

# Public Document Pack

## Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr

### Bridgend County Borough Council



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#### Cyfarwyddiaeth y Prif Weithredwr / Chief Executive's Directorate

Deialu uniongyrchol / Direct line /: 01656 643148 / 643147 / 643694

Gofynnwch am / Ask for: Democratic Services

Ein cyf / Our ref:

Eich cyf / Your ref:

**Dyddiad/Date:** Thursday, 3 June 2021

Dear Councillor,

### **CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

A meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be held remotely - via Microsoft Teams on **Wednesday, 9 June 2021 at 09:30**.

### **AGENDA**

1. Election of Chairperson 3 - 6
2. Apologies for Absence  
To receive apologies for absence from Members.
3. Declarations of Interest  
To receive declarations of personal and prejudicial interest (if any) from Members/Officers in accordance with the provisions of the Members Code of Conduct adopted by Council from 1 September 2008 (including whipping declarations)
4. Approval of Minutes 7 - 48  
To receive for approval the minutes of 20/01/21, 21/01/21 and 25/01/21
5. Cross-Party Recovery Panel Recommendations and Cabinet Progress Response 49 - 66  
  
Invitees:  
  
Councillor Huw David - Leader  
Mark Shephard - Chief Executive
6. Corporate Parenting Champion Nomination Report 67 - 70
7. Nomination to the Public Service Board Scrutiny Panel 71 - 74
8. Forward Work Programme Update 75 - 82

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9. Urgent Items

To consider any item(s) of business in respect of which notice has been given in accordance with Part 4 (paragraph 4) of the Council Procedure Rules and which the person presiding at the meeting is of the opinion should by reason of special circumstances be transacted at the meeting as a matter of urgency.

Note: Please note: Due to the current requirement for social distancing this meeting will not be held at its usual location. This will be a virtual meeting and Members and Officers will be attending remotely. The meeting will be recorded for subsequent transmission via the Council's internet site which will be available as soon as practicable after the meeting. If you have any queries regarding this, please contact [cabinet\\_committee@bridgend.gov.uk](mailto:cabinet_committee@bridgend.gov.uk) or tel. 01656 643147 / 643148.

Yours faithfully

**K Watson**

Chief Officer, Legal, HR & Regulatory Services

Councillors:

JPD Blundell  
J Gebbie  
DG Howells  
M Jones

Councillors

RL Penhale-Thomas  
KL Rowlands  
RMI Shaw  
JC Spanswick

Councillors

T Thomas  
MC Voisey  
A Williams  
AJ Williams

## BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT TO CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

9 JUNE 2021

#### REPORT OF THE CHIEF OFFICER – LEGAL, HR & REGULATORY SERVICES

##### ELECTION OF CHAIR

#### 1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to receive nominations for the role of Chair of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

#### 2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives / other corporate priorities

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:
1. **Supporting a successful sustainable economy** – taking steps to make the county borough a great place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focussed on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions for all people in the county borough.
  2. **Helping people and communities to be more health and resilient** - taking steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services. Supporting individuals and communities to build resilience, and enable them to develop solutions to have active, healthy and independent lives.
  3. **Smarter use of resources** – ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

#### 3. Background

- 3.1 As part of the centralised Overview and Scrutiny structure it has been determined that the membership of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee would consist of the Chairs of each Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee and nine other Members that reflect the political balance of the Authority.
- 3.2 The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 established procedures whereby Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairs are nominated and appointed. The Measure requires that as a minimum, the Chairpersons of these Committees be appointed based on the size and political balance of each of the groups that make up the Council. At the Annual Meeting of Council on 19 May 2021, Cllr K Rowlands, Cllr A Williams and Cllr J Blundell were appointed as the three Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairpersons. The Chairperson of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee is unallocated and therefore, in accordance with Measure, is to be appointed by the members of the Committee from one of the

Chairpersons of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees, but it cannot be the Chairperson representing the Executive Group.

#### **4. Current situation/proposal**

- 4.1 The Committee is requested to receive nominations and appoint a Chairperson of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the provisions set out at paragraph 3.2 of this report.
- 4.2 As set out in the Constitution, should the appointed Chair of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee be unable to attend a meeting, it is for the Committee to appoint a Chair at the meeting in accordance with the political balance rules.

#### **5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules**

- 5.1 The work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees relates to the review and development of plans, policy or strategy that form part of the Council's Policy Framework and consideration of plans, policy or strategy relating to the power to promote or improve economic, social or environmental wellbeing in the County Borough of Bridgend. Any changes to the structure of the Scrutiny Committees and the procedures relating to them would require the Bridgend County Borough Council constitution to be updated.

#### **6. Equality Act 2010 implications**

- 6.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

#### **7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications**

- 7.1 The Act provides the basis for driving a different kind of public service in Wales, with 5 ways of working to guide how public services should work to deliver for people. The following is a summary to show how the 5 ways of working to achieve the well-being goals have been used to formulate the recommendations within this report:

- Long Term - The Chairperson of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee will assist in the long term planning of the business of the Council
- Prevention – The Chairperson of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be preventative in nature and ensure that appropriate policies and procedures are in place
- Integration – This report supports all the well-being objectives

- Collaboration - The Chairperson of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee will support partnership working with other organisations both locally and regionally
- Involvement – The Chairperson of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee will promote the full involvement of external stakeholders, service users, expert witnesses and partners in scrutiny activity

## 8. Financial implications

8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

## 9. Recommendation

9.1 The Committee is requested to receive nominations and appoint a Chairperson of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the provisions set out in paragraph 3.2 of this report.

Kelly Watson  
**Chief Officer – Legal, HR & Regulatory Services**  
 3 June 2021

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**Background documents:** None

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# Agenda Item 4

CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - WEDNESDAY, 20 JANUARY 2021

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
HELD REMOTELY VIA SKYPE FOR BUSINESS ON WEDNESDAY, 20 JANUARY 2021 AT  
10:00

## Present

Councillor – Chairperson

|             |                   |             |             |
|-------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------|
| TH Beedle   | JPD Blundell      | MC Clarke   | N Clarke    |
| RJ Collins  | P Davies          | PA Davies   | DK Edwards  |
| J Gebbie    | T Giffard         | CA Green    | DG Howells  |
| A Hussain   | M Jones           | MJ Kearns   | DRW Lewis   |
| JE Lewis    | RL Penhale-Thomas | AA Pucella  | KL Rowlands |
| RMI Shaw    | JC Spanswick      | RME Stirman | MC Voisey   |
| LM Walters  | KJ Watts          | A Williams  | AJ Williams |
| JE Williams |                   |             |             |

## Apologies for Absence

Councillors: SE Baldwin, B Sedgebeer, E Venables, CA Webster, and DBF White, and Nicola Echanis - Head of Education and Family Support.

## Registered Representatives

|                        |                          |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Rev Canon Edward Evans | Church in Wales          |
| Linsey Morris          | Secondary Schools Sector |

## Officers:

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| Meryl Lawrence | Senior Democratic Services Officer - Scrutiny |
| Andrew Rees    | Democratic Services Manager                   |
| Tracy Watson   | Scrutiny Officer                              |

## Invitees:

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| Victoria Adams            | Interim Finance Manager – Budget Management:            |
| Councillor Nicole Burnett | Communities, Education and Family Support               |
| Hannah Castle             | Cabinet Member Social Services and Early Help           |
| Neil Clode                | Head Teacher, Cynffig Comprehensive School              |
| Councillor Huw David      | Head Teacher, Llangewydd Primary School                 |
| Lindsay Harvey            | Leader  |
| Gill Lewis                | Corporate Director Education and Family Support         |
| Janine Nightingale        | Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change |
| Councillor Dhanisha Patel | Corporate Director - Communities                        |
| Zak Shell                 | Cabinet Member for Wellbeing and Future Generations     |
| Mark Shephard             | Head of Neighbourhood Services                          |
| Councillor Charles Smith  | Chief Executive   |
| Councillor Hywel Williams | Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration           |
| Councillor Richard Young  | Deputy Leader   |
|                           | Cabinet Member for Communities                          |

## 198. ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON

### RESOLVED:

1. That Councillor T Giffard be elected as Chairperson of the Combined Meeting of all Overview & Scrutiny Committees

up to the conclusion of Item 4 in respect of Education and Family Support.

2. That Councillor JPD Blundell be elected as Chairperson of the Combined Meeting of all Overview & Scrutiny Committees for the consideration of Item 4, in respect of Communities.

199. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairperson explained to Members that it was recognised that many of them would be LEA governors and as such there was no requirement to declare an interest however, if any Members had any declarations such as a Community Governor, they must declare those interests.

Cllr JP Blundell declared a personal interest in agenda item 4 because he was a Community Governor at Cefn Glas Infants School.

Rev. Canon E Evans, Registered Representative, Church in Wales, declared a personal interest in agenda item 4 because he was a Community Governor of Bryntirion Comprehensive School

L Morris, Registered Representative, Secondary Schools Sector declared a personal interest in agenda item 4 because she was a Parent Governor at Maesteg Comprehensive School.

Councillor J Gebbie declared a personal interest in agenda Item 4 as she was Chair of Mynydd Cynffig.

Councillor T Beedle declared a personal interest in agenda item 4 as he was Chair of Bridgend Governors Association.

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

Education and Family Support

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

The Chair thanked the Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change and explained that this was the session on the Education and Family Support Directorate, with the Communities one to follow.

A Member stated that she had heard the Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change speak many times and challenged the use of the word 'savings', stating that the Local Authority was not saving anything, but trying to make cuts to services because it didn't have the budget consequentially.

A Member referred to page 39, ESF5 and a reference to autistic spectrum disorder children and asked whether the pandemic had any detrimental effect on autistic children. What had been the experience and how badly, or not, had these children been affected.

The Corporate Director – Education and Family Support explained that he was proud that Bridgend had established a number of settings to support the needs of learners with ASD, both in English and Welsh Medium settings. It was fair to say that the last 10 months had been deeply challenging for all sorts of learners. He praised schools for the phenomenal efforts put in place to make sure children were not affected and highlighted his personal experience of visiting schools and observing learners happy and settled within those settings.

In terms of additional support from the local authority, this took different avenues including additional support within classroom settings, within schools with learning resource centres, additional support from learning support staff and also staff within the school and in bespoke settings within the specialist school environment, providing support for families as well when learners were not on site. From the feedback received, this had been successful. It had inevitably affected learners, but from the efforts of school staff and inclusion staff in particular, the local authority aimed to mitigate any risk to learners' wellbeing.

The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration began by thanking relevant staff, noting that every autistic person was different. What was shared by many autistic people was that change was not welcome and timetabling changes could be upsetting. He noted the dedication of expert staff in special schools and settings in mainstream schools which had been recognised by Estyn, who were very supportive of the Team Bridgend approach.

A Member referred to page 39, ESF6. He noted the figure of £903k for 2021-22 and recurring amount of £1.1million in future years and asked how the figure had been calculated and whether it was a percentage of the budget, how was it split across Education, where did it go altogether and was it just for schools. In respect of the Development Plan impact, this meant additional houses, bringing in additional council tax. How was this calculated and would it be used across different service areas in Education.

The Interim Deputy Head of Finance explained pupil numbers from all schools were collected at a couple of points during the financial year, as well as collecting predictions of estimated pupil numbers for future years. The local authority looked at forward planning, in terms of how it would affect pupil numbers in total including primary and secondary school numbers. Therefore, it changed throughout the years with those figures updated. It was also based upon the age rated pupil unit, which was used to fund schools, so it was a combination of the numbers and the funding age group, noting that it related to school delegated budgets and if there were significant increases there maybe an impact upon support services provided to schools. In terms of the LDP the local authority did not get the funding in the settlement until a couple of years after those pupil numbers had actually gone to school and been registered and gone on to the Pupil level annual school census (PLASC) data forms. She confirmed that it went directly to schools.

A Member referred to page 39, ESF7 in relation to the one off pressure of £1.2million, whilst the review of home to school transport was undertaken. He was concerned to see it as a one off pressure and asked for an update on the review and how the money would be spent, noting this had been on the agenda for years.

The Corporate Director – Education and Family Support reminded Members that the decision about home to school transport had been deferred until the end of March 2021, whilst WG undertook a review of learner travel. He explained that there was however, a significant amount of work currently around contract management, to drive down costs

with the local authority re-tendering over 240 contracts whilst also looking at the wider domain around the use of council assets to help schools.

The Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change stated that this had been a significant concern for a number of years and was raised constantly in the budget monitoring report. She noted the consultation reported back to Cabinet and the decision to defer this pending the review by the WG. This was why this had been put in as a one off pressure until Cabinet were able to review it again.

A Member also referred to page 39, ESF7 and raised concern again, something she did every year, about children receiving transport because there was no safe route to school, particularly areas where children were getting a bus because they did not have a small section of pavement, for example.

The Corporate Director – Education and Family Support assured Members that safe routes to school was something being looked at in the Directorate and wider across the organisation. In addition, the local authority was looking into learners not getting into their first choice of school and having to be transferred to other schools via school transport, putting additional pressure on that budget. A review carried out over the last year however indicated that the numbers not reaching their first choice were extremely low, less than 1%. He noted the particular pressure on Coity with regards to pupil admissions and hoped to address this through Band B proposals. Safe routes to school were being looked at and it was reaching within the thinking in learning travel.

A Member referred to page 39, ESF6 and explained his understanding was that the WG policy had very little flexibility in terms of pupil numbers when new schools were built. What conversations were being had between local authorities and WG to allow flexibility in future years and ensure that schools were still fit for purpose by the time the doors opened?

The Corporate Director – Education and Family Support acknowledged that the local authority was bound by WG policy following the code and statutory guidance. The local authority was lucky to have a mature school modernisation team who were expert in dealing with the policy and delivering. One of the issues that had certainly been flagged up by Members was with regard to sustainably, making the schools large enough, so they coped with additional demand and the transitory nature of families moving. As well as communicating with WG officials, it had been discussed with the Association of Directors of Education in Wales and the Corporate Director – Education & Family Support was happy to raise this again with WG and provide an update.

The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration explained that it was not just new schools that were not allowed to operate with spare capacity, but also existing schools. He would like to see spare capacity to cope with people who moved schools during term time but WG did not allow that flexibility currently.

A Member referred to page 41, ESF1 & 2 and asked whether the savings could realistically be achieved. He asked for reassurance in relation to health & safety on school transport and the need to be 100% sure it was mitigated, as this concerned him.

The Corporate Director – Education and Family Support agreed that health and safety was a top priority within the Directorate and across the organisation. He noted that both of those were currently red and was because neither had been taken forward by Cabinet, as previously discussed. He had been asked over the next couple of months, to look at whether mitigating measures could be put in place. If sufficient mitigating measures could not be put in place then those savings would not go ahead because health and safety was the top priority.

A Member expressed concern that this item had been on the MTFS for the last 3 years and the same concerns were raised every year. She asked why had the review not been done previously and why was it thought deliverable this year?

The Corporate Director – Education and Family Support reassured Members. Firstly a review had been undertaken. The next couple of months would look at what had come out of the review and how some recommendations could be put into practice. Clearly one of the things the Local Authority was trying to do was to make sure, that all those were safe for learners to travel on stating that Members would expect assurance of that and he confirmed his full commitment, but clearly there were other ways of doing things that were equally as safe. The local authority was trying to look at different ways of doing things to provide the same level of health and safety for travellers whilst also making sure these were done within the budget envelope.

A Member referred to page 41, ESF 3 stating that EFS 2, 3, 4 and 6 made reference to vulnerable groups of children and felt that it was not going to be equal and fair. She felt that an equality impact assessment should have been done for each recommendation so that the impact could be understood. She also asked where was the children's rights assessment.

The Corporate Director – Education and Family Support explained that all areas identified within the report, were challenging and was aiming to change practice in order to mitigate any risk to frontline delivery, wherever possible. This included changing practice, changing management, and the processes around supporting learners, so there was a very clear focus on not effecting learners who were benefitting from front line services. That was the guiding principle adopted, certainly within education and other directorates, but again it was difficult. In respect of equality impact assessments, these would be undertaken where required and the Corporate Director – Education & Family Support would be happy to talk through those with Members in due course.

The Member stated that she was really concerned about reducing services to the most vulnerable in the community. In terms of sustainability who was going to take the responsibilities on in an overstretched management structure. She acknowledged the pressures staff were under at the minute and did not think it helped talking about further cuts to their services.

A Member echoed the Member's concerns about the issues and to him the obvious solution was at SCH1. If schools were being asked to provide a 1% efficiency saving, should that saving not go to central services, so that central services were there to support the schools?

The Corporate Director – Education and Family Support stated that he certainly understood the question but the challenge was that all were serving the same ecosystem. Schools faced tough decisions on a daily basis with regard to their budget, and certainly the local authority and central support services faced the same challenges. The local authority worked closely with the Schools Budget forum to make sure any changes in the budget did not adversely affect young people in anyway but it was difficult from a central services point of view. Bridgend ran a very lean central service despite the amount of money spent centrally, per learner, being below the Welsh average. The decision had been made over many years to prioritise school budgets and protect them and certainly over the next couple of years it was going to be a bumpy road for schools and for local authorities to maintain service delivery.

The Member stated that he was very aware of the lean team but it seemed a bit of an anathema, to take services away from that point and expect 56 individual schools to then try to take up the slack when they were under pressure, as well. What was the

purpose of the 1% saving efficiency if it was not to try and provide more central services to act more effectively to support schools. Could the Corporate Director – Education and Family Support explain where the £1million a year would go, if it is not for schools.

The Corporate Director – Education and Family Support explained that it was about looking at the general budget position across the council so that it was fit for purpose. There were areas within both the Education & Family Support and Communities Directorate where there needed to be a one council approach. He was mindful of being one of several Directorates that were looking to support children and young people that ultimately needed to make sure the budget was a balanced one. That was a corporate responsibility, but as a Director he needed to make sure that that service delivery within his Directorate was effective as well.

