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Bridgend County Borough Council



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

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**Dyddiad/Date:** Monday, 10 February 2025

Dear Councillor,

**SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3**

A meeting of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 will be held Hybrid in the Council Chamber - Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB/ Remotely via Microsoft Teams on **Monday, 17 February 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 (if any) from Members/Officers in accordance with the provisions of the Members Code of Conduct adopted by Council from 1 September 2008 (including whipping declarations).

3 Approval of Minutes

To receive for approval the minutes of the meeting of the 20/01/25.

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4 Climate Change Response and Decarbonisation Activity Bridgend County Borough

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Invitees:

Councillor Paul Davies – Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment

Janine Nightingale - Corporate Director – Communities

Zak Shell - Head of Operations - Community Services

Ieuan Sherwood – Group Manager – Economy, Natural Resources & Sustainability

Stuart Baldwin – Climate Change Response Manager

Paul Smith – Decarbonisation Programme Manager

5 Conclusions and Recommendations

6 Forward Work Programme Update

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7 Urgent Items

To consider any item(s) of business in respect of which notice has been given in accordance with Part 4 (paragraph 4) of the Council Procedure Rules and which the person presiding at the meeting is of the opinion should by reason of special circumstances be transacted at the meeting as a matter of urgency.

**Note: This will be a Hybrid meeting and Members and Officers will be attending in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Angel Street Bridgend / Remotely via Microsoft Teams. The meeting will be recorded for subsequent transmission via the Council's internet site which will be available as soon as practicable after the meeting. If you would like to view this meeting live, please contact [cabinet\\_committee@bridgend.gov.uk](mailto: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

Councillors:

S J Bletsoe

JPD Blundell

N Clarke

RJ Collins

C Davies

P W Jenkins

MJ Kearns

W J Kendall

J E Pratt

G Walter

I Williams

MJ Williams

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3 HELD HYBRID IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND, CF31 4WB ON MONDAY, 20 JANUARY 2025 AT 16:00**

Present

Councillor JPD Blundell – Chairperson

S J Bletsoe

I Williams

MJ Williams

Present Virtually

C Davies  
N Clarke

P W Jenkins

J E Pratt

G Walter

Apologies for Absence

RJ Collins, MJ Kearn and W J Kendall

Invitees:

Councillor John Spanswick  
Councillor Jane Gebbie  
Councillor Paul Davies

Leader  
Deputy Leader / Cabinet Member Social Services, Health and Wellbeing  
Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment

Mark Shepherd  
Carys Lord  
Janine Nightingale

Chief Executive  
Chief Officer – Finance, Housing and Change  
Corporate Director for Communities

Deborah Exton  
Victoria Adams

Deputy Head of Finance  
Finance Manager – Communities, Education, Early Years and Young People

Officers:

Rachel Keepins  
Lucy Beard

Democratic Services Manager  
Scrutiny Officer

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Martin Williams – Personal – Member of Coety Higher Community Council who are processing a large Community Asset Transfer

**91. Approval of Minutes**

Decision Made	<u>RESOLVED:</u> That the minutes of the meeting of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 dated 2 December 2024 be approved as a true and accurate record.
Date Decision Made	20 January 2025

**92. Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025-26 to 2028-29**

Decision Made	<u>RESOLVED:</u> Following detailed consideration and discussions with Cabinet Members and Senior Officers, the Committee made the following recommendations and requests for additional information:  <b>Recommendations:</b>  <u>Budget Pressures</u>  1. Members discussed in detail the additional revenue funding required, over and above the current budget, to operate the waste service as an in-house service from 2026-27, as agreed by Cabinet in November 2024. Following consideration of the Future Waste report on the 30 September 2024 by the Committee, Members had felt that more investigation was needed to provide further analysis on whether the service should be brought in-house or not, and also recommended that a potential extension of the existing contract be considered.
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There was disappointment from Members that the previous recommendations made by the Committee had not appeared to have been considered and that there was now a £1.2 million budget pressure sooner than it was necessarily needed.

The Committee **recommended** that the insourcing of the service be looked at again, that modelling and further analysis be done and that the current contract be deferred for a further year to get a better understanding of the situation. Members were concerned that the costs predicted and associated budget pressure for this set for 2026-27 could potentially manifest itself during 2025-26 and also, whether there then could potentially be further recurring pressures for next year.

2. Members discussed the recurrent budget pressure associated with the closure of Bridgend Market and the recurring 300k per annum that was still being paid on the lease, as well as holding costs and covering the cost of the small market hall which was opened in the Rhiw centre where 5 traders currently operate. Members were informed that the future of Bridgend Market Hall itself was still being determined.

Members expressed concern that with the hundred-year lease that was taken out initially in 1971; the authority could potentially be paying out 300k for the next 47 years which would accumulate into millions.

The Committee **recommended** that this agreement be explored further to find a long-term resolution and address this funding pressure.

#### Budget Reduction Proposals

3. Members discussed the ongoing reduction in income across parking services and the specifics on the general downturn in car park income.

Officers explained that since the pandemic the Authority had seen a drop in its entirety across all the car parks with the exception of Porthcawl, in Salt Lake and Rest Bay car parks where the number of visitors has increased.

Members expressed that in their own experience, the car parks in Bridgend were very often full and considering the regeneration plans for Bridgend Town Centre, more car parking provision would be vital. The Committee **recommended** that further exploration be undertaken and evidence examined and reported to the Committee with regard to the car parking offer in the town centre and

the budget pressure as a whole.

4. Members discussed at length the reduction in staff who undertake enforcement activities relating to waste. The Committee were concerned with the failure to issue enforcement notices at present and feared what the outcome would be should the enforcement team be cut by such a significant amount.

Recognising the difficulty there was with the burden of proof, Members were greatly concerned there was a risk that the ability to react to these issues would be reduced if the cut was made and therefore the Committee urged and **recommended** the Cabinet revisit the reduction with a view to removing or reducing the proposal.

5. Members expressed concern over the budget reductions relating to increasing fees on Bereavement services, i.e. burial charges by 20%, and stopping the bi-annual supply of blue refuse sacks to all residents. The Committee felt that these proposals, particularly the increase in burial fees, could have a significant impact on the public and **recommended** that if there is any leeway or additional funding potentially available, or changes to budget proposals, that these reductions be prioritised for reconsideration and either removed, or, in the instance of the 20% proposed increase in burial fees, at least reduced.

Supplementary Recommendations

6. Members discussed the Porthcawl Metrolink Station and the justification behind having to pay ongoing revenue costs. They expressed their frustration that when first scrutinising the Metrolink Station they were not informed of the ongoing costs of £100,000 a year until the other redevelopment went ahead.

The Committee **recommended** that any potential revenue liabilities associated with future capital programmes and projects be looked into and predicted as far as possible and fully disclosed when the decisions are made, especially in this time of austerity.

7. Members expressed concerns over the current conditions of highways within the County Borough and the time taken to action any reported issues. Members questioned whether the proposed approximate £1M increase for Capital funding was sufficient to cover the work needed in the forthcoming year. The Committee **recommended** that consideration be given to whether there is any additional funding that could be allocated to this budget to ensure Highways are maintained to an optimal standard.

	<p>8. <u>Forward Work Programme</u></p> <p>The Committee <b>Recommended</b> that the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Steering Group (either alone or utilising external, objective assistance) assess and review the Council's current CAT programme and consider its impact, and success stories, research any good practice from other Welsh local authorities and reflect on whether any lessons can be learned to progress and improve the Council's future CAT programme.</p> <p><b>Additional information:</b></p> <p>Following detailed consideration and discussion with the Cabinet Member, Officers and Invitees, the Committee made the following requests for information:</p> <p>9. Members requested figures to show the income, expenditure and overall cost to Bridgend County Borough Council for burial services.</p> <p>10. Members asked Officers for clarification on what other Local Authorities provide with regard to the supply of blue refuse sacks to residents.</p> <p>11. Further to the appointment of the 2 x S.106 Officers, to facilitate a S.106 &amp; Infrastructure Delivery Team within the Planning &amp; Development Services the Corporate Director agreed that these Officers could potentially come along to a SOSC 3 to explain their roles.</p>
Date Decision Made	20 January 2025

**93. Forward Work Programme Update**

Decision Made	<p><u>RESOLVED:</u></p> <p>That the Committee approved the Forward Work Programme (FWP) in Appendix A subject to the inclusion of the recommendation below, noted the Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet in Appendix B and noted that the FWP as approved by the Committee would be reported to the next meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee:</p>
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**SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3 - MONDAY, 20 JANUARY 2025**

	1. The Committee requested that the outcome of the review to be undertaken by the CAT Steering Group, referred to in Recommendation 8 above, be added to the Forward Work Programme for the Committee. The Committee requested that a sample of Town and Community Councils with experience of CATs be invited to attend for this item to share their experiences, challenges and best practice, etc.
Date Decision Made	20 January 2025

**94. Urgent Items**

Decision Made	None.
Date Decision Made	20 January 2025

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

The meeting closed at 8:17pm.



