

COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY, 28 FEBRUARY 2018

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB ON WEDNESDAY, 28 FEBRUARY 2018 AT 15:00

Present

Councillor PA Davies – Chairperson

S Aspey	SE Baldwin	TH Beedle	JPD Blundell
NA Burnett	RJ Collins	HJ David	P Davies
SK Dendy	DK Edwards	J Gebbie	T Giffard
RM Granville	CA Green	DG Howells	A Hussain
M Jones	MJ Kearn	DRW Lewis	JE Lewis
JR McCarthy	D Patel	RL Penhale-Thomas	AA Pucella
JC Radcliffe	KL Rowlands	B Sedgebeer	RMI Shaw
CE Smith	SG Smith	JC Spanswick	G Thomas
T Thomas	JH Tildesley MBE	E Venables	SR Vidal
MC Voisey	LM Walters	CA Webster	DBF White
PJ White	A Williams	AJ Williams	HM Williams
JE Williams	RE Young		

Apologies for Absence

MC Clarke, N Clarke, RM James, B Jones, DG Owen and RME Stirman

Officers:

Susan Cooper	Corporate Director - Social Services & Wellbeing
Mark Galvin	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Lindsay Harvey	Corporate Director Education and Family Support
Andrew Jolley	Corporate Director Operational & Partnership Services
Gary Jones	Head of Democratic Services
Gill Lewis	Interim Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer
Darren Mepham	Chief Executive
Mark Shephard	Corporate Director - Communities

127. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Officers declared an interest in Agenda item 13. As JNC Officers and left the meeting whilst this report was being considered:-

Corporate Director – Communities
Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing
Interim Corporate Director – Education and Family Support
Corporate Director – Operational and Partnership Support
Interim Head of Finance

128. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of a meeting of the Council dated 31 January 2018 be approved as a true and accurate record, subject to the word 'Hall' in the third line of Minute number 113, being altered to 'Council'

129. TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM:

Mayor

The Mayor announced that she had recently attended 'Sandville' Porthcawl, where there was an annual thanksgiving service. Sandville is run entirely by charitable donations it gives many people which have been going there for 30 plus years, respite to families as well as a range of therapies and treatment. It is open to the public where individuals can take part in Reike, Massage and a range of treatments for a donation to Sandville. It was an inspiring place with 100 plus volunteers, many of which have been going there to help for over 30 years. The venue had a lovely atmosphere and very family oriented.

The Mayor confirmed that she was pleased to attend the opening of the Hearing Centre in Boots the chemists in Caroline Street, where anyone could make an appointment and have a free hearing test. Everyone can obtain advice on any hearing difficulties and see all the latest technology and equipment.

The Mayor had also visited the Millennium Centre in Cardiff for the St David's Awards and saw the finalists receive Certificates and a pin. They were from all walks of life and different categories, some of which were community, bravery etc. the finalists will now have an Award Ceremony in March.

She had attended the High Sheriff's Ball in the Vale of Glamorgan Hotel, where £4,500 was raised on the evening with an Auction and Raffle. The target the High Sheriff has set is £10,000, which the Mayor stated that she hoped he will reach before his year is over in April. Lamau is a charity for the homeless.

The Mayor announced that she was told of some real life stories where people have turned their lives around. Again the volunteers and staff who work with the homeless are a dedicated team and if determination is anything to go by, this was abundant on the night. She wished them good luck in the future, to ensure no one has to sleep in our streets in some of the worst weather we have had for the last 30 years.

The Mayor confirmed that she was pleased to attend the Dementia Launch in the Pavilion Porthcawl, where we had a number of speakers and a power point presentation. She reminded all Councillors to go to the Web site to sign up for the Dementia friendly training with a view to go on to being a Champion so that the training and awareness of this awful illness can be cascaded throughout the County, and make people aware what to look for in friends and relatives, as this could affect anyone from any walk of life at any time and does not discriminate.

The Mayor attended the Musical 'Carousel' performed by Bridgend Youth Theatre in the Pavilion Porthcawl. They were very professional and the singing and dancing was an absolute delight. She extended her thanks to the cast, people behind the scenes, parents and grandparents, and all those who supported this wonderful Musical.

Finally, the Mayor advised that she had also attended a charity tea in the Heronston Hotel, where the BYT performed singing and dancing with songs from the Shows. The talent we have locally she felt, was awe inspiring and they were all a credit to Bridgend.

Deputy Leader

The Deputy Leader announced, that last week Bridgend County Borough Council was featured prominently by BBC Breakfast News as part of coverage designed to highlight new UK recycling figures.