A Member referred to page 41, ESF2 and asked for a figure on the number of services that would not have an escort on them. In relation to EFS7, the Member felt this should be reviewed in light of everything that had happened in 2020, and going forward into 2021. He would like to think that this was a saving, or cut being reconsidered in light of what was likely to be a really significant impact on pupils going forward.

The Corporate Director – Education and Family Support explained in regard to EFS2 that he did not have information to hand in relation to the actual number of routes and contracts, but was more than happy to find that out from the school transport team.

In regards to ESF7 he noted there were two issues. First of all the obvious impact of the pandemic had on young people and staff, which had been challenging. In addition the development and implementation phase of the new ALN and education & tribunal bill, to determine exactly what inclusion staff were needed, in situ, to deliver it. It would be the same team, but also working with partners across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region and across CSC, to make sure each are supported from a business resilience point of view. Those proposals were not fully developed and would involve some delivery risk if they went ahead.

A Member also raised concern in relation to page 41, ESF2 the proposal to remove escorts on school transport, noting that whilst it had been stated the local authority did not have a statutory obligation, it had an obligation to keep those children safe whilst they were going to school and returning home.

The Corporate Director – Education and Family Support thanked the Member and noted she had provided expert contribution to this debate over the last year or so. He confirmed that there was no statutory requirement around this, but ultimately health and safety was a key area of concern, hence the reason it had been identified as a delivery risk if it went ahead. There were two issues, one that the safety of the learners was paramount and secondly what the local authority would need to do is ensure that it was fully following welsh government policy and guidance on this going forward.

The Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change stated that she appreciated that everyone was asking questions about education and schools but the budget was wider than just education. If at the end of education scrutiny was minded to say, these should be removed, then Members needed to come to the next session with where they were going to put them back. For example, would some of the unpopular savings be transferred into Communities or Social Services & Wellbeing, because the budget had to balance, so what were the alternatives to what was being suggested.

A Member fully accepted and understood what the Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change was saying but he totally disagreed with the word ‘unpopular’ when looking at EFS2 and driver safety. It was not unpopular, it was unsafe.

A Member asked whether it was possible where potential indicative savings for 2022-23 had been earmarked that they could be brought forward as alternatives to some of the decisions for 2021-22 and would that in affect balance the budget.

The Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change stated that this was possible but did depend as some savings needed consultation or procurement so if they were deliverable from the 1<sup>st</sup> April yes, they could be brought forward.

A Member explained that in respect of vulnerable pupils and removing their home to school transport and assistance, this was provided for them, as any child with mobility issues that needed additional support, had this as part of getting themselves around. If maybe they had a car provided or a staff member that was there to support that child and they were responsible for transporting the child, so the Member did not understand why the Council was providing a service that essentially somebody in the community was already having the money to provide for themselves.

The Corporate Directorate – Education and Family Support explained that this was correct and that these were two separate issues. His understanding was that there was support given to families where there were mobility issues. With regards to learners in particular, a learner would only be in receipt of a local authority provided place, with regard to home to school travel, if it was clearly identified within that learners SEN statement or shortly their individual development plan. If it was not stipulated, there was no statutory requirement for the local authority to provide that.

A Member referred to Page 41, EFS4 in relation to Gypsy and Traveller learners and asked with the new structure being proposed how concerned was the Corporate Director – Education & Family Support about children slipping through the net and not receiving the education they deserved while mitigating any disruption with these children's education.

The Corporate Directorate – Education and Family Support explained that the number one concern was mitigating any impact on what any vulnerable group would perceive a service from. He explained that they had moved from the looked after children in education team and other supporting teams who supported vulnerable learners, into the vulnerable groups team. That team had evolved and had attracted additional resources to support a variety of groups of vulnerable learners and that was now called the education engagement team. One of the things that the team had been very effective in doing, was working far closer with schools on delivering this service, not least for those learners in school but also supporting their families, not just in the pandemic but also wider through the school year.

The Headteacher of Llangewydd Junior School and Vice-Chair of Schools Budget Forum explained that the inclusion and engagement team did run a lean service particularly in transport and admissions but never failed to deliver. He confirmed that he did not have any gypsy and travellers at the present time, but the school did have many vulnerable learners and anticipated producing around 25 to 28 individual development plans next year.

The Registered Representative – Church in Wales referred to page 41, EFS5 and noted there was again a reduction to Central South Consortium (CSC) of 1% and asked was it not time for Bridgend to give thought to coming out of CSC and using that money to provide in-house subject advisors.

The Corporate Director – Education and Family Support explained that his view was very clear in regards to CSC and that the value for money from the region was good. He

felt the service provided was effective and certainly, in the main, was reflected in feedback from Headteacher colleagues. The local authority was contractually committed to working with CSC until September 2023. As far as the subject advisors were concerned, they had been called challenge advisors, and were now called improvement partners, and worked with the local authority and schools to help schools and support schools in challenging positions. They did have some subject advisors, notably around the sciences and maths, literacy and IT, so there was some function there, but it was limited and they would certainly not provide an in-house subject advisor team, if we were to move to that model.

The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration agreed partly with what the Registered Representative – Church in Wales, had said in the loss of subject advisors and teacher centres, which had been a long-term trend in educational management. He expressed a need for more subject related advice from improvement partners and had initiated, with CSC, initiatives to build up teacher forums, which existed top down in core subjects, but only existed bottom up for other subjects and he would like to see those expanded. He suggested a pre-council meeting for all Members in respect of blended learning.

A Member referred to Page 41, EFS5 and stated that year on year there had been a cut to the consortium and was it sustainable going forward?

The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration agreed that those cuts were not welcome, but CSC had found the cuts doable and could carry out most of their functions with those cuts.

The Corporate Director – Education and Family Support confirmed that it was challenging, but there had been lots of operational discussions and CSC were maintaining the process and the facilities to support schools. It was aligned with other local authorities.

A Member referred to Page 41, EFS6 and stated that this was an area of concern with the amount of savings or reductions that were listed, noting that the learning support team and governance support team, were effectively the same team. He asked what the impact would be with regards to governor support, school admission support and budget support acknowledging that school governors were volunteers and had large workloads.

The Corporate Director – Education and Family Support thanked the Member for his work with the Bridgend Governors Association. With regards to the team, they were two very small teams but were expert and supported schools to the hilt but it was a challenge and clearly this was indicated in the report. If there were further cuts to the team or if members of staff left and were not replaced, that this would be a challenge and it would impact on service delivery. In terms of school budgets, finance officers also supported schools with deficit budgets and this required additional workforce centrally to support schools through quite challenging times. While this was quite a small saving indicated it would be challenging as indicated by red to achieve.

The Corporate Director – Education and Family Support confirmed that he would amend the narrative in relation to Page 41, ESF4, so it read 'Gypsy, Roma and Traveller'.

The Registered Representatives - Secondary School Sector referred to Page 41, EFS7 and whilst noting this was for 2022-23, asked what was the reasoning behind this being considered at the moment particular as the Corporate Director – Education and Family Support had said earlier, he did not want to have any impact on front line learners, which reducing this, clearly would.

The Corporate Director – Education and Family Support referred to the points that had been discussed several times, that all of the proposals were challenging and not easy. With regard to the following financial year it went back to two elements, firstly benefitting from economies of scale operating across the region, which the ALN Transformation Lead was working towards with other local authorities, and it helped both ways. This should draw upon the expertise of inclusion staff not just at Bridgend, but in the other four local authorities and vice versa, helping business resilience both ways. This was indicated in the MTFs as red as obviously there were challenges in proposing this and the narrative certainly backed that up. Ultimately this would be steered by what eventually came out of the ALN bill, as there would be statutory requirements in there for the local authority so that would shape the thinking going forward. In addition the local authority would need to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment before this proposal was implemented.

A Chairperson referred to Page 41, EFS8 and asked for more information on what the train of thought was here, as there was not a lot of information on there and a number of Directorates had already gone through staffing restructures.

The Corporate Director – Education and Family Support explained that when staff left the service they would not be replaced wherever possible, notwithstanding not increasing additional duties for other staff, but clearly it was important to look at alternative management structures if that opportunity presented itself.

A Member asked that consideration was given to a long term strategic vision before staff left in order to use their expertise to shape the future as opposed to wondering how things would be dealt with once they had left. In using their expertise it may actually result in additional savings being identified over the coming years which would help everything, including efficiency and the long-term sustainability of employment.

The Corporate Director – Education and Family Support stated that he had been charged to look at the longer-term vision by the Chief Executive and was very much focussed on the next month or so ahead, but agreed that staff would help shape the vision ahead as had been done with previous restructures as well.

A Member referred to Page 41, EFS8 and agreed with a previous Member in that the local authority could not keep losing staff and expecting less people to do the same work. In relation to Page 42, SCH1 the Member noted that whilst schools did a marvellous job, there was a disproportionate share to all other services. He suggested a 0.5% cut this year and a 0.5% cut next year, as schools had been warned up to fact that cuts were coming. He was disappointed to see there was not some sort of saving and sharing of the pain within schools this year.

The Cabinet Member Communities pointed out that this was not his area but he accepted the Members points and did not think any Councillors ever came on to the Council to force people into situations where they had to work harder for less and do more with less, but unfortunately that was the reality. The local authority had come through years of stringent austerity and had to live with a budget where money was finite and had to focus resources according to needs. There were no easy choices, it was a balance and if Members felt a cut was wrong in one area they then needed to suggest where else that cut could be made from.

The Leader made the point that there was much uncertainty at present and this was an indicative budget and strategy before Members. It was difficult to make accurate forecasts or predictions about the future of finance. There was a need to prepare budgets that reflected a scenario where the local authority made significant savings. It

was hoped that austerity had ended and would not restart but there was a need to plan for the worst.

A Member stated that there had been a lot of interesting debate about some cuts that when added up came to less than £0.5million. While he was cognisant of a previous comment, it seemed foolhardy to take out £100k and lose the valuable services to all schools for the sake of not implementing an efficiency saving.

A Member noted that if forward savings could be identified, why were those savings not being brought forward on-stream quicker as a way of balancing the budget.

The Leader stated that it would depend on the type of saving that had been made, stating that if the local authority was in a better financial position, then it was sensible not to make those reductions. There were some savings that needed to be made, and those could be brought forward. The Fit for the Future Budget consultation focused on different ways of providing services, as there had been a shift from face to face delivery to online service delivery. This could make significant savings and that was looking to be brought forward including savings on office accommodation costs, which was supported, as that was not having an impact on frontline service delivery, as there was public support for changing the way the local authority delivered some services.

The Chief Executive stated that he wanted to build on what the leader had said. He provided his assurance that in the main when savings were identified for future years, it was usually because there had been some analysis and recognition that either the process involved, perhaps to do with consultation or statutory processes, or indeed the capacity of the service did not allow for that saving to be brought forward. Sometimes it was because a contract or lease ended at a future date where it was known a saving could be made at that point, but not before. He agreed in principle, and stated that this could be looked at again but he wanted to reassure Members that one of the first places when seeking to make savings for the coming year was whether something could be brought forward or not. Often having done the detailed analysis there were good reasons why they could not.

A Member stated that the report referred to policy changes which included reducing services to the statutory minimum, as well as cutting some discretionary services, and asked which statutory services had the Cabinet already looked at, reducing to a minimum and which discretionary services had the Cabinet considered cutting to meet budgetary pressures. The report also stated there will be new pressures surrounding Covid-19 but that the Welsh Government (WG) would continue to provide funding for this, however if there was a shortfall in central funding would the local authority have to absorb this and what estimate had been given on the impact of this. Finally the report referred to the impact of additional WG legislative changes on the local authority e.g. Environment Act, the commitment to eradicate homelessness, the implications of the Local Government Act, etc. The Member asked if the Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change expected this to be full funded by the WG and if not he felt a recommendation needed to be that the Committee and the Council push back on the WG to ensure that any additional legislation which came the Local Authority's way, did not place additional financial pressure on the Authority, without the consequential funding.

The Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change explained that often the discretionary services were those that actually helped to reduce the demand on mandatory services. It was fair to say that every single service had been looked at and these were the proposals in front of Members. The Corporate Director – Education and Family Support had gone through some of the proposals, some of which were a reduction in statutory services. It was much more nuanced that this at the minimum

level. It was a little clearer in respect of Social Services and Wellbeing about the sort of levels but even then there were different ways of delivering services.

In terms of Covid-19 what was likely in the future was complete uncertainty. The local authority had been fortunate that the WG set up a hardship fund and had been successful at getting money from that, including loss of income claims, money for Council Tax Reduction Scheme and the possibility of some help on council tax, but that was yet to be determined. Homelessness had been supported up until now, but it was not clear what would happen next year, with WG officials being clear it would be a whole new budget round and resources.

Even though there had been a better settlement, the Local Authority still needed to be very careful, and not abandon principles or financial governance, just because it had been successful this year. Strong representations were always made regarding money to fund additional legislation. It was not always successful and sometimes it was not known how much some of the new legislative requirements were going to cost. The ALN Bill in particular, had much wider ramifications than anybody thought and certainly the new Homelessness Guidance, was likely to cost the Council a £2M pressure.

The Member thanked the Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change and stated that one of the recommendations coming out of the Committee should be to support Cabinet in writing to the WG to ensure that any additional legislation came with the consequential funding. Ultimately if it did not, the political choices which the Cabinet needed to make about statutory services or even discretionary services, would be all the more difficult.

The Leader thanked the Member for his support in terms of the point and the principle, which was a vital one if new responsibilities and statutory responsibilities were placed on the Local Authority that they were funded in full and that funding was a permanent increase in funding. Sometimes the Authority got short term temporary funding made available, but the responsibility was a permanent responsibility, cost, and pressure.

A Member referred to pages 24/25 4.10.1 and explained that the paragraph talked about an 'assumed Council tax increase of 3.9%', but the wording at the end of the paragraph to 4.11.1 stated 'the proposed Council Tax increase for 2021-22 onwards would remain at 4.5%.'

The Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change confirmed that she would check this.

A Member referred to page 28 4.14.1, in respect of 'Fit for the Future' and noted there had been a 58% reduction in responses this year. She did appreciate how difficult the year was, but she wanted to understand how the Council had ensured that the survey was completed across all economic groups.

The Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change stated that it was hard to say as it had been an unprecedented year but the Local Authority had tried its best, to get to everyone normally reached. Every single group, as far as possible, was represented and the Communications Team had gone out of their way to make the survey available and to talk to people. It was clear that some of the face to face consultation could not happen and the number of contributors had been significantly lower. The responses had been verified and were statistically sound but it was hard to be sure it was completely representative of every single group. The Consultation Engagement and Equalities Manager was also the Equalities Officer and so was very conscious that consultation should not be just with people with IT access. The methodology was set out in the report and she felt Members would be satisfied that

every effort had been made and there were contributions from people who were not technology savvy. It was a statutory requirement but it had been an odd year.

The Leader explained that certainly there was some learning from the consultation on the budget but explained that the Local Authority had reached out to some new groups, which was to be welcomed. This would be built on next year and efforts would be redoubled, to reach groups who were digitally excluded, but some ways of consulting with people would be retained because some people had found it easier this year.

### Communities

A Member referred to page 41, COM1 and noted that it was amber and the £300k cut to the service. He was not against the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) process and it had worked well but there were many smaller clubs where it may not be appropriate. He felt that pushing ahead with the policy was wrong, where some clubs were concerned and in respect of the narrative which noted a 'reduction of grass cut areas etc.' he was concerned that the cut of £300k should not be there.

The Corporate Director – Communities explained the saving was in there as a potential saving reduction from transfers via the CAT process. It was voluntary and needed to have a very robust business plan process behind it, so there was assurance that the organisation taking on the responsibility had the ability to maintain the facility and that it was financially viable to ensure the vibrancy of that club going forward. It was not something that clubs would be mandated to do, but encouraged to do, should they have the right resources. In respect of narrative the amount of maintenance undertaken on children's play was not going to be reduced. There were some budgetary reductions about reducing the number of cuts to areas of grassland across the borough, but the local authority would ensure children's play areas were safe and fit to use as there was a duty of care to children for health and safety reasons for children's play.

The Head of Operations – Community Services updated Members that the CAT process was going well and there had been quite a lot of success. Nearly all of the bowls greens within the borough were now being maintained by the relevant clubs. A large amount of the £300k saving would be attributable to CAT and would be deliverable but some clubs would struggle, although the Local Authority would not go to full cost recovery as long as clubs were committed to the CAT process and every club in the borough had expressed an interest. It could be a challenge if some decided to pull away. One of the things that was approved in a previous Cabinet report was to sign off other saving measures as well and this included reviewing grass-cutting areas, making reductions there and also looking at children's play areas, although not reducing the quality, but potentially the quantity. £300k was a big saving to achieve but all the choices were difficult.

The Cabinet Member - Communities stated the decision to expand the CAT programme had not been taken lightly. The figure reflected there would not be a requirement to maintain playing fields to the standard that leagues and other organisations would need, as this would be down to the clubs and was a direct reflection of the policy, which he felt was right. There was a commitment from the Local Authority to support those clubs. The Cabinet Member Communities did not agree with removing the saving.

A Member referred to page 42, COM1 and asked whether Newbridge Fields was included and if so, how much of the £300k was attributable to Newbridge Fields as the site's complexity made it highly unlikely that it would be able to be addressed and achieved within a year.

The Head of Operations – Community Services explained that in terms of the £300k this was a best estimate coupled with other savings in the section assuming everything

would CAT transfer in the financial year, although Newbridge Fields did not have to transfer in the coming year. Newbridge Fields was complex and a separate report had been commissioned to look at how this would fit together with the potential to have a joint body oversee the entire area and various ways it could potentially work as a CAT transfer or other options. In terms of exact figures for individual transfers, he did not have the information to hand, but could provide it later.

A Member, who was a Member of Bridgend Town Council asked for clarification in respect of CAT's as it had been suggested that Town Councils be invited to contribute and he felt very strongly against this.

The Cabinet Member Communities explained that this was not the case. Newbridge Fields was a complex issue. There were a number of organisations that had a vested interest in Newbridge Fields. Whether or not Bridgend Town Council wanted to be involved in a possible management committee, was for them to decide. He suggested waiting until the consultants had done their work and produced a report and the Local Authority would then look to consult with those that required consultation.

