

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB ON WEDNESDAY, 24 JULY 2019 AT 15:00

Present

Councillor SE Baldwin – Chairperson

S Aspey	TH Beedle	JPD Blundell	NA Burnett
MC Clarke	N Clarke	RJ Collins	HJ David
P Davies	PA Davies	SK Dendy	J Gebbie
T Giffard	RM Granville	CA Green	DG Howells
A Hussain	B Jones	M Jones	MJ Kearns
DRW Lewis	JE Lewis	JR McCarthy	D Patel
RL Penhale-Thomas	AA Pucella	JC Radcliffe	KL Rowlands
B Sedgebeer	RMI Shaw	CE Smith	RME Stirman
G Thomas	T Thomas	JH Tildesley MBE	MC Voisey
LM Walters	KJ Watts	CA Webster	DBF White
PJ White	A Williams	JE Williams	RE Young

Apologies for Absence

DK Edwards, RM James, D Owen, SG Smith, JC Spanswick, E Venables, SR Vidal, AJ Williams and HM Williams

Officers:

Susan Cooper	Corporate Director - Social Services & Wellbeing
Jackie Davies	Head of Adult Social Care
Nicola Echanis	Head of Education & Family Support
Mark Galvin	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Laura Kinsey	Head of Children's Social Care
Gill Lewis	Interim Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer
Michael Pitman	Business & Administrative Apprentice
Kevin Stephens	Democratic Services Assistant
Kelly Watson	Head of Legal & Regulatory Services

339. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor N Burnett declared a prejudicial interest in Agenda item 7 (page 85), as Chairperson of the Evergreen Hall Management Committee.

Councillor MC Voisey declared a prejudicial interest in Agenda item 7 (page 85), as a Member of the Evergreen Hall Management Committee.

Both Members left the meeting whilst this item was being discussed.

340. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of a meeting of Council dated 19 June 2019 be approved as a true and accurate record.

341. TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM:

Mayor

COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY, 24 JULY 2019

The Mayor announced that he has had a busy month and a lot of events had been held outdoors.

Earlier in the month he attended the South Wales Police headquarters and was honoured to be presented to His Royal Highness Prince Charles. Prince Charles was in attendance to unveil a plaque marking the 50th Anniversary of the formation of the South Wales Police. The force came into being on 1st June 1969 and has grown to become one of the best performing forces in the country.

Porthcawl recently hosted its inaugural 10k run. More than 3,000 runners attended and Welsh sprint legend Iwan Thomas warmed up the competitors. Hundreds of spectators came out in force to support the event, which he attended along with the Mayor of Porthcawl. There was even a surprise fly-past by the Red Arrows marking what it is hoped to be the beginning of distance running in the town.

July seemed to be the month of agricultural shows and he was pleased to attend the Bridgend County Show in Pencoed and on a larger scale the Royal Welsh Show. The Bridgend County Show started in 1946 as a welcome home to those who had been serving this country in WW2. It remained a great demonstration of community cohesion as well as a place to celebrate our agricultural heritage he added.

The Mayor advised that he had also had the pleasure of officially opening the Bryncethin Centre following a Community Asset Transfer agreement taking place. This involved attendance by local school children singing, with Bryncethin RFC representatives also being present.

Last weekend he was pleased to be asked to attend the Classic Car Show in Bridgend Town Centre which is presented by the Glamorgan Classic Car Club. This yearly event also included music, food and entertainment and it was great to see the event so well received.

The Mayor congratulated Councillor Bridie Sedgebeer and Chris Elmore MP who had got married last weekend. He wished them a very happy future together.

Lastly, the Mayor thanked those that contributed to the food bank collection at last month's Council and in respect of this, he confirmed that the food bank on Nolton Street were very grateful for such a collection.

Cabinet Member – Communities

The Cabinet Member – Communities advised that Members may recall, that back in 2015, there were fears for the future of Kenfig National Nature Reserve's super-rare Fen Orchid after its numbers dropped to around 200. As the Fen Orchid only grows at Kenfig, the site hosts the entire UK population of this small, pretty flower.

He was pleased to inform Members that thanks to a special landscape management scheme which involves cutting back grass and scraping the surface of dune slacks to encourage and stimulate growth, the Fen Orchids have now increased to more than 1,000.

In fact, a recent Council check on these and other orchids at the 1,300 acre reserve, had to stop when wardens and volunteers found there were too many to count in a single day.

They estimate that orchid numbers at the 1,300 acre reserve have increased to more than 4,000, and that the site features as many as 15 different species including Twayblades, Autumn Lady's Tresses, Bee Orchids and more.

He was delighted that the Council had been able to play a central role in protecting the site's many habitats and ensuring that Kenfig's orchids can thrive.

The Council were currently preparing for the handover of the management of the site when the lease expires in 2020, and together with Natural Resources Wales, are continuing to support the Kenfig Corporation Trust as they seek to appoint a new organisation capable of continuing with this work.

As part of further good news, nine of the County Borough's most beautiful sites have bagged themselves prestigious Green Flag awards from Keep Wales Tidy.

Three of the sites are maintained by the Council, Wilderness Lake in Porthcawl, Maesteg Welfare Park and Coychurch Crematorium and they join Bryngarw Country Park, Glanrhyd Hospital, the Caerau Market Garden, Spirit of Llynfi Woodlands, the Wilderness Allotment Association and the Badgers Brook Allotment.

In the case of Coychurch Crematorium, this was the tenth year in a row that they have achieved Green Flag status. He was sure that Members would join him in congratulating the workers and volunteers whose dedication and hard work had resulted in this success.

