

COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY, 18 DECEMBER 2019

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB ON WEDNESDAY, 18 DECEMBER 2019 AT 15:00

Present

Councillor SE Baldwin – Chairperson

S Aspey	TH Beedle	JPD Blundell	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
A Hussain	RM James	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
JC Spanswick	RME Stirman	G Thomas	T Thomas
JH Tildesley MBE	E Venables	SR Vidal	MC Voisey
LM Walters	KJ Watts	CA Webster	PJ White
A Williams	AJ Williams	HM Williams	JE Williams
RE Young			

Apologies for Absence

S Aspey, NA Burnett and DG Owen

Officers:

Susan Cooper	Corporate Director - Social Services & Wellbeing
Mark Galvin	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Lindsay Harvey	Corporate Director Education and Family Support
Gill Lewis	Interim Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer
Mark Shephard	Chief Executive
Kelly Watson	Head of Legal & Regulatory Services

379. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

380. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of a meeting of Council dated 20 November 2019 be approved as a true and accurate record.

381. TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM:

Mayor

The Mayor announced that he had a very busy Christmas period and it has been a pleasure to visit so many different schools, groups and organisations and share in their festive activities.

It was always heartening to see how much community spirit exists in the County Borough and he had witnessed first hand the hard work and dedication of volunteers, pupils and staff. With this in mind, he reminded Members about nominations for the

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Mayor's Annual Citizenship Awards. Help us to reward the local people who really make a difference in their communities, however big or small. It would only take a few minutes to fill in an application form, which can be downloaded from our website or requested via the Mayor's Office. The deadline for receipt of nominations is Friday 24 January and the winners will be honoured at an event in March.

The Mayor had the pleasure of attending the annual Bridge FM Young Achiever Awards. This impressive event celebrates the young people from around the county borough and recognises their achievements in business, training, education, arts, music and voluntary work. This was a fantastic evening and a joy to meet so many young people who are actively making a positive contribution to where they live.

The annual Olympage Games was held in November and launched the Super-Agers project with colleagues from across the health board area including RCT and Merthyr councils. The day, which he had the honour of opening, was great fun and the Mayor extended his congratulations to the staff for such a well organised event.

The Mayor also thanked everyone who has taken part in the reverse advent calendar initiative in aid of the Bridgend Foodbank. All are greatly appreciated. Donations however he added, are needed all year round and he urged all to carry on providing their help as we go forward into 2020. He further added, that the Foodbank had 11 Distribution Units across the Bridgend County Borough and approximately 50,000 items of food had been contributed to the Foodbank since it had been in being.

The Mayor welcomed Councillor J Williams and extended his best wishes to her following a period of absence from meetings due to ill health.

To end, as this was the last Council before the New Year, the Mayor took the opportunity to wish all those present a happy Christmas and a healthy New Year.

Deputy Leader

The Deputy Leader acknowledged that with Christmas just around the corner, people can often find it difficult to juggle their finances at this time of year.

Unfortunately, this can often lead them into debt.

Members may want to let their constituents know that a drop-in support service is available which can help people manage and overcome debt, tackle their financial difficulties, deal with unemployment and improve their standard of living.

The Financial Advice and Support Service is primarily available to people who live within former Community First delivery areas and can help with a range of issues, from applying for a universal credit claim to learning how to manage a budget.

It is available through the Bridgend offices of Citizen's Advice, Hartshorn House in Maesteg, Tynycoed Surgery in Sarn, Bettws Community Club, Careau Development Trust and job centres in Bridgend, Porthcawl and Maesteg, and more information is available at the Citizen's Advice website.

He also asked Members to remind their communities that there will be waste and recycling collections on Christmas Eve, but not on Christmas Day or Boxing Day. Everything will be picked up two days later than usual for the rest of that week, including Sunday 29 December.

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Because of the large amount of festive waste generated, householders will also be allowed to put out an extra bag of non-recyclable waste for their first collection after Christmas.

Waste and recycling will be collected as normal on New Year's Eve, but not on New Year's Day. Collections will be one day later for that week up until Saturday 4 January, with all collections returning to normal on Monday 6 January.