A Member also stated that Newbridge Fields was not only playing fields but also a public open space. It was also the flood plain in Bridgend and was the protection for the Town of Bridgend. She again asked how much of the £300k was attributed to Newbridge Fields.

The Cabinet Member Communities agreed this was very complex and a way had to be found to move forward on that. In respect of the £300k Officers were not in a position to give a definite answer but promised to come back and provide an answer in the written form.

A Member referred to page 42, COM1 and asked for clarity where it said reduction of grass cut areas and in respect of play areas. She asked if there was a statutory duty to supply play areas and equipment for children.

The Head of Operations – Community Services explained in relation grass cut areas, in the current financial year, there had been a reduction in frequency made, so less cuts than in previous years. It was not felt there could be a further reduction in frequency or there was the potential for high levels of complaints. It was now about looking at a reduction in areas cut, choosing areas that would no longer be cut, and could be signed off by the Cabinet Member – Communities. In respect of the Play areas, it was not about reducing the quality but about reducing the quantity, so identifying some that potentially may not be used anymore. It was a statutory duty, and there was still a need to make sure efficiency was there but if savings were to be made, it would be a mixture of those things.

The Member stated she felt careful consideration was needed in closing any play areas.

The Corporate Director – Communities stated that the Local Authority would not be getting anywhere near the position where it would be below the statutory requirement. What needed to be done was a sensible look at some of the older or less used play areas where there would not be significant impact if they were removed. There was a need to look at play areas making sure they were suitable for a wide range of age groups, had good equipment and were looked after. For children, play was not just about ensuring there was equipment, play was about ensuring there was maintained spaces to kick a ball, run around, safe places for children to play which did not necessarily have to include formalised equipment.

A Member stated in regard to open space provision the last open space play audit identified that there was insufficient local play area space in most wards in the borough.

A Member stated that in terms of grass cutting and weed spraying, she had asked previously if Town and Community Councils could be provided with the cost of extra grass cutting and weed spraying, if they wished to pursue it.

The Head of Operations – Community Services explained that many Town and Community Councils did undertake additional grass cutting and activities of that nature. Normally those Community or Town Councils would undertake that by contractual arrangement themselves or some might even employ their own staff. He asked that Members link in with the Authority so additional grass cuts could be coordinated and happen in-between the cuts that were contractually undertaken.

The Chairperson suggested that the Head of Operations – Community Services send the names of the contacts to the Member.

A Member stated that after some mixed messages there seemed to be agreement that the number of children's play areas would be reduced. He asked when that exercise would take place, decisions made and would Town and Community Councils have time to evaluate and look at what they could potentially save. In relation to Newbridge Fields the issue ran in line with Maesteg Welfare Park. There had been some initial consultation but no costings had been available. If there was a saving, how much was that saving as this reflected in the cost of running the asset. He noted that Town and Community Councils needed to know what was being faced prior to setting their budgets so that they could consider and possibly include in their budgets going forward.

The Corporate Director – Communities explained it was important to note the commitment to have great children's play across the borough but the Local Authority needed to look at those spaces and remove any that didn't function as well whilst looking at the impact of that on the Borough. A review was being undertaken with the Cabinet Member and wider team and she felt there would be conversations to be had around narrative when those to be reviewed were identified. With regard to the costings of CAT transfers this was a critical part about organisations and clubs taking on the ownership of bowling greens, parks, playing fields and this would be supplied as part of that CAT transfer and business case that they prepared.

The Head of Operations – Community Services explained that he was a little surprised at the comment in relation to the CAT costings, because the CAT process had got a lot slicker with many underway and the Community Asset Transfer Officer had been very good at supplying all CAT costings including utility costs, breakdowns of different pavilions, etc. In addition costs for maintaining pitches, etc., had previously been published so all that information could be supplied in due course.

The Member stated that he would very much like to see the overall of running Maesteg Welfare Park and Newbridge fields.

The Corporate Director – Communities confirmed that was something that could be provided.

The Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change explained in regard to Town and Community Council (TCC) budgets, there was obviously a timetabling issue which had never really been solved. If TCC's worked in advance with the Head of Operations – Community Services about what they wanted to do, it was incumbent on them to set the precept accordingly. It wasn't necessarily dependant on the Council's budget. The difficulty was that if TCC's raised the precept to do the work that had been

removed as a saving in the MTFs then the resident was still paying the same amount in council tax, because regardless of who did what, it was still going to cost the resident.

A Member referred to the closure of play areas and suggested that before any closures took place the Local Authority should survey local residents to see what they wanted.

The Corporate Director - Communities noted that this was something that could be considered when looking at those areas.

A Member referred to a WG survey carried out in 2019, which stipulated no one on any estate, should be more than 500m from a playground, or a play area and felt this report should be reviewed.

The Corporate Director – Communities noted that this was a good point and something to be considered during the review.

A Member referred to page 43, COM2 and stated that she was really concerned about the relocation of the Community Recycling Centre to Pyle. It was not about the relocation, but the lack of engagement, especially with the School. She explained that local Members were informed at the time of the consultation that all access would be taken via the A48. Pyle and Kenfig Hill had significant traffic issues, especially around the industrial estate and garden centre.

The Corporate Director – Communities acknowledged that this was something that needed to be addressed on the estate. There was lot of traffic movement in and out of the garden centre and estate and there were some traffic management works being undertaken to improve the junction which was an important part of the recycling centre relocation. The junction needed to be looked at to allow traffic to be managed in a more effective way whilst considering the speed the traffic moved through the site. It was about more efficient use of the Pyle centre, and ensuring improved recycling rates and sustainability going forward.

The Head of Operations – Community Services explained he could not comment specifically on the point about the school. Full planning permission had been granted and all of the appropriate legal processes were undertaken at the time including requirements for statutory consultations. The works on the junction had been tendered recently had prices had been received back for improvement works, hence the green saving, evidenced on the MTFs proposal as the site was being constructed. In terms of the consultation period, he could go back and confirm exactly what was done, but this was historical, the planning stage had passed and permission had been granted some time ago.

The Member thanked the Officers for their comments but felt there would be significant public unrest due to concerns that they had not been consulted with. She did not feel the actual engagement had been good. Furthermore, she felt this was being done to save £60k worth of money.

The Head of Operations – Community Services explained that he appreciated the concerns but in relation to the comment about the £60k saving, it wasn't just about a £60k saving, it was about an improved facility, compared to Stormy Down. There was no re-use shop there and this site would have a re-use shop, which would improve not just recycling, but re-use facilities, so would be a better site benefitting users.

A Member asked for reassurance that there would be some meaningful consultation in respect of play areas and asked for clarification in respect of grass cutting at Council owned cemeteries. In addition, he was concerned that if grass cutting moved to TCC's

there would be an uncoordinated approach which could have an effect on wildlife and ecosystems and hoped there would be advice given on the impact of overzealous grass cutting.

The Corporate Director explained she was committed to looking across children's play, mitigating any excessive community impact but admitted that she did not think that any children's play would have no community impact, but felt it would be prudent to have conversations with the community as and when those decisions were reached.

The Head of Operations – Community Services explained briefly in respect of grass cutting, that he didn't expect overzealous grass cutting to be an issue. He didn't intend for any areas that were regularly cut, to be cut more frequently. If they were, they were certainly not areas that were so unkempt that would lead to ecology and wildlife living there. He noted more naturalised areas were likely to be created which would be an improvement from an ecology perspective. In respect of grass cutting at Council owned cemeteries, the cut to the grass cutting budget was for open space grass cutting, so the cemetery budget would not be affected.

It was agreed that the Cabinet Member - Communities, Corporate Director - Communities, and Head of Operations - Community Services would attend the meeting the next day for the remainder of Members' questions regarding Communities Directorate savings proposals.

201. URGENT ITEMS

None.

**CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - THURSDAY, 21 JANUARY 2021**

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
HELD REMOTELY VIA SKYPE ON THURSDAY, 21 JANUARY 2021 AT 10:00**

Present

Councillor CA Green – Chairperson

|            |              |             |                   |
|------------|--------------|-------------|-------------------|
| TH Beedle  | JPD Blundell | MC Clarke   | N Clarke          |
| RJ Collins | PA Davies    | SK Dendy    | DK Edwards        |
| J Gebbie   | T Giffard    | DG Howells  | A Hussain         |
| M Jones    | MJ Kearn     | JE Lewis    | RL Penhale-Thomas |
| AA Pucella | KL Rowlands  | RMI Shaw    | JC Spanswick      |
| MC Voisey  | LM Walters   | KJ Watts    | DBF White         |
| PJ White   | A Williams   | AJ Williams | JE Williams       |

Apologies for Absence

SE Baldwin, P Davies, DRW Lewis, B Sedgebeer, E Venables and CA Webster

Officers:

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Jackie Davies      | Head of Adult Social Care                               |
| Nicola Echanis     | Head of Education & Family Support                      |
| Deborah Exton      | Interim Deputy Head of Finance                          |
| Meryl Lawrence     | Senior Democratic Services Officer - Scrutiny           |
| Gill Lewis         | Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change |
| Claire Marchant    | Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing        |
| Martin Morgans     | Head of Performance and Partnership Services            |
| Chris Morris       | Accountant  |
| Janine Nightingale | Corporate Director - Communities                        |
| Andrew Rees        | Democratic Services Manager                             |
| Zak Shell          | Head of Neighbourhood Services                          |
| Tracy Watson       | Scrutiny Officer  |
| Kelly Watson       | Chief Officer Legal, HR and Regulatory Services         |

Invitees:

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| Councillor Nicole Burnett | Cabinet Member Social Services and Early Help       |
| Councillor Huw David      | Leader  |
| Councillor Dhanisha Patel | Cabinet Member for Wellbeing and Future Generations |
| Mark Shephard             | Chief Executive                                     |
| Councillor Hywel Williams | Deputy Leader                                       |
| Councillor Richard Young  | Cabinet Member for Communities                      |

203. ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON

RESOLVED: That Councillor C Green be elected as Chairperson of the Combined Meeting of all Scrutiny Committees in relation to Item 4, in respect of Social Services and Wellbeing and the Chief Executives Directorate.

204. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

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

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

The Chair thanked the Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change for her concise overview of the report. Members asked the following questions:

Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate

A Member noted that the report had two Appendices, one containing Budget Pressures and one with Budget Reduction Proposals. For Social Services and Wellbeing (SSWB) there were pressures proposed of £5m, yet on the budget savings, the total was about a tenth. It was well known that Social Services and Wellbeing was a reactive department and could see overspends by some £2m. He asked Officers to comment on the disparity between the two figures.

The Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change acknowledged that SS&W was a demand lead service and there was constant pressure on the budget. There were lots of pieces of work in progress to control that demand, but this was one of the services severely affected by Covid-19. There were opportunities that should enable more efficiencies to be delivered, but that would take time. The savings and the pressures were not necessarily linked, they were for different reasons, so there would continue to be pressures, but that didn't stop opportunities to deliver savings.

The Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing advised that this had been a year like no other. Social Services and Wellbeing was a demand lead service and was statutorily responsive to the needs of individuals and the communities served. Practice had been transformed over a number of years, working in a strength-based way, focussing on what people could do. People with very high level of needs of care and support were connected into communities and had their outcomes met in ways which didn't mean they were as reliant on traditional care and support services. There were reductions in the number of people who had come into care homes, because of investment in reablement services and this was one of the areas of savings. Opportunities to provide daytime occupation and opportunities for people, were seen very differently. It didn't mean that the pressures went away but they related both to quantum of service provided, which linked to the demographics. There was an ageing population which brought with it an increased requirement for some, for care and support and that was reflected in the budget pressures. In addition, this related to the cost of service provision. The social care workforce had been at the fore of the response and the value of the workforce, had been recognised in the budget pressures in terms of the uplift. There had been increasing creativity during the pandemic. Direct payments had been used flexibly for both children and adults with care and support needs, to control their own support needs, and those were reflected in the pressures. There would continue to be transformation in terms of the services provided while continuing to build on the strengths that enabled things to be done more cost effectively, which is why there were savings in terms of practice and in terms of day opportunities, highlighted in the MTFS.

The Cabinet Member for Social Services and Early Help offered her assurance to Members that this was a period of positive transformation. Officers were forward thinking and experienced and were working on evidenced based changes, but had not seen the

benefit of savings that had been identified. There were new grant funding streams coming online all the time, from Welsh Government (WG) and it was about responding to them and what the new funding priorities were going to be from WG. The team were responding to pressures that were completely unknown and now, due to long Covid-19, there would be social care pressures from much younger adults. There was just no idea what the demands on the service were going to be.

A Member referred to page 43, SSW3 and made reference to the National Living Wage and asked for clarification whether this was the real or the foundation living wage, and whether terms and conditions of all commissioned services would be implemented under the ethical procurement and workforce partnership council.

The Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing confirmed to the Member that this was based on the national living wage. The remuneration of the Social Care Sector was an issue receiving significant attention from WG at the moment. A White Paper was out for consultation which set out some of the challenges the Social Care Sector faced, recognising there needed to be some stepped changes in the way services were commissioned going forward. At a national Welsh Government level, it was recognised that there needed to be some sustainable investment in public services to address the issues being faced. The Workforce Strategy for Health and Social Care talked about working towards parity of esteem with the NHS within a 5 year period however this was a challenging proposition. She gave assurances that in relation to services commissioned the Local Authority worked largely to the principles set out in the White Paper. There was an understanding that at a national level there were significant policy issues, which remained unresolved, and which the White Paper would start to garner views, in terms of a resolution.

The Member did not feel the question had been answered. She asked for a guarantee in terms of commissioned services, that all staff and all contractors should be paid the foundation living wage.

The Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing advised that at the moment she could not give a guarantee, as that was not what was reflected in the MTFs proposals being scrutinised. The MTFs proposals were based on the national living wage.

A Member referred to page 39, SSW2 and asked for clarity on the figure as it covered a multitude of areas and wanted to know how much related to Direct Payments.

The Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing explained that the entirety of the pressure related to Direct Payments. The reference to complexity was because that in addition to an increase in the quantum there was complexity of casework. The challenges faced meant there was a need to be flexible within the capacity and capabilities, which had led to an increase in the use of Direct Payments, to give flexibility to individuals to secure their support in a way which worked for them. She felt the descriptor was correct as it was both about an increase in the number of Direct Payments and the complexity of needs that those Direct Payments were supporting.

The Member noted that the figure was in the recurring column, but was not shown across future years.

The Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change explained that the figure would not go over each of the years, it was put in once, and it went into the base budget.

A Member referred to Page 39, SSW3 and stated that there was a big question about commissioning contracts. When they were introduced it was down to a financial saving, as people weren't getting paid the national minimum wage. He noted it was £429k for

2020-21 and then a recurring amount. He felt there needed to be a serious review in terms of commissioned contracts to start looking at cooperative models, insourcing, etc. as this was not the only way. He felt that it sounded like it was not actually saving money, which was the idea when it was introduced.

The Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing confirmed that one of the strategic priorities was to review the way Domiciliary Care was commissioned. In common with many other authorities, the Local Authority was looking to move towards a more outcome-focused way of commissioning that would challenge some of the traditional ways based on task and time. There had been innovation and creativity seen during the pandemic with groups of providers working together. She had talked earlier about outcome focussed and strength based practice, which needed to be reflected in the way services were commissioned. This would give care workers, who saw things on the frontline, the flexibility they needed. The relationships with providers in Bridgend meant that when the Local Authority came to the formal recommissioning of domiciliary care provision, it would be in a good place to move to a different model.

The Cabinet Member for Social Services and Early Help explained that it was her ambition, and that of Cabinet, that procurement look at other outcomes, other than financial, including community benefits, social benefits, the focus on the individual and the communities being served. That was definitely something being considered and she was questioning this at every point. She was committed to making sure that outsourced domiciliary care workers were paid a good living wage as they were really important community members with many working long hours. She noted it impacted on women in particular, something the crisis had shown.

The Chairperson agreed with the Cabinet Member and stated that these people were some of the most important workers, particularly during this pandemic, and certainly should be paid exactly what they should be entitled to.

The Member fully accepted and appreciated what the Cabinet Member had said but felt it needed to be clear what people were being paid in these contracts, as it didn't sound like it was in line with that committed to by the Council.

The Chairperson stated that it was hoped that from here on in all contracts would ensure categorically, that everyone gets paid what they are entitled to be paid and what they should be paid.

A Member asked if agency staff had been used during the pandemic, where staff had been sick, and what was the cost.

The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing confirmed that agency workforce had been used. This pandemic had impacted hugely on frontline staff, in terms of the nature of their work. They had become exposed to the virus, because they lived and worked in the same communities. People had become unwell themselves and some had been required to self-isolate, so that had meant the need to bring agency workforce. The Council had benefited from the social care hardship fund to support the sector. There had been additional money to go into both domiciliary care and to residential care providers, to enable them to offset the impact of those additional costs around their workforce and additional costs they had incurred.

The Member stated that she would still like to have costings, if possible, in respect of agency staff and what wage they were on. Were they in parity with local authority staff; were they getting more or getting less?

A Member referred to page 42, SSW1 and the £90k saving. Whilst it was only 3% of the budget, before things like this could be agreed he felt the Committee needed to know what was the impact and what were the alternative methods of service delivery.

The Head of Adult Social Care explained that Members would recall previous Scrutiny reports on the review of daytime opportunities alongside the prevention and wellbeing agenda. The pandemic has stopped some of those plans in terms of community resilience. The overall delivery of daytime opportunities was still being looked at and constantly reviewed, with the experience over the last 10 months, reshaping how that would be done. In terms of the £90k, what had been done was to look at current budget levels, in those areas, and where there were vacancies, reduce the budgets without any direct impact on service delivery. This would be achievable in the next financial year.

The Member asked if the £90k was a staff saving and what those staff were doing before and was that work going to be added to other peoples.

The Head of Adult Social Care explained to the Member that she could come back to the Member with a fuller explanation but these were vacancies being held within the service.

