

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2 - THURSDAY, 3 NOVEMBER 2022

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2 HELD REMOTELY - VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON THURSDAY, 3 NOVEMBER 2022 AT 10:00

Present

Councillor F D Bletsoe – Chairperson

E L P Caparros	P Davies	P Ford	D M Hughes
M Lewis	J Llewellyn-Hopkins	RL Penhale-Thomas	A Wathan
AJ Williams	R Williams		

Officers:

Lucy Beard	Scrutiny Officer
Meryl Lawrence	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Scrutiny
Claire Marchant	Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing
Jessica Mclellan	Scrutiny Officer
Janine Nightingale	Corporate Director - Communities
Zak Shell	Head of Neighbourhood Services
Kelly Watson	Chief Officer Legal, HR and Regulatory Services
Delyth Webb	Group Manager - Strategic Regeneration

7. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Richard Williams declared a personal interest in agenda item 5 as a member of the Development Control Committee.

8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of a meeting of Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 dated 11 July 2022 be approved as a true and accurate record.

9. CARE INSPECTORATE WALES (CIW) PERFORMANCE EVALUATION REPORT OF CHILDRENS SOCIAL CARE SERVICES 23 - 27 MAY 2022

The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing presented the report the purpose of which was to present to the Committee the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Inspection of Children’s Social Care Services Report and to request that the Committee consider the report and comment on the associated Action Plan.

The Deputy Head of Children’s Social Care presented the detailed Action Plan and explained that it was set out into 4 sections as per CIW’s report. He highlighted the work being done to address each area for improvement in the plan and confirmed that whilst some actions had been completed, several of them were ongoing but that many areas identified for improvement had already been identified by the service themselves prior to the inspection and work already begun on them.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Early Help (Deputy Leader) advised that when she was appointed as Cabinet Member for Social Services at the end of last year, she knew it was going to be a challenge and at times had been despondent regarding some of the challenges being faced. However, she was now more encouraged and could see more opportunities and spent her time as much as possible

with service users. She advised of recent conversations Foster Carers who had been delighted to inform her of the changes they could see being made within the practice.

She highlighted that completing implementation of the 'Signs of Safety' training would give management oversight in a better form. In addition, she raised the challenges faced by the not-for-profit agenda in the sufficiency of provision of placements for young people. Finally, she highlighted the pressure on the budgets for Social Services and the need to look for a more sustainable future and guidance and direction from Welsh Government. She warned that if the budget situation remained the same, then Social Services would not remain the same and that there was a need to have a conversation with communities where the impact would be felt.

A Member thanked Officers and the Deputy Leader for their honesty and transparency and asked whether the Corporate Director was content that the inspection report was a true and accurate reflection of the service provision in Bridgend.

The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing confirmed that she was and highlighted that it reflected the self-evaluation they had presented to CIW and hoped that it also reflected the advice she had given to full Council when she presented the Director of Social Services Annual Report.

A Member referenced the high percentage of respondents to the people survey who felt they were 'rarely' or 'never' treated with dignity and respect, who felt they were 'rarely' or 'never' listened to, when asked how easy it was to make contact with social services, stated, 'not easy' or 'very difficult' and, when asked how useful the information, advice and assistance offered by social services was, responded either 'not useful at all' or 'not useful.' He noted the contrast to the staff survey whereby 93% of respondents stated they were supported to do their job and 71% stated their workload was manageable. He asked whether the figures were the normal standards and queried why the people survey seemed to report one thing and the staff survey another.

The Deputy Head of Children's Social Care confirmed that the response to the people survey was an area they would want to see improved. He confirmed that whilst the service was having a very challenging time, the responses to the staff survey appeared to reflect the level of support, resources and wellbeing support being put in corporately.

In response to a question on when performance management would be aligned to the performance indicators, he highlighted that this had been recognised in the self-evaluation and whilst it was still an area for development, he advised that it was in a much better position since May with information available on a day-to-day basis to the management team.

In response to a question whether the challenge of persistently high volumes of referrals, increased complexity of need and workforce challenges were typical of all local authorities in Wales or relative to Bridgend, the Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing confirmed that Bridgend was in the top quartile in terms of the number of care experienced children and the number on the Child Protection Register. There had been a significant increase, even since the review period, of children open to the authority on a care and support basis, in the number of contacts through front door and the number of assessments undertaken in children's statutory services.