Finally, the Cabinet – Member Communities was delighted to confirm that funding of £3.6m has been provided by Welsh Government for the construction of new local transport and active travel improvements.

These included safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists, new active travel routes, accessibility improvements at a number of bus stops, road safety and cycling training for school children, and Pass Plus courses for new drivers.

Some of the funding will support feasibility studies into traffic flows on the Penprysg Road bridge, as we look at whether it is possible to introduce an all-new bridge that would enable the closure of the level crossing, and improve capacity on the main railway line.

Among the planned active travel improvements, were shared pedestrian and cycling routes between Brackla and Bridgend town centre, Pencoed and the Pencoed Technology Park, Coychurch and both the Waterton Industrial Estate and Waterton Retail Park, and numerous ongoing improvements around Coity.

The initial phase of a 'Safe Routes to School' scheme around Newton Primary will also be completed, with the active travel route extended along the Eastern Promenade and New Road to the school, and the introduction of new cycle and scooter storage.

All of these improvements have been made possible thanks to Welsh Government, and he was very grateful for their continued support.

He also welcomed the new pedestrian and cycling route that the housing developers Persimmon are currently creating between the Heol West Plas roundabout and the hospital along the A4061.

Cabinet Member – Social Services and Early Help

The Cabinet Member – Social Services and Early Help, was sure that Members will have welcomed the recent news that Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership Board will receive £22.7m from Welsh Government's Wales Transformation Fund.

The money is to be used to expand successful pilot projects across the Cwm Taf area, which of course now includes Bridgend County Borough, to provide greater choice and independence for individuals while reducing pressure on social care, GP surgeries and hospitals.

It should also improve people's experience of care, and support the ambition to provide greater care closer to home.

This forms part of an ambitious proposal to transform health and social care across the Rhondda Cynon Taf, Merthyr Tydfil and Bridgend County Borough areas. It reflects the needs of current and future generations, and marks the culmination of many months of hard work.

Much of what the proposal seeks to achieve will be delivered by boosting the role of social value organisations which already have a huge impact upon people's lives.

This was excellent news for Bridgend County Borough he felt.

Members may also want to remind their constituents that households which make use of the purple bag recycling collections for absorbent hygiene products need to reapply on an annual basis in order to remain part of the scheme.

If a household does not put out any bags on three consecutive occasions over a six week period, it will also be assumed that they no longer require a collection.

With 10,200 homes currently signed up to the scheme, it is proving to be extremely popular, and resulted in 1,161 tonnes of AHP waste being recycled instead of ending up in landfill. This is the equivalent in weight of 92 double decker buses.

As disposable nappies can take up to 500 years to fully break down, this is a fantastic result and he was pleased that this important service is helping residents while reducing the amount that we send to landfill.

Cabinet Member – Wellbeing and Future Generations

The Cabinet Member – Wellbeing and Future Generations announced that our popular 'Schools Out' initiative is now live and is offering an action-packed programme of free summer activities for local children.

Organised by the Council in partnership with Awen, Halo, the Urdd, Menter Bro Ogwr and local town and community councils, in addition to the wide range of activities that were on offer last summer, this year, sports camps and academies have been arranged to help children aged 3 to 15 develop important agility, balance, co-ordination and fundamental movement skills.

The Urdd are also running a number of Welsh sports camps, while Menter Bro Ogwr are hosting Welsh language play schemes in various locations throughout the County.

Awen are staging outdoor theatre at Bryngarw Country Park with performances such as Alice in Wonderland and Wuthering Heights, and this year's Summer Reading Challenge

has a 'Space Chase' theme, which ties in well with it being 50 years since the moon landing.

Halo are holding FREE swimming crash courses which includes a range of Disney-inspired family fun swim sessions to help children to be safe and confident in the water.

All activities must be booked in advance and have limited availability, you can find out more at the school's out page on our council website.

Members may also want to help promote the Employability Bridgend initiative within their wards. This is a scheme which supports local people in finding work by increasing their employment prospects.

The Council recently highlighted the case of a Brackla resident whose career as a plumber came to an end for medical reasons. Deciding to retrain, the resident met with advisors, mentors and trainers from Employability Bridgend, and they helped him to achieve his dream job as a fully qualified football coach. His hard work has resulted in a new job with a professional football club.

This is just one example of how the Employability Bridgend initiative is helping local people find work and improve their lives. It is funded by Welsh Government and the European Social Fund.

More information was available from the Employability Bridgend page on the Council website.

Cabinet Member – Education and Regeneration

The Cabinet Member – Education and Regeneration had three updates for Members. Firstly, he was sure that all present would agree that Porthcawl looked fantastic in the media coverage of the recent Healthspan Porthcawl 10k.

The event was hugely popular, and really helped to showcase the town to the wider world. He extended his thanks to everyone who helped make it such a big success.

Events such as this, the Elvis Festival, the Seniors Open golf tournament or the AquaX power boat championship all demonstrate Porthcawl's potential as a 21st century resort, and improvements such as the new town beach sea defences, the marina and the Jennings Building play a major part of this.

He had been advised that there had been entrants this year from overseas, many of whom had not visited Porthcawl before. The 10k event would take place again next year he added, in June or July.

Secondly, Members may want to inform their constituents that online applications can now be made for secondary school bus passes.

With passes available for around 1,000 children who will be eligible when they start year seven this September, applications should be made by Friday 9 August.

It's the first time that the Council has provided the application process online, and forms part of our efforts to offer residents more efficient, convenient ways of accessing services.

We have contacted the families of eligible pupils and have advised how they can make an application via the My Account function at the Council website. As well as speeding

up the process, this move saves money by cutting down on the amount of paper involved, and replacement passes can also be applied for online, too.

