

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD IN REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON TUESDAY, 6 APRIL 2021 AT 14:30

Present

Councillor HJ David – Chairperson

CE Smith
NA Burnett

HM Williams

D Patel

RE Young

Officers:

Gill Lewis	Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change
Kelly Watson	Chief Officer Legal, HR and Regulatory Services
Julie Ellams	Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Mark Shephard	Chief Executive
Lindsay Harvey	Corporate Director Education and Family Support
Jackie Davies	Head of Adult Social Care
Gaynor Thomas	School Programme Manager

647. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following prejudicial interests were made in relation to Agenda item 5:-

Councillor RE Young – As a member of Coity Higher Community Council, which was mentioned in the report.

Councillor N Burnett – As a member of Bridgend Town Council.

Councillor HJ David – As a member of Cefn Cribwr Community Council, which had made an application to the Fund.

All the above Members left the meeting whilst this item was being considered and Councillor HM Williams took the Chair until the report had been determined and thereafter the Leader, Councillor David, returned to the meeting as Chairperson.

648. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of a meeting of Cabinet dated 23 February 2021, be approved as a true and accurate record.

649. BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH LOCAL NATURE RESERVES

The Corporate Director – Communities presented a report, the purpose of which, was to seek approval to declare Bedford Park as a Local Nature Reserve and to extend the boundary of the existing Frog Pond Local Nature Reserve to include the area known as Village Farm Meadow. The report also sought approval for future management approaches and resources for both sites.

By way of background information, she advised that Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) exist to protect habitats and species and provide opportunities to increase awareness about the natural environment within communities. LNRs are established and managed by local authorities, following consultation with Natural Resources Wales (NRW) under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. For a site to become an LNR it must have natural features of special interest to the local area, and the authority must either have a legal interest in the land or have an agreement with the owner to manage

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the land as a reserve. In Wales LNRs have been designated over a number of years, from 1970 to the present day, and are on-going.

There were currently 5 LNRs in Bridgend County Borough. Kenfig LNR is also a National Nature Reserve which is no longer managed by BCBC. These areas are classed as LNRs due to the specific species and habitats that exist within them and they are:

- Locks Common, Porthcawl
- Craig Y Parcau, Bridgend
- Frog Pond Wood, Pyle
- Tremains Wood, Brackla
- Kenfig Nature Reserve, Kenfig

The Corporate Director – Communities confirmed, that designating Bedford Park as an LNR and extending Frog Pond Wood LNR to include Village Farm Meadow, was something that BCBC had the power to do and aligned with national and local policies.

She explained that, Bedford Park and Village Farm Meadow are designated Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) under the provisions of Policy ENV4 of the adopted Bridgend Local Development Plan (LDP) 2013-2022. The basis for these designations is that both sites have habitats and species of local, regional and national significance that require protection under the Town and Country Planning System.

Furthermore, the LDP included Policy ENV5, which promotes the concept of Green Infrastructure approach. Green Infrastructure was considered as a strategically planned and delivered network of natural and man-made green (land) and blue (water) spaces that sustain natural processes. It is designed and managed as a multifunctional resource capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for society. BCBC was the first council in Wales to incorporate such a policy in its LDP, she added.

The Cabinet Member – Education and Regeneration confirmed that he was happy to support the report's recommendations and felt that this was an excellent initiative and that the cost of the proposals would in fact end up being an investment that the public could enjoy in perpetuity.

The Cabinet Member – Wellbeing and Future Generations felt that protecting these areas complied with the Well-being and Future Generations Act, and as a result of this, the intentions of the report would serve the public well in terms of them visiting these areas for their future enjoyment purposes. She asked if further clarification could be given, in terms of the management of the areas, ie what would this entail.

The Corporate Director – Communities advised, that this meant staff looking after and maintaining the areas and to look after the ecology elements of the wildlife that would find their habitat there. These included maintaining an area for bats, with the provision of bat boxes and ensuring conditions are in place for door mice to thrive there also. Information boards would also be placed at the location, in order to advise the public of the wildlife that will make these areas their home.

The Leader added that the above proposals would ensure that the areas in question would become key biodiversity locations, that nearby residents could enjoy, as these were also close to the Cefn Cribwr grasslands, the Parc Slip Nature Reserve and the former Opencast site, which were other areas of interest and/or protected sites.

The Leader asked that Bedford Park Local Nature Reserve be named to reflect the identity and history of the area and the use of the Welsh language by incorporating

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Waun Cimla into the name of the new local nature reserve. The area was identified as Waun Cimla and used in maps and other documents.