He asked those present, to urge householders within their areas to recycle as much as they can. Bridgend County Borough is currently the second highest performing authority in Wales when it comes to how we handle our waste, and the main festive items which cannot be recycled are usually wrapping paper, black plastic, cellophane wrap, bubble wrap and polystyrene.

The vast majority of all other waste can be recycled, including items such as Christmas cards, paper envelopes, cardboard packaging, turkey carcasses and even the tin foil from chocolate tree decorations.

After Christmas, householders who have bought real Christmas trees will be able to recycle them by taking them along to a community recycling centre.

He also asked Members to remind their constituents that unwanted items in good condition can be donated to the Council's re-use shop at the Maesteg centre.

Full details of our festive waste and recycling arrangements can be found on the council website, the Deputy Leader concluded.

Cabinet Member – Communities

The Cabinet Member – Communities, announced that a major new initiative will seek to transform some of the county borough's green spaces over the next four years.

Organised by the charity Plantlife and funded by the National Lottery, the Green Links project will focus on the likes of Kenfig National Nature Reserve, Tremains Wood, Bryngarw Country Park and more.

The scheme encouraged communities to become more directly involved with local green spaces by providing opportunities for volunteering, learning and pleasure.

It sought to create lasting benefits by training volunteers, educators and local partners, and helping them to develop new skills in building, conservation and well-being activities.

This was an excellent initiative which encouraged people to develop a sense of pride in their community. It promoted sustainability and greater well-being, and was a fantastic way to make new friends and tackle loneliness and social isolation.

He stated that Members can support the growth of the Green Links scheme by letting people within the local community know that more information is available directly from the Plant Life website.

The Cabinet Member – Communities extended his thanks to all staff, particularly those within the Communities Directorate for their continued support during this year and wished everyone a Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year.

Cabinet Member – Future Generations and Wellbeing

The Cabinet Member – Future Generations and Wellbeing confirmed that, with Christmas fast approaching, Bridgend County Borough Council will be teaming up with local organisations such as the Wallich, the Zone, Gwalia, local Councils and more, to support rough sleepers once again this winter.

It would be working in partnership to make sure that homeless people have a warm, safe place to sleep and can access a range of help and support.

The daily breakfast run at The Wallich on Park Street provides hot food and drink between 6:30am and 9.00am as well as sleeping bags, warm clothing, toiletries and other important items.

Between 9.30am and 12noon Monday to Friday, a drop-in centre will offer a safe environment with washing facilities a telephone and computer access.

The drop-in service moves to The Zone in the afternoons between 1.30pm to 4.30pm during the week, and between 9.00am and 12noon on Saturdays.

At night, the floor space scheme provides a safe, dry and warm place to sleep. This is available between 8.00pm and 8.00am at The Elms in Bridgend Industrial Estate, with extended hours on Bank Holidays or if the weather becomes severe.

The floor space is allocated on a daily basis, and people can apply between 3.00pm and 5.00pm through the Gwalia Local Support Hub which is based at the Brackla Street Centre.

If anyone is concerned about rough sleepers, they can alert the local authority by using the Street Link app available at www.streetlink.org.uk

Contact details for the Housing Solutions team are available at the council website.

Cabinet Member – Social Services and Early Help

The Cabinet Member – Social Services and Early Help, advised that the Bridgend Resource Centre was coming up with unique ways of raising money to create a new sensory garden, and he was sure that Members will want to show their support.

As research shows that being outside and moving freely can help reduce tension and anxiety amongst people with dementia, the centre wants to develop a custom-built space where they can stroll freely and exercise.

The sensory garden will also support people with learning and physical disabilities, and provide them with a facility offering unique opportunities for using their senses of touch, feel and smell.

The sensory garden will enhance the standard of care that is already provided at the resource centre, and I hope that members will help encourage their constituents to support this effort.

An all-new recycling bank has been installed opposite Lidl on Bridgend Retail Park where unwanted clothing, shoes and linen can be donated. The bank will be emptied weekly and the weight of the donated items will be transferred into cash.

