will make every effort to provide suitable alternative work to any employee who is selected for redundancy. Suitable alternative work will be considered both during the consultation period and after the conclusion of the consultation period. All current vacancies suitable for redeployment will be considered in respect of the selected employees, including where possible, consideration of retraining. If more than one employee is interested in a suitable, alternative post it may be necessary to apply selection criteria and/or conduct competitive interviews. This process will be ring-fenced to the affected employees in the first instance.
- 5.2 Prior consideration will apply where employee(s) have expressed an interest in a vacancy and meet the criteria for the post which is at a grade commensurate with their existing salary range.
- 5.3 Where interest is expressed for a post of a higher salary, the normal selection procedures will apply and consideration will be in competition with any other applicants.
- 5.4 Any offer of redeployment will be made in writing. This will include notification of the trial period which will apply to a redeployment appointment. Whilst this will be for a 4 week period, it can be extended or curtailed depending upon the individual circumstances.
- 5.5 During the trial period there will be performance review(s) at appropriate intervals. This will provide opportunity for the manager and employee to assess suitability. Should the redeployment be successful this will be confirmed and the written statement of particulars issued. If the redeployment is not successful this too will be confirmed in writing.
- 5.6 An employee may undertake more than one trial period during their period of notice.
- 5.7 Should an employee embark on a trial period and the four week period exceeds the date of termination, the trial period will continue for the 4 weeks. At the end of this period should it be unsuccessful redundancy will be confirmed.
- 5.8 Where the redeployment involves an employee changing their normal place of work they will be paid excess travelling expenses, in accordance with the authority's allowances and expenses policy.

- 5.9 Should the employee decline the offer of suitable alternative employment, further redeployment opportunities will be explored during the period of the consultation and notice.
- 5.10 Should an employee refuse an offer of suitable alternative employment or resigns during the trial period the right to a redundancy payment will be lost.
- 5.11 In certain circumstances to avoid a redundancy situation, employee(s) who are in comparable positions but not directly affected by the proposed redundancy can be invited to express an interest in redundancy. This is a bumped redundancy and will only be considered where its approval will save another employee facing redundancy.
- 5.12 If after carrying out these steps there appears to be no possibility of redeployment, the employee(s) will be terminated in accordance with their notice period.

6. Dismissal by reason of Redundancy

- 6.1 In all cases where a dismissal is being considered the three step process will be followed:
- Step 1 - Employee to be advised in writing of the circumstances of the meeting.
 - Step 2 - Meeting takes place with the employee to determine the options.
 - Step 3 - Employee to be advised in writing of the outcome of the meeting.
- 6.2 Where an employee has been selected after the selection criteria has been applied, the employee will have the opportunity during the step 2 meeting to make any representations in support of or against their selection. Management will then consider these representations and, if necessary, extend the consultation period. A further meeting, if necessary, may be scheduled to inform the employee of the decision.
- 6.3 Whilst under notice of termination due to redundancy an employee is entitled to a reasonable amount of paid time off to look for alternative work, attend interviews etc. Employee(s) wishing to take advantage of this provision should seek prior approval for their absence with their manager in the normal manner.
- 6.4 Where an offer of employment is made by an associated employer i.e. any other local authority or other relevant public authority and employment commences within four weeks of the date of termination, this disqualifies the employee from a redundancy payment.

7. Redundancy Notification

- 7.1 At least 90 days written notification must be given to the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR/BISS) if 100 or more employees are to be made redundant, and at least 30 days for 20 to 99 employees. For less than 20 employees, no notification to BERR/BISS is required.

8. Right of Appeal

- 8.1 Any employee who has been selected for redundancy and who is dissatisfied with the way in which the Authority has applied its redundancy selection criteria [including DDA issues], or who believes that the procedure has not been applied correctly will have a right to appeal.
- 8.2 The employee has a right of appeal against the decision of the Authority.
- 8.3 The appeal will be heard by Elected Members.
- 8.4 The employee has 7 calendar days in which to exercise their right of Appeal from the date of receipt of the written notification of termination.
- 8.5 The Appeal must be made in writing stating the grounds of Appeal as outlined in 8.1 above.
- 8.6 The bundles for the Appeal must be exchanged no later than 7 calendar days before the date of the appeal hearing.
- 8.7 Members of the Sub-Committee will hear representations from the employee and his/her representative and from the Corporate Director (or nominated officer) before making its decision.
- 8.8 The decision of the Sub-Committee will be conveyed in writing to the employee and a copy provided to Human Resources.
- 8.9 The process to be adopted at the Appeal hearing is set out in Appendix 1.

Procedure to be adopted at Appeal

1. The hearing will be held by the Grievance and Disciplinary Appeals Committee, who will be supported by one of the Council's Solicitors in the role of Clerk, a Human Resources Advisor and a minute taker.
2. The parties and their representatives shall be called in simultaneously before the Committee. At the start of the hearing the Chairman will introduce those present and will explain the procedure.
3. The Chief Officer or his/her representative will present the management's case calling, if appropriate, any witnesses to assist in substantiating or clarifying the facts.
4. The appellant or his/her representative will be entitled to question the Chief Officer or his/her representative and any witnesses.
5. The appellant or his/her representative will present the appellant's case calling, if appropriate, any witnesses.
6. The Chief Officer or his/her representative will be entitled to question the appellant and any witnesses.
7. The Members, Clerk of the Committee and the Human Resources Advisor will be entitled at any time during the hearing, with the consent of the Chairman, to ask questions.
8. Where new evidence arises during an appeal it may be appropriate to adjourn in order to investigate or consider such points.
9. The Chief Officer or his/her representative will be given an opportunity to sum up but will not be able to introduce any new evidence at this stage.
10. The appellant or his/her representative will be given an opportunity to sum up. He/she will not be able to introduce any new evidence at this stage.
11. All parties other than the Members of the Committee, the Human Resources Advisor and the Legal Clerk will withdraw from the meeting. The Human Resources Advisor and Legal Clerk will remain in the meeting whilst the Committee require advice.
12. Once the Committee has received advice from the Human Resources Advisor and Legal Clerk the Human Resources Advisor and Legal Clerk will withdraw, while the Committee considered the appeal.
13. The Committee may recall the Human Resources Advisor, Legal Clerk and minute-taker to clarify any points. Should the Committee require advice from the Human Resources Advisor or Legal Clerk both officers should be recalled together.
14. The Committee may recall the parties to clarify any points but, if so, must recall both parties and their representatives and allow them to comment if they so wish.
15. After the Committee has reached a decision on the appeal the parties and their representatives will be recalled and the decision announced to them together with the

reasons for it. The decision will be confirmed in writing by the Human Resources Advisor as soon as possible after the hearing.

NOTE:

- The term 'Chief Officer' means Chief Executive, Assistant Chief Executive, Corporate Director or Head of Service of the Council.

The appellant may be represented by either his / her Trade Union representative or by a work colleague.

Bridgend County Borough Council

Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr

www.bridgend.gov.uk



ACTING RANK/HONORARIA PAYMENTS PROTOCOL

PURPOSE

It will be necessary for the Authority to make arrangements to cover the absence of officers other than for annual leave purposes.

The payment of honoraria is designed to cover relatively short-term and usually unplanned absences to ensure that there is no reduction in provision of service.

PAYMENT (Acting Rank)

1. Employees who are requested to undertake the full range of duties and responsibilities of a higher graded post are entitled to additional remuneration commensurate with those duties, for the period during which they are undertaken.
2. An employee will only receive an additional payment after the additional duties and responsibilities have been undertaken for a continuous period of 4 weeks.
3. Once the qualifying period of 4 weeks has elapsed, the additional payment will be paid with effect from the first day on which the employee undertook the additional duties and responsibilities.

HONORARIUM

1. Where employees who are requested to undertake less than the full duties and responsibilities of a higher graded post an honorarium may be paid on a pro rata basis.
2. Where the duties and responsibilities are shared between two or more employees then any amount paid will be calculated pro rata dependent upon the circumstances of each case.
3. Employees who are requested to perform additional duties and responsibilities outside the scope of their substantive post e.g. undertaking project work will receive an honorarium based upon the value of the duties and responsibilities (evaluated by HR/OD & JE).