The Leader stated that it was important for Members to know that the demand for day services had changed. Part of this reflected the pressures talked about earlier in terms of direct payments. It had been seen that some residents were choosing to use direct payments instead, to pay for services they managed themselves. This had enabled the structure of those day services to change. The service had evolved over the years, savings and efficiencies made, but it had also responded to different demands from service users, which was important. He suggested that more information could be brought back to Members on that.

A Member referred to how the demand for day services had changed and wondered what savings/impact that was having on the day-care centre?

The Leader explained that during the pandemic day services had continued to be delivered, but in a different way, with support directed to many of those residents at home, which had brought different pressures. In terms of more long-term service changes, better outcomes had been delivered for some of those residents, because they were more independent, with some taking up employment opportunities, and they had been happier with the outcomes. Efficiency savings had already been made in the day service, with a rationalised number of sites and continuing with the re-configuration of the staffing structure, to reflect this. It was crucial to stress that people were still being supported, but in a different. Some people wanted to go to one place and do the same activities but other people wanted more personalised and individual activities, and that was what was being delivered and provided to them.

In respect of supporting people in the community, the Member asked whether this was residents that were having direct payments and were actually paying for that support, or were they having that support through social services.

The Head of Adult Social Care explained there had been a significant change journey in daytime opportunities within Adult Social Care and that in excess of £1m had been saved over the last 6 years. A significant amount had been done in enhancing community developments, some through active support through social services. Some of this was about promoting independence because people were able to access what they needed within the community. There wasn't a one model fits all, because everyone had different needs. There was now 10 months experience of delivering something different in communities and supporting people in lots of different ways. Currently, the service was reflecting on what had happened by talking to people who had been

supported and looking at the model, in terms of that. There could be significant changes, or small changes, some could be through direct payments, but that was just one option out of a number currently being considered.

The Member thanked the Head of Adult Social Care for her explanation and asked what was the future of the Bridgend Resource Centre.

The Head of Adult Social Care explained that this was one of the flagship buildings in terms of what was delivered there, currently very specialist care and she would like that to continue in terms of enhancing that specialist care and potentially as a hub with other partners. There was a need for some specialist places in order to support some people with the most complex needs, including individuals with learning disability and dementia, so that would be some of the modelling being done over the next couple of months.

The Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing explained there had been massive innovation and creativity, over the years, and building on that, it was important to work with people with learning disabilities and other disabilities and families and carers, in designing those services of the future. Most people with learning disabilities wanted to work and contribute. There were some fantastic schemes, which could be built on, and it was important not to give a blueprint today, but that this was done alongside the people who actually used the services.

A Member asked how direct payments were monitored and reviewed.

The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing explained that they were audited, from a financial point of view, in the same way that everybody who had care and support, needed a plan, and had at least an annual review from their social worker. They were reviewed that way in terms of the review of the care plan as well.

A Member referred to Page 42, SSW2 and explained that he could not see how the narrative related to the budget reductions being proposed and asked how the narrative related to the figures.

The Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing explained that these were difficult ones because they didn't relate to a specific service, building or members of staff. The savings were built up accumulatively from working in the strength-based way, supporting people with care and support in different ways, which meant, accumulatively, less money was spent. By working with individuals to understand what matters to them, it could be they would rather access a community centre or community hub, during the day, reducing the number of domiciliary care calls they have a day. They are happier and have better outcomes and there is some reduction in the budget. As a result there could be a 100 people who have similar adjustments to their care plan, building on the strength-based way. It was difficult to list all those individual changes.

The Member explained that he understood what the Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing was saying, but asked why are they red for the subsequent two years.

The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing explained that they were red because of the uncertainty in terms of coming through the Covid-19 period and what had been seen was quite unusual in terms of the way care and support was provided. There was a significant reduction of placements in care homes, which was understandable and an increase in complexity of care and support within the community because people were remaining within their own homes. While there was hope for the vaccine to be rolled out and that WG could reduce restrictions, it was not known how long this would take so the impact of that on people with care and support needs could not be planned as well as normally.

The Cabinet Member for Social Services and Early Help explained that the Local Authority had set out before the Covid-19 crisis to really start pushing the convention agenda, co-production, working with communities, through transformation funding. Covid-19 had put everything on hold and that way of working was not possible until people could start getting together again. The unknowns that had come out of Covid-19 could not be underestimated and so the budget reduction proposals had to remain red.

A Member stated that he was not clear at all on SSW2 and felt that the narrative needed greater clarity.

A Member thanked the Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing for her comments but did not feel she could actually make any proposals based on the documentation provided, as there was nothing to make any recommendations on.

The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing stated that she took on board the comments about needing to be far clearer in the explanatory notes exactly what was meant and that hopefully her earlier explanation supported what was being proposed. Direct payments was part of that solution but there was always more that needed to be done to develop the community models. She drew Members attention that there was a very ambitious set of proposals from Bridgend partners, to build on all the good work that had already been done and to take the local authority to the next level, in terms of transformation but money next year would be less than anticipated and that would create partners across Bridgend, real challenges, in terms of delivering on this agenda. There was a need to look at revised business cases, which could be brought to Scrutiny, to deliver on these objectives which adds to the red RAG rating which was already indicated due to Covid-19.

A Member asked if there was any way to improve communications, without betraying any form of confidentiality so that the public could get a greater understanding of what the Directorate provided. There was a perception that the Council precept was used to collect waste, to look after the roads, etc., when in fact a large amount of public money was being spent on looking after vulnerable people.

A Member, explaining her own experience, asked whether the Local Authority was up to date with all reviews for complex cases because it was one way of saving a huge amount of money.

The Cabinet Member for Social Services and Early Help agreed with the previous Member and said that the Directorate had stepped up its positive communications over the last year but there was always room for positive stories showing exactly what was being done.

The Chief Executive fully agreed with the Communications challenge and hoped that it had not gone un-noticed that Communications had significantly stepped up over the last year to ensure that both Members and the public had a stream of communications and press releases. The challenge was a challenge for all, including Directors and elected Members, not just the Communications Team. There was clearly a deficit in terms of understanding e.g. people didn't understand how much a care package costs in the same way they didn't understand it costs £5k a year to send a child to school for a year. There was a need to be more straightforward and get those messages out to the public so they had a greater understanding about the pressures on the Local Authority and some of the statutory requirements, where money needed to be found.

The Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing stated that in relation to communications there was such an opportunity, post Covid-19, because people were

valuing and recognising the contribution of the social care workforce alongside the health workforce, and she would redouble efforts with Communications colleagues to make sure that what actually happened on the ground was understood and communicated. In terms of reviews, work was always being done in this area in an integrated way with health colleagues. Some placements were expensive, both in Adults and Children's services. The Local Authority operated from quite an efficient base in Bridgend, with the number of children and young people out of area residential placements being low, compared to the rest of Wales. That meant, in terms of the budget, further efficiencies were not available but there were some very high cost, complex situations, that were being reviewed constantly and were always in discussions with colleagues to ensure those were being taken forward and reviewed in the right person centred way with partners.

The Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change endorsed everything that was being said and there had never been a better time, in respect of communication with the general public and stakeholders, with the huge focus on social care. The Local Authority had sent out leaflets and budget books in the traditional way, and had tried hard to be innovative in connecting with people, who perhaps, in some cases, were not interested, in what the Council did. She would look at how digitally opportunity could be captured and see how better information on some statutory services could be provided. It was one of the top three that came back from the budget consultation, so perhaps a little bit more information would be helpful.

The Deputy Leader stated that greater awareness of the budget had been a real central theme in what he had tried to achieve. He would welcome constructive dialogue on how to get that message across with greater clarity of what was provided to the public.

A Member asked where the Local Authority was in terms of assessments with all the added problems surrounding Covid-19.

The Head of Adult Social Care agreed to come back with the figures/details on that.

The Chairperson advised that Members felt that further clarity regarding the background and substance of some proposals was needed to enable them to make recommendations and that Members would like the opportunity to revisit these proposals with further detail before making recommendations. Members were in agreement and the Chairperson asked if it was possible to have another meeting in order to make recommendations across the board with confidence.

Following discussions the Chief Officer Legal, HR and Regulatory Services advised that the meeting could be adjourned today, on the basis that the Committee would need to get queries to Directors today to give them, tomorrow to collate further information for Members. Subject to Member and Officer availability, another meeting could be arranged for Monday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021 to consider the feedback received from Directors. The report containing the Combined Scrutiny Committees' recommendations would need to be finalised for send out on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup>, to meet the statutory requirements for publishing the Agenda for the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting to be held on 1<sup>st</sup> February.

The Chairperson thanked the Chief Officer Legal, HR and Regulatory Services and advised that the Members of all 4 Committees would be grateful.

Members agreed to arrangements for an adjourned meeting to be held on the following Monday, 25<sup>th</sup> January and to the identification of proposals for which they required further clarity.

#### Chief Executive's Directorate

A Member referred to Page 40, CEX2 and asked if this was a fully funded commitment from the WG and had there been an uplift in the Local Government Settlement to accommodate this.

The Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change explained that the regulations had changed twice and it was WG's ambition to eradicate homelessness. As a result some quite stringent guidelines were put in place at the beginning of Covid-19, which were updated and strengthened, roundabout July time which meant a duty to provide temporary and permanent accommodation. A variety of solutions had been used and a huge amount of work had been done with partners in Housing Associations, plus hotels, Airbnb, etc. Councils were having real difficulty with the new regulations and it required significant finance. That had been funded until now, for the year, but had been put in as a pressure into the budget because it was not known whether it would be funded in part or in full. It may be that the Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change would be coming back to Members next year and saying funds had been received for it, in part or in full, but the Local Authority could not go forward in a budget, in that position. There was an indication that there may possibly be an increase in the Housing Support Grant, which might negate some of the required funding.

The Member stated that he would like to see a recommendation coming forward from the Committee that Cabinet are supported, alongside the WLGA in lobbying the WG for a long term package of support, to support these legislative changes.

A Member referred to Page 40, CEX3 and sought clarification in respect of a new policy officer role, but reducing the HR function.

The Chief Executive explained that they were very different things. HR dealt primarily with internal policies and maybe staff policies. What was being talked about here was having a plethora of needs to respond to various bills, and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act. In addition, the post had a research and development function. He confirmed that an existing officer was already doing part of the role, paid for currently by a health grant in the main. That grant ended at the end of March and it was clear, because of the lean management structure, the requirement to have someone who could help to respond to legislative demands as well as some of the recovery issues that had been talked about.

A Member referred to Page 40, CEX4 in relation to the ICT Digital Strategy Licences and asked if ICT bills were going up because everyone was working from home.

The Head of Partnership Services explained that the Local Authority had found itself previously fortunate having been locked into a low level price with Microsoft. Microsoft had then moved their pricing model to a cloud based service, which had seen exponential growth in terms of the licencing cost, forcing the Authority's hand to move to the cloud, alongside all of the other 22 Local Authorities. It had been raised at an all Wales level, in terms of price increases, but whether staff were on premises working or working at home the cost would still be the same.

A Member referred to Page 43, CEX2 and was concerned, on public health grounds, about the domestic pest control service being withdrawn. He asked that the Chief

Executive consider a model that would protect those on benefits, so that those that could not afford to pay received a service, whilst those that could afford to pay, could make their own arrangements.

The Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change made reference to the Pest Control Contract report to Cabinet on the 19 January 2021, which provided details about other Councils and how they delivered the service. Three options were put forward, the one in the MTFs, in front of Members today, which would be to remove the service. Some Local Authorities in Wales provided a service for free, some a service which was chargeable and some that provided a service which gave a discount for those on benefits. The current contractor had said it would be extremely expensive to continue to provide the contact in the current way, on the basis that they had a huge number of aborted calls because the service was free. She explained that Cabinet had asked that the options were revisited to see what sort of service could be provided. Talks had taken place with Shared Regulatory Services (SRS), who provided the service in Cardiff and the Vale, although they would not take the service while it was completely free because the level of aborted calls were so high, it was therefore not cost effective for them to do so. In terms of the MTFs, this would be one that would have to be removed as a proposal for a saving because that option was not agreed by Cabinet on Tuesday.

A Member referred to Page 44, CEX5 and asked for further clarity as the narrative talked about failure to meet statutory deadlines, negative feedback from external auditors and increasing the time taken to deal with council tax and housing, which was not acceptable.

The Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change explained that there was an impact of every savings cut. Finance had looked at every single area, to try and find where it could make savings and whether providing a restructure that would not necessarily result in redundancies, but could move services and functions around, in order to create the saving.

It was a straight fact that savings, or cuts to the number of people with the same volume of demand, would result in longer timescales, unless other ways of doing things, could be found e.g. through digital access, which was being explored. She believed this was a deliverable saving but there would inevitably be some impact.

The Member stated that he could not support delays to Council Tax or Housing Benefit Claims.

A Member referred to Page 43, CEX2 and noted that he was pleased to see the report come forward and asked how the effectiveness of the service, in terms of sewer baiting was evaluated.

The Head of Partnership Services explained that in terms of the sewer baiting, that was paid for by Welsh Water and managed through the SRS, in terms of performance this was based on call outs. There was no explicit performance indicator, it was about responding to actual complaints.

A Member asked how IT equipment that was now in people's houses, was insured.

The Head of Partnership Services explained that all IT equipment was covered by the corporate insurance policy, with laptops recorded on a central database.

The Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change reminded everyone that there were a lot of rules and regulations about personal use of IT equipment, and that all had a responsibility as well.

A Member also referred to Page 44, CEX5 and stated as a Councillor he was reticent to agree to something that may result in a failure to meet statutory deadlines.

The Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change stated that every saving had an impact but would look to minimise the effect of it as much as possible. She may be able to amend the narrative, so that it became less threatening. It was not a saving that she wanted to make personally, but all areas needed to make a contribution as one Council.

#### Council Wide Budget Pressures

A Member referred to Page 40, CW2 in relation to the Fire Service Precept and said surely it was time for the Fire Authority to follow the Police, in terms of how the precept was set.

The Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change explained that the regulations did not allow that and it was not the same as the Police. She confirmed that she had drafted a letter to the Fire Authority asking about the increase, with a letter received back. There were two Councillors on the Fire Authority, who could make representations, but the Authority remained tied to the existing regulations which was difficult.

A Member referred to Page 25, Table 3, and felt that the Local Authority was a little risk adverse. The best scenario, being looked at in future years was +1% but he hoped it would be better than that, as it was 4.3% this year. The Member then referred to Page 26, and asked if the Local Authority really needed to increase fees and charges for this year. The Member then referred to Page 29 and noted that he had seen this before, in that every Directorate apart from Communities was receiving a net increase in their budget. The Member then referred to Page 31, 4.19.3 in relation to the 'public realm fund' and noted there was an annual £2m public realm fund, but he could not find it in next year's budget.

The Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change explained that in terms of the estimates and assumptions, ever since she had been at the Council, the estimate has always been -3%. It was only really since the decent settlement last year, repeated this year, that the estimate had been revised although it was not felt this could improve because of all the indications, which didn't necessarily lead anyone to believe there was a lot of money coming into the public sector. The Local Authority had to be realistic, and a cash flat settlement was probably the right place to start. If there were a run of better settlements, there may be the confidence to revise this, but it would be foolish at this stage, on the back of two settlements to revise them any further. In terms of fees and charges there were huge pressures. In truth, some of the fees and charges were not coming in at all and it would put an additional significant pressure on the budget if these weren't increased in line with inflation. In terms of the net increase in budgets, the whole process had gone on since May and there were various savings and various pressures put forward. There were significant pressures in some Directorates and the level of grant income and supplementary, that came into Communities, needed to be taken into account as well. The public realm was a recurring figure, around about £2m being spent, primarily in Communities, even though there were things from other Directorates that could be spent out of public realm. If those were not clear in the budget, then the Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change said she would come back to the Member, to point to the relevant bit but assured the Member, they were in the budget for next year on a recurring basis.

The Member asked what the figure was in terms of fees and charges.

The Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change stated that she would have to come back to the Member.

The Leader explained that there was investment, and it was largely in the Communities Directorate in terms of the public realm fund of £2m. The Leader felt that it was a fair question in respect of fees and charges, and it was certainly a principle that all Members had agreed to in the MTFs, that fees and charges would be increased at that rate. In terms of the Revenue Support Grant that was the biggest uncertainty, and how much that was going to be, but if the Authority had further consequential and a better revenue consequential from WG than currently anticipated, then certainly some of the savings would be looked at, particularly the savings that Members had identified.

The Interim Deputy Head of Finance explained that in relation to the Member's comment on the public realm, this was an agreed budget pressure for last financial year, so it was actually in the Communities Directorate base budget already, so would not show as a new budget pressure because it was a recurrent one from a previous year.

The Chairperson then handed over to Councillor JP Blundell, Chair of Subject Overview Scrutiny Committee 3 for the remaining questions from the meeting the day before, in respect of Communities.

A Member referred to Page 43, COM3 and explained that he was concerned about the inability of the Local Authority to take on feasibility studies. The wider point was, certainly on the budget proposal, that the cost of something was known, but not the value of it. Some of the big things going on in the County Borough certainly in terms of regeneration, would not come about, were it not for feasibility studies, and asked what the mind-set was behind this.

The Corporate Director – Communities explained that it had been incredible difficult to come up with budget reduction proposals. This was not to say feasibility studies would not be carried out, as they were a critical part of moving schemes on, but it meant there would not be as much money available as previously, as this was a specified pot that was just for match funding. The resources within the Directorate would have to be used, in other ways, in order to bring schemes forward. There would be a focus to look more closely at the CCR City Deal bids, some of the WG schemes and think more creatively. She did not think this would stop the Local Authority moving forward, it just meant working a little harder. The saving was not for a couple of years and there were still quite a lot of regeneration schemes, capital work, etc. that were going to be undertaken in the next couple of years.

A Member referred to Page 42, COM1 and noted that there had been quite a lot of discussion in relation to this yesterday, but as a Committee felt that the figures needed to be broken down.

