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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, 25 November 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, 1 December 2021 at 09:30**.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
To receive apologies for absence from Members.
2. 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)
3. Approval of Minutes 3 - 16
To receive for approval the minutes of 01 09 21
4. Budget Monitoring 2021-22 - Quarter 2 Revenue Forecast 17 - 46

Invitees

Councillor Huw David - Leader
Councillor Hywel Williams - Deputy Leader
Councillor Stuart Baldwin - Cabinet Member for Communities
Councillor Nicole Burnett - Cabinet Member for Social Services and Early Help
Councillor Dhanisha Patel - Cabinet Member for Future Generations and Wellbeing
Councillor Charles Smith - Cabinet Member for Education & Regeneration

Mark Shephard - Chief Executive
Lindsay Harvey - Corporate Director - Education and Family Support
Gill Lewis - Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change
Claire Marchant - Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing
Janine Nightingale - Corporate Director - Communities
Kelly Watson - Chief Officer, Legal and Regulatory Services, HR and Corporate Policy

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5. Forward Work Programme Update

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6. 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 or tel. 01656 643147 / 643148.

Yours faithfully

K Watson

Chief Officer, Legal and Regulatory Services, HR and Corporate Policy

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

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD IN REMOTELY - VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON WEDNESDAY, 1 SEPTEMBER 2021 AT 09:30

Present

Councillor KL Rowlands – Chairperson

JPD Blundell	J Gebbie	M Jones	RL Penhale-Thomas
RMI Shaw	T Thomas	A Williams	AJ Williams

Apologies for Absence

DG Howells and JC Spanswick

Officers:

Lucy Beard	Scrutiny Officer
Jackie Davies	Head of Adult Social Care
Lindsay Harvey	Corporate Director Education and Family Support
Meryl Lawrence	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Scrutiny
Gill Lewis	Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change
Claire Marchant	Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing
Zak Shell	Head of Neighbourhood Services
Mark Shephard	Chief Executive
Kelly Watson	Chief Officer Legal, HR and Regulatory Services

Invitees:

Councillor Stuart Baldwin	Cabinet Member Communities
Councillor Nicole Burnett	Cabinet Member Social Services and Early Help Leader
Councillor Huw David	Leader
Councillor Charles Smith	Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration
Councillor Hywel Williams	Deputy Leader

31. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

32. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee dated 9 June 2021 be approved as a true and accurate record.

33. BUDGET MONITORING 2021-22 - QUARTER 1 REVENUE FORECAST

The Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change updated Members on the Council's revenue financial position for quarter one as at 30 June 2021 whilst noting time had moved on since this had been reported to Cabinet in July and she would pick up some of the key themes.

She reminded Members that Council at its meeting on 24 February 2021 approved a net revenue budget of £298.956m for 2021-22 and this was the first progress report against

that budget. Table 1 provided a summary of the information and set out the projected position which was showing a projected £1m overspend although she reminded Members that the Outturn report gave a very different picture at the time mainly because there was significant amounts of Covid money and additional grant monies and noted that Members would see financial pressures coming through on many of the budgets. This was clear moving into the 2nd Quarter with particular pressures in Adult Social Care across the whole of Wales. She wanted Members to understand that those pressures were still there, and it was important that Members looked at the significant underlying pressures in some of the services and don't just take from the outturn report there appears to be a very good financial position.

She took Members through Table 1, noting that a £1m Covid recovery fund had been established which has been used carefully on phased car parking offer, phased rental income increases for BCBC rental properties, waiver of sports fees, summer play etc. none of which were claimable against the hardship fund as local decisions weren't claimable.

Table 2 gave a flavour of Covid claims, noting that there was still a pressure on council tax and the council tax reduction scheme and financial hardship is expected as furlough unfolds. A 1% council tax drop was £1m and there was no support indicated yet from Welsh Government (WG). It was noted at 4.1.13 that pay and prices remained volatile and it was not clear on all the pay awards although there was some indication that some of the teachers pay would be funded centrally. Inflation continued to run at quite a high level and it was something that hadn't been planned for so there was a need to ensure there was enough money in the prices budget.

Table 3 set out the prior year savings which had mainly been achieved although there was a shortfall still of £310k which was unlikely to be met and this needed to be considered.

Table 4 and Appendix 2 showed the year's performance which had been a remarkable achievement in many respects in difficult circumstances with all the savings likely to be achieved apart from the relocation of the recycling centre which was delayed.

There was a continued need for savings over the life of the MTFS for 2022-2023 to 2025-2026 and it was noted from the projections that another £22m was likely to be needed depending on the level of settlement WG.

Paragraph 4.3 of the report onwards provided a lot more detail on each of the Directorates.

The Chair thanked the Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change for her presentation following which Members of the Committee asked the following:

A Member noted the Covid recovery fund and asked if this recovery of monies, e.g., the £35k put into car parking fees, had that been successful.

The Head of Operations - Community Services explained that in order to encourage footfall, as part of the bounce back recovery from Covid, the offer had been made with both the three hours free in the Rhiw car park in Bridgend and the free from 12 to 3 o'clock in John Street in Porthcawl. What was incredibly difficult to do was actually baseline the footfall against a norm noting that during the pandemic initially footfall was decimated and although it was returning, still wasn't back to normal levels so it was very difficult to measure.

The Member asked for a little more detail on the split in relation to the £1m Covid recovery fund.

The Chief Executive confirmed that his understanding was it was about £100k - £120k in relation to sports fees and about £18k to £20k in respect of the car parking offer, although a full breakdown could be provided to the committee if they wished.

The Leader clarified that in respect of the summer play activity, the Council had planned more investment to provide a comprehensive range of summer play activities for children and young people but then WG had quadrupled the amount of funding they normally awarded. This was an example of how the budget was uncertain, noting that the Council continued to make the case to the WG for funds for those additional pressures.

The Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change suggested that that a breakdown of the Covid recovery fund could be circulated to members.

The Member enquired what was actually being asked for in respect of claiming for the loss of income. She noted that many of the £2.127m was on hold or pending and asked if this was actually putting a financial pressure on the council with staff trying to collate the information that WG were asking for.

The Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change acknowledged that the Covid claims had been incredibly pressurised and involved a huge amount of extra work not just for Finance but for the Directorates as well, although the Council had a very good relationship with WG Officials in terms of being clear what could be claimed and as a result had been incredibly successful in getting costs claimed back. Effectively it was like running almost two financial systems e.g. Covid costs, Covid loss of income and loss of council tax and the rest in separate areas.

The £2m that was on hold was really a time delay, as the Council had now received some, although she didn't have the exact figure to hand but was hopeful that most of that would be received. The main areas of loss of income had been Halo and leisure and the car parking already mentioned. There had been an ability to claim car parking last year, but this was no longer available.

A Member noted that the report on page 19 talked about the net budget for social services and an under spend of over £600k however page 20 then talked about staffing vacancies and delays implementing a restructure and asked for further clarification in relation to the narrative.

The Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing acknowledged that the situation in domiciliary care and care and support at home was a difficult one to explain and understand. There were significant levels of vacancies in the in-house service with a restructure being consulted on at the moment. There was a big push, in terms of recruitment into those vacancies in-house, and some actions in terms of being more flexible around the contracts offered in-house. There were also some systemic issues, that needed to be addressed. At the same time a significant increase in need for care and support at home, had been seen, with independent sector providers providing more care and support at home than ever before. This was still not enough to meet the need and demand for domiciliary care services despite the significant amounts of money that were being invested into care and support at home.

The Cabinet Member for Social Services and Early Help confirmed that she spent her weeks looking at the figures and the balance was completely off within social care and until the workforce issue could be sorted out through recruitment, it was very difficult to reinstate that balance. There was a need to respond to demands and needs and pay in order to make sure that residents were looked after so reinforcing and prioritising the workforce had to happen.

The Member understood the pressures in home care but asked if this was a significant pressure on recruitment elsewhere in the Council, thinking of a council-wide approach market supplements would be offered and asked if the Council was in a position to offer market supplements to home care staff.

The Corporate Director - Social Services acknowledged that the Council didn't currently have a market supplement policy although she understood that one was well into development and that would be brought forward later in the year for consideration by members. She noted that the next meeting of SOSC2 on 23 September would consider, in some detail, the action plans around care and support at home. This was a challenge, not just across Bridgend but the whole of Wales. As Director this was the highest priority, alongside some of the workforce issues in children's services. What was seen in the budget, and this was a budget report, was that the budget spend didn't align with where the spend should. The budget position reflected some of the challenges in the overall service position and one of the indicators of success moving forward, would be if the budget spend aligned better.

A Member asked once the staff need had been recruited to, would there be an overspend?

The Corporate Director - Social Services highlighted that the Council had set the budget to meet and to pay for the workforce that had been evaluated was needed, although she would seek to, within the relevant permissions, over recruit in this area. To be in a position where the budget was balanced probably meant a successful recruitment drive although potentially a little bit of overspend would be seen. What would then look to be done, in terms of service and financial terms, was reduce that spend on care homes for older people particularly, as it had been seen that the number of people who had their needs met through a care home placement, reduce over the years. One of the risks that Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) highlighted, in their annual report, was that due to the challenges in domiciliary care they may see people going into care homes sooner rather than later, but this had not been seen and so the Service would look to rebalance that budget into more care and support at home, which was what the majority of people wanted.

The Cabinet Member for Social Services and Early Help emphasised the point made that an overspend in those services would mean a saving in the higher care intervention in terms of packages of care and would like to see a lot more investment in the early intervention services. There was a need to ensure the correct budgeting for prevention as when money was invested in prevention costs could be offset further along the line.

A Member referred to 4.2.2 in relation to the Halo contract and asked how the Council was going to continue to maintain subsidising them.

The Corporate Director - Social Services explained, in terms of the partnerships with Halo and the cultural trust partner, that the Council had worked very closely with them throughout the pandemic to manage what had been a very challenging situation for leisure and cultural trust providers. The Service had worked closely with

the Finance team and WG in order to maximise the claims in terms of covered hardship and closely with Halo around their restart and recovery plans, as restrictions were lifted, to look at how they had been able to maintain membership bases and their plans for increasing those membership bases going forward. In governance terms, there was the advisory board, which was well attended by Cabinet members, in order to shape and inform the future direction of services. What the Council would be looking for Halo to do, would be both a return to pre-Covid levels of activity and performance and to build on some of the learning through the pandemic, including where they could be innovative and creative, and continue to make digital offers alongside physical offers and to widen the access into leisure and leisure services across the county borough, as this was key to the health and well-being of the population. Finally, to look then what the impact of that was on the contract and in respect of the subsidies and the investment that they got from the Council

The Member felt it was going to be exceptionally problematic and something that needed to keep a big eye on. She was also concerned that Halo had reduced their ICT provision, prior to the pandemic. She appreciated more was being done online but her concern was vulnerable people being able to access their claims and felt problems were being stored up for the future.

A Member noted that the Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change had briefed Members that the Council was £1m overspent on the 1st Quarter, there was an above average demand going into the 2nd Quarter, which would be a significant budget pressure. Budget Management was being described as volatile and unpredictable, which was entirely understandable and WG continued to provide some grant funding, especially to support adult services. With that in mind, what was hoped to be achieved going into the second quarter, having learned what the first quarter is telling us.

The Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change was not anticipating a huge change in terms of quarter two, with volatility remaining. The settlement from WG was likely to be late again, which was a major factor in the MTFs, and furlough was likely to unfold in September, which would give a feel for the pressure on council tax reduction. If that became excessive there might be some thought in WG about whether there was any support. There also might be a firmer indication on the way inflation was going and the way pay awards were likely to go. It was difficult to predict what might happen in quarters three and four if the country was returned to lockdown as that would have a huge financial impact on the budget again. Some savings were needed by the end of quarter two, so in October, she would hope to be able to highlight some areas where reductions could be made, as there were pressures in many of the services including education, communities and particularly in housing, with rising levels of homelessness. There also needed to be decisions on where money could be taken from the budgets, which was increasingly difficult, as nobody wanted to reduce services. If savings weren't made and there were increasing new pressures, then there could be real difficulty because of the lack of ability to find monies from elsewhere. Reserves were healthy and the general reserve was at expected levels, nothing excessive. There was quite a significant amount of money in earmarked reserves, but the key was earmarked.

In essence the Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change didn't think the Council could just hope that WG would come forward with a good settlement. There was a need to plan savings and if the worst was planned for some savings proposals could be moved forward a year if necessary, as there were no doubts that future settlements would be tough.