SELECTION

(Acting up and honorarium payment)

1. An honorarium will be paid to an individual who is a recognised and agreed [by management] as deputy or assistant clearly identified within a section or division.
2. Where no obvious deputy exists the consideration should be given to sharing the honorarium between the direct line management reports of the [temporarily] vacant post.
3. Where no deputy or assistant exists but it is felt that just one person is required to undertake the full range of duties and responsibilities of the higher graded post, then competitive interviews should be undertaken.
4. The selection process will mirror the Authority's policy on Recruitment & Selection.
5. Where cover is anticipated to be required for between 1-3 months, the temporary vacancy will be ring-fenced to the Service Unit or Section in which it occurs.
6. Where cover is anticipated to be required for in excess of 3 months, it will be regarded as a temporary vacancy and will be dealt with under the Protocol for Secondments.

EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

(Acting up and honorarium payments)

1. There may be occasions where the Corporate Director Resources [or nominated Officer] and the Head of HR/OD [or nominated officer] will determine that exceptional circumstances occur. In these cases there may be a requirement to deviate from the normal procedures, e.g., where a senior officer is absented, without notice, from his/her duties and responsibilities.
2. Each case will be determined on its merits and any deviation to the protocol will be authorised by a second Corporate Director and the Head of HR/OD.

AUTHORISATION

1. All honorarium payments must be agreed with the Human Resources/Organisational Development Service Unit and only the Human Resources/Organisational Development Service Unit may authorise payment.

REVIEW PERIOD

1. All honorarium payments will be subject to a review period of no less frequently than 3 months.

Issue Date: October 2013

This page is intentionally left blank

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO COUNCIL

17 FEBRUARY 2016

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE & MONITORING OFFICER

CONSULTATION ON THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (WALES) DRAFT BILL

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide Members with information to enable a response to be drafted for the consultation on the Local Government (Wales) Draft Bill.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives / Other Corporate Priority

- 2.1 The consultation impacts on the future of local government in Wales and therefore is relevant to all improvement objectives and priorities.

3. Background

- 3.1 The published guidance on the draft Bill provides that the purpose of the draft Bill is to establish new Counties by the merger of existing Counties and County Boroughs, to establish a new and reformed legislative framework for Local Government democracy, accountability, performance and finance, and to establish a statutory Public Services Staff Commission.
- 3.2 Members will be aware of the background to the proposed legislation. The proposed legislation provides proposals for a significant change not only to the structure of local government in Wales but also its internal administration.
- 3.3 The Minister's introduction to the draft Bill is at Appendix A to this report. Responses to the consultation can be made on the form provided for Members at Appendix B. Members will have been provided with a briefing on the implications of the draft Bill prior to the consideration of the report at Council and will be provided with any proposed draft responses from that briefing.
- 3.4. Members will note that the contents of this report provide a broad overview of the draft Bill and not an in-depth review. There are questions asked within the consultation on matters that are not contained within the draft Bill. The report advises on those matters.

4. Current situation / proposal

- 4.1 The remainder of the report provides an overview of the draft Bill. The consultation questions are within Appendix A.

PART 1 LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS AND COUNTY COUNCILS

- 4.2 Part 1 and Schedules 1 to 5 of the draft Bill contain provisions for the reorganisation of county and county borough councils in Wales and establishment of new councils from 1 April 2020.
- 4.3 Shadow authorities will assume a number of finance functions, which includes the calculation of the new council's budget. The intention is to enable the shadow authorities to exercise functions prior to the beginning of the 2020-2021 financial year. The provisions enable access to the valuation lists to ensure bring about harmonisation of council tax charges in the new authority from 2020.
- 4.4 Similar provisions apply to local non-domestic rating lists. There are provisions to ensure that new councils establish a council fund from 1 April 2020 and provides the Welsh Ministers with the power to make regulations specifying the accounting requirements in respect of the fund. There is further provision on the power of the Welsh Ministers to make regulations detailing the process for precepting.
- 4.5 The proposed Local government areas for the 1 April 2020 are set out in the table in Schedule 1. Whilst there are two options for consultation, the proposal for Bridgend County Borough Council is identical in both options. Each of the counties has the name given to it in the first column of the table in Schedule 1. Each county council has the name of the county with the addition of the words "County Council" or, if the council decides, the word "Council". Other than Powys existing councils will cease to exist on the 1st April 2020.
- 4.6 Each of the county councils has a council consisting of either an elected mayor and Cabinet or a Leader and Cabinet. The chair of a county council must as now be elected annually by the council and a member of the executive of a county council, or an assistant to the executive, may not be elected as the Chair of the council. A county council may determine that its chair is to have the title of "mayor" in which case the deputy chair will be the deputy mayor.
- 4.7 A county council may determine to have a presiding member. In this case the same provisions apply as to a deputy and the prohibition against that person being on the executive or an assistant.
- 4.8 The first ordinary elections of councillors of the new councils are to be held on 2 May 2019. After the first ordinary elections of councillors of the new councils, each new council is a shadow authority. From there the ordinary elections are to take place in 2023 and in every fifth year after 2023. The term of office of every such councillor is five years.

- 4.9 Part 1 also deals with administrative issues modifying legislative provisions enabling functions to transfer to the new authorities along with staff, property and liabilities etc. Welsh Ministers are provided the power to make consequential, supplementary provisions.
- 4.10 Part 1 of the draft Bill therefore determines the area and name of the new authorities. It provides for election to shadow authorities, makes financial provision and transfers functions from the old to the new authorities. It provides for the appointment of a chair (Mayor) or a 'Presiding Member'. There is also provision for a High Sheriff and Lord Lieutenant to be appointed to the new administrative areas.

Consultation

Members have a copy of the consultation form at Appendix A to this report. The administrative aspects of this part of the draft Bill are uncontentious. Members may wish to refer to the voluntary merger proposal made by the Authority.

PART 2 GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE

- 4.11 The draft Bill introduces a general power of competence for county councils and 'community councils with competence'. There are restrictions on the power and extent to which it can be used for commercial purposes. The general power of competence gives councils the same power to act as an individual.
- 4.12 It is an important new power. Local authorities are statutory corporations and can therefore only undertake functions within statutory or common law powers. The general power enables an authority (within restrictions) to rely on the wider general power to take a less restrictive review of the way to deliver or provide services to the public. The power extends to providing services anywhere in Wales or elsewhere, for a commercial purpose or otherwise, for a charge, or without charge, with power to do it for, or otherwise than for, the benefit of the authority, its area or persons resident or present in its area.
- 4.13 There are however limits to the power, for example the power cannot be used to alter the functions of the authority or to change the executive model of the authority. It is only possible to charge for services when the service is not one that a statutory provision requires the authority to provide to the person and when the person has agreed to the service being provided. Income cannot exceed the cost of provision.
- 4.14 The draft Bill enables a community council to become a 'community council with competence' if it passes a resolution to do so. The community council will be required to meet the competency requirements. These are that:-
- (a) at least two-thirds of the total number of members of the council have been declared to be elected (whether at an ordinary election or at a by-election),
 - (b) the clerk to the council holds a relevant professional qualification, and
 - (c) the council satisfies the audit condition.
- 4.15 The audit condition is satisfied if:-
- (a) the council has received an unqualified Auditor's opinion on the council's

accounts for two consecutive financial years, and
(b) one of those opinions has been received by the council within the period of twelve months ending on the day on which the resolution is passed.

- 4.16 A community council with competence must pass a resolution at each relevant annual meeting of the council that it continues to comply or ceases to hold the general power of competence.
- 4.17 The new power is similar to provisions applicable to English authorities. Its use is dependent on the limitations placed on its use and it is therefore important to ensure that the limitations on its use are appropriate.

Consultation

Members may wish to support the implementation of the general power of competence but encourage the simplification of its application to local government, this to be provided either within the Act or guidance made thereunder.

