

Public Document Pack
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. Rhwch 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 / 643694 / 643513
Gofynnwch am / Ask for: Democratic Services

Ein cyf / Our ref:
Eich cyf / Your ref:

Dyddiad/Date: Wednesday 8 January 2025

Dear Councillor,

COUNCIL

A meeting of the Council will be held Hybrid in the Council Chamber Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB on **Wednesday, 15 January 2025 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

To receive for approval the minutes of 20/11/2024

5 - 18

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

19 - 20

5 To receive announcements from:

By receiving this Agenda Pack electronically you will save the Authority approx. £3.60 in printing costs

- (i) Mayor (or person presiding)
- (ii) Chief Executive

6	<u>To receive announcements by the Leader</u>	
7	<u>Appointment Process: Chief Executive</u>	21 - 24
8	<u>Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2025-26</u>	25 - 32
9	<u>Amendment to the Constitution - Financial Procedure Rules</u>	33 - 62
10	<u>Information Report for Noting</u>	63 - 180

11 To receive the following Question from:

Councillor Martin Williams to the Leader

How many 20mph roads have (or will) reverted to 30mph following review?

12 Notice of Motion Proposed by Councillor Ian Williams

'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.

It is also noted "The Bridgend Town Centre Update.. Aug 24" only makes reference to "full de-pedestrianisation".

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.'

13 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 live. Any queries regarding this meeting, please contact cabinet_committee@bridgend.gov.uk or tel. 01656 643148 / 643694 / 643513 / 643159.

Yours faithfully

K Watson

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

Distribution:

All Members

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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, 20 NOVEMBER 2024 AT 16:00

Present

Councillor H Griffiths – Mayor and Chairperson

A R Berrow
HJ David
J Gebbie
M Jones
JC Spanswick

S J Bletsoe
P Davies
RM Granville
M Lewis
JH Tildesley MBE

E L P Caparros
M J Evans
GH Haines
J Llewellyn-Hopkins
HM Williams

RJ Collins
N Farr
M L Hughes
J E Pratt
T Wood

Present Virtually

H T Bennett
P Ford
RM James
R J Smith
G Walter
MJ Williams

JPD Blundell
W R Goode
P W Jenkins
I M Spiller
A Wathan
R Williams

N Clarke
S J Griffiths
M R John
T Thomas
AJ Williams
E D Winstanley

C L C Davies
D M Hughes
W J Kendall
A W Ulberini-Williams
I Williams

Officers:

Mark Galvin
Laura Griffiths
Lindsay Harvey
Carys Lord
Claire Marchant
Janine Nightingale
Michael Pitman
Anya Richards
Mark Shephard
Kelly Watson

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

Apologies for absence

Decision Made	Apologies for absence were received from the following Councillors:- M Kearn F Bletsoe D Harrison
Date Decision Made	20 November 2024

68. Declarations of Interest

Decision Made	<p>The following declarations of interest were made:-</p> <p>Councillor R Williams Agenda item 9, personal interest as the Pencoed Road bridge is mentioned in the report, which is something he had been campaigning for, for a number of years.</p> <p>Councillor E Winstanley Agenda item 4, personal interest as she is an employee of Halo Leisure and Agenda item 9 personal interest, as she works for Awen Cultural Trust who manage the Grand Pavilion, Porthcawl.</p> <p>Councillor M Evans Agenda item 9, personal interest as a Pencoed Town Councillor, a School Governor at Croesty Primary School and having campaigned for some considerable time for the Pencoed Road Bridge.</p> <p>Councillor J Gebbie Agenda item 9, personal interest as a School Governor at Mynydd Cynffig Primary School</p> <p>Councillor H Bennett Agenda item 8 personal interest as she works in the third sector and has commented previously on advance payments to third sector organisations.</p> <p>Councillor Amanda Williams Agenda item 9 prejudicial interest as Chairperson of Coety Primary School where reference is made in the report to there being further financial commitment to the scope of this project. Councillor Williams left the meeting during consideration of this item.</p>
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Date Decision Made	20 November 2024

69. Approval of Minutes

Decision Made	<u>RESOLVED:</u> That the minutes of a meeting of Council dated 23 October 2024, be approved as a true and accurate record.
Date Decision Made	20 November 2024

70. Presentation to Council by the Chief Executive of Halo Leisure

Decision Made	<p>The Chief Executive presented a report, that introduced Scott Rolfe, Chief Executive Officer of Halo Leisure, who gave a resume of the work of the organisation, in its support of health and leisure facilities available to the public.</p> <p>He advised that he would give some background on how Halo Leisure and BCBC initially collaborated their resources and give an overview of the partnership and when/how it came about. The presentation would concentrate on the 8 core life centres in Bridgend; outline some key performance data, give a flavour of the size of the service and the impact it has within the County Borough, particularly in relation to supporting the local authority's wellbeing objectives.</p> <p>The presentation would also outline some successes of the service in the way it has impacted on communities that comprise BCBC and give examples of future options being considered, in order to build upon current service provision.</p> <p>Following Mr. Rolfe's submission, the Mayor opened up questions and example of which were as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is noted that you have reduced the consumption of carbon emissions by 12%. Are there any further strategies or proposals being considered to reduce these further;• A member wished to reiterate some of the 'Feel Good for Life' sessions that took place in Bridgend, Ogmere Vale and Cornelly as well as on-line. She felt these were worth visiting.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the cost to empty the Halo swimming pools of water and re-fill/re-heat these? • Could you expand upon the type of works that had been required to the roof and cladding at the Bridgend Life Centre recently? • Does Halo encourage people to subscribe to membership at Life Centres etc, through offering discount services, including to those public who were young, pensioners, those on benefits or veterans; • Could Halo consider expanding by taking over some community assets under something similar to the Council's Community Asset Transfer scheme? • There needs to be more of a community focused provision provided at life centres in the valley areas of the Garw and Ogmore Vale; • Have Halo any intention of expanding their service outside the areas of Hereford and Bridgend? • What would be the most efficient method for Councillors to make referrals to Halo on behalf of their constituents – is there a specific contact officer or way to do this? • Are Life centres required to meet a minimum temperature when it came to heating the water in their swimming pools. <p>The questions and queries raised above (as well as any others) that Mr. Rolfe could not sufficiently respond to, he confirmed that he would follow-up and respond to outside of the meeting.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the report of the Chief Executive and the presentation by the Chief Executive of Halo Leisure, be noted.</p>
Date Decision Made	20 November 2024

71. 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	20 November 2024

To receive announcements by the Leader

Decision Made	Announcements were received from the Leader (No decisions required/made)
Date Decision Made	20 November 2024

73. Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Licensing Principles 2025-2028

Decision Made	<p>The Chief Officer – Legal and Regulatory Services, HR and Corporate Policy presented a report, the purpose of which, was to seek Council approval of the publication of the Council’s Statement of Licensing Principles for the next triennial period 2025 to 2028.</p> <p>In April 2023 the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) published its gambling white paper which included proposals for modernising regulation of the land-based sector.</p> <p>Following a public consultation with a range of stake holders, on 16 May 2024 the Government published its conclusions and proposals that will impact the sector throughout Great Britain.</p> <p>The proposed changes were detailed in paragraph 3.3 of the report, however the Licensing Authority proposed that no policy changes be made to its Statement of Licensing Principles at this time.</p> <p>Appendix B to the report, outlined a response from GamCare to the statutory consultation which had been published on the Council’s website for a period of a month in the summer period.</p> <p>A member asked if there would be any limitations proposed on using cashless payments for gambling purposes, for example, in respect of gaming machines.</p> <p>The Operational Manager – Neighbourhood Services (SRS) Management Team confirmed that there will be appropriate player protections introduced when these have been framed and formulated by government, around issues such as limiting age restriction and restricting upper limits to levels that can be gambled, with processes also being put in place in conjunction with this, to monitor these.</p> <p>A member raised some concerns over the growth of advertising of gambling on television/social media etc and asked, if local authorities could do anything to reduce this.</p>
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	<p>The Operational Manager – Neighbourhood Services (SRS) Management Team stated that licensing authorities could not regulate the above as this was regulated by the Gambling Commission. However, when there were any changes relating to gambling, local authorities were a consultee and could therefore give their feedback including any concerns to the changes so proposed.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That Council approved the proposed Statement of Licensing Principles as attached at Appendix A to the report, for publication in accordance with the relevant regulations.</p>
Date Decision Made	20 November 2024

74. Amendments to the Constitution

Decision Made	<p>The Monitoring Officer presented a report, seeking approval from Council to a series of suggested amendments to the Constitution.</p> <p>These related to the Council's Financial Procedure Rules (FPR's) as referenced to in paragraph 3.1 of the report. At a meeting of Cabinet yesterday, the amendments to the FPR's as tracked changed in Appendix 1 to the report before members today, were approved.</p> <p>The report also requested changes to the composition of the Rights of Way Sub-Committee and to Special Procedures under the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017, governed by the Licensing Committee, as detailed in paragraphs 3.3 to 3.5 of the report inclusive. These recommended changes necessitated amending the Council's Constitution.</p> <p>There were further grammatical changes proposed to the Constitution, however, these could be made under delegated authority by the Monitoring Officer.</p> <p>Members made a number of points primarily in relation to the FPR's:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There needed to be included as part of the FPR's third sector advance payments, ie that each payment would be considered on their merits and in-line with the third sector scheme and funding Code of Practice. • Reference was made fairly frequently in the FPR's to approval being given for delegated authority
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	<p>being given to Chief Officers to approve virements etc, by not more than £100k (subject to the approval of the Chief Finance Officer). However, a member considered that given the financial restraints and cost cutting proposals facing the Council going forward, should this figure be reduced so as to have tighter financial control over Directorate/Council budgets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In respect of section 5.2 of the FPR’s, should the Council have a register containing all contracts, not those that just exceed £50k. • In relation to section 5.7, where it states that ‘each Chief Officer shall, as soon as practical, report to Cabinet the total of extras or variations to any contract which exceeds 10% of the original contract sum, or £100,000 whichever is the greater’, this could result in large scale contracts exceeding their original value by an estimate in some cases, of £600 - £800k. This is too much of a relaxation on the Council’s financial controls by way of a method of delegated authority. • Section 9.3 of the FPR’s – and the additional last sentence, ‘any changes to authorisation limits should be notified to the Business Support Manager promptly’, the word promptly should be replaced with a specific time period. <p>In light of the debate that ensued on the report, Members agreed with the changes to the Constitution referenced to in the third paragraph above, but were of the opinion that a further report be submitted to Cabinet at it’s next meeting, on the FPR’s, possibly taking into account the information outlined in the above bullet points.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> That Council:</p> <p>(1) Approved the amendments to the Constitution in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Rights of Way Sub-Committee as outlined in paragraph 3.3 of the report; • the Licensing Committee as outlined in paragraph 3.5. <p>(2) Agreed for the current Financial Procedure Rules detailed at Appendix 1 to the report to remain as currently exists, with a further report being submitted to the January Cabinet meeting on the FPR’s, for consideration.</p>
Date Decision Made	20 November 2024

75. Capital Programme Quarter 2 Update 2024-25

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

<p>Decision Made</p>	<p>The Chief Officer – Finance, Housing and Change presented a report that confirmed that paragraph 3.5.3 of the Financial Procedure Rules require that she shall report quarterly to Cabinet and Council with an update on the Capital Strategy and the Prudential Indicators. This report fulfilled that requirement.</p> <p>The report therefore provided an update on the quarter 2 spend and projected spend for 2024-25 as at 30 September 2024, the revised capital programme for 2024-25 to 2033-34 and the projected Prudential and Other Indicators for 2024-25.</p> <p>Appendix A of the report showed the budgets, spend to date and projected year end spend as at 30 September 2024 for the individual schemes in 2024-25.</p> <p>Appendix B included the revised capital programme for 2024-25 to 2033-34, while Appendix C gave details of the actual Prudential and Other Indicators for 2023-24 and projected 2024-25.</p> <p>Table 1 in the report detailed the capital programme for each Directorate from the July 2024, approved Council position to Quarter 2</p> <p>Table 2 summarised the current funding assumptions for the capital programme for 2024-25. The Chief Officer – Finance, Housing and Change explained that capital resources are managed to ensure that maximum financial benefit for the Council is achieved. This may require the realignment of funding to maximise government grants.</p> <p>The remainder of the report gave details of the schemes pending, including also, details of any further allocation of funding to some of these, for varying reasons so outlined in the document.</p> <p>Members asked some questions of the Cabinet and Corporate Management Board, which were responded to by these Councillors and Officers.</p> <p>The Leader advised that there were some amazing projects included in the programme, including for example, the refurbishment of Heronsbridge school and the inaugural opening today of Maesteg Town Hall, which was an excellent facility for the people of Maesteg, the wider County Borough and visitors to the area.</p> <p>Some Members were concerned that certain projects had been delayed and were therefore slipping from this quarter of the capital programme to the next and that the delay of some of these had resulted in resources having to be committed to them.</p>
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	<p>The Leader advised that as members were probably aware, a Capital Programme Monitoring Board had been established within the last 12 months and the Board was looking in more detail at estimated costing of projects going forward, to ensure wherever possible, that they remained upon construction within estimated budget.</p> <p>A member proposed a vote upon the recommendations of the report, as he was not sufficiently informed by the report of how much financial contingency was held in the capital programme to support the individual projects it contained, from project level up to programme level.</p> <p>The above motion was duly seconded.</p> <p>The result of the vote was as follows:-</p> <table border="1"><thead><tr><th><u>For (the recommendations of the report)</u></th><th><u>Against</u></th><th><u>Abstentions</u></th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>39</td><td>2</td><td>0</td></tr></tbody></table> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> That Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Noted the Council's Capital Programme 2024-25 Quarter 2 update to 30 September 2024 (Appendix A to the report referred).• Noted the slippage of £12.643 million to 2024-25, as detailed in Appendix B of the report.• Approved the virements between schemes as detailed in Appendix B.• Approved the new additions/reductions to the capital programme in 2024-25, totalling -£3.831 million as outlined in Appendix B.• Approved the new additions to the capital programme between 2025-26 and 2027-28, totalling £19.520 million as detailed in Section 3.3.• Noted the actual Prudential and Other Indicators for 2023-24 and projected for 2024-25 (at Appendix C of the report).	<u>For (the recommendations of the report)</u>	<u>Against</u>	<u>Abstentions</u>	39	2	0
<u>For (the recommendations of the report)</u>	<u>Against</u>	<u>Abstentions</u>					
39	2	0					

Date Decision Made	20 November 2024
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Treasury Management Half Year Report to September 2024

Decision Made	<p>The Chief Officer – Finance, Housing and Change presented a financial report on the above matter.</p> <p>She advised that paragraph 22.5 of the Financial Procedure Rules required the Chief Finance Officer to report quarterly to Cabinet, summarising borrowing and investment activity and indicating compliance with any statutory or Council approved guidelines, together with a half yearly and an annual report to Council.</p> <p>The report before Members provided an update of Treasury Management activity for the half year period 1 April 2024 – 30 September 2024.</p> <p>As at 30 September 2024, the Council had £99.58 million of long term debt, £15.32 million of other long term liabilities and an overall net debt position of £69.90 million.</p> <p>The average interest rate for debt was 4.69% (excluding Salix borrowing which is interest free) and for investments it was 5.09%.</p> <p>She highlighted that the Council had a manageable maturity structure of borrowing, with its current debt repayable at various points over the next 30 years.</p> <p>The Council had also she confirmed, complied with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management Code and Welsh Government Investment Guidance.</p> <p>A member stated that he felt reassured to note from the top of page 128 of the report, that the overall interest that the Council had received from Treasury investments from the period April to September 2024, amounted to £2.31m. He felt that this confirmed how competent the Council's Finance team were when it came to the management of BCB's finances.</p> <p>A Cabinet member for Resources noted that the Public Accounts Committee had recently confirmed that debt within local authorities in Wales stood at £5.6m, which was lower than in local authorities both in England and in Scotland. Also, of the 22 welsh local authorities, Bridgend had lowest amount of debt aside of Merthyr Borough Council, however, if this was calculated on a 'per head' basis, then BCBC was actually the lowest in Wales.</p>
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	town/community council would still receive the money anticipated at the 97.5%, so therefore it was based on an average across the Council.
	<p><u>RESOLVED:</u> That Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved the council tax base and collection rate for 2025-26 as shown in paragraph 3.1 of this report. • Further approved the tax bases for the town and community areas set out in Appendix A of the report.
Date Decision Made	20 November 2024

78. To receive the following Question from:

Decision Made	Councillor Tim Thomas to the Leader (response circulated to Members in advance of the meeting). A supplementary question was asked by Councillor Thomas (to the Leader).
Date Decision Made	20 November 2024

79. Urgent Items

Decision Made	There were no urgent items
Date Decision Made	20 November 2024.

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

The meeting closed at 18:45.

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Meeting of:	COUNCIL
Date of Meeting:	15 JANUARY 2025
Report Title:	PRESENTATION TO COUNCIL BY REPRESENTATIVES OF THE SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE
Responsible Officer:	MARK GALVIN SENIOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER - COMMITTEES
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect on the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.
Executive Summary:	The report will invite a presentation from representatives of the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service updating members on the latest work being undertaken by the organisation.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Council of a presentation proposed to be delivered to Council, by representatives of the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

2. Background

- 2.1 Council will be accustomed to receiving presentations from its key partners, stakeholders and other organisations periodically in the past.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 The presentation will be given at its January meeting by the Chief Fire Officer of the service, who will be accompanied by the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service Treasurer and Director of Service Delivery.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

- 4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there

will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

5.1 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.

6. Climate Change Implications

6.1 There are no climate change implications arising from this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 There are no safeguarding or corporate parent implications arising from this report.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

9. Recommendation

9.1 That Council is recommended to note the presentation as referred to at paragraph 3.1 of the report.

Background documents

None.

Meeting of:	COUNCIL
Date of Meeting:	15 JANUARY 2025
Report Title:	APPOINTMENT PROCESS: CHIEF EXECUTIVE
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	MONITORING OFFICER
Responsible Officer:	LAURA GRIFFITHS GROUP MANAGER LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the policy framework and procedure rules.
Executive Summary:	To provide Members with information about the recruitment process for the Chief Executive.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Council with information about the recruitment process for the Chief Executive.

2. Background

- 2.1 The position of Chief Executive will become vacant following the current post holder confirming his intention to step down from the role and retire in 2025.
- 2.2 A recruitment process will need to be undertaken in compliance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (Wales) Regulations 2006 (as amended) and the Officer Employment Procedure Rules within Section 12 of the Council's Constitution.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 The Council will engage professional support to undertake an executive search and assessment for this role to ensure that it is marketed widely and that a robust appointments process is followed.
- 3.2 The position will be advertised at the end of January / early February 2025, and it is proposed that the process following receipt of applications is as follows:
- Appointments Committee to receive feedback from recruitment specialist and agree long list of candidates to attend the assessment centre.

- Assessment centre held for longlisted candidates comprising a managerial/technical interview with an external expert; stakeholder panel; psychometric testing and interactive assessments.
- Appointments Committee to receive feedback on the results of the assessment centre and interview candidates who have demonstrated that they possess the attributes required for the position.
- Appointment Committee to determine shortlist of candidates to go before Council.
- Council to receive presentation from candidates and determine by way of vote which candidate is appointed to the post. This may require an Extraordinary Meeting of Council to be convened in early April 2025.

3.3 The Appointments Committee comprises of the following Members:

- Leader (Chairperson)
- Deputy Leader
- Cabinet Member (of relevant portfolio to the post)
- 2 Bridgend County Independent Members
- 2 Democratic Alliance Members
- 1 Labour Member

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

5.1 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.

6. Climate Change Implications

6.1 There are no climate change implications arising from this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 There are no safeguarding or corporate parent implications arising from this report.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 The cost of recruitment will be charged to the Chief Executive's budget.

9. Recommendation

9.1 Council is recommended to approve the recruitment process as outlined at paragraph 3.2 of the report.

Background documents

None

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Agenda Item 8

Meeting of:	COUNCIL
Date of Meeting:	15 JANUARY 2025
Report Title:	COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2025-26
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CHIEF OFFICER – FINANCE, HOUSING AND CHANGE
Responsible Officer:	JANICE JENKINS BENEFITS AND FINANCIAL ASSESSMENTS MANAGER
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	The Council Tax Reduction Scheme is set in accordance with the Policy Framework and Budget Procedure Rules.
Executive Summary:	<p>The report outlines the requirement for the Council to adopt a Council Tax Reduction (CTR) scheme for 2025-26 by 31 January 2025. The scheme provides vital assistance for those on low incomes with a liability to pay council tax.</p> <p>Amendment regulations have been laid by Welsh Government uprating the financial figures used in the CTR schemes and making amendments to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • permit an application for CTR to be treated as made where a person has claimed Universal Credit, and the Secretary of State has provided the administering billing authority with information about that claim. • provide for further exemptions from the habitual residence test for persons displaced by violence in Sudan, Israel, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem, the Golan Heights or Lebanon, dependent on immigration status, and for those who are given temporary leave to stay in the United Kingdom under the Migrant Victims of Domestic Abuse concession (which replaces the Destitution Domestic Violence concession). • Add payments made under the Victims of Overseas Terrorism Compensation Scheme to the list of ‘capital disregards’. • remove legislative references and provisions relating to liability to pay Class 2 National Insurance Contributions (NICs) for self-employed earners so that the legislation continues to work as intended.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make a minor technical amendment to update a previous reference in relation to statutory parental bereavement pay. <p>The 2025-26 scheme maintains the maximum level of support at 100% for eligible claimants. The cost of the CTR scheme for 2025-26 is estimated at £17.1m, which includes the cost of disregarding war pensions in full when calculating CTR entitlement (estimated at £5,773).</p>
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1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Council with information regarding the proposed 2025-26 Council Tax Reduction (CTR) Scheme, and seeks Council approval to adopt this CTR scheme by 31 January 2025.

2. Background

- 2.1 CTR provides assistance for those on low incomes with a liability to pay council tax.
- 2.2 Under Part 1 of the Welfare Reform Act 2012 (chapter 3, section 33) the UK government abolished Council Tax Benefit (CTB) with the intention of localising support for council tax from 31 March 2013.
- 2.3 From this date the responsibility to provide support for council tax and the funding associated with it, was devolved to local authorities in England, to the Scottish Government and to the Welsh Government, with a commitment from the UK government to also reduce UK government expenditure on the benefit by 10%. The Welsh Government was thereafter responsible for the establishment of localised schemes in Wales.
- 2.4 The Welsh Government decided to develop a single nationally defined scheme set out in regulations for the provision of council tax support in Wales. The scheme also provided for a small number of discretionary elements which individual councils can choose to adopt; any additional associated costs were to be locally funded.
- 2.5 On 17 January 2024, the Council adopted the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2024-25 in accordance with The Council Tax Reduction Schemes and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2013. This scheme will end on 31 March 2025.
- 2.6 From the latest data, there are currently 12,199 households receiving CTR; 7,959 of these are of working age and 4,240 are of pensionable age. Out of the 12,199 households receiving CTR, 9,739 are entitled to a full reduction.

3. Current situation / proposal

3.1 The Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2025-26

- 3.2 The CTR Scheme in Wales is set by regulations made under Schedule 1B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as inserted by the Local Government Finance Act 2012).

- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Miscellaneous Amendments) (Wales) Regulations 2025 have now been laid before the Senedd for approval. Subject to the approval of the Senedd, these Regulations will update the financial figures in the 2013 Regulations to ensure that the scheme in place for the 2025-26 financial year reflects increases in the cost-of-living. These regulations update the financial figures used in the CTR schemes and make amendments to:
- permit an application for CTR to be treated as made where a person has claimed Universal Credit, and the Secretary of State has provided the administering billing authority with information about that claim.
 - provide for further exemptions from the habitual residence test for persons displaced by violence in Sudan, Israel, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem, the Golan Heights or Lebanon, dependent on immigration status, and for those who are given temporary leave to stay in the United Kingdom under the Migrant Victims of Domestic Abuse concession (which replaces the Destitution Domestic Violence concession).
 - add payments made under the Victims of Overseas Terrorism Compensation Scheme to the list of 'capital disregards'.
 - remove legislative references and provisions relating to liability to pay Class 2 National Insurance Contributions (NICs) for self-employed earners so that the legislation continues to work as intended.
 - make a minor technical amendment to update a previous reference in relation to statutory parental bereavement pay.
- 3.5 The new Regulations do not contain any significant changes, from the claimants' perspective, to the current scheme and the maximum level of support that eligible claimants can receive remains at 100%. The Regulations can be found at: [The Council Tax Reduction Schemes \(Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme\) \(Miscellaneous Amendments\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2025](#).
- 3.6 Within the Prescribed Requirements Regulations there is limited discretion given to the Council to apply discretionary elements that are more generous than the national scheme. These are:
- The ability to increase the standard extended reduction period of 4 weeks given to persons after they return to work (where they have previously been receiving CTR that is to end as a result of their return to work);
 - Discretion to increase the amount of War Disablement Pensions and War Widows Pensions which is to be disregarded when calculating income of the claimant; and
 - The ability to backdate the application of CTR with regard to late claims prior to the new standard period of three months before the claim.

- 3.7 The Council must adopt a CTR Scheme regardless of whether it applies any of the discretionary elements. If the Council fails to approve a scheme, then a default scheme shall apply. The Council can only apply discretion if it makes its own scheme in accordance with the Prescribed Requirements Regulations.
- 3.8 It is proposed that the discretionary elements remain as follows:
- 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.
- 3.9 The total estimated cost to the Council for these three proposals is £5,773 for 2025-26.
- 3.10 **Main Issues**
- 3.11 The Council must consider whether to replace or revise its CTR scheme and is obliged to make a scheme under the requirements of the Prescribed Requirements Regulations. The obligation is a statutory duty and applies even if the Council chooses not to apply any of the discretions available to it.
- 3.12 The recommended approach to the available discretions is to apply the recommendations in Table 1 at paragraph 3.20 of this report. It should be noted that there are no additional monies available from the Welsh Government to fund the discretionary elements.
- 3.13 The scheme must be administered by local authorities within a fixed budget. There are significant difficulties adequately funding a service which is demand led with a fixed cost budget provision. The Welsh Government has confirmed there will be no additional funding to bridge any gap and each authority will be expected to meet any shortfall.
- 3.14 The Council continues to have powers to support hardship on an individual basis or in respect of a defined group. Such arrangements cannot, however, form part of the CTR Scheme itself.
- 3.15 **Adoption of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme**
- 3.16 The Council is required to adopt a scheme by 31 January 2025 in accordance with The Council Tax Reduction Schemes and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2013, regardless of whether it chooses to apply any of the discretionary elements. If the Council fails to make a scheme, then a default scheme will apply.
- 3.17 It is recommended that the Council adopts:
- a Scheme under The Council Tax Reduction Schemes and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2013, which includes all the elements that must be included in the scheme, as set out in the Regulations; and with regard to

the discretionary elements, includes the recommendations in Table 1 set out at Paragraph 3.20 below; and

- The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 to 2024; and
- The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Miscellaneous Amendments) (Wales) Regulations 2025.

3.18 Part 5 of The Council Tax Reduction Schemes and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2013 (Other matters that must be included in an Authority’s Scheme) identifies which elements of the prescribed requirements of a scheme are minimum only requirements and in respect of which local authorities have an element of discretion.

3.19 The recommendation in relation to the available discretionary elements is contained in Table 1 below, and takes into account the following:

- The current local scheme in relation to the treatment of War Disablement Pensions, War Widows Pensions and War Widowers Pensions for Housing Benefit and 2024-25 CTR scheme, which disregards these payments in full; and,
- The fixed funding available.

3.20 Table 1 – Discretionary elements

Part 5 – Other matters that must be included in an authority’s scheme	Prescribed Requirement Regulations (Minimum Requirements)	Recommended Details to be Adopted with regard to discretionary elements
Ability to increase the standard extended reduction period of 4 weeks given to applicants where they have previously been receiving a council tax reduction that is to end, as they have ceased receiving qualifying benefits as a result of returning to work, increasing their hours of work, or receiving increased earnings. Regulation 32 (3) and Regulation 33 (3), paragraph 33 Schedule 1 and paragraph 35 and paragraph 40 Schedule 6.	4 weeks	Pensioners: The 4 weeks period specified in paragraph 33 Schedule 1 will apply, and Non-pensioners: The 4 weeks period specified in paragraph 35 and 40 Schedule 6 will apply.
Ability to backdate applications of CTR for the minimum requirements specified in the Regulations will apply periods longer than the standard period of 3 months before the claim is made. Regulation 34 (4) and paragraph 3 and 4 of Schedule 13.	3 months	Pensioners: The period of 3 months specified in paragraph 3 Schedule 13 will apply, and Non-pensioners:

		The period of 3 months specified in paragraph 4, Schedule 13 will apply.
Ability to disregard more than the statutory weekly £10 of income received in respect of War Disablement Pensions and War Widows Pensions and War Widowers Pensions (disregarded when calculating income of the applicant); Regulation 34 (5), paragraphs 1(a) and 1(b) Schedule 4 and paragraphs 20(a) and 20(b) of Schedule 9	£10	<p>Pensioners: The total value of any pension specified in paragraph 1(a) and 1(b) Schedule 4 will be disregarded.</p> <p>Non-pensioners: The total value of any pension specified in paragraph 20(a) and 20(b) Schedule 9 will be disregarded.</p>

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

- 4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales, the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.
- 4.2 The Welsh Government has undertaken a detailed regulatory impact assessment, which includes an equality impact assessment; the findings reported were in line with their expectations.
- 4.3 The Council has previously undertaken a consultation exercise and this consultation assists the Council in satisfying the public sector equality duty in the Equality Act 2010.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

- 5.1 The Act provides the basis for driving a different kind of public service in Wales, with five ways of working to guide how public services should work to deliver for people. The well-being objectives are designed to complement each other and are part of an integrated way of working to improve well-being for the people of Bridgend. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of the well-being goals or objectives as a result of this report.

6. Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 There are no climate change implications arising from this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 There are no safeguarding and corporate parent implications arising from this report.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 The 2025-26 Provisional Local Government Settlement shows that the sum provided for CTR across Wales is at the same level as 2024-25, a total of £244 million, a sum that has not changed in recent years. Bridgend County Borough Council's 2025-26 provisional settlement from Welsh Government includes £12.540 million to fund the CTR scheme, an increase of £28,000 from the allocation of £12.512 million in 2024-25. This amount does not take into account any increase in council tax charges but is distributed based on expenditure on council tax reduction schemes in previous years. This amount is unlikely to change in the final settlement.

8.2 Any shortfall between the amount provided in the settlement and the amount of CTR awarded, including any discretionary elements, will fall on the Council. The proposed budget for 2025-26 is £17.054 million, which is £1 million higher than the 2024-25 budget. Additional funding has been provided through the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) over the years to meet demographic changes and changes arising as a result of the increase in council tax. Based on the current caseload the estimated total cost of the scheme for 2025-26 is around £17.1 million (including the cost of the discretionary elements), based upon the proposed council tax increase included within the draft MTFS report to Cabinet on 14 January 2025, which is £4.56 million higher than the funding provided by Welsh Government and higher than the proposed CTR budget. Likely spend could change depending upon changes to the number of claimants and the final council tax increase for 2025-26, which will be presented to Council for approval on 26 February 2025. However, with the ongoing cost of living crisis, and the impact of this on people's financial and economic circumstances, along with Welsh Government's strategy to improve take up of benefits through the Welsh Benefits Charter, demand may well increase, so this budget will be kept under review during the financial year and the position reported as part of the quarterly monitoring process to Cabinet.

9. Recommendations

9.1 It is recommended that Council notes the information in the report and adopts the Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2025-26 as set out in paragraphs 3.15 to 3.20 of this report.

Background documents

None

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Meeting of:	COUNCIL
Date of Meeting:	15 JANUARY 2025
Report Title:	AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION – FINANCIAL PROCEDURE RULES
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	MONITORING OFFICER
Responsible Officer:	LAURA GRIFFITHS GROUP MANAGER LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	The revised Constitution will require approval by Council and will be published on the Council’s website.
Executive Summary:	Members are requested to note the suggestions made in relation to amendments to the Constitution to reflect changes to the Financial Procedure Rules.

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Council to amend the Constitution in relation to the Financial Procedure Rules.

2. Background

2.1 The Council is required to ensure that the Constitution remains fit for purpose.

3. Current situation/ proposal

Financial Procedure Rules

3.1 The management of the Council’s financial affairs are conducted in accordance with the Financial Procedure Rules (FPRs) set out in Section 17 of the Constitution. The FPRs have not been revised since 2021, during which time new financial processes and procedures, and new legislation and guidance, have come into effect, changing the way in which the Council operates.

3.2 Following the meeting of Council on 20 November 2024, the FPRs have been further reviewed by officers and Cabinet Members.

3.2 On 14 January 2025, Cabinet approved the further revisions to the FPRs as shown below and attached at **Appendix 1**.

Paragraph	Original	Amended
5.7	Each Chief Officer shall, as soon as practical, report to Cabinet the total of extras or variations to any contract which exceeds 10% of the original contract sum, or £100,000 whichever is the greater.	Added 'subject to a maximum of £500,000'.
9.3	Any changes to authorisation limits should be notified to the Business Support Manager promptly.	Changed 'promptly' to 'within a month'.
9.4	There are a small number of exceptions where some payments are permitted to be paid in advance without prior approval. These include:	Added in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advance payments to Third Sector organisations will be considered in line with the Welsh Government Third Sector Scheme and guidance set out in the Code of Practice for Funding the Third Sector, where financial hardship can be evidenced.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

- 4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

- 5.1 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.

6. Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 There are no climate change implications arising from this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 There are no safeguarding or corporate parent implications arising from this report.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

9. Recommendation

9.1 Council is recommended to approve the amendments to the Constitution in relation to the revised Financial Procedure Rules attached as **Appendix 1**.

Background documents

None

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FINANCIAL PROCEDURE RULES**Introduction****What are Financial Procedure Rules?**

Financial Procedure Rules provide the framework for managing the Council's financial affairs. They are supported by more detailed specific guidance and procedure notes in a range of areas. The procedures identify the financial responsibilities of the Full Council, the Cabinet and Officers.

Why are they important?

- (a) To conduct its business effectively, the Council needs to ensure that sound financial management arrangements are in place and that they are strictly adhered to in practice. Part of this process is the establishment of Financial Procedure Rules which set out the financial responsibilities of the Council. These procedure rules have been devised as a control to help the Council manage its financial matters properly in compliance with all necessary requirements.
- (b) Good, sound financial management is a key element of the Council's Corporate Governance framework which helps to ensure that the Council is doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner.
- (c) Good financial management secures value for money, controls spending, ensures due probity of transactions and allows decisions to be informed by accurate accounting information.
- (d) Good financial management requires secure and reliable records and systems to process transactions and information and substantiate the effective use of public money.
- (e) Financial Procedure Rules should not be seen in isolation, but rather as part of the overall regulatory framework of the Council as set out in this Constitution.

Who do Financial Procedure Rules apply to?

- (f) Financial Procedure Rules apply to every Member and Officer of the Council and anyone acting on its behalf. Members and Officers have a general responsibility for taking reasonable action to provide for the security and use of the resources and assets under their control, and for ensuring that the use of such resources and assets is legal, is consistent with Council policies and priorities, is properly authorised, provides value for money and achieves best value.
- (g) Separate financial procedure rules have been incorporated into the Council's Financial Scheme for Schools and relate to those matters where decisions have been delegated to school governing bodies.

- (h) These Financial Procedure Rules shall apply in relation to any partnership for which the Council is the accountable body, unless the Council expressly agrees otherwise.
- (i) Failure to observe Financial Procedure Rules may result in action under the Council's disciplinary procedures.

Who is responsible for ensuring that they are applied?

- (j) Chief Officers and Heads of Service are ultimately responsible to the Council for ensuring that Financial Procedure Rules are applied and observed by their staff and contractors providing services on the Council's behalf and for reporting to the Chief Finance Officer any known or suspected breaches of the procedures.
- (k) The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for maintaining a continuous review of the Financial Procedure Rules and submitting any additions or changes necessary to Council for approval. The Chief Finance Officer is also responsible for reporting, where appropriate, breaches of the Financial Procedures to Council and/or to Cabinet Members.
- (l) The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for issuing advice and guidance to underpin the Financial Procedure Rules which Members, Chief Officers and others acting on behalf of the Council are required to follow.
- (m) Where any Chief Officer considers that complying with Financial Procedure Rules in a particular situation might conflict with the achievement of value for money or the principles of Best Value or the best interests of the Council, they shall raise the issue with the Chief Finance Officer who will, if they consider necessary and appropriate, seek formal approval from the Council for a specific waiver of the procedures, or an amendment to the procedures themselves.

