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Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr

Bridgend County Borough Council



Swyddfeydd Dinesig, Stryd yr Angel, Pen-y-bont, CF31 4WB / Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB

*Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg.
Rhowch wybod i ni os mai Cymraeg yw eich
dewis iaith.*

*We welcome correspondence in Welsh. Please
let us know if your language choice is Welsh.*



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: Tuesday 4 April 2023

Dear Councillor,

COUNCIL

A meeting of the Council will be held as a Hybrid meeting in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB on **Wednesday, 12 April 2023 at 16:00**.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
To receive apologies for absence from Members.
2. Declarations of Interest
To receive declarations of personal and prejudicial interest from Members/Officers in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct adopted by Council from 1 September 2008.
3. Approval of Minutes 5 - 46
To receive for approval the minutes of 1/3/23 and 15/3/23
4. To receive announcements from:
(i) Mayor (or person presiding)
(ii) Members of the Cabinet
(iii) Chief Executive
5. To receive announcements by the Leader
6. The Well-Being Plan for Cwm Taf Morgannwg 47 - 88
7. To receive the following Questions from:

Councillor Tim Wood to the Cabinet Member – Regeneration

During recent years BCBC has expended a significant sum of public money firstly holding a consultation then a report and investigation process into opening a small portion of Bridgend Town Centre back open to traffic.

This consultation back in 2016 had the highest public engagement in the history of this

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council and the public were resounding in their backing of this partial re-opening of the town centre.

As such, will the Cabinet Member for Regeneration agree that we as a council are here to serve the public, to be good stewards of the public purse and are here to encourage and sustain our town centres not hinder them.

So, will the Cabinet Member for Regeneration detail to me their plans to make Bridgend Town Centre accessible to all?

Councillor Alex Williams to the Cabinet Member - Communities

Will the Cabinet Member - Communities make a statement on the subsidies which BCBC currently provides to support those bus routes which have been deemed as commercially unviable; outline what consideration has been given to the reduction or complete withdrawal of these subsidies; and what analysis has been conducted on the potential ramifications of such a reduction or withdrawal in subsidies on people within the communities which were previously in receipt of subsidised routes?

Councillor Tim Thomas to the Cabinet Member - Communities

What is the Cabinet Member doing to ensure that BCBC roads and highways are accessible for the elderly and disabled?

Councillor Ian Williams to the Cabinet Member - Regeneration

Could the Cabinet Member for Regeneration please let me have an update on what measures are being taken to restore the many derelict buildings in our town centre and what is the timeline for this remediation?

8. **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: This will be a Hybrid meeting and Members and Officers will be attending in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Angel Street Bridgend / Remotely via Microsoft Teams. 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:

S Aspey
H T Bennett
A R Berrow
F D Bletsoe
S J Bletsoe
JPD Blundell
E L P Caparros
N Clarke
RJ Collins
HJ David
C Davies
C L C Davies
P Davies
S Easterbrook
M J Evans
N Farr
P Ford

Councillors

J Gebbie
W R Goode
RM Granville
H Griffiths
S J Griffiths
D T Harrison
M L Hughes
D M Hughes
RM James
P W Jenkins
M R John
M Jones
MJ Kearn
W J Kendall
M Lewis
J Llewellyn-Hopkins
RL Penhale-Thomas

Councillors

J E Pratt
E Richards
R J Smith
JC Spanswick
I M Spiller
T Thomas
JH Tildesley MBE
G Walter
A Wathan
A Williams
AJ Williams
HM Williams
I Williams
MJ Williams
R Williams
E D Winstanley
T Wood

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COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY, 1 MARCH 2023

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD AS A HYBRID MEETING ON WEDNESDAY, 1 MARCH 2023 AT 16:00

Present

Councillor M Jones – Chairperson

S Aspey	H T Bennett	A R Berrow	F D Bletsoe
S J Bletsoe	JPD Blundell	E L P Caparros	N Clarke
RJ Collins	HJ David	C Davies	C L C Davies
P Davies	S Easterbrook	M J Evans	N Farr
P Ford	J Gebbie	W R Goode	RM Granville
H Griffiths	S J Griffiths	D T Harrison	M L Hughes
D M Hughes	RM James	P W Jenkins	M R John
RL Penhale-Thomas	MJ Kearn	W J Kendall	
I M Spiller	J E Pratt	R J Smith	JC Spanswick
A Wathan	T Thomas	JH Tildesley MBE	G Walter
I Williams	A Williams	AJ Williams	HM Williams
T Wood	MJ Williams	R Williams	E D Winstanley

Apologies for Absence

J Llewellyn-Hopkins, M Lewis and E Richards

Officers:

Julie Ellams	Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Mark Galvin	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Lindsay Harvey	Corporate Director Education and Family Support
Rachel Keepins	Democratic Services Manager
Carys Lord	Chief Officer - Finance, Performance & Change
Claire Marchant	Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing
Janine Nightingale	Corporate Director - Communities
Michael Pitman	Technical Support Officer – Democratic Services
Alex Rawlin	Corporate Policy & Public Affairs Manager
Mark Shephard	Chief Executive
Kelly Watson	Chief Officer Legal, HR and Regulatory Services

99. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Item 3, Corporate Plan 2023-28

Cllr H Bennett declared a personal interest as she was an employee of an organisation named as a historic partner in the report (i.e. BAVO).

Cllr E Winstanley declared a personal interest as she was an employee of Awen Cultural Trust, a partner in delivering some of the objectives of the Plan.

Item 4, Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2023-24 to 2026-27

Cllr N Clarke declared a personal interest as she was a volunteer with Porthcawl RNLI.

Cllr J Pratt declared a personal interest as his wife was a teacher employed by BCBC and a Union Representative.

Item 5, Capital Strategy 2023-24 Onwards

Cllr JP Blundell declared a personal interest as he was a LEA Governor of Bryntirion Comprehensive.

Cllr R Smith declared a personal interest as his wife was a teacher employed by BCBC.

100. **CORPORATE PLAN 2023-28**

The Chief Executive presented a report, the purpose of which was to provide an update on the Council's Corporate Plan and seek approval from Council for the Corporate Plan 2023-28, attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Chief Executive explained that there was a statutory requirement to develop and publish a Corporate Plan and it was probably one of the most important documents that they would consider and deliberate on, as it set out the direction of travel for the organisation and the priorities of the Council over the next five years. It had to align with the Medium Term Financial Strategy. He acknowledged the huge amount of work from the Corporate Policy and Public Affairs Manager and her team, including engagement and consultation, the detail of which was set out in the report and in the appendix. He added that it would potentially change before it was published in terms of infographics and format. He referred to the new well-being objectives and new ways of working that had been expanded compared to previous versions. The document focused on those things that had the most impact on the well-being of local residents. Efforts had been made to present the Corporate Plan in a way that was easier to understand in plain English and it was therefore more accessible. He added that an annual action plan would accompany the main Corporate Plan and all the detailed PIs, milestones and the smart elements would be included in the annual action plan.

The Chief Executive outlined the salient elements in the report including the alignment between the Corporate Plan and the MTFs and the explicit links between the Council's well-being objectives and the resources that needed to be directed to support them. He explained that the Corporate Plan was the Council's main vehicle for demonstrating and communicating the priorities to local people and businesses and a really important document for regulators such as Audit Wales. He referred to engagement, and in particular, with the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee and thanked the committee for their input and feedback. In terms of the feedback given, they had taken on board the suggestion to show the cost of Council services per day via infographics which was a much more meaningful way.

The Chief Executive explained the benefits of an annual action including the greater flexibility and allowing for additional and ongoing engagement including with young people. The Equalities Impact Assessment was set out in full as Appendix 2 to the report.

The Chief Executive added that a Delivery Plan would be presented to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, with the aim of monitoring and measuring the outcomes and objectives of the Corporate Plan's Action Plan.

The Leader, the Cabinet Member for Future Generations, the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and the Cabinet Member for Communities thanked the Corporate Policy and Public Affairs Manager and her team for their work on the plan and welcomed the level of engagement across the Chamber resulting in changes to the plan. They were encouraged to see the level of engagement with young people and partners. The Corporate Plan was an easy document to read and follow and showed how that authority provided value for money.

A Member commented that the infographics worked well and asked how the ageing population and those without computers would be able to view the document.

The Chief Executive replied that in terms of the delivery of the plan, he envisaged different versions and ways of accessing the plan such as large print versions etc. They had recognised this issue and would consider further the best way to ensure the document was accessible.

A Member referred to comments and criticisms that there should be more focus on Bridgend Town Centre and tourism and asked for assurances going forward that there would be a lot more emphasis on both this and Porthcawl.

The Chief Executive replied that there was a specific well-being objective which talked about thriving towns and there was a focus on striking a balance. The Leader added that they all shared that ambition for all the towns within the borough. The Cabinet member for Regeneration referred to the new college campus in the town centre which would be the biggest single investment they had ever seen in Bridgend Town Centre and would help in terms of the vibrancy of the town and would deliver a state-of-the-art higher education campus for students in the County Borough.

RESOLVED: That Council approved the Corporate Plan 2023-28 attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

101. **MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (MTFS) 2023-24 TO 2026-27**

The Chief Officer, Finance Performance and Change thanked the Deputy Head of Finance and her team for their hard work in bringing this report before Members.

She explained that the purpose of the report was to present to Council the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-24 to 2026-27, which included a financial forecast for 2023-27, a detailed revenue budget for 2023-24 and a Capital Programme for 2022-23 to 2032-33. She added that the MTFS was aligned with the Council's new Corporate Plan and the well-being objectives that were contained within it. Those documents identified the Council service and resource priorities for the next four financial years, with particular focus on the coming financial year and the development of the MTFS had been guided by those priorities.

The Chief Officer, Finance Performance and Change explained that the Council managed an annual gross expenditure of around £485 million and was the largest employer in the county borough. As a result, the Council played a significant role in the local economy of this area. The MTFS outlined the principles and detailed assumptions which drove the Council's budget and spending decisions. It outlined the financial context within which the Council was operating and tried to mitigate any financial risks and pressures going forward, whilst at the same time taking advantage of any opportunities that arose. She explained that the strategy focused on how the Council intended to respond to the increasing pressures on public sector services, which were exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic and immediately following that by the current cost of living crisis. It sets out the approaches and principles the Council would follow to ensure it remained financially sustainable and delivered on the corporate wellbeing objectives.

She added that it was a legal requirement under the provisions of the local Government Finance Act 92, that the Council approved a balanced budget for the coming financial year and set the council tax rates for the county borough. The report set out proposals to

achieve that objective and to contribute towards a sustainable financial position going into the medium term.

The Chief Officer, Finance Performance and Change explained that the long term financial sustainability of the Council was an important issue. The quarterly reports to Cabinet on the projected revenue position for 2022-2023 had outlined in detail the impact on the budget of the additional cost pressures faced by the Council throughout the year, as a result of the worsening economic climate, rising inflation and interest rates. These had been reflected in rising prices higher than anticipated pay increases and significant tender price increases for goods and services. While some of those additional pressures were not recurrent a number would be core pressures for the Council going forward and these were reflected in the MTFS. The final settlement for local government in Wales was not due to be announced until later that month and therefore the budget was being proposed on the basis of the provisional settlement which was received in December 2022. No significant changes in funding were anticipated between the provisional and final settlement and any changes would be reported back to Council at a later date.

The Chief Officer, Finance Performance and Change confirmed that she believed the level of Council reserves was sufficient to protect the Council in light of unknown demands or emergencies and current funding levels. It was essential that the Council fund balance was maintained in accordance with the MTFS principles, which was that the funds should balance and should be at a prudent but not at an excessive level. It was therefore essential also that revenue, service expenditure and capital expenditure were contained within their identified budgets for the coming financial year.

The Chief Officer, Finance Performance and Change referred to Annex 3 which was the detailed MTFS and drew attention to some of the key information within the document. Council had had to make budget reductions in previous years, and chart 1 indicated that budget reductions of £73 million had been found since the financial year 2010 - 2011. A range of different methods were used to encourage the public to respond to this consultation and the outcome of this process was reported to Cabinet on the 7th of February and was detailed in table five of the MTFS. Also, Cabinet and Corporate Management Board had been working with the Budget, Research and Evaluation Panel (BREP) over the last six months to facilitate the budget planning process. The draft budget report came to Cabinet in January and had subsequently been scrutinised by the Council scrutiny committees, resulting in a report to Cabinet on the 31st of January from the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which outlined a number of recommendations. These recommendations had been considered by Cabinet and the response to these was provided in Appendix A of the MTFS. She explained that Cabinet had reflected on the responses received from the public consultation and from the recommendations from the BREP, and the scrutiny committees, and had compiled the budget based on the comments and the responses received.

The Chief Officer, Finance Performance and Change outlined the principles that would underpin the final budget for the coming year and that the budget before them provided additional funding to support the most vulnerable in Bridgend area by increasing funding to support social care and by increasing funding to support homeless individuals. It also reduced the level of service reductions required in the coming year compared to those included in the draft budget, and it reduced the proposed Council tax increase from 6% to 4.9% in recognition of the impact of any rise on the residents within the county borough. Schools had been tasked with finding budget reductions totalling 2% of their budget to be found as far as possible from efficiency savings in order to help balance the Council's budget. She asked Members to note that the Council would fully fund the pay and price increases the schools would meet in the coming year and this would outweigh that budget reduction. The risk on pay and prices would therefore rest with the Council

for schools during the coming financial year. The details of the budgets for individual services were given in section 2.4 of the strategy.

The Chief Officer, Finance Performance and Change explained that the current financial situation was outlined in section 3 of the report. With regards to the provisional local government settlement, the headline figure was an overall increase of 7.9% across Wales. The spread of that increase ranged from 6.5% to 9.3% and for Bridgend there was an increase of 7.7% in the coming financial year. The increase for Bridgend was the 13th highest increase across all local authorities. The detail on specific grants was still not available at an individual authority level. However, many of the grants remained unchanged from the current year's figures on an all Wales basis. The strategy also modelled the financial position for the authority for the next four years based on the latest information available from Welsh Government. Using this information, it was possible to look at different scenarios for the resources that may be available going forward.

The strategy was regularly reviewed as more information became available, and this was particularly important given the significant economic uncertainties at the current time. The strategy contained assumptions with regards to possible council tax rises going forward due to the pressures already outlined. The model included an increase in Council tax of 4.9% for 2023-2024. This was significantly below the current inflation rate in order to be able to support the citizens of Bridgend, to deal with the rising cost of living, such as increased energy and food bills and other inflationary increases.

The Chief Officer, Finance Performance and Change explained that section 4 of the strategy outlined the budget position for the coming financial year and the net budget requirement for next year was detailed at Table 10, which showed a net budget for next year of £342 million. She outlined some of the key points included in the financial pressures of over £25 million for the coming year. Inevitably cost pressures would arise during the year as a result of new changes or unanticipated events and therefore, a provisional allocation of £1.3 million had been set aside for these in the revenue budget whilst further work was undertaken. She asked Members to note that in setting this budget, it had not been possible to fund all of the pressures identified by services for the coming financial year. Of the £20 million identified, only £11 million had been funded in this proposed budget as detailed in Appendix C of the report. In order to balance the budget, reductions had been identified which totalled £2.6 million as detailed in Appendix D of the report. The South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority was funded by raising a levy on its constituent councils, which was based on population. The levy payable for the coming financial year was £8.5 million and this was a 9.25% increase over the levy for the current financial year.

The Chief Officer, Finance Performance and Change explained that fees and charges were reviewed on an annual basis and a schedule of the fees and charges for the coming financial year would be published on the website. New charges or charges that had been included in the 2023-2024 budget and were above the general increase were shown in Appendix E to the report.

This strategy also dealt with the proposed Capital Programme for the periods 2022-2023 through to 2032-2033. This 10 year programme had been revised during the financial year to bring it up to date and to take into account new capital schemes as they had been developed. Due to the limited capital finances available, services had been asked not to submit bids for funding at this stage. It was recognised that there were a number of capital pressures that would need financing going forward, including regeneration, decarbonisation, homelessness and digitalisation. In addition, there were also financial pressures arising as the result of the impact of the war in Ukraine and the cost of living crisis which had been seen in existing tender prices and would continue to do so for

some time going forward, placing pressure on the existing Capital Programme. The Capital Programme was shown at Appendix G of the report.

The Chief Officer, Finance Performance and Change explained that at the end of March 2022, the Council fund stood at £10.1 million. In the face of continued uncertainty regarding the economy and public finances and the impact of the pandemic and in line with MTFS principles, she recommended that Council maintained its Council fund balance at this level. An overview of reserves was undertaken at the end of December in accordance with the protocol and a breakdown of the movement on those reserves at that time was in Appendix H of the report. A further review would be undertaken at the end of the current financial year and transfers would be made at that point, taking account of the overall financial position for the Council, including the final outturn, actual council tax income, earmarked reserve levels, the Council fund level and any new pressures or risks that needed to be provided for. It was anticipated that there would be insufficient funding available to set aside reserves at the end of this financial year. Reserves could be used to support the revenue budget however, reserves could only be used once, therefore the use of them should be limited to one off areas of expenditure and they should never be used to fund ongoing base budget requirements. She explained that with regards to the council tax, the proposed budget could be balanced with an increase in the council tax of 4.9% for 2023-2024. This increase was lower than the rate of inflation and was required to enable the Council to meet the significant and unprecedented budget pressures that it was facing, including higher than anticipated pay price and service pressures.

The Chief Officer, Finance Performance and Change explained that the final section of the of the strategy provided information on the Council's longer term financial outlook.

The Cabinet Member for Resources thanked the Chief Officer, Finance Performance and Change and the Deputy Head of Finance for their work in bringing forward a balanced budget which was an enormous challenge.

There had been increased demand for many Council services this year which they had had to address and an inflationary pressure of historical proportions. As elected Members they had a responsibility to balance effective service provision against being fair to the taxpayer and there was a legal duty to agree a balanced budget. They had shared best practice and acknowledged the need for an all Wales approach to tackle issues facing all communities. He explained that they had worked alongside the School Budget Forum, the BREP, and the scrutiny committees, and he thanked all Members who took part, particularly Cllr Alex Williams and Cllr Penhale Thomas. They had been able to incorporate many of the scrutiny recommendations into the budget. He also thanked the members of the public who took the time to complete the budget survey over the five week budget consultation. He explained that the budget invested more money in schools, more money in social care and more money into highways, and he believed it was fair to the Council taxpayer. This would protect the most vulnerable people in the communities and keep a very tight grip on growth pressures. It minimised the impact on frontline services and schools had been asked to scrutinise their delegated budgets to ease the burden faced by other Council services. The Council would protect schools by meeting any new pay or price pressures and all schools would receive the full support of the Council. Member had been asked to approve an uplift to the Council tax of around £1.50 per week for a band D property. This modest rise would protect highly valued council services. This budget would build on the successes of the past, 2 new comprehensive schools, 6 new primary schools and seven flying start units and investment of around £200,000,000.

They would continue to invest in state-of-the-art education facilities over the next four years to give future generations the best possible start in life.

The Deputy Leader explained that she was aware that the cost of living was impacting on finances and the financial impact that this budget would have on the families in the borough. She had no hesitation in supporting the budget proposal as it was the best option available to ensure the protection of the most vulnerable residents. The cost of living crisis was also affecting all staff and the Trade Union pay claim for staff was unfair. The pay award for local government was falling well behind the wider labour market and with the rapid inflationary costs, more and more staff delivering services were now falling into poverty. She added that reserves were maintained at an appropriate level in accordance with direction from Wales Audit.

The Deputy Leader advised Members when voting on this budget that she suspected that millions of pounds would be required to discharge their statutory duties in children's services due to the level of demand. She asked all Members who had been involved in the scrutiny process to be supportive of the level of reserves.

The Leader stated that this had been the single most challenging budget that he had ever been involved in setting. It sought to support families, promote well-being and protect the most vulnerable citizens in the county borough. The budget had been developed following a comprehensive consultation with the public, with key stakeholders and expansive engagement with all members through the Overview and Scrutiny process. He thanked the Scrutiny Chairs for their efforts in that process and all Members for a constructive input and recommendations. They had listened and that had been reflected in the final budget.

