

Public Document Pack

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

*Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg.
Rhowch wybod i ni os mai Cymraeg yw eich
dewis iaith.*

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



Cyfarwyddiaeth y Prif Weithredwr / Chief Executive's Directorate

Deialu uniongyrchol / Direct line /: 01656 643148 / 643147 / 643694

Gofynnwch am / Ask for: Andrew Rees

Ein cyf / Our ref:

Eich cyf / Your ref:

Dyddiad/Date: Thursday, 17 January 2019

Dear Councillor,

COUNCIL

A meeting of the Council will be held in the Council Chamber - Civic Offices Angel Street Bridgend CF31 4WB on **Wednesday, 23 January 2019 at 15:00.**

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
To receive apologies for absence from Members.
2. Declarations of Interest
To receive declarations of personal and prejudicial interest from Members/Officers in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct adopted by Council from 1 September 2008.
3. Approval of Minutes 5 - 28
To receive for approval the minutes of 19/12/18
4. To receive announcements from:
(i) Mayor (or person presiding)
(ii) Members of the Cabinet
(iii) Interim Chief Executive
(iv) Monitoring Officer
5. To receive the report of the Leader
6. Council Tax: Council Tax Discretionary Discount on Empty Properties and Second Homes 29 - 32
7. Amendment to 2019-20 Council Tax Base for Cefn Cribwr, Garw Valley, Llangynwyd Lower and St Brides Minor Community Councils 33 - 36
8. Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2019-20 37 - 44
9. To receive the following Questions from:

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1. Question from Councillor MC Voisey to the Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration

In the last budget round, funds were allocated for a Festival of Learning, and to replace the School uniform grant that was withdrawn by the Labour WAG. I understand the festival of learning was a success and self-funding and that the Assembly did a U turn on the school uniform grant"

Therefore the money taken from Council tax payers in Bridgend was not used as intended. Please confirm what the money was used for, or where it is now?

2. Question from Councillor T Thomas to the Cabinet Member Communities

Since a motion calling for the County Borough to go 'plastic free' in July 2018, will the Cabinet Member clarify what progress this authority has made in reducing its non-recyclable plastic use 6 months on from the original motion?

3. Question from Councillor A Hussain to the Cabinet Member Social Services and Early Help

Traditionally, local authorities should have a budget to purchase assistive equipment if it supports someone to live independently and fully. We would want to see this continue. In many authorities we are hearing of a kind of informal means-testing where the person assessing tries to ascertain if someone could pay for the equipment themselves. This is fraught with difficulty and I hope BCBC doesn't try it.

Will the Cabinet Member let the Council know as how is the Telecare Service being provided to the residents in the County and how much will be the estimated saving to the Council?

10. Urgent Items

To consider any item(s) of business in respect of which notice has been given in accordance with Part 4 (paragraph 4) of the Council Procedure Rules and which the person presiding at the meeting is of the opinion should by reason of special circumstances be transacted at the meeting as a matter of urgency.

11. Exclusion of the Public

The Minutes relating to the following item are not for publication as they contain exempt information as defined in Paragraph 12 of Part 4, and Paragraph 21 of Part 5 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007.

If following the application of the public interest test the Committee resolves pursuant to the Act to consider this item in private, the public will be excluded from the meeting during such consideration.

12. Approval of Exempt Minutes

To receive for approval the exempt minutes of 19/12/18

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Yours faithfully

K Watson

Head of Legal and Regulatory Services

Councillors:

S Aspey
SE Baldwin
TH Beedle
JPD Blundell
NA Burnett
MC Clarke
N Clarke
RJ Collins
HJ David
P Davies
PA Davies
SK Dendy
DK Edwards
J Gebbie
T Giffard
RM Granville
CA Green
DG Howells

Councillors

A Hussain
RM James
B Jones
M Jones
MJ Kearn
DRW Lewis
JE Lewis
JR McCarthy
DG Owen
D Patel
RL Penhale-Thomas
AA Pucella
JC Radcliffe
KL Rowlands
B Sedgebeer
RMI Shaw
CE Smith
SG Smith

Councillors

JC Spanswick
RME Stirman
G Thomas
T Thomas
JH Tildesley MBE
E Venables
SR Vidal
MC Voisey
LM Walters
KJ Watts
CA Webster
DBF White
PJ White
A Williams
AJ Williams
HM Williams
JE Williams
RE Young

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COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY, 19 DECEMBER 2018

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB ON WEDNESDAY, 19 DECEMBER 2018 AT 15:00

Present

Councillor JR McCarthy – Chairperson

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

Apologies for Absence

S Aspey, DG Howells, DG Owen, JC Radcliffe, B Sedgebeer and RME Stirman

Officers:

Susan Cooper	Corporate Director - Social Services & Wellbeing
Lindsay Harvey	Corporate Director Education and Family Support
David Holland	Head of Shared Regulatory Services
Gill Lewis	Interim Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer
Darren Mepham	Chief Executive
Mark Shephard	Corporate Director – Communities
Kelly Watson	Head of Legal & Regulatory Services and Monitoring Officer
Mark Galvin	Senior Democratic Services Officer
Kevin Stephens	Democratic Services Assistant

251. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor T Beedle declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 11, the report entitled Capital Programme 2018-19 to 2027-28 as Chairperson of Cwmfelin Primary School.

Councillor Alex Williams declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 9, as Secretary of Heol-y-Cyw Workingmen's, Sports & Social Club.

Mark Shephard and Sue Cooper declared a prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 14, and left the meeting whilst this report was being considered.

252. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of a meeting of Council dated 21 November 2018, be approved as a true and accurate record, subject to the following amendment to the Leader's Report:-

Minute number 239, page 8 of the papers bottom paragraph penultimate line, replace the word 'pensions' with "pay".

253. TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM:

Mayor

The Mayor reminded members about nominations for the Mayor's Annual Citizenship Awards. The awards are open to people who live in the county borough, as well as groups and businesses based locally. More information can be found on the BCBC website and a nomination form can be downloaded from there. The deadline for receipt of nominations is Friday 25 January and the winners will be honoured at an event in March.

We have had a busy Christmas period since the last Council meeting; with the Mayor and his Consort having carried out 29 official engagements, which were both varied and different and very enjoyable.

The blessing of the new Pencoed primary school by Bishop June this was a very a special event for all who attended and a lovely opening for the new building.

They had a fantastic morning at the Olympage games which took place in the Bethlehem Church Life Centre. The games give older people the opportunity to compete and be active in a fun setting whilst making new friends in a social environment.

As part of the ongoing business awards visits the Mayor/his Consort were welcomed by Fords and shown around the new engine dragon line. It was lovely to meet management and production line staff who were building a future for Bridgend. Fords had been trading in Bridgend now for nearly 40 years.

They had attended numerous school concerts and witnessed some outstanding talent and hard work by the pupils and staff across the county borough. He extended his thanks to everyone who had been involved in these.

Looking to the New Year, many events were already in his calendar.

He concluded by wishing all those present a Merry Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Deputy Leader

Members may want to remind their constituents that households will be able to put out an extra bin bag this Christmas, and that a traditional 'black' bag will be suitable for this purpose.

This is of course in addition to the current household waste limit of two bags, and it applies for the first refuse collection after Christmas.

There will be collections on Christmas Eve, but there won't be any collections on Christmas Day or Boxing Day. Everything will be picked up two days later than normal for the rest of that week.

Collections will be made as usual on New Year's Eve, but there won't be any collections on New Year's Day so everything will be one day later up until Saturday 5 January. Collections will be back to normal from Monday 7 January 2019.

The main festive waste that can't be recycled is wrapping paper, black plastic, cellophane wrap and polystyrene. Almost everything else can be recycled, including food waste. Christmas cards can go out with your cardboard, and the envelope can go with your paper recycling.

Latest statistics reveal that with a recycling rate of sixty-eight point six per cent, we are second best in Wales. Our residents recycled enough food last year to power an entire school for four years. This is highly encouraging, and I hope that members will encourage our local communities to recycle as much as possible this Christmas.

The Deputy Leader also took the opportunity to congratulate the 19 council managers who have gained new qualifications as part of a Higher Apprenticeship Programme funded by Welsh Government.

They spent 18 months studying for the qualification, and have been awarded with the Edexcel NVQ Diploma and the Pearson BTEC Diploma in management and leadership.

A further nine officers are currently on the course while a second group of 19 have recently enrolled on the level four and five programmes. Completing this course will improve the overall skill-set and quality of the council's managers, and he was pleased to see that it is producing successful results.

Members will be aware that Cabinet have approved a draft MTFs for 2019/20 – 2022/23 and a draft budget for 2019/20. This is dependent on a whole raft of proposals for reductions in services and cuts which we hoped we might not have to propose, but we have a statutory duty to deliver a balanced budget.

In early December, all Members will have had an opportunity to attend a briefing on the MTFs and to ask questions in more detail. Members will also have had an opportunity to scrutinise the budget proposals and he looked forward to receiving any comments and recommendations.

He had been pleased to attend BREP on a regular basis and have witnessed the intense debate and discussion on proposals and again looked forward to receiving the report from BREP. The budget consultation has now concluded and yesterday, Cabinet received a report which it would now consider.