Section A - Financial Control

1. General

1.1 For the purposes of these Rules:

- (a) "the Chief Executive Officer" means the officer designated by the Council as Head of Paid Service under Section 4 of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989.
- (b) "the Chief Finance Officer" means the officer designated by the Council as the officer responsible for the administration of its financial affairs under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972.
- (c) "Chief Officer" means any of the following:
 - The Chief Executive Officer;
 - The Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing;
 - The Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People;
 - The Corporate Director - Communities;
 - Chief Officer – Legal and Regulatory Services, Human Resources and Corporate Policy.
 - Chief Officer – Finance, Housing and Change.

- (d) "the Monitoring Officer" means the officer designated as such by the Council under Section 5 of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989.
 - (e) "the Cabinet" means the Executive established under Part II of the Local Government Act 2000.
 - (f) "Cabinet Member" means the Leader and any of the members of the Cabinet.
 - (g) "Budget Head" means the budget for a particular service/services.
- 1.2 A Chief Officer may nominate any suitably qualified officer in their Directorate to undertake any of the duties placed upon him or exercise any power granted to him by these Rules.
- 1.3 Each Chief Officer shall consult with the Chief Finance Officer on any matter which is liable to materially affect the finances of the Council before any commitment is incurred and before reporting thereon to the Cabinet or the Council.
- 1.4 (a) Chief Officers shall be responsible for bringing these Financial Procedure Rules to the attention of staff and for ensuring the observance of these Rules throughout their respective Directorates;
- (b) Staff who fail to observe these Rules may be subject to disciplinary action.
- 1.5 Each Chief Officer shall be responsible for the accountability of staff, and the security, custody and control of all other resources including plant, buildings, materials, cash and stores appertaining to their individual Directorates in accordance with the procedures agreed with the Chief Finance Officer.
- 1.6 Each Chief Officer shall have a duty to endeavour to maximise the value for money obtained in running the activities within their purview.
- 1.7 Each Chief Officer shall have a duty to consult the Chief Finance Officer if they have reason to believe that any matter within their purview may result in:
- (a) The Council incurring expenditure in excess of its approved budget;
 - (b) The Council incurring expenditure for which it has no statutory power to incur;
 - (c) The Council failing to comply with the financially related provisions of any relevant European and UK legislation;
 - (d) The Council failing to comply with the financially related provisions of any code of practice adopted by the Council.
- 1.8 Whenever any matter arises which involves or is thought to involve irregularities concerning cash, stores or other property of the Council or held on trust by the Council, the Chief Officer concerned shall notify the Chief Finance Officer who shall take such steps as they consider necessary by way of investigation and report.
- 1.9 Each Chief Officer shall have a duty to inform the Chief Finance Officer and the Monitoring Officer if they suspect that the Council or its officers are exceeding the Council's statutory powers.

- 1.10 No Chief Officer may recommend to the Council or the Cabinet that expenditure be incurred or any other action taken on the assumption that sufficient statutory power is provided by either Sections 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 and Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000, without prior approval of the Chief Finance Officer and the Monitoring Officer.
- 1.11 The Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Monitoring Officer shall be authorised to vary from time to time any amount included in the Rules, but any alteration shall be reported to the next meeting of Council.
- 1.12 Separate Financial Rules shall be issued by the Chief Finance Officer for use by the Council's schools, drawing on, and supplementing this document, as appropriate.

2. Accounting Systems

- 2.1 All accounting procedures and accounting records of the Council and its Officers shall be subject to the approval of the Chief Finance Officer.
- 2.2 All accounts and accounting records of the Council shall be compiled by, or under the direction of, the Chief Finance Officer.
- 2.3 The following principles shall be observed in the allocation of accounting duties:
 - (a) The duties of providing information regarding sums due to or from the Council and of calculating, checking and recording these sums, shall be separated as completely as possible from the duty of collecting or disbursing them;
 - (b) Officers charged with the duty of examining and checking the accounts of cash transactions shall not themselves be engaged in any of these transactions.
- 2.4 A Chief Officer shall be responsible for the financial management and audit of any private fund entrusted to him as part of their duties and will apply regulations to such funds as stipulated by the Chief Finance Officer.
- 2.5 Notwithstanding the duties of a Chief Officer in Rule 2.4, the Chief Finance Officer shall have the right to audit any private fund at any time.
- 2.6 For the purposes of these Rules "private fund" shall mean any fund in the management of which a Chief Officer of the Council is concerned and which may affect any person or property for which the Council has a responsibility, notwithstanding that contributions towards such fund shall have been made by another party other than the Council.

3. Budgeting and budgetary control

3.1 Council's Budget

- 3.1.1 The Budget shall be approved by the Council in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules (Section 16);
- 3.1.2 In referring the Cabinet's Budget Proposals to Council the proper officer will forward to the Council a report of the Chief Finance Officer incorporating the recommendations of the Cabinet and detailing for approval of the Council:
 - (a) a probable out-turn for the current year;

- (b) a revenue budget for the forthcoming year detailing the Budget Heads over which that budget is allocated to specific services and service programme areas;
- (c) a forward indication of the medium term financial strategy which will comprise the revenue budget for the first year and indicative budgets for the subsequent three years and a capital budget for the forthcoming year incorporating a capital programme of at least three years, but no more than ten years;
- (d) an assessment of any major financial risks which may impact on the budget;
- (e) an analysis of reserves and balances and movements over the forthcoming financial year;
- (f) the proposed increase in fees and charges for the forthcoming year;
- (g) a recommendation of the level of Council Tax to be levied for the forthcoming year.

3.1.3 The detailed form of the Budget will be determined by the Chief Finance Officer within the general direction of the Council and Cabinet after consultation with Chief Officers.

3.2 Amendments to the agreed budget (virements and technical adjustments)

- 3.2.1. Each Chief Officer shall have the authority to incur expenditure on any activity under their control up to the amounts specified in respect of that activity in the revenue or capital budgets approved by the Council for the financial year, unless directed otherwise by the Chief Finance Officer.
- 3.2.2 Each Chief Officer, subject to the agreement of the Chief Finance Officer, may approve virements between specific revenue Budget Heads, as set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy, which do not amend any individual Budget Head by more than £100,000 from that approved by the Council. The relevant Chief Officer and Chief Finance Officer must jointly report to Cabinet on any virements which amend individual Budget Heads by more than £100,000.
- 3.2.3 Cabinet may, following a report of the appropriate Chief Officer in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, approve virements between individual revenue Budget Heads which do not amend any individual budget head by more than £500,000 from that approved by the Council.
- 3.2.4 All approved virements over £100,000 must be reported to the Council for information as soon as reasonably practicable after their approval.
- 3.2.5 Any variations to the capital programme, other than those permitted under paragraph 3.4.6, shall require the approval of the Council following a report of the Chief Finance Officer after taking into consideration the recommendations of the Cabinet.
- 3.2.6 All proposals for revenue and capital budget virements that exceed the above limits will need to be approved by the Council on receipt of a report of the appropriate Chief Officer in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer following consideration by the Cabinet. Virement proposals must also be approved by the Council if they:

- a) imply a change in a plan, policy or strategy which would be contrary to the existing policy framework;
- b) have a major operational impact on existing service provision;
- c) are contrary to or not wholly in accordance with the Budget;
- d) imply any additional revenue commitment in future years.

3.2.7 There are also technical adjustments to budgets as a result of the Council adhering to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting. These could include, but are not limited to, the reallocation of centrally held pay and price budgets to other areas within the Council or the allocation of capital charges across the Council, and necessary year end accounting adjustments in line with accepted accounting practices. These are not subject to the authorisation limits of budget virements and the Chief Finance Officer or nominated representative can authorise these.

3.3 Budgetary control

- 3.3.1 The Chief Finance Officer shall provide each Chief Officer with regular information relating to income and expenditure under each approved budget head and any other relevant information available. Each Chief Officer shall be responsible for ensuring control of expenditure and income against the approved budget (attention is drawn to Rule 6.1).
- 3.3.2 A Chief Officer in consultation with the Cabinet Member responsible for the function in respect of which the service is provided will be expected to manage their services within the approved cash limited budget and to provide the Chief Finance Officer with such information as is required to facilitate and monitor budgetary control. A Chief Officer or Cabinet Member may not incur expenditure or forego income if this will result in the approved budget being exceeded. Where a Directorate does overspend, the provisions of para 3.3.5 will take effect.
- 3.3.3 A Chief Officer may delegate responsibility for management of budgets within their control to other senior officers within their Directorate. Such delegation shall be within defined parameters and shall be recorded in writing as determined by the Chief Finance Officer.
- 3.3.4 At year end, consideration will be given to the overall financial position of the Council including the final outturn, net council tax income, the Council's reserve levels and any new pressures or risks that need to be provided for. At that time, and dependent on that financial position, in line with the Council's Reserves and Balances Protocol, a Chief Officer will be invited to submit earmarked reserve requests to meet any specific unfunded one-off expenditure that they expect to arise in the following financial year and these will be considered by the Chief Finance Officer in the context of the Directorate outturn position as well as that of the Council as a whole. Chief Officers will be notified of successful earmarked reserves.
- 3.3.5 Any directorate over-spending against budget may be carried forward at the discretion of the Chief Finance Officer, either against the specific directorate or Council wide budgets. In no circumstances should this provision be seen as giving a Chief Officer power to overspend against approved budgets. Any such overspend will be treated as a breach of the Financial Procedure Rules and the respective Chief Officer held accountable. No Chief Officer or Cabinet Member may budget for a deficit. Where a

net Council-wide overspend occurs this will need to be met from existing usable reserves, including draw down from the Council Fund.

- 3.3.6 Urgent expenditure not included in any budget approval may only be incurred with the approval of the Chief Finance Officer.
- 3.3.7 The cash limited budget for a Chief Officer only relates to the “controllable” elements of their budget and excludes, amongst other things:
- Central capital charges
 - Central support service charges
 - Centrally controlled office accommodation budgets
 - Joint Committee precepts and levies

3.4 Capital programme

- 3.4.1 As part of the budget process the Chief Finance Officer or appropriate Cabinet Member will annually present to the Council a capital programme which shall include:
- (a) those capital expenditure items proposed to commence during the next three years as a minimum;
 - (b) an estimate of the capital costs of those schemes together with the associated proposed funding.
- 3.4.2 Schemes for which external funding has been approved (specific grants and section 106 funding) will be added to the capital programme once the funding has been accepted, and included in the next capital programme report to Council.
- 3.4.3 A Chief Officer, in conjunction with the Chief Finance Officer, before submitting a scheme for inclusion in the capital programme, shall satisfy himself that the scheme is in line with the Council’s Capital Strategy, and that:
- (a) land purchases, design planning consents and relevant studies are sufficiently advanced to ensure that the proposed year of start of a scheme is feasible;
 - (b) the level of expenditure envisaged is realistic, following a full feasibility assessment, and taking into account the Chief Finance Officer’s forecast of capital resources available and the ability of each directorate to meet the consequential costs resulting from prudential borrowing, if applicable, and any on-going maintenance costs;
 - (c) each scheme in the programme has been fully appraised to ensure it is the most economic method of satisfying an identified need.
- 3.4.4 The Capital Programme upon approval by the Council shall:
- (a) confer authorisation upon the Chief Officer concerned to take steps to enable design work to be completed and land to be acquired in due time;
 - (b) form the basis of the annual capital estimates.

- 3.4.5 The inclusion of any item in the approved capital estimates shall not confer authority to incur any expenditure (except on design work and land acquisition) until:
- (a) all necessary statutory approvals have been obtained;
 - (b) any external funding contribution to the project has been secured; and
 - (c) a tender or quotation has been received and accepted in accordance with the Contract Procedure Rules, which does not exceed that part of the total cost included in the capital estimate in respect of the main contract work for the project by more than 10% or £100,000, whichever is lower.
- 3.4.6 If the tender or quotation exceeds the criteria in 3.4.5(c) above, its acceptance will be subject to the approval of the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member(s) responsible for the function in respect of which the decision is required, to a diversion of money from other approved schemes within the appropriate Chief Officer's control sufficient to meet any additional costs.
- 3.4.7 Chief Officers shall monitor both the progress of schemes and the totality of capital expenditure with the aim of avoiding under or overspending against the approved capital estimates. Should such a situation appear likely, a Chief Officer in conjunction with the Chief Finance Officer shall recommend to the Council the remedial action necessary to mitigate the overspend, which could include accelerating or delaying existing schemes within the approved capital programme, the allocation of additional, uncommitted, capital funding, or a revenue contribution to capital, where funds allow.
- 3.4.8 Remedial action which necessitates the delaying or deletion of a scheme within the capital programme shall be subject to the prior approval of the Council based on a joint report of the Chief Finance Officer and Chief Officer.
- 3.4.9 The Chief Finance Officer shall give Chief Officers information relating to actual payments made for each scheme in such detail and at such time as arranged between them in order that they may carry out their responsibilities under paragraph 3.4.7.
- 3.4.10 The capital programme includes an annual allocation for capital minor works. Allocation of this funding to individual schemes is the responsibility of the Corporate Landlord section and approval on individual schemes will not be sought from Council insofar as the overall funding allocated to schemes does not exceed the funding agreed by Council in the capital programme for that financial year.
- 3.4.11 Any additional capital expenditure from within the capital programme for new or existing schemes which, for reasons of urgency, cannot await the next meeting of Council, may only be incurred with the approval of the Chief Executive Officer in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, subject to a maximum value of £100,000, under the Scheme of Delegation of Functions, Scheme B1 paragraph 2.2.
- 3.4.12 Urgent expenditure over £100,000 or not included in any budget approval or delegated power, which needs to be agreed prior to the next meeting of Council, may only be incurred with the approval of the Chief Finance Officer. Any such decision requires approval by either the Chief Executive Officer or Solicitor to the Council under the Scheme of Delegation of Functions, Scheme B1 paragraph 2.1.
- 3.4.13 The Chief Finance Officer shall report quarterly to Cabinet and Council with an update on the Capital Programme.

3.5 Capital Strategy

- 3.5.1 The Chief Finance Officer will be responsible for preparing a Capital Strategy for submission to Council for approval prior to the start of each financial year. The Strategy must demonstrate that capital expenditure and investment decisions are in line with service objectives and properly take account of stewardship, value for money, prudence, sustainability and affordability.
- 3.5.2 The Capital Strategy will need to comply with the requirements of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)'s Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities. It will incorporate the Prudential Indicators that will need to be approved by Council.
- 3.5.3 The Chief Finance Officer shall report quarterly to Cabinet and Council with an update on the Capital Strategy and the Prudential Indicators.

4. Internal audit

- 4.1 The Chief Finance Officer shall have a duty to maintain an effective internal audit of the Council's operations in order to review, evaluate and test the adequacy of the Council's systems of internal control as contributions to the proper, economic, efficient and effective use of resources.
- 4.2 The Chief Finance Officer shall have the responsibility to review, appraise and report to Council, the Governance and Audit Committee, Cabinet, Cabinet Member, or Chief Officer as appropriate upon:
 - 4.2.1 The soundness, adequacy and application of financial and other related operations of the Council.
 - 4.2.2 The extent of compliance with, and financial effect of, established policies, plans and procedures.
 - 4.2.3 The extent to which the Council's assets and interests are accounted for and safeguarded from losses of all kinds arising from:
 - (a) fraud and other offences;
 - (b) waste, extravagance, poor value for money or other cause.
 - 4.2.4 The suitability and reliability of financial and other related management data developed within the Council.
- 4.3 The Chief Finance Officer or an authorised representative of the Chief Finance Officer shall have the authority to require any officer to:
 - 4.3.1 Provide access to any Council premises or land under their control. Where sites are in the possession of a contractor or subject to any tenancy or licence to occupy, such entry will be governed by the conditions of the contract or other legal agreement.
 - 4.3.2 Produce any records, documents and correspondence in their possession.
 - 4.3.3 Provide explanations of matters arising from an audit.

- 4.3.4 Produce and account for any cash, stores or other Council property under their control.
- 4.4 The Chief Finance Officer shall have the authority to request the immediate suspension from duty of any officers who:
- (a) they have reasonable grounds to suspect of misappropriation of Council funds or other property;
 - (b) they believe present a threat of further misappropriation or hindering of any investigation.
- 4.5 Notwithstanding the duty of the Chief Finance Officer for the control and direction of Internal Audit, it shall be the duty of the Chief Internal Auditor to report direct to the Chief Executive Officer and to the Cabinet Member for Resources on any matter in which the Chief Finance Officer appears to be personally involved.
- 5. Contracts of building, construction or engineering work**
- 5.1 Contracts for the execution of capital works shall only be entered into for those schemes which are included in the approved Capital Programme.
- 5.2 Each Chief Officer will maintain contract registers showing for each contract under their control which has a value greater than £50,000:
- (a) the contract sum;
 - (b) the value of any extras or variations to the contract;
 - (c) the amounts and dates of any instalments made;
 - (d) the amount of any retentions held or bonds taken under any contract;
 - (e) the balance outstanding to the Contractor.
- 5.3 Payments to contractors on account of contracts shall be made only on a certificate issued by the responsible officer.
- 5.4 When authorising any extra or variation to a contract the appropriate Chief Officer shall:
- (a) estimate the cost of the variation;
 - (b) issue written instructions to the Contractor to carry out the work, except in cases of urgency where a Chief Officer may issue verbal instructions but shall confirm them in writing as soon as possible, but in any case within 7 days; and
 - (c) ensure that such variation is in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.
- 5.5 The Chief Finance Officer may, at their discretion, decide to audit the final account of a contract, before certifying the final payment.
- 5.6 Claims from contractors in respect of matters not clearly within the terms of any existing contract shall be referred to the Solicitor to the Council for consideration of the Council's legal

liability and, where necessary, to the Chief Finance Officer for financial consideration before a settlement is reached.

- 5.7 Each Chief Officer shall, as soon as practical, report to Cabinet the total of extras or variations to any contract which exceeds 10% of the original contract sum (subject to a maximum of £500,000), or £100,000 whichever is the greater.
- 5.8 If the final account of any contract has not been agreed within eighteen months of the completion of works, then the Chief Officer controlling that contract shall report to the Cabinet on the outstanding items. Any report under this regulation shall include a comparison of the final or likely cost with the original contract sum together with reasons for any differences.

6. Orders for work, goods and services

- 6.1 Each Chief Officer has a duty to issue official orders for all works and services to be carried out, and all goods supplied, within their Directorate with the exception of:
- (a) public utilities;
 - (b) periodical payments;
 - (c) petty cash purchases;
 - (d) purchases made using Purchasing Cards;
 - (e) works, goods and services subject to formal written contracts, or excepted from this requirement by the Chief Finance Officer.
 - (f) Framework contracts.

Before issuing official orders, Officers authorising them must be satisfied that there is provision in the estimates and that the Contract Procedure Rules have been complied with.

- 6.2 Each official order shall be in a form prescribed and approved by the Chief Finance Officer and shall include:
- (a) a description of the works, goods and services ordered;
 - (b) the name and address of the supplier;
 - (c) an estimate of the cost;
 - (d) the financial code to which the cost is to be charged;
 - (e) name of the authorising officer.
- 6.3 Verbal orders may only be placed in exceptional circumstances the details of which must be confirmed by e-mail or other appropriate means on the same day and confirmed by written official order within 3 working days.
- 6.4 Electronic orders will be treated in the same way as other official orders. Changes to on-line authorising officers shall be notified to the Chief Finance Officer immediately.

7. Leasing

- 7.1 The Chief Finance Officer shall be responsible for making leasing arrangements for the use of buildings, plant, vehicles and equipment. No officer other than the Chief Finance Officer may enter into any type of leasing arrangements.
- 7.2 Due to complex capital accounting requirements regarding expenditure in relation to leases, all leases, hire, rental, hire purchase agreements, deferred purchase agreements and other arrangements where the use of an asset is being acquired without the ownership of it must be referred to the Chief Finance Officer in advance of entering any agreement.
- 7.3 Provision within revenue estimates to cover the annual costs of leasing should be made only following consultation with the Chief Finance Officer.

8. Grant Funding and Third Party Funding

- 8.1 It is essential that proper management of external funding or grants received, or funding awarded by the Council, is undertaken in order to safeguard the financial position of the Council and also to maximise the benefits to service delivery from the receipt of these additional funds.
- 8.2 The Council has a Grants Financial Management Policy which all Chief Officers and their staff must adhere to in order to ensure the proper management of grant funding and other internal and external funds. Failure to comply could result in funding being withheld by the funding body or recovered at a later date. Any failure to comply with the Grants Financial Management Policy, which results in funding being reduced to the Council, may be reported to the Governance and Audit Committee, and any shortfall in the funding borne by the responsible directorate.

Section B - Expenditure and Income

9. Payment of accounts

- 9.1 Excluding payments in the form of petty cash from imprest accounts, the preferred method of payment of money due from the Council shall be by automated transfers from the Council's bank accounts overseen by the Chief Finance Officer.
- 9.2 The Chief Finance Officer shall be the authorised signatory of any joint bank account opened in the name of the Council and any other party and will be responsible for the payment of any cheques from that joint bank account.
- 9.3 Each Chief Officer is responsible for examining, verifying and authorising invoices and any other payment vouchers or accounts arising from sources in their Directorate including the use of purchasing cards. Authorised officers can discharge this responsibility on behalf of the Chief Officer. Each Chief Officer will supply the names and specimen signatures for authorised officers together with authorisation limits to the Business Support Manager and will need to confirm the list on an annual basis. Any changes to authorisation limits should be notified to the Business Support Manager within a month.

Payments in advance

- 9.4 All payments for goods and services must be paid in arrears on presentation of an invoice or appropriate document to support the payment. The Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with a Cabinet Member, can give approval for payment in advance of goods or services in

exceptional circumstances and on request from a Chief Officer. Approval must be given in writing via email to the appropriate officer, with the relevant Cabinet Member copied in, for audit purposes. There are a small number of exceptions where some payments are permitted to be paid in advance without prior approval. These include:

- Travel, such as rail tickets which are paid via a purchasing card
- Subscriptions, which are usually paid at the start, or in advance of, the subscription period
- Licences – such as software licences
- Necessary expenditure incurred in the normal course of business not exceeding £1,000. Note, the total value of the purchase needs to be considered rather than a monthly or recurring amount.
- Advance payments to Third Sector organisations will be considered in line with the Welsh Government Third Sector Scheme and guidance set out in the Code of Practice for Funding the Third Sector, where financial hardship can be evidenced.

9.5 Before authorising an account, the authorising officer shall be satisfied that:

- (a) the work, goods or services to which the account relates have been received, carried out, examined and approved;
- (b) the invoice satisfies VAT and Construction Industry Scheme (CIS) regulations and that prices, extensions, calculations, trade discounts, other allowances and credits are correct;
- (c) the relevant expenditure has been properly incurred and is within the relevant estimate provision;
- (d) the financial code to which the expenditure is to be charged is correct and sufficient budget is available;
- (e) the account or invoice indicates the official order number relating to the goods or services provided, or if there is no such order the reason for the omission unless it relates to services not subject to orders such as care contracts;
- (f) appropriate entries have been made in inventories, stores records or stock books as required;
- (g) the account has not been previously passed for payment and is a proper liability of the Council;
- (h) in the case of accounts for the supply of public utility services and other periodic payments, relevant expenditure, and where appropriate, units of energy consumed, have been entered in records approved by the Chief Finance Officer.

9.6 Accounts should be authorised via EDRM online, or other agreed means. Any accounts not authorised via EDRM should be manually authorised and passed to Business Support for processing, or in the case of feeder files passed to the Chief Finance Officer for processing. All payments should be processed within 30 days.

9.7 Where payments are electronically uploaded into the financial system via a feeder file, appropriate controls, including standardising of files and validity checks, are put in place to

ensure their integrity. For any new feeder files, Internal Audit will be asked to review and give assurance on the process for authorisation before use.

- 9.8 For the Council to reclaim VAT on individual payments, the Council is required under VAT Regulations to obtain the supplier's VAT registration number and invoice to be addressed to Bridgend County Borough Council.
- 9.9 The Chief Finance Officer shall set down procedures for the retention of financial documentation. Such documentation must not be disposed of without the specific approval of the Chief Finance Officer. All invoices shall be retained for at least 6 years plus the current financial year. In the case of invoices relating to grant claims, these must be kept until after the grant claim has been audited even if this exceeds 6 years. It is the responsibility of the Chief Officer of the grant to ensure the correct retention period is maintained. The same retention periods apply to electronic copies of all original invoices.
- 9.10 Changes to on-line authorising officers shall be notified to the Business Support Manager immediately.
- 9.11 Each Chief Officer shall, no later than a date specified at the financial year end, notify the Chief Finance Officer of any outstanding expenditure relating to the previous financial year to be accrued in the Statement of Accounts.

10. Imprest accounts

- 10.1 Where appropriate, the Chief Finance Officer shall provide imprest accounts for such officers of the Council as may need them for the purpose of defraying petty cash and other expenses. Such accounts shall be maintained in accordance with the notes of guidance issued to imprest holders by the Chief Finance Officer.
- 10.2 Where petty cash is required, the Chief Finance Officer shall open an account with the Council's bankers for use by the imprest holder, who shall not deliberately cause the account to be overdrawn. Any prolonged overdrawn balance on an imprest holder's bank account shall be reported to the Chief Finance Officer. It will also prevent the use of any business ATM cash card as they cannot be used on an overdrawn account. Where an officer holds a cheque book or business ATM cash card in respect of any account they must ensure that it is securely stored and all cancelled cheques are crossed and retained with the counterfoils of the original cheque book. Receipts for withdrawals must be retained.
- 10.3 Any officer responsible for an imprest account shall be personally responsible for making good any deficiencies in that account.
- 10.4 No income received on behalf of the Council may be paid into an imprest account but must be dealt with in accordance with paragraph 15.3.
- 10.5 Except as otherwise agreed between the Chief Finance Officer and the Chief Officer concerned, payments out of the accounts shall be limited to petty disbursements and shall not include sums due to any tradesperson with whom the Council has an account for the supply of goods and services, or who can establish an account, nor any account for goods exceeding in value a sum to be agreed from time to time by the Chief Finance Officer, nor travelling expenses other than those of a casual nature e.g. bus fares.
- 10.6 An officer responsible for an imprest shall on a regular basis as specified by the Chief Finance Officer, or at any other time if so requested, provide a certified statement as to the state of the account.

10.7 Whenever an officer who is an imprest holder leaves the employment of the Council, or ceases to be entitled to hold an imprest advance, the officer shall account to the Chief Finance Officer for the amount advanced to him.

11. Purchasing Cards

11.1 Where appropriate, a purchasing card will be issued to support the current Purchase to Pay invoice process and should not be considered as a replacement mechanism to bypass the formal requisition and approval process. Expenditure shall be made in accordance with the purchasing card guidelines.

11.2 Each card has an individual monthly expenditure limit, individual transaction limit and restricted category types for expenditure. The cardholder will be making financial commitments on behalf of the Council and will be responsible for obtaining value for money in accordance with Contract Procedure Rules and Corporate Contracts.

11.3 Except, as otherwise agreed with the Chief Finance Officer, payments by purchasing card shall be limited to approved disbursements and shall not include sums due to any tradesperson whose invoices should be paid via the Financial System. Travelling expenses, such as train fares, can be pre-booked and paid with the purchasing card, however, the purchasing card cannot be used to reimburse travelling expenses nor subsistence expenses other than those of a casual nature.

11.4 The cardholder is responsible for updating the Barclaycard Spend Management system with costing, VAT and narrative details of the expenditure in a timely manner and in accordance with the purchasing card guidelines.

11.5 Whenever a member of staff who is a purchasing card holder leaves the employment of the Council, or ceases to be entitled to hold a purchasing card, the member of staff must return the purchasing card immediately on cessation of entitlement to the Corporate Procurement Manager for cancellation. Any replacement member of staff who requires a purchasing card must apply for a new card via the Corporate Procurement Manager.

11.6 Any person holding a purchasing card shall be personally responsible to notify the Corporate Procurement Manager of any unauthorised / unrecognised spend made on the card. The cardholder shall be personally responsible for making good any unauthorised spend that they incur on the card.

11.7 Where appropriate, the Chief Finance Officer shall provide a purchasing card enabled for cash withdrawal to give services access to cash for the purpose of defraying petty expenditure. Such cards shall be maintained in accordance with the notes of guidance to card holders issued by the Corporate Procurement Manager. There is an administration charge for cash withdrawals. Detailed records of monies withdrawn, spending of this money, including VAT amount and costing information, must be kept and be available for examination on request.

11.8 Except as otherwise agreed with the Chief Finance Officer, payments out of the cash withdrawn from the bank by purchasing card shall be limited to petty disbursements and shall not include sums due to any tradesperson with whom the authority has an account, nor travelling or subsistence expenses.

11.9 A person responsible for the cash balance held shall, if so requested, give to the Chief Finance Officer certification as to the state of the funds.

- 11.10 Whenever a member of staff who is a cash balance administrator leaves the employment of the authority, or ceases to be entitled to administer the cash balance, the member of staff shall repay to the Chief Finance Officer the unexpended cash balance of the withdrawn amount, or shall transfer monies, records and vouchers relating to the account to the new cash administrator. When a purchasing card holder leaves, the card in their name must be returned to the Corporate Procurement Manager for cancellation and a new card applied for via the Corporate Procurement Manager unless the new cash administrator is not to be allocated a purchasing card.
- 11.11 Any person holding a cash balance obtained by a purchasing card cash withdrawal shall be personally responsible for making good any deficiencies in that account.

12. Business Cash Cards

- 12.1 Where appropriate a business cash card will be issued to support services which have a requirement for petty cash, to facilitate the withdrawal of cash from ATMs.
- 12.2 Each card is allocated to an individual named officer of the Council against a specific account, who is responsible for the safeguarding of the card and its appropriate use. Each card has an individual withdrawal and daily withdrawal limit and must be used only for the withdrawal of cash for the purposes of petty cash use for that service or other agreed purposes such as private funds.
- 12.3 Cash withdrawn from petty cash accounts must not be used for the purposes of paying sums due to tradesperson. Such invoices should be paid via the Financial System.
- 12.4 Where the card is related to a petty cash account, the cardholder is responsible for updating the petty cash system to record that cash has been withdrawn and must account for all cash withdrawals made.
- 12.5 Whenever a member of staff who holds a business cash card leaves the employment of the Council, or ceases to be entitled to a card, they must return the debit card immediately to the Chief Finance Officer for the card to be cancelled. The Cardholder is personally responsible for any shortfalls between the cash withdrawn and cash held in the petty cash records.

13. Construction Industry Scheme (CIS) – Tax Deduction

- 13.1 For certain types of construction work, the Council is obliged by HMRC's Construction Industry Scheme to deduct tax at source from sub-contractor payments, at the appropriate rate, from the invoiced amount. Those CIS sub-contractors paid under deduction must have the labour/material split shown on the invoice and entered into the Financial System. Further guidance can be obtained from the Purchase Ledger Team in Finance.

14. Salaries, wages and Members' allowances

- 14.1 The payment of all salaries, wages, allowances, expenses or other emoluments to all employees or members shall be made by, or under arrangements approved and controlled by, the Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisational Development.
- 14.2 Each Chief Officer shall notify the Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisational Development as soon as possible and in the prescribed form, of all matters affecting the payment of such emoluments and in particular:
- (a) appointments, resignations, dismissals, suspensions, secondments, and transfers;

- (b) absences from duty for sickness or other reason, apart from approved leave with pay;
 - (c) changes in remuneration, other than normal increments and pay awards;
 - (d) information necessary to maintain records of service for superannuation, income tax, national insurance etc.;
 - (e) any failure to comply with Council or statutory regulations.
- 14.3 Appointments of all employees shall be made in accordance with the regulations of the Council and the approved establishment, gradings and rates of pay.
- 14.4 All time records and other pay documents shall be in a form prescribed or approved by the Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisational Development and shall be certified by or on behalf of the Chief Officer. The names of the officers authorised to certify such records shall be sent to the Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisational Development by each Chief Officer together with specimen signatures and shall be amended on the occasion of any change. Changes to on-line authorising officers shall be notified to the Chief Finance Officer immediately.
- 14.5 No payments to staff may be made other than through the normal payroll system without the specific approval of the Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisational Development.
- 14.6 Where an Officer is hiring or engaging a staff member who is not on the Council payroll there is a legal requirement to determine whether it is the responsibility of the Council to deduct tax and national insurance at source, in accordance with the requirements of the Social Security Contributions (Intermediaries) Regulations 2000, as amended (IR35).
- 15. Officers fees, travelling and subsistence allowances**
- 15.1 All claims for payment of fees, car allowances, subsistence allowances and travelling expenses shall be submitted, duly certified, in a format approved by the Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisational Development, to the appropriate Chief Officer in accordance with the timetable set down by the Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisational Development. A record of all officers authorised to approve such records shall be sent to the Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisational Development together with specimen signatures and shall be amended on the occasion of any change. This applies to both manual and electronic expenses systems.
- 15.2 The certification by, or on behalf of, the Chief Officer shall be taken to mean that the certifying officer is satisfied that the journeys were authorised, the expenses properly and necessarily incurred, the vehicle used had appropriate insurance cover, the necessary receipts of expenditure retained and that the fees and allowances are properly payable by the Council.
- 15.3 Claims submitted more than three months after the expenses were incurred must be accompanied by a letter of explanation for the delay and shall be paid only with the express approval of the Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisational Development who shall refer the matter to Cabinet if necessary.
- 15.4 All claims for payment of incidental expenses such as removal, lodging and disturbance allowances and training course fees etc. shall be made on the appropriate form and shall be in accordance with the appropriate scheme approved by the Council.

16. Banking arrangements and cheques

- 16.1 All arrangements with the Council's bankers shall be made by or under arrangements approved by the Chief Finance Officer, who shall be authorised to operate such bank accounts as considered necessary.
- 16.2 All cheques shall be ordered only on the authority of the Chief Finance Officer who shall make proper arrangements for their safe custody, including cheque books issued automatically by the bank.
- 16.3 Any such bank account opened in respect of monies held on behalf of the Council shall be arranged in consultation with or under the direction of the Chief Finance Officer. The Chief Finance Officer shall maintain a list of authorised signatories, along with specimen signatures, for all such accounts. Any change in signatory shall be reported to the Chief Finance Officer immediately.
- 16.4 No Standing Orders or Direct Debits from the Council's bank accounts shall be set up unless arranged in consultation with or under the direction of the Chief Finance Officer. The Chief Finance Officer shall maintain a list of all officers authorised to set up Direct Debits and Standing Orders.
- 16.5 The Chief Finance Officer shall be authorised to:
- (a) nominate officers empowered to authorise payment out of these bank accounts;
 - (b) negotiate charges with the Council's bankers.
- 16.6 The Chief Finance Officer will be responsible for ensuring that there are adequate controls in place to ensure that all payment methods, whether physical or electronic, have appropriate authorisations, approvals and signatures as necessary.
- 16.7 The Chief Finance Officer shall ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to facilitate the monthly reconciliation of the Council's Bank Accounts.

17. Income

- 17.1 Each Chief Officer will be responsible for the prompt and accurate billing, collection and banking of all income due to the Council in connection with the Directorate's activities, except where in the interests of efficiency or security it is agreed with the Chief Finance Officer that all or part of the duties should be discharged by some other Chief Officer.
- 17.2 Except as agreed between the Chief Finance Officer and the Chief Officer concerned, all receipt books and other such items shall be ordered and supplied to Directorates by the Chief Finance Officer, who shall be satisfied as to the arrangements for their control.
- 17.3 In carrying out this function, each Chief Officer shall ensure that any officer of the staff engaged in the collection of money:
- (a) maintains a record of receipts and bankings in a form approved by the Chief Finance Officer;
 - (b) pays without delay any money collected either:
 - i) to the approved officer;
 - ii) to a security firm employed by the Chief Finance Officer for this purpose; or

- iii) to one of the Council's main bank accounts or via outlets of the nominated collector(s) as agreed by the Council.
 - (c) makes no deduction from monies collected, except with the specific and exceptional approval of the Chief Finance Officer;
 - (d) ensures income is correctly coded onto the financial system nominated by the Chief Finance Officer and satisfies VAT regulations;
 - (e) makes good any shortfalls in cash collected and identifies any surpluses;
 - (f) in the case of cheques received, enters on any paying-in slips details with the cheque or provides supporting evidence and a reference to the related debt.
- 17.4 Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of the money held on behalf of the Council.
- 17.5 Outstanding debts which are found to be irrecoverable may be written off by the Chief Finance Officer, except where it is considered that there are matters of principle or policy which should be referred to the Cabinet.
- 17.6 Any officer holding a cash float shall be personally responsible for making good any deficiencies in that account.
- 17.7 Where an officer takes cash for works, goods or services that is either:
- i. in excess of the level stipulated within the Council's Anti-Money Laundering Policy; or
 - ii. where there is anything suspicious regarding, but not limited to, multiple use of high denomination notes, multiple and frequent disaggregation of payment of a higher value outstanding debt;

then the officer must report it immediately to the Money Laundering Reporting Officer (MLRO) in accordance with that Policy.