She highlighted the need to shift the balance of care and that CIW had picked up that the authority was missing opportunities to prevent escalation of need and that work needed to be done across the system to look at where resources were invested. Whilst acknowledging the need for resources when statutory intervention was necessary, she highlighted that where children and families were motivated to change, the need to have

targeted prevention services which might provide better outcomes than statutory services. The Institute of Public Care (IPC) were undertaking a piece of work looking at Early Help, Edge of Care, safeguarding and how to manage the needs of children and families in Bridgend, driven by data and evidence. However, the advice from IPC was that the demand at the current volume was likely to continue over at least a 2-year period and they had provided clear criteria as to what needs to be considered to reduce the level. Therefore whilst, some authorities across Wales were exhibiting similar features some had been successful in shifting the balance of care.

In relation to a question on whether the missed opportunities to thoroughly explore and mitigate risk and a lack of professional curiosity were due to issues of capacity, the Deputy Head of Children's Social Care clarified that CIW had been referring to the skillset they saw reflected in the files in terms of practice. He referred to the Action Plan and the suite of training options that had been collated; a lot of which were mandatory (for permanent and agency staff). He highlighted that professional curiosity was a real skill, to get beneath what is presented at face value and one which all social workers needed to have.

Later, a Member expressed concern that children may inadvertently drop off the radar due to a lack of professional curiosity or taking people at face value and queried whether there was an internal mechanism for junior staff to take back concerns to senior managers to ensure risks not explored could be probed further.

The Deputy Head of Children's Social Care confirmed that it was important to have support management oversight, supervision and informal supervision. He recognised that the opportunity to have across the desk conversations had gotten lost during the pandemic but that all safeguarding teams were now back in well staffed offices and that supervision training was crucial to ensure managers had the skills to provide that guidance. Whilst there had been significant challenges of vacancies at management levels, they had been able to appoint senior managers from other local authorities where the market supplement had assisted.

In response to a request for clarity on the meaning of inconsistent thresholds and standards, he advised that it referred to the level of intervention provided based on risk. The very significant increased contacts Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) received were reflected in a number of files CIW looked at and they noted the significant improvement from the inconsistency of thresholds and decision making from the critical incident in February and March. The number of managers put into that service had been tripled with additional capacity from senior social workers who make most decisions in terms of risk and ensure consistent thresholds.

A Member noted the delay in reports being written and asked whether calls to IAA were recorded so that the information contained in a call would be available immediately, if required.

The Deputy Head of Children's Social Care confirmed that calls were not recorded but highlighted that if any professional had a safeguarding concern, they should put a call in and that it was important that was recorded on the correct document. He confirmed that Education had their own safeguarding procedures and policies and whilst teachers can contact IAA for advice, if a professional calls for advice and wants the information recorded, they need to state that, so that there is dual responsibility.

To clarify a Member's query as to whether it would be the responsibility of the person reporting to submit a form after the call if they wanted their information to be recorded, he advised that it would depend on the nature of the discussion but that if it was to make a safeguarding referral that a professional wanted to put in, it should be followed up in

writing, but that professionals in IAA did record on the system conversations with other professionals.

The Member expressed concern that there could be a number of minor concerns reported by different individuals resulting in a safeguarding concern which IAA may not necessarily pick up. The Corporate Director agreed to produce a briefing note setting out the process for calls made to the IAA Service, to include detail as to how or if these are being recorded and the responsibility of schools when making safeguarding referrals.

The Member noted the percentage of responses to the people survey that did not find the advice given to be helpful and highlighted that if calls were recorded, that Managers could listen to the advice and if it were not helpful, it could raise a training issue. She stated that Headteachers received conflicting advice whereby some are advised that they did not need to fill out a form, whilst some did constitute a safeguarding referral, so it was vital that all calls were recorded in order to protect children.

The Deputy Head of Children's Social Care confirmed that there were internal processes within schools whereby they report their issues and concerns, albeit low level concerns. If those constituted a safeguarding concern and a safeguarding referral was made, that was recorded. However, he offered to look into individual cases offline with the Member.

The Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing advised that they were trying to ensure a stronger interface with schools and that the Deputy Head of Children's Services would be meeting the Federation of Headteachers for Primary and Secondary schools. They were also looking to re-start regular meetings on a school cluster basis to explore examples and understand whether they were one-off matters or indicative of something more systemic. She also confirmed that Education had the safeguarding infrastructure which could be used to raise concerns.

The Deputy Leader advised that the IPC had highlighted that Bridgend has two front doors for safeguarding which was not good practice and was something the service were looking to address as part of their Action Plan.

In response to a query regarding the facilitation of supervised contact, the Corporate Director clarified that these were contact arrangements directed by the family courts for care experienced children with their parents and extended family, supervised by contact workers in a suitable venue and should be a positive experience for the child. She confirmed that they were seeing an increasing amount of contact being directed by the courts and that an initial review was being undertaken to consider short term measures to ensure capacity to facilitate contact in the best quality way before a deeper review in the New Year.

In response to a question as to what was being done to achieve consistent high-quality reports, the Deputy Head of Children's Services referred to training being provided to staff on report writing and the recording policy to support good quality, consistent records as well as supervision training for managers.

A Member asked what was included in the Action Plans that had been developed and implemented.

The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing advised that following the critical incident there were single agency reviews in a timely manner which was recognised by CIW and action plans followed integrated into the performance evaluation action plan and 3-year strategic plan, as well as a consolidated action plan from the findings of the audit regarding improving practice and policies, ensuring effective quality assurance systems and good management oversight.

A Member asked what the average caseload per social worker was, the highest number of cases with a social worker and whether, on an assessment level, caseloads were at a critical level, whereby identifying or mitigating risk was considered to be a serious issue.

In IAA, the Deputy Head of Children's Services said that case levels were 16 and the lowest he had ever known and within the managed service would be around 18 or 19. In the Locality teams the highest caseload was around 26 but would have some specific circumstances around it such a large sibling group. Within the West Locality team average caseloads were around 20, in the North around 23 and in the East around 24 or 25. He agreed to provide the highest caseload number by locality to the Committee after the meeting.

The Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing confirmed that caseloads in IAA were about right due to the significant additional resource in that part of the service. The caseloads in safeguarding localities were higher than ideal which would be around 15. Whilst work was ongoing to see if cases could safely be closed from care and support, the service had also worked hard to ensure that all cases were allocated at all times, even if this meant senior social workers or team managers holding a small number of cases for a short time. However, she also highlighted that the volume of work made it difficult to keep caseloads at a manageable level and hence the level of budget pressures and agency workers.

In relation to budget pressures, the Deputy Leader advised that IAA had an appropriate level of caseload due to the additional resource and agency staff put into the service at a significant cost to the Authority.

In response to a query on the level of caseloads to enable social workers to cope with pressures of the work and to identify and mitigate risk, the Deputy Head of Children's Services advised that the gold standard would be around 15 to 18 cases and maybe slightly higher in IAA, where there was a higher turnover of cases.

In response to a question on 'Back to Basics' training, the Deputy Head of Children's Services advised that the training had started to be delivered before the inspection, was mandatory for all and had been rolled out and delivered, but would continue to be part of induction training for all new staff.

With regard to whether there were individual training plans for each individual member of staff or generic training plans for roles, he confirmed that every social worker's training was a key part of their monthly supervisions and that their individual training plans were considered every year in their annual appraisal. In addition, there were team and service training plans which evolved and that there was a continuous review on the need for training. He acknowledged that the struggle faced by practitioners in prioritising training against the demand of urgent cases and highlighted the need for balance of competing pressures.

The Deputy Leader advised that social workers needed to complete a mandatory number of hours of Continued Professional Development in order to remain registered, and that practitioners had also been told to prioritise some mandatory training, particularly in relation to the introduction of the new model of practice.

CIW noted that there had been a 'significant adverse impact on the delivery of some children's services' and a Member queried whether there were other services as well as IAA which could be a cause for concern.

The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing confirmed that it largely related to the critical incident in IAA but highlighted that cases would not go into IAA in isolation and might transfer to other parts of the service, although she advised that they try to operate as one service. She also highlighted an example of some of the circumstances regarding a critical incident being called in IAA.