Finally, congratulations are due to business-savvy pupils from Garth Primary School. This is one of the few schools he was yet to visit (with Ward Member(s)). He would arrange for such a visit to take place in September coming

After their school bee hive was vandalised, an idea based around bee conservation has helped Garth pupils to win first place in the Welsh Government's annual Enterprise Troopers competition.

The children impressed judges with their 'Bee-Spoke T-shirts' which they designed to promote conservation and raise money to provide extra security for the school's beehive.

As those present were aware, bees are under threat from pesticides etc, so this business idea was very timely and ethical.

Enterprise Troopers challenges teams of primary school children to run their own businesses, and sell merchandise and services of their choosing in the local community.

The competition aims to help pupils apply their creativity and enterprise skills in a very practical way, and gives them an opportunity to develop business, budgeting and marketing skills.

Being named the best in Wales for the above, is a considerable achievement, he concluded.

342. TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE LEADER

The Leader confirmed that he recently attended the House of Commons to address the Welsh Affairs Select Committee, about the unprecedented impact that closing the Ford Engine Plant will have on our County Borough.

The Ford engine plant has generated directly £1.3 billion for the Welsh economy in recent years. It is an anchor company not just for Bridgend; not just for Wales, but for the UK. Together with the plant's trade union representatives we urged Ford to stay in Bridgend and to stay in Wales to at least keep some of the 1700 highly skilled jobs here.

Ford have announced a £1 million fund for the community. If Ford, which has received over £140 million in government support over recent years, are closing the plant then they their legacy to the wider community and workers, that has built millions of cars for Ford for over 40 years, has to be much, more than just £1 million. We will be meeting with the Director of Ford UK next month and making that case.

The scale of the loss of jobs is unprecedented, and therefore, an unprecedented response is needed from both UK Government and Welsh Government. He stressed that we will lose £250m a year from the economy, and that urgent investment and rapid action is essential.

The Leader cited to the committee, some of the infrastructure projects that could be brought forward to generate new jobs and give some confidence to the businesses, communities, families and residents.

The Council had written to both Minister for Economy and Transport at the Welsh Government and the Secretary of State for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy at the

UK Government, outlining the proposals. We are also making the case at Taskforce meetings and with officials.

Cardiff Capital City Deal office is of course prioritising Bridgend for potential investment.

Colleagues will recall that he announced at the last Council meeting, that we were re-launching our Special Regeneration Fund and extending our Kick Start fund to support small and new businesses in Bridgend County Borough. This afternoon we are proposing that we set aside in the capital programme a £2 million Investing in Communities Fund that we can use flexibly potentially to match fund investment opportunities in Bridgend in the next year. We are also proposing in the capital programme to improve the junction of Heol Mostyn on the A48 at Pyle. This has become vital as it will enable us to further develop the Village Farm Industrial Estate where we have a shortage of accommodation for small and medium size businesses. These are just some of the steps we are taking to respond to the proposed closure.

The Leader advised, that last weekend saw the opening of Bryncethin's new Community Centre.

The old sports pavilion has been converted into a new two-storey building which overlooks the rugby pitch.

It features modern changing rooms, kitchens, an IT suite, a meeting room, a large hall area, a patio area and balcony, and as a dedicated car park.

Bryncethin RFC became the first sports club in the County Borough to complete a 'Community Asset Transfer' deal and take over the ownership of their playing field and pavilion.

As well as agreeing a 35-year lease, the rugby club secured more than £500k funding from our Community Asset Transfer Fund, the Rural Communities Development Fund, the Communities Facilities Programme, Welsh Rugby Union, National Lottery Community Fund, and Section 106 money.

This has enabled them to completely transform the pavilion into a facility for the whole local community to treasure, and it offers a fine model of what can be achieved through the Community Asset Transfer programme.

Arrangements such as this can give community assets a fresh lease of life, and the Leader was delighted that this Council has supported Bryncethin RFC with this transformational project.

343. SOCIAL SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing submitted a report on the Director of Social Services' Annual Report for 2018/18 for approval, and requesting that Members note the judgements reached locally about social care services in Bridgend. The report gave some background information, following which it explained, that the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, places a strong emphasis on promoting the wellbeing of people who need care and support, as well as carers who also need the same.

She explained that the main aim and objective of the report (and accompanying presentation), was to provide Council and people living in Bridgend County Borough, with an overview of social care. It also aimed to highlight progress that had been made during the year, as well as to identify priorities for 2019/20.

Paragraph 4 of the report referred to the guidance, which set out the various sections that related to the six national quality standards for wellbeing, detailed in bullet point format in this section of the report.

The report and supporting information, demonstrated that services were generally effective when gauged against meeting the needs of individuals who require social care support. Whilst information in the report and presentation confirmed that services provided are improving overall, they also identified areas where improvement was needed and these were shown in the priorities for 2019/20.

The draft Report was attached at Appendix 1 to the covering report, whilst a letter from Care Inspectorate Wales outlining a review of the local authority's performance in this area, was attached at Appendix 2.

Paragraph 4.11 of the report gave some key aims and actions being implemented/proposed, with regards to whole service priorities and also some added priorities for Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care per se.

