

**COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY, 18 NOVEMBER 2020**

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD IN REMOTELY VIA SKYPE ON WEDNESDAY, 18 NOVEMBER 2020 AT 15:00**

Present

Councillor KJ Watts – Chairperson

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

Apologies for Absence

RJ Collins, B Jones, JC Radcliffe, SG Smith and JH Tildesley MBE

Officers:

Deborah Exton	Interim Deputy Head of Finance
Lindsay Harvey	Corporate Director Education and Family Support
Gill Lewis	Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change
Claire Marchant	Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing
Janine Nightingale	Corporate Director - Communities
Louis Pannell	Senior Strategic Planning Policy Officer
Jonathan Parsons	Group Manager Development
Michael Pitman	Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Andrew Rees	Democratic Services Manager
Mark Shephard	Chief Executive
Kelly Watson	Chief Officer Legal, HR and Regulatory Services

470. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

471. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That:

- (1) the Minutes of the annual meeting of Council of 30 September 2020, be approved as a true and accurate record, subject to the word “Deputy” being inserted in the resolution in minute number 446 prior to the words “Youth Mayor”;
- (2) the Minutes of the meeting of Council of 21 October 2020 be approved as a true and accurate record.

472. TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR

The Mayor announce that he had on behalf of the Council and its residents I had the honour of representing the Authority by laying a wreath at the war memorial in Bridgend Town on Remembrance Sunday. He stated that the important annual commemoration is when we the nation remembers and honours those who have sacrificed themselves in order to secure and protect our freedom, which seemed particularly relevant this year as all are being asked to make small sacrifices for the good of everyone.

The Mayor was also pleased to participate in a national “poppy train” initiative organised by Great Western Railway, in which wreaths from around the country were collected on Armistice Day by a special train and taken to Paddington to be presented as part of a memorial. He was honoured that Bridgend could take part in a national remembrance.

He congratulated one of the County Borough’s residents, Barbara McGregor who has recently retired after serving nearly 44 years in the Royal Women’s Navy. He stated that her list of achievements were numerous and impressive and she should rightly be proud of the many years of dedicated service that she has given to her country culminating in her position as the most senior Warrant Office of the Royal Naval Careers Service. As a token of appreciation, Mrs McGregor has been presented with the Armorial Bearings of the County Borough and he wished her a long and happy retirement.

The Mayor also announced that due to the revised timing of the Local Government financial settlement from Welsh Government, scrutiny of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) will need to be considered by Scrutiny Committees after Cabinet considers draft MTFS proposals on 19 January and before reporting to Cabinet on 9 February, therefore Scrutiny Committee dates need to be re-arranged to be held within this period. He stated that following consultation with the Scrutiny Committee Chairs and the Section 151 Officer, Council is requested to approve the meetings of SOSC 1 on 18 January, SOSC 2 on 3 February and SOSC 3 on 11 February, be replaced by meetings of all Scrutiny Committee Members on 20 January at 10am (for Education & Family Support and Communities MTFS proposals); and 21 January at 10am (for Social Services & Well-being and Chief Executive’s MTFS proposals). A meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee be held on Monday 1 February at 10am to receive the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committees and BREP, before reporting to Cabinet on 9 February.

473. TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE LEADER

The Leader announced that due to the coronavirus pandemic, the recent remembrance events had to be marked in very different ways and that together with the Mayor and Armed Forces Champion, Councillor Young, he had attended Bridgend Railway Station on the morning of Armistice Day to place commemorative poppy wreaths on a special service organised by Great Western Railway, which were then transported to London where they formed part of a huge public display. He stated that with many of the traditional local events organised by town and community councils either not taking place or being invite-only, residents were encouraged instead to pay their respects by standing upon their doorsteps at 11am on Sunday 8 November to mark the two-minute silence from home.

