

CABINET - TUESDAY, 19 JANUARY 2021

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD IN REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON TUESDAY, 19 JANUARY 2021 AT 14:30

Present

Councillor HJ David – Chairperson

CE Smith
NA Burnett

HM Williams

D Patel

RE Young

Apologies for Absence

Officers:

Claire Marchant	Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing
Janine Nightingale	Corporate Director - Communities
Gill Lewis	Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change
Kelly Watson	Chief Officer Legal, HR and Regulatory Services
Mark Shephard	Chief Executive
Deborah Exton	Interim Deputy Head of Finance
Mark Galvin	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Lindsay Harvey	Corporate Director Education and Family Support
Martin Morgans	Head of Performance and Partnership Services
Zak Shell	Head of Neighbourhood Services
Michael Pitman	Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Fiona Blick	Group Manager Property
Nicola Bunston	Consultation Engagement and Equalities Manager
Lynne Berry	Group Manager Housing & Community Regeneration
Philip O'Brien	Digital Transformation and Customer Services Manager

588. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor HJ David declared a prejudicial interest in Agenda item 17, in that he was a member and President of Cefn Cribwr Athletic and Bowls Club. Councillor David left the meeting whilst this item was being considered and the Deputy Leader took over as Chairperson in his absence, for this item only.

589. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of a meeting of Cabinet dated 15 December 2020, be approved as a true and accurate record.

590. CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEES

The Chief Executive submitted a report, in order to provide Cabinet with an update regarding Corporate Joint Committees, which were an integral feature of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill.

By way of background information, he explained that the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill was passed by the Senedd on 18th November 2020 and will receive Royal Assent in January 2021. It was a substantial piece of legislation covering electoral reform, public participation, governance and performance and regional working.

The new approach as set out in the Bill, is designed to be a more streamlined, flexible, sector-led approach to performance, good governance and improvement. The intention

is for Councils to be proactive in considering how internal processes and procedures should change to enable more effective planning, delivery and decision making to drive better outcomes.

The Chief Executive advised that the establishment of Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs) was an integral feature of the Bill, currently going through the Senedd Committee process. The Bill introduces:

- Powers for councils to initiate the establishment of CJCs covering any functions;
- Powers for Welsh Ministers to establish CJCs covering the four functions of economic wellbeing, transport, strategic planning and school improvement.

CJCs have a role to play in bringing coherence to regional governance, strengthening local democracy and accountability by integrating decision making. There were proposed to be four regional CJCs across Wales covering South East Wales, South West Wales, Mid Wales, and North Wales. The idea would be to build wherever possible, on existing regional arrangements.

The next sections of the report explained some of the principles of how the above would be achieved, including giving details regarding the specific functions of CJCs and how these would be governed by newly introduced Joint Committee regulations.

It was expected, advised the Chief Executive, that the Cardiff Capital Region Cabinet (CCRC) and staffing structure would transform into the South East Wales CJC. The CCRC was an existing and experienced Joint Cabinet Committee and this is the fundamental starting point for a strategy. The key feature of the CCRC approach, was the strength of a Regional Cabinet model which has Leaders (comprising the ten Leaders of Blaenau Gwent; Bridgend; Caerphilly; Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire, Newport, Rhondda Cynon Taff; Torfaen; and Vale of Glamorgan), recurrently coming together to make decisions in the best interests of the region.

The Chief Executive concluded his submission, by advising that a report was presented to the CCRC on 7 December 2020, setting out proposed principles of the approach of CCRC in respect of the CJCs agenda and details of what this provided were shown in paragraph 4.7 of the report.

The Leader felt that the report represented a key milestone, in that the Bill had received Royal Assent, in turn therefore, allowing for CJC's to become part of how regional services would be expanded and delivered upon in the future, as a further development to the collaborative working that already exists regionally.

One of the key principles would be that CJCs would comprise of Leaders of local authorities (amongst other members), which would allow for a democratic mandate to be put in place for the future, as well as effective Scrutiny arrangements also. He added that he supported all of the principles that were outlined in the report, which would improve joint working between organisations included in the venture, going forward. A transition plan and a framework for legal agreements would be put in place in order to progress with the CJC's which was essential. This would have a cost implication however, he stressed.

The Cabinet Member – Wellbeing and Future Generations referred to paragraph 4.5 of the report, where it mentioned that CJCs would likely be bound by legislation such as the Equality Act 2010, Welsh Language and Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act. She assumed that these would automatically apply in any event?

The Chief Executive confirmed that he fully expected this to be the case and that this terminology had probably been used, as the regulations were presently in the latter stages of draft format as opposed to being fully approved.

591. **RESOLVED:** That Cabinet noted and endorsed the report.
BUDGET MONITORING 2020-21 - QUARTER 3 REVENUE FORECAST

The Interim Chief Officer - Finance, Performance and Change presented a report, that provided Cabinet with an update on the Council's revenue financial position as at 31 December 2020, and sought approval for budget virements between £100,000 and £500,000 as required by the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.

She commenced her submission, by reminding Cabinet that on 26th February 2020, Council approved a net revenue budget of £286.885 million for 2020-21. As part of the Performance Management Framework, budget projections are reviewed regularly and reported to Cabinet on a quarterly basis. The delivery of agreed budget reductions is also kept under review and reported to Cabinet as part of this process.

Table 1 in the report, gave the Council's net revenue budget and projected outturn for 2020-21 as at 31 December 2020. This showed a net under spend of £691,000, comprising £1.187m net over spend on directorates and a £7.177m net under spend on corporate budgets. The next section of the report explained details of what the projected position was based on, and the Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change gave a resume of this for the benefit of Members.

The next part of the report outlined the financial pressures the Council had faced since Covid-19 and the various negative ways this had impacted on the Authority's financial position. These pressures would also continue into the foreseeable future, added the Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change.

Table 2 in the report gave a summary of the Covid-19 expenditure claims up to November 2020, while Table 3 gave a resume of the loss of income as a result of the pandemic to Quarter 2 2020-21, in respect of Schools and Council Directorates.

The report then shared information on the areas of Budget Virements/Technical Adjustments and Budget Reduction proposals

Table 4 in the report the Outstanding Prior Year Budget Reductions, which reflected that of the £2.501m outstanding reductions, £1.792m was likely to be achieved in 2020-21, leaving a shortfall of £709k. Some of the proposals still likely not to be achieved were shown in paragraph 4.2.2 of the report.

Paragraph 4.2.4 outlined the budget reduction proposals for this financial year totalling £2.413m, broken down in Appendix 2 and summarised in Table 5 within the report. The current position is a projected shortfall on the savings target of £490k, or 20.3% of the overall budget reduction.

A summary of the financial position for each main service area was attached at Appendix 3, while the main impact of Covid-19 on the budget, if it were assumed that no further funding was forthcoming from Welsh Government, was summarised in Table 6 in paragraph 4.3 of the report.

The final paragraphs of the report then concentrated on budgetary issues on a Directorate by Directorate basis (including schools), Council wide budgets and review of earmarked reserves.

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A number of schemes had already been identified as requiring slippage of budget to future years, particularly since the pandemic had emerged. At quarter 3 the total requested slippage was £14.536 million. Details of these schemes were outlined in paragraph 4.4 of the report.

She advised that since the last capital report in October 2020, there had been a number of new externally funded schemes approved and internally funded schemes, which had been incorporated into the capital programme. These were included on pages 63/65 of the report, with a Revised Capital Programme included at Appendix B (to the report).