The presentation then gave details of the Annual Report 2018/19, as follows:-

Adults – Key facts and figures	2017/18	2018/19
Total number of referrals and re-referrals for adult social care	7604	7469
Number of adults supported in the community	5177	5198
Number of people who received a Telecare package	3162	3451
Number of referrals to Assisted Recovery in the Community (ARC)	1010	1043
Number of people diverted from mainstream services to help them remain independent for as long as possible	116 857 (in ARC)	122 1162 (in ARC)
Number of people supported in residential/nursing care	676	700
Rate of delayed transfers of care for social care reasons per 1,000 population aged 75 and over	1.52	4.79
Children's – Key facts and figures		
Number of contacts during the year	6677	7945
Number of children looked after as at 31 March	384	381
The percentage of all care leavers who are in education, training or employment 12 months after leaving care	61%	64%
The percentage of children aged 7-17 years who are satisfied with the care and support they received	84%	86%
Number of care leavers receiving support from the local Authority and its partners at 31 March	116	153

The percentage of assessments completed for children Within statutory timescales	86%	72%
Number on the Child Protection Register	161	191

Adults – our journey in numbers

By doing the right thing...

- Supporting individuals to live in their own homes for longer, by developing and investing in our care at home and assistive technology services (please note performance in facts & figures section); and
- Increasing our Extra Care capacity (doubling from 39 beds in 17-18 to 79 beds in 18-19) which gives individuals the security of a setting where care can be accessed on a 24/7 basis, but maintaining the independence of having your own front door

Savings have followed...

- As an Extra Care scheme placement costs BCBC in the region of £115 - £120 per week, when compared to costs in the region of £600 per week for a care home placement – resulting in savings of over £600k

Children’s – our journey in numbers

By doing the right thing...

Developing and investing in specialist placement and supported/independent accommodation options within the county borough, and enhancing our internal fostering services, which addresses the balance between our use of independent fostering agencies (IFA’s) and our internal fostering team

Percentage by Placement Type:	2014	2019
Independent Residential	3.16%	2.1%
In-house Residential	1.70%	2.1%
Independent Fostering	26.21%	16.80%
Kinship Fostering	15.78%	16.80%
In-house Fostering	39.08%	39.37%
Pre Adoption	4.61%	4.99%
Placement with Parent	7.28%	14.96%
Independent/Supported Living	0.97%	2.36%

Percentage by Placement Location:	2014	2019
Within BCBC LA	68.93%	69.82%
In Wales (neighbouring authority)	16.02%	16.27%
In Wales (not neighbouring authority)	8.01%	7.09%
In England	2.43%	1.84%

Savings have followed...

With actual total spend on LAC Fostering and Accommodation placements reducing between 17-18 and 18-19 – in spite of inflationary pressures

Key Priorities for 2019/20

The key aims and actions are as follows:

- Give people more choice and control over what support they receive by providing early access to advice and information;
- Continue to improve the ways in which the Council provides good information, advice and assistance to the public, including increasing the support available through local community co-ordinators;
- Continue to involve service users, carers and communities in developing commissioning services;
- Reduce demand through targeted early help and intervention programmes;
- Support the development of a new generation of community health and wellbeing centres for our residents with health partners;
- Establish a new model of residential provision for looked after children and young people and seek the best ways of meeting their individual needs including support beyond the age of 18 by offering specialist accommodation;
- Finalise a transition service model to help disabled children move smoothly into adulthood;
- Support care leavers to secure appropriate accommodation;
- Work in partnership with the third sector, town and community councils and community groups to meet local needs;
- Work with partners and the third sector to strengthen communities and identify the best way of providing services locally;
- Enable community groups and the third sector to have more choice and control over community assets;
- Ensure a smooth transition into the new Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board region to ensure no citizen is adversely impacted as a result of the change;
- Support carers in maintaining their roles;
- Recruit and retain carers across the range of fostering services;
- Ensure Safeguarding is core business across the Council;
- Achieve the budget reductions identified in the medium term financial strategy;
- Develop the culture and skills required to meet the needs of a changing organisation;
- Provide learning and development opportunities for staff to meet future service needs.

There were additional specific priorities identified at the end of each section in the body of the report.

A Member noted that Sickness Absence had gone up in the Social Services Directorate by 8.8%, and he asked if there was a known reason for this and what was being done to try and reduce this increase in absenteeism. He also asked what the sickness percentage was overall in the Directorate.

The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing advised that though there had been an increase in sickness absence across the Directorate, Group Managers were following the guidelines outlined in the Council’s Sickness and Absence Policy, and the situation was being closely monitored with the assistance of Human Resources in order to reduce current levels. It had been noted, that levels had increased in areas/sections of the Directorate where there had been some significant transformation and change, ie through staff restructuring and rationalisation etc.

A Member noted the savings that Social Services had to make as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), bearing in mind also that an Action Plan was in place

to pay back also a previous overspend in the Directorate. He asked how this could be achieved without the high levels of service currently being provided slipping.

The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing replied by stating that high standards of service to the elderly and our most vulnerable will have to be maintained, though this would be a challenge, particularly as further savings are required to be made year on year as part of the Council's Budget.

It was about doing things differently and more innovatively than had been previously the case, and working increasingly with key stakeholders, and external providers such as our Health colleagues. She conceded however, that it was becoming very difficult and challenging to achieve the high standards delivered within previous years, in terms of levels of support which were dwindling internally year on year, under the restraints imposed by the MTFs.

A Member commented that the Council's Education and Social Services Departments, in particular, were providing essential statutory services for the young, elderly and most vulnerable, and were governed by regulations and inspected on levels of service and performance. It was important therefore that the high standards people throughout the BCB had been accustomed to receiving in terms of different support systems in place, would be maintained.

