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## Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr

### Bridgend County Borough Council



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

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Rhowch wybod i ni os mai Cymraeg yw eich  
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#### **Gwasanaethau Gweithredol a Phartneriaethol / Operational and Partnership Services**

Deialu uniongyrchol / Direct line :01656 643696  
Gofynnwch am / Ask for: Julie Ellams

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

**Dyddiad/Date:** 11 January 2017.

Dear Councillor,

### **CORPORATE RESOURCES & IMPROVEMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

A meeting of the Corporate Resources & Improvement Overview & Scrutiny Committee will be held in the Committee Rooms 2/3, Civic Offices Angel Street Bridgend CF31 4WB on **Tuesday, 17 January 2017 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 a meeting of the Corporate Resources and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee of 7 December 2016.
4. Forward Work Programme Update 15 - 18
5. Corporate Plan 2016-2020 - reviewed for 2017-18 19 - 42  
Invitees:  
  
All Members of Cabinet and Corporate Management Board  
All Chairpersons of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees  
Randal Hemingway, Head of Finance & Section 151 Officer
6. Medium Term Financial Strategy 2017-18 to 2020-21 and Draft Budget Consultation Process 43 - 62  
Cllr H David, Leader  
Cllr H Williams, Cabinet Member – Resources  
Andrew Jolley, Corporate Director – Operational & Partnership Services  
Randal Hemingway, Head of Finance & Section 151 Officer

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7. Urgent Items

To consider any items 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.

Yours faithfully

**P A Jolley**

Corporate Director Operational and Partnership Services

Councillors:

G Davies

E Dodd

CA Green

DRW Lewis

Councillors

JR McCarthy

AD Owen

D Patel

M Reeves

Councillors

JC Spanswick

G Thomas

RL Thomas

RE Young

# Agenda Item 3

CORPORATE RESOURCES & IMPROVEMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - WEDNESDAY, 7 DECEMBER 2016

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CORPORATE RESOURCES & IMPROVEMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB ON WEDNESDAY, 7 DECEMBER 2016 AT 2.00 PM

## Present

Councillor M Reeves – Chairperson

G Davies	CA Green	EM Hughes	JR McCarthy
D Patel	JC Spanswick	G Thomas	

## Apologies for Absence

E Dodd and DRW Lewis

## Officers:

Julie Ellams	Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Gail Jewell	Democratic Services Officer – Scrutiny

## Invitees:

Susan Cooper	Corporate Director – Social Services & Wellbeing
Randal Hemingway	Head of Finance & Section 151 Officer
Andrew Jolley	Corporate Director - Operational & Partnership Services
Deborah McMillan	Corporate Director - Education & Family Support
Mark Shephard	Corporate Director - Communities
Nicola Echanis	Head of Education and Family Support
Councillor H David	Cabinet Member - Leader
Councillor C Reeves	Cabinet Member - Communities
Councillor CE Smith	Cabinet Member – Education and Regeneration
Councillor HM Williams	Cabinet Member – Deputy Leader
Councillor Philip White	Cabinet Member – Social Services and Early Help
Councillor N Clarke	Chairperson – Partnerships & Governance Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Councillor P Foley	Chairperson – Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Councillor P Davies	

## 216. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

G Jewell (Scrutiny Support Officer) declared an interest as the Scrutiny Support Officer and left the meeting whilst the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2017-18 - 2020-21 was being discussed.

## 217. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Chairperson confirmed that the items requiring further action were still being dealt with.

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Corporate Resources & Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee of 21 September 2016, be approved as a true and accurate record.

218. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Corporate Director Operational and Partnership Services submitted a report, the purpose of which was to present the items due to be considered at the Committee's meeting on 17 January 2017, and seeking confirmation of the information required for the subsequent scheduled meeting to be held on 8 February 2017, and finally, present a list of further potential items for prioritisation by the Committee.

RESOLVED That Committee:

- (i) Noted the topics due to be considered at the meeting of the Committee for 17 January 2017 and confirmed that it did not require any additional specific information to be provided by the invitees listed or the Overview & Scrutiny Unit;
- (ii) Determined the invitees to be invited to attend, any specific information it would like the invitees to provide as well as any research that it would like the Overview & Scrutiny Unit to undertake in relation to its following meeting scheduled for 08 February 2017;
- (iii) Revisited and considered the list of future potential items for the Committee's Forward Work Programme and reprioritise as the Committees deemed appropriate.

219. COUNCIL PERFORMANCE AGAINST ITS COMMITMENTS AND A SUMMARY OF ITS FINANCIAL POSITION AT QUARTER 2 OF 2016-17

The Committee considered a report on the Council's performance in 2016-17, as of quarter 2. It compared this performance with the commitments to delivering the improvement priorities in the Corporate Plan 2016-20. The report also provided an update on the financial position as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016.

The Chairperson welcomed S Cooper, Corporate Director Social Services & Wellbeing and Councillor P White, Cabinet Member for Social Services and Early Help, to the meeting.

The Committee referred to P2.1.1 and asked if the 3 local community co-ordinators provided resilience for the service. The Corporate Director Social Services & Wellbeing explained that the new scheme was progressing but it was early days in terms of planning. She agreed to send details of the restructure, the

development plan and the Western Bay newsletter to the Member requesting further information.

The Committee referred to the new indicator measuring the number of assessments of need for support for carers undertaken during the year and those that lead to a support plan. Members asked how the authority was performing in this area. The Corporate Director Social Services & Wellbeing explained that discussions were still underway with WG and other authorities re the definition and the way the information was captured. The assessment of carers needs in the majority of cases could be identified in the support plan for the cared for person. By end of year they should have a better understanding of what was required.

Members referred to PM26, another new indicator where the target was set before WG guidance was finalised. This indicator was open to different interpretation and unlikely to be met but should be clarified further during the year.

The Committee requested further information on the percentage of looked after children on 31 March who have had three or more placements during the year. The Corporate Director Social Services & Wellbeing explained that this related to 51 children, of which 31 were under 1 or over 13 years old and agreed to provide further information for committee members.

The Committee referred to a recent Corporate Parenting Workshop where it appeared that good work was being done but the figures in PM34a did not support this. The Corporate Director Social Services & Wellbeing agreed that the film didn't accurately reflect the position but there was a reason in each case such as being a young parent, young carer, or a job seeker.

The CM for Social Services and Early Help explained that there were a number of new indicators and as such it was difficult to set targets and that an additional 12 months of historical data would help in future.

The Committee asked what corrective action had been taken in relation to SSWB 9. The Corporate Director Social Services & Wellbeing explained that this was a compliance issue which was missed but this would not happen again because back up cover had been arranged for future meetings.

The Committee asked why PM28 showed as amber not red for the average length of time on the Child Protection Register. They were advised that this was a new indicator and this area was being closely monitored by the Project Board. The Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer referred Members to the table showing that where performance was worse than target by 10% or more, the indicator would be red.

Members asked why data was not available for target SSWB 2 DWB4.2.3.3. They were advised that all domiciliary care contracts were reviewed and that The Corporate Director Social Services & Wellbeing would look into why this information was not in the report.

The Committee requested an explanation on the number of working days per full time equivalent lost due to sickness absence. One table showed a reduction in sickness across services and in another part of the report, the target was red. The Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer explained that this was a saving that could not be made and should have been deleted from the report.

Members queried the savings made from supporting people in their own homes through domiciliary care. The Corporate Director Social Services & Wellbeing explained that this was part to do with delaying when people went into care, now where possible they came in at the end of their life rather than for several years. The whole system was blending but at the moment the budgets were still separate.

The committee raised concerns about the projected overspend of £612,000 on LAC. Numbers remained steady and because the savings required last year were not met, the sum was taken out of the budget at the start of the year. Reserves were in place but the intention was for the service to make the savings. A recovery plan was in place but there were still considerable savings to be made.

Members referred to the overspend on fostering. The Corporate Director Social Services & Wellbeing explained that there was a complete review underway of foster care costs. A realignment of budgets would give a clearer picture and she would provide more information on the £100,000. Members asked when the remodelling would start to pay off. They were advised that in the past there had been no strategic planning capacity for new ways of working but it was anticipated that by 2017/18 there should be a difference in social care.

Members queried why the sickness levels in adult social care were so high compared to other departments. They were advised that there were a number of issues such as the majority of staff being female and over 55, there were high levels of personal care and staff were open to infection. It was difficult for staff to work flexibly, to manage stress levels and there were high levels of long term sick as a result.

The Chairperson thanked the officers for attending the meeting.

The Chairperson welcomed N Echanis, Head of Education and Family Support and Cllr H David, Leader, to the meeting.

Members requested information regarding school admissions and why it had become red now that it was part of the Digital Transformation Project. The Head of Education and Family Support explained that the Council had taken on a larger digital programme which offered a smarter solution but it would not be delivered in the same time span and therefore was now red.

Members requested more information on P3.1.1, three new income generation initiatives. The Head of Education and Family Support explained that there had been plans such as selling a standardised design of school to other authorities

but this had been overtaken by WG pulling back on what it would and wouldn't fund. Authorities had no extra money to invest and were looking at paired back solutions. Professional opinion had been sought to ensure the section was as efficient as it could be but they were not looking for that area to generate income at the moment.

The Committee were advised that EDU015a consisted of two performance indicators that had been grouped together and one part of this depended on information from other agencies so was not within the gift of the authority. Performance had improved from a low position and continued to improve. The Head of Education and Family Support confirmed that any delay was caused by a shortage of officers writing the statements and not because of a shortage of psychologists. The Leader reported that this PI would become redundant with the Additional Learning Needs Bill which would get rid of statementing and replace with assessments of children with learning needs. Members stated that historically Bridgend was the lowest for statements in Wales and asked if this was still the same. The Head of Education and Family Support agreed to check the figures and report back.

The Committee asked what action had been taken to improve indicator SCC024, the percentage of children taken into care with a Personal Education Plan within 20 school days of entering care. Members were advised that discussions took place internally and this was prioritised in our schools but this did not work as effectively where children were in care outside the area. This was an area where we had no control and ideally it should be split into two separate indicators.

Members raised concerns about home to school transport, savings not achieved in previous years and the impact on education. The Head of Education and Family Support explained that four years ago they had very little knowledge about who was going where but following the retendering process, savings of a million had been achieved and more could be achieved with the implementation of policy changes. There were lots of challenges ahead including safe routes where the authority had to engage with pupils about what they thought of safe routes.

The Chairperson thanked the officers for attending the meeting.

The Chairperson welcomed M Shephard, Corporate Director- Communities and Councillor C Reeves, Cabinet Member - Communities to the meeting.

The Committee referred to £195,000 savings not realised in relation to Ravens Court. The Corporate Director – Communities explained that the information was at the end of quarter 2 when there was an expectation that a lease would be in place following interest from two different companies. Efforts were still being made to lease the building but consideration also had to be given to other issues such as agile working, the digital policy and alternatives such as renting to other bodies. The Innovation Centre was another area of concern because the building was in need of investment to make it attractive for rent.

The Committee asked if the report should include a target for the number of council owned assets transferred to the community for running. The Cabinet Member for Communities explained that she was reviewing this area regularly, relatively few properties had so far been transferred but a large number of organisations had expressed an interest.

Members asked why there was no indicator to show the actual numbers of fly tipping incidents as opposed to the percentage of incidents cleared. The Corporate Director - Communities explained that the authority was only aware of fly tipping that had been reported but that he would provide this information for Members.

The Committee referred to the MREC saving of £300,000 for 2015-16 and asked why this had not been achieved. The Corporate Director – Communities explained that this related to an existing long term contract which was not working as favourably as anticipated and the position was currently being reviewed with a view to procuring a new operator for the site.

The MREC contract was expensive and work was being done to procure an alternative contract which would allow savings to be made. The Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer explained that an equalisation fund would be suitable with regard to waste costs as they fluctuated with costs of procurement only occurring every 7/8 years and increases in contract cost potentially occurring as a result of any procurement. Members also asked for the total cost of procuring the new waste contract. This information was not available but would be emailed to Members following the meeting.