In February 2020, Council approved the Capital Strategy for 2020-21, which included the Prudential Indicators 2020-21 to 2022-23, together with some local indicators.

Appendix C to the report detailed the actual indicators for 2019-20, the estimated indicators for 2020-21 set out in the Council's Capital Strategy and the projected indicators for 2020-21 based on the revised Capital Programme. These showed that the Council was operating in line with the approved limits.

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change concluded, by giving a short narrative on the Council's Capital Strategy.

The Deputy Leader confirmed that the Covid-19 pandemic had impacted detrimentally in a huge way upon the Council's Capital Programme and this had been outside of the control of the Authority.

He advised that he was happy to see the award of funding from WG for the Berwyn Centre and Ogmere Vale washeries, which would go towards improving outdoor facilities in the area. This was welcomed by residents in the Ogmere Valley.

The Leader similarly welcomed funding for road safety improvements at Heol Mostyn junction, Pyle, which would assist motorists travelling in this vicinity. He hoped this funding would be able to be carried forward and used in the next financial year.

The Cabinet Member – Social Services and Early Help added that the funding for the Trem-y-Mor development was sorely needed and if realised, would take advantage of the partnership working that had been developed with the Health Authority and the ICF funding that has been received to date, that had assisted in the development of the Integrated Care team at Trem-y-Mor.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- Noted the Council's capital programme for 2020-21 for the period to 31 December 2020 (Appendix A to the report);
- Agreed that the revised Capital Programme (Appendix B) be submitted to Council for approval;
- Noted the projected Prudential and Other Indicators for 2020-21 (Appendix C to the report).

593. OUTCOME OF THE CONSULTATION 'FIT FOR THE FUTURE'

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager presented a report, the purpose of which, was to inform Cabinet of the outcome of the 'Fit for the Future' 2020 consultation which asked citizens to share their views on how they think the Council should shape its services going forward, as part of its 'Restart, Recover and Renew' strategy, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The intention was to understand how

the public felt that the Council could look like and how it could deliver sustainable and effective services for the next 5 to 10 years.

She explained that the 'Fit for the Future' 2020 consultation sought to obtain views on the future direction of the Council following the Covid-19 pandemic. The allocation of financial resources determined the Authority's ability to meet its well-being objectives.

Following a number of years of reductions in funding from central government, and continued financial pressures, along with addressing post-Covid-19 recovery, all Councils across the country are continuing to change the way they work and the services they provide, so that organisations can manage with less. Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) has made reductions from its budget of £22 million over the last four years (2017-18 to 2020-21), with an expectation of significant further reductions required over the next four years.

A public consultation exercise had been undertaken over an eight week period from 19 October 2020 to 13 December 2020. Respondents were asked to share their views on a range of areas including:

- Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Business and the economy;
- Health and wellbeing;
- Customer access to Civic offices;
- Digitalisation;
- Council Tax levels;
- The future.

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager explained, that in order to gather views of young people, the consultation team attended the Bridgend Youth Council meeting on 24 November 2020. The Youth Council took part in discussions around some of the key questions within the consultation and were encouraged to complete the full consultation online.

The consultation also aimed to reach the following key stakeholders, general public/residents, Citizens' Panel members, elected members, BCBC employees, Bridgend businesses, town and community councils, school governors, Bridgend Community Cohesion and Equality Forum (BCCEF) members, local interest/community groups, Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations (BAVO), Bridgend College, partners, secondary schools (including head teachers) and media outlets.

In addition to general social media content, four polls were created on Twitter which generated 122 votes to key questions within the budget consultation survey, she added.

The Consultation Report was attached at Appendix A to the covering report and set out in detail, the views expressed by those who participated in this.

Overall, the council has received 1,831 interactions from a combination of survey completions, engagement at various meetings, social media engagement and via the authority's Citizens' Panel. Due to the impact of Covid-19 this is a decrease of 5,606 (75%) on the 7,437 interactions from last year. A total of 1,421 survey responses were received, which is a decrease of 58% on last year's survey completions.

The Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager then outlined for the benefit of Members, some of the key headline figures and themes that arose from the consultation. These primarily related to:

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- Responding to the pandemic;
- Business and the economy;
- Health and wellbeing;
- Customer access to Civic Offices;
- Digitalisation;
- Council Tax levels;
- The Council's future goals

The Leader thanked the Consultation, Engagement and Equalities Manager for the hard work that she had undertaken in relation to the detail of the report and he was very pleased to hear, that other local authorities had used the BCB 'Fit For the Future' Consultation this year as a model of 'good practice.'

The Deputy Leader echoed his thanks for what he felt had been a very interesting Consultation in terms of some of its outcomes. He had been interested to note, that more constituents than he thought, had not missed the Civic Offices being closed as a result of the pandemic and that 6 out of 10 respondents had confirmed they would be using the Council's on-line services going forward. He was also encouraged to see the number of subscribers for the 'Go Delivery' service also.

The Cabinet Member – Wellbeing and Future Generations though noting that the take-up for the Consultation had been down by 75% compared to last year, in the face of previous increasing engagement year on year in recent years previous to this, she still felt the response had been very good in view of Covid-19, which she considered had exceeded expectations.

The Leader concluded debate on the item, by adding that he felt that it was important to build on face to face consultation in the future also, ie on-line in the current climate, in order to develop further elements of the Consultation process.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet noted the outcome of the consultation with interested parties as detailed in the consultation report attached at Appendix A to the report.

594. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2021-22 TO 2024-25

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change presented a report, the purpose of which, was to present Cabinet with the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021-22 to 2024-25, which sets out the spending priorities of the Council, key investment objectives and budget areas targeted for necessary savings. The strategy includes a financial forecast for 2021-2025 and a detailed draft revenue budget for 2021-22.

She advised that, the quarterly reports to Cabinet on the revenue position for 2020-21 have outlined in detail the impact on the budget of the additional cost pressures and loss of income faced by the Council throughout the year as a result of the pandemic. Welsh Government has played a significant role in mitigating the majority of these losses through their various funding streams, most notably the Covid-19 Hardship Fund.

However, Cabinet and Council now needed to consider the longer term impact of the pandemic and how it will shape the Council as part of its Recovery Programme.

The impact of the pandemic had impacted upon the levels of income the Council would have ordinarily have had, therefore setting a balanced budget for 2021-22 was even more challenging than usual, particularly on the back of 10 years already of significant budget savings since austerity.

Over the last 10 years, the Authority had made over £65m of budget reductions, as was illustrated in paragraph 4.1.1 of the report. This was almost 25% of the Council's present budget.

In terms of council tax, the proportion of this required to balance the Council's budget has steadily increased over recent years and it currently funded almost 30% of the budget.

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change then referred to paragraphs 4.1.2 to 4.1.7 of the report, service areas of the Council where opportunities for savings were outlined and these savings proposals had been examined by both the Council's Budget Research and Evaluation Panel (BREP) over the course of the year, as well as Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

The views of these bodies would be presented to Cabinet at its meeting in early February, prior to Cabinet then recommending the Budget to Council later in February 2021.

The MTFs of the Council is set within the context of UK economic and public expenditure plans, Welsh Government's priorities and legislative programme. The MTFs included:

- The principles that will govern the strategy and a 4 year financial forecast;
- The Capital programme for 2020-21 to 2030-31, linked to priority areas for capital investment and the Capital Strategy;
- The Corporate Risk Assessment, which will be updated and included in the final MTFs (in February 2021).