The Head of Operations – Community Services explained what was asked for was specific figures relating to Newbridge Fields and the exact cost of the contribution that would make towards Community Asset Transfers (CATs). What the Member had asked for was slightly different e.g., a breakdown of the £300k. He noted that to be clear, the £300k was a target. There wasn't a line that this much would come from CAT or this much would come from the saving from the grass cutting, etc. It was a target and some of it could be influenced but to a degree much was outside of the Directorate's control, as this depended on the variables. If CATs went well, not as much would need to be saved from grass cutting or children's play areas. If there was hardly any CATs across the line, more would need to be saved on grass cutting and children's play areas.

The Member responded that he felt the target should be reduced or spread over the years, as he felt it was not going to happen next year and was unrealistic to keep it there.

The Cabinet Member for Communities explained that he did not want to see the target reduced. The target was not like a quota, and was something that could be missed as long as there was an understanding of why the target was missed. The Head of Operations - Community Services was correct, that the more CAT transfers that went through the system, the less money needed to be saved. He felt it was best left alone but that it needed to be monitored.

The Corporate Director - Communities noted that there was a lot of interest in CATs across the borough. A lot of work had been done in the year progressing with work, acknowledging that they were complicated and a CAT would not be put through until everything was in place and the business plan was robust. If the target of 10 CATs was reduced then savings would need to be looked for, which created greater pressure in other areas.

The Leader explained that the strategy for children's play areas was being reviewed; working with TCC's in particular to improve the children's play offer. Children's play areas could be retained and he hoped to see investment in those and would look to bring additional information back to Members as soon as that information was available.

A Member referred to Page 43, COM3, and explained that he endorsed a previous Member's comment. He noted the Cabinet decision earlier that week that the Local Government and Elections Act paper had been endorsed, within which there was guidance on collaborative working and feasibility studies. He referred to point 7.3 of the MTFS report, the council's approach to meeting its obligations under the Wellbeing of Future generations (Wales) Act for the 5 ways of working, included collaboration and savings generated from collaboration and integrated working. There was a huge section that moved the Local Authority into the direction of collaboration and this seemed to be wholeheartedly taking a section of the ability to do that.

The Corporate Director – Communities explained she was also concerned about this moving forward. There needed to be new ways of working going forward. She felt that the new bill that had come through and the regional working, especially with strategic planning and strategic transport, would compliment what was already being done. Where schemes are looked at the Local Authority worked with adjoining neighbouring authorities in addition to working with the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) more widely. She felt that the creation of the CCR could open up opportunities, rather than it work the other way. The Local Authority worked in a strategic way, and felt the words 'strategic regeneration fund' meant something different than literally regional working. Strategic was about looking at the long-term future as well as working across the region. A lot of work was being done to mitigate some of the budget pressures and she reassured Members that any feasibility studies carried out, would be of good quality.

The Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change confirmed that it was always planned that it would cease at this point but there were other feasibility pots that would more than adequately replace it and it was only ever intended to be for this period.

A Member referred to Page 42, COM1 and asked if he could have further information in relation to those 10 interested in CATs including the total cost per site and number of expressions of interest for the next year.

The Corporate Director – Communities stated that the target was to get 10 more CATs through this year. Whilst there was a lot of interest, she explained that some of that data wasn't available now but would definitely be available later on in the year when the work had been completed.

The Head of Operations – Community Services commented in relation to Page 43, COM5, noting that it was a green. The biggest risk associated with leaving Sunnyside House was dilapidation costs, for which a budget had been set aside. He confirmed that everything was on budget and was progressing well.

A Member referred to Page 43, COM6 and asked if the local authority owned the depot.

The Head of Operations - Community Services confirmed that BCBC did own the depot.

A Member referred to Page 43, COM7 and asked for clarification in relation to this.

The Head of Operations - Community Services explained that the Local Authority had been successful with funding which meant that the Authority could pay for vehicles that Kier would effectively use for the remainder of the current contract with the AHP service. As a result, Kier had a saving which would pass back through the revenue in the current contract, displayed as the MTFS saving. The vehicles would be owned by the Local Authority at the end of the current contract, for future contracts or services. This was progressing well and would be delivered.

The Member asked about the suitability of the vehicle.

The Head of Operations – Community Services said he would send the full vehicle spec to the Member, outside of the meeting.

A Member referred to Page 43, COM8 and asked what percentage of the borough now had LED lights.

The Head of Operations - Community Services explained that the vast majority were done, with circa 20k streetlights, and thought it was about 3 or 4k still to go. He could confirm the exact number outside of the meeting.

A Member noted that he hadn't received an answer in relation to Fees and Charges. If fees and charges weren't increased, how much would that be.

The Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change said that she just wanted to manage expectations on the Fees and Charges because there were thousands and they all had different rules and regulations. She asked that the Member provide specific details outside of the meeting.

A Member said it was very dangerous not to raise fees because it would have two consequences. One because it would create a hole somewhere else, that would have to be filled and secondly when there was an increase in fees, they would increase by larger amounts. By keeping it to the minimum it was still an increase that would help the overall budget. He felt that the recommendation should be for fee increases.

A Member referred to Page 43, COM7 and stated that she would also like the spec of the vehicle and asked for clarification about the vehicles being retained by the Local Authority at the end of the contract. She asked if a tractor had been retained at Waterton depot.

The Head of Operations – Community Services said he was not aware of the tractor. He explained there were some JCBs at the Waterton Depot, which the Highways Department used in various highways activities, including flooding response. Tractors as such, tended to be used by the Parks Department and sat in the Bryncethin Depot. In terms of what happens to the vehicles at the end of the Kier Contract, generally the Local Authority would not own the whole fleet of vehicles at the end of the Kier Contract. The AHP's were separate and would transfer to the Local Authority at the end of the contract.

The Member stated that Members were told that the vehicles would be owned by the Local Authority, and that was one of the benefits. She asked if any thought had been given to purchasing vehicles with the hook mechanism on the back for wheelie bins, for future proofing.

The Head of Operations - Community Services stated that the bulk of the Kier fleet, excluding the AHP collection vehicles which had been paid for by WG, was under Kier's control and were their vehicles. There was an option at the end of the contract to buy the Kier vehicles off them. With regard to buying vehicles for future waste collection terms, if you spec vehicles to be able to pick up wheeled bins, there was an additional cost and they were also quite difficult to load from a manual handling perspective. You would choose what service you wanted and then buy the vehicles that fit. You wouldn't get them just in case going down that route because effectively they wouldn't be very good to use for a sack collection, for example.

The Corporate Director – Communities noted that there was a tremendous amount of decisions to be made in respect of the waste contract going forward. An awful lot of work needed to be done and further discussions could be had at an appropriate time.

A Member referred to Page 43, COM4 and enquired about the cost benefit analysis. He wondered if scaling back on the service would lead to less money in the pot and in the local economy in the long run.

The Corporate Director – Communities explained that it was about baselining expectations, after the pandemic, and looking to rebuild the tourism sector. There was consideration of a regional approach and working on some of the communications as a Local Authority. A cost benefit analysis would be done. She did not feel that the Authority was getting enough benefit from the contract and it was prudent to take a look at everything being done. The intention was for the Authority to cover the work in the way we communicate and marketing is conducted more widely and to use partner organisations from WG and the CCR, to assist us in all of that marketing.

The Member said that he was encouraged by the response, but that this was a large piece of work and was hoping that the proposals would be taken to the most relevant Scrutiny Committee to drill down.

The Corporate Director – Communities explained that this was an incredibly important part of the economy, and a measure, as a factor of success, was the income brought in by tourism, and needed to be kept robust as possible to attract visitors. Tourism was something the Local Authority wanted to get right.

The Senior Democratic Services Officer – Scrutiny advised Members that any additional information requested would be communicated with Directors and Cabinet Members and the information circulated to Members by the end of the week. Arrangements would be made to reconvene the meeting on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> January and appointments sent. At that meeting the Combined Committees would need to focus their questions upon the proposals for which they had requested additional information and make

**CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - THURSDAY, 21 JANUARY 2021**

recommendations upon the MTFs to meet the timetable for reporting to COSC on 1<sup>st</sup> February and onwards to Cabinet.

206. URGENT ITEMS

None

**CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - MONDAY, 25 JANUARY 2021**

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
HELD IN REMOTELY VIA SKYPE FOR BUSINESS ON MONDAY, 25 JANUARY 2021 AT  
11:00**

Present

Councillor CA Green – Chairperson

|             |              |                       |            |
|-------------|--------------|-----------------------|------------|
| TH Beedle   | JPD Blundell | MC Clarke             | N Clarke   |
| RJ Collins  | PA Davies    | SK Dendy              | DK Edwards |
| J Gebbie    | T Giffard    | A Hussain             | M Jones    |
| MJ Kearn    | JE Lewis     | RL Penhale-<br>Thomas | AA Pucella |
| KL Rowlands | RMI Shaw     | JC Spanswick          | T Thomas   |
| LM Walters  | KJ Watts     | PJ White              | A Williams |
| AJ Williams | JE Williams  |                       |            |

Apologies for Absence

SE Baldwin, DG Howells, DRW Lewis, B Sedgebeer, E Venables, MC Voisey and CA Webster

Registered Representatives

|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Rev Canon Edward Evans<br>Morris | Church in Wales<br>Secondary Schools Sector |
|----------------------------------|---|

Officers:

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| Meryl Lawrence | Senior Democratic Services Officer - Scrutiny |
| Andrew Rees    | Democratic Services Manager                   |
| Tracy Watson   | Scrutiny Officer                              |

Invitees:

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| Victoria Adams            | Interim Finance Manager – Budget Management:<br>Communities, Education and Family Support |
| Councillor Nicole Burnett | Cabinet Member Social Services and Early Help<br>Leader                                   |
| Councillor Huw David      | Interim Deputy Head of Finance  |
| Deborah Exton             | Corporate Director Education and Family Support   |
| Lindsay Harvey            | Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and<br>Change                                |
| Gill Lewis                | Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing<br>Accountant                            |
| Claire Marchant           | Corporate Director - Communities  |
| Chris Morris              | Cabinet Member for Wellbeing and Future<br>Generations                                    |
| Janine Nightingale        | Head of Neighbourhood Services  |
| Councillor Dhanisha Patel | Chief Executive   |
| Zak Shell                 | Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration   |
| Mark Shephard             | Chief Officer Legal, HR and Regulatory Services   |
| Councillor Charles Smith  | Deputy Leader   |
| Kelly Watson              | Cabinet Member for Communities  |
| Councillor Hywel Williams |   |
| Councillor Richard Young  |   |

208. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor T Beedle declared a personal interest in agenda item 4 as he was Chair of Bridgend Governors Association.

Councillor A Williams declared a personal interest in agenda item 4, as a Committee member of Heol-y-Cyw RFC who were involved in the CAT process.

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

The Senior Democratic Services Officer - Scrutiny advised that as this combined meeting of all Scrutiny Committees was a continuation of the adjourned meeting from Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> January, Cllr Cheryl Green would continue as Chairperson for the meeting.

Education and Family Support

A Member referred to ESF2 and the tenders received for school transport and asked for reassurance that there was robustness around the selection process and how the Local Authority achieved value for money.

The Corporate Director - Education and Family Support explained that he was very happy to offer the Member assurance it would be a very robust process. Officers within Education and Family Support would be working very closely with Legal and Procurement Officers to ensure compliance with all processes around the tendering procedure.

A Member commented that Home to School transport had been under review for a long period and appealed that this was progressed.

The Corporate Director - Education and Family Support agreed with the Member and stated that it had been a concern for some time. There had been a considerable amount of work that had gone into the review, for the last year or so. The Local Authority hoped to see the WG review of several of the issues, which was due to come to fruition at the end of March. Hopefully this information, in combination with the intelligence secured, would enable the Local Authority to move this on at pace.

A Member referred to SCH1 and stated that the efficiency saving should be reconsidered to stop cutting central services as it damaged all schools.

A Member also referred to SCH1 and expressed that while no one wanted to make cuts, he felt that the burden needed to be shared equally and that there should be some cut this year.

The Registered Representative, Church in Wales also referred to SCH1 and that for the last number of years Bridgend had been at the lower, if not the bottom end in the amount that was spent on education per pupil. He advised that any cut to the schools' budget would be particularly disastrous, not only in the current year, but in future years.

A Member explained that she had been in a meeting with the Minister for Housing and Local Government and challenged her about the settlement. The Minister had said that while it wasn't a growth budget each Authority should not be losing or proposing to lose any staff, because it should be a standstill budget. She said that if any Authorities stated they were going to lose staff then WG wanted to know immediately because they had said that wouldn't be viable going forward.

The Corporate Director - Education and Family Support explained that he really appreciated Members' comments and it was a very challenging picture for the entire

organisation. All the areas identified were difficult; none of them were easy and had been reached after significant work. There was a balance to be had with supporting schools, and the points that a number of Members had made, with regard to the challenging financial position that some schools were in. The Local Authority was mindful to support schools through the difficult times that lay ahead but also the balance maintaining central service to provide support for all schools. He would need to reflect upon the comments in relation to the Minister for Housing and Local Government, as this was the first he had heard of this from WG, and again that would be something he would be happy to consider with colleagues and CMB.

### Social Services and Wellbeing

The Chairperson thanked the Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing and the Officers responsible for the very detailed response and additional information that had been provided.

A Member referred to page 42, SSW2 in relation to housing adaptations and asked if there was any way, sometimes expensive equipment, could be refurbished and re-used whereby saving the authority money, especially as there was a move to bring matters in-house.

The Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing explained that Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) were a key example of an area whereby investing in a preventative service could reduce ongoing care and support needs. She knew of lots of examples across Wales where there was a really positive and proactive approach to recycling equipment, some of it very bespoke to individuals. Other equipment could be refurbished and cleaned and all the rest of it and could be put to very good use. This was something that should be built into performance targets for the service, as it was brought in house. She confirmed that she would keep Members updated in coordination with colleagues in Housing, who were the lead on delivery of DFGs.

A Member also asked if the practice could be looked into in relation to the secure estate.

The Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing explained that Members were clearly highlighting the desire for more information about equipment including how much equipment was being issued, how much of that equipment was bespoke to individuals, be it in the secure estate or in their own homes in the community, as well as how well that equipment was being used and recycled. She would work with colleagues to prepare a briefing note that would set this out. There was a need to ensure whether the Local Authority was being as efficient and effective as it could be and she would certainly collate the data for this area.

A Member echoed the Chairperson's sentiments regarding the detailed additional information provided and requested more details and case studies in future going forward. They asked what was the sustainability of these cuts going forward considering the likelihood that people's conditions would deteriorate and they would be likely to need increasing help from the Local Authority.

The Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing explained that one of her priorities as a new Director, was to make sure there is well evidenced strategic plans, going forward, across all the main population groups who require care and support, which look at the increase in population and the things needed to meet those needs going forward, in the most cost effective way. This also achieves the best outcomes for individuals and supporting that there would be business cases, which either required more investment or could continue to see reductions in the cost of services going forward. It would differ from population to population and would require different

business cases around the types of services needed to be developed to meet the needs most cost effectively.

The Member stated that he was just seeking assurance that if people's circumstances changed next week, for example, the Local Authority would be in a position to help them with another care plan which may cost more.

The Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing responded to provide that assurance and explained that care packages were regularly reviewed, at least once a year, but often more frequently, and these could increase as well as decrease. She explained that the savings represented an overall net reduction.

A Member fully supported the review of functions but sought assurance that statutory reviews be undertaken more frequently, and that the staff providing the service would have the ability to make those recommendations. She also sought reassurance that in relation to any nursing provision, the tab should be picked up by the NHS, rather than the Local Authority. In relation to the White Paper, all care sector staff should have the real living wage including any commissioned services, and it would also be on the same spectrum as the agenda for change in the NHS, which would have significant cost implications for the Local Authority.

The Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing explained that it was very interesting times working in social services and referred to the White Paper, published recently, which was out for consultation. This recognised the absolute value and importance of the work of the direct care workforce. She strongly believed they were experts in what they did and if they made recommendations that somebody needed even just a little bit more or a little bit less, then that was really important because they spent day in and day out with people with care and support needs, and would know the person well, in making those recommendations. In relation to the second point, Bridgend had integrated teams and good joint working between community nursing staff, particularly, social workers and occupational therapists in the community, which enabled a holistic approach. There had always been tensions at that interface between organisations, but if the practice was right and working in the strength-based way across the health and social care spectrum, the Local Authority was in a far better position with health colleagues to do what matters and to get the right care packages with the right contributions across partner agencies. Moving forward, the Local Authority would look at what further integration meant and some very important discussions would be needed with the Health Board about their contributions to keeping people safe within communities. A lot of the things driving social care costs were the underlying health needs, so it was about supporting them to invest in the right services, which could reduce the cost overall across sectors.

### Communities

A Member referred to page 41, COM1 and expressed concern about employing a consultant, to review Maesteg Park and Newbridge Fields. She asked for the cost to be provided and whether there was an appetite to transfer, before employing someone to carry out the review.

The Corporate Director - Communities confirmed that all parks in the borough had expressed an interest in looking at the CAT process. When looking at large complex sites, with multiple users, it was important to take a close look at what would be involved with that CAT. Consultancy advice had been provided to make sure everything was being captured in order to know the full cost implications and operating lifetime costs of the facilities and to ensure if they were transferred, that they were done in the right way.

With regard to Maesteg Welfare Park and Newbridge Fields it was felt more detailed work needed to be undertaken on those two areas in particular.

The Member asked what the cost was of employing the consultants.

The Corporate Director - Communities explained that she did not have the cost to hand, but would provide that information.

A Member asked what would happen if Maesteg Welfare Park or Newbridge Fields were not transferred. What was, if any, the Local Authority's de facto or fail safe position on these two.

The Corporate Director - Communities explained that if the two areas were not transferred, they would remain in the management of the borough council and would be looked after, in perpetuity. She hoped for some arrangement for a CAT transfer, but of course these were large, complex sites and there was an awful lot to get through to ensure that CAT was appropriate and could be managed in the right way.