These new figures have revealed that Wales is doing better than England, Scotland and Ireland, and the BBC had chosen to use Bridgend County Borough Council as an example of how it is possible not only to hit new recycling targets, but to exceed them altogether.

In fact, the presenter stated that “Bridgend Council is achieving rates that other parts of the UK can only dream of.”

Two local residents were interviewed at random, both of whom were in favour of the scheme, and the footage included a demonstration of how our scheme works, animated videos, local statistics and more.

This was an excellent opportunity to reach a very large audience indeed, and he was delighted to see such a positive piece of reporting.

Interim Corporate Director – Education and Family Support

The Interim Corporate Director – Education and Family Support, confirmed that a decision had been taken to close all schools in the County Borough this week on Thursday and Friday, due to the snow that had been forecast for South Wales.

This decision had been taken on the grounds of health and Safety for pupils, parents and teaching staff alike. This would be the case he added, unless any further updates indicated otherwise.

Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration

The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration was sure that Members will have noted the most recent round of school categorisation information issued by Welsh Government, with this categorisation being based on several criteria including support needs, and schools are grouped, green, yellow, amber or red. This revealed that 38 out of 48 primary schools and seven out of nine secondary schools have been categorised as receiving either ‘green’ or ‘yellow’ support in Bridgend County Borough.

All three special schools and the pupil referral unit have been categorised as ‘green’ or ‘yellow’.

Eight primary schools have been placed in the ‘amber’ category, and two are in the ‘red’ category. Two of our nine secondary schools are also in the ‘amber’ category, with none placed in ‘red’.

He was pleased to see the County Borough continuing to display a trend of overall improvement, and we are considering the report in further detail as we look at how we and our partners in the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service can work with all local schools to offer help and support.

The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration briefly mentioned that the Jennings Building in Porthcawl had been shortlisted for a major national award by the Royal Town Planning Institute. Nominated under the Excellence in Planning for Heritage and Culture category, the Building would be competing against the likes of the Sill National Landscape Discovery Centre, and the refurbishment of the Grade II listed Darlington Hippodrome. Just to be nominated in this 40 year old scheme was a major achievement, and he was sure that Members would be keeping their fingers crossed for when the winners were announced in May.

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He then announced that new Members might not be aware, that a few months ago we had similar news concerning another of our County towns, Pencoed. An Affordable Housing Project was built by Jehu Ltd at Heol y Geifr, the former Bayswater Tubes brownfield site. This was a £5m scheme for Hafod Housing. LABC is an organisation representing all local authority Building Control teams in England and Wales. In the LABC Cymru Awards, the Pencoed development won the “best large volume housing project” award, and Jehu’s Senior Site Manager Glyn Rees, won the best Site Supervisor award. The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration, felt this was excellent news for the County Borough.

Cabinet Member – Communities

The Cabinet Member - Communities wished to mention that this week has marked Fuel Poverty Awareness Day, which aims to highlight the need to do more to ensure that people across the UK can afford to live warmer, healthier, happier lives.

The awareness day is organised by the charity National Energy Action, and they have acknowledged our own efforts by presenting the Council with an award for the Caerau mine water project, which as you know is seeking to help cut fuel bills in the Llynfi Valley for up to a thousand homes.

He extended his thanks to all that had been concerned in this.

As work gets underway at Porthcawl’s town beach, last Thursday he had participated with an ITV interview about the project which highlighted a recent drop-in public information session organised by the contractors, Alun Griffiths.

The session was well attended and offered people their first glimpse of an artist’s impression of the finished work, which he believed was very well received indeed.

He was looking forward to see the project progress, and believed that this is going to be another landmark development for Porthcawl.

Finally, the Cabinet Member – Communities invited Members to join him in thanking the Highways Department for their excellent work with gritting that had allowed roads comprising the main highway network to remain open, in what had been inclement weather conditions the last few days. Also, with worse weather predicted in the next couple of days, he sent on behalf of Council, a message of his support and appreciation in light of the increased demands that would be put upon them further during this period.

Cabinet Member – Social Services and Early Help

The Cabinet Member Social Services and Early Help, confirmed that Porthcawl, Kenfig Hill, Pyle and Cornelly had become the latest areas to be recognised as dementia-friendly communities in Bridgend County Borough.

More than 1,500 people from local businesses, shops, churches, schools and voluntary organisations have signed up to the Dementia Friendly scheme.

This has been developed as a partnership between Bridgend County Borough Council, Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board, BAVO and the Alzheimer’s Society, and has been embraced by local town and community councils.

It follows the success of a previous scheme set up in Maesteg town centre in 2016, and he was delighted to see that it is being extended across further communities.