The Leader also announced that the UK Government Covid Vaccine Taskforce has been leading work on funding and procuring vaccines for the UK, and the Wales Covid-19 Vaccine Delivery Programme Board is undertaking comprehensive preparatory work to ensure that we have suitable deployment arrangements in place ready for this eventuality. He informed Council that the Chief Medical Officer has written to all Health Boards and Trusts to ask them to work with key partners in support of local delivery plans, and this Council is of course supporting these efforts. Further national direction on how the vaccination programme will be carried out is awaited and he will keep

Members informed of latest developments on this vital work. He requested that residents not to let their guard down, and to think twice about whether their actions could be putting them or other people at risk, whether it is how children are dropped off at school, who residents come into contact with or behave when visiting a shop or a pub, small decisions could have a big impact. He informed Members that in the weeks and months to come, Welsh Government will be driving forward a new programme of messages to encourage people to change their long-term attitudes towards the coronavirus and how it spreads. He stated that the Council will be supporting this, and he hoped Members will play their part in encouraging constituents to do likewise.

He informed Council that there is currently a drive-through mobile testing facility located in the Bowls Hall car park of Bridgend Life Centre, and the Council is working with Cwm Taf and Public Health Wales on establishing a longer-term testing site for the county borough as quickly as possible. He hoped to bring more details very soon, but in the meantime, the Council website continues to offer a one-stop-shop of resources and updates, and officers can advise you on any further questions you may have or receive.

The Leader also announced that Members may have seen the recent announcement from Welsh Government on its new Framework for Regional Investment In Wales. Produced in partnership with local authorities, the private and third sectors, and research and academia bodies, the new framework has the backing of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Under the banner of 'Made In Wales', it focuses on four broad investment priorities. These are to provide more productive and competitive businesses, to reduce factors which lead to economic inequality, support the transition to a zero-carbon economy, and to support the development of healthier, fairer, more sustainable communities. The new programme of regional investment is expected to start early next year, and he will inform Members of further details.

474. PRESENTATION BY THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER AND THE CHIEF CONSTABLE OF SOUTH WALES POLICE AND PROGRAMME OF FUTURE PRESENTATIONS TO COUNCIL

The Chief Executive introduced a presentation to Council from the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable of South Wales Police and informed of the programme of future presentations to Council. Members of the Council were introduced to the Mr Alun Michael, Police and Crime Commissioner, the newly appointed Chief Constable, Jeremy Vaughan and Chief Superintendent Dorian Lloyd.

The Police and Crime Commissioner informed Council that he was pleased with the way the Police and Crime Commissioner's throughout Wales have worked together in a unique way during the pandemic with the Crown Court service, the Welsh Government and local government to get the courts back up and running to ensure perpetrators are brought to justice. He thanked the Council's leadership and officers for the way in which it had worked with the police jointly during the pandemic. He stated that the next challenge is for the four national governments to work together on a single set of guidelines over Christmas and for it to be policed. He informed Council that one of the most recent successes was the implementation in March of a programme to hold the perpetrators of domestic abuse to account, and which has since being rolled out in the local authority areas of Neath Port Talbot and Swansea.

The Police and Crime Commissioner informed Council of the high demand of the service of the police pre-covid and during the pandemic. South Wales Police faces immense financial challenges, although funding had been received for the employment of additional police officers.

## **COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY, 18 NOVEMBER 2020**

The Chief Constable informed Council that a greater number of 999 calls had initially been received at the start of the pandemic. He stated that South Wales Police had invested in a joint enforcement team with BCBC. He informed Council that he had a major focus on the wellbeing of the workforce. He stated that the Police and Crime Plan is being refreshed and he was pleased that he had taken on a winning team, with South Wales Police being regarded as one of the best forces in England and Wales. He informed Council that time had been taken to pause and reflect on the values of the force and that the mission remains the same to tackle those who target South Wales to deal in drugs, but also to assist addicts with programmes to combat their addictions.

He stated that investment had been made in the service where the public make the first point of contact with the police. He informed Council that the police had worked effectively with the Council on early intervention services. He stated that he wanted his officers to be problem solvers and to empower communities and with the Black Lives Matter movement, he wanted South Wales Police to challenge the status quo and be leaders in diversity. He also wanted his police sergeants to be the most confident and capable leaders and the force would invest in leadership. He referred to the impending retirement of Chief Superintendent Lloyd and he thanked him for his leadership and wished him well for the future.

