

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: Thursday, 16 October 2025

Dear Councillor,

CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be held Hybrid in the Council Chamber - Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB / Remotely via Microsoft Teams on **Thursday, 23 October 2025 at 10:00.**

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 24/07/25

5 - 12

By receiving this Agenda Pack electronically you will save the Authority approx. £2.32 in printing costs

4 Budget Monitoring 2025-26 - Quarter 2 Revenue Forecast

13 - 50

Invitees:

Councillor John Spanswick - Leader
Councillor Jane Gebbie - Deputy Leader / Cabinet Member for Social Services, Health and Wellbeing
Councillor Hywel Williams - Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance
Councillor Martyn Jones - Cabinet Member for Education and Youth Services
Councillor Paul Davies - Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment
Councillor Eugene Caparros - Cabinet Member for Resources (Job Share)
Councillor Melanie Evans - Cabinet Member for Resources (Job Share)
Councillor Neelo Farr - Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Economic Development and Housing

Jake Morgan – Chief Executive
Carys Lord - Chief Officer - Finance, Housing and Change
Lindsay Harvey - Corporate Director - Education, Early Years & Young People
Claire Marchant - Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing
Janine Nightingale - Corporate Director - Communities
Kelly Watson - Chief Officer Legal and Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy

5 Arrangements for Commissioning Services

51 - 76

Invitees:

Councillor John Spanswick - Leader
Councillor Hywel Williams - Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance

Jake Morgan – Chief Executive
Carys Lord - Chief Officer - Finance, Housing and Change
Kelly Watson - Chief Officer Legal and Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy

6 Conclusions and Recommendations

7 Forward Work Programme Update Report

77 - 116

8 Urgent Items

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

Note: This will be a Hybrid meeting and Members and Officers will be attending in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Angel Street Bridgend / Remotely via Microsoft Teams. The meeting will be recorded for subsequent transmission via the Council's internet site which will be available as soon as practicable after the meeting. If you would like to view this meeting live, 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

Councillors:

F D Bletsoe

JPD Blundell

N Clarke

HJ David

H Griffiths

S J Griffiths

GC Haines

M L Hughes

J Llewellyn-Hopkins

RL Penhale-Thomas

T Thomas

A Ulberini-Williams

AJ Williams

MJ Williams

This page is intentionally left blank

CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - THURSDAY, 24 JULY 2025

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD HYBRID IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND, CF31 4WB ON THURSDAY, 24 JULY 2025 AT 10:00

Present

Councillor AJ Williams – Chairperson for the Meeting

GC Haines

Present Virtually

F D Bletsoe
M L Hughes
MJ Williams

JPD Blundell
J Llewellyn-Hopkins

N Clarke
RL Penhale-Thomas

S J Griffiths
T Thomas

Apologies for Absence

H Griffiths, A Ulberini-Williams and HJ David – Mayor was on other Council business

Councillor Hywel Williams - Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance and Councillor Melanie Evans – Cabinet Member for Resources (Job Share)

Kelly Watson - Chief Officer - Legal & Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy and Janine Nightingale – Corporate Director - Communities

Invitees:

Councillor John Spanswick
Councillor Jane Gebbie
Councillor Martyn Jones
Councillor Paul Davies
Councillor Neelo Farr
Councillor Eugene Caparros

Leader
Deputy Leader / Cabinet Member Social Services, Health and Wellbeing
Cabinet Member for Education and Youth Services
Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment
Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Economic Development and Housing
Cabinet Member for Resources (Job Share)

Jake Morgan
Carys Lord
Lindsay Harvey
Claire Marchant

Chief Executive
Chief Officer – Finance, Housing and Change
Corporate Director - Education, Early Years & Young People
Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing

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

Martin Morgans	Interim Head of Operations – Community Services
Alex Rawlin	Corporate Policy & Performance Manager
Kate Pask	Corporate Performance Manager
Paul Miles	Group Manager - Human Resources and Organisational Development
Philip O'Brien	Digital Transformation and Customer Services Manager
Rachel Keepins	Democratic Services Manager

Officers:

Meryl Lawrence	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Scrutiny
Jessica Mclellan	Scrutiny Officer

Declarations of Interest

Councillor J Llewellyn-Hopkins – Item 4 – Prejudicial – Family members are due to be in receipt of a Disabled Facilities Grant

162. Appointment of a Chairperson

Decision Made	<u>RESOLVED:</u> Councillor AJ Williams was appointed as Chairperson for the meeting.
Date Decision Made	24 July 2025

163. Approval of Minutes

Decision Made	<u>RESOLVED:</u> That the minutes of meetings of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee dated 30 June 2025 be approved as a true and accurate record.
Date Decision Made	24 July 2025

164. Budget Monitoring 2025-26 - Quarter 1 Revenue Forecast

Page 7

Decision Made	<p><u>RESOLVED:</u></p> <p>Following consideration of the report and detailed discussion with Cabinet Members and Senior Officers, the Committee made the following requests for additional information:</p> <p>Additional Information Requested:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Committee requested: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. the terms of reference for the fleet services review report be circulated to Members; b. that the scope of the report should include the extent of the losses and the importance of the fleet services function; and c. the date by which the Committee could expect the report scheduled. 2. The Committee requested an update confirming when the exit terms of the recycling centre at Tythegston are likely to be finalised and the likely costs of any remediation works. 3. The Committee requested the most up to date figure of deficit balances for schools.
Date Decision Made	24 July 2025

165. Quarter 4 / Year End Performance 2024-25

Decision Made	<p><u>RESOLVED:</u></p> <p>Following consideration of the report and detailed discussion with Cabinet Members and Senior Officers, the Committee made the following recommendations and requests for additional information:</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. The Committee expressed concern regarding the lack of a target regarding sickness levels and recommended that the issue of sickness and appraisals is strengthened in the Corporate Plan Delivery Plan which is scheduled to the December meeting of the Committee.
---------------	---

	<p>5. The Committee recommended that the Deep Dive Group for the Chief Executive Directorate explore the support available for employees and the issues of staffing in the financial and legal departments.</p> <p>Additional Information Requested:</p> <p>6. The Committee requested comparative sickness data from other Welsh local authorities when available from Data Cymru.</p> <p>7. The Committee expressed concern regarding the achievability of the 100% target for mandatory e-learning modules and requested an update demonstrating the change to the Performance Indicator for the upcoming year and how mandatory e-learning will be managed. In addition, the Committee requested that Members be kept informed of the movement from the old to the new model.</p> <p>8. In relation to the staff survey, the Committee requested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. written briefing on the work being undertaken; b. confirmation of when the Committee could receive a full report on the topic; and c. data demonstrating any directorates/service areas where the response rate has been particularly low.
Date Decision Made	24 July 2025

166. Self-Assessment 2024-25

Decision Made	<p><u>RESOLVED:</u></p> <p>Following consideration of the report and detailed discussion with Cabinet Members and Senior Officers, the Committee made the following recommendations:</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <p>9. The Committee recommended that the new Welsh-Medium Seedling School planned for Porthcawl be included in 'expanding Welsh medium education opportunities' section of the report.</p>
---------------	--

	10. The Committee expressed concern regarding the Council's ability to recruit to certain technical positions and recommended that a recruitment plan be developed exploring creative approaches and a sustainability plan for recruitment.
Date Decision Made	24 July 2025

167. Digital Strategy

Decision Made	<p><u>RESOLVED:</u></p> <p>Following consideration of the report and detailed discussion with a Cabinet Member and Senior Officers, the Committee made the following recommendation and requests for additional information:</p> <p>Recommendation:</p> <p>11. The Committee expressed concern regarding the relatively low number of responses received to the consultation and recommended that responses be sought from young people in schools, Bridgend College and Bridgend Youth Council.</p> <p>Additional Information Requested:</p> <p>12. The Committee requested a copy of the draft Digital Strategy 2025-2029.</p> <p>13. The Committee requested the number of Hwb devices apportioned per School and further detail of the investment in the replacement programme.</p> <p>14. The Committee requested that detail of broadband social tariffs for individuals on means tested benefits be circulated to Members to allow them to update residents accordingly.</p>
Date Decision Made	24 July 2025

168. Scrutiny Budget Working Group

Decision Made	<p><u>RESOLVED:</u></p> <p>Following consideration of the report the Committee approved size, composition and nominations process to the Working Group, the Draft Terms of Reference in Appendix A and the Proposed Structure of Scrutiny Budget Working Group and Draft outline of schedule of meetings in Appendix B.</p>
Date Decision Made	24 July 2025

169. Forward Work Programme Update

Decision Made	<p><u>RESOLVED:</u></p> <p>The Committee approved its draft Forward Work Programme in Appendix A subject to the following addition, noted the Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet to track responses to the Committees' Recommendations made at previous meetings in Appendix B and noted the Forward Work Programmes for the other Overview and Scrutiny Committees in Appendices C, D and E.</p> <p>1. The Committee requested that the Audit Wales Report, <i>Arrangements for Commissioning Services – Bridgend County Borough Council</i> referred from the Governance and Audit Committee be circulated to Members of the Committee for consideration and that an update on the report be added to the Committee's FWP on 23 October 2025.</p>
Date Decision Made	24 July 2025

170. Urgent Items

Decision Made	None.
Date Decision Made	24 July 2025

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

The meeting closed at 14:29.

This page is intentionally left blank

Meeting of:	CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	23 OCTOBER 2025
Report Title:	BUDGET MONITORING 2025-26 – QUARTER 2 REVENUE FORECAST
Report Owner/ Responsible Chief Officer / Cabinet Member:	CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE CHIEF OFFICER – FINANCE, HOUSING AND CHANGE
Responsible Officer:	JOANNE NORMAN GROUP MANAGER – BUDGET MANAGEMENT
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	As required by section 3 (budgetary control) of the Financial Procedure Rules; Chief Officers in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Member are 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.
Executive Summary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The net revenue budget for 2025-26 is £383.226 million. The overall projected position at 30th September 2025 is a net under spend of £5.897 million (1.54% of the net revenue budget). • There continues to be an underlying projected over spend of £453,000 on directorate budgets primarily due to ongoing pressures within Children's Services and the Chief Executive's Directorate. • The overall projected net under spend is mainly due to the projected under spend of £6.350 million on Council wide budgets. This primarily relates to additional interest anticipated from current investments, additional grant from Welsh Government towards the teachers' pay award 2025-26, the confirmed National Joint Council (NJC) pay awards being lower than budgeted for and the Council not seeing the increases in Consumer Price Index (CPI) impact as expected on contractual arrangements to date in 2025-26. • The budget approved for 2025-26 included budget reduction proposals totalling £8.379 million. The current position is a projected shortfall on the

	savings target of £858,000, or 10.24% of the overall reduction target.
--	---

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update on the Council's revenue financial position as at 30th September 2025.

2. Background

- 2.1 On 26th February 2025, Council approved a net revenue budget of £383.338 million for 2025-26 based on the provisional local government settlement announced by Welsh Government on 11th December 2024. The Welsh Government announced its final settlement on the 20th February 2025. The Final Local Government Settlement for Bridgend was £112,234 less than provided in the Provisional Settlement mainly due to data changes in the Non-Housing Revenue Account (HRA) element of Welsh Government's funding formula. This decreased the net revenue budget for 2025-26 to £383.226 million. The updated revenue budget was outlined in a report to Council on 12th March, where it was also confirmed that no changes were made to the levels of council tax, or budget pressures and reductions approved by Council on 26th February 2025.
- 2.2 As part of the Performance Management Framework, budget projections are reviewed regularly and reported to Cabinet on a quarterly basis. The delivery of agreed budget reductions is also kept under review and reported to Cabinet as part of this process.

3. Current situation / proposal

3.1 Summary financial position at 30th September 2025

- 3.1.1 The Council's net revenue budget and projected outturn for 2025-26 is shown in **Table 1** below.

Table 1- Comparison of budget against projected outturn at 30th September 2025

Directorate/Budget Area	Original Budget 2025-26 £'000	Revised Budget 2025-26 £'000	Projected Outturn Q2 2025-26 £'000	Projected Over / (Under) Spend 2025-26 £'000	Projected Over / (Under) Spend Qtr 1 2025-26 £'000
Directorate					
Education, Early Years and Young People	154,862	157,073	156,784	(289)	(572)
Social Services and Wellbeing Communities	115,909	119,451	119,334	(117)	626
Chief Executive's	33,754	34,429	34,506	77	(185)
	24,815	25,762	26,544	782	858
Total Directorate Budgets	329,340	336,715	337,168	453	727
Council Wide Budgets					
Capital Financing	5,958	5,907	4,680	(1,227)	(87)
Levies	10,209	10,209	10,209	0	0
Apprenticeship Levy	750	869	869	0	92
Council Tax Reduction Scheme	17,054	17,054	17,268	214	221
Insurance Premiums	1,363	1,363	1,375	12	0
Repairs & Maintenance	670	670	670	0	0
Pension Related Costs	430	430	462	32	0
Other Council Wide Budgets	17,452	10,009	4,628	(5,381)	(55)
Total Council Wide Budgets	53,886	46,511	40,161	(6,350)	171
Total	383,226	383,226	377,329	(5,897)	898

3.1.2 The overall projected position at 30th September 2025 is a net under spend of £5.897 million comprising £453,000 net over spend on directorates and a net under spend of £6.350 million on Council wide budgets. A detailed analysis of the more significant projected under and over spends is set out in section 3.3.

3.1.3 During quarter 2, Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) received confirmation of the following funding:-

- Contribution of £4.447 million from Welsh Government (WG) towards the increased costs of employer NI contributions for staff directly employed by BCBC, and for staff employed by the Fire and Rescue Authority – this was a shortfall of £390,000 compared with the actual cost of the increased contributions.
- Social Care Workforce grant - £2.005 million
- Eliminating Profit grant - £1.129 million
- Contribution towards teachers' pay award 2025-26 - £521,736

The detailed narrative in section 3.3 of the report refers to where these have impacted on the quarter 1 projections.