The Leader explained that safeguarding the most vulnerable citizens was a priority shared by every Member in the Chamber. Given the increase in demand on both adult and children's social services experienced in every local authority in the country, they would have to invest more in these essential services. He explained the proposals for both Adult and Children's social services and for the homeless. Those, together with unavoidable inflationary pressures, nationally negotiated and agreed pay increases that they anticipated would come in, would total over £14 million.

The Leader explained that the partnership with Welsh Government which would enable them to embark on the largest and most ambitious phase of the 21st century School Modernisation Programme and what that meant for BCBC. He was happy to support the budget as a well-being budget that remained ambitious.

A Member asked about the proposed savings from the withdrawal of the Blue Badge holders ability to park in BCBC car parks with no charge. She asked how much a full public consultation would cost and if the costs for this consultation were in the proposed budget and what the timelines were for delivery of this in order to deliver the budget saving of £40,000. The Cabinet Member for Resources replied that there would be a full public consultation around this saving proposal and they would take that into account and act accordingly. The Corporate Director for Communities replied that the intention was to take the savings proposed in the Communities Directorate, in one package, out for consultation. She added that BCBC was the only authority in Wales that currently allowed free parking for blue badge holders to park for free. The estimated saving of £40,000 may not be completely realised that year because they had to do the consultation first.

The Member asked how the budget conformed with principal seven of the Council's adopted budget strategy that stated savings proposals were fully developed and included realistic delivery timescales prior to inclusion in the annual budget. The Chief Officer, Finance Performance and Change replied that the saving proposal had been quantified and they had a figure against it. If the budget was agreed, they would start that process and would certainly get that policy change in place before the end of the

financial year. They should see some of that income coming in during the financial year and it would be fully made by 2024/25.

A Member asked how much the advert on local radio cost, telling residents about enforcement on fly tipping and also how much money was raised through enforcement. The Cabinet Member for Communities replied that he did not have that information to hand but acknowledged that they needed to do more work on this as they had previously been concentrating on engagement and recycling. Recycling rates were very good so they could afford to concentrate more on fly tipping and a little less on engagement. He agreed to provide the information requested by the Member, outside the meeting.

A Member asked if they would revert back to six cabinet positions after increasing it to 7 last year, which costs the authority £17,000 a year in uplift. He asked for public assurance that no Cabinet/senior officer meetings would be held in local hotels with refreshments, but that they would be held in the Civic Centre, saving money. The Leader replied that there were no plans to increase the number of Cabinet Members and that BCBC had one of the smallest sized Cabinets in Wales.

The Cabinet Member for Communities thanked the Corporate Director for Communities and her small team for doing an excellent job with reducing resources. He referred to the consultation responses and the value of their work. He outlined the good news around capital funding and the decarbonisation agenda and other developments within his portfolio.

A Member asked how any redundancies, as a result of the 2% cut to schools and education, would be paid as he understood there was only a small amount of money in the redundancy pot. Could they be satisfied that the cost of redundancies would not outweigh the savings made by cutting education, given that it was most likely to be the oldest staff who would opt for redundancy costing the authority more? The Corporate Director for Education and Family Services replied that as in Appendix D of the MTFs, the saving represents 2% and 1% going forward. School budgets were also affected by school pupil numbers etc and therefore at this time, it was very difficult to determine the impact overall of the 2% on individual school budgets. They were not keen to see any redundancy in schools and were looking at a range of measures to see how they could achieve the savings without redundancy situations. He gave some examples of the measures being considered and assured the Member that the proposal efficiency saving for schools would not necessarily lead to teacher redundancies.

A Member asked the Chief Officer, Finance Performance and Change to confirm that the CCRD payments could be taken from both the revenue and capital budgets and corresponding reserves? He also asked where the payment was in this budget. The Chief Officer, Finance Performance and Change replied that they had a revenue budget which they used to contribute to the running costs of the CCR office. They also made an additional payment to support the capital spend for CCR. There was a reserve which was topped up and that reserve would only be required for a short period of time. They were not incurring any long term revenue costs as a result of doing it this way. The Member asked what amount of revenue had gone into pay the CCRD payment this year? The Chief Officer, Finance Performance and Change did not have that information to hand but agreed to provide it after the meeting.

A Member explained that he was concerned about the prospect of reduced staff, potentially an increase in the number of pupils on role and a response given to him in a scrutiny meeting that it could be remedied by potentially looking at shared learning online. He was concerned about the impact this could have on children with additional learning needs and cognitive disorders and was reassured that provisions would be put in place. He asked exactly how much that support would cost and where was it allocated

in the budget? The Corporate Director for Education and Family Support replied that there were two areas identified, support for learners with additional learning needs and also support for digital learning. With regard to the inclusion service or the Learner Support group within the current Directorate, there was a range of support for learners with cognition, learning and multiple motor impairments. There was also a range of support for the educational psychology, support for learners, the sensory teams and also for learners with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties and the overall cost of that provision was £7.5 million. In relation to the online learning, they had benefited significantly from a Welsh government grant over the last three years. All schools now benefitted from wholesale Wi-Fi connectivity that was available free from charge to schools. They had also provided Chromebooks to all six form learners within Bridgend and that satisfied the post 16 post inspection action plan requirement. In addition they had supported the Welsh medium schools in delivering Chromebooks to every single learner in the Welsh medium schools.

A Member asked if there was a figure of revenue that was generated from capital? The Chief Officer, Finance Performance and Change replied that returns on the capital on the revenue monies that they had invested were going up at the current time because interest rates had gone up. She did not have the figure with her but they were predicting for this year, an increase since January when the base rate had gone up.

A Member referred to officers in neighbouring local authorities working not only with the executive, but also opposition groups to formulate alternative budgets. He asked if Cabinet and officers agreed that going forward, opposition groups should be given support to work with the officers to put forward alternative budgets? The Monitoring Officer replied that there was a requirement that all officers support all members within the authority including Cabinet, backbenchers and Scrutiny Chairs and Leaders of the Opposition. From her perspective, that was satisfied by them attending Scrutiny Committees, BREP and offering to meet individually with Members as demonstrated by an open invitation over the past weekend. The Leader replied that he would like them to work together as Members on one budget the same as the one before them which benefitted from over six months of engagement with colleagues from across the Chamber. They could look at ways to improve the process next year. Hundreds of hours of members and officers time had been taken up with considering the proposals that were before them.

A Member referred to the Waterton Upgrade identified in the budget which had since been removed from the LDP following an updated report from National Resource Wales that the area was now a flood risk. This project would need to be relocated or rescoped and he asked why it remained in the capital budget. The Corporate Director for Communities replied that it was clear that they did not want to stay on that depot site. They were exploring other areas where they could replace that depot and in particular looking at the Brynmenyn Industrial Estate. It was going to be very challenging to get that capital receipt, but what was clear was that they had a salt barn and an operational depot that was now in the flood risk area and could not stay there. Work was being done to find an alternative location with a reduced budget.

A Member referred to a response given in the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny meeting of 2nd February 2023 that suggested there were hidden contingencies within the budget table over and above the £116 million stated in reserves. There may be more money available to protect children's education than presented in the budget, and it gives the impression that as an organisation, they were not being completely clear and or transparent.

He asked how much additional contingency was built into the budget over and above the state of reserves, where it was and how could this pass the test of being balanced,

robust and defined if there were undisclosed contingencies contained within it? The Leader replied that there were no undisclosed reserves. They had made a provision in the budget for pay and price inflation. He was referring to pay inflation and the pressures that they faced and that was identified within the budget that was before them.

A Member referred to the underlying principle of the Constitution which was one Council working together for the benefit of the residents. The budget that had gone through scrutiny was based on the political priorities of the administration and not all members or groups. Her group submitted what they believed to be a credible, balanced and legal alternative budget that included the recommendations from scrutiny as well as listening to the priorities in the public consultation. She was disappointed that the proposals were not considered in line with one Council and Group Leaders were not given the opportunity to discuss this further. She asked if the Leader would be willing to listen to the 25 opposition Members of this Council and public opinion and withdraw the budget and take it back to Cabinet to consider the concerns that they had all made. The Leader replied that he was disappointed that at this late stage he had not seen the alternative proposals. They had a legal duty to set a budget and a responsibility to send out the bills, to set the levy and the precept for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, for South Wales Police and for Town and Community Councils. The Member quoted section 16, point 2.3 from the Constitution that that was not what was constitutionally required from them on that day. Councillors had the opportunity to send this back to Cabinet for five days and it needed to be done within the next 11 days. It was not law that they had to set a budget today under the Constitution. The Leader asked the Chief Officer, Finance Performance and Change to share with the Chamber, her interpretation and response. She explained that Members could submit an alternative budget if they were not happy with the proposed budget. She confirmed that she did receive an alternative budget just before the deadline. In her role as the Section 151 officer, she reviewed the proposals to ensure they were robust and that they would result in a balanced budget.

She did not believe that they met the criteria and in particular, the requirement of the Council to be robust with regards to its long term financial planning and therefore on that basis, it was not brought forward to Council. The Leader reminded Members that there was one budget for consideration before them. The Monitoring Officer explained that it was correct that paragraph 6.2, point 3 said that the Council would consider the proposals and could adopt them, amend them, refer them back to Cabinet for further consideration or substitute its own proposals. However, that should not be read in isolation in her opinion it should be read in conjunction with paragraph 16 point 2.4, which clearly stated any amendments to the proposal needed to be with the Chief Finance officer by the deadline and that included any referral back to Cabinet.

A Group Leader explained that he recognised that the backdrop to this budget was like no other. While the relatively significant uplift in the financial support from Welsh government was to be welcomed, it really masked the reality of the situation on the ground, where budgets across the local authority were under tremendous pressure. He shared his colleagues concerns at the particularly low level of savings predicated on policy changes. He thought this was something that they must have a laser focus on moving forward across the remainder of the MTFS. Working in that spirit of genuine cooperation had led to changes, and he thanked Cabinet Members for having reviewed some of their initial proposals to get them to this point. He believed fundamentally in education and that a 2% cut to individual schools budgets was infeasible and undeliverable. He was bitterly disappointed that they were unable to make some headway on reducing the level of that cut in the many rounds of discussions through BREP and scrutiny. He welcomed the commitment that had been given by Cabinet around the detail of future budgets and looked forward in the next financial year to a more rigorous and in-depth exploration of the budget setting process.

A Member said that he thought they had actually worked as one Council over the last few months. He had sat on the BREP committee, which looked in detail at the budget proposals and where the cost savings were going to come from and in general, there was a strong consensus around from those committees about the things that needed to be changed. Cabinet picked up many of the changes and this was collaborative working across the Council. He believed they were working on very low levels of contingency for the organisation and should there be another catastrophe, it could leave the organisation vulnerable and unable to provide those statutory and essential services to residents. Were officers sure that they had enough in terms of contingency reserves and were they ready for Bridgend to bounce back as quickly as possible from this? The Chief Officer, Finance Performance and Change replied that the Council fund was enough for emergencies and it certainly shouldn't go any lower. The Council fund should sit at 5% of the net revenue budget and they were sitting at just some margin below that so were in line with what Audit Wales would consider acceptable. They did have earmarked reserves which had been set aside to meet liabilities that they knew they were going to meet or to meet policy decisions that had been made which they could not deliver in any one year to enable them to deliver some of those policies over a period of time. She believed that the reserve levels were right and that they were managing the risks going forward through that reserve policy. With regards to investing to help in the future, she outlined work going through the capital programme to enable them to do that such as solar panels etc.

A Member stated that inflation was running at between 10% and 12% and they were faced with supporting an increase to a budget of less than half of that. He was therefore inclined to support the one budget that he had seen and had the opportunity to help scrutinise and he supported it as being necessary in the current circumstances.

A Member asked about support for schools going forward. The Corporate Director for Education and Family Support replied that where schools had deficit budgets, they would need to support them and the range of support on offer would be from a wide range of sources, not just from finance but from school improvement professionals and from local authority experts.

There was also a range of activity to support families to make sure the needs of children coming into schools in early years settings were also supported.

Following a Members request which was duly seconded, a recorded vote was conducted on the report's recommendations, the result of which was as follows:

For: Councillors S Aspey, H Bennett, JP Blundell, E Caparros, R Collins, HJ David, Colin Davies, P Davies, M Evans, N Farr, P Ford, J Gebbie, R Goode, RM Granville, H Griffiths, S Griffiths, M Hughes, M Jones, M Kearns, W Kendall, JC Spanswick, JH Tildesley, G Walter, H Williams, R Williams, E Winstanley = 26 votes

Against: Councillors A Berrow, F Bletsoe, S Bletsoe, N Clarke, Chris Davies, S Easterbrook, D Harrison, D Hughes, P Jenkins, M John, R Smith, I Spiller, R Penhale-Thomas, T Thomas, A Wathan, Alex Williams, Amanda Williams, I Williams, M Williams, T Wood = 20 votes

Abstentions: RM James and JE Pratt

The recommendations of the report were carried.

RESOLVED: That Council approved the MTFs 2023-24 to 2026-27, including the 2023-24 revenue budget and the Capital Programme 2022-23 to

2032-33. In particular Council approved the following specific elements:

- The MTFS 2023-24 to 2026-27 (Annex 3).
- The Net Budget Requirement of £342,047,227 in 2023-24.
- A Band D Council Tax for Bridgend County Borough Council of £1,675.26 for 2023-24 (Table 15 of the MTFS).
- The 2023-24 budgets as allocated in accordance with Table 10 in paragraph 4.1.3 of the MTFS.
- The Capital Programme 2022-23 to 2032-33, attached at Appendix G of the MTFS.

102. **CAPITAL STRATEGY 2023-24 ONWARDS**

The Chief Officer, Finance Performance and Change presented to Council for approval, the Capital Strategy 2023-24 to 2032-33 (Appendix A to the report), which included the Prudential Indicators, and the Annual Minimum Revenue Provision Statement 2023-24.

She explained that local authorities were required to determine a Capital Strategy which demonstrated that the authority took capital expenditure and investment decisions in line with service objectives and properly took account of stewardship, value for money, prudence, sustainability and affordability when making these decisions. The proposed Capital Strategy for 2023 - 2024 to 2032 - 2033 was attached at Appendix A of the report.

The Chief Officer, Finance Performance and Change explained that the strategy set out the Council's plan for capital expenditure, and how that was to be funded over the coming 10 years. In developing long term investment decisions, it was crucial that decisions were based on clear information, including a long term management plan. The document was presented as an integral part of the Council's budget and policy framework. It linked with the Corporate Plan, the Treasury Management Strategy, the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the Council's Asset Management Plan.

The Chief Officer, Finance Performance and Change outlined the principles which drove the budget and spending decisions of the Council as reflected in the capital strategy. The plan detailed how any proposed investments in land and buildings would require the completion of a full feasibility study to evaluate the practicality of the capital project, and to assess its deliverability before the Council invested time and money into that project.

The Chief Officer, Finance Performance and Change added that there were a number of significant areas that would need financing going forward, including economic recovery, decarbonisation and homelessness, digitalisation and coastal defences. As reported to Council throughout the year there were also other financial pressures arising as a result of the pandemic and Brexit, which were being seen in existing schemes, and it was anticipated this would continue for some time going forward. The pressures included supply chain difficulties leading to higher prices and delays in schemes being completed.

The Chief Officer, Finance Performance and Change explained that the strategy also referred to the changes with regards to the ability to borrow from the public works loan board with regards to borrowing to invest primarily for financial return. Major capital projects required careful management to mitigate the potential risks which could arise. The effective monitoring, management and mitigation of these risks was a key part of managing the capital strategy.

The Chief Officer, Finance Performance and Change explained that the report outlined the robust process in place to approve, manage and monitor capital projects and quarterly capital monitoring reports were prepared for Cabinet and Council which included details of any variances between projects as well as projections of likely year end spend.

The Chief Officer, Finance Performance and Change reported that in 2023 - 2024 the Council was planning capital expenditure of £69 million and this was summarised at table 2 within the capital strategy document. The Council had several funding streams available to support capital investment and these were detailed in appendix one of the capital strategy. The Council received support from Welsh government towards the cost of capital and this funding was prioritised towards investment that was required to meet health and safety requirements. There were currently no nationally imposed restrictions to the level of borrowing that the Council could incur to pay for capital investment. The Council approved its own affordable borrowing limit.

The percentage of the Councils revenue budget that was committed to capital financing costs was increasing in the long term period given the pressure on revenue budgets, this limited the affordability of other priorities in future years and should be a factor considered by members when determining the capital programme.

The Cabinet Member for Resources welcomed the strategy which provided a clear framework for Members to follow and provided a clear commitment for post project evaluation. He supported the request from Scrutiny for a member training session to ensure that going forward, all Members had a good, clear understanding of the strategy.

A Member referred to the significant pressure on the capital programme from higher prices as a result of inflation and asked the Chief Officer, Finance Performance and Change to outline the changes to the strategy or the additional considerations that had been included in the strategy to accommodate those in future. The Chief Officer, Finance Performance and Change replied that this was about future proofing the Capital Programme. It was normal practice to include contingency in individual schemes. They were aware there were pressures within existing schemes which were outside the control of officers and there were issues in relation to inflation impacting on many of the capital schemes at the moment. Tenders were coming in above anticipated estimates and they were not allocating all of the capital monies to enable them to respond to those kind of pressures going forward.

A Member asked for reassurance that the Executive would look at maximizing the opportunities that came with investing in solar energy and EV charging points to provide much needed revenue to the Council. The Leader replied that they were investing in electric vehicle charging points as reported to Council and they would consider ideas around improving energy efficiency in schools to reduce energy costs. He asked Members to support and recognise the work being done around Bridgend Heat Network, which was a pioneering project, the only one of its kind and supported the authority's renewable energy agenda.

A Member asked if going forward, they could have better reporting of risk at project level so when faced with difficult decisions, they had the complete picture. The Chief Officer, Finance Performance and Change replied that she was happy to look at the way that information was reported. They did not want to give away commercial information but would look to see if they could address the issues raised.

RESOLVED: That Council approved the Capital Strategy 2023-24 to 2032-33 including the Prudential Indicators 2023-24 to 2025-26 and the

Annual Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement 2023- 24
at Appendix A of the report.

103. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2023-24

The Chief Officer, Finance Performance and Change presented the Treasury Management Strategy 2023-24 (Appendix A to the report), which included the Treasury Management Indicators, for 2023-24 to 2025-26.

She explained that the Treasury Management functions of the Council were regulated by the Local Government Act 2003. This provided authorities with the powers to borrow and invest as well as providing controls and limits on this activity. The Council had to approve a Treasury Management Strategy before the start of each financial year which set out the Councils and Chief Financial Officer's responsibilities, delegations and reporting arrangements.

The Chief Officer, Finance Performance and Change explained that the Council undertook its treasury management activities in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance's prudential code which had been updated to reflect changes in an increasingly complex environment and to complement changes to regulations. The Council had an integrated Treasury Management Strategy where borrowing and investments were managed in accordance with best professional practice. The Council would look to borrow money if needed to either meet short term cash flow needs or to fund capital schemes approved within the capital programme. Therefore, any actual loans taken were not generally associated with particular items of expenditure or assets.

The Chief Officer, Finance Performance and Change explained that the Council was exposed to financial risks including the potential loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of risk were therefore central to the Treasury Management Strategy. Should anything change significantly, a revised strategy would be presented to Council for approval. She added that the ongoing impact on the UK of the war in Ukraine, together with higher inflation, higher interest rates, uncertain government policy and a deteriorating economic outlook, would be major influences on the Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2023-2024.

The Chief Officer, Finance Performance and Change reported that as at the 31st of December 2022, the Council held £99.8 million of borrowing and £94.05 million of investments. It was anticipated that the Council might need to borrow during the next three years however, this position could change should capital schemes not progress as anticipated, further schemes added to the capital programme that were not fully funded by grant or revenue contributions, or new schemes added which required additional debt financing. When borrowing money, the Council's primary objective was to strike an appropriately low risk balance between securing low interest costs and achieving certainty of those costs over the period for which funds were required. The strategy outlined the major objectives for the Council with regards to borrowing in 2023-24.