A member of Council referred to the rise in vulnerable people during the pandemic and the reliance on the services of voluntary bodies and questioned what steps the police are taking to work with voluntary organisations and the DWP to protect vulnerable people from people masquerading as volunteers offering to collect prescriptions and shopping. The Police and Crime Commissioner informed Council that South Wales Police had been the first police force to have entered into a compact with the voluntary sector and that funding is provided to work with victims. The Chief Constable requested that any concerns Members have be reported to the police for investigation. He stated that the police have a commitment to early intervention and partnership working that there are social workers based within the control room to assist vulnerable people.

A member of Council questioned the impact of policing Cardiff as a capital city on the police budget and asked what the precept for the forthcoming financial year might be. The Chief Constable informed Council that policing the capital city costs an additional £4m per year on top of delivering policing throughout South Wales and that the budget for policing was £60m less than it was previously. The Police and Crime Commissioner informed Council that Edinburgh as a capital city receives an additional premium from the UK Government / Home Office, however South Wales Police has not received such recognition, he continued to make the case to the Home Office for policing Cardiff to be similarly recognised as Edinburgh. He also informed Council that 50% of the police funding comes from the Home Office and that additional needed to be done prior to deciding on the precept.

A member of Council questioned whether the 101 service was fit for purpose. The Chief Constable informed Council that the 101 service handles 330,000 calls annually and that the public who have used its service have been surveyed, with there being high levels of satisfaction.

A member of Council asked in relation to PACT meetings and how does the police communicate with local communities during the lockdown period. The Chief Constable informed Council that neighbourhood policing is a priority and that 24 PCSOs had been recruited. The Chief Superintendent informed Council that there is a commitment to PACT meetings and a key challenge had been communicating with residents remotely.

A member of Council referred to many constituents suffering from low level crime, anti-social behaviour and traffic offences and questioned the steps being taken to tackle

**COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY, 18 NOVEMBER 2020**

offenders. The Chief Superintendent informed Council that it remains a daily priority to understand and tackle anti-social behaviour and road traffic offences and that the police is committed to neighbourhood policing and that patrols are briefed on the priorities.

**RESOLVED:** That Council:

- (1) Noted the presentation by the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable of South Wales Police.
- (2) Noted the future presentation to the December meeting of Council as outlined.

**475. ENDORSEMENT OF REGIONAL TECHNICAL STATEMENT 2020**

The Corporate Director Communities sought endorsement of the Regional Technical Statement to meet the requirements of National Planning Policy and agree the progression of the Statement of Sub-Regional Collaboration (SSRC).

The Senior Strategic Planning Officer reported that the Minerals Technical Advice Note 1: Aggregates (2004) (MTAN 1) required the preparation of Regional Technical Statements (RTS) for the areas covered by both the South Wales and North Wales Regional Aggregates Working Parties (RAWPs). He stated that due to a change in methodology, Bridgend is required, through its Local Development Plan process, to meet the apportionment set out in the RTS.

The Senior Strategic Planning Officer informed Council that a Statement of Sub Regional Collaboration (SSRC) is required to be prepared by the Cardiff City Authorities (referred to in the report), as part of the evidence base needed to support each Local Development Plan (LDP). He confirmed, that the timescale for preparing SSRCs will need to be geared towards the timescale for the earliest LDP submission within that sub-region. The purpose of the SSRC is to confirm that all constituent LPAs within a particular RTS sub-region accept the individual apportionments for aggregates for their individual Authority areas as set in the latest Review of the RTS and that (as a minimum) the RTS requirements for that sub-region as a whole will therefore be met.

The Senior Strategic Planning Officer reported that the calculation of the apportionments set out in the RTS followed a four-stage process and he set out each stage and its relevance to Bridgend as follows:

- Stage 1 – Setting the national level for future aggregates provision;
- Stage 2 – Calculation of the Regional Split between North and South Wales;
- Stage 3 – Calculation of Sub-Regional and LPA apportionments;
- Stage 4 – Sand and Gravel and Crushed Rock total apportionment

In addition to the SSRC, the Bridgend LDP will need to safeguard primary aggregate resources, which will mean that relevant resources of both crushed rock aggregates and land-based sand and gravel should be safeguarded within the LDP in accordance with detailed advice based on the use of British Geological Survey mapping. He stated that that the LDP would also need to safeguard railheads in order to provide a full range of sustainable transport options (whether or not they are currently utilised).