Today we are expecting to receive the final budget settlement from Welsh Government. The detail of this will need to be digested, however, any material changes were not expected. If the Authority were able to reduce the impact of the reductions it would do so.

Finally, a survey of ICT provision will shortly be sent to all Members. The survey is intended to identify how the provision, use and support of ICT for Elected Members could be developed in the future to enable further efficiencies.

Members are kindly requested to complete the survey electronically by 31 January 2019. The results of the survey will be presented to the Members' ICT Forum he concluded.

Cabinet Member – Communities

The Cabinet Member – Communities announced that any dog owners who were in the habit of visiting Kenfig National Nature Reserve with their pets, may wish to exercise caution around the pool area.

In recent weeks there has been a large bloom of blue-green algae which is most visible where it has collected at the water's edge. While naturally occurring, it can produce toxins which are harmful to both humans and dogs, so he urged people to keep well clear of this.

Unfortunately, he needed to advise members of another problem at Kenfig National Nature Reserve, namely off-road motorcycles which are being ridden illegally at the site.

As well as being a danger to other visitors using the dunes, the bikes are causing severe damage to the dune habitats which are home to several protected and rare species such as the Fen Orchid.

The council is working with South Wales Police to tackle the problem, and visitors who witness such illegal activity are being urged to report any sightings to the 101 number.

Speaking of nature reserves, he recently had an opportunity to visit what is perhaps the County Borough's best kept secret.

Craig Y Parcau is a charming woodland walk which runs alongside the River Ogmore on the opposite bank to Newbridge Fields.

Several improvements have been made to the pathways there, so if anyone fancied a walk after their Christmas dinner, Craig Y Parcau comes highly recommended.

Individuals can access Craig Y Parcau from the hilly path which goes up towards Broadlands.

Cabinet Member – Wellbeing and Future Generations

The Cabinet Member – Wellbeing and Future Generations announced that this year's White Ribbon campaign has been marked with a number of different events.

Throughout the campaign, residents have been reminded that the Assia Suite at the Civic Offices is ready and available to offer confidential advice and support on all forms of domestic abuse, as well as safety planning for victims and their children.

Since the Suite was set up three years ago, the service has helped hundreds of people.

She thanked members for their support during this year's White Ribbon campaign, and also thanked BCBC's partners South Wales Police, Calan DVS, the Probation Service, and Victim Support. She also acknowledged the efforts of Councillor David White, who serves as our White Ribbon Champion, and thanked him for all his hard work again this year.

On a slightly lighter note, and as it was Christmas, she also wished to mention something that will help ensure residents can enjoy the festivities.

The Food Standards Agency has made free advice available that is designed to prevent families suffering from food poisoning due to undercooked Christmas turkey and other meats.

Of the estimated one million cases of food poisoning in the UK each year, many occur during the festive season.

Members may want to let their constituents know that they can find useful advice and guidance at the food.gov.uk website, or follow hash tag "season's eating's" on Twitter.

Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration

The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration announced that he together with Cabinet colleagues, local members and council officers recently met with Carwyn Jones AM at Village Farm in Pyle for an update on the Enterprise Hub Programme.

As the largest business property development scheme ever undertaken by Bridgend County Borough Council, this was a really exciting £5.5 million initiative which stood to create more than 2,600 square metres of new business units, including blocks at Village Farm, suitable for light industry.

This investment is made possible by partnership with Welsh Government and by support from European Union regional funding

Subject to Welsh Government approval, new facilities will be created at Brocastle, and the Innovation Centre on Bridgend Science Park will be refurbished to accommodate modern business needs.

Around 58 businesses and 150 jobs will be supported by the initiative, which is being provided in partnership with Welsh Government as part of a plan to meet growing demand for commercial premises that are suitable for new or smaller enterprises.

As the number of companies in Bridgend County Borough is increasing, this initiative will avoid a shortage of appropriate starter units, and is excellent news for the local economy. Architects are hard at work on the plans for the new enterprise hubs, and construction is expected to begin in 2019.

Members may also be interested to know about a new school initiative which is encouraging future generations to live greener, more sustainable lives.

An intergalactic space monkey called Busta, a mascot for the above scheme, is helping to educate primary school pupils on how food waste can be converted into electricity.

It is targeting all Key Stage 2 students and provides a wide range of resources with curriculum-linked activities. The scheme is being delivered in partnership with Recycle for Wales, Wastebuster and Eco-Schools, and he was sure members would agree that it is delivering some increasingly important lessons.

Cabinet Member Social Services and Early Help

A new initiative has been launched to help give vulnerable people, and those who are supported by social services, more of an opportunity to express their views.

Called the Bridgend Voice and Choice hub, it has been set up as a first port of call for anyone who needs an advocate to represent their opinions and stand up for their rights.

A dedicated helpline has been created and is available Monday to Friday.

Various organisations have come together to form the hub with the council including ProMo-Cymru, Mental Health Matters, People First Bridgend and the Golden Thread Advocacy Project.

Members may want to let their constituents know about this very useful service. The Bridgend Voice and Choice hub can be contacted on 0808 801 0330, and you can find out more details by visiting the website, bridgendvoiceandchoice.cymru.

He also acknowledged and thanked pupils from Brynteg Comprehensive, who have once again played a significant role in ensuring that vulnerable children can have a happy Christmas.

Every year, the pupils raise money through charitable events, and then spend it buying toys which they donate to the annual Santa Appeal organised by the council's Early Help and Safeguarding teams.

This year, the pupils raised almost £5,000 and bought bags of presents for 157 needy and vulnerable children.

He felt this was a lovely gesture and a fantastic effort. As well as thanking the pupils, he also thanked everyone who supported the Santa Appeal. Without it, there are children and young people out there who would otherwise not have any Christmas presents at all. Well done to all concerned.

Finally, the Cabinet Member Social Services and Early Help thanked Bridge FM who had kindly brought in 7 crates of presents last week, as had Officers of the Council in support of the Foster Carers Xmas party at Brackla Community Centre yesterday. He attended the event and confirmed how pleasing it was to see Foster Carers and young children in care opening these gifts and enjoying what was such an important occasion.

Chief Executive

The Chief Executive advised members that the Council had a number of important consultations progressing at the moment.

These covered a range of issues such as subsidised transport, post-16 sixth form provision and dog fouling enforcement.

In the New Year, consultations would also be launched on how we deal with empty properties in the county borough, and parks, pavilions and playing fields.

These are all important issues which we want local residents to participate in, so he hoped that members will encourage their constituents to do so.

Full details are available at the consultation page of the council website, and Members can obtain alternative formats by contacting our consultation and engagement team.

Without wishing to pre-empt the formal decision that council is asked to make this afternoon, the Chief Executive felt that members would wish to note that the Appointments Committee did proceed to appoint an Interim Chief Executive and he congratulated Mr Mark Shephard on that appointment.

At the previous meeting of the Council the Leader explained the intention to appoint an interim S151 Officer on the same time scale as the Interim Chief Executive. In fact we did not proceed with that appointment. He was pleased to say that Gill Lewis the current Interim S151 officer has kindly agreed to stay with us a little longer, to ensure continuity and to support the Council through the budget process.

The intention remained to seek a permanent solution in the new year but the above did mean that the Authority has greater continuity in this key role than would have otherwise been the case.

254. TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE LEADER

The Leader reported that today marks BCBC's Chief Executive's last meeting of Council, and he was sure that all colleagues would want to wish Mr. Darren Mepham well in his new role as Chief Executive for Barnet and Southgate College in North London.

Alongside Members, Darren had provided strategic leadership for the authority for over 6 years since he was first employed by the Council in 2012.

This period has been largely defined by the hardest financial climates that we have ever experienced, but with a strong and experienced senior management team behind him, Darren had proven to be more than up to the task of meeting the challenge head-on.

Whether it has been collaborative working arrangements with neighbouring Councils, or driving forward wide scale organisational change, Darren had of course overseen a wide range of developments during his time here.

The Leader added that he was grateful to Darren for the support and sage advice he had given not just him, but all Members, and he knew he would be just as successful in his new role.

We had also seen the Constituency Assembly Member for Bridgend step down as First Minister and the Leader wished to publicly thank him. As the Leader of the opposition, Conservative Assembly Member, Paul Davies said in his tribute, Carwyn had carried out his duty, with "dedication and devotion."

He was sure that Members would join him in wishing the new First Minister, Mark Drakeford, every success. He also welcomed the appointment of a new Minister for Local Government, Julie James AM and looked forward to resetting that relationship between local government and Welsh Government.

As one door closes, another opens, and that was certainly the case in BCBC's ongoing school modernisation programme.

As the year draws to a close, we were also saying goodbye to Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Cwm Garw, and are welcoming the all-new Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Calon Y Cymoedd.

The school will shut its doors at its Pontcymmer premises for the last time this week, and will begin 2019 at its all-new premises adjacent to Betws Primary.

Any Member who has had the privilege of seeing that new school will already know what the pupils can expect. It has been constructed as a mirror image of its new neighbour, which was also opened just a few short months ago.

The old school premises served its community well for a number of years in different ways, including as a Grammar and Comprehensive School, but it had reached the end of its very long life.