The Member acknowledged that the key here was WG support and asked what sort of discussions were ongoing in relation to the Council's situation because he felt sure the situation was replicated elsewhere across Wales.

The Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change acknowledged that some councils were in a slightly worse position, some in a slightly better position but there was a huge consistency about the things that they were finding difficult to fund and their pressures had been very similar in terms of the claims on the hardship fund and the loss of income. The S151 Officers met fortnightly, now monthly with WG and the WLGA, so there was a huge amount of interaction, although that didn't mean that those officials had any insight into what the WG budget could look like ultimately. There were significant pressures from health across Wales and from other areas e.g., economic regeneration, etc., so local government was just one voice at that table, although hopefully a strong voice.

The Leader confirmed that representations at a political level, mirrored those that had been made by S151 officers, across Wales and currently, due to the acute pressures on health and social care, because of the way they are so closely related, he, along with the WLGA leader were meeting with the health minister on a weekly basis to talk about the unprecedented pressures on social care and making the case for that long-term investment in the system. The Minister was listening to that, and certainly recognised the crucial role that social care played itself and also in terms of sustaining the NHS as well and he would continue to raise the need for investment in in local services.

A Member asked what kind of discussions were being on reduced council tax income and asked if this could be raised as a priority.

The Leader confirmed that had been raised and the Council had received some additional support from WG, but there was still a recognition that that pressure had not gone away. WG were committed to reviewing the way that local finances were raised although this was a long-term aspiration of WG, in terms of council tax reform.

The Member asked if there was now any indication of what the Council was going to receive in terms of this assistance.

The Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change confirmed no, was the honest answer with council tax collections still currently running at about 1% down. The collection rate was set at half a percent down on normal so she was hopeful that things may have improved by the second quarter. The Council had also been able to process some of the summons that were suspended because during the Covid year, although as time went on the ability to collect debt became less. There was still hope the last year's collection would increase through that mechanism, as well as some upturn in this years and September and October would be critical.

A Member referred to COM19 and asked if there was further information as the narrative seemed vague and he was trying to figure out how the figure had gone from amber to red.

The Head of Operations - Community Services reassured Members that the department was staying on budget. In terms of the permitting scheme for roadworks this was outstanding, as other areas within the highways department had been concentrated on to make sure the budget stayed on track. Essentially this would be a scheme that gave better control over external roadworks when statutory undertakers e.g., gas companies, etc., came along to do works on the highways. It

was hoped this would generate some money, but the main purpose was to give the Council better control and to actually limit the amount of time that statutory undertakers spent undertaking works on the roadway. Although this was already in existence in England it didn't exist in Wales yet and it required a change in WG legislation to actually allow it to happen. Whilst this would continue to be pursued it would take some time to deliver, although it felt like the Council was getting there.

A Member referred to page 30, in relation to the pay award, as the employers offer was 1.75% and asked for an update on the position and how the Council would mitigate the award.

The Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change stated that she did not think that anything had been absolutely signed sealed and delivered on teacher's and other pay, but the Council had budgeted between 1.75% and 2% in the MTFS, so if it was below 2% this would be within budget. There was some indication that WG would make a contribution to the teachers' pay award, which would be extremely welcome, and the suggestion currently was that the Council would fund the 1% and WG would contribute the 0.75%, but that had not yet been formally confirmed and that was only for a part year because the teachers' pay crossed the financial year. She was fairly comfortable however, that the Council had budgeted for the pay awards aspect.

A Member referred to COM1 and explained that whilst it stated that the £300k was likely to be achieved in 2021-22, she was aware of asset transfers that hadn't progressed, so wondered how this target would be achieved.

The Head of Operations - Community Services stated that firstly the £300k was the MTFS savings target and not the exact amount saved through CAT transfers. He provided Members with a brief overview of some of the CAT transfer successes, which were on an ongoing basis, whilst some were on the cusp, and would provide Members with a full breakdown of those which had transferred and those that it was hoped would be achieved, for members to view. He confirmed that an extra person had been recruited in the property department, to help with the lease process and a person had just been appointed to assist with the CAT process in addition to the CAT Officer. There was more to do to make sure the Service continued to achieve the £300k on a recurring basis and there was a need to ensure CAT transfer process was kept going. Savings didn't end at the end of the year, and future savings would need to be identified and depending on how many successful CAT transfers, these could then be tallied up to see if there were further savings that that could be offered, if the number exceeded the £300k.

Having considered the above report, the Committee requested the following:

1. A breakdown of the Covid recovery fund to be circulated to members.
2. A full list and breakdown of CAT transfers including those that it was hoped would be achieved be circulated to Members.

RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the projected revenue position for 2021-22.

34. **REVIEW OF BUDGET RESEARCH & EVALUATION PANEL**

The Interim Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change outlined the report on the review of Budget Research & Evaluation Panel to Members. In particular, she highlighted the importance of Member attendance to make sure that there

was a collective agreement going forward upon the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

There were no questions by Members.

RESOLVED: That the Committee having considered the report, endorsed the review of the role of the Budget Research and Evaluation Panel (BREP).

35. **SOCIAL SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21**

The Director of Social Services & Wellbeing presented the key themes of the Annual Report and advised that the last year had been very much about creativity, a lot of innovation but also a lot of sheer hard work, from people right across the whole system. Safeguarding had always been central, even in a public health-led pandemic, citizens and communities had been badly impacted and lost many people, and the recovery and renewal piece for social services, as part of that response, was going to be really important. Staff really needed the time and space to recover at their own pace, or faced the risk of burnout and attrition, which was being seen at the moment because the pace hadn't slowed, and if anything, had accelerated moving into the final two quarters of the year. Services had adapted to new working practices, which were highlighted in the report. Stabilisation and renewal were critical over the next six months and she reinforced the point that the workforce was critical to this success, with more dependence on all parts of the workforce than ever before.

The Chair thanked the Corporate Director Social Services & Wellbeing for presenting her report and thanked the Corporate Director and her team for their all their efforts during a very challenging year.

The Cabinet Member for Social Services and Early Help thanked the Corporate Director Social Services & Wellbeing and her team for putting the report together and noted that despite the awful year, there were so many good examples. She appealed to Members scrutinising the report to focus on the human aspects in terms of the financials and figures.

A Member highlighted the issue of staffing generally and asked what the local authority was doing to ensure it could get staff.

The Corporate Director Social Services & Wellbeing acknowledged that there was a national piece of work around workforce, working closely with WG and with Social Care Wales. This was firstly to promote the sector, secondly to look at the really difficult issues, such as the implementation of the WG manifesto priority around a real living wage for care workers and thirdly around professional standards, working very closely with Social Care Wales, around the registration of not just professional social work staff, but of care workers. It was really important that Bridgend were key players on the national stage and informing and co-producing policy where necessary. Bridgend was keen to promote Bridgend to be as successful as possibly can in retaining and recruiting the Bridgend workforce. The Corporate Director Social Services & Wellbeing then went through the different action plans in terms of recruitment, for both the social care workforce and then the social work workforce.

The Member asked what would happen if people didn't come forward, which was her concern. Were people applying already and showing an interest to what was already being shared and any job adverts.

The Corporate Director Social Services & Wellbeing acknowledged that this was difficult because of competing in very overcrowded space in terms of both the social care worker and the social work workforce whilst starting from a place where lots of people weren't coming forward wanting to do these jobs. She noted that quite significant numbers of people applied for healthcare support worker jobs but weren't coming forward in the same numbers, to work for the local authority in care jobs or to work in the independent sector, so there was a need to understand and do everything within the action plans to make Bridgend as attractive as possible. There were challenges in the short term and the Authority was looking at how it brought in workforce via agency, which could cause difficulties, but what was most important was meeting statutory duties in both social work and social care workforce. That needed to be done in the best way that wasn't disruptive and supported the workforce and the retention piece being the absolute most important and not something which causes more difficulties for the existing workforce. She advised of the need to look at how people's needs can be supported in different ways for example Bridgend was really successful with assistive technology and the need to continue to promote that and look at how need and demand for services are managed in a way which is most effective and cost effective. This really was a challenge and absolutely needed a whole council approach and sets of aligned actions about what could be done locally, regionally and nationally.

The Cabinet Member for Social Services and Early Help explained that there were a number of issues she wanted to extend on including the lack of national pay scale for social workers, which was extremely damaging for the local authority because of not only competition from immediate ordering authorities, but with authorities around the UK, for experienced staff. She reassured members that long conversations were being had within the care workforce and social care. There was a need to empathise with the workforce because people should not fall through the hoop. The Council needed to meet its statutory needs and at the moment the workforce was working tirelessly to ensure that.

The Chair asked Members if there were any further questions regarding the evidence provided in the report, as she was conscious that Members comments were sought that could help strengthen the report.

A Member acknowledged that he liked the format of the report and offered his admiration to the whole of the department for the work that had been done in what could only be described as challenging times. However, he acknowledged that the county was not a level playing field and there were areas of significant deprivation within the county and asked how the socio-economic duty would affect the work now and in the future.

The Corporate Director Social Services & Wellbeing explained that in terms of the application of the socio-economic duty, as with many diseases, Covid had been a disease of inequality with some of the most deprived communities most severely impacted. From a social care perspective when looking at the services there was a need to make sure the duty was properly understood and applied because it may mean different solutions in some parts of the county borough than others. In some parts of the county borough this could mean focussing on the right set of interventions and not just supporting people in terms of connecting them, but actually doing that active community development work where there were gaps in what was naturally occurring within communities. Whilst in other parts of the county borough the Council didn't necessarily need to take such a strong role, e.g., the Porthcawl Covid-19 Strategy Group, where the community itself came forward. The Council was part of a group addressing vaccine inequalities in outcomes and any

postcode inequalities looking at the evidence-based interventions to make sure these were being addressed in the right way.

A Member referred to page 91 of the report and noted the number of contacts received was down from 6810 to 4742 and asked if this was Covid related or if the Council was moving in the right direction and generally the number of contacts was coming down.

The Corporate Director Social Services & Wellbeing explained in terms of the number of contacts, that it was a very unusual year to look at any trends because there were times of the year when some of the normal referrers were operating very differently, e.g., schools, primary care, health visiting, etc. More of a normalisation was starting to be seen, as services came back on board as would be expected and there was some need and demand which didn't come through early enough which was now causing some pressure on services, but last year it really did fluctuate depending on the period of the lockdown whether referrals were coming in or not.

The Member noted that the number of children on the child protection register had increased from 165 to 201 and asked if there had been an increase due to Covid.

The Corporate Director Social Services & Wellbeing explained that in terms of the child protection register and the number of registrations, she was quite comfortable with the level. The Council was in one of the higher quartiles of numbers of children on the child protection register in Wales and had confidence in that in terms of the protection that was afforded to children on the child protection register. It was quite right and proper that the register remained quite high at the moment, given the challenges that children and families had faced and given the fact that there may have been some delays in children and families coming forward and in terms of the ability then to statutorily intervene with families, whereas all steps below the child protection register were voluntary.

The Member referred to page 93 of the report and asked for further clarification regarding the 296 total number of reports of children who go missing during the year, and the 99 total number of children who go missing during the year.

The Corporate Director Social Services & Wellbeing explained there was a process which came into effect, whenever a child or young person was missing for a period of time, working closely with South Wales Police, particularly around how to code these. Some children and young people went missing quite frequently and some would present quite significant risks to themselves, with those sorts of situations managed in a multi-agency way to look at how to support and what the risk management plan was around that child or young person. She did not think, currently, there were any children or young people missing currently.

The Member referred to page 99 and noted that in respect of Maple Tree House that the number of children placed during the year had dropped from 22 to 9, with children placed in supported living remaining the same. She asked if the figures were down because of Covid or another reason and what was the reason for moving the existing service to a purpose-built provision.

The Corporate Director Social Services & Wellbeing explained that the relocation of maple tree house would include additional capacity. Within the provision, there was both emergency provision and short-term assessment provision, both of which were critical and both of which was better managed separately. A far better building was needed for that, as well as a better location which would also enable co-location with other aspects of placement services. This would enable the fostering team to

really get to know the children and young people as they went through the detailed and thorough assessment that they had in the assessment unit. There were some exciting plans around this although she noted there had been a little bit of delay in the implementation, although this was a priority for going forward.

Following on from this the Member noted that a press report had highlighted that following an inspection of maple tree house, there were issues and there needed to be improvement. She was disappointed that these press reports did not then report on any of the improvements and asked for clarification about attendance not just at maple tree house, but all adult and childcare premises, especially when Members were not currently able to visit.