**RESOLVED:** That Council endorsed the Regional Technical Statement. the Development Control Committee noted the Regional Technical Statement that will be reported to Council for endorsement.

**476. TREASURY MANAGEMENT - HALF YEAR REPORT 2020-21**

## **COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY, 18 NOVEMBER 2020**

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change reported in compliance with the requirement of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's 'Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice' to produce interim Treasury Management Reports; the Treasury Management Indicators for 2020-21 and provided an update on the proposed changes to the Treasury Management Strategy 2020-21 for approval.

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change explained that Treasury management is the management of the Council's cash flows, borrowing and investments, and the associated risks. Treasury risk management at the Council is conducted within the framework of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy' (CIPFA) Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2017 Edition (the CIPFA Code) which requires the Council to approve a Treasury Management Strategy (TMS) before the start of each financial year. The CIPFA Code also requires the Council to set a number of Treasury Management Indicators, which are forward looking parameters and enable the Council to measure and manage its exposure to treasury management risks, and these are included throughout this report. In addition, the Welsh Government (WG) issued revised Guidance on Local Authority Investments in November 2019 that requires the Council to approve an Investment Strategy before the start of each financial year. The Council's Capital Strategy 2020-21, complying with CIPFA's requirement includes the Prudential Indicators which in previous years were included in the TMS, along with details regarding the Council's non-treasury investments. The Capital Strategy and TMS should be read in conjunction with each other as they are interlinked as borrowing and investments are directly impacted upon by capital plans and were approved together by Council on 26 February 2020.

She informed Council that following a recent re-tender exercise for the Council's treasury management advisors, Arlingclose were the successful tenderer and will continue to be the Council's advisors for the next 4 years.

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change reported that the Council has complied with its legislative and regulatory requirements during the first half of 2020-21, with the TMS for 2020-21 reported to Council on 26 February 2020. In addition, a quarterly monitoring report was presented to Cabinet in July 2020. She presented a summary of the treasury management activities for the first half of 2020-21 and informed the Committee that the Council had not taken long term borrowing since March 2012 and it was not expected there would be a requirement for any new long term borrowing in 2020-21. Favourable cash flows had provided surplus funds for investment and the balance of investments at 30 September 2020 was £64.29 million with an average interest rate of 0.24%.

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change informed Council that the Treasury Management Code requires the Council to set and report on a number of Treasury Management Indicators, which either summarise the expected activity or introduce limits upon the activity. All local authorities are required to conduct a mid-year review of its treasury management policies, practices and activities and that the outcome of the review is that there are changes required to investment limits, namely, to increase the overall balance that can be invested into Money Market Funds (MMFs) from £20 million to £30 million, which will enable the Council to increase the number of MMF's available and thus assist the Council in investing positive cash balances into a much wider investment portfolio. In addition, an amendment to the investment limit for Registered Providers from £3 million to £5 million will provide a greater opportunity of being able to use this type of investment than is currently available. As the Council has had positive cash balances this will provide the Council with wider scope in making investments at a practical level whilst also providing greater

## COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY, 18 NOVEMBER 2020

diversity of funds invested. She outlined the proposed revised TMS and the proposed amendments, these amendments have been discussed with the Council's Treasury Management Advisors.

RESOLVED: That Council:

- approved the Council's treasury management activities for 2020-21 for the period 1 April 2020 to 30 September 2020 and the projected Treasury Management Indicators for 2020-21.
- approved the proposed changes to the Treasury Management Strategy 2020-21.

### 477. 2021-22 COUNCIL TAX BASE

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change and Section 151 Officer reported on details of the council tax base and estimated collection rate for 2021-22 for approval.