18. Fees and Charges

- 18.1 The Council has a Fees and Charging Policy to support the Medium Term Financial Strategy. It is intended to provide a consistent and co-ordinated approach to charging across the Council, setting out the key principles for charging and for reviewing charges and must be adhered to by all Chief Officers and their staff.
- 18.2 When setting charges, there is recognition that where possible, the full cost of the service should be recovered. However, there is also a recognition that in some instances, there will be a conscious decision not to fully charge or a statutory charge or limit set, and the remaining cost will be met by the Council Tax payer.
- 18.3 In line with the Medium Term Financial Strategy, a review of fees and charges should be undertaken at least annually as a minimum and any new or increased charges must receive approval from Cabinet or delegated authority under the Scheme of Delegation, Scheme A paragraph 1.6. Where a proposal is made not to increase charges in a financial year, approval must be sought from the appropriate Chief Officer and Chief Finance Officer.

19. Value Added Tax

- 19.1 The Chief Finance Officer shall establish appropriate systems of control for the proper accounting of Value Added Tax (VAT) inputs and outputs. The Chief Finance Officer will produce and distribute a VAT guidance document to all Directorates and schools to enable officers to comply with HMRC VAT regulations.

Section C - Security and Assets

20. Security

- 20.1 The Chief Finance Officer shall have overall responsibility to the Council for security of Council property.
- 20.2 Each Chief Officer shall be responsible for maintaining proper security at all times for all buildings, stocks, stores, furniture, equipment, cash, title deeds, securities, etc. under their custody.
- 20.3 Maximum limits for cash holdings shall be agreed with the Chief Finance Officer.
- 20.4 Every transfer of official money from one member of staff to another will be evidenced in the records of the Directorate concerned by the signature of the receiving officer.
- 20.5 Keys to safes and similar receptacles for the safeguarding of money or other valuables are to be carried on the person of those responsible; the loss of any such keys must be reported to the Chief Finance Officer.

21. Data Protection

- 21.1 The Council's Data Protection Officer shall be responsible for undertaking the tasks set out in Section 71 of the Data Protection Act 2018 and Article 39 of the UK GDPR.
- 21.2 Each officer shall be responsible for maintaining proper security, privacy and compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR in respect of personal data held.
- 21.3 Each Chief Officer shall have a duty to notify the Data Protection Officer of any computer system in their Directorate which holds personal data.
- 21.4 Each Chief Officer shall have a duty to ensure the safekeeping and prevention of improper use of any personal data held in the Directorate, regardless of the media on which it is held.
- 21.5 The Chief Finance Officer, or an authorised representative of the Chief Finance Officer, shall have access to all computer systems and records and may require and receive such explanations as are necessary, for the purposes of the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.
- 21.6 The security of financial systems, e.g. use of passwords, shall be maintained by adhering to instructions issued by the Chief Finance Officer and in line with the ICT Code of Conduct.

22. Stocks and stores

- 22.1 Each Chief Officer shall be responsible for the custody of the stocks and stores in the Directorate and shall have a duty to:

- (a) ensure that stocks are adequate but not excessive for the purpose envisaged;
 - (b) maintain accurate and up to date records of such stocks and stores and ensure that a stocktake is undertaken at year end and the certificate is submitted to Finance;
 - (c) provide the Chief Finance Officer with such information as they require in relation to stores for accounting, costing and financial records.
- 22.2 A Chief Officer shall arrange for periodical test examinations of stocks by persons other than storekeepers and shall ensure that all stocks are checked at least once in every year. Any surpluses or deficiencies revealed by such periodical test examinations shall be reported to the Chief Finance Officer and, after consultation with the Chief Officer, the Chief Finance Officer will decide what action to take.
- 22.3 Losses due to theft of stocks shall be reported to the Chief Finance Officer as soon as possible and, where found to be irrecoverable, shall be written off.
- 22.4 In all other instances write offs need the consent of the Chief Finance Officer following the submission of a report by the Chief Officer outlining the reasons for write off.

23. Investments, borrowings and trust funds

- 23.1 The Council has adopted the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)'s Code of Practice on Treasury Management in the Public Services.
- 23.2 The Chief Finance Officer will be responsible for preparing and presenting an annual Treasury Management Strategy to the Governance and Audit Committee prior to submission to Council for approval in advance of the start of each financial year. The Strategy must include a Borrowing Strategy, Investment Strategy and set the Council's Treasury Management Indicators for the forthcoming financial year.
- 23.3 All investment and borrowing transactions shall be undertaken in accordance with the Treasury Management Strategy with due regard to the requirements of CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management in the Public Services.
- 23.4 All investments of money under its control shall be made in the name of the Council. Any borrowing activity must have regard to CIPFA's Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities and the Code of Practice on Treasury Management in the Public Services.
- 23.5 The Chief Finance Officer shall report quarterly to the Cabinet, summarising borrowing and investment activity, monitoring against the approved Treasury Management and other appropriate indicators, and indicating compliance with any statutory or Council approved guidelines together with a half yearly and an annual report to Council.
- 23.6 The Chief Finance Officer, or an agent nominated by the Chief Finance Officer, will be the Council's Registrar of loan instruments and shall maintain records of all borrowing of money by the Council.
- 23.7 The Chief Finance Officer will have a duty to ensure a proper, efficient and effective mix of borrowing and investments.
- 23.8 The Governance and Audit Committee is responsible for ensuring effective scrutiny of the Treasury Management policies and practices. The Committee will review the Half Year and

Annual Report on Treasury Management as well as the Treasury Management Strategy. The Committee will make any recommendations for improvements on treasury management to the Chief Finance Officer and raise any concerns that the Council is exceeding its legal powers with the Monitoring Officer.

24. Inventories

- 24.1 Each Chief Officer shall be responsible for the plant, vehicles, machinery, equipment, tools, furniture and other non-consumable property in the Directorate and shall have a duty to:
- (a) maintain an up to date inventory of such goods;
 - (b) carry out an annual physical check on goods listed in the inventory;
 - (c) as far as is practicable see that such goods are marked as Council property;
 - (d) ensure that such goods are not removed or used except in accordance with the ordinary course of the Council's business.
- 24.2 Every transfer of items contained in the inventory from one establishment to another shall be evidenced in the records of the establishment concerned by the signature of the receiving officer.

25. Insurances

- 25.1 The Chief Finance Officer shall have a duty to:
- (a) effect adequate insurance cover in accordance with the Council's Insurance Strategy contained in the Risk Management Policy. The Chief Finance Officer will arrange insurance for losses which would have a significant impact on budgets and the provision of services, where it must be bought by law and where the insurance provides additional benefits which enable an activity to take place;
 - (b) promptly claim any insurance loss the Council has suffered and liaise with the Council's Insurers to settle any claim brought by another party, if it is assessed that the Council has a legal liability to do so;
 - (c) ensure that sums insured and limits of indemnity are regularly reviewed;
 - (d) maintain comprehensive records of insurance including policy documents and understand what coverage they provide;
 - (e) employ the services of a professional insurance broking company who can provide expert advice;
 - (f) only transfer risks to Insurance Companies which are financially strong;
 - (g) comply with the "duty of fair presentation" contained in the Insurance Act 2015. The Council must disclose to its Insurers all information, facts and circumstances which are, or ought to be, known to it, which are material to the risk. A material circumstance is one which would influence the judgement of a prudent Underwriter in considering whether to provide insurance and, if so, on what basis and cost.
- 25.2 A Chief Officer will have a duty to:

- (a) promptly notify the Chief Finance Officer of any new risks, insurable assets or liabilities which are required to be insured under the Insurance Strategy.;
- (b) promptly notify the Chief Finance Officer in writing of any loss, liability, damage or any event likely to lead to a claim and where appropriate inform the Police;
- (c) promptly provide any information required by the Chief Finance Officer or the Council's Insurers to progress a claim;
- (d) assist the Chief Finance Officer to comply with the "duty of fair presentation contained in the Insurance Act 2015 by disclosing all relevant information.

25.3 The Chief Finance Officer shall review all insurances at least annually, in consultation with other Chief Officers as appropriate.

25.4 No indemnity shall be given in the name of the Council without the prior approval of the Chief Finance Officer.

26. Prevention of Theft, Fraud and Corruption

26.1 The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for advising on effective systems of internal control to prevent fraud and corruption.

26.2 The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for developing, maintaining and implementing an Anti-Fraud and Bribery Policy. If a Chief Officer suspects any irregularities concerning cash, stores or other property of the Council or held on trust by the Council, they will notify the Chief Finance Officer who will take such steps as considered necessary by way of investigation and report.

26.3 The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for developing, maintaining and implementing an Anti-Money Laundering Policy. The key message of this Policy is to make staff aware of their responsibilities and if they suspect that money laundering activity may be taking place or proposed, they must disclose those suspicions to the Council's Money Laundering Reporting Officer who is the Chief Finance Officer.

26.4 The Council employs a corporate Senior Fraud Investigator, so should any fraud or irregularity be identified, whilst it would still be reported to the 'Chief Finance Officer' initially, certain matters may be referred to the Senior Fraud Investigator for investigation where appropriate.

26.5 The Chief Finance Officer is also responsible for developing, maintaining and implementing the Anti-Tax Evasion Policy. The policy addresses the prevention of tax evasion and will provide a coherent and consistent approach for all employees and any person who performs services for and on behalf of Bridgend County Borough Council.

26.6 All Chief Officers are responsible for ensuring compliance with the Anti-Fraud and Bribery Policy, Anti-Money Laundering Policy and the Anti-Tax Evasion Policy and with systems of internal control.

27. Estates

27.1 The Chief Executive Officer shall maintain a register and appropriate records detailing all properties owned by the Council including:

- (a) purpose for which held;

- (b) location, extent, and plan reference;
- (c) particulars of nature of interest held;
- (d) purchase details;
- (e) rents payable;
- (f) particulars of tenancies granted.

27.2 The Chief Finance Officer will maintain an asset register of all Council assets.

27.3 Where land and/or buildings are found to be surplus to requirements the responsible Chief Officer shall, as soon as possible, submit a report to the appropriate Cabinet Member for appropriate action in accordance with the Schemes of Delegation.

28. Asset Disposal

28.1 Directors are responsible for ensuring that all property assets which are surplus to requirements are referred to the Corporate Landlord section, who will determine the appropriate action to be taken in conjunction with Directorates. In accordance with the Council's disposal strategy the following shall be considered:

- restrictions relating to the ownership of the asset;
- opportunities for using the asset elsewhere in the Council;
- market opportunities;
- appropriate use of tendering procedures for disposal;
- fairness in the disposal process;
- asset security;
- the costs of disposal in relation to the expected income.

28.2 All assets, including assets declared surplus where disposal is proposed must be notified to the Chief Finance Officer for approval and appropriate action in accordance with the Council's disposal strategy and Scheme of Delegation of Functions.

28.3 All assets, whether land, property, buildings, vehicles, plant or equipment, must be notified to the Capital Accountant to ensure their disposal is accurately recorded on the Council's Fixed Asset Register in a timely manner, and as soon after disposal as possible.

29. Protection of private property

29.1 The Chief Officer shall in any known case where steps are necessary to prevent or mitigate loss of or damage to moveable property, prepare in a form agreed with the Chief Finance Officer, an itemised inventory in each case prepared in the presence of two officers.

29.2 All valuables such as jewellery, watches and other small articles of a similar nature and documents of title deposited with the Council for safe custody shall be recorded in a form agreed by the Chief Finance Officer.

29.3 All monies deposited with the Council for safekeeping shall be dealt with in accordance with guidelines agreed by the Chief Officer and the Chief Finance Officer.

29.4 Where a Chief Officer is required as part of their duties to hold in trust any property, valuables or cash belonging to a third party they should do so in accordance with guidelines agreed with the Chief Finance Officer.

30. Risk Management

30.1 The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for preparing the Council's Risk Management Strategy and its promotion throughout the Council and for advising of strategic, financial and operational risks.

30.2 Chief Officers shall be responsible for the identification, classification and control of all risks falling within their areas of responsibility. The risks identified shall be incorporated into a Departmental Risk Register, and any risks that exceed the Council's risk threshold shall be notified to the Chief Finance Officer for incorporation into the Corporate Risk Assessment, which shall be subject to periodic review by the Governance and Audit Committee at no more than annual intervals.

30.3 Chief Officers shall take responsibility for risk management within their areas of responsibility, having regard to advice from the Chief Finance Officer and other specialist Officers (e.g. crime prevention, fire prevention, health and safety), and shall undertake regular reviews of risk within their own Directorates.

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Meeting of:	COUNCIL
Date of Meeting:	15 JANUARY 2025
Report Title:	INFORMATION REPORT FOR NOTING
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CHIEF OFFICER – LEGAL AND REGULATORY SERVICES, HR AND CORPORATE POLICY
Responsible Officer:	MARK GALVIN – SENIOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES - COMMITTEES
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the policy framework and procedure rules.
Executive Summary:	To inform Council of an Information Report for noting.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Council of an Information Report for noting that has been published since its last scheduled meeting.

2. Background

- 2.1 At a previous meeting of Council, it was resolved to approve a revised procedure for the presentation to Council of Information Reports for noting.

3. Current situation / proposal

3.1 Information Reports

The following Information Report has been published since the last meeting of Council:-

<u>Title</u>	<u>Date Published</u>
Audited Statement of Accounts 2023-24	8 January 2025

3.2 Availability of Document

The document has been circulated to Elected Members electronically via email and placed on the Bridgend County Borough Council website. The document is available from the date of publication above.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. This is an information report, therefore it is not necessary to carry out an Equality Impact assessment in the production of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

5. Well-being of Future Generations Implications and Connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

5.1 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.

6. Climate Change Implications

6.1 There are no Climate Change Implications from this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 There are no Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications from this report.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 There are no financial implications in relation to this report.

9. Recommendations

9.1 That Council acknowledges the publication of the report referred to in paragraph 3.1 of this report.

Background documents

None

Meeting of:	COUNCIL
Date of Meeting:	15 JANUARY 2025
Report Title:	AUDITED STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2023-24
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CHIEF OFFICER – FINANCE, HOUSING AND CHANGE
Responsible Officer:	NIGEL SMITH, GROUP MANAGER – CHIEF ACCOUNTANT
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	The Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014 (as amended) require Local Authorities to publish audited statement of accounts.
Executive Summary:	The Council’s Statement of Accounts 2023-24 were approved by the Governance and Audit Committee on 28 November 2024. Audit Wales have completed their audit of the accounts, and the Auditor General for Wales has signed the auditor’s certification of the accounts. The Statement of Accounts will be published to the Council’s website, along with the Annual Governance Statement which has been approved by the Council’s Leader and Chief Executive.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Council that the audit of the Council’s Statement of Accounts 2023-24 has concluded, and the accounts have been certified by the Auditor General with an unqualified audit opinion.

2. Background

- 2.1 The preparation of the Statement of Accounts is a requirement of the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014 (as amended 2018) and its content is defined by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy’s ‘Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom’ (the Code). The audited Statement of Accounts 2023-24 are attached at **Appendix A**.
- 2.2 The audited Statement of Accounts 2023-24 was signed by the responsible financial officer as presenting a true and fair view of the financial position of the Council at 31 March 2024 on 28 November 2024 and were approved by the Governance and Audit Committee on 28 November 2024.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 The Auditor General for Wales signed the audit certification on 29 November 2024. The Audit General for Wales’ Report to Members is included at pages 83-85 of the Accounts, which confirms that, in the Auditor General’s opinion, the accounts give a

true and fair view of the financial position of the Council as at 31 March 2024 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended; and that they have been prepared in accordance with legislative requirements and appropriate accounting standards as interpreted by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023-24.

3.2 The certification of the accounts is in accordance with the requirements of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 and the Auditor General for Wales' Code of Audit Practice. This will give members assurance that the Statement of Accounts have been properly prepared and fairly represent the financial position of the Council for 2023-24.

3.3 **Appendix A** also includes the Council's Annual Governance Statement, approved by the Council Leader and Chief Executive. The Annual Governance Statement is reviewed by Audit Wales as part of the audit of the Statement of Accounts, to ensure consistency with the accounts and the auditor's knowledge and understanding of the Council.

3.4 The audited Statement of Accounts 2023-24, including the Annual Governance Statement, will be published on the Council's website.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. This is an information report therefore it is not necessary to carry out an Equality Impact assessment. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

5.1 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 because of this report.

6. Climate Change Implications

6.1 The Climate Change implications were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the environment because of this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 The Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting implications were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon Safeguarding and Corporate parenting because of this report.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 The Statement of Accounts 2023-24 sets out the Council's financial position as at 31 March 2024. There are no further financial implications as a result of this report.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 It is recommended that the Council notes the audited Statement of Accounts 2023-24 including the Annual Governance Statement at **Appendix A**.

Background documents

None

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Statement of Accounts

Bridgend County Borough Council • 2023-24



**Bridgend County Borough Council
Civic Offices
Angel Street
BRIDGEND
CF31 4WB
(01656) 643643**

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Narrative report

Introduction

Bridgend County Borough Council's Statement of Accounts provides a record of the Council's financial position for the year. The Council produces its Statement of Accounts to explain the Council's finances, to give assurance that public money has been properly accounted for, and that the financial standing of the Council is on a secure basis. The Statement of Accounts must provide a 'true and fair' view of the Council's financial position as at 31 March 2024, and of its income and expenditure for the 2023-24 financial year. When preparing these accounts consideration is given to the materiality of information. Materiality is a concept that determines whether an omission or misstatement of information in a financial report would impact a reasonable user's decision-making. If information is significant, it is material. If the information is insignificant or irrelevant, it is said to be immaterial. Audit Wales calculate materiality using 1% of the Council's gross expenditure. Audit Wales will also calculate a trivial level above which any misstatements are reported to those charged with governance, in particular the Governance and Audit Committee. The trivial level is set at 5% of the material level. Some areas of the accounts have a much lower level of materiality, in particular the remuneration disclosures, where materiality is set at £1,000; and related party disclosures, where materiality is set at £10,000 for individual's interests. The Council's materiality level is in the region of £5.4 million and any notes to the accounts below this value, which are not statutorily required, and where the Council believes they do not aid understanding, have been excluded.

The Council's services will continue to be delivered by the public sector therefore the accounts are prepared on a 'going-concern' basis. The level of usable reserves excluding schools and Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (£99m) is sufficient to meet the cost of the provision of services over the medium term.

About Bridgend

The county borough of Bridgend



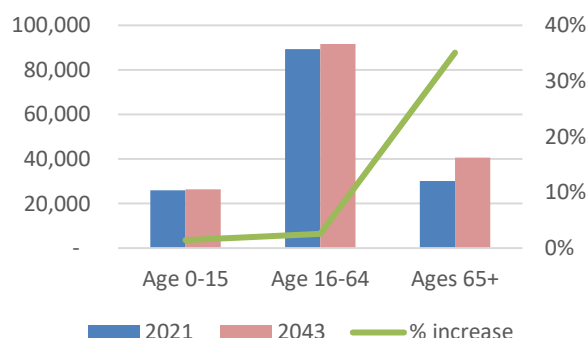
The county borough of Bridgend lies in South Wales and is conveniently situated between Wales' capital city, Cardiff, to the east and the city of Swansea to the west, approximately 20 miles from each. It is bordered by the counties of Neath Port Talbot, Rhondda Cynon Taf and the Vale of Glamorgan with a coastline to the Bristol Channel and covers an area of 98.5 miles². The County has a diverse geography with valleys in the north and 12.5 miles of coastline and beaches to the south. The M4 runs through the centre of the county borough, and there are main-line rail links to Cardiff, London and Swansea. Bridgend County Borough it is at the heart of the South Wales industrial and coastal belt. To the north is the residential town of Maesteg, to the southwest is the coastal town of Porthcawl and to the east is Pencoed. Bridgend is one of 22 Councils in Wales, and accounts for approximately 4.7% of the country's population.

Demographic profile of Bridgend

The census 2021 for Bridgend showed that there were 145,500 people living in the county. The population is projected to increase to 158,717 by 2043, with significant increases forecast in the population aged over 65, according to the 2018 principal population projections for local authorities.

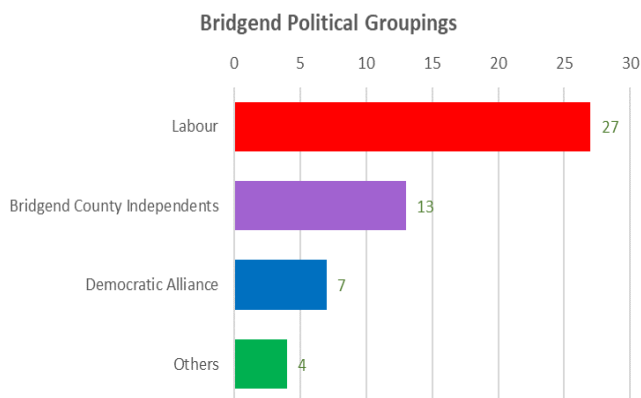
The profile of the population is an important determinant of the demand for services provided by the Council such as the need for adult and children's social care. The population change projections highlight the potential pressures facing the Council with a forecast increasing proportion of older people aged 65+.

Population change projections 2021 - 2043



Political and management structure

Council Democracy



As at 31 March 2024 the Council had 51 Councillors elected by the community to decide how the Council should carry out its various activities. They represent public interest as well as individuals living within the ward in which they have been elected to service a term of office. They represent the people of Bridgend and set the overall Council strategy and budget framework.

The constitution sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures to be followed to ensure decisions are effective, transparent and accountable to local people. Council elects a Mayor annually to perform a civic role and promote the County. Council also appoints a leader of the Council who appoints Cabinet Members, each with a responsibility for a specific portfolio of services.

The role of the Cabinet is to be responsible for most major decisions, provide leadership, and propose the budget framework and budget.

Overview and Scrutiny Committees support the work of the Cabinet and Council by:

- scrutinising decisions of the Cabinet;
- considering service provision, planning, management and performance of service areas;
- allowing all Councillors, citizens and stakeholders to have a say in matters concerning the Council;
- considering policies, protocols and plans and producing reports and recommendations thereon;
- contributing to the annual budget consultation process;
- having the opportunity to influence future Cabinet and Council decisions through pre-decision meetings; and
- having the ability to review a decision which has been made but not yet implemented.

Regulatory and other committees support the delivery of Council services. Council has given the Governance and Audit Committee the responsibility to review and approve the Financial Statements of the Council.

The Council's Corporate Management Board is led by the Chief Executive and includes the 3 Corporate Directors, the Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer.

Bridgend County Borough Council Organisational Structure

The Council's operations are organised into Directorates, each of which report into the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive also manages the Chief Executive's Directorate. The Directorates are:

Education & Family Support (*changed to Education, Early Years and Young People from April 2024*): Schools, Learner Support, Family Support, Schools Support, School Modernisation, Vulnerable Groups Support and Business Support.

Social Services & Wellbeing: Adult Social Care- Residential Care, Domiciliary Care, Day Opportunities; Prevention and Wellbeing – Leisure Centres, Community Centres, Cultural Trust Partnership; Children’s Social Care – Care Experienced Children, Family Support Services, Adoption and Social Work.

Communities: Planning & Development, Corporate Landlord, Strategic Regeneration, Economy, Natural Resources and Sustainability, Cleaner Streets & Waste Management, Highways & Green Spaces.

Chief Executives: Finance, Human Resources, Partnerships, Legal, Democratic and Regulatory Services, ICT, Elections, Housing & Homelessness, and Business Support.

Objectives and performance

Our ambition – How we will work differently for our communities

During the period 2023-28, the Council wants to invest in the right things, the things that make the biggest difference and are the most valued by our communities. We are faced with difficult choices about how we prioritise spending, we won’t be able to do everything for everyone. Since the pandemic, and in the current economic crisis, what people want has changed. The Council has agreed how it will work differently to adapt to these changes as set out right.



Better and more targeted use of resources



One council, working well together and with partners



Improving communication, engagement and responsiveness



Supporting and empowering communities



Protecting the services that matter to you the most

The Council’s 7 Wellbeing Objectives

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 says that public bodies, including the Council, must work to improve the wellbeing of Wales. The Council has published a set of wellbeing objectives to demonstrate how the Council will contribute to the national wellbeing goals. The wellbeing objectives below are set out in the Council’s [Corporate Plan 2023-28 – ‘Delivering Together’](#).

Wellbeing Objective 1: A County Borough where we protect our most vulnerable

The main ways we will achieve this are:

- Providing high-quality children’s and adult social services and early help services to people who need them
- Supporting people in poverty to get the support they need or help they are entitled to
- Supporting people facing homelessness to find a place to live
- Supporting children with additional learning needs to get the best from their education
- Safeguarding and protecting people who are at risk of harm

Wellbeing Objective 2: A County Borough with fair work, skilled, high-quality jobs and thriving towns

The main ways we will achieve this are:

- Helping our residents get the skills they need for work
 - Making sure our young people find jobs or are in education or training
 - Improving our town centres, making them safer and more attractive
 - Attracting investment and supporting new and existing local businesses
-

Wellbeing Objective 3: A County Borough with thriving valleys communities

The main ways we will achieve this are:

- Investing in Maesteg town centre and creating more jobs in the valleys
 - Improving community facilities and making them more accessible
 - Improving education and skills in the valleys
 - Investing in our parks and supporting tourism to the valleys
-

Wellbeing Objective 4: A County Borough where we help people meet their potential

The main ways we will achieve this are:

- Providing safe, supportive schools with high quality teaching
 - Expanding Welsh medium education opportunities
 - Modernising our school buildings
 - Supporting and encouraging lifelong learning
 - Being the best parents we can to our care experienced children
 - Offering youth services and school holiday programmes for our young people
-

Wellbeing Objective 5: A County Borough that is responding to the climate and nature emergency

The main ways we will achieve this are:

- Moving towards net zero carbon
 - Improving the energy efficiency of our buildings and services
 - Protecting our landscapes and open spaces and planting more trees
 - Reducing, reusing or recycling as much of our waste as possible
 - Improving flood defences and schemes to reduce flooding of our homes and businesses
-

Wellbeing Objective 6: A County Borough where people feel valued, heard and part of their community

The main ways we will achieve this are:

- Improving the way we engage with local people, including young people, listening to their views and acting on them
- Offering more information and advice online and in your libraries and community buildings, not just in Civic Offices
- Helping clubs and community groups to take control of and improve their facilities and protect them for the future
- Making sure you can talk to us and hear from us in Welsh
- Celebrating and supporting diversity and inclusion and tackling discrimination

Wellbeing Objective 7: A County Borough where we support people to live healthy and happy lives

The main ways we will achieve this are:

- Improving active travel routes and facilities so people can walk and cycle
- Offering attractive leisure and cultural activities
- Improving children's play facilities and opportunities
- Providing free school meals and expanding free childcare provision
- Integrating our social care services with health services so people are supported seamlessly
- Improve the supply of affordable housing

Every year the Council must publish a Corporate self-assessment report. This report assures the public, Welsh Government and other regulators, that the Council is performing well, making decisions in a sensible, open way and using its money and other resources properly. Most importantly, the report tells local residents, businesses and stakeholders how the Council is performing. The Council's Corporate Self-Assessment 2023-24 will be published in due course and will outline how the Council has performed against each of its objectives as set out above.

Governance and risk

Governance

The Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards. This includes ensuring that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The Council also has a duty under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in delivering its functions in terms of strategic effectiveness, service quality, service availability, fairness, sustainability, efficiency and innovation. The Annual Governance Statement included at the end of the Statement of Accounts document, sets out in detail the Council's governance arrangements.

Risk management

In delivering services, the Council is faced with a range of risks, which can threaten the quality and availability of the services the Council provides. The Corporate Risk Register is regularly reviewed by the Corporate Management Board and is presented to Council as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and twice-yearly to the Governance and Audit Committee. Some of the most significant risks, and mitigating actions to deal with these, are listed below.

Risk description	Possible consequences	Mitigating actions
The Council is unable to deliver a balanced budget and sustain services into the medium term	The more difficult decisions to cut or reduce service levels must be made or the Council will not deliver the changes necessary to achieve a balanced budget, which will result in the Council being in breach of its legal responsibilities.	The Council manages this risk through existing budget and business planning processes, which include early identification of savings targets and development of options for Cabinet, challenge from Scrutiny and formal and informal briefings of members and political groupings.

Risk description	Possible consequences	Mitigating actions
The Council is unable to identify and deliver infrastructure improvements required in the medium to longer term due to the cessation of external grants, the increased cost of borrowing and the increased costs of construction and building works	If the Council does not have sufficient capital to maintain, improve and replace infrastructure, including roads, street lights, school buildings and technology then they will deteriorate bringing financial and safety risks which could lead to adverse incidents, reports, publicity, fines and ultimately prosecution.	The Council has a 10-year capital programme. The development of this programme and arrangements for its review and updating are well established. The Council has identified scope to improve upon this to ensure that these needs are balanced with other demand for capital through the development of the new Capital Programme Board.
The Council fails to meet statutory responsibilities to respond to situations where individuals are at risk of neglect or abuse. This would include children, adults in need of social care, homeless individuals and others	There is a risk that, without adequate budgets and due to the lack of a sufficiently experienced workforce, the Council's safeguarding arrangements will not be effective, and that children and adults at risk will not be kept safe and will experience harm. The demand for services continues to increase, which places additional pressures on services.	The Council continues to prioritise this area of work. Additional staff have been employed to ensure the service is able to meet the increasing demand for services; the Council's Market Supplement Policy has been invoked to support the recruitment of staff to the childcare teams; resource has been found to support increased numbers of staff accessing the social work training scheme and work has been done to establish an overseas recruitment programme. Working practices in the service are being reviewed and the Council continues to work effectively with key partners.
The Council is unable to attract, develop or retain a workforce with the necessary skills to meet the demands placed upon the authority and its services	If there is a continued reduction in the number of suitably skilled and experienced staff then there will not be the expertise in the workforce to deliver services and protect the interests of the Council. This could lead to the wellbeing of citizens suffering, a reduction in service quality, a delay to service provision and a loss of morale amongst the remaining staff if they feel unsupported and therefore seek to work elsewhere.	Measures have been taken to seek to mitigate and treat the risks including the Market Supplement Policy and further development of international recruitment. Use of agency staff continues to be high in some areas and direct work is being undertaken to improve this position.
Significant service pressures in the health and social care services could impact on the ability of services to support vulnerable individuals	The health and social care system is not able to meet the health and care needs of people in a timely way resulting in harm and excess deaths. The immediate risk is that there is not sufficient capacity in community health and social care services to prevent hospital admissions and support timely discharge from hospital.	There are regular meetings at senior levels across Health and the Council to understand the current position and to agree the joint actions required to try to address the issues.
There is an increase in the financial fragility of schools in the Borough	Whilst the Council seeks to mitigate the impact of the overall financial positions for schools, current financial planning	There are structures in place to escalate issues to senior officers and Members. There is a School Budget Forum in place that is a

Risk description	Possible consequences	Mitigating actions
	includes the need to reduce the level of support previously given to schools. The consequences of this include schools having to use their balances to fund activity with increased risk of schools going into deficit. It is a requirement that schools address a deficit within 3 years, 5 years in exceptional circumstances. This will be more difficult as funding to schools reduces.	consultative body in relation to the schools funding formula and overall finance issues for schools. School governors are responsible for monitoring and reporting school finance positions. Schools are supported with the development and monitoring of individual school budgets by the central finance team.
There is a threat to business continuity if the Council is unable to procure and implement major ICT systems which support critical services such as a replacement system for Care Director (WCCIS) and the Capita One system for Education	In social care the failure to procure and implement a new system by January 2026 will result in the Council having to rely on an unsupported database or a complex interim solution. Operating social care case management and safeguarding services without a functional system is not safe or viable option. Without a system the Council can not fulfil its statutory safeguarding obligations and there is a risk to life of children and adults at risk of failing to do so. The Capita One system will provide a single comprehensive record for each child which supports the Council to manage education efficiently by connecting data securely resulting in more informed decisions and early intervention.	The Council is working with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS Cymru), the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and national programme to progress national approach to contingency planning, procurement strategy, data migration and scoring resources from Welsh Government via a clear business case - The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Region Councils and the Vale of Glamorgan have formed a regional consortia to manage evaluation and implementation of a new supplier - A national or regional approach to procurement will enable better market management and should secure better value for money - The WCCIS regional team provide some capacity to support system change - the Council have formed a cross-directorate group to provide governance within the Council - Education is working with schools and the ICT service to implement the new system.

Decarbonisation 2030

Welsh Government declared a Climate Emergency in April 2019. Following this the Welsh government committed to achieving a carbon neutral public sector by 2030. In June 2020 Bridgend County Borough Council's Cabinet approved a report that set out the crucial role the Council has to play through the management of its own resources, organisations and businesses and the Council declared its own climate emergency in June 2020. Cabinet approved the Council's 2030 Net Zero Carbon Strategy on 13 December 2022. The Strategy includes six priority actions aimed at reducing the organisation's greenhouse gas emissions to achieve a net zero position by 1 April 2030. The Action Plans include carbon management, buildings, transport, procurement, land use and waste. This strategy will be an integral part of the Council's Corporate Plan, whilst policies, strategies and ongoing plans will all reflect the commitment to Net Zero. This will ensure it is fully embraced across the organisation. Whilst Council has agreed £0.4 million capital allocation per annum to 2030-31, the level of resources to deliver 2030 Net Zero will be substantially more than this and, due to financial constraints, the Council's ambition to achieve Net Zero 2030 may be difficult to deliver.

The Council has already progressed schemes including:

- Solar panels.
- Energy efficient lighting, including in Civic Offices.
- Electric vehicle charging points across the Borough.
- The Council's Re:fit programme, which has been run in partnership with energy experts Ameresco, has seen schools and public buildings fitted with a range of measures including LED lighting, lighting controls, Building Management Systems and solar PV systems.

Future opportunities

The Council will continue to work towards achieving net zero carbon and has secured funding to progress the following schemes:

- Replacement of gas-fired boilers with Air Source Heat Pumps and installation of solar PV at two Council buildings – Bridgend Resource Centre and Bryn-y-Cae Residential Home.
- Installation of rooftop solar PV and ground-mounted battery storage at Bryncethin Depot in order to reduce Council electricity costs and reduce carbon emissions.