The Cabinet Member – Communities concluded debate on this item, by stating that he was encouraged to see the local authority preserving the ecology in areas of the County Borough, such as these exemplified in the report and the likes of Bedford Park and its Iron Works.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:-

- Formally declared Bedford Park as a new Local Nature Reserve and extend the boundary of Frog Pond Wood Local Nature Reserve to include Village Farm Meadow;
- Authorised the Corporate Director Communities, in consultation with the Chief Officer - Legal, HR & Regulatory Services, to establish a new management plan for Bedford Park and a revised management plan for Frog Pond Wood in line with the approach outlined in section 4 of the report, with the resources outlined in section 8.

650. **ALLOCATIONS UNDER TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCIL CAPITAL GRANT SCHEME 2020-21 & COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER FUND**

The Corporate Director – Communities submitted a report, in order to seek Cabinet approval to allocate capital funding to Town and Community Councils, to develop projects in line with the recommendations contained within the report from the Town and Community Council (T&CC) Capital Grant scheme for 2021-22 and Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Fund.

She advised that BCBC has allocated £50,000 for 2021-22 and subsequent years in the approved Capital Programme, to support applications from T&CCs for capital projects.

Applications to the T&CC Capital grant scheme 2021-22 were made available in January 2021, with the deadline for receipt of completed applications of 26 February 2021 being established. Funding of up to £65,427.61 is currently available for grants in 2020-21, as was reflected in paragraph 3.5 of the report.

The £1 million Sports Pavilion Fund originally established in February 2014 to promote the transfers of sports facilities, was re-designated as the CAT Fund and the scope for funding widened under the MTFs 2019-20 to 2022-23 in February 2019, to also include building works on other Council facilities such as community centres and public toilets. In February 2020 the Cabinet also approved that the CAT Fund should further be extended, to include pitch and drainage improvements for playing fields. These measures were designed to ensure that the CAT programme was supported and as many assets as possible could be appropriately maintained, kept open and provide long-term community benefits for residents in any particular location.

The Corporate Director – Communities advised, that to maximise the support that could be provided in 2020-21 as the T&CC Capital Grant scheme was oversubscribed, the CAT Fund was also able to be utilised as applications met the criteria for this fund, which enabled as many projects to be progressed as possible. This resulted in £65,000 being allocated under the CAT Fund for the 4 projects outlined in paragraph 3.8 of the report that had a combined total project value of £140,000.

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The report further confirmed, that Cabinet and the CAT Steering Group has, to date, allocated funding totalling £503,327.61 via the CAT Fund, which was summarised in the table in paragraph 3.9 and detailed at Appendix A of the report.

In terms of the present situation, the proposals received for the 2021-22 T&CC Capital Grant allocation were outlined in paragraph 4.1 of the report. More information in respect of these projects and what they entailed, were expanded upon in this section of the report.

In terms of the non-collaborative CAT Projects, further information on these were shown in paragraphs 4.10 and 4.11 of the report.

The remainder of the report, explained the manner by which BCBC intended to develop further its collaborative working arrangements with Town and Community Councils in relation to the Town and Community Council Capital Grant Scheme and Community Asset Transfer Fund. This would allow them to manage and maintain then certain Community facilities going forward, as part of long term sustainable schemes.

The Deputy Leader welcomed a further report in due course, as well as being encouraged to see, that the Council was looking at ways to work closer with Town and Community Councils, with the view of them exploring ways by which, to take over the operation and day to day running of community assets within their area in the future.

The Cabinet Member – Wellbeing and Future Generations concluded debate on this item, by confirming how please she was to see that the majority of projects being pursued were connected to the utilisation of children’s play areas, which was very important as these were places where young people could enjoy themselves in a relatively safe outdoor environment during the time of the ongoing pandemic.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:-

1. Approved the 9 T&CC projects outlined at paragraph 4.13 based on the allocations detailed which total £108,327.61 (£65,427.61 - T&CC Capital Grant scheme 2021-22 and £42,900.00 – CAT Fund).
2. Agreed to receive a further report in relation to amendments to the T&CC Fund and its future aligned with the 2030 De-carbonisation agenda.