Residents can also help raise funds by using a smart phone or tablet to shop online through an app called 'easy fundraising'.

With thousands of participating online shops including Tesco, Asda, Amazon and eBay, retailers will donate a percentage of every purchase to the appeal.

More details could be found, including a link to download the app, at the Council's website.

Cabinet Member – Education and Regeneration

The Cabinet Member – Education and Regeneration had some excellent news to share with Members regarding three of our local schools.

Following recent reviews, Estyn has confirmed that Tynyrheol Primary has made significant improvements. The school is being removed from special measures, and there will be no further monitoring in relation to this.

Cynnfig Comprehensive has also been removed from a list of schools requiring follow-up review after implementing previous Estyn recommendations.

West Park Primary, meanwhile, has been deemed to have good standards, excellent attitudes to learning and well-being, good teaching and learning experiences, excellent care, support and guidance, and good learning and overall management.

Estyn has invited the school to prepare a case study on its work in relation to the contributions of pupil groups which will be used on their website.

He was sure Members would join him in offering congratulations to the heads, teachers, governors, staff and pupils at all three schools for their hard work and dedication.

The Cabinet Member – Education and Regeneration confirmed that next month there would be further news published from Estyn regarding several more of our schools and again this would be good news.

Finally, he had a quick travel update to share with Members. Last Sunday he took part in some Active travel on his bike from his house to Bridgend Railway Station where he caught the first scheduled Sunday service up to the Llynfi valley, since the disastrous beeching cuts of the 1960's. He added that more good news would follow regarding the Llynfi valley line in 2020.

Chief Executive

The Chief Executive advised that he was delighted to inform Members that a new Corporate Director - Communities has been appointed.

Following a rigorous selection process, the interview panel and a cross-party Committee of Councillors had selected Janine Nightingale as the successful candidate.

Janine is originally from Maesteg. A qualified planner, she has worked at Cardiff Council at Chief Officer level in Transformation and Land and Buildings.

She is currently the Head of Capital Projects in Economic Development where she has responsibility for providing strategic direction and leading on Cardiff's £300m capital programme.

With more than 20 years senior management experience in local government, the Panel was particularly impressed with Janine's ambitious vision for Bridgend County Borough; her obvious passion and positivity, and her detailed understanding of the area.

He hoped that Janine can start her role early in the New Year, hopefully by 1 March 2020 and he knew that she was looking forward to meeting Members and Officers, and to playing a key role in the future of Bridgend County Borough Council.

382. TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE LEADER

The Leader reported that as members who had attended the pre-Council briefing on the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy would know, he was delighted to confirm that Bridgend County Borough Council's settlement for 2020-21 will include an increase of 4.7 per cent on last year's budget.

While this does not restore the authority's funding to previous levels, it does represent the first significant increase in core grant funding for almost 12 years.

The increase to our core grant funding is most welcome, and we will now be reviewing our original financial plans for 2020-21, including areas where some proposed cuts were intending to be made, to ensure that the money can be used as effectively and as efficiently as possible.

It is going to be of great benefit in helping us to meet budget pressures such as additional costs in education, social services, teachers' pay and pensions, and more.

The Council were still not fully aware of the extent of some of the future key cost pressures and, in particular, the pay award for all staff, which may cost several million pounds.

The Leader added that he was grateful to Welsh Government for listening to BCBC's concerns, in particular Minister for Housing and Local Government Julie James, Minister for Finance and Trefnydd Rebecca Evans, and First Minister Mark Drakeford.

The Leader advised that several Councillors had been in contact with Cabinet Members about the misuse of fireworks following receiving emails from concerned local residents.