The Chief Officer, Finance Performance and Change explained that they had changed the strategy going forward based on comments that they had received from elected Members. The new strategy proposed that there was a reduced limit on what they could place with other local authorities and they were also proposing to reduce the time over which that money could be invested. During the coming financial year, Council would receive reports as required in the Code of Practice. These included an annual Treasury Management Strategy, a mid-year monitoring report and an annual Treasury Outturn report.

A Member referred to some councils around the country that were taking a higher degree of risk and getting themselves into trouble and asked if the authority was confident that the changes that had been made to the strategy were sufficient to protect against those situations. The Chief Officer, Finance Performance and Change replied that treasury management activities had inherent risk built into them and the strategy was trying to minimise that as much as possible. The changes that they were proposing went close to reducing that risk.

A Member referred to the loan to Thurrock Council of £8 million, £5 million of which was due to be repaid in May and asked if the Chief Officer, Finance Performance and Change could clarify the position. The Chief Officer, Finance Performance and Change replied that this was one of the risks they faced however there was a very strong process in place to make sure that they made all the relevant due diligence checks before that money was deposited anywhere and they would have regular updates in relation to that particular investment. Some repayment was due during the current financial year and they were assured that both of those payments would be made on the date on which they were due.

A Member asked if they reviewed on a regular basis, what programmes would move forward within the next two years and if not, what money could be moved back into the mainstream budget to alleviate the other problems they were facing.

The Chief Officer, Finance Performance and Change replied that the Capital Programme was submitted regularly and therefore regularly reviewed. With regards to individual schemes, they asked for updates from project managers on a very regular basis with regards to likely spend and the profile of that spend. Schemes would not sit in the Capital Programme if there was an issue with them or if the scheme was not going to be delivered and any funding that was earmarked to that scheme would then be released. They could then reallocate that money, if they were satisfied that the scheme would not take place, to support other capital schemes that were coming online. Reserves could only be used once, so they could not be used to prop up the revenue budget over a period of time.

RESOLVED: That Council approved the Treasury Management Strategy 2023-24 including the Treasury Management indicators 2023-24 to 2025-26 (Appendix A of the report).

104. **COUNCIL TAX 2023-24**

The Chief Officer, Finance Performance and Change presented a report providing Council with details of the council tax requirement for the County Borough Council, together with the requirements of the Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales and Town and Community Councils, and seeking Council approval of the Band D council tax for Bridgend County Borough Council and the community areas for 2023-24.

The Chief Officer, Finance Performance and Change explained that in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the Council had to calculate its budget requirement and formally approve the Council tax for the coming year. In addition, as a billing authority, Bridgend County Borough Council was also required to calculate the basic amount of Council tax for dwellings within the area, which related to one or more special items. This Council collected the council tax on behalf of Town and Community Councils within the area and also the Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales. The Council had agreed a net budget requirement for the Council for the coming financial year of £342 million. This equated to a council tax of £1675.26 on a band D property.

The Chief Officer, Finance Performance and Change explained that the Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales had notified the Council that their precept for the coming financial year had been agreed and their precept on a band D property would increase to £324.47. This was a 7.4% increase for the coming year. The Town and Community Councils budget requirement for the coming year was an average .92% increase for 2023-2024. The total average band D council tax requirement for the coming year for all areas of Bridgend, and a further breakdown of the counter tax for each area detailing the amount payable to this Council was as shown in table 7 of the report.

A Member asked if there could be a vote on this bearing in mind that the budget had already been passed and if those Members who sat on Town and Community Councils should declare an interest. The Monitoring Officer replied that in terms of the interest, there was no need to declare a prejudicial interest. The budget had been passed by Council and her advice was if the council tax wasn't approved at this stage, they would be frustrating the will of Council.

The Member referred to the cost-of-living crisis and asked what the process was for recovering missed payments and if the authority was flexible in these circumstances. The Chief Officer, Finance Performance and Change replied that there were a number of processes in place to support people who were in difficulty with regards to meeting their council tax. If people wanted to pay in instalments, they could pay over 12 months as opposed to 10, which eased it for some people. They also checked to see whether or not they would be entitled to any benefits or anything that they may not be aware of. There was the Council tax reduction scheme as well, which was £16 million in the revenue budget to support people should they be having difficulties with their council tax, and the Council had in past years put more money into that for exactly the reason that had been identified.

A Member asked the Leader if he believed Welsh Government was doing all it could to help authorities in Wales. The Leader replied that the First Minister was on record as saying that he had a concern about the impact of increasing the income tax on some of the people on the lowest incomes in Wales and the potential regressive impact of an increase in the basic rate of income tax. In terms of the higher rate of income tax, there was a much smaller base in Wales and other parts of the UK and the revenue that would be generated from that was not considered significant. Welsh Government were currently considering their options in terms of raising income and they were certainly looking at the council tax system. The outcome of the consultation of the council tax system would be reported back and there would be some changes following on from that.

A Member stated that there was no comparison in the report with the other local authorities and that BCBC had the 4th highest level out of the 22 authorities in Wales. He asked if an analysis had been undertaken on affordability levels and what impact an increase would have on collection rates. The Deputy Head of Finance replied that the collection rate was reviewed annually and was actually brought down in pandemic. It was a combination of looking at the collection rate and what measures could be put in place to support residents. With regard to affordability, the Chief Officer, Finance Performance and Change explained that they were always monitoring collection rates and this was reflected when they brought the council tax base forward for approval back in December. It would never be set at a level which they did not think was achievable.

The Cabinet Member for Resources explained that when they used averages, they could give some kind of guidance of the average across Wales to refer to how authorities were funded. Within that range, there were a number of properties below a band D and a number above. The majority of properties in BCBC were below band D and this affected

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the overall average position in that table. A more affluent authority with a greater number of properties above band D would be different and therefore it was not really relevant where they were in that table. The Member replied that he had the Stats Wales table in front of him and BCBC was exponentially higher than most local authorities across the board.

Following a Member request, a recorded vote was conducted, the result of which was as follows:

For: Councillors S Aspey, H Bennett, JP Blundell, E Caparros, R Collins, HJ David, Colin Davies, P Davies, M Evans, N Farr, P Ford, J Gebbie, R Goode, RM Granville, H Griffiths, S Griffiths, M Hughes, RM James, M Jones, M Kearn, W Kendall, JC Spanswick, G Walter, H Williams, R Williams, E Winstanley = 26 votes

Against: Councillors A Berrow, F Bletsoe, S Bletsoe, N Clarke, Chris Davies, S Easterbrook, D Harrison, D Hughes, P Jenkins, M John, R Smith, I Spiller, R Penhale-Thomas, J Pratt, T Thomas, A Wathan, Amanda Williams, I Williams, M Williams, T Wood = 20 votes

The recommendations of the report were carried.

RESOLVED: That Council approved:

- a Band D Council Tax for Bridgend County Borough Council of £1,675.26 for 2023-24, and
- the Council Tax charges for Band D properties for 2023-24 for each of the community areas as outlined in Table 7 of the report.

105. **URGENT ITEMS**

None.

The meeting closed at 19:16

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD HYBRID IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND, CF31 4WB ON WEDNESDAY, 15 MARCH 2023 AT 16:00

Present

Councillor M Jones – Chairperson

S Aspey	H T Bennett	A R Berrow	F D Bletsoe
S J Bletsoe	JPD Blundell	E L P Caparros	N Clarke
RJ Collins	HJ David	C Davies	C L C Davies
P Davies	S Easterbrook	M J Evans	N Farr
P Ford	J Gebbie	W R Goode	RM Granville
H Griffiths	S J Griffiths	D T Harrison	M L Hughes
D M Hughes	RM James	M R John	MJ Kearns
W J Kendall	M Lewis	J Llewellyn-Hopkins	RL Penhale-Thomas
J E Pratt	R J Smith	JC Spanswick	T Thomas
JH Tildesley MBE	G Walter	A Wathan	A Williams
HM Williams	I Williams	MJ Williams	R Williams
E D Winstanley	T Wood		

Apologies for Absence

P W Jenkins, E Richards and I M Spiller

Officers:

Debra Beeke	Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisational Development
Mark Galvin	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Lindsay Harvey	Corporate Director Education and Family Support
Rachel Keepins	Democratic Services Manager
Carys Lord	Chief Officer - Finance, Performance & Change
Claire Marchant	Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing
Janine Nightingale	Corporate Director - Communities
Michael Pitman	Technical Support Officer – Democratic Services
Mark Shephard	Chief Executive
Kelly Watson	Chief Officer Legal, HR and Regulatory Services

106. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

All Officers present other than the Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisational Development and Democratic Services Officers, declared a prejudicial interest in Agenda item 6. and left the meeting whilst this item was being considered.

The following further declarations of personal interest were made by members:-

Councillor S Bletsoe – Agenda item 11. Question from Councillor S Easterbrook, as a resident of a housing estate that charges a management fee.

Councillor N Farr – Agenda item 12 as a member of a trade union.

Councillor JC Spanswick – Agenda items 6. and 8 as a family member works for BCBC. Agenda item 12. as a member of a trade union.

Councillor M Kearns – Agenda items. 6 and 8. As a family member works for BCBC and Agenda item 12. as a member of a trade union.

Councillor P Davies - Agenda items 6. and 8 as a family member works for BCBC.
Agenda item 12. as a member of a trade union.

Councillor E Winstanley – Agenda item 11. Question from Councillor S Easterbrook as an owner of two properties which incur management fees. Agenda item 11. Question from Councillor F Bletsoe as an employee of Awen who manage the venues cited in the question on behalf of BCBC. Agenda item 12. as a member of a trade union.

Councillor F Bletsoe - Agenda item 11. Question from Councillor S Easterbrook, as a resident of a housing estate that charges a management fee.

Councillor C Davies - Agenda items 6. and 8 as a family member works for BCBC.
Agenda item 12. as a member of a trade union.

Councillor T Thomas - Agenda item 11. Question from Councillor S Easterbrook, as a resident of a housing estate that charges a management fee.

Councillor JP Blundell - Agenda item 12. as a member of a trade union.

Councillor M Lewis - Agenda item 6. and 9. as a member of a trade union.

Councillor J Gebbie - Agenda item 12. as a member of a trade union.

Councillor RM James – Agenda item 6. and 8. as a family member works for BCBC.

Councillor P Ford – Agenda item 12. as a member of a trade union

Councillor RC Collins – Agenda item 12. as a member of a trade union

Councillor HJ David – Agenda item 12. as a member of a trade union

Councillor H Bennett – Agenda item 12. as a member of a trade union

Councillor A Berrow - Agenda item 6. and 8. as a family member works for BCBC.

Councillor H Williams - Agenda item 12. as a member of a trade union

Councillor R Goode - Agenda item 12. as a member of a trade union

Councillor G Walter - Agenda item 6, 8 and 12. as a member of a trade union

Councillor J Pratt - Agenda item 12. as a member of a trade union

Councillor RM Granville - Agenda item 12. as a member of a trade union

Councillor M Hughes - Agenda item 12. as a member of a trade union

Councillor H Griffiths – Agenda item 6. as a family member works in BCBC

Councillor R Williams - Agenda item 12. as a member of a trade union

Councillor M Jones - Agenda item 12. as a member of a trade union

107. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the following meetings of Council be approved as a true and accurate record:-

18 January 2023
8 February 2023

Subject to the following paragraph being added to the preamble of the decision on Agenda item 7, entitled Porthcawl Metrolink, of the Minutes dated 8 February 2023:-

'A Member recognised and acknowledged that the Council had no option than to support the report's proposal. She raised concerns around access rights being approved from December 2024 to December 2034 with a train provider to operate daily return services to London from Carmarthen and the impact it would have on the Community of Pencoed.

The Member sought assurance that resources would be provided for the proposal works at Penprysg level crossing due to the lack of LUF and asked that consideration be given to a Plan B to progress such needed infrastructure works.

Officers assured the Member and other local Members from Pencoed, that further resources would be sought from all the potential relevant avenues, for this purpose.'

108. **TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM:**

Mayor

I have had the recent honour of meeting recipients of this year's Mayoral Awards. There were too many people to mention, but I would just like to say that these are honest, decent folk going about their daily business, to help those less fortunate than themselves.

Together with other key members, I recently met with the Senedd member, Huw Irranca Davies to welcome the First Minister to a Maesteg based company that specialises in fire prevention, Sideris, one of the world's leading manufacturers of fire prevention technology in tall buildings. The company has expanded, with a £6m investment, doubling their production capacity in recent years. I am sure members will join me in congratulating the company and in wishing them well in their future endeavours.

I have also attended many St. David's Day Concerts, listening to the various choirs both within our schools and concert halls, which was a privilege. The Deputy Leader and myself also attended the High Sheriff's Award ceremony in Pencoed with other dignitaries, where it was also a privilege to witness incredible achievements undertaken by young people, with the top award going to the Bridgend Young Carers.

Additionally, our Youth Deputy Mayor Gwynllian Williams recently collected an award for raising awareness and promoting LGBT+ and I would like to congratulate him for this.

Last Sunday I attended Nolton Church, Bridgend, to witness the blessing of the new Standard for the Ogmere Branch of the Welsh Guards. In attendance was the Kings representative for the High Sheriff, Professor Peter Vaughan, the Lord Lieutenant, together with the Bridgend Town Mayor, Councillor Tim Wood.

Finally, can I thank you all for supporting the Mayor's Charity. The Lonely Dragon sits in the Members lounge waiting to be named. Those who wish to guess its name need to commit a £1 to the Charity, for this purpose.

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member – Social Services and Early Help

I was fortunate enough to see our children's social care workforce this morning, as we launched our practice model, Signs of Safety. I would like to reassure members that we are taking strides to address our challenges here in Bridgend and you will be receiving further information on this in due course

Bridgend County Borough Council has been marking New Family Social and LGBT+ Fostering and Adoption Week once again by encouraging members of the local community who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or other to consider adopting or fostering children in the county borough.

This time, we have been encouraging people to consider how many children they could adopt, and whether they might be able to accept sibling groups.

In Wales last year, there were more than 7,000 looked-after children, but finding adopters and foster carers for children who are also siblings can take a long time.

The service continues to welcome enquiries on fostering and adoption from the LGBTQ+ community, and in 2022, one in four applications came from same-gender couples.

This is a significant increase when compared to 2017's figure of one in eight, and it is good to see that more children who are waiting for adoption are finding permanent families.

Bridgend Foster Care and the Western Bay Adoption Service both provide extensive information about who can adopt and foster, as well as the process of adopting and fostering within the county borough.

We are looking for people aged 21 and over who do not have any cautions or convictions against them involving children, who can demonstrate a commitment towards keeping children and young people safe, and who can offer a loving and safe environment.

With plenty of support and advice available, by acting as a foster carer or adopter, you can also help to keep local children within Bridgend County Borough instead of them having to relocate to a different area elsewhere.

For further information on how to foster or adopt in Bridgend County Borough, visit W-W-W Dot Bridgend Foster Care Dot Wales, or W-W-W Dot Western Bay Adoption Dot Org.

I would also like to say well done to Ollie Malin, Ffion Jenkins and Charley Evans for their success at the High Sheriff of Mid Glamorgan's annual Youth Awards.

As ambassadors for Bridgend Young Carers Network, all three were nominated in the group category and won a top prize of £1,000.

As well as being a lot of fun, the award has recognised all of the hard work that they have put in to promote the network, and to drive it forward.

As a result of their efforts, the number of young carer ambassadors has increased from three to eleven in less than a year.

More than 280 young carers have also been supported and supplied with the National Young Carers identity card.

The award also draws greater attention to the role that young carers play within the local community, and I am sure that members will want to join me in congratulating them and wishing them well.

The High Sheriff's Youth Awards ceremony also saw Deputy Youth Mayor G presented with the Ann Morgan Community Award.

G was chosen to receive this award for his fantastic work on developing trans awareness training, and his dedication towards making Bridgend County Borough a better, safer, more inclusive place.

This was a well-deserved accolade, and members will no doubt once again want to offer their congratulations.

Finally, I would like to give my unreserved thanks to our staff who support our Young Carers and the Bridgend Youth Service, which in turn, gives them the support they need in order to take their own agendas forward.

Cabinet Member – Communities

Members may want to let their constituents know that the council's optional garden waste collection service is now open for registration.

This year, the service will run between Monday 13 March and Friday 17 November, with collections taking place every two weeks.

Those who sign up for the service will receive two sturdy green sacks which can be used for the disposal of typical garden waste such as plants, flowers, weeds, grass cuttings, leaves and hedge clippings.

The service offers a convenient way of having your green waste collected and disposed of from the kerbside, and costs £46.01 per household or £41.73 for pensioners.

This year, Kier will also be offering a random selection of participants a free subscription to the service, which has become increasingly popular since it was first launched in 2013.

Last year, almost 8,000 residents signed up to the service and more than 13,000 tonnes of garden waste was diverted and recycled instead of being disposed of as landfill.

Residents also have the option of disposing of garden waste for free by using a community recycling centre.

More details are available at both the council and Kier websites.

Cabinet Member – Wellbeing and Future Generations

Members may want to let their constituents know about a free event that is taking place tomorrow which aims to offer expert advice and support on how residents can deal with the ongoing Cost of Living crisis.

The event 'Help for Households', it has been organised by Employability Bridgend and will be available between 10am and 2pm tomorrow at Bridgend Indoor Market.

A wide range of partner organisations will be participating with the event, including Citizens Advice, the Bridgend Repair Café, Welsh Water, the Childcare Team, and Baobab Bach Community Pantries.

Examples of the type of advice on offer includes help with household bills, tips on the best energy deals, suggestions for ways to save money on food, advice on whether people may be eligible for additional benefits and support, and much more.

Each participant who calls in to the event will also receive a free bag featuring cost saving items, which will be tailored to each individuals needs.

The event represents our commitment as a council towards helping residents meet the challenges of the ongoing Cost of Living Crisis, and it provides an opportunity for people to access specialist advice that is relevant towards them and their own personal circumstances.

I hope that it will have a positive impact, and that members will help let people know that it is taking place.

Cabinet Member – Resources

I previously updated members on how the Welsh Government Fuel Support Scheme had successfully made more than 15,000 payments to eligible households and had provided much-needed support totalling around three million pounds.

While that scheme has now closed, the Energy Bills support scheme from UK Government is still running and will remain open to applications until 31 May.

However, the number of people applying for this support remains very low across Wales, so I would like to ask members for their support in ensuring that as many local residents as possible are aware of the scheme.

To be eligible, applicants must meet a number of criteria. The dwelling where they apply for the support must be their sole or main address, and they must be responsible for paying for energy used within the dwelling as part of a service charge, rent or some other arrangement.

The household must not be eligible for or already in receipt of payments from the energy support scheme, while the household must not double as a business premises or other form of non-domestic property.

This would be applicable to, for example, residents of park home sites such as the one at Happy Valley.

UK Government is also offering additional support via an Alternative Fuel Payment fund. This provides a £200 payment for households that use alternative fuel sources for their heating instead of mains gas.

Again, criteria applies, but it is aimed at someone who uses oil or bottled gas as their main source of heating or who does not pay for electricity by direct debit, such as those who live in rural areas or at remote spots in the county borough.

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Applications for both schemes must be made online at GOV DOT UK, and there is also a freephone telephone number for anyone who cannot get internet access – 0808 1753 287.

I am sure that members will want to help make people more aware that these schemes are available, and I am grateful for your support in doing so.

I am aware of recent correspondence between the Mayor and others, so if I may offer further comment regarding Bridgend's position within the StatsWales table for council tax.

In Wales, there are 9 Council Tax bandings (A – I). Council tax bands are based on property values in April 2003. Under the current system, local authorities can only set their council tax levels for Band D properties - with lower and higher bands charged a fixed proportion of that.

In terms of Bridgend, we have a higher percentage of properties in lower bands than the all-Wales average.