Members may want to inform their constituents to look out for the special 'dementia friendly' badges and stickers at participating premises.

He concluded by stating that as a Dementia Friendly Authority, Members could register themselves as Dementia Friendly Councillors in their own right. He could arrange for this to be carried out on block together with appropriate Officers. He was very committed to complete this he considered.

Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations

The Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations advised that given that Members will shortly be discussing the budget for next year, she thought Members would be interested to learn that our ongoing partnership with Halo Leisure is continuing to deliver fresh investments despite the challenges that were being faced.

This time, around £200,000 worth of upgrades have been provided at local leisure centres in Pencoed, Pyle, Ynysawdre and Maesteg.

The improvements range from site upgrades to new kit and specialist cardio-vascular training equipment.

With further upgrades planned in coming months, it's great to see that the partnership is providing local people with access to facilities that will help them to lead healthier, active lifestyles, she concluded.

130. TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE LEADER

The Leader confirmed that dialogue was ongoing between the Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public Services and Council Leaders and the Welsh Government Association, about the Cabinet Secretary's statement on local government re-organisation. He added that in Bridgend, the Council's initial response would be discussed at the next Group Leader's meeting, and the WLGA planned to write to the Cabinet Secretary outlining a collective response of all the local authorities in Wales.

He also advised that Members may wish to remind their constituents about the deadlines for some important consultations that we are currently running. The first one is the proposal for a new class for children with autism at Pencoed Primary School. This will end on 23 March 2018.

Then, a few days later on 26 March, our consultation on withdrawing subsidies from some commercial bus routes will also close. Finally, on 4 April, the consultation on Public Conveniences will come to an end.

All three are drawing a lot of comments, and anyone who wants to have their say can do so by visiting the consultation pages of the Council's website.

Paper formats and alternative formats can be obtained by contacting the Council's Consultation team.

Finally, the Leader advised that the Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration together with himself, had the privilege of being invited to the official closing ceremony of Brynmenyn Primary School. This was an emotional experience, as it was the last day in their old building, but it was also an exciting milestone and a new chapter, as the school now had a brand new building that had opened just this week. He was therefore really pleased with this, as were the staff, school governors, pupils and parents, as they were now happy studying in a 21st Century School. He was sure that all Members echoed his

sentiments, and agreed that it was extremely important that the Authority looked to provide the best education opportunities for all children at schools within the County Borough.

131. INVITATION TO PREPARE A JOINT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (LDP) SOUTH EAST WALES - WEST, AND INVITATION TO LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITIES TO PREPARE A STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN (SDP).

The Group Manager Development presented a report on behalf of the Corporate Director – Communities, which concerned the response to the letters from the Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs - Lesley Griffiths AM received on the 13 December 2017, regarding her invitation to undertake Joint Local Development Plans (LDP) and a regional Strategic Development Plan (SDP).

In respect of Joint Local Plans, the letter invited the Council to give serious consideration to preparing a joint plan with RCT and Caerphilly. The reasoning behind this request, related primarily to better resourcing opportunities, greater collaboration and a more joined up planning regime although no evidence has been submitted to support this view.

He added that the letter concerning the SDP similarly invited local planning authorities to prepare strategic plans on the 3 regional footprints, which in Bridgend's case would align with the Cardiff Capital Region area. The SDP would be separate tier of development plan that will sit above the LDP. Once in place an SDP would allow for 'light-touch' LDPs to be produced.

The Cabinet Secretary had invited positive responses to the invitation to be submitted by 28th February 2018. Until such time Welsh Government (WG) will not agree to the progression of any plan individually. WG has the power to direct Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to produce development plans including joint plans.

Bridgend had always had consistent development plan coverage and these have been successful in delivering growth.

The receipt of these letters was quite unexpected and their content has far-reaching implications for LPAs in the autonomous production of development plans, and would seem to diverge from the direction of travel for development as discussed with WG officials up until this point.

The Group Manager Development advised that whilst there is some agreement with the Cabinet Secretary's points expressed in the letters i.e. that the planning system is best placed to deliver the strategic and local land use vision for both the region and County Borough, and to ensure the right development is carried out in the right place, there is concern about the joint LDP approach, which is covered in detail in the report and attached appendices.

The letters suggest that LPAs would not be allowed to progress with their own LDP until timing of the letters has significant implications for Bridgend given the imperative to start work immediately on a Review of its LDP which will expire in 2021. There is a risk that a joint plan would not be delivered by this date resulting in a 'policy vacuum'. An up-to-date development plan is important to guide sustainable development and promote investment opportunities and prevent inappropriate development.

