

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3 - MONDAY, 12 DECEMBER 2022

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3
HELD HYBRID IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET,
BRIDGEND, CF31 4WB ON MONDAY, 12 DECEMBER 2022 AT 16:00**

Present

Councillor P Davies – Chairperson

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| S J Bletsoe | N Clarke | C Davies | M J Evans |
| W J Kendall | J E Pratt | G Walter | I Williams |
| MJ Williams | | | |

Apologies for Absence

Officers:

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| Lucy Beard | Scrutiny Officer |
| Nicola Echanis | Head of Education & Family Support |
| Rachel Keepins | Democratic Services Manager |
| Meryl Lawrence | Senior Democratic Services Officer - Scrutiny |
| Claire Marchant | Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing |
| Jessica Mclellan | Scrutiny Officer |
| Janine Nightingale | Corporate Director - Communities |
| Andrew Thomas | Group Manager Sports & Physical Activity |

19. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Members listed below declared personal interests in Agenda item 3 - Play Sufficiency Duty, Assessment and Action Plan to Secure Sufficient Opportunities in Bridgend County Borough, as indicated:

Councillor Ian Williams, Member of Bridgend Town Council, Governor of Oldcastle Primary School and Brynteg Comprehensive School.

Councillor Jonathan Edward Pratt, Member of Porthcawl Town Council.

Councillor Melanie Evans, Member of Pencoed Town Council, Community Governor of Pencoed Comprehensive and Croesty Primary Schools.

Councillor Paul Davies, Member of Maesteg Town Council, Governor of Caerau Primary and Nantyffyllon Primary Schools.

Councillor Steven Bletsoe, Member of Bridgend Town Council, Member of Coity Higher Community Council and Governor of Penybont School.

Councillor Martyn Williams, Member of Coity Higher Community Council and St Brides Minor Community Council.

20. PLAY SUFFICIENCY DUTY, ASSESSMENT AND ACTION PLAN TO SECURE SUFFICIENT OPPORTUNITIES IN BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH

The Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing presented the report and explained that the right to play was a central right for children in Wales not just for smaller children but through to the age of 25. The report reflected the impact on children and young people of the COVID-19 pandemic and the extended periods of lockdown. She explained that as well as understanding the assessment, it was also important to

note the action plan which was attached and the whole Council and partnership approach, which was required to deliver that action plan.

The Group Manager for Prevention and Wellbeing gave a presentation on the draft assessment, explaining that the draft had been submitted to Welsh Government as required in June, and the process continued through scrutiny and eventually to Cabinet for sign off. This was a three year cycle but there was also annual action planning and an opportunity for engagement on the various matters throughout the year.

The Chair thanked the Group Manager for Prevention and Wellbeing for the presentation and Members discussed the following:

A Member referred to the phrase “One Council” and asked how this worked in relation to this report.

The Group Manager for Prevention and Wellbeing advised that there was National Guidance on how this should work, with strategic leadership through the Cabinet Member for Wellbeing and Future Generations, a lead Corporate Director and support from both the Communities and Education Directorates. The matters crossed over and all relevant partners should be thinking beyond their own specific area of work and how it interfaced and the impact in terms of a broader Council. The Corporate Director of Social Services and Wellbeing advised that this was demonstrated by the number of Cabinet Members, Corporate Directors and Representatives in attendance at the meeting and that the key partners Halo, Awen, BAVO and schools were all key to the delivery both individually and collectively.

The Chairperson asked for a link to the National Guidance to be circulated to Committee Members.

A Member referred to 4.3c of the report: “To have regard to children and young people with diverse needs, including those living with disabilities or additional needs” and asked if the Authority had been consulting with and involving disabled people, children, parents and carers over the plans for improvement.

The Group Manager for Prevention and Wellbeing advised that he had children with disabilities and was until recently, a Board Member of Disabilities Board, Wales who ran bespoke programmes and that there was feedback from discovery days that shaped the activities and opportunities. They surveyed around 300 young people with additional needs as part of a bigger survey that had provided specific data. They had tried to capture the voices of young people with disabilities, without people speaking for them.