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change advised, that Councils received their provisional settlements from Welsh Government on 22 December 2020. The headline figure is an overall increase, after adjusting for transfers, of 3.8%, across Wales and, for Bridgend, an increase of 4.3% in Aggregate External Finance (AEF), or £9.064 million. Though this was better than had been expected, prudent and successful management of finances would very much be still required going forward.

She then advised of the position regarding grant funding the Council had received, including those grants that had been awarded as a result of the pandemic.

Paragraph 4.7 of the report, then referred to the in-year financial position of the Authority as at 31 December 2020.

The overall projected position at 31st December 2020, was a net under spend of £691,000, comprising £1.187 million net over spend on directorates and a £7.177 million net under spend on corporate budgets, offset by net appropriation to earmarked reserves of £5.299 million, including £2.5 million to support capital investment.

Paragraph 4.8 of the report, gave details of the MTFs for the period 2021-22 to 2024-25, whilst paragraph 4.9 included details of the 13 MTFs Principles, which had been reviewed last year.

In terms of Council Tax, the 2021-22 draft Revenue Budget, shown in Table 6 of the report, assumed a Council tax increase of 3.9%. This is lower than the proposed increase of 4.5% included in the MTFs 2020-21 to 2023-24 in February 2020, due to the better than anticipated provisional settlement and as a consequence of the responses received through the budget consultation.

The next section of the report contained details of the MTFS Scenarios for its current period of 2021-22 to 2024-25 year by year, including estimated Best Scenario, Most Likely Scenario and Worst Scenario estimations.

Table 4 in paragraph 4.13.1 of the report, showed the current position in respect of addressing the most likely forecast budget reduction requirement of £22.095 million.

Table 5 of the report, then gave some budget reduction proposals identified for the period of 2021-22 to 2024-25.

As the Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change had alluded to previously in her submission, the MTFS had been the subject of some significant analysis through the Council's overview and scrutiny process. It had also been the subject of external consultation with the constituents of the BCB as part of the Council's 'Fit for the Future' consultation.

Table 6 in the report then gave details of the Draft Revenue Budget for BCBC 2021-22 and based on the proposed budget of £298.956m, the Council Tax increase for this period would be 3.9%, which was lower than had been previously estimated.

Paragraph 4.17 then gave some details regarding Pay, Price and Demographics. The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change, confirmed that these were estimates at this time, as opposed to accurate details.

Information in respect of Budget Pressures were highlighted in paragraph 4.19 of the report, whilst 4.20 stated that reduction proposals of £1.760m for 2021-22 had been identified from service and corporate budgets to achieve a balanced budget.

Table 7 in the report showed the Council's Earmarked Reserves, while information following that was shared with Members in relation to the Capital Programme and Capital Financing Strategy, as explained in further detail in an earlier agenda item that had been considered by Cabinet.

Table 8 gave details of the Annual Allocations of Capital Funding for 2020-21 and 2021-22 and the Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change briefly explained the Council's Capital Receipts and Prudential (Unsupported Borrowing).

She concluded her report, by confirming that as Section 151 Officer, the Authority had sufficient resource to discharge its role as required by S114 of the Local Government Act 1988.

The Deputy Leader advised that this year had been unprecedented and he commended Finance Officers therefore for the preparation and commitment that had gone into the report before Members. He added that the Council had to prepare for an uncertain future however, due to the ongoing pandemic and the pressures this would bring for the Council's budget moving forward.

He also thanked the Budget Research and Evaluation Panel (BREP) for their input into the MTFS, which had assisted Cabinet in their deliberations and decisions on the Budget. He felt that this had all culminated in the balance of the reports proposals.

The MTFS report would now be referred to Overview and Scrutiny where their input too would also be welcomed and awaited. If there was adequate flexibility to take forward any proposals made by Members of Scrutiny and as a result of this, make any adjustments to the MTFS, then these would be given some due consideration. In terms

of the Pay, Prices and Demographics section of the report, he assured that Cabinet would give a commitment to a real living wage for Council employees.

The Cabinet Member – Social Services and early Help echoed the issue regarding the real living wage being committed to for Social Service providers. She stated that both Adult and Children’s Social Care were volatile areas and therefore the budget needed to be managed carefully in these service areas. She also added some concerns over the impact of long Covid on individuals, including the younger generation, adding that packages may be needed to pave the way for the recovery of these patients from this aspect of the illness, that would come with a financial commitment.

The Leader recognised the scale of the financial pressures, particularly those within Social Care services, which had been an historical pressure not just for BCBC, but for other local authorities also. This budget service area would be monitored close going forward, as would all other service areas of the Council.

He echoed the thanks given by the Deputy Leader to Finance Officers in preparing the MTFS report, as well as BREP Members, which was a Cross-party Panel and welcomed the comments of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committees on the budget proposals, at the two Committee meetings convened later this week.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet submitted for consultation with Overview and Scrutiny Committees the 2021-22 annual budget and development of the MTFS 2021-22 to 2024-25, as set out in the report, prior to presenting a final version for approval by Council in February 2021.

595. **DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS (DFG'S)**

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change presented a report which updated Cabinet on proposal to develop and implement a new model of service delivery for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) and approve the:

- Implementation of a new model of working that will see the Council internalise the functions of the DFG process for both children and adults
- Utilisation of the capital budget to support the internalisation of the DFG Process
- delegated authority to enter into a Collaboration Agreement with Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council for a period of up to two years to provide support whilst Bridgend’s internal model is developed and established.

She explained that following the Audit Wales Report in 2018, significant work had been undertaken by officers in reviewing the delivery of the DFG service in Bridgend, taking on board their recommendations.

She added that visits to neighbouring Councils were undertaken to learn from their reviews and the subsequent re-modelling of their DFG services. One of the authorities had been highlighted by Welsh Government as good practice. All the authorities operated an internal DFG service to oversee the application from start to finish.

The financial models across Councils in Wales varied, as follows:

- Some Councils top slice the budget to cover costs

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- Other Authorities charged a set percentage of fees ranging from 10% to 15% of works' costs.
- Some authorities also charged an administration fee in addition to a set percentage of fees

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change explained that Bridgend's DFG capital budget currently funds Council administration fees of £395 per application and, in addition, pays fees to external third-party agents who are appointed on an individual basis by the applicant. Further background was at section 3 of the report.

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change explained that National Strategic Indicators are used to measure the performance of local authorities at a national level. She stated that Bridgend was ranked 20th in Wales and presented the table at 4.2.

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change stated that with the research undertaken and liaising with Scrutiny and Members, Officers had concluded a change to the service was required. Therefore, it was recommended that a pilot project be established to internalise the DFG service. Further details on the service and implementation were provided in paragraph 4 of the report.

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change explained that to provide the necessary capacity for the project, it was proposed that a collaborative agreement with Neath Port Talbot Council (NPT) was entered into. She explained that NPT had an in-house service that could provide the capacity and that both parties would benefit through shared learning and resources. She explained that the identified risks of changing the service delivery model were listed at 4.15 of the report and the management of such including the benefits to the service were listed at 4.16 of the report.

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change provided the financial implications as indicated in section 8 of the report. She stated that the change in service would be cost effective and expected further savings and efficiencies to be made over future years.