The Committee asked for information on car parking charges, how much each car park generated and what happened to the income. The Corporate Director – Communities explained that the information was available and that income collected was spent on car parks and related highway issues as required by the relevant legislation.

The Committee discussed sickness levels and asked why the level was so high. The Corporate Director Communities explained that the nature of the Directorate business meant there was a high number of manual workers working outside and long term sickness continued to be the main problem. Members questioned if adequate support was being provided for staff. They were advised that both support and flexibility were provided where possible.

The Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer reported that there were ongoing concerns regarding the timing of the digital platform and savings could not be delivered this year because online accounts could not be launched until mid-March. Staff savings had mitigated the position and it was hoped that delivery would be as soon as possible in the new year.

Sickness levels were better than in the previous year following the robust implementation of policies.

The Committee asked for further information regarding the three new income generating initiatives. The Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer explained



that one fell within this area relating to card payments and different charges for credit and debit cards. Through procurement, costs had reduced from £20,000 to £1,000 and it was not worth implementing measures to mitigate the £1,000. Members commented that this was not income generation and the Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer agreed and said that if costs had not fallen then he would have introduced the initiative.

The Committee asked for further information on how much the authority was charged for card payments. The Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer agreed to look into the matter and report back to Committee.

The Committee asked why the same target of 9 days had been set for the average time taken to process housing benefit changes. Members were advised that there were significant changes in the last quarter of last year and the way information was supplied by DWP. He was not confident staff could manage the volume of information received and so did not reduce the target but would look to change in the future.

Members were concerned that only limited action had been taken to enable community groups and the third sector to have more voice and control over community assets. They were advised that adoption of the Town and Community Council charter related to this directorate but work was being done elsewhere on this indicator.

The Committee questioned why the indicator regarding rationalising the council's administrative estate including the leasing of Raven's Court, was green and not amber. Members were advised that the part of the project that fell within this portfolio was green but the project was not green overall.

The Committee questioned why only 4% of unoccupied dwellings had been returned to occupation. Members were advised that it was difficult persuading owners to release homes for occupation particularly without legislation and changes were required before any real progress could be made.

Members questioned the position with the average number of days to deliver a DFG for children and young people. They were advised that this had been a difficult area in the past with PI's calculated in different ways. Some applicants could wait up to 12 months before starting work where as others would start immediately. In future it would be calculated on when the authority had completed its work and on this basis performance should be better in future.

### **Conclusions**

The Committee requested that its disappointment that the Chief Executive was unable to attend this committee meeting to present his report be noted.

### **All Directorates**

- a) The Committee note that there were some Performance Indicators (PIs) that were annual indicators but when Directors were questioned, they

were able to provide an update in relation to some of the lines. Therefore, Members ask all Directorates to go through their PIs to ensure they are truly annual or if updates could be provided quarterly to minimise requests for additional information.

- b) Members questioned sickness levels in Social Services and Communities and it was stated long term sickness was particularly problematic. It was mentioned that short term absences were generally being controlled well due to the robust implementation of Sickness Absence Policies and therefore members recommend that the Local Authority should focus their effects on managing long term absences.

## **Finance**

Additional Information requested:

- When discussing card payments, Members queried how much the Council is for charged and asked if the Local Authority refuse any card providers due to high charges.

## **Adult and Children's Social Care**

- a) The Committee shared their concerns in relation to the PM26 - the percentage of looked after children returned home from care during the year and highlighted the risk associated with this PI.
- b) Members have recommended that when reporting on PI PM33 - The Percentage of looked after children on 31<sup>st</sup> March who have had three or more placements during the year in the future - that the number of babies born in hospital be removed and presented separately.
- c) Members queried how the PI showing the number of working days per full time equivalent lost due to sickness absence is red on the RAG status, when it shows a budget reduction proposal of £50,000 in green under the Additional Financial Information – Budget Reduction Monitoring Variances 2015-16.

Additional Information requested:

- In relation to PI P2.1.1, the Committee asked for further information in relation to the funding options for the Local Community Co-ordinators (LCCs) and questioned when and how work undertaken by the LCCs is recorded and monitored to ensure resilience within their role.
- Members have requested a breakdown of the £100,000 overspend on fostering to show what costs are allocated to respite care, travelling costs and childcare.

## **Education and Family Support Services**

- a) With reference to PI SCC024 – Members recommend that this PI be presented separately to show percentage of children looked after during the year with a Personal Education Plan within 20 school days of entering

- care or joining a new school in the borough and then another showing the percentage joining a new school outside the borough.
- b) When the Directorate reassess the safe route to schools, Members have asked Officers to take into consideration the age of the pupils.

Additional Information requested:

- The Committee asked for reassurance with reference to the quality of school teachers and requested to receive information relating to all training undertaken.
- Members stated that we were one of the lowest statementing authorities and asked how we currently rate.
- Members have requested a breakdown of the £100,000 overspend on fostering to show what costs are allocated to respite care, travelling costs and childcare.

### **Communities**

- a) The Committee recommend that in addition to PI STS006 - Percentage of reported fly tipping incidents cleared within 5 working days, that the statistics of the actual quantity of fly tipping be presented to Members.

Additional Information requested:

- With reference to Highways Services, Members have asked to be provided with the savings achieved in relation to overtime.
- Members have requested to receive the number of apprenticeships and traineeships arising from the 21<sup>st</sup> Century schools programme and other Bridgend County Borough Council projects.
- Members have asked to be provided with the total costs associated with the new waste collection contract, along with the figures collated from the kitchen waste collection contract which took place in 2008.
- Members have requested to be provided with a list of all car parks in the borough along with the allotted revenue accrued.

### **220. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2017-18 - 2020-21**

Members considered a report on the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2017-18 to 2020-21, which set out the spending priorities of the Council, key investment objectives and budget areas targeted for necessary savings. The strategy included a financial forecast for 2017-21 and a detailed draft revenue budget for 2017-18.

Members asked for more information regarding digitising the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and the fact that many people in receipt of benefits would not be able to manage this online. The Deputy Leader explained that a budget had been allocated to deal with this and everyone who was entitled to it would receive it. An online platform was being configured and instructions were being issued with Council Tax bills encouraging residents to complete transactions on line

rather than by phone. Other services would continue to support residents unable to apply on line.

The Committee requested details of the proposed savings in Democratic Services. The Corporate Director – Operational and Partnership Services explained that this did not specifically relate to scrutiny. There would be a different form of Local Government in future and a requirement to collaborate more. If scrutiny collaborated more, it was likely that it would cost less and savings could be made from this. The role of the Mayor was also being considered including the part the authority played in supporting the Mayors work. These were not finite proposals but issues to be considered in the future. It would be possible to make the savings required by looking at the way services were delivered including combining the scrutiny function. If Members protected this part of the budget then that could create a problem.

Members asked for clarification regarding not reducing the scrutiny function but changing the way the service was delivered. They were concerned about collaborating for education and social services and different priorities for each authority. Some Members were aware of joint scrutiny arrangements that had failed because others were not willing to participate. The Corporate Director - Operational and Partnership Services explained that there could be collaborative working but not collaborative scrutiny.

This would not damage the scrutiny function and it was important to continue to look at different ways of working. More information would be available in January about the proposed merges and consideration could then be given to staffing proposals for the transitional period. This report was being presented to scrutiny when the authority was approaching a period of change. In terms of work now, the authority could think about a structure that could embrace collaboration in future.

Some Members suggested that monthly council meetings were unnecessary and this could be reviewed. The Corporate Director - Operational and Partnership Services explained that he was under the impression Members were happy with the current arrangements and added that web casting appeared to be becoming more popular.

Members raised the issue of the Community Action Fund, some wards being larger than others and multi member wards. The Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer confirmed that discussions had taken place in BREP and it was difficult to make it equitable for all members. He confirmed that funding could be pooled.

The Committee questioned why less staff were required for Direct payments however additional money was required. The Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer explained that there had been adjustments between the teams and he was happy to provide further information if required.

The Committee questioned how achievable savings were from reducing the number of staff in HR, OD and Communications and business support. Members were advised it was difficult when the only cuts that could be made involved

people. This could have an impact on the service delivered and why collaboration was so important.

Concerns were raised about reducing visits to food establishments. The authority was broadly compliant but there would be concerns if there was a reduction. The Corporate Director - Operational and Partnership Services explained that the purpose was to maintain performance and there was currently a review underway.

### **Conclusions**

Additional Information requested:

- Members have requested further information in relation to the unavoidable 2017-18 service budget pressures against the Chief Executive & Finance Directorate, with reference to the increase in volume and complexity of administration for Direct Payments.

The Committee are concerned that collaborative scrutiny without extra resources could result in a poor level of scrutiny which would be damaging to the authority. The future picture is unclear and the authority should continue to value scrutiny as it played an important part in holding the executive to account and supporting the quality of decision making. The Committee recommend that resources be retained.

#### 221. URGENT ITEMS

None

The meeting closed at 5.50 pm

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## REPORT TO CORPORATE RESOURCES AND IMPROVEMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

17 JANUARY 2017

### REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR – OPERATIONAL AND PARTNERSHIP SERVICES

#### FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

#### 1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- a) present the items due to be considered at the Committee's meeting to be held on 08 February 2017 and seeks confirmation of the information required for the subsequent scheduled meeting to be held on 15 March 2017;
- b) present a list of further potential items for prioritisation by the Committee.

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

2.1 The improvement priorities identified in the Corporate Plan 2016-2020 have been embodied in the Overview & Scrutiny Forward Work Programmes. The amended Corporate Plan adopted by Council on 10 March 2016 formally set out the improvement priorities that the Council will seek to implement between 2016 and 2020. 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 11 July 2016, the Corporate Resources and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee determined its Annual Forward Work Programme for 2016/17.

#### 4. Current Situation / Proposal

##### Meetings of the Corporate Resources and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee

4.1 In relation to the Committee's next scheduled meeting to be held on 08 February 2017, the table below lists the items to be considered and the invitees due to attend.

Topic	Invitees	Specific Information Requested	Research to be Undertaken by the Overview & Scrutiny Unit
Digital Transformation Programme	Cllr Hywel Williams, Cabinet Member – Resources; Darren Mepham, Chief Executive;	Digital Transformation - Report going to Cabinet in May, Committee's role is to assist in the design and development for the future.	Detail research / To be confirmed

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Invitees</b>	<b>Specific Information Requested</b>	<b>Research to be Undertaken by the Overview &amp; Scrutiny Unit</b>
	Martin Morgans, Head of Regulatory and Partnership Services; Randal Hemingway, Head of Finance; Caron Cant, Interim Digital Transformation Programme Lead.		
2016-17 Quarter 3 Financial Performance	Cabinet and CMB All Scrutiny Chairs Randal Hemingway, Head of Finance	To review 2016-17 financial performance as at 31 December 2016	Detail research / To be confirmed

4.2 The table below lists the item to be considered and the invitees due to attend in respect of the subsequent meeting of the Committee to be held on 15 March 2017.

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Invitees</b>	<b>Specific Information Requested</b>	<b>Research to be Undertaken by the Overview &amp; Scrutiny Unit</b>
Community Asset Transfer of Land At Cosy Corner	Mark Shephard, Corporate Director – Communities; Satwant Pryce, Head of Regeneration, Development and Property Services.	Cabinet will be considering a report at the end of March, on the community asset transfer of land at Cosy corner, to the Harbourside Community	Detail research / To be confirmed
Business Plan 2016/17	Cabinet and CMB; All Scrutiny Chairs; Randal Hemingway, Head of Finance; Yuan Shen, Corporate Performance, Partnership and Transformation Manager.	To comment on Directorate 2016-17 business plans including its actions, milestones and performance measures	Detail research / To be confirmed

4.3 The table below lists all potential items that the Committee approved at their meeting on 11 July 2016, which are put to the Committee for reprioritisation as appropriate.