3.1.4 During quarter 2, pay awards for 2025-26 were agreed for Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) Chief Officers, National Joint Council (NJC) employees, along with Teachers' pay awards from September 2025. The agreed pay awards for JNC and NJC staff were lower than budgeted for and the projected under spend

on this budget has been recognised under other Council wide budgets. Even a variance of 1% on the pay settlement for NJC staff can result in a swing of required funding of over £1.5 million per annum. However, the ongoing uncertainty over future pay awards means that it is likely that the provision set aside in the MTFS for 2026-27 will need to be supplemented by any funding not committed from the central pay budget this financial year.

- 3.1.5 The Teachers' pay award was confirmed at 4% for implementation from September 2025, higher than the assumptions made by Welsh Government when they set their budget for 2025-26. WG announced additional funding via the Local Authority Education Grant and post-16 grant to be allocated specifically against teachers' pay. BCBC received a contribution of £521,736 as set out in paragraph 3.1.3.
- 3.1.6 The main financial pressures remain in the Chief Executive's Directorate and within Children's Services in the Social Services and Wellbeing (SSWB) Directorate.
- 3.1.7 The projected net over spend for the Chief Executive's directorate is mainly due to delays in implementing Medium Term Financial Strategy budget reduction proposals. There is a projected shortfall of £220,000 on prior year budget reductions along with an £79,000 shortfall on current year budget reduction proposals.
- 3.1.8 There continues to be pressure in learning disabilities and physical disability/sensory impairment services driven by the complexity of need and demand across these services. There is also significant pressure in children's residential placements. The Social Services Improvement Board is overseeing a number of actions to address the pressures in line with the 3 year Plans for Sustainable Care and Support for Adults and for Children and Family services.
- 3.1.9 It is too early in the financial year to provide a realistic indication of projected council tax income for this financial year, and whether the Council is likely to see a reduction in council tax income over the 2025-26 financial year as more people have suffered financial hardship due to the cost of living crisis, or whether additional income will be collected from council tax premiums on empty properties and second homes. A 1% reduction in the council tax income collection rate could result in an additional pressure to the Council of around £1 million. Council tax collection rates will be monitored continuously throughout the year and reported accordingly.

Budget virements/technical adjustments

- 3.1.10 There have been a number of technical adjustments between budgets since the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) was approved by Council in February 2025.
- 3.1.11 The main technical adjustments are outlined below:

Technical Adjustments

Service vired from / to	Amount
Allocation of funding retained centrally in respect of National Joint Council (NJC) pay award for 2025-26 for school employees – confirmed July 2025	£1,094,080
Allocation of funding retained centrally in respect of National Joint Council (NJC) pay award for 2025-26 for directorate employees – confirmed July 2025	£3,058,169
Allocation of funding retained centrally in respect of Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) pay award for 2025-26 for Chief Officers – confirmed July 2025	£96,226
Transfer of inflationary uplifts not confirmed when the Medium Term Financial Strategy was agreed that are held centrally until evidence of the uplift is provided by the service areas (detailed in paragraph 3.1.12).	£708,915

Pay/Price Inflation

- 3.1.12 When the budget was set, very little funding was allocated to directorates for pay and price inflation, as most had not been determined for the forthcoming year. The majority of the price provision has been retained centrally within Council wide budgets, to be allocated as further information is known about specific contractual price increases. Amounts released during quarter 2 are shown in paragraph 3.1.11 and include £143,365 for Home to School Transport contracts and £115,160 for Prevention and Wellbeing contracts (Awen and Halo) in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) increase along with £119,000 increase to the Apprenticeship Levy budget.
- 3.1.13 The Teachers' pay award from September 2025 onwards was also agreed in July 2025. As noted in 3.1.5, additional grant funding of £521,736 was announced by Welsh Government in September. Allocation of this grant and the funding retained centrally in respect of the Teachers' pay award will take place during quarter 3.
- 3.1.14 The uncertainty regarding the funding of the increases to the rate of employers' national insurance contributions was referenced in the quarter 1 revenue monitoring report. During quarter 2, Bridgend County Borough Council received a grant of £4.192 million for BCBC staff, a post-16 grant of £96,000, and a grant of £159,199 towards Fire and Rescue Authority NI increases. The grant was £390,000 short of the actual increase needed. Bridgend has also had to fund the cost of NI increases for commissioned services from its own budget.

Budget Reduction Proposals

- 3.1.15 The net budget for the financial year has been set assuming full implementation of the current year budget reduction requirements across the Council's budget, which amount to £8.379 million. Where proposals to meet this requirement have been delayed or are not achievable directorates have been tasked with identifying alternative proposals to meet their requirements such as holding additional vacancies, or bringing forward alternative budget reduction proposals.

3.1.16 In February 2025 Council approved the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2025-26 to 2028-29. This identified the need to develop recurrent budget reduction proposals, based on the most likely scenario, amounting to £39.516 million over the next four years. Against that background it is essential that expenditure is kept within the overall approved budget and that longer term proposals continue to be developed so that the Council has as much flexibility as possible to meet the challenges which lie ahead.

3.1.17 At year end consideration will be given to any budget over spends to determine whether these should be carried forward as a first call on the directorate budget for the following year. Similarly, consideration will be given to requests from directors to carry forward any planned directorate under spends for specific purposes into the following year, in line with the Council's Reserves and Balances Protocol, as long as these can be met from within the Council's cash limited budget for 2025-26. This is in line with the reports to Cabinet and Council on the MTFS, and the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.

3.2 Monitoring of Budget Reduction Proposals

Prior Year Budget Reductions

3.2.1 The Revenue Budget Outturn report was presented to Cabinet on 24th June 2025. In the report it was highlighted that there were £415,000 of prior year budget reduction proposals that were not met in full, with a total outstanding balance to be met of £290,000. In addition, of the 2024-25 budget reduction proposals of £13.045 million, it was reported that there was a total outstanding balance to be met of £1.569 million. Directors have been asked to identify if any of these proposals are still not likely to be achieved in full during the 2025-26 financial year, and to identify mitigating actions that will be undertaken to achieve them. All remaining outstanding prior year budget reductions are outlined in **Appendix 1** with a summary per directorate provided in **Table 2**.

Table 2 – Outstanding Prior Year Budget Reductions

	Total Budget Reductions Required	Total Budget Reductions Likely to be Achieved	Shortfall
DIRECTORATE /BUDGET REDUCTION AREA	£'000	£'000	£'000
Education, Early Years and Young People	291	149	142
Social Services and Wellbeing	501	501	0
Communities	464	296	168
Chief Executives	1,567	1,347	220
TOTAL	2,823	2,293	530

Note: The total budget reductions required in Table 2 represents the full original budget reduction targets.

3.2.2 **Table 2** shows that of the £2.823 million outstanding reductions, £2.293 million is likely to be achieved in 2025-26 leaving a shortfall of £530,000. Proposals still not likely to be achieved include:

- EDFS19 – Communication and Relationships Team (£142,000 shortfall). A service review has started with a new Team Manager in place from 1 September 2025.
- COM 2 2021-22 – Re-location of Community Recycling Centre from Tythegston to Pyle (£60,000 shortfall). The new site in Pyle opened in quarter 4 of 2023-24. Once the exit terms of the lease in Tythegston have been finalised the full saving will be made.
- COM2 2023-24 – Charging Blue Badge Holders for parking (£40,000 shortfall). The Traffic and Transport Team are progressing with the order making process and have carried out an initial engagement on the proposal which is currently being evaluated prior to progressing.
- CEX22 – Review of ICT Services (£87,000 shortfall). Saving was not met in full due to the timing of the re-procurement exercise on telephony budgets across the Council.
- CEX25 – Staff savings from Finance senior management team – (£70,000 shortfall). Shortfall in savings target due to failure to implement the proposed Finance Senior Management restructure. The service is now considering alternative budget saving proposals.

3.2.3 As outlined in the MTFS reports to Cabinet and Council, MTFS Principle 7 states that *“Savings proposals are fully developed and include realistic delivery timescales prior to inclusion in the annual budget. An MTFS Budget Reduction Contingency Reserve will be maintained to mitigate against unforeseen delays”*. An MTFS Budget Reduction Contingency reserve is in place to offset shortfalls on specific budget reduction proposals on a one-off basis where circumstances to achieving them are outside of the directorate’s control. During the financial year, the Section 151 Officer will consider applications from Directorates to the MTFS Budget Reduction Contingency reserve to mitigate some of the shortfalls.

Budget Reductions 2025-26

3.2.4 The budget approved for 2025-26 included budget reduction proposals totalling £8.379 million, which is broken down in **Appendix 2** and summarised in **Table 3** below. The current position is that £5.593 million has been achieved to date with an additional £1.928 million to be achieved by year end, leading to an overall projected shortfall on the savings target by year end of £858,000, or 10.24% of the overall reduction target.

Table 3 – Monitoring of Budget Reductions 2025-26

	Total Budget Reductions Required	Total Budget Reductions Achieved to date	Total Budget Reductions Likely to be Achieved	Shortfall
DIRECTORATE /BUDGET REDUCTION AREA	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Education, Early Years and Young People	1,428	382	1,011	417
Schools	1,186	1,186	1,186	0
Social Services and Wellbeing	1,817	682	1,617	200
Communities	717	356	556	161
Chief Executive's	688	444	609	79
Corporate/Council Wide	2,543	2,543	2,543	0
TOTAL	8,379	5,593	7,522	857

3.2.5 The most significant budget reduction proposals unlikely to be achieved in full are (> £100,000 shortfall):-

- EEYYP5 – Reduction in Strategy, Performance and Support Group (£109,000 shortfall). The staff consultation process is due to commence in quarter 3 of 2025-26. Saving will be made in full in 2026-27.
- SCH1 – Efficiency saving against School Delegated Budgets – 1% in 2025-26 (£1.186 million). Whilst the saving is referenced as having been achieved due to the overall reduction in the Individual Schools Budget (ISB), as referenced in paragraph 3.3.1, the reduced budgets have resulted in total projected deficit balances for schools at year end of £5.087 million. Officers are working with schools to bring this overall deficit down.
- SSW8 – Reduction in provision of number of Supported Living Accommodation units (£190,000 shortfall). The service area is actively seeking means to achieve this budget reduction proposal. Updates will be provided in future revenue monitoring reports.

3.2.6 **Appendix 2** identifies the projected amount of saving against these proposals in detail and action to be taken by the directorate to mitigate the shortfall. Directors continue to work with their staff to deliver their proposals or alternatives and this is reflected in the forecast outturn for the year. During the financial year the Section 151 Officer will also consider applications from directorates to the MTFs Budget Reduction Contingency reserve to mitigate some of the shortfalls.

3.2.7 In the longer term, these proposals must be realised or must be met through alternative budget reduction proposals in order to deliver a balanced budget position.

3.3 Commentary on the financial position at 30th September 2025

Financial position at 30th September 2025

A summary of the financial position for each main service area is attached in **Appendix 3** to this report and comments on the most significant variances are provided below.

3.3.1 **Education, Early Years and Young People Directorate**

The net budget for the Education, Early Years and Young People (EEYYP) Directorate, including school delegated budgets, for 2025-26 is £157.073 million. Current projections indicate an under spend of £289,000 at year end compared to the quarter 1 projected under spend of £572,000. The main variances are:

EDUCATION, EARLY YEARS AND YOUNG PEOPLE DIRECTORATE	Net Budget £'000	Projected Outturn £'000	Projected Variance Over/(under) budget £'000	% Variance
Inclusion Group	8,765	9,505	740	8.44%
EEYYP Support Unit (EDSU)	545	579	34	6.19%
Home to School Transport	10,892	10,498	(393)	-3.61%
Catering Services	1,863	1,369	(494)	-26.54%

Schools' delegated budgets

Total funding delegated to schools in 2025-26 is £124.897 million.

The schools' delegated budget is reported as balanced as any under spend or over spend is automatically carried forward into the new financial year before being considered by the Corporate Director - Education, Early Years and Young People in line with the 'Guidance and Procedures on Managing Surplus School Balances'.

The Financial Scheme for Schools requires schools to obtain permission from both the Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People and the Section 151 Officer to set a deficit budget. Schools with deficits of greater than £50,000 in a primary school or greater than £150,000 in a secondary or special school are requested to attend termly support and challenge meetings with senior local authority officers. In addition, any unplanned deficits that occur within the financial year due to unforeseen circumstances must be reported as soon as they become known to the school.

At the start of 2025-26, projections indicated an overall deficit balance for school delegated budgets of £5.206 million at year end. At quarter 2 this has slightly reduced to a projected deficit of £5.087 million. There are 35 primary schools, 5 secondary schools and 2 special schools (71% of all schools) projecting a deficit balance at year end.

Central Education, Early Years and Young People Directorate budgets

Inclusion Group

- There is a projected net over spend of £740,000 across Inclusion Group budgets compared with a projected net under spend of £345,000 at quarter 1.
- The main reason for the projected over spend is that there continues to be significant demand for additional learning needs (ALN) support at schools resulting in a projected over spend of £536,000 at quarter 1 compared with £78,000 at quarter 1. The demand is high in particular for pupils requiring neurodevelopmental, behavioural, communication and complex medical support. The number of pupils supported in the spring term was 303, increasing to 345 in the summer term.
- Recoupment expenditure has projected to increase by £533,000 since quarter 1. Numbers have remained stable in inter-authority recoupment placements, with 20 at Summer 2025, down to 18 in Autumn 2025. The pressure is due to additional support being provided at Heronsbridge School and Ysgol Bryn Castell to mitigate further external placements. The projected costs for the support provided by the special schools alone are currently £422,000, however this approach prevents higher costs that would have been incurred with external providers.
- The projected over spend has been partly mitigated by current staff vacancies held across Inclusion Group budgets (£212,000).