The Cabinet Member - Wellbeing and Future Generations thanked the Officers involved in this report. She expressed that change in Bridgend was needed. It was noted by a recent Overview and Scrutiny Committee, that members of the public had to wait a considerable amount of time for grants money or their home to be adapted to suit their medical needs.

She added that a number of issues had been highlighted in the report and it was relieving to see that these were being looked at in the remodelling of the service.

The Cabinet Member - Social Services and Early Help welcomed the report and agreed with the Cabinet members points on the service being improvised. She explained that every day that a person has to wait for DFG or home adaptations to be made was another day of struggling for them and so it was a service that needed to be working effectively in order to provide a more efficient and quality service delivery.

The Cabinet Member - Social Services and Early Help asked what the governance of the new service would look like and how it would be an improvement over what was currently in place.

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The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change explained that it had taken a long time to reach this stage because of unpicking each part of the process to establish the length of time it took for delivery of services and what was required in order to achieve improvements. She added that having a project team around each part of the process would allow proper analysis and scrutiny of it. The Head of Partnership Services added that with the past low performance of the service, the focus had been on moving forward, improving on delivery time for requests for each individual, as well as also providing more DFGs each year.

The Leader asked what assessment had been done on NPT Councils service and what reassurance can be given that going forward BCBC could provide a high-quality service to the residents of Bridgend.

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change explained that along with the PI's, the Authority had looked at each element of the service that NPT Council provided to see which areas we needed to improve on the most, and moving forward BCBC would look to draw the expertise from these areas in its future service.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- Approved the internalisation of the DFG service;
- Approved using the capital budget to support the internalisation of the DFG process;
- Approved entering into the collaboration agreement with NPT and suspended the relevant parts of the Council's contract procedure rules in respect of the requirements relating to the procurement of the DFG service which NPT shall fulfil;

Delegated authority to the Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change, to approve the final terms of the collaboration agreement with NPT on behalf of the Council and to arrange execution of the collaboration agreement on behalf of the Council, subject to such delegated authority being exercised in consultation with the Chief Officer - Legal, HR and Regulatory Services

596. PEST CONTROL CONTRACT

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change presented a report which provided the background, current position and options to determine the preferred way forward in terms of a pest control service.

She explained that BCBC currently had a contract in place which provided a free of charge service for domestic pest control, which covered rats, mice, bed bugs and cockroaches. BCBC currently only charged for services to remove flees and wasps.

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change stated that the current contract, which commenced in 2017 provided by the company Rentokil, was due to expire in April 2021.

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change explained that the current contract was somewhat unpopular with residents as had been indicated from surveys that had been conducted. She explained that when the contractor was called out, they aimed to arrive within 3 days. This had resulted in 40% aborted calls.

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The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change provided figures relating to the Local Authorities in Wales and what pest control services they provided, with details of these shown at paragraph 3.4 of the report.

She also provided figures on the public consultation that took place in 2019 which obtained views on budget reduction proposals. These were detailed at paragraph 3.5 of the report.

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change explained that there had been increased requests for pest control provision particularly since Covid-19 lockdown on 23rd March 2020. These had increased by around 47%, which could be expected with more residents working from home.

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change provided 3 options which were outlined in the table at 4.6 of the report, with the following costs/savings to be expected:

Recovery charge	Cost of Service	Potential Income	Net cost to BCBC
50/50 proportionate split	£95,000	£71,250	£23,750
80/20 split in favour of concessionary charges	£95,000	£57,000	£38,000

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change stated that it was recommended not to proceed with option 3 as this incurred the highest cost to the authority and would need to be funded from the core Council budget. She added that Option 1 and Option 2 entailed a change in service provision and was therefore subject to public consultation, which would take 12 weeks to complete.

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change explained that to ensure service continuity in the meantime it was proposed that Cabinet suspend the relevant parts of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules requiring a competitive procurement exercise and agree to enter into a short-term contract of 6 months with the current pest control service provider Rentokil. She advised that this proposal breached the requirements of the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and required Cabinet's approval to set aside the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

The Cabinet Member - Wellbeing and Future Generations explained that the service was earmarked as a potential saving as part of the MTFs, however it did appear to be a popular service overall despite the point covered about the long call out time.

The Cabinet Member - Wellbeing and Future Generations asked if there were other options available that could see elements of the listed options. She explained that an option that covered free call outs for rats only could be considered, as this covered the majority of pest control call outs.

The Cabinet Member - Social Services and Early Help shared similar views as the cabinet member and explained that the rat population appeared to have increased in recent months, particularly as restaurants had closed and their food source in town centres had diminished. She stated that residents were apprehensive about reporting about rats as they did not want to take ownership of the problem and therefore potentially incur a charge. The Cabinet Member - Social Services and Early Help felt that this would further cause issues on reporting a problem if a charge were in place for this.

The Cabinet Member - Education and Regeneration agreed that the options listed did not cover the issues that the cabinet members and the public have faced as well as the possible consideration of a hybrid option.

The Deputy Leader asked what scope option 2 in the report allowed for. The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change explained that further consultation could be undertaken with providers as well as Local Authorities to determine what other options could be provided.

The Leader commented that sometimes infestation issues were as a result of other environmental health issues. He agreed that more information on how other Local Authorities dealt with these issues and how the Shared Regulatory Services delivered these services to Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan, was required.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- Agreed to explore further avenues with the Shared Regulatory Services (who provide pest control support to Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan Councils) on possible other alternative options to pursue with regards to Pest Control to those identified in the report.
- Approved the suspension of the relevant parts of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules in respect of the requirement as to re-tendering and authorise the Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change to enter into a short-term contract of 6 months with the current pest control service provider Rentokil.

597. **PORTHCAWL WATERFRONT REGENERATION SCHEME: SALE OF THE FOOD STORE SITE**

The Corporate Director Communities presented a report which updated Cabinet on the recent marketing of the food store site (on part of The Green and Salt Lake car park); and sought approval to appoint and dispose of the site to the preferred bidder, in accordance with the proposed heads of terms.

The Corporate Director Communities explained that in September 2020, the site was advertised for sale on the open market by EJ Hales, the Council's appointed agent. She provided Cabinet with the Bidding Requirements as listed at section 4 of the report.

The Corporate Director Communities outlined the selection process following the bids. She stated that there were 5 bids in total, 3 of which were non-compliant as they did not accord with the planning development brief, and 2 bids that were compliant.

The bid details were commercially sensitive and have been anonymised as follows and were ranked in order of highest to lowest value bids for the price to be paid for the land:

- Bid 1 : Non-Compliant : the bid did not accord with the Planning Development Brief
- Bid 2 : Compliant
- Bid 3 : Compliant
- Bid 4 : Non-compliant : the bid did not accord with the Planning Development Brief
- Bid 5 : Non-compliant : the bid did not accord with the Planning Development Brief

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The Corporate Director Communities explained that Bid 1, which was previously non-compliant, had since come back with further proposals. Unfortunately, these considerations were still non-compliant. Bid 2 was submitted by Aldi Stores Ltd and was therefore the selected preferred bidder.

She added that EJ Hales Ltd had certified that in their opinion the selected bid was a highly attractive financial offer and in terms of value delivers best consideration.

The Corporate Director Communities stressed that the stage we were currently looking at was the disposal stage. If Aldi were to continue with the purchase of the land, they would need to submit a planning application for this.