651. HOUSING SUPPORT GRANT DELIVERY PLAN 2021-22

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change presented a report, in order to:

- Update members on the Housing Support Grant Delivery Priorities for 2021-22;
- seek approval to waive the Council’s Contract Procedure Rules in accordance with Contract Procedure Rule 3.2.9.3 for two existing Housing Support Grant funded contracts;
- seek approval to use the Housing Support Grant allocation to continue service delivery for the Phase 2 low level supported accommodation project, effective from 1st April 2021;
- suspend the relevant parts of the Council’s Contract Procedure Rules with regards to the requirement to tender for a contract and agree for the Chief Officer - Finance, Performance and Change to enter into a contract with Pobl, in

order to continue service delivery of an existing supported accommodation project;

- seek approval to offer an uplift of up to 5% in the contract value of all existing Housing Support Grant funded contracts that BCBC has with third sector housing related support providers, effective from 1st April 2021, on the basis that any actual uplift directly materialises in improved terms and conditions of the workforce.

She advised that the Welsh Government Housing Support Grant (HSG), came into being in April 2019, following the Welsh Government funding flexibilities pathfinder project. It brought together three former grants - Supporting People Programme, Homelessness Prevention Grant and Rent Smart Wales Enforcement Grant.

The HSG is an early intervention grant programme to support activity which prevents people from becoming homeless, stabilises their housing situation, or helps potentially homeless people to find and keep accommodation.

HSG Practice Guidance required Local Authorities to develop an annual HSG Delivery Plan, which should include the headings as included in paragraph 3.3 of the report.

Following the publication of the draft Welsh Government budget, Local Authorities are given an indicative HSG allocation and are required to submit to Welsh Government their Delivery Priorities, Stakeholder Engagement, Spend Plan and Annex A: Homelessness Statutory Duties, from their annual HSG Delivery Plan. An offer of grant is then made, following the publication of the final Welsh Government budget.

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change, confirmed that Bridgend County Borough Council's (BCBC) HSG allocation from Welsh Government for 2021-22 is £7,833,509.33. This represents an increase of £1,878,966.49 (32%) from the allocation in 2020-21 of £5,954,542.84. The increase is as a result of an additional £40m being allocated to the total HSG budget by Welsh Government.

As part of ongoing strategic planning BCBC Housing service engage with a diverse range of stakeholders including through attendance at various forums such as, BCBC Landlord Forum, Community Safety Partnership, Homeless Cell, Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements and Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences. As such there was ongoing dialogue with key stakeholders, including Health, Police, Probation, Registered Social Landlords, Social Services and support providers.

Bridgend's existing Homelessness Strategy 2018 – 22 has informed the HSG Delivery Priorities for 2021-22. The Strategy was developed on a co-production basis with a broad range of stakeholders, including those with lived experience and following findings from an independent Homelessness Review in 2018.

In line with the HSG requirements set out at paragraph 3.4 of the report, a submission of BCBC's Delivery Priorities, Stakeholder Engagement, Spend Plan and Annex A: Homelessness Statutory Duties, has been made to Welsh Government. Following this submission a funding award of £7,833,509.33 has been received. The HSG Delivery Priorities for 2021-22 were highlighted in paragraphs 4.8 to 4.12 of the report.

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change, gave a resume of these for the benefit of the Cabinet.

In order to support BCBC's HSG Delivery Priorities, approval was requested to waive BCBC's Contract Procedure Rules in order to uplift two existing contracts, as detailed in

Table 1 of the report. An uplift in these services will provide additional resources to meet the support needs of increased presentations, including the increased numbers accommodated in temporary accommodation. The cost of the proposed uplifts will be met from BCBC's HSG allocation.

She added that the need to modify the contracts to provide the uplift was required, in order to allow for additional resources to be provided which had been brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting impact on housing services, as highlighted in paragraph 4.10 of the report, as well as the expected long term social and economic impact of the pandemic.

To further support BCBC's HSG Delivery Priorities, approval was also requested to suspend the CPRs and directly enter into a contract with Pobl to allow for the continuation of an existing supported accommodation project, currently funded via Welsh Government 'Phase 2 Funding'.

Following a successful bid to Welsh Government for 'Phase 2 Funding' Pobl have entered into a lease agreement for 11 units of accommodation in the Maesteg area. The current funding comes to an end at the 31st March 2021 and, in order for continued delivery, a new contract and further funding is required. Without continued funding vulnerable service users would be made homeless, which would place additional pressures on homelessness services, as well as limiting future housing and support options for those in need.

It was therefore proposed that Phase 2 Funding continues to be funded from BCBC's HSG allocation and a contract be entered into with Pobl until 31/12/2022, with an option to extend for up to 24 months at a maximum total cost of £283,674.32 (£75,522.34 per annum).