The Cabinet Member – Social Services and Early Help, confirmed that both the Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing and himself had honest and frank discussions regarding the level of savings that had to be made in the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate and the effect of this, particularly with regard to future service provision. The current MTFs covers the next 4 years and the savings the Authority have to make during this period are unprecedented, particularly when considering that £10m was required in 2020/21 followed by a further £8m in 2021/22. In the area of Social Services, he assured Members that the high standards the service presently provided would be maintained. What he could not guarantee however, was maintaining the wide variety of the level of services currently on offer.

A Member was aware through research, that statistics used to be made available across Wales under the appropriate legislation, outlining the number of people who had taken up Respite Care and the offer of Short breaks etc, for a period, as part of their convalescence after an illness or operation. He asked if this data was still made available.

The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing confirmed that under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, which came into force in 2016, a Performance Framework had been introduced, involving all Welsh local authorities which would reflect outputs such as that the Member referred to. However, this piece of work was presently in progress. She added that the Directorate had just undertaken a project in relation to Respite Care also, in order to look to improve and have more flexible options for clients, and she would share information regarding this with the Member outside of the meeting.

A Member concluded debate on this item by commending the Rota System and he urged all Members to become involved in this moving forward.

RESOLVED: That Council approved the Director of Social Services Annual Report for 2018/19.

344. CAPITAL PROGRAMME UPDATE - QUARTER 1 2019 - 20

The Interim Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer presented a report, the purpose of which, was to:-

- Comply with the requirement of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Prudential Code for Capital Finance 2018
- Provide an update of the Capital Programme from 1 April to 30 June 2019 (Appendix A)
- Seek approval for a revised capital programme for 2019-20 to 2028-29 (Appendix B)
- Note the projected Prudential and Other Indicators for 2019-20 (Appendix C)
- approve a revenue budget virement of £2,349,797 from school delegated budgets to council wide budgets, following the receipt of grant funding from Welsh Government to that same value, to contribute towards capital expenditure as outlined in paragraph 4.7.

By way of background, she advised that in December 2017, CIPFA published a new edition of the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in local authorities. The revised Code placed a new requirement on local authorities to determine a Capital Strategy, to be approved by Council, demonstrating that the authority takes capital expenditure and investment decisions in line with service objectives and properly takes account of stewardship, value for money, prudence, sustainability and affordability. The Interim Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer, added that local authorities were required to have in place a Capital Strategy that sets out the long-term context in which capital expenditure and investment decisions are made and gives due consideration to both risk and reward, and impact on the achievement of priority outcomes.

In terms of the monitoring of the Capital Programme 2019-20, the Interim Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer confirmed that the revised programme for the above period, currently totalled £54.471m, of which £36.665m was met from BCBC resources, including capital receipts and revenue contributions from earmarked reserves, with the remaining £17.806m coming from external resources. A breakdown of this was given in Table 1 in this section of the report on a Directorate by Directorate basis.

Table 2 in the report, then summarised the current funding assumptions for the capital programme for 2019-20. The capital resources are managed to ensure that maximum financial benefit for the Council is achieved. This may include the realignment of funding, to maximise government grants.

Appendix A to the report provided details of the individual schemes within the capital programme, showing the budget available in 2019-20 (as well as some commentary associated with the programme), compared to the projected spend. £8.286m of funding was slipped forward into 2019-20 for schemes not completed in 2018-19, as outlined in the report to Cabinet on Financial Performance 2018-19, which included the schemes shown in paragraph 4.3 of the report.

The report then referred to a scheme that slipped into 2020-21 as detailed in paragraph 4.4 of the report, as well as a re-profiling of the Maesteg Town Hall scheme.

The next section of the report, outlined a number of new externally funded schemes approved, which had also been incorporated into the Council's Capital Programme.

Paragraph 4.7 of the report then outlined a number of new schemes, funded by the Council, to be included in the Capital Programme. These were:-

- ICT Data Centre;
- Heol Mostyn Junction, Pyle;
- Evergreen Hall;
- Investing in Communities

Paragraph 4.8 advised that in March 2019, Council approved a change to the funding envelope for Band B of the School Modernisation Programme and for this to be incorporated into the Capital Programme. The reasons for this were expanded upon in this section of the report.

The Interim Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer added that there were a number of other schemes within the above Programme that were awaiting confirmation of external funding over the summer period. These would form further reports to both Cabinet and Council in due course. The revised Capital Programme was included at Appendix B to the report.

She then explained that in February 2019, Council approved the revised Financial Procedure Rules, determining Cabinet as the body to receive the monitoring report on the Capital Strategy and Prudential Indicators. Appendix C to the report detailed the actual indicators for 2018-19, the estimated indicators for 2019-20 set out in the Council's Capital Strategy and the projected indicators for 2019-20, based on the revised Capital Programme.

The final section of the report's narrative referred to the subject of Capital Strategy Monitoring.

This also required the monitoring of non-treasury management investments and other long term liabilities.

The Council previously approved £1m within the Capital Programme for the purchase of investment assets and spent £520k on acquiring an office building, which generated a rental income of £56k per year or just over 9% return on the investment. There was a further £480k available within the Capital Programme, but as yet no suitable options have been identified within the Bridgend area, which would produce a reasonable return and at acceptable levels of risk. The Council could, in the future, consider expanding its property investment portfolio, in which case, it would require reviewing the criteria and investment strategy and this would be on a risk based approach.

She concluded her submission, by advising that the Council had a number of other Long Term Liabilities which were included in the Capital Strategy, and examples of these were shown in paragraph 4.15 of the report.