The Cabinet Member - Education and Regeneration welcomed the report and hoped that this was a landmark in the regeneration of Porthcawl. He thanked the Local Members of Porthcawl for their continued support with the strategy that had been a number of years in force. He asked the Corporate Director if there were any design work or images of what the building might look like so that the residents of Porthcawl have an idea of what to expect.

The Corporate Director Communities explained that the sketches that had been submitted were commercially sensitive at the moment as it was a bespoke design. This was until the successful bidder officially become the owner of the land. She explained that once Aldi had submitted the designs to planning for consideration, they would be happy for the designs to be shared with residents and to work with BCBC on joint marketing and consultation with residents regarding this.

The Cabinet Member - Social Services and Early Help welcomed the report and was excited to see this development take place. She added that residents of Porthcawl had showed their support to it on social media. She asked the Corporate Director, subject to the planning procedures etc, when the residents of Porthcawl were likely to see the doors of the new store open.

The Corporate Director Communities explained that it was dependent on the time scales of each stage, but we could expect to see the planning application be submitted within 6 months, should Cabinet approve the report, and then development to begin within 6 months of an approved planning application. However, Aldi were keen to start development as soon as possible.

The Cabinet Member - Communities explained that it was important that this development stood as an addition to the town centre of Porthcawl, rather than against it. He asked what level of integration it would have with the current town centre.

The Corporate Director Communities explained that there were plans for active travel links as well as footpaths to be built to allow the new development to link well with the town centre.

She added that in addition to this, with future developments in Porthcawl, the aim was to open up the older paths and roads to provide a well-established travel link among all developments.

The Leader asked that the successful bidder ensure a high standard development so that the crucial gateway into the town centre and promenade would be fully enhanced. He asked the Corporate Director if this had been fulfilled.

The Corporate Director Communities confirmed that the current plans were promising. They planned to use local and bespoke materials for the development as well as have

some architectural features, including open spaces for the public. Their plans also protected some of the key vistas when driving towards the sea.

The Leader asked if further plans were in place to develop the whole infrastructure of Porthcawl following this development.

The Corporate Director Communities explained that further plans were in place to develop more active travel routes in and around Porthcawl, development of the car parks as well as a bus link. She added that this was part of the bigger picture in terms of the regeneration of Porthcawl.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet:

- Approved the disposal of the Porthcawl food store site to Aldi Stores Ltd and entered into the agreement for lease and lease on the terms outlined in this report and at the sale price bid for the land and subject to the bullet point below.
- Delegated authority to the Corporate Director – Communities, in consultation with both the Chief Officer – Legal, HR and Regulatory Services and the Section 151 Officer, to approve the terms of the disposal agreement and enter into the agreement, with a view to legally completing the sale as soon as possible.

598. **VALLEYS REGIONAL PARK, BRYNGARW COUNTRY PARK DISCOVERY GATEWAY**

The Group Manager Economy, Natural Resources and Sustainability presented a report which updated Cabinet on an opportunity to access further funding through the Valleys Regional Park Discovery Gateways Capital Grant, 2019-2021, and sought Cabinet approval to accept a revised funding offer and enter into agreement with delivery partner Awen Cultural Trust to support the delivery of activities as part of the Valleys Regional Park at Bryngarw Country Park.

The Group Manager Economy, Natural Resources and Sustainability provided background to the valleys regional park and the funding that had been made available by Welsh Government. BCBC accepted a grant offer of £500,000 for the delivery of activity at Bryngarw Country Park through the Valleys Regional Park Discovery Sites Capital Grant, 2019-2021. Further information was at section 3 of the report.

The Group Manager Economy, Natural Resources and Sustainability explained that BCBC entered into a legal agreement with Awen Cultural Trust, and were approached with a range of actions which would be in addition to existing agreed actions as listed in paragraph 4 of the report.

He added that the proposed actions had subsequently been agreed by Welsh Government and an opportunity exists for a further £147,000 grant funding to support the delivery in partnership with Awen Cultural Trust. To access additional funding, BCBC needed to enter into a revised grant agreement with Welsh Government. Awen Cultural Trust as delivery partner will be invited to enter into appropriate revised agreements with BCBC.

He advised that no match funding would be required by BCBC and the total grant for additional action at Bryngarw Country Park totalled £657,000.

The Cabinet Member - Communities welcomed the report and was grateful for the additional grant funding from Welsh Government, particularly with the proposed plans for the extra money regarding renewable energy, which was cohesive with BCBCs 2030 renewable energy strategy.

The Leader echoed the Cabinet Members comments and was pleased to see further investment in a key valley destination.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- Accepted the additional funding and revised grant offer for the delivery of activity at Bryngarw Country Park of £647,000 through the Valleys Regional Park Discovery Sites Capital Grant, 2019-2021.
- Authorised the Corporate Director, Communities, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer and Head of Legal and Regulatory Services, to enter into a revised agreement for delivery of the above and any subsequent minor amendments with Welsh Government and Awen Cultural Trust.

599. BRIDGEND 2030 DECARBONISATION STRATEGY, PATHWAY TO A CARBON NEUTRAL (NET-ZERO) COUNCIL

The Corporate Director – Communities presented a report, the purpose of which, was to detail the process of developing a “Bridgend 2030” Decarbonisation Strategy. This would further respond to the Councils Climate Emergency Response Programme and present a pathway to a Carbon Neutral (also known as Net-Zero) Bridgend by 2030, working with the Public Service Board, communities and business.

She explained that, Welsh Government (WG) declared a Climate Emergency in April 2019 and set out its priorities to address change for Wales to build resilience. Following this, the Welsh Government has now committed to achieving a carbon-neutral public sector by 2030. Bridgend supports this approach and has proposed its adoption into the updated 2021-22 BCBC Corporate Plan.

The areas of focus for decarbonisation were energy, transport, buildings and open spaces.

She proceeded by stating that Carbon emissions were measurable on what the Council own and buy for communities, for example, how energy is purchased and used, buildings heated and powered, transport contracts or fleet purchased. All public bodies needed to address becoming Carbon Neutral by 2030, based on tackling the different scope emissions, as shown in paragraph 3.5 of the report.

The Corporate Director – Communities continued by stating that, to propose areas of priority and focus resources, BCBC required a carbon audit to fully understand the carbon footprint relating to each in-scope emission category, as shown in paragraph 3.5 (of the report).

In terms of where BCBC were now, the Council had developed its Smart Energy Plan in 2019 comprising of a series of projects to tackle decarbonising heat, which Cabinet approved on 19th February 2019. This included District Heat Networks in Bridgend and Caerau, (their specific progress is subject to separate reports to Cabinet,) smart metering and gaining electrification of heat.

To meet the carbon-neutral/ net-zero carbon objective by 2030, the progress of and projects within the Smart Energy Plan needed to be, expanded and accelerated and its governance strengthened. Table 1 in the report, set out the progress that has been achieved to date within the four WG prioritised areas of focus for 2030.

The Corporate Director – Communities advised, that a newly realigned 2030 Programme Board would be responsible for all projects (and agreeing additional projects), their scope, viability and overseeing the financial and risk profiles. The Programme Board will

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communicate the benefits of the programme to the wider community and also provide clarity of the Council's role for each.

The report concluded, by outlining some proposed key outcomes, in the form of aims and objectives of the Strategy.

The Cabinet Member – Communities welcomed what was an innovative and outward looking report, with some challenging targets contained therein. He welcomed the Strategy, which would be introduced as a result of a directive from Welsh Government. The ambitions of the Strategy when realised, would assist in the reduction of carbon emissions in our buildings and facilities, amongst others. The Strategy he was pleased to see, would also be supported by an Action Plan.