Cabinet needed to be aware that in awarding this contract to Pobl, the Council is exposed to the risk of potential challenge from other providers of such services, as was highlighted in paragraph 4.18 of the report.

As detailed in paragraph 4.3, Welsh Government have stated that not all increased HSG funding should necessarily be used to commission additional resources. They have suggested that Local Authorities consider utilising funding to reward staff operating in the sector as per a recommendation from an expert Homelessness Action Group.

In acknowledgement of the value BCBC places on the workforce of the third sector providers it commissions and to support the recommendation of the Homelessness Action Group, approval is requested to award an uplift of up to 5% in the contract value of all existing HSG funded contracts that BCBC has with third sector providers, effective from 1st April 2021.

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change, explained that funding will be held by the Council and prior to any uplift, BCBC would liaise with third sector providers to ensure that any uplift award will directly result in improved terms and conditions of the workforce. Where appropriate, consultation with the relevant Trade Unions, which will take place at this stage of proceedings.

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change concluded the report, by referring to its financial implications.

The Leader advised that the report included excellent news with regard to the additional funding that is going to be provided by Welsh Government in an attempt to end street homelessness. He was also pleased to note that there were strong and robust

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partnerships in place, with the third sector and providers, which would assist in ensuring that the 5% increase uplift to them in relation to Housing Support Grants, would actually find its way to the front line workers. In terms of the Start service, he noted that this would increase by around 30% and this was a critical move, in that the service supported young and vulnerable people leaving the Secure Estate. He asked however, if this was in relation specifically to individuals leaving the Secure Estate at Parc Prison, or any secure estate across Wales and them returning to Bridgend.

The Strategic Housing Commissioning Manager advised that this related to anyone leaving any secure estate and returning to their community in Bridgend, that were being possibly with a homeless situation.

The Cabinet Member – Future Generations and Wellbeing also commended the 5% increase as referred to above and in the report, which she felt was recognising the contributions made by third sector providers that provide invaluable support to the Housing Support Grant Commission Support, in helping keep people off the streets. She also commended the increase of 32% given by Welsh Government in support of funding to assist in the eradication of homelessness in Bridgend. This would go a long way to achieving a vast reduction in cases of homelessness she felt.

The Cabinet Member – Social Services and Early Help, recognised as an elected Member of a town centre Ward, the benefit such extra funding had given in terms of assisting to find a roof over the heads of people who were unfortunate enough to find themselves without a roof over their head. She hoped that the 5% increase would actually be benefited by the staff who provided the crucial work in terms of putting support in place for the homeless.

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change recognised that this up to 5% increase, would help deliver these services on the ground, though there were some difficulties in respect of this to overcome, as the employees in question were not BCBC employees.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- noted the Housing Support Grant Delivery Priorities for 2021-22;
- approved a waiver of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules under Rule 3.2.9.3 from the relevant parts of the Contract Procedure Rules for the procurement of the services provided under the Contract with Pobl for the generic housing related support service and the Contract with Taff Housing for the support service for young people and adults leaving the secure estate and approves the uplift in the contract value, as detailed within this report and delegate authority to the Chief Officer - Finance, Performance and Change, in consultation with the Chief Officer – Legal, HR and Regulatory Services, to enter into any agreements or documents which may be required to give effect to such variations,
- approved using the Housing Support Grant allocation, to continue service delivery for the Phase 2 low level supported accommodation project, effective from 1st April 2021;
- suspended the relevant parts of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules with regards to the requirement to tender for a contract and agrees for the Chief Officer - Finance, Performance and Change to enter into a contract with Pobl, in order to continue service delivery of the Phase 2 low level supported accommodation project.

- delegated authority to the Chief Officer - Finance, Performance and Change to approve the final terms of the contract with Pobl for the Phase 2 low level supported accommodation project on behalf of the Council and to arrange execution of the contract on behalf of the Council subject to such delegated authority being exercised in consultation with the Chief Officer - Legal, HR and Regulatory Services;
- approved an uplift of up to 5% in the contract value of all existing Housing Support Grant funded contracts that BCBC has with third sector housing related support providers, effective from 1st April 2021 subject to the providers ensuring that any actual uplift directly materialises in improved terms and conditions for the workforce and there is compliance with the terms and conditions of each individual contract BCBC has entered into with the providers,
- delegated authority to the Chief Officer - Finance, Performance and Change, in consultation with the Chief Officer – Legal, HR and Regulatory Services, to vary those existing Housing Support Grant funded contracts that BCBC has with third sector housing related support providers to apply the uplift of up to 5% in the contract value and enter into any agreements or documents which may be required to give effect to such variations;

652. NON DOMESTIC RATES DISCRETIONARY RELIEF - RETAIL, LEISURE AND HOSPITALITY RATES RELIEF SCHEME 2021-22 AND ENHANCED HOSPITALITY AND LEISURE RATES RELIEF SCHEME 2021-22

The Interim Chief Officer - Finance Performance and Change presented a report, recommending Cabinet adopt the Welsh Government's Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Rates Relief Scheme 2021- 22 and the Welsh Government's Enhanced Hospitality and Leisure Rates Relief Scheme for 2021-22.