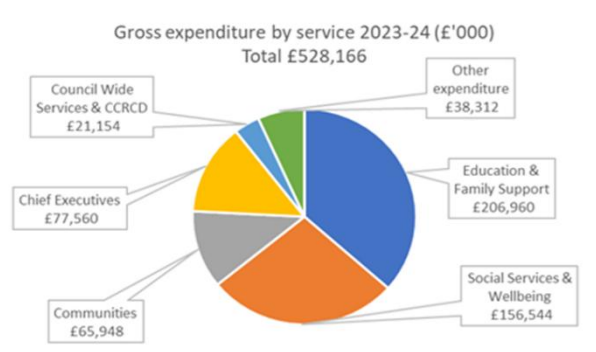
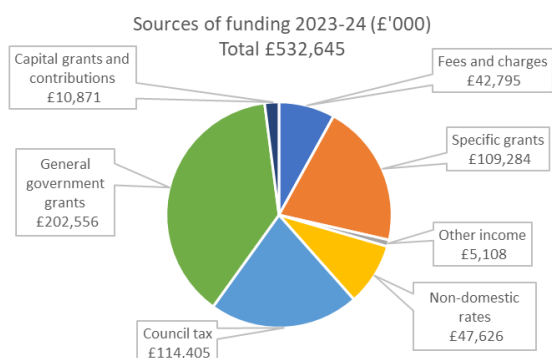
Financial Performance

Income and Expenditure

The council receives funding from three main sources:

- Government grants, including the Welsh Government core funding to the Council, the Revenue Support Grant (RSG);
- Council tax; and
- Its share of business (non-domestic) rates

The Council also generates income from fees and charges for services it provides. The charts below show the funding received and how it was spent on services and other expenditure, which includes precepts and levies and interest payable. The difference of £33,833 is the deficit on the provision of services as shown in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

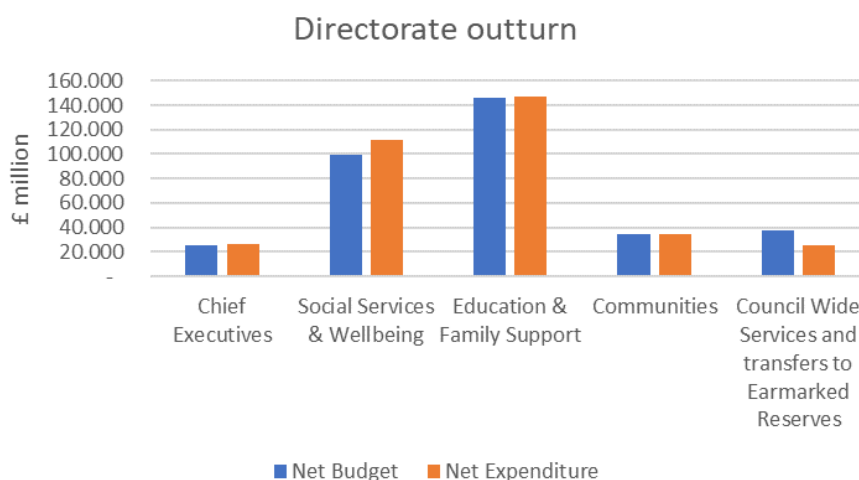


Revenue outturn

In March 2023 the Council approved a net revenue budget of £342.047 million based on the provisional local government settlement received from Welsh Government in December 2022. The Welsh Government announced its final settlement on 28th February 2023 which included an increase in the Revenue Settlement Grant for the Council of £0.287 million, resulting in a net budget of £342.334 million for the year. The revenue budget shows the annual cost of delivering the council's duties and responsibilities to the community, many of which are provided under statute. The Council's annual revenue budget covers the day-to-day running costs of the Council including staff, waste collection, schools, care workers, foster carers and leisure services. The final revenue outturn, after a net drawdown of earmarked reserves, was a net overspend of £0.102 million which was funded via the Council Fund, leaving the Council Fund at £9.730 million as at 31 March 2024. The outturn position is shown below.

Directorate	Net Budget £ million	Net Expenditure £ million	(Under)/ overspend £ million	(Under)/ overspend %
Chief Executives	25.410	25.932	0.522	2.10%
Social Services & Wellbeing	99.386	111.213	11.827	11.90%
Education & Family Support	145.860	147.212	1.352	0.90%
Communities	34.383	34.504	0.121	0.40%
Council Wide Services and transfers to Earmarked Reserves	37.295	25.081	(12.214)	(32.70)%
Directorate outturn subtotal	342.334	343.942	1.608	0.50%
Funding and Financing	342.334	343.840	1.506	0.40%
Total Council outturn	-	0.102	0.102	-

The Council's net budget and net expenditure by Directorate is shown in the table below.



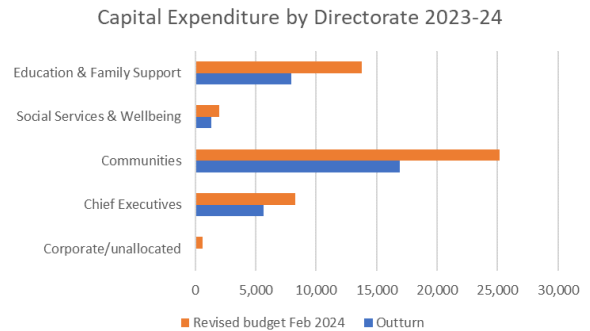
The Council received Revenue Support Grant from the Welsh Government of £202.556 million. The net Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) collectable on behalf of Welsh Government by the Council for the year was £43.123 million. The Council's share of NDR due for the year from Welsh Government was £47.626 million.

2023-24 has been a challenging year for the council's finances. The Council made additions/reclassifications to revenue earmarked reserves of £10.341 million and drew down or unwound £38.840 million, a net reduction in reserves of £28.499 million. The Council Fund reduced by £0.102 million to £9.730 million. The Council's outturn report for the year can be found on the Council's website [here](#).

Capital Expenditure and Funding

Capital investment forms a large part of the Council's spending. The Council's original capital programme for 2023-24, approved by Council on 1 March 2023, was £58.387 million.

Budget adjustments take place during the year to reflect new schemes added to the Capital Programme, removal or reductions in schemes and slippage of schemes to future years. The final approved budget for the year was £49.714 million and the total expenditure was £31.813 million, The variance below will be slipped into future years.

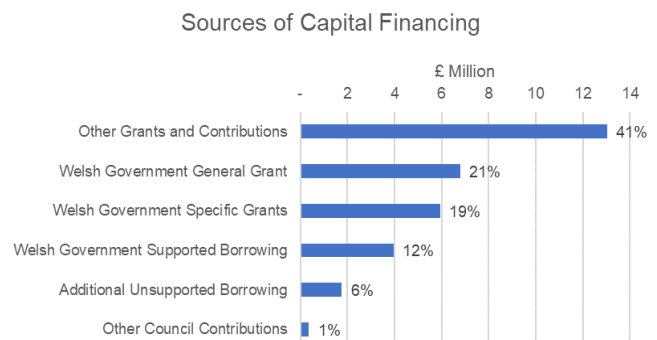


Directorate	Original approved budget £'000	Revised budget £'000	Outturn £'000	Variance (Under)/over £'000
Education and Family Support	26,917	13,756	7,930	(5,826)
Social Services and Wellbeing	6,701	1,983	1,311	(672)
Communities	30,308	25,152	16,892	(8,260)
Chief Executives	4,640	8,250	5,680	(2,570)
Corporate/unallocated	479	573	-	(573)
TOTAL	69,045	49,714	31,813	(17,901)

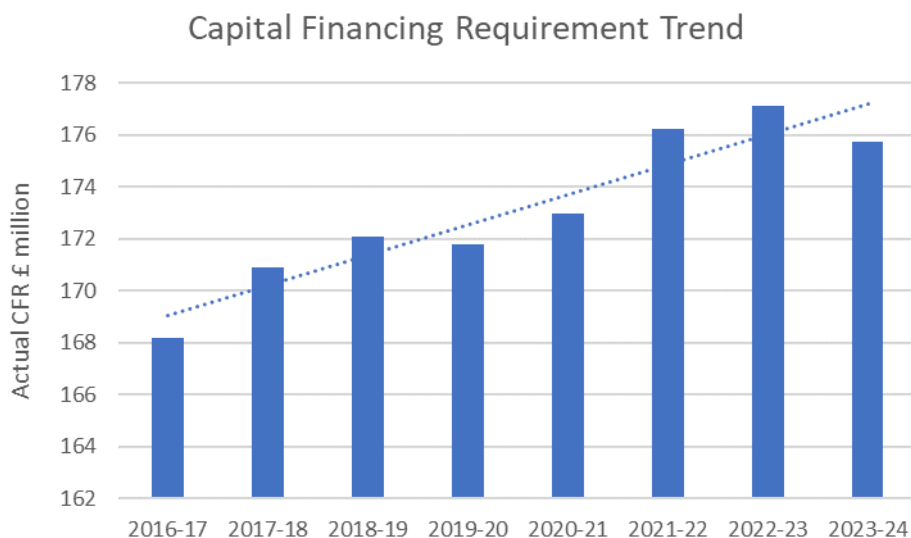
The total expenditure for the year represents 64% of the final approved capital programme, and key projects included:

- Cosy Corner, Porthcawl
- Maesteg Town Hall
- ICT Data Centre replacement
- Universal Primary Free School Meals – kitchen refurbishments
- Porthcawl Metro
- Disabled Facility Grants for adaptations to people's homes to support individuals to continue to live at home.

The Council pays for its capital expenditure from a number of sources. The local government capital settlement for 2023-24 provided the Council with £8.008 million of capital funding, of which £3.951 million was supported borrowing and £4.057 million was capital grant. An analysis of the capital funding is shown to the right.



Capital expenditure incurred historically by borrowing, but to be paid for from future revenue or capital income, is termed the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). The CFR over the last 7 years is shown below with the dotted line representing the trend over that period. Revenue amounts are set aside each year to repay the borrowing known as Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) and is put aside over a 45-year period in line with the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy.



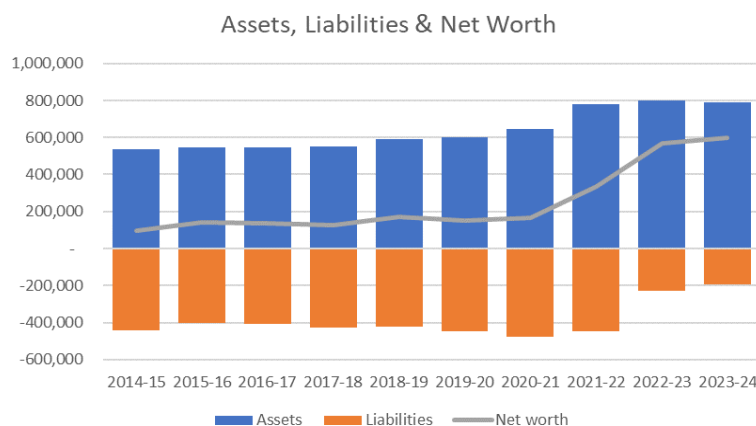
Assets and Liabilities

The balance sheet summarises the Council's financial position at the year-end, and reports the assets, liabilities and reserves of the Council, which shows how much the Council owns and how much it owes. The net assets of the Council have increased by £36.833 million from £570.604 million as at 31 March 2023 to £607,437 million as at 31 March 2024.

The key movements over the year are shown below:

	31 March 2023 £'000	31 March 2024 £'000	Movement £'000
What we own – assets	799,838	808,527	8,689
What we owe – liabilities	(229,234)	(201,090)	28,144
Net financial position – assets less liabilities	570,604	607,437	36,833
<i>The net financial position is held in reserves as follows:</i>			
General reserves held by the Council, including earmarked reserves – usable reserves	134,727	104,027	(30,700)
Other reserves held for statutory or specific purposes – unusable reserves	435,877	503,410	67,533
Total reserves	570,604	607,437	36,833

The Council's assets and liabilities can be used to show a 'net worth', as in the chart below. The major reduction in liabilities relates primarily to the pension fund liability, which is discussed later in the report.



Long term assets

Property, plant and equipment are revalued on a 3-year rotation. This is a shorter period than the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's 'Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting' suggests but enables the Council to ensure values recorded in the accounts are materially correct. The valuation of assets involves a number of assumptions, however movements in asset values as well as accounting charges such as depreciation have no impact on council tax, as these charges are required to be reversed out from unusable reserves. Details of the movements in assets, capital expenditure and its financing are included at note 21.

- Assets revalued during 2023-24 as part of the Council's rolling programme included community centres, administrative offices, residential homes, bus stations and car parks.
- Investment properties, surplus assets and assets held for sale are revalued annually.

Short term assets & liabilities

Short term assets include investments made in line with the approved [Treasury Management Strategy](#), to support the short term cash flow needs of the Council. The total investments and cash balances held for Treasury Management purposes was £50.00 million as at 31 March 2024 and is primarily temporary cash balances deposited with financial institutions and Central Government Debt Management Office. The average rate of interest earned for the year was 4.50%.

Borrowing

The Council has long-term borrowing outstanding as at 31 March 2024 of £99.699 million including its share of Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRC) long-term borrowing of £0.05 million. The Council's borrowing of £99.694 million is a mixture of Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) £77.617 million, Lender Option Borrower Options (LOBOs) of £19.745 million, and £2.33 million of Salix loans to finance capital expenditure. More detail in relation to borrowing is provided in note 31. The borrowing should be seen in the context of the total value of the Council's long-term assets, which are shown in the Balance Sheet at £694 million. Borrowing is permitted in line with the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities as long as, in the opinion of the Chief Finance Officer, the revenue costs are capable of being met and are in keeping with prudential indicators and guidelines. Should the opportunity arise for the Council to repay its LOBOs at a benefit to the Council, then it will look to do so.

Raising debt to finance Council investment

The Council has a borrowing requirement arising from current and past years' capital programmes. This is met via a mixture of long- and short-term borrowing, the balance of which can vary year on year depending upon investment and debt maturities and market conditions. Decisions made on borrowing will also affect investment levels. Councils can borrow to invest in property, plant or equipment or other infrastructure that supports the

delivery of service, but they must ensure that they can pay this amount back. The Council sets out its approach to borrowing and investment in its annual Treasury Management Strategy, approved by Council in advance of each financial year, and monitored throughout the year by the Governance and Audit Committee, with advice from external treasury management advisors as appropriate. The Council did not take out any new borrowing for capital financing during 2023-24.

Pensions Liability: £6.74 million

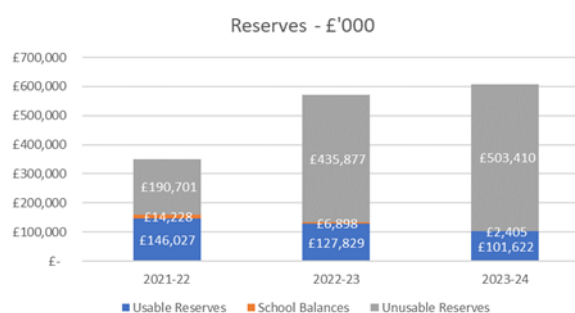
The requirements of International Accounting Standards 19 (IAS19) in relation to post-employment benefits – i.e., pensions, have been fully incorporated into the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, with actuarial gains and losses being recognised in Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure, as note 30 explains in detail. The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) is a funded defined benefit plan with benefits earned up to 31 March 2014 being linked to final salary. Benefits after 31 March 2014 are based on a Career Average Revalued Earnings (CARE) scheme. The Council is part of the Rhondda Cynon Taff Pension Fund. The fund is revalued every 3 years by an independent firm of actuaries. The last valuation of the pension fund was 31 March 2022.

A pensions reserve and a pension liability are incorporated within the Council's accounts, reflecting the amount by which the Bridgend element of the Rhondda Cynon Taff Pension Fund is under-funded compared with the assessed payment liabilities to pensioners now and in the future. The cost to the Council during the year for pension liabilities was £21.40 million. The overall pensions' liability of the Council at 31 March 2024 was £6.74 million, a reduction of £29.11 million from 31 March 2023 when the liability was £35.85 million. This takes into account the underpin liability following the McCloud remedy and the outcome of the McCloud/Sargeant case that the impact of transitional protection arrangements put in place when firefighters' and judges' pension schemes were reformed were age discriminatory.

In June 2023 the High Court found in the Virgin Media case that changes to member benefits in contracted out defined benefit pension schemes between 1996 and 2016 required an actuarial certificate in line with Section 37 of the Pensions Act 1993, and that changes without this certification are to be considered void. It is anticipated that there will not be any pension liability changes as a result of this case for the Council. Further information can be found in Note 30 to the accounts.

Reserves

The reserves of the Council represent the net worth of the Council and are split into usable and unusable amounts. **Usable reserves** are sums of money put aside for specific purposes or for general contingencies and cash flow management. Their use, creation and assessment of sufficiency also considers risks to financial resilience. During the last year the Council has faced significant financial challenges and the opportunity to set aside new earmarked reserves for specific purposes has been limited. Earmarked reserves and other usable reserves are detailed in note 28 of the accounts, whilst unusable reserves are shown in note 29.



Unusable reserves have increased as a result of an increase in the valuation of assets in the current year (£34.7 million) and a reduction in the net liability of the pension fund (£29.1 million). As these are unusable, they represent accounting adjustments rather than actual cash flows.

Addressing future challenges

The Council faces significant challenges moving forward. It has in place a Medium Term Financial Strategy approved by Council which shows the required savings for the forthcoming year and indicative savings for the following three years. The key medium-term financial risks facing the Council are:

- Population growth and an ageing population, increasing dementia rates and an increased number of young people with complex disabilities living into adulthood.
- High numbers of children in care and the significant service and financial pressures within Children's Social Care services.
- Safeguarding the financial position of the Council. Whilst the Council has an agreed budget for 2024-25 and has in place a Medium Term Financial Strategy for the period 2024-25 to 2027-28, the level of expected savings the Council will need to make over that period is significant. Not all savings targets for future years are fully developed, and the Council will need to ensure it can meet those targets, looking at ways to improve efficiency through delivering services in different ways.
- The Council's outturn for 2023-24 is an overspend of £0.102 million. Whilst the overspend was been mitigated in part through the application of reserves appropriate to expenditure during the year, the Council is unable to support any further future overspend using reserves as this is neither prudent nor sustainable. The level of reserves has reduced to both meet planned expenditure but also to meet the budget pressures during the year.

Whilst the Council continues to face increasing pressures on its budget, it approved a balanced budget for 2024-25. The uncertain economic climate will require the Council to continually review its priorities and budgets.

The Financial Statements

The Statement of Accounts are included in this document, and consist of the following financial statements:

Statement of Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts

This sets out the respective responsibilities of the Council and the Section 151 officer for the preparation and approval of the Statement of Accounts.

The Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES)

This records the Council's income and expenditure in the year of providing services in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices, rather than the amount to be funded from taxation. Councils raise taxation to cover expenditure in accordance with statutory requirements, which may be different from the accounting cost. The taxation position is shown in both the Expenditure and Funding Analysis and the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Movement in Reserves Statement (MiRS)

The Movement in Reserves Statement shows the movement from the start of the year to the end of the year on the different reserves held by the Council, analysed into 'usable reserves' - those that can be used to fund expenditure - and 'unusable' reserves, which must be set aside for specific purposes. Unusable reserves would include unrealised gains and losses (such as the Revaluation Reserve), where amounts would only become available if the assets are sold, and reserves that reflect 'adjustments between accounting basis and funding under regulations'. The surplus or deficit on the Provision of Services line shows the true economic cost of providing the Council's services, more details of which are shown in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. These are different from the statutory amounts required to be charged to the Council Fund Balance for council tax setting purposes. The Net Increase/Decrease line shows the statutory Council Fund balance movements in the year following those adjustments.

Balance Sheet

This records a snapshot of the Council's assets, liabilities, cash balances and reserves at the year-end date. The net assets of the Council (assets less liabilities) are matched by the reserves held by the Council.

Cash Flow Statement

The Cash Flow Statement shows the reason for changes in cash and cash equivalents of the Council during the reporting period. The statement shows how the Council generates and uses cash and cash equivalents by classifying cash flows as operating, investing and financing activities. The amount of net cash flows arising from operating activities is a key indicator of the extent to which the operations of the Council are funded by way of taxation and grant income or from the recipients of services provided by the Council. Investing activities represent the extent to which cash outflows have been made for resources which are intended to contribute to the Council's future service delivery. Cash flows arising from financing activities are useful in predicting claims on future cash flows by providers of capital (i.e. borrowing) to the Council.

Notes to the Accounts

These set out the Accounting Policies adopted for the Statement of Accounts and disclosures relating to the financial statements and include pensions and financial instruments disclosures. These include the Expenditure and Funding Analysis which shows how annual expenditure is used and funded from resources (government grants, fees and charges, council tax and business rates) by the Council in comparison with those resources consumed or earned by the Council in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices. It also shows how this expenditure is allocated for decision making purposes between the Council's Directorates and Council wide areas. Income and expenditure accounted for under generally accepted accounting practices is presented more fully in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Annual Governance Statement

The Annual Governance Statement sets out the governance structures of the Council and its key internal controls.

The Statement of Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts

The Council's responsibilities

The Council is required to:

- Make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs and to secure that one of its officers has the responsibility for the administration of those affairs. In this Council that officer is the Chief Finance Officer.
- Manage its affairs to secure economic, efficient and effective use of resources and safeguard its assets.
- Approve the Statement of Accounts.

Signed:



28 November 2024

Chair of Governance and Audit Committee

The Chief Financial Officer's Responsibilities

The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for the preparation of the Council's Statement of Accounts in accordance with proper practices as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC *Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom* (the Code).

In preparing this Statement of Accounts, the Chief Financial Officer has:

- selected suitable accounting policies and then applied them consistently
- made judgements and estimates that were reasonable and prudent
- complied with the local authority Code.

The Chief Financial Officer has also:

- kept proper accounting records which were up to date
- taken reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Chief Financial Officer's Certificate

I certify that the Statement of Accounts presents a true and fair view of the financial position of Bridgend County Borough Council as at 31 March 2024 and of its income and expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2024

Signed:



28 November 2024



Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement

2022-23					2023-24				Notes
Gross Expenditure £'000	Govt Grants £'000	Other Income £'000	Net Expenditure £'000		Gross Expenditure £'000	Govt Grants £'000	Other Income £'000	Net Expenditure £'000	
205,641	(37,660)	(8,364)	159,617	Education and Family Support	206,960	(40,024)	(7,863)	159,073	
140,653	(11,077)	(20,790)	108,786	Social Services and Wellbeing	156,544	(11,811)	(24,060)	120,673	
62,506	(8,922)	(8,821)	44,763	Communities	65,948	(10,019)	(7,545)	48,384	
76,735	(45,176)	(2,626)	28,933	Chief Executives	77,560	(46,761)	(2,426)	28,373	
21,007	(2,130)	(378)	18,499	Council Wide Services	21,154	(669)	(901)	19,584	
2,062	(1,995)	(172)	(105)	Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD)	125	(38)	(100)	(13)	
508,604	(106,960)	(41,151)	360,493	Cost Of Services	528,291	(109,322)	(42,895)	376,074	
				Other Operating Expenditure					
19,334			19,334	Precepts payable	20,746			20,746	7
8,026			8,026	Levies payable	9,181			9,181	7
		(971)	(971)	(Gain) / loss on disposal of non current assets	459			459	
27,360	-	(971)	26,389	Other Operating Expenditure	30,386	-	-	30,386	
				Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure					
4,624			4,624	Interest payable on debt	4,851			4,851	31
22			22	Interest element of finance leases (lessee)	11			11	31
1,084			1,084	Interest payable on PFI unitary payments	1,018			1,018	13
6,470			6,470	Net Interest on Net Defined Benefit Liability	1,190			1,190	30
		(2,503)	(2,503)	Investment Income & Other Interest Receivable			(5,108)	(5,108)	31
		(260)	(260)	Changes in fair value of investment properties	855			855	22
		(147)	(147)	Interest & Investment Income CCRCD					
227			227	Change in Fair Value of Investment Properties CCRCD					
12,427	-	(2,910)	9,517	Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure	7,925	-	(5,108)	2,817	
				Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income					
	(179,595)		(179,595)	Revenue Support Grant		(202,556)		(202,556)	8
		(52,773)	(52,773)	National Non-Domestic Rates			(47,626)	(47,626)	9
	(19,462)	(107,255)	(107,255)	Council Tax		(10,871)	(114,405)	(114,405)	10
	(2,587)		(2,587)	Recognised capital grants and contributions		38		38	11
		(15)	(15)	Recognised capital grants and contributions CCRCD			19	19	
				Tax Expenses CCRCD					
-	(201,644)	(160,043)	(361,687)	Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income		(213,389)	(162,012)	(375,401)	
548,391	(308,604)	(205,075)	34,712	(Surplus) or Deficit on Provision of Services	566,602	(322,711)	(210,015)	33,876	

		(27,750)	(27,750)	(Surplus) or deficit on revaluation of Property, Plant and Equipment			(45,926)	(45,926)	29a
2,212			2,212	Impairment losses on non-current assets charged to the Revaluation reserve	5,330			5,330	29a
		(243,050)	(243,050)	Actuarial (gains) / losses on pension liabilities			(30,070)	(30,070)	30
				Change in fair value of equity investments - CCRC			(408)	(408)	
			(268,588)	Other Comprehensive (Income) and Expenditure				(71,074)	
			(233,876)	Total Comprehensive (Income) and Expenditure				(37,198)	

Movement in Reserves Statement

	Council Fund Balance	Earmarked Reserves	Capital Receipts Reserves	Capital Grants Unapplied	CCRCU Usable Reserves	Total Usable Reserves	CCRCU Unusable Reserves	Total Unusable Reserves	Total Council Reserves Restated
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Balance at 31 March 2022 brought forward	10,110	106,733	21,773	6,047	1,364	146,027	3,453	190,701	336,728
<u>Movement in Reserves during 2022-23</u>									
(Surplus)/deficit on the provision of services	(37,339)				2,627	(34,712)	-	268,588	233,876
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis under regulations (Note 20)	22,824		3,955	(1,536)	(1,831)	23,412	1,831	(23,412)	-
Transfers to Earmarked Reserves (Note 28)	14,237	(14,237)	-	-					-
Increase/(Decrease) in 2022-23	(278)	(14,237)	3,955	(1,536)	796	(11,300)	1,831	245,176	233,876
Balance at 31 March 2023 carried forward	9,832	92,496	25,728	4,511	2,160	134,727	5,284	435,877	570,604

	Council Fund Balance	Earmarked Reserves	Capital Receipts Reserves	Capital Grants Unapplied	CCRCU Usable Reserves	Total Usable Reserves	CCRCU Unusable Reserves	Total Unusable Reserves	Total Council Reserves
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Balance at 31 March 2023 brought forward	9,832	92,496	25,728	4,511	2,160	134,727	5,284	435,877	570,604
<u>Movement in Reserves during 2023-24</u>									
(Surplus)/deficit on the provision of services	(33,833)				(44)	(33,876)	410	71,074	37,200
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis under regulations (Note 20)	5,232		257	(2,356)	38	3,169	(38)	(3,172)	(3)
Transfers to Earmarked Reserves (Note 28)	28,499	(28,499)							-
Increase/(Decrease) in 2023-24	(102)	(28,498)	257	(2,356)	(6)	(30,707)	372	67,902	37,197
Balance at 31 March 2024 carried forward	9,730	63,998	25,985	2,155	2,154	104,020	5,656	503,779	607,801

Balance Sheet

31 March 2023 £'000		31 March 2024 £'000	Notes
641,074	Property, Plant & Equipment	679,344	21c
220	Heritage Assets	220	
5,845	Investment Property	4,990	22
6,002	CCRCD Investment Property	6,003	31
708	CCRCD Equity	1,118	
1,428	Intangible Assets	946	21d
5,214	Long term Investments	-	31
1,555	CCRCD Long Term Debtors	1,529	
662,046	Long Term Assets	694,150	
48,333	Short Term Investments	45,027	31
65	Assets Held for Sale	65	24
345	Inventories	1,013	
62,167	Short Term Debtors	55,741	23
	Short Term Loans CCRCD	63	
21,574	Cash and Cash Equivalents	6,019	31
4,854	Cash CCRCD	4,854	31
170	Deferred Tax CCRCD	170	
284	Financial Assets CCRCD	284	31
137,792	Current Assets	113,236	
(2,926)	Bank overdraft	(619)	31
(1,338)	Short Term Borrowing	(13,636)	31
(55,087)	Short Term Creditors	(53,724)	25
(4,222)	Provisions due in 1 year	(638)	26
(63,573)	Current Liabilities	(68,617)	
(4,550)	Provisions due after 1 year	(6,404)	26
(100,034)	Long Term Borrowing	(94,120)	31
	Other Long Term Liabilities		
(13,024)	PFI & Other Long Term Liabilities	(11,973)	27
(4,127)	Long term creditors (CCRCD)	(1,630)	27
(35,850)	Net Pensions Liability	(6,740)	30
(8,076)	Capital Receipts in Advance	(10,100)	21h
(165,661)	Long Term Liabilities	(130,967)	
570,604	Net Assets	607,802	
	Usable reserves		
9,832	Council Fund	9,730	28b
92,496	Earmarked reserves	63,996	28b
25,728	Capital Receipts Reserve	25,985	28a
4,511	Capital Grants Unapplied	2,155	21i
2,160	Usable Reserves CCRCD	2,154	
	Unusable Reserves		
222,430	Revaluation Reserve	257,114	29a
(35,850)	Pensions Reserve	(6,740)	29b
254,429	Capital Adjustment Account	257,836	29c
(677)	Financial Instruments Adjustment Account	(666)	
(4,453)	Short-term Accumulating Compensated Absences Account	(3,760)	
(2)	Unusable Reserves CCRCD	(2)	
570,604	Total Reserves	607,802	

Cash Flow Statement

2022-23 £'000		2023-24 £'000	
34,712	Net (surplus)/deficit on the Provision of Services	33,876	
(51,590)	Adjustments to net deficit on the provision of services for non-cash movements	(29,823)	34
23,296	Adjustments for Items included in the net deficit on the provision of services that are investing and financing activities	11,128	
6,418	Net Cash Flows from Operating Activities	15,181	35
33,902	Investing Activities	17,345	36
(22,410)	Financing Activities	(19,278)	37
17,910	Net (Increase) / Decrease in Cash & Cash Equivalents	13,248	
(41,696)	Cash & Cash Equivalent at the beginning of the Reporting Period	(23,786)	
(23,786)	Cash & Cash Equivalent at the end of the Reporting Period	(10,538)	

The Cash Flow Statement shows the changes in cash and cash equivalents of the Council during the reporting period. The statement shows how the Council generates and uses cash and cash equivalents by classifying cash flows as operating, investing and financing activities.



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1. Accounting Policies

1.1 General principles

The Statement of Accounts summarises the Council's transactions for the 2023-24 financial year and its position at the year end of 31 March 2024. The Council is required to prepare an annual Statement of Accounts by the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014 and the Accounts and Audit (Wales) (Amendments) Regulations 2018, in accordance with proper accounting practices. These practices comprise the *Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the Code) 2023-24* and the *Service Reporting Code of Practice 2023-24* supported by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

The accounting convention adopted in the Statement of Accounts is principally historical cost, modified by the revaluation of certain categories of non-current assets and financial instruments.

1.2 Standards that have been issued but not yet adopted

The Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023-24 requires that the Council discloses information relating to the anticipated impact of an accounting change that will be required by a new standard that has been issued but not yet adopted. At the balance sheet date there are no new relevant standards or amendments to existing standards that have been published but not yet adopted by the Code that will have any impact on the financial statements. However, the following details are provided for information purposes.

Standard	Effective date	Further details
IFRS 16 Leases	01 April 2024	The Standard removes the previous lease classifications of operating and finance leases and will require local authorities that are lessees to recognise all leases on their balance sheet as right-of-use assets (there are exemptions for short-term and low value leases) with a corresponding lease liability representing the lessee's obligation to make lease payments for the asset. The implementation date of IFRS 16 for local government is 1 April 2024. The implementation of the standard is not expected to have a material impact on the 2024-25 accounts.
IAS 1	01 January 2024	Amendments in relation to Classification of Liabilities as Current or Non-Current issued in January 2020. Amendments in relation to Non-current Liabilities with Covenants issued in October 2022.
IFRS 16	01 January 2024	Amendments in relation to Lease Liability in a Sale and Leaseback issued in September 2020.
IAS 12	01 January 2023	Amendments in relation to International Tax Reform: Pillar Two Model Rules issued in May 2023
IAS 7 and IFRS 7	01 January 2024	Amendments in relation to Supplier Finance Arrangements issued in May 2023.

1.3 Accruals of income and expenditure

Activity is accounted for in the year that it takes place, not simply when cash payments are made or received. In particular:

- Revenue from the sale of goods is recognised when the Council transfers the significant risks and rewards of ownership to the purchaser and it is probable that economic benefits or service potential associated with the transaction will flow to the Council.
- Revenue from the provision of services is recognised when the Council can measure reliably the percentage of completion of the transaction and it is probable that economic benefits or service potential associated with the transaction will flow to the Council.

- Supplies are recorded as expenditure when they are consumed – where there is a gap between the date supplies are received and their consumption, they are carried as inventories on the Balance Sheet.
- Expenses in relation to services received (including services provided by employees) are recorded as expenditure when the services are received rather than when payments are made.
- Investment income and interest receivable on investments and payable on borrowings is accounted for respectively as income and expenditure on the basis of the effective interest rate for the relevant financial instrument rather than the cash flows fixed or determined by the contract.
- Where revenue and expenditure have been recognised but cash has not been received or paid, a debtor or creditor for the relevant amount is recorded in the Balance Sheet. Where debts may be impaired, the balance of debtors is written down by the difference between the carrying amount and revised future cash flows and a charge made for the impairment to revenue.

1.4 Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets

Provisions

Provisions are made where an event has taken place that gives the Council a legal or constructive obligation that probably requires settlement by a transfer of economic benefits or service potential, and a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation. For example, the Council may be involved in a court case that could eventually result in the making of a settlement or the payment of compensation.

Provisions are charged as an expense to the appropriate service line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the year that the Council becomes aware of the obligation and are measured at the best estimate at the Balance Sheet date of the expenditure required to settle the obligation, taking into account relevant risks and uncertainties.

When payments are eventually made, they are charged to the provision carried in the Balance Sheet. Estimated settlements are reviewed at the end of each financial year and where it becomes less than probable that a transfer of economic benefits will now be required (or a lower settlement than anticipated is made), the provision is reversed and credited back to the relevant service.

Where some or all of the payment required to settle a provision is expected to be recovered from another party (e.g. from an insurance claim), this is only recognised as income for the relevant service if it is virtually certain that reimbursement will be received if the Council settles the obligation.

Contingent Liabilities

A contingent liability arises where an event has taken place that gives the Council a possible obligation whose existence will only be confirmed by the occurrence or otherwise of uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the Council. Contingent liabilities also arise in circumstances where a provision would otherwise be made but either it is not probable that an outflow of resources will be required or the amount of the obligation cannot be measured reliably.

Contingent liabilities are not recognised in the Balance Sheet but disclosed in a note to the accounts.

Contingent Assets

A contingent asset arises where an event has taken place that gives the Council a possible asset whose existence will only be confirmed by the occurrence or otherwise of uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the Council.

Contingent assets are not recognised in the Balance Sheet but disclosed in a note to the accounts where it is probable that there will be an inflow of economic benefits or service potential.

1.5 Reserves

The Council sets aside specific amounts as reserves for future policy purposes or to cover contingencies. Reserves are created by appropriating amounts out of the Council Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement. When expenditure to be financed from a reserve is incurred, it is charged to the appropriate service in that year to score against the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The reserve is then appropriated back into the Council Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement so that there is no net charge against council tax for the expenditure.

Certain reserves are kept to manage the accounting processes for non-current assets, financial instruments, employee and retirement benefits and are 'Unusable' reserves as set out in Note 29 to the accounts.

1.6 Government grants and contributions

Whether paid on account, by instalments or in arrears, government grants and third-party contributions and donations are recognised as due to the Council when there is reasonable assurance that:

- the Council will comply with the conditions attached to the payments, and
- the grant / contribution will be received.

Amounts recognised as due to the Council are not credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement until conditions attached to the grant or contribution have been satisfied. Conditions are stipulations that specify that the future economic benefits or service potential embodied in the asset acquired using the grant or contribution are required to be consumed by the recipient as specified, or future economic benefits or service potential must be returned to the transferor.

Monies advanced as grants and contributions for which conditions have not been satisfied are carried in the Balance Sheet as creditors. When conditions are satisfied, the grant or contribution is credited to the relevant service line (attributable revenue grants and contributions) or Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income (non-ringfenced revenue grants and all capital grants) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Where capital grants are credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, they are reversed out of the Council Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement. Where the grant has yet to be used to finance capital expenditure, it is posted to the Capital Grants Unapplied Reserve. Amounts in the Capital Grants Unapplied Reserve are transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account once they have been applied to fund capital expenditure.

1.7 Employee benefits

Benefits Payable during Employment

Short-term employee benefits are those due to be settled within 12 months of the year-end. They include such benefits as wages and salaries, paid annual leave, paid sick leave and bonuses for current employees. These are recognised as an expense for services in the year in which employees render service to the Council. An accrual is made for the cost of holiday entitlement earned by employees but not taken before the financial year-end which employees can carry forward into the next financial year. The accrual is charged to the relevant Service Cost line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, but then reversed out through the Movement in Reserves Statement so that holiday benefits are charged to revenue in the financial year in which the holiday absence occurs.