Our Shared Regulatory Service Joint Committee recently met and this was considered by Members including our representatives Cllr Patel and Cllr Lewis. The Committee have concluded that the current law does not offer people and animals enough protection from frequent disturbance by fireworks, particularly where there are numerous public and domestic displays around the traditional and religious dates and a growing number of displays at other celebratory events like birthdays and weddings. The Committee's recommendation is that local authorities should be empowered to limit the number of displays in their areas in these circumstances. A request will be made of UK Government to work with local authorities to identify a best practice approach to a revenue-neutral, mandatory permit system for fireworks displays, where local evidence is this is necessary to protect the community. The Government we hope, will work with a local authority to pilot the approach before the end of 2020, with a view to legislating to empower all local authorities to establish mandatory permit schemes where they deem it necessary.

383. LICENSING ACT 2003 STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY AND CUMULATIVE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The Team Manager – Licensing submitted a report, which related to the Council’s role as a licensing authority, as the regulatory body for pubs, clubs, off-licences and late night takeaways.

The purpose of the report was to seek approval to publish the Statement of Licensing Policy for the next five year period and to approve a special Cumulative Impact Assessment and Policy as part of that process.

The Team Manager – Licensing explained that the Council must undertake its functions to promote the licensing objectives of:

- Prevention of crime and disorder;
- Prevention of public nuisance;
- Public safety;
- The protection of children from harm

She confirmed that the Council became the Licensing Authority in 2005 and it was now time for the five year review of the Statement of Licensing Policy. This is a formal process and the statutory process was outlined at paragraph 3.2 of the report. The Consultation with regards to this she explained, took the form of an online consultation between 17 June 2019 and 9 September 2019. The statutory consultees included the Police, Fire Authority, Shared Regulatory Services, the local Health Board, other Council departments and the Home Office.

It also included all Elected Members, Town and Community Councils, the Town Centre Manager and trade representatives.

The Statement of Licensing Policy sets out how the Council exercises its functions and the approach to decision making. It also sets out what it expects prospective applicants to consider when preparing applications for new licences or major variations. Section 9 of the policy sets out a number of measures which could be considered, depending on the style of the premises. The Team Manager – Licensing advised, that other than in the Bridgend Town Centre, it was fair to say that the consultation did not result in any new trends or issues which would merit a change in policy. As a result, the proposed over-arching Statement was at Appendix A to the report. The changes to this she pointed out, were highlighted in red. They related firstly to updates made to the Council’s corporate objectives. A number of Directorates had changed in their shape or levels of area of responsibility and in view of that, some revisions at page 40 of report needed to be further looked at, ie where some of the addresses of the bodies so listed there, required updating.

The second issue explained the Team Manager – Licensing, related to the Special Cumulative Impact Policy in place in Bridgend Town Centre.

Cumulative Impact is a term used to describe how a density of licensed premises in a particular area can have a negative impact on crime and disorder, littering, anti-social behaviour and nuisance. If a Council identified that there is an evidence problem in an area, it can include a policy to address Cumulative Impact within the main Policy Statement. Such a policy has been in place in Bridgend Town Centre Streets since 2005. The effect of this policy is to control the number of new premises or major changes to premises within the area. The policy effectively creates a rebuttable presumption of all new applications and variations, unless the applicant can demonstrate that their premises will not add to the problems being experienced within that location.

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The main change this year is that the Council must undertake an Assessment of Cumulative Impact and publish a separate document before adopting a policy for a specific area.

She further explained as was also outlined in the report, that the South Wales Police was asking the Council to retain the policy which relates to the Bridgend Town Centre streets of Derwen Road, Market Street, Wyndham Street and parts of Nolton Street. Their letter to this effect, was attached at Appendix B to the report.

In terms of the licensing objectives, the South Wales Police had concluded that having a cumulative impact policy has had a direct bearing on the reduction of recorded crime within the town centre and also, incidents of reported anti-social behaviour.

The draft Assessment added the Team Manager – Licensing, was included at Appendix C to the report. As part of the public consultation, she advised that a questionnaire was included to identify issues of concern relating to licensed premises within the town centre.

The sample size is small, ie totalling 15, with members of the public, interested parties and licence holders having replied to such consultation.

93% were in favour of retaining the cumulative impact policy and the top issues of concern were listed in bullet point format in paragraph 4.7 of the report.

The policy was one of a set of measures that can be used to control the impact of licensed premises, which involve enforcement, the use of CCTV and trade schemes, such as Pubwatch.