Education, Early Years and Young People Directorate Support Unit (EDSU)

- There is a projected over spend of £34,000 at quarter 2 compared with the projected over spend of £159,000 at quarter 1. The underlying reason for the projected over spend relates to delays in implementing MTFS proposals requiring restructures which will be finalised later in 2025-26, including EEYYP5 – Strategy, Performance and Support Group – shortfall of £109,000, EEYPY 6 – Pupil Services – shortfall of £26,000 and EEYYP8 – Business Support – shortfall of £70,000. The improved projections reflect additional vacancies within the Support Unit since quarter 1.

Home-to-school transport (HtST)

- There is a projected under spend of £393,000 on the HtST budget at quarter 2 compared with the projected under spend of £101,000 at quarter 1. This has been achieved through efficiencies in contracts for the first half of the year.
- The projected under spend reflects that the MTFS budget reduction proposal in this service area for 2025-26 of £675,000 will be met in full – EEYYP 2 – review of HtST. The improved projection from quarter 1 reflects the ongoing review of HtST budgets.
- If the projected under spend is maintained for the remainder of the financial year, the service is in a strong position to meet the 2026-27 MTFS proposal of £417,000.

Catering Services

- Catering Services is projecting an under spend of £494,000 in quarter 2 which is comparable to the projected under spend of £518,000 in quarter 1.
- The projected under spend continues to be based on the full implementation of the Universal Primary Free School Meals (UPFMS) by Welsh Government and the accompanying grant funding to support the initiative.
- The provision of UPFSM in 2025-26 will continue to be monitored closely to determine whether the positive projections are sustainable and whether Catering

Services can contribute to future MTFS budget reduction proposals for the EEYYP Directorate.

- The projected under spend is slightly lower than 2024-25 due to the delay in the implementation of MTFS budget reduction EEYYP1 – Cessation of the meals at home service which is currently reporting a shortfall of £56,000. The service has now ceased so no further costs should be incurred.

3.3.2 **Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate**

The Directorate's net budget for 2025-26 is £119.451 million. Current projections indicate an under spend of £117,000 at year end compared to the quarter 1 projected over spend of £626,000. The detailed narrative below sets out the main service areas where projections have improved, including learning disability, physical disability/sensory impairment home care, learning disabilities residential care, homes for older people, prevention and wellbeing and children's social care commissioning and social work.

Two significant grants have been confirmed since the quarter 1 projections – Social Care Workforce grant (£2.005 million) and Eliminating Profit (£1.129 million). The detailed narrative below refers to where these have positively impacted on the projections.

Council approved budget pressures of £8.800 million for the SSWB Directorate in February 2025 as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy. The funded pressures include £3.250 million to mitigate the ongoing pressures of Care Experienced Children and insufficient numbers of foster carers, £2.020 million for the implications of Real Living Wage (RLW) uplifts on commissioned contracts, £1.282 million for learning disabilities services, £679,000 for mental health services and £540,000 for Physical Disability/Sensory Impairment services.

As noted in the quarter 1 report, there continues to be pressures in learning disabilities and physical disability/sensory impairment services driven by the complexity of need and demand across these services. There is also significant pressure in children's residential placements. The Social Services Improvement Board is overseeing a number of actions to address the pressure in the adult services budget, including accelerating the work to transform learning disabilities. Further actions have been developed into a 3 year Plan for Sustainable Care and Support for Adults in BCBC that was approved by Cabinet on 19th November 2024. This plan sits alongside the 3 year strategic plan for children and family services which was approved by Cabinet in September 2023.

The most significant variances for the directorate are :

SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING DIRECTORATE	Net Budget	Projected Outturn	Projected Variance Over/(under) budget	% Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Adult Social Care	79,138	78,382	(756)	-0.96%
Prevention and Wellbeing	6,380	6,187	(193)	-3.03%
Childrens Social Care	33,933	34,765	832	2.45%

Adult Social Care

There is a projected net under spend of £756,000 on the Adult Social Care budget, an improvement of £232,000 from the £524,000 projected under spend at quarter 1.

The most significant variances contributing to the under spend are:

ADULT SOCIAL CARE	Projected Variance Over/(under) budget £'000
Physical Disability/Sensory Impairment Home Care	225
Learning Disabilities Residential Care	203
Older People Home care	151
Physical Disability/Sensory Impairment Residential Care	110
Mental Health Residential Care	(87)
Older People Direct Payments	(108)
Mental Health Supported Accommodation	(256)
Learning Disabilities Direct Payment	(266)
Homes for Older People	(770)

- Physical Disability/Sensory Impairment Home Care - there is a projected over spend of £225,000 compared to £397,000 at quarter 1. This is based on the current demand for the service which is 99 packages of support (101 at quarter 1). The projected over spend is mainly due to increased costs for existing placements, due to changing needs. The projection has improved from quarter 1 due to a £151,000 allocation of the Social Care Workforce (SCW) grant.
- Learning Disabilities Residential Care – there is a projected over spend of £203,000 compared to £361,000 at quarter 1. Whilst the projection has improved from quarter 1 due to a £400,000 allocation of the SCW grant the service has seen an increase of two placements since quarter 1 and a reduction in projected joint funded income as further clarification was received during quarter 2 as to the split of funding with health for one placement. Therefore the overall projections have only improved by £158,000 and not the full value of the SCW grant.
- Older People Home Care – there is a projected over spend of £151,000 compared to £47,000 at quarter 1. Whilst the service has been allocated £51,000 of the SCW

grant in quarter 2 the projected over spend has increased due to an increase in placement numbers within Independent Domiciliary Care.

- Physical Disability/Sensory Impairment Residential Care – there is a projected over spend of £110,000 which is comparable to the £106,000 projected over spend at quarter 1. The projected over spend is due to higher placement numbers than budgeted for.
- Mental Health Residential Care – there is a projected under spend of £87,000 compared to a projected under spend of £218,000 at quarter 1. The reduction in projected under spend is due to an increase in placement numbers to 48 current placements compared to 46 at quarter 1.
- Older People Direct Payments – there is a projected under spend of £108,000 compared to a projected under spend of £161,000 at quarter 1. The reduction in projected under spend is due to an increase in the number of Direct Payment cases to 107 current cases compared to 93 at quarter 1.
- Mental Health Supported Accommodation – there is a projected under spend of £256,000 compared to a projected under spend of £242,000 at quarter 1. This continues to be as a result of staffing vacancies with the service.
- Learning Disabilities Direct Payments – there is a projected under spend of £266,000 across the Direct Payments budgets in this area compared to a projected under spend of £241,000 at quarter 1. This is based on the current demand for packages of support of 137 (143 at quarter 1).
- Homes for Older People – there is a projected under spend of £770,000 compared to a projected under spend of £441,000 at quarter 1. Since quarter 1 there has been an increase in projected client contributions for internal residential homes. All contributions towards residential care are financially assessed in accordance with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 but the average income received each year will vary in total depending on the financial position of the people needing care during the financial year – e.g. if there are a large number of people who have savings or assets and are therefore not reliant on the local authority paying their contribution in full, then this will increase the overall average income received per person.

Prevention and Wellbeing

- There is a projected under spend of £193,000 compared to a projected under spend of £41,000 at quarter 1. The movement is due to an allocation from the central price inflation budget to this service area during quarter 2 which has improved the projections by £115,160 as the revised management fee costs had been built into the quarter 1 projections. The service has also maximised the Play Works Sufficiency grant (£46,000).
- The underlying reason for the projected under spend is mainly due to maximisation of grant funding from the Shared Prosperity Fund (£643,000). This is also mitigating the following MTFs saving whilst public engagement is undertaken with a view of what a long term sustainable cultural services looks like:-
 - SSW13 (2024-25) – £360,000 - Council to reduce its investment into cultural services.

Children's Social Care

There is a projected net over spend of £832,000 on the Children's Social Care budget compared with the projected net over spend of £1.191 million at quarter 1. The most significant variances contributing to this over spend are:-

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE	Projected Variance Over/(under) budget £'000
Care Experienced Children	1,050
Early Help & Edge of Care	(143)

- The projected over spend of £1.050 million for Care Experienced Children has decreased from the £1.266 million reported at quarter 1. The budget has had £606,000 of Social Care Workforce grant allocated during quarter 2. The underlying over spend is due to a combination of factors:-
 - The Independent Residential Care budget has a projected over spend of £880,000 (quarter 1 - £946,000).
 - The quarter 1 projections were based on 26 care experienced children in independent residential care – this has increased to 28 placements at quarter 2.
 - In addition, there continues to be insufficient foster carer placements to meet needs and children requiring specialist provision, sometimes with high staffing ratios to keep them safe and protected. It should be noted that this budget area can be volatile and small changes in demand can result in relatively high costs being incurred.
 - Children's Internal Residential Care has a projected net over spend of £280,000 compared to £324,000 in quarter 1. This is mainly due to increased usage of agency workers to address safeguarding issues which require additional staffing across the service.
 - Fostering - There is a projected under spend in this area of £438,000. This is primarily due to a projected under spend of £335,000 on the Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) budget based on 33 placements. This is due to alternative, lower cost, placement options being fully utilised, including Special Guardianship Orders. It should be noted, however, that some of the children in costly independent residential provision would ideally be with foster carers who can manage complex needs. There is insufficient capacity in-house and in IFAs which means that some children's needs are being met in a higher, more expensive, tier of service.
 - Children's Supported Living – There is a projected over spend of £562,000 which is comparable with the £594,000 projected over spend at quarter 1. This is currently mitigated by the projected under spend in Fostering noted above. The pressure is due to increases in the number of placements (21 in quarter 1 of 2024-25 compared to 27 currently).

- Early Help & Edge of Care – There is a projected under spend of £143,000 compared with the projected under spend of £188,000 at quarter 1. This is due to a projected under spend of £38,000 on staffing and £105,000 on running costs across the service while a review of the service is progressed.

3.3.3 **Communities Directorate**

The net budget for the Directorate for 2025-26 is £34.429 million. The current projection is an anticipated over spend of £77,000 compared with the projected under spend of £185,000 at quarter 1. The main variances are:

COMMUNITIES DIRECTORATE	Net Budget	Projected Outturn	Projected Variance Over/(under) budget	% Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Highway Services	9,168	9,401	233	2.54%
Fleet Services	205	797	592	289.35%
Traffic & Transport	1,341	837	(504)	-37.59%
Parks, Playing Fields & Bereavement	2,807	2,991	184	6.55%
Corporate Landlord	3,647	3,279	(368)	-10.09%

Highway Services

- There is a projected over spend of £233,000 at quarter 2 compared with a projected over spend of £73,000 at quarter 1. The service area is not anticipated to meet its vacancy management MTFS saving of £93,000 based on current staffing projections. The balance of the over spend is due to the projected over spend on hire charges for vehicles and equipment.

Fleet Services

- There is a projected over spend of £592,000 compared to the projected over spend of £520,000 at quarter 1. The fleet services team operate on a break-even basis with re-charges for work undertaken on directorates, South Wales Police (SWP) and the general public's vehicles, generating income to support staffing and overhead costs. Productivity levels continue to be impacted by long term sickness and ongoing issues with recruitment and retention difficulties. A market supplement has been introduced in line with the corporate Market Supplement Policy following comparisons with neighbouring authorities and remuneration of HGV technicians, which has seen some limited success in filling vacancies. A report outlining options for service operating models to mitigate the budget position of fleet services was delayed due to officer availability but an external review is now proceeding and is anticipated in the latter half of the 2025-26 financial year. The one-off anticipated costs of the review have been built into the quarter 2 projections.

Traffic and Transport

- There is a projected under spend of £504,000 compared with a projected under spend of £380,000 at quarter 1. Whilst the service area has benefitted from an MTFS budget pressure of £360,000 approved by Council for 2025-26 towards the shortfall in car park income and the staff car pass scheme which has been impacted by hybrid working, the Council continues to benefit from the temporary income

raised from the Salt Lake Car Park in Porthcawl. The enhanced position from quarter 1 is mainly due to improved projections for car park income across the Borough and maximisation of grant income.

Parks, Playing Fields & Bereavement Services

- There is a projected over spend of £184,000 on Parks, Playing Fields & Bereavement services. There are projected over spends on grounds maintenance at cemeteries within Bereavement services (£91,000) and maintenance budgets on Pavilions (£143,000). These have been partly mitigated by staffing vacancies.

Corporate Landlord

- There is a projected under spend of £368,000 compared to the projected under spend of £249,000 at quarter 1. This is primarily due to staff vacancies as the service continues to experience recruitment difficulties. The quarter 1 projections anticipated posts to be filled by 1st October 2025, however this has now been revised to 1st January 2026.

3.3.4 Chief Executive's

The net budget for the Directorate for 2025-26 is £25.762 million. Current projections indicate a projected over spend of £782,000 at year end compared to the quarter 1 projected over spend of £858,000. The main variances are:

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S	Net Budget £'000	Projected outturn £'000	Projected Variance Over/(under) budget £'000	% Variance
ICT	4,323	4,553	230	5.3%
Partnerships	2,306	2,498	192	8.3%
Housing & Homelessness	4,855	4,830	(25)	-0.5%
Finance	4,401	4,702	301	6.8%

ICT

- There is a projected net over spend of £230,000 across ICT budgets compared to a projected net over spend of £265,000 at quarter 1.
- As noted in the quarter 1 report the projected over spend is mainly due to MTFS saving proposals from 2024-25 and 2025-26 not being fully achieved. There is a shortfall of £87,000 against the 2024-25 MTFS budget reduction proposal CEX 22 – Review of ICT services and a shortfall of £58,000 against the 2025-26 MTFS budget reduction proposal CEX 10 – Restructure of the ICT service, pending a restructure of the service.
- The balance of the projected over spend is primarily due to historic SLA income from schools no longer being realised as the Welsh Government School Hwb project now includes the services previously being re-charged.
- The projection has improved by £35,000 since quarter 1 mainly due to staff vacancies.