The stunning new premises have been built as part of our Band A School Modernisation Programme, and offers state of the art educational facilities fit for the 21st century.

The Leader was looking forward to the official opening of the new school, and to watching it become a foundation for the growth of Welsh medium education in the Ogmore and Garw Valleys.

The Leader on behalf of both Cabinet and Council, took the opportunity of wishing all Members and Officers a relaxing and enjoyable Christmas, and thanked them for all their support in 2018 which he knew would continue moving forward into the future.

255. TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS FROM:

1. Question from Councillor Tim Thomas to the Leader

Is the Leader satisfied with the resources available to members of the City Deal Joint Scrutiny Committee?

Response

The Council offered to host the joint scrutiny committee on behalf of the ten partners. The authority has a good reputation nationally for our work on scrutiny and as such the other partners in the City Deal were confident in us taking a lead on this.

We have estimated the additional resource required by the authority to support the joint committee – mostly in terms of democratic support officer's time and this is being funded from the City Deal. It is intended that the joint scrutiny committee can draw on the expertise of the accountable body (Cardiff CC) who are already providing legal, financial and democratic support to the regional committee – we are deliberately avoiding any duplication of effort.

The committee has met once and we will keep the resource requirements under review over time. However it should be recognised that the work of the Cardiff Capital region City Deal is also overseen by:

The UK government
The Welsh Government
The Welsh Audit Office

These organisations all have an interest and role in the probity, governance, value for money and deliverability of the partnership.

In addition, a series of independent gateway reviews commissioned by the UK government have also been established. These will assess in more detail how well the partnership is delivering outcomes and will in turn determine the ongoing receipt of phased payments from the treasury.

Supplementary question by Councillor Tim Thomas

Given that the Cardiff Capital City Deal is such an important area of work, how are we monitoring it moving forward and how can Members get involved specifically.

Response

There is a site visit in Newport before the next scheduled meeting of the Cardiff City Deal Joint Scrutiny Committee so there are adequate resources supporting the scheme. All Members will receive reports for future meetings also, as opposed to a link to the agenda being placed on the Council's website. If Members had any questions regarding the City Deal, then these can either be shared with me, or the Chairperson of the Cardiff City Deal Region (ie the Leader of Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC). Alternatively, the Programme Director could also be approached to this end. He added that the Cardiff City Deal was open and transparent, similar to the Shared Regulatory Service. It also had its own Joint Committee that scrutinised any work and projects going forward. If there was any fear of the scheme not having sufficient resources as it progressed, then this would be looked into by the participating authorities. As part of the scheme, quarterly monitoring reports had to be submitted to both the UK and Welsh Governments. Targets set within the Business Plan that supported the City Deal also

had to be met. The Wales Audit Office had reviewed the Cardiff City Deal in its fairly early stages and had found governance arrangements to be effective. The Vice-Chairperson of the Cardiff City Deal Joint Scrutiny Committee added that if Members had any specific concerns that had been raised by the relevant Member today, then he would address these should he be approached and asked.

2. Question from Councillor Sorrel Dendy to the Cabinet Member Communities
Has First Cymru indicated to BCBC or put notice in of the removal of their service to Bridgend County?

Response

There is no indication from First Cymru Buses Ltd that they intend to withdraw their services in the Bridgend area, rather in recent meetings they have been positive about having ongoing and potentially improved services moving forward within Bridgend.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Dendy to the Cabinet Member Communities

Whether BCBC has a plan in place if the main bus service were to leave with little to no notice?

Response

The bus services are predominately provided on a commercial basis by independent operators, not directly by BCBC or via any contract with BCBC and operators. As such should one operator decide to pull out of the market place, BCBC's role in the situation would be limited. The gap in services would in all likelihood be met by other commercial operators looking to increase their market share and capitalise on the opportunity that would be presented. Whilst BCBC may take a proactive role in encouraging and facilitating this to take place to ensure routes are provided there is no specific plan as this is not a directly provided council service.

Further supplementary question from Councillor Tim Thomas

The future of bus routes and bus subsidies within the County Borough will probably have an effect on the future of the Bridgend bus station and whether this remains open. Has an economic impact analysis been conducted into the future viability of the Bridgend bus station in conjunction with bus subsidies/bus routes

Response

The cuts that the Council are facing at present and those anticipated in the future are both unprecedented and hard hitting. The possibility of the Bridgend bus station closing is something that will have to be considered as part of the MTFs reductions. Though the Council do not wish to close this facility, the cost of keeping it open also has to be strongly considered.

3. Question from Councillor Tom Giffard to the Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations

A recent Freedom of Information request I submitted showed that this Council has spent nearly £200,000 on external Welsh translation services over the last 18 months.

Can the Cabinet Member explain why the Council is not prioritising employing internal translators to keep this ballooning budget under control?

Response

Our total cost across the authority was £192,535 for the period between April 2017 and October 2018 for the purchase of translation services.

At this stage there is no compelling business case to employ an in house team for the reasons that follow, however this is of course something that we will continue to keep under review should circumstances change. The reasons for not creating an in house service at the moment are:

- Because this is a new requirement it is taking time to establish the scale of translation requirement. The Council and the Welsh Language Commissioner agreed the final standards in November 2018 and different standards have had different implementation dates since the legislation came into force. Annual costs have therefore varied from approx. £53k in 2015-16 to approx. £130k in 2017-18. Our current projected cost for the current full financial year is £110k.
- In order to create a resilient in house service, which could meet the peak translation demands (i.e. translation of Cabinet and Council agenda within 5 working days) the annual cost would be in the region of **£136k** (including on costs), based on the following structure:
 - Senior Translator – Grade 10 (£29,055 - £30,756)
 - Translator x 3 – Grade 8 (£23,111 - £24,657)
- In order for BCBC to set up an internal translation service we anticipate the need to purchase an additional IT system to manage translation processes, which naturally comes with administration, maintenance and management time costs. At present we have not costed this element.
- We know from other local authorities who do have an in house service that they have experienced difficulties in recruiting Welsh translators, and have also suffered retention issues when they have managed to recruit them, due to the high demand for Welsh translators.
- Those authorities with in house services have also had to buy in external translation to meet demand and cover vacancies and other staff absence.

Therefore at this stage there is no robust business case for investing in such additional staff. However as already stated, this is something that we will keep under review should circumstances change.

Updates on our compliance with the Welsh Language Standards will continue to be provided to the Cabinet Equalities Committee.

Supplementary question by Councillor Tom Giffard

Councillor Giffard initially asked his question in Welsh, but upon being asked by the above Cabinet Member to ask this in English, he duly responded as follows:-

Could a report be prepared on the above for submission to the Cabinet Committee Equalities so that the use of the Welsh language and compliance with the Welsh Language Standards can be looked at in more detail. All Councillors should be able to work bilingually.

Response

We take our duty seriously regarding the use of Welsh language including in the workplace and the Welsh Language Standards, this is something that is also considered by the Cabinet Committee Equalities as part of their regular reports on employee data collation, etc. A regular agenda item is considered by the Cabinet Committee Equalities on the use of Welsh and the Welsh Language Standards. The Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations added that not all Members are Welsh speakers nor have had the opportunity to learn Welsh.

Second supplementary question by Councillor Tim Thomas

What opportunities are there for staff in the workplace to practice and learn to communicate in Welsh and are there any plans to roll this out further.

Response

There are courses available in the workplace for employees to learn Welsh and they get paid for time off for this. However, any studying of this is voluntary as opposed to mandatory. The Authority are also encouraging the recruitment of Welsh speaking teaching staff and extra funding for this purpose had been provided by the Welsh Government and the Central South Consortium. There are cohorts for level 1 and level 2 Welsh speaking training courses, and the Council were also looking wherever possible in recruiting Welsh speakers in vacant posts, including in apprenticeship roles.

Third supplementary question by Councillor Alex Williams

We don't publish FOI requests on-line due to translation costs associated with this. Is this compliant with the Welsh Language Standards, and is this being looked at in possible conjunction with the recruitment of an increased number of Welsh speaking employees.

Response

If an FOI request is placed on the Council's website then it is translated (into Welsh). If it is not placed on the Council's website then it is not translated until it is requested in Welsh.

4. Question from Councillor Altaf Hussain to the Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations

In order to develop more active communities and your achievements in partnership with HALO Leisure Centre, with 9% increase in visits to Life Centres following your major investment in their facilities, can the Cabinet Member let us know which other centres in Bridgend County, apart from HALO, can be accessed by over 60 year old residents?

Can the Cabinet Member also let us know since when has the Council invested in these Life Centres and how much has been invested so far in attaining this 9% increase in visits?

Response

In terms of participation in centres in Bridgend by the over 60s, apart from HALO which delivers strong services, particularly the over 60 National Free Swim initiative (highest in Wales) and National Exercise Referral Scheme (2nd largest in Wales). Bridgend has an Ageing Well Plan, which targets the development of age friendly communities including intergenerational opportunities as opposed to segregated activities for specific demographics. Key aspirations would include combatting loneliness and isolation by connecting older adults to communities, reducing falls or the fear of falling and developing dementia supportive opportunities also.