In relation to a question on supervision records, she confirmed that it was an area that was regularly audited and that a supervision policy was being co-produced with supervisors and supervisees. The supervision records were produced by supervisors but she acknowledged that it had not always been as good as it should have and that it was an area where standards needed to be set.

A Member asked for information on what direct payments (DPs) were, how many had been applied for and how many had been paid.

The Deputy Head of Children's Services confirmed that DPs were a form of support provided to children and adults and in children's social care used to support families and disabled children following an assessment of whether their needs can be met by a DP. The DP is paid to a family who can employ a personal advisor to help them meet the identified support need. He confirmed that the number of DPs provided increased year on year, which created budget pressures and that there would be a review of DPs across the directorate this year. On 12 December, they would be engaging and launching a strategy and policy document and he hoped that the policy review would address the issues of families reporting having to jump through hoops to obtain a DP.

A Member asked what the plan was to reduce the 12-week waiting list for mental health support and expressed concern that some children with mental health concerns were also absent from school and the waiting list was also then impacting on their education.

The Deputy Head of Children's Social Care agreed that the waiting list was far too long for such an important service and was not provided by the social services directorate. However, he agreed to obtain information regarding the waiting list from the relevant senior officer.

In relation to how the waiting list had been allowed to reach 12 weeks, the Deputy Leader reiterated the significant issues in workforce across Wales and stated that it was something Welsh Government needed to consider in depth. She advised that the last social work training course in Cardiff was only half full and that Bridgend was recruiting its own social work students with more take up than ever before. She continued that where staff had been diverted from a service or there was a lack of staff, there would be a delay but that it had improved following the inspection.

The Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing, responded to a query as to what the Directorate were doing to encourage people into a career in social care in Bridgend instead of other local authorities, acknowledging the need for more sensitive marketing and confirmed there was an earmarked reserve to fund a marketing post in the directorate. She referred to the need for people to feel well supported and for a competitive financial and non-financial offer. In addition, there was a need for colleagues to promote the opportunities in their networks.

In order to reassure the Committee about the process for recording episodes of missing children, the Deputy Head of Children's Services advised that in the case of a missing child, a safeguarding referral was placed on the child's file and there would be written records in response with management oversight and actions agreed.

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2 - THURSDAY, 3 NOVEMBER 2022

In response to a question regarding meaningfully involving children and young people, he confirmed that it would be a key requirement of the Corporate Parenting and Participation Officer. Care experienced children and all children's views would be at the centre of the creation of the engagement and involvement framework. The voice of the child was also central to the Back to Basics training which should be reinforced by team managers in supervision.

The Deputy Leader advised that care experienced children had her contact details and there was an open-door policy to discuss any concerns they may have.

In response to a query on the return of rota visits, the Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing advised that the Directorate was actively looking into how they could be brought back effectively.

She also confirmed that the delivery of the Action Plan would impact on envelope of the budget in which they were working. There were significant overspends which was largely driven by workforce, reliance on agency staff and the placement situation. There was also some dedicated support funded by ear marked reserves due to the underspend position last year.

The Chairperson thanked the Deputy Leader, the Corporate Director - Social Services & Wellbeing and the Deputy Head of Children's Social Care for their report and the information provided to the Committee.

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

1. That the Chair of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 liaise with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Early Help to identify:
 - a) What Members can do to support the Council's promotion of recruitment into Bridgend Social Services; and
 - b) What support the Committee can provide to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Early Help in her discussions with Welsh Local Government Association regarding employment terms and conditions and pay.

and the Committee requested:

2. A briefing note setting out the process of calls made to the Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) Service to include detail as to how or if these are being recorded and the responsibility of schools when making safeguarding referrals.
3. Detail of Social Worker current caseloads including the highest caseload attributed to any one Social Worker.
4. How many Direct Payments have been applied for in the past 12 months and how many were made.

