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Bridgend County Borough Council

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



Gwasanaethau Cyfreithiol a Rheoleiddiol / Legal and Regulatory Services

Deialu uniongyrchol / Direct line /: 01656 643147
Gofynnwch am / Ask for: Andrew Rees

Ein cyf / Our ref:

Eich cyf / Your ref:

Dyddiad/Date: 17 March 2016

Dear Councillor,

COMMUNITY, ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Community, Environment and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be held in Committee Rooms 1/2/3, Civic Offices Angel Street Bridgend CF31 4WB on **Wednesday, 23 March 2016 at 2.00 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 (if any) from Members/Officers in accordance with the provisions of the Members Code of Conduct adopted by Council from 1 September 2008 (including Whipping declarations)
3. Approval of Minutes 3 - 14
To receive for approval the minutes of the meetings of the Community Environment and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee of 18 January and 27 February 2016.
4. Forward Work Programme Update 15 - 18
5. Awen Cultural Trust 19 - 42
Invitees:

Councillor Hywel Williams - Cabinet Member Communities
Mark Shephard - Corporate Director – Communities
Mark Wilkinson - Group Manager - Learning Disability
Scott Pickrell - Day Services Manager
Richard Hughes - Chief Executive of Awen Trust
Alun Morgan- Chairman of Board of Trustees of Awen Trust
6. Social Housing Allocation Policy and Common Housing Register Update 43 - 60
Report - Housing Solution Interview, Housing Registration and Nomination Processes

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We welcome correspondence in Welsh. Please let us know if your language choice is Welsh

Invitees:

Joanne Ginn - Housing Solutions Team Leader
Councillor Hywel Williams - Cabinet Member for Communities
Stephen Cook, Chief Executive Valleys to Coast
Elizabeth Willington - Housing Manager, Valleys to Coast
Jenny Williams - Housing Manager, Wales and West

7. 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.

8. Nomination to Standing Budget Research and Evaluation Panel 61 - 64

9. Exclusion of the Public

The minutes relating to the following item are not for publication as they contain exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14 of Part 4 and Paragraph 21 of Part 5, 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 Cabinet resolves pursuant to the Act to consider this item in private, the public will be excluded from the meeting during such consideration.

10. Approval of Exempt Minutes 65 - 68

To receive for approval the exempt minutes of the Community Environment & Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee of 27 January 2016.

Yours faithfully

P A Jolley

Assistant Chief Executive Legal and Regulatory Services

Distribution:

Councillors:

DK Edwards
CA Green
RM James
RD Jenkins

Councillors

CL Jones
DRW Lewis
JR McCarthy
G Phillips

Councillors

JC Spanswick
JH Tildesley MBE
KJ Watts
R Williams

Public Document Pack Agenda Item 3

COMMUNITY, ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - MONDAY, 18 JANUARY 2016

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY, ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB ON MONDAY, 18 JANUARY 2016 AT 10.00 AM

Present

Councillor JC Spanswick – Chairperson

DK Edwards
DRW Lewis

CA Green
JR McCarthy

RD Jenkins
G Phillips

CL Jones
R Williams

Officers:

Kym Barker
Sarah Daniel

Democratic Services Officer – Scrutiny
Democratic Services Officer - Committees

Invitees:

Councillor H Williams
Mark Shepherd
Satwant Pryce
Zak Shell
Joanne Norman

Cabinet Member Communities
Corporate Director Communities
Head of Regeneration and Development
Head of Neighborhood Services
Finance Manager – Education, Communities and Transformation

28. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the following members/ officers for the reasons so stated:

Councillor R M James – Personal Commitment
Councillor K Watts – Family Commitment

29. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

30. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Community Environment and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee of 8 October 2015 were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting subject to the amendment to the job title of Officer from Trecco Bay Holiday Park

31. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Scrutiny Officer presented the report to the Committee with items that were due to be considered at the Committee meeting to be held on 27 January 2016 and sought confirmation of the information required for the subsequent scheduled meeting to be held on 23 March 2016

RESOLVED:

- Members agreed the item on the Vibrant and Viable Places Programme would be presented at the meeting on 27 January 2016.
- Members requested that the item on the Procurement of Waste Management Services at the Materials Recovery and Energy Centre (MREC) be scheduled as the second item for the meeting 27 January 2016.
- Members agreed that items on Social Housing Allocation Policy (Common Housing Register) and the Housing function within BCBC and a report on the Cultural Partnership would be scheduled for the meeting on 23 March 2016.

32. DRAFT BUDGET CONSULTATION 2016-17

The Scrutiny Officer introduced the report to the Scrutiny Committee with the draft MTFS 2016-17 to 2019-20 which included a financial forecast for 2016-20 and a detailed draft revenue budget for 2016-17

Members were concerned at the loss of funding for community based regeneration projects as this area seemed to be badly hit year after year. Members asked how the budget reduction would impact on the Directorate. The Corporate Director Communities advised that this area was marked green as the savings had already been delivered and a restructure proposal was underway. The Head of Regeneration and Development added that managing a change in expectation would be the most difficult challenge as staffing levels had been reduced by a third and the service had no Group Manager.

Members were concerned at the proposed reduction in budget to Ground Maintenance and Bereavement Services. They stated that this was a concern with constituents as the Borough was looking more run down and untidy every week with pot holes, grass cutting, litter and dog fouling not being tended to as often as they needed. Members felt the budget should have seen an increase in this area and not a reduction.

Members also noted that fees had increased in bereavement services and were now amongst the highest in Wales but service levels had decreased. They stated that the increase in fees should be put back into the service as it was upsetting and disrespectful for members of the public to see overgrown and run down grounds. Members added if the service was not covering its own costs then it should look at how other Authorities operate or if it was more viable to externalise the service. The Head of Neighbourhood Services stated that the Authority could look at the possibility of re-investing the fees but the budget reductions would need to be achieved elsewhere. Another option to outsource the maintenance of the grounds would need to be approved by Cabinet and a tender put out for the contract.

Members sought clarification on the reduction to the Grounds and Maintenance Services and asked what percentage the reduction equated to. They were also concerned that they did not have previous years reduction figures available to them so they were unable to see the true reflection of the reduction to the service overall. The Finance Manager - Education, Communities and Transformation stated that the reduction equated to 6% and the previous years' reduction was 24%.

A Member suggested that by not tending to general wear and tear this could potentially be costing the Authority more in damages and repairs. The Corporate Director

Communities advised that the Authority were unable to maintain services as they did previously due to budget pressures in all areas. He added the Authority were also looking to relieve the pressures through the Community Asset Transfer Scheme.

A Member asked if the Authority would be able to deliver at a Local Government level if approached by Welsh Government to support a new transport infrastructure system. The Head of Regeneration and Development stated that the Authority would prioritise such a scheme so they would be able to support and contribute to the scheme.

The Chairperson asked how the Highways Maintenance Service would look in the future with the proposed reduction in budget to the service. The Head of Neighbourhood Services advised that a few changes were already underway which included the restructuring of the traffic transport team and energy saving of street lighting which was projected to save approximately £150k. The Corporate Director Communities added that there were also proposed changes to the current method of street work management from its current noticing method to that of a permit scheme.

A Member suggested there could be a potential saving if there were not so many traffic lights in the area. He stated that the amount of traffic lights in the area deterred people from visiting the area as they caused more disruption and did not help traffic flow in the area. He stated the Authority should look at the possibility of using some of the traffic signals on a part time basis to ease traffic flow issues and reduce costs.

A Member queried the reduction in the maintenance budget and was concerned that as the service level would have to reduce this would mean that repairs to pot holes would be left longer and also if streets would now be left out of winter gritting due to the number of gritters being reduced from 4 to 3.

The Head of Neighbourhood Services stated that a statutory function of the Authority was to repair potholes that were a certain size so the public would not see a difference to the service in the future. However, they would be looking at how the roads were resurfaced overall. He added that the reduction to the winter gritting would be achieved without removing streets from the gritting route – however they would be reviewing the route maps to see if savings could be achieved in that area. The Corporate Director Communities added that a Corporate bid for funding had been made to increase highways services – if successful he explained that the resurfacing of highways would improve.

A Member asked if the reduction in highways budget included the drainage systems as they were concerned that these needed regular maintenance to prevent damages caused by blockages. The Head of Neighbourhood Services stated that the drainage systems were part of the “Invest to Save” initiative and they needed regular inspections and would continue to do so. He added they would be reviewing the frequency to ensure that they were adequately maintained.

Members questioned how the £15k reduction would be achieved to the Bus Services. The Corporate Director Communities advised that it would be achieved through reducing administration costs and reviewing the routes of some services.

Members questioned the £75k of extra income for the planning department. The Head of Regeneration and Development stated that this was due to a price increase for planning fees, however the extra income had already been used to mitigate the impact in other areas of the service. She added that whilst the increase in funding was welcomed, as part of the Wales Planning Act applications now had to be determined

within 6 weeks or a refund of the application fee would be issued resulting in added pressures for the service.

Members asked where the highest amount of overtime was in the Authority. The Head of Neighbourhood Services advised that there was a high amount of overtime payments for work relating to works for the M4 as this work had to be completed at night, however some of the costs relating to this could be recovered from WG. He added that there would be a review of the seasoned hours for Parks/ Playing Fields and a review of works to local roads which may need to be rescheduled to daytime to reduce overtime payments. He added that a review was already underway of staff on standby for emergency call outs, which would be reduced if the service need allowed.

A Member was concerned at the proposed reduction of current weed spraying to one spray per annum. He added that this could cost more in the longer term in damage/ repair costs. He added that the time of year that the spraying takes place should also be reviewed as they currently take place just a month apart in September and October and perhaps earlier in the year would be more beneficial and cost effective.

Members asked how Awen Cultural Trust would achieve their budget reduction. The Corporate Director Communities advised that the reductions was known to Awen before they were officially formed. He advised that they have more flexibility than the Authority would have to develop and find different ways of achieving savings.

The Cabinet Member Resources stated that Cabinet CMB had been working on the proposals for several months and while some were unpalatable, the reality was that the Authority needed to save £30million. He added that Members should not lose sight of the Corporate priorities and that providing a good standard of education was very important in giving them the best opportunities for their future.

Conclusions

- Members asked the Officers to clarify any changes or omissions to proposals as a result of recent changes to the requirement for savings. The Officer identified the changes and explained the rationale for them.
- Members noted the public support for community services from the consultation exercise 'Shaping Bridgend's Future' and queried whether these findings had been taken into account when prioritising revisions to budget reductions. The Officer responded that there had been some adjustment for some services, such as highways, as a result of feedback from the consultation.
- Members were concerned that the required savings for several of the proposals would result in a deterioration of the appearance of the county and that this would make the area less attractive to businesses and visitors.
- Members raised concerns that carrying out less maintenance work may result in more claims and costs in the long term.
- Members noted that there was currently good service provision in place for responding to issues with pot holes in roads and raised concerns that this was an example of a 'visible' service which will now be at risk due to the requirement for savings.
- Members queried what would happen if the proposals relating to savings for services covered by Cultural Trust were not achieved. The Officer responded that the Trust were

aware of the requirement and had greater flexibility than the Authority in the way it can manage services.

- Members noted the budget reductions attached to Bereavement Services which may lead to a reduction in general ground maintenance activities and raised concerns that the cost to the public for the services is going up while the quality of services is diminished. Members queried whether the service should be 'standalone' so that the increased charges could be re-invested into the service and therefore not be subject to a reduction in standards due to the cut backs in other areas.
- Members commented that regeneration would be badly hit and that, for example, this could impact on the ability of the Authority to deliver on their part of any potential opportunities link to City Deal. The Officer responded that there would be a need to focus resources on the most viable activities to ensure resilience and sustainability.
- Members queried whether the 'Invest to Save' proposal which is currently being worked up for highways to inform a business case includes resurfacing and drainage, the Officer responded that it does.
- Members queried whether the amount of savings linked to the reduction in weed spraying and in road marking maintenance justify the long term risk.
- Members supported the corporate project to reduce overtime payments across the council and asked for examples of where this is happening within the Communities directorate. The Officer responded that some overtime occurs when work is required on or around the M4 but that costs can be recovered from this. Other overtime work linked to, for example, local roadworks, parks and playing fields and the call centre is part of the current review.