<b>Meeting of:</b>	<b>SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>17 FEBRUARY 2025</b>
<b>Report Title:</b>	<b>CLIMATE CHANGE RESPONSE AND DECARBONISATION ACTIVITY BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH</b>
<b>Report Owner / Corporate Director:</b>	<b>CORPORATE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES</b>
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	<b>STUART BALDWIN CLIMATE CHANGE RESPONSE MANAGER</b>
<b>Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:</b>	There is no effect upon the policy framework and procedure rules.
<b>Executive Summary:</b>	<p>The purpose of this report is to allow Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 the opportunity to better understand what constitutes Climate Change and raise questions on current activity and the future.</p> <p><b>Bridgend County Borough Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2020 and on 30<sup>th</sup> June Cabinet agreed that the Council should establish a Climate Change Response Programme.</b></p> <p>The purpose of this report is to highlight that Climate Change is not just about decarbonisation and how we can mitigate and adapt to tackle climate change through many activities.</p>

## 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to offer Subject Overview Scrutiny Committee 3 the opportunity to better understand what constitutes Climate Change activity in Bridgend County Borough and offer the opportunity to raise questions on what has already been successfully delivered and activity going forward.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 In October 2018, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) produced a report on the state of global warming. The report identified that a continued warming of global temperatures will significantly increase the likelihood and resulting impact of floods, droughts and extreme heat. The report stated the importance of limiting global warming and a requirement for an unprecedented scale and speed of action.

- 2.2 In November 2018, the Councils of Bristol and Manchester were among the first to pass Motions that declared a 'Climate Emergency' and set ambitious targets aiming to be carbon neutral by 2030 and 2038 respectively to support efforts to limit global warming.
- 2.3 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 addition, there is a commitment to coordinating action to help other areas of the economy to make a decisive shift away from fossil fuels, involving academia, industry and the third sector.
- 2.4 The Welsh Government published its second national climate adaptation plan in 2019, Prosperity for All: A Climate Conscious Wales. That five-year plan demonstrated their commitment to tackling the climate emergency and set out the actions being taken by Welsh Government to prepare for and adapt to the risks and impacts arising from climate change. Welsh Government recognise that both these strategies are steps in the journey towards tackling climate change.
- 2.5 Bridgend CBC declared a climate emergency in June 2020 and established its Climate Change Response Programme. This contained a commitment to achieve Net Zero carbon emissions by 2030 across its operations. This Bridgend 2030 Net Zero Carbon Strategy ("Bridgend 2030 Strategy") is the initial strategic step in achieving this commitment.
- 2.6 In October 2024 Welsh Government published its 'Climate Adaptation Strategy for Wales' in which the plan marks an important shift in its approach to tackling the risks of climate change identified by Welsh Government and to supporting a country resilient to the effects of extreme and changing weather patterns. Climate change 'adaptation' is a term used to describe actions taken to address climate risks and increase climate resilience, whereas climate change 'mitigation' refers to actions taken to limit further global warming through reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. Both are essential elements of a comprehensive response to tackling the climate and nature emergencies.
- 2.7 The council had aligned its Net Zero target with the Welsh Government ambition of achieving a Net Zero public sector by 2030. This will require understanding the priorities, costs, stakeholders and wider impacts of actions associated with council operations, whilst improving understanding of the public sector's role in influencing change in society and the wider economic system. The council's eight Bridgend 2030 commitments are as follows:-

<b>Commitment 1</b>	The council will demonstrate leadership and commitment to deliver the Bridgend 2030 Net Zero Carbon Strategy, to address the Climate Emergency as declared by Welsh Government, the Senedd and the council.
<b>Commitment 2</b>	The council will integrate low and zero-carbon behaviours throughout the organisation and carbon impact will become a key consideration in all strategic decisions.
<b>Commitment 3</b>	The council will decarbonise its built estate by 2030 with a strong focus on energy efficiency, low carbon heating and on-site renewable generation.
<b>Commitment 4</b>	The council will undertake a programme of fleet renewal to ultra-low emission vehicles, such that all vehicles are ULEV by 2030.
<b>Commitment 5</b>	The council will promote active and low-carbon travel options throughout its own operations.
<b>Commitment 6</b>	The council will decarbonise its procurement activity by engaging the supply chain, supporting and mandating suppliers to decarbonise, and progressing sustainable, local procurement practices.
<b>Commitment 7</b>	The council will ensure its land holdings are developed and maintained to support Net Zero objectives through high levels of carbon sequestration and biodiversity.
<b>Commitment 8</b>	The council will decarbonise its waste streams by ending landfill use and adopting a reuse culture alongside sustainable methods of disposal.

### 3. Current situation

3.1 On 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020 Cabinet approved the following as part of their plans for the implementation of a Climate Change Response Programme.

- A cross-party member committee to oversee the Climate Emergency Response Programme
- The creation of a dedicated officer role to lead on:
  - o Co-ordination of all BCBC services.
  - o Collaboration with key public, private and third sector partners.
  - o Engagement with residents.
- The development of a Bridgend County Climate Emergency Citizens' Assembly.
- The development of a Bridgend County Climate Emergency Response Strategy
- The hosting of an annual Bridgend County Sustainability Summit.

3.2 It is important to recognise that the context has changed significantly since the Climate Change Response Programme was created. Many aspects have moved on whilst others have not progressed, specifically:

- Subject Overview Scrutiny Committee 3 has been given the remit for Climate Change and Nature.
- The staff resource has been established and manages the sustainability and nature aspects. In addition, a Decarbonisation Programme Manager has been recruited and oversees the decarbonisation and energy aspects.
- While Bridgend CBC tendered and awarded for the delivery of a Citizen Climate Assembly the payment of residents was considered unpalatable considering the financial context at the time. There is still much work to do on engaging our residents in a more meaningful and longer-term basis. A Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) exists and the development of a

Climate Change Risk Assessment is underway in partnership with the Public Scrutiny Board (PSB), Rhondda Cynon Taff and Merthyr County Borough Councils. The first Sustainability Summit took place with partner agencies in 2022.

3.3 Delivery of Climate Change and Decarbonisation activity is primarily driven by the Climate Change Response Team (climate change adaptation, community energy, domestic energy efficiency, Local Area Energy Planning, biodiversity enhancement, and nature conservation), and the Decarbonisation Programme Team (delivery of the Net Zero 2030 Strategy, energy management). It should be noted that delivery of this work cuts across all areas of BCBC activity and must be factored into decision making in all service areas.

### Decarbonisation

3.4 BCBC uses the Welsh Government Welsh public sector net zero reporting methodology (Public Sector Net Reporting Guide) to calculate emissions arising from its operations and to assess progress against the Net Zero Strategy. Annual emissions have been calculated since the 2019-20 financial year and progress has been made with an overall downward trend since the 2019-20 baseline.

3.5 Greenhouse gas emissions are categorised into three groups or 'Scopes' by the most widely used international accounting tool, the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol.

- Scope 1 covers direct emissions from owned or controlled sources such as gas for heating.
- Scope 2 covers indirect emissions such as from the generation of purchased electricity.
- Scope 3 includes all other indirect emissions that occur from an organisation's activity. This includes purchased goods and services and business travel.

Figure 2 shows the breakdown of BCBC emissions by scope for each year reported.