5. The current waiting list for children awaiting help from the Youth Emotional Mental Health Team.
10. **CALL-IN OF CABINET DECISION: PORTHCAWL WATERFRONT REGENERATION: APPROPRIATION OF LAND AT GRIFFIN PARK AND SANDY BAY**

The Senior Democratic Services Officer - Scrutiny presented the report the purpose of which was to enable the Committee to scrutinise the decision of Cabinet of 18 October 2022 in relation to the report on Porthcawl Waterfront Regeneration: Appropriation of Land at Griffin Park and Sandy Bay.

She advised that, in accordance with Rule 18 of the Overview and Scrutiny Rules in the Council's Constitution, five Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees, and two Scrutiny Chairs, had requested that an Executive decision made by Cabinet on the 18 October 2022 be Called-In.

She advised that the Committee was recommended to consider the Cabinet decision of 18 October 2022 relating to Porthcawl Waterfront Regeneration: Appropriation of Land at Griffin Park and Sandy Bay and to determine whether it wished to:

- i) refer the decision back to Cabinet for reconsideration, setting out in writing the nature of its concerns; or
- ii) decide not to refer the matter back to the Cabinet.

The Chairperson invited the Members who had supported the Call In to speak on the reasons for the Call In.

Members stated the main reasons for the Call In included:

- Scrutiny should be seen as providing assurance to the public, to Cabinet and Officers that the Council was proceeding in the correct direction and should be seen as adding value and strengthening the public policy making process.
- The need for demonstrable evidence the local authority had implemented the 5 Ways of Working in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (The WBFG(W) 2015 Act), requiring public consultation to go beyond the statutory minimum.
- Members had received a significant number of representations from town councillors, members of the public and local organisations in Porthcawl objecting to the proposals who had raised concerns and valid questions regarding the regeneration plans. Members welcomed the opportunity of giving those people a voice, recognising the significant generational impact and irreversible change to the town that the development plans could have on Porthcawl.
- Concern was expressed that the public perception from the Cabinet meeting might have been that it had been a pre-determined decision given the high level of public concerns that did not appear to have been adequately discussed or addressed.
- That there needed to be demonstrable evidence that sufficient consideration had been given to the response to the public consultation which was overwhelmingly against the appropriation of land for the purposes outlined in the Cabinet report.

- The loss of open space for recreational purposes, changes to Griffin Park, concerns about proposed housing at Sandy Bay, lack of investment in tourism facilities, as well as the impact on wildlife and ecology, which were not sufficiently discussed during the Cabinet deliberations on this issue.
- Whether the appropriation of all of the land was necessary to enable the Porthcawl waterfront regeneration (which might open the floodgates for housing) and why the option of a reduction in the area of the land proposed for appropriation had not been considered.
- The dichotomy between the process of the appropriation of the land and the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) process required further exploration.
- Porthcawl is a jewel in the Borough's crown, and opportunities needed to be considered to regenerate it in a sympathetic manner which promotes tourism similarly to surrounding areas that benefit from tourism.

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration:

- Thanked the Committee for the invitation but indicated that as most decisions had been taken prior to her becoming a Cabinet Member and advised that Officers would be better placed to provide the background information.
- Advised that the appropriation of the land was necessary for the implementation of the Local Development Plan (LDP) that had been agreed at the previous meeting of Council.
- Highlighted that following emails with concerns from residents, Cabinet asked Officers to facilitate a site-visit for them which allowed them to envision how much open space would be available. In addition, following the Place Making Strategy the number of proposed houses had been reduced and the area for open space had been enlarged.
- Confirmed that Cabinet had also done a walkabout with local Councillors for them to see how much open space there would be and how Griffin Park would be extended, and that there would be a further walkabout arranged for local stakeholders.
- Advised that the new all-weather tennis court would be in place before the removal of the existing tennis courts and that this would be done in consultation with Porthcawl Tennis Association.
- Confirmed that whilst no decision had been made about exactly what would be developed on the land, there would be commercial and leisure facilities that would enhance Porthcawl and that all stakeholders would be involved in any decisions made.
- In relation to whether the appropriation of the land was a separate issue to the CPO, whilst linked, confirmed that the appropriate legal advice had been sought and they were separate things.
- Felt that the 5 Ways of Working in the WCFG(W) 2015 Act had been met and highlighted the large need for housing and that 30% would be for social housing.