In respect of the report, the following options are being considered:-

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1. Preparation of a SDP only with no individual reviews of our existing LDP until the SDP is adopted.
2. Individual Review of the LDP whilst simultaneously working collaboratively on the SDP with the region.
3. Collaboration 'Plus' with an individual review of Bridgend's LDP whilst working simultaneously with RCT (and other LPAs) to prepare a joint evidence base and also with the region to prepare a SDP.
4. A Joint LDP with RCT and Caerphilly whilst simultaneously working collaborating with the region to prepare a SDP.
5. A Joint LDP with just RCT whilst simultaneously working collaboratively with the region to prepare a SDP.

Each of these options were considered in detail in the report, with the most favourable options being 2 and 3. Option 3 – Collaboration 'Plus' is likely to be the most cost effective and expedient, with a replacement LDP in place by the critical date of 2021.

However, there are considerable risks to Bridgend if, as under Option 1 it was to forego preparation of an LDP, given that there would be a likely policy vacuum beyond 2021 up until the time the SDP is adopted and work can progress in earnest on light touch LDP.

Similarly options 4 and 5 i.e. Joint LDPs offered the highest level of risk both in terms of delivery and maintaining consistent plan coverage.

The report details why it was so important for Bridgend to maintain plan coverage, given the lack of a 5 year land supply and a need to identify new sites. A replacement plan would guide development to the right locations and as a Local Planning Authority we would not be dictated to by the development industry, or suffer from 'planning by appeal', which could undermine any future development strategy for Bridgend and even the future direction of a SDP.

The Group Manager Development further added, that it is also the view of Officers that it is the role of the SDP to effectively manage cross boundary issues, which is cited by the Cabinet Secretary as one of the primary reasons for undertaking joint plans rather than the function of sub-regional joint LDPs.

The approach advocated by the Cabinet Secretary would result in a number of sub-regional Joint LDPs across the region, but which would also exclude Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. (their plans are recently adopted) and Merthyr (who are already underway with their LDP review).

In terms of the SDP, there are clear economic and social advantages to having a regional plan in place in order to effectively manage and deliver the aims and aspirations of the Cardiff Capital region (CCR), of which Bridgend were a part of. It is imperative therefore that Bridgend contributes to the SDP and forms part of this strategic planning process.

Bridgend Officers have been in discussion with colleagues in RCT, Caerphilly and within the region. There is a consensus at Officer level that there although there is widespread support to produce a SDP, there are considerable risks and complications and no appetite to progress Joint LDPs.

Also, Leaders across the region considered the Cabinet Secretary's letters and have taken the view that there is a general consensus to prepare a SDP, but that Joint LDP would be a distraction from this important work and LPAs should be allowed to progress with individual LDPs if considered necessary. This view was echoed by the WLGA Executive Board.

In summary, it was considered that here is no advantage in terms of planning outcomes to pursue a joint LDP with RCT and Caerphilly. Matters of resource management can still be addressed by working collaboratively with neighbours and sharing costs without embarking on a formal joint plan. Regional and cross boundary matters are best addressed by way of an SDP although LPAs should be allowed to progress with their own LDPs if there is a compelling need.

This view was endorsed by the WLGA, CCR Leaders and the professional Planning Officers both regionally and Wales wide.

A Member confirmed that there had only been one round of LDPs across Wales, and as recent motions NDM6635 and NDM 6626 passed unanimously in the National Assembly demonstrate, there are issues with new developments that must be addressed in any future LDP such as the tendency for new developments to lie unfinished for several years, home buyers being trapped by ever increasing maintenance charges, and the mismatch between planned developments and the public services required to make those sustainable.

He felt it would be better to keep the LDP in house for now, and for it to be written and influenced by the people who are in the best position to have learned those lessons and know what has worked and what has not.

Many of the concerns across Wales have stemmed from the fact that since the financial crash, the housing market is now dominated by even fewer firms that have a strong position in the market.

He added that these large firms have been lobbying for fewer restrictions on planning, cheaper S106 agreements, and larger developments that price out the smaller developments. There was also substantial concerns over the quality of new builds as a result that more competition in the market would address if we had an LDP that divided developments into more manageable chunks that small developers could bid for. Keeping an LDP in-house enabled more influence reflecting the needs of Bridgend

The Cabinet Member – Communities advised that in his opinion there were limited benefits for Bridgend if there was put in place a regional LDP with neighbouring authorities, particularly as proposals for land use for LDP's covering these Authorities would differ from that of BCBC's. He added that Caerphilly CBC did not have an LDP in place. He added that there would be other implications also, which could result in a policy vacuum existing in any such new Plan. He added however, that he considered an SDP was a better vehicle that would work, for the reasons explained in the report.