In addition to leisure facilities, BCBC works with Town and Community Councils, voluntary management committees and the Awen Cultural Trust to ensure 18 community centres are locally available. These centres are supporting activities such as movement and dance, exercise, creative and social opportunities. Our Local Community Coordinators are connecting vulnerable people to such opportunities and helping to develop new opportunities. BCBC works in partnership with Sport Wales to invest in community groups and opportunities via the Community Chest scheme. During 2017–18 there were around 6 projects supported that could be deemed more specific to the over 60s with £6-8k of investment.

Our partnership with Awen Cultural Trust includes joint service development planning to ensure that our libraries and cultural venues are connecting to (and supporting) the Ageing Well Plan. In 2014 the Awen cultural partnership was created to manage the Councils libraries, cultural venues and theatres, arts development and cultural services and Bryngarw Park on our behalf. Opportunities have included movement and exercise in libraries, the 'books on prescription' scheme, the HYNT scheme, providing support for carers, support for the development of Men's Sheds and the "Books on Wheels" mobile library services for the housebound. BCBC has continued to invest in the Bridgend Carers' Centre and related services where a balanced programme of exercise, social and wellbeing activities are held.

BCBC has ensured that people attending residential care and day care can be more active via the 'move more often' and 'Olympage' programmes including training of related staff and volunteers. This has grown into regular programmes and events at the Community Hubs led by Social Services personnel. There is close working with Shout (the older persons' forum) and support for Tai Chi for wellbeing activities at the Evergreen Hall and a range of non- Council venues (e.g. Caerau, Cefn Glas). There are also mobile outreach sessions such as lifestyle screening, falls prevention in Porthcawl, Maesteg and Ogmore Vale linked to community centres or sheltered housing.

BCBC is now working with BAVO and Alzheimer's Society to support the development of more dementia friendly communities and this will include both HALO and Awen. We are also working with schools to become more age-friendly and this will include our dual use sites where growth in overall attendances by the over 60s can also be evidenced in recent years. Our work with older adults has highlighted the importance of our outdoor environment and green spaces. Our Love to Walk programme offers 6-12 weekly walks (seasonal variations) led by volunteer walk leaders, whilst the 2018 walking festival attracted 291 participants. Similarly, Bridgend works in partnership with Swansea and Neath/Port Talbot Councils to offer the Park Lives programme that in Bridgend we have focused particularly on older adults and outdoor activities.

The Healthy Living Partnership between BCBC and GLL/HALO was established in 2012 and included 8 leisure centres and swimming pool facilities and related services. The key objectives in establishing the partnership were to ensure the assets remained fit for purpose, to ensure that the costs to the Council were reduced, for the Council to retain certain controls over pricing and programming whilst also delivering on social outcomes such as healthier communities, children and young people and strong communities.

The capital investment at the commencement of the partnership was £4.3 million, which is repaid during the 15 years that the contract operates via annual revenue budgets. The initial investment supported the development of Bridgend Life Centre as a flagship facility and was essential to support the Council's aspiration for sustainable facilities and cost effective delivery. Since 2012, our partners have continued to invest in improving assets including co-location of libraries, all-weather sports areas, state of the art fitness equipment, energy efficiency installations and more. In terms of overall annual costs to the Council, the management fee payable to HALO is now over 50% less than the cost of the leisure centres in 2011-12 when services were run by the Council. A full repairing lease is an integral part of the management fee.

The focus on partnership working across the County Borough and involving a broad range of organisations has been recognised in a recent inspection by Quest, the UK Quality scheme for sport and recreation. The approach being taken in Bridgend has been assessed as 'excellent' and is the only Local Authority in Wales to have achieved this standard. The partnership with Halo has been managed within the Social Services and Wellbeing directorate and this has assisted with the strategic direction of the partnership to enhance wellbeing and impact on targeted population groups.

Supplementary question by Councillor Altaf Hussain

He would supply this to the Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations outside of the meeting and requested a written response outside of the meeting (ie to all Members).

256. APPOINTMENT PROCESS: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Chief Executive presented a report, in order to provide Council with information regarding the recruitment to the post of Chief Executive.

He advised that this position had become vacant following the resignation of the current post holder whose employment would terminate with the Authority on 6 January 2019.

The report continued by advising that this post had been filled recently on an interim basis until a permanent appointment is made.

The Chief Executive explained that the Council would engage professional support to undertake executive search and assessment for the role, to ensure that it is marketed widely and then a robust appointments process would follow.

He added that the position would be advertised early in the New Year and it is proposed that the process following receipt of applications, would be as was detailed in paragraph 4.2 of the report.

RESOLVED: That Council approved the recruitment process for the post of Chief Executive as was set out in paragraph 4.2 of the report.

257. SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME - BAND B

The Corporate Director – Education and Family Support and Interim Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer presented a joint report, the purpose of which, was to:

- update Council with regards to the outcome of Welsh Government’s review of the Mutual Investment Model (MIM) Band B funding mechanism and revised capital grant intervention rates;
- seek Council endorsement of the revised financial commitment required for the delivery of Band B of the School Modernisation Programme; and
- approve a change to the capital programme to reflect the updated commitment.

Paragraph 2 of the report set out the principles, as approved by Cabinet in March 2015, adopted by officers in shaping the advice contained in the current report.

The Corporate Director – Education and Family Support reminded Members of the key objectives of the School Modernisation Programme, as promoted by Council in 2006, as were shown in paragraph 3.4 of the report.

In order to shape our approach to school modernisation, officers have also worked with a range of partners to carefully consider:

- the condition of buildings;
- the maintenance backlog;
- population growth;
- projections of pupil population; and
- housing developments identified within the Local Development Plan (LDP).

Members will be aware that Bridgend's school modernisation programme has been very successful to date with 6 new provisions already being built within Band A with Ysgol Calon y Cymoedd due to open in January 2019.

In October 2017, Cabinet was presented with a report detailing the outcome of the work of the school modernisation workstream and the revised SOP submission.

Cabinet considered the proposed Band B schemes, and determined to approve the following, based on the increasing demand for places, the requirement to promote the Welsh language and building condition:

- Bridgend North East (2 form entry (FE)) - capital grant
- Bridgend South East (2.5FE) - capital grant
- Bridgend Special School (270 places) – Mutual Investment Model
- Bridgend West – Welsh-medium (2FE) - capital grant
- Bridgend West – English-medium (2FE) - capital grant

In addition, in order to promote the Welsh language and support Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 commitment, Welsh Government made available £30m capital grant across Wales which Councils were asked to bid against. Officers identified the need for the creation of Welsh-medium child care facilities which would deliver Welsh language opportunities to areas of the county borough where there is currently insufficient provision (that is: Ogmore and Garw Valleys, Bridgend and Porthcawl). Welsh Government approval in principle has now been received for Bridgend's £2.6m bid.

At its meeting on 31 January 2018, Council approved, in principle, the financial commitment required for Band B of the School Modernisation Programme.

The overall programme was estimated to be in the region of £68.2m, of which approximately £43.2m was anticipated to be capital funded (circa £23m funded by Bridgend County Borough Council), the balance proposed to be funded through the Welsh Government Mutual Investment Model (MIM).

Welsh Government had advised local authorities that MIM, a new approach to investment in public infrastructure in Wales, whereby private partners will build and maintain schools in return for a fee, will cover the cost of construction, maintenance and financing the project.

The Welsh Government intervention rate for the MIM is 75%, which will be paid to the local authority in the form of a grant. The remaining 25% is to be met from the local authority revenue budgets over a 25-year contract period. The local authority was also required to meet 50% of the up-front capital costs for furniture, equipment and IT.

At the end of a specified period of time, the asset will be transferred to the local authority. Welsh Government had advised that it will present packages of schemes to the market as design and build projects made up of a number of schemes within a geographical area (including across local authority areas) and be of sufficient monetary size overall in order to attract large companies (eg £100m).

Since the approval of the strategic outline plan, Welsh Government has reviewed the schemes that have been proposed for MIM.

Welsh Government has stated that it is not value for money to include small or very complex schemes (such as special schools) through the MIM route.

Consequently, Bridgend Special School is now deemed unsuitable for delivery under this funding model.

It is important to note that this is purely in relation to Welsh Government's recent decision to remove special schools from MIM funding rather than any fault of the local authority.

In light of Welsh Government's decision, the funding approach to Bridgend County Borough Council's Band B schemes needed to be re-considered and a decision taken on the way forward. Hence, a report was presented to Cabinet on the 20th November for approval for a revised funding approach, before seeking approval from full Council on the 21st November.

On the 20th November, Cabinet approved a revised funding package based on funding 2 primary school schemes through the MIM route, and 2 primary schools and the special school scheme through the capital grant route.

However, prior to the report being submitted to Council, Welsh Government announced a change to the capital grant intervention rate. Welsh Government contributions for Band B increased to 75% for special school and pupil referral unit schemes, and 65% for all other schemes; the MIM intervention rate would remain set at 75%.

As the change in intervention rate would have a positive impact for the Council on the cost of delivering Band B, it was determined to defer the Council report, as the detail was no longer factually correct and the change in intervention rate could impact the proposed delivery method; this would allow Cabinet an opportunity to review their decision in this regard. I am indebted to members for me to bring this paper back to this meeting.