Recommendations

- The Committee recommend that a review of weed spraying to ensure that this is carried out in a timely manner to ensure maximum effect.

Further Information requested

- The Committee requested further information on the proposal 'COM9' which covers the review of highways maintenance/DLO services. The Committee requests detailed information on how this service is expected to look following staffing reductions and service reconfiguration to enable them to decide whether an item on the review should be included in the 2016-17 Forward Work Programme.

The Committee requested further information on the recurrent pressure relating to public transport.

33. URGENT ITEMS

None

The meeting closed at 12.20 pm

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY, ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB ON WEDNESDAY, 27 JANUARY 2016 AT 2.00 PM

Present

Councillor JC Spanswick – Chairperson

CA Green
DRW Lewis
R Williams

RM James
JR McCarthy

RD Jenkins
G Phillips

CL Jones
KJ Watts

Officers:

Rachel Keepins	Democratic Services Officer - Scrutiny
Andrew Rees	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Kevin Stephens	Democratic Services Assistant

Invitees:

Councillor H Williams Cabinet Member Communities
Mark Shepherd Corporate Director Communities
Satwant Pryce Head of Regeneration and Development
Zak Shell Head of Neighbourhood Services
Robert Hughes – Senior Solicitor
Gareth Davies – Director of Development, Coastal Housing Group

34. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the following Members:

Councillor DK Edwards – Other Council business
Councillor JH Tildesley MBE – Unwell.

35. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

36. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Scrutiny Officer presented a report which detailed the items to be considered at the next meeting of the Committee to be held on 23 March 2016 and the invitees due to attend. She requested the Committee consider items for inclusion on the Committee's Forward Work Programme and email the Scrutiny Team with potential items.

The Corporate Parenting Champion informed the Committee that he would not be seeking re-nomination as the Committee's Corporate Parenting Champion due to his potential future Council commitments. The Chairperson thanked Councillor Jenkins for fulfilling the role of Corporate Parenting Champion and requested members of the Committee consider a new nomination of Corporate Parenting Champion at the appropriate time.

Conclusions:

- (1) Noted the topics to be considered at its meeting on 23 March 2016 and the invitees to attend to attend the meeting;
- (2) That an officer from Social Services be requested to attend the meeting of the Committee on 23 March 2016 to inform the Committee of the progress of B-leaf as part of the Cultural Partnership Project.

37. VIBRANT AND VIABLE PLACES

The Scrutiny Officer introduced a report which provided the Committee with information on the delivery of the Vibrant and Viable Places programme (VVP).

The Head of Regeneration and Planning reported on the delivery of the VVP scheme together with an outline of the challenges of delivering a major project in a town centre. She stated that a grant of £5.98m had been secured from the VVP programme which provides an opportunity to support the evolution of Bridgend town centre, bringing more people to live in the centre, to create vibrancy, footfall, innovation and economic growth.

The Head of Regeneration and Planning informed the Committee the VVP programme comprised the following elements:

- Rhiw Gateway
- Homes in Town
- New parking provision
- Disposal of Council owned land
- Business Improvement District
- Townscape Heritage Initiative
- Redevelopment of 11 Nolton Street

The Head of Regeneration and Planning informed the Committee that substantial progress had been made with piling currently taking place at the Rhiw Gateway site. She stated there is a Delivery Plan and Risk Register for the project and a Development Agreement signed with Coastal Housing Group and a programme manager allocated to the scheme. The Head of Regeneration and Planning also informed the Committee that as tenders for the development had come in at a higher cost than anticipated a value engineering exercise had been undertaken to bring the project into line with available funding. An amended scheme had resulted in a two month delay to a start being made on site. The Head of Regeneration and Planning informed the Committee that work was being undertaken with Welsh Government officials to find the most suitable means to ensure there was no under spend at year end as it was not possible to carry forward funding into the next year. Work was being undertaken on options ii and iii in the report, in order to safeguard the drawdown of grant.

The Head of Regeneration and Planning informed the Committee of progress made to date on the Homes in Town project which would result in properties being converted in the town centre. Discussions were taking place with the Welsh Government on the potential to use the Council's capital allocation against a town centre scheme under the proposed Building for the Future Programme, should take up of the Homes in Town project remain problematic.

The Committee questioned the effect on usage of Shopmobility following its relocation to the Brackla Multi Storey Car Park. The Head of Regeneration and Planning informed the Committee that she would provide the Committee with data on usage of Shopmobility which would be looked at in line with footfall in the town centre. Usage of Shopmobility had however fluctuated since the relocation of Shopmobility.

The Committee referred to the need for amendments having to be made to the Rhiw Gateway project and questioned the risk attached to not drawing down funding and what physical changes have been made to the scheme. The Director of Development Coastal Housing Group informed the Committee that several areas in relation to the value engineering exercise had been considered as it did not want to compromise the development and wanted to avoid the need to re-apply for planning consent. He stated that an example of value engineering was the frame of the building which had been constructed in a more cost effective way. In relation to the housing element of the development, boiler specifications and kitchen finishes had been reviewed. He stated that uppermost was the need to avoid delaying the process of construction. The Head of Regeneration and Planning informed the Committee that following the value engineering exercise there would no longer be painted finishes on all walls and pillars in the new car park and there would be less drainage gullies. She stated that there was a need to ensure that the vision for the car park was not comprised as Secure By Design had requirements in relation to the CCTV equipment at the car park. She stated that car parking spaces would be wider and in line with current parking standards. The Director of Development Coastal Housing Group informed the Committee that the project had been commenced in the autumn with the car park taking 12 months to construct and handed over in the latter part of 2016 or the early part of 2017. It was envisaged the residential units would be handed over in 18 months. The Head of Regeneration and Planning also informed the Committee that most of the value engineering changes made were in relation to the choice of materials used and that one lift would be provided in the residential development as opposed to the two lifts originally envisaged.

The Committee referred to the progress on the Homes in Town project and questioned what would happen to the 5 properties which had proven to be unsuitable for development. The Head of Regeneration and Planning informed the Committee that the conversion of properties in the town centre for residential is difficult due to noise problems from late night economy establishments due to the high cost of conversion to insulate properties against noise. She stated that a report is to be commissioned to introduce measures to combat noise in order that landlords did not incur abortive costs. She informed the Committee of the need to resolve the issue of noise in the town centre preventing development from taking place as residential development was part of the match funding package.

The Committee questioned in relation to the YBC site identified for disposal the number of 1 bedroom properties to be developed and whether local builders were given the opportunity to develop sites. The Head of Regeneration and Planning informed the Committee that it was unlikely that 1 bedroom properties would be developed on the YBC site but she would provide the Committee with information on the configuration of the properties to be developed. She stated that sites are advertised on the open market which would be more attractive to the larger house builders. Local builders would be more successful in developing smaller residential sites. Sites are disposed of on the open market, however sites are occasionally sold off market but prior to such sales, sites are valued by the District Valuer.

The Committee questioned whether the affordable housing policy of providing 25% of properties for new developments had been applied in relation to the Homes in Town project due to their closeness to the town centre and rail and bus stations. The Head of Regeneration and Planning informed the Committee that the affordable housing is applied but the requirements of the developer are considered for each development and developers are required to produce an appraisal for their site. She stated that residential schemes take time to work up with developers and policies were not overturned. The Committee considered that sites for residential development should be disposed to

Registered Social Landlords where possible. The Director of Development Coastal Housing Group informed the Committee that RSLs would welcome off market disposals but they would need to look at the viability of developing affordable housing on some sites. The Cabinet Member Communities informed the Committee that the Council is in the position of having to release assets where possible, funds from which were re-invested in the School Modernisation Programme. He informed the Committee that the Local Housing Strategy was currently the subject of consultation and he welcomed Members to take part in the consultation.

The Committee referred to the progress being made in developing the Business Improvement District and expressed concern that a significant part of the business community could be omitted, namely businesses in parts of Tremains Road and Eweny Road as they are located outside the BID boundary. The Head of Regeneration and Planning informed the Committee that the boundaries for the BID had been determined by the traders themselves. The traders who are part of the BID would also determine a levy based on their rateable value in order for the BID to make decisions. It was likely that the ballot for the BID would take place in March 2016.

The Committee referred to funding being concentrated in towns and questioned whether villages would benefit from external funding. The Head of Regeneration and Planning informed the Committee that regeneration funding for villages is available through the Rural Development Programme whilst Bridges into Work is available for people who are long term unemployed. She stated that most of the County Borough was covered by some form of regeneration funding.

The Committee questioned whether health and safety matters would be considered prior to any re-development of 11 Nolton Street. The Director of Development Coastal Housing Group informed the Committee that Coastal had purchased the property in 2013 and prior to any re-development due diligence, ground testing and appropriate checks would take place.

The Head of Regeneration and Planning summarised the process of developing a major project on site at the Rhiw Gateway in that noise levels have had to be dealt with, although noise from the site was within acceptable limits. She stated that the presence of trees on site could de-stabilise the site and consent was required to cut down the trees. A bat survey had to be undertaken and consultation taken place with Bridgend Town Council and the Civic Trust. She informed the Committee that costs had increased due to the presence of trees which had been removed prior to the commencement of piling. Fire marshals had to be placed when the walkway from the multi storey car park to the Rhiw Shopping Centre was taken down. She stated that keeping neighbours and traders happy had been a difficult and complicated process to manage.

The Cabinet Member Communities placed on record his thanks to the Head of Regeneration and Planning and the Regeneration team in securing the Vibrant and Viable Places funding and for taking the project through to fruition.

Conclusions

1. In light of the proposals for new housing developments at various sites across the County Borough, the Committee wished to raise the need for the Authority to ensure that developers strictly adhere to the policy for affordable housing provision.

2. In relation to the disposal of Council land, the Committee stressed the importance of ensuring that the right price is gained for the land and that the Authority does not lose out financially in any way.
3. The Committee agreed to progress this item further, adding it to their forward work programme for next year to focus on the following:
 - Rhiw Gateway – late 2016/early 2017 - Measure of Success - impact on the town centre, footfall, how people have moved into the town centre etc.
 - Homes in Town – revisit in 6-7 months' time to consider how the risks, issues and mitigating measures have been progressed.

Additional Information

1. The Committee asked to receive the figures for the usage levels for the Shop Mobility since its change in location from the Rhiw car park to Brackla car park.
2. The Committee asked for information as to how many of the converted town centre homes would be one bedroom.
3. Whether RSLs have been approached regarding their interest in purchasing Council land as they tend to have a higher allocation of affordable housing than private investors.

38. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items

39. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business as they contained exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14 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.

Following the application of the public interest test it was resolved that pursuant to the Act referred to above, to consider the under-mentioned item in private with the public being excluded from the meeting as it would involve the disclosure of exempt information as stated above.

40. PROCUREMENT OF WASTE MANAGEMENT SERVICES AT THE MATERIALS RECOVERY AND ENERGY CENTRE, CRYMLYN BURROWS, (MREC)

The meeting closed at 5.00 pm

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REPORT TO COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

23 MARCH 2016

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE – LEGAL AND REGULATORY SERVICES

FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the items due to be considered at the Committee's next meeting to be held following the Annual General Meeting of Council.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives / Other Corporate Priorities

- 2.1 The key improvement objectives identified in the Corporate Plan 2013-2017 have been embodied in the Overview & Scrutiny Forward Work Programmes. The amended Corporate Improvement Objectives adopted by Council on 25 February 2015 formally set out the improvement objectives that the Council will seek to implement between 2013 and 2017. The Overview and Scrutiny Committees engage in review and development of plans, policy or strategies that support the Corporate Themes.

3. Background

- 3.1 At its meeting on 24 June 2015 the Corporate Resources and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee determined its Annual Forward Work Programme for 2015/16.