PART 3 OF THE DRAFT BILL DEALS WITH PROMOTING ACCESS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- 4.18 The draft Bill provides a duty on councils to promote access to, and public participation in, local government. This involves the promotion of access to and public participation in 'connected authorities' including community councils, fire and rescue authorities and national park authorities.
- 4.19 There is a requirement to produce a statutory 'public participation strategy' (which also covers the connected authorities). Councils are also to take 'reasonable steps' to consult the public over budget proposals.
- 4.20 There is also a requirement to establish Community Area Committees. The 'community area' will be defined by the Public Service Board (as per S37 (5) of the Wellbeing and Future Generations Act). Membership is to include ward members along with a member of each relevant community council and other bodies that exercise functions of a public nature with representatives from third sector bodies.
- 4.21 The Community Area Committee is required to prepare and consult on a statement of priorities and objectives annually. Councils may delegate functions to the committees and Ministers may also make directions as to functions.
- 4.22 Further provisions place Authorities under a duty in respect of 'improvement requests'. These require an Authority to enter into discussions with certain community bodies for the purpose of improving local outcomes. A community group or community council is able to make written 'improvement requests' to the Authority in respect of how it believes outcomes could be improved. This may include proposals for services to be delegated and delivered by others. The Authority has a duty to agree to an improvement request, and report on the decision publically unless there are reasonable grounds not to.

- 4.23 There are further provisions for improving public access to local authority meetings. The provisions include the webcasting of meetings but also enable the public to film meetings and make a running commentary of meetings.
- 4.24 Authorities are to be required to encourage the public to participate in decision making by the council, and in decision making by other local authorities in the council's area. The Authority is to prepare and publish a strategy setting out how it is to comply with its duty to encourage participation in decision making.
- 4.25 The Authority is to make provision for holding meetings where members of the public may scrutinise the exercise of functions by councils operating executive arrangements. Members of the public are to have the opportunity to speak at meetings of community councils open to the public.

Other obligations are to publish a guide to accompany its constitution and make copies of the guide available on request and to publish an electronic and postal address for each of its members. There is an important obligation to improve the involvement of children in the decision making of the authority.

Consultation

This part of the draft bill contains significant changes to the way in which local government is administered.

- (a) Members may wish to comment that the authority already undertakes significant public consultation on its budget setting. It is suggested that Members comment that a prescribed consultation process is inappropriate as what may work in one area will not in another. The use of social media and other forms of communication outside the formal meeting scenario has been demonstrated as increasingly the way in which the public wish to be communicated with.
- (b) Members may wish to express concern at the implementation of a duty to promotion of access to and public participation in 'connected authorities'. It would seem sufficient for Authorities to exercise the duty in respect of themselves unless regulations provide that the duty is only in relation to joint working arrangements.
- (c) Members may wish to express concern at the operation of the Community Area Committee (CAC) being a local authority committee which has a membership of unelected and unaccountable persons. This particularly the case when exercising executive functions. It is possible for this committee to have a majority of membership not represented by the County Council.
- (d) Members may question the process of undertaking Improvement Requests. The authority undertakes many forms of consultation with the public on service needs and provision. The process involved in Improvement Requests appears extremely bureaucratic and has the ability to be as costly to the authority as the Foi process.
- (e) Members may wish to raise issue with the proposal to provide public access to meetings. The authority already webcasts meetings however the costs and practical ability to webcast all meetings of the authority may require further

consideration. Members may wish to respond seeking the removal of the statutory obligation to take a written record of each meeting (the minute) where webcasting is provided.

- (f) Members may wish to comment on the ability of the public to make their own recordings and provide a running commentary on proceedings within a committee. Members may take the view that this will be obtrusive and enable 'selective editing'. It may appear unnecessary in the event of the meeting being webcast.

PART 4 DEALS WITH THE FUNCTIONS OF COUNTY COUNCILS AND MEMBERS

- 4.26 The draft Bill provides new duties upon Councillors. These include:
- Attend at all committee/council meetings of which the councillor is a member.
 - Hold of 4 surgeries each year.
 - Respond to correspondence within 14 days.
 - Undertake training deemed mandatory by the council.
 - Publish an annual report.
- 4.27 Breach of these duties is to be investigated and reported to the Standards Committee which has powers of sanction. There are also duties on Group Leaders to take 'reasonable steps to promote and maintain high conduct of standards by members of the group'.
- 4.28 The Leader (or elected mayor) is to set objectives for the executive, and requires candidates who wish to stand for elected mayor or executive leader to prepare a written manifesto. It also enables the appointment of members as assistants to the executive.
- 4.29 Councils are required to replace the term and role of 'head of paid service' with that of 'chief executive'. The Leader (or elected mayor) must also set and review objectives for the Chief Executive. The leader must prepare and publish a report on the above, and share it with all members.
- 4.30 Changes are made to Scrutiny enabling voting rights for co-opted members. There is also provision for annual reports of scrutiny.
- 4.31 There are also important provisions on ensuring members have training on equality and diversity. Standards Committees are also to make annual reports.
- 4.32 In summary this part of the draft Bill provides for Members to attend meetings unless there is good reason not to do so. Members are also required to hold surgeries for the electorate at least four times per year. There are standards in respect of members responding to correspondence and to complete training. It will now be a statutory requirement for Members to provide annual reports.
- 4.33 Enforcement of these provisions is through the Standards Committee. The Monitoring Officer must refer complaints to the chair of the committee and if either the chair or the Monitoring Officer considers that it should be investigated the investigation will take place and the matter be put to the Standards Committee. The

Standards Committee will have the power to censure, suspend or partially suspend for up to six months.

- 4.34 The draft Bill also provides for group leaders to take steps to promote standards, the leader is required to set objectives for the executive to achieve and report on the progress in achieving the objectives and publish this. Prior to the election of a Leader candidates must provide a manifesto and all candidates must be provided an opportunity to promote their manifesto at a meeting of the authority prior to the election.
- 4.35 New provisions enable Members to be appointed to assist the Executive to be titled 'Assistant to the Executive'. These to be appointed by the Leader. Assistants are not members of the Executive but may attend and speak and subject to further guidance the Authority's executive arrangements will detail the number appointed.
- 4.36 The draft Bill also provides for the Chief Executive to require sufficient staffing to undertake the functions of the Authority. The Leader is to set objectives for the Chief Executive.
- 4.37 In respect of Overview and Scrutiny the provisions enable co-opted members to vote at committee. There is also a power to require the implementation of joint Overview and Scrutiny meetings.

Consultation

(a) Member's performance: Members may wish to support the review of performance overall but question the specifics of the provisions. Members will be aware of the '6 month rule in respect of attendance and may take the view that amendment to this legislation is an alternative method of ensuring performance. Members may also take the view that enforcing the undertaking of surgeries is a limited view of the practical realities of local government. The use of social media and open involvement in the ward and an expectation of 24 hour access of the public may be seen as making surgeries a small part of the daily life of members. Members may wish to comment that the most effective surgeries are those that include assembly Members and Members of Parliament.

The publication of annual reports and the need to undertake training may be less contentious however the response to correspondence within 14 days again brings a considerable administrative burden to the Authority in centrally processing all communication.

- (b) The provision for Group Leaders to promote high standards in Group may not be contentious to members.
- (c) Executive objectives set by the Leader may also not be contentious although it can be argued that the executive are answerable to the electorate and council in any event.
- (d) The provision for the Head of Paid service to be known as the Chief Executive is unlikely to be contentious however; the provisions go further and enable the Chief Executive to dictate staffing and resources within the authority. Members

may be of the view that this removes Members ability to determine the structure of the Authority. Members may prefer a compromise enabling the Chief Executive to advise Members of required resources.

- (e) The requirement for written manifesto for candidates for Leader may be considered problematic given the time between an election and the establishment of administrations

PART 5 OF THE DRAFT BILL PROVIDES FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF GOVERNANCE.