She advised that the estimated council tax base for 2021-22 was 55,722.52, Band D equivalent properties and the estimated collection rate is 97.5%. The net council tax base was therefore 54,329.46. She informed Council that the estimated collection rate has been reduced from 98%, used when setting the budget for 2020-21, down to the lower figure of 97.5%, to reflect the current economic circumstances surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic, the higher number of citizens facing economic hardship and current collection rates. She stated that the Council Tax Base is provided to Welsh Government and is used to calculate the amount of Revenue Support Grant in the Local Government Revenue Settlement. For distributing RSG, collection rates are assumed to be 100%. The amount of Council Tax due for a dwelling in Band D is calculated by dividing the annual budget requirement to be funded by taxpayers by the Council Tax Base. She informed Council that the council tax element of the Council's budget will be based on the net council tax base of 54,329.46.

The Deputy Leader in commending the report to Council commented that it was prudent to set a lower collection rate as it was recognised that it may take longer to collect council tax, recognising the difficult times that prevail.

A member of Council questioned the evidence used to adjust the collection rate and what this meant in cash terms and for doing so during the current economic climate. The Deputy Leader informed Council that it was expected that the collection rate would be close to 98%, but it was realistic for the Council to be prudent and to adjust the collection rate. He stated that the amount raised from collection changes daily. The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change and Section 151 Officer informed Council that as at the end of October, a collection rate of 64.24% had been achieved compared to 65% as at the same time last year. She stated that it had not been possible to arrange court hearings due to the pandemic and that the Council had offered residents the opportunity during 2020/21 to re-profile Council tax payments from 10 to 12 months or to defer the usual payments made in April 2020 – January 2021 to June 2020 to March 2021.

A member of Council asked whether the Council distinguishes those who are unable to pay council tax and those who refuse to pay and whether credit agencies were used. The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change and Section 151 Officer informed Council that officers discuss payment options with every defaulter and a variety of repayment methods are offered. The Council would only go to court where people will not pay.

## COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY, 18 NOVEMBER 2020

A member of Council questioned whether there was a significant amount of council tax debt in a particular Band. The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change and Section 151 Officer informed Council that she would confirm whether that information is available.

A member of Council questioned what means officers have to analyse whether people have the means to pay council tax. The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change and Section 151 Officer informed Council that officers have extensive dialogue with people who default and they would have to demonstrate they do not have the means to pay. The Interim Deputy Head of Finance informed Council that officers ask for a breakdown of income and expenditure in order to come up with the best options for repayment.

RESOLVED: That Council:

- approved the council tax base and collection rate for 2021-22 as shown in paragraph 4.1 of the report.
- approved the tax bases for the town and community areas set out in Appendix A of the report.

478. TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING QUESTION FROM:

### **Question from Councillor Altaf Hussain to the Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration:**

GDPR tells us that each school should have email account for Governors. As a school Governor, the personal data you send over email must be kept secure. Governors should be doing everything in their power to prevent a breach of personal data. This means the use of secure school email accounts by all Governors. And, all Governors should be provided with school email address and the technology to enable them to access their school email address securely when using personal devices.

Could the Cabinet Member let us know if this has been uniformly achieved in our County Borough and if not when is it going to happen?

### **Response of the Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration:**

Secure email accounts are available, free-of-charge, via Hwb (the all-Wales learning platform) to all school governors. This provides uniformity of access for all governors across Bridgend and Wales.

Each school has a Hwb Digital Champion who is able to create Hwb email addresses for governors.

Governors are able to securely access Hwb email accounts from a range of personal devices. Individual governors are advised to speak to their Hwb Digital Champion or link governor for Information and Communication Technology (ICT) if they face any barriers to their access to Hwb, including access to appropriate technology.

Central South Consortium offers support and training to school governors where required.

Councillor Hussain in his supplementary question commented there are many questions about GDPR and since there are no policy or guidelines, suggested that this very important issue either in a Member Development Activity or more appropriately in a



**COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY, 18 NOVEMBER 2020**

Scrutiny Committee. The Monitoring Officer advised Council that GDPR training has been provided to Members and that the Council has a GDPR policy and an officer responsible for GDPR. She also advised that governing bodies of schools are data controllers and that responsibility lies with the governing bodies. The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration informed Council that school governors use secure email accounts. The Corporate Director Education and Family Support stated that he would provide further information to Councillor Hussain on secure email accounts and confirmed that Hwb email accounts are free of charge.

479. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

The meeting closed at 16:54