The Team Manager – Licensing outlined that the conclusion of the assessment, was that there is evidence to support the continuation of a cumulative impact policy for Bridgend town centre and that is a proportionate measure to address the problems so identified there.

The effect of adopting the policy will create a rebuttable presumption that where relevant representations are received, most likely from the police in relation to crime and disorder, but it could relate to public nuisance as well, applications for new premises or variations of existing premises will be refused, unless the applicant can demonstrate that the application will not add to the negative impact in the town centre streets covered by the policy.

Though this was not a blanket policy, it does place the onus on the operator.

She stated that if the responsible authorities or public, have no concern about the proposed style or operation of the premises and do not make representations, then the application would be granted.

The Team Manager – Licensing concluded her submission, by confirming that the policy aims to reduce incidents of alcohol related problems and crime and disorder, as well as to ensure that Bridgend Town Centre is a safe environment for people both visiting and working in the area.

The Cabinet Member – Future Generations and Wellbeing welcomed the report, adding that ultimately Members and Officers wanted all areas of the County Borough to be safe including the Bridgend town centre, in order that everyone could enjoy the hospitality offered by establishments that formed the night time economy within all areas of the Bridgend district.

She added that the consultation rightly highlighted where there were 'hotspot' areas of concern, resulting in the South Wales Police correctly requesting that the Cumulative Impact Area is retained as part of the Policy, due to continuing incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour. She referred to page 23 of the report and pointed out that the main towns so described should be added to and include Pencoed.

A Member asked if the Policy would hinder trade in any restaurants or bistro type establishments throughout the County Borough, regardless of whether or not these are currently trading or soon to be new establishments.

The Team Manager – Licensing advised that these type of places rarely if ever attracted any sort of trouble. The places where anti-social behaviour took place were usually larger venues that opened for long periods into the early hours and didn't serve food, ie such as nightclubs etc.

A Member felt that the Cumulative Impact Area should also incorporate an area at the top of Nolton Street in Bridgend. This would be Ewenny Road and Cowbridge Road as there were a number of late night venues in a fairly confined area within this location. She highlighted this, as previously members of the public and local Members had raised concerns or objections of a planning or licensing nature in respect of licensed establishments in this vicinity, as well as some concerns with regards to anti-social behaviour taking place at or in the immediate vicinity of these premises that were located close to residential accommodation.

The Team Manager – Licensing advised that this area could be monitored in future and if such concerns so raised became worse or conversely did not improve, then consideration could be given to this area also being included in the Cumulative Impact Area upon the Policy next being reviewed.

A Member referred to that section of the report that gave information on the "Responsible Authorities" included under the Licensing Act 2003 and he noted that the Fire Authority was regarded as one of these. He asked if they were invited to Licensing Hearings much the same as the Police were, if they objected to an application for any type of Licence relating to a Late Night Establishment.

The Team Manager – Licensing replied that the Fire Authority were a statutory consultee when any application was made for a new Premises Licence or to vary an existing Premises Licence. This was on health and safety grounds alone, amongst others, ie the premises maximum capacity etc at any one time in terms of patrons. If any objections were made by anyone to any such application, whether this be a statutory body or a member of the public, then a Hearing would be convened in order that all respective parties submissions could be considered by the Licensing Sub-Committee prior to it making a decision on the application either to grant; grant with licensing conditions or refuse the application.

RESOLVED: That Council:

- (1) Approved the publication of the Statement of Licensing Policy attached at Appendix A to the report to cover the period 2019 to 2024.
- (2) Further approved the publication of a Cumulative Impact Assessment as part of the above Statement of Licensing Policy and to approve a specific Cumulative Impact Policy, set out in Section 6 of the Statement of Licensing Policy referred to above.

384. **INFORMATION REPORT FOR NOTING**

The Head of Legal and Regulatory Services presented a report, the purpose of which, was to inform Council of the Information Report for noting which has been published since its last scheduled meeting, as detailed in paragraph 4.1 of the covering report.