Partnerships

- There is a net projected over spend of £192,000 across the Partnerships budgets compared to a projected net over spend of £239,000 at quarter 1.
- There continues to be a projected over spend against the CCTV budget (£73,000) which is mainly due to a reduction in projected income as a result of the contract with the Vale of Glamorgan ending (£71,000).
- There is a projected over spend in Communications and Marketing of £56,000 which is mainly due to increased staffing costs while the service underwent a restructure. The restructure became effective from the 1st October 2025.
- There is a projected over spend against Pest Control services of £34,000 – this is due to the shortfall in the 2024-25 MTFS budget reduction proposal, CEX 8 - Charging for PEST control services. There continues to be a reduced uptake in the service resulting in a projected income shortfall for 2025-26.
- The balance is mainly due to a shortfall against the historic vacancy management factor target across Partnership budgets.

Housing & Homelessness

- There is a projected net under spend of £25,000 on Housing & Homelessness compared to a net projected under spend of £78,000 at quarter 1.
- The overall budget for housing and homelessness has been increased by £400,000 in 2025-26 due to Council approving a MTFS budget pressure to support pressures on the homelessness budget. In addition there has also been an increase of £970,000 due to transfers from Welsh Government into the settlement from previous grant funding.
- Projected spend on Homelessness accommodation in 2025-26 is £4.200 million. As well as the core budget (£3.274 million) the service has also seen an increase in rental income relating to Housing Benefits claimed by tenants who have been supported with homelessness accommodation (£460,000). The net impact is a projected over spend on accommodation of £466,000.
- This has been offset by projected under spends on the Brynmenyn Homeless Centre (£158,000) and the three new Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) properties acquired in 2024-25 (£196,000) due to projected increases in Housing Benefit income. Further projected under spends include maximisation of Supporting People grant (£121,000) and grant funding received for Asylum Seeker Dispersal (£99,000).

Finance

- There is a projected over spend of £301,000 on Finance budgets which is comparable to the quarter 1 projected over spend of £299,000.
- This firstly relates to failure to implement historic MTFS proposals requiring restructures (the service is now considering alternative budget saving proposals) and delays to in-year restructures which will be finalised later in 2025-26 (CEX25 (2024-25) – Staff savings from Finance senior management team - shortfall of £70,000 and CEX5 – review support capacity across finance – shortfall of £23,000).
- There is also a shortfall of £91,000 on Department for Work and Pension (DWP) subsidy contributions towards housing benefit payments in Bridgend. Any Housing Benefit award paid over the subsidy level is borne by the Council as the DWP does not fully fund all Housing Benefit expenditure – for example, there are a number of tenancy arrangements whereby the subsidy is limited to historic local housing allowance rates or restricted by rent officer determinations.
- The balance is mainly due to a shortfall against the historic vacancy management factor target of £115,000 across Finance budgets.

3.3.5 Council Wide budgets

This section includes budgets, provisions and services which are council wide, and not managed by an individual directorate. The net budget for 2025-26 is £46.511 million. Current projections anticipate an under spend against this budget of £6.350 million which has improved from the projected over spend at quarter 1 of £171,000. The main variances are:-

COUNCIL WIDE BUDGETS	Net Budget	Projected Outturn	Projected Variance Over/(under) budget	% Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Capital Financing	5,907	4,680	(1,227)	-20.78%
Council Tax Reduction Scheme	17,054	17,268	214	1.25%
Other Council Wide budgets	10,009	4,628	(5,381)	-53.76%

Capital Financing

- The projected under spend of £1.227 million mainly relates to additional interest anticipated from current investments. Interest rates started to fall from the high of 5% in November 2024, with further reductions to the current rate of 4%. Further interest rate reductions are expected, however the timing of these are uncertain and are subject to economic factors and in particular the position of inflation against the Bank of England's 2% target.
- It should also be noted that this will not be a recurring under spend. As noted in the Treasury Management Quarter 1 Report 2025-26 to Cabinet on 23rd September 2025, the Council has loans from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLb) maturing within the next 3 financial years that it will need to repay and, given the anticipated level of expenditure within the capital programme over the current and next financial years, including the new rolling fleet replacement programme for waste service vehicles, it is likely that new borrowing will be required to replace these maturing loans.

Council Tax Reduction Scheme

- There is currently a projected over spend of £214,000 on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme which is comparable with the £221,000 projected over spend at quarter 1. This is a demand led budget and take-up is difficult to predict. The projected take-up for 2025-26 is higher than in 2024-25 when the gross spend in this budget area was £16.326 million. This is partly due to the increase in council tax in 2025-26 of 4.5%, plus work undertaken by the Benefits Team to ensure citizens are aware of and claiming the benefits they are entitled to. The budget will be closely monitored in 2025-26 as there could be additional calls on the scheme with the ongoing cost of living crisis with the potential for an increase in the number of benefit claimants.

Other Council wide budgets

- The projected under spend of £5.381 million has improved from the £55,000 projected under spend at quarter 1. The main areas contributing to this projected under spend are:-

- As referred to in paragraph 3.1.3, during quarter 2 Welsh Government provided a grant of £521,736 towards the teachers' pay award 2025-26 that was not anticipated at budget setting.
 - As referred to in paragraph 3.1.11 during quarter 2 allocation of funding retained centrally in respect of National Joint Council (NJC) pay awards was vired to directorate and school budgets. The confirmed pay award was lower than budgeted for. The ongoing uncertainty over future pay awards means that it is likely that the provision set aside in the MTFS for 2026-27 will need to be supplemented by any funding not committed from the central pay budget this financial year.
 - Inflation rates have fluctuated since the budget was set – CPI was 2.8% when the budget was set in February 2025, increasing to 3.8% in August 2025. The majority of the budget estimated for price inflation is retained centrally within council wide budgets and allocated to directorates/schools as further information is known about specific contractual price increases – CPI allocations during quarter 2 can be found in paragraph 3.1.11. The majority of the projected under spend on the price inflation budget relates to reductions in requirements to allocate price budgets to service areas in-year as the Council has not seen the increases in CPI impact on contractual arrangements to date in 2025-26. There is, however, ongoing uncertainty on energy cost increases in 2026-27 and the general trajectory of CPI, therefore it is likely that the provision set aside in the MTFS for 2026-27 will need to be supplemented by any funding not committed from the price inflation budget this year.
 - There is also a projected reduction in corporate support required to fund redundancy costs as there are fewer staffing related MTFS proposals for 2025-26.
- The uncertainty regarding the funding of the increases to the rate of employers' national insurance contributions was referenced in the quarter 1 revenue monitoring report. During quarter 2, Bridgend County Borough Council received a grant of £4.447 million for BCBC staff and towards Fire and Rescue Authority NI increases. The grant was £390,000 short of the actual increase needed. Bridgend has also had to fund the cost of NI increases for commissioned services from its own budgets.

3.4 Earmarked Reserves

- 3.4.1 The cumulative revenue draw down by directorates is £898,000 as shown in **Table 4** below. The majority of the draw down from earmarked reserves takes place in the later stages of the financial year, especially on capital and grant funded schemes. In addition, school balances are not adjusted until the year end – an overall draw down in year of £4.468 million from school balances is currently projected, which would continue to leave a negative balance to be managed by the Council.

Table 4 – Usable Revenue Earmarked Reserves (Excluding Council Fund) – Quarter 2

Opening Balance 01 Apr 25	Reserve	Net Additions/ Reclassification	Draw- down	Unwound	Closing Balance 30 Sep 25
£'000		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
	Corporate Reserves:				
2,290	Asset Management Reserves	-	(209)	-	2,081
1,830	Major Claims & Insurance Reserves	-	-	-	1,830
1,892	Service Reconfiguration	-	-	-	1,892
2,294	Change Management/Digital Transformation	-	-	-	2,294
500	Economic and Future Resilience Fund	-	-	-	500
3,179	Other Corporate Reserves	-	-	-	3,179
11,985	Total Corporate Reserves	-	(209)	-	11,776
	Directorate Reserves:				
1,919	Education & Family Support	-	(38)	-	1,881
1,856	Social Services & Wellbeing	-	(265)	-	1,591
1,835	Communities	-	(182)	-	1,653
1,966	Chief Executives	-	(123)	-	1,843
7,576	Total Directorate Reserves	-	(608)	-	6,968
	Equalisation & Grant Reserves:				
316	Education & Family Support	-	-	-	316
47	Social Services & Wellbeing	-	-	-	47
2,478	Communities	(355)	(81)	-	2,042
47	Chief Executives	310	-	-	357
2,888	Equalisation & Grant Reserves:	(45)	(81)	-	2,762
(619)	School Balances	-	-	-	(619)
21,830	TOTAL RESERVES	(45)	(898)	-	20,887

3.4.2 In addition to the usable revenue reserves in **Table 4**, there are currently £46.083 million of other earmarked reserves funding schemes within the capital programme.

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

4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act 2010, 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 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. The allocation of budget determines the extent to which the Council's well-being objectives can be delivered. 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 and Nature Implications

- 6.1 There are no direct implications arising from this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 There are no direct implications arising from this report.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 These are reflected in the body of the report.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 The Committee is recommended to consider the projected revenue position for 2025-26.

Background documents: Individual Directorate Monitoring Reports

This page is intentionally left blank

PRIOR YEAR BUDGET REDUCTIONS CARRIED FORWARD INTO 2025-26

Ref.	Budget Reduction Proposal	Original Reduction and RAG £000	Total amount of saving likely to be achieved in 2025-26 £000	Reason why not achievable	Proposed Action in 2025-26 to achieve
------	---------------------------	---------------------------------	--	---------------------------	---------------------------------------

RAG STATUS KEY	
RED	Not likely to be achieved at all in this financial year or less than 25%.
AMBER	Reduction not likely to be achieved in full in financial year but greater than 25%
GREEN	Reduction likely to be achieved in full

EDUCATION, EARLY YEARS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

EDFS9 (2024-25)	Cessation of Adult Community Learning (ACL) provision	149	149	The outcome of the consultation process for the cessation of the ACL service was finalised in quarter 3 of 2024-25.	None required - saving will be made in full in 2025-26
EDFS19	Communication and Relationships Team - Referrals only accepted for pupils who are at risk of permanent exclusion and placement breaking down. No longer completing observations for the ND Pathway	142	0	Saving not met in 2024-25 due to the overall increase in pupils needing the service	A Service review has started with a new Team Lead in place from 1 September 2025. Further updates to Cabinet will be provided as the review progresses.
Total Education, Early Years and Young People		291	149		

SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING

SSW7 (2024-25)	Review opportunities to amend the current energy payment arrangements for the leisure contract	45	45	On 22 October 2024, Cabinet approved modification of the existing contractual terms to vary the expiry date from 31 March 2027 to 31 March 2032. Work is ongoing to enter into a variation agreement.	None required - alternative saving identified and has been achieved in 2025-26
SSW13 (2024-25)	Council to reduce its investment into cultural services including the availability of buildings, services or resources relating to its libraries, supported employment, community venues and arts programmes	360	360	Cabinet report in May 2024 approved reductions of £65K, along with public engagement over how future savings can be achieved. Further reports will be presented to Cabinet to enable the outcome of consultation exercises to be taken into account when finalising any proposed changes.	The saving of the remaining £295,000 will be covered by maximising grant funding opportunities in 2025-26. However a long term plan to achieve the additional £295,000 needs to be explored. We are commencing public engagement at present with a view of what does long term sustainable cultural services look like.
SSW17 (2024-25)	BCBC consider efficiency savings from Third Sector Contracts - bereavement services	5	5	Notice was served covering a 10 months saving in 2024-25.	None required - saving will be made in full in 2025-26
SSW18 (2024-25)	BCBC consider efficiency savings from Third Sector Contracts - dementia services	57	57	Notice was served covering a 10 months saving in 2024-25.	None required - saving will be made in full in 2025-26
SSW22 (2024-25)	BCBC consider efficiency savings from Third Sector Contracts - substance misuse services	34	34	Notice was served covering a 10 months saving in 2024-25.	None required - saving will be made in full in 2025-26
Total Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate		501	501		

COMMUNITIES

COM2 (2021-22)	Re-location of Community Recycling Centre from Tythegston to Pyle resulting in cessation of lease payments at existing site	60	0	The new site opened during quarter 4 of 2023-24. The timing of the opening meant that exit terms of the lease were being finalised in 2024-25. Once these have been finalised, the full saving will be made.	Once the exit terms have been finalised, the full saving will be made. The service will endeavour to meet any shortfall in the saving through alternative one off efficiencies in 2025-26 to deliver a balanced budget position.
COM4 (2022-23)	Remove Business in Focus from running Enterprise Centres in Bridgend	20	5	Review of Business in Focus operating model explored to identify operating efficiencies with a view to restructuring the management agreement with Business in Focus to deliver this saving.	Savings have been made elsewhere in Corporate Landlord, mainly due to staff vacancies.
COM5 (2022-23)	Commercially let a wing of Ravens court to a partner organisation or business	50	50	Building was not commercially let during 2024-25. Sale of the freehold took place in the final quarter of 2024-25.	Full saving is anticipated to be met in 2025-26
COM2 (2023-24)	Charging Blue Badge Holders for parking	40	0	The Traffic and Transport Team are progressing with the order making process and have carried out an initial engagement on the proposal which is currently being evaluated prior to progressing	Shortfalls against this savings target will be met through one off efficiencies in 2025-26 to deliver a balanced budget position.
COM3 (2023-24)	Commercially let two wings of Ravens court to a partner organisation or business	120	120	Building was not commercially let during 2024-25. Sale of the freehold took place in the final quarter of 2024-25.	Full saving is anticipated to be met in 2025-26
COM1 (2024-25)	Reduction in staff mileage budgets	34	34	Achieved 58.8% of the proposed saving in 2024-25 - saving increased as year progressed.	Full saving is anticipated to be met in 2025-26
COM10 (2024-25)	Review of Porthcawl Marina berthing fees with a view to it operating on a full cost recovery basis	32	5	The service was subject to unforeseen salary costs to cover sickness.	Savings have been identified elsewhere within the Economy, Natural Resources & Sustainability department in 25-26.
COM14 (2024-25)	Office Rationalisation to include closing Raven's Court and the Innovation Centre and sharing accommodation in Civic Offices with the MASH and SWP.	73	73	Raven's Court was not commercially let during 2024-25. Sharing of accommodation in Civic Offices did not take place until the final quarter of 2024-25.	Full saving is anticipated to be met in 2025-26