A Member referred to paragraph 4.7 of the report headed Capital Programme 2019-20 onwards and the fact that earlier in the debate the Cabinet Member – Education and Regeneration had expressed his concern regarding the budget for the Education Department. The section of this report advised that the Quarter 1 budget monitoring report to Cabinet earlier this month outlined the revenue funding released as a result of late notification of one-off grant funding from WG towards teachers' and firefighters' pay and pensions. This paragraph of the report then went on to say that Cabinet had proposed that an 'Investing in Communities Fund' be established with £2m of this funding to support the capital minor works programme, by enabling more capital improvement works to be carried out on Council assets in BCB local communities.

Knowing the continued pressure upon Schools funding, she asked if it was prudent to put this funding into the Capital Works Programme (as opposed to committing it to schools).

The Leader advised that this would have limited impact in respect of allocation of future funding for teachers pensions etc, because if grant funding is not made available by Welsh Government from 2020/21 for this on a recurrent basis, then the funding that the Council has allocated will be passported back to schools' delegated budgets so they are not at detriment.

RESOLVED: That Council:-

1. Noted the Capital Programme for the period 1 April 2019 to 30 June 2019 (Appendix A).
2. Approved the revised Capital Programme (Appendix B).
3. Noted the projected Prudential and Other Indicators for 2019-20 (Appendix C).
4. Approved a revenue budget virement of £2,349,797 from school delegated budgets to Council wide budgets, to fund Capital Expenditure, as outlined in paragraph 4.7 of the report.

345. **TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS FROM:**

Councillor A Hussain to the Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration:

Could the Cabinet Member in charge of tourism let the Council know about his plans to support skills in the tourism sector in addition to let us know about the gaps in provision and data, and to identify what could be done by the Council to make our seaside destinations popular?

Response

The Destination Management Plan (DMP), 2018-2022, approved by cabinet in March 2018, sets the framework for managing the tourism vision to 2022. The Destination Management Plan is supported by the Destination Action Plan (DAP) that details specific activities. The actions contained within the DAP focus on key strategic opportunities for development, maximise external funding opportunities and where possible deliver in partnership. The DMP proposes the following vision:

To develop a thriving visitor economy in Bridgend County Borough which celebrates the strengths of the place, supports jobs, generates business opportunities and improves the range of amenities available for visitors and local people.

The DAP supports the delivery of this vision by focusing action against the following priorities:

- (a) Support the development of the tourism product
- (b) Support the development of tourism infrastructure
- (c) Raise the profile and attract more visitors to Bridgend County Borough

The DMP specifically identifies developing tourism human resources as a priority. More specifically, the DAP has the following priorities;

2.5.1 Encourage the take-up of customer service and product knowledge training:

Businesses will be encouraged to take up training and development opportunities as and when they become available, especially through the delivery of already piloted approaches.

2.5.2 Raise awareness of tourism management training opportunities:

We will work with stakeholders to help identify local training needs, in conjunction with economic development initiatives, alongside an awareness campaign to encourage operators to undertake management development and staff training.

2.5.3 Encourage new business start-ups in tourism:

Support and advice will be provided to help people start up new tourism businesses through the mechanisms available to BCBC and where required signposting will occur to Business Wales.

In 2018 the Council undertook a consultation regarding future lines of communication and representation for the visitor economy in the destination, following the decision by Bridgend Tourism Association to cease its activities. It was recommended that the Bridgend Business Forum is ideally placed as a communications, networking, advocacy and consultation mechanism for the tourism sector. The Bridgend Business Forum membership is made up of established and new start businesses within a wide variety of business sectors. Sole traders, micro, small and medium sized businesses as well as large international companies are all present within the membership. It provides local business people with an opportunity to meet new customers and suppliers, learn new skills, share best practice, and keep up to date with factors that could affect their business. Importantly the forum also provides an opportunity for business people to voice their views. The BBF delivers business skills workshops in subjects like marketing, social media, raising finance and human resource management. People are encouraged to network with fellow attendees as well as learn from a whole host of expert facilitators. The annual Bridgend Business Forum Awards is the jewel in the crown of the Bridgend business calendar and with has a dedicated Tourism Business category. In March the BBF held an event which specifically targeted tourism businesses and was held at the Grove Golf Club in Porthcawl.

The Bridgend kick-start grant is a flexible grant scheme delivered through a partnership with UK Steel Enterprise and Bridgend County Borough Council. It provides financial assistance to new or existing micro-businesses that are located, or are planning to locate, in Bridgend County Borough. A micro-business is defined as one which has fewer than ten employees and a turnover or balance sheet total of less than €2 million. The tourism sector is heavily dominated by micro-businesses and SME's and several tourism businesses have benefitted from the grant in recent years.

Tourism is delivered by the department of economy and natural resources. Opportunities for skills support for all sectors including tourism are disseminated by staff within the department via established communication channels such as the business e-news.

In the last year a free Pop Up Business School that provides participants with the knowledge and tools needed to start their own business has been supported by BCBC twice. This is open to people considering any kind of business, including tourism.

Every opportunity is taken to better understand how to develop a thriving visitor economy in Bridgend County Borough which celebrates the strengths of the place, supports jobs, generates business opportunities and improves the range of amenities available for visitors and local people. We participated in a research programme led by Visit Wales which includes collecting information on occupancy levels, tourism trends, visitor satisfaction and more. In addition we undertake our own independent research.

This information informs the approach and evidences the extent to which we are achieving our vision.

According to the Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Model (STEAM) data, tourism already injects much needed revenue into the local economy (£347.30m) and supports 4,041 jobs. Since 2013 there has been a progressive increase in the economic impact of tourism in Bridgend County Borough, with the economic value of tourism increasing from £289.86 million in 2013 to £347.30 million in 2018. During the same period visitor numbers and visitor days have shown similar increases with visitor numbers up from 3.55 million in 2013 to 3.72 million in 2018 and visitor days increasing from 5.25 million in 2013 to 5.61 million in 2018. This growth exceeded the targets set in the Destination Management Plan 2018-2022 and positioned the County Borough as one of the success stories of the Cardiff Capital Region in tourism terms.