The Leader concluded debate on this item, by advising that he could see that there was support for the recommendations of the report from all political groups, and he was encouraged to see that Bridgend were speaking with One Voice, and that all local authorities in SE Wales had the same view with regard to the SDP and LDP proposals.

RESOLVED: That Council:

- (1) Approved Bridgend County Borough Council's formal response to the Cabinet Secretary (Appendix 1), and noted the contents of the Options appraisal attached at Appendix 5 to the report
- (2) Endorsed the Cardiff Capital Joint Cabinet and WLGA responses to the Cabinet Secretary (Appendices 2 and 3 to the report.)
- (3) Authorised Officers of the Council to proceed with the preparation of the SDP in conjunction with the 10 Local Planning Authorities (LPA's) in the Cardiff Capital Region, and
- (4) Authorised Officers to proceed with a review and replacements of Bridgend's existing LDP (whilst simultaneously working collaboratively with other LPA's, wherever possible to prepare a shared a joint evidence base).

132. **PROPOSED HEALTH BOARD BOUNDARY CHANGE - CONSULTATION: EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIP WORKING IN BRIDGEND**

The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing submitted a report that:-

- Informed Council of the joint working with Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University (ABMU) Health Board and how this has helped to shape sustainable services for the future;
- Ensured that Elected Members are aware of the implications of the Bridgend area of ABMU Health Board moving into the Cwm Taff University Health Board; and
- To seek Council approval of the BCBC formal response to Welsh Government on the consultation document, 'Effective Partnership Working in Bridgend, regarding the proposed health board boundary change to align decision-making across health and local government'.

The Chief Executive gave an introduction to the report, and after summarising certain background information, he advised that at the end of last year Welsh Government issued a consultation as outlined in bullet point 3 above, which closed on 7 March 2018, which was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

He confirmed that the proposed health board boundary change set out in the consultation had been developed, following the responses to the White Paper 'Reforming Local Government-Resilient and Renewed.'

He explained that this consultation sought views on a proposal that healthcare services for people in the area of Bridgend County Borough Council, should be provided by Cwm Taf University Health Board instead of ABMU, in order to align decision-making across health and local government.

The Chief Executive stated that in order to best meet people's needs and expectations, to secure the best outcomes for people local, regionally and in Wales, public services need to be able to work together effectively. While boundaries should not be a barrier to delivering the outcomes Wales needs, unnecessary complexity, especially in decision-making, could make this more difficult and limit opportunities to serve the public even better.

He then confirmed that the intention for the proposed change was to provide clarity and consistency for more effective leadership and partnership; supporting the ambitions of Bridgend County Borough Council and its strategic partners in meeting the needs of our communities.

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The Chief Executive advised Members that at the next meeting of Council, Members would receive a Presentation from Cwm Taf University Health Board after the consultation has closed, so that they can explain how they work and integrate with local authorities. He considered this was important in order to get a sense from them what they regarded important from working collaboratively.

He then further advised Members that the Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing would give a brief Presentation to better inform our response to the consultation; to give a flavour of what we see important in the area of health and social care, and finally to ensure that our response to the consultation is informed.

The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing gave a Presentation, the thrust of which was to re-cap on the context element of social care; to focus on the main areas currently of integration with the ABMU, and to conclude the Presentation by highlighting the Council's future priorities.

Following conclusion of the Presentation, the Mayor invited questions from the floor.

A Member asked if Overview and Scrutiny would have a role to play in any changes should they go ahead.

The Leader replied that they would as soon as the consultation was concluded, and the future of the Health Board was decided upon.

In response to a further Member's question, the Leader confirmed that key local partners such as the South Wales Police and Fire Service had been consulted on the proposals and were supportive of these, as were Merthyr and Rhondda Cynon Taf Council's. Obviously, ABMU were disappointed, though they recognised the reasons behind Welsh Government's proposals.

The Mayor asked if the Ambulance Service had been notified of the proposal.

The Leader confirmed that they hadn't, but that he would take the necessary steps to ensure that they were.

A Member asked for some assurance that certain local health community services would remain in place following any change, making particular reference to Maesteg Community Hospital.

The Leader replied that these services would not be affected, as it was Cwm Taf's vision to deliver more services in the community, and where possible, less acute and hospital based facilities.

The Chief Executive added, that Cwm Taf were in a stronger financial position than ABMU.

A Member noted that there would be, in all probability, at least as good availability of services locally if the proposal goes ahead to join with Cwm Taf. She asked however, if services for individuals further afield would be compromised if the change was proceeded with, ie private transfers and the like.

The Leader assured that there would be no change or cut of service here, and that people who needed this type of care in, for example a hospital environment out of the Bridgend area, would continue to receive this. There were no proposals to change patient flows currently in place he concluded.

RESOLVED: That Council approved the consultation response attached at Appendix 2 to the report, and await further information following the relevant Welsh Government announcements.

133. **CORPORATE PLAN 2018-2022**

The Chief Executive presented a report, that sought Council approval of the new Corporate Plan 2018-2022, shown at Appendix A to the report.

He advised that the proposed Corporate Plan set out the Council's priorities for the above period, and defined the Council's commitments for 2018-2019.

He referred to paragraph 4.3 which confirmed that in January 2018, the Council's Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the draft Plan, and made a series of constructive comments and suggested amendments for inclusion in the Plan. These had been collated, and wherever feasible, amendments had been made to the Plan, and examples of these were shown in bullet point format in this section of the report.

The Chief Executive confirmed that the Plan would be supported by the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), Directorate Business Plans and Service Plans. He added that the Plan's priorities and commitments would be reviewed annually, to take into account changing circumstances and progress made, and to ensure that the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009, and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 are met.

He then referred to paragraph 4.9 of the report and the three listed Priorities of the Plan, and emphasised that whilst these were not subject to change (but to review), the commitments of the Plan were subject to change, usually on an annual basis. The Priorities of the Plan also had the support of constituents of the County Borough following a consultation exercise that had been undertaken in 2017, in relation to two pieces of different legislation as detailed above.

A Member referred to page 97 of the Plan and the Aim – To create successful town centres. He asked how this aim could be fully achieved if there was a proposal as part of the MTFS, to close public toilets and cut certain bus services into town centres and other areas.

The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration responded by stating that nothing had as yet been fully decided with regard to both the above proposals, as they were presently out for consultation.

A Member referred to page 102 of the report and the comparable data with regard to the number of vacant properties in the 4 town centres that comprise the Bridgend County Borough, and questioned the accuracy of this.

The Corporate Director – Communities confirmed that the target(s) for 2016-17 and 2017-18 had been the same, however, when the Actual(s) data was received and collated, and in particular, for Bridgend, Maesteg and Porthcawl, these totals were all different. He advised Council that in future, the Actual figures would be looked to be maintained from the previous year going forward.

The Cabinet Member – Communities wished to point out, that the prospect of bus services being cut was not a decision governed by the Council per se. The Authority were going out to consultation on bus service subsidies. The companies who provided

bus services would ultimately be making decisions regarding the future delivery of these services, he concluded.

RESOLVED: That Council approved and adopted the proposed Corporate Plan 2018-2022.

134. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2018-19 TO 2021-22 AND COUNCIL TAX 2018-19

The Chief Executive Officer and Interim S151 Officer submitted a joint report, seeking Council approval of the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2018-19 to 2021-22, which included a financial forecast for 2018-22, a detailed revenue budget for 2018-19, and a Capital Programme for 2017-18 to 2027-28.

Attached to the report were the following documents:-

- The Medium Term Financial Strategy for the above mentioned period
- Appendix A – Budget Pressures 2018-19
- Appendix B – Budget Reduction Proposals 2018-19 to 2021-22
- Appendix C – Fees and Charges 2018-19
- Appendix D – Budget by Area of Service Allocation
- Appendix E – Directorate Base Budgets by Corporate Priority
- Appendix F – Reserves and Balances 2018-19
- Appendix G - MTFS Capital Programme 2017-2028
- Appendix H – Treasury Management Strategy 2018-19
- Appendix I – MTFS EIA 2018-19
- Schedule A – Cabinet Response to Scrutiny recommendations
- Schedule B – Corporate Risk Assessment
- Schedule C – Council Tax 2018-19

The Interim Head of Finance then gave a resume of the report and the above attachments for the benefit of Members, by taking out the salient points from each of these areas/sections.

The Leader then gave an introductory speech on the Budget.

He thanked the Deputy Leader, Senior Management team and all Members for developing the proposals. He advised that for many years Bridgend had worked differently to other Councils. Backbench Members from different political parties and groups, had for a number of years, undertaken a major role in the developing the budget. This year had been no different, and he thanked Members of the Budget Research and Evaluation Panel (BREP), for analysing proposals and asking questions that had at times been difficult to answer, and challenging every line of what they had considered. It had been a constructive, comprehensive and honest budget setting process that had begun last summer, and he thanked Members of all the political groups for their involvement and contributions.

The Budget was a fundamental challenge that local authorities had to face year on year, and one that gets more difficult every year, particularly with austerity and since the onset of the recession. This was the same challenge however, for all welsh local authorities.

Every Council in Wales had increased its Council Tax, regardless of what political party held power in that particular authority, with the largest increase being 12.5% in Pembrokeshire.

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None of these authorities had proposed increasing Council Tax out of choice. Such increases were being made, as there was no realistic sustainable alternative. BCBC had already made £35m of savings, and will be required to make a further £32m in future years. 490 people in the Council had been made redundant in 4 years. The Council were now more efficient than it had ever been however, though it would have to continue cutting precious services that mattered to constituents, and that was the reality of the situation.

There was only one realistic alternative course of action open to a local authority and that was to increase Council Tax in order to gain sufficient revenue in order to assist in continuing to provide services. If this increase did not take place, then the Council would have to declare itself bankrupt as Northamptonshire County Council recently had.

It was difficult for residents to understand, because they don't see or know that the services that often their family depended on. They may not realise that the cost of educating their two children in the local primary school is £10,660 a year, or that the cost for the Council of looking after their grandmother in a residential home is £560 per week. The Council were supporting a record number of older people in their home, and it also had a record number of pupils in its primary schools.

Our flagship school modernisation programme was the centre piece of BCBC's investment plans for the next five years. Today's budget would confirm the funding for its new schools for Cwm Garw and Pencoed Primary, in addition to others invested in prior to this. It would also commit us to £65m for Band B of the 21st Century School programme, that levered in £1m in funding to every £1m we commit into new primary school places, welsh medium and english medium, and our special school also.

We would also enable the re-development of our residential unit in Bridgend, as a hub for new services for our most vulnerable LAC.

Today's Budget was also crucial, because it committed the Council's contribution to the re-development of Maesteg Town Hall, to the regeneration of the Salt Lake area of Porthcawl, and of course, to the Caerau mine water energy scheme. The above were all very important reasons the Leader concluded, why he urged Members to support the Budget that was before them today.

The Deputy Leader advised that today's budget would set the direction of the Council for the next 4 years.

He commended the extent of consultation on the Budget including with members of the public, and the fact that there had been 2,619 interactions with the public over where they felt cuts required should best be made.

He stated that today Council were setting a gross budget of £400m, with grants from Welsh Government and others amounting to around £40m, leaving a net Budget of £266m.

18% of this came or just under £75m came from Council tax payments, where the suggested increase would mean a total cost of £1,395 per year for a Band D home. The whole of the Council tax receipt he added, would be less than the Schools delegated budget of £88m. The Council would intend spending more than £108m educating 20,000 learners.

The Deputy Leader then referred to Social Services, a service that was essential in order to keep vulnerable citizens safe.

In the Bridgend County Borough, there were approximately 5,000 individuals that were dependent upon vital services in order to keep them from harm. Between Adult and Children's Social Care, the Council would be spending nearly £80m. A further £26m would be spent by the Communities Directorate, for work such as collecting litter, grass cutting and gritting the highway network.

He continued by advising that the Capital Programme would deliver an investment of tens of millions of pounds through delivering the Band A School Modernisation Programme, together with a multi-million pound investment in two new Extra Care Homes for the Valleys gate way and Maesteg.

There would also be a £5m investment in replacing and resurfacing roads and pavements throughout the County Borough, and £2.5m for installing more efficient LED lights.

The Deputy Leader concluded debate on this item, by commending the Budget to Council.

A Member stated that Welsh funding from the UK government per person is currently at £120 for every £100 spent in England. She remained concerned that Welsh Labour Government had continued to not effectively fund new legislation, including the Additional Learning Needs Bill, and stop funds for deserving schemes including school uniform grants, funding for which then becomes an additional pressure on the hard working people of Bridgend. She supported innovative, proactive proposals however, contained within the Budget such as the Festival of Learning. She noted £285,000k had been allocated to fund Kier to increase the service for the purple bag absorbent hygiene products. Officers had refused though, to allow the un-redacted waste contract to be seen by Councillors, so on that basis it was impossible for me to vote for the Budget, as members of Scrutiny had no idea what they were ultimately putting local people's money into. Despite previous failings of the implementation of the Waste Contract, residents have worked hard to make the contract work, even though they had been rewarded with a Council Tax increase.

The Corporate Director Operational and Partnership Services emphasised that sharing sight of the Contract had not been refused, and that he would meet with Scrutiny to share this, if reasonable reasons were given to him to do so.

Members were concerned with the proposal that cuts would be made to both public toilets as well as bus services, and that this should not take place. A Member felt that the savings made from cuts to these should be found elsewhere, for example, from the School's Education budget, which the Leader together with certain other Members, did not seem to support.

A Member supported the above, but did not think that the £68k saving from closing public toilets should be found from the School's budget. He added that he was unhappy that there were plans to cut this budget further next year, though accepted that this was something for discussion at a future date. He felt however, that perhaps funding could be providing toward keeping public toilets open through the Community Action Fund that had been allocated to Members.

With regard to proposed public toilet closures and reducing bus routes, the Cabinet Member explained that both these were out to consultation, and that the feedback received would have some impact on both these proposals.

The Leader confirmed that this was something, ie the future Community Action Fund, that he could discuss further with Group Leaders on a cross party basis in due course, in

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order to establish where they had committed their allocation to. Though the £5k that he had received he had committed to a local primary school, in order to put in place a sensory area for children with ALN, which he felt was a worthwhile area within which to make this contribution.

A Member also raised concern over the continued cuts that had been made to the Communities budget, and the effect this was now starting to have on frontline certain services.

A Member noted that there were still some considerable overspends that needed to be met, (shown as part of the report that explained the Red, Amber, Green – traffic light symbols on spend), and sought assurance that these would be met as part of the budget.

The Interim Head of Finance confirmed that these would be delivered through strong accountability arrangements that had been put in place, as part of next year's budget.

The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing added, that overspend in her Directorate was being managed through a Directorate Financial Plan, which was aiming to ensure that the overspend made by her Department, would be made-up by end of March 2018.

A Member also noted that there was intended within the budget proposals to make a £30k saving in audit reductions, whereby this Unit would only look at statutory work and requirements. She added that she hoped that by imposing such a reduction, this would not compromise ensuring that service areas of the Council perform to the required standards (particularly areas where there was risk).

The Interim Head of Finance confirmed that the saving proposed in this area had been assessed, and that it had been considered that this extent of saving was both realistic and achievable, without there being too of a high element of risk. She added that the service was also subject to external auditing, and that Internal Audit, though finding recruitment and retainment of staff difficult, were still providing both an efficient and effective service.

It was moved and duly seconded that a recorded vote be taken on the MTFs, but that firstly, an electronic vote was required to see that there was a consensus of Members for this.

Therefore an electronic vote was taken, the result of which was as follows:-

For (recorded vote)	Against	Abstain
47	0	0

As the vote for a recorded vote was carried, this was then undertaken, the result of which was as follows:-

For (recommendations of report)	Against	Abstain
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Councillors:-

PA Davies	-	A Pucella
G Thomas		L Walters
JH Tildesley MBE		S Vidal
DBF White		K Rowlands

N Burnett
R Collins
P Davies
J Gebbie
RM Granville
S Baldwin
J Radcliffe
T Thomas
T Beedle
R Penhale-Thomas
DK Edwards
KJ Watts
A Williams
J Williams
R Shaw
G Howells
B Sedgebeer
JP Blundell
S Smith
M Jones
S Dendy
AJ Williams
E Venables
JR McCarthy
M Kearn
D Lewis
JE Lewis
JC Spanswick
CA Green
S Aspey
MC Voisey
PJ White
D Patel
HJ David
HM Williams
CE Smith
RE Young

A Hussain
C Webster
T Giffard
M Voisey

40

8

RESOLVED:

That Council approved the MTFS 2018-19 to 2021-22, including the 2018-19 revenue budget, the Capital Programme 2017-18 to 2027-28 and the Treasury Management Strategy 2018-19. In particular it approved the following specific elements:-

- The MTFS 2018-19 to 2021-22.
- The Net Budget Requirement of £265,984,097 in 2018-19.
- The 2018-19 budgets as allocated in accordance with Table 9 in paragraph 3.3 of the report.
- The Capital Programme 2017-18 to 2027-28 (Appendix G of the report).
- The Treasury Management Strategy 2018-19 and Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators 2018-19 to 2021-22 (Appendix H of the report).

- A Band D Council Tax for Bridgend County Borough Council of £1,395.51 for 2018-19 (Table 11) and the Council Tax for the areas outlined in Section 6 of the report.
- The Council Tax charges for Band D properties for 2018-19 for each of the community areas as outlined in Table 20 (of the report).

135. URGENT ITEMS

None.

136. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business as they contained exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 12, 14 and 16 of Part 4 and Paragraph 21 of Part 5 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007.

Following the application of the public interest test in consideration of these items, it was resolved that pursuant to the Act referred to above, to consider them in private, with the public being excluded from the meeting as should they remain, it would involve the disclosure to them of exempt information of the nature as referenced to above.

137. APPROVAL OF EXEMPT MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Exempt Minutes of a meeting of Council dated 31 January 2018, be approved as a true and accurate record.

138. PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE JNC MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

The meeting closed at 18:05