The Interim Chief Officer - Finance Performance and Change, explained that the two schemes aimed to help businesses to reduce their business rates charges for the period 01/04/21 to 31/03/22 in order to support continued occupation of High Street and retail premises, and to support those in the hospitality, leisure and tourism sectors. The Welsh Government announced a temporary extension of the current Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Rates Relief Scheme for 2021-22 to support eligible occupied properties by offering 100% support to businesses within the retail, leisure and hospitality sector with a rateable value under £500,000. Premises that would benefit were detailed in Appendix A of the report, but broadly included those that had a rateable value of under £500,000, were occupied, and were shops, pubs and restaurants, gyms, performance venues and hotels across Wales. The Welsh Government also announced that an Enhanced Hospitality and Leisure Rates Relief Scheme would be available for the 2021-22 financial year, to support eligible occupied businesses within the hospitality, leisure and tourism sector in Wales with a rateable value over £500,000. The various categories of hospitality, leisure and tourism premises that would benefit from relief were set out in Appendix B to the report and included those that had a rateable value of over £500,000, were occupied, and were hotels, holiday parks and stadia across Wales. The Welsh Government would provide 100% rates relief for eligible properties for the 2021-22 financial year.

The Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Rates Relief Scheme for 2021-22 would run alongside the Small Business Rates Relief Scheme. It was estimated that there would be in the region of 1,000 eligible ratepayers across the borough that could potentially benefit from having no rates to pay for the 2021-22 financial year under these Schemes.

The Deputy Leader stated that this was a “good news” report and that the 1000 businesses across BCBC would be delighted to hear that the authority was adopting this initiative. The Deputy Leader asked for clarification as to whether or not those businesses that qualified in 2021, needed to re-apply for the relief. The Interim Chief Officer - Finance Performance and Change replied that they did not need to re-apply and this should be automatically applied to their accounts in almost every case.

The Leader asked if a business should expect to receive a bill from the authority even if it was for zero or if they should expect to receive any communication outlining that they had received rates relief on their account.

The Interim Chief Officer - Finance Performance and Change, confirmed that they would receive a bill with the automatic dispensation on it. She added that she did not have the exact information with her but she was under the impression that the bills had already been sent out. The Leader advised that a business could contact the authority if they did not receive confirmation that the relief had been applied and thanked the Interim Chief Officer - Finance Performance and Change and her team for administering the schemes.

RESOLVED That Cabinet adopted the Non Domestic Rates Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Rates Relief Scheme for 2021-22 and the Enhanced Hospitality and Leisure Rates Relief Scheme for 2021-22 as detailed within Appendix A and Appendix B of the report.

653. SECTION 33 OF THE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE (WALES) ACT 2006, PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE COUNCIL AND CWM TAF MORGANNWG NHS TRUST

The Head of Adult Social Care presented a report, on the proposal for entering into a new revised Section 33 Agreement of the National Health Service (Wales) Act 2006 with Cwm Taf Morgannwg NHS Trust, regarding the provision of integrated Mental Health Daytime Opportunities.

The Head of Adult Social Care explained that a Section 33 Agreement with ABMU Health Board for the provision of integrated community day opportunities had been in place since 1st October 2008. It had been revised and extended on a number of occasions since then and the current Section 33 Agreement commenced on 1st April 2017 and would expire on 31st March 2021.

The Head of Adult Social Care explained that the service had progressed considerably in the last 13 years and it was now necessary to update the Section 33 Agreement and ensure that the revised Agreement reflected the changes that had taken place and adequately reflected the current situation including budget and staffing details. She explained that the service offered responsive and accessible person-centred support, promoting the recovery of a person from an episode of mental ill health. The public could access the advice and guidance service without the need for referral and the service acted as a point of contact for mainstream community organisations and agencies requiring information and advice in support of individuals. This included local third sector organisations, employers and local colleges.