The Corporate Director Social Services & Wellbeing acknowledged the reporting the Council received. She gave assurance to Members around visits into premises and confirmed that the two responsible individuals for in-house care homes were the Head of Adult of Social Care for the adult care home provision and the Head of Children's Social Care for the children's provision. Both had continued throughout the pandemic to undertake their responsible individual duties, which included a strong focus on quality assurance, linking in with the facilities. However, at times during the pandemic, this had to be virtual and was very well evidenced, but as the risks reduced, then those quality assurance visits had been increasingly face to face, noting that herself and the Cabinet Member for Social Services and Early Help had recently visited themselves as well. She explained that she would work with Members in terms of the reintroduction of rota visits, as it was a really important part of what they did in terms of fulfilling corporate parenting and other safeguarding responsibilities.

She advised that in terms of Maple Tree House itself, the Council was not formally in any escalated sort of state of intervention from the CIW and would continue to report through into the corporate parenting committee. CIW had continued to inspect, from a regulatory point of view, throughout the last year into regulated services and undertook a full quality assurance check at the start of April with the report to be published in the Autumn.

The Cabinet Member for Social Services and Early Help reassured Members that visits were taking place with the same level of scrutiny being given. With regards to Maple Tree House a report had been received by the corporate parenting committee, regarding the CIW inspection, with an update on the improvements that had been made and how that the Council was not in any special measures. She was disappointed with the reporting and asked that Members share the correction information.

A Member referred to the safeguarding policy on page 42 and noted that on page 57, paragraph 2, it stated that 'as a statutory officer, I need to review, consolidate and strengthen safeguarding resources', and asked how the Corporate Director - Social Services & Wellbeing proposed to do that.

The Corporate Director Social Services & Wellbeing explained that because this was a corporate / whole council safeguarding policy there was a need to make sure all the right information was being received from across the council, with all directorates needing to understand their interface with safeguarding and safeguarding responsibilities. In order to do that the right governance arrangements were needed. One of the things she was looking to do was to establish a corporate safeguarding board that sat beneath CMB and CCMB, reporting to them the right information around safeguarding and with an officer to support that.

The Member acknowledged this but felt the responsibility of safeguarding should not be confined just to Officers. Members also had a role to play, not only with visits to care homes, but in terms of reviewing corporate policy during the scrutiny process and suggested that this was something that could be considered when considering the activities of the safeguarding board.

The Corporate Director Social Services & Wellbeing agreed that this was helpful and one of the things within the new safeguarding policy was that there would be an annual safeguarding report to members on the effectiveness of corporate safeguarding. This would draw out in a lot more detail than she was able to do in the headlines in the annual report, the effectiveness of corporate safeguarding, and would be one of the key duties of the new officers. The other thing being considered jointly, between officers in both Social Services & Wellbeing and Education and Early Help, was to ensure that there was some further member training on safeguarding during the next term for members. This should be context specific to the role of Members, rather more general e-learning.

The Cabinet Member for Social Services and Early help re-emphasised the importance of elected Members to attend all safeguarding training that was available especially those that sat as LEA governors, as the training wasn't mandatory at present.

RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the content of the Director of Social Services' draft Annual Report for 2020/21.

36. **SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT**

The Senior Democratic Officer – Scrutiny presented the draft Scrutiny Annual Report and explained that purpose of the report was to present the committee with the draft scrutiny annual report which covered a two-year period for 2019-20 and 2020-21. Scrutiny was required to submit the annual report to Council with a review of how the function had operated for the previous period. The draft Scrutiny Annual Report was attached as Appendix A and it provided detail on the challenges and outcomes for scrutiny committees and panels for the period, as well as identifying some areas of focus for improvement to ensure scrutiny continued to develop and achieve positive outcomes for the residents of Bridgend. The Committee was asked to consider whether the draft report collated and prepared by the Scrutiny Team reflected the work done by the scrutiny function for the last two years, before going forward, subject to any amendments, to Council.

The Chairs of COSC, SOSC1, SOSC2 and SOSC3, thanked the Senior Democratic Officer – Scrutiny and Scrutiny Officer for their report and hard work, whilst acknowledging the impact caused by a vacancy within the team.

RESOLVED: That the Committee endorsed the Scrutiny Annual Report attached as Appendix A, subject to a spelling amendment, for submission to Council for consideration.

37. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE**

There were no requests to include specific information in the item for the next meeting.

There were no further items identified for consideration on the Forward Work Programme for the remainder of the municipal calendar of meetings using the agreed form, and this could be revisited at the next meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Committee considered and approved its Forward Work Programme in Appendix A; noted the Forward Work Programmes for the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees following consideration in their respective July Committee Meetings in Appendix B, C & D and noted the Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet to track responses to the Committee's recommendations made at the previous meetings in Appendix E.

38. **URGENT ITEMS**

None

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BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO THE CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1 DECEMBER 2021

REPORT OF THE INTERIM CHIEF OFFICER – FINANCE, PERFORMANCE AND CHANGE

BUDGET MONITORING 2021-22 – QUARTER 2 REVENUE FORECAST

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update on the Council's revenue financial position as at 30th September 2021.

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 focused on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions of 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** – ensuring 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.
- 2.2 The allocation of budget determines the extent to which the Council's well-being objectives can be delivered.
- #### 3. Background
- 3.1 On 24th February 2021, Council approved a net revenue budget of £298.956 million for 2021-22. As part of the Performance Management Framework, budget projections are reviewed regularly and reported to Cabinet on a quarterly basis. The delivery of agreed budget reductions is also kept under review and reported to Cabinet as part of this process.

4. Current situation/proposal

4.1 Summary financial position at 30th September 2021

4.1.1 The Council's net revenue budget and projected outturn for 2021-22 is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1 - Comparison of budget against projected outturn at 30th September 2021

Directorate/Budget Area	Original Budget 2021-22 £'000	Revised Budget 2021-22 £'000	Projected Outturn Q2 2021-22 £'000	Projected Over / (Under) Spend 2021-22 £'000	Projected Over / (Under) Spend Qtr 1 2021-22 £'000
Directorate					
Education and Family Support	127,055	127,137	128,226	1,089	771
Social Services and Wellbeing Communities	74,043	74,053	74,524	471	(647)
Chief Executive's	28,137	28,321	28,008	(313)	624
	21,304	21,416	19,999	(1,417)	156
Total Directorate Budgets	250,539	250,927	250,757	(170)	904
Council Wide Budgets					
Capital Financing	7,329	7,329	8,329	1,000	0
Levies	7,783	7,797	7,775	(22)	0
Apprenticeship Levy	650	650	667	17	0
Council Tax Reduction Scheme	15,654	15,654	15,654	0	0
Insurance Premiums	1,363	1,363	1,430	67	0
Repairs & Maintenance	670	670	570	(100)	0
Pension Related Costs	430	430	432	2	0
Other Council Wide Budgets	14,538	14,136	7,254	(6,882)	0
Total Council Wide Budgets	48,417	48,029	42,111	(5,918)	0
Appropriations to Earmarked Reserves	0	0	4,004	4,004	0
Total	298,956	298,956	296,872	(2,084)	904

4.1.2 The overall projected position at 30th September 2021 is a net under spend of £2.084 million comprising £170,000 net under spend on directorates and a £5.918 million net under spend on council wide budgets, offset by a net appropriation to earmarked reserves of £4.004 million. The projected position is based on:-

- Inclusion of reimbursed expenditure/loss of income to date on areas impacted by Covid-19 received from Welsh Government (WG).
- Exclusion of Covid-19 expenditure/loss of income claims that are currently on hold with WG at the time of writing this report.
- Exclusion of Covid-19 expenditure/loss of income claims that have not yet been submitted as they relate to quarters 3 and 4 of 2021-22.

- 4.1.3 The projected under spend on the Council budget at quarter 2 significantly masks the underlying budget pressures in some service areas that were reported in 2020-21 and still persist in 2021-22. The main financial pressures are in Home to School Transport, Social Services and Wellbeing, Homelessness and Waste.
- 4.1.4 The Home to School Transport budget has been supported in 2021-22 by a one-off MTFBS Budget Pressure of £1.210 million that was approved by Council in February 2021. The quarter 2 projections indicate further pressure of £577,000 on this budget, with additional procurement exercises due to commence shortly for taxis and minibuses which could put further pressure on the budget going into 2022-23, increasing the budget pressure to over £2 million.
- 4.1.5 It is forecast that the long-term impact of Covid-19, alongside the already known pressures of an ageing population, increasing dementia rates and more complex and challenging needs is going to result in increasing demands on already pressurised services in the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate. The underlying pressure on the budget at quarter 2 is masked by grant funding of £1.777 million from the Social Care Recovery Fund which has been announced by Welsh Government (WG) since quarter 1, along with under spends on staffing budgets due to difficulties in recruitment.
- 4.1.6 Whilst budget growth of £2.192 million was approved by Council as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy budget setting process in February 2021 to continue the commitment to focus support for homeless individuals, the Council has seen a significant increase in the provision of temporary accommodation. Secondly, further to the budget being approved for 2021-22, Welsh Government confirmed that the Covid Hardship Fund was to be extended into 2021-22, including support for temporary accommodation. Given the increase in provision and, as it is anticipated that the Hardship Fund will not be in place beyond 31st March 2022, the budget growth might be insufficient to meet the increase in demand going into 2022-23.
- 4.1.7 Waste tonnages increased in 2020-21, primarily due to lockdowns and more residents working from home in general and this trend is continuing into 2021-22. Support was received in 2020-21 and in the first half of 2021-22 from the WG Hardship Fund towards these increased costs. Support is continuing for the second half of 2021-22, albeit that funding is reduced to 50% of the increased costs. As it is anticipated that the Hardship Fund will not be in place beyond the 31st March 2022, the underlying budget pressure is likely to continue into 2022-23.

A detailed analysis of the more significant projected under and over spends is set out in section 4.3.

Covid-19

- 4.1.8 The UK was put into lockdown on 23rd March 2020 in an unprecedented step to attempt to limit the spread of coronavirus. A Covid-19 Hardship Fund was set up at an early stage by the Welsh Government to the value of £188.5 million which the Council was able to draw on for financial support. Bridgend successfully claimed over £15 million in expenditure claims and over £5.5 million in loss of income claims in 2020-21.

- 4.1.9 The Welsh Government allocated £206.6 million in its budget to the Hardship Fund to support local government for the first six months of 2021-22. In addition, £23.3 million was allocated to support free school meals during the school holidays. WG have recently confirmed a further allocation of £97.5 million for the remainder of the 2021-22 financial year with revised principles for claims and tapering of support for social care uplifts and void payments. It is anticipated that the Hardship Fund will not be in place beyond 31st March 2022.
- 4.1.10 The Authority will continue to claim from the Hardship Fund against the eligible criteria and directorates will continue to capture costs incurred as a result of the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Updates will continue to be provided to Cabinet through the quarterly revenue budget monitoring reports throughout 2021-22.
- 4.1.11 Cabinet and Corporate Management Board (CCMB) agreed to establish a £1 million Covid-19 Recovery Fund in 2020-21 to provide funding for conscious and proactive decisions aimed at boosting recovery that were unlikely to be paid for by WG. The balance on this fund has been carried into 2021-22 and CCMB have approved the use of this fund to support the free car parking offer for town centres to the end of January, a phased rental income increase for Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) owned premises and the waiver of sports fees for the remainder of the 2020-21 season. Further proposals will be considered by CCMB during the remainder of 2021-22.

Estimated costs of the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic

- 4.1.12 Welsh Government has provided specific eligibility criteria for each of its funding streams, and all directorates have been made aware of them, and are capturing costs accordingly. Any Covid-19 costs which are not identified and claimed will need to be funded from the normal service budgets or established earmarked reserves. Claims submitted to date to Welsh Government, and the outcome of these claims, are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 – Covid-19 expenditure claims up to end of August 2021

Specific Hardship Fund	Claimed £'000	Paid £'000	On hold/ pending review £'000	Disallowed £'000
General	253	236	7	10
Homelessness	1,273	1,273	0	0
Free School Meals	99	0	99	0
Schools	498	496	0	1
Adult Social Services	2,600	1,789	811	0
Visitor Economy	24	24	0	0
Self Isolation Payments (SIP)/ Statutory Sick Pay Enhancements (SSP)	337	337	0	0
Total	5,084	4,155	918	11

4.1.13 The disallowed expenditure relates primarily to reimbursement of costs incurred by the Council in relation to ongoing home working arrangements and the provision of temporary outdoor structures at schools. Whilst the WG Hardship panel agreed that these costs may be additional and not within the Council's financial plans, they also felt that having such assets in place provides longer term benefits to local authorities. A contribution of 50% has therefore been agreed across Wales toward these costs for the first six months of 2021-22. WG have confirmed that these are no longer eligible to be claimed for the remainder of the 2021-22 financial year. The claims not paid to date of £918,000 are mostly those pending review by the Social Care Panel (£811,000) and Free School Meal Panel (£99,000). As there is no certainty at the time of writing this report in relation to the outcome of the items placed on hold, the reimbursement of costs has not been assumed in the quarter 2 projections. Of the Adult Social Services claims pending review, £294,000 relates to reimbursement for Bridgend internal social care services, with the balance of £517,000 support for external providers. If the claims for internal social care provision and free school meals are successful, this would improve the quarter 2 projections by £393,000.