- 4.38 Part 5 sets out arrangements for a new regime to improve the governance of county councils; it in most part removes the previous legislative provisions. There is a general duty on county councils to make, implement and comply with governance arrangements for the purpose of securing good governance; accountability; and economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources.
- 4.39 There is a duty to prepare and publish a corporate plan, consult on it, maintain it under review and report on progress made against it. The draft Bill provides prescription as to the contents of a Corporate Plan.
- 4.40 In addition there is an annual duty to undertake and publish a self-assessment, this in connection to the duty of good governance. Finally there is also a duty to commission a peer assessment. The peer assessment report and council's action plan in response must be published. There is also provision for Ministerial powers of intervention, support and commissioning of a governance review.
- 4.41 A significant change to the regulation of local authorities is in the requirement of the Wales Audit Office, Estyn and CSSIW to carry out a combined assessment of an Authority. The Authority must prepare a formal response to the combined assessment.
- 4.42 Audit Committees are renamed Corporate Governance and Audit Committees with membership changing to a third lay members with the chair a lay member. The Committee's role in considering regulatory and assessment reports is strengthened.
- 4.43 The draft Bill provides for the continuation of corporate plans and self- assessment. In addition however there are new provisions relating to Peer assessment and a duty on regulators to carry out combined assessment of governance arrangements of a county council. Much of the provision is to be supplemented by further regulation.
- 4.44 The draft Bill provides for the Audit Committee to be named the Corporate governance and Audit Committee. The role of the committee is to be strengthened in respect of corporate governance and will include a membership of one third lay members.

Consultation

- (a) Members may welcome the continuation (albeit with significant prescription) of the corporate plan and self -assessment processes. Members may view the implementation of peer assessment as an additional unnecessary statutory imposition that when taking other forms of assessment into account is unnecessary.

- (b) Members may wish to agree and welcome the implementation of a combined assessment by regulators in the hope that it will reduce the regulatory burden on the authority.
- (c) Members may wish to express concern in relation to the constitution of the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee, this being chaired by an independent member and consisting of one third independent members.

PART 6 OF THE DRAFT BILL PROVIDES FOR THE REVIEW OF COMMUNITY COUNCIL ARRANGEMENTS.

- 4.45 The draft Bill requires the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales to undertake a review of community council arrangements to be established on 1 April 2020. There are also requirements to consider the training needs of Councillors.
- 4.46 The Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales (“the Commission”) must conduct a community council review in relation to each of the counties in Wales, (but the Commission may begin to conduct the reviews at any time before 1 April 2020).
- 4.47 A “community council review”, means a review of the communities in the area of the county conducted for the purpose of recommending that a county council makes changes in respect of:
 - (a) councils for communities and common community councils in the area of the county, and
 - (b) the electoral arrangements for communities in the area of the county.
- 4.48 The Commission may recommend that the council
 - (a) establish a separate council for a community;
 - (b) dissolve a separate council for a community;
 - (c) group two or more communities together under a new common community council;
 - (d) add one or more communities to a group of communities for which there is a common community council;
 - (e) separate one or more communities from a group of communities;
 - (f) dissolve a group of communities and its common community council;
 - (g) give a name to a new, or change the name of an existing, council for a community or common community council.
- 4.49 The provisions relate only to Community Councils and detail provisions for a review of boundaries etc. given the change that will have taken at county level to administrative areas. There are also proposals to extend terms of office to the five year standard. There are training requirements for community council members similar to those that exist in County Councils. There are provisions that impact on county councils in determining which training should be compulsory. The powers of the Standards Committees do not appear in relation to community councillor training.

Consultation

Members views are sought

PART 7 OF THE DRAFT BILL DEALS WITH WORKFORCE MATTERS.

4.50 Workforce matters are provided in the establishment of a Public Services Staff Commission and provision for Ministers to issue guidance which may be prescriptive in that it can include the size and composition of the Workforce, recruitment and retention of staff and the management, organisation and remuneration of staff of a new authority.

- The Welsh Ministers may issue guidance to public bodies about workforce matters.
- A public body to which guidance is issued must have regard to it.
- Guidance under this section may be issued to a particular public body, public bodies of a particular description or to public bodies generally.
- Before issuing, revising or withdrawing guidance under this section, the Welsh Ministers must consult—
 - (a) each public body to which the guidance relates,
 - (b) any trade union which is recognised (within the meaning given by the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 (c.52)) by a public body to which the guidance relates, and
 - (c) such other persons as the Welsh Ministers consider appropriate.
- The Welsh Ministers must publish any guidance issued under this section (including revised guidance) on a website and in such other form as they think fit.

4.51 More specifically “workforce matters” means:-

- planning by public bodies in relation to the size and composition of their workforce;
- the recruitment and retention of staff of public bodies;
- the management, organisation and remuneration of staff of public bodies;
- training and development of staff of public bodies;
- the provision of information to staff of public bodies (including trade unions representing staff) about decisions affecting their work and about opportunities to contribute to those decisions;
- There is to be a public services staff commission
- The Commission must provide such advice on workforce matters as the Welsh Ministers may request.
- The Commission will be disbanded in 2021

Consultation

Members may find the proposals uncontroversial

PART 8 OF THE DRAFT BILL IS THE INTERPRETATION SECTION

4.52 Contains general provisions regarding interpretation and commencement. The commencement of most provisions are unknown without further regulation however the following are intended to come into force within 2 months of Royal Assent (2017):

- Establishing new councils (Chapters in Part 1)
- general power of competence (Part 2)

- Improvement Requests (Chapter 4 of Part 3)
- Review of community councils (Part 6)

The consultation includes issues that do not form part of the draft Bill.

- Right of Recall of councillors

4.53 In the event of a Councillor being suspended due to breach of the Model Code. Ward electors are proposed to have the ability to raise a petition calling for a by-election. If a petition was signed by at least twenty percent of the electorate in that ward, a by-election would be called.

Consultation

Member's views are sought

- Simplification of Remote Attendance Provisions

4.54 The remote attendance provisions have caused technical and practical issues for local government. The provisions are of particular use in larger authorities however and a simplification of regulations may be considered by Members to be positive.

Consultation

Members may wish to approve of the proposal

- Roles and Responsibilities of Chief Executives

4.55 This proposal is for the Returning Officer role to be the duty of the Chief Executive without further remuneration.

Consultation

Members may wish to consider whether the proposal removes the independence of the Returning Officer role

- The removal of the Designated Independent Person process

4.56 The proposal removes the statutory protection for the chief executive, chief Finance Officer, Monitoring Officer and head of democratic services. The process ensures that the dismissal of any of those officers is only undertaken after an investigation and report of a designated independent person. The purpose of the process has been to ensure that there is independence in the investigation process and recommendation to Council. The process has been criticised as being time consuming and expensive. The proposal in the draft Bill is to remove the process and for Council to vote on the dismissal of these officers.

Consultation

Members views are sought

- The clarification of council functions and responsibilities.

4.57 A proposal for:-

- quasi-judicial functions not to be for the Executive.
- approval of the Council's budget and financial planning, including the amount of Council Tax required, to full Council;
- appointments of senior staff reserved to full Council;
- appointment of the Electoral Registration Officer and electoral matters to Council;
- remuneration of Members of the Authority to Council;
- functions related to the provision of services by the Council to the Executive;
- allocation of functions to require the agreement of both Council and Executive; and
- Council's scheme of delegation to be published and be accessible through the Council's website.

Consultation

The proposals enable some discretion to new authorities in the allocation of functions. Members may support this or may take the view that the allocation of functions within local government should be prescribed across all authorities.

- Repeal of Community Polls Duties.

4.58 Under the Local Government Act 1972 a community poll can be demanded at a community meeting. The subject of the poll can be anything which arose at the meeting. The polls are expensive and provide no obligation to abide by the outcome. The proposal is to repeal the provisions. The provisions are to be replaced by duties to enable an e-petitions process. The purpose of which is to enable communities to express views on matters of concern, without the restrictions and costs and enabling a modernisation of the process.