Members will recall that when this matter was taken to full Council in January 2018, capital match funding of around £23m was requested to meet the four primary school schemes identified at that time.

A comprehensive comparison of the capital grant and MIM schemes is available at Table 1 in the report.

It is important to note that while figures cannot be firmed up at this point in time, unsupported borrowing will not be drawn upon until such time as general capital funding, section 106 funding and available capital receipts and earmarked capital reserves have been exhausted, as this will require a recurrent revenue budget to meet the borrowing costs.

Paragraph 8.4 of the report outlines the four options considered by officers.

Paragraph 8.6 summarises the full revenue and capital implications of each of the revised funding options based on current assumptions.

It is important to note these costs are estimates based on information available at the current time, and MIM information received from Welsh Government, and will change in line with inflationary and interest rates rises.

The Corporate Director Education and Family Support then expanded upon the various funding options (Options 1 to 4) considered by Officers as outlined in paragraphs 8.4 to 8.11 of the report, and the reasons why Option 2 had been considered as the preferred option.

A Member stated that he hoped that any proposed new builds of schools would be of good quality and to the standards required as part of Bridgend's 21st Century School Project.

RESOLVED: That Council approved the revised budget required in respect of Band B of the School Modernisation Programme to be incorporated into the Capital Programme.

258. **GAMBLING ACT 2005 - STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES**

The Head of Legal and Regulatory Services submitted a report, the purpose of which, was to report the outcome of the three year review of the Gambling Statement of Principles, the framework which governs the way this authority undertakes its duties as the licensing authority for gambling. This matter was reported to Cabinet on 18 December 2018 but approval of the Statement of Principles for the next three year period from 2019 is a Council function.

The Mayor invited the Head of Shared Regulatory Services to present the report.

He advised that the Gambling Act 2005 provides for a regulatory system to govern the provision of all gambling in Great Britain, other than the National Lottery and spread betting. The Gambling Commission was set up under the Gambling Act 2005 to regulate commercial gambling in Great Britain in partnership with licensing authorities as local regulators. The Act places a legal duty on both the Commission and licensing authorities to aim to permit gambling, in so far as it is considered to be reasonably consistent with the licensing objectives, and the full regulatory framework was set out at paragraph 4.2 of the report.

He proceeded by confirming that the Council is required to publish a policy statement, known as the Statement of Principles every three years. The current document had been reviewed and a draft consultation undertaken. A copy of the draft Statement of Principles was attached at Appendix A to the report, with the reviewed elements shown highlighted in red. He pointed out to Council that on page 7 of Appendix A the number of betting premises in Bridgend in 2018, had now reduced from 17 to 16.

The Head of Shared Regulatory Services stated that the Act places a duty on the Council to develop a Statement of Principles that promotes the three licensing objectives contained in paragraph 4.1 of the report.

Analysis of complaints and intelligence received by the Council since the last revision of the Statement, suggested that no new trends or concerns had emerged during the last three years, either by sector or location. One of the enforcement concerns which had arisen is the siting of machines in takeaways and other shops, which is illegal and this resulted in a prosecution and cannot therefore be dealt with as a policy issue.

He advised that no significant changes were made to the Statement of Principles, however, it follows the approach set out in the 5th Edition of the statutory guidance issued by the Gambling Commission to licensing authorities referred to in paragraph 4.2 of the report.

This meant that in the absence of any local factor or risk, the authority will follow the Gambling Commission's approach to regulating gambling as set out in the Guidance. It is important to recognise that whilst the authority must have regard to the Guidance in its decision making, the Guidance does not seek to fetter the discretion of the authority in dealing with applications or compliance.

The Head of Shared Regulatory Services confirmed that a consultation exercise had been initiated as part of the review, involving those bodies and stakeholders detailed in paragraph 4.5 of the report. The consultation he advised took place between 31 August and 9 November 2018. The responses to this were detailed in Appendix B to the report.

The original draft Statement of Principles did not contain a relevant issue, in the form of certain amendments shown in paragraphs 4.8.2 through to 4.9.2 of the report.

The Head of Shared Regulatory Services added that whilst not impacting on this policy review, Council is advised, that the Government has announced a change to the stakes involved in gaming machines known as "Fixed Odds Betting Terminals" (FOBTs). FOBTs are electronic machines, sited in betting shops, which contain a variety of games, including roulette. The maximum stake on a single bet is £100, the maximum prize is £500. These machines have proved controversial, with concerns being raised that the machines have a causal link to problem gambling because of the large amount of money that can be lost in a short time. From April 2019, the maximum stake will be reduced to £2.00. (Source: UK Parliament Library Briefing paper 16 November 2018).

A Member asked the Head of Shared Regulatory Services, how many age test purchase checks had been carried out in the last 3 years, and how many of these had been found to be under age.

He replied that he would be able to provide this information outside of the meeting.

A Member referred to page 45 of the papers where there was a table format, findings from a local analysis of the gambling profile of BCBC. He felt it would be useful if the data detailed here could be compared with other neighbouring authorities.

The Head of Shared Regulatory Services confirmed that he could undertake such a comparable data exercise, and once more come back to the Member outside of the meeting.

A Member whilst acknowledging controls that the local authority and other organisations put in place for gambling, was concerned over what was beyond our control. To that end, she felt that it would be useful if the Council would write to the Advertising Standards Authority asking them to look at issues relating to encouraging gambling, through for example, the over-publicising of on-line gambling sites etc.

The Leader advised that he would arrange for this to take place, and send a letter on behalf of Council along these lines, to the Gambling Commissioner, both the Welsh and UK Governments and Offcom.

RESOLVED: That Council approved the Statement of Gambling Principles for the three year period 2019-2021, incorporating with the proposed amendments 1 – 3 referred to in paragraphs 4.8.1 to 4.9.2 of the report, and to approve publication in accordance with the regulations.

259. **APPOINTMENT OF A REGISTERED REPRESENTATIVE TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY SUBJECT COMMITTEES**

The Head of Legal and Regulatory Services presented a report, seeking Council's approval of the appointment of Reverend Canon Edward Evans as the Church in Wales Registered Representative for Education items considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees, for a maximum of four years.

The report gave some background information, following which it confirmed that the Reverend Canon Edward Evans had completed a term of office in the above role and had since been nominated for re-appointment to serve a further term on the Committee(s).

RESOLVED: That Council noted the report and approved the appointment of the above person as a Registered Representative for Education items that are to be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees, for a further term of four years.

260. URGENT ITEMS

RESOLVED: The Mayor received the following item as urgent in accordance with the provisions of Paragraph 4 of the Council Procedure Rules as contained in Part 4 of the Council's Constitution, as due to technical issues when publishing the agenda and accompanying papers, the report was omitted from the agenda. A decision on the report is required before the next scheduled meeting of Council in January 2019.

261. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2018-19 TO 2027-28

The Interim Head of Finance submitted a report, the purpose of which, was to obtain approval from Council for a revised Capital Programme for 2018-19 to 2027-28.

She advised that on 28 February 2018, Council approved a Capital Programme covering the above period as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy. Since then, additional schemes have been approved by Council including the Enterprise Hub Development Programme, new classrooms at Cwmfelin Primary School, Porthcawl Regeneration and Waterton Depot, along with a number of externally funded schemes.

Since the programme was last approved, a number of new schemes have been progressed which require that Council approve changes to the Capital Programme. These were outlined in paragraphs 4.2 to 4.12 of the report and the Interim Head of Finance gave a summary of each of these as detailed hereunder, together with any extra resource implications that needed to be committed to each of the schemes so listed.

These schemes were as follows:-

- 21st Century Schools Band A Programme – Pencoed Primary School
- Cwmfelin Primary School – Accommodation
- Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
- Agile Working
- Cemetery Extensions
- Fleet
- ICT Rolling Programme
- Porthcawl Resort Investment Focus (PRIF)
- Registrars
- Welsh-Medium Capital Grant

The Interim Head of Finance reported that since the approval of the Capital Programme, a number of schemes had been progressed which required approval (of Council).

She advised Members that in respect of the 21st Century Schools Band A Programme, despite site investigation works being undertaken in advance of letting the Pencoed Primary School construction contract, the site required significant cut and fill activities

not originally anticipated, resulting in the project costs increasing by £200,000. It was proposed to meet this additional cost from projected under spends in other Band A schemes. The Interim Head of Finance informed Cabinet that a budget of £165,000 had been included in the Capital Programme for the provision of additional accommodation at Cwmfelin Primary School. However, following design development, the original project estimate was deemed insufficient and despite a value engineering exercise being undertaken, a revised project cost had been received of £235,000, resulting in additional funding of £70,000 over and above the approved budget, which it was proposed would be vired from the school modernisation retention budget.

The Interim Head of Finance reported that capital investment of £205,000 had been approved for the establishment of a MASH. However the MASH had instead moved into Raven's Court, resulting in costs being considerably less than anticipated, which would release funding of £45,116 for other schemes. She also reported that capital funding of £1.217m for ICT investment had been approved to deliver agile working, which was dependent on securing a tenant for Raven's Court. Following decisions on where to place the MASH, the active marketing of Raven's Court would no longer be pursued and consequently the investment initially identified was no longer required, which left a balance of £1.201m to be de-committed and used for other schemes.