4.1.14 The Council has also submitted a claim for loss of income to the Welsh Government for the first quarter of 2021-22 totalling £567,000 as shown in Table 3.

Table 3 – Covid-19 loss of income for Quarter 1 2021-22

Directorate	Claimed (covers to end of Qtr 1)	Paid	On hold	Main areas
	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Education and Family Support Directorate	48	48	0	£48k - School meal income
Schools	83	83	0	£52K - school meal income, £31K - loss of income from hire of school premises
Social Services & Wellbeing Directorate	303	303	0	£282k – contribution to Council's leisure service provider, £21k – dual use sites where facilities are managed for community use outside of school hours
Communities Directorate	129	129	0	£74k - Car Park Income, £36k pitch and pavilion hire, £10k – civil enforcement income
Chief Executive's Directorate	4	1	3	£3k – housing income, £1k – environmental health income
Total	567	564	3	

4.1.15 Of the total claim, £564,000 has been approved. £3,000 is currently on hold as WG have requested an updated position as part of the quarter 2 claim to see if this income has simply been delayed in being received. The quarter 2 loss of income claim is due to be submitted on the 22 October. As there is no certainty at the time of writing this report in relation to the outcome of this claim, the quarter 2 projections have excluded the estimates for this claim. There are two specific areas where loss of income is clearly identifiable at this stage of 2021-22 and will be included in future claims – Chief Executive’s loss of court cost income and registrars, land charges, licencing fees and public health fees (£384,000) and Social Services loss of dual use income (£48,000). If these claims are successful, the quarter 2 projections will improve by £432,000.

4.1.16 In addition to lost income from service provision, the Council is also likely to see a reduction in council tax income over the 2021-22 financial year as more people have suffered financial hardship through the pandemic and the furlough scheme comes to an end. Bridgend received £1.261 million from WG in 2020-21 in recognition of the reduced collection rates experienced by councils as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic. Recognising that recovery may be slow the Council reduced its own budgeted collection rate by 0.5% when it approved the council tax base in November 2020. A 1% reduction in the council tax income collection rate could result in an additional pressure to the Council of around £1 million. It is too early to provide a realistic indication of projected council tax for this financial year, but it will be monitored continuously throughout the year and reported accordingly.

4.1.17 Alongside the impact on Council Tax, the ending of the furlough scheme could also manifest itself in an increase in eligibility for council tax support. Support of £325,469 from WG was provided in 2020-21 towards the increased demand on the council tax reduction scheme due to the impact of Covid-19 on personal financial circumstances, however, no additional funding has yet been identified by Welsh Government for either reduced council tax income or increased council tax support.

Budget virements/technical adjustments

4.1.18 There have been a small number of budget virements and technical adjustments between budgets since the quarter 1 Revenue Forecast was presented to Cabinet in July. The budget position is reported on the assumption that these virements will be approved. The main virements and technical adjustments in quarter 2 are outlined below:

Budget Virements

Service vired from / to	Amount
Transfer of funding from Parking Services (Communities Directorate) to CCTV Services (Chief Executive’s Directorate) to enable ongoing support at the Council car parks.	£11,916

Technical Adjustments

Service vired from / to	Amount
Transfer of inflationary uplifts not confirmed when the MTFS is agreed that are held centrally until evidence of the uplift is provided by the service areas	£287,998

Pay/Price Inflation

- 4.1.19 When the budget for 2021-22 was set, directorates were provided with funding for known pay and price inflation. The remaining provision was retained centrally within Council wide budgets, to be allocated as further information was known about specific contractual price increases. The technical adjustments table above presents the start of the release of these budgets as and when evidence is provided by the service areas.
- 4.1.20 Inflationary pressures include those arising from specific contractual commitments and significant increases in staffing costs arising not only from the above inflation increases in the national living wage, the recently agreed pay award of 1.75% for Teachers, but also the ongoing discussions regarding the pay claim for National Joint Council (NJC) workers. Funding is due to be transferred shortly from centrally held budgets to reflect the uplift required for the confirmed Teachers' pay increase.
- 4.1.21 Inflation rates have fluctuated since the budget was set (CPI was 0.7% in February 2021, had increased to 2.1% by May 2021 and further increased to 3.2% in August). The Bank of England Monetary Policy Committee has forecast inflation to rise slightly above 4% before Christmas, higher than earlier predictions, owing largely to developments in energy and goods prices. With the uncertainty around Brexit and Covid-19, and the possible economic fallout arising from these, the budget will need to be monitored closely during the remainder of the year.

Budget Reduction Proposals

- 4.1.22 The net budget for the financial year has been set assuming full implementation of the current year budget reduction requirements across the Council's budget, which amount to £1.760 million. Where proposals to meet this requirement have been delayed or are not achievable directorates have been tasked with identifying alternative proposals to meet their requirements such as vacancy management, or bringing forward alternative budget reduction proposals.
- 4.1.23 In February 2021 Council approved the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2021-22 to 2024-25. This identified the need to develop recurrent budget reduction proposals, based on the most likely scenario, amounting to £22.095 million over the next four years. An update MTFS report was presented to Cabinet in September 2021, outlining a number of financial pressures that the Council is still facing going forward, and the uncertainty over the financial settlement for 2022-23. Against that background it is essential that expenditure is kept within the overall approved budget and that longer term proposals continue to be developed so that the Council has as much flexibility as possible to meet the challenges which lie ahead.

4.1.24 At year end consideration will be given to requests from directors to carry forward any planned directorate under spends for specific purposes into the following year, in line with the Council's Reserves and Balances Protocol, as long as these can be met from within the Council's cash limited budget for 2021-22. This is in line with the reports to Cabinet and Council on the MTFS, and the Council's Financial Procedure Rules. Similarly, consideration will be given to any budget over spends to determine whether these should be carried forward as a first call on the directorate budget for the following year. However, a decision will not be made until towards the end of the financial year when the overall outturn position is more definite.

4.2 Monitoring of Budget Reduction Proposals

Prior Year Budget Reductions

4.2.1 A report was presented to Cabinet on 22nd June 2021 on the Revenue Budget Outturn 2020-21. In the report it was highlighted that, for 2017-18 to 2019-20, there were £2.501 million of budget reduction proposals that were not met in full, with a total outstanding balance to be met of £709,000. In addition, of the 2020-21 budget reduction proposals of £2.413 million, it was reported that there was a total outstanding balance to be met of £342,000. Directors have been asked to identify if any of these proposals are still not likely to be achieved in full during the 2021-22 financial year, and to identify mitigating actions that will be undertaken to achieve them. All remaining outstanding prior year budget reductions are summarised in **Appendix 1** with a summary per directorate provided in Table 4.

Table 4 – Outstanding Prior Year Budget Reductions

	Total Budget Reductions Required	Total Budget Reductions Likely to be Achieved	Shortfall
DIRECTORATE /BUDGET REDUCTION AREA	£'000	£'000	£'000
Education and Family Support	344	344	0
Social Services and Wellbeing	185	40	145
Communities	1,847	1,772	125
TOTAL	2,376	2,106	270

4.2.2 Table 4 shows that of the £2.376 million outstanding reductions, £2.106 million is likely to be achieved by 2021-22 leaving a shortfall of £270,000. Proposals still not likely to be achieved include:

- SSW20 – savings from library and cultural facilities (£70,000). Covid-19 has impacted on the delivery of this saving and there is an ongoing impact on these budgets in relation to income levels achieved. Under spends are being held across the service area to mitigate any shortfall in the short term.
- SSW27 – income generation from mobile response and telecare charging (£75,000). Income levels have not increased to the level required to meet the budget reduction therefore the service area continues to seek to identify efficiencies to meet the shortfall in 2021-22.
- COM19 – Streetworks review (£100,000) due to delays in approval process with Welsh Government. The Highways network budget area is committed to stay within budget through the implementation phase.

Budget Reductions 2021-22

4.2.3 The budget approved for 2021-22 included budget reduction proposals totalling £1.760 million, which is broken down in **Appendix 2** and summarised in Table 5 below. The current position is a projected shortfall on the savings target of £65,000, or 3.7% of the overall reduction target.

Table 5 – Monitoring of Budget Reductions 2021-22

	Total Budget Reductions Required	Total Budget Reductions Likely to be Achieved	Shortfall
DIRECTORATE /BUDGET REDUCTION AREA	£'000	£'000	£'000
Education and Family Support	116	116	0
Schools	0	0	0
Social Services and Wellbeing	315	315	0
Communities	823	758	65
Chief Executive's	130	130	0
Council Wide Budgets	376	376	0
TOTAL	1,760	1,695	65

4.2.4 The most significant budget reduction proposal unlikely to be achieved in full is COM 2 – Re-location of Community Recycling Centre from Tythegston to Pyle resulting in cessation of lease payments at existing site (£60,000). The new site in Pyle will be opening once related junction and road improvement works have been completed with both sites being maintained until the new site is fully operational, therefore the saving will not be achieved in full until 2022-23.

- 4.2.5 **Appendix 2** identifies the projected amount of saving against these proposals in detail and action to be taken by the directorate to mitigate the shortfall. Directors continue to work with their staff to deliver their proposals or alternatives and this is reflected in the forecast outturn for the year.
- 4.2.6 As outlined in the MTFS reports to Cabinet and Council, MTFS Principle 7 states that *“Savings proposals are fully developed and include realistic delivery timescales prior to inclusion in the annual budget. An MTFS Budget Reduction Contingency Reserve will be maintained to mitigate against unforeseen delays”*. An MTFS Budget Reduction Contingency reserve was established in 2016-17. This reserve has been used to meet specific budget reduction proposals in previous years on a one-off basis pending alternative measures. During the financial year, the Section 151 Officer will consider applications from Directorates to the MTFS Budget Reduction Contingency reserve to mitigate some of the shortfalls.
- 4.2.7 In the longer term, these proposals must be realised or must be met through alternative budget reduction proposals in order to deliver a balanced budget position. These will continue to be closely monitored and draw down from the MTFS Budget Reduction Contingency reserve will be made as part of the overall review of earmarked reserves during quarter 3 if required.

4.3 **Commentary on the financial position at 30th September 2021**

Financial position at 30th September 2021

A summary of the financial position for each main service area is attached as **Appendix 3** to this report and comments on the most significant variances are provided below.

4.3.1 **Education and Family Support Directorate**

The net budget for the Directorate for 2021-22 is £127.137 million. Current projections indicate an over spend of £1.089 million at year end. Covid-19 expenditure included in this projection amounts to £99,000 – if this were to be successfully claimed from WG, the projection would improve to an over spend of £990,000. The main variances are:

EDUCATION & FAMILY SUPPORT DIRECTORATE	Net Budget	Projected Outturn	Projected Variance Over/(under) budget	% Variance	Over/ (under) specifically Covid-19 related
	£'000	£'000	£'000		
Support for Learners with Additional Learning Needs	2,575	3,190	615	23.9%	
Home to School Transport	6,728	7,305	577	8.6%	
Integrated Working and Family Support	1,385	1,329	(56)	-4.0%	
Health and Safety	388	326	(62)	-16.0%	

Schools' Delegated Budgets

Total funding delegated to schools in 2021-22 is £103.574 million.

The schools' delegated budget is reported as balanced as any under or over spend is automatically carried forward into the new financial year before being considered by the Corporate Director - Education and Family Support in line with the 'Guidance and Procedures on Managing Surplus School Balances'.

At the start of 2021-22, projections indicated an overall surplus balance for school delegated budgets of £5.241 million at year end. At quarter 2 this has reduced to a projected surplus of £4.18 million. There are 8 primary schools (13.5% of all schools) projecting a deficit balance at year end.