The Cabinet Member - Wellbeing and Future Generations was happy with the report, which was key to supporting the Council's ever increasingly robust Environmental agenda.

The Leader also welcomed the report and the targets contained therein, which were both challenging and ambitious.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet :-

- Approved the development of a draft "Bridgend 2030" decarbonisation strategy and action plan for public consultation in the summer of 2021 and note that this draft strategy and action plan shall be reported to a future cabinet meeting prior to public consultation.
- Approved and delegates authority to the Corporate Director, Communities engaging with the Bridgend Public Services Board on the draft "Bridgend 2030" decarbonisation strategy and agree a shared narrative and methodology with the Public Services Board for the decarbonisation agenda for the Borough.
- Approved the development of a realigned Programme Governance structure and the appointment of the Cabinet Member for Communities as the Chair of the 2030 Programme Board as set out in section 4.10 of the report.

600. BRIDGEND TOWN HEAT NETWORK PROJECT

The Corporate Director – Communities presented a report, the purpose of which, was to update Cabinet on progress made with regards to the development of the Bridgend Town Heat Network Project and secure a number of key decisions regarding the progression of the project.

She explained that the Bridgend Town Heat Network Project is included as a project within the BCBC Smart Energy Plan (SEP) (approved by Cabinet February 2019). The Smart Energy Plan details the projects that BCBC will participate in during the period 2019 – 2025. This proposes to test various technologies, consumer propositions and business models to provide a pathway to the decarbonisation of Bridgend County Borough. It is also a key contributor to the Welsh Government's decarbonisation strategy (published March 2019) "Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales".

She continued by stating that a capital grant application was made to UK Government via the Heat Network Investment Programme (HNIP) in April 2019 and this was approved in December 2019 for £1,000,000 capital investment towards the construction of the heat network and £241,000 for pre-construction activities.

Throughout 2020 the project has been progressed through the creation of a new financial model, preparation of a planning application for the thermal store, development of an environmental permit for the energy centre and the creation of a tender pack for the procurement of a design build operate and maintain (DBOM) contractor to manage the construction and operation of the network.

The Bridgend Town DHN project had reached a critical stage with several crucial milestone decisions needed to ensure progression in line with the Conditions Precedent laid out in the Grant Funding Offer provided by the Dept. of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to BCBC as part of the HNIP grant conditions.

This must happen by 19 March 2021 and therefore, it was essential, that the procurement must be underway by March 2021. In order to achieve this, the procurement notice must be launched in February 2021.

It was then the Corporate Director – Communities explained, that a full business case will be prepared and will be subject to Cabinet approval before the appointment of any contractor would take place. During the procurement process the Council will explore different options and innovation from the market to consider in the final business case. The details of the SPV to be established will be the subject of a further report to Cabinet for approval in the immediate future. Following this, the tender documents for the appointment of the DBOM will be released, but no appointment will be made until Council approve the scheme and additional loan amount as part of the Capital Programme. The detail of these individual tasks were set out in paragraph 4.4 of the report onwards.

In line with the BCBC Local Area Energy Plan, which indicates that heat networks are the most technical and economically advantageous option for the decarbonisation of heat within Bridgend Town, the Council is seeking to develop a Phase 2 of the heat network. Phase 2 would be a more ambitious project than Phase 1 and would have the potential to connect two hospitals, four schools and a care home as well as potential new development within Bridgend Town centre.

The Council made an application for grant funding from UK Government (Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy) through its Heat Network Delivery Unit (HNDU) in June 2020 for £132,150 to contribute towards the cost of preparing an Outline Business Case for Phase 2 of the project (£102,150) and Project Management resource support (£30,000).

BEIS approved the funding application in September 2020 and a tender pack is being developed to procure the technical, financial and legal consultants needed to prepare the outline business case for Phase 2. The cost of developing the outline business case has been estimated as £150,000. The remaining £47,850 needed to prepare the outline business case is being provided by the Council. The £47,850 will be funded from the Heat (SEP) Programme budget within the Strategic Regeneration Fund.

In terms of the reports financial implications, the Cabinet Report in April 2018, had the Phase 1 Year 1 capital outlay as £1.959 million, this increased to £4.229m in April 2019 when an amended financial model was created as part of the grant submission to UK Government through the Heat Network Investment Programme. The increase was driven primarily by the inclusion of the new Sunnyside development. The withdrawal of the development from the scheme has meant that the Year 1 capital outlay is currently £3.389 million. The costs within the project are different to those presented in the original outline business case to Cabinet in April 2018 and those presented to Corporate Management Board in April 2019 due to a number of factors most notably withdrawal of the Sunnyside development from the project, upgrades to the transformer required at the

Bridgend Life Centre, inflationary impacts and future proofing of the further network connections. Further information on the breakdown of the financial costs were outlined in paragraphs 8 of the report.

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change advised briefly of the report's complexities concerning the Council having to amend its Treasury Management Strategy, in order that it may lend in excess of a £1m to SPV and in order to do so, to borrow from PWLB.

A further report in order to achieve this, would therefore be placed before Budget Council in February, she added.

The Cabinet Member – Communities advised that this report related directly to the previous agenda item ie the Bridgend 2030 Decarbonisation Strategy, which would look to improve energy consumption and the decarbonisation of energy in Council buildings. The Bridgend project would consist of a number of phases and as the project was a new venture, he stressed that it would come with some challenges. He added also, that some of the Council's procurement procedures would require adjusting, in order to accommodate some of the project's proposals.

The Leader confirmed that there had been huge preparation and planning for this project as it was both complex and the first of its kind for Bridgend. He welcomed further progress reports as the project evolved.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- Approved the continued delivery of the Bridgend Town District Heat Network project.
- Agreed that a report be taken to Council for its approval to amend the Capital Programme for the inclusion of the Bridgend Town District Heat Network project within the Capital Programme and agrees the loan to the SPV, subject to approval to changes to the Treasury Management Strategy.
- Noted that the Treasury Management Strategy will need to be revised to enable the Council to make a loan of £1.821 million to the SPV, and this will be reflected in the draft Treasury Management Strategy 2021-22 that will be presented to Audit Committee on 28 January 2021, and to Council for approval in February 2021.
- Approved the procurement of and subsequent appointments of technical/financial consultant and a legal advisor to prepare an Outline Business Case for Phase 2 of the Bridgend Town Heat Network Project.
- Delegated authority to the Corporate Director Communities to tender for the technical/financial consultant and Legal Advisor to prepare an Outline Business Case for Phase 2 of the Bridgend Town Heat Network Project and award the contracts to the successful tenderers, the contractual terms of the contracts to be approved by the Corporate Director Communities in consultation with the Chief Officer – Legal, HR and Regulatory Services.
- Suspended the relevant parts of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules which require procurements to be conducted under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and approve the procurement of a Design Build Operate Maintain contractor for the Bridgend District Heat Network by utilising the negotiated procedure with prior call for competition under the Utilities Contract Regulations 2016.
- Approved Brodies LLP running the procurement of the Design Build Operate Maintain Contractor under the negotiated procedure with prior call for competition under the Utilities Contract Regulations 2016 on behalf of the Council.