Ref.	Budget Reduction Proposal	Original Reduction and RAG £000	Total amount of saving likely to be achieved in 2025-26 £000	Reason why not achievable	Proposed Action in 2025-26 to achieve
COM28 (2024-25)	Letting of former Woodmat Property, Brynmenyn Estate	35	9	Opportunities were sought to achieve this budget reduction proposal, but let not agreed by end of 2024-25.	Corporate Landlord are currently finalising the terms to lease this unit, therefore part-year saving should be achieved
Total Communities Directorate		464	296		

Chief Executives

CEX8 (2024-25)	Charging the public for Pest Control Services	67	33	Due to reduced uptake of the service, the saving was only partly achieved in 2024-25.	Income levels will continue to be monitored closely with further updates provided to Cabinet in future revenue monitoring reports. If there continues to be a shortfall in income levels, Partnerships will endeavour to meet any shortfall in the saving through alternative one off efficiencies in 2025-26 to deliver a balanced budget position.
CEX12 (2024-25)	Increased income from Registrars' Ceremonies	43	43	Due to reduced uptake of the service, the saving was only partly achieved in 2024-25.	Full saving is anticipated to be met in 2025-26 as first half of the year has seen an increase in bookings.
CEX13 (2024-25)	Restructure of Legal Services	154	154	Saving partly achieved in 2024-25 due to the timing of implementation of the Legal restructure	The restructure of Legal Services has been completed therefore the savings will be made in full from 2025-26.
CEX14 (2024-25)	Reconfiguration of Business Support	160	160	Saving partly achieved in 2024-25 due to the timing of implementation of the Business Support restructure	The restructure of Business Support has been completed therefore the savings will be made in full from 2025-26.
CEX15 (2024-25)	Increase income generated from legal fees for property transactions, S106 Agreements and Highway Agreements	20	0	Legal Services are reliant on the instructions that come through from Directorates. Due to reduced uptake of the service, the saving was not achieved in 2024-25	Legal Services will endeavour to meet any shortfall in the saving through alternative one off efficiencies in 2025-26 to deliver a balanced budget position.
CEX16 (2024-25)	Restructure of HR Service	289	289	Saving partly achieved in 2024-25 due to the timing of implementation of the HR restructure	The restructure of HR has been completed therefore the savings will be made in full from 2025-26.
CEX17 (2024-25)	Household Canvas - Reduction / Limited Canvass Door Knocking	9	0	Saving not achieved due to increased costs associated with canvassing.	Elections will endeavour to meet any shortfall in the saving through alternative one off efficiencies in 2025-26 to deliver a balanced budget position.
CEX19 (2024-25)	Restructure of Democratic Services	96	96	Saving partly achieved in 2024-25 due to the timing of implementation of the Democratic Services restructure	The restructure of Democratic Services has been completed therefore the savings will be made in full from 2025-26.
CEX20 (2024-25)	Restructure of Corporate Policy and Public Affairs Team	45	45	Saving partly achieved in 2024-25 due to the timing of implementation of the Corporate Policy and Public Affairs restructure	The restructure of Corporate Policy and Public Affairs has been completed therefore the savings will be made in full from 2025-26.
CEX22 (2024-25)	Review of ICT Services	398	311	Saving not met in full due to the timing of re-procurement exercise on telephony budgets across the Council	ICT Services will endeavour to meet any shortfall in the saving through alternative one off efficiencies in 2025-26 to deliver a balanced budget position.
CEX23 (2024-25)	Review the provision of Partnerships and Customer Services	216	216	Saving partly achieved in 2024-25 due to delays in confirmation of alternative external funding towards 2 posts.	Confirmation of funding has been finalised, therefore full saving anticipated to be made in 2025-26.
CEX25 (2024-25)	Staff savings from Finance senior management team	70	0	Shortfall in savings target due to failure to implement proposed Finance senior management restructure.	Finance will endeavour to meet any shortfall in the saving through alternative one off efficiencies in 2025-26 to deliver a balanced budget position.
Total Chief Executives Directorate		1,567	1,347		

GRAND TOTAL OUTSTANDING REDUCTIONS	2,823	2,293		
REDUCTIONS SHORTFALL		530		

Ref.	Budget Reduction Proposal	Impact, including on 5 Ways of Working as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act	Proposed 2025-26 £'000	Value achieved to date 2025-26 £'000	Value likely to be achieved 2025-26 £'000	Reason why not likely to be achievable
------	---------------------------	---	------------------------------	--	--	--

Page 37

RAG STATUS KEY	
RED	Not likely to be achieved at all in this financial year or less than 25%.
AMBER	Reduction not likely to be achieved in full in financial year but greater than 25%
GREEN	Reduction likely to be achieved in full

EDUCATION, EARLY YEARS AND YOUNG PEOPLE
CENTRAL EDUCATION, EARLY YEARS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

EEYYP1	Cessation of the Meals-at-Home Service	While there could be a significant redundancy cost, redeployment options could be explored to mitigate this risk. A public consultation would be required prior to determination by Cabinet.	56	0	0	Whilst the service has now ceased there are some residual costs in 2025-26. Full saving should be achieved in 2026-27.
EEYYP2	Review of Home to School Transport	While transport for Nursery children is non-statutory, if this were to be removed, there could be negative impact on pupils attending Welsh-medium and faith school nursery settings in particular although numbers are relatively low (<100). Home-to-school transport for Post-16 students is non-statutory. This could result in an increased number of young people not in education, employment or training. These cuts could impact on school attendance.	675	200	675	The new Home-to-School Transport Policy was implemented on 1 September 2025. The efficiency savings are ongoing and contracts have been adjusted to take into account the change of eligibility for pupils.
EEYYP3	Reduction in Counselling services	Should a decision be made to reduce counselling services this would have a negative impact on the wellbeing of children and young people. A reduction in this area would limit the access to support for children and young people.	50	50	50	Full saving should be achieved in 2025-26
EEYYP4	Reduction in Early Years and Childcare	Some functions would need to be removed from the team, for example, the ability to • quality assure childcare providers in the community (with associated safeguarding risks); • complete the statutory childcare sufficiency assessments and associated statutory work; and • support and develop childcare within the community.	90	0	23	The outcome of the consultation process for the Early Year service is likely to be finalised during quarter 3 of 2025-26.

Ref.	Budget Reduction Proposal	Impact, including on 5 Ways of Working as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act	Proposed 2025-26 £'000	Value achieved to date 2025-26 £'000	Value likely to be achieved 2025-26 £'000	Reason why not likely to be achievable
EEYYP5	Reduction in Strategy, Performance and Support Group	<p>This proposed reduction relates to a number of posts in the Strategy, Performance and Support Group.</p> <p>The reduction will present a significant impact (and associated serious risk) in the implementation of the Education, Early Years and Young People Directorate's main management information systems. This reduction will limit the way in which the directorate is able to record, manage and report on sensitive data relating to vulnerable children.</p> <p>This reduction would also impact on the local authority's ability to dispense its statutory home-to-school transport duties. This reduction will mean that our capacity to maintain procurement and contract procedure responsibilities will be diminished and that the School Transport Team's ability to respond to complaints and issues will be more limited.</p>	146	0	37	Staff consultation due to begin in quarter 3 of 2025-26.
EEYYP6	Reduction in Pupil Services	<p>There would be a significant risk to the local authority being able to ensure school admission arrangements are in place and school places are offered in line with national legislation and local policy arrangements. The child employment function would likely need to cease, to compensate for the reduced capacity within the team. Furthermore, the team would not be able to have oversight and administer applications for discretionary transport which would likely leave the local authority open to legal challenge.</p>	35	0	9	Staff consultation due to begin in quarter 3 of 2025-26.

Ref.	Budget Reduction Proposal	Impact, including on 5 Ways of Working as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act	Proposed 2025-26 £'000	Value achieved to date 2025-26 £'000	Value likely to be achieved 2025-26 £'000	Reason why not likely to be achievable
EEYYP7	Reduction in the Corporate Health and Safety Unit	<p>The local authority has, within the last few years, provided significant additional revenue budget to expand the number of Health and Safety advisors to support the local authority in delivering its functions safely. The Corporate Health and Safety Unit (CHSU) ensures that both staff and the public are kept safe where they are affected by the local authority's undertakings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•The team's ability to promote a positive health and safety culture would likely be compromised.•Significant reduction in proactive work and active monitoring, mentoring and coaching for the "responsible person"•Significant increased pressure on managers at all levels with more limited advice available and less time from the CHSU to support•Significant increased reactive work.•Inability to offer training without support from the private sector (at cost)•Potential increase in insurance cost, and the cost to services to address failings in general, or which has been identified by the HSE (for example, fees for intervention)•Increased in costs to cover work would normally be completed by the CHSU but will likely require contractors to provide•Potential serious failings under the current health and safety legislation, potentially leading to prosecution (corporate and personal liability for senior officers, in particular Corporate Management Board)•A poorer health and safety culture across the organisation in general•Poorer health and safety systems•Increase level of criticism from services users, members of public and elected members <p>There are significant health and safety risks that the current team has limited capacity to address that could potentially mean regulatory interventions by the HSE. There have been several HSE interventions within the last two years. A reduction in the human resources would add exponentially to the risk of the local authority failing its health and safety duties, where the potential for intervention by the HSE, prosecutions and fines would significantly outweigh any MTFS efficiency.</p>	76	0	19	Staff consultation due to begin in quarter 3 of 2025-26.

Ref.	Budget Reduction Proposal	Impact, including on 5 Ways of Working as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act	Proposed 2025-26 £'000	Value achieved to date 2025-26 £'000	Value likely to be achieved 2025-26 £'000	Reason why not likely to be achievable
EEYYP8	Reduction in Business Support	<p>The directorate's centralised support function is responsible for providing business support to teams and to the central EDSU function that is responsible for all complaints, reports (for example Cabinet), statutory meeting support such as SACRE, member referrals, FOI requests, subject access requests, managing referral and inputting information into the directorate's central management information systems. A reduction of staff would mean there would likely be delays in input of referrals which would increase waiting times for children and families to receive support from family support services. Delayed communication with schools following receipt of Police Protection Notifications (PPNs) involving pupils within Bridgend schools. There would be an impact on the Youth Justice Service's (JYS) statutory requirements, for example notification of overnight arrests / custody, invites to Bureau and capturing data in relation to education provision for children open to YJS. This could also affect statutory Youth Justice Board key performance indicators. Freedom of information and subject access requests would likely not meet statutory timelines and there would be delays in Cabinet and scrutiny reports being progressed, as EDSU support the approvals process. Delegated power administration support could be delayed and could miss call-in timescales. There would likely be poor customer service to complainants who raise complaints via EDSU. This could escalate to more complaints and member referrals. There would likely be poorer customer service to children, young people and families who access any service within the Education, Early Years and Young People portfolio, including Learner Support, School Support, Pupil Services, Early Years and Young People and School Admissions. Inaccurate or missing data could contribute to General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) breaches, for example, if an address change has not been updated in a timely manner. Lastly, there will be significantly increased pressure on practitioners, senior practitioners and team managers.</p>	93	0	23	Staff consultation due to begin in quarter 3 of 2025-26.
EEYYP9	Reduction of staff in Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Statutory Team	<p>Failure to meet the Welsh Government deadline for ALN Implementation Plan 2023-2025. The risk of failure to determine, capture, and disseminate processes relating to the ALN Code and the Education Tribunal in Wales and comply with statutory duties of the local authority. This includes individual development plans (IDP) requirements of the ALNET Act 2018.</p>	44	44	44	Full saving should be achieved in 2025-26
EEYYP10	Reduction in Education Other Than At Schools (EOTAS) support	<p>Increasing demand and waiting list for specialist support at The Bridge Alternative Provision has resulted in a higher need for bespoke timetables. If there is no lead post overseeing this area the risk appropriate education not provided to those pupils who cannot attend mainstream or special school the local authority would not be fulfilling its statutory duty. Capacity of staff to identify appropriate accredited, vocational packages to meet individual need will be reduced resulting in an increase in number of pupils who are on a waiting list for suitable education. Delays in meeting the needs of learners and significant placement breakdowns will lead to an increase in out of authority specialist placements requested at significant additional cost. Further challenge placed on mainstream schools to identify and agree alternative packages on a case by case basis at significant additional cost. Pupils would not receive the support they require resulting in lower exam outcomes and an increase in those Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) post statutory school age. Possible increase in number of permanent exclusions from mainstream schools.</p>	75	0	43	Shortfall in savings due to the timing of the restructure. Saving will be made in full in 2026-27.