Central Education and Family Support Budgets

Support for Learners with Additional Learning Needs

- There is a projected over spend of £615,000 for Inclusion which primarily relates to the shortfall in recoupment income for other Local Authority (LA) placements at Heronsbridge School and Ysgol Bryn Castell. Whilst a budget pressure of £500,000 was agreed by Council as part of the MTFS in February 2021, there has been a further reduction in the number of other LA pupils in Bridgend schools. Whilst there were 20 at the end of 2020-21 this has reduced to 16 with an expectation this will reduce further to 13 from the Autumn Term due to increased demand from BCBC pupils.

Home to School Transport

- There is a projected over spend of £577,000 for Home to School Transport (HTST). This is on top of the underlying pressure on the HTST budget which has been supported by a one-off MTFS Budget Pressure of £1.210 million that was approved by Council in February 2021 to support the increased costs of HTST and the increased provision of taxis and minibuses for those pupils with additional learning needs.
- In addition to the historic pressures, Cabinet and Corporate Management Board has recently determined that in order to ensure the safety of nursery pupils on school transport vehicles, those previously transported on big buses should be transported in either dedicated minibuses or taxis or in existing taxis and minibuses. This is an additional requirement for the 2021-22 school year onwards, and has increased costs annually by an estimated £170,000.
- School transport operators have been significantly impacted by the pandemic and have passed many of the risks associated with continuing to operate including for example, driver retention, relatively low paid jobs and ongoing insecurity in the market, on to the local authority. For example, the cost of drivers and escorts has increased significantly.
- A retendering exercise has also been completed on home to school transport contracts, principally big buses and minibuses with an annual increase of £752,000.
- A further procurement exercise has recently commenced for special taxis, taxis, and minibus contracts which could put further pressure on the HTST budget going into 2022-23.

Integrated Working and Family Support

- The projected under spend of £56,000 relates primarily to staff vacancies within the service and maximising grant income. The vacant posts are expected to be filled during the year and this is built into the current projection.

Health and Safety

- There is a projected under spend of £62,000 within the corporate Health and Safety service which is due to staff vacancy management. The service are actively recruiting to fill the vacant posts.

4.3.2 Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate

The Directorate's net budget for 2021-22 is £74.053 million. Current projections indicate an over spend of £471,000 at year end. Covid-19 expenditure and loss of income included in this projection amount to £342,000 – if these were to be successfully claimed from WG, the projection would improve to an over spend of £129,000. In addition, since quarter 1, the directorate has been notified of £1.777 million in grant funding from the WG Social Care Recovery Fund. A spend plan for this funding is currently being finalised and any impact on budget projections are not yet included in this plan. The main variances are:

SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING DIRECTORATE	Net Budget	Projected Outturn	Projected Variance Over/(under) budget	% Variance	Over/ (under) specifically COVID-19 related
	£'000	£'000	£'000		£'000
Adult Social Care	49,452	49,351	(101)	-0.2%	294
Prevention & Wellbeing	5,230	5,190	(40)	-0.8%	48
Childrens Social Care	19,371	19,983	612	3.2%	

Adult Social Care

- There is projected net under spend of £101,000 on the Adult Social Care budget. The most significant variances contributing to this projected under spend are:-

ADULT SOCIAL CARE	Projected Variance Over/(under) budget
	£'000
Care at Home for Older People	(792)
Care at Home for Physical Disabilities/Sensory Impairment	199
Residential Care - Physical Disability/Sensory Impairment	(107)
Care at Home for Learning Disabilities	716
Care at Home for Mental Health	317
Assessment and Care Management	(346)

- Care at Home for Older People – this includes domiciliary care services, local authority homecare services and the provision of direct payments. The projected under spend of £792,000 is primarily on the homecare budget due to staffing vacancies and delays in implementing a restructure due to Covid-19. The service has reviewed the contacts available within the service in an aim to improve workforce capacity.
- Care at Home for Physical Disabilities/Sensory Impairment – there is a projected net over spend of £199,000. This is primarily due to the projected over spend on Independent Domiciliary Care of £137,000 due to increased costs of packages of care. In addition, placements have increased from 72 at quarter 1 to 86 at quarter 2.
- Residential Care – Physical Disability/Sensory Impairment – the projected under spend of £107,000 is mainly due to a reduction in placements. This budget area will be closely monitored with a view to determining whether the under spend is recurring, with potential re-alignment to other budgets facing projected over spends within Physical Disability/Sensory Impairment service areas
- Care at Home for Learning Disabilities – there is a projected over spend of £716,000 mainly due to increased complexity of needs and the increase in the number of people receiving domiciliary care within a home setting or supported accommodation. External homecare saw an increase of 9 people receiving a service since quarter 1. Internal homecare has also seen an increase in staffing costs to cover sickness and shielding.
- Care at Home for Mental Health – the projected over spend of £317,000 is based on 37 current placements with an increasing number of placements requiring complex packages of support.
- Assessment and Care Management – there is a projected under spend of £346,000 across all service areas due to a continuing challenging recruitment environment for qualified social workers. Various recruitment activities have been actioned in order to fill vacant posts.

Prevention and Wellbeing

- The projected under spend of £40,000 is primarily due to maximisation of grant funding opportunities. The projection does not include any estimate for a contribution to the Council's leisure provider for the gross net loss of running the leisure services in 2021-22 due to Covid-19. A successful claim of £282,000 was made for quarter 1 through the WG Hardship loss of income fund (see Table 3) and claims will continue to be made for the remainder of 2021-22. Close monitoring of the impact of Covid-19 on leisure services beyond this point will be required and updates provided to Cabinet in future monitoring reports.
- Future claims of £48,000 are anticipated to the WG Hardship Fund relating to Dual-use income and if these are successful, will improve the position for prevention and wellbeing in 2021-22.

Childrens' Social Care

- There is projected net over spend of £612,000 on the Children's Social Care budget. This primarily relates to a projected over spend on the Care Experienced Children budget of £442,000. The Care Experienced population was 388 at the end of August compared with 391 at quarter 2
- At the end of quarter 1 there were 6 children in independent residential placements (in and out of authority) and 2 in BCBC 39 week local authority

education provision. The quarter 1 budget monitoring report indicated that additional places were being made after 30th June with searches underway due to the need to secure the right specialist provision to safely meet the needs children whose needs are increasing. At the end of quarter 2 the numbers have increased to 10 children in independent residential placements and 2 in BCBC local authority education provision. It is important to note that decisions on the accommodation, care and support needed for a child is always made in their best interest and that, overall, the number of residential placements made by BCBC remains low when benchmarked with other comparable authorities. As noted in the quarter 1 budget monitoring report, this budget area can be volatile and small changes in demand can result in relatively high costs being incurred. This has been realised in the last quarter with the projected under spend of £310,000 at quarter 1 changing to a projected over spend of £442,000.

4.3.3 Communities Directorate

The net budget for the Directorate for 2021-22 is £28.321 million. The current projection is an anticipated under spend of £313,000. Covid-19 expenditure included in this projection amounts to £80,000 – if this were to be successfully claimed from WG, the projection would improve to an under spend of £393,000. The main variances are:

COMMUNITIES DIRECTORATE	Net Budget	Projected Outturn	Projected Variance Over/(under) budget	% Variance	Over/ (under) specifically Covid-19 related
	£'000	£'000	£'000		£'000
Development Control	-230	-10	220	-95.7%	
Waste Disposal & Collection	9,002	9,398	396	4.4%	80
Street Lighting	1,616	1,256	(360)	-22.3%	
Highways Services (DSO)	2,854	2,754	(100)	-3.5%	
Parking Services	(295)	(363)	(68)	-23.1%	
Engineering Services	85	-12	(97)	-114.1%	
Corporate Landlord	2691	2539	(152)	-5.6%	

Development Control

- The projected over spend in Development of £220,000 is primarily due to a forecast downturn in planning application income based on income to date and comparison with the 2020-21 outturn. Fee income is subject to considerable fluctuations between years, depending on number and types of applications and will require close monitoring for the remainder of the 2021-22 financial year.

Waste Disposal and Collection

- There is a projected over spend of £396,000 on the Waste Disposal and Collection budget. £60,000 of this is due to the delay in the achievement of COM 2 - Re-location of Community Recycling Centre from Tythegston to Pyle resulting in cessation of lease payments at the existing site. The new site will be opening once related junction and road improvement works have been completed with both sites being maintained until the new site is fully operational.
- The balance of the over spend is due to continued increased tonnages of residual waste being experienced by the service. Tonnages increased in 2020-21, primarily due to lockdowns and more residents working from home in

general and this trend is continuing into 2021-22. We have successfully claimed £71,233 from the WG Hardship fund to date and WG have indicated continuing support for increased tonnage as a result of homeworking, albeit that funding will be reduced to 50% of the increased costs for the second half of 2021-22. Claims will continue to be submitted, and if successful could improve the projections by up to £80,000.

Street Lighting

- There is a projected under spend of £360,000 on Street Lighting. Due to a change in energy providers in 2021-22, the kilowatt per hour charge decreased by 7% which, based specifically on the energy budget for street lighting, would lead to a reduction in costs of circa £63,000. £73,000 of the projected under spend is one-off due to financial profiling of the annual loan repayments. Finally, the LED replacement programme has generated the balance of the saving due to reduced energy consumption. Consideration will be given towards utilising some of this saving towards the 2022-23 MTFS budget reduction target and demonstrates a successful outcome of an invest to save programme within the Council.

Highways Services

- The projected under spend of £100,000 within Highways Services is primarily due to members of staff working on, and hence charging their time to, the SALIX capital scheme to enable the replacement of street lighting with new energy efficient LED units. This is not a recurring saving and is a reduced projection from the 2020-21 outturn of £244,000 as the SALIX Scheme completed in quarter 2 of 2021-22.

Parking Services

- The projected under spend on Parking Services is primarily due to a fortuitous upturn in car park income experienced during quarter 2 as a direct result of the popularity of the 'staycation' and a significant improvement on the income received in quarter 2 in 2020-21 when the country was in lockdown. The current under spend masks a pressure on the service area of £180,000 due to the current shortfall in staff car pass income due to the ongoing working from home principle. There is a potential for this to be a long term budget pressure for the service area.

Engineering Services

- The projected under spend of £97,000 within Engineering Services is primarily due to an increase in the level of fee earning jobs (grant funded/non grant funded projects) and the differing chargeable rates allowed on the schemes.

Corporate Landlord

- There is a projected under spend on the Corporate Landlord budget of £152,000. This primarily relates to staffing vacancies within the Strategic Asset Management team, however Corporate Landlord are actively recruiting to fill, or have already filled these vacancies.

4.3.4 Chief Executive's

The net budget for the Directorate for 2021-22 is £21.416 million. Current projections anticipate an under spend against this budget of £1.417 million. The

projections have improved since quarter 1 due to the successful claim of £1.273 million from the WG Hardship Fund within Housing and Homelessness. A further £1 million is anticipated to be spent on homelessness in the final two quarters of 2021-22 and claims will be made to support this expenditure. In addition, the projections do not include loss of income claims for other Chief Executive service areas that WG will be considering in the final quarters of 2021-22 which are estimated to be in the region of £384,000. If all of these claims are approved, the projections could further improve by £1.384 million.

The main variances are:

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S	Net Budget £'000	Projected Outturn £'000	Projected Variance Over/(under) budget £'000	% Variance	Over/ (under) specifically COVID-19 related £'000
Finance	3,696	3,576	(120)	-0.4%	184
HR and Organisational Development	1,912	1,810	(102)	-5.3%	
Partnerships	2,046	1,946	(100)	-4.9%	
Legal, Democratic & Regulatory	4,938	5,136	198	4.0%	200
ICT	3,778	3,894	116	3.1%	
Housing & Homelessness	3,354	1,908	(1,446)	-43.1%	(1,273)

Finance

- Whilst there is a projected under spend of £120,000 in Finance, included in this projection is a shortfall of £184,000 relating to court cost income. WG have indicated that it is very difficult to assess accurately what might be recoverable for the whole year so they will review the data as part of the quarter 4 return and assess actual losses. The shortfall has been offset by staffing vacancies across Finance and Housing Benefits as the service is currently going through a restructure. The structure is anticipated to be populated in the second half of the 2021-22 financial year.

HR and Organisational Development

- There is a projected under spend of £102,000. This primarily relates to staffing and apprenticeship vacancies, however HR are actively recruiting to fill, or have already filled these vacancies.