Supplementary question by Councillor A Hussain

Destination Management Plan (DMP) 2018-2022 is great vision and in your Destination Action Plan (DAP) how are you raising the profile and attract more visitors to Bridgend County Borough although over last two year we have not seen any increase?

Response

The Cabinet Member – Education and Regeneration referred the Member to the last paragraph of his response above. He added that footfall was measured also, in order to gauge how many people were entering towns comprising the BCB, particularly Porthcawl as one of our main seaside resorts. The amount of stay overs in hotels and guest houses etc, could also be monitored to measure the amount of holiday makers who visit places such as Porthcawl. Things such as this could be achieved and were aided by the STEAM in terms of measurement of certain relevant date (as detailed in the substantive response), as well as reflecting trends and accurately comparing data from the past to the present. The Cabinet Member – Education and Regeneration further added, that there were regeneration projects and events ongoing, not just within main tourist attractions such as Porthcawl but throughout the County Borough as a whole.

Supplementary question by Councillor N Burnett

Aside of Porthcawl, what is being done to attract tourism in other areas of the County Borough?

Response

Though there was data to gauge this to a certain extent, as with data collated in respect of the number of visitors to Porthcawl, this was to an extent dependent upon the level of interest shown by them in completing surveys that were made available to members of the public, which if they completed, would give a more accurate picture on the level of people who visited Porthcawl and other places, and whether these visitors were just visiting a particular place for the day, or for a longer period, ie through a holiday. There were in the County Borough, 5 or 6 nationally branded hotels, none of which were actually in Porthcawl. There were numerous places of interest to visit also throughout the BCB outside the location of Porthcawl, for example, Maesteg Town Hall, Merthymawr dunes, Bryngarw House and Country Park, Coity Castle, Carnegie House, Bridgend Designer Outlet, the National Cycle Network amongst others on-line that could be looked up on web sites such as 'Bridgend Bites.' He added further, that there were often a number of events organised by external providers particularly in Bridgend town, through a number of different stalls being provided, normally over the weekend period, selling foods and delicatessen products.

Supplementary question by Councillor R Stirman

What steps are taken to direct tourists to places of interest within the County Borough?

Response

On-line through various web sites, whether these be the Council's (eg Bridgend Bites), through the EU Rural Development funded Training of Tourism 'Ambassadors,' (of which the Member who posed the question is one) or other organisations involved in arranging any particular event. Also by advertising events through displaying public notices in places regularly visited by the Council. Notices and publications were available made in tourist information centres. Permanent road signs also direct tourists to the likes of Bryngarw House, Grand Pavilion and other places of interest throughout the County Borough, he concluded.

Councillor M Voisey to the Leader

As a result of the Labour First Minister not approving the M4 relief road around Newport, how will the City Deal project recover from this disastrous decision for the economy of South Wales, and should this council have a second vote as to whether we wish to remain party to the City Deal, now the facts have changed so dramatically?

Response

The M4 relief road issue has had been the subject of some considerable debate, though it will be assisted by the Metro Plus scheme to be jointly funded by the City Deal project/Welsh Government that also includes a proposal for Park and Ride. Funding was being sought for Digital connectivity and with regard to this, consultation was ongoing with regard to looking at ways of securing national funding outside of the City Deal funding, for improvement to Broadband connectivity

Supplementary question by Councillor MC Voisey

Would the Leader please advise how the Cardiff Region and in particular this Authority, will benefit and take advantage of the benefits of 5G mobile network and the forecast maximum use of electric cars, for the revenue benefit of this authority.

Response

The Leader advised that improvements in respect of the M4 relief road and the congestion of traffic around the Newport tunnel, was a project that had never been part of the City Deal project proposals, so he did not see the need for any such second vote being conducted as to whether or not Bridgend should stay part of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, as the Member had suggested in his original question. He assured also, that the Cardiff Capital Region Transport Authority which he chaired had offered to work very closely with Welsh Government, to identify ways by which traffic congestion could be reduced or alleviated in and around the above highway network. It would cost in the region of £1.6billion to build the M4 relief road at Newport and Welsh Government had decided that this was unaffordable. Funding was intended to be contributed however, towards a package of public transport improvement scheme instead, which was more affordable and would improve the present situation not just in the Newport area but would possibly see improvements across South East Wales including in Bridgend. Efforts would also be made through the introduction of an appropriate campaign, to persuade the public to use more public sector transport, (as opposed to

their own vehicles(s)), such as bus, rail and cycle. This would help reduce vehicular congestion and also pollution from emissions.

Supplementary question by Councillor T Thomas

I recently wrote to the Leader regarding the Great Western Power House, which is an economic deal between the South East of Wales and Swindon and Bristol. The Leader noted that he is supportive of this policy and it is complementary to the City Deal.

One of the concerns of the City Deal is that a large amount of money is being re-distributed to Cardiff. How can we be reassured that this policy will not further re-distribute more local money across the M4 corridor into South West England.