Termination Benefits

Termination benefits are amounts payable as a result of a decision by the Council to terminate an Officer's employment before the normal retirement date or an Officer's decision to accept voluntary redundancy and are charged on an accruals basis to the relevant Service Cost line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, when the Council is demonstrably committed to the termination of the employment of an Officer or group of Officers or making an offer to encourage voluntary redundancy.

Where termination benefits involve the enhancement of pensions, statutory provisions require the Council Fund balance to be charged with the amount payable by the Council to the pension fund or pensioner in the year, not

the amount calculated according to the relevant accounting standards. In the Movement in Reserves Statement, appropriations are required to and from the Pensions Reserve to remove the notional debits and credits for pension enhancement termination benefits and replace them with debits for the cash paid to the pension fund and pensioners and any such amounts payable but unpaid at the year-end.

Post-Employment Benefits

Employees of the Council are members of two separate pension schemes. Both schemes provide defined benefits to members (retirement lump sums and pensions), earned as employees working for the Council.

The *Teachers' Pension Scheme*, administered by Teachers' Pensions on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE). The arrangements for this scheme mean that liabilities for benefits cannot ordinarily be identified specifically to the Council. The scheme is therefore accounted for as if it were a defined contributions scheme and no liability for future payment of benefits is recognised in the Balance Sheet. The Education and Family Support line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is charged with the employer's contributions payable to Teachers' Pensions in the year.

The *Local Government Pension Scheme* - other employees are entitled to be members of the Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Pension Fund. The Local Government Scheme is accounted for as a defined benefit scheme:

- The liabilities of the pension scheme attributable to the Council are included in the Balance Sheet on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method i.e. an assessment of the future payments that will be made in relation to retirement benefits earned to date by employees, based on assumptions about mortality rates, employee turnover rates, and projections of projected earnings for current employees.
- Liabilities are discounted to their value at current prices, using a discount rate.
- The assets of the pension fund attributable to the Council are included in the Balance Sheet at their fair value:
 - Quoted securities – current bid price
 - Unquoted securities – professional estimate
 - Property – market value
- The change in the net pensions liability is analysed into the following components:
 - Current service cost – the increase in liabilities as result of the number of years of service earned this year – allocated in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement to the services for which the employees worked
 - Past service cost – the increase in liabilities as a result of a scheme amendment or curtailment whose effect relates to the number of years of service earned in earlier years – debited to Central Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement
 - Net interest on the net defined benefit liability (asset), i.e. net interest expense for the Council – the change during the period in the net defined benefit liability (asset) that arises from the passage of time charged to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement – this is calculated by applying the discount rate used to measure the defined benefit obligation at the beginning of the period to the net defined benefit liability (asset) at the beginning of the period – taking into account any changes in the net defined benefit liability (asset) during the period as a result of contribution and benefit payments.
 - Re-measurements comprising:
- The return on plan assets – excluding amounts included in the net interest on the net defined benefit liability (asset) – charged to the Pensions Reserve and Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure

- Actuarial gains and losses – changes in the net pensions liability that arise because events have not coincided with assumptions made at the last actuarial valuation or because the actuaries have updated their assumptions – charged to the Pensions reserve and Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure:
 - Contributions to the pension fund – cash paid as employer’s contribution to the pension fund in settlement of liabilities; not accounted for as an expense.
- In relation to retirement benefits, statutory provisions require the Council Fund balance to be charged with the amount payable by the Council to the pension fund or directly to pensioners in the year, not the amount calculated according to the relevant accounting standards. In the Movement in Reserves Statement, this means that there are transfers to and from the Pensions Reserve to remove the notional debits and credits for retirement benefits and replace them with debits for the cash paid to the pension fund and pensioners for any amounts payable to the fund but unpaid at the year end. The negative balance that arises on the Pensions Reserve thereby measures the beneficial impact to the Council Fund of being required to account for retirement benefits on the basis of cash flows rather than as benefits earned by employees.
- The Council also has restricted powers to make discretionary awards of retirement benefits in the event of early retirements. Any liabilities estimated to arise as a result of an award to any member of staff (including teachers) are accrued in the year of the decision to make the award and accounted for using the same policies as are applied to the Local Government Pension Scheme.

1.8 VAT

VAT payable is included as an expense only to the extent that it is not recoverable from Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs. VAT receivable is excluded from income.

1.9 Overheads and Support Services

In line with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting overheads and support services are shown in the relevant service where they are incurred and are not recharged out to supported service areas. Any internal income as a result of transactions between departments is shown in the supplying service line with the corresponding charge being shown in the recipient service line.

1.10 Intangible Assets

The Council accounts for software as intangible assets to the extent that the software is not an integral part of a particular IT system and accounted for as part of the hardware item of Property, Plant and Equipment. The most significant intangible asset is the Wales Community Care Information System (WCCIS) software development costs and licence.

All software is given a finite useful life, based on assessments of the period that the software is expected to be of use to the Council. The useful life used by the Council for the WCCIS is 8 years. Amortisation of the intangible asset is charged on a straight line basis over the useful life and is charged to the Social Services and Wellbeing line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

1.11 Property, Plant and Equipment

Expenditure on the acquisition, creation or enhancement of Property, Plant and Equipment is capitalised on an accruals basis, provided that it is probable that the future economic benefits or service potential associated with the item will flow to the Council and the cost of the item can be measured reliably. Expenditure that maintains but does not add to an asset’s potential to deliver future economic benefits or service potential (i.e. repairs and maintenance) is charged as an expense when it is incurred.

All expenditure on Property, Plant and Equipment is recognised irrespective of value. Expenditure below £40,000 is considered non-enhancing and is immediately impaired unless cumulatively over more than one year the expenditure would amount to more than this value.

Measurement

Assets are initially measured at cost, comprising its purchase price and all expenditure that is directly attributable to bringing the asset into working condition for its intended use. Assets are then carried in the balance sheet using the following measurement bases:

- **Land and buildings** – current value, determined as the amount that would be paid for the asset in its existing use (existing use value – EUV)
- **Non-specialised operational properties** – existing use value (EUV)
- **Specialised operational properties (such as schools)** – depreciated replacement cost (DRC)
- **Vehicles, plant and equipment** – depreciated historical cost
- **Community assets** – historical cost
- **Assets under construction** – historical cost (until they become operational)
- **Infrastructure assets** – depreciated historical cost
- **Surplus assets and investment properties** – fair value
- **Assets held for sale** – lower of carrying amount and fair value less costs of sale

The cost of assets acquired other than by purchase is deemed to be its fair value, unless the acquisition does not have commercial substance (i.e. it will not lead to a variation in the cash flow of the Council). In the latter case, where an asset is acquired via an exchange, the cost of the acquisition is the carrying amount of the asset given up by the Council. The Council does not capitalise borrowing costs incurred whilst assets are under construction.

Revaluations

Assets included in the Balance Sheet at fair value or current value are revalued sufficiently regularly to ensure that their carrying amount is not materially different from their fair value or current value at the year-end. Revaluations of the Council's property assets are undertaken on a 3 year rolling programme basis. Additional asset valuations have been undertaken in 2023-24 to ensure that the values held in the balance sheet are materially correct. Revaluation gains since 1 April 2007 only are recognised in the Revaluation Reserve, the date of its inception. Previous revaluation gains have been consolidated into the Capital Adjustment Account.

Impairment

Assets are assessed at each year-end to determine whether there is any indication that an asset may be impaired. Where indications exist and any possible differences are estimated to be material, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated and, where this is less than the carrying amount of the asset, an impairment loss is recognised for the shortfall. Where there have been previous revaluation gains against the asset held in the Revaluation Reserve, any subsequent loss is firstly written out against the accumulated Revaluation Reserve with any balance being charged against the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Depreciation

Depreciation is provided for on Property, Plant and Equipment assets by the systematic allocation of their depreciable amounts over their useful lives. Exceptions are made for:

- Heritage assets
- Assets without a determinable finite useful life such as freehold land
- Assets that are not yet available for use i.e. assets under construction, and assets held for sale.

Depreciation is calculated on the value of the asset at the start of the year and on the following bases:

Asset	Policy	Life
Land	No depreciation charged	N/A
Buildings	Straight line depreciation on estimated remaining life	As advised by Valuer (between 1 - 79 years)
Vehicles, plant and equipment	Straight line depreciation on estimated remaining life	3 - 10 years
Infrastructure - Bridges	Straight line depreciation on estimated remaining life	30 years
Infrastructure - Roads	Straight line depreciation on estimated remaining life	15 years
Infrastructure - Other	Straight line depreciation on estimated remaining life	1 - 30 years

Revaluation gains are also depreciated, with an amount equal to the difference between current value depreciation charged on assets and the depreciation that would have been chargeable based on their historical cost being transferred each year from the Revaluation Reserve to the Capital Adjustment Account.

Componentisation

Assets purchased or revalued during the year are reviewed to confirm whether any part of the asset will have a significantly different useful life and a material impact on depreciation. Where this is the case the asset will be componentised and the differing parts will be depreciated over their respective useful lives. Within the Council's asset portfolio there are a number of asset classes where componentisation is not considered, including:

- Equipment – as this is considered immaterial.
- Asset classes which are not depreciated – such as land, investment property, heritage assets, community assets and assets held for sale.

Disposals and Non-current Assets Held for Sale

When it becomes probable that the carrying amount of an asset will be recovered principally through a sale transaction rather than through its continuing use, it is reclassified as an Asset Held for Sale. The criteria for recognising assets as being held for sale are:

- Available for immediate sale in present condition
- Sale highly probable
- Actively marketed
- Sale completion expected within 12 months.

Amounts received for a disposal in excess of £10,000 are categorised as capital receipts.

1.12 Heritage Assets

Heritage Assets are those assets that are intended to be preserved in trust for future generations because of their cultural, environmental or historical worth. Heritage Assets are recognised and measured (including the treatment of revaluation gains and losses) in accordance with the Council's accounting policies on property, plant and equipment. The Council recognises its Civic Regalia and a number of paintings in the Balance Sheet at insurance value. The value of the paintings were added to the Balance Sheet during 2017-18 based on an insurance valuation carried out by professional valuers during the year. According to the Code there is no prescribed minimum period between valuations and the Council does not intend to revalue its Heritage Assets in the near

future unless there is evidence of impairment such as physical deterioration or damage, or doubts to their authenticity arise.

1.13 Charges to revenue for non-current assets

Services are debited with the following amounts to record the real cost of holding non-current assets during the year:

- Depreciation attributable to the assets used by the relevant service
- Revaluation and impairment losses on assets used by the service where there are no accumulated gains in the Revaluation Reserve against which the losses can be written off.

The Council is not required to raise council tax to fund depreciation, revaluation or impairment losses or amortisation. However, it is required to make an annual prudent provision from revenue to contribute towards the reduction in its overall borrowing requirement. This is detailed in the Council's Annual Minimum Revenue Provision Statement, and differentiates between supported capital expenditure, unsupported capital expenditure, and Finance Leases / PFI. Depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses and amortisations are therefore replaced by this *Minimum Revenue Provision* (MRP) by way of an adjusting transaction with the Capital Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement for the difference between the two. The Council charges MRP on a straight line basis over 45 years. This ensures that the costs of supported capital expenditure are spread evenly over the lifetime of assets, and that the debt is fully extinguished within forty-five years.

1.14 Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital Under Statute (REFCUS)

Expenditure incurred during the year that may be capitalised under statutory provisions but does not result in the creation of non-current assets has been charged as expenditure to the relevant service in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the year. Examples of such expenditure include home improvement grants, such as Disabled Facilities Grants, town improvement grants and land feasibility studies. Where the Council has determined to meet the cost of these from existing capital resources or by borrowing, a transfer in the Movement in Reserves Statement from the Council Fund Balance to the Capital Adjustment Account then reverses out the amounts charged so there is no impact on the level of council tax. Where this expenditure is funded by grants or contributions, this is also taken to the relevant service area where the expenditure has been charged.

1.15 Leases

Leases are classified as finance leases where the terms of the lease transfer substantially all the risks and rewards incidental to ownership of the property, plant or equipment from the lessor to the lessee. All other leases are classified as operating leases.

Where a lease covers both land and buildings, the land and buildings elements are considered separately for classification.

Arrangements that do not have the legal status of a lease but convey a right to use an asset in return for payment are accounted for under this policy where fulfilment of the arrangement is dependent on the use of specific assets.

The Council as a Lessee

Operating Leases

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as an expense of the services benefitting from use of the leased property, plant or equipment. Charges are made on a straight-line basis over the life of the lease, even if this does not match the pattern of payments (e.g. if there is a rent-free period at the commencement of the lease).

The Council as a Lessor

Operating Leases

Where the Council grants an operating lease over a property or an item of plant or equipment, the asset is retained in the Balance Sheet. Rental income is credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Credits are made on a straight-line basis over the life of the lease, even if this does not match the pattern of payments (e.g. there is a premium paid at the commencement of the lease). Initial direct costs incurred in negotiating and arranging the lease are added to the carrying amount of the relevant asset and charged as an expense over the lease term on the same basis as rental income.

1.16 Financial Instruments

A financial instrument is a contract that gives rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another entity. Non-exchange transactions, such as those relating to taxes and government grants, do not give rise to financial instruments.

Financial Assets

A financial asset is a right to future economic benefits controlled by the Council that is represented by cash, equity instruments or a contractual right to receive cash or other financial assets or a right to exchange financial assets and liabilities with another entity that is potentially favourable to the Council. Financial assets are classified based on a classification and measurement approach that reflects the business model for holding the financial assets and their cash-flow characteristics. There are three main classes of financial assets measured at:

- amortised cost
- fair value through profit or loss (FVPL), and
- fair value through other comprehensive income (FVOCI).

The Council's business model is to hold investments to collect contractual cash flows. Financial assets are therefore classified at amortised cost as they are held solely for payment of principal and interest.

Financial Assets held at Amortised Cost

Financial assets measured at amortised cost are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the Council becomes a party to the contractual provisions of a financial instrument and are initially measured at fair value, which is normally the transaction cost. They are subsequently measured at their amortised cost. Annual credits to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES) represent investment and interest income receivable. This means for the financial assets held by the Council, the amount presented in the Balance Sheet is the outstanding principal receivable (plus accrued investment and interest income).

Any gains or losses that arise on derecognition of an asset are credited or debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the CIES.

Expected Credit Loss Model

The Council recognises expected credit losses on all its financial assets held at amortised cost, either on a 12 month or lifetime basis. Only lifetime losses are recognised for trade receivables (debtors) held by the Council.

Impairment losses are calculated to reflect the expectation that the future cash flows might not take place because the borrower could default on their obligations. Credit risk plays a crucial part in assessing losses. Where risk has increased significantly since an instrument was initially recognised, losses are assumed on a lifetime basis. Where risk has not increased significantly or remains low, losses are assessed on the basis of 12-month expected losses.

Financial Liabilities

A financial liability is an obligation to transfer economic benefits controlled by the Council and can be represented by a contractual obligation to deliver cash or financial assets or an obligation to exchange financial assets and liabilities with another entity that is potentially unfavourable to the Council. Financial liabilities are initially measured at fair value and carried at their amortised cost. Annual charges to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure Section of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for interest payable are based on the carrying amount of the liability, multiplied by the effective rate of interest for the instrument. For most of the borrowings that the Council has, the amount presented in the Balance Sheet is the outstanding principal repayable together with any accrued interest and interest charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for the year according to the loan agreement.

The Council has three Lender's Option Borrower's Option loans (LOBOs) with stepped interest rates. An effective interest rate has been used for these so that these are re-measured amounts for the LOBOs on the Balance Sheet.

The Council does not hold any financial assets or liabilities at Fair Value, however it is required to provide fair value information as appropriate. The inputs to the measurement techniques are categorised in accordance with the following three levels:

- Level 1 inputs – quoted prices (unadjusted) in active markets for identical assets or liabilities that the Council can access at the measurement date.
- Level 2 inputs – inputs other than quoted prices included within Level 1 that are observable for the asset or liability, either directly or indirectly.
- Level 3 inputs – unobservable inputs.

1.17 Inventories and Long Term Contracts

Inventories are included in the Balance Sheet at the lower of cost and net realisable value. Work in progress is subject to an interim valuation at the year end and recorded in the Balance Sheet at cost plus any profit reasonably attributable to the works.

Long term contracts are accounted for on the basis of charging the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services with the value of works and services received under the contract during the financial year.

1.18 Private Finance Initiatives (PFI)

PFI contracts are agreements to receive services, where the responsibility for making available the property, plant and equipment needed to provide the services passes to the PFI contractor. As the Council is deemed to control the services that are provided under the PFI scheme and as ownership of the property, plant and equipment will pass to the Council at the end of the contracts for no additional charge, the Council carries the assets used under these contracts on its Balance Sheet as part of Property, Plant and Equipment.

The original recognition of these assets was balanced by the recognition of a liability for amounts due to the scheme operator to pay for the capital investment.

Non-current Assets recognised on the Balance Sheet are revalued and depreciated in the same way as property, plant and equipment owned by the Council.

The amounts payable to the PFI operators each year are analysed as follows:-

- fair value of the services received during the year – debited to the relevant service in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement
- finance cost – an interest charge on the outstanding Balance Sheet liability, debited to Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure section of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement
- payment towards the liability – applied to write down the Balance Sheet liability towards the PFI operator

PFI assets are subject to MRP. The Annual MRP Policy for the Council has deemed this charge to be equivalent to the finance lease liability written down for the year.

1.19 Joint Arrangements

The Council is part of a number of joint arrangements including the Joint Committee for the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD) which consists of 10 Partner Authorities: Blaenau Gwent; Caerphilly; Cardiff; Merthyr Tydfil; Monmouthshire; Newport; Rhondda-Cynon-Taf; Torfaen; the Vale of Glamorgan and Bridgend. The Joint Committee has been established to oversee delivery of a range of programmes designed to secure sustainable economic growth for the region in order to improve the lives of all in the community, including increasing connectivity and improving physical and digital infrastructure. The contributions to the Joint Committee are classified as Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital Under Statute (REFCUS). The Council has consolidated its share of the income and expenditure, and the assets and liabilities of the Joint Committee. The Council continues to have administrative responsibilities for Coychurch Crematorium and independent financial statements continue to be prepared and reviewed for this joint committee. The activities of the Coychurch Crematorium joint arrangement are excluded from the Council's single entity financial statements on the basis of materiality of both assets and population.

1.20 Council Tax Income

All Council Tax income is shown in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement of the Council with the major preceptors' precepts (principally Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales) being included as expenditure. Council Tax Income is shown gross in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement with any amounts allocated as a result of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme recognised as an expense within net costs of services.

1.21 Prior Period Adjustments, Changes in Accounting Policies and Estimates and Errors

Prior period adjustments may arise as a result of a change in accounting policies or to correct a material error. Changes in accounting estimates are accounted for prospectively, i.e. in the current and future years affected by the change and do not give rise to a prior period adjustment. Material errors discovered in prior period figures are corrected retrospectively by amending opening balances and comparative amounts for the prior period. Changes in accounting policies are only made when required by proper accounting practices or the change provides more reliable or relevant information about the effect of transactions, other events and conditions on the Council's financial position or financial performance. Where a change is made, it is applied retrospectively (unless stated otherwise) by adjusting opening balances and comparative amounts for the prior period as if the new policy had always been applied.

1.22 Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash is represented by cash in hand and deposits with financial institutions repayable without penalty of notice of not more than 24 hours. Cash equivalents are investments that mature in no more than a month or less from the date of acquisition and that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash with insignificant risk of change in value. In the Cash Flow Statement, cash and cash equivalents are shown net of bank overdrafts that are repayable on demand and form an integral part of the Council's cash management.

1.23 Events after the Balance Sheet date

Events after the Balance Sheet date are those events, both favourable and unfavourable, that occur between the end of the reporting period and the date when the Statement of Accounts is authorised for issue. Two types of events can be identified:

- those that provide evidence of conditions that existed at the end of the reporting period – the Statement of Accounts is adjusted to reflect such events.
- those that are indicative of conditions that arose after the reporting period – the Statement of Accounts is not adjusted to reflect such events, but where a category of events would have a material effect, disclosure is made in the notes of the nature of the events and their estimated financial effect.

Events taking place after the date of authorisation for issue are not reflected in the Statement of Accounts.

1.24 Investment Property

Investment properties are those that are used solely to earn rentals and/or for capital appreciation. The definition is not met if the property is used in any way to facilitate the delivery of services or production of goods or is held for sale. Investment properties are measured initially at cost and subsequently at fair value, based on the amount at which the asset could be exchanged between knowledgeable parties at arm's-length. Properties are not depreciated but are revalued annually according to market conditions at the year-end. Gains and losses on revaluation are posted to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The same treatment is applied to gains and losses on disposal.

The Council instructed external valuers Cooke & Arkwright to provide valuations annually as at 31 December for all of the Council's investment portfolio in line with IFRS13. When the fair values of Investment Properties, Surplus Assets and Assets Held for Sale cannot be measured based on quoted prices in active markets (that is **Level 1 inputs**), their fair value is measured using the following valuation techniques:

Level 2 inputs: quoted prices for similar assets or liabilities in active markets at the valuation date

Level 3 inputs: based on most recent valuations, adjusted if necessary through the use of indexation and impairment review

The majority of the investment properties were valued at Level 2 inputs with a number valued at Level 3 inputs.

Rentals received in relation to investment properties are credited to the net Cost of Services and result in a gain for the Council Fund Balance. However, revaluation and disposal gains and losses are not permitted by statutory arrangements to have an impact on the Council Fund Balance. The gains and losses are therefore reversed out of the Council Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement and posted to the Capital Adjustment Account and (for any sale proceeds greater than £10,000) the Capital Receipts Reserve.

1.25 Local Authority Schools

The Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting confirms that the balance of control for local Council maintained schools (i.e. those categories of school identified in the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, as amended) lies with the Council. The Code also stipulates that those schools' assets, liabilities and cash flows are recognised in the Council's financial statements (and not the Group Accounts). Therefore, schools' transactions, cash flows and balances are recognised in each of the financial statements as if they were of the Council.

2. Critical Judgements in Applying Accounting Policies

In applying the accounting policies set out above, the Council has had to make certain judgements about complex transactions or those involving uncertainty about future events. The critical judgements made in the Statement of Accounts are:

There is a high degree of uncertainty about future levels of funding for local government and the final level of funding to the Council will not be known until nearer the end of the financial year. However, the Council has determined that this uncertainty is not yet sufficient to provide an indication that the assets of the Council might be impaired as a result of a need to close facilities and reduce levels of service provision.

The Council is deemed to control the services provided under the outsourcing agreement for the provision of a Comprehensive School in Maesteg and also to control the residual value of the school at the end of the agreement. The accounting policies for PFI schemes and similar contracts have been applied to the arrangement and the School has been recognised as Property, Plant and Equipment on the Council's Balance Sheet and is separately identified under note 21c. The school is the Council's only PFI asset.

The Council has a number of interests in other entities however these are not sufficiently material to include within the consolidated financial statements when reviewing both quantitative and qualitative information. In order to ensure compliance with the Code, a range of narrative disclosures have been made in other sections of the accounts.

3. Assumptions made about the future and other major sources of estimated uncertainty

The Statement of Accounts contains estimated figures that are based on assumptions made by the Council about the future or that are otherwise uncertain. Estimates are made taking into account historical experience, current trends and other relevant factors. However, because balances cannot be determined with certainty, actual results could be materially different from the assumptions and estimates.

The items in the Council's Balance Sheet at 31 March 2024 for which there is a significant risk of material adjustment in the forthcoming financial year are as follows:

Plant, Property and Equipment

Revaluation of the Council's assets is undertaken on a 3-year rolling programme. The value of those assets is based upon calculations and estimation techniques following the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) guidance, and in accordance with IFRS. Revaluation takes account of the value and condition of the asset, relevant components and also de-recognition where appropriate. Additional valuations have been undertaken in the current year to ensure that the assets in the balance sheet are materially correct.

Depreciation of Property, Plant and Equipment

Assets are depreciated over useful lives that are dependent on assumptions about the level of repairs and maintenance that will be incurred in relation to individual assets. The current economic climate may result in spending on repairs and maintenance having to be reduced thus bringing into doubt the useful lives assigned to assets. If the useful life of assets is reduced, depreciation increases and the carrying amount of the assets will fall.

Investment Properties, Surplus Assets and Assets Held for Sale

Fair Value estimations:

The Council instructed external valuers Cooke & Arkwright to provide valuations as at 31 December 2023 for all of the Council's investment portfolio and these were valued in line with IFRS13.

When the fair values of Investment Properties, Surplus Assets and Assets Held for Sale cannot be measured based on quoted prices in active markets (**Level 1 inputs**), their fair value is measured using the following valuation techniques:

Level 2 inputs: quoted prices for similar assets or liabilities in active markets at the balance sheet date;

Level 3 inputs: valuations based on the most recent valuations adjusted to current valuation by the use of indexation and impairment review.

Where possible, the inputs to these valuation techniques are based on observable data, but where this is not possible judgement is required in establishing fair values. These judgements typically include considerations such as uncertainty and risk. Changes in assumptions used could affect the fair value. The external valuers used the most appropriate valuation techniques to determine fair value.

Pensions Liability

Estimation of the net liability to pay pensions depends on a number of complex judgements relating to the discount rate used, the rate at which salaries are projected to increase, changes in retirement ages, mortality rates and expected returns on pension fund assets. A firm of consulting actuaries is engaged to provide the Council with expert advice about the assumptions to be applied.

4. Expenditure and Funding Analysis

The expenditure and funding analysis shows how annual expenditure is used and funded from resources (government grants, rents, council tax and business rates) by the Council in comparison with those resources consumed or earned by the Council in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices. It also shows how this expenditure is allocated for decision making purposes between the Council's directorates. Income and expenditure accounted for under generally accepted accounting practices are presented more fully in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

2022-23				2023-24		
Net Expenditure Chargeable to the Council Fund	Adjustments between the Funding and Accounting Basis & transfers to Earmarked Reserves (Note 5)	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement		Net Expenditure Chargeable to the Council Fund	Adjustments between the Funding and Accounting Basis & transfers to Earmarked Reserves (Note 5)	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement
£'000	£'000	£'000		£'000	£'000	£'000
138,246	21,371	159,617	Education and Family Support	147,213	11,860	159,073
96,846	11,940	108,786	Social Services & Wellbeing	111,792	8,881	120,673
30,879	13,884	44,763	Communities	34,504	13,881	48,384
20,856	8,077	28,933	Chief Executives	25,371	3,002	28,373
23,561	(5,062)	18,499	Council Wide Services	16,117	3,466	19,584
	(105)	(105)	Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD)		(13)	(13)
310,388	50,105	360,493	Net Cost Of Services	334,996	41,077	376,073
(310,110)	(13,149)	(323,259)	Other income and Expenditure	(334,894)	(7,360)	(342,254)
	(2,522)	(2,522)	Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD)		57	57
278	34,434	34,712	Surplus or Deficit	102	33,774	33,876
10,110			Opening Council Fund Balance	9,832		
(278)			Surplus or (Deficit) on Council Fund for year	(102)		
9,832			Closing Council Fund Balance as at 31 March	9,730		

5. Note to the Expenditure and Funding Analysis

Adjustments between Funding and Accounting Basis 2022-23				
Adjustments from Council Fund to arrive at the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statements amounts	Adjustments for Capital Purposes (Note 1)	Net change for the Pensions Adjustments (Note 2)	Other Differences (Note 3)	Total Adjustments
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Education and Family Support	3,541	9,003	8,827	21,371
Social Services & Wellbeing	1,066	7,194	3,680	11,940
Communities	8,441	3,262	2,181	13,884
Chief Executives	3,611	3,470	996	8,077
Council Wide Services	(3,501)	-	(1,561)	(5,062)
Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD)	(17)		(88)	(105)
Net cost of services	13,141	22,929	14,035	50,105
Other income and expenditure from the Expenditure and Funding Analysis	(20,693)	6,470	1,074	(13,149)
Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD)			(2,522)	(2,522)
Difference between Council Fund surplus or deficit and Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	(7,552)	29,399	12,587	34,434

Adjustments between Funding and Accounting Basis 2023-24				
Adjustments from Council Fund to arrive at the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statements amounts	Adjustments for Capital Purposes (Note 1)	Net change for the Pensions Adjustments (Note 2)	Other Differences (Note 3)	Total Adjustments
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Education and Family Support	3,213	(90)	8,737	11,860
Social Services & Wellbeing	2,292	(69)	6,658	8,881
Communities	10,935	(32)	2,978	13,881
Chief Executives	1,362	(39)	1,679	3,002
Council Wide Services	(3,269)		6,735	3,466
Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD)				
Net cost of services	14,533	(230)	26,787	41,090
Other income and expenditure from the Expenditure and Funding Analysis	(9,557)	1,190	1,007	(7,360)
Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD)			44	44
Difference between Council Fund surplus or deficit and Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	4,976	960	27,838	33,774

Note 1 - Adjustments for Capital Purposes

The adjustments for capital purposes column adds in depreciation and impairment, revaluation gains and losses and Revenue Expenditure Funded by Capital under Statute (REFCUS) in the services line, and for:

- Other operating expenditure – adjusts for capital disposals with a transfer of income on disposal of assets and the amounts written off for those assets.
- Financing and investment income and expenditure – the statutory charges for capital financing (i.e. the Minimum Revenue Provision) and other revenue contributions are deducted from other income and expenditure as these are not chargeable under generally accepted accounting practices.
- Taxation and non-specific grant income and expenditure – capital grants are adjusted for income not chargeable under generally accepted accounting practices. Revenue grants are adjusted from those receivable in the year to those receivable without conditions or for which conditions were satisfied throughout the year. The Taxation and Non Specific Grant Income and Expenditure line is credited with capital grants receivable in the year without conditions or for which conditions were satisfied in the year.

Note 2 - Net Change for the Pensions Adjustments

The net change for the removal of pension contributions and the addition of IAS19 Employee Benefits pension related expenditure and income:

- For services this represents the removal of the employer pension contributions made by the authority as allowed by statute and the replacement with current service costs and past service costs
- For Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure – the net interest on the defined benefit liability is charged to the CIES.

Note 3 - Other Differences

Other differences between amounts debited / credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and amounts payable / receivable to be recognised under statute:

- For financing and investment income and expenditure the other differences column recognises adjustments to the Council Fund for the timing differences for premiums and discounts.
- The charge under Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income represents the difference between what is chargeable under statutory regulations for council tax and NNDR that was projected to be received at the start of the year and the income recognised under generally accepted accounting practices.

6. Expenditure and Income Analysed by Nature

This table sets out how the funding to the Council has been used in providing services in line with generally accepted accounting practices. This will include cash and non-cash transactions including accounting adjustments in line with International Financial Reporting Standards. **A segmental analysis of fees, charges and other service income is presented on the face of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.**

2022-23 £'000		2023-24 £'000
	Expenditure	
256,774	Employee expenses	253,337
233,825	Other services expenses	246,866
18,232	Depreciation, amortisation, impairment	28,088
12,200	Interest payments	7,071
27,360	Precepts and levies	29,926
-	(Gain)/Loss on disposal of assets	459
-	Other expenditure	874
548,391	Total expenditure	566,619
	Income	
(41,151)	Fees, charges and other service income	(42,894)
(160,028)	Income from council tax, non-domestic rates	(162,030)
(308,604)	Government grants and contributions	(322,711)
(2,650)	Investment Income and other Interest Receivable	(5,108)
(971)	(Gain)/Loss on disposal of assets	-
(275)	Other income	-
(513,679)	Total income	(532,743)
34,712	(Surplus) or Deficit on the provision of services	33,876

Notes to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement

7. Precepts and Levies

Precepts are the amounts collected on behalf of, and paid to, non-billing authorities (e.g. community councils) by billing authorities so that they can cover their expenses. Levies are the amounts payable when services are operated over areas covering more than one Council, either on a joint service basis, where one Council administers the service and other Councils contribute to the costs, or by external bodies who levy on the appropriate Councils. The amounts paid were as follows:

2022-23 £'000		2023-24 £'000
	Precepts	
16,486	Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales	17,848
2,848	Community Councils	2,898
19,334	Total Precepts	20,746
	Levies	
7,544	South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority	8,523
348	Coroners Service	513
116	Archive Service	126
18	Swansea Bay Port Authority	19
8,026	Total Levies	9,181
27,360	Total Precepts and Levies	29,927

8. Revenue Support Grant (RSG)

This is the principal source of finance towards revenue expenditure received from Welsh Government. The amount received in 2023-24 was £ 202.556 million (£179.595 million for 2022-23).

9. National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR)

NNDR is organised on a national basis. The Welsh Government (WG) specifies the rate in the pound to be charged (the multiplier) and, subject to the effects of transition arrangements, local businesses pay rates calculated by multiplying their rateable value by the rate in the pound (the multiplier). The multiplier was 53.5p in 2023-24 (53.5p in 2022-23). The total rateable value of the Council equalled £97,831,709 on 31 March 2024 (£97,646,775 on 31 March 2023). The Council is responsible for collecting rates due from ratepayers in its area but pays the proceeds into the NNDR pool administered by WG. WG then redistributes the sums payable back to local authorities pro rata to adult population in each Council's area.

The Council receives a contribution directly from the NNDR pool. The income from this is reflected separately in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. This amount was £47,626 million in 2023-24 (£52.773 million in 2022-23). The reduction in contribution is due to the higher level of Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Rates Relief provided by WG in 2023-24 (75% relief compared to 50% in 2022-23). Welsh Government therefore collected less in NNDR in 2023-24.

10. Council Tax

Council Tax Income derives from charges raised from residential properties, which have been classified into ten valuation bands based on the value the property is estimated to have been on 1 April 2005. Charges are calculated by taking the amount of income required for Bridgend County Borough Council, each Community Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales and dividing this by the Council Tax base. The Council Tax base is the total number of properties in each band adjusted by a factor to convert the number to a Band D equivalent, which is then adjusted for discounts. The gross tax base is then multiplied by the estimated collection rate to give the net tax base on which the budget is set – this was 55,007.82 Band D equivalents for 2023-24 (54,568.51 in

2022-23). The average charge for a Band D property is £2,052.40 in 2023-24 (£1,951.31 in 2022-23 on average) and this is multiplied by the factor specified for the band to give the individual amount due.

Council Tax bills were based on the following multipliers for bands A* to I and the number of properties in each band were as follows:

Band	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Factor	5/9	6/9	7/9	8/9	9/9	11/9	13/9	15/9	18/9	21/9
Chargeable Dwellings	28	10,311	15,004	14,472	11,045	7,783	4,300	1,450	289	93

A* - in Band A but affected by disability reduction. Analysis of the net proceeds from Council Tax is as follows:

2022-23 £'000		2023-24 £'000
(107,255)	Council Tax Collectable	(114,405)
	Less:	
2,848	Payable to Community Councils	2,898
16,486	Payable to Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales	17,848
1,051	Provision for non-payment of Council Tax increase/(decrease)	1,368
(86,870)		(92,291)

11. Grants

In addition to the Revenue Support Grant, the Council credited the following grants and contributions to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

2022-23 £'000	Specific Grants credited to Services	2023-24 £'000
(32,287)	Housing Benefit Subsidy	(32,320)
(7,887)	Post 16 Grant	(8,192)
(4,976)	Education Improvement Grant	(5,056)
(5,953)	Pupil Development Grant	(6,424)
(7,954)	Housing Support Grant (previously Supporting People)	(8,003)
-	Shared prosperity fund	(2,516)
-	Local Authority Education	(1,686)
-	Universal Primary Free School Meals	(1,666)
-	Eliminating profit	(1,203)
(10,196)	Other Education & Family Support	(8,745)
(3,904)	Other Social Services & Wellbeing	(3,991)
(9,398)	Others	(7,762)
(2,364)	Homelessness Prevention – No one left behind	(1,293)
(2,304)	Concessionary Fares Grant	(2,069)
(3,444)	Flying Start	(3,654)
(1,394)	Recruit Recover & Raise Standards (inc. Accelerated Learning Programme)	(1,946)
(1,999)	Social Care Workforce Grant (previously Sustainability Grant)	(2,001)
(390)	Housing/Council Tax Benefit Administration	(488)
(1,912)	Regional Integrated Fund (previously Integrated Care Fund)	(1,506)
(1,776)	Families First	(2,655)
(1,781)	Home for Refugees - Ukraine	(658)
(3,500)	Covid Grants	-
(259)	Cost of Living	-
(550)	General Capital Grant	(3,172)
(737)	Other Capital Grants	(2,278)
(1,995)	Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD)	-
(106,960)	Total Specific Grants Credited to Services	(109,284)

2022-23 £'000	Other Government Grants credited to Taxation and Non-specific Grant Income	2023-24 £'000
(19,462)	Capital Grants and Contributions	(10,871)
(2,587)	CCRCD	-
(22,049)	Total Other	(10,871)
(129,009)	Total Grants	(120,155)

No Covid-19 grant income was received in 2023-24 (£3.500m in 2022-23). 2022-23 included an element of Hardship Funding and a couple of small grant streams which have now ended. This is set out in the table below.