Partnerships

- This service areas includes Transformation, Partnerships and Customer Services & Engagement. The projected under spend of £100,000 is primarily due to staff vacancies. Various recruitment activities have been actioned in order to fill vacant posts but appointments have been affected by Covid-19.

Legal, Democratic & Regulatory

- There is a projected over spend of £198,000. This is primarily due to lower than forecast levels of income received for registrars, land charges, licencing fees and public health fees. WG have indicated that it is very difficult to assess accurately what might be recoverable for the whole year so they will review the data as part of the quarter 4 return and assess actual losses. The projections could therefore improve at year end if future claims prove to be successful.

ICT

- There is a projected net over spend of £116,000 across ICT budgets. This has improved from the £340,000 projected over spend reported at quarter 1. Due to reduced printing activity ICT have been unable to recover the fixed costs of printers and photocopiers through the recharge to service departments. Consequently, reduced spend has been incurred on printing budgets across the service departments. Given the ongoing working from home principle for the remainder of the 2021-22 financial year, an exercise will be undertaken to re-align budgets before the end of quarter 3 and the improved position in ICT reflects a proposed £150,000 realignment from service area budgets.

Housing & Homelessness

- Budget growth of £2.192 million was approved by Council as part of the MTFs budget setting process in February 2021 to continue the commitment to focus support for homeless individuals, providing them with accommodation. The budget was approved prior to confirmation from WG that the Covid Hardship Fund was to be extended for the first six months of 2021-22. Table 2 sets out that successful claims of £1.273 million have been made to the WG Hardship Fund and these claims are the major contributor to the projected under spend within Housing and Homelessness. Anticipated spend for the second half of 2021-22 is circa £1 million. If future claims are successful, this will further significantly improve the projections for Housing in this financial year.
- The Council has seen a significant increase in the provision of temporary accommodation. At quarter 2, the service are providing temporary accommodation for 326 people from 196 households, compared with 74 households in temporary accommodation in March 2020. As it is anticipated that the Hardship Fund will not be in place beyond 31st March 2022, and given the significant increase in provision of temporary accommodation, the budget growth will be needed in full in 2022-23 to continue to provide support for homeless individuals, providing them with accommodation.

4.3.5 Council Wide budgets

This section includes budgets, provisions and services which are council wide, and not managed by an individual directorate. The budget for 2021-22 is £48.029 million. The projected outturn is £42.111 million, resulting in a projected under spend of £5.918 million. The main variances are detailed below:-

COUNCIL WIDE BUDGETS	Net Budget	Projected Outturn	Projected Variance Over/(under) budget	% Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Capital Financing	7,329	8,329	1,000	13.6%
Other Council wide Budgets	14,136	7,254	(6,882)	-48.7%

Capital Financing

- The projected over spend on capital financing costs is due to utilising the budget in 2021-22 to pay off historic prudential borrowing costs, where feasible, which will have a long term revenue cost saving benefit for the Council.

Other Council wide Budgets

- Other Council wide budgets includes funding for pay, price and pension increases along with funding to deal with unexpected costs unforeseen when the budget was set.
- When the MTFs was approved in February 2021, the pay increases for NJC employees and teachers had not been finalised. Provision was made in the budget with an element of contingency built in. As noted in 4.1.20 the Teachers' pay award has recently been agreed. As WG have indicated that they will be providing a grant to contribute to this increase, this has been built into the projected under spend for 2021-22.
- There are ongoing discussions regarding the pay claim for National Joint Council (NJC) workers. Even a variance of 1% on the pay settlement of NJC staff alone can result in a swing of required funding of over £1 million per annum.
- Inflation rates have fluctuated since the budget was set (CPI was 0.7% in February 2021, had increased to 2.1% by May 2021 and further increased to 3.2% in August). The majority of the budget estimated for price inflation is retained centrally within Council wide budgets and allocated to directorates/schools as further information is known about specific contractual price increases e.g. for energy. Part of the under spend relates to projected reductions in requirements to allocate price budgets to service areas in-year as the Council has not seen the estimated increases in CPI impact on contractual arrangements to date in 2021-22. However, given the uncertainty of Brexit and Covid-19 at this point in the financial year, and the Bank of England Monetary Policy Committee forecast for inflation referenced in 4.1.21 this will require close monitoring for the remainder of the financial year.
- A thorough review of the other Council wide budgets was undertaken during quarter 2 to assess the requirement for both historic and in-year allocations for pay and price increases, taking into account known pay increases, grant contributions received towards these pressures, and the known impact of inflationary uplifts on contractual arrangements, current negotiations on NJC pay claims and the uncertainty of inflationary uplifts in the short to medium term. Consequently, it is felt reasonable to assume that an element of this budget could be used to mitigate shortfalls in funding, or higher council tax increases in the MTFs 2022-23 and work will continue on identifying such an amount.

Council Tax Reduction Scheme

- There is currently a projected break even position on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme based on spend to date, however this is a demand led budget and take-up is difficult to predict. As noted in paragraph 4.1.17, the ending of the furlough scheme could also manifest itself in an increase in eligibility for council tax support. The final additional cost of this is difficult to predict as we have yet to see the impact of the end of the furlough scheme/newly unemployed and a likely increase in the number of benefit claimants. This budget will require close monitoring during 2021-22.

4.4 Review of Earmarked Reserves

- 4.4.1 The Council is required to maintain adequate financial reserves to meet the needs of the organisation. The MTFs includes the Council's Reserves and Balances Protocol which sets out how the Council will determine and review the level of its

Council Fund balance and earmarked reserves. At quarter 2 a review of the particular pressures that were to be covered by earmarked reserves was undertaken and Directorates have drawn down funding.

4.4.2 There have been net additions of £4.341 million, the cumulative draw down by directorates is £1.166 million and £337,326 has been unwound, as shown in Table 6 below.

Table 6 – Usable Earmarked Reserves (Excluding Council Fund) – Quarter 2

Opening Balance 01 Apr 21	Reserve	Movement as at Quarter 2			Closing Balance 30 Sep 21
		Net Additions/ Reclassification	Unwound	Draw-down	
£'000		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
	Corporate Reserves:				
34,118	Capital Programme Contribution	4,295	(18)		38,396
6,103	Asset Management Reserves	-	(118)	(203)	5,782
7,556	Major Claims & Insurance Reserves	4		-	7,559
4,993	Service Reconfiguration	-		-	4,993
3,050	Change Management/Digital Transformation	-	(6)	(142)	2,902
2,000	Economic and Future Resilience Fund	-		-	2,000
57,819	Total Corporate Reserves	4,299	(143)	(344)	61,631
	Directorate Reserves:				
502	Education & Family Support	-	(12)		490
3,349	Social Services & Wellbeing	-	(42)	(90)	3,217
3,657	Communities	-	(141)	(96)	3,420
2,716	Chief Executives	42		(84)	2,674
10,224	Total Directorate Reserves	42	(195)	(270)	9,801
	Equalisation & Grant Reserves:				
1,961	Education & Family Support	-		(472)	1,490
594	Social Services & Wellbeing	-		-	594
2,532	Communities	-		(51)	2,481
1,228	Chief Executives	-		(30)	1,198
6,315	Equalisation & Grant Reserves:	-	-	(552)	5,763
8,490	School Balances	-		-	8,490
82,848	TOTAL RESERVES	4,341	(337)	(1,166)	85,685

4.4.3 The net appropriation to earmarked reserves during quarter 2 is £4.004 million (£4.341 million additions offset by £0.337 million that have been unwound).

4.4.4 Additions mainly relate to the Capital Programme Contribution reserve which was established to avoid the Council needing to borrow, which would result in consequential borrowing costs on the revenue budget, and will be used to fund schemes within the capital programme, both current and future capital pressures.

The main reserve that was unwound related to a balance of £100,000 included within a demolition reserve, specifically to be re-allocated to the Childrens Residential Accommodation Hub Capital project.

- 4.4.5 The capital programme contribution reserve supplements the funding we receive from WG and via capital receipts to fund our capital programme. Currently we have a balance of £38 million of funding in this reserve which constitutes 45% of our overall earmarked reserves balance. This will be used to fund a wide range of schemes in the capital programme.
- 4.4.6 The School balances reserve increased significantly to £8.490 million at the end of 2020-21 due to additional school grant funding announced late in 2020-21. As noted in paragraph 4.3.1 the quarter 2 projections indicate a projected overall surplus balance for school delegated budgets of £4.18 million at year end as this grant funding gets utilised in-year. This will reduce this reserve accordingly by year end.
- 4.4.7 A further review will be undertaken at quarter 3 when there is a clearer picture on pressures and projected year end balances.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

- 5.1 As required by section 3 (budgetary control) of the Financial Procedure Rules; Chief Officers in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Member are expected to manage their services within the approved cash limited budget and to provide the Chief Finance Officer with such information as is required to facilitate and monitor budgetary control.

6. Equality Act 2010 implications

- 6.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act 2010, 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 well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. As the report is for information it is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.

8. Financial implications

- 8.1 These are reflected in the body of the report.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 The Committee is recommended to:
- note the projected revenue position for 2021-22.

Gill Lewis
Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change
October 2021

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Background documents: Individual Directorate Monitoring Reports

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PRIOR YEAR BUDGET REDUCTIONS CARRIED FORWARD INTO 2021-22

Ref.	Budget Reduction Proposal		Original Reduction and RAG £000	Revised RAG £000	Total amount of saving likely to be achieved by 21-22 £000	Reason why not achievable	Proposed Action in 2021-22 to achieve
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RAG STATUS KEY	
RED	Not likely to be achieved at all in this financial year or less than 25%.
AMBER	Reduction not likely to be achieved in full in financial year but greater than 25%
GREEN	Reduction likely to be achieved in full

EDUCATION & FAMILY SUPPORT

EFS1 (2017-18)	Phased implementation of Learner Transport Policy regarding statutory distances for free travel.		20		20	Cabinet deferred the decision to amend the Local Authority's Learning Travel Policy until after the review of the current statutory distances by Welsh Government. In the meantime, a Budget Pressure was approved by Council as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021-22 to 2024-25 in February 2021 to support the increased costs of Home to School Transport and the increased provision of taxis and minibuses for those pupils with additional learning needs.	A review is being undertaken by Welsh Government of the current statutory distances. Whilst we await the outcome of the review it is unlikely that any change to the statutory distances by WG will follow until 2022 at the earliest. The service area are currently developing an updated budget pressure to include historic and emerging pressures on the HTST budget for consideration as part of the MTFS 2022-23 budget setting process.
EFS2 (2017-18)	School transport route efficiencies.		40		40	Cabinet deferred the decision to amend the Local Authority's Learning Travel Policy until after the review of the current statutory distances by Welsh Government. In the meantime, a Budget Pressure was approved by Council as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021-22 to 2024-25 in February 2021 to support the increased costs of Home to School Transport and the increased provision of taxis and minibuses for those pupils with additional learning needs.	A review is being undertaken by Welsh Government of the current statutory distances. Whilst we await the outcome of the review it is unlikely that any change to the statutory distances by WG will follow until 2022 at the earliest. The service area are currently developing an updated budget pressure to include historic and emerging pressures on the HTST budget for consideration as part of the MTFS 2022-23 budget setting process.
EFS1 (2018-19)	Phased implementation of Learner Transport Policy regarding statutory distances for free travel.		67		67	Cabinet deferred the decision to amend the Local Authority's Learning Travel Policy until after the review of the current statutory distances by Welsh Government. In the meantime, a Budget Pressure was approved by Council as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021-22 to 2024-25 in February 2021 to support the increased costs of Home to School Transport and the increased provision of taxis and minibuses for those pupils with additional learning needs.	A review is being undertaken by Welsh Government of the current statutory distances. Whilst we await the outcome of the review it is unlikely that any change to the statutory distances by WG will follow until 2022 at the earliest. The service area are currently developing an updated budget pressure to include historic and emerging pressures on the HTST budget for consideration as part of the MTFS 2022-23 budget setting process.
EFS27 (2018-19)	Review arrangements for Special Schools Home to School Transport with a view to achieving efficiency savings		75		75	A Budget Pressure was approved by Council as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021-22 to 2024-25 in February 2021 to support the increased costs of Home to School Transport and the increased provision of taxis and minibuses for those pupils with additional learning needs.	The service area are currently developing an updated budget pressure to include historic and emerging pressures on the HTST budget for consideration as part of the MTFS 2022-23 budget setting process.
EFS 1 (2019-20)	Phased implementation of Learner Transport Policy regarding statutory distances for free travel.		67		67	Cabinet deferred the decision to amend the Local Authority's Learning Travel Policy until after the review of the current statutory distances by Welsh Government. In the meantime, a Budget Pressure was approved by Council as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021-22 to 2024-25 in February 2021 to support the increased costs of Home to School Transport and the increased provision of taxis and minibuses for those pupils with additional learning needs.	A review is being undertaken by Welsh Government of the current statutory distances. Whilst we await the outcome of the review it is unlikely that any change to the statutory distances by WG will follow until 2022 at the earliest. The service area are currently developing an updated budget pressure to include historic and emerging pressures on the HTST budget for consideration as part of the MTFS 2022-23 budget setting process.
EFS 1 (2020-21)	Phased implementation of Learner Transport Policy regarding statutory distances for free travel.		75		75	Cabinet deferred the decision to amend the Local Authority's Learning Travel Policy until after the review of the current statutory distances by Welsh Government. In the meantime, a Budget Pressure was approved by Council as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021-22 to 2024-25 in February 2021 to support the increased costs of Home to School Transport and the increased provision of taxis and minibuses for those pupils with additional learning needs.	A review is being undertaken by Welsh Government of the current statutory distances. Whilst we await the outcome of the review it is unlikely that any change to the statutory distances by WG will follow until 2022 at the earliest. The service area are currently developing an updated budget pressure to include historic and emerging pressures on the HTST budget for consideration as part of the MTFS 2022-23 budget setting process.
Total Education & Family Support Directorate			344		344		