The Member explained that his question was predominantly concerned with playgrounds having accessible equipment for children in wheelchairs and that there was not one piece of wheelchair accessible playground equipment in the Bridgend Central Wards, meaning this part of Bridgend was without any wheelchair accessible equipment.

The Group Manager for Prevention and Wellbeing advised that one of the challenges was when looking at the broader picture, there were just over 40 children attending Heronsbridge in wheelchairs and that school had a wheelchair accessible swing, and roundabout. There were twenty children across both primary and secondary however he was not aware of the number that could transfer from the wheelchair to the equipment. Wheelchair users accounted for one part, there were also 600 young people with autism and 700 with behavioural, emotional and social issues and those with sensory impairments.

The Cabinet Member for Wellbeing and Future Generations replied that they had not only to be One Council, but also One County Borough. He welcomed involvement from all Members as this was a growing provision but also recognised the huge amount of consultation that had already been undertaken.

The Cabinet Member for Communities reported that the intention was that every Ward would have at least one area with accessible play equipment across the Borough.

A Member referred to the financial implications in the covering report as this was a comprehensive far-reaching piece of work and that it was unacceptable to read that the financial implications were uncertain and he asked for further explanation.

The Corporate Director of Social Services and Wellbeing replied that there had been significant investment into play areas already as part of the budget for this year. The budget for next year would be set by the Council in the new year once the settlement had been received and the priorities in this plan alongside all the other priorities across the Council would need to be properly costed and considered as part of that budget setting process. The work of the Strategic Leadership Group would need to get into the detail about the budgetary implications of all the elements, but it was a moving picture because of the fact that the money came through in various ways.

A Member referred to the Cabinet Member's comment that it should be looked at as one County Borough rather than individual areas and highlighted the statement made by the Commissioner for Future Generations that people should have access to green spaces within 20 minutes' walk of their house. He advised if they were going to create a low carbon environment then they could not expect those with additional needs to travel long distances, therefore they had to act as Ward Councillors and campaign for local matters.

The Group Manager for Prevention and Wellbeing explained there had always been uncertainty in this area but in recent times there had been significant investment in play facilities. They were looking at how to pool resources to get the best value from them and at ways of bringing in partners. They had costed the plan originally but there was some uncertainty regarding some of the funding.

The Cabinet Member for Communities explained that this was not only about play facilities and that when it came to green spaces they had to ensure that these were fully accessible. This area would take less resources and was often overlooked.

A Member referred to the years 2016 and 2019 on page 30 of the report and asked if these figures were 3 years out of date. The Corporate Director of Social Services and Wellbeing advised that the figures were for the current period and the dates need updating.

A Member referred to the assessment of the population which was based on data in 2019 and asked if the data that was anticipated in early summer 2022, had been received? The Corporate Director of Social Services and Wellbeing replied that they had not updated all the needs assessments with the new data however it was a live document, the assessment was undertaken at a moment in time and engagement would continue leading to changes in the priorities based on fresh data and evidence.

A Member asked if the pandemic was responsible for a number of the indicators changing from green to amber. The Group Manager for Prevention and Wellbeing explained that this was a major contributor. They had surveyed 4,300 people and the negative impact was mainly as a result of lifestyle changes such as reduced levels of activity. He added that there was commonality across data sets.

The Cabinet Member for Wellbeing and Future Generations added that it was not just Covid impacting on delivery or engagement, there was also a raft of new things such as the impact on mental health and lifestyle, and working with communities to rebuild that would be key over the next few years.

The Chairperson asked what steps were being taken to increase involvement. The Corporate Director of Social Services and Wellbeing explained that the Summer of Fun was a major initiative across Wales. The team was working with partners around the most vulnerable on projects such as the Vulnerable Hub and Discovery Days focussing on the children that were most impacted by the pandemic. There were also problems securing a workforce to deliver the summer programmes. There were a range of bespoke packages developing, on the premise that without good wellbeing, a child would be less inclined to engage in play, sport, arts or whatever.