Consultation

Members may consider that the proposal is positive.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework& Procedure Rules

5.1 There is no effect upon the Policy Framework and the Procedure Rules.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 No equality impact assessment has been undertaken as the Auditor General's Annual Improvement Report is essentially a retrospective assessment of the Council's performance.

7. Financial Implications

7.1 The draft Bill states that “The merging authorities must meet the costs of the transition committee” established under the bill, this will be a joint cost of the joining authorities. The transition committee is to be established by the end of June 2017 and therefore it should be anticipated that in late 2016/early 2017 provision will be required.

8. Recommendation

8.1 That Council determines its response to the consultation.

Andrew Jolley
Assistant Chief Executive
17 February 2016

Contact Officer: Andrew Jolley Assistant Chief Executive
Telephone: (01656) 643106
E-mail: Andrew.Jolley@Bridgend.gov.uk

Postal Address Level 4, Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB

Background documents

None

Foreword by the Minister for Public Services

The White Paper *Reforming Local Government: Power to Local People* set out my vision for Local Government in Wales. This is based on activist Councils, engaged in delivering modern, accessible, high quality public services with their local communities. Councils should be acting as community leaders and agents of change, with leadership focusing on excellence, and Councils committed to looking outwards in their place-shaping role.

It also set out the vision for the different spheres of government in Wales and the relationship between them. We wish to see Local Government which is strong, flexible and empowered to deliver the strategic direction set by the Welsh Government in the light of local circumstances. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 provides the framework for coordinating the different parts of government in Wales. This Draft Bill and the programme of reform will contribute to better outcomes by ensuring Local Government services are sustainable, integrated and involve the people of Wales.

In June I announced the Welsh Government's preference for the future configuration of Local Government in Wales. Maps, with two options in respect of North Wales, were published alongside this announcement. The maps set out our preference for the future structure in South, Mid and West Wales whilst facilitating further discussion around North Wales. The case in North Wales is finely balanced between two or three Local Authorities. I welcome views, through this formal consultation, on all our proposals for Local Authority mergers.

I understand this is an unsettling time, and I am committed to ensuring the terms and conditions of Local Authority staff are protected so no-one will be disadvantaged by transfer to a new Authority. The Bill will, therefore, also establish a statutory Public Services Staff Commission, a proposal which has attracted widespread support from Local Government. The Public Services Workforce Partnership Council will remain at the heart of the vision to support the development of a world class public service workforce. It will be the primary reference point for the Commission.

This consultation is very much part of an on-going dialogue about the reform of Local Government. I want to hear from you whether our proposals for legislation will help to achieve the objective of creating the 'activist' Councils Wales needs. I would also be interested to hear if you think there is more we might do to achieve this objective.

Leighton Andrews AM
Minister for Public Services

Consultation on the Draft Local Government (Wales) Bill

Consultation response form

The Welsh Government intends to publish a summary of the responses to this consultation. Normally, the name and address (or part of the address) of its author are published along with the response, as this gives credibility to the consultation exercise.

Name*: Bridgend County Borough Council

Organisation:

Email*: Andrew.jolley@Bridgend.gov.uk

Telephone: 01656643106

Address: Civic Centre
Angel Street
Bridgend
Mid Glamorgan
CF31 4WB

* required information

Consultation questions

These questions should be read in conjunction with the Draft Bill, draft Explanatory Notes and draft Explanatory Memorandum

PART 1

Question 1.1: Do you have any comments on any of the provisions in Part 1 of the Draft Bill?

BCBC notes that the options within schedule 1 of the draft bill do not provide an alternative option. BCBC sought a voluntary merger which was rejected.

Question 1.2: What are your views on the options for 2 or 3 Counties in North Wales, as set out in Schedule 1 to the Draft Bill?

BCBC has provided its views as part of the submissions of the WLGA

Question 1.3: What are your views on the proposed configuration of Local Government areas in Wales?

BCBC has provided its views as part of the submissions of the WLGA

Question 1.4: Do the Welsh Ministers need to seek any further powers to support the integration of Powys Teaching Health Board and Powys County Council?

BCBC has provided its views as part of the submissions of the WLGA

Question 1.5: What are your views on the procedure for naming the new Counties?

BCBC is content with the procedure

Question 1.6: What are your views on the proposed changes to the Local Government election timetable?

BCBC is content with the timetable

Question 1.7: Do you have any general comments on the provisions in section 16 and Schedule 3 of the Draft Bill relating to Local Government finance?

No

Question 1.8: How could the Welsh Government measure the current level of avoidance of Non-Domestic Rates?

Question 1.9: Do you have any comments or suggestions on how future legislation could help to reduce instances of avoidance of Non-Domestic Rates?

Question 1.10: In what other ways could the Welsh Government enable Local Government to reduce the level of avoidance and fraud within the Non-Domestic Rates system?

Question 1.11: Do you agree that the preserved counties be abolished and that consequential amendments are made so that the appointments of Lord-Lieutenants and High Sheriffs are made in respect of the counties in existence after 1 April 2020?

BCBC is content with the proposals

Question 1.12: Are there other matters of a technical nature which should be considered?

No

PART 2

Question 2.1: Do you have any comments on any of the provisions in Part 2 of the Draft Bill?

BCBC welcomes the introduction of a general power of competence. The Authority is concerned however that the power is subject to such control that it will not facilitate innovative service provision within local government

Question 2.2: Do you have any comments on our proposals relating to Community Councils with competence?

The comments above apply in equal measure.

PART 3

Question 3.1: Do you have any comments on any of the provisions in Part 3 of the Draft Bill?

BCBC is supportive of moves to improve the participation of the public in the decision making of local government. The Authority has considerable concerns however in respect of the proposals in Part 3. The proposals will require significant resource to implement and maintain.

It is unclear how the Authority can support the public to participate in the decisions of other bodies.

The Authority already undertakes consultation on budget setting and has experienced the need to use all forms of social media to adequately reach the public and gain participation.

The Authority is extremely concerned at the practical operation of the Area Community Committees. There is concern that whilst being a committee of the authority it is at least influenced if not controlled by non- elected members of the community.

There is also concern that in delegating functions to the area community committee it is probable that inconsistent decisions will be made within the administrative area of one authority.

This is exacerbated by the prospect of separate authorities delegating different functions to committees. To that end the Authority considers that if the committees are to be implemented there should be a statutory determination of their powers and remit.

The ability of the committee to seek its delegations from the County Council will in the view of the Authority detract from the sovereignty of the elected representatives.

The ability to provide political balance and maintain probity within the CAC requires further consideration within the legislation.

The Authority views the implementation of improvement requests to have the significant burden of FOI requests within the Authority. It can be seen as a charter for certain individuals to disrupt the operation of the council.

Question 3.2: Do you have any comments on the proposed public participation duty and the requirement to consult on the annual budget?

As above

Question 3.3: How should community representatives to sit on community area committees be sought and selected?

BCBC does not agree that no elected representatives should have voting rights on the CAC

Question 3.4: Do you agree County Councils should be able to delegate functions to a community area committee? If yes, are there any functions that should or should not be capable of being delegated?

BCBC considers it important that delegations are statutory

Question 3.5: Do you have any views on whether transitional arrangements need to be put in place for existing area committees, or is a good lead-in time sufficient?

It is no the view of the Authority that it is necessary to legislate further

Question 3.6: Do you have any comments on the revised provisions for 'improvement requests' or on the interaction between these provisions and those relating to the public participation duty (Part 3, Chapter 2) and community area committees (Part 3, Chapter 3)?

As above

Question 3.7: Do you have any comments on any of our further proposals relating to access to meetings?

BCBC supports the webcasting of meetings but is concerned in relation to the cost and availability of premises to enable all committees to be broadcast.

Question 3.8: Do you have any comments on our proposals to enhance participation by children and young people through the public participation duty?

BCBC is supportive of enhancing participation of young people and has long supported a youth Mayor and Council

PART 4

Question 4.1: Do you have any comments on any of the provisions in Part 4 of the Draft Bill?