Topic	Proposed Date	Specific Information Requested	Research to be Undertaken by the Overview & Scrutiny Unit
Rationalising the Council's Estate including Depot Rationalisation		<p>Originating out of the Corporate Plan – one of the five key projects/programmes under Corporate Priority 3 – Smarter Use of Resources.</p> <p>Rationalising the Council's Estate – Once decision made in relation to Ravens Court Committee's role to assist in developing the next phase. Depot Rationalisation relates back to 2014 where there were concerns over the budget - increase in the cost of the project and the need for consultants, the disposal of land and the gaining of a capital receipt for this.</p>	Detail research / To be confirmed

### **Corporate Parenting**

- 4.4 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.<sup>1</sup>
- 4.5 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.
- 4.6 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 wellbeing in the County Borough of Bridgend.

### **6. Equality Impact Assessment**

<sup>1</sup> 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

6.1 None

## **7. Financial Implications**

7.1 None.

## **8. Recommendations**

8.1 The Committee is recommended to:

- (i) Note the topics due to be considered at the meeting of the Committee for 08 February 2017 and confirm if it requires any additional specific information to be provided by the invitees listed or the Overview & Scrutiny Unit;
- (ii) Determine the invitees to be invited to attend, any specific information it would like the invitees to provide as well as any research that it would like the Overview & Scrutiny Unit to undertake in relation to its following meeting scheduled for 15 March 2017;
- (iii) Revisit and consider the list of future potential items for the Committee's Forward Work Programme and reprioritise as the Committees deems appropriate.

**Andrew Jolley,**  
**Corporate Director – Operational and Partnership Services**

**Contact Officer:** Gail Jewell, Scrutiny Officer

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Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend,  
CF31 4WB

**Background documents:** None

## BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT TO CORPORATE RESOURCES AND IMPROVEMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

17 JANUARY 2017

#### REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

##### Corporate Plan 2016-2020 – reviewed for 2017-18

#### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To present to committee the Council's reviewed Corporate Plan 2016-20 for 2017-18 for consideration (attached).

#### **2. CONNECTION TO CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT PLAN / OTHER PRIORITIES**

- 2.1 The Corporate Plan sets out the Council's priorities for 2016-20 and defines the Council's commitments for 2017-18. It also sets the Council's well-being objectives under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and outlines how the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and other strategic plans will support the Council's core business and priorities.

#### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Council's Corporate Plan 2016-2020 was published in March 2016, setting out three new priority themes (improvement objectives under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009), associated aims and success measures. It also identified commitments to deliver those priorities in 2016-17. The Council needs to review and define its commitments for 2017-18.
- 3.2 In April 2016, the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (the Act) came into effect. The Act places a duty on each public body to carry out sustainable development. In carrying out sustainable development, public bodies must, among other things:
- set and publish well-being objectives;
  - take all reasonable steps to meet those objectives; and
  - publish a statement about well-being objectives.

#### **4. CURRENT SITUATION / PROPOSAL**

- 4.1 The current corporate plan has been reviewed for 2017-18. The review has focused mainly on:
- updating the Council's commitments and success measures for 2017-18
  - defining and integrating the Council's well-being objectives into the Plan
- 4.2 The Council's vision, values, principles and priorities remain unchanged from the current plan.

- 4.3 The three priorities are the Council's improvement objectives under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and wellbeing objectives under the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The Well-being Statement, required by the Act, is embedded into the Plan. The commitments are the steps the Council will take to deliver the integrated improvement and wellbeing objectives in 2017-18. The plan also sets out how the objectives make a contribution to the seven national wellbeing goals.
- 4.4 The success measures for each aim have been reviewed for 2017-18 to ensure they link closely to the commitments. Some new indicators are identified for 2017-18. For those new measures, wherever possible indicative targets have been set.
- 4.5 Financial information is yet to be incorporated into the Plan, because the Council's budgets are yet to be set.
- 4.6 The Committee's comments on the reviewed Plan will be considered when it is finalised for Cabinet to consider on 20 February 2017 and for Council to approve on 1 March 2017. In line with the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009, the Plan must be published by 31 March 2017.
- 4.7 Once approved, the Plan will replace the current Corporate Plan. The delivery of the plan will be monitored through the Corporate Performance Assessment process, through directorate management team meetings and through this Committee.

## **5. EFFECT UPON POLICY FRAMEWORK & PROCEDURE RULES**

- 5.1 The Council's Corporate Plan forms part of the Policy Framework.

## **6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 6.1 A full equality impact assessment was undertaken when the Plan was developed. Consideration was given to the potential impact on protected groups within the community and on how to avoid a disproportionate impact on people within these groups. Separate EIAs will be undertaken when proposals for carrying out the plan are developed and implemented.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 None in this report.

## **8. RECOMMENDATION**

- 8.1 That the Committee consider the reviewed Corporate Plan 2016-2020 for 2017-18.

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**Background Documents - None**

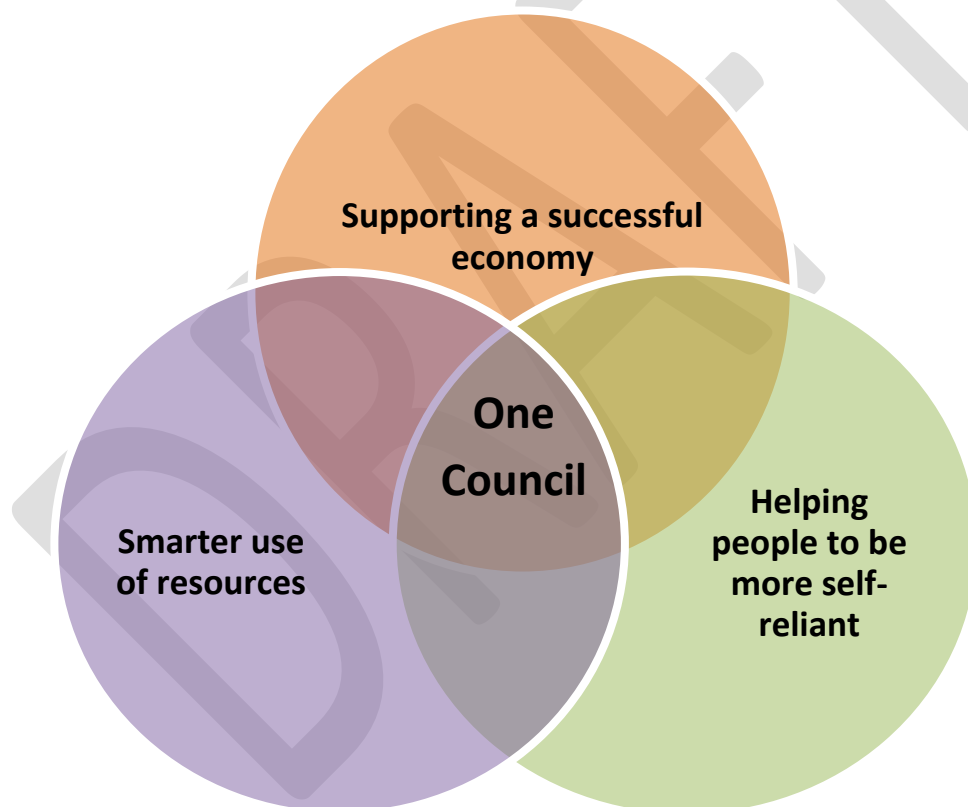
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# Corporate Plan 2016 - 2020



Reviewed for 2017- 2018

## Our Priorities



**Bridgend County Borough Council**  
**Working Together to Improve Lives**

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.  
This document is also available in Welsh.

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

This Council is uniquely placed to bring its own services together with the work of other agencies, communities, families and individuals for the benefit of the people of the county. This is nothing new. However, the world is changing fast, hence this document - our Corporate Plan 2016-20 sets out how the Council is to change and what its focus will be over the next four years.

We recognise that we will have to make significant changes to the way we think and operate in order to meet the significant challenges ahead of our communities – not least the increasing demands made on many of our services, against the background of a shrinking budget and economic uncertainty.

To make sure that the areas we focus on are the right ones, we consulted our citizens extensively on our priorities and budget reductions in our 'Shaping Bridgend's Future' consultation. By using a range of methods, the consultation received 1,819 responses (1.3% of the population) which is considered in statistical terms to be a valid sample size. More than 80% of respondents agreed that we had chosen the right priorities to bring about the necessary changes. Respondents also provided a range of other suggestions which have been considered in the development of the Corporate Plan.

The future shape of local government in Wales is still uncertain, but we will keep our focus on what our citizens in Bridgend need.

We have a clear and simple **vision** for this Council, that is, always to act as '**One Council working together to improve lives**'. To enable us to achieve this vision, our Cabinet has implemented cross-cutting portfolios.

This means that we will become a smaller, more flexible and innovative authority that works with partners and local communities to create a future in which residents have access to a more responsive and tailored service. It will also mean that people take greater responsibility for making that happen, both for their own sake and for that of the community as a whole.

**Our Values** have not changed. These represent what the Council stands for and influence how we work:

- Fair - taking into account everyone's needs and situation
- Ambitious - always trying to improve what we do and aiming for excellence
- Citizen-focused - remembering that we are here to serve our local communities
- Efficient - delivering services that are value for money

In developing this Corporate Plan we have identified **Our Principles**. These have been developed to help us steer the Council to become the sort of organisation that it needs to be in order to meet new challenges:

- Wherever possible the Council will support communities and people to create their own solutions and reduce dependency on the Council.
- The Council will focus diminishing resources on communities and individuals with the greatest need.
- The Council will use good information from service users and communities to inform its decisions.

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<sup>1</sup> This is our Well-being Statement.



- The Council will encourage and develop capacity amongst the third sector to identify and respond to local needs.
- The Council will not let uncertainty over the future of public services prevent meaningful and pragmatic collaboration with other public sector bodies.
- The Council will work as one Council and discourage different parts of the organisation from developing multiple processes or unnecessarily different approaches.
- The Council will transform the organisation and many of its services and in so doing will deliver financial budget reductions as well as improvements.

These principles highlight the importance of other organisations in delivering services to meet local needs. The Council has a track record of working with the third sector, the not-for-profit sector and the private sector, each of which already provides some services for the Council. In our survey, ‘Shaping Bridgend’s Future’, more than three quarters of respondents agreed that some Council services should be provided by organisations other than the Council. We will continue to build on this approach throughout the lifetime of this plan.

### Our priorities

We have specifically identified three outcomes or priorities<sup>2</sup> that will be our focus over the coming four years. These outcomes are intended to improve the quality of life of people in the county while significantly changing the nature of the Council:

Supporting a successful economy	Helping people to become more self-reliant	Smarter use of resources
A successful, sustainable and inclusive economy that will be supported by a skilful, ambitious workforce.	Individuals and families that will be more independent and less reliant on traditional Council services.	A Council that has lean, robust processes and a skilful workforce. A supported third/community sector with the opportunity to take on services that meet citizens’ needs.

### Our well-being objectives

In April 2016, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 came into effect. The Act is about improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. It places a duty upon all public bodies to apply the principles of sustainable development to ensure that present needs are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The Council is determined to implement the Act by appointing a Cabinet Member for Well-being and Future Generations.

The Act sets out seven long-term national goals:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
- A globally responsible Wales.

<sup>2</sup> These priorities are our improvement objectives under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

As a public body, we have a duty to work towards achieving these seven goals. The Act requires that we set our well-being objectives and take steps to realise them. The three priorities set out above are our well-being objectives. The aims under each priority in this plan specify what we want to achieve. The actions and success measures identified to deliver them are the steps we will take towards meeting those objectives. It is through these three priority areas that we will contribute most to the seven goals.