Cardiff University's Wales Governance Centre has reported that councils with more low-band houses tend to set their Band D rates higher to compensate" for their lower tax base.

In Bridgend, 68.14% of our residential properties are in Council Tax Bands A – D with 50% being in Bands A – C. Therefore, 50% of all households who pay the full Council tax will pay less than the Band D level in the coming financial year.

Cabinet Member – Education

I am sure that members will be aware that the National Education Union has postponed the two days of industrial action that were scheduled to take place on the 15th and 16th March.

The union has announced that constructive talks with Welsh Government have resulted in a new pay offer, and that its members are currently considering the deal on offer.

In the event that this latest offer is rejected and that further industrial action is announced, the council will once again work closely alongside local schools to make necessary preparations, and will prioritise the health, safety and wellbeing of pupils.

In other news, I welcome Welsh Government's announcement that free school meal provision will continue to be available to children from lower income families across the Easter and Whitsun school holidays.

More than £9m has been invested to help councils across Wales offer nutritious meals to eligible pupils up until the end of the May half-term holiday.

This includes all bank holidays during this period, and I will bring you further details in due course.

I would like to briefly remind members that residents have until 24 March to apply for full-time nursery places in time for the start of the new school year in September, while applications for part-time places must be submitted by 31 August.

You can find out more and apply online through the council's My Account service, which is accessible by visiting the corporate website.

Cabinet Member – Regeneration

Two informal consultation events are set to take place in March which will ask people how they think new public open space planned as part of Porthcawl's ongoing regeneration should be used.

With the first session taking place at the Grand Pavilion today until 7pm and again between 9am-5pm on Thursday 23 March, the sessions will showcase a number of potential options as well as designs for how public open space could be developed to benefit residents and visitors alike.

Potential ideas range from skateparks, pump tracks and water-based facilities such as a 'splash park' to community gardens, green walking routes and outdoor gym and multiuse game zones.

We have already received a number of excellent ideas, such as an open-air amphitheatre and performance venue, or space suitable for staging seasonal events such as visiting speciality markets, Christmas ice rinks and more.

We want to capture all of these views so they can be properly analysed and investigated.

Once the drop-in sessions are complete, the exhibition boards will be made available to view online at the council's website, with comments sought over a further three-week period.

All feedback received by 7th April will help shape and inform an open space concept design, and to capture a shared vision for the look, feel and use of key open spaces within the regeneration area.

Organised by Bridgend County Borough Council in line with the Placemaking Wales Charter, businesses and residents are being encouraged to visit one of the drop-in sessions, view exhibition boards, speak to regeneration staff and give their thoughts on the proposals.

We want to ensure that the open spaces within the planned regeneration area respond to the needs of current and future generations alike, and I hope that residents and visitors will take full advantage of this opportunity to have their say.

Finally, can I take this opportunity to wish all the best to Sean Warrington, from the Communities Directorate, on his new job – he had been head hunted for his expertise - he will be a great loss to BCBC. I would like to personally thank him for the support he gave me as a new cabinet member.

Chief Executive

Members will be aware that we recently carried the 2022 staff survey, which provides valuable information on our employees' opinions and attitudes across a wide range of work-related issues.

Such surveys are an important part of our approach to staff engagement and building a motivated workforce, they help to inform our working practices, and enable us to make progress as an organisation.

We have now completed the analysis of the results, and I would like to briefly share some of the key outcomes with members.

Overall, 42 per cent of all council staff responded to the survey and shared their views across seven specific themes. This represents a 9 per cent increase on the previous 2021 staff survey.

At 85 per cent, the majority of respondents stated that they enjoy their role, with 66 per cent adding that they feel valued at work.

Sixty-seven per cent of respondents told us they are satisfied with the council as an employer and that they are also aware of our priorities, while 88 per cent said they were satisfied with our seven proposed new objectives.

Eighty-four per cent of respondents stated there are opportunities for two-way communication where ideas and issues can be raised and discussed.

In relation to staff wellbeing, 68 per cent of respondents said they are comfortable with their work demands, and 73 per cent stated that they are aware of the support the council makes available for the workforce in relation to health and wellbeing.

Seventy-three per cent agreed that they are satisfied with the new Flexitime working hours staff flexi time scheme 83 per cent said they can work productively within their remote working environment.

Staff were asked to share their views across seven specific themes: Culture, the council's priorities, work performance, communications, knowledge and skills, employee wellbeing, and hybrid working.

Across all seven themes, 65 per cent of staff delivered a positive result, 25 per cent remained neutral, and 10 per cent were negative.

One area that we were particularly interested in was how staff had received the new hybrid working arrangements. It was pleasing to note that 76 per cent of all respondents provided positive responses and indicated that they were satisfied with the new interim Hybrid Working policy.

While 71 per cent said that they keep up to date with latest council news via their work email, only 35 per cent said that they always read the weekly Bridgenders email, and 25 per cent indicated that they will always read the quarterly staff newsletter as long as it contains something of interest.

This is obviously just a flavour of the results from the staff survey, but I think that it has clearly highlighted a number of encouraging views and has helped to highlight some of the areas which we will need to look at going forward.

Work will now take place to study the results in closer detail, and to see how they can be best applied to deliver further improvements for the council, both as an organisation and as a good employer.

109. **TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE LEADER**

I am delighted to be able to inform members that Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Early Help, Councillor Jane Gebbie, has been presented with a prestigious national award from the Ron Todd Foundation.

Set up following the work of trade union leader Ron Todd, the foundation supports people who are living in poverty and works to prevent its root causes, promote equality and diversity, and to recognise individuals who undertake outstanding work in these areas.

Every year, it announces winners at its annual memorial lecture event, and this year has declared Councillor Gebbie to be the winner of the Ron Todd Award for Equality.

Councillor Gebbie won the award after she was nominated by no less than eleven different organisations and individuals.

The Deputy Leader has a deep-rooted commitment towards social equality, this award recognises that, and I am sure that members will join me now in offering her our warmest congratulations.

I was also delighted to attend Maesteg Sports Centre where its 40th anniversary has been marked by a £400,000 investment and the newest facilities were officially opened by the Mayor in the presence of the Cabinet Member for Wellbeing and Future Generations, Cabinet and local members.

The upgrade includes a larger gym area with new cardio machines, a dedicated strength and conditioning space, a wellness zone, a new exercise studio, additional room for training and workshops, and a new accessible changing space.

The sports centre has been a popular and well-used facility in the Llynfi Valley since March 1983, and since the council partnered with Halo Leisure in 2012, it has recorded well over one point five million users and more than a million gym workouts.

Further improvements are planned, including the soon-to-be-finished strength and conditioning zone, and I know all local members are looking forward to the additional benefits future phases of investment will deliver.

Demolition of Bridgend town centre's former police station will begin on Monday 20 March as preparations get underway for clearing the site read for the development of the planned new Bridgend College campus.

With work expected to take up to twelve weeks, access to Cheapside and local businesses will be maintained throughout the demolition process.

Some temporary narrowing of the carriageway and minor alterations to pedestrian crossing points will be required, and the contractor has been liaising with local businesses directly to ensure that they are aware.

As you know, the site forms a significant part of our regeneration plans for Bridgend town centre. We intend to lease it to Bridgend College and enable the Cowbridge Road campus to relocate there.

The college plans to create a net-zero carbon building, with 21st century learning and teaching facilities for post-16 further and higher education in Bridgend, with community benefits including a 200-seat theatre space, design workshops and flexible meeting spaces.

It represents a £50 million investment into skills and training for the people of Bridgend County Borough which will cater for at least 1,000 staff and students.

We also want it to act as a catalyst for wider regeneration by increasing footfall and supporting local businesses.

We will bring you further news on this as the development starts to take shape.

Finally, I was saddened to hear from her son that the former Mayor of the County Borough Mari Jones recently passed away at the age of 92.

The member for Llangynwyd, Mari devoted herself to many years of public service. Mari served on many committees within the authority and was vice chair of Planning and Development Committee.

Outside of the council, she served as a governor for both Cwmfelin and Llangynwyd primary schools, and as a director at Valleys To Coast Housing and Maesteg Town Hall.

Mari was also very active within several community groups, such as the Llangynwyd Village Hall Working Group, as vice chair of the Glamorgan Women's Institute arts and leisure committee, and as a past president for Tir Larll WI.

A fluent Welsh speaker, Mari was passionate about the Welsh language, and I am sure that I am not the only member present here today who remembers her as a very committed colleague, one who was wholly dedicated towards her role as an elected member, and towards helping to improve her local community.

Mari's funeral service will be held at St Ceitho's Church, Llangeitho, Tregaron, the village where she grew up, on Wednesday 29 March.

Members and Officers then stood in a minutes silence as a mark of respect to Mari Jones, a past Mayor of BCBC.

110. **PAY POLICY STATEMENT - 2023/2024**

The Group Manager Human Resources and Organisational Development presented a report, the purpose of which, was to seek Council approval of the Pay Policy Statement for 2023 2024.

She advised that the Pay Policy Statement provided a framework to ensure that employees are rewarded fairly and objectively without discrimination and recognised the importance of having a clear written policy on pay for employees.

She proceeded by confirming that the Council has a statutory requirement under the Localism Act 2011 to prepare a Pay Policy Statement on an annual basis. The first statement was in place in 2012, and they have been produced annually since that year. The statement is developed in accordance with Welsh Government guidance, added the Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisational Development.

The focus of the legislation was about transparency of pay for Chief Officers and how their pay compares with lower paid employees in the Council. However, in the interests of transparency and accountability the Council's Pay Policy Statement covered all employee groups, with the exception of teachers (as their remuneration is set by Welsh Government and therefore not in local authority control).

The Pay Policy Statement also excluded Members of the Council, as they are not employees and are governed by separate legislation via the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales.

The Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisational Development stated that Members were being asked to note paragraphs 4.5 to 4.7 of the report, which summarised the changes which have been reflected in this year's statement, including as follows:

1. the Council's accreditation as a Real living Wage employer and payment of the Real Living Wage - £10.90 per hour;
2. the changes to the pay structure as a result of the 2022/2023 pay award which included the deletion of spinal column point 1 from the National Joint Council pay spine, with effect from 1 April 2023.

The Pay Policy Statement was attached at Appendix 1 to the report, which set out all pay arrangements including all pay grades, related policies and the Single Status collective agreement, as well as subsequent addenda to the collective agreements.

A Member asked if there was another Policy within the Council for benefits over and above those contained in the report, such as for example, car allowances.

It was confirmed that no car benefits had been made available for any Council Officers, as a result of a Collective Agreement made in 2013 when the Authority implemented Single Status.

A Member referred to page 51 of the report and paragraph 7.5.1 and performance pay related payments. She noted that the Council did not operate performance related pay at any staffing level. There were however, a number of managerial processes in place to monitor, evaluate and manage performance. She asked if the Officer could elaborate on these and their effectiveness.

The Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisational Development stated that, there were a number of processes in place to manage staff performance levels undertaken at an employee/manager level. These included activities such as 1 : 1's, team meetings and staff appraisals, where objectives were set out for staff and managed through service arrangements.

As this was the last meeting of Council to be attended by the Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisational Development, the Leader and the Mayor together with other Members, paid tribute to her hard working career, due to her pending retirement from BCBC at the end of this month.

This was echoed by all those present in the meeting, who all wished her the very best in her future retirement.

RESOLVED: That Council approved the Pay Policy Statement 2023/2024 attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

111. **RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS 2022-23 & STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

The Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change presented a report, so as to inform Council of the requirement for Members to formally declare any related party transactions for the 2022-23 financial year by completing the declaration attached at Appendix A to the report even if it is a nil return, and that this must be completed no earlier than 31 March 2023 and returned to BCBC by Wednesday 12 April 2023.

The report gave some background information, following which, it confirmed that the requirement to declare related party transactions is not new within the Statement of

Accounts. Audit Wales scrutinised these returns closely as part of their audit of the Statement of Accounts and have recommended that the Council should:

- formally remind all Councillors of the importance of completing and submitting their annual related party return by the deadline set by the Finance Department; and
- ensure that any outstanding related party returns are always pursued promptly.

The Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change added that this report was therefore to inform Members of the requirement to complete the declaration attached at Appendix A, with reference to the guidance attached at Appendix B, by 12 April 2023. It was essential that the form was completed as at 31 March 2023 and covered the full financial year or period for which the individual was a Member of the Council.

Members should note that a copy of the declaration will be emailed separately to their Bridgend County Borough Council email address for completion and return.

RESOLVED: That Council noted the requirement for Members to:

- formally declare any related party transactions for the 2022-23 financial year;
- complete and date the return no earlier than 31 March 2023;
- submit the return the same by Wednesday 12 April 2023

112. **PENSION POLICIES**

The Human Resources (HR) Service Centre Manager presented a report, in order to seek Council approval for the following 3 local government pension policies:

- Discretions Policy
- Early Retirement, Ill Health and Redundancy Policy
- Flexible Retirement Policy

He advised that as part of the review of HR policies, the 3 pension policies have been updated with a small number of proposed changes.

He confirmed that Trade Union colleagues had been consulted on the amended policies and the three recognised trade unions had confirmed their support in relation to the changes.

The HR Service Centre Manager then briefly outlined the respective policies and their changes.

Discretions Policy

In reviewing this policy, it is proposed to introduce Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contribution (SCAVC) pension arrangement for LGPS members.

This will be implemented through a salary sacrifice scheme, which means that employees will receive tax and national insurance relief.

The Council would also make savings through reduced employer national insurance contributions

Early Retirement, Ill Health Retirement and Redundancy Policy

The revised policy has been updated to reflect the current organisational roles and strengthens the position in relation to re-engagement of leavers under certain circumstances.

Flexible Retirement Policy

The revised policy provides more flexibility for part-time employees to apply for flexible retirement.

RESOLVED:

That Council approved:

- the Discretions Policy (Appendix 1 to the report)
- the Early Retirement, Ill Health Retirement and Redundancy Policy (at Appendix 2)
- the Flexible Retirement Policy (at Appendix 3)

113. INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report, the purpose of which, was to advise Council of the Annual Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales in respect of the level and range of remuneration the Authority must make available to its elected members for the 2023/24 municipal year.

She explained that the Panel's Determinations for 2023/24 were shown at page 19 of the Annual Report (attached as Appendix 1 to the covering report).

Section 153 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 empowers the Panel to require a relevant authority to comply with the requirements imposed on it by the IRWP Annual Report.

The Panel's Annual Report 2023/24 proposed some changes to the current remuneration prescribed for elected members at Principal (County Borough) and Town and Community Council levels. The following paragraphs summarised the key elements of the Report applicable to principal councils.

- Basic salaries (to increase to £17,600 – the Monitoring Officer advised that it was the gift of members whether or not to accept such increase);
- Salaries paid to Senior, Civic and Presiding members of principal councils (see paragraph 4.3.2 of the report for further information);

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that there were no further changes to the payments and benefits paid to elected members and therefore, all other Determinations as set out in the 2022 to 2023 Report, still stood and should be applied in 2023 to 2024, including those covering:

- Travel and subsistence
 - Care and personal assistance
 - Sickness absence
 - Assistants to the Executive
 - Additional salaries and Job-sharing arrangements
 - Co-opted members.
- Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committees (The salary of a chair of a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be £8,800 and £4,400 for a vice-chair. There are no other changes)

The Authority must implement the Panel's determinations in this report from the date specified within the Annual Report (April 2023).

The Monitoring Officer concluded by stating that the Panel will monitor the compliance with the determinations in its Annual Report by relevant authorities against those requirements detailed in paragraph 4.5.2 of the report.

RESOLVED: That Council noted the Annual Report for 2023/24 and approved:

- (1) The adoption of the relevant Determinations of the Panel contained within the Annual Report (attached as Appendix 1 to the report);
- (2) Those posts (shown in the revised Members' Schedule of Remuneration at Schedule 1 of Appendix 2) who will receive a senior / civic salary;
- (3) The revised Members' Schedule of Remuneration (Appendix 2) and for it to become effective from 1 April 2023;
- (4) That the Members' Schedule of Remuneration be updated with any changes to senior / civic salary positions subsequently made by Council during the 2023/24 municipal year.

114. **INFORMATION REPORT FOR NOTING**

The Chief Officer Legal and Regulatory Services, HR and Corporate Policy, reported on the Information Report which had been published since the last meeting of Council.

RESOLVED: That Council acknowledged the publication of the document listed in the report.

115. **TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS FROM:**

Councillor RC Collins to the Cabinet Member – Wellbeing and Future Generations

I welcomed the opportunity to view the exciting work underway to refurbish and improve Maesteg Sports Centre. Please can the Cabinet Member update us on progress to complete the scheme?

Response

Thank you for the question regarding the refurbishments of Maesteg Sports centre and also Pencoed Library. Firstly, at Maesteg, this is an exciting project and the result of a number of years of work behind the scenes to access funding to support this development through BCBC, Halo and Sport Wales Capital funding. The centre helped to support the covid vaccination programme and has been identifying how it can further build centre usage since the easing of restrictions on the leisure sector.

The first phase of the works were officially opened on the 1st March 2023 by the Mayor of Bridgend County Borough, Cllr Martyn Jones, the Leader of the Council, Cllr Huw David and myself also accompanied by local members who had been invited. The centre was also celebrating its 40th birthday since opening as a leisure venue.

The most recent works have seen the start of the creation of the new fitness and wellbeing spaces within the site which will grow into a new 54 station fitness and wellbeing area which is twice as big as the previous space. The design has included new toilet provision including an accessible toilet and new ventilation system. This work has taken place within an area of the former Y Llynfi reference library that is planned to

migrate to Maesteg Town Hall. This area is now already in use by the public and receiving positive comments.

The next stage of the works will see the redesign of the original and smaller gym space to become a functional fitness area by the middle of April and the mezzanine floor to be a wellbeing area with a focus on a range of health and community programmes being delivered for residents.

These works will then continue through the building with the changing areas being redecorated with new showering facilities, lighting and flooring. This will be complemented by a change to the current family provision making it a “changing places” style space with improved accessibility and still allowing family access alongside towards the end of May

The final stages of the works over the coming months will see the construction of 2 flexible multi use rooms in former office space and another area alongside the previous soft play section towards the end of June. This will allow multiple partner events such as training, meetings and delivery of targeted support such as the health board supported Joint Care Programme amongst others as the centre develops a wider diversity of services.

These works are also underpinned by energy investments into new lighting and energy reduction elements as part of our commitment to the council reducing the carbon footprint.

The works cost when completed will be in excess of £400,000 and when achieved will mean over £500,000 has been invested into the Maesteg site in the last year linked to the redevelopment of the soft play area and squash court enhancements.

Supplementary question from Councillor RC Collins

With the recent announcement from Tennis Wales and BCBC for the provision of tennis courts in 3 areas of the County Borough, can I ask for some reassurance that the Authority will pursue further opportunities to provide more facilities that will promote health and wellbeing for individuals across the Bridgend area.

Response

We are committed to investment for the above. I was recently at Maesteg Sports Centre with Ward members from the Maesteg area to see some of the refurbishment works that had been carried out at the Centre and indeed which were still ongoing. At Cabinet yesterday we also approved the proposals for tennis facilities at Maesteg Welfare Park, Griffin Park Porthcawl, and at Ogmere Vale and Heol-y-Cyw also, This was part of a rolling programme in terms of further investment for health and wellbeing facilities planned across the County Borough.

Second supplementary question from Councillor M Hughes

There is a particular need for further health and wellbeing provision in the valley areas of the Ogmere and Garw. What is being proposed there to improve the current situation.

Response

The newly approved Council Corporate Plan identifies investment in our valley areas as a key priority for the BCB which will be realised. The Ogmere Life Centre has benefited in recent years from some investment and in the Garw valley we co-located the library in

the Garw Valley Leisure Centre which had proved a success. Plans were also proposed to developing youth provision at this Life Centre, in order that support is available for all age groups and all backgrounds. Welsh Government had also provided additional funding for the roll out of Flying Start in Blaengarw and Nantymoel.