The Authority is broadly accepting of the performance management of Members but considers that the proposed legislation takes a dated view of the working of Members. Members report that the public do not appreciate the provision of surgeries unless combined with assembly members and members of parliament. The public prefer modern forms of communication through social media and e-mail. Members who are active in the community are also accessible outside specific set times.

The responsibility to provide written responses within a statutory timeframe is considered unnecessary and again does not take account of modern forms of communication. The data collation would be a considerable burden on local authorities particularly as it would require a central control over communication of elected members.

It is considered appropriate for members to undertake training and to attend regularly. The 6 month rule is outdated and does not ensure attendance, it is considered that more thought is required in relation to this provision as attendance alone is not a guarantee of effective working.

Question 4.2: Do you have any comments on the proposed duty on leaders of political groups or the monitoring and reporting roles of the Standards Committee?

BCBC is broadly supportive

Question 4.3: Do you have any comments on our proposals in relation to the delegation of functions by Local Authorities?

Question 4.4: Do you have any comments on our proposal to give the Welsh Ministers a power to direct the IRPW to have regard to guidance when reviewing the remuneration framework for Councillors?

No

Question 4.5: Do you agree the provisions relating to remote attendance in the 2011 Measure should be made more flexible?

Yes

Question 4.6: Do you have any comments on our proposal that Shadow Authorities should be required to appoint interim Returning Officers?

No

Question 4.7: Do you have any comments on the desirability of giving Councils the power to dismiss the Chief Executive, the Chief Finance Officer, the Monitoring Officer and the Head of Democratic Services through a vote?

BCBC accepts that the present DIP system is time consuming and costly. It considers however that there is a middle road rather than losing the protection afforded to officers who must remain independent of the political environment of a local authority. No to provide some protection will limit the ability to recruit persons willing to undertake those duties.

Question 4.8: Do you have any comments on our proposal to change the framework within which Councils and their Executive determine how their functions are to be allocated?

BCBC is of the view that the current allocation of functions is needlessly complex but does not consider it appropriate for authorities to have different allocations of functions. It considers this to be confusing for the public and counter to the aims of the legislation to make local government more accessible to the public

Question 4.9: Do you have any comments on our proposals in relation to the disposal and transfer of Local Authority assets?

no

PART 5

Question 5.1: Do you have any comments on any of the provisions in Part 5 of the Draft Bill?

Question 5.2: Do you have any comments on our proposal to subject Local Authorities to a governance arrangements duty?

No although the proposals remain a significant governance burden on an authority.

Question 5.3: Do you have any comments on the model approach to peer assessment set out in Annex A?

Question 5.4: Do you have any comments on the proposed role for the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee in relation to the Local Authority's response to the self assessment, peer assessment, combined assessment and governance review?

Question 5.5: Do you have any comments on our proposal to reject local public accounts committees?

Question 5.6: Are Public Services Boards the right bodies to examine the policy choices facing local public services?

Question 5.7: If so, would they benefit from additional legal powers?

Question 5.8: What legislative measures could be considered to enable Local Government to take a public sector-wide shared services role?

PART 6

Question 6.1: Do you have any comments on any of the provisions in Part 6 of the Draft Bill?

Question 6.2: Should the Boundary Commission be required to submit their draft reports to Shadow Authorities from May 2019?

Question 6.3: Should the new County Councils implement the Boundary Commission's recommendations or should this be a responsibility of the Boundary Commission itself?

Question 6.4: Do you have any comments on our proposals relating to compulsory training for Community Councillors?

Question 6.5: Do you have any comments on our proposal to extend the term of Community Councillors elected in 2017 to six years?

Question 6.6: Do you have any comments on our proposal that Community Councils should be required to consider and plan for the training needs of their own members and employees?

Question 6.7: Do you have any comments in relation to the setting of objectives for a Community Council clerk?

Question 6.8: Do you have any comments on our proposal to repeal the legislation relating to community polls and to require instead that Local Authorities should implement a system of e-petitions?

PART 7

Question 7.1: Do you have any comments on any of the provisions in Part 7 of the Draft Bill?

Question 7.2: Do you have any views on whether it would still be desirable to establish a statutory Public Services Staff Commission if it would be more constrained in the matters on which it could issue guidance than a non-statutory Commission?

PART 8

Question 8.1: Do you have any comments on any of the provisions in Part 8 of the Draft Bill or on any of the Schedules?

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

Question 9.1: Are you aware of any consequential amendments to legislation that will need to be made?

Question 9.2: Please provide feedback you think would be useful in relation to the supporting documents published alongside the Draft Bill i.e. Draft Explanatory Memorandum (including the Regulatory Impact Assessment) and specific Impact Assessments.

Question 9.3: We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addresses, please use this space to comment.

Responses to consultations may be made public – on the internet or in a report. If you would prefer your response to be kept anonymous please tick the box:

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO COUNCIL

17 FEBRUARY 2016

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE

DEBATE ON THE IMPACT AND CAUSES OF REDUNDANCIES WITHIN THE STEEL INDUSTRY.

1. Purpose of Report

- To inform the debate on the impact and causes of recent announcements of redundancies within the steel industry. This report provides information on what are thought to be the main causes of the present situation within the domestic steel industry.
- Energy costs
- Business rates
- Strength of Sterling
- Cheap imports particularly from China
- Over-supply

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives / Other Corporate Priority

- 2.1 Redundancies within the steel industry are likely to have a significant impact on supply industries and may require action within the existing priorities and objectives.

3. Background

- 3.1 On the 18th January 2016, Tata Steel UK Ltd announced cost-saving proposals to improve the competitiveness of its UK business. Redundancies have been announced of 750 jobs at Port Talbot and a further 300 jobs within the UK including 15 at Trostre. Tata employs 4,000 people at its Port Talbot site, together with an additional 3,000 agency staff and contractors. It has a total workforce of 6,000 in Wales. The institute for Policy research has estimated that the redundancies could lead to the loss of an additional 1,200 jobs in the supply chain. It is also likely therefore that there will be job losses in the wider economy as a result of the decision.
- 3.2 The decision by Tata has been attributed to 'difficult market conditions'. Market commentators widely cite global over-capacity of production and steel prices are at a ten-year low. Although Chinese imports to the UK have significantly increased, it remains the case that over 60% of steel imports are from the EU.
- 3.3 The situation is summarised in the following statement issued by Tata Steel:

"We need the European Commission to accelerate its response to unfairly traded imports and increase the robustness of its actions. Not doing so threatens the future

of the entire European steel industry. And while we welcome progress on UK energy costs, the Government must take urgent action to increase the competitiveness of the UK for its vital steel sector. This includes lowering business rates and supporting energy efficiency and anti-dumping cases so we can compete fairly.'

3.4 Stuart Wilkie, Managing Director of Strip Products UK (part of Tata UK) , said:

"We have to accelerate the changes we announced last August, by lowering our costs at the same time as focusing on manufacturing higher-value products. These are urgent steps needed to give this business a chance of survival."

3.5 There have also been calls for Government action to:

- Accelerate the introduction of the energy compensation scheme for intensive energy industries facing increased costs arising from low carbon energy sources;
- Implement a more effective public procurement policy to support the British steel Industry;
- Press the EU for introduction of anti-dumping measures to deal with the increasing flows of cheap Chinese steel into Europe.

3.6 Whilst there has been argument that the UK steel companies should be provided with support to win contracts on major UK developments, the nearest to Port Talbot being the Hinkley Point nuclear plant, the EU procurement regime is complex. UK guidelines issued late in 2015 recommended that social implications of bids should be taken into account when assessing bids.

3.7 In respect of an allegation of 'dumping', there is an added complication arising from the intentions of the EU to consider whether China should be considered as a 'market economy' i.e. one in which prices are not artificially depressed by the government. This measure would make it harder for Europe to fight off cheap steel imports.

3.8 Industrial relations between Tata and trade unions remains positive with the Unite union reporting that there is no difference of opinion between Tata and trade unions. Tata has stated that the company is taking all necessary steps to preserve remaining jobs. Tata has stated that it does not require state aid or a 'bail out' but specific actions to ensure a 'level playing field'.