The Head of Adult Social Care outlined the position regarding referral rates and how the service had been delivered during the pandemic. The reduction in the number of GP referrals was significant early on but now numbers had more or less returned to the same as they were pre-covid. The service was now working on a recovery plan and on targeting support for specific areas of the population. They would be looking at providing counselling support such as bereavement counselling for young people and family

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relationship counselling as well as other areas. They would also be looking at wellbeing and resilience group work and courses and some social engagement and support and work around debt and finance support and that area.

The Head of Adult Social Care explained that the revised Section 33 Agreement set out the arrangements under which the combined service would operate and be managed as detailed in the report. Should Cabinet approve entering into the revised Section 33 Agreement, it would run for a further four years, with the agreement expiring on 31st March 2025.

The Cabinet Member - Social Services and Early Help said that she was very happy to move the report. There was a very valuable and successful partnership with the Health Board and they knew how effective this resource was for the county. The ARC service was very successful and helped a considerable number of people and would need to continue to help more people in the coming months as the community emerged from the pandemic. Mental health services had taken a hit and many people had been discouraged from visiting their GP because they could put it aside and not bother people with it. She assured everyone that mental health issues were taken very seriously and individuals who experienced these, should try not to be afraid and ask for help.

The Cabinet Member - Social Services and Early Help asked how the authority would be picking up on the people reticent to come forward and how we would be working with GP's in cluster groups to encourage everyone who needed support to come forward. The Head of Adult Social Care replied that in terms of the recovery plan which they had been working on with health colleagues, part of it was looking at referrals and where they came from and that could be from organisations and geographical areas. They could then see areas that were not being targeted and do some work within those areas. This was currently being mapped out and part of a plan for the next 12 months. They had direct access into various groups so they could work on areas that needed support or where the service needed to be enhanced

The Leader replied that this was very encouraging to hear and they would keep an eye on the demand for services and if necessary they could be scaled up to meet any extra demand.

The Cabinet Member - Communities said that it was recognised that now more than ever, a support mechanism was needed for those in society finding it difficult to cope especially with the covid-19 restrictions placed on society. People were feeling anxious, not coping, loneliness and those factors alone would help to increase levels of those considering suicide. This would be an extra burden because people needed these services before the pandemic came along. The pandemic would highlight the need because people realised the incredible strain society was under. He welcomed the report and was particularly happy that no referral was required and this removed the stigma which could deter those looking for help. He thanked the officers for their hard work and the ARC service which had and would continue to develop and evolve.

The Leader reminded people of the message that if they were sad, confused or angry they didn't have to deal with it alone. He asked that they get in touch. In a crisis, help was available and would continue to be available 24/7. He took the opportunity to thank the staff who had worked throughout the pandemic. They had never been so busy and were helping people with the most difficult set of circumstances and he was grateful for what they were doing for people in the community.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet approved the proposal to enter into a renewal of the Section 33 Agreement under the National Health Service (Wales) Act 2006, with Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board

regarding the provision of integrated mental health daytime opportunities.

654. DATES OF CABINET, CABINET COMMITTEE CORPORATE PARENTING AND CABINET COMMITTEE EQUALITIES MEETINGS - 2021-22

The Chief Officer Legal, HR & Regulatory Services presented a report seeking approval for the schedule of meetings of Cabinet, Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting and the Cabinet Committee Equalities for the period May 2021-April 2022. The proposed dates for these meetings would be reported for noting in the proposed Programme of meetings to be submitted to the Annual Meeting of Council on 19 May 2021. This prevented meeting dates of Cabinet, Council or their Committees, wherever possible, conflicting with each other. The meeting dates were set out in paragraph 4 of the report.

The Cabinet Member - Wellbeing and Future Generations moved the report and added that all but one of the dates fell outside the school holidays and were "family friendly". The Leader replied that they would be able to confirm closer to that date whether or not that meeting was required or the date needed to be changed. The Cabinet Member - Wellbeing and Future Generations explained that a Cabinet Committee Equalities meeting was due to take place on 27th July 2021. The date could not be brought forward because they were expecting a Welsh Government report due at that time, so therefore, the Committee meeting could not be convened at an earlier date. The Leader added that they did consider the impact on Members and officers when setting the dates for meetings.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet approved the schedule of meeting dates for Cabinet, Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting and the Cabinet Committee Equalities meetings for the period May 2021 - April 2022, as outlined in Paragraphs 4.1.2, 4.2.1 and 4.3.1 of the report.

655. SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME: OUTCOME OF THE CONSULTATION ON BRIDGEND WEST SCHOOLS' MODERNISATION PROPOSAL

The Corporate Director - Education and Family Support presented a report, informing Cabinet of the outcome of the consultation on the Bridgend West schools modernisation proposal, the findings of the consultation and seeking approval to progress to publication of a public notice as prescribed in the School Organisation Code. He added that the Schools Programme Manager was also in attendance in the meeting, to answer any detailed questions regarding the proposals.

The Corporate Director - Education and Family Support explained the background and that in its meeting of 21 January 2020 Cabinet gave approval for the Bridgend West schemes to be taken forward via the Mutual Investment Model (MIM) funding arrangements. The preferred way forward for the Bridgend West scheme were preferred education options of provision of a new-build, two-form entry English-medium school on 'a' site suitable for Afon y Felin and Corneli Primary Schools combined and provision of a new-build, two form entry Welsh-medium school on 'a' site suitable for an enlarged Ysgol Y Ferch O'r Sgêr. He explained that the preferred sites for the new schools were determined by Cabinet as the Valleys to Coast (V2C) owned Marlas Estate site and the existing Ysgol Y Ferch O'r Sgêr/Cornelly Integrated Children's Centre/Corneli Primary School site. In its meeting of 19 January 2021 Cabinet gave permission to formally consult on the Bridgend West proposal. This report outlined the responses to the consultation and was seeking approval to continue the progress to the next stage.

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The Corporate Director - Education and Family Support explained that consultation exercises were carried out between 25 January 2021 and 7 March 2021 in accordance with the statutory School Organisation Code. The consultation document invited views and opinions to be submitted in respect of the proposal. A summary of the issues raised by consultees and the local authority's responses were provided in the consultation report as detailed in Appendix A to the report. He outlined the next stages of the process and referred to the timetable providing an indication of the likely timescales involved.

The Corporate Director - Education and Family Support, explained the financial implications of the proposals and asked Cabinet to consider the recommendations as listed in the report.

The Cabinet Member - Education and Regeneration, stated that this was a very positive item and very exciting news for the community of north Cornelly where they would be receiving two 21st Century new schools. This was a co-operative venture with the housing association, V2C. They had had meetings with them and the local members and these were very positive meetings. The scheme would involve a land swap which was a very innovative way of going about this. They would also ensure there was as much continuity as possible as well as change. No child or teacher would have to move premises until the new facilities were ready and that was built into the sequencing. He stressed that this was not a money making or cost cutting venture. This was a modernisation programme with funding from Welsh Government and BCBC and an investment in the future of Cornelly, a rapidly growing community. The Cabinet Member - Education and Regeneration, referred to the history of schools in Cornelly and changes over the years and his own empathy with the area where he lived when first married.

The Cabinet Member - Education and Regeneration responded to some doubts raised in the consultation regarding Afon y Felin being swamped in a larger school. He wanted to reassure people that being in a bigger school did not mean that a child would be lost, nor that the small school ethos would be lost. There were limits on school class sizes and they would work hard to continue the village school ethos in a bigger school. He suggested that when conditions would allow they should take parents and governors and teachers to see similar situations in Pencoed and Brynmenyn where a village school had been replaced with a new 21st Century school. Nobody there would want to go back, given the choice.

The Cabinet Member - Social Services and Early Help said that this was hugely positive and the intention of Cabinet was for all children to get the best education experience and that they were providing quality learning facilities and community friendly experiences. She asked what feedback they had received from school governors regarding the process. The Corporate Director - Education and Family Support replied that BCBC had excellent school governors across all the schools and as previously mentioned, all stakeholders were sent a link to the consultation document. In addition there had been a virtual meeting with governors and the outcome of the meeting was in the report. In general the feedback was positive. They had a range of questions looking at staffing and were advised that this was something they would work through. They enjoyed an excellent relationship with the governors of these schools and would continue to work with them as the proposal progressed.

The Leader was pleased to see that overall there was broad support from governors. Understandably there were questions and some of the detail would not be available at this early stage. Part of the purpose of the consultation was to shape the proposals as they progressed and they would continue to work closely with the three governing bodies to this end.

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The Cabinet Member - Wellbeing and Future Generations welcomed the report and agreed that they should move to the next stage to consult with the public. She asked what learning had come from the CCYD merger which could be brought to this project. In terms of the consultation, she asked that children with additional learning needs were catered for, because she had read with interest the feedback from the pupils and the learner voice. Those children unable to engage with the mainstream should also be given the opportunity to comment on the changes. In some of the feedback there was concerns regarding the loss of community facilities and she asked how this would be dealt with during construction and thereafter. The Cabinet Member also referred to the timetable and asked what would be happening between the 9th June 2021 and 1st September 2023.