Question from Councillor S Easterbrook to the Leader

Management companies operating on Bridgend for residents of new build housing estates have for a number of years been taking a management fee, yet have failed to carry out the maintenance. Issues that have occurred and needed resolving range from street lighting, road repairs, sweeping of leaf litter from gullies and boundary maintenance of hedges. Residents are not only charged Council Tax at the same rate as every other householder but are also subject to this additional fee to a third party maintenance company, there are often issues for residents contacting these companies with contacts within the company not responding to emails, yet residents are still expected to pay the fee every year that varies from house to house. Does the Leader feel that this acceptable that residents in this Borough are charged twice for the same service offered by two separate entities, when it appears neither are delivering a service residents are paying for.

Response

With regards to the management fee referred to in your question. These fees apply where a new estate has been built and the housing company charge a management fee for the upkeep of communal areas that are not in the control of the council. This would cover the costs to maintain, renew and repair the shared community amenities and spaces which the local council has not adopted – predominantly green spaces. This agreement is between the landlord, or their agent, and the homeowner. The service provided will not also be provided by the Council in this area. I don't consider it acceptable that residents pay a fee to a third party maintenance company and doesn't receive a service; however, the Council is not involved in this arrangement and any concerns with regards to this should be dealt with directly with the agents.

The Welsh Government has previously called for evidence on the impact of this practice and is in talks with the UK Government over potential new England and Wales legislation to give freeholders the same rights as leaseholders to challenge management fees and even force a change of companies. I have asked Welsh Government for an update on this call for evidence.

With regards to the Council Tax, I can confirm that this will be charged as soon as the property is completed and the full charge for the property is made, unless certain exemptions apply. I would also draw your attention to the information that was included in the recently approved Corporate Plan which illustrates how the Council's budget is spent. As you will be aware, the Council Tax only fund 27% of the total spend of this Council. Using the total funding available, the Council provides over 800 services for residents in this area and council tax is not broken down into component areas for each household.

Supplementary question from S Easterbrook

Welsh Government has previously called for evidence on the impact of this practise and is in talks with the UK Government over potential new legislation for England and Wales to give freeholders the same rights as leaseholders to challenge management fees and even force a change for these companies. I would welcome this information as and when it is received. I note that you did not include the Authorities role at the outset of the planning process and how management companies are allowed to charge this

management fee at all. I believe that developers of some new developments considered by the Development Control Committee, have to put this condition of management companies into their plans and proposals, before they are approved. Should the Council therefore not be allowing this practise in the first place and stop placing this condition on developers which ultimately ends up costing our residents, ie a form of double taxing. Constituents have said to me, that they don't get a lot from these management services they are having to pay for. I do understand more management fees being imposed for the occupier of a flat in a complex, due to for example, the maintenance of shared communal areas etc.

Response

We have a situation whereby not all developers wish to have their areas of build adopted by the Council and this is not something by statute that we can legislate for. So therefore, on occasions, new developers are now very much akin to wanting the local authority to adopt roads and play areas at new developments. There are occasions though, whereby developers when they construct new estates, do not wish to commute these type of facilities over to the Council to maintain them as this comes with a S106 agreement commitment and a commuted capital fee. So instead, some developers choose to impose a management fee which can be placed upon occupiers of the development. Residents are aware of this situation as part of the purchase of their property and that this fee is for estate maintenance and it is then up to the resident(s) whether or not they would wish to bear this cost going forward, or to arrange for maintenance of, for example, grassed/open areas, maintenance of roads etc, themselves. Those that do accept this, can form a Management Committee (comprising of committed residents), in order that they can have meetings with the Management Company, in order that they are able to form a relationship with the company going forward in order to plan such maintenance works. Local authorities have very limited ability to prevent developers taking on management companies for this purpose. The Development Control Committee has no involvement whatsoever in this, it was added.

Question from Councillor M Williams to the Leader

Junction 36 of the M4 is a notorious bottleneck which causes congestion, restricts development & investment opportunities to the north of our county and causes misery to residents in neighbouring communities, which are being used as increasingly dangerous rat runs. Could the Leader please outline what efforts this authority has made to improve junction 36 and the surrounding highway network (including re-consideration of the once proposed Bryncethin by-pass) to alleviate the traffic issues once and for all.

Response

Improvements to Junction 36 is identified as a strategic transport project for Bridgend. As the junction is part of the trunk road system it falls within the purview of Welsh Government, which effectively owns the asset. WG has commissioned WelTAG (Welsh Transport Appraisal Guidance) studies on M4 motorway junctions including those within Bridgend. However, following the publication of the recent report from the Roads Review Panel, it is clear that any improvements to the junction to ease traffic congestion or to facilitate car travel is not going to be supported by Welsh Government. Furthermore, national planning policy does not favour car-based transport solutions. In terms of any future road building projects, there is no specific allocation for a new bypass at Bryncethin in the current Local Development Plan or its replacement. Any such project will unlikely receive permission and any solution to capacity issues within the area will have to be active travel or public transport based.

Supplementary question from Councillor M Williams

Given situations such as the Y Bont and Highways Yard depot moving to Bryncethin and the Kenning Development only going to get worse, together with the Welsh Government moratorium going to discourage active travel etc, we are now as far away as ever of having some serious investment committed to the problems at Junction 36, together with increased housing being proposed in this and surrounding areas which will only exacerbate the current problem, what tactical or affordable interventions can be made or have been considered, that could help communities such as Coity village and Bryncethin etc, to cope with the impacts of this junction. Also, could the Leader agree to a meeting with the relevant Officers and Cabinet member and the local members of Coity and St. Brides Minor, in order to consider some options to improve the situation here going forward.

Response

We will arrange for the meeting with Ward members along the lines you suggest. When the announcement was made by the Deputy Minister for Climate Change I arranged to meet with him about the review and I made it clear that we would wish for Welsh Government to consider alternative ways to improve Junction 36 to include enhancements for Active Travel routes and public transport priority corridors and I will be ensuring that this is followed-up as part of the overall infrastructure of our motorway and transport network. This would also need to be funded by WG. I will keep members informed of the outcome of this accordingly.

Second supplementary question from Councillor T Thomas

In terms of road improvements in this area, could we have an update on the suitability of bus and train provision within the Valleys Gateway and in that statement could he also give an update on the Tondu Loop, which provides a service every half hour to the Llynfi valley.

Response

The bus industry is experiencing a very difficult time at present with the Welsh Government now having to provide additional funding through the Bus Emergency Support Grant, which is a multi-million pound package of support. However, this support is likely to come to an end in the coming months. In view of this, we will be working closely with the industry in order to support them as they make this very difficult transition. The reason for the decline in passengers, stems from the pandemic and unfortunately this has not fully recovered nor with it the income previously generated pre-pandemic. We are discussing ways to resolve the situation as best we can, with First Cymru. I will provide a response to the Tondu Loop part of the question, outside of the meeting.

Question from Councillor F Bletsoe to the Cabinet Member – Regeneration

In light of the recent announcement that Porthcawl Grand Pavilion will see significant investment from the Central Government “levelling up funding” and the ongoing improvements to Maesteg Town Hall, what undertaking will the cabinet member for regeneration give to all residents in all corners of our Borough that we will see our own county wide “levelling up” that will ensure a full and equitable investment in all areas of our Boroughs cultural heritage?

Response

The recent news of this council's successful bid to the UK Government Levelling-Up Fund, in partnership with Awen Cultural Trust (AWEN), for the Grand Pavilion, Porthcawl has been welcomed by Cabinet, members and the public across the county borough. The beneficiaries of this investment into a cultural asset such as the Grand Pavilion will not be limited to Porthcawl but will be felt by people across the county borough and indeed the wider region. Users and audiences from a wider area view the Grand Pavilion as their creative / cultural home. It is too simplistic to suggest that the location of the theatre determines that the impact of investment is restricted to the immediate locality.

In order to preserve and enhance the longer-term future of cultural services and activity-based opportunities, the Council supported the development of the cultural partnership with AWEN in 2015. This was for a period of 20 years and sought to sustain a range of cultural assets and opportunities at a time where the only alternative would have been to reduce provision in order to meet medium-term financial strategy efficiencies. The partnership model has returned over £800k in savings to the council since 2015, at the same time as enhancing the provision as was transferred in 2015.

The Grand Pavilion is included in the portfolio and fulfils a strategic role for residents of the County Borough and beyond including the needs of visitors. This exciting re-development will result in enhanced performance spaces, gallery and event space – all with the flexibility to incorporate broader activities and art forms, a more environmentally friendly asset and a more inclusive and accessible offer with related infrastructure improvements to support facility users with diverse needs.

The Levelling Up investment has been secured through a competitive process and via UK government with the strategic and cultural role of the asset needing to be evidenced. The submission was the highest scoring in Wales and many other applications across Wales were unsuccessful. Opened in 1932, the Grand Pavilion is a Grade II listed building and one of the County Borough's most treasured cultural and heritage assets. Levelling Up funding will ensure that long-identified works needed to secure the building's fabric into the long-term will be completed as well as the exciting additions listed above.

The Grand Pavilion project is only the latest in a number of investments made into the Council's cultural estate over the last decade. In 2014 Bridgend Library was completed at Bridgend Life Centre, Pyle Library was refurbished in 2019 and Pencoed Library is currently in the process of undergoing a £400K refurbishment. In the Llynfi Valley the Council, again working with Awen, are nearing the completion of the re-development of Maesteg Town Hall, which like the Grand Pavilion will have benefit for the wider valley area and also boost the socio-economic life of the town centre. The co-location of library services within existing assets at Pontycymer and Ogmore Vale in partnership with Halo Leisure have sustained library services for these communities with capital investment secured to develop the facility at Pontycymer.

Awen have also invested in Blaengarw Workmen's Hall and have re-established an events and community programme to support cultural life in the Garw Valley. This year a new stage, cinema and event equipment has been installed to further to Hall's ability to support the local community, and cultural activity within the Valley.

Bryngarw Park is another cultural asset which serves the whole county borough and attracts in excess of 220, 000 visitors every year. Over the last three years, the park has benefited from near £700, 000 of investment through the Council's participation in the Welsh Government's Valleys Regional Park programme. This investment allowed Awen to develop a new education centre, redevelop the visitor centre, improve accessible facilities and improve car parking, walking and toilet facilities. The park is now considered one of the best in the South Wales area for its facilities and programme, with

a commitment to accessible play and the range of activities and events it offers, which include discovery walks, storytelling events, exhibitions, open air theatre and concerts.

We are also committed to working with Bridgend College to bring forward a new modern teaching and learning campus to Bridgend town centre which will include classrooms, IT suites, multi-purpose studios, catering kitchens, recording and dance studios, design workshops, performance areas and more. The development will also include a 200 seat theatre offering a wide range of opportunities for community uses and engagement, and will provide a great benefit to the night time economy in the town.

The Welsh Government have committed to the development of a National Cultural Strategy during 2023 and the Council and its partners will be keen to identify any opportunities that can preserve or further enhance local assets and opportunities.

The scope of the cultural strategy includes venues like the Grand Pavilion but also services such as libraries, museums and archives. The Maesteg Town Hall project will be able to support a broad range of cultural activity for the longer term and again has a strategic role in supporting the cultural needs of our resident population. In addition to supporting performances the two venues identified will expand their potential to support community arts groups and third sector organisations. The venue at Maesteg will have made best use of resources by co-locating the town library, the reference library and county family history service in one space.

Beyond facility based library services there has been success in terms of the Books on Wheels mobile library service supporting the more vulnerable at home; highlighting the potential to support people in different ways and in different places. Digital access to resources also increased significantly during the pandemic and this trend has not changed in terms of remote accessing of books, magazines and music. Specific support is in place to support people with sensory impairments also and outreach programmes that connect with schools and other partners to extend the reach of services. In partnership with Awen we will continue to support those who need remote access. It will be important to identify innovative approaches to reaching people and improving accessibility beyond the use of physical assets in the future also.

Awen also now directly operating the Bridgend Youth Theatre programme and are in a position to ensure that opportunities can be accessed across the County. In addition, the ability to develop access to opportunities in less traditional spaces via outreach programmes and pop-up opportunities in smaller settings is actively being pursued. Recent examples would be using virtual reality approaches in care homes, pop up cinema in day services, and carer friendly events, to name a few.

Responsibility for our heritage and cultural assets is taken very seriously. A Built Heritage Strategy for the County Borough is currently being prepared, the aim of which is to conserve protect and enhance the built heritage of Bridgend County. Listed Building Consent delegation that has recently been awarded to this authority will assist with the aims of the strategy and the efficiency of determining applications to facilitate protection and enhancement and improve certainty and confidence of historic building owners. Within the County Borough, there are 374 Listed Buildings, 60 Scheduled Ancient Monuments, 16 Conservation Areas, 6 Historic Parks and Gardens and 2 Landscapes of Outstanding / Special Historic Interest. A project is currently underway at Bedford Iron Works, involving significant vegetation clearance, masonry repairs and health and safety works to facilitate its reopening to the public, funded by BCBC it is with a view to establishing a potential heritage partnership agreement with Cadw for future maintenance.

Aside from the formal cultural services provision, there are other avenues being implemented and explored to support Bridgend's cultural heritage including a Heritage trail for Bridgend Town, bringing together history and points of interest along a guided route. On-going support is also being provided to Hut 9, to progress feasibility work for the site, deliver events and explore funding opportunities with Cadw to conserve the site and paintings.

Earlier this year we commissioned a series of surveys of vacant churches and chapels across our three valleys to update a previous 2014 chapels survey. This is with a view to complete an assessment of their historic & architectural character, and cultural value alongside identifying potential funding, support and best practice for potential conversion to new uses.

Hopefully this provides the members with reassurance that investment in all areas of our County Borough's cultural heritage is an ongoing process and is continuously being sought and delivered.

Supplementary question from Councillor F Bletsoe

Numerous third parties such as Arwen Trust, Cadw, Halo and the Bridgend College are doing a great job in delivering cultural heritage and leisure opportunities in the County Borough. As Bridgend is known for producing some superb bands and duo's such as Bullet for my Valentine, Funeral for a Friend, Sex Clone Utopia, Dave and Griff and Those Damn Crows amongst others, can I ask what support BCBC (and not the 3rd parties mentioned above) are doing and have done, to support the growing music scene in Bridgend as part of a cultural and heritage reach.

Response

A detailed response on this question will be given to members outside of the meeting. The Leader added that Arwen Cultural Trust was created by BCBC and it is only able to support organisations that deliver arts and culture throughout the County Borough because of the annual support the local authority provided through a partnership arrangement. In terms of the town centre, we were instrumental in securing Cheapside for a new College Campus that will be able to accommodate arts and cultural events in the future.

Second supplementary question from Councillor M Lewis

With regards to the Boroughs Cultural Heritage, how successful were the recent celebrations of the tricentennial birthday of Dr. Richard Price, Llangeinor, which I unfortunately missed due to illness.

Response

This was a very satisfying occasion where there was involvement from Arwen, the Garw Valley Community Council and the Richard Price Society and BBC broadcaster Huw Edwards who originates from the Garw Valley. He unveiled a blue plaque in London where Dr. Price lived and at this location there was an excellent turnout for Dr. Price due to his influence on both the French and American revolutions. This included pupils from Blaengarw who attended there to celebrate the valleys wonderful heritage.

116. **NOTICE OF MOTION PROPOSED BY COUNCILLOR JANE GEBBIE AND
SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR ALEX WILLIAMS**

The above members in turn, gave verbal submissions, outlining their reasons behind supporting the following Notice of Motion:-

**“MOTION ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT PAY TO COUNCIL: A FULLY FUNDED,
PROPER PAY RISE FOR COUNCIL AND SCHOOL WORKERS**

This council notes:

- Local government has endured central government funding cuts of more than 50% since 2010. Between 2010 and 2020, councils lost 60p out of every £1 they have received from central Westminster government.
- New research by UNISON has shown that councils across England, Wales and Scotland are facing a collective funding shortfall of £3bn by the financial year 2023/24 and a cumulative funding gap of £5bn by 2024/25.
- At a local level, Bridgend County Borough Council has made savings totalling nearly £73m since 2010 / 2011. This represents almost 23% of the Council's current net revenue budget
- Councils led the way in efforts against the Covid-19 pandemic, providing a huge range of services and support for our communities. Local government has shown more than ever how indispensable it is. But Covid has led to a massive increase in expenditure and loss of income, and as we emerge from the pandemic, local authorities and schools need far more support from Westminster. Recent funding announcements from the Westminster Government relating to schools did nothing to help.
- Council and school workers kept our communities safe through the pandemic, often putting themselves at considerable risk as they work to protect public health, provide quality housing, ensure our children continue to be educated, and look after older and vulnerable people. Since 2010, the local government workforce has endured years of pay restraint with the majority of pay points losing at least 25 per cent of their value since 2009/10. Staff are now facing the worst cost of living crisis in a generation, with inflation hitting 10% and many having to make impossible choices between food, heating, and other essentials. This is a terrible situation for anyone to find themselves in.
- At the same time, workers have experienced ever-increasing workloads and persistent job insecurity. Across the UK, 900,000 jobs have been lost in local government since June 2010 – a reduction of more than 30 per cent. Local government has arguably been hit by more severe job losses than any other part of the public sector.
- There has been a disproportionate impact on women, with women making up more than three-quarters of the local government workforce.
- Recent research shows that if the Westminster Government were to fully fund the unions' 2023 pay claim, around half of the money would be recouped thanks to increased tax revenue, reduced expenditure on benefits and tax credits, and increased consumer spending in the local economy.

This council believes:

1. Our workers are public service super-heroes. They keep our communities clean and safe, look after those in need and keep our towns and cities running.
2. Without the professionalism and dedication of our staff, the council services our residents rely on would not be deliverable.
3. Local government workers deserve a proper real-terms pay increase. The Westminster Government needs to take responsibility and fully fund this increase; it should not put the burden on local authorities whose funding is still picking up the service pressures from the Covid-19 pandemic.

This council resolves to:

- A. Support the pay claim submitted by UNISON, GMB and Unite on behalf of council and school workers, for an increase of RPI + 2%
- B. Call on the Local Government Association **and the Welsh Local Government Association** to make urgent representations to central government to fund the NJC pay claim.
- C. Write to the Chancellor and Secretary of State to call for a pay increase for local government workers to be funded with new money from central government.
- D. Meet with local NJC union representatives to convey support for the pay claim and consider practical ways in which the council can support the campaign.
- E. Encourage all local government workers to join a union.

Council unanimously supported this Notice of Motion, subject to the addition to point B immediately above (shown in bold), that was also unanimously agreed.

117. **URGENT ITEMS**

None.

The meeting closed at 18:10

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO COUNCIL

12 APRIL 2023

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

THE WELL-BEING PLAN FOR CWM TAF MORGANNWG

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) of the Well-being Plan for Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Services Board.

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 Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (“the Act”) gives a legally binding common purpose to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of their area by contributing to the achievement of the 7 national well-being goals.
- 3.2 The Act places a well-being duty on specified public bodies including local authorities, local health boards, fire and rescue services and Natural Resources Wales to act jointly via Public Services Boards (PSBs).
- 3.3 PSBs are required to:
- assess the state of economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being in their areas (the Well-being Assessment)
 - use that Assessment to set local well-being objectives (the Well-being Plan)

- act together to meet those objectives.

- 3.4 Changes to the health board footprint created the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board covering Rhondda Cynon Taf, Merthyr Tydfil and Bridgend local authority areas. It was agreed that the two PSBs covering that area should merge to become a single PSB to reduce duplication and enable more effective joint working to improve well-being for people in the area.
- 3.5 As a foundation for this change, the Well-being Assessment was prepared to cover the Cwm Taf Morgannwg area and was done in close collaboration with the Regional Partnership Board in the development of their Population Needs Assessment. The Well-being Assessment was published in April 2022 and is available on the PSB webpages: <https://www.bridgend.gov.uk/my-council/bridgend-public-services-board/assessments-of-well-being/>
- 3.6 Following publication of the Well-being Plan, Cwm Taf and Bridgend PSBs will merge to form Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Services Board.