Our core business and other strategic and operational plans, such as our Strategic Equality Plan 2016-20, our Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and business plans, will also help us meet our objectives and maximise our contribution to the national goals.

The Act requires us to do things differently, applying sustainable development to everything we do. We are committed to the sustainable development principle, always acting in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. The five ways of working, defined by the Act - long term, prevention, integration, collaboration and involvement - will underpin everything we do and help us to improve the well-being of the area and make the county borough a good place for people to live, work, study and visit. **Appendix 2** shows how the wellbeing goals, the sustainable development principle and the five ways of working relate to each other.

### **Medium Term Financial Strategy**

In 2017-18 Bridgend County Borough Council will have a gross budget of nearly £400 million and a capital programme of currently £42.029 million to support our core business and the corporate priorities set out in this plan. Whilst the 2017-18 budget settlement is favourable compared to recent years, there is considerable uncertainty around 'Brexit' negotiations and the Council is going to be expected to achieve budget reductions of nearly £34 million from 2017-18 to 2020-21. Our Medium Term Financial Strategy sets out how we will achieve our corporate priorities and statutory duties whilst meeting budget reductions and managing financial pressures and risks over the next four years. Our spending plan is shown in appendix 1. Our detailed Medium Term Financial Strategy can be found at [www.bridgend.gov.uk](http://www.bridgend.gov.uk) (hyperlink).

### **Safeguarding**

The Council takes the safeguarding of vulnerable adults and children very seriously. Our commitment to safeguarding is set out in Priority Two of our this Plan. The actions we will take in 2017-18 are set out on page 11. Our social care services of course address safeguarding as core business but we also ensure that safeguarding considerations influence all services and we take a lead role with partners in the county. This plan includes the further development of a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub as a significant step forward and further detail on other safeguarding measures is highlighted in directorate business plans.

### **Other important services**

The Corporate Plan focuses on key areas that we want to change. However, we have many other core and statutory services that will continue to receive our attention. This includes our work as a planning authority, maintaining highways and public transport, refuse collection, street cleaning, revenues and benefits, public protection, and sports, arts and libraries through our partners HALO and Awen. This is not an exhaustive list. More information about our plans for these and other services are included in our business plans which are available on request.

Improving educational attainment remains very important to us. In this plan ongoing improvement in this area forms part of a wider objective in raising skills and attainment more generally. This is an important part that we can play in supporting a successful economy. In this Corporate Plan we particularly highlight our commitment to close the gap in educational attainment between pupils eligible for free school meals and those who are not. The directorate business plans will set out further detail of how we will achieve improvements to which we are committed.

### **How we will deliver this plan**

- Our Council's Transformation Programme. We have embarked on a programme of key changes to services that will help realise this plan.
- Strong financial management. This plan is supported by our Medium Term Financial Strategy to ensure that we make the most of our shrinking resources. We have to make nearly £34 million of budget reductions by 2020-21. An illustration of where our money comes from, and how we spend it, is included at the end of this plan.
- Strong performance management. We manage our performance closely and monitor progress regularly so that we can allocate our resources effectively and deliver the best possible services for our citizens.
- Business planning and service planning. The priorities in this plan are delivered through actions and measures detailed in each directorate/service plan and individual staff performance plans.

We will report on progress through our Annual Report. Our previous annual reports are available on [www.bridgend.gov.uk](http://www.bridgend.gov.uk).

This plan will be reviewed and refreshed annually.

### **Your comments**

We continue to welcome your comments on this plan. Your feedback will be taken into consideration in the course of the annual review and is always welcome.

You can give it through our website: [www.bridgend.gov.uk](http://www.bridgend.gov.uk); through Twitter: @BridgendCBC; via email to [improvement@bridgend.gov.uk](mailto:improvement@bridgend.gov.uk); or in writing to Corporate Performance Team, Bridgend County Borough Council, Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend CF31 4WB.



Councillor Huw David  
Leader of the Council



Darren Mepham  
Chief Executive

## Priority One - Supporting a successful economy

This means we will take steps to make the county a good place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focused on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions of all people in the county.

### Why is this important?

If we have a strong economy, local people will have more opportunities to secure a job, develop a career and improve their family income and circumstances. Lower levels of poverty can boost health and wellbeing and create more resilient communities that need fewer services. We want our town centres and businesses to generate wealth, provide jobs, attract investment, improve skills and encourage visitors. When consulted, 86% of citizens agreed that it was important to focus on supporting a successful economy.

There are signs that Bridgend's economy is improving. Employment rates for people aged between 16 and 64 years have continued to rise, from 69.9% in 2013-14 to 70.2% in 2014-15 and to 73.2% in 2015-16. However, the percentage of children living in households where no one is working rose from 17.3% in 2014 to 19.4% in 2015 and this is greater than the Wales average of 13.6%.

Following the UK's decision to leave the European Union, there is significant uncertainty around 'Brexit' negotiations, such as whether Britain will have full access to the European single market. Whilst we cannot influence the outcomes of the negotiations, we will continue to endeavour to make the most of the resources available to support the growth of the local economy.

### Our aims:

- To help local people develop skills and take advantage of opportunities to succeed and to extend that success to every community in the County Borough;
- To create conditions for growth and enterprise; and
- To create successful town centres.

### Our key projects and programmes that will help us to achieve these aims over the life of this corporate plan are:

**City Deal** – Working with neighbouring South East Wales Councils, we are seeking a 'City Deal' from the UK and Welsh Government which could result in around £1 billion investment in major capital projects in the Cardiff City Region over the next 10-15 years.

**Strategic Review of Post 16 Education and Training** - A strategic review to evaluate education provision and curriculum delivery with Bridgend College to ensure that there are clear options available to provide the best possible opportunities for learners in Bridgend.

**Successful Economy Programme** - key regeneration and local development schemes including: the Vibrant and Viable scheme with external funding of £9.6 million, which is redeveloping the Rhiw Car Park in Bridgend and creating affordable housing in the heart of the town centre by converting vacant space over shops into accommodation.

## What we will do in 2017-18:

### **Aim - To help local people develop skills and take advantage of opportunities to succeed and to extend that success to every community in the County Borough**

- Continue to work with the Cardiff Capital Regional Skills and Employment Board and BCBC led local projects to help shape employment opportunities and develop a skilled workforce to meet those needs.
- Work with individuals and families who are unemployed, economically inactive, experiencing in-work poverty, face barriers to work or are in or at risk of poverty, to improve their job opportunities.
- Work with schools to close the gap in educational attainments for pupils eligible for free school meals and those who are not and improve learner outcomes for other vulnerable groups including looked after children and young carers.
- Progress the implementation of the Good To Great Strategy for young people who are more able and talented than their peers to help them reach their full potential.
- Complete the review into the curriculum and schools estates for primary, secondary and Post-16 education and begin consultation on the proposals, where required, with all stakeholders.

### **Aim - To create conditions for growth and enterprise**

- Develop and deliver the Porthcawl Resort Investment Focus Programme to grow the value of tourism in the economy and increase employment and business opportunities.
- Contribute to the development of the business plan for the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, with the aim of bringing increased investment and economic control into the local area.
- To support the Bridgend Business Forum with the delivery of its development plan and its programme of events for 2017/2018.
- Develop a Low Carbon Transition Plan as part of the Smart System and Heat Programme with a view to identifying and developing heat projects within Bridgend County Borough.

### **Aim - To create successful town centres**

- Invest in our town centres to enhance existing facilities and provide new facilities including schemes in Porthcawl Harbourside, Maesteg and Bridgend.

### **Who will help us?**

- Housing Associations and Private Landlords;
- Bridgend Business Forum;
- Bridgend College and training providers;
- City Deal partners;
- Careers Wales; and
- Job Centre Plus.

### **Contributes to Wellbeing Goals**

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
- A globally responsible Wales

## How will we know we are successful?

**Aim – To help local people develop skills and take advantage of opportunities to succeed and to extend that success to every community in the County Borough**

Measure	Actual 2014-15	Actual 2015-16	Wales Average 2015-16	Target 2016-17	Target 2017-18
The number of participants we expect to work with under Bridges in to Work	<i>Not applicable. New indicator identified for 2016-17</i>			227	134
The number of apprenticeships and traineeships created by external contractors as part of the 21st Century schools programme and other BCBC led projects	<i>Not applicable. New indicator identified for 2016-17</i>			4	4
The number of apprenticeships and traineeships taken up by people who live in Bridgend	<i>Not applicable. New indicator identified for 2016-17</i>			2	2

### Education Measures

(Figures for educational achievement relate to the previous academic year)

Measure	Actual 2014-15	Actual 2015-16	Wales Average 2015-16	Target 2016-17	Target 2017-18
The percentage of Year 11 leavers from schools in the Authority identified as not being in education, employment or training in the Careers Wales Annual Destination Survey Statistics	3.6% (60 leavers)	3.2%	2.8	3.4%	2.80%
The percentage of schools meeting Learning & Skills Measure in terms of the subject offer at Key Stage 4 & Post 16	<i>Not applicable. New indicator identified for 2016-17</i>			100%	100%
Average GCE points score for learners aged 17	806	777	799.7	810	820
The percentage of pupils at A level achieving Level 3 threshold	97.6%	97.6	Local measure	98.6%	99%
The percentage of pupils achieving 3 A*-A grades at A level	7.1%	5.3%	7.9%	7.5%	10%
The percentage of pupils aged 15, at the preceding 31 August, in schools maintained by the local authority who achieved the Level 2 threshold including a GCSE grade A* - C in English or Welsh first language and mathematics	54.8%	59.7%	58.3%	61.1%	64.20%

Measure	Actual 2014-15	Actual 2015-16	Wales Average 2015-16	Target 2016-17	Target 2017-18
The size of the gap in educational attainments between pupils 15+ entitled to free school meals and those who are not (measured by Level 2 inclusive indicator)	36.30%	27.2%	Local measure	23.8%	30.1%

#### Aim – To create conditions for growth and enterprise

Measure	Actual 2014-15	Actual 2015-16	Wales Average 2015-16	Target 2016-17	Target 2017-18
The number of VAT/PAYE registered businesses in the borough	4,090	4,440	Local measure	Increase	Increase on 16-17 Year End Actual
The number of construction schemes for which the local authority has negotiated community benefits	<i>Not applicable. New indicator identified for 2016-17</i>		Local measure	6	4
The percentage of working age population that is in employment	69.6%	70.4%	70.3%	Increase	Increase

#### Aim – To create successful town centres

Measure	Actual 2014-15	Actual 2015-16	Wales Average 2015-16	Target 2016-17	Target 2017-18
Total annual expenditure by tourists	£289m	£306.62m	Local measure	Increase	2% increase on 16-17 Year End Actual
The number of visitors to town centres (footfall for Bridgend and Porthcawl )	5,565,023 3,135,193	5,354,363 3,975,792	Local measure	5,800,000 3,000,000	6,000,000 4,300,000
The number of vacant premises in town centres	Bridgend 65 Maesteg 19 Porthcawl 17	Bridgend 55 Maesteg 19 Porthcawl 17	Local measure	Bridgend 55 Maesteg 19 Porthcawl 17	Bridgend 55 Maesteg 19 Porthcawl 17
The number of residential units in Bridgend town centre, that have been (a) consented (b) completed	<i>Not applicable. New indicator identified for 2016-17</i>			(a) 8 (b) 28	(a) 30 (b) 14
The financial value of externally funded town centre regeneration projects underway/in development	<i>Not applicable. New indicator identified for 2016-17</i>			£23m	£16m

The targets for 2017-18 are provisional and may change in the light of actual results for 2016-17.

## Priority Two - Helping people to be more self-reliant

This means we will take early steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services.

### Why is this important?

Providing information, advice and assistance at an early stage can help people and their families stay together and remain independent within their communities. We know that children benefit from a secure supportive family environment and that most people are happier if they can stay independent and in their own homes for as long as possible. Such support can make it less likely that their situation will deteriorate and that they will become dependent on Council services.