2022-23 £'000	Covid Grants	2023-24 £'000
(3,411)	Hardship Funding	-
(89)	Test, Trace & Protect	-
-	Other Covid Support Grants	-
(3,500)	Total	-

The Council did not administer other grants on behalf of the Welsh Government this year as they did last year (2022/23 - £11,743m) but there were two grants with underspends which were refunded to the Welsh Government this year. These were £0.295m for the Energy Bill Support and £0.058m for alternative fuel. Further information is in the following table:

2022-23 £'000	Agency Grants	2023-24 £'000
(3,571)	Winter Fuel	-
(1,325)	Unpaid Carers	-
(5,615)	Social Care Bonus Scheme	-
(119)	Statutory Sick Pay Enhancement Scheme	-
(607)	Self Isolation Payments Scheme	-
(425)	Energy Bill Support	-
(81)	Alternative Fuel	-
(11,743)	Total	-

12. Leases

Council as a Lessee

Operating Leases

The future minimum lease payments due under non-cancellable leases in future years are:

2022-23 £'000		2023-24 £'000
(376)	Not later than one year	(375)
(765)	Later than one year but less than five years	(765)
(6,146)	Later than five years	(6,146)
(7,287)	Total	(7,286)

Expenditure charged in the year to the Service areas was £0.392 million made up of minimum lease payments of £0.008 million and £0.384 million for contingent rents (2022-23: £0.383 million made up of £0.008 million minimum lease payments and £0.375 million contingent rents).

Council as a LessorOperating Leases

The Council leases out property for economic purposes to provide affordable accommodation for local businesses. The future rentals receivable under operating leases are:-

2022-23 £'000		2023-24 £'000
107	Not later than one year	105
156	Later than one year but less than five years	155
1,741	Later than five years	1,792
2,004	Total	2,052

13. Private Finance Initiative (PFI)

During the 2008-09 financial year, the Council commenced payment under a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) arrangement for the provision of a Secondary School in Maesteg – this contract was entered into in 2007-08 and will run until August 2033 with a commitment of £30.5 million (Net Present Value) over the duration of the contract, the costs being charged to the Education and Family Support Directorate and school delegated budget.

The total unitary payment is divided into the service charge element, the repayment of the liability element and the interest element. The charges are shown below:

2022-23 £'000	Unitary Charge	2023-24 £'000
766	Service Charge Element	870
1,084	Interest Element	1,018
863	Finance Lease Liability	929
2,713	Total	2,817

These payments will be made over the life of the PFI contract and estimates for subsequent years are as detailed below at current prices.

Unitary Charge	2024-25 £'000	2025-26 to 2029-30 £'000	2030-31 to 2033-34 £'000	TOTAL £'000
Service Charge Element	502	2,512	2,002	5,016
Interest Element	946	3,444	792	5,182
Finance Lease Liability	1,001	6,290	5,683	12,974
Total	2,449	12,246	8,477	23,172

14. Pooled Fund Arrangements

There are a number of formal pooled budget arrangements between the Council and Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board under Section 33 NHS (Wales) Act 2006.

Purpose of Partnership	Partner	Year	Gross Income Of Partnership £'000	Gross Expenditure of Partnership £'000	Council's Contribution £'000
Provision of day opportunities for people recovering from mental health problems.	Cwm Taf-Morgannwg University Health Board	2022-23	(691)	691	345
		2023-24	(748)	748	374
Provision of specified community equipment for service users to enable them to continue to live in their own homes. Rhondda Cynon Taf are the lead partner	Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC Merthyr Tydfil CBC Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board	2022-23	(3,168)	3,164	851
		2023-24	(3,444)	3,433	815
Provision of integrated community support services	Cwm Taf-Morgannwg University Health Board	2022-23	(5,275)	5,275	2,473
		2023-24	(5,529)	5,529	2,611
Cwm Taf Morgannwg Care Home Accommodation	Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC Merthyr Tydfil CBC Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board	2022-23	(60,544)	60,484	12,044
		2023-24	(70,242)	69,991	16,381

15. Officers' Remuneration

Four separate disclosures are required to ensure compliance with the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014, the Accounts and Audit (Wales) (Amendments) Regulations 2018 and the CIPFA Code.

Disclosure 1 – Ratio of the Remuneration of the Chief Executive to the median remuneration of all the Council's employees

The ratio of the remuneration of the Chief Executive to the median remuneration of all the Council's employees was 5.57 (2022-23 5.89). The median remuneration of all employees was £27,334 (2022-23: £24,948).

Disclosure 2 – Table of Officers' Remuneration over £60,000

The number of employees (including teachers) whose remuneration, excluding pension contributions, was £60,000 or more for the year is as follows.

2022-23 including Redundancy Costs (Restated)	Remuneration Band	Number of Employees			
		2023-24 inc Redundancy Costs (Note 1,3-4)	2023-24 exc Redundancy Costs (Note 2)	Number of Teachers inc in figures exc Redundancy (Note 2)	Number of Non-Teachers inc in figures exc Redundancy (Note 2)
54	£60,000 - £64,999	52	51	40	11
30	£65,000 - £69,999	42	41	36	5
15	£70,000 - £74,999	26	26	22	4
16	£75,000 - £79,999	19	19	18	1
4	£80,000 - £84,999	17	17	14	3
7	£85,000 - £89,999	8	8	7	1
4	£90,000 - £94,999	4	4	2	2
3	£95,000 - £99,999	2	2	2	-
2	£100,000 - £104,999	2	2	2	1
1	£105,000 - £109,999	4	4	4	1
3	£110,000 - £114,999	-	-	-	-
1	£115,000 - £119,999	2	1	1	1
-	£120,000 - £124,999	4	4	4	2
1	£125,000 - £129,999	1	1	1	-
-	£130,000 - £134,999	-	-	-	-
-	£135,000 - £139,999	-	-	-	-
-	£140,000 - £144,999	-	-	-	-
-	£145,000 - £149,999	-	-	-	-
141		183	180	153	27

Note 1: These costs include redundancy costs and payments in lieu of notice at time of departure as well as any applicable pension strain costs, which are the costs of the early payment of benefit payable by the Council to the Pension Fund when a member of staff over 55 is made redundant.

Note 2: These are officers still in post, of which there are 180 individuals with remuneration of £60,000 or more, including:

- a) 153 Headteachers, Deputy Headteachers and Assistant Headteachers
- b) 27 Senior Managers of the Council, including the Senior Officers shown in Disclosure 3 below, and Heads of Service.

Note 3: The above includes 4 instances of there being two people for one role which has occurred due to the post becoming vacant and being filled during the year.

Note 4: The above includes employees from Voluntary-aided and Voluntary-controlled Schools.

Disclosure 3 – Table of Senior Officers’ Remuneration (including Pensions Contributions)

Job Title	Salary		Pension Contributions (note 1)		Total Remuneration including Pension Contributions	
	2022-23 £	2023-24 £	2022-23 £	2023-24 £	2022-23 £	2023-24 £
Chief Executive Officer & Head of Paid Service (Note 2)	147,024	152,170	29,111	29,521	176,135	181,691
Corporate Director - Education and Family Support	117,113	121,212	23,188	23,515	140,481	144,727
Corporate Director - Communities	117,113	121,212	23,188	23,515	140,346	144,727
Corporate Director - Social Services & Wellbeing	117,113	121,212	23,188	23,515	140,301	144,727
Chief Officer – Finance, Housing and Change (Note 3)	99,113	104,866	19,624	20,344	119,176	125,210
Chief Officer – Legal and Regulatory Services, Human Resources and Corporate Policy	99,113	104,866	19,624	20,344	121,609	125,210

Notes

- Note 1 No ‘Taxable Expenses’ or ‘Benefits in kind’ were paid in the year. Pension Contributions relate to actual payments made.
- Note 2 The Chief Executive Officer figures excludes payment for Election Duties for the Bridgend County local elections and for Bridgend County by-elections in 2023-24.
- Note 3 The title changed from "Chief Officer - Finance, Performance and Change" to "Chief Officer - Finance, Housing and Change" during the year.

Disclosure 4 – Table on Exit Packages

The number of exit packages approved in the year with total cost per band and total cost of compulsory and other redundancies are set out in the table below:

Exit Package Cost Band (including Special Payments)	Number of Compulsory Redundancies		Number of Other Departures Agreed		Total Number of Exit Packages by Cost Band		Total Cost of Exit Packages in Each Band	
	2022-23 £	2023-24 £	2022-23 £	2023-24 £	2022-23 £	2023-24 £	2022-23 £	2023-24 £
£0 - £20,000	5	7	9	5	14	12	159,450	57,021
£20,001 - £40,000	5	3	-	1	5	4	162,241	115,721
£40,001 - £60,000	2	1	-	-	2	1	102,498	45,661
£60,001 - £80,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	12	11	9	6	21	17	424,189	218,403

16. Members' Allowances

The allowances for Councillors are shown in the table below.

2022-23 £'000		2023-24 £'000
665	Basic Salary (all Members)	688
563	Senior Salary	601
59	Civic Salary	58
1,287	Total	1,347

Full details of the 'salary' arrangements are available on the Council's website, and details of all Member earnings are also published annually on the Council's website.

<https://www.bridgend.gov.uk/my-council/democracy-and-elections/councillors-remuneration/>

17. External Audit Costs

Bridgend County Borough Council incurred the following fees relating to external audit and inspection.

2022-23 £'000		2023-24 £'000
217	Financial Statement Audit	231
106	Performance Audit	112
323	External Audit Services	343
39	Grant Claims and Returns	42
362	Total	385

18. Participation in Joint Committees and Joint Arrangements

The Council participated in a number of Joint Committees and Joint Arrangements during the year. The amounts contributed by the Council are set out below.

	2022-23 £'000	2023-24 £'000
Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD)	115	121
Central South Consortium Joint Education Service	554	535
Joint Adoption Service	976	949
Shared Regulatory Service	1,673	1,840
Shared Internal Audit Service	209	288
Glamorgan Archives	116	126
Joint Vehicle Maintenance	120	125
Coychurch Crematorium	-	-
Margam Crematorium	-	-
Total	3,763	3,984

The Council participated in Joint Committee's for Coychurch and Margam Crematorium and received a cash payment from Margam Crematoria in 2023-24 of £44,700 (£44,800 2022-23).

19. Related Party Transactions

The Council is required to disclose material transactions with related parties – bodies or individuals that have the potential to control or influence the Council or to be controlled or influenced by the Council. Disclosure of these transactions allows readers to assess the extent to which the Council might have been constrained in its ability to operate independently or might have been able to limit another party's ability to bargain freely with the Council.

Welsh Government

Welsh Government has significant influence over the general operations of the Council – it is responsible for providing the statutory framework within which the Council operates; provides the majority of its funding in the form of grants and prescribes the terms of many of the transactions that the Council has with other parties (e.g. council tax bills). Grants received from government departments are set out in Notes 8 and 9 above.

Members

Members of the Council have direct control over the Council's financial and operating policies. Members' external interests are maintained in a register, which is available for inspection on the Council's website. The total of members' allowances paid is shown in Note 16. Payments made to organisations where Members had an interest included Care and Repair (Bridgend) £1,637,503 (£1,256,323 in 2022-23) and Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations £568,365 in 2023-24 (£618,256 in 2022-23). In all instances, the grants were made with proper consideration of declarations of interest. The relevant members did not take part in any discussion or decision relating to the grants. Other payments made to organisations where members declared interests totalled £558,917 (£1,208,822 in 2022-23) as shown in the table below;

	2023-24 £
ADSS Cymru	10,678
Maesteg Harlequins RFC	11,870
Pencoed Town Council	14,978
Bridgend Town Council	15,565
The Bridge Mentoring Plus Scheme	17,104
Brackla Community Council	25,517
Porthcawl Town Council	25,655
Cornelly Community Council	28,367
Kenfig Hill RFC	29,165
Pyle Community Council	51,220
Bridgend County Credit Union	123,283
Welsh Local Government Association	155,201
Various less than £10k	50,314
Total	558,917

Balances owed by the Council as at 31 March 2024 included Care & Repair £279,286 (£56,921 in 2022-23), Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations £13,256 (£nil in 2022-23), Cornelly Community Council £7,244.16 (£nil in 2022-23) and Bridgend Lifesavers Credit Union Ltd £9,623 (£9,035 in 2022-23). Amounts owed to the Council as at 31 March 2024 included Welsh Local Government Association £49,813 (£103,370 in 2022-23), and Bridgend Town Council £57,509 (£nil in 2022-23).

Chief Officers

During 2023-24 the Head of Adult Social Care sat on the Board of WSP Glamorgan Consultancy (previously known as Capita Glamorgan Consultancy Ltd). The Council owns 14.7% of the shares of the company and holds voting rights to this value on the Board. During 2023-24 the Council was charged £532,470 (2022-23: £1,229,566) in respect of goods, services and capital works. The balance owed by the Council at the 31 March 2024 was £28,843 (£232,604 in 2022-23). In addition the Head of Operations Community Services sits on the Board of CSC Foundry

Ltd, a special purpose vehicle which is a wholly owned subsidiary of the City Deal Joint Committee. Details of the payments made to the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal are included in note 18 to the accounts.

Other Joint Committees

Details of the amounts paid under Joint Committees is shown in Note 18.

Glamorgan Archives Joint Committee

The Glamorgan Record Office is managed and administered by the Glamorgan Archives Joint Committee under powers conferred by the Local Government (Wales) Act 1994.

Coychurch Crematorium

Coychurch Crematorium is subject to the control of a Joint Committee of Members from Bridgend CBC, Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC and the Vale of Glamorgan CBC. Financial statements for this Joint Committee are available on the Bridgend CBC website (www.bridgend.gov.uk).

Margam Crematorium

Margam Crematorium is subject to the control of a Joint Committee of Members from Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, who manage the Crematorium. Financial Statements for this Joint Committee are available on the Neath Port Talbot CBC website (www.npt.gov.uk)

Other Public Bodies

The Council has a number of pooled budget arrangements with Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board as detailed in Note 14. It also pays a management fee to the Awen Trust for cultural related services which is a not for profit organisation. The amount paid to Awen in 2023-24 was £4,359,852 (2022-23: £3,665,383 (restated)). The balance owed by the Council to Awen as at 31 March 2024 is £64,567 (2022-23 - £27,263) and a balance outstanding of £21,093 was owed to the Council at the 31 March 2024 (2022-23 - £15,975).

Notes to the Movement in Reserves Statement

20. Adjustments between Accounting Basis and Funding Basis under Regulations

This note details the adjustments that are made to the total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure recognised by the Council in the year in accordance with proper accounting practice to the resources that are specified by statutory provisions as being available to the Council to meet future capital and revenue expenditure.

The following sets out a description of the reserves that the adjustments are made against.

Council Fund Balance

This is the statutory fund into which all the receipts of the Council are required to be paid and out of which all liabilities of the Council are to be met, except to the extent that statutory rules might provide otherwise. These rules can also specify the financial year in which liabilities and payments should impact on the Council Fund Balance, which is not necessarily in accordance with proper accounting practice. The Council Fund Balance therefore summarises the resources that the Council is statutorily empowered to spend on its services or on capital investment (or the deficit or resources that the Council is required to recover) at the end of the financial year.

Capital Receipts Reserve

The Capital Receipts Reserve holds the proceeds from the disposal of land or other assets, which are restricted by statute from being used other than to fund new capital expenditure, or to be set aside to finance historical capital expenditure. The balance on the reserve shows the resources that have yet to be applied for these purposes at the year-end.

Capital Grants Unapplied

The Capital Grants Unapplied Account holds the grants and contributions received towards capital projects for which the Council has met the conditions that would otherwise require repayment of the monies, but which have yet to be applied to meet expenditure. The balance is restricted by grant terms as to the capital expenditure against which it can be applied and/or the financial year in which this can take place.

Unusable Reserves

This includes the Revaluation Reserve which contains the gains made by the Council arising from increases in the value of its Property, Plant and Equipment; the Pensions Reserve which absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for post-employment benefits and for funding benefits in accordance with statutory provisions; the Capital Adjustment Account which absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for the consumption of non-current assets and for financing and acquisition, construction or enhancement of those assets under statutory provisions; the Financial Instruments Adjustment Account which absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for income and expenses relating to certain financial instruments and for bearing losses or benefitting from gains per statutory provisions; and the Short-term Accumulated Compensated Absences Account which absorbs the differences that would otherwise arise on the Council Fund Balance from accruing holiday entitlements earned but not taken in the year.

The tables below detail the adjustments for 2022-23 for comparative purposes and the adjustments for 2023-24.

2022-23	Usable Reserves			Unusable Reserves £'000
	Council Fund Balance £'000	Capital Receipts Reserve £'000	Capital Grants Unapplied £'000	
Adjustment to the Revenue Resources				
<i>Amounts by which income and expenditure included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement are different from revenue for the year calculated in accordance with statutory requirements:</i>				
Pensions costs (transferred to (or from) the Pensions Reserve)	29,400			(29,400)
Financial Instruments (transferred to the Financial Instruments Adjustment Account)	(10)			10
Holiday Pay (transferred to the Accumulated Absences Reserve)	969			(969)
Reversal of entries included in the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in relation to capital expenditure (those items are charged to the Capital Adjustment Account)	22,541			(22,541)
Total Adjustments to Revenue Resources	52,900			(52,900)
Adjustments between Revenue and Capital Resources				
Transfer of non-current asset sale proceeds from revenue to the Capital Receipts Reserve	(3,834)	3,834		-
Statutory provision for the repayment of debt (transfer from the Capital Adjustment Account)	(6,524)			6,524
Capital expenditure financed from revenue balances (transfer to the Capital Adjustment Account)	(256)			256
Total adjustments between Revenue and Capital Resource	(10,614)	3,834		6,780
Adjustments to Capital Resources				
Use of the Capital Receipts Reserve to finance capital expenditure		29		(29)
Application of capital grants to finance capital expenditure	(19,462)			19,462
Cash payments in relation to deferred capital receipts			(1,536)	1,536
Other amounts		92		(92)
Total adjustments to Capital Reserves	(19,462)	121	(1,536)	20,877
CCRCD	(1,831)			1,831
Total Adjustments	20,993	3,955	(1,536)	(23,412)

2023-24	Usable Reserves			Unusable Reserves £'000
	Council Fund Balance £'000	Capital Receipts Reserve £'000	Capital Grants Unapplied £'000	
Adjustment to the Revenue Resources				
<i>Amounts by which income and expenditure included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement are different from revenue for the year calculated in accordance with statutory requirements:</i>				
Pensions costs (transferred to (or from) the Pensions Reserve)	960			(960)
Financial Instruments (transferred to the Financial Instruments Adjustment Account)	(11)			11
Holiday Pay (transferred to the Accumulated Absences Reserve)	(693)			693
Reversal of entries included in the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in relation to capital expenditure (those items are charged to the Capital Adjustment Account)	30,025			(30,025)
Total Adjustments to Revenue Resources	30,281			(30,281)
Adjustments between Revenue and Capital Resources				
Transfer of non-current asset sale proceeds from revenue to the Capital Receipts Reserve	(257)	257		
Statutory provision for the repayment of debt (transfer from the Capital Adjustment Account)	(6,500)			6,500
Capital expenditure financed from revenue balances (transfer to the Capital Adjustment Account)	(7,421)			7,421
Total adjustments between Revenue and Capital Resource	(14,178)	257		13,291
Adjustments to Capital Resources				
Use of the Capital Receipts Reserve to finance capital expenditure				
Application of capital grants to finance capital expenditure	(10,871)			10,871
Cash payments in relation to deferred capital receipts			(2,356)	2,356
Other amounts				
Total adjustments to Capital Reserves	(10,871)		(2,356)	13,227
CCRC	-			-38
Total Adjustments	5,232	257	(2,356)	(3,171)

Notes to the Balance Sheet

21. Non-current Assets

a) Capital commitments

As at 31 March the Council had the following material capital commitments.

2022-23 £'000		2023-24 £'000
3,261	Porthcawl Metrolink	791
875	Cosy Corner	-
2,167	Maesteg Town Hall	397
6,303	Total	1,188

b) Notes on Non-current Assets

Voluntary-aided & Voluntary-controlled Schools

The Council recognises the only Voluntary-controlled School on its Balance Sheet. This is Pen-y-Fai Church in Wales Primary School. The four voluntary-aided primary schools and one voluntary-aided comprehensive school are not assets of the Council and therefore not included in the Balance Sheet.

c) Non-current Assets valuation

Non-current Assets are included in the Balance Sheet on the valuation basis set out in the Statement of Accounting Policies. All assets are valued on a rolling 3-year basis as at 31 December with a review to 31 March, which confirmed no significant changes in value during that period. For 2023-24 additional valuations were carried out to ensure that the assets as stated in the Balance Sheet are materially correct. These valuations were undertaken by Council Surveyors in accordance with the Statements of Asset Valuation, Practice and Guidance Notes of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors for non-investment assets, investment assets being valued independently by Cooke & Arkwright. Cooke & Arkwright also valued a number of surplus assets.

Summary of Property, Plant & Equipment (PPE) Restated	Other Land and Buildings £'000	Vehicle, Plant and Equipment £'000	Community Assets £'000	Surplus Assets £'000	Assets Under Construction £'000	Total PPE Assets £'000	PFI Assets Included In PPE £'000
Cost or Valuation							
At 1 April 2022	500,138	16,479	5,025	13,990	9,174	544,806	26,025
Additions	4,854	1,990	68	7	8,041	14,960	
Accumulated Depreciation and Impairment written out to Gross Carrying Amount	(10,914)					(10,914)	(1,315)
Revaluation increases/(decreases) recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	26,749			(1,211)		25,538	2,380
Revaluation increases/(decreases) recognised in the Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services	3,234		(83)	(94)		3,057	
Derecognition - Disposals	(166)	(87)		(205)		(458)	
Derecognition - other	(1,535)					(1,535)	
Assets reclassified (to)/from Held for Sale				(65)		(65)	
Other Movements in Cost or Valuation	1,012				(1,012)	-	
CCRCD Assets		198			60	258	
At 31 March 2023	523,372	18,580	5,010	12,422	16,263	575,647	27,090
Accumulated Depreciation and Impairments							
At 1 April 2022	(4,740)	(8,962)	(39)	0	(42)	(13,783)	(7)
Depreciation Charge for the year	(11,868)	(1,982)	(3)			(13,853)	(1,316)
Accumulated Depreciation and Impairment written out to Gross Carrying Amount	10,913					10,913	1,316
Accumulated impairment written off (where no account balance at 1 April)							
Acc. Depreciation WO to GCA							
Impairment Losses/(Reversals) recognised in the Revaluation Reserve							
Impairment Losses/(Reversals) recognised in the Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services							
Derecognition - disposals	8	87				95	
Derecognition - other							
Other Movements							
CCRCD Depreciation		(116)				(116)	
At 31 March 2023	(5,687)	(10,973)	(42)	0	(42)	(16,744)	(7)
NBV as at 1 April 2022	495,398	7,517	4,986	13,990	9,132	531,023	26,018
NBV as at 31 March 2023	517,685	7,607	4,968	12,422	16,221	558,903	27,083

Summary of Property, Plant & Equipment (PPE)	Other Land and Buildings £'000	Vehicle, Plant and Equipment £'000	Community Assets £'000	Surplus Assets £'000	Assets Under Construction £'000	Total PPE Assets £'000	PFI Assets Included in PPE £'000
Cost or Valuation							
At 1 April 2023	523,372	18,580	5,010	12,422	16,263	575,647	27,090
Additions	8,648	3,080	40		9,520	21,288	
Accumulated Depreciation and Impairment written out to Gross Carrying Amount	(13,457)					(13,457)	(1,354)
Revaluation increases/(decreases) recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	40,545			50		40,595	3,731
Revaluation increases/(decreases) recognised in the Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services	(5,229)		(10)			(5,239)	
Derecognition - Disposals	(740)	(395)				(1,135)	
Derecognition - other	(2,080)	(91)				(2,171)	
Assets reclassified (to)/from Held for Sale							
Other Movements in Cost or Valuation	5,952			151	(6,103)		
CCRCD Assets							
At 31 March 2024	557,011	21,174	5,040	12,623	19,680	615,528	29,467
Accumulated Depreciation and Impairments							
At 1 April 2023	(5,687)	(10,973)	(42)		(42)	(16,744)	(7)
Depreciation Charge for the year	(12,559)	(1,975)	(3)			(14,537)	(1,316)
Accumulated Depreciation and Impairment written out to Gross Carrying Amount	13,457					13,457	1,316
Accumulated impairment written off (where no account balance at 1 April)							
Acc. Depreciation WO to GCA							
Impairment Losses/(Reversals) recognised in the Revaluation Reserve							
Impairment Losses/(Reversals) recognised in the Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services							
Derecognition - disposals	24	395				419	-
Derecognition - other							
Other Movements	62				(62)		
CCRCD Depreciation							
At 31 March 2024	(4,703)	(12,553)	(46)	0	(104)	(17,406)	(7)
NBV as at 1 April 2023	517,685	7,607	4,968	12,422	16,221	558,903	27,083
NBV as at 31 March 2024	552,308	8,621	4,994	12,623	19,576	598,122	29,460

In accordance with the Temporary Relief offered by the Update to the Code on infrastructure assets this note does not include disclosure of gross cost and accumulated depreciation for infrastructure assets because historical reporting practices and resultant information deficits mean that this would not faithfully represent the asset position to the users of the financial statements.

The Council has chosen not to disclose this information as the previously reported practices and resultant information deficits mean that gross cost and accumulated depreciation are not measured accurately and would not provide the basis for the users of the financial statements to take economic or other decisions relating to infrastructure assets.

2022-23 £'000	Infrastructure	2023-24 £'000
76,312	Net Book Value at 1 April	82,171
11,217	Additions	4,709
(84)	Derecognition	(59)
(5,274)	Depreciation	(5,599)
-	Impairment	-
82,171	Net Book Value at 31 March	81,222

The Council has determined in accordance with Regulation 24L of the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (Wales) Regulations 2003 (as amended) that the carrying amounts to be derecognised for infrastructure assets when there is replacement expenditure is nil.

Summary of Property, Plant & Equipment (PPE)

2022-23 £'000	Property, Plant & Equipment (PPE) Reconciliation	2023-24 £'000
82,171	Infrastructure Assets	81,222
558,903	Other PPE assets	598,122
641,074	Total PPE Assets	679,344

d) Intangible Assets.

The Intangible asset refers to the Wales Community Care Information System, WCCIS. As at 31 March 2024 the remaining life of the asset was 2 years.

2022-23 £'000		2023-24 £'000
	Cost or valuation	
6,040	At 1 April	6,040
6,040	At 31 March	6,040
	Accumulated amortisation and impairments	
(4,130)	At 1 April	(4,612)
(482)	Amortisation for year	(482)
(4,612)	At 31 March	(5,094)
1,910	Net Book Value at 1 April	1,428
1,428	Net Book Value at 31 March	946

e) Sources of finance for Capital Expenditure

2022-23 £'000		2023-24 £'000
(6,811)	Loans	(5,716)
(21,073)	Government grants	(17,072)
29	Reversal of previous funding of capital receipts	-
(256)	Revenue contribution	(7,420)
(1,119)	Other contributions	(1,605)
(29,230)	Total	(31,813)

f) Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital under Statute

These relate to capital expenditure that does not result in a tangible non-current asset. They include renovation grants and contributions towards capital expenditure incurred by other parties.

2022-23 £'000	2022-23 CCRCD £'000	2022-23 Total £'000		2023-24 £'000	2023-24 CCRCD £'000	2023-24 Total £'000
3,054	1,465	4,519	Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital Under Statute	5,816	38	5,854
(1,287)	(1,465)	(2,752)	Grants and Contributions	(5,450)	-38	(5,488)
1,767	-	1,767	Total	366	-	366

g) Capital financing requirement and the financing of capital expenditure

2022-23 £'000		2023-24 £'000
	Capital Financing Requirement	
176,216	Opening Capital Financing Requirement	176,503
	Capital Investment	
26,176	Property, Plant and Equipment and Intangible Assets	25,997
3,054	Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital under Statute	5,816
	Sources of Finance	
(22,192)	Grants & Contributions	(18,677)
29	Capital receipts applied	
(256)	Revenue Contributions	(7,420)
(3,529)	Minimum Revenue Provision	(3,298)
(2,132)	Unsupported Borrowing MRP	(2,273)
(863)	PFI School MRP	(929)
176,503	Closing Capital Financing Requirement	175,719
	Explanation for Movements in Year	
424	Increase/(Decrease) in Underlying Need to Borrow (supported by government financial assistance)	653
726	Increase/(Decrease) in Underlying Need to Borrow (unsupported by government financial assistance)	(508)
(863)	Assets acquired under PFI Contract	(929)
287	Increase/(Decrease) in Capital Financing Requirement	(784)

h) Capital Receipts In Advance

This includes a combination of capital grants received in advance in respect of proposed capital schemes for 2023-24, which was £0.844 million (2022-23: £0.579 million) plus section 106 contributions received from developers which will be committed to, and used to fund, current and future schemes in line with the specific requirements of the agreements of £ 9.256 million (2022-23: £7.497 million).

i) Capital Grants Unapplied

This includes a combination of capital grants received where the expenditure to be financed from the grants has yet to be incurred, therefore it is held for future use. This value of grants held is £2.155m 2023-24 (£4.511m 2022-23).

22. Investment Properties

The following table summarises the movement in the fair value of investment properties over the year:

2022-23 £'000	CCRCD £'000	Total £'000		2023-24 £'000	CCRCD £'000	Total £'000
5,585	2,733	8,318	Opening Balance at 1 April	5,845	6,002	11,847
260	3,269	3,529	Net gain / (loss) from fair value adjustments	(855)	-	(855)
5,845	6,002	11,847	Balance as at 31 March	4,990	6,002	10,992

23. Short Term Debtors

These represent the monies owed to the Council after making provision for debts that might not be recovered and are analysed as follows;

2022-23 £'000		2023-24 £'000
8,814	Trade Receivables	9,236
2,934	Prepayments	3,047
49,244	Other Receivable Amounts	42,472
1,175	CCRCD	986
62,167	Balance as at 31 March	55,741

The Council collects NNDR payments on behalf of Welsh Government. As at 31 March 2024, the Council had paid over more cash than it collected, this excess was included in the Balance Sheet as a debtor of £ 2.207 million. The equivalent for 2022-23 was a debtor of £2.280 million. This figure is included in the Other Receivable Amounts figure above.

24. Assets Held for Sale

2022-23 £'000		2023-24 £'000
2,500	Balance at 1 April	65
65	Assets newly classified as held for sale: Property, Plant & Equipment	-
(2,500)	Assets Sold	-
65	Balance as at 31 March	65

25. Short Term Creditors

These represent monies owed by the Council and are analysed as follows:

2022-23 £'000		2023-24 £'000
(7,495)	Trade Payables	(6,702)
(44,002)	Other Payables	(43,815)
(3,590)	CCRCD	(3,207)
(55,087)	Balance as at 31 March	(53,724)

26. Provisions

The Council has provisions as detailed below:

	Insurance £'000	Other Provisions £'000	Total £'000
Balance at 1 April 2023	5,011	3,500	8,511
Movement of provision during year	(107)		(107)
Amounts used/released in 2023-24	(771)	(3,500)	(4,271)
CCRCD		2,909	2,909
Balance at 31 March 2024	4,133	2,909	7,042

Provisions < 1 yr	638		638
Provisions > 1 yr	3,495	2,909	6,404
Balance at 31 March 2024	4,133	2,909	7,042

Insurance Provision (Self-funding / MMI)

Self-Fund

The Council has a self-insurance fund. This Insurance Provision has been set aside to meet the estimated cost to the Council of outstanding liability for policy years up to 2023-24 for Employer's Liability, Public Liability and Property. However, the actual cost of individual claims and the timing of payments is uncertain. The Council also has an earmarked reserve for Insurance which acts as an additional contingency for the fund, over and above the total outstanding liability, to allow for unexpected events, worse than anticipated deterioration in the current reserves and higher than anticipated future losses both in frequency and cost.

27. PFI and Other Long Term Liabilities

2022-23 £'000		Movement in year £'000	Moved to Short Term Creditors £'000	2023-24 £'000
12,974	Maesteg School PFI Lease		(1,001)	11,973
50	Waste Contract		(50)	-
4,127	CCRCD	(2,497)	-	1,630
17,151	Balance as at 31 March	(2,497)	(1,051)	13,603

The PFI Finance Lease Liability matches the fair value of the fixed asset for the PFI School as at the date the asset came onto the Council's Balance Sheet being £21.898 million (July 2008). This will be written down over the life of the PFI contract by the value of the unitary payment deemed to be the finance lease element each year. For 2023-24, the amount written down was £0.929 million and £1.001 million has been transferred to Short Term Creditors leaving an outstanding long term liability of £11.973 million on the PFI scheme at year end.

The Waste Contract liability is repayable in instalments of £50,000 per annum, the final instalment moving to short term creditors as at 31st March 2024.

28. Usable Reserves

The following notes detail the Usable Reserves of the Council:

a) Usable Capital Receipts Reserve

This represents capital receipts available to finance capital expenditure in future years.

2022-23 £'000		2023-24 £'000
21,773	Balance at 1st April	25,728
3,926	Capital Receipts Received	257
29	Receipts Used to Finance Capital Expenditure	-
25,728	Balance as at 31 March	25,985

b) Earmarked Reserves

The Earmarked Reserves in the Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2024 are detailed below:

Opening Balance 2022-23 Restated £'000	Reserve	Movement during 2023-24		Closing Balance 2023-24 £'000
		Additions/ Re-classification/ Unwound £'000	Drawdown/ unwound £'000	
9,832	Council Fund		(102)	9,730
43,805	Corporate Reserves:			
	Capital Programme Contribution	9,571	(13,321)	40,055
548	Major Claims Reserve	1,000	(1,048)	500
2,892	Service Reconfiguration	-	(1,000)	1,892
13,468	Other Corporate Reserves	2,002	(6,998)	8,472
60,713	Total Corporate Reserves	12,572	(22,367)	50,919
	Other Reserves:			
12,624	Directorate Reserves	3,570	(9,526)	6,668
6,558	City Deal Reserve	(6,558)	-	-
19,182	Total Directorate Reserves	(2,988)	(9,526)	6,668
6,898	Delegated Schools Balance	-	(4,493)	2,405
86,793	Total Reserves excluding Equalisation Reserves	9,585	(36,386)	59,992
5,703	Equalisation and Grant Reserves	756	(2,454)	4,005
92,496	TOTAL EXCLUDING COUNCIL FUND	10,341	(38,840)	63,997
102,328	TOTAL INCLUDING COUNCIL FUND	10,341	(38,942)	73,727

Council Fund

The transfer from the Council Fund for 2023-24 was £0.102 million. This has resulted in the balance on the fund being £9.730 million at 31 March 2024 (£9.832 million at 31 March 2023).

Other Earmarked Reserves

The balance on Earmarked Reserves excluding the Council Fund was a net decrease of £ 28.499 million in 2023-24 (net decrease of £14.236 million in 2022-23). An overview of each earmarked reserve is explained below.

Corporate Reserves**Capital Programme Contribution**

This earmarked reserve has been set up as a revenue contribution to the capital programme, to enable schemes to be progressed more quickly to alleviate pressure on the revenue budget and accelerate the realisation of capital receipts.

Major Claims Earmarked Reserve

This reserve has been created to mainly cover the deficit on the pension fund, major capital contractual claims and mitigate against potential other claims against the Council.

Service Reconfiguration / Severance Costs

This reserve has been established to meet potential costs relating to service remodelling and consequential severance costs.