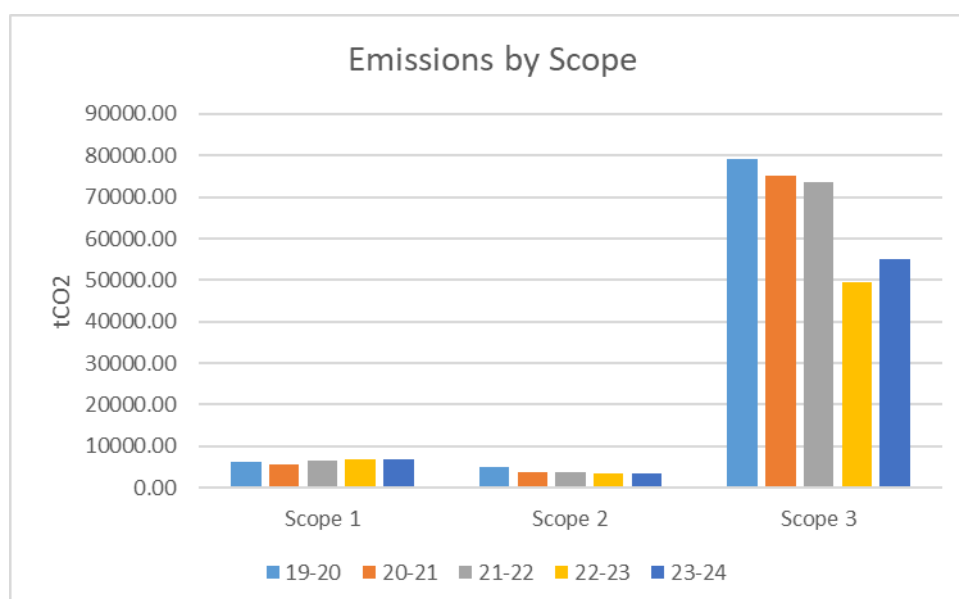


Figure 1 BCBC emissions by scope

3.6 In the latest BCBC emissions report covering 2023-24, procured goods and services (within Scope 3) account for 70% of the total carbon footprint. This is a consistent trend across all local authorities and many other public sector bodies. Actions to reduce this category of emissions are mostly not in the direct control of BCBC and long term so much of Decarbonisation Programme activity has been targeted at reducing scope 1 and 2 emissions where BCBC has a high degree of control and can quickly implement positive changes. This is in line with the pathway described in the 2030 strategy. Figure 3 shows the reported scope 2 and 3 emissions.

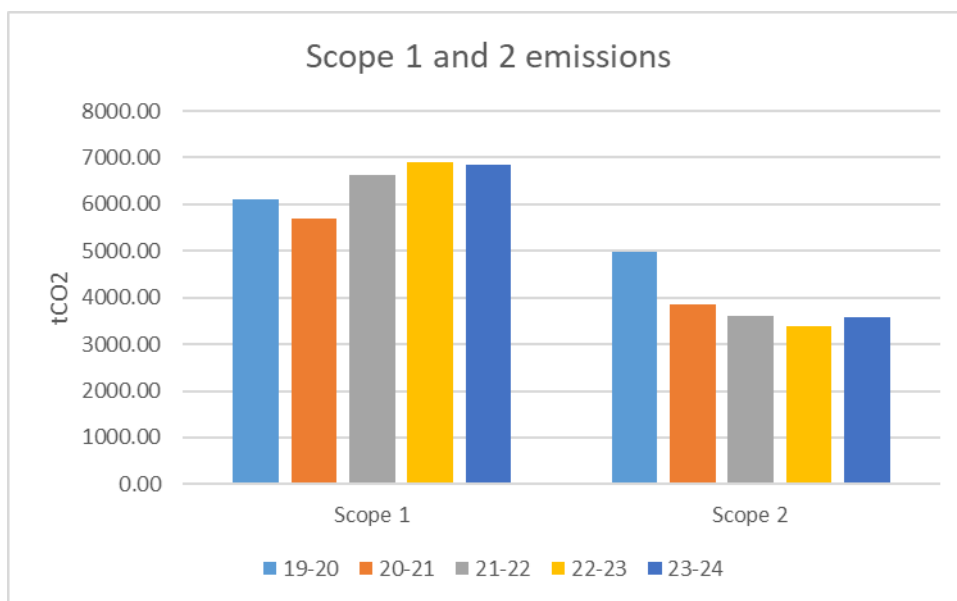


Figure 2 BCBC scope 1 and 2 emissions

- 3.7 Interpretation of scope 2 and 3 emissions is complicated by significant changes in building use between 2020 and 2023 due to the pandemic, and by changing emissions factors used to calculate grid electricity emissions. Since 2021-22 actual consumption of gas (scope 1) has reduced by 12% and electricity (scope 2) by 8% which has saved approximately £660,000 in addition to emission reductions.
- 3.8 Grant funding is an important mechanism to deliver actions that progress the decarbonisation of BCBC operations. Since 2021 BCBC has been awarded grants from Welsh Government and the Shared Prosperity Fund of £1.42m for electric vehicles and charging infrastructure, £1.1m for low carbon heating systems and solar PV, and a £204k interest free loan for LED lighting and solar PV with battery storage.
- 3.9 In addition to the grant funded infrastructure improvements, the Decarbonisation Programme team has initiated a range of 'no regret' actions that have low cost and high impact. Programmes to improve building insulation and replace lighting with LED fittings have been ongoing since 2023. Replacing all lighting with LED and improving lighting controls at the Civic Offices is conservatively estimated to have reduced annual electricity consumption by 23,000kWh. All BCBC sites (schools, offices, depots etc) have been visited so the building management systems can be optimised to minimise energy use.
- 3.10 The Net Zero Strategy is currently being reviewed to ensure it reflects the progress made, and current financial and technological environments.

## Climate Change Risk Assessment

- 3.11 Dr. Alan Netherwood (Netherwood Sustainable Futures) and Dafydd Thomas (Well-being Planner) were commissioned in March 2024 to undertake a Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA) for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg (CTM) area, by the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Service Board (PSB). The area comprises three local authorities, Bridgend County Borough, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough.

The aim of this commission was to:

- explore how combinations of climate risks resulting from increasingly impactful, and frequent severe weather events might affect the landscape, infrastructure, services, assets and diverse communities across CTM
- to understand the cumulative effects of a changing climate on CTM and to begin to understand what issues may arise and where
- to identify priorities for forward planning for climate risk across CTM to inform partners' approaches to climate adaptation

- 3.12 The aim of this localised approach was to utilise available documentary evidence and data; understand current approaches to forward planning for climate risk and to gain insights of local experts and decision makers to build up a nuanced picture of climate risk across the CTM area. This work was undertaken between March and October 2024.

- 3.13 This is an independent report from the authors, to the PSB, informed by a wide range of opinion, evidence and data provided by contributors. It is important to note that this commission is for the production of a climate change risk assessment for the use of the PSB and partners to plan forward. The commission is not to produce a climate adaptation plan, but instead, the recommendations in the report can be used to support partners' thinking on future climate adaptation activity.

- 3.14 The CCRA has been funded through the Bridgend Resilient Communities Fund, via the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund, and contributions from PSB partners set aside to support the work.

- 3.15 The report provides an overview of the work undertaken describing the approach taken, the evidence gathered; how this evidence has been used to engage with key partners throughout the CCRA and detail on 11 (eleven) climate risks which the authors believe the PSB and partners should prioritise for their forward planning.

The priority areas identified are as follows:

- Post-industrial landscape
- Climate resilient communities
- Infrastructural pinch points
- Transport networks (road, rail, bridge)
- Wildfire management
- Asset management
- Social care and health provision

- Maintaining utilities (energy, water, food, ICT)
- Nature conservation management
- Institutional responses to climate risk
- Resource and finance for climate adaptation

- 3.16 The Climate Change Committee's Climate Change Risk Assessment sets out, at the broadest level, the changes in climate that we can expect by mid-century (two decades away) from projections of climate change. This includes warmer and wetter winters; hotter and drier summers; high variability of extreme weather and increased exposure to weather-related hazards: such as flooding, heatwaves, storm damage and wildfire. The aim of the Climate Change Risk Assessment was to explore the potential impact of combined and cumulative risks resulting from these changes in CTMs communities, their implications for public services and other sectors.
- 3.17 The CCRA provides UK and Wales based evidence of 61 risks categories inherited from multiple national governments and are designed for UK and Wales level risk management and provide a good starting point for considering climate risk in Cwm Taf Morgannwg. The report highlights the importance of public services recognising that repeated incidents of severe weather will become more frequent, intense and potentially impactful as the climate changes. Public service planning needs to take account of cumulative effects of these more frequent impacts on the key infrastructure it relies upon, community resilience, strategic planning, business continuity planning, as well as the operational considerations in responding to repeated severe weather incidents. Impacts will be felt differently in different places and may combine and cascade depending on local contexts. This CCRA seeks to develop a picture of potential cumulative impacts of combined risks specific to CTM rather than generic statements about which risks are most important to address.
- 3.18 It recognises the CTM area has suffered from repeated, intense flooding in recent years. The frequency and intensity of this flooding is highly likely to increase given climate projections in coming decades.
- 3.19 The backdrop to the assessment are both short and medium-term resource constraints on public funding. These constraints will profoundly affect the public and other sectors across CTM for the foreseeable future, There is less available resource to meet service demand and less capacity to plan forward for issues such as climate change. There is no additional funding for addressing climate risks.
- 3.20 This CCRA seeks to enable the PSB and partners to better understand the public service, community and institutional implications of climate risk for CTM and its partnerships. This approach should enable the PSB and partners to identify specific adaptation responses to address the risks identified.
- 3.21 The report has been framed as a tool to support the PSB's organisations and partners to engage with internal and external audiences. Bridgend County Borough Council now has to consider how it integrates the findings of the report into our corporate risk register and how in light of the recently published Welsh Government Climate Adaptation Strategy for Wales (October 2024) WG is exploring public bodies' reporting on climate adaptation planning across Wales as part of its powers under the Climate Change Act 2008. This will potentially compel PSB partners to undertake a climate risk assessment for their organisation and to support a strategic

response to this issue through its partnerships. This work on climate risk management should enable the partners to respond to any new reporting duties and to influence the requirements made of them under this duty.