The Corporate Director - Education and Family Support, explained that with regard to learning lessons from previous builds, with the Band A schools they convened a group of all head teachers that met on a monthly basis. He also attended those meetings and they drew up a list of key elements which was then passed on to the School Modernisation team. The Heads of the new schemes would be in touch with the group from the previous scheme and be would be guided and share experience. With regard to the learners with Additional Learning Needs, they recognised that they needed to consult with all learners. From the very beginning of the process they had sent out a link to all parents and carers so they were aware of what was going on and had also met with the School Councils and representatives from within the schools. If the proposals were taken forward then as with all new builds, when they reached the design stage they would work with all pupils to ensure their feedback was built into the design process. In addition all new schools had to be fully compliant with DDA requirements and building control measures. They would also be working closely with inclusion service colleagues to make sure all needs were met.

The Corporate Director - Education and Family Support explained that with regard to community use, the key element was to allow for community access. There were three key areas they were looking at, appropriate indoor and outdoor facilities and community wi-fi access within the building and purpose built rooms the use of which would be determined by the governing body.

The Schools Programme Manager added that in relation to the CCYD build and lessons learnt, it was very important to bring both schools together at an early stage to make sure the ethos transferred across to the new school. That was a massive lesson and staff at the schools involved in the new proposals had already asked for this to make sure they started off on the best footing which was very encouraging.

The Leader explained that many lessons had been learnt over the years from a number of amalgamations and a programme of rationalisation so there were a range of different experiences. The crucial element was the commitment from the schools to work together and to make a success of these proposals. In any new school that was a fundamental building block to achieve a successful and sustainable environment for children.

The Cabinet Member - Communities referred to appendix 3 of the report and in particular the teams meeting with the School Council, to tease out what the children thought about the change. The depth of the questions asked by the pupils was interesting and it was obvious the children understood exactly what was going on. The questions were targeted and probing and as expected, it showed that welsh education in Bridgend was of a very high quality. When the representatives were asked if this was a good idea, they all agreed it was and were happy with the proposals. He thanked all the officers involved for their hard work, to this end.

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The Leader referred to the future of Welsh medium education within the borough and how access to this could be extended at the same time as improving the facilities and buildings for children in the English medium education. He asked the Corporate Director - Education and Family Support to outline the current plans in terms of Welsh medium education for the west of the borough.

The Corporate Director - Education and Family Support, reiterated that this was a massive priority for the Education Directorate. This featured as part of the Estyn Post Inspection Action Plan and they were very passionate about meeting requirements and the targets for the west and this was of high priority. There were 2 elements in the west, a significant improvement to the Ysgol Y Ferch O'r Sgêr site providing state of the art facilities for learners in that area and also pieces of work around increasing the provision in Porthcawl. These were two separate but very important parts of the modernisation programme and intention to increase the number of Welsh speakers within the county borough, he added.

The Leader added that he was personally very excited about the proposals and he was aware of how excited the members of the community were about the increase of Welsh medium education within the town.

The Cabinet Member - Education and Regeneration reinforced a number of points. There were assumptions and misconceptions in the feedback and a need to talk to people to convince them that everything would be okay and there was no need to worry. Concerns were raised from Afon y Felin that pupils would be more anonymous in a larger school with larger classes. It was important to show pupils and parents what happened in a modernised school and the way the school and classes were managed, to preserve the small school ethos. Also there was an assumption that if they were expanding at Cornelly, there would be no provision in Porthcawl but that was incorrect. There were plans for Porthcawl and those plans would take shape in the near future.

The Leader added that Afon Y Felin and Cornelly Primary Schools and Ysgol Y Ferch O'r Sgêr were not fit for purpose. All had significant backlogs of work and maintenance and even if this work was completed the schools would not be of the standard expected. He did not want the authority to be in the position where they were reacting to a backlog of repairs and even if funds were available, it would not make the school suitable for the long term. He looked forward to the next phase of the project and wanted to hear people's views about how they could make this a flagship. They would work with the head teachers, teachers, all staff, governors and young people.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet:

- Noted the outcome of the consultation with interested parties as detailed in the attached consultation report and appendices;
- Approved the consultation report for publication;
- Authorised the publication of a public notice on the proposal; and
 - Approved the implementation of the proposal, should there be no objections at the end of the public notice period.

656. URGENT ITEMS

None.

The meeting closed at 16:30