Page 41

Ref.	Budget Reduction Proposal	Impact, including on 5 Ways of Working as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act	Proposed 2025-26 £'000	Value achieved to date 2025-26 £'000	Value likely to be achieved 2025-26 £'000	Reason why not likely to be achievable
EEYYP11	Reduction in contribution to Central South Consortium	Depending on where this funding is cut (either from the grant received by the local authority and immediately passported to Central South Consortium) or from the funding allocated for Principal / Improvement Partners it will either: •Reduce curriculum reform support and professional learning and leadership support at a time when the new curriculum is being extended to examination classes; or •Result in a decrease in the number of improvement partners (IP) to work in partnership with school leaders, staff and governing bodies. Each IP would be required to work with more schools with less time in each school. This would mean a reduction in the support available to schools to support pre-inspection and post inspection planning and a reduction in the time available to support senior leader recruitment processes. It will also coincide with anticipated changes as a result of the Middle Tier Review which may create additional work / responsibility for headteachers and senior leaders in relation to school improvement functions without the expected funds to support any such transition.	88	88	88	Full saving should be achieved in 2025-26
Total Education, Early Years and Young People			1,428	382	1,011	

SCHOOLS

SCH1	Efficiency savings against School Delegated Budgets - 1% for 2025-26 and 1% thereafter.	It is important to note that some of this impact may be mitigated by the financial support provided to schools from the local authority in assisting schools to meet cost pressures in relation to pay and pensions, and energy. Further to discussion with headteachers, the following potential impacts have been identified: 1. Risk of increased school deficit positions; 2. Potential to result in some teacher and other staff redundancies; 3. Increase in class sizes; 4. Loss of interventions; 5. Increase in staff absence; 6. Low staff morale; 7. Increased workload; 8. Reduced curriculum offer; 9. Reduced leadership / strategic thinking time; 10. Potential inability to meet statutory requirements; 11. Decrease in adult support in classrooms; 12. Increase in pupil exclusions; 13. Decline in standards; 14. Reduction in ability maintain school buildings; 15. Limited extra-curricular activity; 16. Increase in referrals for behaviour support; 17. Reduced support for learners with additional needs; 18. Reduction in professional learning opportunities; 19. Loss of expertise due to teachers and senior leaders leaving the profession.	1,186	1,186	1,186	Savings achieved due to overall reduction in Individual Schools Budget (ISB). However, reduced budgets have resulted in quarter 2 total projected deficit balances for schools at year end in excess of £5.087m.
Total Schools			1,186	1,186	1,186	

Total Education, Early Years and Young People Directorate			2,614	1,568	2,197	
---	--	--	-------	-------	-------	--

Ref.	Budget Reduction Proposal	Impact, including on 5 Ways of Working as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act	Proposed 2025-26 £'000	Value achieved to date 2025-26 £'000	Value likely to be achieved 2025-26 £'000	Reason why not likely to be achievable
SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING						
SSW2	Redevelop the indoor bowls arena space and explore redevelopment for other purposes that offer increased income generation	The operation of the indoor bowls hall at Bridgend Life Centre generates operating costs that are difficult to cover based on the seasonal usage by the indoor bowls club. Any changes to indoor bowling would not be popular and may have a negative impact on the Council's wellbeing goals. The development of the wellbeing hub inside the bowls hall has improved usage by downsizing the number of bowling rinks already. With investment there may be possibilities for seasonal increased income generation. Potential need for alternative community venue for indoor bowls. Feasibility study would be required during 2024-25.	10	0	0	A feasibility study is currently in process to provide potential opportunities for seasonal usage of the Bowls hall. This saving being achieved will depend on the outcome of the study therefore not likely to be achieved at present. Further updates will be provided in future budget monitoring reports.
SSW4	Consider the transition of currently shared facilities at five school sites (Dual Use Assets), to whole school operation in line with many primary and secondary schools across BCBC	BCBC supports community access of school assets including Pencoed sports centre, Brackla sports centre, Ysgol Bryn Castell, Porthcawl sports hall and Parc Dderwen 3G pitch. The sites are busy with 110 organisations utilising the different spaces available. These are partnership arrangements with schools including cost sharing and often have linked to external funding support. The proposal has been to increase prices for hirers to offset increases in staffing and premises costs / school contributions whilst also creating a saving from increased income generation. There are considerable numbers of junior groups and activities within the usage data for the sites and targeted population groups also. If achieved the proposal will supports sustainability via maximising value for existing assets beyond the school day for community benefit. In particular the model links to 21st century schools and Welsh government aspiration for community use and connection beyond the school day. The school benefit during the day and community beyond, the main risks would be the school not having the opportunity to use the asset outside school hours, having a negative impact on community opportunities.	71	36	71	Full saving should be achieved in 2025-26
SSW5	Staffing restructure within Prevention and Wellbeing Services	The Prevention and Wellbeing service would be reliant on external grant funding to support its service. If grant funding ceases there will be no meaningful prevention and wellbeing offer in Bridgend significantly increasing pressure on statutory services. There will be a reduction in the number of staff by 3, redundancy costs will need to be funded. In order to achieve this the service is in the process of redesigning to ensure that it is fit for purpose with clear functions and objectives established which will mitigate any significant impact and risks.	147	0	147	Full saving should be achieved in 2025-26
SSW6	Increase in income charges by increasing standard charges by 10 % across all non residential services	Review of the service pricing model and increasing unit costs for all non residential services with a view to generating additional income. Based on unit cost increase of 10%. Services are provided to vulnerable adults following an assessment of need. There is risk that individuals will cancel care packages and not have their needs met which could result in higher packages of care required in the future cost and / or an increase in debt recovery. In terms of flat rate charges such as Transport and Meals, no additional income can be generated under the current regulations.	100	50	100	Full saving should be achieved in 2025-26

Ref.	Budget Reduction Proposal	Impact, including on 5 Ways of Working as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act	Proposed 2025-26 £'000	Value achieved to date 2025-26 £'000	Value likely to be achieved 2025-26 £'000	Reason why not likely to be achievable
SSW7	Implementation of the Home remodelling programme across adult services	The support at home remodelling programme across whole of adult services has determined that the service will move to a locality based delivery model which will result in non care staffing savings of £198k. This will result in 5 staff members being made redundant •The model aims to maximise reablement and short-term capacity to support hospital discharge and avoiding hospital admission. The service has been working towards increasing those individuals who go through the short-term services to ensure we maximise independence before we commission long term care packages our current performance is that 53.98% of individuals who completed a package of reablement during quarter 1 2024-25 had no ongoing service need. In 2023-24 38.6% of people had a short term service prior to have a long term package, the service has been working towards increasing this number to 80% of people, in July the figure had increased to 60% of people who had a short term service prior to have a long term package people. To be able to achieve this target the service will no longer be providing long term packages of care in the main to older people, so all future long term packages would be commissioned via independent providers. This should reduce the overall support at home spending levels by £300k.	198	0	198	Full saving should be achieved in 2025-26
SSW8	Reduction in provision of number of Supported Living Accommodation units	Close one supported living accommodation. Suitable alternative provision would need to be identified. Achieving these savings is dependent on tenant with rights being agreeable to moving to an alternative provision. Review the waking nights expenditure.	190	0	0	Service area actively seeking means to achieve budget saving proposal. Updates will be provided in future revenue monitoring reports.
SSW9	Review of Caswell Clinic social work budget (clinic based at Glanrhyd Hospital)	BCBC host the regional social work team based in the Caswell clinic. All costs are reimbursed so no impact on this small budget reduction	3	3	3	Full saving should be achieved in 2025-26
SSW10	Apply 4% vacancy factor to social work teams and increase the vacancy factor on non frontline staff from 3% to 4%	In 2024-25 a vacancy factor of 3% was applied to non frontline teams in Social Services and Wellbeing. Care worker and social work posts were excluded due to an assessment of risk that all posts need. There is now greater stability in social work teams which means an assessment of risk means that the vacancy factor can be applied in these teams in adults and children's social care. This will require the step down of agency by the end of the financial year, and it is highly improbable there will be no vacant posts covered by agency due to safeguarding reasons meaning achievement of the full 3% represents a significant risk.	697	349	697	Full saving should be achieved in 2025-26
SSW11	Reduction of Social Care Workforce Development Partnership (SCWDP) spend.	External training courses / conferences to be supported only where there is an identified need that cannot be met by in-house resources. Use of internal staff to facilitate training workshops. External trainers bring specialist knowledge and skills that internal trainers could not replicate so the impact on statutory training essential to regulatory requirements will need to be closely monitored.	50	0	50	Full saving should be achieved in 2025-26

Budget Reduction Proposals 2025-26 to 2028-29

APPENDIX 2

Ref.	Budget Reduction Proposal	Impact, including on 5 Ways of Working as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act	Proposed 2025-26 £'000	Value achieved to date 2025-26 £'000	Value likely to be achieved 2025-26 £'000	Reason why not likely to be achievable
SSW12	Business efficiencies in support services through reviewing structures in business support, performance and commissioning.	<p>The commissioning team is at full capacity with all colleagues on permanent contracts, so any MTFS saving / restructure will result in redundancy costs. The team are also driving forward key transformational change linked to MTFS savings, so any reduction on capacity will impact our ability to deliver targeted savings elsewhere in the MTFS. There is also a risk that we will not be able to meet essential requirements of the newly implemented WG Code of Practice for commissioning care and support, nor our own internal Contract Procedure Rules, where there is a risk that tenders cannot be undertaken within required timescales.</p> <p>Business support has been restructured to provide a support office model which ensures that statutory minutes linked to safeguarding are completed and distributed in a timely manner and to ensure social work tasks are carried out by support officers, thus maximising the amount of time that social workers spend with children, adults, families and carers. Reduction in this resource will increase the administrative burden on social work staff. Any reduction in the performance team will impact on the ability to complete statutory performance returns. There is a high probability reductions in these teams will result in compulsory redundancies.</p>	129	129	129	Full saving should be achieved in 2025-26
SSW13	Removal of Safeguarding capacity	Would result in a compulsory redundancy situation. Corporate safeguarding is a statutory duty having no dedicated resource, there is risk of criticism that people will come to harm through no one being available to drive the implementation of safeguarding across the Council. There is also a significant risk of criticism from regulators.	57	0	57	Full saving should be achieved in 2025-26
SSW14	Reduction in staff within Children's Services	This proposal is to reduce Independent Reviewing Officer numbers by 1 linked to the reduction in the child protection register. This is currently achievable whilst maintaining reasonable caseloads but there is a risk there will be insufficient workforce if the numbers of children subject to registration increase again. It is also proposed that social work assistants in IAA undertake young carers assessments meaning that the Young Carers Worker would be redundant. Finally a review of senior management arrangements can result in some savings. This will need to be monitored closely given the CIW serious concerns in August 2022 which included concerns at management oversight arrangements.	50	50	50	Full saving should be achieved in 2025-26
SSW15	Reduction in family group conferencing service contract value. Due to the continued implementation of signs of safety (including family network meetings) and new ways of working less families will need to be referred to the family group conferencing service.	The risks are minimal as we have already begun to lower our usage with the full implementation of Signs of Safety. We have set an expectation that family meetings will be run by Social Workers until it is felt independence from the LA is required. We currently have the criteria: children who have been subject to Child Protection Register (CPR) for longer than three months or subject to Public Law Outline (PLO). We could reduce this to only include those children who become subject to pre-proceedings PLO or are in court.	60	60	60	Full saving should be achieved in 2025-26
SSW16	Removal of Corporate Parenting Events budget	Low impact as utilising "Just Giving" to raise funds to support the Corporate Parent responsibilities of this Council and partners.	5	5	5	Full saving should be achieved in 2025-26

Budget Reduction Proposals 2025-26 to 2028-29

APPENDIX 2

Ref.	Budget Reduction Proposal	Impact, including on 5 Ways of Working as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act	Proposed 2025-26 £'000	Value achieved to date 2025-26 £'000	Value likely to be achieved 2025-26 £'000	Reason why not likely to be achievable
SSW17	Management efficiencies	A review of senior management in adult and children's social care will be undertaken to identify efficiencies whilst ensuring there continues to be effective leadership and management capacity which is key to delivering the changes and transformation required to deliver the rest of the MTFS savings and to retain the confidence of regulators who in 2022 had serious concerns regarding management oversight in children's social care and regulated care services	50	0	50	Full saving should be achieved in 2025-26
Total Social Services and Wellbeing			1,817	682	1,617	

COMMUNITIES

COM1	Reduction in staff mileage budgets	During the pandemic most meetings were arranged virtually, instead of in person. This arrangement has continued in the main since then with hybrid working, although there are clear cases where in-person meetings are essential, with the result that spend on mileage is less than pre-pandemic levels, and budgets can be reduced accordingly with no impact on service provision, but positive benefits for achieving net carbon zero.	32	6	18	There was a similar budget reduction proposal in 2024-25 which was not met in full and has been carried forward into 2025-26 (see COM1 - Appendix 1). The historic target will be met in 2025-26, however it is anticipated there will a shortfall against the in-year proposal. Alternative budgets will have to be identified if the value likely to be achieved does not improve in future revenue monitoring reports.
COM2	Review of cleaning specifications and frequencies on BCBC Operational assets.	Will impact cleaning standards and visibility of cleaning frequencies but change is considered feasible. Will need to review cleaning staff numbers and potential for redundancies however aim will be to implement changes through staff redeployment and recruitment changes across the wider cleaning contract thus avoiding redundancy issues.	35	35	35	Full saving should be achieved in 2025-26
COM3	Further review of cyclical servicing and maintenance contracts dialling back maintenance items to safety critical and statutory compliance only.	Reduction of cyclical maintenance activity counter productive for long term asset operation. Potential for reduction in Business Support staff as a result of the reduction in cyclical orders although savings to Business Support already form part of current MTFS.	45	0	0	Due to ongoing pressures on the property revenue maintenance budgets the budget reduction proposal is unlikely to be achieved in 2025-26. However, savings from staff vacancies in Corporate Landlord have supported the shortfall against this specific proposal.
COM4	Increase income across the commercial property portfolio	Change will take time to implement and require additional surveyor resource over time.	15	0	0	Due to staff vacancies the additional income target will not be met in 2025-26. However savings from the staff vacancies have supported the shortfall against this specific proposal.
COM5	Review Legionella and Asbestos officer structure.	Savings identify the option of creating a newly combined legionella and asbestos team reducing the overall staffing budget	10	10	10	Full saving should be achieved in 2025-26
COM6	Removal of funding from Southern Wales Tourism Group	Removal of BCBC contribution of funding from external tourism group. Will impact on reduction in marketing activities for BCBC.	9	9	9	Full saving should be achieved in 2025-26
COM7	Further reduction in Porthcawl Programme budget	Further reduction in Porthcawl Programme budget - reduction excluding post and minimal development spend.	35	35	35	Full saving should be achieved in 2025-26