- 3.22 The followings sections focus on work already underway in response to the Climate Change Risk Assessment where it relates to specific key areas, namely:
- The Natural Environment
  - Homes
  - Businesses
  - Waste
  - The future
- 3.23 To aid in halting and reversing the loss of nature, and along with governments across the world, the Welsh Government has set a goal to protect and effectively manage at least 30% of land and 30% of sea in Wales by 2030. This goal is known as 30 by 30. Welsh Parliament's Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee's report on Halting and reversing the loss of nature by 2030 (January, 2025) looks at how the Welsh Government has responded to the challenge of halting and reversing the loss of nature by 2030, since the UK joined this global commitment in December 2022 (the Global Biodiversity Framework), including progress towards 30 by 30. Given the current state of Wales' nature, meeting this commitment will be a significant challenge and there are currently limited plans or actions proposed to meet this target and limited progress has been made thus far.
- 3.24 The Halting and reversing the loss of nature by 2023 report also includes a list of 30 recommendations for Welsh Government, largely focusing on nature policy. This is a new report and Welsh Government have not yet responded to the report or the recommendations, so it is not yet clear what this could mean for local authorities going forward. What is clear, however, is that there is a significant challenge ahead and a great deal of work, commitment, and investment required to halt and reverse the loss of nature.
- 3.25 The Bridgend Local Nature Partnership (LNP) brings together organisations, groups, and individuals to work together to protect and increase biodiversity in Bridgend. The LNP is hosted by BCBC and has a dedicated staff member, funded by Welsh Government's Local Places for Nature grant scheme, to oversee co-ordination of the LNP. In the absence of official direction or action from Welsh Government, the LNP Steering Group (consisting of the LNP coordinator, BCBC Biodiversity Policy Manager, an NRW Officer, the LNP Chair, a representative of the Local Environmental Records Centre, a member of the public, and a member of a Community Council) commissioned a 30 by 30 assessment of Bridgend to better understand what land is likely to currently qualify toward this target, and what land has the potential to subject to effective management, improved condition and a management plan. The report found that only 1.15% of land assessed in Bridgend currently could qualify, with another 25.93% with the potential to qualify if the above conditions are met. Whilst each county is not expected to have 30% of its land contribute to the 30 by 30 target as this is a national target, these figures highlight the work required in Bridgend to improve land, habitats and spaces for nature, to ensure they are in good condition and have strong ecological resilience and connectivity.



- 3.26 The LNP and its Steering Group have also been developing a Bridgend Local Nature Recovery Action Plan (LNRAP), which is intended as a strategic document of local priorities, actions and projects to guide not only the work of the LNP and its partners to protect and enhance nature, but all those who work and live in Bridgend. Whilst this document is important to ensure work addresses local needs and priorities and is conducted through a joined up approach, nature recovery actions often require significant commitment, resource and financial investments, as well as ongoing monitoring and management to ensure they remain effective and valuable to nature. Whilst the actions and projects identified in the Bridgend LNRAP will not be solely the responsibility of BCBC, it is important to note that, as a significant landowner and influential organisation, BCBC can and should play a large role in nature recovery in Bridgend.
- 3.27 Whilst the Senedd, and a number of other local authorities in Wales, declared a Nature Emergency in 2021, BCBC have yet to declare one. BCBC should make it a priority to declare a nature emergency to acknowledge the urgent need to protect the natural environment and act on climate change, particularly as BCBC declared a climate emergency in 2020, and climate and nature are inherently interconnected and interdependent.
- 3.28 The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 that seeks to reverse the decline and secure long-term resilience of biodiversity in Wales. Section 6 of the Act places a duty on public authorities to 'seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity' so far as it is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions. In so doing, public authorities must also seek to 'promote the resilience of ecosystems'.
- 3.29 Green space management makes a significant contribution to improving an area's ecology. Furthermore, green space management also helps to promote community spirit and sense of place especially if the community is involved such as inputting to the scheme design at the concept stage or actively involved in the planting process. There have been a number of examples of green space enhancement within Bridgend County Borough over the last few years that have been funded through BCBC's Climate Change budget, the most recent of these being the identification of five tree planting schemes at Brynmenyn Primary, School terrace Cornelly, Bryntirion Community Centre, BCBC Civic offices and Aber/Planka Fields. These schemes will involve woodland planting, enhancing and replacing failing urban planting and building on implemented schemes to further enhance ecological potential. They have also been designed with the input of local and relevant schools, community council and dedicated public consultation.
- 3.30 One significant threat to our native biodiversity is invasive non-native species (INNS), These are species that have been introduced to an area where they are not native, which can cause harm to the environment, economy or human health. INNS are considered one of the top five threats to biodiversity worldwide. This is due to their ability to spread quickly and outcompete native plants and animals, reducing the diversity of habitats, and ultimately reducing the resilience of ecosystems, making it difficult for them to adapt and recover in the face of climate change.
- 3.31 Recommendations regarding a BCBC wide approach to INNS management were made to Cabinet on 17 November 2021, and given approval. These recommendations included:

- An INNS survey of all BCBC land
- The development of a BCBC INNS policy
- The establishment of a working group
- A point of contact to review and develop actions plans to control Japanese knotweed infestations on BCBC managed land.

- 3.32 An INNS Officer has been in role since January 2023 to facilitate a cross-council approach to INNS management. A mapping exercise focused on INNS present on BCBC land, specifically Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam, was completed in April 2024. Whilst progress has been made to ensure a cross-council approach to the management of INNS on BCBC assets, INNS remain a significant threat to biodiversity as eradication is challenging with many of these species, and therefore, ongoing control methods are necessary. This means that ongoing commitment and resources are required to ensure these species can be locally managed.
- 3.33 BCBC actively manages five Local Nature Reserves, these being Bedford Park at Cefn Cribwr, Craig y Parcau at Bridgend, Frog Pond Wood at Pyle, Lock's Common at Porthcawl and Tremains Wood at Brackla. Under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 local authorities, in consultation with the Natural Resources Wales, have powers to designate sites in their control as LNRs. In using these powers, the local authority accepts a commitment to manage the land as a nature reserve and to protect it from inappropriate uses or development.
- 3.34 Current approaches to the management of green spaces seeks to mutually promote the multiple benefits that they can provide such as ecology, landscape, well-being along with socio-economic benefits and in doing so promote the concept of Green Infrastructure. The importance of the multiple benefits of green assets has been realised at national policy level such as the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.
- 3.35 To this end both Bedford Park and Tremains Wood have active and constituted volunteers that meet regularly. This not only aids the ecology of these sites, but the volunteers also get a sense of ownership and have the opportunity of up-skilling through training. These volunteers will also help with the management of other LNRs that don't currently have dedicated volunteers. In partnership with the woodland charity Llais y Goedwig, at Bedford Park a tree nursery has been implemented, with the trees being tended by volunteers. These trees in time will be utilised in planting schemes elsewhere in the county borough. Also at Bedford Park, following the discovery of great crested newt within the Bedford Park Ironworks compound, a project in partnership with Amphibian and Reptile Conservation is being implemented to create a wetland complex to improve the habitat at Bedford Park not only for great crested newts, but a range of other flora and fauna.
- 3.36 Trees make a significant contribution to an area providing multiple benefits including the defining of place names e.g. Pencoed. In recognition of the importance of the county borough's urban tree stock, on June 7<sup>th</sup> 2018 Cabinet approved a revised corporate tree policy. This updated a previous policy and included additional information as set out in the 2014 Bridgend i- Tree study. This study quantified that the ecosystem services value (e.g. flood alleviation, removal of air pollution, carbon

sequestration) of Bridgend County Borough's urban tree stock amounted to £686million. The 2018 report also included other information, notably when the Council would and wouldn't intervene when requested to undertake trees works by the public. However, in light of the range of enquiries concerning trees that officers receive, this policy is subject to further review with the addition of further information such as information concerning Tree Preservation Orders, Conservation Area and Felling Licences. This revised policy will be presented to Cabinet in due course for further approval.