The Cabinet Member Communities acknowledged the complexity of the CAT process in relation to the two areas, which was due to the fact that, in some instances, pitches overlapped each other, so there was a lot of work that needed to be done with the two management committees of those particular clubs. In answer to the question, what would happen, the Corporate Director - Communities was quite right. The object of the strategy employed was to make savings. Savings were becoming apparent and clubs themselves, that were entering into CAT transfers, were beginning to see the benefits of those transfers, but it was fair to say that while there was an appetite with the clubs on those two areas, if it was impossible to transfer those, then the Local Authority would be in a position to support those clubs, although it would mean those savings would not be made. He was quite confident that a way forward on these two complex areas, could be found and he reassured Members on the appetite of the clubs that involve themselves in those two areas.

A Member stated that she welcomed the outside consultants, but as a Bridgend Town Councillor she had seen the brief to the consultants and nowhere did it actually mention the consideration of Newbridge Fields being a flood plain. She was concerned that the consultants may not have the expertise to deal with flood plains and whether the recommendations that came from them would actually include those costs.

The Corporate Director - Communities stated that she could provide assurance for that. The flood plain issue was very important and was part of the brief. While it may not have been involved in the tender, it would be one of the first things discussed with the consultants when looking through the maps, topography and the area of those parks. It would be one of the most important considerations for that scheme and would be included.

A Member referred to usable reserves and said it would be useful for perhaps, the Cabinet Member for Finance and the Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change to comment upon whether they felt that the usable reserves should be used in this time of uncertainty.

The Chairperson clarified that this was a question that had been generated because of the response to COM1, but she was happy for the Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change to make a general response.

The Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change explained that the short answer was no. She did not think the Local Authority should be using useable reserves.

The £64million that was referred to was made up of over £9million of Council fund and £55million of earmarked reserves. Whilst it looked like a big figure, the £9million in the Council fund was in line with the MTFs principles, in terms of reserves. These were approved by Council as part of the MTFs and reiterated in various documents that Council received. They were revised last year through BREP and then by approval by Council. She confirmed that the Council fund was in line with that principle, 5.27% of the net budget excluding schools, and the principle says it should be at least 5%.

In terms of the earmarked reserves, a lot of those were supporting the capital programme, about £20million. Another £4.5million supported asset management, minor works, repairs and demolition. The Covid-19 fund of £3million, was now £2.5million with money transferred into an emergency fund, most of which had already been used. There were also grants and equalisation accounts, which was another £4million, which could not be spent on anything else, otherwise these would have to be repaid back to WG. The rest was council wide reserves, major claims, service reconfiguration and insurance, etc. Earmarked reserves were earmarked for a purpose and were looked at nearly every month in Finance. These had been reported through the quarterly budget monitoring and the Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change had been vigilant in terms of unwinding any reserve that had not moved or was no longer necessary. The Auditors looked at them very closely, and would raise a query if they weren't needed or looked as though they were just set aside for something very general and were vigilant on them. School balances were incredibly low. While she understood that Members looking at that sort of figure might think that it was useable, it was not useable.

The Deputy Leader stated that he had nothing really to add to what the Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change had said, but gave assurance, as a Cabinet Member, that earmarked reserves were constantly reviewed. The process was under constant review and in meetings with the Finance Team it was ensured that there was an appropriate sum to cover a known pressure and put on the pressure to try and unwind and to keep that reserve pot as true as possible. The general fund was in line with audit recommendations, a principal set annually by Council. The Deputy Leader would not be advocating reducing that sum below what was recommended by Wales Audit.

A Member referred to COM1 and asked for further clarification that if the feasibility did not come to fruition, what would be the level of maintenance e.g. would they stay at the level they are now or go back to the fall-back position of having very little maintenance.

The Corporate Director - Communities explained it was important to keep parks in the condition they deserved, but against a backdrop of financial austerity, it was incredibly difficult. If they did remain with the in-Council ownership and the transfers were not successful, they would have a comprehensive maintenance regime, as they did currently, on those sites for the next year. What would happen after that, of course, would be dependent on budget settlements.

The Cabinet Member Communities reassured the Member that the Local Authority had a responsibility to the clubs and leagues, who expected a certain standard, so it would have to be kept up to those standards at least. He advised that as the Corporate Director - Communities has advised, the situation would have to be reviewed year on year. The Local Authority would keep monitoring the situation and liaise with clubs.

A Member noted that the additional information said that all clubs had expressed an interest, which he felt was to avoid an increase in fees, as if they didn't, either fees would go up or sites would close. He didn't disagree with the CAT process, but it was difficult to know how charging a club to pay maintenance would work in large open spaces because those areas were also used for informal recreation by the general

public. He raised concern that there did not appear to be individual costs per site and as a result questioned how this amount could be removed from the budget. He raised concern about employing consultants and felt that the service was no longer resilient. He confirmed his extensive experience in parks and green spaces and had offered some of that experience to the Cabinet Member in the past. He felt disappointed with the wording on closures to children's play areas and felt this should be removed because investing in children's play areas was in the capital programme for next year. He felt the £300k target should be removed and any savings made, reinvested in parks and open spaces, for future generations.

The Corporate Director - Communities reiterated that she understood the Member's concerns and acknowledged his discussions with the team about the CAT transfer process. She reassured him in regard to the CAT process, explaining that it was not compulsory, but something clubs were encouraged to do, which gave them more control over their fields, but only if this was financially viable and legally correct. She acknowledged his interest in the detailed breakdowns of figures, but they could not be provided at present. She was content that the process was robust and that every CAT was looked at carefully and nobody would be asked to undertake a CAT if the club were not ready, minded or willing.

A Member referred to the response received in relation to COM1, that clubs could maintain facilities as costs significantly lower than BCBC, and asked whether BCBC had been inefficient in running these previously, and if it was known where savings could be made, why they hadn't been made earlier.

The Corporate Director - Communities said that she assured the Member that was not the narrative that went behind the comment and explained that as a Borough Council everyone was paid wages, received pensions plus all of the add-on costs. Staff were paid to work across a range of sites, so it would be more expensive than a club, for instance, doing their own grass cutting with machinery they owned, as opposed to the Council, who would have to move machinery from one part of the Borough to another and whose employees were paid at a Council standard rates and had the protection that being a Council employee brought with it. She stressed that it was absolutely not that the service was inefficient, but rather that it was efficient and lean and as such there was little resilience. Using club staff and volunteers, could significantly reduce the costs of running those clubs.

The Cabinet Member Communities said in relation to CATs, he did not feel that the system was flawed. He acknowledged there were certain problems in respect of Newbridge Fields and Maesteg Welfare Park, as these facilities were used by members of the general public, not just sports clubs and this made it complex. The Local Authority would not have been able to maintain these facilities going forward, due to austerity, to the point where the facilities would close themselves because they would not be meeting the standards of the clubs or organisations that those clubs represent. CAT gave clubs an option and he felt that the majority of clubs were now seeing the benefits of that. He believed the decision taken at that particular time had allowed facilities and especially those taken over by CAT, to remain in the public domain.

A Member stated that in relation to COM1 there was talk of reduction of grass cut areas, maintained parkland, and a reduction of the number of children's play areas. In relation to TCC's taking over grass cutting and taking over children's play parks, she felt that communication could be better. She asked for clarification on the reduction of maintenance in relation to play parks.

The Corporate Director - Communities appreciated the Member's concerns and any transfer of any maintenance of grass cutting play areas and or grass cutting generally,

would be discussed with TCC's, which would need to be reflected in their precept. With regard to health and safety there wasn't a minimal level, but a standard for health and safety. Grass cutting didn't present the same dangers, but with health and safety and children's play, there was a standard which would be met. She would gladly have those conversations with TCC's going forward.

A Member referred to COM1 and the breakdown of the £300k and asked how achievable the target was in the long run this year.

The Corporate Director - Communities explained that this was the target being aimed for. The target was very ambitious, to get another 10 CAT transfers through the system, which would make the target achievable. This would be monitored and if it was felt this would not happen, then achieving the saving would need to be done through reduction in maintenance of the grass cutting, etc.

A Member felt concerned by the comment that said that if the saving can't be achieved through CAT, cuts would have to be made elsewhere, including reducing grass cutting. This was a frontline service and should be protected.

The Corporate Director - Communities explained that with regard to the comment on grass cutting, that was about grass cutting within play areas, and not grass cutting wholly across the borough. What needed to be done, and it was advisable and prudent, was to keep reviewing the target, which she hoped to achieve. If the saving was not seen through CAT, it would then have to come from other areas of the Directorate. All cuts were incredibly difficult for all service reductions.

The Chairperson advised that everyone that wanted to speak, had already spoken and so there was no further questions for all the invitees and she thanked them very much for their attendance, particularly at such short notice and it was much appreciated.

As this concluded debate on this item, the Chairperson thanked all Invitees for attending the meeting and positively responding to questions from Members, following which they retired from the meeting.

Recommendations:

Having considered the report on the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021-22 to 2024-25, and having heard Invitees' responses to Members' questions upon the draft budget proposals and budget pressures, the Combined Meeting of all Scrutiny Committees made the following comments and recommendations:

1. The Committee recommended that the Cabinet lobbies Welsh Government to ensure that additional legislation comes with the consequential funding to avoid putting the Local Authority under additional unnecessary financial pressure from existing budgets. (CEX5 Homelessness Funding.)
2. The Committee recommended that consideration be given to greater communication with the public explaining the costs of services and how the Council spends money.
3. The Committee recommended that clarification is sought regarding the Local Government Minister expressing this year's settlement is a flat cash budget that requires no redundancies.

4. The Committee recommended that Corporate Management Board and Cabinet are requested to review and define what the role and responsibility of BREP is and respond to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny to consider.
5. The Committee recommended that Cabinet are requested to write to Welsh Government to impress upon them the need to lobby Westminster, as while NHS Staff and Teachers pay protections are devolved to Welsh Government, Local Government staff are on NJC Terms and Conditions, is not a devolved budget, and they will be subject to a pay freeze. Furthermore, the White Paper for the care sector requires that commissioned services should be paid a real living wage on the same terms & conditions as LA staff.
6. The Committee expressed concern about the Ed Psych provision and the additional pressure the pandemic placed on the service and recommend an increase in the budget for 2021-22 to alleviate the likely huge demand from younger people from the impact of the pandemic, as well as increased additional learning needs. (EFS7)
7. The Committee expressed concern that the target of £300k for 2021-22 was unrealistic and recommended that it should be removed. While it supported the CAT process it was felt that any savings should be reinvested into the service. If this target cannot be removed for 2021-22, then the Committee recommend that the target of £300k be spread across 3 years from 2022-23 onwards. (COM1)

8. The Committee recommended that the narrative be amended, as it states “this may impact on the availability to maintain the current number of children’s play areas”, but the Capital Programme is investing in play areas.(COM 1)

9. The Committee recommended that CAT Transfer progress be monitored by Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 at the half year point. (COM1)

10. The Committee recommended that the Fees and Charges policy be reviewed in 2021-22 to change it from “inflation +1%”, to just “inflation” with a view to it being implemented from the budget in 2022-23.

11. The Committee were concerned regarding the impact of cutting the Pest Control Contract completely, due to the impact on those in receipt of benefits and recommended that the Pest Control Savings proposal is placed on hold pending the Cabinet reviewing of the proposal. (CEX2)

12. The Committee recommended that a working group actively look at identifying relatively small one off investments on safe routes to schools which could offset ongoing costs of some Home to School transport. (EFS2/Budget Pressure EFS7)

210. URGENT ITEMS

None

The meeting closed at 14:00

## BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT TO THE CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

9 JUNE 2021

#### REPORT OF THE CHIEF OFFICER – LEGAL, HR & REGULATORY SERVICES

#### CROSS-PARTY RECOVERY PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS AND CABINET PROGRESS RESPONSE

#### 1. Purpose of report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- a) present the Committee with the Cabinet progress response to the Cross-Party Recovery Panel's Recommendations attached in **Appendix A**.
- b) present the Committee with the Cross-Party Recovery Panel's Findings and Recommendations attached in **Appendix B** for endorsing by the Committee to be submitted to Cabinet.

#### 2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives / other corporate priorities

2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:

1. **Supporting a successful sustainable economy** – taking steps to make the county borough a great place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focussed on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions for all people in the county borough.
2. **Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient** - taking steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services. Supporting individuals and communities to build resilience, and enable them to develop solutions to have active, healthy and independent lives.
3. **Smarter use of resources** – ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

#### 3. Background

3.1 On 23 March 2020 the UK Government imposed a nationwide lockdown in an effort to help minimise the spread of coronavirus. The Council has undergone significant change during this period, in that some services have been created, some services stopped and some staff have been redeployed.

- 3.2 The Chief Executive presented a report to the meeting of Cabinet on 30 June 2020 for a proposed approach to recovery planning from Covid-19. The recovery programme had the following 3 strands - Restart, Recover and Renew.
- 3.3 It was agreed at the meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 13 July 2020 to establish a Cross-Party Recovery Panel. Membership of the Recovery Panel comprises the 12 Members of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee plus 4 additional Members: 2 Labour; 1 Independent Alliance and 1 Conservative, nominated by Group Leaders. The Panel was established with the aim of shaping, informing and advising Cabinet on the Council's recovery planning to form the basis of the recovery phase for the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 3.4 The Recovery Panel would select key areas for examination in greater depth and make recommendations to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to inform their recommendations to Cabinet on 15 September 2020, noting the extremely short timescales in order to feed into the realignment of the Authority's Medium Term Financial Strategy and Corporate Plan.
- 3.5 The Panel met on six occasions during August 2020 and were supported by the Senior Democratic Officer – Scrutiny, two Scrutiny Officers and the Group Manager Legal & Democratic Services.
- 3.6 During its meetings the Recovery Panel considered presentations from requested invitees including: Public Service Board (PSB) Team Officers; Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations (BAVO) Chief Executive, Operational Manager and a Community Navigator; the Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing and the Head of Adult Services; the Director of Bridgend County Care and Repair, and; the Head of Partnerships and Performance and Group Manager – Housing.
- 3.7 The Cross-Party Recovery Panel had taken a structured approach to the selection of key areas from those identified for priority to feed into the recovery process and had identified key issues following examination.
- 3.8 The Panel met on 7 December 2020 and selected Housing and Homelessness as a key area for examination in greater depth. The Panel met on 11 March and 14 May 2021 and heard from invitees from: Community Housing Cymru; the Chartered Institute of Housing Cymru; the Authority's Housing Team and the Shared Regulatory Service Neighbourhood Service Team.

#### **4. Current situation/proposal**

- 4.1 The Cabinet's response to the Recovery Panel's Phase 1 recommendations was reported to the Panel and the meeting of COSC on 2 December 2020.
- 4.2 The Cabinet's progress response to the Recovery Panel's findings and recommendations is attached in **Appendix A**.
- 4.3 Subsequently, the Cross-Party Recovery Panel met on 14 May 2021 and made its recommendations on Housing and Homelessness as attached in **Appendix B**.

## 5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

5.1 There is no effect upon policy framework and procedure rules.

## 6. Equality Act 2010 implications

6.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

## 7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications

7.1 The Act provides the basis for driving a different kind of public service in Wales, with 5 ways of working to guide how public services should work to deliver for people. The following is a summary to show how the 5 ways of working to achieve the well-being goals have been used to formulate the recommendations within this report:

- Long-term - The consideration and approval of this report will assist in the recovery process for both the short-term and in the long-term.
- Prevention - The consideration and approval of this report will assist in the Recovery process by approving and shaping preventative measures provided by Directorates to generate savings.
- Integration - The report supports all the wellbeing objectives.
- Collaboration - The consideration and approval of this report will assist in the recovery process by approving and shaping collaboration and integrated working.
- Involvement - Publication of the report ensures that the public and stakeholders can review the work that has been undertaken by Recovery Panel Members.