A Member commented that only 5 Town and Community Councils had responded and that the deadline for responses was May 2022 which was the month of the election. If responses were being sought by a deadline, then Officers should be mindful of the timing of deadlines for responses.

A Member referred to the removal of 'no ball games' signs to encourage more children to play in the community. He explained that one of the Social Landlords in the area wrote letters to residents telling them they would be in breach of their tenancy agreements if they allowed their children to play in the street. Residents had raised this, there had been a public meeting where it was accepted they had no right to do so. At this meeting residents explained that they had been waiting almost 5 years for a play park to be funded under Section 106 money, which had already been transferred to BCBC. A Ward Member had been working to resolve this matter and had been advised there could be a direct payment to the Community Council to install the park, but was later advised differently. He asked how they could influence unhelpful behaviour from the Housing Associations and also in light of the One Council conversation, how could they work together to get the park installed.

The Cabinet Member for Communities explained that he had recently met with Officers and that play area was out for tender for design and build. The Cabinet Member for Wellbeing and Future Generations advised that this related to how the Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) were held to account as organisations they had to work with, and agreed to raise the matter with RSL's at the next opportunity.

A Member referred to the provision of open space and asked whether two playgrounds offered sufficient provision for 5.5k residents in the Oldcastle Ward. The Cabinet Member for Communities replied that as in the revised LDP, the Outdoor Play and Space Audit indicated that many Wards had a deficit in play provision, and there was a commitment to refurbish the current areas before creating new ones.

A Member referred to dog fouling and recent incidents in his Ward and suggested that signs indicating play areas might encourage responsible dog owners to keep their pets away from those areas making those areas safer for children to play in. The Cabinet Member for Communities agreed and confirmed that a report was being submitted to Cabinet shortly regarding a Public Spaces Protection Order which would enable the addressing of this issue.

A Member asked if there could be some positive actions proposed in relation to C14 to take it out of red and straight to green, rather than the potential to revisit. The Cabinet Member for Wellbeing and Future Generations replied that there were a lot of issues being raised in relation to bringing houses up to standard but he would raise this with Registered Social Landlords and continue to raise it going forward.

A Member referred to the cost of school facilities for grass roots sports. At CCYD there were 3 all-weather pitches. Recently grass roots games had been arranged but had to be called off because a pitch was waterlogged, but they were unable to use the all-weather pitches because it was too costly, or there was a perception that it would be too costly. There was a similar example in Coety with a community room, which was seldom used by the community because of the cost of using it. He asked why these facilities could not be more readily available. The Cabinet Member for Education replied that these pitches were for community use. The fees were set by Head Teachers and Governing Bodies. There were guidelines on what community use was and he was happy to work with schools on this matter. It also depended on what the clubs were willing and could afford to pay. Schools were at the heart of the community and should be for community use and the price should reflect that whilst also taking into account cost recovery. The Cabinet Member for Education agreed to talk to the Member following the meeting to discuss the matter further.

A Member asked if there was a mechanism for facilities to be used at short notice. The Group Manager for Prevention and Wellbeing replied that there was a hybrid of arrangements in place. Demand was high for these facilities and the cost to operate was high.

A Member asked about point F8 on page 72 of the report, "The Local Authority has an accessible and well-known way of arranging temporary road closures, to support more children to play outside their homes". He advised that the process was not well known and asked for further information. The Group Manager for Prevention and Wellbeing agreed that it was not well known and should not be amber. Members discussed the cost of a road closure and volunteers to support the scheme and the Group Manager for Prevention and Wellbeing agreed to look at this issue again.

A Member felt there was a lack of opportunity to have an ambitious open conversation between the Town and Community Council and the Council. The Group Manager for Prevention and Wellbeing, the CAT process and Section 106 Agreements were in different areas, so nothing was joined up and it was not a proper partnership. The Cabinet Member for Communities replied that they needed to do better with regard to working with Town and Community Councils and should work on that area.