Page 46	Ref.	Budget Reduction Proposal	Impact, including on 5 Ways of Working as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act	Proposed 2025-26 £'000	Value achieved to date 2025-26 £'000	Value likely to be achieved 2025-26 £'000	Reason why not likely to be achievable
	COM8	Increase bulky waste charges from £30 for 3 items to £35	Potential increase in fly tipping. Increase would not result in full cost recovery under the current contract, but recyclable tonnages contribute to an improved recycling level against Welsh Government targets to reduce the likelihood of penalties.	10	3	10	Full saving should be achieved in 2025-26
	COM9	Increase fees on Bereavement services, i.e. burial charges by 20%	Income target has been based on historic income levels achieved and the application of a 20% increase to current charges. This will be the second year that bereavement charges have increased. There is a risk to achieving the income target if there is a reduction in burials compared with the last two years if they return to pre-pandemic levels, or if relatives seek alternative services from neighbouring authorities. This has been reflected in the target income.	100	0	100	Full saving should be achieved in 2025-26
	COM10	Reduction in the size of the waste enforcement team.	Reduction in staff who undertake enforcement activities relating to waste. There is a risk that the ability to react to issues will be reduced.	156	38	119	Shortfall in savings due to the timing of the restructure. Saving will be made in full in 2026-27.
	COM11	Commercially let Pandy Depot	Would require existing BCBC archive storage to be condensed or relocated to other location and take time to ready for commercial letting. Reduce the amount of depot facilities for BCBC operations. Will require capital to ready for letting. Full savings unlikely until 2025-26, but partial savings are a possibility in 2024-25.	50	0	0	Ongoing opportunities being sought to achieve this budget reduction proposal, but let not agreed by end of quarter 2. Projections will be updated throughout the financial year as opportunities continue to be sought.
	COM12	Stop bi-annual supply of blue refuse sacks to all residents.	This saving is agreed & will be implemented from April 2025. This would mean residents would have to provide their own bags for containment of refuse. Likely to be an unpopular change for residents who currently have these delivered with food waste liners. The amount of the saving is now slightly reduced in 2025-26 because of the contactors expenditure on the bags already ordered but will be realised in full from 2026-27.	220	220	220	Full saving should be achieved in 2025-26
Total Communities Directorate				717	356	556	

Budget Reduction Proposals 2025-26 to 2028-29

Ref.	Budget Reduction Proposal	Impact, including on 5 Ways of Working as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act	Proposed 2025-26 £'000	Value achieved to date 2025-26 £'000	Value likely to be achieved 2025-26 £'000	Reason why not likely to be achievable
------	---------------------------	---	------------------------------	--	--	--

CHIEF EXECUTIVES

CEX1	Remove vacant grade 6 post (0.5) - Democratic Services	Will result in increased demand on other staff members. Statutory work will need to be prioritised. Service will be operating at minimum provision.	20	20	20	Full saving should be achieved in 2025-26
CEX2	Reduction in payment to Shared Regulatory Services (SRS)	SRS have been asked to make a reduction to their budget. This will need to be agreed by the Joint Committee in February. This will impact on core service provision and authority specific services.	153	153	153	Full saving should be achieved in 2025-26
CEX3	Review of the current Learning and Development provision	Reduces the available training support for employees and may impact on learning and development opportunities.	84	42	84	Full saving should be achieved in 2025-26
CEX4	Reduction in Corporate Apprenticeship budget - 15%	The budget has been underspent due to the turnover of apprentices. The reduction in budget will lead to approx. one less corporate apprentice per annum and periods of inactivity between recruitment rounds.	58	58	58	Full saving should be achieved in 2025-26
CEX5	Review support capacity across finance	The service will be unable to respond in a timely manner to requests for information or support with budget information	31	0	10	Shortfall in savings target due to timing of implementation of restructure. Saving will be achieved in full by 2026-27.
CEX7	Review the capacity within the customer services team.	This is a non statutory service. This proposal is to review the work in the team which will increase response times to callers who contact the Authority either by phone or in person, will reduce capacity to deal with emails from the public and blue car badge applications.	67	34	67	Full saving should be achieved in 2025-26
CEX8	Extend further the use of Houses in Multiple Occupation to provide temporary accommodation for single homeless individuals	This will reduce the Council's reliance on more expensive accommodation options such as tourism style properties.	120	60	120	Full saving should be achieved in 2025-26
CEX9	Management restructure across the Chief Executive's Directorate	This will result in reduced capacity across the directorate and reduced responsiveness	77	77	77	Full saving should be achieved in 2025-26
CEX10	Restructure the ICT service	This will reduce the capacity within the team to deal with business as usual and to support service configurations in other service areas	78	0	20	Shortfall in savings target due to timing of implementation of restructure. Saving will be achieved in full by 2026-27.
Total Chief Executive's Directorate			688	444	609	

CORPORATE / COUNCIL WIDE

CW1	Change the Council's Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy from a straight line to annuity method. The MRP is the charge to revenue made in respect of paying off the principal sum of the borrowing undertaken to finance the capital programme	The change in policy will improve the Council's ability to make prudent provision as it helps to distribute the MRP more fairly when factoring that the value of money decreases with time due to its earning potential. The annuity method provides a fairer charge than equal instalments as it takes account of the time value of money.	1,000	1,000	1,000	Full saving should be achieved in 2025-26
-----	---	---	-------	-------	-------	---

Page 48

Ref.	Budget Reduction Proposal	Impact, including on 5 Ways of Working as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act	Proposed 2025-26 £'000	Value achieved to date 2025-26 £'000	Value likely to be achieved 2025-26 £'000	Reason why not likely to be achievable
CW2	Removal of uncommitted funding set aside in the MTFS 2024-28 towards emerging budget pressures and as a contingency against non-deliverability of budget reduction proposals. The original allocations were £550k and £1.08 million respectively. Only £87k has been allocated during the year resulting in a balance of £1.543 million as a contribution to continuing budget pressures	There will be no negative impact on service delivery, these budgets were set aside in 2024-25 to meet new and continuing budget pressures. A number of these are recurring and this funding will help to reduce overspends in future years. It does mean, however, that there is less headroom corporately to deal with unexpected financial pressures going forward.	1,543	1,543	1,543	Full saving should be achieved in 2025-26
Total Corporate / Council Wide			2,543	2,543	2,543	

GRAND TOTAL REDUCTIONS	8,379	5,593	7,522
REDUCTION SHORTFALL	857		

3,722	3,382	5,930
2,167	2,131	893
2,490	2,866	1,556
8,379	8,379	8,379

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL	Budget 2025-26			Projected Outturn	Projected Variance Over/(under) budget	% Variance
	Expenditure Budget	Income Budget	Net Budget			
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
EDUCATION, EARLY YEARS AND YOUNG PEOPLE						
School Delegated Budgets	148,344	(23,447)	124,897	124,897	-	0.0%
Inclusion Group	9,912	(1,147)	8,765	9,505	740	8.4%
Early Years and Young People	3,479	(545)	2,934	2,843	(91)	-3.1%
Strategic Performance and Support	18,029	(4,265)	13,764	12,998	(766)	-5.6%
Schools Support	1,691	(829)	862	723	(139)	-16.1%
Sustainable Communities For Learning	4,039	(3)	4,036	4,004	(32)	-0.8%
Other Education and Family Support	1,879	(64)	1,815	1,814	(1)	-0.1%
TOTAL EDUCATION AND FAMILY SUPPORT	187,373	(30,300)	157,073	156,784	(289)	-0.2%
SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING						
Adult Social Care	105,425	(26,287)	79,138	78,382	(756)	-0.96%
Prevention and Wellbeing	7,323	(943)	6,380	6,187	(193)	-3.03%
Childrens Social Care	35,177	(1,244)	33,933	34,765	832	2.45%
TOTAL SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING	147,925	(28,474)	119,451	119,334	(117)	-0.1%
COMMUNITIES DIRECTORATE						
Planning & Development Services	2,544	(1,663)	881	841	(40)	-4.5%
Strategic Regeneration	1,910	(969)	941	883	(58)	-6.2%
Economy, Natural Resources and Sustainability	7,847	(6,231)	1,616	1,601	(15)	-0.9%
Cleaner Streets and Waste Management	15,787	(2,430)	13,357	13,419	62	0.5%
Highways and Green Spaces	27,797	(14,106)	13,691	14,187	496	3.6%
Director and Head of Operations - Communities	300	(4)	296	296	-	0.0%
Corporate Landlord	14,783	(11,136)	3,647	3,279	(368)	-10.1%
TOTAL COMMUNITIES	70,968	(36,539)	34,429	34,506	77	0.2%
CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S						
Chief Executive Unit	520	(2)	518	528	10	1.9%
Finance	39,809	(35,408)	4,401	4,702	301	6.8%
HR/OD	2,347	(441)	1,906	1,952	46	2.4%
Partnerships	3,894	(1,588)	2,306	2,498	192	8.3%
Legal, Democratic & Regulatory	7,344	(1,116)	6,228	6,258	30	0.5%
Elections	190	(3)	187	218	31	16.6%
ICT	5,584	(1,261)	4,323	4,553	230	5.3%
Housing & Homelessness	12,682	(7,827)	4,855	4,830	(25)	-0.5%
Business Support	1,175	(137)	1,038	1,005	(33)	-3.2%
TOTAL CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S	73,545	(47,783)	25,762	26,544	782	3.0%
TOTAL DIRECTORATE BUDGETS	479,811	(143,096)	336,715	337,168	453	0.1%
Council Wide Budgets	47,912	(1,401)	46,511	40,161	(6,350)	-13.7%
NET BRIDGEND CBC	527,723	(144,497)	383,226	377,329	(5,897)	-1.5%

NB: Differences due to rounding of £000's

This page is intentionally left blank

Meeting of:	CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	23 OCTOBER 2025
Report Title:	ARRANGEMENTS FOR COMMISSIONING SERVICES
Report Owner: Responsible Chief Officer / Cabinet Member	CHIEF OFFICER – FINANCE, HOUSING AND CHANGE
Responsible Officer:	CARYS LORD CHIEF OFFICER – FINANCE, HOUSING AND CHANGE
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no impact on the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.
Executive Summary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council’s external auditors, Audit Wales, undertake a range of financial and performance audit work during the financial year. • They publish a number of reports in respect of the audit work undertaken. Some of the reports are national across all local authorities and others are local and specific to Bridgend. • This report provides details of Audit Wales’ report ‘Arrangements for Commissioning Services – Bridgend County Borough Council’

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to submit to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee an Audit Wales report entitled “Arrangements for Commissioning Services” and to update members with regards to the planned actions to be undertaken in response to this report.

2. Background

- 2.1 Audit Wales undertakes a programme of work during the year to help the Auditor General discharge his duties under the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004. The Auditor General’s functions include auditing accounts and undertaking local performance audit work at a broad range of public bodies, alongside conducting a programme of national value for money examinations and studies. The Auditor General also assesses the extent to which public bodies are complying with the sustainable

development principle when setting and taking steps to meet their well-being objectives.

- 2.2 As part of their work Audit Wales undertakes thematic reviews. These reviews report on issues that are common across all local authorities. The same audit is undertaken in all 22 Local Authorities over a period of time. Each Local Authority will receive a report outlining the findings in their area and a national report is also produced which reports on the key findings at a national level and highlights examples of good practice.
- 2.3 During the past 12 months Audit Wales has undertaken work to review Councils' arrangements for commissioning services. The work at this Council was completed earlier this year and the final report was published in June 2025.

3. Current situation/ proposal

- 3.1 The objectives for this piece of work were to :
- Provide assurance that the Council has proper arrangements for commissioning services to secure value for money in the use of resources ; and
 - Provide assurance that the Council is acting in accordance with the sustainable development principle in commissioning services.
- 3.2 In addition, from an All Wales perspective, the national report will seek to explain how Welsh Councils approach the commissioning of services and will also look to inspire and empower councils by identifying and sharing examples of notable practice where relevant.
- 3.3 It is important to note that the work reviewed the Council's arrangements for the commissioning of services. The audit did not cover procurement arrangements or the Council's contract management arrangements.
- 3.4 In undertaking this work, Audit Wales identified three examples to look at in more detail during their field work in Bridgend. Their findings are detailed in the Audit Wales report attached at **Appendix A**.
- 3.5 In summary the recommendations made to the Council are below :

Recommendation 1 – establish commissioning arrangements

The Council should strengthen and formalise current practice, to assure itself that the decision it makes to commission services are consistently shaped

Recommendation 2 – Strengthen compliance with its commissioning arrangements

To ensure the Council's corporate approach to commissioning is consistently used across service areas, the Council should introduce arrangements to monitor compliance with its corporate approach to commissioning

Recommendation 3 – Introduce regular review of the Council’s commissioning arrangements

To ensure the Council identifies opportunities to improve value for money, it should routinely evaluate the effectiveness of its corporate commissioning arrangements across the organisation.

- 3.6 The Council has responded to the report and the completed Management Response Form is attached at **Appendix B**.
- 3.7 The Audit Wales report was considered at the Governance and Audit Committee in July 2025. It was noted at that meeting that the National Report, which will highlight examples of notable practice, would be available in the Autumn and it was proposed that any findings identified in that report could further inform the actions outlined in the Management Response Form.
- 3.8 The report has been referred to this Committee to monitor the progress of the actions identified and also to ensure that the findings in the national report are duly considered and reflected in the final action plan. Audit Wales has confirmed that the publication of the national report has been delayed therefore it has not been possible to update the action plan since Governance and Audit Committee considered it in July.
- 3.9 It is proposed therefore that Committee notes the Audit Wales report and the action plan and that a further report is brought to this Committee when the national report is available and can be reflected in the proposed actions.
- 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 and Nature Implications**
- 6.1 There are no climate change and nature implications arising from this report.
- 7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications**
- 7.1 There are no Safeguarding or corporate parent implications as a result of this report.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

9. Recommendation

9.1 It is recommended that Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- Notes the Audit Wales Report at **Appendix A** along with the Council's Management Response Form to the report at **Appendix B**.
- Receives a further report when the Audit Wales All Wales report is published to consider any further actions required by the Council.