4. Current situation / proposal

4.1 The main causes of the present situation within the domestic steel industry are considered to be:

Energy Costs

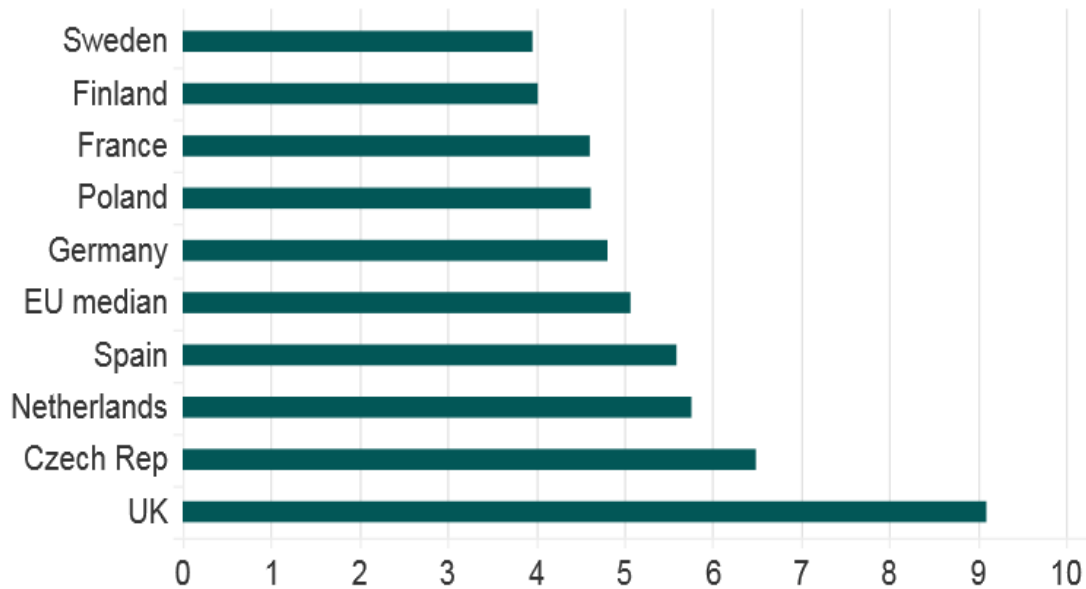
4.2 The price per kilowatt hour of electricity for UK steel makers is higher than elsewhere in Europe. The Port Talbot steelworks uses as much energy as the city of Swansea. Tata's electricity bill for Wales last year was £60 million. Some competitors within Europe are paying half the energy costs per kilowatt hour.

Help with energy costs

Electricity prices for EU steelmakers

In Euros for 2014

■ Price p/kWh



Eurostat/Dukes December 2014



- 4.3 The BBC has reported that the Government has recently received approval from the EU to provide compensation to the industry. This has now been agreed with a sum of £410 million being available. This has not however reached the industry yet.

Business Rates

- 4.4 Business rates are considerably higher in the UK than in other EU member states. One reason for this is that in the UK the value of machinery forms part of the rate calculation in addition to the value of premises.
- 4.5 Tata's Business rates for the Port Talbot plant are £26 million per year. When the firm invested £185 million in a new furnace, its rates increased.

Strength of Sterling

- 4.6 Sterling values are high relative to historic levels since 2008, at the time of writing Sterling was at 1.32 Euros from a high of 1.42 in 2015. A strong pound provides cheaper imports. Last year sterling reached a seven year high against many currencies.

Sterling vs Euro

€ per £



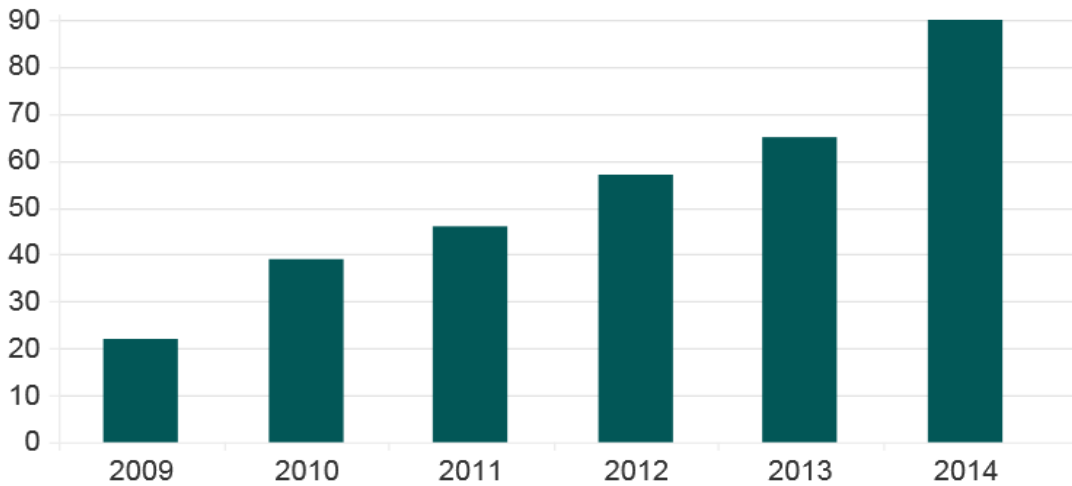
Cheap Imports

- 4.7 China has been blamed for the dumping of cheap steel on the market. This claim has been strongly denied by the Chinese Government. China is the world's largest producer of steel. As can be seen from the graph below, production exports from China have increased significantly between 2009 and 2014.

Tackle 'dumping'