- 3.37 In 2023 a £6.4m scheme was delivered to defend Porthcawl from flooding and any potential future rise in sea levels. The work was jointly funded by Welsh Government and Bridgend County Borough Council as part of the Coastal Risk Management Programme. The work transformed the promenade area into a flat, easily accessible space with new planters and enhanced flood defences which blend into the overall design and run between Porthcawl Marina and Coney Beach.
- 3.38 The work also focused on the iconic Western Breakwater and extensive refurbishment delivered to ensure that the 200-year-old structure continues to stand up to the tides and tough maritime weather conditions. Around 550 tonnes of grout was used during the upgrade. The second phase of the project extended into Sandy Bay and as far as Rhych Point, where flood defences and dune protection works were also upgraded.

## **Homes**

- 3.39 The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) is a government energy efficiency scheme in Great Britain to help reduce carbon emissions and tackle fuel poverty. The scheme began in April 2013, and over time it has been amended and we are now operating under ECO4.
- 3.40 This ECO policy will be entirely formed from one obligation, the Home Heating Cost Reduction Obligation (HHCRO). Under HHCRO, obligated suppliers must mainly promote measures which improve the ability of low income, fuel poor and vulnerable households to heat their homes. This includes actions that result in heating savings, such as the installation of insulation or the upgrade of an inefficient heating system. The target is divided between suppliers based on each supplier's relative share of the domestic gas and electricity market.
- 3.41 Bridgend County Borough Council signed a Statement of Intent in February 2024 and the impact of this meant that residents in Bridgend County were eligible for the LA Flex aspect of ECO but we know that residents had been securing home ECO funding directly with suppliers without there being any form of monitoring or oversight.
- 3.42 Through working in partnership with E.ON a new Statement of Intent was signed in July 2024 to include the new Great British Insulation Scheme (GBIS). The UK government insulation scheme started out as ECO+, with the aim of helping eligible UK homeowners install home insulation to make their homes more energy efficient with energy-saving improvements. At the heart of the scheme are affordability and comfort, so if you make your home more energy efficient, it will keep a consistent temperature, making it more cost-effective and efficient. The scheme was launched in the summer of 2023 and will run until March 2026. GBIS is just about insulation and differs to ECO4 and LA Flex which takes a whole house approach.

3.43 Through our partnership with E.ON we know that 114 properties have benefited from energy efficiency measures and the average SAP ratings overall.

Average starting SAP	49.07
Average SAP change	22.12
Average final SAP	81.89

The table below shows the total measures and spend by each obligation in Bridgend County Borough Council.

Obligation	Total Measures	Spend
ECO4	277	£1.48M
GBIS	32	£97.53K

### **Businesses**

3.44 Challoch Energy, working closely with Nuvision Energy (Wales) Ltd and Bridgend College, was appointed by Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) to design a delivery model to provide advice and guidance to small businesses of Bridgend County Borough on how to implement energy savings measures to help them reduce energy costs and deliver carbon savings.

3.45 The project was funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. This framework has enabled Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) to further support decarbonisation of the economy through their work with communities and businesses.

3.46 Improving energy efficiency by reducing the amount of energy that businesses use will play a key role in reducing carbon emissions as well as benefit businesses through lower energy bills. There are a wide range of measures that can be implemented ranging from low-cost behavioural actions to high-cost installations, some of which are listed below:

- Behavioural changes
- Changing to energy efficient LED light bulbs
- Double-glazing windows
- Draft-proofing and insulation
- Upgrading heating (heat pumps)
- Installation of solar PV

### **Transport**

3.47 Transport remains the largest domestic sector for emissions in the UK at more than 25%, with Bridgend attributing 51% of its emissions to transport. Transitioning to cleaner road transport is crucial for the UK to meet its net zero emissions target by 2050. The recent surge in both the supply and demand for Electric Vehicles (EVs) has highlighted charging infrastructure as the primary challenge to this goal as highlighted in Bridgend County Borough Council's Draft Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy.

- 3.48 Welsh Government published an Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy in 2022, which sets out an objective that ‘by 2025, all users of electric cars and vans in Wales are confident that they can access electric vehicle charging infrastructure when and where they need it as referenced in Bridgend County Borough Council’s Draft Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy.
- 3.49 The Welsh Government position on EV charging is synonymous with Central Government messaging and policy around the topic, with a targeted transition to EV being central to transport decarbonisation, removing charging infrastructure as a perceived and real barrier to EV adoption.
- 3.50 The development of this draft EV Strategy is to facilitate a scalable shift to Zero Emission Vehicles over the 5 years to 2030, as part of Bridgend’s commitment to addressing the climate emergency. Our draft strategy aligns with the Welsh Government’s Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy, which aims to ensure that by 2025, all users of electric cars and vans in Wales can access charging infrastructure when and where they need it.
- 3.51 Bridgend’s draft strategy aims to provide accessible, reliable, and inclusive EV charging infrastructure for all residents, visitors, and businesses. To ensure that everyone will have access to dependable, inclusive and affordable EV charging facilities.
- 3.52 Bridgend have been actively increasing its public EV charging network over recent years, particularly in public community spaces such as leisure facilities, and are committed to developing this network further. The County currently has 12 public chargepoints that have been commissioned by the Council, 52 that have been commissioned by the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR), alongside an additional 44 chargers that are operated independently at locations such as supermarkets.
- 3.53 The main focus for the next five years is delivering a public charging network aimed at residents, with the right types of chargers in the right locations.
- 3.54 The Bridgend Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy is still in draft form and internal officer consultation is currently ongoing. As part of the governance route we are committed to bringing this strategy to Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

### **3.55 The future**

#### **The Local Development Plan**

- 3.56 The need to tackle the climate emergency and contribute towards meeting national renewable and low carbon energy generation targets was identified as a key issue and driver within the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP). The planning system has a key role to play in setting the land use framework for a broader response. This overarching issue was encapsulated within a key Strategic Objective (3j), also informed by the Sustainability Appraisal process:

“Promote developments that are well located and designed to assist in meeting energy demand with renewable and low carbon sources in accordance with the energy hierarchy for planning (set out in Planning Policy Wales, PPW), including delivery of net zero carbon homes in the first

instance, thereby helping to both mitigate the causes of climate change and tackle the 'climate emergency' declared by Welsh Government and the Council”.

- 3.57 As recognised in Planning Policy Wales, development proposals should “mitigate the causes of climate change, by minimising carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions associated with the development’s location, design, construction, use and eventual demolition; and include features that provide effective adaptation to, and resilience against, the current and predicted future effects of climate change”. RLDP Policy SP4 therefore specifies criteria that require development to both mitigate and adapt to climate change, thereby minimising its underlying causes and planning for its consequences. A key role of the RLDP is to put in place resource efficient and climate change resilient settlement patterns that minimise land take and urban sprawl. Put simply, this means locating development in settlements which are accessible to a range of services and facilities whereby people can reduce private car usage and thereby reduce the harmful effects of carbon emissions.
- 3.58 Policy SP4 also recognises the risk of flooding as a key effect of climate change. The Policy seeks to steer highly vulnerable development away from undefended flood risk areas, to assess the implications of development in areas at risk of flooding and to ensure that new development does not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere. The Flood Map for Planning accompanying Technical Advice Note 15 includes climate change information to show how this will affect flood risk extents over the next century, along with the potential extent of flooding assuming no defences are in place. The Flood Map for Planning has been supplemented by a Strategic Flood Consequences Assessment for Bridgend County Borough. This information has influenced the siting and type of development allocations within the RLDP, and will also inform policies on flood risk whereby subsequent development proposals can be assessed.
- 3.59 The planning system also plays a key role in delivering clean growth and the decarbonisation of energy, as well as being crucial in building resilience to the impacts of climate change. The transition to a low carbon economy not only brings opportunities for clean growth and quality jobs, but also has wider benefits of enhanced places to live and work, with clean air, clean water and improved health outcomes. In accordance with national planning policy, the Council has an aspiration for all new housing development to be net zero carbon in the first instance, while continuing to promote a range of low and zero carbon technologies as a means to achieve this. This aspiration is encapsulated within the RLDP.
- 3.60 In order to reduce future energy demand, strict policies have been introduced that seek to maximise the energy efficiency of new development, integrate energy generation into wider development proposals, and ensure that low carbon heating systems are installed. The principles of energy efficiency measures and renewable energy are now incorporated into Building Regulations. However, the RLDP also seeks to ensure that new development has regard to broader principles of sustainable design in order to significantly reduce energy usage and carbon emissions. Passive building techniques can help achieve these principles through design that makes best use of insulation, orientation and shading to facilitate solar gain and passive cooling to optimise thermal comfort. SP4 seeks to encourage renewable and low/zero carbon energy generation technology, subject to a range of

material planning considerations. Such policy approaches can also help ensure that new development is designed to be resilient to future climate change effects.