- In relation to whether sufficient consideration was given to the project by Cabinet, she highlighted that Sandy Bay had been earmarked for development since the Development Plan in 2004 so was not new.

The Corporate Director – Communities:

- Wished to make clear that the use of the land at Sandy Bay and Coney Beach had not been pre-determined but that the land had been appropriated, which was a legal mechanism to remove its current use (as a caravan park), for planning purposes with the intention to do extensive consultation as to what can be achieved in the area.
- Clarified that due consideration had been given to all comments made by public and referred to Appendix 5 to the Cabinet report which detailed the main concerns from the over 600 responses they had. Data Protection legislation prohibited the responses being published in full in the public domain, but she confirmed that Cabinet Members had received a document which detailed every objection received.
- Confirmed that the draft plan was to increase the size of Griffin Park from 4 acres to 8 acres and create a long linear park and link Griffin Park to the monster park. Importantly, once designated as formal open space, land can be afforded protection.
- Advised that one of the objections was the need to take a corner off one of the Bowling Greens at Griffin Park in order to gain access to the site which may affect the tennis courts but, she highlighted that it was a disused bowling green which the Council had committed to replace and in relation to the tennis courts, the Council had committed to providing brand-new all-weather courts.
- Another area of concern had been in relation to the Veterans Hub which, she advised, was not fit for use due to deterioration and the Council had committed to helping them find new premises and working with the community on facilities.
- With reference to the Placemaking Strategy, confirmed that Coney Beach and Sandy Bay had been in the LDP as a strategic site after it ceased trading in the early 2000s. It was put into the LDP, as a potential housing allocation, in 2004, in 2014 and now again and she confirmed it was proceeding to Welsh Government for examination in public.
- In relation to the WCFG(W) 2015 Act, she highlighted the evolving nature of Porthcawl as a seaside town for residents and visitors and people's right to have somewhere to live (including a need for affordable homes), to play, to have employment and to have education. They had looked at the plans in place and produced a Placemaking Strategy which had been consulted on with an exhibition in the Grand Pavilion and with 3 weeks of hoardings in Cosy Corner and adopted by the Cabinet in March.
- She confirmed the geographical extent of the Placemaking Strategy and advised that it had put together a strong vision for regeneration and at the

heart of it was open space, active travel, community spaces, taking traffic away from the sea front, bringing the town centre and seafront together, a new school in the area, new homes (a proportion being affordable) and leisure opportunities. However, the detail of those would be part of consultation as the appropriation itself was simply the planning legislation to allow consideration of its future use.

- Advised that the need to appropriate all of the land was due to having no definitive planning permissions or decisions on what areas would be used for open space, for the new school, for housing where the roads would be and leaving any part of the land out of the appropriation would be pre-determining what can be done with the site in the future.
- Confirmed that the 5 ways of working was absolutely imbedded in everything they did and that it was necessary to ensure a sustainable future for young people. She referred to sections 2 & 7 of the Cabinet Report where the 5 Ways of Working had been considered and the Human Rights Act considerations at paragraphs 4.41 to 4.47.
- She advised that it has been made clear from the Placemaking Strategy that CPOs would be necessary to appropriate and clean the title of some of the land which did not have names or titles. She clarified that appropriation was planning legislation whilst a CPO was property legislation.

The Leader of the Council reiterated that the Placemaking Strategy had been extensively consulted upon including the face-to-face engagement at the Grand Pavilion and had been approved by Members at Council. He advised that the Council had responded to much of the public consultation with the inclusion of more public open space and highlighted the planned expansion of Griffin Park and plans to maintain, enhance and protect the relic dunes and the active travel network which would provide a truly integrated development for visitors and local residents. He also referenced the comprehensive consultation report that Cabinet received and considered.

The Principal Regeneration Officer presented Appendix 3 of the Cabinet report and highlighted the areas of planned open space and other qualitative improvements.

The Chairperson invited the public speakers listed below to address the Committee for a maximum of three minutes, in turn, with their comments, objections and representations regarding the decision of Cabinet (made at its meeting on 18 October 2022).