## 8. Financial implications

8.1 There are no financial implications directly associated with this report.

## 9. Recommendation

9.1 The Committee is requested to:

- a) note the Cabinet progress response to the Cross-Party Recovery Panel's Recommendations attached in **Appendix A**.
- b) endorse the Cross-Party Recovery Panel's Findings and Recommendations attached in **Appendix B** to be submitted to Cabinet

Kelly Watson  
**Chief Officer - Legal, HR & Regulatory Services**  
3 June 2021

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**Background Documents:** None

## Updated response to Cross Party Recovery Panel Recommendations March 2021

## Appendix A

| Rec Ref                 | Recommendation  | Original response   | Update  |
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| <b>Recommendation 1</b> | The Panel recommends that the future sustainability of culture, leisure and green spaces should be added to the list of key priorities that were identified in the recovery planning Cabinet report of 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2020, in order to facilitate health, exercise and wellbeing. | Cabinet fully recognise and acknowledge the crucial role culture, leisure and green spaces play in ensuring opportunities for local people to participate in recreational activities, whether as a participant or as a spectator, and the impact that has on health, exercise and both physical and mental wellbeing. This has been demonstrated by the support that has already been given to our partners Halo Leisure and Awen Cultural Trust to ensure the long term sustainability of the services that they run on our behalf and promote a more rapid recovery from the impact of the Covid 19 lockdown. In addition Cabinet have, as part of our Covid response, introduced a range of measures to promote the continued use of green space both for formal and informal activity, including waiving playing fields charges and developing and publicising the use of rights of way across the County Borough. Cabinet are of the view therefore that these priorities are already implicit in the holistic ‘public health ‘theme that has been identified and approved as one of the Council’s four main recovery priorities moving forward. However, Cabinet are happy to make the link with culture, leisure and green spaces more explicit in line with the panel’s recommendation. | Cabinet fully appreciate the value of green spaces and will ensure that this is highlighted where appropriate as part of future priorities.<br><br>Closed |

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| <p><b>Recommendation 2</b></p> | <p>The Panel recommends that the Economic Taskforce training that had already been offered to businesses should be offered to the Third Sector and Charities, to avoid duplication of effort.</p> | <p>Cabinet understands that a significant amount of training has been provided to businesses and also extended to small numbers of third sector and charity organisations. This includes nearly 2,700 business with one of the funding streams made available as a result of the coronavirus pandemic BCBC undertook a series of specific measures to support businesses in different sectors to ‘start-back’ as restrictions were lifted.</p> <p>In response to an identified need within the retail community, the Council’s Enterprise and Employability section led on a ‘Retail start-back pack’ which included the distribution of 2,000 sneeze guards. These provided a barrier between businesses and their customers, which in addition to other measures put in place by businesses following their own risk assessment, aided measures to support consumer confidence. In addition, the team secured the delivery of COSHH accredited Covid training courses to 350 business employees across the County. This course supported awareness and understanding amongst the business community in relation to health and safety measures in their properties when re-opening to customers. Additionally, the team supported efforts within the tourism and hospitality sectors with 260 guest registers delivered to local businesses to support Test, Track and Trace process as part of the tourism and hospitality start-back pack. All of these measures</p> | <p>Further work in relation to such training and support being rolled out has not been undertaken in recent months due to the restrictions that have been in place and the limitations these have presented.</p> <p>As the current restrictions are eased, and if the demand exists and further resources can be made available, then further deployment of such training and resources can be explored by the Economic Development team and become part of business as usual.</p> <p>Closed</p> |
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|                         |   | <p>were specifically created in Bridgend County and directly in response to identified business needs following research with the business community.</p> <p>Cabinet are advised that certain aspects of the above may be suitable for some of those in third sector and charities. If this was to be taken forward, a period of research with the third sector and charities would be needed to identify need and determine demand. Based on this, options could be considered and resources secured prior to options being deployed.</p> |  |
| <b>Recommendation 3</b> | The panel recommends that through the Welsh Government Procurement, all organisations providing care across the County Borough have access to suitable and appropriate PPE following Welsh Government and HSE guidelines, for the activity being undertaken.                              |  | <p>This issue has been resolved</p> <p>Closed</p>  |
| <b>Recommendation 4</b> | The panel recommended that Cabinet formally approach and enter into discussions with Welsh Government in respect of funding to be held locally as local volunteer organisations should have a say in how that money is spent in their Communities, rather than it being held by the WCVA. | Cabinet recognise that whilst local volunteer organisations would benefit from being more involved in the allocation of funding rather than it being held by WCVA, such a change would require a national approach. Welsh Government in their publication on the Third Sector Scheme in Wales Report 18/19 (published July 2020) identifies how the WG invests in the Third Sector Support Wales approach (i.e. WCVA and the 19 County Voluntary Councils across Wales). The scheme aims to deliver  | <p>As previously reported, any change in policy by Welsh Government from current practice would need to be considered at a national level and recognising the opportunities and challenges for the third sector in its broadest sense.</p> <p>The principle of local distribution of third sector investment is understood and has continued throughout the pandemic. BAVO</p> |

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|  |  | <p>a partnership between Welsh Government and the third sector to support the growth of a stronger and more resilient third sector, better policy and better public services. At the risk of generalisation, it is known that CVC's work with grassroots organisations (local and regional activity) many of whom have complex support needs, whereas large, national organisations tend to have staff capacity, higher skills sets and different support needs. The relationship between WG and CVC's is mainly channelled through WCVA.</p> <p>Given the importance of the local and hyperlocal third sector response to Covid to our local authority, there may be value in WG reviewing the proportion of funding distributed between the national and local delivery agents within the Third sector infrastructure so that local and regional partnership working is the focus and third sector activity is strengthened and sustained.</p> <p>Additionally, the proportionality and methods of distribution of investment into the community and third sector should be reviewed.</p> <p>As an example, the small VSEF fund (£25000) distributed via the local CVC quickly injected cash into those organisations delivering crucial support on the ground in our communities, and it did so with good local intelligence and through simple processes. The fund that was centralised and</p> | <p>report having supported distribution of 166k of investment aimed at children and young people, Covid capital response, money management, food poverty and third sector development with potential for a further 20k from welsh government in march.</p> <p>In January 2021 Welsh Government launched a large revenue scheme to develop volunteering across Wales but the investment needed to be applied for, the scheme delivered and the funding spent by the end of march which was not locally practical based on responding to the pandemic. BAVO have expressed interest in any continuation of this approach in 2021 as it would align well to our building resilient communities plan. This plan is due to be refreshed during the current year.</p> <p>Closed</p> |
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|  |  | <p>distributed via WCVA directly was millions in comparison.</p> <p>The next iteration of that funding (Voluntary Services Recovery fund) was wholly centralised with no local distribution made available to CVC's. The related processes of this centralised approach can create barriers and is proving complex for many small local groups, some of whom are not connected to WCVA or struggle with working online or utilising the MAP system.</p> <p>There may be benefit in WG recognising the value of local CVC's distributing investment directly into the communities, adding value to other local investment (as was the case with VSEF and indeed, the old CFAP community grants). The CVC's are directly connected into the PSB and RPB and are fully aware of the local needs assessments and are therefore able to make informed decisions that tie into the overall ambitions for our County.</p> <p>Recognising that there is some potential benefits in funding allocations being made direct to CVCs, Cabinet will consider how it can engage other local authorities to approach Welsh Government to gain a Wales wide approach.</p> |  |
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| <b>Recommendation 5</b> | The Panel recommends that no further cuts are placed on Third Sector funding and that a whole Council approach to funding the Third Sector be adopted. The Panel also recommends that the appropriate resources be put in place for BAVO to facilitate this.   | Cabinet are very much aware of the importance of the role provided by the Third Sector and have taken opportunities to protect and increase with other funding opportunities. Reduced funding has been considered each year as part of the MTFS proposals. Cuts to CAB and BAVO were part of the formal budget consultation last year and the proposals did not gain acceptance. The public and the Cabinet were keen to continue support for the 3rd sector organisations and to maintain the successful partnership that has been built.<br><br>Consideration will be given to how we best work with our partners and ensure that resources are deployed in the most effective way. | Cabinet have recommended to Council in the 21/22 budget that it continues to ensure that core funding levels to the third sector are protected.<br><br>Closed  |
| <b>Recommendation 6</b> | The panel recommends that Cabinet approach Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board to understand their Covid-19 plan in relation to both Primary and Secondary health care plans and obtains copies of these.  |   | This issue has been resolved<br><br>Closed   |
| <b>Recommendation 7</b> | The Panel noted the Covid-19 impact on people with dementia in Wales and the massive deterioration seen in sufferers and noted that BAVO had worked with BCBC on developing Dementia friendly communities, but that funding was coming to an end soon, and would be reverting back to the Alzheimer's Society. The | Developing Dementia Supportive Communities is a strategic priority within the "Ageing Well Plan for Bridgend". The funding identified had been previously provided by Western Bay to BAVO as opposed to via Welsh Government and this funding stream has concluded. There are other sources of investment provided by the Integrated Care Fund that Bridgend is accessing and also some core funding relating to the Older Persons strategy that  | BCBC and BAVO are now working in partnership and utilising Integrated Care Funding to support people living with dementia and their carers. As part of this arrangement BAVO will be linking with Alzheimer's society to support the development of a programme that meets the identified needs of local people and communities including reviewing how developing "Dementia Friendly Communities" |

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|                         | Panel therefore recommended that Cabinet write to Welsh Government to ensure that this is adequately funded.   | can support the ongoing development of work. This work can be progressed with BAVO and other local partners. BCBC currently commissions the Alzheimer's society to support people living with dementia and carers on an annual basis beyond this funding which was not a large sum. There is the potential for cross sector working and partnership with BAVO to develop a strategic approach that meets the needs of Bridgend.  | can be taken forward as part of the forthcoming recovery programme. It should be highlighted that this resource is externally provided but is being used collaboratively to make best use of resources.<br><br>CLOSED  |
| <b>Recommendation 8</b> | The Panel recommended that Cabinet engage with Welsh Government on the continued financial support to eradicate homelessness and the use of more innovative approaches for organisations to do that. | Cabinet are fully engaged with the WG on this matter and share the ambition to tackle homelessness. Capital and revenue funding has been secured from WG to increase housing stock in Bridgend for this year through the WG Phase 2 Homelessness Scheme. This is for the financial year 20/21 only. This will only provide funding for a small number of premises. Cabinet will continue to request additional funding for on-going revenue and capital schemes that can target provision for homelessness cases. The cost of the increased guidelines for supporting homeless in accommodation is estimated at around £2m per year. This will increase further if our particular emergency provision such as Night shelters and Floor space provision is not supported by WG. | Regular meetings with WG overview the issues associated to the Pandemic and Homelessness responses. WG are continuing to provide financial assistance with regards temporary accommodation enable to book accommodation for a further six months.<br><br>Ongoing |
| <b>Recommendation 9</b> | The Panel recommends to Cabinet that a holistic Service Level Agreement is set-up between the Authority and BAVO.  | There is an annual SLA in place between BCBC and BAVO that provides financial support towards core resources and activity of the CVC. Additionally, from time to time opportunities may arise for  | As per previous response, BCBC already has annual SLA arrangements in place with BAVO<br><br>CLOSED  |

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|                          |   | <p>project activities and funding will be put in place via an SLA or similar arrangement. Existing project funding to BAVO is currently linked primarily to joint work with the Wellbeing directorate. BAVO also act as a distributor for small amounts of funding to the sector on behalf of BCBC and other partners (such as Food poverty grant) for which an agreement is also in place. There is an opportunity as part of the “Building Resilient Communities” approach to explore how to make best use of overall resources and what this might mean in terms of further support of BAVO and the third sector</p>  |   |
| <b>Recommendation 10</b> | <p>The Panel recommend that Cabinet investigate the establishment of an adapted housing register that works with all partners and covers the whole County Borough area.</p> | <p>BCBC has previously had an Adapted Housing Register which was removed as it was not seen to have real benefits. RSL’s are key partners in the nomination and allocation process of all housing in Bridgend. In order to understand whether this is beneficial change to the new housing Jigsaw system that was established in January this year engagement will take place with RSL’s to determine whether there is a need to introduce an adapted housing register and determine any operational changes, IT requirements and implementation timescale if required. Cabinet will be kept abreast of these developments and oversee appropriate service improvements.</p> | <p>RSLs manage their housing stock to support citizen to live independently where adaptations are required and needs develop. Any vacated property is assessed and adaptations noted and this information is supplied to the Council when ready for nomination. This allows us to best match the property to the needs of the individual.</p> <p>Closed</p> |

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| <b>Recommendation 11</b> | The Panel recommend that Cabinet write to Valleys to Coast expressing its disappointment of their level of cooperation during Covid-19.  |  | Complete  |
| <b>Recommendation 12</b> | The Panel recommend that Cabinet write to Welsh Government regarding the decision of Registered Social Landlords to furlough their staff at a time of need, which has impacted on other public services.                 | The co-operation and collaborative nature in delivering housing and support schemes in Bridgend is crucial and Cabinet will reinforce the joint responsibilities and collaborative efforts required to meet homelessness challenges of the future and seek reassurances from WG that support will be provided to RSL's to ensure that furloughing is not required in the future. | <p>Since this was raised the furloughing of RSL staff has not since arisen so no further action required. On-going collaboration will continue to take place as part of normal partnership working and response to Covid 19. Since last summer, we have worked more closely with RSLs to ensure that our services work together to better support tenants. Such activity With RSLs includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Weekly Homelessness Cell</li> <li>2) Bi-weekly Rapid Rehousing Meetings - to transition households from Temp Accommodation</li> <li>3) Complex Case Reviews – on a per need basis</li> <li>4) Quarterly Strategic meetings with V2C - Cross Directorate</li> </ol> <p>Since last summer we continue to work with RSL to undertake the following tasks (i.e. above</p> <p>This Recommendation has been considered and can now be closed</p> |
| <b>Recommendation 13</b> | The Panel recommend to Cabinet that the targeting of Social Housing Grant should be considered to develop housing options for the homelessness and people with support, to enable them to access suitable accommodation. | Cabinet already have oversight over the targeting and spend of Social Housing Grant (SHG) in the Borough Council area. SHG is a planned 3 year programme of development which is decided by Welsh Government. Discussions take place with WG regularly on new developments and projects with the aim of increasing stock. Discussions have                                       | <p>Discussions with WG are continuing on the capital side of funding for particular projects for homeless people for the end of the financial year.</p> <p>SHG schemes continue to be developed to meet the 3 year programme and a provide a balanced approach to meeting re-housing needs for family accommodation as well as 1 bed needs to</p>   |

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|                                 |  | <p>been held with all RSL's to develop schemes as quickly as possible which will support homelessness – primarily one bed stock. It is also important that all areas and communities have a balanced and sustainable approach and development of all stock to meet rehousing needs.</p> <p>Capital and revenue funding has been secured from WG to increase housing stock in Bridgend for this year through the WG Phase 2 Homelessness Scheme. Cabinet will continue to request additional funding for on-going revenue and capital schemes that can target provision for homelessness cases in particular emergency provision.</p> | <p>meet homelessness. The level of future funding of SHG will be determined by WG. Additional funding attracted this financial year includes - Revenue Project Update (Total £ - £158,563) this funding has supported:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Creation Triage Centre to meet the needs of single person households Brynmenyn</li> <li>2) Extension of Kerrigan Project Step Down - 2 additional staff members to expand on Pobl's existing staff structure. Additional staff capacity to allow for an on-site support staff presence at additional units, throughout the week</li> <li>3) Working regionally with regards the setup of a regional Multi-Disciplinary Team. This project will develop a new service, which will meet an identified need across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region, supporting complex individuals who have substance misuse and / or alcohol issues.</li> </ol> <p>Capital Project Updates: (Total £ - £2m): RSLs are in the process of acquiring the accommodation in-line with their submitted bids.</p> <p>This Recommendation has been considered and can now be closed</p> |
| <p><b>Recommendation 14</b></p> | <p>That BCBC prepares a corporate contingency strategic Covid-19 plan that will involve all statutory partners and Third Sector support networks in line with their individual responsibilities to the citizens of the County Borough of Bridgend.</p> | <p>During the initial Lockdown period, BCBC was part of a range of strategic arrangements that included statutory and non-statutory partners. These arrangements include ILF Regional arrangements and PSB and played critical roles in ensuring that Bridgend services are aligned to partner organisations to meet the challenges of COVID-19</p>  | <p>BCBC has a history of working closely with all statutory partners under a range of both formal and informal network arrangements. These arrangements have been essential to the operational and strategic responses employed by the Council in its response to COVID-19. It is considered that the production of a single plan</p>   |

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|                          |   | <p>in our communities. We have also developed a local Recovery Plan that has been approved and is based on Lessons Learnt provided by services. In addition a corporate contingency budget has been created that has been used to support necessary responses to COVID-19 and will continue to be used as required. Nevertheless we will continue to work with RPB and PSB to ensure that BCBC plays its part in such arrangements and deliver some of the expectations set out in the developing Community Impact Assessment being overseen by the PSB.</p>   | <p>that involves all statutory partners including the Third Sector would require a significant amount of effort and would be difficult to complete due to the changeable nature of the presenting situations. Having considered this recommendation, it is considered that a single plan would deliver limited benefits.</p> <p>This Recommendation has been considered and can now be closed</p> |
| <b>Recommendation 15</b> | <p>The Panel recommend that Cabinet revisit the Authority's policy on the disposal of surplus land which could be made available for the development of affordable housing, in line with Welsh Government guidelines.</p> | <p>Cabinet are overseeing the development of a new acquisitions and disposals strategy, which builds on current practice around achieving the best disposal outcome for BCBC - balancing the best price against the benefits being offered through alternative uses including partnership working/ community asset transfers,. in line with BCBC policies. In essence the current practice works dynamically to support BCBC corporate plan and policies, including working with RSLs on a number of projects and disposing of land to them off market, where appropriate.</p> <p>If there is a Council policy for planning to identify more land for affordable housing this will potentially negatively impact on capital receipts and hence delivery of other corporate</p> | <p>This Recommendation has been considered and can now be closed</p>  |

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|                          |  | <p>programmes, unless there is a mechanism to fund the gap from WG.</p> <p>However If WG was to make funding available to bring sites forward for affordable housing that otherwise are not viable, particularly North of the M4, this may also be considered as an opportunity.</p> <p>Local authorities have a clear statutory obligation to achieve “best consideration” in terms of any sale receipt. So if it is to restrict the sale for affordable housing, it will need to consider the legal means (including state aid) for doing this; particularly where there is likely to be challenge from house builders on the more attractive sites.</p> |  |
| <b>Recommendation 16</b> | The Panel recommend that Cabinet consider exploring the potential of Bridgend County Borough Council becoming a Cooperative Council. | In efforts to make Bridgend CBC a better place for residents to live and businesses to thrive, Cabinet acknowledges this recommendation and will explore in more detail how the Council can achieve the status of becoming a cooperative Council and to identify what the benefits and costs to such an approach would be.   | Agreed that at this stage it was more sensible to continue to pursue and apply some of the principles that relate to a Cooperative Council rather than seek to be formally acknowledged as a Cooperative Council. However, this matter would continue to be reviewed moving forward. |

**Cross - Party Recovery Panel**

**14<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

**Recommendations to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
on 9 June 2021 (and on to Cabinet)**

**Housing and Homelessness:**

**Recommendation 1**

**That Cabinet seeks reassurance from WG that the Pods can be used as a last resort for certain identified individuals.**

**Recommendation 2**

**That Cabinet ensure, as far as reasonably achievable, that the LDP addresses the need for housing in an equitable manner that does not polarise provision in the county borough leading to inequality of opportunity and lack of access locally, to housing.**

**Recommendation 3**

**That the provision and resourcing of 1 bedroomed accommodation be prioritised due to the high demand and lack of supply.**

**Recommendation 4**

**That concern is expressed regarding the WG funding of Homelessness beyond September 2021 and any impact this will have upon pressure upon the Authority's budget.**

**Recommendation 5**

**That the opportunities of office or commercial properties for conversion be investigated, to help with appropriate accommodation to help with the relief of homelessness.**

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## BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT TO THE CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

9 JUNE 2021

### REPORT OF THE CHIEF OFFICER – LEGAL, HR & REGULATORY SERVICES

#### CORPORATE PARENTING CHAMPION NOMINATION REPORT

#### 1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to request the Committee to nominate one Member as its Corporate Parenting Champion to represent the Committee as an invitee to meetings of the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting.