4. Current Situation / Proposal

- 4.1 In relation to the Committee's next meeting the table below lists the potential items to be considered and the invitees due to attend.

Topic	Invitees	Specific Information Requested	Research to be Undertaken by the Overview & Scrutiny Unit
Halo	tbc	From the CEL OVSC meeting on 8 October 2015 - Members would like this item to be added to the list of future potential items for the Committee Forward Work Programme.	
Homes in Town	tbc	From the CEL OVSC meeting on 27 January 2016 - Revisit in 6-7 months' time to consider how the risks, issues and mitigating measures have been progressed.	

Extra Items for Consideration

- 4.2 The list below contains potential items as yet to be decided for the 2016-17 forward work programme. The prioritisation and timings of these will be agreed at the Committee meeting following the Annual General Meeting.

Topic	Purpose of Report	Invitees
Porthcawl Harbour	Porthcawl Harbour and its operation has been put forward for consideration as an item for the FWP. The purpose of the report is to enable Members to understand how the project is working, how many staff are employed, whether it is breaking even, losing money, or indeed bringing in some income into the authority. Also the long term "pit falls" i.e. having to dredge the harbour, how often, how much will it cost, etc.	tbc
Rhiw Gateway	Late 2016/early 2017 - Measure of Success report – to include information on any impact on the town centre, footfall, how people have moved into the town centre etc.	tbc
Procurement of Waste Management Services at the Materials Recovery and Energy Centre Crymlyn Burrows (MREC)	From the CEL OVSC meeting on 27 January 2016 - request for a report to contain consolidated information in relation to the progress made in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increasing recycling• Reducing Residual Waste• Findings from work undertaken into the possibility of Bridgend ceasing its contract with NPT for the disposal of Residual Waste	tbc
Management of Sports Pavilions		tbc

Corporate Parenting

- 4.3 Corporate Parenting is the term used to describe the responsibility of a local authority towards looked after children and young people. This is a legal responsibility given to local authorities by the Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004. The role of the Corporate Parent is to seek for children in public care the outcomes every good parent would want for their own children. The Council as a

whole is the 'corporate parent' therefore all Members have a level of responsibility for the children and young people looked after by Bridgend.¹

4.4 In this role, it is suggested that Members consider how the services within the remit of their Committee affects children in care and care leavers, and in what way can the Committee can therefore assist in these areas.

4.5 Scrutiny Champions can greatly support the Committee in this by advising them of the ongoing work of the Cabinet-Committee and particularly any decisions or changes which they should be aware of as Corporate Parents.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework and Procedure Rules

5.1 The work of the Corporate Resources and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee relates to the review and development of plans, policy or strategy that form part of the Policy Framework and consideration of plans, policy or strategy relating to the power to promote or improve economic, social or environmental well being in the County Borough of Bridgend.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 None

7. Financial Implications

7.1 None.

8. Recommendations

¹ Welsh Assembly Government and Welsh Local Government Association *'If this were my child... A councillor's guide to being a good corporate parent to children in care and care leavers'*, June 2009

The Committee is recommended to:

- (i) Note the topics due be considered at the next meeting of the Committee to be scheduled at the Annual General Meeting of Council;
- (ii) Determine the invitees to be invited to attend, any specific information it would like the invitees to provide and any research that it would like the Overview & Scrutiny Unit to undertake in relation to this meeting.

Andrew Jolley,
Assistant Chief Executive – Legal & Regulatory Services

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Background Documents: None

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

23 MARCH 2016

AWEN CULTURAL TRUST

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the progress made by the Awen Cultural Trust (the Trust) since it was established to manage a range of cultural services and facilities on behalf of the Council, with effect from 1st October 2015, including an update on the Wood B and B Leaf programmes.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities

- 2.1 The provision of cultural services plays a vital role in the wellbeing of communities across the County Borough of Bridgend.

3. Background

- 3.1 Reports to the Council's Cabinet on 13th January 2015 and 1st September 2015 set out the approved basis and process for the establishment of a 'not for profit' Cultural Trust.
- 3.2 The Awen Cultural Trust manages the Council's Theatres and Arts service, the Library Service, Community Centres, Bryngarw House and Park and also the Wood B and B-Leaf work related projects.

4. Current Situation / Proposal

- 4.1 The key document that governs the relationship between the Council and the Trust is the Partnership Agreement which sets out the key provisions with regard to service provision, pricing, programming, service planning and management.
- 4.2 In addition a cultural partnership outcomes framework and key performance indicators have been agreed. The Trust are responsible for collecting and collating both quantitative and qualitative data including that related to the Welsh Public Library Standards [WPLS] for the statutory library service which the Trust manage on the Council's behalf. The outcome framework can be reviewed periodically to reflect the priorities of the Council and to direct the Trust towards those issues and matters that the Council deems to be most important. The main priorities for the Trust are agreed in an annual service plan which the Trust presents for Council approval annually. The draft service plan for 2016/17 is included as **Appendix 1**, including the partnership outcomes framework.

- 4.3 The Council and the Trust entered into lease arrangements in respect of buildings managed by the Trust on behalf of the Council which establish the respective responsibilities for each party in respect of those buildings, in particular this is important for establishing the respective obligations for repair and maintenance of the buildings. The Trust sets out an annual planned maintenance plan for approval by the Council. The Communities Directorate must bid to the Council's minor capital works budget for any items of maintenance or improvement that the Council retains responsibility for under the terms of the leases. The exception to these arrangements is the majority of community centres which are not leased to the Trust, but where the Trust carry out an 'agent' role for the Council, set out in a service level agreement, to support the various voluntary management committees who continue to be responsible for the day to day management of the centres.
- 4.4 A great focus for the initial few months for the Trust has inevitably been around business consolidation. Establishing a brand new independent organisation without any 'shadow' period is a huge undertaking. A high calibre Board of Trustees has been appointed with a mix of skills from both the business community and with local interest and knowledge. For example the Board contains representatives who are Managing Directors of existing 'not for profit' companies, some with significant financial and accountancy background and some with cultural services and creative industries experience.
- 4.5 The Council is restricted to fewer than twenty percent representation on the Board. The two nominated Council representatives are Councillor John McCarthy and Councillor Jeff Tildesley. The Council nominated representatives must by law represent the best interests of the Trust.
- 4.6 Although the majority of its staff were TUPE transferred from the Council, the new Trust has had to establish appropriate processes for finance and budget management, human resources and day to day management.
- 4.7 The Trust is a separate independent organisation which has charitable status. Due to the significant amount of public funds invested in the new venture, internal audit were tasked with assessing controls in order to provide the Council and the Trust with reasonable assurance that they are adequate. A final report was received in January 2016.
- 4.8 Although the organisation is still very much in its infancy a pleasing 'reasonable assurance' opinion was given, and no substantial risks were identified.
- 4.9 Monthly meetings are held between the Chief Executive of the Trust and the Corporate Director Communities to monitor and discuss the partnership arrangements, including any matters of performance, development or contractual issues. It is, however, hoped to strengthen the client arrangements the Council has in place to work with the Trust moving forward in the new financial year.
- 4.10 It is important to note that the establishment of a not for profit Trust was chosen by the Council as the best way of managing the libraries and other cultural services previously managed by the Council, as it represented what was likely to be the most effective way of preserving a 'cultural offer' within the County Borough in the face of significant projected financial cut backs to the service moving forward. The aim is

for the Trust to operate on a more commercial basis with a view to reducing costs and maximising revenues, thereby protecting services and reducing the required funding from the Council in the future. The Council will work closely in partnership with the Trust to ensure that the services provided remain as accessible as possible to the whole community and ensure the impact on staff and customers is minimised. The Partnership Agreement sets out the indicative reduction the Trust can expect in its annual grant payment over the term of the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016/17 to 2019/20 – this represents £418,000.

- 4.11 Both the Trust and the Council recognise the understandable concern some elected members have expressed with regard to the transfer of the Wood B and B-Leaf work related projects from the Council to the Trust. However, the transfer has been very smooth with a lot of positive feedback received from clients, their families and from colleagues within Social Services and Wellbeing. The Trust has ensured that all risk assessments have been reviewed for all clients and has made a concerted effort to better integrate the activities in Wood B and B-Leaf into the wider activities of the Trust. An example of this is the production of wooden reindeer decorations, produced by the team from windfall timber in the park. This work involved developing a process from design through to production and sale of the decorations. This proved a very successful enterprise and all the decorations were sold before Christmas. As well as this the grounds maintenance team have been working at Pencoed Library and continue to maintain the grounds at Bryngarw House. The team are preparing to receive 24,000 bedding plants which will be grown in the poly tunnels ready for sale; some of the plants will be used to make Easter Wreaths. The ethos of skill development and work experience is being strengthened by the Trust who are developing the commercial potential of B-Leaf and Wood B.
- 4.12 Since the transfer the Trust management team have worked well with officers from the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate. There have been regular meetings and discussions and the Learning Disability Assessment Care Management Team continue to have contact with service users and their families as before. A draft performance management framework, which includes quality monitoring criteria, has been produced by officers and is currently being discussed with the Trust management team; this framework will be in place by April 2016. Arrangements have been made to continue the 'Rota Visits' to B-Leaf and Wood B which are included in the current program. The Council retains the responsibility to transport service users to B-Leaf and Wood B and these arrangements are being reviewed in line with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.
- 4.13 As part of the Partnership Agreement between the Council and the Trust an annual service plan has to be submitted by the Trust and agreed by the Council prior to the new financial year. This is currently being considered by the Council for the financial year 2016/17 but sets out some key objectives for the Trust for the next few years which include:

A capital strategy that includes plans to develop both Maesteg Town Hall and the Grand Pavilion, Porthcawl into vibrant cultural hubs. A £500,000 BCBC Capital contribution has been agreed by Council on the 10th March towards a Maesteg Town Hall project with anticipated total project costs of £3,845,000.

Plans to develop the existing cultural programme at Maesteg Town Hall

A marketing strategy to develop new audiences based on more effective use of social media

Improved partnership working to ensure the library service offer remains of high quality and locally relevant

Increased opportunities for work related opportunities for clients in Wood B and B-Leaf

5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules

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

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 A full equalities impact assessment was completed and attached to the Cabinet report on September 1st 2015, seeking approval to proceed with the transfer of cultural services to Awen Cultural Trust. The Partnership Agreement and outcomes framework obligates the Trust to maximise participation in cultural activities by 'all sections of the local community regardless of age, earnings or ability'.

7. Financial Implications

7.1 The service fee for the period 1st October 2015 to 31st March was paid in -bi-monthly instalments. Going forward, the service fee will be paid in equal quarterly instalments in advance, adjusted on an annual basis to reflect MTFS savings and/or transfer of any additional services to the Trust. The service fee will also be subject to an overall review every 3 years from the commencement date of the Partnership Agreement.

7.2 The Partnership Agreement sets out the indicative reduction the Trust can expect in its annual grant payment over the term of the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016/17 to 2019/20 – this represents £418,000.

7.3 As indicated at paragraph 4.3 of the report the Council agreed on the 10th March 2016 a capital contribution of £500,000 towards additional facilities within Maesteg Town Hall and co-locating the library provision. The total scheme costs are estimated to be £3,845,000.

8. Recommendation

8.1 It is recommended that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the very positive progress the Awen Cultural Trust has made over the last 5 months since being established in October 2015.

Mark Shephard
CORPORATE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES
February 2016

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Background documents:

Cabinet Report 13th January 2015
Cabinet Report 1st September 2015

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AWEN CULTURAL TRUST Draft Service Plan 2016-17

1. Overall Service Objectives

Awen Cultural Trust is looking to consolidate its position throughout 2016/17 as a locally recognised social business and charity with a reputation for delivering quality facilities and experiences.

As an organisation there will be a particular focus on organisational culture, developing values and behaviours that will underpin our commitment to our customers.