Ref.	Budget Reduction Proposal		Original Reduction and RAG £000	Revised RAG £000	Total amount of saving likely to be achieved by 21-22 £000	Reason why not achievable	Proposed Action in 2021-22 to achieve
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SOCIAL SERVICES & WELLBEING

SSW19	Further review of HALO partnership contract, including the Council taking over the management and payment of utility bills currently incurred by HALO. This will result in VAT efficiencies for HALO and contribute towards the reduction in the management fee		40		40	Detailed discussions and advice received from VAT consultants resulted in this budget reduction proposal not being able to be progressed.	Alternative savings have been found from changes to utility contracts – full savings should be achieved in 2021-22.
SSW20	Identify further savings from library and cultural facilities and related services including reviewing the numbers of facilities (libraries, community centres) and also reductions in services or opening hours.		70		0	Covid-19 has impacted on the delivery of this saving.	Close monitoring of the Leisure Services budgets will be required in 2021-22 to determine the potential for the Covid-19 pandemic to continue to impact on income levels achieved. Underspends will be held across the service area to mitigate any shortfalls in the short term.
SSW27	Increase income generation from mobile response and telecare charging		75		0	Income levels have not increased to meet the required budget reduction proposal.	Service area continues to seek to identify efficiencies to meet the shortfall in 2021-22.
	Total Social Services & Wellbeing Directorate		185		40		

COMMUNITIES

COM19 (2017-18)	Permitting Scheme road works net of existing income of £95,000		100		0	The Streetworks Review is due to be submitted shortly to WG for their final comments for approval before steps can be taken towards implementation.	The Highways network budget area is committed to stay within budget through the implementation phase with full savings anticipated in 2022-23.
COM 4 (2019-20)	Review of School Crossing Patrol service in line with GB standards		10		10	Budget re-alignment actioned within Traffic & Transport budgets in 2021-22.	No action required. Budget re-alignment actioned in 2021-22.
COM 26 (2019-20)	Investigate the introduction of charging to users of the Shopmobility facility in Bridgend Town Centre to reduce/remove the current level of subsidy		5		5	Saving achieved in full in 2021-22	No action required.
COM 52 (2019-20)	Reductions to the budget for the Materials Recovery and Energy Centre (MREC) to be achieved through the current procurement being undertaken with Neath Port Talbot CBC for the provision of new operator arrangements for the MREC facility at Crumlyn Burrows		1,300		1,300	A Budget Pressure of £300,000 representing the shortfall for this Budget Reduction proposal was approved by Council as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021-22 to 2024-25 in February 2021.	None required - historic shortfall in savings target addressed through a Council approved budget pressure
COM 55 (2019-20)	Increase charge for Green Waste Service from £28.30 per household to £38.30		25		25	Saving achieved in full in 2021-22	No action required.
COM 26 (2020-21)	Investigate the introduction of charging to users of the Shopmobility facility in Bridgend Town Centre to reduce/remove the current level of subsidy		18		18	Saving achieved in full in 2021-22	No action required.
COM51	The savings will be delivered in a number of ways including operational efficiencies, streamlined business processes, IT investment, improved procurement and contract management, and some deletions of vacant posts.		350		325	Level of savings identified as at 30 June 2021.	Service area continues to identify efficiencies to meet the shortfall in 2021-22.
COM 55 (2020-21)	Increase charge for Green Waste Service from £28.30 per household to £38.30		25		25	Saving achieved in full in 2021-22	No action required.
COM96	WG National AHP Waste Programme - capital contribution from WG towards 7.5 tonne vehicle to collect AHP recycling		14		14	Saving achieved in full in 2021-22	No action required.
	Total Communities Directorate		1,847		1,722		

GRAND TOTAL OUTSTANDING REDUCTIONS			2,376		2,106		
REDUCTIONS SHORTFALL					270		

MONITORING OF 2021-22 BUDGET REDUCTIONS

Ref.	Budget Reduction Proposal	Impact, including on 5 Ways of Working as set out in the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act	Budget Reductions 2021-22 £'000	Value Likely to be Achieved 2021-22 £'000	Reason why not likely to be achievable
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EDUCATION & FAMILY SUPPORT

CENTRAL EDUCATION & FAMILY SUPPORT

EFS2	Removal of a vacant post within Cognition and Learning Team	Potential reduction in support for a vulnerable group, however it is anticipated that this has been mitigated by a change in working practices by the team as a result of the ALN reform	61	61	Full saving should be achieved in 2021-22
EFS3	Reconfiguration of the team providing support to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners to create a more efficient service	Whilst the impact is more on the management and leadership of the team, this may result in some slight reduction in the service offered to this vulnerable group but there will still be a service offering support	50	50	Full saving should be achieved in 2021-22
EFS4	Reduction in Central South Consortium (CSC) Budget of 1%	Reduction is achievable within the overall CSC budget and will be mainly achieved through efficiency savings	5	5	Full saving should be achieved in 2021-22
Total Education and Family Support			116	116	

SOCIAL SERVICES & WELLBEING

SSW1	Remodelling day service provision for older people and learning disability services	Full review of services which could mean alternative methods of service delivery	90	90	Full saving should be achieved in 2021-22
SSW2	Across Adults and Children's services embed and consolidate outcome focussed practice and commissioning for all service areas	This will support people to live their lives and will require our systems to be adapted to support the changes in practice. There will be a shift to embed outcome focussed practice which will have a focus on targeted prevention initiatives and by developing collaborative, long term relationships with providers as well as maximising the opportunities of the use of technology. this will be underpinned by planning accommodation, care and support together and listening to people who are experts in their own lives and acting upon what will make a difference.	225	225	Full saving should be achieved in 2021-22
Total Social Services & Wellbeing Directorate			315	315	

MONITORING OF 2021-22 BUDGET REDUCTIONS

Ref.	Budget Reduction Proposal	Impact, including on 5 Ways of Working as set out in the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act	Budget Reductions 2021-22 £'000	Value Likely to be Achieved 2021-22 £'000	Reason why not likely to be achievable
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COMMUNITIES

COM1	Transfer of pitches/pavilions through Community Asset Transfer. Increased charges for end-users to achieve full cost recovery for pitches/pavilions that do not transfer. Reduction of grass cut areas and areas within maintained parkland.	The savings identified will see the removal of the remaining seasonal operatives' budget with corresponding cuts to plant, equipment and materials. Where asset transfers occur the respective club (rugby, football, bowls and cricket etc) will be expected to fully fund the ongoing maintenance of the asset. The remaining parks budget will be used to maintain the Council's main parks, including children's play areas, highway grass cutting which is safety related, and to secure the ongoing site management and safety of the sites that will remain in Council ownership. the level of funding will also dictate the standard of open space maintenance and may result in a further reduction of grass cut areas if the proposed savings are not forthcoming through the asset transfer process.	300	300	The full saving in 2021-22 has been achieved as the seasonal operative budget has been capped at a level to ensure the Parks and Playing Fields expenditure does not exceed available budget. Successful CAT transfers have taken place to date, and will continue to be progressed by the CAT Officer.
COM2	Re-location of Community Recycling Centre from Tythegston to Pyle resulting in cessation of lease payments at existing site	Construction of the new site will mean that this saving will not be effective until 2021/22	60	0	New site in Pyle will be opening once related junction and road improvement works have been completed with both sites being maintained until the new site is fully operational, therefore saving will not be achieved in full in 2022-23.
COM5	The lease for Sunnyside House expires on 31/03/21 - savings will be made from this date.	No impact on service provision	309	309	Full saving should be achieved in 2021-22
COM6	One off capital payment for the fire suppression system required at Tondu. Revenue cost of system is included in the annual contract price with Kier.	Minimal impact. The fire system will be provided and if paid from the Capital Asset Management Fund as opposed to the revenue budget, the £60K per annum can be saved.	60	60	Full saving should be achieved in 2021-22
COM7	WG National AHP Waste Programme - capital contribution from WG towards 7.5 tonne vehicle to collect AHP recycling	A Contract Variation will be progressed with Kier to achieve the saving levels proposed based on a reduction in costs in relation to the current AHP vehicle that is leased.	19	14	New vehicle purchased part-way through 2021-22 therefore only partial saving achieved.
COM8	Reduction to energy budget for Street Lighting - savings due to replacement with more efficient LED	Reduction will have limited impact	75	75	Full saving should be achieved in 2021-22
Total Communities Directorate			823	758	

MONITORING OF 2021-22 BUDGET REDUCTIONS

Ref.	Budget Reduction Proposal	Impact, including on 5 Ways of Working as set out in the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act	Budget Reductions 2021-22 £'000	Value Likely to be Achieved 2021-22 £'000	Reason why not likely to be achievable
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CHIEF EXECUTIVES

CEX1	Reduction of the ICT Telephony Budget	No impact on the communications infrastructure and maintenance	41	41	Full saving should be achieved in 2021-22
CEX2	Reduction of HR Staffing Budget	Reduction of a post and increased workload. Where possible savings will be made from vacant posts.	24	24	Full saving should be achieved in 2021-22
CEX3	Reduction of Finance staffing budgets	Reduction in capacity across the finance service following proposed restructure, which could impact on time taken to undertake functions. Will endeavour to make savings from vacant posts where possible	65	65	Full saving should be achieved in 2021-22
Total Chief Executive's Directorate			130	130	

CORPORATE / COUNCIL WIDE

CWD1	Reduction in insurance budget through on-going efficiencies in managing the insurance contract.	No impact as favourable insurance contract renewals have been achieved, however no mitigation available for potential increases to premiums in future years.	75	75	Full saving should be achieved in 2021-22
CWD2	Savings on building maintenance prudential borrowing budget	No impact - capital financing budget was utilised in 2019-20 to pay off prudential borrowing associated with Minor Works with a long term cost saving benefit for the Council.	120	120	Full saving should be achieved in 2021-22
CWD3	Reduce provision made for pay and prices following Chancellor's announcement of pay freeze, and lower than anticipated current inflation rate.	Impact will need to be kept under review, and may be risk depending on final pay awards agreed and inflation increases during the year.	181	181	Full saving should be achieved in 2021-22
Total Corporate / Council Wide			376	376	

GRAND TOTAL REDUCTIONS	1,760	1,695
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TOTAL BUDGET REDUCTION REQUIREMENT 1,760 1,760

REDUCTION SHORTFALL	0	65
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740	1,681
795	19
225	60
1,760	1,760