Directorate Reserves**City Deal Reserve**

This reserve is to provide the necessary funding for the Council's capital contribution to the Cardiff City Region City Deal programme.

Directorate Issues

These reserves relate to specific Directorate issues anticipated in 2023-24. Examples include reserves to support pressures within Social Services and Care Experienced Children, and wider regeneration investment.

Delegated School Balances

These balances represent the cumulative effect of over and under-spending on school delegated budgets not available to the Council.

Analysis of Delegated Schools Balance

2022-23 Closing Balance £'000	School Types	No's in Category	2023-24 Funding Available £'000	2023-24 Spend £'000	2023-24 Closing Balance £'000
2,875	Primary Schools	48	58,398	58,115	283
3,734	Secondary Schools	9	61,671	59,083	2,588
289	Special Schools	2	12,193	12,659	(466)
6,898	Total	59	132,262	129,857	2,405

The 2022-23 Closing Balance figure is included within the 2023-24 Budget. This accounting treatment of including the prior year's closing balance in the current year's 'Funding Available' applies solely to Schools and does not apply in any other area of the accounts.

Equalisation and Grant Reserves

This includes grant reserves where under proper accounting practice, all grants and contributions should be analysed to see whether there are specific conditions attached to them. When the conditions are actually satisfied, the grant is credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement regardless of whether the actual expenditure has been incurred. In these cases, the Council can decide to transfer the grant monies to an earmarked reserve to fund future expenditure. In 2023-24 there were £0.757 million (2022-23 - £1.247 million) of grants that have been transferred to earmarked reserves, to ensure the funding is protected in accordance with

the original terms and conditions of the grant or contribution. In addition, there are a small number of equalisation reserves that ensures expenditure that is incurred in a particular future year is smoothed over the period of the Medium Term Financial Strategy. These include the costs of elections, the Special Regeneration Fund, the preparation of the Local Development Plan and the Building Control Earmarked Reserves. £ 2.454 million of the reserves were drawn down during the year.

29. Unusable Reserves

The following notes detail the Unusable Reserves of the Council.

a) Revaluation Reserve (RR)

The Revaluation Reserve contains the gains made by the Council arising from increases in the value of its Property, Plant and Equipment. The balance is reduced when assets with accumulated gains are:

- Revalued downwards or impaired and the gains are lost;
- Used in the provision of services and the gains are consumed through depreciation; or
- Disposed of and the gains are realised.

The Revaluation Reserve contains only revaluation gains accumulated since 1 April 2007. Accumulated gains arising before that date are consolidated into the balance on the Capital Adjustment Account.

2022-23			2023-24	
£'000	£'000		£'000	£'000
	203,699	Balance at 1 April		222,430
27,750		Upward Revaluation of Assets	45,925	
(2,212)		Downward Revaluation of Assets and Impairment Losses not charged to the Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services	(5,330)	
	25,538	Surplus or deficit on revaluation of non-current assets not posted to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of services		40,595
(5,326)		Difference between fair value depreciation and historical cost depreciation (charged to the Capital Adjustment Account)	(5,870)	
(1,481)		Accumulated gains on assets sold or scrapped	(41)	
	(6,807)	Amount written off to the Capital Adjustment Account		(5,911)
	222,430	Balance as at 31 March		257,114

b) Pensions Reserve

The Pensions Reserve absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for post-employment benefits and for funding benefits in accordance with statutory provisions. The Council accounts for post-employment benefits in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as the benefits are earned by employees accruing years of service, updating the liabilities recognised to reflect inflation, changing assumptions and investment returns on any resources set aside to meet the costs. However, statutory arrangements require benefits earned to be financed as the Council makes employer's contributions to pension funds or eventually pays any pensions for which it is directly responsible. The debit balance on the Pensions Reserve therefore shows a substantial shortfall in the benefits earned by past and current employees and the resources the Council has set aside to meet them. The statutory arrangements will ensure that funding will have been set aside by the time the benefits come to be paid.

2022-23 £'000		2023-24 £'000
(249,500)	Balance at 1 April	(35,850)
243,050	Actuarial gains or losses on pensions assets and liabilities	30,070
(48,750)	Reversal of Items relating to Retirement Benefits debited or credited to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	(22,360)
19,350	Employer's Pensions Contributions and Direct Payments to Pensioners Payable in the Year	21,400
(35,850)	Balance as at 31 March	(6,740)

c) Capital Adjustment Account (CAA)

The Capital Adjustment Account absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for the consumption of non-current assets and for financing the acquisition, construction or enhancement of those assets under statutory provisions. The Account is debited with the cost of acquisition, construction or enhancement as depreciation, impairment losses and amortisations are charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (with reconciling postings from the Revaluation Reserve to convert fair value figures to a historical cost basis). The Account is credited with the amounts set aside by the Council as finance for the costs of acquisition, construction and enhancement.

The Account contains accumulated gains and losses on Investment Properties.

The Account also contains revaluation gains accumulated on Property, Plant and Equipment before 1 April 2007, the date that the Revaluation Reserve was created to hold such gains going forward.

2022-23			2023-24	
£'000	£'000		£'000	£'000
	237,220	Opening Balance		249,143
	3,452	CCRCD Balance		5,286
	240,672	Total Balance at 1 April		254,429
		Reversal of items relating to capital expenditure debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement:		
(19,608)		Charges for depreciation and impairment of non-current assets	(20,619)	
1,437		Revaluation gain/(losses) on Property, Plant and Equipment	(7,469)	
(1,767)		Revenue Expenditure funded from Capital Under Statute	(366)	
		Other amounts including Mortgage Payments		
		Amounts of non-current assets written off on disposal or sale as part of the gain/loss on disposal to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	(675)	
	(21,320)			(29,129)
	5,327	Adjusting amounts written out to the Revaluation Reserve		5,870
	(15,993)	Net written out amount of the cost of non-current assets consumed in the year		(23,259)
		Capital financing applied in the year:		
(29)		Use of the Capital Receipts Reserve to finance capital expenditure	-	
20,905		Capital grants and contributions credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement that has been applied to capital financing	13,228	
6,524		Statutory provision for the financing of capital investment charged against the Council Fund	6,500	
256		Capital expenditure charged against the Council Fund	7,421	
	27,656			27,149
	260	Movement in the market value of Investment Properties credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement		(855)
	1,834	Movement in CCRCD Capital Adjustment Account balance		372
	254,429	Balance as at 31 March		257,836

30. Pensions Liabilities, IAS 19 disclosures

As part of the terms and conditions of employment of its officers, the Council makes contributions towards the cost of post-employment benefits. Although these benefits will not actually be payable until employees retire, the Council has a commitment to make the payments (for those benefits) and to disclose them at the time that employees earn their future entitlement.

This Council participates in the Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Pension Fund, which is administered under the Regulations governing the Local Government Pension Scheme. This is a defined benefit scheme, meaning that the Council and employees pay contributions into a fund, at a rate determined by the Fund's Actuary based on triennial actuarial valuations, which aims to balance 100% of pension liabilities with investment assets. The last triennial valuation took place on 31 March 2022.

Further information can be found in Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC Pension Fund's Annual Report which is available upon request from the Director of Finance, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, Bronwydd, Porth, Rhondda, Rhondda Cynon Taf. Information is also available at: <http://www.rctpensions.org.uk>

Any award of discretionary post-retirement benefits upon early retirement is an unfunded defined benefit arrangement, under which liabilities are recognised when awards are made. No investment assets are built up to meet these pension liabilities, and cash has to be generated to meet the actual pension payments as they fall due.

The principal risks to the Council of the scheme are the longevity assumptions, statutory changes to the scheme, structural changes to the scheme (i.e. large scale withdrawals from the scheme), changes to inflation, bond yields, and the performance of the equity investments held by the scheme. These are mitigated to a certain extent by the statutory requirements to charge the Council Fund with the amounts required by statute as described in the accounting policies note.

The disclosures required for 2023-24 include information provided by the pension administrators, Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC and Aon Hewitt Associates Limited as the pension fund scheme's actuary.

All mortality assumptions are based on an analysis of the Fund's recent mortality experience that was carried out in advance of the 2022 Valuation.

McCloud Judgement

In December 2018, the Court of Appeal held that transitional protection provisions contained in reformed judicial and firefighter pension schemes, introduced as part of public service pension reforms in 2015, amounted to direct age discrimination and were therefore unlawful. On 27 June 2019 the Supreme Court denied the Government's application for leave to appeal the decisions. The calculation of the liability incorporates the impact of the 'McCloud' judgement.

Section 37 Legal Case

In June 2023 the High Court found in the Virgin Media case that changes to member benefits in contracted out defined benefit pension schemes between 1996 and 2016 required an actuarial certificate in line with section 37 of the Pensions Schemes Act 1993, and that changes without this certification are to be considered void. This requirement applies to past service rights and future service rights, and to changes to the detriment or benefit of scheme members. The judgment was appealed in June 2024 but the appeal was dismissed.

For the Local Government scheme GAD do not believe that there are any absent actuarial confirmations. Therefore, they do not expect any liability changes to arise following this judgement. GAD will confirm that actuarial confirmations are available in due course.

Transactions Relating to Post-employment Benefits

The cost of retirement benefits is recognised in the reported cost of services when they are earned by employees, rather than when the benefits are eventually paid as pensions. However, the charge required to be made against Council Tax is based on the cash payable in the year, so the real cost of post-employment benefits is reversed out of the Council Fund via the Movement in Reserves Statement. The following transactions have been made in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and the Council Fund balance via the Movement in Reserves Statement during the year.

Restated Local Govt Pension Scheme	LGPS Unfunded Benefits	Teachers' Unfunded Benefits	Restated Total	Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement	Local Govt Pension Scheme	LGPS Unfunded Benefits	Teachers' Unfunded Benefits	Total
				Cost of Services :				
42.20	-	-	42.20	Service cost comprising:	21.05	-	-	21.05
0.08	-	-	0.08	Current service cost	0.07	0.03	0.02	0.12
				Past service costs				
				Financing & Investment Income & Expenditure :-				
6.25	0.16	0.06	6.47	Net interest expense	0.85	0.24	0.10	1.19
				Total Post Employment Benefit Charged to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	21.97	0.27	0.12	22.36
				Other Post Employment Benefit Charged to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement				
				<i>Remeasurements of the net defined benefit liability comprising:</i>				
86.68	-	-	86.68	Return on plan assets (excluding the amount included in the net interest expense)	(47.21)	-	-	(47.21)
(393.85)	(1.01)	(0.28)	(395.14)	Actuarial (gains) / losses due to changes in financial assumptions	(25.99)	(0.06)	(0.02)	(26.07)
(0.38)	0.01	-	(0.37)	Actuarial (gains) / losses due to changes in demographic assumptions	(11.89)	(0.10)	(0.04)	(12.03)
65.04	0.53	0.21	65.78	Actuarial (gains) / losses due to liability experience	8.68	(0.14)	(0.05)	8.49
				Adjustment loss (gain) due to restriction of surplus	46.75	-	-	46.75
(242.51)	(0.47)	(0.07)	(243.05)	Total Post-employment Benefits charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	(29.66)	(0.30)	(0.11)	(30.07)
				Movement in Reserves Statement:-				
48.53	0.16	0.06	48.75	Reversal of net charges made for retirement benefits in accordance with IAS 19	21.97	0.27	0.12	22.36
				Actual amount charged against the Council Fund Balance for pensions in the year				
18.59	0.47	0.29	19.35	Employer's Contributions payable to the scheme	20.62	0.5	0.28	21.40
(25.71)	(0.47)	(0.29)	(26.47)	Retirement Benefits Paid Out	(29.83)	(0.5)	(0.28)	(30.61)

Pensions Assets and Liabilities Recognised in the Balance Sheet

The amounts included in the Balance sheet arising from the Council's obligation in respect of its defined benefit plan are as follows:-

Local Govt Pension Scheme	LGPS Unfunded Benefits	Teachers' Unfunded Benefits	Total		Local Govt Pension Scheme	LGPS Unfunded Benefits	Teachers' Unfunded Benefits	Total
2022-23 £m	2022-23 £m	2022-23 £m	2022-23 £m		2023-24 £m	2023-24 £m	2023-24 £m	2023-24 £m
(757.64)	(5.36)	(2.18)	(765.18)	Present value of defined benefit obligation	(761.28)	(4.83)	(1.91)	(768.02)
729.33	-	-	729.33	Fair Value of Plan Assets	808.03	-	-	808.03
-	-	-	-	Unrecognised Assets	(46.75)	-	-	(46.75)
(28.31)	(5.36)	(2.18)	(35.85)	Net liability arising from defined benefit obligation	-	(4.83)	(1.91)	(6.74)

Reconciliation of the Movements in the Fair Value of the Scheme (Plan) Assets

2022-23 £m		2023-24 £m
795.89	Opening fair value of scheme assets at 1 April	729.33
21.48	Interest income on assets	34.23
(86.68)	The return on plan assets, excluding the amount included in the net interest expense	47.21
19.35	Contributions by Employer	21.40
5.76	Contributions by Participants	6.47
(26.47)	Net Benefits Paid Out	(30.61)
729.33	Balance as at 31 March	808.03

Reconciliation of Present Value of the Scheme Liabilities (Defined Benefit Obligation)

Local Govt Pension Scheme	LGPS Unfunded Benefits	Teachers' Unfunded Benefits	Total		Local Govt Pension Scheme	LGPS Unfunded Benefits	Teachers' Unfunded Benefits	Total
2022-23	2022-23	2022-23	2022-23		2023-24	2023-24	2023-24	2023-24
£m	£m	£m	£m		£m	£m	£m	£m
1,036.77	6.14	2.48	1,045.39	Opening balance at 1 April	757.64	5.36	2.18	765.18
42.20	-	-	42.20	Current Service Cost	21.05	-	-	21.05
27.73	0.16	0.06	27.95	Interest Cost	35.08	0.24	0.10	35.42
5.76	-	-	5.76	Contributions from scheme participants	6.47	-	-	6.47
				<i>Remeasurement (gains) and losses:</i>				
(393.85)	(1.01)	(0.28)	(395.14)	Actuarial gains / losses arising from changes in financial assumptions	(25.99)	(0.06)	(0.02)	(26.07)
(0.38)	0.01	-	(0.37)	Actuarial gains / losses arising from changes in demographic assumptions	(11.89)	(0.10)	(0.04)	(12.03)
65.04	0.53	0.21	65.78	Actuarial gains / losses arising from changes in liability experience	8.68	(0.14)	(0.05)	8.49
0.08	-	-	0.08	Past Service Cost	0.07	0.03	0.02	0.12
(25.71)	(0.47)	(0.29)	(26.47)	Benefits Paid	(29.83)	(0.50)	(0.28)	(30.61)
				Liabilities extinguished on settlements				
757.64	5.36	2.18	765.18	Balance as at 31 March	761.28	4.83	1.91	768.02

Local Government Pension Scheme assets comprised:

Fair Value of Scheme Assets 2022-23 £m	Asset Split 2022-23 %		Fair Value of Scheme Assets 2023-24 £m	Asset Split 2023-24 %
496.67	68.10	Equities	517.14	64.00
56.89	7.80	Property	52.52	6.50
76.58	10.50	Government bonds	98.58	12.20
90.44	12.40	Corporate bonds	126.05	15.60
8.75	1.20	Cash and cash equivalents	13.74	1.70
729.33	100.00	Total assets	808.03	100.00

Basis for Estimating Assets and Liabilities

Liabilities have been assessed on an actuarial basis using the projected unit credit method, an estimate of the pensions that will be payable in future years dependent on assumptions about mortality rates, salary levels etc. Both the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) and discretionary benefits liabilities have been estimated by Aon Hewitt, an independent firm of actuaries, in accordance with IAS 19.

The significant assumptions used by the Actuary were:

2022-23 % pa		2023-24 % pa
4.7	Discount rate	4.8
2.7	CPI Inflation	2.6
2.7	Rate of pension increases	2.6
3.95	Rate of salary increases	3.85
	<i>Mortality Assumptions:</i>	
	Longevity at 65 for current pensioners :-	
21.6	Men	21.0
24.2	Women	23.8
	Longevity at 65 for future pensioners :-	
22.9	Men	22.3
25.7	Women	25.2

The estimation of the defined benefit obligations is sensitive to the actuarial assumptions set out in the table above. The sensitivity analysis below has been determined based on reasonably possible changes of the assumptions occurring at the end of the reporting period and assumes for each change that the assumption analysed changes while all the other assumptions remain constant. The assumptions in longevity for example, assume that life expectancy increases or decreases for men and women. In practice, this is unlikely to occur, and changes in some of the assumptions may be interrelated. The estimations in the sensitivity analysis have followed the accounting policies of the scheme, i.e. on an actuarial basis using the projected unit credit method. The methods and types of assumptions used in preparing the sensitivity analysis below did not change from those used in the previous period.

Increase in Assumption 2022-23 £m	Decrease in Assumption 2022-23 £m		Increase in Assumption 2023-24 £m	Decrease in Assumption 2023-24 £m
(12.88)	12.88	Rate for discounting scheme liabilities (increase or decrease by 0.1%)	(12.94)	12.94
0.76	(0.76)	Rate of increase in salaries (increase or decrease by 0.1%)	0.76	(0.76)
12.12	(12.12)	Rate of increase in pensions (increase or decrease by 0.1%)	12.18	(11.42)
19.70	(20.24)	Longevity (increase or decrease in 1 year)	19.79	(19.03)

Impact on the Council's Cash Flows

The funded nature of the LGPS requires the Employer and its employees to pay contributions into the fund, calculated at a level intended to balance the pension liabilities with investment assets. The current Employer's contribution rate to achieve a funding level of 100% of scheme liabilities will be reviewed at this point. Consequently, whilst there is a significant shortfall (liability) between the benefits earned by past and current employees and the resources the Council has set aside to meet them, the statutory arrangements will ensure that funding will have been set aside by the time the benefits come to be paid.

The expected employer's contributions to the Local Government Pension Scheme for the accounting period ending 31 March 2024 are:

	2024-25 £m
Local Government Pension Scheme	19.48
LGPS Unfunded	0.23
Teachers Unfunded	0.08
Total	19.79

The weighted average duration of the defined benefit obligation for the scheme members is 19.79 years.

Teachers

In 2023-24, the Council paid £15.075 million (£14.186 million for 2022-23) to the Teachers Pensions Agency in respect of teachers' pension costs. In addition, the Council is responsible for all pension payments relating to added years awarded, together with the related increases. In 2023-24, these amounted to £ 0.330 million (£0.368 million for 2022-23).

31. Financial Instruments Disclosures

Categories of Financial Instruments

The following categories of financial instruments are carried in the Balance Sheet:

Financial Assets

31 March 2023						31 March 2024				
Current		Non-current				Current		Non-current		
Investments £'000	Debtors £'000	Investments £'000	Debtors £'000	Total £'000		Investments £'000	Debtors £'000	Investments £'000	Debtors £'000	Total £'000
66,981	8,814	5,089		80,884	Amortised Cost	50,426	9,236			59,662
5,138	-	-	1,555	6,693	CCRCD	5,138			1,529	6,667
72,119	8,814	5,089	1,555	87,577	Total financial assets	55,564	9,236	0	1,529	66,329
-	-	5,845	-	5,845	Non-financial assets			4,990		4,990
-	-	6,002	-	6,002	CCRCD			6,002		6,002
-	-	11,847	-	11,847	Total Non-financial assets	0	0	10,992	0	10,992
72,119	8,814	16,936	1,555	99,424	Total	55,564	9,236	10,992	1,529	77,321

The current investments figure above includes accrued income receivable for long term investments in addition to short term interest.

The £9.236m (2022-23: £8.814 million) debtors figure in the table above relates to trade debtors for goods and services delivered and is included in the overall debtors figure of £55.930 million (2022-23: £62.167 million) included in the balance sheet. More information in relation to debtors can be found at note 23.

Financial Liabilities

31 March 2023					31 March 2024				
Current		Non-current			Current		Non-current		
Borrowing £'000	Creditors £'000	Borrowing & Other Long-Term Liabilities £'000	Total £'000		Borrowing £'000	Creditors £'000	Borrowing & Other Long-Term Liabilities £'000	Total £'000	
(1,338)	(7,913)	(113,051)	(122,302)		Amortised Cost	(13,636)	(7,875)	(106,086)	(127,597)
		(4,127)	(4,127)		CCRCD			(1,637)	(1,637)
(1,338)	(7,913)	(117,178)	(126,429)		Total	(13,636)	(7,875)	(107,723)	(129,234)

The current borrowings figure above includes £ 1.955 million of accrued interest payable for the year.

The current creditors figure of £7.875 million (2022-23: £7.913 million) relates to trade creditors for goods and services received of £6.702 million (2022-23: £7.495 million) and £1.174 million (2022-23: £0.418 million) monies held by the Council on behalf of third parties and is included in the overall creditors figure of £54.107 million (2022-23: £55.087 million) on the balance sheet. More information in relation to creditors can be found at note 25.

Offsetting financial assets and liabilities

Financial assets and liabilities are set off against each other where the Council has a legally enforceable right to set off and it intends either to settle on a net basis, or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously. The table below shows those instruments that have been offset on the balance sheet.

31 March 2023 Gross Assets (Liabilities) £'000	Offsetting of Financial Assets and Liabilities	31 March 2024 Gross Assets (Liabilities) £'000
4,282	Bank Accounts in Credit	2,948
4,282	Total Financial Assets	2,948
(6,933)	Bank Overdrafts	(3,812)
(6,933)	Total Financial Liabilities	(3,812)
(2,651)	Net Position	(864)
(275)	Bank uncleared amounts	246
(2,926)	Net position in Balance Sheet	(618)

Income, expense, gains and losses

The income, expense, gains and losses recognised in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for financial instruments are shown below:

31 March 2023				31 March 2024		
Financial Liabilities Amortised Cost £'000	Financial Assets Amortised Cost £'000	Total £'000		Financial Liabilities Amortised Cost £'000	Financial Assets Amortised Cost £'000	Total £'000
5,730		5,730	Interest Expense	5,881		5,881
	(2,503)	(2,503)	Investment Income and Other Interest Receivable		(5,108)	(5,108)
	(147)	(147)	CCRCD		-	-
5,730	(2,650)	3,080	Net (gain)/loss for the year	5,881	(5,108)	773

Fair Values of Financial Assets and Liabilities that are not measured at Fair Value

The Council does not have any financial assets or liabilities that are carried at fair value. In addition, there are no assets held at amortised cost for 2023-24.

31 March 2023		Financial Liabilities	31 March 2024	
Carrying amount £'000	Fair Value £'000		Carrying amount £'000	Fair Value £'000
		Financial liabilities held at amortised cost:		
(77,617)	(75,568)	PWLB	(77,617)	(76,376)
(19,757)	(22,561)	LOBOs	(19,745)	(22,222)
(2,654)	(2,573)	Salix Loans	(2,735)	(2,291)
(13,023)	(16,846)	PFI and other long term liabilities	(11,973)	(14,642)
(113,051)	(117,548)	Total	(112,070)	(115,531)

The fair value of **Financial Liabilities** is higher than the carrying amount because the Council's portfolio of loans includes a number of loans where the interest rate payable is higher than the prevailing rates at the Balance Sheet date.

The fair value of liabilities is calculated using other significant observable inputs (Level 2) as follows:

- PWLB – Public Works Loan Board – market rates for local authority loans of the same remaining term to maturity as at the Balance Sheet date
- LOBO – Lender's Option Borrower's Option – increased by the value of the embedded options. Lender's options to propose an increase to the interest rate on the loan have been valued according to a proprietary model for Bermudian cancellable swaps. Borrower's contingent options to accept the increased rate or repay the loan have been valued at zero, on the assumption that lenders will only exercise their options when market rates have risen above the contractual rate.
- Other financial liabilities – discounted contractual cash flows at the appropriate AA-rated corporate bond yield.

Nature and extent of risks arising from Financial Instruments

The Council's activities expose it to a variety of financial risks including:

- **Credit risk** – the possibility that other parties may fail to pay amounts due to the Council;
- **Liquidity risk** – the possibility that the Council might not have funds available to meet its commitments to make payments;
- **Market risk** - the possibility that unplanned financial loss may arise for the Council as a result of changes in such measures as interest rates movements.

The Council's overall risk management strategy is approved by Council and set out within its annual Treasury Management Strategy. The Strategy sets out the parameters for the management of risks associated with financial instruments which covers specific areas such as interest rate risk, credit risk and the investment of surplus cash.

Credit Risk

Credit risk arises from deposits with banks and financial institutions, as well as credit exposures to the Council's customers. The risk is minimised through the Annual Investment Strategy included in the Council's Treasury Management Strategy, which is available on the Council's website via the Council Meeting 28/02/2024 agenda Item 6 – Treasury Management and Capital Strategies 2023-24 . [here](#).

The Council's credit risk management practices are set out within the Investment Strategy. In determining whether the credit risk of financial instruments has increased since initial recognition, the Council has reviewed the creditworthiness of its investments and has concluded that there has not been a significant increase in credit risk.

The Council's primary objective is to give priority to security and liquidity prior to consideration of yield. Counterparty limits are constantly reviewed and where market conditions dictated, limits are reduced. During the year there were no changes that required the Council to consider any investments having an increased credit risk.

Credit risk exposure

As at 31 March 2024 the Council had the following exposure to credit risk. £44 million of the £50 million investments outstanding at 31 March 2024 were invested with other Local Authorities, where an expected loss allowance is not required. For those financial assets where a 12-month expected credit loss is calculable, the calculated credit loss is £2,003. This has been calculated by reference to historic default data published by credit rating agencies as advised by our Treasury Management Advisors. Due to the immateriality of the expected credit loss, no adjustment has been made in the accounts for this.

	Credit risk rating (as used by the Council)	Gross carrying amount £'000
12 month expected credit losses	AA+	-
	AA-	-
	AA	-
	A+	(6,000)
	A	-
Simplified approach	LA	(44,000)
TOTAL		(50,000)

Council does not generally allow credit for its customers (trade debtors) such that all the trade debtors are recognised as short term, however, £4.940 million balance of debtors is past due date for payment. These are not included in the credit risk table above.

Liquidity Risk

The Council manages its liquidity risk through its cash-flow management to ensure that cash is available when required. It has ready access to instant access deposit accounts, overdraft facilities and borrowing from the Money Markets or other local authorities to cover any day to day cash flow need. In addition the Council can access Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) borrowing. The Council arranges fixed term loans and investments with a range of maturity dates within the framework and indicators approved each year. There is no perceived risk that the Council will be unable to raise finance to meet its commitments, instead the risk relates to replenishing a significant proportion of its borrowings at a time of unfavourable interest rates. The Council sets limits on the maturity structure of fixed rate borrowing such that no more than 50% of loans are due to mature in any one year through careful planning of new loans taken out and (where it is beneficial to do so) making early repayments. The maturity analysis of financial liabilities is as follows:

31 March 2023 £'000	Maturity Analysis Financial Liabilities	31 March 2024 £'000
(10,357)	Less than 1 year	(14,351)
(7,351)	Between 1 and 2 years	(5,529)
(12,519)	Between 2 and 5 years	(8,974)
(23,226)	Between 5 and 10 years	(25,471)
(13,759)	Between 10 and 20 years	(10,000)
(36,389)	More than 20 years	(36,389)
(19,757)	Uncertain date*	(19,745)
(123,358)	Total Financial Liabilities	(120,459)

* This refers to the Lender's Options Borrower's Options which may be rescheduled in advance of their maturity date of 2054, however, the Council does not anticipate this will occur due to the current low interest rates.

All trade and other payables are due to be paid in less than one year.

Market Risk

The Council is exposed to the risk that financial loss could potentially occur as a result of changes in such measures as interest rate movements, market prices or foreign currency exchange rates.

Interest Rate Risk

The Council is exposed to risk in terms of its exposure to interest rate movements on its borrowings and investments. Movements in interest rates have a complex impact on the Council. For instance, a rise in interest rates would have the following effects:

- borrowings at variable rates – the interest expense charged to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services will rise
- borrowings at fixed rates – the fixed rate protects the Council from increased interest charges as an equivalent loan would now cost more. The fair value of the borrowing (liability) will fall
- investments at variable rates – the interest income credited to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services will rise
- investments at fixed rates – the fixed rate prevents the Council from receiving higher investment income from the same principal invested. The fair value of the asset will fall

Borrowings are not carried at fair value, so nominal gains and losses on fixed rate borrowings would not impact on the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services or Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure. However, changes in interest payable and receivable on variable rate borrowings and investment will be posted to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services and affect the Council Fund Balance.

The Council monitors market and forecast interest rates within the year to adjust exposures appropriately, to allow any adverse changes to be accommodated. For instance during periods of falling interest rates, and where economic circumstances make it favourable, fixed rate loans may be repaid early to limit exposure to losses. According to this strategy, at 31 March 2024, if there had been a 1% change in interest rates with all other variables held constant, the financial effect would be approximately:

	Estimated £'000 + 1%	Estimated £'000 -1%
Interest payable on variable rate borrowings	193	0
Interest receivable on variable rate investments	(336)	(336)
Impact on Surplus or Deficit on Provision of Services	(143)	(336)

The figures for an approximate impact of a 1% fall in interest rates for borrowing are not the same figures as the 1% increase (but reversed) as the variable rate borrowing relates to our LOBO loans where it is assumed that the lender would not exercise their option if there was a fall in interest rates.

Price risk

As the Council has not invested in instruments that are subject to price risk, such as bank certificates of deposit and Government Bonds, it is not subject to price risk.

Foreign Exchange Risk

The Council has no financial assets or liabilities denominated in foreign currencies and thus has no exposure to loss arising from movements in exchange rates.

Transition to IFRS9 Financial Instruments

The Council adopted the IFRS9 Financial Instruments accounting standard with effect from 1 April 2018. The main changes include the reclassification and re-measurement of financial assets and the earlier recognition of the impairment of financial assets.

The nature of the Council's financial instruments has meant no changes to the Council's balance sheet on transition.

32. Events after the Reporting Period

Where an event or information arises after the reporting period (i.e. after 31 March 2024) that relates to conditions existing at 31 March 2024, certain figures in the financial statements and notes would be adjusted if necessary, in all material respects, in order to reflect the impact of the event or information. There have been no such events after 31 March 2024 that required reporting.

33. Contingent Liabilities

A contingent liability arises where an event has taken place that gives the Council a possible obligation whose existence will only be confirmed by the occurrence or otherwise of uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the Council. Contingent liabilities also arise in circumstances where a provision would otherwise be made but either it is not probable that an outflow of resources will be required or the amount of the obligation cannot be measured with sufficient reliability.

Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) is a lightweight form of concrete used in many public buildings from the mid-1950s to the mid-1990s. During August 2023 the UK Government announced new guidance on RAAC as a result of heightened safety risks. As a result, the Council commenced surveys of its estate to determine the existence of RAAC. To date the presence of RAAC has been confirmed at one asset – Bridgend Indoor Market – that the Council leases on a long-term arrangement. As a result, the Council closed the Indoor Market and commissioned a surveyor to determine the extent of the RAAC at the market and the associated estimated cost of remedial works. A report has been received by the Council. Whilst the report in relation to the Bridgend Indoor Market has been received, there are a number of options to be considered and until such time as a suitable option is known, it is not possible to measure any potential obligation with sufficient reliability and as such a contingent liability exists.

Notes to the Cash Flow Statement

34. Adjustments for Non-cash Movements

2022-23 £'000		2023-24 £'000
(18,232)	Depreciation & Impairment of Assets	(28,088)
(5,996)	Movement in Inventories, Debtors & Creditors	(3,538)
(29,400)	Pension Fund Adjustments	(960)
143	Provisions	4,378
(2,863)	Disposal of Non Current Asset	(716)
33	Changes in Fair Value of Investment Property	(855)
4,725	CCRCD Revenue and Capital contributions recognised in CIES	(44)
(51,590)	Adjustments to net deficit on the provision of services for non-cash movements	(29,823)

35. Operating Activities

The cash flows for operating activities include the following items:

2022-23 £'000		2023-24 £'000
1,324	Cash Flow on Revenue Activities	15,456
4,594	Interest Paid	3,154
1,106	Interest element of finance lease and PFI rental payments	1,029
(2,037)	Interest Received	(4,458)
1,431	CCRCD	-
6,418	Net Cash Flows from Operating Activities	15,181

36. Investing Activities

The cash flows for investing activities include the following items:

2022-23 £'000		2023-24 £'000
27,456	Purchase of Property, Plant and Equipment and Intangibles	25,997
7,897	Purchase / (Proceeds) from Short Term Investments	(8,395)
(3,833)	Proceeds from sale of Property, Plant and Equipment and Investment Property	(256)
2,382	CCRCD Long Term Debtors/Investments	
33,902	Net Cash Flows from Investing Activities	17,345

37. Financing Activities

The cash flows for financing activities include the following items:

2022-23 £'000		2023-24 £'000
(1)	Cash Receipts of short and long term borrowing	(6,383)
(20,149)	Other Receipts from financing activities	(12,895)
-	Repayments of short and long term borrowing	
(2,260)	CCRCD – HMT and other grants received	
(22,410)	Net Cash Flows from Financing Activities	(19,278)

The report of the Auditor General for Wales to the Members of Bridgend County Borough Council

Opinion on financial statements

I have audited the financial statements of Bridgend County Borough Council for the year ended 31 March 2024 under the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004.

Bridgend County Borough Council's financial statements comprise the Movement in Reserves Statement, the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and the related notes, including the material accounting policies.

The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and UK adopted international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023-24.

In my opinion, in all material respects, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial position of Bridgend County Borough Council as at 31 March 2024 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with legislative requirements and UK adopted international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023-24.

Basis for opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing in the UK (ISAs (UK)) and Practice Note 10 'Audit of Financial Statements of Public Sector Entities in the United Kingdom'. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of my report.

My staff and I are independent of Bridgend County Borough Council in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in the UK including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and I have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that the use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work I have performed, I have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on Bridgend County Borough Council's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

My responsibilities and the responsibilities of the responsible financial officer with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and my auditor's report thereon. The Responsible Financial officer is responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in my report, I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

My responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If I identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, I am required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact.

I have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters

In my opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of my audit:

- the information contained in the Narrative Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and is in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023-24;
- The information given in the Annual Governance Statement for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and is in accordance with guidance.

Matters on which I report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of Bridgend County Borough Council and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not identified material misstatements in the Narrative Report or the Annual Governance Statement.

I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters, which I report to you, if, in my opinion:

- I have not received all the information and explanations I require for my audit;
- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for my audit have not been received from branches not visited by my team; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns.

Responsibilities of the responsible financial officer for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts, the responsible financial officer is responsible for:

- the preparation of the statement of accounts, which gives a true and fair view and comply with proper practices;
- maintaining proper accounting records;
- internal controls as the responsible financial officer determines is necessary to enable the preparation of statements of accounts that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error;
- assessing the Bridgend County Borough Council's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the responsible financial officer anticipates that the services provided by Bridgend County Borough Council will not continue to be provided in the future.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

My responsibility is to audit the financial statements in accordance with the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004.

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or

error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. I design procedures in line with my responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud.

My procedures included the following:

- Enquiring of management, the Head of Internal Audit and those charged with governance, including obtaining and reviewing supporting documentation relating to the Bridgend County Borough Council's policies and procedures concerned with:
 - identifying, evaluating and complying with laws and regulations and whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance;
 - detecting and responding to the risks of fraud and whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud; and
 - the internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations.
- Considering as an audit team how and where fraud might occur in the financial statements and any potential indicators of fraud. As part of this discussion, I identified posting of unusual journals, bias in accounting estimates and significant transaction outside the normal course of business;
- Obtaining an understanding of Bridgend County Borough Council's framework of authority as well as other legal and regulatory frameworks that the Council operates in, focusing on those laws and regulations that had a direct effect on the financial statements or that had a fundamental effect on the operations of Bridgend County Borough Council.
- Obtaining an understanding of related party relationships.

In addition to the above, my procedures to respond to identified risks included the following:

- reviewing the financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with relevant laws and regulations discussed above;
- enquiring of management, the Governance and Audit Committee and legal advisors about actual and potential litigation and claims;
- reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance;
- in addressing the risk of fraud through management override of controls, testing the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments; assessing whether the judgements made in making accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluating the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business.

I also communicated relevant identified laws and regulations and potential fraud risks to all audit team members and remained alert to any indications of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations throughout the audit.