Response

The Cardiff Regional City Deal Agreement involves 10 local authorities and is intended to cover projects for the next 15 years. In terms of the Great Western Power House, no financial commitment has been given to this as part of the City Deal, it was just a report and an idea at this stage, though some common interests were shared between the two regions. This was due to the fact that there were mutual interests, including increasing options for rail transport between the locations detailed in the first paragraph of the above supplementary question and further afield, i.e. rail travel from South West Wales to London Paddington. There were also significant common interests in respect of increasing the existing connectivity between South East Wales and South West England economies and higher education and research sectors. Harnessing the full renewable energy potential of the Bristol Channel will also require joint working between local authorities both sides of the channel. The Great Western Power House aims and objectives were to better connect regions in Wales and England, in order to drive a more inclusive growth of economy of some considerable scale, through the joining-up of key collaborative means. This would potentially involve introducing an Industrial Strategy that would lead to increased infrastructure, and innovated methods of growth between different areas of location. These were very similar to some of the aims and objectives of the City Deal project. He stressed however, that both these initiatives were still in their very early stages currently.

Supplementary question by Councillor JP Blundell

Would the Leader agree, that the Council needs to work with neighbouring authorities, especially those involved in the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, so that suitable professionally qualified residents can aim for and succeed in getting high paid jobs within the region they live in.

Response

The Leader acknowledged and agreed with this point. He stated that there was significant connectivity between the Bridgend economy and the Swansea City region and therefore the Swansea Deal in the west. The local authority was part of a Taskforce set up by and led by Welsh Government and UK Government, in order to look at employment options at that site should the Ford engine plant close, which appeared likely to be the case. Together partners were aiming to attract inward investment to secure replacement jobs in new and existing businesses, to offset the 1,700 jobs that would be lost if Ford shut the engine plant. This could be projects either on the existing Ford site or an appropriate location elsewhere in the County Borough.

Councillor T Thomas to the Cabinet Member – Communities

Will the Cabinet Member outline any plans on how this council will reduce carbon emissions with a view to ensuring the Council's activities are net-zero carbon by 2030?

Response

Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) is at the forefront of innovative low carbon energy solutions and projects. BCBC has been engaged with the Smart System Heat Programme since 2013 when it submitted a Pre-Qualifying Questionnaire to the Energy Technologies Institute (ETI) and was selected from over 70 local authorities from across the UK to be one of the shortlisted 3 prioritised authorities in the programme. Cabinet approved a Local Area Energy Strategy and Smart Energy Plan on 19th February 2019. These offer a route to achieving the decarbonisation of heat within Bridgend County Borough. The Local Area Energy Strategy proposes a pathway to achieving decarbonisation targets and the Smart Energy Plan provides the detail of how technologies, business models and consumer propositions will be deployed and tested in order that scale up can happen and the decarbonisation targets be achieved.

The Smart Energy Plan formally maps out the near term delivery of the first phase of the Local Area Energy Strategy. The Smart Energy Plan is aligned to the Welsh Government Carbon Budget time periods and identifies the projects and activities to be delivered during this period. The Smart Energy Plan aims to deliver the following benefits:

- Decarbonise heat within Bridgend County Borough
- Stimulate economic growth
- Provide new job opportunities
- Attract new and existing businesses to trial initiatives and grow within the County Borough.

BCBC acknowledges the Welsh Governments Climate Emergency Declaration of the 29th April 2019 and the commitment Welsh Government has made to achieving a carbon neutral public sector by 2030.

Bridgend will be at the forefront of discussion with Welsh Government regarding the identification of resources and funding that will need to be provided, to enable BCBC to meet the objective of carbon neutrality for its own activities (both services and property holdings).

BCBC will continue to work towards a net-zero carbon scenario and to maximise the reduction of carbon emissions produced by the Councils own activities and assets. In order to achieve this aim, the Council will continue to; Optimise asset energy performance within the BCBC Building Portfolio. Support all schools to reduce energy, costs and emissions. Improve engagement, communications and training related to energy and carbon saving throughout all departments within the Council. Engage with staff to actively improve energy and costs saving awareness. Ensure effective metering and monitoring is undertaken to effectively reduce avoidable energy waste. Carry out energy audits to identify, quantify and prioritise energy saving opportunities within our buildings and Increase participation of renewable energy technologies to decrease dependency on fossil fuels.

Supplementary question by Councillor T Thomas

Welsh Government have accepted a recommendation that all new homes have to be as close to zero carbon by 2021.

Given that many homes that have recently gone through the planning process or are being considered will be built around 2021, how will we ensure that these homes are zero carbon.

Response

Though Welsh Government have introduced such a Policy, the process regarding the consideration of planning applications by a Local Planning Authority, is covered by planning law introduced through central legislation, namely the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, and local authorities were bound by this legislation. If Welsh Government decided to enforce the above, BCBC and other Welsh local authorities, would have to change their appropriate Technical Advice Note (TAN), in order that the Development Control Committee could call site developers to account, ie by imposing a condition upon them to introduce the likes of zero carbon in properties constructed as part of new housing developments. Unless this was pursued and there was a change to the above legislation, local authorities unfortunately, did not have the power to enforce Developers to build zero carbon dwellings.

Supplementary question by Councillor PA Davies

How is BCBC progressing with the reduction of carbon emissions through street lighting (lanterns).

Response

This was an ongoing work in progress programme. Work had been completed in the grounds of the Coychurch Crematorium, whereby low energy replacement lighting had been provided in the car parking area there. This was cheaper to run than normal energy lighting. The Council were looking at all times to reduce the carbon footprint in anything it became involved in where there was scope to do that. In terms of street lighting columns 'per se', and the ongoing replacement, the Council were investigating the provision of columns that gave out reduced carbon emissions, as well as looking at innovative other methods, including the ability for WiFi connectivity, whereby members of the public will be able to access WiFi through these new type columns.

346. **URGENT ITEMS**

None.

The meeting closed at 17:10