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BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL	Budget 2021-22			Projected Outturn	Projected Variance Over/(under) budget	% Variance
	Expenditure Budget	Income Budget	Net Budget			
	£000	£000	£000			
EDUCATION AND FAMILY SUPPORT						
School Delegated Budgets	124,876	(21,302)	103,574	103,574	-	0.0%
Learning	9,912	(2,398)	7,514	8,160	646	8.6%
Strategic Partnerships & Comm	25,800	(10,139)	15,661	16,166	505	3.2%
Health and Safety	390	(2)	388	326	(62)	-15.9%
TOTAL EDUCATION AND FAMILY SUPPORT	160,978	(33,841)	127,137	128,226	1,089	0.9%
SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING						
Adult Social Care	68,585	(19,133)	49,452	49,351	(101)	-0.2%
Prevention and Wellbeing	6,060	(830)	5,230	5,190	(40)	-0.8%
Childrens Social Care	20,428	(1,057)	19,371	19,983	612	3.2%
TOTAL SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING	95,073	(21,020)	74,053	74,524	471	0.6%
COMMUNITIES DIRECTORATE						
Planning & Development Services	2,075	(1,523)	552	772	220	39.9%
Strategic Regeneration	2,032	(352)	1,680	1,680	-	0.0%
Economy, Natural Resources and Sustainability	6,920	(5,635)	1,285	1,236	(49)	-3.8%
Cleaner Streets and Waste Management	12,554	(1,578)	10,976	11,260	284	2.6%
Highways and Green Spaces	22,955	(12,086)	10,869	10,253	(616)	-5.7%
Director and Head of Operations - Communities	268	-	268	268	-	0.0%
Corporate Landlord	13,916	(11,225)	2,691	2,539	(152)	-5.6%
TOTAL COMMUNITIES	60,720	(32,399)	28,321	28,008	(313)	-1.1%
CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S						
Chief Executive Unit	583	-	583	527	(56)	-9.6%
Finance	46,668	(42,972)	3,696	3,576	(120)	-3.2%
HR/OD	2,248	(336)	1,912	1,810	(102)	-5.3%
Partnerships	2,892	(846)	2,046	1,946	(100)	-4.9%
Legal, Democratic & Regulatory	5,916	(978)	4,938	5,136	198	4.0%
Elections	153	(49)	104	145	41	39.4%
ICT	5,055	(1,277)	3,778	3,894	116	3.1%
Housing & Homelessness	10,773	(7,419)	3,354	1,908	(1,446)	-43.1%
Business Support	1,116	(111)	1,005	1,057	52	5.2%
TOTAL CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S	75,404	(53,988)	21,416	19,999	(1,417)	-6.6%
TOTAL DIRECTORATE BUDGETS	392,175	(141,248)	250,927	250,757	(170)	-0.1%
Council Wide Budgets	48,999	(970)	48,029	42,111	(5,918)	-12.3%
Appropriations to Earmarked Reserves				4,004	4,004	0.0%
NET BRIDGEND CBC	441,174	(142,218)	298,956	296,872	(2,084)	-0.7%

NB: Differences due to rounding of £000's

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BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1 DECEMBER 2021

REPORT OF THE CHIEF OFFICER – LEGAL AND REGULATORY SERVICES, HR AND CORPORATE POLICY

FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

1. Purpose of report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- a) Present the Committee with the Forward Work Programme (**Appendix A**) for this Committee for consideration and approval;
- b) 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) Request the Committee to identify any further items for consideration on the Forward Work Programme having regard to the selection criteria in paragraph 4.3;
- d) Present the Forward Work Programmes for the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees attached as **Appendices B, C and D** following consideration in their respective June Committee meetings;
- e) Present the Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet (**Appendix E**) to track responses to the Committee's recommendations made at the previous 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 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.’

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee Draft Forward Work Programme

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

- 3.7 The draft Forward work programme for this Committee was 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.
- 3.8 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.
- 3.9 An effective FWP identifies 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 updates from each SOSC FWP and any updated information gathered from FWP meetings with Corporate Directors.

4. Current situation/proposal

- 4.1 The Committee approved its Forward Work Programme at its meeting on 9th June 2021.
- 4.2 The Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programmes are also being reported to the Committee for coordination and oversight of the overall FWP, following consideration by their respective Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The SOSC FWP's will be included in the standing FWP Update report as updated by each SOSC meeting..

Identification of Further Items

- 4.3 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

- 4.4 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.
- 4.5 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.
- 4.6 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.
- 4.7 The Forward Work Programme for COSC is attached as **Appendix A** for the Committee's consideration.

- 4.8 The Forward Work Programme for the SOSC 1, 2 and 3 are attached as **Appendices B, C and D**, for coordination and oversight of the overall Forward Work Programme.
- 4.9 The Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet for the previous meetings is attached as **Appendix E**, to track responses to the Committee's recommendations at the previous meetings.

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 and approve the Forward Work Programme for the Committee attached as **Appendix A**;
- 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 4.3;
- d) Note the Forward Work Programmes for the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees attached as **Appendices B, C and D**, following consideration in their respective June Committee meetings;
- e) Note the Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet to track responses to the Committee's recommendations made at the previous meetings as **Appendix E**.

Kelly Watson

CHIEF OFFICER – LEGAL AND REGULATORY SERVICES, HR AND CORPORATE POLICY

25 November 2021

Contact officer: Meryl Lawrence
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Background documents: None.

**Forward Work Programme 2021-22
Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee:**

APPENDIX A

Date of Meeting:	Report Topics:
Mon 5 th July 9.30am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revenue Budget Outturn 2020-21 - Council's Performance against its Wellbeing Objectives for 2020 -21 (Year End Performance)
Wed 1st September 9.30am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Budget Monitoring 2021-22 – Quarter 1 Revenue Forecast - Director of Social Services Annual report - Scrutiny Annual Report - BREP Review Report
Thurs 7 th October 9.30am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Future Service Delivery Model - Update on the work of the Shared Regulatory Service
Wed 1 st December 9.30am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Budget Monitoring 2021-22 – Quarter 2 Revenue Forecast
Wed 12 th January 9.30am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corporate Plan 2018-2023 reviewed for 2022-23 - Q2 Performance Report 2021-22 - Capital Strategy 2022-23 onwards
Wed 19 January 9.30am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022-23 to 2025-26 and Budget Proposals
Tues 1 February 9.30am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scrutiny and Budget Research and Evaluation Panel Recommendations on Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022-23 to 2025-26 and Draft Budget Consultation Process.
Wed 2 nd March 9.30am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Budget Monitoring 2021-22 – Quarter 3 Revenue Forecast - Employee Wellbeing
Date TBA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual Safeguarding Report - Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) - Replacement Local Development Plan - Ethical Procurement - Shared Workspace - Future Service Delivery Model

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**Forward Work Programme
Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1:**

APPENDIX B

<u>Date of Meeting:</u>	<u>Report Topics:</u>
Mon 14 th June 9.30am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corporate Parenting Champion Nomination report; - Nomination to the Public Service Board Scrutiny Panel report; - Draft Outline Forward Work Programme
Mon 12 th July 2.30pm	Additional Learning Needs and Educational Tribunal (ALNET) Act 2018
Thurs 16 th Sep 9.30am	How Central South Consortium supports Bridgend Schools.
Mon 18 th Oct 2.30pm	New Curriculum for Wales
	School Governing Bodies
Thurs 20 th Jan 9.30am	Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget Proposals
Mon 14 th Mar 9.30am	Post Inspection Action Plan
TBA	How Schools coped with the Pandemic
	Youth Justice Service

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**Forward Work Programme
Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2:**

APPENDIX C

<u>Date of Meeting:</u>	<u>Report Topics:</u>
Thurs 17 th June 9.30am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Domiciliary Care Inspection Report; - Corporate Parenting Champion Nomination report; - Nomination to the Public Service Board Scrutiny Panel report; - Draft Outline Forward Work Programme.
Thurs 15 th July 9.30am	Social Services and Wellbeing Strategic Programme <i>(followed by Thematic reports one to each meeting via a rolling programme as below)</i>
Thurs 23 rd Sep 9.30am	First Theme – Wellbeing * (including Partnerships****) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Early help and Permanence Strategy - Re-commissioning Regulated Care and Support at Home
Wed 10 th Nov 9.30am	Second Theme – People - voice and control** (including Partnerships****) Embedding strength based practice in adult and children’s services
Fri 21 Jan 9.30am	Medium Term Financial Strategy & Budget Proposals
Wed 2 nd Feb 9.30am	Third theme – Prevention *** (including Partnerships****) Progress in delivering priorities for wellbeing, leisure and cultural services in Bridgend.
	Mental Health Strategy
TBA	Workforce including Stress related sickness – would like to include in this the SSWB workforce programme priorities of retention and recruitment, workforce planning (including reviews of skill mix) and career pathways and training and development

An explanation of the themes in the Forward Work Programme is provided overleaf.

Briefing Session requested:

Financial Assessments for all social care packages be arranged for Members of the Committee, to include what happens when the person does not have capacity and Health Board funded care and nursing care funding.

Explanation of the Four Themes:

The four themes included in the draft Forward Work Programme above are the key principles of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, which also form the foundation of Care Inspectorate Wales' inspection and performance review activity, and are set out below for Members' information:

* **Well-being** - To what extent are local authorities promoting well-being, ensuring people maintain their safety and achieve positive outcomes that matter to them? Including timely step down of children from local authority care, supporting older people to return home from hospital.

****People - voice and control** - How well are local authorities ensuring people, carers and practitioners are having their voices heard, making informed choices, and maintaining control over their lives? How is this balanced with the recommendations and requirements made by Public Health Wales and Welsh Government? Can the local authority demonstrate learning is used to inform new ways of working?

*****Prevention** - To what extent are local authorities successful in promoting prevention and reducing need for increased or formal support from statutory agencies? Including taking all necessary steps to support the upbringing of the child by the child's family and supporting people with mental health issues before they reach crisis.

******Partnerships** - To what extent are local authorities able to assure themselves the step change in opportunities for partnership working are positively exploited to maximise person-centred planning, ensure integrated service delivery and service sustainability. Opportunities include recent learning from digital advances, partnership working and ability of the health and social care system to advance at scale and pace and work towards a Healthier Wales.

<u>Date of Meeting:</u>	<u>Report Topics:</u>
Mon 28 th June 9.30am	Corporate Parenting Champion Nomination Nomination to the Public Service Board Scrutiny Panel Draft Outline Forward Work Programme
Mon 19 th July 9.30am	Progress of the Bridgend 2030 Decarbonisation Strategy (Ultra Low Emission Vehicles) Update on the Waste Service Contract 2024
Wed 4 th Oct 9.30am	The Bridgend County Economic Futures Framework
Wed 24 th Nov 9.30am	Infrastructure Delivery (including roads, street lights, building and technology)
Mon 24 th Jan 9.30am	Medium Term Financial Strategy & Budget Proposals
Wed 16 th Feb 9.30am	Transport Projects in the County Borough
Date TBA	Changes in External Economic Funding - Economic Development
Date TBA	The introduction of the 20 mph speed limit and WG Pavement Parking Enforcement (following the surveying of streets and collation of information for potential Traffic Parking Orders, but before implementation)

The following Member Development Sessions are proposed:

Corporate Joint Committees Transport, Planning and Economic Development

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Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee

RECOMMENDATIONS MONITORING ACTION SHEET

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Outcome
21 April 2021	Sickness Absence related to Stress, Anxiety, Depression and Mental Health	The Committee concluded by making a number of recommendations and requests for Information.	Scrutiny	ACTIONED – response and information circulated to Committee Members 29 June 2021
9 June 2021	Forward Work Programme	The Committee concluded by making a number of recommendations.	Scrutiny	ACTIONED – response and information circulated to Committee Members 2 July 2021
5 July 2021	Forward Work Programme	The Committee requested Ethical Procurement to be added to the Forward Work Programme.	Scrutiny	ACTIONED – added to the FWP with date to be confirmed.

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Outcome
1 September 2021	Budget Monitoring 2021-22- Quarter 1 Revenue Forecast	The Committee requested: 1. A breakdown of the Covid recovery fund be circulated to members.	Scrutiny / Interim Chief Officer Finance Performance and Change	To be provided.
		2. A full list and breakdown of CAT transfers including those that it was hoped would be achieved.	Scrutiny /Corporate Director - Communities	To be provided.
7 October 2021	Future Service Delivery Model	The Committee concluded by making a number of recommendations and requests for Information.	Scrutiny / Chief Executive	ACTIONED – response and information circulated to Committee Members 25 November 2021
	Shared Regulatory Services Update	The Committee concluded by making a number of recommendations and requests for Information.	Scrutiny / Chief Officer Legal and Regulatory Services, Human Resources and Corporate Policy	ACTIONED – response and information circulated to Committee Members 25 November 2021
	Forward Work Programme	The Committee requested a report upon Shared Workspace to be added to the Forward Work Programme.	Scrutiny	ACTIONED – report added to the Committee’s Forward Work Programme.