Such an approach is important not only for those requiring social care support but also those requiring a whole range of other Council services. We are committed to providing good information, advice and assistance to the residents of Bridgend so that they are better equipped to manage situations themselves and the Council services can concentrate on those in greatest need. Eighty percent of respondents to our survey said we should focus on helping people to become more self-reliant and that we should prioritise services for older people, disabled people and children.

By building on our track record of working with the third sector, the not-for-profit and private sector, we can support communities to develop their own approaches to local issues and meet people's needs within the community.

### Our aims:

- To give people more choice and control over what support they receive by providing early access to advice and information;
- To reduce demand by investing in targeted early help and intervention programmes;
- To support carers in maintaining their roles; and
- To support the third sector, town and community councils and community groups to meet local needs.

### Our key projects and programmes that will help us achieve these aims over the life of this corporate plan are:

#### Remodelling Social Care:

- This is a large programme which includes recommissioning adult home care, developing extra care and information and advice services for people and their carers.
- Working with partners we are creating a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub as a single point of contact for all safeguarding concerns.
- We are looking at our existing models of residential care for children and young people and respite care for children with disabilities in order to make them more targeted and more effective.

**Community Asset Transfer** - transferring assets to communities to manage while making the most of the assets we retain.



## What we will do in 2017-18:

### **Aim - To give people more choice and control over what support they receive by providing early access to advice and information**

- Continue to improve the ways in which the Council provides good information, advice and assistance to the public, including increasing the support available through local community coordinators.
- Continue to involve service users, carers and communities in developing and commissioning services.

### **Aim - To reduce demand by investing in targeted early help and intervention programmes**

- Implement a new 52-week residential service model for disabled children and young people.
- Establish a new model of residential provision for looked after children and young people.
- Finalise a transition service model to help disabled children move smoothly into adulthood.
- Work with households and partners to help prevent homelessness.
- Increase engagement of partners, including schools, in the use of the Joint Assessment Family Framework (JAFF) and Team Around the Family (TAF) processes, which aim to ensure early identification of needs and delivery of support for children and families.
- Ensure that all services available work better together to provide vulnerable children with seamless support when needed and prevent them from becoming looked after.

### **Aim - To support carers in maintaining their roles**

- Work with partners and schools to support carers by providing the right information, advice and assistance where relevant.
- Recruit and retain carers across the range of fostering services.

### **Aim - To support the third sector, town and community councils and community groups to meet local needs**

- Work with partners and the third sector to identify the best way of providing services within local communities.
- Enable community groups and the third sector to have more voice and control over community assets.

## Who will help us?

- Western Bay Partners.
- Third Sector partners.
- People in receipt of services, their carers and families.

## Contributes to Wellbeing Goals :

- A resilient Wales.
- A healthier Wales.
- A more equal Wales.
- A Wales of cohesive communities.
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language.

## How will we know we are successful?

**Aim – To give people more choice and control over what support they receive by providing early access to advice and information**

Measure	Actual 2014-15	Actual 2015-16	Wales Average 2015-16	Target 2016-17	Target 2017-18
The percentage of a) adults and b) children who received advice and assistance from the information, advice and assistance service during the year	<i>Not applicable. New indicator identified for 2016-17</i>			Establish baseline for a) and b)	a) 30% b) 30%  Definition of these measures continues to be under review nationally
The percentage of people who are satisfied with the care and support they received	<i>Not applicable. New indicator identified for 2016-17</i>			Establish baseline (survey data available in April 2017)	65%
The percentage of adults who completed a period of reablement and six months later have: a) a reduced package of care and support or b) no package of care and support	<i>Not applicable. New indicator identified for 2016-17</i>			Establish baseline	60%  Definition of these measures continues to be under review nationally
Number of people who have been diverted from mainstream services to help them remain independent for as long as possible	12	129	<i>Local measure</i>	130	200

## Aim – To reduce demand by investing in targeted early help and intervention programmes

Measure	Actual 2014-15	Actual 2015-16	Wales Average 2015-16	Target 2016-17	Target 2017-18
The percentage of final duty homelessness acceptances as a proportion of all homelessness presentation	44.56%	32.43%	35.80%	23.60%	14.07%
The percentage of children supported to remain living within their family	<i>Not applicable. New indicator identified for 2016-17</i>			65%	65%
The average length of time older people (aged 65 or over) are supported in residential care homes	<i>Not applicable. New indicator identified for 2016-17</i>			1055	1000
The average age of adults entering residential care homes	<i>Not applicable. New indicator identified for 2016-17</i>			84yrs	84yrs
The percentage of looked after children on 31 March who have had three or more placements during the year	11.8%	13.7%	9.8%	12%	12%
The percentage of children who receive Connecting Families interventions during the year who remain out of the care system as at 31 March of that year	<i>Not applicable. New indicator identified for 2017-18</i>				80%
The percentage of individuals discussed at Transition Panel that have a transition plan in place by age 17	<i>Not applicable. New indicator identified for 2017-18</i>				100%
The percentage of Joint Assessment Family Framework (JAFF assessments) that progress to a Team Around the Family (TAF) in collaboration with partners	<i>Not applicable. New indicator identified for 2017-18</i>				60%

## Aim – To support carers in maintaining their roles

Measure	Actual 2014-15	Actual 2015-16	Wales Average 2015-16	Target 2016-17	Target 2017-18
The percentage of people who feel they are able to live more independently as a result of receiving an adaptation in their home	<i>Not applicable. New indicator identified for 2017-18</i>				75%
The percentage of carers of adults who were offered an assessment or review of their needs in their own right during the year	94.7%	95.3%	91.4%	94.0%	96.0%
The percentage of identified young carers with an up-to-date care and support plan in place	<i>Not applicable. New indicator identified for 2017-18</i>				90%

**Aim – To support the third sector, town and community councils and community groups to meet local needs**

Measure	Actual 2014-15	Actual 2015-16	Wales Average 2015-16	Target 2016-17	Target 2017-18
The number of community groups using packages of support to manage transferred assets	<i>Not applicable. New indicator identified for 2016-17</i>			3	6
The number of adults who received a service provided through a social enterprise, cooperative, user-led service or third sector organisation during the year	<i>Not applicable. New indicator identified for 2016-17</i>			Establish baseline	175
The number of Council owned assets transferred to the community for running	<i>Not applicable. New indicator for 2016-17</i>			5	5

The targets for 2017-18 are provisional and may change in the light of actual results for 2016-17.

## Priority Three - Smarter use of resources

This means we will ensure that all its resources (financial, physical, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the development of resources throughout the community that can help deliver the Council's priorities.

### Why is this important?

Over the next four years the Council is expected to make a budget reduction of almost £34 million. This year as in previous years, we are committed to finding at least 50% of the planned budget reduction for the year by making smarter use of resources, and thus to minimise its impact on services. As austerity continues, it becomes harder each year to make further budget reductions, but we continue to seek ways of working that will save us money, primarily by making smarter use of our buildings, our people and our spending.

In our public consultation we found that 76% (825 respondents) agreed they were happy for some Council services to be provided by other organisations. The provision of services online was the most popular budget reduction measure in the consultation. We also asked for other suggestions of how the Council could save money in the future. Of the responses received the most popular suggestion, with 225 respondents, was to streamline the Council, our workforce, offices and processes. We will do these things, and more besides, to ensure that the Council is making smarter use of its resources.

### Our aims:

- To achieve the budget reductions identified in the Medium Term Financial Strategy;
- To improve the efficiency of and access to services by redesigning our systems and processes;
- To make the most of our physical assets, including school buildings;
- To develop the culture and skills required to meet the needs of a changing organisation; and
- To make the most of our spend on goods and services.

### Our key projects and programmes that will help us to achieve this aim over the life of this corporate plan are:

**Digital Transformation Programme** – changing the way we operate to enable customers to access information, advice and services on line.

**Rationalising the Council's estate** – disposing of assets, transferring assets to communities to manage while making the most of the assets we retain.

**Schools' Modernisation Programme** – investing in a sustainable education system in school buildings that reduces cost and their carbon footprint.

## What we will do in 2017-18:

### **Aim - To achieve the budget reductions identified in the Medium Term Financial Strategy**

- Implement the planned budget reductions identified in the 2017-18 budget.

### **Aim - To improve the efficiency of and access to services by redesigning our systems and processes**

- Increase the number of citizens using our online system to manage their council tax and housing benefit accounts and deliver financial savings.
- Automate most common internal processes to reduce transaction costs and streamline processes.
- Deliver the schools commercialisation project to optimise the use of collective resources available to support schools.

### **Aim - To make the most of our physical assets, including school buildings**

- Provide new and improved schools by delivering the schools' modernisation programme.
- Rationalise further the Council's administrative estate to ensure the Council operates from one core office by March 2018.
- Develop an approach to commercialisation of Council assets.
- Market the part of the Waterton site that is due to be vacated for housing development under the Parc Afon Ewenni scheme.
- Implement energy and carbon reduction measures and promote good practice in all our public buildings to help them reduce their carbon footprint.
- Review capital expenditure to ensure alignment with corporate objectives.

### **Aim -To develop the culture and skills required to meet the needs of a changing organisation**

- Support managers to lead staff through organisational change.
- Provide the learning and development opportunities for staff to meet future service needs.
- Improve our understanding of citizens views by developing and promoting mechanisms that increase responses to consultations.

### **Aim - To make the most of our spend on goods and services**

- Review procurement processes and procedures to ensure best value is achieved through eProcurement and utilising national and regional arrangements.
- Monitor the corporate contracts register to ensure compliance and opportunities to aggregate spend.

## Who will help us?

- Employees;
- Schools;
- Contractors; and
- Trade Unions.

## Contributes to Wellbeing Goals:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A globally responsible Wales

## How will we know we are successful?

**Aim - To achieve the budget reductions identified in the Medium Term Financial Strategy**

Measure	Actual 2014-15	Actual 2015-16	Wales Average 2015-16	Target 2016-17	Target 2017-18
The percentage of budget reductions achieved	95.3%	92.5%	Local measure	100%	100%

**Aim -To improve the efficiency of and access to services by redesigning our systems and processes**

Measure	Actual 2014-15	Actual 2015-16	Wales Average 2015-16	Target 2016-17	Target 2017-18
The percentage of Council Tax customers accessing on line service through 'my account'	0%	0%	Local measure	30%	50%

**Aim - To make the most of our physical assets, including school buildings**

Measure	Actual 2014-15	Actual 2015-16	Wales Average 2015-16	Target 2016-17	Target 2017-18
Ratio of staff to desk in Civic Offices	Data not available	6:5	Local measure	3:2	3:2
Realisation of capital receipts target	£4.2m	£5.9m	Local measure	£4m	£1.5m
The percentage change in carbon emissions in the non-domestic public building stock on previous year	6.68%	8.28%	Local measure	3%	3%*
The percentage change in the average Display Energy Certificate (DEC) score within LA publicbuildings over 1000m <sup>2</sup>	1.8%	4.5%	Local measure	0%	0%
Income generated from the Council's non-operational property portfolio	<i>Not applicable. New indicator for 2017-18</i>				£25k pa additional income

\* Static target set by Welsh Government.

**Aim – To develop the culture and skills required to meet the needs of a changing organisation**

Measure	Actual 2014-15	Actual 2015-16	Wales Average 2015-16	Target 2016-17	Target 2017-18
The number of working days/shifts per full-time equivalent (FTE) local authority employee lost due to sickness absence	9.8	10.85	9.9	8.5	8.5
The number of interactions from citizens on the corporate social media accounts (Facebook and Twitter)	Data not collected	28875	Local measure	10% increase on previous year	5% increase on previous year
The percentage of employees completing e-learning modules	Data not collected in this year	43.07%	Local measure	40%	45%
The number of managers receiving training to improve their people management skills (including absence management)	n/a	n/a	Local measure	New indicator (235 completed)	200

**Aim - To make the most of our spend on goods and services**

Measure	Actual 2014-15	Actual 2015-16	Wales Average 2015-16	Target 2016-17	Target 2017-18
The percentage of tenders above EU threshold compliant with the Public Contract Regulations 2015 that are compliant	<i>Not applicable. New indicator for 2016-17</i>			100%	100%

The targets for 2017-18 are provisional and may change in the light of actual results for 2016-17.



## **Appendix 1 – An outline of our income and spending**

*2017-18 – where the money will come from*

*2017-18 – where the money will be spent*

*These two charts will be included once the budget for 2017-18 has been approved*

DRAFT

## Appendix 2 - The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Well-being of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015 has been put in place to make sure that public bodies are doing all they can to contribute to the improvement of the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.

The Act introduces seven long-term well-being goals, puts in place a sustainable development principle, and defines 5 ways of working that public bodies will need to think about to show they have applied the sustainable development principle. The diagram below shows how the seven national goals, the sustainable development and the five ways of working work together.



The Council is committed to the well-being goals and the sustainable development principle, making sure that when we make decisions we take into account the impact they could have on people living their lives in Wales in the future.

## BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT TO CORPORATE RESOURCES & IMPROVEMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

17 JANUARY 2016

#### REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR – OPERATIONAL AND PARTNERSHIP SERVICES

#### MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2017-18 to 2020-21 AND DRAFT BUDGET CONSULTATION PROCESS

#### 1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to present the Committee with:

- a) the findings of the Budget Research and Evaluation Panel (BREP) attached at Appendix A;
- b) the responses from all the Overview & Scrutiny Committees in relation to Cabinet's draft budget proposals, attached at Appendix B.

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

2.1 The improvement priorities identified in the Corporate Plan 2016-2020 have been embodied in the Overview & Scrutiny Forward Work Programmes. The amended Corporate Plan adopted by Council on 10 March 2016 formally set out the improvement priorities that the Council will seek to implement between 2016 and 2020. The Overview and Scrutiny Committees engage in review and development of plans, policy or strategies that support the Corporate Themes.

#### 3. Background

- 3.1 In considering the challenges associated with continued budget reductions, Members of the 2013/14 BREP recognised the need for a 'whole Council' response to be adopted in managing anticipated cuts to services against a backdrop of increasing demand, public sector reform and the challenging financial outlook.
- 3.2 The BREP recommended that a Standing BREP be established to engage members on budget proposals as well as to enable members to feed in community intelligence gained from their representative role and engage in shaping future service provision. This recommendation was endorsed by both the Corporate Resources and Improvement Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet as part of the 2013/14 draft budget consultation process.

3.3 It was agreed that each Scrutiny Committee would nominate two members to sit on the Standing BREP. For 2016-17, the BREP consisted of:

*Cllr M Reeves (Chair of BREP and Chair of Corporate Resources and Improvement)*

*Cllr J Spanswick (Chair of Community Environment and Leisure)*

*Cllr N Clarke (Chair of Partnerships and Governance)*

*Cllr P Foley (Chair of Children and Young People)*

*Cllr Pam Davies*

*Cllr C Green*

*Cllr G Phillips*

*Cllr E Dodd*

*Cllr K Watts*

*Cllr M Butcher*

3.4 The primary purpose of the approach was :

- To achieve consensus on the direction of the budget over the life of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- To achieve a detailed overview and assessment of the budget proposals where the expertise and knowledge pertaining to each Committee service area contributes to a corporate understanding and appreciation of the draft budget proposals.
- To assist the Council to develop a budget for 2017/18 that aims to meet the needs of the communities of Bridgend County Borough.
- To facilitate firmer understanding of the budget setting process and the draft proposals in order to assist the Committees in making informed comments, constructive challenge or recommendations to Cabinet as part of the budget consultation process.

### **Methodology**

3.5 The Standing BREP has met on six separate occasions and examined by means of semi-structured interviews with Directors and Officers the Budget Strategy for the Council as a whole.

3.6 The Panel also determined to focus their work on a few specific areas to examine in detail in order to assist with informing the budget proposals and also to ensure that there was no duplication between the work of the Panel and that of the individual Committees.

3.7 The three areas chosen were:

1. Collaboration with Town and Community Councils
2. The 1% proposed efficiency saving for schools
3. The proposed Community Action Fund

- 3.8 Detailed information was requested from Officers to inform discussions regarding the rationale behind the early draft proposals, their impact and how they linked to the Corporate priorities.
- 3.9 As well as meeting with the Chief Executive early on in the Panel's meetings, the BREP also invited the Cabinet Member – Resources/Deputy Leader to attend each meeting to be part of the BREP process.
- 3.10 Further to this, the Panel determined to invite external invitees such as Town Clerks and representative Headteachers to attend specific meetings and provide their perspectives on relevant draft proposals.

#### **4. Current Situation / Proposal**

- 4.1 The Corporate Resources and Improvement Overview & Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider the findings of the Budget Research and Evaluation Panel and determine whether the recommendations should be forwarded to Cabinet along with the consolidated responses from all five Overview and Scrutiny Committees as part of the budget consultation process.
- 4.2 To assist Members in their deliberations, the other Chairs of Overview & Scrutiny Committees have been invited as representatives of their Committees as well as nominated members of the Panel. The Deputy Leader and the Head of Finance have also been invited to attend to facilitate discussions.

#### **5. Effects on the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules**

- 5.1 This item relates to the role of Overview & Scrutiny Committees as consultees in respect of the budget setting process.

#### **6. Equalities Impact**

- 6.1 The report received by cabinet on 12 January 2016 on the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016-17 to 2019-20 states that the proposals contained within the report cover a wide range of services and it is inevitable that the necessary budget reductions will impact on the local population in different ways. In developing these proposals, Officers reported that consideration has been given to their potential impact on protected groups within the community and on how to avoid a disproportionate impact on people within these groups.
- 6.2 The cabinet report further stated that Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken on all budget reduction proposals before the final recommendations are made concerning next year's revenue budget.

#### **7. Financial Implications**

- 7.1 The report relates to the budget setting process and the financial implications associated with that.

## 8. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to determine whether it wishes to submit the recommendations outlined at Appendix A and B to Cabinet as part of the budget consultation process, subject to any modifications and amendments that the Committee decides are appropriate.

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Democratic Services - Scrutiny

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### **Background Documents:**

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

## **Report of the Budget Research and Evaluation Panel 2016**

- 1.1 The Budget Research and Evaluation Panel (BREP) has considered the draft budget proposals for the year 2017-18. It has also continued to monitor the deliverability and achievability of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS); for example, by considering the progress of the changes to Learner Transport and the future proposals for schools.
- 1.2 The work of the BREP helps to ensure financial transparency and accountability with regard to the draft budget proposals and the draft Corporate Priorities. This ensures that elected Members have the opportunity to help to develop and shape Council policies on the delivery of services, which is particularly important at a time of increasing demand for services, public sector reform and the challenging financial outlook.
- 1.3 The BREP acknowledge the financial challenges facing the authority and the need to make substantial savings over the term of the MTFS and therefore stress the importance of BREP and Scrutiny taking an active role in monitoring the savings in the context of a 'One Council' approach.
- 1.4 The BREP are concerned that year on year the opportunities to identify additional savings to offset shortfalls in planned savings become fewer and less sustainable. Therefore it is increasingly vital that budget savings are delivered as planned.
- 1.5 BREP were advised that previous budget reductions identified and agreed by Council on 25 February 2015 will still stand and that further or new budget reductions will come from areas that are not 'Areas of Focus' (AOF) identified by CMB and Cabinet as aligning with the Corporate Strategy.

## **2 Comments on BREP 2015-16**

- 2.1 The Panel briefly discussed the findings and responses from last year's BREP process with particular concern over the Learner Transport savings in that there had been issues experienced recently due to routes to school being deemed unsafe. This meant, therefore, that whilst changes to distance criteria have been introduced by the Authority, buses in some wards have had to continue and the full savings not realised.
- 2.2 The Panel recommend that investment be made into safer routes for school now to ensure longer term savings are achieved through reducing the need for Learner Transport.
- 2.3 The Panel also recommend that the Authority seek guidance as to whether there is a differentiation between a safe route for a pupil of 11 years old compared with one who is, for example 15 years old; similar to that made for 10 year olds in Primary school and 11 year olds in Secondary Schools.
- 2.4 The Panel determined to reiterate part of recommendation 1 of the BREP last year that a Project Manager be identified from outside of the Education and

Transport departments to carry out a review of the Authority's transport to ensure that we are running these services as effectively and efficiently as possible.

- 2.5 The Panel also questioned the response to recommendation 24 from last year in that contracts could not be adjusted mid-year. Members made particular reference here to the School Transport Contract with buses and coaches to some schools not always being full, meaning that the Authority were not getting value for money from these contracts. Members expressed the view that there should be a review system for contracts throughout the year. Officers and the Deputy Leader advised that this would be difficult to achieve in terms of current ongoing contracts, as the flexibility was not put into the initial agreement. Flexibility could be considered for inclusion in any future contracts however with this came at a greater cost. The Deputy Leader advised that the Council were improving the methods by which they were procuring services and an example of this was the new Waste Contract.

#### **Recommendation 1**

**The Panel expanded upon their recommendation from last year and proposed that a data exercise be carried out to track the number of pupils using the buses throughout the year to determine how significant a decrease there is in service users. This information can then be used to inform whether a mechanism for revisiting contracts mid-year would be beneficial and cost effective.**

- 2.6 The Panel also discussed their recommendation response from Cabinet in relation to the regionalisation of payroll from 2016-17. It was the view of the Panel that if Bridgend is able to deliver the payroll service so efficiently then it should lead the way in the region, as with Regulatory Services, and strive towards a regional system to achieve collaborative savings.

#### **Recommendation 2**

**The Panel recommend that BCBC put out an expression of interest to other LAs to take forward the regionalisation of payroll; in order to give an indication of whether there could be a gain for the LA and the region as a whole.**

### **3 Presentation of Budget to the Public and Budget Consultation Process**

- 3.1 During the early stages of the BREP process this year the Panel considered the draft budget report, discussing the way in which a much more explanatory approach was being taken in order to provide the public with the situation and rationale behind the proposed savings. The Panel complimented this approach but made a series of suggestions for this report to make it more accessible and informative to members of the public.
- 3.2 These included the following amendments and suggestions for inclusion:
- a) That the base budget and impact of reductions be incorporated into the report;



- b) That a table or chart be included in any presentation to the public in order to provide a snapshot of where the Authority's budget is spent;
- c) That a similar table or chart be provided within the report to evidence where council tax is spent;
- d) That the proportion of Council tax in relation to the total Budget be more clearly illustrated;
- e) That further links to Capital spend should be illustrated in the report; where, for example a revenue cut may be made in a service area but there is a corresponding capital investment or spend. This may assist in addressing the public's concerns over the impact of the cuts.
- f) Any presentation and report to the public needs to make it clearer that although the view being portrayed is that there has been a good settlement, it is only good in comparison to what it was predicted to be; there are still budget savings of £6m that have to be made and services that have to be cut and reduced on top of the £38m savings that have already been taken out of the budget over the past few years.

3.3 The Head of Finance and S151 Officer reported to the Panel that the public response to the Council's MTFS consultation were increasing year on year with over 2500 responses this year . This is the highest response the Authority has received to any consultation and far exceeds the response obtained by many other Local Authorities to their budget consultation. He confirmed that the Council would continue to engage with the public in respect of the MTFS to improve their awareness and also take on board any feedback that may be useful to inform future budget proposals. It was recognised that there was still a need to secure more observations from younger people as there had not been a very good response to the Youth Survey undertaken. It was acknowledged that this was important in order to achieve a more holistic and complete form of feedback from a number of different age groups. It was also the case that work needed to be done to increase Member participation with the numbers decreasing over the past few years. A possible issue with this could have been the time of day this consultation event was held and this was an area to look at for the future.