RESOLVED: That Council acknowledged the publication of the document listed in the report.

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

Question from Councillor T Thomas to the Cabinet Member Communities

Does the Cabinet Member agree that this authorities highways should be accessible for all regardless of age, disability or any other protected characteristic?

Response of the Cabinet Member Communities

Bridgend Council is committed to improving access to the highways network. This is a commitment that has been backed up with action. Between the 2017/18 and 19/20 financial years, an ongoing pedestrian aids programme has resulted in a total of 113 dropped kerbs being installed throughout the borough. The installations prioritised according to usage levels in the respective areas.

We now have 61 safe walked routes to schools, assessed and in use. We have an annual bid programme, promoting our proposed network improvements to Welsh Government which in this financial year alone secured £950,000 of investment for Safe Routes in Communities and £432,000 for the development of multi-use Active Travel routes.

Councillor Thomas confirmed that he was happy with the response, but added that he would appreciate meeting with the Cabinet Member – Communities on a related ward issue, to which he agreed.

Supplementary question from Councillor JP Blundell

Could the Cabinet Member – Communities outline how the Council is rolling out planned drop-kerbs throughout the County Borough?

Response

This is being rolled-out within areas where there is most footfall and/or upon requests from the public where drop-kerbs are required. Works were also considered in conjunction with the Council's Active Travel Scheme. An example of works in respect of the latter, was at Coychurch roundabout, where drop-kerbs had been put in place, to assist and encourage active travel to specific locations, ie offices and hubs situate within close proximity to this vicinity.

Second supplementary question from Councillor B Sedgbeer

Does the Cabinet Member – Communities agree that investment in creating footpaths/footways in Velindre Road, Pencoed, has resulted in increased access to the different highway networks situate in that area.

Response

Yes, and this would form part of a wider programme that will be extended to other areas of the County Borough, in order for easier forms of access points to be created to enable members of the public to get from one location to another, particularly the disabled, etc.

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

Could the Cabinet Member let the Council know what action has been taken to reduce the level of Loneliness & Isolation and their negative impact on Health & Wellbeing of our elderly population in our County Borough?

Response of the Cabinet Member Social Services and Wellbeing

The context of the Prevention and Wellbeing agenda was initially reported to the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee in April 2015 with a review of progress presented to the Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee in April 2016. Subsequent reports on prevention and wellbeing were presented to Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 in March 2018 and 10th October 2019.

The Prevention and Wellbeing service is working with partners to develop an increase in sustainable community based opportunities.

There is an array of activities and community based initiatives that are in place in Bridgend to tackle loneliness and isolation. Examples include the 'Olympage' programmes, which supports older adults to engage in modified games and activities to increase physical activity, reduce loneliness, improve confidence, and live more active and healthier lives have continued to grow. Originally commenced within day care and residential care settings, there are now programmes linked to the community hubs, programmes for people with learning disabilities, activities in community centres and leisure / cultural venues and independent care settings also.

"We have been able to adapt activities and to plan for a series of annual activities and events to make sure that everyone can be included".

Community Hub Coordinator.

"Yesterday, I visited the Cultural Olympage sessions. There was a fab turnout. 15 of the group attended and had an absolute ball. Lots of conversations turned to reminiscing about music and memories and even some impromptu singing and dancing".

LCC Ogmore Valley.

Building on the work developed via 'Olympage', the Council has been successful in securing funding to develop a 'Super-Agers' project via the Healthy and Active Fund. This project will operate across the new Health Board footprint of Cwm Taf Morgannwg including Merthyr and Rhondda Cynon Taf County Councils and includes collaboration with the broader Third Sector, Health Board and Public Health. The work will include building resilience in our communities with ownership of opportunities by older adults. The programme will support older adults to deliver and lead activities and also older volunteers to run vibrant community facilities.

"When we launched the Healthy and Active Fund, it was with the message that the benefits to our mental and physical health are clear. These projects show a new innovative approach to supporting people of all ages and backgrounds".

Deputy Minister, Culture, Sport and Tourism.