4. Current situation/proposal

- 4.1 The Well-being Plan has been approved by the shadow Cwm Taf Public Services Board at its meeting on 28th February 2023.

The well-being plan

- 4.2 The overarching theme of the Well-being Plan is 'A More Equal Cwm Taf Morgannwg' that drives every aspect of the Public Services Board's work. The Well-being Assessment told us that the communities in Bridgend, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf have a lot to be proud about. However, not all communities have fair access to opportunities and face different challenges that impact on well-being.
- 4.3 The Well-being Plan attached as **Appendix 1** has two objectives:
- Healthy local neighbourhoods - A Cwm Taf Morgannwg where our communities are inclusive and feel cohesive and people feel safe, supported and valued
 - Sustainable and resilient local neighbourhoods - A Cwm Taf Morgannwg where we understand and respond to the risk of climate change to our communities. To do this we must value, manage and enjoy our green and blue spaces responsibly
- 4.4 The emphasis of the plan is very much about having a regional framework but focusing on the small geographical areas that are neighbourhoods. Our Well-being Assessment and our experience through the Covid-19 pandemic has shown us how proud local people are of their communities and how important local communities are to their well-being.
- 4.5 As set out in the Act, how we work is equally important as what we focus on. The Well-being Plan makes five commitments for the way the single PSB will work and

these will be the core principles for the PSB that will guide and challenge activity throughout the PSB structure:

- Involvement and citizen voice will shape the design and delivery of the plan. We will maximise opportunities for working in a more inclusive and co-productive way by working with Coproduction Network for Wales.
- PSB organisations are rooted in their communities. Through their size and reach, they can contribute to our local area in many ways beyond delivering services. We will maximise our contribution to improving well-being through using our assets to support communities through procurement, reducing our carbon footprint and as big employers of local people.
- Establishing a regional governance at the PSB that drives local delivery (based on need and improving equity) and campaigns at a national level on behalf of our communities.
- Improving intelligence across the region, agencies and partnerships so that we recognise and build on the many strengths of the area and understand the causes behind the challenges we face.
- We will keep our eye on the future by using systems thinking and focusing on outcomes so that we act in a way that will make sustainable improvements to well-being for future generations.

Collaboration and Engagement

- 4.6 The Well-being Plan has been developed jointly by the two PSBs and in collaboration with partnerships and networks across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg area. Along with the Well-being Assessment that informed the plan it is a product of two years activity by the two PSBs.
- 4.7 The final draft plan was subject to a 12 week public consultation until 10 February 2023. Consultation methods included:
- Online survey
 - Group workshops, online presentation and 'jamboard's
 - Attending events, community spaces, forums and engagement opportunities
 - Statutory consultees and internal colleagues
 - Via PSB partners' media and internal networks
 - Linking back to those responding to the Well-being Assessment consultation and engagement.
 - A Health Impact Assessment through two workshops
 - BCBC Member Information Session
- 4.8 These mechanisms enabled some really good and detailed conversations about what well-being means and how the PSB can act to improve well-being across all four aspects – economic, environmental, social and cultural. These conversations have informed the development and refining of the final plan.
- 4.9 The online survey part of the consultation received 238 respondents
- 88% agreed with the overarching theme – A fairer Cwm Taf Morgannwg
 - 86% agreed with the PSB Commitments
 - Objective One
 - 86% agreed – Findings from the Well-being Assessment are accurate

- 90% agreed – These are the right things to focus on
- 85% agreed – This is the right aim
- Objective Two
 - 83% agreed – Findings from the Well-being Assessment are accurate
 - 87% agreed – These are the right things to focus on
 - 79% agreed – This is the right aim
- 121 people provided emails to be involved in future engagement with the PSB

4.10 In addition to the Public Services Board collectively approving their well-being plan, the six statutory partners must also approve the plan for publication. The statutory partners are:

- Bridgend County Borough Council,
- Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
- Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
- South Wales Fire and Rescue Services
- Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board
- Natural Resources Wales.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

5.1 The Council is a statutory partner for the PSB which is obliged to publish and deliver the Well-being Plan. Partnership working forms part of the policy framework. Once approved by the Council and other statutory members of the PSB, the plan becomes part of the Council's policy framework.

6. Equality Act 2010 implications

6.1 A full Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out as part of the development and consultation of the draft Well-being Plan. The full EIA considers the impact of the strategy, policy or proposal on the nine protected characteristics, the Socio-economic Duty and the use of the Welsh Language.

6.2 The outcome of this EIA is to continue with the policy or proposal in its current form as no negative impacts have been identified. The information gathered through the EIA has been taken into consideration in the preparation of the final plan and will inform delivery of the Well-being Plan and future engagement by the PSB. The full EIA is attached as **Appendix 2**.

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. 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.

7.2 The Well-being Plan is prepared in line with the statutory guidance for PSBs. It sets out the well-being objectives and outcomes for the PSB and how the PSB will work towards the national well-being goals.

8. Financial implications

- 8.1 There are no direct financial implications from this report.
- 8.2 The PSB currently receives funding from Welsh Government to support collaboration in line with the ways of working in the Well-being of Future Generations Act. This is provided to the regional PSB to work together with partners and partnerships.
- 8.3 The PSB does not have an operational budget. Bridgend County Borough Council provides officer support for Bridgend PSB.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 It is recommended that Council approves the Well-being Plan attached as **Appendix 1** for Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Services Board.

Mark Shephard
CHIEF EXECUTIVE
April 2023

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Background documents: None

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OUR WELL-BEING PLAN

A More Equal
Cwm Taf Morgannwg



2023 | 2028



OUR WELL-BEING PLAN

A More Equal Cwm Taf Morgannwg



Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Services Board (PSB) brings together the previous PSBs in Cwm Taf, covering Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf, and Bridgend to form one PSB for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg area. This new board comprises public bodies, who deliver services locally to improve the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being by setting objectives that will achieve the Well-being Goals outlined in the Wellbeing of Future Generations 2015 Wales Act.

We must do this by using the sustainable development principle which means the PSB needs to make sure that when making decisions they consider the impact they could have on people living their lives in Wales in the future.

We use the following five ways of working from the Act to help us to do this:



LONG TERM



PREVENTION



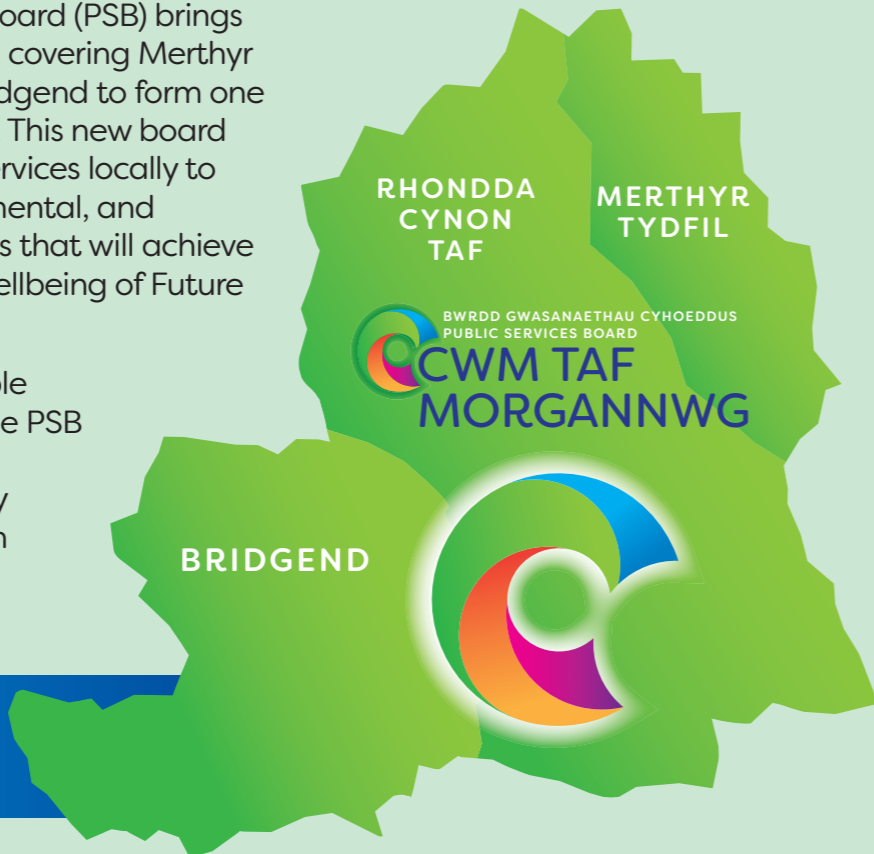
INTEGRATION



COLLABORATION



INVOLVEMENT



OUR WELL-BEING PLAN

A More Equal Cwm Taf Morgannwg



Over 450,000 people live in the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Area. Well-being is about quality of life, and how that is connected to the environment, the economy, the services we need and the culture we share. Many things have shaped our communities and our well-being—such as industrial heritage, the landscape and shared interests in sport and the arts, giving a rich history and future opportunity. These can be considered as social, economic, environmental, and cultural factors.

Our **Well-being Assessment** provides the evidence base for this Well-being Plan, the data and information gathered has been used alongside what local communities and people have told us about life in Bridgend, Merthyr Tydfil, and Rhondda Cynon Taf.

The overarching theme of our Well-being Plan is **'A More Equal Cwm Taf Morgannwg'** and that drives every aspect of the Public Services Board's work.

Our Well-being Assessment told us that the communities in Bridgend, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf have a lot to be proud about. However, not all communities have fair access to opportunities and face different challenges that impact on well-being. We have learned from our Well-being Assessment to identify how we will work together locally to tackle these inequalities in relation to our lifestyles, our communities, and our environment to improve the well-being for people living here now and building towards a fair future.

This draft plan sets out how we will work together to achieve this.



How we developed the Plan

To develop our Well-being Plan we used findings from the Well-being Assessment, messages from the engagement and consultation, worked with PSBs and their wider networks and stakeholders at a series of workshops to develop the objectives and draft plan, benefited from support and formal feedback from the Future Generations Commissioner and reflected on our own experience of delivering the previous Well-being Plans.

The Well-being Assessment was a real collaboration of PSB members, partners, and stakeholders from across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg area and wider to bring together data and information to provide a picture of the state of well-being in the area. There was a Community Assessment Action Group that steered the work, with engagement and data sub-groups that included specialists from across our partner agencies and partnerships. The published Assessment and a series of summary sheets are available [here](#).

A report on our engagement and consultation as part of the Well-being Assessment, published [here](#), shows the wide range of conversations

about well-being with diverse communities. We worked with the Regional Partnership Board that helped facilitate conversations and acted as a critical friend to ensure the outcomes were utilised. We met people in their own spaces, in community centres, in town centres, shops and bus stations. Through the Hackathons we used music, poetry, drama, and art as a way of drawing out and reflecting on experiences.

The Our Futures Festival workshop reflected on the findings of the Well-being Assessment and considered where the PSB can make the most difference. Our Stakeholder Conference reflected on our past performance and ways of working. The Three horizons workshop led by Natural Resources Wales helped us to picture the future we want and how the PSB can work together to get there. We have considered how the Objectives of the Well-being Plan relate to the plans of our partners and partnerships to see how shared outcomes can help us to integrate better.

Future Voices

Throughout the Well-being Assessment and the development of the Well-being Plan we have committed to improving our engagement and making co-production part of our culture. In the development of this Well-being Plan we built on the earlier engagement for the Assessment, going back to those groups, networks, and places to check that the Well-being Objectives and our analysis was right. Through this process we have been supported by the Co-production Network for Wales and will work with them through the life of the plan to develop our approach and skills to make sure community voices really shape and influence the way we work.

To underpin the delivery of our plan we will be focusing on developing our understanding of how local neighbourhoods work and how the environment and climate change impacts on well-being. Our Assessment tells us this will not be the same for everyone so we will develop how

we work with different population groups to see where there is inequality.

We will bring together a network of engagement across our partners and partnerships to improve collaboration and share good practice to support delivery of this plan.

We will build on our work through the previous plans and have a long running programme through the life of this Plan to bring in the voice of our future generations – local children and young people, to make sure they act as our conscience so that we have the courage and ambition for our work to secure the future they want.

Our assessment recognised the rich local culture of our area. We will maximise our opportunities such as the Eisteddfod Genedlaethol and other festivals and events to celebrate our Welsh language and the culture, language, and customs of our diverse communities.



Working Differently

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The PSB membership, partnerships and networks bring together a wide range of organisations and groups. In working together on our objectives in this Well-being Plan, each will be able to make a different contribution. In all our activities we are guided by the ways of working in the Well-being of Future Generations Act

Specifically, for the achievement of the plan, PSB partners make the following commitments



Involvement and citizen voice will shape the design and delivery of the plan. We will maximise opportunities for working in a more inclusive and co-productive way by working with Coproduction Network for Wales.



PSB organisations are rooted in their communities. Through their size and reach, they can contribute to our local area in many ways beyond delivering services. We will maximise our contribution to improving well-being through using our assets to support communities through procurement, reducing our carbon footprint and as big employers of local people,



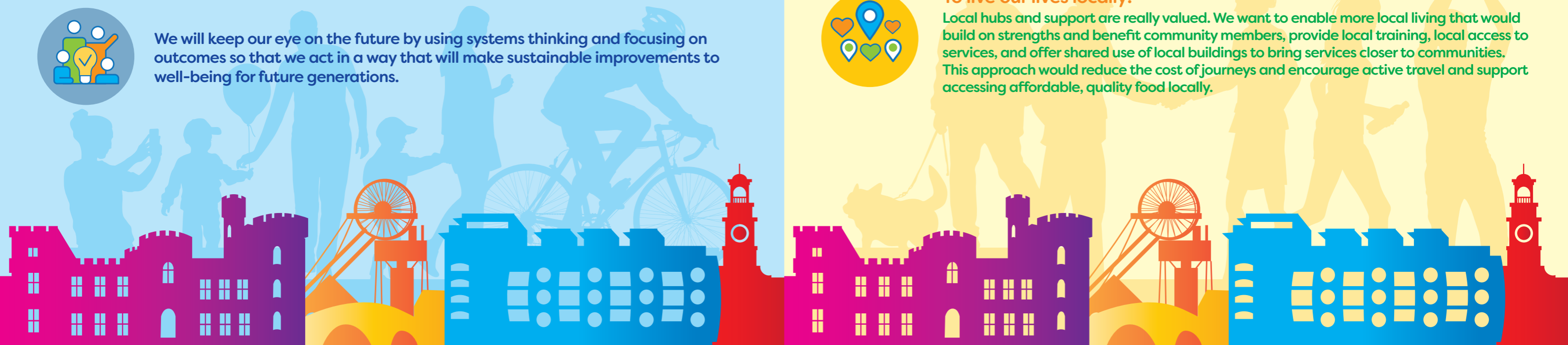
Establishing a regional governance at the PSB that drives local delivery (based on need and improving equity) and campaigns at a national level on behalf of our communities.



Improving intelligence across the region, agencies, and partnerships so that we recognise and build on the many strengths of the area and understand the causes behind the challenges we face.



We will keep our eye on the future by using systems thinking and focusing on outcomes so that we act in a way that will make sustainable improvements to well-being for future generations.



Objective One

Healthy local neighbourhoods

A Cwm Taf Morgannwg where our communities are inclusive and feel cohesive and people feel safe, supported, and valued. Our Well-being Assessment told us that we want:



To feel Connected:

During lockdown our local communities came together with voluntary organisations and partners to make sure that everyone had the support they needed. We are proud of our culture and heritage and our strong local communities, but we know that loneliness can affect anyone, and young people said they felt disconnected. We know that taking part in our community is good for our mental health, and there are great local activities and opportunities but some people, including those with disabilities, feel excluded and cost and transport can be a barrier.



Healthy places:

There are great opportunities to keep fit and healthy in our community, but physical activity rates are low, we have high levels of diabetes and obesity, and people in more deprived neighbourhoods are less likely to make use of the green and blue spaces around us. Having safe local spaces and affordable opportunities to be active is important, including play for children and young people. Having access to healthy food locally is also important.



To feel and be safe:

Cwm Taf Morgannwg is a safe place to live with good work being done to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour, but we know that some people feel unsafe in some spaces or at certain times. Recent figures also show an increase in reports of hate crime and domestic abuse. We recognise the impact this can have and want to create communities where everyone feels safe and has a sense of belonging.



To live our lives locally:

Local hubs and support are really valued. We want to enable more local living that would build on strengths and benefit community members, provide local training, local access to services, and offer shared use of local buildings to bring services closer to communities. This approach would reduce the cost of journeys and encourage active travel and support accessing affordable, quality food locally.

By working together on this objective, we will:

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Support communities to be inclusive so that:

- more people say they feel connected;
- fewer people say they feel lonely; and
- there is a range of community activities for everyone in the language of their choice.



Promote healthier lifestyles in our communities so that:

- more people are active;
- fewer people, particularly children, are obese; and
- there are more opportunities to be active locally and affordably.



Work with communities to build a sense of belonging so that:

- more people report feeling safe in their local area;
- fewer people experience anti-social behaviour; and
- there are opportunities to act together to tackle problems when they occur



Help people to access to support, services and opportunities in their local neighbourhood so that:

- more people use active travel;
- fewer people face long / costly journeys to access services; and
- there are community buildings for everyone to access and use.

We believe working in this way will also positively contribute to the seven national Well-being goals:

A prosperous Wales	Reducing the reliance on costly transport to live locally and having access to low cost or no cost opportunities to come together in the local area. Supporting our town centres
A resilient Wales	Reducing our carbon footprint by being able to access the services we need by walking or using active travel.
A healthier Wales	By promoting healthier lifestyles and enabling access to local opportunities to be active and come together.
A more equal Wales	By understanding the barriers that some people face in feeling connected to their communities
A Wales of cohesive communities	Helping everyone feel safe in their local area by acting on substance misuse and domestic violence
A Wales of vibrant culture & thriving Welsh Language	By enabling everyone to have access to a range of activities and opportunities to take part in our rich local culture of sports, music, arts and language.
A globally responsible Wales	By working to make sure that everyone who comes to the area has a warm welcome and the support they need.

Who can help Us? – Our key links for delivery

- Regional Community Cohesion Officers and community cohesion networks including Black Asian and Minority Ethnic and LGBTQI+
- Community Safety Partnership, Area Planning Board for Substance Misuse, Regional Safeguarding Board and engagement networks and groups
- VAWDASV Steering Group (violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence)
- Public Health Wales Healthy Weight, Healthy Wales Programme
- Regional Partnership Board
- RIC (Regional Innovation Communication) Hub Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board
- Regional Social Prescribing Steering Group
- Play sufficiency groups and sports development teams
- Local Development Plans
- Workforce well-being
- Local Authority Elected Members and Town and Community Councillors
- Community hubs, organisations, and neighbourhood networks



Objective Two

Sustainable and resilient local neighbourhoods

Cwm Taf Morgannwg where we understand and respond to the risk of climate change to our communities. To do this we must value, manage and enjoy our green and blue spaces responsibly. Our Well-being Assessment told us that we want:



To protect and enjoy our natural green and blue spaces responsibly:

We love green and blue spaces around us but we could be managing and using them better for a wide range of benefits such as climate adaption, physical exercise, coming together or just being outside. When we do use them, and in all the things we do and the decisions we make, we want to make sure that we're not doing anything that could negatively impact on the spaces around us. We need a healthy ecosystem for water and food however many of our local species of plants, animals and insects are in decline.



To increase opportunities for active travel and using public transport:

We find that travelling for work, shopping, appointments, and socialising can be costly and difficult without a car. Where more of the services, businesses, and activities we use are in our local neighbourhoods, we can use active travel like walking and cycling to get to them which can improve our health and reduce the number of journeys that rely on vehicles.



To reduce carbon use and waste:

At present, we are using our resources in an unsustainable way, and this is contributing to the climate and nature emergencies. We already have good rates of recycling but there is more we must do to reduce the amount of waste we produce. There are good examples of how we are reducing carbon and we must all support plans to become carbon neutral. We all have a role to play in global climate mitigation: reducing our consumption and waste and energy use to create a cleaner, greener Cwm Taf Morgannwg.



To tackle Climate Change and its impact:

We are already seeing the impact of Climate Change in our communities. Many residents have experienced devastating flooding and we are also seeing rising temperatures in the summer. Wales has declared both Climate and Nature emergencies and we know that extreme weather has greater impact in areas with a lower income. Climate adaptation is needed to make our most vulnerable communities resilient. We must change how we use and manage our urban and natural spaces to help us respond to climate change and the risks it poses.

By working together on this objective, we will:



Improve, use, enjoy and protect our natural local spaces so that we see:

- more local, accessible green and blue spaces;
- fewer incidents of pollution and fly tipping; and
- more resilient, healthier ecosystems and natural environment in our local area, including our rivers and hillsides.



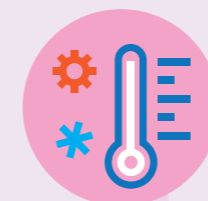
Support communities by increasing opportunities for more active travel in their daily lives so that we see:

- more of the things we need and use being nearby;
- fewer journeys being undertaken by car; and
- an improvement in air quality and health.



Understand how we can all use resources more sustainably so that we see:

- more re-use and recycling of a range of materials;
- reduced energy consumption; and
- improved management of our land and coastline to reduce carbon emissions and increase carbon capture.



Work with communities identify opportunities for Climate Change mitigation and adaptation and understand potential risks from climate change so that we see:

- more awareness, knowledge and skills across communities;
- fewer people, communities, and properties at risk; and
- increased confidence in our ability to respond to future challenges



We believe working in this way will also positively contribute to the seven national Well-being goals:

A prosperous Wales	Reducing negative impacts on our local spaces to create a healthy eco-system
A resilient Wales	By understanding how we can use resources more sustainably
A healthier Wales	Promoting use of green and blue spaces for physical activity and active travel for healthier lifestyles
A more equal Wales	By recognising the limitations on some communities and improving accessibility, knowledge, and skills
A Wales of cohesive communities	By improving awareness, knowledge, and skills across communities in terms of climate change and active travel options
A Wales of vibrant culture & thriving Welsh Language	By improving accessibility to green and blue heritage spaces
A globally responsible Wales	Making a change across communities to use what we have responsibly

Who can help Us? – Our key links for delivery

- RCT Climate Action Network
- VAMT green spaces network
- RCT Neighbourhood networks
- Biodiversity Action Plans
- Bridgend Green Network
- City Deal partners
- A local climate change risk assessment
- Cwm Taf Nature Network
- Public Health Wales Healthy Weight, Healthy Wales
- Play sufficiency groups and sports development teams
- Economic Partnerships
- Valleys Regional Park
- Transport for Wales

How will we deliver the plan?

We will make sure the priorities and steps in our Wellbeing Plan are delivered through:

- Strong leadership – PSB will collectively lead the delivery of this plan, with a nominated lead for each of the priorities. The new regional PSB for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg area will give a refreshed drive for improving well-being in our communities and also influencing at regional and national level.
- Good governance – delivery will be coordinated through a small core delivery structure led by PSB members that will provide regular reports on progress.
- Accountability – A new regional PSB scrutiny committee, including elected members, will provide democratic accountability through reviewing progress on delivery of the well-being plan and providing advice and support to the PSB.
- Joint resources – Different partners are able to bring different contributions to delivery of the well-being plan. This will include aligning resources across PSB members and making best use of partnership and external funding sources, either directly or through partners.
- Delivery plans—that will be developed for each priority and will include targets, responsibilities, timescales and measures for progress.
- Collective commitment to delivering the plan – The wellbeing objectives, priorities and steps in this plan will be reflected in the individual corporate and business plans of PSB members and link to the priorities of key strategic partnerships.
- Community and stakeholder involvement – for each objective our plan highlights how we will work with different stakeholders at a community level. Community and stakeholder involvement. will be embedded in all our steps and action plans.
- Links to key strategic partnerships – through having common outcomes and working jointly through existing mechanisms to avoid duplication and add value to joint work on improving well-being in our communities
- Sharing intelligence – building our common understanding of well-being in our area by sharing information and working together to analyse what this means for our future communities.



How our objectives link together

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Using our green and blue spaces and having a healthy local ecosystem enables us to live healthy lives in our local communities and make healthy lifestyle choices

Using active travel helps us to be more physically active and have closer day to day contact with other people in our communities.

- Coming together to enjoy our natural spaces helps us to feel more connected and secure in our communities.
- By responding to the challenges of climate change we can prevent damaging impacts on our health and come together as communities to be more resilient to future challenges.
- Thinking more widely about how we use our community assets will help us to reduce our carbon footprint.

How will we know if we are successful?

We have chosen a small number of quality-of-life outcomes for each of our Well-being Objectives. We will use qualitative and quantitative information to evidence our impact on these well-being outcomes in our area. Our delivery plans will include specific steps, outputs, outcomes, and time-bound performance measures that we will use to evaluate progress.

At the end of each year, we will publish an annual report.



A Reflection of our Public Services Board Journey

Collaboration:

Collaborative working enables the growth of networks and knowledge. It has allowed us to reach more diverse groups that help to inform our plans and assessments. It is also through collaborative working that we have learned new methods for engagement and communication. Some examples of this are:

- We have been able to share expertise, learning and collaborate through working with the Regional Partnership Board and supported by the Community Action Group in the development of the Well-being Assessment and Population Needs Assessment.
- Bringing in wider partners, such as Lloyds Bank Foundation who are working in Merthyr Tydfil to build positive relationships with residents, service commissioners, third sector, charities, private sector, and community groups. This work will focus on children and young people's mental health.
- Working across our partner networks and partnerships such a Community Safety Partnership, Area Planning Board for Substance Misuse and and VAWDASV (Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence) Steering Group has given a better understanding of well-being such as the white ribbon campaign against domestic violence, providing advice and support on keeping safe and providing training such as the far-right extremism training through the regional community cohesion officer
- Sharing resources such as the nature and well-being web pages where links to partners opportunities and materials help everyone enjoy using our natural spaces and learn more about nature.



Integration:

As we come together as a regional Public Services Board integration is critical to the way we work going forward as it helps to ensure we increase productivity and reduce duplication. As shown in the annual reports linked above, we have worked with many partners on approaches and plans with successful outcomes:

- Working together to understand shared challenges such as the project with CLES on procurement to see where we spend our money and how more of that can be with local businesses.
- Having a common commitment, such as working towards the real living wage brings organisations together as employers
- Being together to share thoughts and ideas in our series of workshops at the Waterton Centre, Orbit Centre Merthyr Tydfil, Fire Service Headquarters and Bridgend College for the Our Futures Festival
- We have a good foundation through our networks and sub boards such as the Assets Sub Board and Workforce Well-being Sub boards in Bridgend.
- Benefiting from learning from other areas such as Project Dewi with the Co-production network for Wales where we are sharing experiences and ideas across a number of PSBs who want to build in co-production into their culture whilst working as regional PSBs

Involvement:

Our commitment to improve how we involve our communities in our work will continue because we know the importance of hearing the voices of local communities and service users. We have benefited from the skills of our partners to guide and lead on some of the involvement activity as they provide a new perspective and understanding of our diverse communities and a wider network of connections.

Some examples of involvement are:

- We have had young people design and lead their own engagement through the mind our futures – snakes and ladders project which has focused on the mental health impact from lockdown.
- Using different forms of media in the Hackathons with the Regional Partnership Board where service users and providers came together using craft, song, spoken word, drama, poetry, and illustrations to bring out what is important to their well-being.
- Making sure we have less heard voices by working with people who use mental health services, adults with a learning disability, carers, veterans, victims of domestic violence, drug users, and children and young people.
- Having conversations with people where they are – town centres, community halls, shops, life centres, bus stations, parks, Viva fest with people with a learning disability, college canteens, community hubs

Long term:

Partners are increasingly aware through policy development and collaborative approaches to tackling some of our sustained challenges that long term thinking is vital in the planning and delivery of services and the conversations we have with our communities. This has been developed over the life of the first plan, and here are some examples of how we have adopted long-term thinking in our work:

- Carrying out a 'Three Horizons' session with Natural Resources Wales to consider the Cwm Taf Morgannwg of safe, resilient, healthy communities that meet the challenges of life in 2030'. This allowed us to think about how we need to change, and how we must work and do things differently.
- Working with Public Health Wales on their System Change work linked to the Healthier Wales programme, which includes creating healthy environments and active travel. An integrated approach to this work also recognises how this contributes to improving our health and social care system in the long term.
- Young people from across the region told us what they wanted to see in their futures and told us what needs to change to get there.
- Improving green spaces across the region through our Green Networks and 'prescribing' them to communities as ways of promoting good physical and mental health in future generations
- Circular Economic Innovation Communities have helped PSB partners work towards reducing waste

Prevention:

By taking a preventative approach to delivering services and working with our workforce, we have enabled an increased understanding among the workforce of their own well-being and lifestyle choices and developed services to prevent some of our most vulnerable residents from experiencing further risk factors. This has been achieved by:

- Delivering the CHOICE project, which offers advice and support to vulnerable women in our communities to access long-acting reversible contraception (LARC). The programme has been expanded to include a CHOICE street-based service, supporting homeless clients. As of the 31 January 2023, the project has supported 1,121 clients.
- Developing the Vulnerability Profile work, led by Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board, which is nearing completion. This work focuses on supporting the sharing of characteristics between the Health Board and Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council pilot area, to recognise the socio-economic and health barriers that a child and their families face in having the best start in life. The project has informed planning of school places, helped with supporting child vaccination and health screening.
- PSB are partners learning from each other on how to support staff with Mental health issues and promote healthy lifestyle choices.



Taking this learning forward

During the development of the Well-being Plan and the establishment of the new regional PSB, members of both boards have met and reflected on the things that are important to them to keep from the previous plans and from the previous PSBs in terms of ways of working. We have valued coming together to learn from each other, share approaches and have collaborative conversation. We have trusted relationships to build on that meant that we could respond during covid, cutting through bureaucracy to respond to community need.

We recognised that communities have solutions, and we want to work towards a future where the community trusts and works closely with the PSB. We have benefited from the expertise and strengths of all kinds of partners across all areas of the delivery of the well-being plans. Through the PSB our professional networks are important and valuable. We also recognise that there are challenges in balancing the longer-term preventative focus with short-term organisational demands.

Keep in Touch

We will always welcome contact from anyone interested in improving well-being in the Cwm Taf Morgannwg area. There are lots of different ways to get involved. You can find out more about PSBs and a link to our contact details [here](#)

Full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) form

Appendix 2

This document is a multi-purpose tool ensuring the appropriate steps are taken to comply with the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) Equality Impact Assessment legislation and to demonstrate that we have shown due regard to the need to reduce inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage when taking strategic decisions under the [Socio-economic Duty](#). It also ensures consideration of the [Welsh Language Standards](#).
[Click here to access more information and guidance to help you complete this EIA.](#)

- This assessment should be carried out **before your policy or proposal commences but after your engagement or consultation activities**.
- Your EIA screening form should have informed your consultation or engagement activities.
- If you are undertaking a full public consultation as part of your policy or proposal this form should be completed after the consultation has concluded.
- The results of your consultation and engagement activities will have helped you to gain a better understanding of the needs of those who may be impacted by the policy or proposal.
- **All sections and all questions require a response and must not be left blank even if they are ‘not applicable’.**

Name of project, policy, function, service or proposal being assessed:	Public Services Board Well-being Plan
Brief description and aim of policy or proposal:	The well-being plan is a strategic plan for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg area for the Public Services Board made up of key local partners including local authorities, Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board, Natural Resources Wales, South Wales Fire and Rescue and other invited partners.
Who is responsible for delivery of the policy or proposal?	Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Services Board
Date EIA screening completed:	270223

Evidence

Record of other consultation/engagement with people from equality groups, people who represent these groups, staff who work with groups, including any sessions run as part of a public consultation.

Group or persons consulted	Date/venue and number of people	Feedback/areas of concern raised	Action Points
Online consultation	The online survey had a total of 238 responses. It was held for 12 weeks closing on 10 th February 2023.	Where there were comments made in addition to the set questions, these related mainly to the whole population. A few comments related to age and disability. They noted that older people were more likely to feel fear of crime and also feel isolated and lonely. Older people would	These points are reflected in the well-being plan and have informed how the PSB see the interrelatedness of the objectives. The full findings in the engagement report will be published and also used to inform the development of the delivery plans.

Group or persons consulted	Date/venue and number of people	Feedback/areas of concern raised	Action Points
	<p>Respondent by equality group</p> <p>Disability - 10.13% informed that they are disabled. 13.22% preferred not to disclose their disability status</p> <p>Nationality - over half the respondents identifying as Welsh (52.19%). The next highest category is British with 26.75%. All other nationalities had a less than 10% response rate; English (6.58%), Scottish (0.44%), Northern Irish (0.44%), Other (3.07%). A total of 24 people (10.53%) chose not to disclose their nationality.</p> <p>Religion - Within the survey responses the majority of people had no religion (46.46%), and just over a third of respondents were Christian (34.96%). A total of 4.41% of people that responded were followers of other religions such as; Buddhist (0.88%), Hindu (0.44%), Muslim (0.88%), Other (2.21%). Both Jewish</p>	<p>like to see more seats and resting places in outdoor spaces and recognise that upgraded outdoor spaces provide opportunities for all ages to enjoy. People with a mental health condition needed more opportunities to reduce isolation and join in with activities locally. It was noted that in responding to access requirements for disabled people that consideration be given to 'hidden' disabilities. Opportunities for play for children was felt to be important and that improved and upgrade facilities would encourage more physical activity.</p> <p>A few respondents also stated that a stronger sense of belonging and community needs to be created to help them feel safe and happier.</p>	

Group or persons consulted	Date/venue and number of people	Feedback/areas of concern raised	Action Points
	<p>and Sikh categories had zero respondents. 14.16% chose not to disclose whether they had a religion or Belief that they follow and 12 people chose to skip the question.</p> <p>Gender - Of the 229 people that chose to answer the diversity question on gender, 51.97% were female, and 38.43% were male. This shows a 13.54% difference in male and female representation. 0.87% of respondents selected that they would describe their gender in another way, such as Nonbinary and 8.73% preferred not to say.</p> <p>Sexual Orientation - Over three quarters of respondents selected their sexual orientation as Heterosexual/straight (77.73%). 1.75% were gay men, 0.44% were gay women, 1.75% were Bisexual and 2.18% selected the 'Other'</p>		

Group or persons consulted	Date/venue and number of people	Feedback/areas of concern raised	Action Points
	<p>category which totals the LGBTQI+ community representation as 6.12%. 16.16% of respondents preferred not to say.</p> <p>Marital Status - Within the survey over half of the respondents were married (51.09%), 11.79% were partnered, 10.48% were single, 6.55% were divorced, 0.44% were in a civil partnership, and 5.24% were widowed. Of the 229 respondents, 14.41% preferred to not disclose their marital status.</p> <p>Welsh Language - Respondents of the survey were also asked about their Welsh language capabilities, of the 238 people, 15 chose to skip the questions on speaking, reading and writing Welsh. 40.36% of the respondents could not write in Welsh, 45.87% could not read Welsh and 57.99% could not speak any Welsh. Only % could speak and write</p>		

Group or persons consulted	Date/venue and number of people	Feedback/areas of concern raised	Action Points
	Welsh fluently, with 3.7% able to read fluently in Welsh. However, just under half, 45.5%, could speak a little Welsh.		
Bridgend Community Cohesion and Equality Forum	Discussions at the meeting 6 th December 2022 on the well-being assessment and well-being plan development and an exercise using a 'Jamboard' to capture thoughts on the elements of the draft plan. 10 people were at the meeting and the consultation draft and link to the online survey was shared to all members.	Discussions highlighted the importance of feeling safe in communities and in local spaces.	The objective 'Health local Neighbourhoods' includes taking action in communities to address safety issues and work with people to help them to feel safe in their local area.
Health Impact Assessment	Two meetings were held to assess the draft well-being plan against the wider determinants of health, with a particular focus on equality, and how people of different equality characteristics are affected differently. 2 nd February – Bryngarw County Park – focused on Sustainable and Resilient	Full reports on the key findings are available. Some of the findings are listed below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing transport emissions and the impact this has on health (e.g. poor air quality) • There is strong motivation and engagement from the community on climate change e.g., volunteering • Community and voluntary groups provide key interventions 	These findings are reflected in the well-being plan. The detail in the engagement report will inform the development of the delivery plans.

Group or persons consulted	Date/venue and number of people	Feedback/areas of concern raised	Action Points
	<p>Local Neighbourhoods – 16 participants</p> <p>9th February – Focused on Healthy Local Neighbourhoods – 10 participants</p>	<p>/ support via social prescribing can have a positive impact on mental and physical health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • access to debt support can be integrated into other service delivery which will positively impact their stress levels and mental health • Through work settings, support can be given to parents, families • All PSB partners giving the same messages on health and wellbeing • Accessibility should consider more than just language, as there are many other factors such as geography, groups and disabilities. • People with no fixed abode fall further from access to support • In relation to safety in the area it was identified that females do not feel safe in both natural and built environments. • Increasing knowledge and bringing in different perceptions of safety could help with addressing fear of crime. • Also another item to consider is whether the anti-social behavior can be resolved or lessened through providing a sense of 	

Group or persons consulted	Date/venue and number of people	Feedback/areas of concern raised	Action Points
		<p>belonging in communities and in school, and should include things for diverse students also.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The health literacy and service information should be accessible to all across numerous platforms to allow it to reach as many members of the community as possible 	
Members workshop	<p>A hybrid members session was held on 30th January 2023, that all CTM PSB members were invited to attend to give their feedback and pose any queries with the draft well-being plan. There were 21 members in attendance for the meeting, two in person and the rest via teams.</p>	<p>Overall the comments were positive and members felt that the objectives were the right ones to focus on. Comments mainly related to the whole population. Having services in the local neighbourhood is important to access for disabled people and enables active travel. Centralising of services goes against this.</p>	
Consultation tables	<p>A series of consultation opportunities were held jointly with the community safety partnership at the following locations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridgend Bus Station • Bridgend College • Pyle Life Centre • Noddfa Community Centre • Sarn Library 	<p>Results fed into the online survey</p>	

Group or persons consulted	Date/venue and number of people	Feedback/areas of concern raised	Action Points
	<p>A printed survey was completed and the results fed into the online survey.</p> <p>Leaflets promoting the online survey were also distributed at these locations.</p>		
<p>Mental Health Hackathon</p>	<p>A 'Hackathon' event took place on 14th October and a 'Well-being Walk' session on the 12th October.</p> <p>Attendees included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substance misuse service involvement group • Mental health service users' group • Relevant professionals 	<p>Reports on key findings are available.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Integration needs to be defined and understood. 2. Services need to work together to meet the needs of the whole person 3. Stigmas need to be challenged through improved education, understanding and acceptance 4. Equity of provision and improved accessibility for everyone (everyone is a service user at some point in their life) 5. Communities (of interest and place) play an important role in improving and supporting mental health. More work needs to be done to support and recognise the preventative role our communities play. <p>Responses need to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building up community connections and support. • We need to reframe the conversation around mental health - people, including professionals, 	<p>The plan recognises that having access to opportunities to socialise and come together in the community and in local spaces is important for maintaining good mental health and this is a part of the objective 'Health Local Neighbourhoods'.</p>

Group or persons consulted	Date/venue and number of people	Feedback/areas of concern raised	Action Points
		<p>need to have permission and time and space to look after their mental health before they reach crisis point</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More representation from female than males in the engagement (observation) • Mental health can impact anyone, particularly during anxious periods like the pandemic – there needs to be a variety of support options and services available to help people at any stage of their mental health journey • Integration to help the person rather than passing between services without receiving any support • Routes to access support: self – referral, GP 	
<p>Carers Hackathon</p>	<p>Hackathon event took place on the 18th November and a community engagement session on 23rd November.</p> <p>Involving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unpaid carers • Relevant professionals 	<p>Reports on key findings are available. Below are some of the issues raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better, more proactive identification with caring responsibilities, and knowing what is there to signpost them to services • Services need to be better coordinated, with the needs of the carer at the centre. • Need to improve communication and information sharing, people need to understand what they need to do for appointments or to access services. This includes ESL, sign language and easy read (videos). 	<p>The well-being plan recognises that not everyone feels connected and loneliness can affect anyone. This workshop reinforced that this is particularly an issue for carers and that they need to be involved in further work.</p>

Group or persons consulted	Date/venue and number of people	Feedback/areas of concern raised	Action Points
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved wider community awareness, as the community can play a key role in supporting carers and cared for. • Being able to meet other carers via carer support groups was reported to be a lifeline for many, they described it as an escaped and thoroughly enjoyed attending the sessions. • More support needed for young people who have a caring role to ensure the done miss out on education and social opportunities. 	
Older People Hackathon	<p>Hackathon event took place 4th November. Community engagement tea dance took place 2nd November.</p> <p>Involving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older people • Unpaid carers • Relevant professionals 	<p>Report on key findings is available.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Face to face support is very important 2. Accessible and inclusive support in the community that could be multi-generational is needed 3. Support to attend groups and build confidence is vital 4. Digital exclusion is a real barrier 5. The need for accessible housing to support independent living is really important 6. If there's help available take it – break down the stigma with asking for help 	<p>Opportunities to be involved in local community activities and access to local support in community locations is included in the objective 'Health Local Neighbourhoods'.</p>

Group or persons consulted	Date/venue and number of people	Feedback/areas of concern raised	Action Points
Accessibility Hackathon	<p>Event took place on the 11th November.</p> <p>The event included people with physical disabilities, including people living with hearing loss</p>	<p>Report on key finding is available.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Accessibility of information is vital to break down barriers for people including ensuring online information is up to date and easy to understand 2. Transport /accessible parking remains a barrier for many to access their communities 3. Communications needs of individuals needs to be properly considered including accessibility and cultural considerations for BSL users 4. Services and organisations need to value coproduction and the use of the creative arts to engage with people bringing the community together. 5. Awareness raising, training and skills is needed at different levels to meet accessibility needs of different groups 6. Wherever possible people with lived experience should deliver training 7. People with lived experience should be involved at all stages of change rather than services being created by people who aren't living that experience 	<p>These key points will inform our delivery of the plan in relation to co-production and communication.</p>

Group or persons consulted	Date/venue and number of people	Feedback/areas of concern raised	Action Points
Co-producing Co-production event	Event took place on 29 th September. Professionals People with live experience	Report on session available. The purpose was to agree a definition for a co-production charter to be implemented across the region. The definition agreed is: “Co-production positively transforms relationships between those who provide and receive services across Cwm Taf Morgannwg, by valuing lived experience and sharing power to influence and embed meaningful change.”	The event has developed a definition of co-production that will support the work of the PSB on that commitment.
Climate Slam	Event took place on 2 nd December with members of People First in Cwm Taf and Bridgend. Adults with learning disabilities	Report on event available. The groups were split into three groups and each group moved around the three activities planned for the session covering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small changes we could make against themes and making a pledge • Homes for the future • Improving understanding on environmental impact (good v bad) 	This was a good example of involving people with learning disabilities to explore all aspects of well-being. The messages will support the development of the delivery plans and further engagement on climate change.
Snakes and Ladders – the Other Pandemic – Young People Project	This is a National Lottery’s ‘Mind our Futures’ campaign in Merthyr Tydfil. The project is led by Safer Merthyr Tydfil and the Merthyr Tydfil Borough Wide Youth Forum (MTBWYF).	Full write up of event available. Key themes were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dim cymorth yn y cymuned (no support in the community) • Dim cymorth meddygwyl yn ysgol (no mental health support in school) 	The PSB has made a particular commitment to co-production and improving the way we engage. Working with children and young people is a particular priority as they are our future generations and further work is planned to bring the voices of children and young

Group or persons consulted	Date/venue and number of people	Feedback/areas of concern raised	Action Points
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ysgol a cyfryngau cymdeithasol (school and social media) • School / Ysgol • Exams • Bullying • Social media • “Fake friends” • Parental separation • Caring responsibilities • Family issues • ACEs • Self esteem • Trying to “fit in” • Body image • Not enough support and guidance for the future • Talking to new people • Worrying over older family members 	people through to the delivery of the well-being plan.
The Talking Shop	<p>A shop front space in Merthyr Tydfil town centre. In partnership with Omidaze Productions and The Democracy Box, this is a safe space where people can come to talk about democracy but also to talk about things that are important to them...and a free cup of tea!</p> <p>Attended 4 sessions over the month of December to chat</p>	<p>Full write up of sessions conversations available.</p> <p>Tenancy, suitable accommodation, and support to find permanent residence were recurring themes, alongside really negative experiences of private landlords. Not having these is undermining any sense of well-being and making it hard to see and plan for a future.</p>	This was a good model of engagement that can inform further work of the PSB to improve the way we involve increasingly diverse communities in a very open way.

Group or persons consulted	Date/venue and number of people	Feedback/areas of concern raised	Action Points
	and meet people and talk about their well-being and other issues.		
Cwm Taf Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Committee made up of elected members from RCT and MT CBCs, lay members and other partner organisations	Broad support for the plan, members were happy with the objectives and overall statement in the Plan. A need for better collaboration between partners and impact of each objective and areas of work on the other was highlighted. Community involvement was also seen as a priority.	Community involvement and co-production are included as a specific commitment for the PSB

If you undertook a full public consultation please enter the details and a summary of the findings here:

Statutory 12 week consultation was undertaken involving an online consultation and also discussions with stakeholders and members of the public through meetings and workshops and attending public events and awareness sessions.

Engagement mechanisms included

- Online survey
- Group workshops
- Online presentation and 'jamboard'
- Attending events, community spaces, forums and engagement opportunities
- Statutory consultees and internal colleagues
- Presentations and tools for partners to use
- Health Impact Assessment workshops

The online consultation had 238 respondents

- 88% agreed – A fairer Cwm Taf Morgannwg as the overarching aim.
- 86% agreed – PSB Commitments
- Objective One
 - 86% agreed – Findings from the Well-being Assessment are accurate
 - 90% agreed – These are the right things to focus on
 - 85% agreed – This is the right aim
- Objective Two
 - 83% agreed – Findings from the Well-being Assessment are accurate

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 87% agreed – These are the right things to focus on • 79% agreed – This is the right aim • 121 people provided emails to be involved in future engagement with the PSB |
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Please list any existing documents, reports, evidence from previous engagement, previous EIAs, service user information etc. which have been used to inform this assessment.	The evidence base for the well-being plan is from the PSBs Wellbeing Assessment, previous annual reports,
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If you have identified any data gaps then you **MUST** undertake more consultation/engagement/research.

Assessment of Impact

It is important that you record the mitigating actions you will take when developing your final policy or proposal. Record here what measures or changes you will introduce to the policy or proposal in the final draft which could:

- Reduce or remove any unlawful or negative impact or disadvantage;
- Improve equality of opportunity;
- Introduce positive change;
- Reduce inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage;
- Provide opportunities for people to use the Welsh Language;
- Ensure that the Welsh Language is treated no less favourably than the English Language.

Protected characteristics

Based on the data you have analysed, and the results of consultation or engagement, consider what the potential impact will be upon people with protected characteristics (negative or positive). Include any examples of how the policy or proposal helps to promote equality. If you do identify any adverse impact you **must seek legal advice as to whether, based on the evidence provided, an adverse impact is or is potentially discriminatory, and identify steps to mitigate any adverse impact – these actions will need to be included in your action plan.**

	What are the impacts of your policy or proposal?			Why have you come to this decision? Please provide an explanation and any supporting evidence.	Considerations to mitigate negative impact(s) and/or secure positive impact(s)
	Please place an X in the relevant box				
	Positive impact(s)	Negative impact(s)	No impact		

Gender	x			<p>The well-being plan has an overarching aim for A more Equal Cwm Taf Morgannwg. This applies to all equality groups. The well-being assessment noted an increase in domestic violence and wants to work to ensure people feel safe.</p>	<p>In engagement and through monitoring and evaluation the PSB will continue to judge its impact on people with protected characteristics.</p>
Disability	x			<p>The well-being plan has an overarching aim for A more Equal Cwm Taf Morgannwg. This applies to all equality groups The plan notes that disabled people can feel excluded from community activities and young people can feel disconnected from their community. The plan wants to ensure that everyone feels connected to their community. The assessment noted that hate crime has increased and will act to ensure everyone feels safe. The regional partnership board area plan will specifically address issues related to health and social care services for their priority groups including people with a disability and continue to explore through joint engagement events.</p>	<p>As above</p>
Race	x			<p>The well-being plan has an overarching aim for A more Equal Cwm Taf Morgannwg. This applies to all equality groups. The assessment noted that hate</p>	<p>As above</p>

				crime has increased and will act to ensure everyone feels safe.	
Religion and belief	x			The well-being plan has an overarching aim for A more Equal Cwm Taf Morgannwg. This applies to all equality groups. The assessment noted that hate crime has increased and will act to ensure everyone feels safe.	As above
Sexual Orientation	x			The well-being plan has an overarching aim for A more Equal Cwm Taf Morgannwg. This applies to all equality groups. The assessment noted that hate crime has increased and will act to ensure everyone feels safe.	As above
Age	x			The well-being plan has an overarching aim for A more Equal Cwm Taf Morgannwg. This applies to all equality groups. Young people told us they can feel disconnected from their community and the plan wants to work so that everyone feels connected.	As above
Pregnancy & Maternity	x			The well-being plan has an overarching aim for A more Equal Cwm Taf Morgannwg. This applies to all equality groups. The plan notes the importance of play for children.	As above
Transgender	x			The well-being plan has an overarching aim for A more Equal Cwm Taf Morgannwg. This applies to all equality groups.	As above

				The assessment noted that hate crime has increased and will act to ensure everyone feels safe.	
Marriage and Civil partnership	x			The well-being plan has an overarching aim for A more Equal Cwm Taf Morgannwg. This applies to all equality groups.	As above

Socio-economic impact

Does the evidence gathered suggest that your policy or proposal will have a disproportionate impact on people living in socio-economic disadvantage? This could include communities of place or communities of interest (i.e., where stakeholders, service users, staff, representative bodies, etc. are grouped together because of specific characteristics or where they live).

	What are the impacts of your policy or proposal? Please place an X in the relevant box			Why have you come to this decision? Please provide an explanation and any supporting evidence.	Considerations to mitigate negative impact(s) and/or secure positive impact(s)
	Positive impact(s)	Negative impact(s)	No impact		
Socio-economic disadvantage	x			The wellbeing assessment on which the plan is based highlights the communities within our area that are more deprived. The plan highlights challenges to the cost of transport and proposes more access to services and opportunities through active travel and more locally. It recognises the importance of have low cost or no cost social opportunities. Having access to affordable healthy food locally is also an aspect of the plan. In the longer term the impact of climate	The plan commits PSB members to work together on these objectives to add value to the contributions of individual organisations. The plan includes some outcomes against each objective and will develop delivery plans that will set out specific actions, timetable and resources to ensure the plan is delivered. In engagement and through monitoring and evaluation the PSB will continue to judge its impact on people with socio-economic disadvantage.

change is anticipated to have a greater impact on more deprived communities where there is lower community resilience to the impact such as flooding or extreme weather. This plan includes a focus on understanding and adapting to the impact of climate change so that the effect on communities is reduced.

The use of green spaces in a local area offers a free opportunity to take more exercise. The plan includes promoting and improving access to these spaces.

The plan includes reducing anti-social behaviour, particularly in our town centres which make the more attractive and viable to maintain and extend employment opportunities there. The plan addresses the wider determinants of health and includes measures to promote healthy lifestyles including exercise, access to healthy food, social activity and access to natural spaces. These measures can reduce ill health such as diabetes, dementia, mental health and obesity which can impact on the ability to be in employment and maintain an income. The plan includes reducing energy use and

				<p>recycling and reuse of materials that can impact on cost of living.</p> <p>The plan also recognises that as Anchor organisations PSB members are big employers in the area and will act together to maximise our contribution to improving well-being in the area through our workforce.</p>	
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Welsh language

Consider how your policy or proposal ensures that you are working in line with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011), to ensure the Welsh Language is not treated less favourably than the English Language, and that every opportunity is taken to promote the Welsh Language (beyond providing services bilingually) and increase opportunities to use and learn the language in the community.

	What are the impacts of your policy or proposal for persons to use the Welsh language and in treating the Welsh language less favourably than the English language? Please place an X in the relevant box			Why have you come to this decision? Please provide an explanation and any supporting evidence.	Record of mitigation in order to: secure positive or more positive effects avoid adverse effects or secure less adverse effects
	Positive impact(s)	Negative impact(s)	No impact		
Will the policy or proposal impact on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language	x			<p>The plan commits to people having access to a range of community activities in the language of their choice.</p> <p>The plan will use welsh language events and opportunities such as the Eisteddfod to involve Welsh speakers in all aspects of delivery of the plan so that language choice is considered in delivery.</p>	<p>In engagement and through monitoring and evaluation the PSB will continue to judge its impact on Welsh language.</p>

Will the policy or proposal treat the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language	x			The PSB is committed to adhering to good practice in the use of Welsh no less favourably than English. Ensuring we have Welsh speakers involved in our work and as part of our engagement will help to ensure we are taking language choice into consideration in the way the PSB works.	
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Wider impact

Cumulative impact

What is the cumulative impact of this policy or proposal on different protected groups when considering other key decisions affecting these groups made by the organisation? (You may need to discuss this with your Service Head or Cabinet Member to consider more widely if this proposal will affect certain groups more adversely because of other decisions the organisation is making, eg, financial impact/poverty, withdrawal of multiple services and whether this is disadvantaging the same groups, eg, disabled people, older people, single parents (who are mainly women), etc)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act directs PSBs to consider the Economic, Social, Environmental and Cultural Well-being of the area and develop a well-being plan to improve well-being. The cumulative impact is to improve well-being and work together across organisations and with communities to understand impacts on different groups and where there could be unintended consequences.

Public Sector Equality Duty

The Public Sector Equality Duty consists of a general equality duty and specific duties, which help authorities to meet the general duty.

The aim of the general equality duty is to integrate considerations of the advancement of equality into the day-to-day business of public authorities. In summary, those subject to the equality duty, must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a characteristic and those who don't
- Foster good relations between people who share a characteristic and those who don't

How does this policy or proposal demonstrate you have given due regard to the general equality duty?

The overarching aim of the plan is to have a more Equal Cwm Taf Morgannwg. I includes measures to have more cohesive communities, promote safety and reduce anti-social behaviour and reduce crime and disorder, including hate crime so that our communities are safe places for everyone. In the development of the plan we have worked with a range of different people with different equality groups to understand what well-being means to them, so that this can influence the objectives in the plan and how it is delivered. We know from our assessment that some people, such as disabled people and young people do not always feel connected to their communities and the plan includes measures to reduce loneliness and foster a sense of belonging in communities. Through the delivery of the commitments in the Plan we intend to improve opportunities for inclusion overall, through our evaluation methods (sense checking against the Equality Duty), our work with the RPB and their focus on groups with protected characteristics, and through our engagement networks

Procurement and partnerships

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requires all public authorities to consider the needs of protected characteristics when designing and delivering public services, including where this is done in partnership with other organisations or through procurement of services. The Welsh Language Standards also require all public authorities to consider the effects of any policy decision, or change in service delivery, on the Welsh language, which includes any work done in partnership or by third parties. We must also ensure we consider the Socio-economic Duty when planning major procurement and commissioning decisions to consider how such arrangements can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage.

Will this policy or proposal be carried out wholly or partly by contractors or partners?

	Please place an X in the relevant box:
Yes	The Public Service board is a partnership of which the local authority is a partner alongside other public bodies such as the local health board, fire and rescue services and Natural Resources Wales.

If yes what steps will you take to comply with the General Equality Duty, Welsh Language Legislation and the Socio-Economic Duty in regard to procurement and/or partnerships?

	Steps taken to ensure compliance:
General Equality Duty	Public sector members on the board are subject to these duties and the PSB is committed to working in line with these duties also. Undertaking an Equality Impact Assessment on the well-being plan is part of that commitment and the well-being assessment considered the well-being of people with protected characteristics.

Welsh Language legislation	Public sector members on the board are subject to these duties and the PSB is committed to working in line with these duties also. Publication by the PSB will be bilingual and language choice considered as part of public engagement.
Socio-economic duty	Public sector members on the board are subject to these duties and the PSB is committed to working in line with these duties also. Improving community involvement and our approach to co-production will help to ensure that issues affecting less affluent communities are brought into our understanding of well-being in our communities.

Record of recommendation and decision

What is the recommendation for the policy or proposal based on assessment of impact on protected characteristics, Welsh Language and socio-economic impact?

If you chose to continue with the policy or proposal in its current form even though negative impacts have been identified a full justification should be provided and actions should be identified with the aim to reduce negative impacts.

	Please place an X in the relevant box	Please explain fully the reasons for this judgement.
Continue with the policy or proposal in its current form as no negative impacts have been identified	x	The well-being plan has been developed to have a positive impact on well-being for everyone. Our engagement and evaluation will ensure that in delivery equality is a primary driving principle.
Continue with the policy or proposal in its current form even though negative impacts have been identified		
Do not continue with this policy or proposal as it is not possible to address the negative impacts.		

Monitoring action plan and review

Equality Impact assessment Action Plan

It is essential that you now complete the action plan. Include any considerations you have identified to mitigate negative impact(s) and/or secure positive impact(s) on protected characteristics, socio-economic impact and Welsh Language. Once your action plan is complete, please ensure that the actions are mainstreamed into the relevant Service Development Plan.

Action	Lead Person	Target for completion	Resources needed	Service Development plan for this action

<i>E.G. Information about the service to be available in BSL video on the website</i>	<i>Service manager</i>	<i>End of financial year</i>	<i>£XX</i> <i>Staff time/resource</i>	<i>X Service Plan</i>
Publications will be bilingual	PSB Officer	All publications through the life of the plan	From Welsh Government engagement funding.	In the PSB Terms of Reference
Evaluation and monitoring of the plan will take into consideration the impact on protected groups and on Welsh language	PSB Officer	As part of the annual reporting cycle and through the well-being assessment.	From within existing resources.	Annual Report
The PSB will seek to involve our diverse communities, Welsh speakers and protected groups in its work	PSB Officer	Through the life of the plan	Welsh Government engagement funding	Engagement plans and reports and through evaluation methods and in collaboration with Regional Partnership Board priority groups.

Please outline how and when this EIA will be monitored in the future and when a review will take place:

Monitoring arrangements:	Date of Review:
Performance against the well-being plan is reported annually in an annual report published bilingually.	annual
Performance management arrangements will be developed across the new regional PSB structure.	Annual
Through our ongoing engagement we will have feedback from people from protected groups and across our communities to help us to judge the impact we are having.	Ongoing
The well-being plan is developed on a 5 year cycle and the existing plan will be reviewed and aligned with a refreshed well-being assessment.	5 year cycle

Approval

Date Full EIA completed:	28/03/2023
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Name of the person completing the Full EIA:	Helen Hammond, Lisa Toghill, Stephanie Davies
Position of the person completing the Full EIA:	PSB Officer, Bridgend County Borough Council
Approved by (Head of Service or Corporate Director):	Martin Morgans
Date Full EIA approved:	31/03/23

Publication of EIA and feedback to consultation groups

It is important that the results of this impact assessment are published in a user friendly accessible format.

It is also important that you feedback to your consultation groups with the actions that you are taking to address their concerns and to mitigate against any potential adverse impact.

When complete, this form must be signed off and retained by the service and a copy should also be sent to equalities@bridgend.gov.uk

Where a full EIA has been completed this should be included as an appendix with the relevant cabinet report and therefore will become available publically on the website.

If you have queries in relation to the use of this toolkit please contact the Equalities Team on 01656 643664 or equalities@bridgend.gov.uk

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