3.4 In terms of feedback from the consultation responses, the Panel were advised that there was a general consensus to support services aligned to Schools and Social Services, at the expense of services such as libraries and Adult Learning. It was reported that schools were still being protected more than any other area of the Authority in terms of the percentage of the budget reduction. There was also support from constituents for more road improvements as well as for Social Enterprises such as Awen Trust and Halo. and Between 45 – 55% of respondents had also supported street cleaning and the Community Action Fund however there were responses for maintaining street lighting provision at road danger spots such as road traffic junctions.

3.5 Whilst the support of Digital Services had been apparent last year, this had not been so supported this year when compared to maintaining the provision of other key front line services. There had also been support to raise the cost of school meals and for a proposal for a gradual increase for the use of

Council playing fields and also support to be tougher on constituents who failed to comply with payment of their Council Tax.

- 3.6 The Panel congratulated Officers on the increasing number of responses to the budget consultation but raised concerns that displaying findings as percentages can be misleading as it can be interpreted as the percentage of all constituents, not just those who responded.

### **Recommendation 3**

**The Panel recommend that for future consultation reports, the findings be displayed as the number of people, not just as percentages as this can sometimes be misinterpreted as the percentage of all constituents in the County Borough.**

## **4 Draft Budget Proposals 2017-18**

- 4.1 In its initial consideration of the budget approach and proposals for 2017-18, the Panel determined to focus on a few specific areas to examine in detail in order to assist with informing the budget proposals and also to ensure that there was no duplication between the work of the Panel and the individual work of the Committee's.

- 4.2 The three areas chosen were:

1. Collaboration with Town and Community Councils
2. The 1% proposed efficiency saving for schools
3. The proposed Community Action Fund

### **Collaboration with Town and Community Councils**

- 4.3 The Panel requested that they consider how the Local Authority is collaborating and communicating with Town and Community Councils in a bid to maintain community services that are at risk of future budget cuts. Members therefore requested that a small number of Town Clerks be invited to attend a BREP meeting along with Officers to provide their views and assist in discussions. Four Town Clerks representing TCCs with varying precepts attended a meeting and provided a valuable contribution to the debate.
- 4.4 Various options for the provision of future services were considered including the TCCs independently commissioning services or buying in the service from the LA instead of taking it on fully. For all options however there were common themes including the need for better communication and support from the LA, whether this be in relation to timing; ensuring that any approach from the LA is timely for the TCC in order to fit in with their own budget setting process; or support such as the provision of better information regarding the service to determine the viability of taking it on. Contractual assistance was also discussed should the TCC decide to explore the possibility of taking on the full contract for a service, and likewise simple issues such as the notification to TCC Clerks that a service, such as grass cutting, is scheduled to be reduced and the details of this reduction.

4.5 In drawing up its conclusions and recommendations from the BREP process, the Panel commented that there was perceived to be a culture issue within LAs regarding TCCs that needed to be addressed. Likewise the Panel agreed that the Authority need to really be willing to provide help and not make processes too long winded and onerous for TCCs. With TCCs possibly willing to pay towards services or take them on, BCBC need a strengthened process to be able to respond effectively.

4.6 **Timing**

The evidence provided by TCCs indicated the need for a longer time period for TCCs to consider any proposals for future services from the LA with the request that this be more than one or two months before the precept process. TCC Clerks commented that external Audits are getting stricter therefore figures and detail are needed in a more timely manner.

**Recommendation 4**

**The Panel recommend the need to coordinate the TCC Budget setting process with the BCBC Budget Setting Process to ensure the TCCs have information in time to inform their precept. The latest the information would need to be communicated with the TCC is the by the September Budget Review.**

4.7 **Communication, Approach and Support**

The Panel discussed how the LA engages with TCCs and what type of support is provided to the clerks. Whilst there seems to be a specific process for the current Asset Management Scheme, for other services there does not seem to be a lot of engagement or exploration of the possibilities for TCCs to take on or assist with the provision of services, whether this be partially or fully.

4.8 Members also agreed with the view that the LA need to take a more supportive lead approach with TCCs as they do not have the expertise to explore possible service options and draw up the detail. The detail instead needs to come from the LA, with such information on running costs, how costs could potentially be reduced, how the LA could possibly support the TCC to take items forward. The Deputy Leader also reported that following May's local elections there would be an expansive Induction Programme for Elected Members, one of which would relate to fostering and improving relationships between the LA and all TCCs.

**Recommendation 5**

**The Panel recommend the need for improved communication between the LA and TCCs over planned policy changes or cuts that the Authority is introducing i.e. if a service is going to cease to be continued the TCC may need to put in place some transitional planning, rather than it being cut and finding out too late.**

#### **Recommendation 6**

The Panel recommend that any communication between the LA and TCCs involve the clerk who, undertaking a coordinating role, can then ensure that matters are taken before the full Town or Community Council as appropriate. Similarly, it is recommended that TCC clerks be invited to attend the TCC Forum to ensure that they are kept informed of the discussions and outcomes.

#### **Recommendation 7**

The Panel recommend that a standardised structure be established for approaching TCCs for assistance with future service provision and that they be provided with suitable detail and information to ensure that there is clarity from the start. Supplement dialogue needs to be provided from the Authority to determine what services, beyond the core services that BCBC will continue to maintain, that TCCs could potentially take ownership of.

It is proposed that estimated figures could be provided to TCCs in the first instance in order that they can respond as to whether there is an appetite/expression of interest. Following which the Authority will be able to determine the viability of providing further detailed information.

Further to this it is recommended that the Authority share its knowledge and provide additional support to TCCs as requested such as contractual assistance in order to take forward proposals for the transfer of services.

#### **4.9 Collaboration**

It was recognised that for LAs to engage with TCCs required significant resources, however, the Panel agreed that the long term benefits would be considerable both for the public, whose services could be maintained and for the LA, both in terms of future savings and in respect of the Authority's reputation. It was therefore proposed that the work to assist TCCs to take on community services be considered as an 'invest to save' proposal where short term investment will result in long term benefits and efficiencies.

- 4.10 During their discussions the Panel were advised of some TCCs who had already decided to take on community services using a private contractor. The Panel consequently discussed the prospect of other TCCs learning from this and even working together to share costs. The subject of double taxation was also raised and various views expressed over whether or not this is a barrier to TCCs taking on community services.

#### **Recommendation 8**

The Panel recommend that formal arrangements be established for TCCs to co-operate more together, share best practice and possibly look at sharing resources and joint commissioning of services. One proposal was to consider the possibility of utilising the TCC Forum to take on a coordinating role. Such cooperation would also assist the LA in engaging with TCCs to determine expressions of interest for the

**future provision of services on a much simpler and larger scale rather than approaching each TCC individually which can be extremely time consuming.**

#### **Recommendation 9**

**The Panel also recommended that TCCs discuss and share experience of the issue of double taxation to discover from those who have already hired private contractors whether this is actually an issue for members of the public and if it is really a barrier to taking on community services.**

#### **Community Asset Transfer**

- 4.11 During their discussions with TCCs the subject of Community Asset Transfers was raised. The Panel expressed concern over the provision of support to Local organisations towards Community Asset Transfer (CAT) in that there had been delays and missed opportunities as a result of reduced staffing and the need to recruit to the one remaining post. Members commented that without dedicated Officer support to assist with the developing of Business and financial plans, CATs will not be achieved.
- 4.12 The Panel requested that in light of their concern's, the CRI Overview and Scrutiny Committee keep the item of CATs on their forward work programme in order to ensure that sufficient support and drive is provided behind the project.

#### **Recommendation 10**

**The Panel recommend that the Capital fund designed for allocation to TCCs to assist them with renovation of Community Assets, be used to repair and renovate the Authority's buildings before getting people interested, as the current state of the buildings could be a significant barrier to asset transfer.**

#### **School Efficiency Savings**

- 4.13 In its first meeting the Panel determined to consider in detail the proposed school efficiency savings which were being put forward now that Welsh Government no longer required LAs to protect school budgets. In order to inform their discussions Members invited Headteacher representatives from the primary and secondary sectors to attend their Panel meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss in detail the potential impact on schools and the likelihood of achieving the saving, and where also could the savings be made should the proposal not be progressed?
- 4.14 A number of points were highlighted from the discussions including the fact that schools have not been entirely exempt from budget pressures with having to take on costs that had previously been covered by the Local Authority. Examples of these include pay awards, licenses, Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, Carbon Reduction Commitment and tree inspections. Cuts have also been made to the educational improvement grants that schools receive from Welsh Government and schools still have to provide the incremental increase in salaries and their own legal cover, such as in cases of job

evaluation. The Panel commented that this needs to be made more apparent in the budget report and more widely known in order to understand the context around schools and budget cuts.

- 4.15 The Panel also discussed the pupil teacher ratios and school funding where it was stated that Bridgend has the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest pupil teacher ratio in Wales and is poorly funded per pupil with only Caerphilly, for example, spending less per primary school pupil.
- 4.16 Members had mixed concerns and views with regard to the funding of schools and whether there should be a cut in funding equating to 1%, 0.50%, or no cut at all.

#### **Recommendation 11**

**Based on the fact that funding for schools varies for each LA and that Bridgend has historically been poorly funded per pupil; rated as one of the lowest in Wales and with one of the highest pupil teacher ratio in Wales; the Panel recommend that Cabinet put pressure on Welsh Government to rectify the issue of school funding in order that funding is distributed in a more fairer and balanced manner across Wales.**

- 4.17 The Panel discussed various concerns regarding the efficiency saving such as the risks to schools already in deficit and the fact that other schools could go into deficit as a result of the savings and that this would consequently limit the judgement from Estyn.
- 4.18 Other potential impacts discussed were the effect on pupil teacher ratios, which could increase as a result of the efficiency savings at a time when the Education Secretary is looking to propose caps for pupils in infant classes. For secondary schools, impacts such as larger class sizes, smaller number of teachers; meaning teachers possibly teaching outside of their main subjects; also the need to appoint part time staff which always proved a struggle to recruit. A possible narrowing of the curriculum was also stated due to the loss of teachers and a loss of support staff who often supported the most vulnerable pupils. Similar issues were raised for primary schools with increased class sizes, loss of teachers, low morale, a fall in education standards and results as well as a reduction in the support for those more able and for those with Special Educational Needs. It was reported by the Primary Headteacher representative that the efficiency savings over the four years equated to losing approximately forty primary school teachers.
- 4.19 On the other side the Panel were also advised that without the school efficiency saving, the LA would have to find around £3.5m over four years from elsewhere, with likely more next year. Members also noted the fact that Schools, even with a 1% cut, were still the least cut service area within the LA and so are still to some extent being protected.
- 4.20 It was however looking at possible options to assist schools such as supporting schools to become better commissioners, for example in their commissioning of legal services. The LA would look to broker this for schools.

IT support could also possibly be commissioned separately. Whilst schools in Bridgend work really well together, they still broker services independently which costs more individually.

- 4.21 A further option was to assist schools in increasing their income generation; possible ways schools can create more opportunities for income such as hiring out their halls and facilities or teaching classes outside of usual classes.

#### **Recommendation 12**

**With a vote of 6 to 2, the Panel recommend that the proposal for a 1% school efficiency not be progressed in light of the risks it poses to pupils and their attainment as well as continued school improvement. It also could potentially impact negatively on pupil teacher ratios and the most vulnerable pupils with Special Educational Needs.**

#### **Community Action Fund**

- 4.22 The third item the Panel decided to look into in detail was the proposed Community Action Fund, the idea of which was to allocate for a one year trial period, a budget to every individual member to spend in their own ward, replicating other schemes that already exist such as those operating in Worcestershire. The Panel requested further detail on this fund including how this would be undertaken, what the criteria would be, how much would be allocated to each ward Member and how the fund would be monitored.
- 4.23 The Panel expressed some concerns over the fund not being proportionate for each Member and their number of constituents given the varying sizes of the wards in the County Borough however Officers determined that this was the fairest way.
- 4.24 Officers reported that the purpose of the fund was to react quickly to local need, for example to those issues that often come through as Member Referrals.
- 4.25 Concerns were also expressed that the fund is open to potential abuse with reports that some Members in other LAs where a similar fund had been introduced, have been referred to the Ombudsman. However, as a Councillor, the Panel stated that Members will likely have their own interests in various aspects of their own community.
- 4.26 The Panel also discussed the possibilities of pooling the funds between Members as well as collaboration with Town and Community Councils to combine funding and/or ideas based on local need such as weed spraying.
- 4.27 The Panel initially supported the Community Action Fund however, following continued discussions around the budget savings and the impact of these on services and service users, the Panel did not feel it appropriate at this time to take forward such an initiative.

### **Recommendation 13**

**Members were in agreement that the Community Action Fund was a good idea in principle, but that it was not an appropriate initiative to take forward at this time given the level of cuts that are being made in other areas.**

4.28 Should the initiative be taken forward during the future the Panel recommend that the following points be taken into consideration:

- That a hybrid of choices be made available to Members such as pooling funds and collaborating with TCCs.
- Whilst the proposal accounted for administration costs to cover the application and allocation process, the Panel expressed the view that there may be a need for some additional officer support in an advisory capacity.
- As part of the application process, an option to request officer involvement be incorporated to ask for assistance or advice such as the potential cost of services, for example, pothole or pavement repairs.

## **5 Further General Comments on the MTFS 2017-18 to 2020-21**

### **5.1 School Efficiency Savings**

The Panel agreed to consider where the savings that were set against the school efficiency proposal as detailed in section 5 could instead be made.

### **Recommendation 14**

**The Panel recommend that the savings against the school efficiency proposal be partially offset by the funding that was proposed for the Community Action Fund, with consideration given to the remainder of the savings being taken from the £6,194,000 allocated for other Corporate Budgets' for 2017-18; as recommended by the CYP Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**

### **5.2 Council Tax**

Discussions were held around the Council Tax increase which, whilst initially proposed at 3.9%, was decreased to 2.9% to reflect the better than expected settlement from Welsh Government. The BREP however viewed that a minor increase in Council Tax would offset some of the proposed cuts as it would equate to approximately an extra £650,000.

### **Recommendation 15**

**The Panel recommend that the initial proposal of 3.9% increase for Council Tax be reinstated instead of the 2.9% put forward in the draft budget proposals.**

### **5.3 Street Lighting and Gully Cleansing**

Members expressed concern with the proposal to turn off all street lighting in areas other than those deemed essential, for example at road crossing junctions etc. There were further worries in that this could include areas considered safe routes to schools which may consequently be deemed unsafe for pupils who walk these routes. Members supported some areas



having street lights turned off, as well as the proposal for only every other street light to be turned on but commented that a blanket switch off could create a rise in crime, accidents and lead to more problems in the long term.

- 5.4 The Panel also discussed the subject of Flood Risk Management and gully cleansing and the need to give the public reassurance. Members agreed that the proposal to reduce the frequency of gully cleansing would create a greater risk of flooding and could result in more costs than savings.

**Recommendation 16**

**The Panel recommend that the proposals to turn off all street lights and to reduce the frequency of gully cleansing not be progressed for 2017-18 and alternatively savings are achieved through Council Tax income with a 3.9% increase.**

- 5.5 **Weed Spraying**

**Recommendation 17**

**The Panel did not support the proposal to reduce weed spraying over the year and recommend that Town and Community Councils be approached to consider taking part of the cost of this service on when determining their precept.**

- 5.6 **Schools Strategic Review**

Whilst not directly related to a specific budget proposal, the Panel stressed the need for the work under the Strategic Review to be progressed as soon as possible. They stated that the work of the Board was vitally important in order to address issues within Post-16 education such as small class sizes. It was the view of the Panel that future savings will not be realised without such issues being resolved and new ways of working introduced.

- 5.7 Members commented on the lack of detail in the report of the possible savings that could be made through a possible restructure of Headteachers; working with schools in order to achieve succession planning and explore various avenues such as the Executive Head/ Head of School model which had proved hugely successful in Coleg Cymunedol Y Dderwen.

**Recommendation 18**

**The Panel recommend that the Authority carry out a review of potential retiring Headteachers and work with schools on succession planning and possible savings that could be achieved through various options and models such as Federations.**

- 5.8 **Car Parking**

The Panel reiterated ongoing concerns regarding the delays in achieving savings related to car parking. Members commented that proposals to charge Blue Badge Holders and to undertake a review of staff car parking charges have not been achieved for a number of years. They also expressed concerns over the new Rhiw car park closing at 7pm which did not encourage

the public to come into Bridgend of an evening to use local restaurants and also meant decreased revenue from the car park.

### **Recommendation**

**The Panel recommend that the opening times of the Rhiw Car Park be changed to 24hr in order to encourage and support night time economy within the town centre.**

## **6. Future role of the Budget Research and Evaluation Panel**

- 6.1 The Panel will 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.
- 6.2 The BREP expressed some concerns over how the public were approached during the consultation process; the questions that were asked over various proposals and whether the public fully understood some of the budget savings. For example- whether the 67% of respondents who supported the proposal for street lighting actually understood that this meant all street lights being turned off. Panel Members highlighted that clarification over this proposal was requested in a recent Scrutiny meeting.
- 6.3 Likewise the BREP agreed that more needed to be done to engage young people and encourage schools and Headteachers to support the budget consultation process and promote it more within their schools.
- 6.4 The Panel requested that as part of their future work the BREP 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.
- 6.5 The BREP also requested that future work consider in more detail the evidence behind budget pressures linked to demographic growth, ensuring value for money is being received.
- 6.6 The BREP consider 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.

## **Comments from Individual Overview and Scrutiny Committees 2016-17**

### **1 Corporate Resources & Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

- 1.1 The Committee is concerned that collaborative scrutiny without extra resources could result in a poor level of scrutiny which would be damaging to the authority. The future picture is unclear and the authority should continue to value scrutiny as it played an important part in holding the executive to account and supporting the quality of decision making. The Committee recommend that resources be retained.

### **2 Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

- 2.1 The Committee note that the Sport, Play and Active Wellbeing team are focusing on the development of the wellbeing and preventative agenda and Member questioned whether future reports of the team would be presented to Adult Social Care or remain with Community Environment and Leisure.
- 2.2 The Committee have requested that when Members receive an update on the implementation of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act in February, Officers provide information relating to what the Local Authority has undertaken in relation to the Councils increased legislative responsibility in connection with Deprivation of Liberty Standards (DoLS) and how this work is monitored.
- 2.3 Members have requested that the next meeting of Adult Social Care scheduled for 6 February 2017 be held at Trem Y Mor.

### **3 Community Environment and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

- 3.1 Members were concerned at the proposal to eventually close all public conveniences in the Borough by 2018/19 and introduce a comfort scheme as a substitute. Meanwhile Members were concerned that the reductions to the cleaning teams in this area would mean that the service becomes a reactive service and therefore would create a potential public health risk.
- 3.2 Members questioned Officers on the removal of four area cleaner streets teams and asked how the service would operate if the proposal went ahead and what the minimum statutory requirements in the Environmental Protection Act were. Officers stated that the minimum requirements were not defined and it would require a challenge. Officers added that the reduction proposal included the reduction of a vehicle which meant the operational schedule would change and areas would be prioritised as necessary.
- 3.3 Members queried why the car parking review and proposed changes had not yet been completed and implemented despite this being a reduction proposal for 2016-17. Officers stated that the review would happen early in 2017 upon implementation of the residents parking scheme. They added that there had

been some legal issues which had contributed to the delay but now these had been resolved they were hoping to complete the review and achieve the proposed savings as soon as possible

- 3.4 Members questioned the officers on the proposal of the street lighting and whether this was to partially or fully switch off the street lights. Officers stated that risk assessments would be carried out to determine which sites to switch off and that they would be fully turned off in these areas. Members were concerned at the potential risk to community safety, especially of that on learner travel routes.
- 3.5 Members were concerned at the proposal to reduce the frequency to gully cleansing as they feared homes would be at risk due to water and flood risks. Officers shared the Members concerns and stated that this proposal would be reviewed.
- 3.6 Members welcomed a review of the proposal to reduce the frequency of gully cleansing.
- 3.7 Members were concerned at the proposal of reduced focus on rear lanes overgrowth and footpaths in rural areas and that this would require expensive and extensive future repairs.
- 3.8 Members did not agree with the proposed saving of £15k for the reduction of weed spraying as this would end up being more costly in the long run and not an efficient way of operating.

### **Recommendations**

- 3.9 Members recommended the removal of the proposal to switch off the street lighting due to the risk of community safety.

## **4 Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

### **Education and Family Support**

- 4.1 In order to justify any proposed efficiency savings to school budgets, Members recommended that non-statutory services such as early years and nursery provision which the Authority is continuing to provide should be provided in the report to evidence that they are more beneficial long term at preventing a worsening situation for statutory services.
- 4.2 The Committee expressed concerns over the effects of cumulative small budget pressures that schools are experiencing such as pay awards and licenses which were once covered by the Local Authority but are now being delegated to schools.

- 4.3 In light of these pressures the Committee had strong concerns over the potential impact of the 1% efficiency savings proposed for school budgets, particularly for those schools already in deficit and for the primary sector, with evidence being heard that this would equate to losing 40 primary teachers across the 4 years.
- 4.4 As a result of this the Committee recommend against the 1% efficiency saving for school budgets. It is recommended instead that the proposed Community Action Fund for Councillors not be progressed and the money be used to partially offset the 1% saving.
- 4.5 Furthermore the Committee recommend that the budget titled 'Other Corporate Budgets' for 2017-18 with a proposed £6,194,000 set against it, be considered to achieve the remainder of the saving set against schools under the 1% efficiency.
- 4.6 The Committee reiterated previous concerns and recommendations in relation to Learner Transport including those from last year's budget consultation process that proper project management be provided to carry out a review of Learner Transport and that this comes from outside of the two responsible areas in order to provide an objective oversight.

#### **Further comments**

- 4.7 The Committee were pleased to receive assurances that the proposed collaboration and savings for the Educational Psychology Service would not be to the detriment of the service but would ensure that it was maintained at its current level.
- 4.8 The Committee wished to congratulate Officers on the success of the School Modernisation Programme and its continued achievements for pupils within the County Borough.
- 4.9 Members also commended schools on the improvement achieved within Bridgend even when we have such a high pupil teacher ratio.

#### **Children's Social Services**

- 4.10 The Committee expressed serious concerns regarding the proposal for further savings from the reduction of Looked After Children particularly given the recent Quarter 2 finance report which projected that the savings of 357,000 for LAC allocated for this year will not be made and the service is currently overspent. Members commented that they did not share the apparent confidence that the Directorate displayed over achieving the future savings in this area.
- 4.11 The Committee requested further detail as to how the service had calculated the £260,000 saving for 2017-18 for LAC.

- 4.12 The Committee further stated that in light of the historic overspends in respect of LAC and the current status of the projected savings in this area for 2016-17, the proposals for further savings for 2017-18 and 2018-19 are unrealistic and unachievable. The Committee therefore recommend that the Directorate look elsewhere for more realistic savings that are attainable.
- 4.13 The Committee echoed previous concerns of the Committee in relation to the cost of Out of County Foster Carers compared with those in house and the need for more Foster carers within the County Borough to keep LAC closer to home. The Committee reiterated previous recommendations that there be an increase in payments made to in-house Foster carers to try and grow their numbers and reduce the overall cost of sending children out of Authority, which is not always best for the Looked After Child.