- Delegated authority to the Corporate Director Communities to tender the contract for the Design Build Operate Maintain contractor for the Bridgend District Heat Network, in consultation with the Chief Officer – Legal , HR and Regulatory Services using the negotiated prior call for competition under the Utilities Contract Regulations 2016 and noted that a further report shall be presented to Cabinet following the conclusion of the procurement of the Design Build Operate Maintain contractor for a decision on whether to award the contract.
- Noted that a report shall be presented to Cabinet in February 2021 on the creation of the Special Purpose Vehicle which will provide the commercial delivery mechanism for the project.

601. **CAERAU HEAT SCHEME**

The Group Manager – Economy, Natural Resources and Sustainability submitted a report, in order to provide Cabinet with an update on the delivery of the Caerau Heat Scheme project; to seek authority from Cabinet to undertake an options appraisal of alternative delivery methods and for Cabinet to agree to receive a further report with a proposal on the preferred option and a way forward.

By way of some background information, he confirmed that the Caerau Heat Scheme, was established as a highly innovative project and proposed to extract heat from water contained within flooded former coal mine workings, to provide a resource for properties within Caerau.

He referred Members to Table 1 in paragraph 3.5 of the report, which showed the decision gateways, with their originally estimated and revised dates. It also showed project outputs and outcomes that will be available in the event of the project being closed down at any one of the decision gates.

In terms of the present situation, the Group Manager – Economy, Natural Resources and Sustainability, advised that in the past 12 months certain key pieces of work in relation to the Scheme had been completed. These were outlined in paragraphs 4.2 to 4.5 of the report.

As a result of this work and in line with the decision gateways for the project detailed in paragraph 3.6 of the report, it was now proposed that an options appraisal be undertaken to determine viability and suitability of alternative delivery methods. The options appraisal would be based on the set of criteria listed in paragraph 4.7 and cover the options detailed in paragraph 4.8 of the report.

He stated that an agreed view on the options appraisal would be developed by members of the Energy Programme Board, while the next steps for the project were proposed as follows:

- Undertake the options appraisal;
- Present the findings of the above to WEFO for consideration;
- Submit a report to Cabinet on the outcome of the options appraisal for a decision on how to proceed and if required a subsequent report to Council.

This would take in all around 6 months, the Group Manager – Economy, Natural Resources and Sustainability added.

The report concluded by explain the financial implications arising from the report's recommendations.

To date, the Scheme Manager had carried out a high level mapping exercise of potential areas within Bridgend County Borough, where the Welsh Government Programme could have maximum impact and two areas have been identified (these will require further discussion to agree actual boundaries and areas to be considered). The two initial areas were Ogmore Valley and Porthcawl (East).

The process of accessing support once an area location had been decided, would require the Scheme Manager to carry out an assessment of each property and design a package of works that could improve the energy efficiency of the home. The measures that could receive funding through the programme were exemplified in paragraph 4.4 of the report.

The Group Manager – Economy, Natural Resources and Sustainability stated that the funding caps established for the programme by WG have been set at:

- Up to £5,000 for on-gas E rated properties
- Up to £8,000 for on-gas F & G rated properties
- Up to £8,000 for off-gas E rated properties
- Up to £12,000 for off-gas rated F & G properties

Unlike the previous phases of this programme, BCBC would not be required to prepare bids, manage grant payments, procure contractors etc. This will be undertaken by Welsh Government. The role of BCBC will be substantially reduced and instead will be to:

- Agree the area where the programme will be offered.
- Send out initial letters (drafted by Arbed am Byth) with residents names on them inviting them to engage in the programme and attend information events.
- Provide support at community engagement events.

The Cabinet Member – Communities noted that this was not a BCBC programme and he had some concerns therefore, that the Authority were in charge of administering this and that due to that, residents would think it was in fact a BCBC led project. BCBC would also not have full control of the work that would be undertaken as part of the project. He therefore felt that more information should be forthcoming, about BCBC's exact role in the Scheme and how this affected our responsibilities to constituents who qualified for the work that would be carried on their properties.

The Cabinet Member – Wellbeing and Future Generations supported the above, but added that the Scheme if it eventually was progressed, would improve energy efficiency in properties that needed this, particularly in deprived valley locations.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet welcomed the report but before progressing further requested written confirmation from Welsh Government in relation to the roles and responsibilities in relation to delivery and post-completion.

603. CAE GOF PLAYING FIELDS

The Head of Operations - Community Services presented a report, the purpose of which, was to consider the business case prepared in accordance with the Council's Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Policy document to support the leasing of the bowls pavilion, bowls green, two rugby pitches and tennis courts at Cae Gof Playing Fields to Cefn Cribwr Athletic Club (CCAC); and assess the funding package requested by CCAC under the Council's £1 million CAT Fund and Change Management Fund so that proposals to re-develop the bowls pavilion and drainage / pitch improvements and day to day management of the bowls green and two rugby pitches at Cae Gof Playing Fields.

Cabinet were advised that under the revised CAT protocol, funding applications up to £50k from the £1 million CAT Fund could be approved by the CAT Steering Group with all sums in excess of this threshold being required to be referred to Cabinet for approval, and as CCAC had submitted multiple applications the matter needed to be considered by the Cabinet.

The Head of Operations - Community Services confirmed that CCAC represented the interests of the rugby and bowls sections at Cae Gof Playing Fields and first submitted an expression of interest for the Main Pavilion on 12 August 2016 which was approved by the Council's Strong Communities Connecting Services Board on 5 October 2016. The Club re-engaged with the CAT process on 10 January 2019 when more formal discussions also involving Cefn Cribwr FC have been progressed. This resulted in a joint expression of interest being submitted by CCAC and Cefn Cribwr FC for the lease of Cae Gof Playing Fields including the Main Pavilion which was approved in principle by the CAT Steering Group on 19 December 2019.

However, having deemed that little progress was being made with Cefn Cribwr FC, the rugby and bowls sections of CCAC decided to progress a CAT on their own by proposing to take a lease over part of Cae Gof Playing Fields, namely the Bowls Pavilion and Green, 2 x rugby pitches and tennis courts. The revised proposal was agreed in principle by the CAT Steering Group on 7 December 2020. Under the new arrangements Cefn Cribwr FC have confirmed that they would wish to complete the separate lease of the Main Pavilion and 2 x football pitches with discussions presently ongoing.

CCAC were seeking to extend the existing bowls pavilion to cater for rugby, referee, disability and female sport needs with Conditional Consent for Planning Application P/20/624/FUL being approved on 4 November 2020. The Club were also looking to improve the condition of the rugby pitches which have been subject to an independent condition survey by Oolong Sports Pitch Consultancy in February 2020 under the CAT Business Support contract.

The Head of Operations - Community Services advised that CCAC had prepared detailed business and financial plans outlining their proposals to redevelop the Bowls Pavilion and improvements to both rugby pitches and to provide assurance on the viability and sustainability of the project. These had been reviewed by the Finance Department and the CAT Steering Group and were considered to demonstrate the financial viability of the project.

CCAC had also submitted funding applications to the CAT Fund that had been reviewed alongside the business and financial plans by the Finance Department and the Parks Department in the first instance and by the CAT Steering Group.

Details of this were shown in Table format in paragraph 4.8 of the report.

The Council's Quantity Surveyor (Major Projects) had reviewed the building works included under the Bowls Pavilion Extension & Remedial Works proposal and had determined the estimated total cost of building works to be £154,441.55 which included a contingency of £20,144.55 (or 15%). CCAC had secured in principle funding totalling £40,000 from two external sources Cefn Cribwr Community Council (£20,000) and Ford Community Legacy Fund (£20,000) which was in addition to £11,000 the Club had earmarked from its own funds towards the cost.