The Interim Head of Finance also reported that funding of £360,000 towards cemetery extensions at Porthcawl and North Cornelly, however due to further investigation and feasibility works an additional £170,000 was required to be funded by prudential borrowing. She also reported that a capital budget of £1.64m is required for the purchase of replacement highway maintenance vehicles to be funded from within clients' existing revenue budgets, through revenue contributions to capital or prudential borrowing. She then commented on the need following a review of the ICT estate for an increase of £226,375 funded from a revenue contribution from the existing ICT rolling programme budget.

The Interim Head of Finance reported that the procurement exercise for the Porthcawl Resort Investment Focus project had been completed which had increased to £2,924,000; there was a need to revise the match requirement to £1,358,060. The match funding was made up of a range of external resources and Council funds. She stated that if opportunities arise to access further external funds, either through ERDF or other sources then these will be targeted in an effort to further reduce the requirement for Council resources.

She also reported that there is significant commercial interest in the land and building (Ty'r Ardd) which houses the Registrar's Office and Awen's Reference Library. There has been an increase in wedding cancellations due to the works taking place on the adjacent land. With work increasing on the site, it was likely to cause a further increase in wedding cancellations. Feasibility work has been undertaken on relocating the Registrar's Office which can be accommodated on the ground floor of Civic Offices. This would provide a one-off capital receipt from the sale of the land as well as ongoing revenue savings from the closure of a building. She stated that the indicative capital budget needed to remodel the area of the Civic Offices affected is £275,000, which includes creating a patio area for wedding photos. The anticipated capital receipt, indicated in the draft valuation report, is expected to be significantly more than the cost of the works.

The Interim Head of Finance reported that the Welsh Government had awarded the Council £2.6m in order to create Welsh-medium childcare provision in Bettws, Ogmores Valley, Bridgend Town and Porthcawl with the four projects costing £650,000 each.

She then advised Council, that the revised Capital Programme included a number of other adjustments which reflect new external funding approvals and changes to expenditure profiles across financial years, which showed a revised programme of £211.185m, of which, £138.408m is met from the Council's resources, including general Capital Funding from the Welsh Government and £72.777m met from external resources.

She referred Members to the revised Capital Programme that was attached at Appendix 1 to the report, which also included a number of other adjustments required to reflect new external funding approvals and changes to expenditure profiles across financial years. This reflected a total revised programme of £211.185m, of which £138.408m is met from BCBC resources, including General Capital Funding from Welsh Government, and £72.777m met from external resources.

Finally, the Interim Head of Finance referred to the financial implications of the report, stating that any capital receipts released as a result of schemes being removed from the Capital Programme will be re-allocated to other schemes already included within the programme, but funded from external borrowing to reduce potential borrowing costs, therefore reducing the pressure on the Revenue Budget.

A Member was concerned that some of the schemes so listed in the report required additional funding than that was originally proposed, following detailed feasibility and design work having subsequently being undertaken. Due to this an amendment to the report's recommendation was made, which was duly seconded, namely that the report be deferred and referred to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee for further consideration. It was also further recommended and carried unanimously, to conduct a recorded vote on this amendment

Members therefore agreed to have an electronic vote on whether or not a recorded vote be taken on the above amendment. The result of this was as follows:-

<u>For</u> (a recorded vote)	<u>Against</u>	<u>Abstentions</u>
45	1	0

A recorded vote was then taken on the amendment, ie to defer the report and in turn, refer it to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

The result of the recorded vote was as follows:-

<u>For</u> (the amendment)	<u>Against</u>	<u>Abstentions</u>	<u>Did Not Vote</u>
21	26	0	1

To defer the report and in turn, refer it to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration (Motion)	
Councillor Stuart Baldwin	Against
Councillor Tom Beedle	For
Councillor Jon-Paul Blundell	Against
Councillor Nicole Burnett	Against
Councillor Mike Clarke	For
Councillor Norah Clarke	For
Councillor Richard Collins	Against
Councillor Huw David	Against
Councillor Paul Davies	Against
Councillor Pam Davies	Against
Councillor Sorrel Dendy	For
Councillor Keith Edwards	For
Councillor Jane Gebbie	Against
Councillor Tom Giffard	For
Councillor Richard Granville	Against
Councillor Cheryl Green	For
Councillor Altaf Hussain	For
Councillor Malcolm James	Against
Councillor Brian Jones	For
Councillor Martyn Jones	Against
Councillor Mike Kearns	Against
Councillor David Lewis	Against
Councillor Janice Lewis	Against
Councillor John McCarthy	Against
Councillor Dhanisha Patel	Against
Councillor Ross Penhale-Thomas	For
Councillor Aniel Pucella	For
Councillor Kay Rowlands	For
Councillor Rod Shaw	Against
Councillor Charles Smith	Against
Councillor Stephen Smith	Against
Councillor John Spanswick	Against
Councillor Gary Thomas	Against
Councillor Tim Thomas	Against
Councillor Jefferson Tildesley MBE	No vote recorded
Councillor Elaine Venables	For
Councillor Sadie Vidal	For
Councillor Matthew Voisey	For
Councillor Lyn Walters	For
Councillor Ken Watts	For
Councillor Carolyn Webster	For
Councillor David White	Against
Councillor Philip White	Against
Councillor Alex Williams	For
Councillor Amanda Williams	For
Councillor Hywel Williams	Against
Councillor Julia Williams	For
Councillor Richard Young	Against
Rejected	

Therefore, the amendment failed.

A second electronic vote was then undertaken on whether or not further debate should take place on the report, the result of which was as follows:-

<u>For (further debate)</u>	<u>Against</u>	<u>Abstentions</u>
22	10	1

In response to a question regarding accommodation at Cwmfelin Primary School, the Corporate Director – Education and Family Support advised that improvements were needed to the existing buildings at the school, as this had been assessed as a category 'C' building and funding was required, in order to expand the current class room sizes, some of which also included cloakroom areas due to a lack of space overall at the school in other areas. He added that, there were 3 mobile classrooms at the school which were in a poor condition. These amounted to 50% of class space overall at the school which was insufficient for learning and teaching purposes. He added that the initial budget allocation, did not include for mechanical and engineering works undertaken at the existing school, nor for the provision of CCTV.

In terms of the re-location of the Registrar's Office, a Member felt that when this is further considered, adequate car parking provision nearby should also be considered in order to assist in strengthening customer service.

A Member referred to paragraph 4.11 of the report, and funding allocated for projects dedicated to supporting and growing the use of the welsh language in Education and asked for further clarification regarding the funding avenues for this.

The Corporate Director – Education and Family Support advised that there was no capital cost for the Council in respect of the above, as this was being funded by Welsh Government. However, there would be a revenue cost, and a Steering Group had been established to look at the extent of this going forward.

RESOLVED: That Council approved the revised Capital Programme as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

262. 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 item of business as it contains exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 12 of Part 4 and Paragraph 21 of Part 5 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007.

Following the application of the public interest test in consideration of this item, it was resolved that pursuant to the Act referred to above, it be considered in private, with the public being excluded from the meeting as it would involve the disclosure of exempt information of the nature as stated above.

COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY, 19 DECEMBER 2018

263. APPROVAL OF EXEMPT MINUTES

264. APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The meeting closed at 18:05

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BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO COUNCIL

23 JANUARY 2019

REPORT OF THE INTERIM HEAD OF FINANCE AND SECTION 151 OFFICER

COUNCIL TAX: COUNCIL TAX DISCRETIONARY DISCOUNT ON EMPTY PROPERTIES AND SECOND HOMES

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to propose that Council amends the level of discretionary discount available on Council Tax empty properties and second homes with effect from 1 April 2019.

2.0 Connection to Corporate Improvement Plan/Other Corporate Priority

2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate priorities:-

- Helping people become more self-reliant - The number of empty properties will hopefully reduce as they are brought back into use resulting in more affordable accommodation becoming available.

3.0 Background

3.1 With effect from 1st April 2004, the Local Government Act 2003 gave Local Authorities the discretionary powers to reduce or remove the 50% Council Tax discount on unoccupied and substantially unfurnished Council Tax chargeable dwellings after the initial 6 month exemption period had expired, known as Class C properties. Bridgend County Borough Council has previously awarded a 50% discount to the properties which might fall into this category. However, currently only 10 of the 22 local authorities in Wales still award a 50% discount after the initial 6 month exemption period (Appendix 1).

3.2 It is estimated that currently up to 1,244 council tax payers across the Borough are benefiting from this reduction and therefore under this proposal will face an increase in the amount they are charged from 1 April 2019 if their properties continue to remain empty.

3.3 With regards unoccupied but furnished properties described as second homes and or holiday lets the Council has the discretion to award up to 50% discount. However Bridgend County Borough Council has not awarded a discount on these type of properties since 1 April 2000.