There is growing engagement with primary and secondary schools, recognising their potential to contribute to Ageing Well in Bridgend, intergenerational working and the development of age friendly communities, including:

- a. Dementia friends and champions training in secondary schools (Archbishop McGrath School, Pencoed Comprehensive School). This has involved strong partnership working with BAVO. The benefits of this work will be further reviewed to identify any learning prior to increasing the scale of the programme.
- b. Inter-generational activities between primary schools and older adults (LCC programme – Ogmore Valley, nursery school visits to Bryn Y Cae etc.);
- c. Facility projects that help to bring people together (Bryn Y Cae dementia garden).

“It was fun being all together playing games”.

Primary School child.

“Fantastic event....and we’ve all really enjoyed it”.

Older Adult.

The Park Lives regional programme has been working with older adults to access doorstep opportunities in the natural environment. This programme provides locally convenient opportunities in parks and community settings. A focus on community Tai Chi and Yoga has been developed with activities led by adults who have been supported to develop skills and qualifications.

“G has achieved great success in engaging, delivering and retaining interest from our older communities and is nothing short of amazing. He has supported regular activities in care settings and is massively passionate about improving older people’s wellbeing.”

Operations Manager, Prevention and Wellbeing.

The Love to Walk programme supports volunteer led community walking opportunities that are inclusive and contribute to mental wellbeing. There are 13 weekly opportunities and an annual Love to Walk festival to promote opportunities to new participants.

The Community Chest Scheme is managed by the Council on behalf of Sport Wales and has supported local projects with £71,892 of funding (with £5,556 put into tackling inequalities). Examples would include integrating stroke survivors into Bridgend indoor bowls centre, activity programmes with SHOUT etc.

“We actively work in partnership with the community. The Stroke Club are regular users of our facilities. We are very grateful to our volunteer members for making this happen every week”.

Ogwr Indoor Bowls

Another example of supporting Loneliness and Isolation would be The Memory Lane Café which was set up by a member of the public, who was supported by BCBC, ABMU and AWEN through a coproduction approach to do this. The individual had identified the need for developing positive peer support for carers, who support a person living with dementia. It was also seen as a positive and safe environment for carers and people they support to socialise and participate in activities. It supports the idea of making natural connections with others and helps to assist in carer resilience. The group has between 20 and 25 people in attendance. The Group has recently branched out from the Centre and is organising trips and facilitating activities in other venues in the community.

There is a commitment within the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate Business Plan to work with Health partners and this approach will include the co-location of services that can contribute to wellbeing outcomes.

The Wellbeing Hub at Bridgend Life Centre has been supported by the Council's Integrated Care Funding and Halo Leisure. The facilities will support employability, community and workforce development, Third Sector engagement space and group activity rooms. The outcomes will focus on dementia support, falls prevention, combatting loneliness and isolation and physical and mental wellbeing.

This focus on co-location and accessibility of facilities and services will be expanded to other locations where supported by the business case. Considerations would include Maesteg Town Hall, Maesteg Sports Centre, Grand Pavilion (Porthcawl) and community centres.

The Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate also supports the voluntary management committees of community centres and venues. There is partnership working on developing prevention and wellbeing support opportunities particularly in relation to Local Community Coordination programmes

Adult Social Care has supported day time opportunities for a number of years which have been underpinned by a series of principles that focus on a philosophy whereby:-

"There should be more localised services supporting a positive community presence with relationships being developed with local people."

Historically, investment has been made by the Service in developing plans to establish Bridgend Resource Centre, Work Related Services (WOOD B/BLEAF), which are both work based projects for adults with disabilities at Bryngarw Park and Tondu Industrial Estate, and four strategically positioned Localised Services based on a model of "Active Citizenship" which are based at:

- Cwm Calon – Maesteg Localised Service;
- Sarn Adult Support Centre – Valleys Gateway & Pencoed Localised Service;
- Ty Penybont – Bridgend Localised Service;
- Pyle Life Centre – Pyle & Porthcawl Localised Service.