The extent to which my procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is affected by the inherent difficulty in detecting irregularities, the effectiveness of Bridgend County Borough Council's controls, and the nature, timing and extent of the audit procedures performed.

A further description of the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of my auditor's report.

Other auditor's responsibilities

I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

Certificate of completion of audit

I certify that I have completed the audit of the accounts of Bridgend County Borough Council in accordance with the requirements of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 and the Auditor General for Wales' Code of Audit Practice.



Adrian Crompton
Auditor General for Wales
29 November 2024

1 Capital Quarter
Tyndall Street
Cardiff, CF10 4BZ

The maintenance and integrity of Bridgend County Borough Council's website is the responsibility of the Accounting Officer/Client Officer; the work carried out by auditors does not involve consideration of these matters and accordingly auditors accept no responsibility for any changes that may have occurred to the financial statements since they were initially presented on the website.

Annual Governance Statement



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1 Foreword

The Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. It has a duty under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 to make arrangements and keep under review the extent to which is its exercising its functions effectively, using its resources economically, efficiently and effectively and to have in place effective governance for securing these requirements.

In discharging this overall responsibility, the Council must put in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, and arrangements for the management of risk. It is necessary that our communities and those that use and pay for services, those who deliver services, and our partners and suppliers, have confidence in our governance arrangements. They must be assured that our services are provided effectively and efficiently and delivered on a consistent basis, that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and that decisions are taken transparently and lawfully.

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 repeals the performance duties which were set out in the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009. The Act came into force on 1 April 2021. The new performance and governance regime commenced from the 2021-22 financial year. It requires councils to undertake an annual assessment of performance, and answer the following questions:

- Is the Council exercising its functions effectively?
- Is the council using its resources economically, efficiently and effectively?
- Does the Council have effective governance in place for securing the above?

The Council's [second self-assessment](#) has been published and sets out responses to the questions above for the 2022-23 financial year - the self-assessment for 2023-24 will be reported in autumn 2024. The self-assessment confirms that the Council has good governance in place. This statement sets out the Council's assessment of its governance for 2023-24.

The Cabinet and Corporate Management Board are confident that the governance arrangements operated effectively in supporting the Council in meeting its obligations and responsibilities. There are always opportunities to make improvements, and these are set out within this statement and will be addressed during the forthcoming year.



Cllr John Spanswick
Leader of the Council



Mark Shephard
Chief Executive

2 Governance Framework

What is Corporate Governance?

The Council has a key role in governing and leading our community. Effective local government relies on public confidence in Elected Members and Council Officers. Corporate governance comprises the systems, processes, culture and values by which the Council is directed and controlled, led and held to account, and how it engages with stakeholders. It is also about the way that Councillors and employees think and act.

The Governance Framework enables the Council to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether they have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.

What this Statement tells you

This Statement describes the extent to which the Council has complied with its Code of Corporate Governance and the requirements of the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014 and the Accounts and Audit (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 for the year ended 31 March 2024.

It also sets out how the Council has responded to governance issues identified during 2023-24 and actions to be undertaken during 2024-25 following an annual review of the Governance Framework.

The Statement has been prepared in accordance with the 2016 guidance: '[Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework](#)' produced by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE).



Porthcawl

The Council’s Governance Responsibilities

The Council must consider the longer-term impact of any decisions it makes and should work collaboratively with other public bodies to improve well-being in Wales.¹

As a public body the Council has to ensure it delivers sustainable social, cultural, environmental and economic outcomes as a key focus of its governance process and structures. This is achieved by:

- behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of law; and
- ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.

The Council’s Code of Corporate Governance sets out its commitment to, and responsibility for, ensuring that there is a sound system of governance in place. The [Code of Corporate Governance](#) is reviewed annually, the outcome of which is reported to the Governance and Audit Committee, and is available on the Council’s website.

The Council’s Code of Corporate Governance sets out the seven principles of good governance in line with CIPFA’s ‘Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework’.

Bridgend County Borough Council Code of Corporate Governance The Council’s Governance Principles are based on the following:	
A	Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law
B	Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement
C	Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits
D	Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes
E	Developing the entity’s capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it
F	Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management
G	Implementing good practice in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability



Civic Offices

¹ Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Council's Governance Framework

The Governance Framework comprises the systems, processes and values by which the Council is directed and controlled and the means by which it accounts to, engages with and leads the local community. It enables the Council to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.

The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to make appropriate use of, and prevent loss of, public funds. It also assists with managing the risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives. It does not eliminate all the risk; the system of internal control is designed to identify and prioritise risks, evaluate the likelihood of those risks materialising and manage their impact.

To review the effectiveness of the governance framework, assurances are provided to, and challenged by, the Governance and Audit Committee, Scrutiny Committees, Standards Committee, Council, Cabinet and Corporate Management Board as appropriate. In addition, the Section 151 Officer promotes and delivers good financial management, and the Monitoring Officer promotes and delivers legal and ethical assurance.

Decision Making and Responsibilities

The Council consists of 51 elected Members with an elected Leader and Cabinet who are supported and held to account by Scrutiny Committees. The Council's [constitution](#) sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures for ensuring that the Council is efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. It contains the basic rules governing the Council's business and sets out a list of functions and decisions exercisable by officers under delegated powers. It also contains the rules and protocols by which the Council, Members and officers operate.

Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act received Royal Assent on 20 January 2021. The Act is a substantial piece of legislation covering electoral reform, public participation, governance and performance and regional working. There are many reforms within the Act, however, in summary the Act introduced:

- Reform of electoral arrangements for local government, including extending the voting franchise to 16- and 17-year olds;
- Introduction of a general power of competence;
- Reforming public participation in local government;
- Reforms around democratic governance and leadership;
- Collaborative working;
- Reform of the performance and governance regime; and
- Powers to facilitate voluntary mergers of principal councils.

The Act continues to have a wide-ranging impact on the organisation, powers, performance measurement and governance of the Council. From May 2022 the composition of the Governance and Audit Committee changed, and one-third of its members are required to be lay members, including the Chair of the Committee. For the Council the Governance and Audit Committee now comprises 8 elected

members and 4 lay members, although as at the year end only 3 lay members were in post. New responsibilities assumed by the Committee include:

- a role in reviewing the Council's self-assessment report and making any recommendations for change;
- consideration of the outcome and response to a panel performance assessment of the Council; and
- responsibility for making reports and recommendations in relation to the authority's ability to handle complaints effectively.

Role of the Governance and Audit Committee

The **Governance and Audit Committee** is a statutory Committee that provides independent assurance on the Council's internal control environment. It consists of 8 Councillors and 4 Lay Members. Its main functions are:

- Review, scrutinise and issue reports and recommendations in relation to the Council's financial affairs.
- Review, scrutinise and issue reports and recommendations on the appropriateness of the Council's risk management, internal control, arrangements to secure value for money and corporate governance arrangements.
- To consider the report on the annual risk assessment, any interim reports and the Corporate Risk Management Policy.
- Oversee the Council's internal and external audit arrangements (including the performance of external providers of Internal Audit) and review its financial statements.
- To approve the Internal Audit Charter.
- To approve the risk-based internal audit plan and to approve significant interim changes to the risk-based internal audit plan.
- To consider and approve the Head of Internal Audit's annual report and opinion, a summary of internal audit activity (actual and proposed) and the level of assurance it can give over the Council's corporate governance arrangements.
- To consider reports from Internal Audit on agreed recommendations not implemented within a reasonable timescale and approve necessary remedial action.
- To be responsible for ensuring effective scrutiny of the Treasury Management function, Strategy and Policies.
- To monitor the Council's Anti-Fraud and Bribery Strategy, Anti-Money Laundering Policy and Anti-Tax Evasion Policy
- To review and approve the Council's Annual Governance Statement and Code of Corporate Governance.
- To review and approve the Annual Statement of Accounts and appropriateness of the accounting policies and whether they have been followed correctly, and to consider whether there are any concerns arising from the financial statements or from the audit that need to be brought to the attention of the Council.
- To review and consider reports from the External Auditor on the Council's performance, financial probity and corporate governance, and to receive reports from other external regulators as appropriate.
- To review and assess the Council's ability to handle complaints effectively and make recommendations in this respect.
- To review the Council's draft self-assessment report on its performance and, if deemed necessary, make recommendations for changes to the conclusions.

3 Corporate Governance Arrangements

Bridgend County Borough Council is committed to ensuring good governance principles and management practices are adopted in all business activities to ensure public trust. The arrangements the Council has for Corporate Governance is set out below.

1	Bridgend County Borough Council Code of Corporate Governance	The Council's Code of Governance provides a public statement that sets out the way in which the Council meets and demonstrates compliance with the CIPFA Governance principles.
2	The Governance Framework	The Council's Code is underpinned by a Governance Framework which comprises the policies, procedures, behaviours and values by which the Council is governed and controlled.
3	The Annual Governance Statement	The Annual Governance Statement provides assurances regarding the Council's Governance arrangements, together with identifying areas of future focus and improvement. The purpose of the Annual Governance Statement is to report publicly on the extent to which the Council complies with its Code of Corporate Governance. It identifies those areas which have been identified as needing improvement following self-assessment.
4	Annual Governance Statement Action Plan	The Council continues to review the areas for improvement identified within the Governance statement which are monitored through the Annual Governance Statement Action Plan.

4 Governance Assessment

Sources of assurance for the Governance assessment are set out below.

Assurance required	Sources of assurance	Assurances received
Delivery of Corporate Plan priorities	Corporate Plan Directorate Business Plans Service Plans Corporate Performance Framework	Corporate Self-Assessment report
Services are delivered economically, efficiently and effectively	Corporate Performance Assessment	Corporate Self-Assessment report Scrutiny Committees and reviews Annual Self-Assessment of the Governance & Audit Committee

Assurance required	Sources of assurance	Assurances received
Management of risk	Risk Management Framework	Governance and Audit Committee review of risk Audit Wales external challenge
Effectiveness of internal controls	Constitution and Scheme of Delegation, including contract procedure rules and financial procedure rules Strategic Leadership Team – Cabinet & Corporate Management Board	External audit reports Internal audit reports
Community engagement & public accountability	Forward Work Programme Complaints Policy Participation and Engagement Strategy	Community Engagement Feedback Ombudsman Reports
Procurement processes	Contract Procedure Rules	Value for money
Roles & responsibilities of Members & Officers	Head of Paid Service Monitoring Officer & S151 Officer	External Inspections eg Estyn, Audit Wales, Care Inspectorate Wales.
Standards of conduct & behaviour	HR Policies & procedures Members Code of Conduct Employee Code of Conduct	Complaints and compliments received
Training & development of Members & Officers	Corporate Learning & Development Plan Member Development Plan	Staff survey Performance Development Reviews – appraisal process
Compliance with laws & regulations, internal policies & procedures	Constitution Council Policies Welsh Language Standards Health & Safety Policy Internal Audit reports Whistleblowing Policy Anti-Fraud and Bribery Strategy Anti Money Laundering Policy Anti-Tax Evasion Policy	External Audit reviews Internal Audit reviews Independent external reviews – Estyn, Care Inspectorate Wales.

Audit Wales have undertaken and reported on a number of reviews during the year and these have been reported to Governance and Audit Committee. The key outcomes of the reviews are set out below.

Report	Key outcomes
Use of performance information: Service User perspective and Outcomes – Bridgend County Borough Council (September 2023)	<p>This review focused on the performance information provided to senior officers and senior members (senior leaders) about service user perspectives and outcomes, and how this information is used. This was not a full review of the Council's performance management arrangements or an in-depth review of the quality of the data that the Council collects. The review also didn't focus on engagement with service users on specific service charges or the development of policies and strategies.</p> <p>Overall the audit found that the Council's performance information does not enable senior leaders to understand the service user perspective, which is</p>

	<p>restricting their ability to understand the impact of their services and policies. Two recommendations were made to strengthen the information given to senior leaders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council should strengthen the information it provides to its senior leaders to enable them to understand how well services and policies are meeting the needs of service users; and • The Council should strengthen the information provided to senior leaders to help them evaluate whether the Council is delivering its objectives and its intended outcomes.
<p>Digital Strategy Review: Bridgend County Borough Council (March 2024)</p>	<p>Audit Wales looked at the extent to which the Council's strategic approach to digital has been developed in accordance with the sustainable development principle and whether it will help to secure value for money in the use of the Council's resources.</p> <p>The key findings were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The review found weaknesses in the Council's strategic approach to managing and delivering its digital strategy. The Council's digital strategy 2020-24 is not expressed as a set of timebound measurable objectives and milestones. In the absence of clear objectives and measure of success, the Council cannot easily understand whether it is achieving its intended outcomes and value for money; • The Council has not drawn on a broad range of evidence from both internal and external sources to sufficiently analyse the 'as is' to develop an understanding of the underlying causes of current demand/issues to be addressed; • The Council has not identified and engaged with all those stakeholders who may have an interest in the development of its digital strategy; and • The Council has not costed the delivery of its digital strategy nor identified its planned savings from delivering its digital strategy. The absence of this information makes it difficult for the Council to be assured that the strategy is deliverable, and that it is delivering value for money over time.

Managing Risk

The Council faces a range of risks as would be expected from the broad range of services it delivers and activities it is engaged with. On a day-to-day basis operational risk arises from the challenge of ensuring sufficient capacity and capability to advise on, and to deliver, the key policy objectives of the Council.

The Council has developed a robust approach to the management of risk. The Corporate Risk Management Policy is aligned with Directorate Business Plans and the Council's performance management framework. The Council defines risk as: 'Any potential development or occurrence which, if it came to fruition, would jeopardise the Council's ability to:

- achieve its well-being objectives;
- provide services as planned; or
- fulfil its statutory duties, including the duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement.'

Risks are viewed from both a Service and Council-wide perspective which ensures the key risks are distilled in the [Corporate Risk Assessment](#). The Council has seen increasing uncertainty and risk, particularly in relation to the current economic climate and the financial challenges the Council faces. The Risk Assessment sets out how the Council is addressing these risks and the mitigating actions it will put in place to reduce them. It is regularly reviewed and challenged by both senior management and

the Governance and Audit Committee. It is not possible to eliminate all risk of failure to meet the targets in the Council's policies, aims and objectives and cannot therefore provide absolute assurance of effectiveness, but one of reasonable assurance.

During 2021-22 detailed Risk Management Guidance was developed for use by all departments across the Council. It enables staff to identify risks, prioritise them and implement actions to mitigate them, in a consistent and timely manner. Training was rolled out to all directorate management teams and the roles and responsibilities at each stage of the process outlined. Directorate Business Plans were revised to ensure that processes and actions are aligned with the corporate risk management process.

Changes at a political level places risk upon the Council, as a new Leader is to be elected during the May 2024 annual meeting. Changes in the Cabinet are likely, the extent of which will only be known once the annual meeting takes place.

Financial Management

The financial management of the Council is conducted in accordance with all relevant legislation and the Constitution. The Council has in place Financial Procedure Rules, Contract Procedure Rules, a specific Financial Scheme for Schools, and the scheme of delegation of functions also provides the framework for financial control. The Section 151 Officer is responsible for establishing a clear framework for the management of the Council's financial affairs and for ensuring that arrangements are made for their proper administration.

The Council's ability to deliver savings and contain its expenditure within its overall budget is well established. However, the Council faces significant challenges in the future in the face of uncertain funding levels and cost pressures, the impact of Cost-of-Living crisis and the ongoing conflict in the Ukraine. The Council estimates that it will need to generate approximately £45 million of savings over the period 2024-25 to 2027-28. The Medium-Term Financial Strategy has taken account of known cost pressures and priority areas in line with the Corporate Plan and undertaken extensive consultation to ensure a robust process. To ensure greater involvement of stakeholders in the development of the Medium Term Financial Strategy a three week consultation 'Shaping Bridgend's Future' was undertaken between 15 January 2024 and 4 February 2024, the emphasis of which was to seek citizen's views on how we should address the budget situation. It was recognised that the budget planning for 2024-25 was more difficult and uncertain than ever before, and the Council is facing even more cost pressures than experienced in previous years, as a result of the global economic circumstances arising from the cost-of-living crisis, high levels of inflation and the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. The results were collated and used to further inform final decisions on the Medium Term Financial Strategy. The Medium Term Financial Strategy can be found on the Council's website [here](#). Welsh Government has given no indication of funding levels for future years. Given this uncertainty, the Council has developed detailed budgets for 2024-25 but can only make assumptions for future years based on a range of funding scenarios.

The Council has in place robust arrangements for effective financial control through the Council's accounting procedures, key financial systems and the Financial Procedure Rules. Arrangements in place to demonstrate good financial control include established budget planning procedures and regular budget monitoring reports to Cabinet and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as well as detailed information to budget holders. The Council prepares its Annual Accounts as required by the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations and in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom.

Compliance with the CIPFA Financial Management Code of Practice

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) launched the Financial Management Code of Practice (FM Code) in November 2019. The FM Code was developed in the context of increasing concerns about the financial resilience and sustainability of local authorities.

The FM Code sets out the principles by which authorities should be guided in managing their finances and the specific standards that they should, as a minimum, seek to achieve. It clarifies how Chief Finance Officers should satisfy their statutory responsibility for good financial administration as required in section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 and emphasises the collective financial responsibility of the whole leadership including the relevant elected members.

Whilst the Code is designed to be flexible to the nature, needs and circumstances of individual authorities, it is up to each authority to determine the extent to which it complies with the FM Code and to identify what action it may wish to take to better meet the standards that the FM Code sets out. In its Guidance Bulletin 06 (*Application of the Good Governance Framework 2020/21*) CIPFA stated that the Annual Governance Statement should include the overall conclusion of an assessment of the organisation's compliance with the principles of the FM Code. Also, that where there are outstanding matters or areas for improvement, these should be included in the action plan.

The Council's assessment of its compliance with the 19 Standards outlined in the FM Code for 2023-24 identified that the Council could demonstrate compliance with all of the Standards, but that further actions could be taken to enhance compliance during 2024-25. These actions are included in the AGS Action Plan for 2024-25 and are to:

- Review and update the Council's Financial procedures and policies as required e.g. Financial Procedure Rules, Financial Scheme for Schools, Fees and Charges Policy, to reflect changing circumstances and processes as a result of the challenging financial climate;
- Provide additional training to full Council and schools, as required, on Budget Management, Capital Strategy and Earmarked Reserves;
- Continue to develop budget reduction proposals for the full life of the MTFs and a high level of monitoring of achievement of existing reductions; and
- Try to improve and widen the reach of the budget consultation process to ensure more meaningful, and specific responses.

Progress against these are included in Section 6 – Improving Governance.

5 Audit Assurance

Audit and Audit Assurances

The Council is audited externally by the Auditor General for Wales, supported by Audit Wales. The objectives of this are to obtain assurance on whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; that the accounts have been prepared in accordance with legislative requirements and the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom; and to issue an opinion thereon. They also assess our arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources.

In 2024 the External Auditor gave an unqualified audit opinion on the financial statements for 2022-23.

Audit Wales also audit a number of grant claims and in the year completed 5 audits of grants and returns. In addition, Audit Wales undertake reviews of various services and also performance reviews throughout the year, the outcome of which are reported to the Governance and Audit Committee.

Internal Audit is a statutory requirement within Local Government. The Council's internal audit is undertaken by the Regional Internal Audit Service, a partnership shared service between Bridgend County Borough Council, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council hosted by the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

The Head of Internal Audit's annual opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and control for 2023-24 is:

“Reasonable Assurance”

The opinion states that, based on the work completed by the Regional Internal Audit Shared Service for the financial year, no significant cross-cutting control issues have been identified that would impact on the Council's overall control environment. 90% of the agreed plan has been achieved indicating good internal audit coverage across all service areas. The weaknesses that have been identified are service specific. Audit opinions have been presented to Governance and Audit Committee throughout the year as summarised below.

Audit Opinion	Number
Substantial assurance	10
Reasonable assurance	25
Limited assurance	6
No assurance	0
Total	41

85% of Internal Audit opinions issued were positive which provided a good level of assurance on the effectiveness of the control environment; there were no *No Assurance* opinions issued.

Of the 12 audits that were deferred from 2022-23, 10 have been completed with 2 in progress at year end. Additionally 2 2023-24 planned audits have been deferred into 2024-25. The recommendations made to improve governance, risk management and control have been accepted by operational management and are at various stages of implementation. Progress on implementation of agreed Internal Audit recommendations and the progress of completion of the Internal Audit Plan was reported quarterly to Governance and Audit Committee.

The Governance and Audit Committee also receives twice-yearly a regulatory tracker. This was implemented to cover all regulators and all completed inspections and their recommendations for the Council. The tracker focuses on amber and red rated recommendations, being adequate and unsatisfactory rated recommendations, whilst the Subject and Overview Scrutiny Committees receive the report to include all recommendations irrespective of rating.

6 Improving Governance

A number of significant issues were identified in the Council's 2022-23 Annual Governance Statement. The progress made on the significant issues is shown below:

6.1 Progress on issues raised in 2022-23 that were addressed in 2023-24

Issue	Governance Principle	What the issue was	Outcome of actions taken
Workforce Development	E	Like many other Councils Bridgend is experiencing significant workforce challenges particularly in Social Services. Audit Wales identified that the Council did not have in place a strategic Workforce Plan to guide and inform approaches to managing short term critical workforce pressures and ensuring future resilience within the workforce.	<p>A number of key workforce planning activities have taken place, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting children's services workforce planning to improve the recruitment of social workers, including international recruitment, continuing to grow our own social worker and reduce reliance on agency social workers. • Supporting recruitment and retention of staff in adult social care to meet current and future service demand. • Dedicated recruitment plan for catering services. • School leadership age analysis to understand short and medium-term succession planning. • Development of policies to support new ways of working. • Introduction of a new Employee Assistance Programme available for all employees to access. <p>For 2023-24 directorate business planning included workforce planning priorities and information on their workforce and working planning. This has improved visibility on workforce issues in each Directorate, as well as identifying some of the workforce planning priority areas and activities taking place to address them.</p>

Issue	Governance Principle	What the issue was	Outcome of actions taken
			<p>The current focus is on supporting services who have to identify reductions in service budgets in line with the Medium Term Financial Strategy. The level of reductions are unprecedented and will have a wide-ranging impact on the level of services that the Council can deliver.</p>
Strategic Asset Management	E	<p>An Audit Wales review identified workforce challenges are impacting on the Council's ability to plan strategically and to ensure the Council's buildings meet statutory safety requirements.</p>	<p>Significant work has been undertaken to improve the Council's statutory compliance in the "Big 5" areas of compliance, including electricity, gas, fire safety, asbestos and legionella. The first four areas are well into the 90% compliance for the first time in 10 years, significantly improving the statutory compliance picture.</p> <p>A new Integrated Works Management System (IWMS) is also being procured, which will increase visibility and efficiency in uploading new data and certification to give a live view on compliance across the Authority.</p>
Disabled Facility Grants (see AW report referred above)	F	<p>The Council has been slow to respond to Audit Wales proposals for improvement in relation to Disabled Facilities Grants and performance remains poor. The council is developing a new operating model for 2023-24 which is intended to be simpler, better coordinated and more responsive to service user needs.</p>	<p>Significant work was undertaken to improve this service in 2023-24. This has included updating procedure guidelines, working with external surveyors to enable progress with existing grant applications and work, the introduction of a new software system to monitor progress on all applications and improved tendering processes to ensure value for money.</p> <p>For the first time in many years, the service has fully spent its capital allocation in 2023-24</p>
Decarbonisation 2030	D	<p>Whilst the Council has in place a Decarbonisation 2030 strategy, it</p>	<p>The Welsh Government have announced that they have</p>

Issue	Governance Principle	What the issue was	Outcome of actions taken
		has not fully identified the resources needed to implement the strategy nor how partners may help to deliver the strategy ambitions.	realigned their ambitious 2030 net zero targets for public sector decarbonisation to 2035. The Council's strategy will now be reviewed in line with national objectives however the intention to work with other public sector partners to deliver the strategy will still remain.
Long to medium term financial management	F	<p>The Council has robust financial management process in place, but there are some areas where improvements can be made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide additional training to full Council on Capital Strategy and Earmarked Reserves • provide finance training to schools on closing of accounts procedures and requirements • rationalisation of earmarked reserves and developing timescales for usage • continue to review consistently under and overspends and realign budgets accordingly • continue to develop budget reduction proposals for the full life of the Medium Term Financial Strategy 	<p>Capital Strategy training was undertaken for all members on 18 May 2023. Training for schools on the closing process was provided on 12 March 2024.</p> <p>Reserves are regularly reviewed and members have been provided with details of reserves held. A major review of reserves was undertaken at the start of the financial year, as well as ongoing monitoring throughout the year, with unwinding and repurposing of reserves as necessary.</p> <p>Budget monitoring is undertaken throughout the year, with quarterly reports presented to Cabinet and Scrutiny.</p> <p>Budget reduction proposals have been developed as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and were presented to Council for approval 1 February 2024.</p>
Additional Training for Members to support their role in ensuring proper financial management of the Council	E	As new members have joined the Council it is crucial that they develop the skills and knowledge to undertake their role competently. There may be knowledge gaps in some areas particularly in relation to the Capital Strategy, Earmarked Reserves and Statement of Accounts.	Training was provided during the year to Members including Capital Strategy, Treasury Management and Earmarked Reserves to enable members to have a better understanding of these areas and enable greater scrutiny of decision-making, ensuring a more robust delivery of these services.
Performance Management Arrangements	F	A review of the Council's performance management arrangements have identified that they do not consistently enable it	A 1-year Corporate Plan Delivery Plan was agreed by Council on 17 April 2024.

Issue	Governance Principle	What the issue was	Outcome of actions taken
		to effectively manage its performance.	<p>New arrangements for performance monitoring and summaries are almost entirely complete and will be complete at the quarter 4 reporting in June. They have received positive feedback from members.</p> <p>Arrangements for self-assessment were agreed at Governance and Audit Committee on 18 April 2024.</p> <p>Performance Indicator audits commenced in summer 2024.</p> <p>The Audit Wales Service User Perspective data has been received and a range of solutions presented to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee (COSC) in late March. A service user perspectives workshop was held with COSC members on 3 June 2024.</p>

6.2 Issues raised in 2023-24 that will be addressed in 2024-25

Based on a review of the governance framework, and an assessment of compliance with the CIPFA Financial Management Code, the following significant issues identified in 2023-24 will be addressed in 2024-25 with the links to the [Governance Principles](#) on page 5:

Issue	Governance Principle	What the issue is	Proposed Actions to address issue
Medium to long term financial management	F	The impact of budget reductions is no longer sustainable through top-slicing of budgets, and the focus will need to turn to reductions in service delivery and the potential for the Council to cease providing some services.	<p>The budget setting process for 2025-26 is to start earlier than usual. The process for setting the budget will be reviewed with the Cabinet.</p> <p>The BREP process is being reviewed to ensure engagement and challenge to take place throughout the year leading up to the setting of the 2025.26 budget.</p>
Recruitment	E	Difficulties remain in certain areas for recruitment of staff.	Targeted recruitment continues in certain key areas, with bespoke recruitment packages being

Issue	Governance Principle	What the issue is	Proposed Actions to address issue
			developed as appropriate. We continue to work regionally and nationally to develop solutions that will not destabilise the job market
Decarbonisation (carried forward from 2023-24)	D	Whilst the Council has in place a Decarbonisation 2030 strategy, it has not fully identified the resources needed to implement the strategy nor how partners may help to deliver the strategy ambitions.	The Welsh Government have announced that they have realigned their ambitious 2030 net zero targets for public sector decarbonisation to 2035. The Council's strategy will now be reviewed in line with national objectives however the intention to work with other public sector partners to deliver the strategy will still remain.
Use of performance information (service user perspective)	B	The Council's needs to ensure that performance information enables senior leaders to understand the service user perspective and to plan services accordingly.	The Council's performance management team is working with the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee (COSC) to develop a small suite of PIs to measure service user perspectives better from 2025/26. Research has been completed to assess existing measures in the Council, measures in other councils and national measures and a workshop will take place on 3 June to review the research and develop an action plan.
Digital Strategy	D	An Audit Wales review found weaknesses in the Council's strategic approach to managing and delivering its digital strategy. The Council's digital strategy 2020-24 is not expressed as a set of timebound measurable objectives and milestones. In the absence of clear objectives and measure of success, the Council cannot easily understand whether it is achieving its intended outcomes and value for money. The review also found that the Council has not consulted with all stakeholders, nor has costed the delivery of its digital strategy or savings achievable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council is currently drafting a new Digital Strategy. The new document will take into account the needs of stakeholders, both within and outside the Council, and will be supported with an action plan which includes key milestones.

Issue	Governance Principle	What the issue is	Proposed Actions to address issue
Improved Financial Management	G	The Council's assessment of its compliance with the 19 Standards outlined in the FM Code for 2023-24 identified that the Council could demonstrate compliance with all of the Standards, but that further actions could be taken to enhance compliance during 2024-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and update the Council's Financial procedures and policies as required e.g. Financial Procedure Rules, Financial Scheme for Schools, Fees and Charges Policy, to reflect changing circumstances and processes as a result of the challenging financial climate. • Provide additional training to full Council and schools, as required, on Budget Management, Capital Strategy and Earmarked Reserves • Continue to develop budget reduction proposals for the full life of the MTFS and a high level of monitoring of achievement of existing reductions • Try to improve and widen the reach of the budget consultation process to ensure more meaningful, and specific responses

These issues will be monitored via a detailed action plan during 2024-25, with the responsible officer and deadline for implementation identified for each action and reported to Cabinet/Corporate Management Board and to the Governance and Audit Committee.

7 Assurance Statement

Governance arrangements have effectively supported the Council through the reporting period. Decisions are subject to effective external and internal scrutiny and where weaknesses are found, action plans are put in place and monitored. Based on this, subject to the above issues being resolved, we can provide an overall reasonable assurance that Bridgend County Borough Council's governance arrangements remain fit for purpose.

Steps to address the matters referred to above will be taken to further enhance our governance arrangements.

Signed:  Date: 15 November 20/24
(Leader)

Signed:  Date: 15 November 2024
(Chief Executive)

Glossary Of Terms

Accrual

An accrual is a sum shown in the accounts representing income or expenditure for the accounting period but which was not actually received or paid as at the date of the balance sheet.

Actuary

An actuary is a person who works out insurance and pension premiums, taking into account factors such as life expectancy.

Amortisation

Reduction in value of capital expenditure which has not created an asset, through charges to revenue.

Audit

An audit is an independent examination of the Council's accounts.

Balance Sheet

This is a statement of our assets, liabilities and other balances at the date of the end of the financial year, 31 March.

Budget

A budget (or estimate) is a plan of income and spending, based upon which council tax is set. Actual expenditure and income is subsequently monitored against this plan.

Capital expenditure

Capital expenditure is spending on fixed assets. These are assets that will be used for several years in the provision of services and are items such as buildings, equipment and vehicles.

Capital Adjustment Account

The Capital Adjustment Account absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for the consumption of non-current assets and for financing the acquisition, construction or enhancement of those assets under statutory provisions.

Capital receipt

Capital receipts are proceeds from the sale of fixed assets such as land or buildings.

Cash flow Statement

This is a statement that summarises the movements in cash during the year.

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement

This account records day-to-day spending and income on items such as salaries and wages, running costs of services and the financing of capital expenditure.

Contingent liabilities

A Contingent Liability is a possible obligation that arises from past events and whose existence will be confirmed by the occurrence of uncertain future events.

Corporate and Democratic Core (CDC)

CDC is a service defined by the Best Value Accounting Code of Practice representing costs relating to Member activity (Democratic Representation and Management) and costs that provide the infrastructure to ensure that services can be provided (Corporate Management).

Creditor

A creditor is an organisation / someone owed money by the Council at the end of the financial year for goods / services received during the financial year or previous years.

Current assets

These are short-term assets that are available for the Council to use in the following accounting year.

Current liabilities

These are short-term liabilities that are due for payment by the Council in the following accounting year.

Debtor

A debtor is an organisation / someone who owed the Council money at the end of the financial year for goods / services received during the financial year or previous years.

Delegated schools balances

Under the Local Management of Schools provisions, any balances accrued at year end are delegated to individual schools. These funds are held outside of the Council's Council Fund balances.

Depreciation

Depreciation is the estimated loss in value of fixed assets that are presented in the Balance Sheet.

Earmarked reserves

These are reserves set aside for a specific purpose.

Escrow account

Escrow is a legal arrangement whereby money is delivered to a third party (called an escrow agent) to be held in trust pending a contingency or the fulfillment of a condition or conditions in a contract.

Expenditure and Funding Statement

This statement brings together local authority performance reported on the basis of expenditure measured under proper accounting practices with statutorily defined charges to the Council Fund.

Financial Year

This is the accounting period. For local authorities it starts on 1 April and finishes on 31 March of the following year.

Finance leases

Finance leases are used to finance purchases where the Council takes on most of the risks associated with owning the asset.

Government grants

Assistance by government and inter-government agencies and similar bodies, whether local, national or international, in form of cash or transfers of assets to a Council in return for past or future compliance with certain conditions relating to the activities of the Council.

International Financial Reporting Standard (IFRS)

Financial regulations to be followed as set by the Accounting Standards Board (ASB).

International Financial Reporting Standards Interpretations Committee (IFRICs)

The interpretative body of the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) designed to help the IASB improve financial reporting through timely identification, discussion and resolution of financial reporting issues within the framework of IFRS.

Inventories

Inventories are raw materials purchased for day to day use. The value of these items that have not been used at the end of the financial year are shown as current assets in the balance sheet.

Leasing

This is a method of financing capital expenditure by paying the owner to use property or equipment for a number of years.

Liability

A liability is an amount payable at some time in the future.

Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)

This is an amount that has been set aside to repay loans. This should be a prudent amount.

Movement in Reserves Statement (MIRS)

This statement shows the movement in the year on different reserves held by the Council.

National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR)

The NNDR, or Business Rate, is the charge to occupiers of business premises. The money collected is paid to the Welsh Government and redistributed to individual authorities in proportion to their adult population.

Net Realisable Value

The selling price of an asset, reduced by the relevant (direct) cost of selling it.

Non Distributable Costs (NDC)

NDC is a category of costs defined by the Best Value Accounting Code of Practice and cannot be allocated to specific services. It represents:

- costs of unused I.T. facilities,
- costs of long term unused, unrealisable assets,
- certain pension fund costs

Open Market Value in Existing Use (OMVEU)

OMVEU is a basis for valuation of fixed assets.

Operating assets

These are assets used in the running / provision of services.

Operating leases

These are leases where risks of ownership of the asset remain with the owner.

Post balance sheet events

Post balance sheet items are those that arise after the Balance Sheet date. These are items that did not exist at the time the Balance Sheet was prepared but should be disclosed if they are relevant to the fair presentation of the accounts.

Precepts

This is the amount paid to a non-billing Council (for example a community council) so that it can cover its expenses (after allowing for its income).

Prior year adjustment

Those material adjustments applicable to prior years arising from changes in accounting policies or from the correction of material errors.

Provision

A provision is an amount we set aside in our accounts for expected liabilities which we cannot measure accurately.

Private Finance Initiative (PFI) – a central government initiative which aims to increase the levels of funding available for public services by attracting private sources of finance. The PFI is supported by a number of incentives to encourage authorities' participation.

Public Works Loan Board (PWLB)

This is a loan facility provided by the Government Debt Management Office (DMO), which provides longer term loans to local authorities.

Related party transactions

These are the transfer of assets or liabilities or the performance of services by, to or for a related party no matter whether a charge is made.

Revaluation Reserve

This represents the non-distributable increase/decrease in the valuation of fixed assets.

Revenue account

This is an account which records our day to day spending and income on items such as salaries and wages, running costs of services and the financing of capital expenditure.

Service Reporting Code of Practice (SeRCOP)

The Service Reporting Code of Practice provides a consistent framework for reporting local authority data. SeRCOP is reviewed annually by the appropriate regulating body to ensure that it develops in line with the needs of modern local government, Transparency, Best Value and public services reform.

Temporary borrowing or investment

This is money borrowed or invested for an initial period of less than one year.

Trust fund

Trust funds hold money on behalf of an individual or organisation. Trustees administer the funds for the owners.

Work in progress (WIP)

Work in progress is the value of work undertaken on an unfinished project at the end of the financial year, which has not yet been charged to the revenue account.

Picture back cover: Bryngarw Country Park



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