4.0 Current Situation / Proposal

4.1 Currently Bridgend County Borough Council awards a 50% discount to Council Tax properties which remain empty due to the following:-

- a) a property remaining empty and unfurnished after the initial 6 month exemption;
- b) a property that has been under renovation for longer than 12 months;
- c) a property remaining empty after the 6 months probate exemption has expired;
- d) a property is unoccupied but furnished and actively marketed for let or sale.

4.2 It is now proposed that Council remove the discretionary power to award a discount and charge 100% of the council tax in the above circumstances from 1 April 2019, for the financial year 2019-20 onwards. This in turn should discourage owners of empty properties to allow them to remain empty and fall into disrepair.

4.3 A notice of this change will be required to be publicised within 21 days of the decision if agreed.

5.0 Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedures Rules.

5.1 None.

6.0 Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 There are no equality implications arising from this report.

7.0 Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Assessment

7.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of wellbeing goals/objectives as a result of this report.

8.0 Financial Implications

8.1 Welsh Government currently takes into account a local authority's council tax base when it calculates the local authority's annual funding, the Revenue Support Grant (RSG). The higher the Council's estimated tax base is, the lower the amount of RSG it receives. The current process allows discounts on empty properties and second homes to flow through in the calculation of the tax base, thereby lowering the tax base. Local authorities are therefore currently reimbursed through the RSG for discounts they choose to offer. Welsh Government is currently considering changing the way in which the tax base is calculated, to ignore discretionary discounts in the calculation of the tax base, to bring all local authorities to an equal position, and whilst any changes will not be implemented for 2019-20, they may be put in place for 2020-21.

8.2 Based on the number of properties that have been empty for longer than 6 months, at the time of writing this report it is estimated that by removing the 50% discount an additional £933,000 in Council Tax could be raised in 2019-20. This figure is based on an average Band D council tax charge of approximately £1,500, and 100% collection. However while the Council will make every endeavour to collect taxes due, full collection of the additional £933,000 is not a realistic assumption as there is always an element of non-payment, particularly so on empty properties.

9. Recommendations

9.1 It is recommended that Council:

- Agrees the continuation of no Council Tax discount on second homes except where the reduction is granted in respect of a job related dwelling.
- Approves a new level of 100% Council Tax payable for all categories mentioned in 4.1 above which have been empty for more than 6 months.
- Delegates authority to the Revenues Manager to implement the above changes as set out in paragraph 4.

Gill Lewis
Interim Head of Finance & Section 151 Officer
January 2019

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Background documents:

Ceredigion	0%
Pembrokeshire	50%
Carmarthenshire	50%
Swansea	50%
Neath Port Talbot	50%
Bridgend	50%
Vale of Glamorgan	50%
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Caerphilly	0%
Blaenau Gwent	50%
Torfaen	0%
Monmouthshire	0%
Newport	50%
Cardiff	50%
Number of LA's	
Awarding of 0%	12
Awarding of 50%	10

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO COUNCIL

23 JANUARY 2019

REPORT OF THE INTERIM HEAD OF FINANCE AND SECTION 151 OFFICER

AMENDMENT TO 2019-20 COUNCIL TAX BASE FOR CEFN CRIBWR, GARW VALLEY, LLANGYNWYD LOWER AND ST BRIDES MINOR COMMUNITY COUNCILS

1. Purpose of Report.

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Council with details of the amended council tax base figures for 2019-20 for a number of community councils for re-approval.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Plan/Other Corporate Priority

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate priorities:-
1. Supporting a successful economy – taking 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.
 2. Helping people to be more self-reliant – taking early steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services.
 3. Smarter use of resources – ensuring 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.
- 2.2 The council tax base determines the amount of council tax which can be raised to fund the Council's budget. The budget strategy is an integral part of the Corporate Planning process.

3. Background.

- 3.1 The 2019-20 council tax base for the Council and individual Community Councils was approved by Council on 21 November 2018. Subsequently, it has been identified that the individual council tax base figures did not total the overall net tax base. On further examination a total rounding error of 0.04 on individual council tax base figures has come to light and as a consequence the council tax base figures which were stated in Appendix A of the report for Cefn Cribwr, Garw Valley, Llangynwyd Lower and St Brides Minor Community Councils need amending and hence now require re-approving by Council.
- 3.2 The overall Council Tax base figure is not affected and remains at 54,807.11 (gross) and 53,710.97 (net).

4. Current situation / proposal.

- 4.1 The revised council tax bases for each of the Community Councils which require re-approval by Council are shown in the table below:

Community Council	Gross Tax Base	Percentage Collection Rate	Net Tax Base Originally Approved 21/11/18	Revised Net Tax Base
Cefn Cribwr	555.75	98%	544.64	544.63
Garw Valley	2305.73	98%	2259.62	2259.61
Llangynwyd Lower	175.75	98%	172.24	172.23
St Brides Minor	2317.74	98%	2271.39	2271.38

- 4.2 For completeness Appendix A, which provides details of all Community Council tax bases and includes the amendments in the above table, is attached for Council to approve the amended figures and re-approve the rest.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules.

- 5.1 The council tax base is set in accordance with the Policy Framework and Budget Procedure Rules.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

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

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Assessment

- 7.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of wellbeing goals/objectives as a result of this report.

8. Financial Implications.

- 8.1 These are outlined in the report.

9. Recommendation.

- 9.1 Council is recommended to:
- Approve Appendix A which includes the amended council tax bases for Cefn Cribwr, Garw Valley, Llangynwyd Lower and St Brides Minor Community Councils.

Gill Lewis
Section 151 Officer
January 2019

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Background documents

None

Estimated County Borough Tax Base 2019-20

Community Council Area	Total Tax Base (No. Band D Equivalent Properties)	Estimated Collection Percentage	Net Tax Base (No. Band D Equivalent Properties)
Brackla	4263.56	98%	4178.29
Bridgend	5996.82	98%	5876.88
Cefn Cribbwr	555.75	98%	544.63
Coity Higher	3829.71	98%	3753.12
Cornelly	2636.78	98%	2584.04
Coychurch Higher	344.70	98%	337.81
Coychurch Lower	660.67	98%	647.46
Garw	2305.73	98%	2259.61
Laleston	4999.58	98%	4899.59
Llangynwyd Lower	175.75	98%	172.23
Llangynwyd Middle	1068.17	98%	1046.81
Maesteg	5670.08	98%	5556.68
Merthyr Mawr	150.52	98%	147.51
Newcastle Higher	1741.52	98%	1706.69
Ogmore Vale	2586.42	98%	2534.69
Pencoed	3496.71	98%	3426.78
Porthcawl	8141.69	98%	7978.86
Pyle	2543.21	98%	2492.35
St Brides Minor	2317.74	98%	2271.38
Ynysawdre	1322.00	98%	1295.56
Total County Borough	54807.11	98%	53710.97

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO COUNCIL

23 JANUARY 2019

REPORT OF THE INTERIM HEAD OF FINANCE

COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2019-20

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Council with information regarding the implementation of the 2019-20 Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTR), the requirement to adopt a CTR scheme by 31 January 2019, together with the funding implications.

2. Connection to Corporate Plan / Other Corporate Priorities

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate priorities:-
2. **Helping people to be more self-reliant** – taking early steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services.
- 2.2 The Housing Benefits Service, which administers CTR, is a statutory service which supports our disadvantaged citizens.

3. Background

- 3.1 CTR provides assistance for those on low incomes with a liability to pay Council Tax.
- 3.2 Part 1 of the Welfare Reform Act 2012 (chapter 3, regulation 33) abolished Council Tax Benefit (CTB) with the intention to localise the allocation and administration of Council Tax Benefit (CTB) from 2013-14.
- 3.3 The Government devolved to Welsh Government the establishment of localised schemes in Wales, and stated the intention to reduce expenditure on CTB by the equivalent of 10%.
- 3.4 The Welsh Government decided to develop a single nationally defined scheme set out in regulations for the provision of Council Tax support in Wales. The scheme also provided for a small number of discretionary elements which individual councils can choose to adopt; any additional associated costs were to be locally funded.
- 3.5 On 31 January 2018, the Council adopted the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2018-19 in accordance with the Council Tax Reduction Schemes and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2013. This scheme will end on 31 March 2019.

3.6 From the latest data, there are currently 13,471 households receiving CTR; 8,275 of these are of working age and 5,196 are of pensionable age. Out of the 13,471 households receiving CTR, 9,956 are entitled to a full CTR reduction.

4. Current Situation

4.1 The Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2019-20

4.2 The CTR Scheme in Wales is set by regulations made under Schedule 1B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as inserted by the Local Government Finance Act 2012).

4.3 On 27 November 2013, the Assembly laid regulations that implemented the arrangements to support those who will pay council tax. The regulations (Council Tax Reduction Schemes and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2013 and Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Default Scheme) (Wales) Regulations 2013) prescribe the main features of the scheme to be adopted by all councils in Wales. Minor amendments to these regulations have since been made each financial year.

4.4 The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2019 have now been laid. These regulations update the financial figures used in the CTR schemes and makes amendments to:

- Mirror changes made to the benefit system with respect to Employment Support Allowance. The 2013 Regulations will continue to make reference to the Work-Related Activity Component which will continue to be payable to some applicants.
- Make changes to reflect new service provision arrangements following the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016.
- Make changes to address an anomaly within the wording of the amending provisions included within the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2017 with respect to changes of circumstances provisions.
- Make a number of changes with respect to payments which are disregarded for the purposes of calculating 'income' and/or 'capital'. These include the new bereavement support payments amongst others.