A Member asked how the survey for 0-3 years age groups conducted with partner schools was organised. He added that more engagement for activities for 0-3 year olds would be useful. The Group Manager for Prevention and Wellbeing agreed to share the information he had.

The Chairperson advised that there were no further questions for the invitees and thanked them for their attendance and they left the meeting.

RESOLVED:

Following detailed consideration and discussions with Officers and Cabinet Members, the Committee made the following Recommendations:

1. When seeking the views of Town and Community Councils, Officers be mindful of the timing of survey response deadlines, and seek to avoid traditionally busy times for Councils, such as the beginning of May, to ensure maximum engagement. (CM/AT)
2. That consideration be given to whether there should be a mechanism in place to enable clubs/organisations to use community facilities, such as sports pitches,

out of hours, should the weather prevent them from using their usual facilities.
(CM/AT)

3. That consideration be given to how the partnership between Town and Community Councils and Bridgend County Borough Council could be strengthened to ensure more cohesion and a less transactional relationship.
(CM/AT)
4. That Officers reflect on how well known the procedure to arrange temporary road closures is and consider how the procedure can best be promoted. (CM/AT)
5. That consideration be given to revisiting the objective of erecting signs such as Play Priority Signs and exploring with Registered Social Landlords the removal of existing No Ball Games signage where appropriate, to encourage more children to play outside their homes. (CM/AT)

Additional Information:

The Committee requested:

6. The National Guidance on the 'One Council' approach and an explanation of what the 'One Council' process and aspirations are in relation to the report as well as how the model of strategic leadership within the Guidance functions. (CM/AT)
7. Confirmation of how the Local Authority engaged the views of 0-3 year olds or their families in the Family wellbeing survey for 0-3 years age groups conducted with partner schools. (CM/AT)

21. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE**

The Scrutiny Officer presented the Committee with the proposed draft outline Forward Work Programme (FWP) attached at Appendix A to the report for discussion and consideration. The SOSOC forward work programme would be included in the next report to COSC with any updates from each meeting included.

The Scrutiny Officer explained that the Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet was attached as Appendix B to track responses to the Committee's recommendations. She drew Members' attention to Appendix A and the addition of the Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 to 2025/26 and Budget Proposals which was on the 23rd of January 2023. She advised that the Homelessness Strategy would now be scheduled for April and with the Committee's agreement, the Bridgend 2030 Net Zero Carbon Strategy, the Biodiversity Action Plan and the Future Waste Services Work Streams would be scheduled for future meetings.

A Member explained that he was disappointed that they had not seen the Just Solutions report into Major Parks for BCBC. This was aimed at Newbridge Fields, Maesteg Welfare Park and Aberfields including Waun Llwyd Playing Fields and he hoped there were no recommendations in that report which overlapped with decisions being made at that meeting. The Chair confirmed that the report was not yet available but it was expected shortly. The Member asked if the report could be included in the Forward Work Programme.

The Democratic Services Manager suggested that when the report was published, they could consider the detail and decide if it should come to a future meeting for consideration or be circulated as an information item. No officers had seen the report but it could be linked to Community Asset Transfers in which case it would be more

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appropriate to have an item on overall community asset transfers. They could send the report to committee members inviting comments and decide on the best way forward.

A member referred to page 141, the Shared Prosperity Fund and asked if any feedback had been received from UK Government, Dr Jamie Wallis or Chris Elmore in relation to the letter regarding the Shared Prosperity Fund. The Scrutiny Officer replied that she had not seen anything and she would follow it up.

RESOLVED: That the Committee approved the Forward Work Programme in Appendix A, noted that the Forward Work Programme would be reported to a meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, following the next cycle of Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings and noted the Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet in Appendix B.

22. **URGENT ITEMS**

None.

The meeting closed at Time Not Specified