Key objectives for 2016/17 include:

- Developing programme and activity at Maesteg Town Hall
- Progressing a capital strategy that meets the theatre and library ambitions of Maesteg and Porthcawl
- Reaching new audiences through a channel shift approach to communication and a greater emphasis on social media
- Further develop partnerships with other delivery bodies to increase activities, in particular within the library services with a focus on children, young people and digital inclusion.
- Enhancing the opportunities and experiences for trainees at B-Leaf and Wood-B by creating new product lines and wider work related activities.

The above will complement a financial strategy that acknowledges a reduced management fee from Bridgend CBC and the need to focus on increasing revenue streams and value for money reviews.

2. Service planning

The following has been prepared for the Council's consideration against the 2015/16 Outcomes Framework for the Cultural Partnership. It is proposed that, as well as reporting retrospectively on the activities, the Council will measure the Trust's success using a balanced score-card approach.

<i>BCBC Cultural Aims</i>	<i>5-year Commissioning Outcomes</i>	<i>Activities</i>
Promote, celebrate and champion the county borough's rich cultural heritage	People (customers) enjoy access to and positive experiences at Bridgend's arts venues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Pavilion and Maesteg Town Hall will programme a diverse range of arts events and activities. Awen will specifically focus on encouraging new audiences at Maesteg Town Hall through a supported programme of events and marketing.</i> • <i>Implementation of new box office arrangements for Maesteg Town Hall to increase opening hours, accessibility and data collection.</i> • <i>Awen will seek to undertake a training programme for staff to improve marketing, programming and fundraising across all venues with a view to improving customer experience and increasing</i>

		<p><i>attendances.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• Awen will look to implement a new disability and carers scheme that ensures fair access to arts performances.</i>
	Local cultural organisations are active, viable and sustainable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• Awen will seek to actively support other local arts organisations in the development of programmes, promotional activities and technical support.</i> <i>• Awen will work with Carnegie House to provide them with support in marketing, programming and audience development</i> <i>• Awen will work in partnership with Valley & Vale Community Arts for the delivery of projects in the Omore and Garw Valleys</i> <i>• Awen will provide advice and support to artists and arts organisations, both professional and amateur, in terms of grant applications, event development etc.</i>
	Bridgend's cultural heritage has a sustained positive impact on communities and the local economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• The Local & Family History Library will develop a series of events and activities to celebrate the role of culture in the communities of the County Borough</i> <i>• Natural heritage – Awen will work with, and support, the Bryngarw Volunteer group in the implementation of a new complete a new accessible learning trail, further enhancing the features of the Park to attract greater visitor numbers.</i> <i>• Awen will refresh the park's management plan with aim of achieving Green Flag status over the first two years of the Partnership.</i> <i>• Awen will initiate a programme of work that exploits the natural resources available within Bryngarw Park, and utilising skills from Bleaf / WoodB and providing further training opportunities for adults with disabilities, create opportunity for sustainable products.</i>

Employ culture as means of supporting and enriching formal learning	Children and young people have a good level of literacy and digital skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Publicise and promote the successful Summer Reading Challenge</i> • <i>Start a series of regular 'Coding Clubs' in libraries to support digital skills for young people</i> • <i>A full programme of regular 'Bounce & Rhyme' sessions where babies and toddlers are introduced to rhyme, songs, books, actions and the library in a welcoming and supportive environment</i> • <i>Regular story times, offering children the opportunity to listen to a story and then participate in a related craft activity</i> • <i>Storywalks: working with Love 2 Walk to deliver a body and mind programme to children aged 3-11</i> • <i>Hold the successful annual 'Penalty Kick' reading programme for reluctant young readers</i> • <i>Awen representatives will form a part of the steering group for the arts in education work of the South Central Education Consortia with a view to supporting Bridgend Schools to access funding and other opportunities</i>
Support and develop the growth of the creative industries and cultural sector as key contributors to the local economy	People of all ages, but in particular young people have access to, and can experience and develop career pathways within the creative industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Provide work experience placements for Bridgend College students through the events programme in Bryngarw Park</i> • <i>Continue to work in partnership with It's My Shout for the delivery of Bridgend Youth Theatre and the BBC Made in Wales film scheme</i> • <i>Work in partnership with Arts Connect and Bridgend College on the delivery of the Forte Music project</i> • <i>Develop youth theatre taster sessions in the Llynfi, Garw and Ogmore valley areas</i> • <i>Work with It's My Shout to recruit trainees from the more deprived communities in to the creative industries training scheme</i>

	People of all ages are digitally literate and are helped to secure support and employment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake a project supported by Digital Communities Wales to offer ICT advice and support to the housebound and elderly via Mobile Library services • Job Club to be launched at Pencoed Library in conjunction with Bridges into Work to support people seeking employment • Awen will formally launch an innovative library app, developed in conjunction with a south Wales tech start-up as a window onto the service's range of e-resources.
Tackling poverty by widening access and routes to participation and quality cultural experiences`	People in the county borough's most deprived communities are accessing cultural provision and opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan and deliver a 'Pop-up library' in Blaengarw Workmen's Hall and other locations to promote library services in valleys communities and/or C1st areas • Develop the library offer in Betws by scheduling regular activities for young people and raising the profile of the library in the community • Maintain a wide programme of activities and develop, promote and encourage new events at our community centres • Delivery of Creative Industries Training workshops and Youth Theatre taster sessions to attract people from C1st areas
	Equality of opportunity and inclusivity is at the heart of cultural provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Running and supporting a range of inclusive and supportive reading groups Inc. groups for adults, children, teenagers and Welsh language groups • Deliver events at Bryngarw Country Park in conjunction with Menter Iaith • Enhance welsh language programming in the arts venues, particularly Maesteg Town Hall, with a view to working closely with welsh language primary and secondary schools • The Grand Pavilion will participate in National Disabled Access Day • Conduct a disabled access audit of Bryngarw Country Park in partnership with Bridgend College • The library service will enter into a

		<p><i>partnership with the RNIB which will allow us to offer a wider range of audio books to our blind and partially-sighted customers and allow people with impaired vision to fully take part in our reading groups</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Awen is committed to providing a wide range of books and e-books in the Welsh language for adults and young people at all our libraries</i>
Inspire people to develop to their full potential and through culture make people's lives better and more fulfilled	People with disabilities learn new skills and confidence to lead and sustain independent lives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Marketing drive to raise profile of accessible opportunities / facilities within the trust e.g. induction loops; audio described performances, wheelchair accessible play equipment etc.</i> • <i>Introduction of HYNT scheme to provide carers with free tickets to enable disabled people to have the support they need to access events</i> • <i>Development of training plans for trainees at WoodB/Bleaf and delivery of work skills training in partnership with Elite Supported Work Agency</i> • <i>Create more training opportunities/work experience taster sessions for adults with disabilities in other areas of the trust</i> • <i>Recruit more trainees to the existing programmes i.e. Bleaf & WoodB</i> • <i>Hold an open day for parents/carers</i> • <i>Hold an awards evening to acknowledge success of trainees</i>
	People at risk of being disadvantaged or disengage are social included through arts and culture (Suggest combining with the Equality of Opportunity theme above)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Delivery of Bridgend Youth Theatre Workshops for young people with autism in partnership with Arts Council of Wales</i>
	People are healthier and independent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Work in partnership with local dementia groups to offer targeted library services to dementia sufferers and their families</i> • <i>Develop a programme of 'Healthy body, healthy mind' sessions for the elderly</i>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Participate in developing Awen's Volunteering Policy with the aim of creating varied and fulfilling roles for volunteers to help to deliver innovative library services</i> • <i>Booklink service continues to support the housebound by providing books for both information and entertainment. Also now providing IT support and encouragement. Supported by digital technology supplied by Digital Communities Wales.</i>
Develop a sustainable cultural offer based on delivering relevant and value for money provision	Facilities and programmes are more sustainable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Continue to develop the e-resources offer in libraries</i> • <i>Deliver a "channel shift" project realising efficiencies and economies of scale by using smarter marketing technology and approaches</i> • <i>Develop retail opportunities at Bryngarw Park</i> •

3. Performance Indicators and Targets

As an approach to measuring Awen's success against the Outcomes Framework, Awen is proposing adopting elements of our Performance Scorecard. This has been specifically designed to consider our charitable / outcome objectives while also delivering an user friendly overview of the organisation's overall health and performance.

The Scorecard will be supplemented with case studies and other evidence to demonstrate impact against the range of outcomes.

The proposed scorecard is present as Appendix C.

The outcome measures are developed using the logic basis where longitudinal and academic evidence supports that participation has benefit e.g. that children who use libraries perform better at school and have better literacy skills.

4. Programmes of Use and Proposed Activities

As part of a strategy to encourage more and more people to engage with, and benefit, from library services and resources, Awen will be piloting a new *pop-up library* at Blaengarw Workmens Hall. This provides an additional alternative to the mobile library. It helps position the Hall as community resource and cultural hub within the Garw Valley.

There are no other plans to introduce new programmes of use beyond those activities outlined within the Partnership Agreement.

5. Pricing Changes

Room hire charges at Pyle and Y Llynfi libraries will be revised to reflect community usage and consistency across venues. A small number of prices which have been historically unsustainably low will be increased; many charges will be reduced to encourage greater usage by the community.

A full report is attached at Appendix A. Awen requests that the Council notes and supports the proposals.

As part of the effort to reduce dependency on public funding and increase the profitability of products Awen will be introducing booking charges on ticket sales during 2016/17. Booking charges are already in place at Maesteg Town Hall.

6. Changes to opening hours

Betws Library

Betws Library is currently open for 17 hours per week, viz. Tuesday 9.30-1 & 2-5, Thursday 2-6, Friday 9.30-1 & 2-5. These hours were established following a staffing restructure in 2011 which envisaged a full-time job share Community Librarian role who worked across Betws and Pontycymer Libraries. In practice the role has always been split between two part-time members of staff and, since 2012, the staffing of Pontycymer Library has been the responsibility of Halo.

As such, it makes sense to revise the opening hours at Betws to maximise use of the facility in line with the needs of the community. The community centre in which the library is located has long been relatively quiet on Fridays and statistics show that Friday is the least busy day for the library. Evidence from other comparable libraries shows that Monday is usually the busiest weekday (for example Sarn Library issues 20% more books on a Monday than a Friday) and hence, with the agreement of the post holder, it is proposed to move the Friday session to a Monday.

This will maintain the opening hours at 17 hours per week but should improve visitor numbers, book issues and community visibility. The service will engage with current library users over the course of a month prior to the change of hours to ensure that anyone affected is aware. In addition, the local council member will be apprised of the proposed change and the rationale behind it.

7. Operational Procedure Changes

Awen Cultural Trust has adopted an Adult Safeguarding Policy which is attached for the Council's reference. The nominated Safeguarding Officer and the Director of Business Development have already undergone training for their roles.

Awen can confirm that Ceri Evans, Director of Business Developments is the Trust's nominated officer for the purposes of liaison with the Council's nominated officer for B-leaf and Wood-B under provision 33.1 of the Partnership Agreement.

During October 2105 Awen instigated a total review of the referral process and procedures for service users at WoodB and Bleaf. The result was the flow chart as illustrated in Appendix B. It is requested that the Council formally acknowledge the process through this first service planning document.

Aligned to this process are the responsibilities of both parties to ensuring the safe and appropriate placement of service users to ensure the best possible experience within the two settings.

Awen Cultural Trust has adopted a Health & Safety Policy in accordance with provisions 4.4 of the Partnership Agreement and a copy is attached.

8. Marketing Action Plan

Awen Cultural Trust has recently restructured the marketing functions bringing them together in to a central Marketing & Development Unit. Reporting to the Director of Business Development, their remit is to cover internal/external communications, strategic and operational marketing, fundraising and commercial development.

The main priority for the marketing team early in 2016/17 is to conduct a marketing audit with a view to developing a Marketing & Development action plan. Work is already underway on a comprehensive branding review with a view to developing the Trust's visual identity and its utilisation through new and/or refreshed websites. As part of this process an organisational culture workshop has been held with board members and further branding workshops are being held with staff in the coming weeks.