The Council, via regional transformation funding and related development plans is aspiring to develop 'Resilient and Coordinated Communities' that support people to meet needs in community settings and reduce the need for managed care. This approach is being taken forward in partnership with BAVO and will see five 'Community Navigator' roles connected to community hubs and an investment scheme to support small, medium and large projects in the Third Sector that enhance support in community settings. The transformation fund is provided by Welsh Government and connected to Local Health Boards.

Supplementary question from Councillor A Hussain

Older men in Wales are the loneliest group of people in the UK, experiencing a high level of isolation.

Could the Cabinet Member tell us what he has achieved so far in promoting digital inclusion training for older people? (Bearing in mind 'The five Ageing Well Themes in Bridgend' and I am referring to Theme B3)

Response

Whilst the Cabinet Member – Social Services and Early Help confirmed he would either follow this up with a written answer, or alternatively Councillor Hussain could come and discuss the above with him further, the Leader advised that an initiative called Men's

Shed was being introduced across the County Borough. As part of the Ageing Well in Bridgend programme, this had been introduced to tackle loneliness and isolation experienced by older men. A Men's Shed is a place for men to think, invent and make things and be part of a unique group who have a sense of belonging. The Leader added, that activities that take place in the sheds, include woodwork, music lessons, cookery lessons, gardening, model making and art, depending upon the skills of the group. There were presently Sheds in Maesteg and Tondy, with further facilities proposed to follow at other locations. In terms of digital inclusion, this was offered in Council libraries and Life Centres for the benefit of society including the elderly, he added.

The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing further added that something had been introduced in Social Services called See Me. The theme of this was about an older person making a story about their lives via a video for the benefit of their family and close associates. She added that, Extra Care Schemes had also introduced virtual reality headsets for service users to use. Through these, they could experience real life adventures such as snorkelling under the sea and travelling in space, amongst others. I pads were also available at some Extra Care facilities also she added.

The Cabinet Member – Social Services and Early Help, confirmed that isolation and loneliness was a very big problem for the elderly and up to 29% of deaths related in some way to this. He reminded that the Council was a Dementia Friendly Authority which was another form of support for people suffering from this illness. He concluded by stating that the Council also had Community Co-ordinators in post, that co-ordinated group sessions in our communities for the elderly who had some or another level of incapacity.

A Member made the comment that Digital Inclusion should be added to the Council's Scrutiny Forward Work Programme and the Cabinet Member – Social Services and Early Help agreed with this recommendation.

Question from Councillor MC Voisey to the Leader

Can the Leader of the Council please justify why he thinks elected Members of this Council should not have the right to ask questions in Council meetings and scrutinise in the chamber the decisions taken by this administration?

Response of the Leader

Council procedure is governed by the Constitution which is agreed at full Council.

Supplementary question from Councillor MC Voisey

Clearly we need to change the Constitution to make this Council more open to scrutiny by Members, and improve democracy. Will the Leader bring forward changes to the Constitution, to show that we are listening to the people, by working with and for them.

Response

A cross-party political Working Group had previously been set-up for the purpose of looking at changes to the Constitution, including in relation to questions by Members to the Executive at Council meetings and the outcomes of this were reported to and agreed by Council at its meeting dated 20 November 2019. Therefore, any changes put in place to the Constitution had been supported by Members. The remit of all formal Council Committees, allowed for questions to be asked of Officers (and Cabinet Members) and these were always responded to either in the meeting, or if a question had to be researched before an accurate answer could be given, then this would be followed-up

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outside of the meeting. There is a clear directive in the Constitution that Members have the democratic right to ask questions at meetings and have a response to these from Officers/Cabinet Members accordingly.

Second supplementary question from Councillor T Thomas

Does the Leader agree that for the best use of Councillors time at Council meetings, that Cabinet Members announcements should be provided as information papers only, or if there could be better or more improved opportunities by which Members may ask questions (on their announcements).

Response

This was also considered previously by the Constitution Working Group and also, as Cabinet Members announcements are not reports, it is not custom and practice for Members to ask questions on these in any event.

386. **URGENT ITEMS**

None.

The meeting closed at 16:00