- 3.61 A placemaking approach must also be adopted in the identification, design and delivery of all transport measures in order to maximise the sustainability of developments. The location, scale, density, mix of uses and design of all developments should be carefully considered in a manner that reduces transport demand and enhances the scope for sustainable transport choices. The 'transport network' refers to the links and services that help people move across the County Borough, including the highway, public transport, pedestrian routes, cycle routes, public rights of way and bridle routes.
- 3.62 Policy SP5 emphasises that movement, connectivity and legibility of transport links are critical components in the creation of a successful, sustainable place. An efficient, integrated transport network that prioritises sustainable transport is critical to making a contribution to decarbonisation and supporting economic growth. SP5 requires all development proposals to consider improving and/or expanding corresponding active travel and public transport networks. This will prove fundamental in ensuring the increasing attractiveness of active travel as a credible alternative to the private car, thereby encouraging modal shifts away from unsustainable forms of transportation, helping to promote physical activity and reducing the impact of transport based emissions.
- 3.63 In summary, the RLDP sets out a clear, overarching policy response to the climate emergency within, adopting appropriate mitigation and adaption measures to reduce and respond to the impacts of climate change.

### **The Future – Bridgend County Climate Response Strategy**

- 3.64 The Climate Change Risk Assessment has identified 11 key priority areas that Bridgend CBC should consider adding to its risk register. Following internal discussions Bridgend needs to recognise how these feature in a Climate Change Response Strategy.
- 3.65 Beginning in 2025/26 a specification will be developed to enable officers to tender for the delivery of such a strategy. Early discussions have already taken place with officers supporting the Public Service Board on the possibility of developing an holistic strategy that will focus on an area basis rather than an organisational one.
- 3.66 The aspiration is that, through 2025/26, a strategy will be commissioned and drafted and taken through the appropriate governance routes ready for adoption in 2026/27.

## **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 Long term – Tackling climate Change through mitigation and adaptation is a long term activity and often across several generations to enact the behaviour change required to reduce human impact on biodiversity and reducing greenhouse gases.

Integration – activities identified in this report promotes a shift towards sustainable practices and demonstrates our commitment to innovation and environmental stewardship, inspiring others to adopt similar initiatives. This holistic approach ensures that our project supports multiple well-being goals and aligns with the objectives of other public bodies.

Involvement – Engaging stakeholders with an interest in achieving well-being goals, activities identified in this report promotes action on climate change and renewable energy outreach actively collaborates with local community groups, environmental organisations, and council members. These stakeholders are integral in planning and executing our outreach activities, ensuring that diverse perspectives and needs are considered. The stakeholders reflect the diversity of the area by including representatives from various demographic groups, such as different age groups, ethnic backgrounds, and socioeconomic statuses. This inclusive approach ensures that our activities address the unique needs and concerns of all community members, fostering a sense of shared responsibility and collective action towards achieving well-being goals.

Collaboration - Internally, we collaborate with various departments within the council to ensure alignment with broader sustainability goals and to secure necessary resources. Externally, we partner with local environmental organisations, community groups, and educational institutions to enhance our outreach efforts and share best practices. These partnerships enable us to pool resources, expertise, and networks, ensuring a comprehensive approach to promoting environmental awareness and sustainable practices. By working together, we can more effectively address the well-being goals of reducing carbon emissions, fostering community engagement, and promoting a culture of sustainability.

Prevention – Activities identified in this report should over the longer term reduce our negative impact on biodiversity and greenhouse gas emissions. This has a direct impact on the wellbeing and future generations so have at least the same quality of life as we do now.

## **6. Climate Change Implications**

- 6.1 The actions and activities within this report and inextricably linking to climate change mitigation and adaptation and decarbonisation of the activities of Bridgend County Borough Council.

## **7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications**

- 7.1 No safeguarding or Corporate Parent implications associated with this report in line with the risks identified in the Safeguarding Policy.



## **8. Financial Implications**

- 8.1 In June 2020 Cabinet approved the establishment of a Climate Change Response Revenue Budget (£150,000) and it is this budget that will be utilised to deliver the new Climate Change Response Strategy. It is estimated that such a strategy will cost in the region of £60,000.
- 8.2 There is a fixed annual capital allocation of £150,000 to support the Council with match funding for climate response grant bids. The cost of incorporating net zero in major builds, e.g. new schools, is built into each individual scheme's capital budget.

## **9. Recommendation**

- 9.1 It is recommended that Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 consider and provide comment on this report.

## **Background documents**

Bridgend Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy (draft)

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# Agenda Item 6

<b>Meeting of:</b>	<b>SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>17 FEBRUARY 2025</b>
<b>Report Title:</b>	<b>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE</b>
<b>Report Owner / Corporate Director:</b>	<b>CHIEF OFFICER – LEGAL &amp; REGULATORY SERVICES, HR &amp; CORPORATE POLICY</b>
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	<b>MERYL LAWRENCE SENIOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER – SCRUTINY</b>
<b>Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:</b>	<b>The work of the Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committees relates to the review and development of plans, policy or strategy that form part of the Council’s Policy Framework and consideration of plans, policy or strategy relating to the power to promote or improve economic, social or environmental wellbeing in the County Borough of Bridgend. Any changes to the structure of the Scrutiny Committees and the procedures relating to them would require the Bridgend County Borough Council Constitution to be updated.</b>
<b>Executive Summary:</b>	<p><b>The Council’s Constitution requires the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to develop and implement a Forward Work Programme for the Committee.</b></p> <p><b>The Council’s Constitution also provides for each Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee to propose items for the Forward Work Programme having regard for the Council’s Corporate Priorities and Risk Management framework, for the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to have oversight and refer any cross-cutting topics to a Committee or Research and Evaluation Panel.</b></p> <p><b>The Committee is asked to consider and agree its Forward Work Programme, identify any specific information it wishes to be included in and any invitees they wish to attend for the reports for the next two Committee meetings, identify any further items for consideration on the Forward Work Programme having regard to the criteria set out in the report, consider the Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet and note that the Forward Work Programmes for the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees will be reported to the next meeting of COSC.</b></p>

## 1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- a) Present the Committee with the Forward Work Programme updated at the previous Committee meeting (**Appendix A**) for discussion and consideration;
- b) Request any specific information the Committee identifies to be included in the items for the next two meetings, including invitees they wish to attend;
- c) Request the Committee to identify whether there are presently any further items for consideration on the Forward Work Programme having regard to the selection criteria in paragraph 3.6 of this report;
- d) Present the Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet (**Appendix B**) to track responses to the Committee's recommendations made at previous meetings;
- e) Advise that the Committee's Forward Work Programme as updated by the Committee will be reported to the next meeting of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee (COSC), with those from each respective Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee (SOSC), following their consideration in this cycle of Committee meetings.

## 2. Background

2.1 The Council's Constitution requires the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to develop and implement a Forward Work Programme for the Committee.

2.2 The Council's Constitution also provides for each Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee to propose items for the Forward Work Programme having regard for the Council's Corporate Priorities and Risk Management framework, for the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to have oversight and refer any cross-cutting topics to a Committee or Research and Evaluation Panel.

### Best Practice / Guidance

2.3 The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny's (CfGS) Good Scrutiny Guide recognises the importance of the Forward Work Programme. In order to 'lead and own the process', it states that Councillors should have ownership of their Committee's work programme, and be involved in developing, monitoring and evaluating it. The Good Scrutiny Guide also states that, in order to make an impact, the scrutiny workload should be coordinated and integrated into corporate processes, to ensure that it contributes to the delivery of corporate objectives, and that work can be undertaken in a timely and well-planned manner.

2.4 Forward Work Programmes need to be manageable to maximize the effective use of the limited time and resources of Scrutiny Committees. It is not possible to include every topic proposed. Successful Scrutiny is about looking at the right topic in the right way and Members need to be selective, while also being able to demonstrate clear arguments for including or excluding topics.

- 2.5 The CfGS's guide to effective work programming 'A Cunning Plan?' makes the following reference to the importance of good work programming:

*'Effective work programming is the bedrock of an effective scrutiny function. Done well it can help lay the foundations for targeted, incisive and timely work on issues of local importance, where scrutiny can add value. Done badly, scrutiny can end up wasting time and resources on issues where the impact of any work done is likely to be minimal.'*

### **3. Current situation / proposal**

#### Forward Work Programme

- 3.1 Following the approval of the schedule of Scrutiny Committee meeting dates at the Annual Meeting of Council on 15 May 2024, the standing statutory reports to Scrutiny Committees of: the Corporate Plan, the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and Budget, Performance and Budget Monitoring, etc. have been mapped to the appropriate timely meeting dates into a Forward Work Programme.
- 3.2 The Forward Work Programmes for each Scrutiny Committee have been prepared using a number of difference sources, including:
- Corporate Risk Assessment;
  - Directorate Business Plans;
  - Previous Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme report topics / minutes;
  - Committee / Member proposed topics;
  - Policy Framework;
  - Cabinet Work Programme;
  - Discussions with Corporate Directors;
  - Performance Team regarding the timing of performance information.
- 3.3 There are items where there is a statutory duty for Policy Framework documents to be considered by Scrutiny, e.g., the MTFS including draft budget proposals considered in January 2025, following which COSC coordinated the conclusions and recommendations from each of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees in a report on the overall strategic overview of Cabinet's draft Budget proposals to the meeting of Cabinet on 4 February 2025.
- 3.4 An effective Forward Work Programme will identify the issues that the Committee wishes to focus on during the year and provide a clear plan. However, at each meeting the Committee will have an opportunity to review this as the Forward Work Programme Update will be a standing item on the Agenda, detailing which items are scheduled for future meetings and be requested to clarify any information to be included in reports and the list of invitees. The Forward Work Programme will remain flexible and will be revisited at each COSC meeting with input from each Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee reported and any updated information gathered from Forward Work Programme meetings with Corporate Directors.
- 3.5 The Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programmes will be reported to the next meeting of COSC, with the comments from each respective Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee for coordination and oversight of the

overall Forward Work Programme. The SOSC Forward Work Programmes will be included in the standing Forward Work Programme Update report from then on with any feedback from each SOSC meeting included.

### Identification of Further Items

- 3.6 The Committee are reminded of the Criteria Form which Members can use to propose further items for the FWP which the Committee can then consider for prioritisation at a future meeting. The Criteria Form emphasises the need to consider issues such as impact, risk, performance, budget and community perception when identifying topics for investigation and to maximise the impact scrutiny can have on a topic and the outcomes for people. Criteria which can help the Committee come to a decision on whether to include a referred topic, are set out below:

#### Recommended Criteria for Selecting Scrutiny Topics:

PUBLIC INTEREST:	The concerns of local people should influence the issues chosen for scrutiny;
ABILITY TO CHANGE:	Priority should be given to issues that the Committee can realistically influence, and add value to;
PERFORMANCE:	Priority should be given to the areas in which the Council is not performing well;
EXTENT:	Priority should be given to issues that are relevant to all or large parts of the County Borough, or a large number of the Authority's service users or its population;
REPLICATION:	Work programmes must take account of what else is happening in the areas being considered to avoid duplication or wasted effort.

#### Reasons to Reject Scrutiny Topics:

- The issue is already being addressed / being examined elsewhere and change is imminent.
- The topic would be better addressed elsewhere (and can be referred there).
- Scrutiny involvement would have limited / no impact upon outcomes.
- The topic may be sub-judice or prejudicial.
- The topic is too broad to make a review realistic and needs refining / scoping.
- New legislation or guidance relating to the topic is expected within the next year.
- The topic area is currently subject to inspection or has recently undergone substantial change / reconfiguration.

#### Corporate Parenting

- 3.7 Corporate Parenting is the term used to describe the responsibility of a local authority towards care experienced children and young people. This is a legal responsibility given to local authorities by the Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004. The role of the Corporate Parent is to seek for children in public care the

outcomes every good parent would want for their own children. The Council as a whole is the 'Corporate Parent', therefore all Members have a level of responsibility for care experienced children and young people in Bridgend.

- 3.8 In this role, it is suggested that Members consider how each item they consider affects care experienced children and young people, and in what way can the Committee assist in these areas.
- 3.9 Scrutiny Champions can greatly support the Committee in this by advising them of the ongoing work of the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting and particularly any decisions or changes which they should be aware of as Corporate Parents.
- 3.10 The Forward Work Programme for the Committee is attached as **Appendix A** for the Committee's consideration.
- 3.11 The Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet to track responses to the Committee's recommendations made at previous meetings is attached as **Appendix B**.

#### **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 Act provides the basis for driving a different kind of public service in Wales, with 5 Ways of Working to guide how public services should work to deliver for people. The following is a summary to show how the 5 Ways of Working to achieve the well-being goals have been used to formulate the recommendations within this report:
  - Long-term - The approval of this report will assist in the planning of Scrutiny business in both the short-term and in the long-term on its policies, budget and service delivery.
  - Prevention - The early preparation of the Forward Work Programme allows for the advance planning of Scrutiny business where Members are provided an opportunity to influence and improve decisions before they are made by Cabinet.
  - Integration - The report supports all the wellbeing objectives.
  - Collaboration - Consultation on the content of the Forward Work Programme has taken place with the Corporate Management Board, Heads of Service and Elected Members.

- Involvement - Advanced publication of the Forward Work Programme ensures that stakeholders can view topics that will be discussed in Committee meetings and are provided with the opportunity to engage.

5.2 When setting its Forward Work Programme, the Committee should consider how each item they propose to scrutinise assists in the achievement of the Council's 7 Wellbeing Objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015** as follows :-

1. A County Borough where we protect our most vulnerable
2. A County Borough with fair work, skilled, high-quality jobs and thriving towns
3. A County Borough with thriving valleys communities
4. A County Borough where we help people meet their potential
5. A County Borough that is responding to the climate and nature emergency
6. A County Borough where people feel valued, heard and part of their community
7. A County Borough where we support people to live healthy and happy lives

## 6. **Climate Change Implications**

6.1 The Committee should consider how each item they scrutinise affects climate change, the Council's Net Zero Carbon 2030 target and how it meets the Council's commitments to protect and sustain the environment over the long term. There are no Climate Change Implications arising from this report.

## 7. **Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications**

7.1 The Committee should consider how each item they scrutinise affects care experienced children and young people, and in what way the Committee can assist in these areas. Safeguarding is everyone's business and means protecting peoples' health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect. There are no Safeguarding and 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 The Committee is recommended to:

- a) Consider and approve the Forward Work Programme for the Committee in **Appendix A**.
- b) Identify any specific information the Committee wishes to be included in the items for the next two meetings, including invitees they wish to attend;



- c) Identify whether there are presently any further items for consideration on the Forward Work Programme having regard to the selection criteria in paragraph 3.6 of this report.
- d) Note the Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet in **Appendix B** to track outstanding responses to the Committee's recommendations made at previous meetings;
- e) Note that the Committee's Forward Work Programme as approved by the Committee will be reported to the next meeting of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee (COSC), with those from each respective Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee (SOSC), following their consideration in this cycle of Committee meetings.

### **Background documents**

None.

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**Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3**  
**2024-25 Forward Work Programme**

<b>Monday 16 July 2024 4.00pm</b>		
<b>Report Topic</b>	<b>Information Required / Committee's Role</b>	<b>Invitees</b>
Valleys Regeneration Strategy	<p>The development of a commercial property enhancement grant for the Valley high streets to make them look better and bring properties back into commercial use.</p> <p>The development of funding bids for Valleys to enhance the economy and stimulate new job opportunities.</p> <p>The increase in the amount of land and premises available for businesses including industrial starter units, in the Valleys.</p> <p>Accessibility for people from the Valleys to wider public transport.</p>	<p><b><u>Cabinet Members</u></b> Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Economic Development and Housing</p> <p><b><u>Officers</u></b> Corporate Director Communities</p> <p><b><u>External</u></b></p>

<b>Monday 30 September 2024 4.00pm</b>		
<b>Report Topics</b>	<b>Information Required / Committee's Role</b>	<b>Invitees</b>
Future Waste	<p>Setting out of future direction. What is going to be done. How the future service will look. Outcome of consultation.</p>	<p><b><u>Cabinet Members</u></b> Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Regeneration</p> <p><b><u>Officers</u></b> Chief Officer – Finance, Housing and Change Head of Partnerships</p> <p><b><u>External</u></b></p>

**APPENDIX A**

<b>Monday 2 December 2024 4.00pm</b>		
<b>Report Topics</b>	<b>Information Required / Committee's Role</b>	<b>Invitees</b>
<p>Housing and Homelessness Update</p> <p>And</p> <p>Information Report: Update on the Shared Prosperity Funding</p>	<p>Affordable; Accessible; Social; Energy efficiency housing; Registered Social Landlords</p> <p>Progress on Empty homes in the County Borough, including the number, the Empty Homes Policy and Grants available – as requested by Members of SOSC 3 at 22 April meeting.</p> <p>The Committee requested the above to also include churches and chapels – asked for by Members of SOSC 3 at 16 July meeting.</p> <p>How grants are progressing in terms of spend, who the recipients are, feedback on the process.</p>	<p><b><u>Cabinet Members</u></b>                      Leader of the Council                      Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment</p> <p><b><u>Officers</u></b>                      Corporate Director Communities                      Head of Operations - Community Services</p> <p><b><u>External</u></b></p>

<b>Monday 20 January 2025 4.00pm</b>		
<b>Report Topics</b>	<b>Information Required / Committee's Role</b>	<b>Invitees</b>
<p>Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025-26 to 2028-29</p>		<p><b><u>Cabinet Members</u></b>                      Leader of the Council                      Deputy Leader of Council and Cabinet Member of Social Services and Health                      Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Legal                      Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment                      Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Wellbeing                      Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Regeneration</p> <p><b><u>Officers</u></b>                      Chief Executive                      Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change                      Corporate Director Communities</p>

Monday 17 February 2025 4.00pm		
Report Topics	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Climate Change Decarbonisation	<p>Update on progress and future priorities given current and future budget implications</p> <p>Electric charging points update</p>	<p><b><u>Cabinet Members</u></b>            Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment            Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Economic Development and Housing</p> <p><b><u>Officers</u></b>            Corporate Director Communities            Decarbonisation Programme Manager</p> <p><b><u>External</u></b></p>

Monday 7 April 2025 4.00pm		
Report Topics	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Maesteg Town Hall Review	<p>Lessons Learned - COSC delegated the Lessons Learned report to SOSC 3 to consider, when the project has been completed. (Possible information report or member briefing)</p> <p>To be included in scope:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Justification of the money spent;</li> <li>- Inner detail of what occurred;</li> <li>- Details of the challenges encountered;</li> <li>- Details of the lessons learnt;</li> <li>- A possible presentation from Officers;</li> <li>- An honest appraisal of what could have changed or been done differently.</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Cabinet Members</u></b>            Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment</p> <p><b><u>Officers</u></b>            Corporate Director Communities</p> <p><b><u>External</u></b></p>

**Member Briefing sessions**

- Porthcawl Regeneration
- Infrastructure Delivery - including specifically condition of the highways in include; repairs and maintenance, road resurfacing and potholes, network management of utilities, and the development of internal metrics for repairs and closing referrals – (All Member Briefing)
- Corporate Joint Committees Regional Responsibilities – (All Members Briefing)
- Development of Sunnyside (All Member)
- Community Transfers (CAT) - Position Update

**Information reports**

- Audit Wales ‘Springing Forward Asset Management Inspection Report’ – including associated Action Plan

**Potential Items**

- Bridgend Town Centre Masterplan and Regeneration
- Outcome of review recommended by SOSC 3 to be undertaken by the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Steering Group to assess and review the Council’s current CAT programme, considering:
  - Its impact
  - Success stories
  - Good practice researched from other Welsh local authorities
  - Reflection on lessons learned
- Members have requested that the Porthcawl Regeneration and Pavilion Update, be scheduled alongside meeting alongside the Maesteg Town Hall report.
- United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund Grant
- Communities Directorate Target Operating Model (TOM) - Summer 2025
- Bridgend Town Centre Masterplan and Regeneration
- Sickness levels in the Authority and its effect on decision-making in the Directorate
- Major parks in the Borough
- Valley to Coast

**Referred from COSC as potential items**

- The Committee were advised that the Council’s charging regime for car parking, including the free parking offers, were being reviewed. The Committee requested that the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 consider requesting a report detailing the outcome of the exercise referred to above and that such report demonstrates the difference in revenue between the free parking period and a full charging model.

- The Committee discussed the Council's response to the recent storm, Darragh, expressing concern about the increasing pattern of storms hitting the UK and **recommended** that the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 request a report to explore the Council's preparedness to respond to storms and adverse weather, preventative measures against foreseeable damage and the impact of adverse weather and any fallout (e.g. loss of power) on vulnerable residents. The Committee **recommended** that the report should have invitees from Communities and Social Services.

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**Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3**

**RECOMMENDATIONS MONITORING ACTION SHEET 2024-2025**

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Outcome	Response
2 December 2024	Housing and Homelessness	<p>Members discussed how vital the Welsh Government Housing Support Grant funding had been, the freezing of the Grant had applied significant pressure across Wales and 18 months ago regular meetings between the 22 Welsh local authorities regarding Homelessness had ceased, which had previously been attended by a network of individuals who could provide operational feedback to Welsh Government.</p> <p>The Committee requested information regarding the nature and title of the previously held meetings and <b>recommended</b> that following receipt of the information requested, that a letter be sent from the Committee to Welsh Government to request the reasons for discontinuing the meetings, whether there were plans to restart them and if not, the reason why.</p>	Head of Performance and Partnerships	<p>Recommendations circulated requesting response – to be provided.</p> <p>Chased 5 February 2025.</p>	
2 December 2024	Housing and Homelessness	The Committee discussed the issue of vacant and derelict buildings in the borough and enquired whether there were	Head of Performance	Recommendations circulated requesting	

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Outcome	Response
		<p>any schemes or strategies that could potentially enable the Local Authority to take control of such empty buildings to turn them into social housing.</p> <p>The Committee <b>recommended</b> that when a Council owned property becomes vacant, all options should be explored including whether it could be utilised by another part of the Authority e.g. for repurposing as housing accommodation, prior to consideration of whether it is declared surplus, marketed for sale, or disposed of otherwise.</p> <p>The Committee highlighted the importance of the Authority looking at inventive ways of working with partners to bring properties back in to use which could inevitably reduce the costs.</p>	and Partnerships	<p>response – to be provided.</p> <p>Chased 5 February 2025.</p>	
2 December 2024	Housing and Homelessness	The Committee expressed concern that the proposed level of social housing would only address 50% of the current waiting list and asked whether there was an opportunity to review the figures and submit another bid in the Local Development Plan (LDP) process.	Head of Performance and Partnerships	<p>Recommendations circulated requesting response – to be provided.</p> <p>Chased 5 February 2025.</p>	

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Outcome	Response
		<p>Members were advised that following the Local Development Plan (LDP) being adopted this year, a local housing and marketing assessment would be undertaken every two to three years which would provide up to date figures to enable negotiation for the right mix and type of housing, however the actual review for the LDP would be 4 years from its adoption.</p> <p>The Committee <b>recommended</b> that Members be encouraged to examine the updated figures from the Local Housing and Marketing Assessment when considering the review of the LDP in 4 years' time, and that given Members' concern at hearing in the meeting of a development not meeting all of its percentage target to build social housing, that the proposed housing percentage targets be adhered to rigorously throughout the Planning process.</p>			
2 December 2024	Housing and Homelessness	The Committee requested further information regarding the primary capital funding stream for the development of affordable housing, the Social Housing Grant, including the following:	Head of Performance and Partnerships	<p>Recommendations circulated requesting response – to be provided.</p> <p>Chased 5 February 2025.</p>	

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Outcome	Response
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Details of the local SHG partners worked with;</li> <li>b. A breakdown of the allocation of costs;</li> <li>c. What the costs were used for;</li> <li>d. Details of how the Council looks at the developments bid for;</li> <li>e. Whether the developments bid for were delivered on time and at the original contract price.</li> </ul>			
20 January 2025	Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025-26 to 2028-20	The Committee made recommendations and requested additional information.	Scrutiny / Chair of COSC	<b>ACTIONED:</b> Recommendations formally reported to COSC and onward to Cabinet on 4 February 2025 for consideration and response.	
20 January 2025	Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025-26 to 2028-20	The Committee <b>Recommended</b> that the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Steering Group (either alone or utilising external, objective assistance) assess and review the Council's current CAT programme and consider its impact, and success stories, research any good practice from other Welsh local authorities and reflect on whether any lessons can be learned to progress and improve the Council's future CAT programme.	Corporate Director for Communities	Recommendations circulated requesting response – to be provided.	

**APPENDIX B**

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Response</b>
20 January 2025	Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025-26 to 2028-20	Members requested figures to show the income, expenditure and overall cost to Bridgend County Borough Council for burial services.	Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change / Corporate Director for Communities	Recommendations circulated requesting response – to be provided.	
20 January 2025	Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025-26 to 2028-20	Members asked Officers for clarification on what other Local Authorities provide with regard to the supply of blue refuse sacks to residents.	Corporate Director for Communities	Recommendations circulated requesting response – to be provided.	
20 January 2025	Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025-26 to 2028-20	Further to the appointment of the 2 x S.106 Officers, to facilitate a S.106 & Infrastructure Delivery Team within the Planning & Development Services the Corporate Director agreed that these Officers could potentially come along to a SOSC 3 to explain their roles.	Corporate Director for Communities	Recommendations circulated requesting response – to be provided.	

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