4.5 The new regulations do not contain any significant changes, from the claimants' perspectives, to the current scheme and the maximum level of support that eligible claimants can receive remains at 100%. The regulations can be found at: <http://senedd.assembly.wales/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?lId=23483>

4.6 Within the Prescribed Requirements Regulations, there is limited discretion given to the Council to apply discretionary elements that are more generous than the national scheme. These are:

- The ability to increase the standard extended reduction period of 4 weeks given to persons after they return to work (where they have previously been receiving CTR that is to end as a result of their return to work);
- Discretion to increase the amount of War Disablement Pensions and War Widows Pensions which is to be disregarded when calculating income of the claimant; and

- The ability to backdate the application of CTR with regard to late claims prior to the new standard period of three months before the claim.

4.7 It is required by the Prescribed Requirements Regulations that the Council adopts a CTR Scheme by 31 January 2019, regardless of whether it applies any of the discretionary elements. If the Council fails to make a scheme, then a default scheme shall apply under the provisions of the Default Scheme Regulations. The Council can only apply discretion if it makes its own scheme under the Prescribed Requirements Regulations.

4.8 **Consultation**

4.9 The 2015 amendment Regulations removed the requirement for local authorities to publish a draft scheme and consult interested persons where a billing authority revises a scheme in consequence of amendments made to the Prescribed Requirement Regulations. The effect of the amendment was to remove the requirement for local authorities to consult in relation to changes made by Welsh Ministers (as opposed to the discretionary areas of the scheme), over which local authorities have no discretion.

4.10 Consultation on the Prescribed Requirement Regulations was undertaken in 2016 and the results detailed in the Report of the Head of Finance's Council Tax Reduction report to Council on 11 January 2017. This report can be found at:- <https://democratic.bridgend.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=142&MId=2697&Ver=4&LLL=0>.

As it is proposed not to change the discretionary elements, a further consultation exercise has not been completed.

4.11 It is proposed that the discretionary elements remain as follows:

- The extended payment period is maintained at the minimum standard of 4 weeks.
- War Disablement Pensions and War Widows Pensions are fully disregarded when calculating entitlement to CTR. The estimated cost of this proposal within the financial year is £13,200.
- Backdating is maintained at the minimum standard of 3 months.

4.12 The total estimated cost to the Council for these three proposals is £13,200 for 2019-20.

4.13 **Main Issues**

4.14 The Council must consider whether to replace or revise its CTR scheme and is obliged to make a scheme under the requirements of the Prescribed Requirements Regulations. The obligation is a statutory duty and applies even if the Council chose not to apply any of the discretions available to it.

4.15 The Council's recommended approach to the available discretions is to apply the recommendations in Table 4, paragraph 4.23. It should be noted that there are no

additional monies available from the Welsh Government to fund the discretionary elements.

4.16 The scheme must be administered by local authorities within a fixed budget. There are significant difficulties adequately funding a service which is demand led with a fixed cost budget provision. The Welsh Government has confirmed there will be no additional funding to bridge any gap and each authority will be expected to meet any shortfall.

4.17 The Council continues to have powers to support hardship on an individual basis or in respect of a defined group. Such arrangements cannot, however, form part of the CTR Scheme itself.

4.18 **Adoption of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme**

4.19 The Council is required to adopt a scheme by 31 January 2019 under the Council Tax Reduction Schemes and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2013, regardless of whether it chooses to apply any of the discretionary elements. If the Council fails to make a scheme, then a default scheme will apply under the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.

4.20 It is recommended that the Council adopts:

- a Scheme under the Council Tax Reduction Schemes and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2013, which includes all the elements that must be included in the scheme, as set out in the Regulations; and with regard to the discretionary elements, includes the recommendations in Table 4 set out at Paragraph 4.23 below; and
- The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 to 2018; and
- The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2019.

4.21 Part 5 of the Council Tax Reduction Schemes and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2013 (Other matters that must be included in an Authority's Scheme) identifies which elements of the prescribed requirements of a scheme are minimum only requirements and in respect of which local authorities have an element of discretion.

4.22 The recommendation in relation to the available discretionary elements is contained in Table 4 below: and takes into account the following:

- The consultation responses received in 2016, in particular those relating to the discretionary elements,
- The current local scheme in relation to the treatment of War Disablement Pensions, War Widows Pensions and War Widowers Pensions for Housing Benefit and 2018-19 CTR scheme, which disregards these payments in full,
- The fixed funding available.

4.23 Table 4 – Discretionary elements

Part 5 – Other matters that must be included in an authority’s scheme	Prescribed Requirement Regulations (Minimum Requirements)	Recommended Details to be Adopted with regard to discretionary elements
<p>Ability to increase the standard extended reduction period of 4 weeks given to applicants where they have previously been receiving a council tax reduction that is to end, as they have ceased receiving qualifying benefits as a result of returning to work, increasing their hours of work, or receiving increased earnings. Regulation 32 (3) and Regulation 33 (3), paragraph (33) Schedule 1 and paragraph (35) and (40) Schedule 6.</p>	<p>4 weeks</p>	<p>Pensioners: The 4 weeks period specified in paragraph (33) Schedule 1 will apply, and</p> <p>Non-pensioners: The 4 weeks period specified in paragraph (35) and (40) Schedule 6 will apply.</p>
<p>Ability to backdate applications of CTR for the minimum requirements specified in the Regulations will apply periods longer than the standard period of 3 months before the claim is made. Regulation 34 (4) and Paragraph (3) and (4) of Schedule 13.</p>	<p>3 months</p>	<p>Pensioners: The period of 3 months specified in paragraph (3) Schedule 13 will apply, and</p> <p>Non-pensioners: The period of 3 months specified in paragraph 4, Schedule 13 will apply.</p>
<p>Ability to disregard more than the statutory weekly £10 of income received in respect of War Disablement Pensions and War Widows Pensions and War Widowers Pensions (disregarded when calculating income of the applicant); Regulation 34 (5), Paragraphs 1(a) and 1(b) Schedule 4 and Paragraphs 20(a) and 20(b) of Schedule 9</p>	<p>£10</p>	<p>Pensioners: The total value of any pension specified in paragraph 1(a) and 1(b) Schedule 4 will be disregarded.</p> <p>Non-pensioners: The total value of any pension specified in paragraph 20(a) and 20(b) Schedule 9 will be disregarded.</p>

5. Effect upon Policy Framework and Procedure Rules

5.1 None.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment was completed for the 2013-14 CTR scheme and as the proposed scheme for 2019-20 does not contain any significant changes, a further Equality Impact Assessment has not been conducted.
- 6.2 The Welsh Government has undertaken a detailed regulatory impact assessment, which includes an equality impact assessment; the findings reported were in line with their expectations.
- 6.3 The Council has undertaken a consultation exercise and this consultation assists the Council in satisfying the public sector equality duty in the Equality Act 2010.

7. Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

- 7.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act have been considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 The 2019-20 Final Local Government Settlement shows that the sum provided for CTR across Wales is at the same level as 2018-19. Bridgend Council's 2019-20 final settlement from Welsh Government includes £13.080 million to fund the CTR scheme, an increase of £173,000 from £12.907 million in 2018-19; this amount does not take into account any increase in council tax charges but is distributed based on expenditure on council tax reduction schemes in previous years.
- 8.2 Any shortfall between the amount provided in the settlement and the amount of CTR awarded, including any discretionary elements, will fall on the Council. Based on the current caseload the estimated total cost of the scheme for 2019-20 is between £14.5 and £14.8 million (including the cost of the discretionary elements), which is £1.42 million higher than the funding provided by Welsh Government. Additional funding of £1 million to meet the full cost of the CTR scheme was included in the base budget as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2014-15 to 2017-18 (MTFS). In addition, further funding has also been provided through the MTFS to meet demographic changes and changes arising as a result of the increase in council tax. The proposed budget for 2019-20 is currently £14.8 million, which includes additional funding to meet the proposed council tax increase in the MTFS. Whilst this is currently considered to be sufficient to meet demand, it will be kept under review throughout the MTFS period.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 It is recommended that Council:
 - Note The Council Tax Reduction Schemes and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2013, and the 2014 to 2019 amendment regulations.
 - Adopts the Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2019-2020 as set out in paragraphs 4.18 to 4.23 of this report.

Gill Lewis
Interim Head of Finance

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Background Documents

Welfare Reform Act 2012

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/5/contents/enacted>

The Council Tax Reduction Schemes and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2013

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2013/3029/contents/made>

The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Default Scheme) (Wales) Regulations 2013

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2013/3035/contents/made>

The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2014

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2014/66/contents/made>

The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2015

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2015/44/contents/made>

The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2016/50/contents/made>

The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2017

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2017/46/contents/made>

The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2018

<http://senedd.assembly.wales/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?lId=20675>

The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2019

<http://senedd.assembly.wales/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?lId=23483>

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

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