An application has been made to the Arts Council of Wales for a Training & Business Development Grant to support the team with the implementation of a major channel shift exercise from traditional marketing methods to improved use of digital technologies. This should help realise efficiencies as well as improve the customer experience. The grant will also enable to the team to improve their skills in fundraising and commercial activities thus contributing to the overall financial sustainability of the trust.

An application for capital support has also been made to Arts Council of Wales for a new box office and customer relationship management system for the trust which will provide a single box office service for events across the whole of the trust. The system will have integrated marketing segmentation software and sit seamlessly with websites to improve the customer experience and also provide sophisticated data intelligence on customer behaviour thus enhancing marketing opportunities and performance monitoring.

9. Other proposals

Awen Cultural Trust would like to seek the Council's agreement for the implementation of Pay & Display parking arrangements at the Grand Pavilion, Car park in Porthcawl. While providing some additional revenue, the aim of the scheme is also to discourage all-day town centre users parking at this site. It is currently a free to park site which already experiences non-pavilion users parking there for long lengths of time at the expense of customers and staff. This will no doubt become more prevalent as wider parking schemes are implemented around the town.

This request is made in accordance with provision 16.1 of the Partnership Agreement.

10. Financial Plan

The 2016/17 budget is currently being finalised. A breakdown of proposed spend against the various facilities and activities will be forwarded to the Council to supplement this Service Plan.

AWEN CULTURAL TRUST
REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS
LIBRARY ROOM HIRE CHARGES
FEBRUARY 2016

1.0 Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform BCBC of proposals to amend room hire charges in libraries and to explain the rationale behind these changes.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 As part of its role in supporting activities within the community, Awen Cultural Trust (the Trust) hires out space and rooms to individuals and groups at Pyle Library and, on a smaller scale, at Y Llynfi and Ty'r Ardd Libraries.
- 2.2 Over the years a patchwork of charges has been developed with little consistency regarding levels of charges and eligibility for concessionary rates.

3.0 Current position

- 3.1 The Trust wishes to establish a logical pricing framework for the spaces it rents out in libraries, ensuring that there is a consistent approach with community centre rates. Although some historically low prices will be increased, many prices will be reduced in order to maximize community usage of these facilities. It should be noted that room hire charges at Pyle Library have remained unchanged for at least nine years.
- 3.2 A summary of the proposed changes is as follows:

Pyle Library (non-ICT usage):

Current cost per hr	Room	Proposed cost per hr	Room
£8.24; £3.40-£4.12 (conc.)	All rooms	£10; £6 (conc.)	Halls/Large Rooms (after 4:30pm only)
		£8.50; £4.50 (conc.)	Meeting Rooms (inc. Training Room 2)

Y Llynfi & Ty'r Ardd (non-ICT usage) - NEW:

Current cost per hr	Room	Proposed cost per hr	Room
--	--	£8.50; £4.50 (conc.)	IT suite & The Gallery (Y Llynfi); IT suite (Ty'r Ardd)

Training Room Hire Charges (ICT Usage): Pyle, Y Llynfi, Ty'r Ardd

Current			
Customer	Purpose of Hire	Number of Sessions	Cost
BCBC Users	staff training	One session*	£75 (£61.88 Exc. VAT)
		Two consecutive sessions on same day	£115 (£94.88 Exc. VAT)
		All day (3 consecutive sessions)	£152 (£125.40 Exc. VAT)
Schools, BCBC Adult Classes, Voluntary Groups and Non-BCBC	free training for the public	One session	£38 (£31.35 Exc. VAT)
		Two consecutive sessions on same day	£58 (£47.85 Exc. VAT)
		All day (3 consecutive sessions)	£75 (£61.88 Exc. VAT)
Non-BCBC users	Paid for training for the public	One session	£115 (£94.88 Exc. VAT)
		Two consecutive sessions on same day	£178 (£146.85 Exc. VAT)
		All day (3 consecutive sessions)	£230 (£189.75 Exc. VAT)
Non-BCBC users	Commercial Use	One session	£190 (£156.75 Exc. VAT)
		Two consecutive sessions on same day	£305 (£251.63 Exc. VAT)
		All day (3 consecutive sessions)	£380 (£313.50 Exc. VAT)
ACL	Free & paid for training for the public	One session	£33 (plus 50% reduction)
		Two consecutive sessions on same day	£50 (plus 50% reduction)
		All day (3 consecutive sessions)	£65 (plus 50% reduction)

Proposed	
Time	Cost
Full Day	£60; £40 (conc.)
Half Day/Evening	£30; £20 (conc.)
Hourly	£10; £6 (conc.)

3.3 Current charges for room hire at the Trust's community centres are indicated at Appendix 1 to illustrate the consistency of approach across the Trust. Community centre charges are unaffected by the current proposals.

3.4 It is proposed that the revised charges are implemented from 1st April 2016.

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 The financial implications of the proposed changes will be minor but positive. Small increases in rates for non-ICT room hire are unlikely to affect the level of hires; reducing the complex web of unrealistic charges for the ICT suites should improve the occupancy rate of these rooms and hence increase income.

5.0 Recommendations

5.1 It is recommended that BCBC notes and supports these proposed changes.

Richard Bellinger

Director of Operations

February 2016

Current Charges for Awen Community Centres

No changes proposed

** NO VAT CHARGE APPLICABLE**

DURATION WILL BE PER HOUR OR PART OF THE HOUR

Awel Y Mor Community Centre (5127)

Facility	Time	Hourly Charge	Status
Main Hall & Stage	Morning / Afternoon	£13.50	Profit making group/private gain
Main Hall & Stage	Morning / Afternoon	£8.50	NPO/individual
Main Hall & Stage	Evening	£14.00	Profit making group/private gain
Main Hall & Stage	Evening	£9.00	NPO/individual
Committee Room	Morning / Afternoon	£7.00	Profit making group/private gain
Committee Room	Morning / Afternoon	£6.00	NPO/individual
Committee Room	Evening	£9.50	Profit making group/private gain
Committee Room	Evening	£7.00	NPO/individual

Coity & Litchard Higher Community Centre (5127)

Time	Hourly Charge	Status
Morning / Afternoon	£7.00	Profit making group/private gain
Morning / Afternoon	£6.00	NPO/Individual
Evening	£9.50	Profit making group/private gain
Evening	£7.00	NPO/Individual

Betws Life Centre Centre (5127)

	Time	Hourly Charge	Status
(Main Hall / IT Suite etc)	Morning / Afternoon	£13.00	Profit making group/private gain
	Morning / Afternoon	£5.00	NPO/Individual
	Creche	£1,050.00	Per Month (Private Gain)

Bryngarw Visitor Centre (5143)

Time	Charges	Status
Full Day	£80.00	
Half day	£40.00	

Hourly Rate	£20.00	Profit making group/private gain
Hourly Rate	£10.00	NPO/Individual

Discounted rates for non commercial groups & organisations or no private gain

Blaengarw Workingmens Hall (5006)

Facility	Time	Hourly Charge	Status
Main Hall & Stage	Morning / Afternoon	£13.00	Profit making group/private gain
Main Hall & Stage	Morning / Afternoon	£8.00	NPO/individual
Main Hall & Stage	Evening	£14.00	Profit making group/private gain
Main Hall & Stage	Evening	£9.00	NPO/individual
All other Rooms	Morning / Afternoon	£8.00	Profit making group/private gain
All other Rooms	Morning / Afternoon	£6.00	NPO/individual
All other Rooms	Evening	£10.00	Profit making group/private gain
All other Rooms	Evening	£7.00	NPO/individual
Tea & Coffee		£3.00	Per session profit making /private gain group
Tea & Coffee		<i>Free to NPO's</i>	Per session
Weekly charge for nurseries		£25.00	Profit making group/private gain
Daily charge for Mum & Toddler groups		£5.00	NPO/individual

Free first two weeks introductory promotion for NPO groups

Concessions

Those eligible for concessions will be:

- Charities
- Community Interest Companies (CICs)
- Not for Profit organisations, Limited by Guarantee
- Clubs (where the profits go to the club bank account, not an individual)

You can check a company's status using the following websites:

Companies House - <https://beta.companieshouse.gov.uk/>

The Charity Commission - <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission>

If a group or individual cannot give proof of their status as a not-for-profit, a final decision will be made by the Manager.

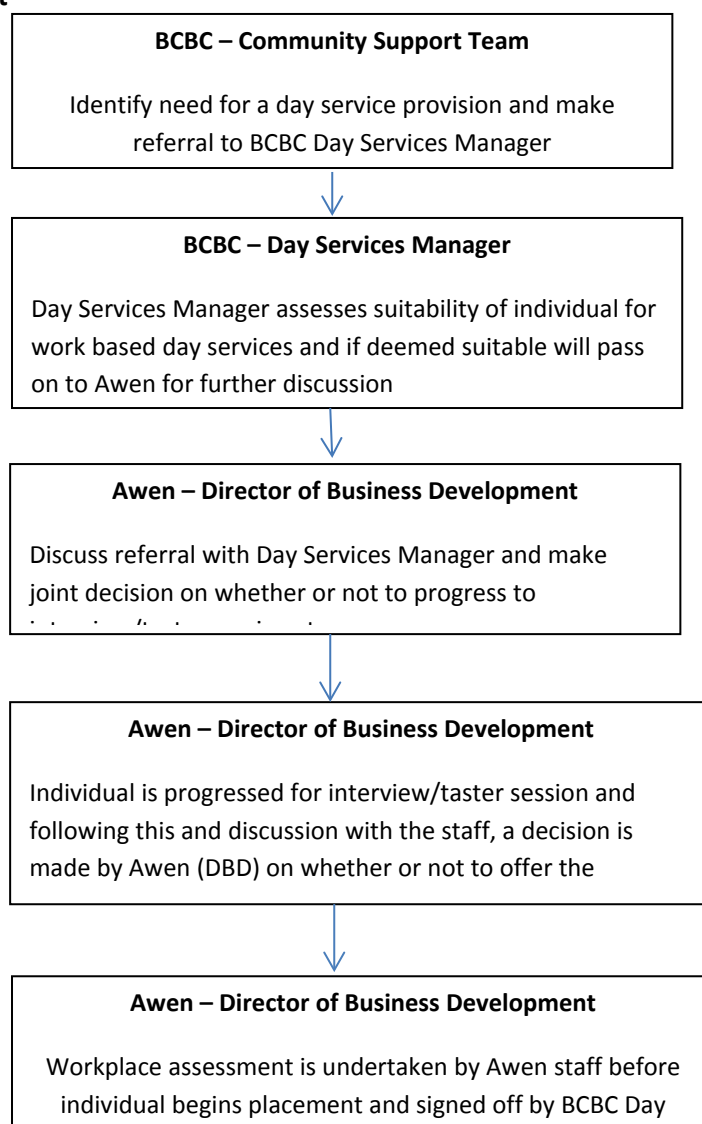
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Appendix B

Awen and BCBC: Defined areas of responsibility for work based projects

Awen	BCBC
Providing range and quality of opportunity	Creates personal support plan and undertakes regular reviews with relevant stakeholders – at least annually
Providing meaningful activities that have outcomes	Creates generalised risk assessments as necessary for service users – medical, behavioural etc
Keeping service users safe whilst engaged in these activities – ensuring environment, activity, tools etc are safe and appropriate	Signs off the workplace risk assessment created by Awen
Carrying out workplace risk assessments and regularly reviewing them – sign off by BCBC	Pro-active disclosure of any relevant information regarding service users
Participate in the annual reviews of the personal support plans	
Reporting any issues / incidents to BCBC	

Referral Flowchart



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APPENDIX C

AWEN CULTURAL TRUST BALANCED SCORECARD 2016/2017			
Period		Actual 15/16	Target 16/17
Performance areas			
Income and expenditure exc. Mgt Fee			
Income	CE		To be confirmed as part of budget setting process
Expenditure	CE		To be confirmed as part of budget setting process
Participation / Attendances			
Total no. of loans (books and electronic resources)	RB		455000
Visits to Bridgend Library	RB		160000
New library members registered	RB		4500
MTH attendance	MP		25000
GP attendance	MP		140000
Bryngarw Park visits	CE		205000
No. of attendances at WoodB/Bleaf	SM		1640 (TBC)
No. of participants at WoodB/Bleaf	SM		40 (TBC)
No. of bookings for community centres/Blaengarw Workingmen's Hall	DC		1440
No. of individual attendances at community centres/Blaengarw W Hall	DC		42000
Safety			
Accidents	HS		No more than 6
RIDDOR reportable	HS		No more than 2
POVA related to services	HS		No target - monitoring purpose only
Customer services			
Formal complaints received	HS		No more than 10
Workforce			
Absence as a percentage of total hours lost (%)	HS		No greater than 4%
Assets			
Electricity consumption	DC		to be developed
Gas consumption	DC		to be developed
Outcome measures			
% Venues Attendances GP from C1st post-code	MP		140000
% Venues Attendances MTH from C1st post-code	MP		25000
Children and young people attending library events	RB		36000
Nos. library members per 1000 population	RB		160
Nos. library issues per 1000 population	RB		3000
% of under-5 population who are library members	RB		30
Youth theatre participation / attendances	MP		6000
Customer satisfaction rating	HS		To be developed as part of customer charter and survey
Earned income as a % against mgt fee	CE		To be developed as part of business planning and budget setting process

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BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

23 MARCH 2016

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

SOCIAL HOUSING ALLOCATION POLICY AND COMMON HOUSING REGISTER UPDATE REPORT – HOUSING SOLUTION INTERVIEW, HOUSING REGISTRATION AND NOMINATION PROCESSES.