Chinese steel exports

■ Millions of tonnes



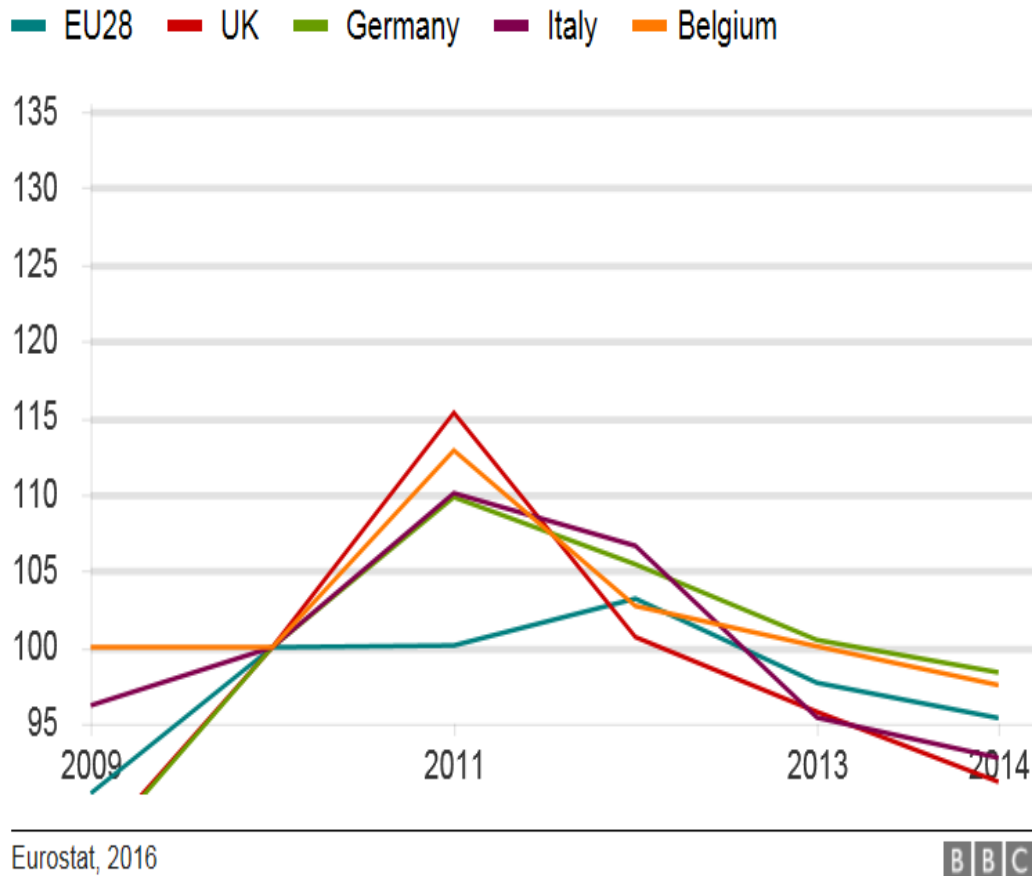
EEF/UK Steel Annual Review 2015

B B C

- 4.8 The Financial Times reported in January 2016 that while growth in the Chinese economy grew at 6.9 per cent in 2015, it has slowed to the lowest rate since 1990. China's steel industry has also suffered decline with more than half of producers reporting losses last year. The China Iron and Steel Association suffered losses of \$9.8bn in 2015. China's steel industry contracted for the first time in almost 35 years in 2015, with raw steel production dropping 2.3 per cent. There is concern that the result is the 'dumping' of cheap steel on the international market.
- 4.9 The Chinese government has a campaign to reduce industrial overcapacity, especially in the steel and coal sectors. The sale of cheap steel on the world market is seen at least in part as result of oversupply within the Chinese steel market.

Over-supply

- 4.10 Zhu Jimin (President of Shanghai Jiao Yun Group Co., Ltd) speaking at a briefing by the China Iron & Steel Association (CISA) stated that production cuts are slower than the contraction in demand, therefore oversupply is worsening, China's steel demand evaporated at unprecedented speed as the nation's economic growth slowed, as demand quickly contracted, steel mills are lowering prices in competition to get contracts.
- 4.11 There is significant oversupply within the Chinese market for the first time in a generation as economic growth slows. Steel is a global industry; excess supply in one area inevitably leads to pressure to export into other markets.
- 4.12 Oversupply may with other factors referenced in this report have helped market prices for steel to fall in 2014, UK steel falling more steeply than other EU nations



Responses

- 4.13 The Business Minister (Westminster), has stated that *‘the government would work with the Welsh Assembly to support workers and find them new jobs.....and that the government has taken clear action to help the industry, through cutting energy costs, taking action on imports, government procurement and EU emissions regulations and meeting key steel industry asks.’* Specifically, the Government has stated that it has done everything asked of it by the steel industry, including:
- Securing state aid approval in December 2015 to compensate energy intensive industries, said to be worth about £100m a year over the next five years and equivalent to about 30% of the industry’s energy bills;
 - Securing flexibility over EU emissions regulations and extending the deadline for compliance until 2020;
 - Issuing new guidance on procurement which provides for more flexibility;
 - Voting in favour of certain ant-dumping measures on certain steel products;
- 4.14 Recently that the UK government has obtained clearance from the European Commission for its energy compensation scheme.
- 4.15 The Welsh Government’s response has focused on responding to the proposed job losses. Edwina Hart convened the first meeting of the Steel Task force on the 20th January 2016 where, together with representatives of Tata Steel, trades unions,

local authorities and other interested parties, they considered the measures required to support redundant employees. The second meeting took place on the 1st February.

4.16 The Welsh Government has also requested the Chancellor to give consideration to the creations of a new Enterprise Zone in Port Talbot, providing enhanced capital allowances.

4.17 The Leader on behalf of the Authority issued a press release on the 22nd January calling for swift action on the national steel crisis. The Leader also wrote to the Prime Minister.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules

5.1 There is no effect upon the Policy Framework and the Procedure Rules.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 No equality impact assessment has been undertaken as the Auditor General's Annual Improvement Report is essentially a retrospective assessment of the Council's performance.

7. Financial Implications

7.1 There are no financial implications in this report.

8. Recommendation

8.1 That Council debates the issue.

Andrew Jolley
Assistant Chief Executive
17 February 2016

Contact Officer: Andrew Jolley Assistant Chief Executive

Telephone: (01656) 643106

E-mail: Andrew.Jolley@Bridgend.gov.uk

Postal Address Level 4, Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB

Background documents

This report has been drawn from a variety of sources, all accredited within the body of the report.

Council Leader calls for swift action on national steel crisis

Members of Bridgend County Borough Council have urged the UK Government and Welsh Assembly to take swift action to support the steel industry and avert a crisis across Wales.

It follows the announcement from Tata Steel UK Ltd that the nearby Port Talbot steelworks will bear the brunt of more than a thousand job losses throughout the country.

Of the 1,050 jobs that are set to be cut, 750 will take place at the Port Talbot plant.

Speaking at the January meeting of full Council, Leader Mel Nott OBE told councillors that Tata had recently confirmed that there were 596 residents of Bridgend County Borough employed at their Port Talbot site.

Councillor Nott said: "This move is going to have a serious impact on communities up and down the coast, and I am sorry to say that the impact on Bridgend County Borough could be substantial.

"But there is also a wider issue to consider, and as such I have written to Prime Minister David Cameron calling on urgent interaction from the UK Government.

"Tata Steel is one of Wales' most significant employers and has a total economic impact of £3.2 billion. More than 10,000 full time equivalent jobs are supported off-site in the Tata supply chain, and it attracts inter-regional export revenues of more than £2 billion for Wales.

"Any disruption in the manufacturing of steel will have a major effect on small-to-medium sized businesses with supply links into Port Talbot. That's why urgent action is needed to ensure that the UK steel industry is not unfairly disadvantaged on the international markets.

More...

“When the banking sector collapsed in 2008, the UK Government stepped in with decisive action. The steel industry deserves no less than the banking industry, and I’ll be writing to Prime Minister David Cameron to urge him to impress upon his ministers and Government colleagues just how important this situation is.”

Bridgend County Borough Council will be ensuring that residents who may be affected by the job losses will have access to a full redundancy support package as well as support from a taskforce which has been announced by First Minister Carwyn Jones.

This will include opportunities for retraining and learning new skills as well as initiatives such as the Kickstart project which is part-funded by the steel industry and seeks to help individuals start up their own businesses.

Councillor Nott added: “Bridgend County Borough Council will play its part, but urgent action is needed on a wider scale to avoid this crisis from developing further across the UK steel industry.”

The Rt Hon David Cameron, MP
The Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1A 2AA

Dear Prime Minister

UK Steel Industry

Further to my letter of 11th November 2015, I write to you as Leader of Bridgend County Borough Council to again urge you and your Government to act quickly and decisively in response to the on-going crisis within the UK steel industry.

As previously explained, I represent the county borough adjoining the authority which is home to Tata Steel’s Port Talbot facility.

There are 6,500 people currently employed in the steel industry across Wales. The Port Talbot plant accounts for 3,500 of them, including a large number of people from my own county borough.

Research by the Cardiff Business School has found that the total economic impact of Tata Steel in Wales is £3.2bn.

Inter-regional export revenues amount to more than £2bn, and more than 10,000 full time equivalent jobs are supported off-site in the Tata supply chain, many of them via small-to-medium sized enterprises.

If the crisis is allowed to develop further, it will have dire consequences not just for these two areas, but for the whole of Wales.

I welcome the fact that the Welsh Government has announced details of a taskforce to look at this issue and offer support to those whose jobs are being cut.

This will include opportunities for retraining and learning new skills as well as initiatives such as the Kickstart project which is part-funded by the steel industry and seeks to help individuals start up their own businesses.

But I would again urge you to impress upon your Ministers and Government colleagues the need for swift, positive action and decisive support to ensure that the UK Steel industry is not unfairly disadvantaged on the international markets.

I am again reminded of how quickly the Government was to act on the banking industry crisis in 2008, and can only reiterate my belief that the steel industry deserves no less - decisive action now will help avert a catastrophe.

As such, I look forward to positive proposals emerging from Government as a matter of urgency.

Yours sincerely



Cllr MEJ Nott OBE JP
Leader
Bridgend County Borough Council

By virtue of paragraph(s) 12 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank