

COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY, 15 JANUARY 2025

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD HYBRID IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND, CF31 4WB ON WEDNESDAY, 15 JANUARY 2025 AT 16:00

Present

Councillor H Griffiths – Chairperson

H T Bennett
JPD Blundell
P Davies
GH Haines
J Llewellyn-Hopkins
A W Ulberini-Williams

A R Berrow
E L P Caparros
M J Evans
M L Hughes
J E Pratt
I Williams

F D Bletsoe
RJ Collins
J Gebbie
M Jones
JC Spanswick
E D Winstanley

S J Bletsoe
HJ David
RM Granville
M Lewis
JH Tildesley MBE
T Wood

Present Virtually

S Aspey
P Ford
D M Hughes
W J Kendall
A Wathan
R Williams

N Clarke
W R Goode
RM James
R J Smith
AJ Williams

C L C Davies
S J Griffiths
P W Jenkins
I M Spiller
HM Williams

N Farr
D T Harrison
M R John
T Thomas
MJ Williams

Officers:

Mark Galvin
Lindsay Harvey
Rachel Keepins
Carys Lord
Claire Marchant
Janine Nightingale
Michael Pitman
Mark Shephard
Kelly Watson

Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Corporate Director - Education, Early Years & Young People
Democratic Services Manager
Chief Officer - Finance, Housing & Change
Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing
Corporate Director - Communities
Technical Support Officer – Democratic Services
Chief Executive
Chief Officer - Legal & Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy

This document is available in Welsh / Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg

80. Apologies for absence

Decision Made	Apologies for absence were received from the following Members:- Cllr G Walter Cllr M Kearn
Date Decision Made	15 January 2025

81. Declarations of Interest

Decision Made	<p>The following declarations of personal interest were made by in Agenda Item 8 by the undermentioned Councillors, as members of their family were in receipt of Council Tax Reduction under the CTR scheme:-</p> <p>Councillor N Farr Councillor JC Spanswick</p> <p>Councillor T Wood declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 8., as he received a single occupancy reduction in Council Tax for his property.</p> <p>Councillor P Davies declared a prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 8., as a close family member was in receipt of Council Tax reduction. Councillor Davies left the meeting whilst this item was being considered</p> <p>Councillor J Pratt declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 4., as a member of Her Majesty's Coastguards.</p>
Date Decision Made	15 January 2025

82. Approval of Minutes

Decision Made	<u>RESOLVED:</u> That the minutes of a meeting of Council dated 20 November 2024, be approved as a true and accurate record.
Date Decision Made	15 January 2025

83. Presentation to Council by representatives of the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service

Decision Made	<p>The Chief Executive presented a report, which invited Mr. Fin Monahan, Chief Officer, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service and colleagues to give a power point presentation, on the latest work of the service.</p> <p>Following conclusion of the presentation, the Mayor invited questions from members, which included the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What qualities, values and skills do you have to take on the operational changes required in the service in order to deal effectively with the previous cultural failings that had been experienced;• In Llantwit Major all 4 emergency services are based at one location. Do you think this type of joint service is effective and sustainable from a 'cost' perspective;• In respect of usable reserves, it was noted from the power point slides that between 2025/26 there was a figure of approximately £3m reduction in reserves. There was a similar dip in 2027/28, so please could we have an update on this for the remainder of 2027/28. Also, what cost pressures are anticipated within the above periods to reduce these reserves;• In terms of reaching out to the most vulnerable in society, my understanding is that you do not currently record the numbers of care experienced children and young people, could you explain the reasons for this. Also, how do you collaborate and/or liaise with other emergency services such as the South Wales Police, etc regarding looking after the most vulnerable;• With regards to finances, the presentation confirmed that there was proposed a 4.88% precept to BCBC, however, a third of that was directly connected to National Insurance Contributions (NIC) in the last budget figures. It was also confirmed in the presentation, that the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service would be reimbursed this via BCBC through Welsh Government (WG). Is this the case, as I thought that WG were likely to reimburse the Council's NIC increase and possibly those in our 'direct supply chain'. Some clarity here would be welcomed;
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regarding your reserves, are the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service setting a budget next year on the assumption that it may have to use some of its Reserves in order to obtain a balanced budget. If this is to be the case, how do you intend building reserves back up, in order that they are sustainable long term; and• One area not discussed in the presentation was Building Safety. With the Building Safety Act currently being proposed as part of new legislation, will this be an additional challenge for you and if so, how do you intend collaborating with local authorities to enforce the provisions of this new legislation, particularly with regards to fire safety regulation compliance. Would you also have any information regarding levels of unsafe cladding and buildings within the Bridgend County Borough. <p>The South Wales Fire and Rescue Service representatives responded to some of the above questions, adding that any that they could not satisfactorily or fully answer, then they would respond to the Councillor that posed these outside of the meeting.</p> <p>Finally, prior to the Mayor thanking Mr Fin Monahan and colleagues for attending today's meeting, she asked if they could arrange for their presentation given today to be forwarded onto all members by email.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> That Council noted both the report and the presentation.</p>
Date Decision Made	15 January 2025

84. To receive announcements from:

Decision Made	Announcements were received from the following dignitaries (no decisions required/made):- <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mayor;• Chief Executive
Date Decision Made	15 January 2025

85. To receive announcements by the Leader

Decision Made	Announcements were received from the Leader (No decisions required/made)
Date Decision Made	15 January 2025

86. Appointment Process: Chief Executive

Decision Made	<p>The Monitoring Officer presented a report, the purpose of which, was to provide Council with information about the recruitment process for the Chief Executive.</p> <p>She referred Members to the report and advised that the current Chief Executive would be retiring from BCBC on 30 June 2025.</p> <p>Through a competitive tendering process, Solace in Business had been appointed to assist in the recruitment process and what this would entail, was explained at the meeting by the Monitoring Officer.</p> <p>As the appointment to the post of Chief Executive had to be approved by Council, it was anticipated that an Extraordinary meeting of Council would be convened for this purpose on 2 April 2025, with this date (or an alternative date) being confirmed in due course.</p> <p>Though the membership of the Appointments Committee had been agreed at the last Annual meeting of Council, two substitutions would now be on the Panel to consider the Chief Executives appointment, from the Labour and BCI groups.</p> <p>Therefore the composition of the Appointments Committee for this appointment would be as follows:-</p> <p>Councillor JC Spanswick (Chairperson) Councillor J Gebbie Councillor Amanda Williams (substituting Councillor T Wood) Councillor I Spiller Councillor R Penhale-Thomas Councillor RM James Councillor M Evans (substituting Councillor HM Williams) Councillor J Paul-Blundell</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> That Council approved the recruitment process as outlined at</p>
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	paragraph 3.2 of the report.
Date Decision Made	15 January 2025

87. Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2025-26

Decision Made	<p>The Chief Officer – Finance, Housing and Change, submitted a report, in order to provide Council with information regarding the proposed 2025-26 Council Tax Reduction (CTR) Scheme, and to seek its approval to adopt this CTR scheme by 31 January 2025.</p> <p>She advised that on 27 November 2013, the Welsh Assembly laid regulations that implemented the arrangements to support those who will pay council tax. The Council Tax Reduction Schemes and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2013 and Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Default Scheme) (Wales) Regulations 2013 prescribe the main features of the scheme to be adopted by all councils in Wales. Minor amendments to these regulations have since been made each financial year.</p> <p>The regulations uprated the financial figures used in the CTR schemes and make amendments to the categories reflected in the bullet points shown at paragraph 3.4 of the report.</p> <p>The Chief Officer – Finance, Housing and Change confirmed that Council must adopt a CTR Scheme, regardless of whether it applies any of the discretionary elements that are included within the scheme. If the Council fails to approve a scheme, then a default scheme would apply. The Council can only apply discretion if it makes its own scheme in accordance with the Prescribed Requirements Regulations.</p> <p>It was proposed that the discretionary elements of the CTR Scheme remained as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The extended payment period is maintained at the minimum standard of 4 weeks.• War Disablement Pensions and War Widows Pensions are fully disregarded when calculating entitlement to CTR. The estimated cost of this proposal within the financial year is £5,773.• Backdating is maintained at the minimum standard of 3 months. <p>The total estimated cost to the Council for these three proposals is £5,773 for 2025-26.</p>
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	<u>RESOLVED:</u> That Council noted the information contained above and in the report and adopted the Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2025-26, as set out in paragraphs 3.15 to 3.20 (of the report.)
Date Decision Made	15 January 2025

88. Amendment to the Constitution - Financial Procedure Rules

Decision Made	<p>The Monitoring Officer submitted a report, the purpose of which, was to seek approval from Council to amend the Constitution in relation to the Financial Procedure Rules (FPR's).</p> <p>She explained that following a meeting of Council on 20 November 2024, the FPRs have been further reviewed by officers and Cabinet Members.</p> <p>Therefore, since then, on 14 January 2025 Cabinet approved the further revisions to the FPR's as shown at paragraph 3.2 of the report and attached at Appendix 1 (to the report).</p> <p>A Member referred to the revision relating to paragraph 9.4 of the FPR's, where it referenced that there are a small number of exceptions where some payments are permitted to be paid in advance without prior approval. He noted that these included to Third Sector organisations. He asked the Chief Officer – Finance, Housing and Change if she could share a little more information regarding this.</p> <p>She stated that any third sector organisation that requested an advance payment would be suitably assessed should they have met the relevant criteria. Where financial hardship could be proven that if they were not paid in advance they would face such hardship, then a payment could be made to the organisation in question in advance.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> That Council approved the amendments to the Constitution in relation to the revised Financial Procedure Rules attached as Appendix 1 to the report.</p>
Date Decision Made	15 January 2025

89. Information Report for Noting

This document is available in Welsh / Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg

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Decision Made	<p>The Chief Officer, Legal and Regulatory Services, HR and Corporate Policy informed Council of an information report for noting, that had been published since the last scheduled meeting.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> That Council acknowledged the publication of the report referred to in paragraph 3.1 of the report.</p>
Date Decision Made	15 January 2025

90. To receive the following Question from:

Decision Made	<p>Councillor Martin Williams to the Leader (response circulated to Members in advance of the meeting).</p> <p>A supplementary question was asked by Councillor Williams (to the Leader) at the meeting.</p>
Date Decision Made	15 January 2025

91. Notice of Motion Proposed by Councillor Ian Williams

Decision Made	<p>The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Ian Williams:-</p> <p>“During the recent consultation and subsequent teams meeting with Arcadis regarding the Cafe & Cultural Quarter it was evident from the three options presented that safely reintroducing traffic to Queen Street, Dunraven Place and Market Street have not been considered to date.</p> <p>It is also noted “The Bridgend Town Centre Update.. Aug 24” only makes reference to “full de-pedestrianisation”.</p> <p>This council asks cabinet to consider committing to a partial reintroduction of traffic to Queen Street, Dunraven Place and Market Street at the earliest practicable opportunity to support town centre traders and previously recognised residents’ consultation.”</p> <p>An amendment to the Motion was moved and this was duly seconded and subsequently agreed by</p>
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	<p>Council. The amended Notice of Motion so supported therefore, was as follows, with the amendment being shown below in bold:-</p> <p>“During the recent consultation and subsequent teams meeting with Arcadis regarding the Cafe & Cultural Quarter it was evident from the three options presented that safely reintroducing traffic to Queen Street, Dunraven Place and Market Street have not been considered to date.</p> <p>It is also noted “The Bridgend Town Centre Update.. Aug 24” only makes reference to “full de-pedestrianisation”.</p> <p>That this Council asks cabinet to consider committing to a partial reintroduction of traffic and also modernisation of all transport and access to Queen Street, Dunraven Place and Market Street at the earliest practicable opportunity to support town centre traders and previously recognised residents’ consultation”.</p>
Date Decision Made	15 January 2025

92. Urgent Items

Decision Made	There were no urgent items
Date Decision Made	15 January 2025

To observe further debate that took place on the above items, please click this [link](#)

The meeting closed at 18:10.