1. Purpose of Report.

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update the Committee on the Housing Solutions Service; to provide a pen picture of applicants who access the Common Housing Register (CHR), and those who do not; and explain the nomination process. The report will also advise Members of any barriers and issues in administering the CHR and how the service and its Registered Social Landlord (RSLs) partners intend to respond to these.

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

- 2.1 The Housing Solutions Service contributes towards the Corporate Plan Priority 'Working together to help vulnerable people stay independent'. The Social Housing Allocation Policy (SHAP) helps to deliver the Corporate Improvement Priorities of "working together to help vulnerable people to stay independent" and "working together to make the best use of resources", It also helps to manage demand for social housing.

3. Background.

- 3.1 The Committee received a report on 15th July 2015 setting out the factors that led to the implementation and development of the SHAP and the CHR. The report also advised Members of how the service and its Registered Social Landlord (RSLs) partners have reviewed the SHAP and how they intend to manage the increased demand for housing solutions services, in a period of budget cuts.
- 3.2 There is a statutory requirement for every housing authority to have a Housing Allocation Scheme for determining priorities, and a procedure to be followed in allocating housing accommodation. In Bridgend County Borough the Allocation Scheme is known as the SHAP and the procedure to be followed in allocating housing is known as the CHR. The Authority developed the CHR in partnership with the 4 local RSLs Valleys to Coast (V2C), Linc Cymru, Hafod, and Wales and West Housing Association. Valleys to Coast are able to allocate up to 25% of their vacancies through their own allocation policy as set out in the Deed of Stock Transfer. For all other RSLs they offer 100% nomination rights to the Council.
- 3.3 Prior to the introduction of the SHAP housing applicants could request to be registered on one of the five partners registers without any prior qualifying interview or discussion. This resulted in a disproportionate number of applicants (69% -

3,184 of 4,614) being accepted onto the registers without any identified housing need. The SHAP was developed with the customer in mind and applicants are now only accepted on to the CHR following a Housing Assessment by the Council.

4.0 Current Situation/Proposal

- 4.1 Following the implementation of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 the Authority now has a duty to assist almost every applicant that presents as homeless, which increases the pressures on the service. The requirement to undertake reasonable steps to prevent and relieve homelessness is a further pressure, with an increased focus on case management requiring increased levels of work. Everyone can apply to be considered for housing under the SHAP, however not every applicant will be eligible for housing under the Policy.
- 4.2 A Housing Assessment is completed by the Council in order to meet its obligations under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 but also in recognition that the Council appreciates the importance of offering applicants as much choice as possible regarding their housing options. Applicants are encouraged to express preferences about the housing accommodation to be allocated to them but the Council and its Partners' ability to meet these expectations are limited to accommodation that is available in the County Borough. See **Appendix A** for a synopsis of the Housing Assessment.
- 4.3 For applicants who are owed a duty under section 66 of the Act (Homelessness Prevention), the duty is to help the applicant by ensuring property does not cease to be available or to help secure accommodation. For applicants who are owed a section 73 (Homelessness Relief) duty, the duty is to help to secure accommodation and applicants who are owed a section 75 (Final) duty the duty is to secure accommodation. For applicants owed any of these duties under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, the Council will be entitled to make an offer of suitable accommodation anywhere within the Council's borough. There is insufficient social housing (of the right size and location) within the County Borough to accommodate all housing applicants. The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 in recognition of this issue nationally enables Local Authorities to make an offer of suitable accommodation in both Social Housing and the Private Rented Sector where the offer is deemed suitable and meets the needs of the household. Applicants are advised of this and the options available to them during their assessment.
- 4.4 The Housing Assessment is an opportunity to gather all the necessary information from the applicant about their housing history, their current situation, their housing needs, and identify any support needs. In considering the options available to the applicant the Housing Solutions Advisor will have regard to the reasonable preference categories, suitability of the applicant's current accommodation including overcrowding and specific housing needs. All relevant additional information provided by the applicant or by other agencies, such as Social Services, Community Mental Health Team, Health, Police, Probation etc., on the applicant's behalf will be considered during the assessment.
- 4.5 Under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 the Authority must give reasonable preference for housing to:
 - All categories of homeless people;

- People occupying insanitary, overcrowded or otherwise unsatisfactory housing;
- People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds;
- People who need to move to a particular locality within the Borough to avoid hardship to themselves or others.

4.6 In addition the Council will give reasonable preference to reflect the housing needs of those applicants within the following categories, specifically but not exclusively:

- i. Those owed a homelessness duty as a result of violence or threats of violence likely to be carried out and who as a result require urgent rehousing, including:
 - Victims of domestic or other violence;
 - Victims of racist incidents;
 - Same sex couples who are victims of harassment amounting to threats of violence or violence;
 - Victims or witnesses of crime who are at risk of intimidation amounting to threats of violence or violence.
- ii. Those who need to move because of urgent medical reasons.
- iii. Applicants who suddenly lose their existing home as a result of a disaster e.g. fire or flood.

4.7 Following completion of a Housing Assessment, applicants are notified of the outcome in writing. For applicants who have no postal address, a care of address or email address is recorded if this is available. If there are no delivery options, the applicant will be contacted via telephone and advised that there is a letter for them to collect from Civic Offices. For applicants who are unable to attend the interview at the Council Offices, a home or hospital visit may be offered. Advice and help is given to vulnerable applicants and those with specific needs in order that they can complete a Housing Assessment. Applicants who are identified as being in housing need are placed in Bands according to housing need and those Bands determine the applicant's priority for the offer of accommodation (nomination):

Banding
<p>PRIORITY CASES</p> <p>Those applicants falling within the reasonable preference categories set out in 4.5 and 4.6 above and whom the following also apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A number of statutory agencies are involved; or ▪ There is a statutory requirement to intervene; or ▪ Immediate provision of housing will alleviate intense agency input ▪ Immediate provision of housing is needed because of a critical medical or welfare need including emergencies ▪ Under occupation of social housing and need to transfer to a smaller property in order to avoid loss of tenancy <p>The above categories are regarded as having exceptional need of housing and are prioritised. Examples of the type of applicants and households that are</p>

deemed to be priority cases are:

Pen Pictures – Priority Cases

1.

Applicant presents to the Authority fleeing domestic abuse. A homeless application is taken and a risk assessment completed to ascertain the level of risk posed to the victim.

Due to the high level of risk identified in the risk assessment questionnaire completed by a Housing Solutions Advisor, the applicant is referred to the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (**MARAC**) which is a local meeting to discuss how to help victims at high risk of murder or serious harm. A domestic abuse specialist (Idva), police, children's social services, housing, health and other relevant agencies all sit around the same table. They talk about the victim, the family and perpetrator, and share information. Together, the meeting representatives write an action plan for each victim.

These circumstances meet the criteria of 'a number of statutory agencies are involved' thus, registration is in the priority band.

2.

Applicant presents to housing with a need to move because of a medical condition. The medical condition will not improve unless they move. The applicant has physical illnesses/disabilities and lives in a two storey property with a bath and overhead shower.

The health conditions cause the applicant to struggle in the current property. The conditions have a great impact on mobility.

The applicant is at risk of falls and is unsafe going up and down the stairs.

The applicant has difficulties with transfers and requires assistance. The applicant is also at risk of falls with bath transfers and requires a level access shower. The applicant finds the access into the property difficult and therefore needs a hardstanding for a car, ramped access or level access into the property.

The housing department request an Occupational Therapist (OT) assessment. On receipt the OT advises of the adaptations the applicant requires. The OT advises that the applicant would benefit from facilities on one level ideally a ground floor flat/bungalow. However if this is not feasible the property would need a ground floor and first floor toilet and a stair lift.

The OT provides an opinion on the urgency of the move. In the above scenario the opinion is, there is a critical need to move.

These circumstances meet the criteria of 'Immediate provision of housing is needed because of a critical medical or welfare need including emergencies' thus, registration is in the priority band.

BAND A

Those applicants assessed as having urgent housing need:

- You have an urgent need to move because of your disability and the need for an adapted property; or
- You are unintentionally homeless, in priority need and owed a duty by the Council; or
- You need to move on from supported housing; or
- You are owed a homelessness duty and as a result of violence or threats of violence likely to be carried out you require urgent rehousing; or
- You need to move because of urgent medical or hardship reasons; or
- You need to move to suitable adapted accommodation because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability which you, or a member of your household has sustained as a result of service in the Armed Forces; or
- You need accommodation as a result of leaving the Armed Forces and the loss of military accommodation; or
- You are under occupying social housing and want to transfer to a smaller property in order to avoid financial hardship

Examples of the type of applicants and households that are deemed to be Band A cases are:

Pen Pictures – Band A Cases

1.

Applicant presents to housing homeless the same day. The Housing Solutions Advisor confirms that the applicant is homeless and undertakes a Housing Assessment.

The applicant suffers with mental ill-health and it is assessed that this condition makes the applicant more vulnerable than the average person who is street homeless. Therefore, the applicant is deemed priority need.

The applicant is accommodated in interim accommodation and both the applicant and the Housing Solutions Advisor agree Reasonable Steps to relieve the homelessness within 56 days. The 56 days has passed but it has not been possible to relieve homeless by helping to secure accommodation.

The applicant is eligible, homeless, priority need, unintentionally homeless and has a local connection. The applicant is owed the final homeless duty, duty to secure accommodation.

These circumstances meet the criteria of 'You are unintentionally homeless, in priority need and owed a duty the Council' thus; registration is in the Band A.

2.

Applicant presents to the housing department. The applicant is residing in a supported living scheme i.e. Women's Aid, Young Persons accommodation.

The applicant has been provided with housing related support to empower and maintain independence in their own tenancy. Both the applicant and the support provider are of the opinion that the applicant has achieved independence and can live independently.

The Housing Solutions Advisor agrees that the applicant needs to move into their own accommodation.

These circumstances meet the criteria of “ You need to move on from supported housing’ thus, registration is in Band A.

BAND B

Those applicants assessed as having non urgent housing need:

- You need to move for medical or hardship reasons; or
- You need to move because of overcrowding conditions or insanitary conditions; or
- You need to move because you are disabled and your property is not suitable and cannot be easily adapted; or
- You are homeless but do not qualify for Band A; or
- You need to move for reasons of employment, meeting needs in the local area; or
- You meet the criteria set out in these Bandings but you have no local connection with the area;
- You have a substantiated threat of homelessness within 56 days where housing will prevent your homelessness;
- You are homeless and housing will relieve your homelessness.