<u>Name:</u>	<u>Organisation:</u>
1. Jamie Strong	A Voice for the Future of Porthcawl
2. Don Tickner	Porthcawl Civic Trust Society
3. Margaret Minhinnick	Sustainable Wales

The comments, objections and representations made by the public speakers included the following:

- Why the area of the land proposed for appropriation could not be reduced, why it needed to include the relic dunes, why the area of land proposed for

housing on Sandy Bay could not be reduced to create further protected recreational space, and why the extension of Griffin Park could not go to the desirable beach front at Sandy Bay.

- Noting that documentation referred to the appropriation enabling the land to be marketed to developers, whether there was any possibility of a public consultation on the development of the land or whether the use of the land had been pre-determined, highlighting that the LDP already referred to the number of houses that would be built on the land.
- Concern was expressed about the extent of the Council's attempts at public consultation with reference to the Office of Future Generations Commissioner and the WBFG 2015 Act which state, it was crucial when developing plans, that planning authorities engaged with people in their own communities to have a participatory process, which focussed on achieving sustainable places and sets out a requirement which went beyond the statutory minimum consultation set out in planning legislation.
- Further concerns regarding the lack of real consultation with the public over the planning of the food store at Salt Lake and Cosy Corner highlighting the limited opportunities to engage or comment and that any opportunities fell short of the requirements of the WBFG(W) 2015 Act.
- Concerns about the lack of evidence of a true understanding of the WBFG 2015 Act which requires public bodies to demonstrate how their decisions meet the social, environmental, cultural and economic well-being for their community and Wales.

It was not clear if the five ways of working, intrinsic to the planning system, especially involvement, had been interpreted in line with the legislation, as had it been the case there would have been more than a consultation process and that it was not clear how collaboration, integration, prevention and long term had been utilised for the well-being of future generations of Porthcawl and Wales.

- There was a need for a more cohesive approach for professionals to work in partnership with people who have lived experience to inform, to redefine shared visions and values and to share the responsibility to achieve mutual, sustainable solutions throughout and the WBFG 2015 Act provides a delivery framework for all Council staff and elected Members.

The Senior Democratic Services Officer - Scrutiny confirmed that there had been no written representations or objections received.

In response to matters raised by the public speakers, the Corporate Director – Communities:

- Advised that the relic dunes were going to remain unchanged and would be protected and confirmed that it had been included in the appropriation as it had been part of the caravan park and had caravans on it.

- With regard to the owners' agreement, everything required planning permission and consultation.
Confirmed that the consultation on the appropriation went above the minimum requirements and, in relation to Cosy Corner, whilst Welsh Government grant funding required a building for employment use, the Council were also providing open space and community facilities.
- Agreed that consultation and co-production were hugely important but highlighted that this matter was appropriation and that it was the detailed plans that would come next and committed to work with them to deliver a co-produced plan for what the community wants.

The Chairperson invited any other Members who had supported the Call In to speak and then invited any other Members of the Committee to ask questions or comment.

A Member queried, with reference to facilities in neighbouring areas, why there was no reference to facilities in the reports, what the cost had been to produce the draft plans and what the cost would be to produce new ones after public involvement.

The Corporate Director reiterated that the appropriation was a legal planning mechanism to allow detailed plans to come forward in the future which were not available until public consultation, but advised that the ambition was to be premier waterfront town.

In response to whether the planned road through Griffin Park would change, advised that it was key to a road into the development site and that the identified entrance was the only option due to a residential community at the top end. However, the size, scale and direction of the road had not yet been designed. She also highlighted the commitment to deliver homes but with a balanced and sustainable community.

In response to a question regarding the placement and accessibility of the new tennis courts, the Leader advised they would work closely with the Lawn Tennis Association and the local club regarding detailed plan, but the plans were to relocate the courts within the expanded Griffin Park and highlighted the benefit of the new courts being an all-weather facility.

The Chief Officer – Legal & Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy reminded Members that the scope of the Call In was the Cabinet decision on the appropriation only.

In response to a question regarding her vision for Porthcawl, the Cabinet Member for Regeneration advised that she had lots of potential ideas including a wet area and indoor leisure facilities for visitors and residents and was keen to work with residents.

The Corporate Director - Communities in relation to a question regarding the responses to the public consultation clarified that all comments had been given to Cabinet but that they needed anonymisation for the public report. She also highlighted that where there had been similar comments, they had been included in Appendix 5 of the Cabinet report under themes and headings.