The independent pitch condition surveys commissioned under the Council's Business Support contract had been used by CCAC to inform the funding applications for the

social distancing and additional cleansing requirements had placed added burdens and costs on operators.

Welsh Government (WG) and local authorities (LAs) had stepped in he explained, to support the sector with substantial financial assistance. There had also been an excellent, ongoing dialogue between all parties to discuss and agree on support arrangements, he added.

The Head of Operations – Community Services continued, by advising that the Minister of Economy and Transport, had met with Leaders of all 22 LAs, along with his officials, to outline WG’s direction of travel. Further details have been included in the Wales Transport Strategy (WTS) which has been the subject of consultation. More recently, the Deputy Minister, Lee Waters MS, met with all Leaders to discuss the WTS but also to encourage LAs to sign up to the Bus Emergency Scheme 2 (BES2). This was the latest phase of financial support to help operators through the period of the pandemic.

Alongside this, WG stepped in to help operators deal with reduced income on commercially operated routes and the additional costs being incurred. Initially, WG made £29m available from a Hardship Fund, which operated from April 2020 for three months. This fund was assembled from monies that would otherwise have been paid via Bus Services Support Grant (BSSG), Mandatory Concessionary Fare reimbursement and the ‘My Travel Pass’ scheme.

The Bus Emergency Scheme was then introduced in July to provide ongoing support. This became known as ‘BES 1’ and it continued to maintain operators’ income at historic levels, based on what was being paid to them under previous grant schemes. In return for this financial support WG signalled that it expected operators to contribute to a reshaping of bus services in Wales, to include improved regional networks with greater integration with rail services, smart ticketing and timetabling.

Turning to the present situation, the Head of Operations – Community Services advised, that BES 2 will continue to address the loss of fare box revenue and the additional costs associated with responding to the pandemic. Under BES 2 the WG funding will sit alongside local authority funding provided through the Concessionary Travel Scheme and via Revenue Support Grant, with the Bus Services Support Grant to make up the shortfall.

WG would be a co-signatory to the BES 2 agreement with bus operators, along with TfW. This is currently still under discussion and may be subject to changes before it is finalised. LAs retain legal responsibilities for bus services and therefore remained central to determining which local services receive this support. They would need to sign up to the principle of the agreement and the relationship with their Lead Authority, in ensuring that the ongoing emergency funding meets their priorities and is delivered on their behalf.

This would provide the legal basis for WG to make payments to the operators. In this way, WG could use its powers to support operators, whereas the additional funding would breach LAs de minimis limits for direct award contracts (further details in the briefing note in Appendix 1 and the full proposed Agreement in Appendix 2, to the report). LAs would remain responsible for those services which they currently contract directly with bus operators. LAs would need to consider planning for contingencies, such as if the BES2 agreement is not signed or the level of funding for BES2 is reduced during the period of the agreement.

Key features of BES 2 were shown in paragraph 4.4 of the report.

V2C's Plas Morlais site. Land issues had been agreed by Cabinet and Council in December and built into the capital programme.

The Corporate Director – Education and Family Support confirmed that Heads of Terms in respect of the land swap required for the scheme had been agreed with V2C.

WG had confirmed that the Welsh Education Partnership Co. (WEPCo) was established in September 2020. Consequently, the Authority were now able to move forward with delivering individual projects through the New Project Request process, as set out in the Strategic Partnering Agreement.

He then explained, that in November 2020, WG approved BCBC's Strategic Outline Case submission in respect of the Bridgend West proposal.

In order to progress the proposed Bridgend West Band B schemes to WG MIM stage 2 and business case approval stage, it was necessary to have first completed the necessary School Organisation Code statutory processes.

In order to bring about a change of the proposed nature, he pointed out that the Code requires that a consultation exercise with the school governing body, staff, parents, pupils and interested parties be undertaken.

The Corporate Director – Education and Family Support stated that a number of options were available under the Code, in terms of achieving the school organisation necessary for the Bridgend West 'Band B' schemes and these were detailed (for both Welsh and English medium) in paragraph 4.12 of the report.

In respect of the Welsh-medium proposal there was no need to close any school (the existing Ysgol Y Ferch O'r Sgêr could simply be formally enlarged). In respect of English-medium, however, two schools (with two headteachers) would be replaced by a single school.

The Integrated Children's Centre (ICC) building currently located on the Corneli site would remain in situ under the proposal 'as is' and consequently would be adjacent to one of the new school buildings upon completion. Both newly created school buildings would have integrated community facilities. It was therefore envisioned at this stage, that the existing Flying Start provision at Afon y Felin Primary School would transfer to the ICC building if the proposal was progressed.

There was an existing hard court pitch on the land at Plas Morlais (owned by V2C), which would be part of the site required to be developed for provision of the new school building. Community accessible outdoor sports provision would be included as part of the proposed new build schemes, which should negate any perceived detriment involved in developing the site, it was explained.

The Corporate Director – Education and Family Support concluded his report, by advising of its financial implications.

The Cabinet Member – Education and Regeneration advised that the report at this stage was just proposing to consult on the proposals contained therein and he hoped to that end, that everyone involved in the consultation would engage in this.

He added that if the proposals of the report were proceeded with, then this would bring 21st Century Modern Schools for North Cornelly for both English and Welsh medium, together with an increase in green spaces replacing a brownfield site and extra affordable housing.

The Leader stated that the report reflected the Council's commitment to providing state of the art education provision in the area of Cornelly and he hoped that the consultation would have significant support from the likes of teachers, pupils, parents and the school governing bodies, in the support of the Authority's aspirations to expand welsh medium school places in the western area of the County Borough.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- Noted the evaluations that have been undertaken as expressed in the report;
- Noted the preferred means to achieve the necessary school organisation, ie discontinue the two English-medium schools (Corneli Primary School and Afon y Felin Primary School) and establish a new two-form entry plus 60-place nursery English-medium school with 15-place Additional Learning Needs Resource Centre school on land at Plas Morlais (with effect from September 2023) – and to make a regulated alteration to the Welsh-medium school (Ysgol Y Ferch O'r Sgêr) in the form of an enlargement to two-form entry plus 60-place nursery Welsh-medium school on the existing Corneli Primary School/Ysgol Y Ferch O'r Sgêr site (with effect from September 2024) and;
- Gave approval to formally consult on the Bridgend West proposal.

606. **INFORMATION REPORT FOR NOTING**

The Chief Officer Legal, HR and Regulatory Services presented a report, that informed Cabinet of an Information Report for noting (attached thereto) that had been published since its last scheduled meeting.

Details of the Information Report was shown in paragraph 4.1 of the covering report.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet acknowledged the publication of the document listed in the report

607. **URGENT ITEMS**

None.

608. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED: That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business as it contained exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14 of Part 4 and/or Paragraph 21 of Part 5 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Following the application of the public interest test it was resolved that pursuant to the Act referred to above, to consider the following item in private, with the public excluded from the meeting, as it was considered that in all circumstances relating to the item, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information, because the information is commercially sensitive and it relates to the

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business and financial affairs of the Council and the proposed vendors.

609. APPROVAL OF EXEMPT MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Exempt Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet dated 15 December 2020, be approved as a true and accurate record.

The meeting closed at 18:45