Examples of the type of applicants and households that are deemed to be Band B cases are:

Pen Pictures – Band B Cases

1.

Applicant presents to Housing Solutions as the property they are living in is overcrowded. The applicant is originally from Bridgend but has lived away in England for a number of years.

The applicant wishes to move back to the area however due to the number of years she has resided in England, she no longer has a local connection to the area but fits the criteria to be registered on the Common Housing Register due to being overcrowded.

These circumstances meet the criteria of ‘You meet the criteria set out in these Bandings, but you have no local connection to the area’ thus, registration is in Band B

2.

Applicant presents to housing as their accommodation is affected by damp. An environmental health report evidences the damp which has not been remedied by

the landlord despite the landlord being asked to make good this disrepair. The damp is not severe so as to make the property uninhabitable.

These circumstances meet the criteria of 'You need to move because of overcrowding conditions or insanitary conditions' thus, registration is in Band B.

NO PREFERENCE

Those applicants assessed as having no preference:

- You have a history of unacceptable behaviour which would not have entitled the authority to a possession order under section 84 of the Housing Act 1985;
- You have a recoverable property related debt of between £300 and £999 in your current or former home;
- You have a recoverable property related debt in your current or former home of less than £300 but have failed to enter into an immediate repayment plan with the Council/RSL.

Examples of the type of applicants and households that are deemed to have no preference are:

Pen Pictures – No Preference Cases

Applicant presents to housing and is deemed to be in housing need due to, for example, overcrowding however they have a property related debt i.e. rent arrears of £850.

These circumstances meet the criteria of 'You have a recoverable property related debt of between £300 and £999 in your current or former home', thus registration is in the No Preference band.

- 4.8 Table 1 below sets out the number of applicants within each Band on the CHR as of 25th February 2016. Those in the Residual Group have been assessed as not being in housing need. However, this group of applicants were historical applicants and had previously been given some priority for the time they had been waiting. They were therefore given the choice to remain on the register under the Residual Group if they wished. Those in the Residual Group are required to re-register annually along with all other applicants, and may be nominated for a property only when there are no suitable applicants in one of the other bands:

Table 1

Housing need priority given	Total number of applicants at 25/02/16
Priority Band	82
Band A	286
Band B	784
No Preference	24
Residual Group	106
Total	1282

- 4.9 Applicants who are identified as not being in housing need as per the criteria set out in the Bands of the SHAP as shown in 4.7 above are offered housing options advice, including details of any review and complaints process. Examples of the type of applicants and households that are deemed not being in housing need are:

Pen Pictures – Not in Housing Need

Applicant presents to Housing Solutions claiming the property they live in is unaffordable. The Housing Solution Advisor undertakes a financial assessment. This reveals that the applicant prefers non priority payments such as credit cards, catalogue, and television packages over priority payments such as rent, utilities and council tax. The property is affordable but for the applicant choosing to prioritise non priority payments. Thus, the Housing Solutions Advisor would deem there to be no housing need and refer the applicant to an agency for debt/financial advice.

Applicant presents to Housing Solutions as they want to move to provide care or support to a relative. A Housing Assessment is completed taking into consideration the proximity between where the person requiring care resides and where the person providing the care resides. The assessment evidences that the care and/or support can be provided from where the applicant currently resides therefore, there is no need to move so there is no housing need.

Applicant presents to Housing Solutions. The property they currently reside in is suitable for their needs as is the area they reside in. However the applicant would merely like to move area i.e. they want to live near the coast in Porthcawl. They would not be deemed in housing need as there is no need to move.

- 4.10 The Housing Assessment will help applicants determine if social housing is the best option for them. Applicants will be required to produce evidence of their eligibility and supporting information in order that the officer may consider all the facts. Examples of what cannot be taken into account are:

- Living in Private Rented accommodation and want to move to Social Housing (unless a notice has been served by the landlord);
- Adequately housed but wishes to move to a different area (unless there is a requirement for the applicant to move as per 4.6 above);
- Affordability where the applicants lifestyle choices make accommodation not affordable i.e. excessive mobile phone charges, catalogue, finance (debt advice is offered in these cases);
- Move to be nearer family (unless there is a requirement to give or receive care);

- 4.11 Members will recall from the report of 15th July 2015 that the Council and the RSLs have established a steering group known as the Allocations Panel, which meet once a month. The purpose of the group is to oversee the SHAP and CHR and the implementation of any changes. The Allocations Panel have been asked to develop criteria around low income households who fall just outside housing need, and report back to Bridgend Housing Partnership on the effectiveness of adding a further Band and the likely cost to the RSL partners.
- 4.12 The development of this new band has been agreed by the Council and the RSLs. The new band will focus on accepting applicants onto the Common Housing Register who wish to reside in the areas of the Borough where accommodation takes longer to let. Each RSL has provided the Council with a list of the areas they wish to include in this band which are primarily the valley areas. This band will not require a person to be in housing need and there will be a cap on the household income.
- 4.13 The lack of suitable nominations to void properties is a growing concern for both the Council and the RSLs, which can be partly attributed to the size and type of available housing in a particular area. In addition the number of failed nominations to void properties is of equal concern. The Council deems a property to be void and available for nomination when it is available for occupation in the following 4 weeks. This may be contrary to the terminology used by RSLs who deem a property to be void when the former tenant ends their tenancy. However the property may not be available for letting for a number of weeks/months if works of repair and/or improvements are required, or removal of belongings and cleaning if the property is abandoned. This can result in miscommunication in relation to voids and available voids between the Council and the RSLs.
- 4.14 The SHAP sets out that one reasonable offer of accommodation will be made based on the information gathered as part of the Housing Assessment. The offer will be regarded as reasonable if it meets the needs of the applicant in terms of size and type of accommodation and is in the applicants preferred area of choice. Those applicants that are homeless and in priority need may be offered suitable accommodation outside of their preferred area which may result in no further homelessness duty being owed. Applicants may be at risk in certain areas, if this risk is substantiated then these areas will be removed from their registration. The substantiating evidence may come from, for example, the police, probation, MARAC, Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA).
- 4.15 Further offers of accommodation may be made to the applicant outside the applicant's preferred area of choice where it appears to the Council that the size and type of accommodation is suitable to the needs of the applicant. As it is not in the applicants preferred area of choice, any refusal of these 'further offers' will not result in automatic removal from the register. This will not apply to applicants that are homeless and in priority need.
- 4.16 Applicants are matched to a property based on the information they provided to the Council during their assessment, and any additional information they may provide the Council during their annual re-registration or change of circumstances as they arise. The RSLs send the details of void properties to the Council in order that they may match suitable applicants from the CHR and make a nomination to the RSL. Where a RSL states there is criteria attached to a void property this results in the

time to match and provide a nomination taking longer and the failure rate to increase. Examples of criteria that are applied by the RSL are:

- No support needs
- No drugs
- No Anti-social Behaviour (ASB)
- No Alcohol
- No Pets
- Persons over a certain age

- 4.17 The average time taken by the Council to provide a nomination once it has been notified of an available void is 2 days based on voids in the period 01/01/15 to 31/12/15:

Quickest	Average	Longest
2 minutes	2 Days	29 Days

Table 2 sets out the number of void properties provided to the Council in the period 01/01/15 to 31/12/15, and of those how many nominations were successful and how many failed due to lettings criteria or as a result of applicants who would otherwise come within the No Preference Band, be excluded or for who we are awaiting further information.

Table 2

RSL	No of Voids Total	No of Voids with criteria Nos./%	Successful Nominations Nos./%	Failed Nominations due to lettings criteria Nos./%	Failed Nominations due to applicants circumstances Nos./%
V2C	411	110 / 27%	198 / 48%	103 / 25%	109 / 27%
Wales & West	147	33 / 22%	95 / 65%	32 / 22%	20 / 13%
Linc-Cymru	122	3 / 2%	78 / 64%	13 / 11%	27 / 22%
Hafod	92	46 / 50%	80 / 87%	10 / 11%	2 / 2%

N.B there are 5 voids awaiting a decision by the RSL, 1 with V2C and 4 with Linc-Cymru.

- 4.18 Following a nomination from the Council the RSL will review the applicant's application and details and determine whether an offer of accommodation can be made. The RSL will consider such factors as former rent arrears, references, sustainability of tenancies and carry out an affordability assessment. At this point the RSL may not deem the nomination to be reasonable, or the applicant may not deem the accommodation to be reasonable. Examples of the grounds for which either party may deem the offer not to be reasonable are:

Applicant: Examples

- Not in their preferred area
- Property type i.e. applicant wants a bungalow but has been offered a ground floor flat
- Property size
- Not near shops, school, transport links

RSL: Examples

- Applicant has rent arrears
- Applicant has support needs
- Failing financial assessments
- Past anti-social behaviour

4.19 Table 3 sets out the number of nominations in the period 01/01/15 to 31/12/15 that have been refused by the RSL or the applicant:

Table 3

RSL	No of Nominations Total	Refused by RSL Nos./%	Refused by Applicant Nos./%	No of refusals by applicant not upheld Nos./%	No of refusals by applicant upheld Nos./%
V2C	488	176 / 36%	116 / 24%	111 / 96%	5 / 4%
Wales & West	192	61 / 32%	37 / 19%	29 / 78%	8 / 22%
Hafod	174	46 / 26%	47 / 27%	43 / 91%	4 / 9%
Linc-Cymru	133	26 / 20%	22 / 17%	18 / 82%	4 / 18%

4.20 The Council does not always accept the grounds that have been stated by the RSL and/or the applicant, and may request additional information to substantiate the refusal. This may result in a delay whilst the Council awaits qualifying information. The average time taken to provide a new nomination following a failed nomination in the period 01/01/15 to 31/12/15 is 2.32 days:

Quickest	Average	Longest
1 minute	2.32 Days	28 Days

4.21 With the exception of V2C the remaining RSL Partners will accept several nominations for a void property until a suitable match of tenant can be found. In some cases there may not be a suitable match as there is no one registered for that size of property in that particular area. The creation of a new band as highlighted in 4.12 above should assist in this process. V2C however will only accept three nominations from the Council before they advertise the void under their own choice based lettings scheme 'My Choice'. V2C use their ability to nominate up to 25% of their stock through the Deed of Transfer as highlighted in 3.2.

4.22 The Council does not have data on the percentage of properties that V2C house via 'My Choice' annually and cannot confirm whether this is in line with the 25% agreed allocation. The Council therefore is not in a position to determine if properties are not being let via the CHR as a direct result of the introduction of the Banding of the

CHR; the criteria that V2C apply to their voids; or that V2C will only accept three nominations before advertising properties on 'My Choice'.

4.23 For applicants who are eligible to join the Common Housing Register the applicant's requirements in relation to property size will normally be determined according to the standard indicated in the household table below. Exceptions may occur (subject to the applicant demonstrating ability to afford rent) which will include, but not exclusively:

- When the housing provider needs to consider the sustainability of an area;
- Where there is limited stock or low demand;
- Where a household member has a disability or health related condition which requires an additional bedroom. This must be supported by information from a relevant medical professional and subject to an affordability assessment;

Household	Bedrooms
Single person	1 or bedsit
Couple	1
Single pregnant woman	2
Single parent or couple with one child	2
Single parent or couple with two children of same sex	2
Single parent or couple with two children of opposite sex under 10 years	2 or 3
Single parent or couple with two children of opposite sex where at least one child is over 10 years	3
Single parent or couple with three children	3
Single parent or couple with four children	3 or 4
Single parent or couple with five children	4
Single parent or couple with more than five children	4

4.24 The following should be read in conjunction with the table above:

- i. For the purposes of sharing bedrooms the following apply:
 - Under 10 years old, mixed sexes may share a bedroom however, where a child is within twelve months of being 10 years old, an additional bedroom may be provided
 - Under 16 years old, same sexes may share a bedroom however, where a child is within twelve months of being 16 years old, an additional bedroom may be provided
 - Over 16 years old, own bedroom required
- ii. Parlour type properties can be considered as having an additional bedroom to assist where necessary with housing larger families where larger accommodation is not available
- iii. In all cases child refers to dependent child

- 4.25 The Council and its RSL Partners remain concerned about affordability and the forthcoming changes in relation to Welfare Reform and the introduction of Universal Credit. Affordability therefore is a critical element to any Housing Solutions advice and at present all four RSLs operate their own affordability assessments highlighted in 4.18, and the Council completes their own financial assessment as part of the Housing Assessment. In light of the proposed Government changes set out below it would be beneficial for applicants, the Council and the four RSL Partners to complete one common financial assessment. Discussions have taken place during monthly allocation meetings between the Council and RSL's to develop this.
- 4.26 The Government intends to bring Housing Benefit (HB) for social housing tenants in line with the private sector Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates from 1 April 2018. The policy will apply to tenancies signed after 1 April 2016, with entitlement changing from 1 April 2018.

Bridgend's weekly LHA rates from April 2016 are as follows:

Shared accommodation	£55.23
1 bedroom	£80.55
2 bedroom	£103.56
3 bedroom	£115.06
4 bedroom	£149.59

- 4.27 It is proposed that the rates will apply in the same way as they currently do for LHA, for example, irrespective of the number of bedrooms that are actually in the property, a couple's maximum HB will be restricted to the 1 bedroom rate, and a single person with 2 children under 10 to the 2 bedroom rate. This change also means that HB for single people aged under 35 without children in social housing will be restricted to the shared accommodation rate. The intention is that RSL tenants will only be able to claim the same amount of HB as a private tenant.
- 4.28 On 1st March 2016 the Government put in place a year-long exception for all tenants of supported accommodation in the social sector so that this measure will only apply to these tenancies from April 2017, rather than April 2016. As examples, this will include refuges for those fleeing domestic abuse, homeless provision, housing for ex-offenders, as well as supported housing for older and disabled people.

The actual cut in benefit for all other new social housing tenancies, and for new supported tenants after April 2017, will still take place from April 2018 as planned.

- 4.29 Table 4 shows the total number of applicants on the CHR by number of bedrooms, and the average number of vacancies that become available for bedroom sizes per annum. It can be seen that the percentage of applicants requiring a one bedroom property has increased, while the percentage requiring a three bedroom property has decreased. There has been an increase in the failed nomination rate for larger properties due to the demand for smaller properties which was expected with the introduction of the 'bedroom tax'.

Table 4

Number of bedrooms	Number of applicants on CHR at 25-03-16	% of all applicants	Average number of vacancies per annum	% of all vacancies per annum	Success rate of allocations %
1 bed <35	378	29.49%	85	12.71%	58 (14.29%)
1 bed >35	493	38.46%	123	18.39%	83 (20.44%)
2	219	17.08%	307	45.89%	181 (44.58%)
3	109	8.50%	146	21.82%	78 (19.21%)
4	73	5.69%	7	1.05%	5 (1.23%)
5	6	0.47%	1	0.15%	1 (0.25%)
6	4	0.31%	0	0.00%	0 (0.00%)
Total	1282		669		406 (60.68%)

The 'success rate of allocations %' column is based on the number of properties successfully allocated for each bedroom size as a percentage of the total number of properties successfully allocated e.g. for a 2 bed this is 181 as a percentage of 406.

The 60.68% calculation is based on the number of properties successfully allocated per annum (406) as a percentage of the number of vacancies per annum (669).

- 4.30 Given the above proposed changes by the Government set out in 4.26, the number of applicants aged <35 currently on the CHR requiring 1 bedroom (shared room), and the number of larger properties where the Council is unable to provide nominations it would appear that the development of a shared tenancy model would assist applicants, the Council and the RSL Partners.

	LHA rates from April 2016	Shared accommodation rates – rental income potential
Shared accommodation	£55.23 < 35 year old	£55.23
1 bedroom	£80.55 > 35 year old	£25.32 top up required
2 bedroom	£103.56	2 share = £110.46
3 bedroom	£115.06	3 share = £165.69
4 bedroom	£149.59	3 share = £165.69 4 share = £220.92

- 4.31 Not all properties will be suitable for shared tenancies, and not all applicants would be suited to living in shared accommodation. Some works to properties may be required to enable shared living to be developed for instance fire doors, locks on

bedrooms and bathrooms etc. and these works would have to be funded by the landlords; and it is accepted that some tenants may require support to understand their obligations as a shared tenant. The Council has recently commissioned a generic floating support service through the WG Supporting People Programme Grant and tenants could be referred to and access this service which provides support within tenants own homes and a drop-in shared support hub model.

- 4.32 As set out in 4.1 there are future cost pressures on the service arising from the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 as the Authority now has a duty to assist almost every applicant that presents as homeless. This has seen an increase in the number of applicants contacting the service from 2606 in 2014/15 to 3183 in 2015/16 (projected to end of year) an increase of 22%. This has also seen an increase specifically regarding homelessness from 673 in 2014/15 to 916 in 2015/16 (projected to end of year) an increase of 36%. The requirement to undertake reasonable steps to prevent and relieve homelessness, and an increased focus on case management requiring increased levels of work has highlighted the need to recruit three additional full time Housing Solutions Advisors and an additional support officer in order to meet the demands of the new legislation.
- 4.33 Welsh Government (WG) approved an application for transitional funding to resource the new and additional services from 1st April 2015. However, the short term nature of the funding has meant that the service has been unable to recruit sufficiently experienced staff to respond to the changes in the legislation. One fixed term member of staff has been recruited for a 2 year period, and Agency workers have been recruited periodically however this is not the preferred model of delivery as it does not provide any sustainability for applicants or the team.
- 4.34 The inability to recruit has resulted in the average number of days taken to conduct a Housing Assessment rising from 11 calendar days to 18 calendar days (9 working days to 14 working days). Members should note that while indications have been given that funding may be available for 3 years, the confirmed funding commitment is for only one year. If and when this funding ceases, the ongoing resource requirements of the legislation will need to be assessed, and funding for the service assessed accordingly.

5. Effects on the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules

- 5.1 These proposals are consistent with current Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.

6. Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.1 There are no equality implications arising from this report.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 There is a risk that demand for temporary accommodation will increase once the full impact of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 is felt, which may result in a budget pressure. Additional transitional funding has been identified by WG for the first three years of the new legislation to support the cost of implementation. As WG budgets for future years have not yet been confirmed, the current funding level of £222,476 is only guaranteed for the 2015-16 financial year, with no indication of

funding levels beyond this year. If and when this funding ceases, the ongoing resource requirements of the legislation will need to be assessed, and the service adjusted accordingly. As a result of efficiency savings achieved over a number of years the service is now very lean, and there is very little scope to meet additional statutory requirements, or for further cost reductions.

8. Recommendations

8.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the content of this report.

DARREN MEPHAM
Chief Executive

16th March 2016

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Background documents:

None.

The Housing Assessment is structured and every assessment contains the same questions under the same sub headings to ensure uniformity. The Housing Assessment is an extensive exercise containing many questions and below is an example of the type of questions asked under each sub heading. This is not an exhaustive list of the questions asked.

Reason for Assessment

Examples:-

Homeless or threatened with homelessness

Domestic Abuse

Other abuse or discrimination

Medical or Disability

Eligibility

Example questions:-

Are you a British Citizen?

Have you returned to the UK within the last 6 months after living abroad?

Homeless

Example questions:-

Do you have accommodation to return to tonight?

Are you losing your current accommodation within the next 56 days?

Medical & Disability

Example questions:-

Does anyone in the household have a diagnosed medical condition or disability?

Does your household need a property that is suitable to meet your medical or disability needs?

Support & Social

Example questions:-

Is anyone in the household involved?

Have you ever served in the Armed Forces?

Abuse & Discrimination

Example Questions:-

Is anyone living in the home causing you or a household member to live in fear of violence or abuse?

Who is the risk from?

Are there any areas of the Borough where that person may pose a risk to a household member?

Property Condition

Example questions

Are there any issues with the condition of the property?

Is the property overcrowded?

Affordability

Details of income and the frequency are selected from a list. The monthly income is then automatically calculated

Example questions:-

Are you in education?

Are you employed?

Are there affordability issues with our current property?

Convictions & Proceedings

Example questions:-

Has a household member been convicted of a criminal offence? – Details

Are there any proceedings pending against a member of the household?

Action Diary

Sets Reasonable Steps for those homeless or threatened with homelessness

Example

Applicant - Look at properties in line with Local Housing Allowance

Local Authority –Referral to Bond Board

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

23 MARCH 2016

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE – LEGAL & REGULATORY SERVICES

NOMINATION TO STANDING BUDGET RESEARCH AND EVALUATION PANEL

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek nominations for the Budget Research and Evaluation Panel.

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

- 2.1 The priorities identified in the Corporate Plan 2013-2017 have been embodied in the Overview & Scrutiny Forward Work Programmes. The Corporate Improvement Objectives were adopted by Council on 19 February 2014 and formally set out the improvement objectives that the Council will seek to implement between 2013 and 2017. The Overview and Scrutiny Committees engage in review and development of plans, policy or strategies that support the Corporate Themes.

3. Background

- 3.1 The BREP was originally set up on an annual basis and focussed on examining the annual draft budget proposals to aid the scrutiny process. In contrast, the standing BREP whilst examining annual draft budget proposals, also undertakes informal consideration of proposals related to medium and longer term reviews linked with the Council's Strategic Change Management Programme. It seeks to assist management in the delivery of the plans to support change and the Medium Term Financial Strategy by fully utilising its community representational role to inform policy changes and provide challenge and the BREP will develop its terms of reference and methodology within that function.

4. Current Situation

- 4.1 The BREP 2015/16 agreed that the Panel should continue to consider which services will be delivered differently, which will no longer be provided directly by the local authority and which services will no longer be provided at all. This consideration should be extended to all service areas, regardless of the extent of the budget savings required of them.
- 4.2 The BREP noted the recent review of the Corporate Priorities and considered that there should be an ongoing role for the Panel to take part in a wider discussion with Cabinet and CMB about the future delivery of services.
- 4.3 The BREP requested that as part of their future work they be involved at the planning stage of any public consultation or engagement surrounding the draft

budget and at key stages throughout the process such as where questions and methodology are formulated.

- 4.4 The BREP considered that the work of the Panel is a vital and important mechanism for budget setting and monitoring to ensure an objective, democratic approach from the start of the budget setting process.
- 4.6 In addition to this the Panel requested that the 2015/16 BREP undertake a review of the process following the setting of this year's budget. The purpose of this would be to evaluate the effectiveness of BREP, to identify any potential improvement, establish how recommendations are taken forward and to provide evidence of the impact and outcomes from the work of the Panel. This is due to take place in April/June 2016.

Membership and Relationship to Overview and Scrutiny Committees

- 4.7 To ensure the focus and analytical depth necessary for the Panel, total membership should be no more than ten Members, therefore the Standing BREP will consist of the Chair and one other Member nominated from each of the five Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The Chair of the BREP will be nominated by the members of the BREP itself at its first meeting. A further nomination is also being proposed as a reserve, to try to alleviate any potential impact resulting from any changes to the Committee membership at the Annual General Meeting of Council.
- 4.8 The standing Panel's Forward Work Programme (FWP) should be informed by the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and Strategic Change Management Programme.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework and Procedure Rules

- 5.1 The report has no direct effect but seeks to broadly support the Authority in the development of future services.

6. Equalities Impact

- 6.1 There are no implications in this report.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 None

8. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

- Nominate the Chair and one other Member of the Committee onto the standing Budget Research & Evaluation Panel.
- Nominate a further Member as a reserve, to try to alleviate any potential impact resulting from any changes to the Committee membership at the Annual General Meeting of Council.

Andrew Jolley,
Assistant Chief Executive – Legal and Democratic Services

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Background Documents:

Bridgend County Borough Council Constitution
Part II of the Local Government Act 2000: Executive Arrangements

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

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