#### 2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives / other corporate priorities

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:
1. **Supporting a successful sustainable economy** – taking steps to make the county borough a great place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focussed on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions for all people in the county borough.
  2. **Helping people and communities to be more health and resilient** - taking steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services. Supporting individuals and communities to build resilience, and enable them to develop solutions to have active, healthy and independent lives.
  3. **Smarter use of resources** – ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

#### 3. Background

- 3.1 Corporate Parenting is the term used to describe the responsibility of a local authority towards looked after children and young people. This is a legal responsibility given to local authorities by the Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004. The role of the Corporate Parent is to seek for children in public care the outcomes every good parent would want for their own children. The Council as a whole is the 'corporate parent' therefore all Members have a level of responsibility for the children and young people looked after by Bridgend. <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Welsh Assembly Government and Welsh Local Government Association 'If this were my child... A councillor's guide to being a good corporate parent to children in care and care leavers', June 2009

- 3.2 In order to further develop and enhance the Council's Corporate Parenting role with its partners, a Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting comprising all Members of Cabinet was established by Cabinet on 4 November 2008.
- 3.3 The inaugural meeting of the Cabinet Committee was held on 27 November 2008 where it was agreed that the Cabinet Committee will meet bi-monthly. The terms of reference for the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting are:
- to ensure that looked after children are seen as a priority by the whole of the Authority and by the Children and Young People's Partnership;
  - to seek the views of children and young people in shaping and influencing the parenting they receive;
  - to ensure that appropriate policies, opportunities and procedures are in place;
  - to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Authority in its role as corporate parent against Welsh Government guidance.
- 3.4 At its inaugural meeting, the Cabinet Committee requested that a Corporate Parenting "Champion" be nominated from each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to become permanent invitees to the Cabinet Committee.

#### **4. Current situation/proposal**

- 4.1 The Committee is requested to nominate one Member as its Corporate Parenting Champion to represent the Committee as an invitee at meetings of the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting.
- 4.2 The role of the Corporate Parenting Champion is to represent their Overview and Scrutiny Committee, partaking in discussions with Cabinet over items relating to children in care and care leavers.
- 4.3 It is also suggested that in this role each Champion considers how all services within the remit of Scrutiny affect children in care and care leavers and encourage their own Committee to bear their Corporate Parenting role in mind when participating in Scrutiny.
- 4.4 Scrutiny Champions can greatly support the Committee by advising them of the ongoing work of the Cabinet Committee and particularly any decisions or changes which they should be aware of as Corporate Parents

#### **5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules**

- 5.1 The work of the Subject Scrutiny Committee relates to the review and development of plans, policy or strategy that form part of the Policy Framework and consideration of plans, policy or strategy relating to the power to promote or improve economic, social or environmental wellbeing in the County Borough of Bridgend.

## **6. Equality Act 2010 implications**

- 6.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

## **7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications**

- 7.1 The Act provides the basis for driving a different kind of public service in Wales, with 5 ways of working to guide how public services should work to deliver for people. The following is a summary to show how the 5 ways of working to achieve the well-being goals have been used to formulate the recommendations within this report:

- Long Term – The establishment of the Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee demonstrates the Authority's long term commitment to improving and strengthening their role as Corporate Parents to care leavers and Looked After Children.
- Prevention – The Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee are preventative in their nature and ensure that appropriate policies, opportunities and procedures are in place for all care leavers and Looked After Children.
- Integration – This report supports all the well-being objectives.
- Collaboration – All members are Corporate Parents and this report supports collaborative working with Cabinet and Members of Scrutiny and emphasises the role of Corporate Parents for all Elected Members.
- Involvement – Corporate Parent Champions provide practical support and guidance to children in care and care leavers to ensure they achieve their well-being goals.

## **8. Financial implications**

- 8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

## **9. Recommendation**

- 9.1 The Committee is asked to nominate one Member of the Committee as its Corporate Parenting Champion to represent the Committee at meetings of the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting.

Kelly Watson  
**Chief Officer – Legal, HR & Regulatory Services**  
June 2021

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**Background documents:** None

## BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT TO THE CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

9 JUNE 2021

#### REPORT OF THE CHIEF OFFICER – LEGAL, HR & REGULATORY SERVICES

##### NOMINATION TO THE PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD SCRUTINY PANEL

#### 1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to request the Committee to nominate three Members to sit on the Public Service Board Scrutiny Panel.

#### 2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives / other corporate priorities

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:-
1. **Supporting a successful sustainable economy** – taking steps to make the county borough a great place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focussed on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions for all people in the county borough.
  2. **Helping people and communities to be more health and resilient** - taking steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services. Supporting individuals and communities to build resilience, and enable them to develop solutions to have active, healthy and independent lives.
  3. **Smarter use of resources** – ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

#### 3. Background

- 3.1 From 1 April 2016, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 introduced statutory Public Services Boards (PSB) across each local authority area in Wales. PSBs work together to improve the social, economic, cultural and environmental well-being of the board's area. The Act specified that one Committee take an overview of the overall effectiveness of the Board which the Authority determined to carry out via a PSB Scrutiny Panel which now sits under the remit of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.2 The purpose of the Panel is to review and scrutinise the efficiency and effectiveness of the PSB and its decisions as well as the governance arrangements surrounding it. The Panel will hold up to two meetings a year and will make reports or recommendations to the Board regarding its functions, with the aim of enhancing its

impact. These recommendations are to be presented to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee for approval prior to submission to the Board.

- 3.3 A copy of any report or recommendation made to the Public Service Board must be sent to the Welsh Ministers, the Commissioner and the Auditor General for Wales.
- 3.4 The membership of the PSB Panel is determined annually and incorporates three Members from the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, one Member from each of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees and counterpart representatives that sit on the Public Service Board.

#### **4. Current situation/proposal**

- 4.1 In addition to the one Member nominated from each of the three Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees, the Committee is asked to nominate a further three Members to sit on the Public Service Board Scrutiny Panel.

#### **5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules**

- 5.1 The work of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee relates to the review and development of plans, policy or strategy that form part of the Policy Framework and consideration of plans, policy or strategy relating to the power to promote or improve economic, social or environmental wellbeing in the County Borough of Bridgend.

#### **6. Equality Act 2010 implications**

- 6.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

#### **7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications**

- 7.1 The Act provides the basis for driving a different kind of public service in Wales, with 5 ways of working to guide how public services should work to deliver for people. The following is a summary to show how the 5 ways of working to achieve the well-being goals have been used to formulate the recommendations within this report:

- Long-term - The establishment of the PSB Panel will assist in the long term planning of the business of the Council by the continuation of effective relationships with other organisations to improve wellbeing in Bridgend County now and in the future.
- Prevention - The PSB Scrutiny Panel will monitor the Public Service Board's objectives and priorities within the Wellbeing Plan which address underlying causes of problems and prevent them getting worse or happening in the future.

- Integration - The report supports all the wellbeing objectives.
- Collaboration - The PSB Panel supports partnership working with other organisations both locally and regionally.
- Involvement - The PSB Panel will maintain a relationship with other Organisations through effective partnership working and act as a critical friend to ensure the PSB are involving citizens of Bridgend when making decisions that affect them.

## **8. Financial implications**

8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

## **9. Recommendation**

9.1 The Committee is asked to nominate three Members of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to sit on the Public Service Board Scrutiny Panel.

Kelly Watson  
**Chief Officer - Legal, HR & Regulatory Services**  
June 2021

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**Background documents:** None

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## BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT TO CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

9 JUNE 2021

### REPORT OF THE CHIEF OFFICER - LEGAL, HR & REGULATORY SERVICES

#### FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

#### 1. Purpose of report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- a) Present the Committee with the proposed draft outline Forward Work Programme (**Appendix A**) for this Committee for discussion and consideration;
- b) To request any specific information the Committee identifies to be included in the items for the next two meetings, including invitees they wish to attend;
- c) To request the Committee to identify any further items for consideration on the Forward Work Programme having regard to the selection criteria in paragraph 4.6;
- d) To note that the proposed draft Forward Work Programmes for the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees will be reported to the next meeting of COSC, with the comments from each respective Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee, following consideration in their June Committee meetings.

#### 2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives/other corporate priorities

2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objective/objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:

- **Supporting a successful sustainable economy** – taking steps to make the county borough a great place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focussed on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions for all people in the county borough.
- **Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient** - taking steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services. Supporting individuals and communities to build resilience, and enable them to develop solutions to have active, healthy and independent lives.
- **Smarter use of resources** – ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1 The Council's Constitution requires the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to develop and implement a Forward Work Programme for the Committee.
- 3.2 The Council's Constitution also provides for each Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee to propose items for the Forward Work Programme having regard for the Council's Corporate Priorities and Risk Management framework, for the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to then prioritise and schedule.

#### Best Practice / Guidance

- 3.3 The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny's Good Scrutiny Guide recognises the importance of the forward work programme. In order to 'lead and own the process', it states that Councillors should have ownership of their Committee's work programme, and be involved in developing, monitoring and evaluating it. The Good Scrutiny Guide also states that, in order to make an impact, the scrutiny workload should be coordinated and integrated into corporate processes, to ensure that it contributes to the delivery of corporate objectives, and that work can be undertaken in a timely and well-planned manner.
- 3.4 Forward Work Programmes need to be manageable to maximize the effective use of the limited time and resources of Scrutiny Committees. It is not possible to include every topic proposed. Successful Scrutiny is about looking at the right topic in the right way and Members need to be selective, while also being able to demonstrate clear arguments for including or excluding topics.
- 3.5 The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) guide to work effective work programming 'A Cunning Plan?' makes the following reference to the importance of good work programming:

*'Effective work programming is the bedrock of an effective scrutiny function. Done well it can help lay the foundations for targeted, incisive and timely work on issues of local importance, where scrutiny can add value. Done badly, scrutiny can end up wasting time and resources on issues where the impact of any work done is likely to be minimal.'*

### **4. Current situation/proposal**

#### Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee Draft Forward Work Programme

- 4.1 Following the approval of the schedule of Scrutiny Committee meeting dates at the Annual Meeting of Council on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2021, the scheduling of standing statutory reports to Scrutiny Committees upon: the Medium Term Financial Strategy, Performance, the Corporate Plan, Budget Monitoring, etc. have been mapped to the appropriate meeting dates into a draft Forward Work Programme.

- 4.2 The draft outline Forward work programme for this Committee has been prepared using a number of difference sources, including:
- Corporate Risk Assessment;
  - Directorate Business Plans;
  - Previous Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme report topics / Minutes;
  - Committee / Member proposed topics;
  - Policy Framework;
  - Cabinet Work Programme;
  - Discussions with Corporate Directors;
  - Performance Team regarding the timing of performance information.
- 4.3 There are items where there is a statutory duty for Policy Framework documents to be considered by Scrutiny, e.g. the MTFs including draft budget proposals scheduled for consideration in December 2021, following which the Committee will coordinate the conclusions and recommendations from each of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees in a report on the overall strategic overview of Cabinet's draft Budget proposals to the meeting of Cabinet in February 2022.
- 4.4 An effective FWP will identify the issues that the Committee wishes to focus on during the year and provide a clear plan. However, at each meeting the Committee will have an opportunity to review this as the Forward Work Programme Update will be a standing item on the Agenda, detailing which items are scheduled for future meetings and be requested to clarify any information to be included in reports and the list of invitees. The FWP will remain flexible and will be revisited at each COSC meeting with input from each SOSC reported and any updated information gathered from FWP meetings with Corporate Directors.
- 4.5 The Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee Draft Forward Work Programmes will be reported to the next meeting of COSC, with the comments from each respective Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee for coordination and oversight of the overall FWP. The SOSC FWP's will be included in the standing FWP Update report from then on with any feedback from each SOSC meeting included.

#### Identification of Further Items

- 4.6 The Committee are reminded of the Criteria Form which Members can use to propose further items for the FWP which the Committee can then consider for prioritisation at a future meeting. The Criteria Form emphasises the need to consider issues such as impact, risk, performance, budget and community perception when identifying topics for investigation and to ensure a strategic responsibility for Scrutiny and that its work benefits the Authority. There are a number of questions and processes that can help the Committee come to a decision on whether to include a referred topic, some of which are set out below:

### Recommended Criteria for Selecting Scrutiny Topics:

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| PUBLIC INTEREST:   | The concerns of local people should influence the issues chosen for scrutiny;   |
| ABILITY TO CHANGE: | Priority should be given to issues that the Committee can realistically influence, and which will result in a Cabinet decision being taken; |
| PERFORMANCE:       | Priority should be given to the areas in which the Council, and other agencies, are not performing well;                                    |
| EXTENT:            | Priority should be given to issues that are relevant to all or large parts of the County Borough;   |
| REPLICATION:       | Work programmes must take account of what else is happening in the areas being considered to avoid duplication or wasted effort.            |

### Reasons to Reject Scrutiny Topics:

- The issue is already being addressed / being examined elsewhere and change is imminent.
- The topic would be better addressed elsewhere (and can be referred there).
- Scrutiny involvement would have limited / no impact upon outcomes.
- The topic may be sub-judice or prejudicial to the Council's interest.
- The topic is too broad to make a review realistic.
- New legislation or guidance relating to the topic is expected within the next year.
- The topic area is currently subject to inspection or has recently undergone substantial change.

### Corporate Parenting

- 4.7 Corporate Parenting is the term used to describe the responsibility of a Local Authority towards looked after children and young people. This is a legal responsibility given to local authorities by the Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004. The role of the Corporate Parent is to seek for children in public care the outcomes every good parent would want for their own children. The Council as a whole is the 'corporate parent', therefore all Members have a level of responsibility for the children and young people looked after by Bridgend.
- 4.8 In this role, it is suggested that Members consider how each item they consider affects children in care and care leavers, and in what way can the Committee assist in these areas.
- 4.9 Scrutiny Champions can greatly support the Committee in this by advising them of the ongoing work of the Cabinet-Committee and particularly any decisions or changes which they should be aware of as Corporate Parents.
- 4.10 The draft outline Forward Work Programme for COSC is attached as **Appendix A** for the Committee's consideration.

## **5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules**

- 5.1 The work of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees relates to the review and development of plans, policy or strategy that form part of the Council's Policy Framework and consideration of plans, policy or strategy relating to the power to promote or improve economic, social or environmental wellbeing in the County Borough of Bridgend.

## **6. Equality Act 2010 implications**

- 6.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales, the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

## **7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications**

- 7.1 The Act provides the basis for driving a different kind of public service in Wales, with 5 ways of working to guide how public services should work to deliver for people. The following is a summary to show how the 5 ways of working to achieve the well-being goals have been used to formulate the recommendations within this report:

- Long-term - The approval of this report will assist in the planning of Scrutiny business in both the short-term and in the long-term on its policies, budget and service delivery.
- Prevention - The early preparation of the Forward Work Programme allows for the advance planning of Scrutiny business where Members are provided an opportunity to influence and improve decisions before they are made by Cabinet.
- Integration - The report supports all the wellbeing objectives.
- Collaboration - Consultation on the content of the Forward Work Programme has taken place with the Corporate Management Board, Heads of Service, Elected Members and members of the public.
- Involvement - Advanced publication of the Forward Work Programme ensures that the public and stakeholders can view topics that will be discussed in Committee meetings and are provided with the opportunity to engage.

## **8. Financial implications**

- 8.1 There are no financial implications directly associated with this report.

## 9. Recommendations

9.1 The Committee is recommended to:

- a) Consider the proposed draft outline Forward Work Programme for the Committee in Appendix A, make any amendments and agree its Forward Work Programme.
- b) Identify any specific information the Committee wishes to be included in the report for the next two Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings, including invitees they wish to attend;
- c) Identify any further items for consideration on the Forward Work Programme having regard to the selection criteria in paragraph 4.6.
- d) Note that the proposed draft Forward Work Programmes for the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees will be reported to the next meeting of COSC, with the comments from each respective SOSC following consideration in their June Committee meetings.

Kelly Watson

**CHIEF OFFICER – LEGAL, HR & REGULATORY SERVICES**

3 June 2021

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**Background documents:** None.

| <b>Date of Meeting:</b>                    | <b>Report Topics:</b>  |
|--|--|
| Mon<br>5 <sup>th</sup> July<br>9.30am      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Revenue Budget Outturn 2020-21</li> <li>- Council's Performance against its Wellbeing Objectives for 2020 -21 (Year End Performance)</li> </ul>   |
| Wed<br>1 <sup>st</sup> September<br>9.30am | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Budget Monitoring 2021-22 – Quarter 1 Revenue Forecast</li> <li>- Director of Social Services Annual report</li> <li>- Annual Safeguarding Report</li> <li>- Accommodation Board</li> </ul>   |
| Thurs<br>7 <sup>th</sup> October<br>9.30am | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shared Regulatory Service - date to be confirmed with Board</li> </ul>  |
| Wed<br>1 <sup>st</sup> December<br>9.30am  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Budget Monitoring 2021-22 – Quarter 2 Revenue Forecast</li> <li>- Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022-23 to 2025-26 and Budget Proposals</li> <li>- Q2 Performance Report 2021-22 (or Jan 22)</li> </ul>  |
| Wed<br>12 <sup>th</sup> January<br>9.30am  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Corporate Plan 2018-2023 reviewed for 2022-23</li> <li>- Capital Strategy 2022-23 onwards</li> <li>- Replacement Local Development Plan</li> <li>- Scrutiny Recommendations on Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022-23 to 2025-26 and Draft Budget Consultation Process</li> </ul> |
| Wed<br>2 <sup>nd</sup> March<br>9.30am     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Budget Monitoring 2021-22 – Quarter 3 Revenue Forecast</li> <li>- Employee Wellbeing</li> </ul>   |

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