In response to a question as to how beach front properties, which normally attract a premium would be protected as affordable homes, the Corporate Director - Communities advised that the detail was not available yet but highlighted that a certain percentage of affordable homes was critical to creating sustainable communities.

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2 - THURSDAY, 3 NOVEMBER 2022

In response to a question regarding Porthcawl Town Council (PTC), she confirmed that they were involved in the Placemaking Strategy as a key consultee and stakeholder, and they would continue to be moving forward. The Cabinet Member for Regeneration responded that they were also planning another walk through the site with stakeholder representatives.

The Corporate Director – Communities in response to a query regarding the funding for facilities within the new Griffin Park, advised that Griffin Park had been community asset transferred (CAT) to PTC and that the revenue support and maintenance was critical. She was keen to use S106 agreements for commuted capital sums to look after some of the infrastructure highlighting the difficult budget position and that facilities needed to be sustainable. Discussions with PTC would continue as to Griffin Park's future.

In response to whether the proposed road through Griffin Park would affect the agreement with PTC, the Corporate Director - Communities advised that the corner which was proposed to be used for the road had been removed from the CAT and highlighted that old facilities could not be removed prior to the installation of new facilities.

The Leader assured that there would be partnership with PTC on the plans for Griffin Park.

A Member highlighted that there had been much discussion regarding Griffin Park but little regarding Sandy Bay apart from the reference to housing and queried whether there was already a vision or planned for the appropriated land.

The Corporate Director – Communities confirmed that there were high level and strategic plans and framework and advised that there were plans for 200 homes on Salt Lake and 900 on the appropriated land. However, she highlighted that the site would be much more than just that and although there was a very clear vision for the site, the detail could not be pre-determined due to the need for planning applications.

In response to a Member's query, the Corporate Director confirmed that there had been 600 representations received regarding the appropriation, over 1000 regarding the LDP and similar amount on the Placemaking Strategy; so a high percentage of residents and also highlighted the large number of people who went to the exhibition and had their questions answered there.

In relation to infrastructure, that was a key part of the provision and she advised that new homes would not be introduced into a community unless it was sustainable and had facilities around it.

The Leader also highlighted the plans to extend the English-Medium education provision and the provision of Welsh-Medium education and childcare as well as the wider infrastructure for Porthcawl.

In response to a query as to whether referring the decision on the appropriation back to Cabinet for reconsideration would frustrate and delay plans to proceed to public consultation, the Leader advised that if the decision was referred back it would add time to the process and that they did not want to delay plans for Porthcawl. However, he highlighted although key principles had already been agreed by Council in approving the LDP, there were choices to be made and that they would take on board all views expressed regarding the consultation including how to consult and engage with the community on the detail.

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2 - THURSDAY, 3 NOVEMBER 2022

The Chairperson invited Members of the Committee, having regard to whether it was satisfied with the responses, whether it wished to:

- a) Refer the decision back to the Cabinet for reconsideration, setting out the reasons and rationale for the request;
- or
- b) Decide not to refer the matter back to the Cabinet.

RESOLVED: The Committee concluded that the Decision would not be referred back to Cabinet but made the following Recommendation to Cabinet:

a) That having regard to concerns expressed to Members by Porthcawl residents, views shared by public speakers and questions from Members, that Cabinet be requested that going forward for the next stages in the process that they involve Porthcawl Town Council, all stakeholders and the public in further consultation and engagement.

11. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

Having considered the report the Forward Work Programme Update the Committee requested:

1. That the scope of the Integrated Working with Cwm Taf University Health Board report include a narrative regarding hospital discharge.
2. That when the report on IAA is scheduled that there also be invitees from Education.

There were no further items identified for consideration on the Forward Work Programme having regard to the selection criteria in paragraph 4.3, and this could be revisited at the next meeting.

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

RESOLVED: That the Committee approved the Forward Work Programme in Appendix A, subject to the incorporation of the above requests, noted that the Forward Work Programme and any updates from the Committee would be reported to the next meeting of COSC and noted the Recommendation Monitoring Action Sheet in Appendix B.

12. URGENT ITEMS

None.

The meeting closed at Time Not Specified