Background documents

None

Arrangements for Commissioning Services – Bridgend County Borough Council

Audit year: 2023-24

Date issued: June 2025

Document reference: 4958A2025

This document has been prepared as part of work performed in accordance with statutory functions.

We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh and English. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to delay. Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg. This document is also available in Welsh.

Contents

Summary report	
Why we did this audit	4
Our audit duties	4
Our objectives for this audit	4
Why commissioning is important	4
What we looked at and what does good look like	5
Our audit methods and when we undertook the audit	5
What we found	6
Our recommendations for the Council	9
Appendices	
Appendix 1 – audit questions and criteria	10

Summary report

Why we did this audit

Our audit duties

- 1 We are carrying out this audit under the duties contained within:
 - section 17 of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 (the 2004 Act) to help enable the Auditor General to be satisfied (or not) that the Council has put in place proper arrangements to secure value for money in the use of its resources; and
 - section 15 of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to help enable the Auditor General to assess the extent to which the Council is acting in accordance with the sustainable development principle in taking steps to meet its well-being objectives.
- 2 This audit may also inform a study for improving value for money under section 41 of the 2004 Act.

Our objectives for this audit

- 3 Our objectives for this audit are to:
 - provide assurance that councils have proper arrangements for commissioning services to secure value for money in the use of resources;
 - provide assurance that councils are acting in accordance with the sustainable development principle in commissioning services; and
 - explain how councils approach the commissioning of services and inspire and empower councils and other public sector bodies by identifying and sharing examples of notable practice/approaches where relevant.
- 4 We are undertaking this audit at each of the 22 principal councils in Wales.

Why commissioning is important

- 5 Commissioning is the process by which the Council designs services it intends to deliver. It starts with defining the service and the desired outputs and outcomes and ends when the Council organises its method of delivery. For example, by establishing a delivery team internally, or through procuring an external supplier.
- 6 Commissioning arrangements can help to ensure services are delivered economically, efficiently and effectively. Conversely, weaknesses in commissioning arrangements can reduce both the impact and value for money of services, even if the processes which follow, such as procurement and contract management are robust.



What we looked at and what does good look like¹

- 7 We reviewed the Council's arrangements for commissioning services and specifically the extent to which this has been developed in accordance with the sustainable development principle; and that it will help to secure value for money in the use of the Council's resources.
- 8 This audit did not cover procurement arrangements or the Council's contract management arrangements.
- 9 The audit sought to answer the overall question: **In commissioning services does the Council put in place proper arrangements to secure value for money in the use of its resources?**
- 10 We used the audit criteria set out in **Appendix 1**, which also shows how the criteria relate to the audit questions. This has been informed by our cumulative knowledge as well as the question hierarchy and positive indicators we have developed to support our Sustainable Development Principle examinations.



Our audit methods and when we undertook the audit

¹ Defined as 'what should be' according to laws or regulations, 'what is expected' according to best practice, or 'what could be', given better conditions.

- 11 Our findings are based on document reviews, and interviews with the senior officer(s) responsible for the development of the Council's strategic approach to commissioning. We also interviewed senior officers with responsibility for services that the Council has commissioned externally.
- 12 Given the wide range of council services, we undertook sample testing of the arrangements the Council has put in place to commission services. To do this, we selected several services where the Council has taken the decision to commission services externally and examined the commissioning arrangements the Council has put in place. The sample of service areas we reviewed in the Council were:
 - Housing Related Support Service at Maple Tree House
 - Housing Related Support Service at Brynmenyn House
 - Extension to the Waste Collection Services contract
 - We also received some evidence about commissioning arrangements in social services and the decision-making process regarding waste services, after the contract extension
- 13 The evidence we used to inform our findings is limited to these sources. We undertook this work during November to December 2024.
- 14 We are undertaking this work at each of the 22 principal councils in Wales and, as well as reporting locally to each council, we also intend to produce a national report.



What we found

- 15 Overall, we found that **the Council does not have arrangements to assure itself that it consistently secures value for money when it commissions services**. We set out below why we reached this conclusion.
- 16 The Council's corporate approach to commissioning is set out in its Commissioning Form. The Form's purpose is to guide service areas when they are procuring services from an external service supplier. The Council does not have any corporate arrangements in place earlier in the commissioning process at the stage when the Council would decide if and how it will commission services.

- 17 The Council's commissioning arrangements require a clear definition of the service to be commissioned. But they do not require a clear rationale for the service or the intended outcomes of the service. However, for the services we examined, the Council had both defined, and explained the need, for the service, together with the intended outcomes. Consistently ensuring that there is an understanding of services to be commissioned, including their intended outcomes, is important to enable the Council to subsequently monitor if it is securing value for money.
- 18 All the services we examined had clear monitoring arrangements for the intended outcomes of the services and also set out how their value for money will be assessed. However, the Council's commissioning arrangements do not require service areas to do this. It is therefore difficult for the Council to assure itself that commissioned services are consistently securing value for money.
- 19 The Council does not have arrangements to ensure that it always conducts a comprehensive options appraisal before commissioning services. Only one of the services we examined considered a range of options for service delivery, including a risk assessment of each option. The options appraisal was informed by a broad range of information, which would help the Council understand a range of factors that could affect the service being commissioned. Not always conducting an options appraisal means that the Council's arrangements do not ensure that it is consistently considering all options for service delivery. This increases the risk that the Council may choose options that do not provide the best value for money. This is particularly important at a time when the Council is experiencing significant financial challenges with a medium-term funding gap of £44.9 million between 2024-25 to 2027-28².
- 20 The Council's commissioning arrangements do not require service areas to consider what long term means in the context of different services. Nor do they require service areas to consider how they will balance long and short-term need. The Council could only demonstrate that it had done this for one of the service areas we examined. However, because the Council does

² Audit Wales, Bridgend County Borough Council, Financial Sustainability Review, September 2024

not consistently consider both the short and the longer term when commissioning services, it risks choosing approaches that do not secure value for money over the longer term. Longer-term considerations could include, for example, providing stability to service providers or delivering longer-term objectives that can be achieved beyond potentially short-term grant funding cycles.

- 21 The Council does not have arrangements to consistently ensure that it understands the full costs of commissioned services. The Council understood the costs of the sample of commissioned services we examined. It had also included mitigating arrangements should funding reduce in the future. However, the Council does not have arrangements to systematically ensure that it understands the full-life costs of all commissioned services, or that contract management costs are included in these costs. By not ensuring that all commissioning decisions are based on comprehensive financial information, the Council risks making commissioning decisions that do not secure value for money.
- 22 The Council's commissioning arrangements do not consistently ensure that the wider impacts that commissioned services could have are considered as part of the commissioning process. Commissioning decisions for services valued over £5 million are taken by the Council's Cabinet. All Cabinet reports require consideration of the Council's own wellbeing objectives. Commissioned services valued less than £5 million do not have to be reported to Cabinet. The examples we looked at were less than the £5 million threshold. For these services, we did not find any evidence that the Council has considered how they could contribute to its well-being objectives as part of the commissioning process. The Council's commissioning arrangements also do not require services to consider the well-being objectives of other public sector bodies or the impact on the national well-being goals. By not taking into account the wider implications of commissioning decisions, the Council increases the risk of duplication and of failing to identify opportunities to secure multiple benefits.
- 23 The Council does not ensure that commissioning decisions are consistently informed by those who will be directly and indirectly affected by commissioned services. We found examples of service areas involving

partners and service users when commissioning their services. For example, the Housing Support projects we looked at are informed by a needs assessment and the service providers are required to seek service users' views. However, the Council's corporate arrangements do not require service areas to systematically consider the full range of people who may be affected by, and who should be involved in, commissioning decisions.

- 24 The Council's commissioning arrangements require service areas to think about which partners and potential partners they could work with to commission services. The services we looked at were able to provide examples where they had pursued joint working and partnership opportunities. Working with the right people and partners can help the Council ensure that its services meet the needs of its communities, and that those services are delivered in a way that maximise value for money.
- 25 As the Council does not have a consistent corporate approach to commissioning across the organisation, it cannot regularly review that approach or ensure that it is used by all service areas.
- 26 The Council does not routinely share lessons learned from its approach to commissioning. It does not have a corporate approach or requirement for service areas to share lessons learned. The services we examined had not undertaken any formal evaluation of the commissioning activity. While some service areas undertake lots of commissioning, other areas of the Council are less experienced. By not regularly reviewing its arrangements for commissioning services and sharing lessons learned, the Council risks missing opportunities to improve both the value for money and impact of its approach.



Our recommendations for the Council

Exhibit 1: our recommendations for the Council

Recommendations

R1 Establish commissioning arrangements

The Council should strengthen and formalise current practice, to assure itself that the decisions it makes to commission services are consistently shaped by:

- an understanding of the service to be commissioned and its intended outcomes (para 17);
- setting out how it will assess and monitor the value for money of commissioned services over the short to longer term (para 18);
- an appraisal of all the options to deliver the service from the perspective of economy, efficiency and effectiveness over the short to longer term (para 19);
- planning over an appropriate timescale (para 20);
- an understanding of long-term resource implications (para 21);
- ensuring that wider impacts of the service are maximised (para 22);
- working with the right people and partners to design and deliver the service (para 23); and
- sharing lessons across the organisation (para 25).

R2 Strengthen compliance with its commissioning arrangements

To ensure that the Council's corporate approach to commissioning is consistently used across service areas, the Council should introduce arrangements to monitor compliance with its corporate approach to commissioning (para 25).

R3 Introduce regular review of the Council's commissioning arrangements

Recommendations

To ensure the Council identifies opportunities to improve value for money, it should routinely evaluate the effectiveness of its corporate commissioning arrangements across the organisation (para 25).

Appendix 1

Audit questions and criteria

Overall question: In commissioning services does the Council put in place proper arrangements to secure value for money in the use of its resources?

	Level 3 questions	Criteria
Does the Council have a clear rationale for commissioning services?	Does the Council clearly define the services it intends to commission and why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council sets out a clear definition of the services it intends to commission. • The Council sets out 'why' it needs to commission the services including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the intended outcomes/impact of delivering the service; and – if/how the service helps the Council meet its statutory duties.
	Does the Council conduct a comprehensive options appraisal of commissioning options before deciding to commission a service?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council considers the full range of commissioning options for providing the service – options might include for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – in-house provision; – partnership arrangements or approaches to commissioning within and across sectors; – externalising the service to another provider through a trust or other arrangement; and – contracting the service through a tender process. • The Council considers the cost-benefits of the options from the perspective of economy, efficiency and effectiveness – including over the short, medium and long term. • The Council includes the costs of contract management within its assessment of commissioning options. • The Council includes an assessment of risk for each commissioning option

	Level 3 questions	Criteria
		<p>as part of the assessment of cost-benefits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council uses a broad range of information from internal and external sources to develop an understanding of the current and long-term factors that are likely to impact on commissioned services.
Is the Council planning over an appropriate timescale?	Does the Council consider what long-term means when commissioning services?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council considers what long term means in planning its approach to commissioning services – ie how far ahead it can/should plan and why. • The Council considers how it will balance short and long-term needs when planning the commissioning of services, including, for example, when determining the timeframe for contracts or other commissioning arrangements.
	Does the Council understand long-term resource implications when commissioning services?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council thinks about the resources it will need over the medium and longer term (whole life costs) to deliver commissioned services. • The Council considers how a range of future budget reduction scenarios could be implemented to commissioned services.
	Does the Council set out how it will monitor the value for money of commissioned services over the short, medium and long term?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council sets out the monitoring arrangements it will follow for the commissioned service. • The Council should set out how value for money of commissioned services will be assessed and monitored including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – costs and benefits; and – progress towards short, medium and longer-term milestones and measures.

	Level 3 questions	Criteria
Has the Council thought about the wider impacts its commissioned service could have?	In commissioning services, does the Council consider how it can maximise their contribution to the Council's well-being objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council considers how commissioned services will impact on all of its own well-being objectives to secure multiple benefits, avoid duplication or any unintended consequences. Eg consideration of longer-term objectives, local supply chain, market resilience and impact of contract length of time, bio-diversity, carbon reduction.
	In commissioning services, does the Council consider how services can maximise their contribution to the well-being objectives of other public sector bodies?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council considers how commissioned services will impact on the well-being objectives of other public sector bodies to secure multiple benefits and avoid duplication or any unintended consequences.
	In commissioning services, does the Council consider how services can maximise their contribution to the National Well-being Goals?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council considers how commissioned services will impact on the national well-being goals to secure multiple benefits and avoid duplication or any unintended consequences.
Is the Council working with the right people and partners to design and deliver its commissioned services?	Has the Council identified who it needs to involve?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council understands who will be directly and indirectly affected by commissioned services. This has been informed by a stakeholder analysis or similar.
	Is the Council involving the full diversity of people?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council involves the full diversity of views in deciding how to commission services. The Council uses the results of involvement activity to inform how it will commission services, including its impact on groups who share protected characteristics.
	Is the Council collaborating with the right partners?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council has a good understanding of which partners and potential partners it could work with

Level 3 questions		Criteria
		<p>to commission services to improve value for money. This has been informed by comprehensive analysis of potential partners and their priorities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where opportunities to improve value for money by commissioning of services in partnership are identified, the Council pursues them.
Does the Council have arrangements in place to evaluate the value for money of its approach to commissioning?	Does the Council routinely evaluate the effectiveness of commissioning arrangements?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council regularly reviews the effectiveness of its approach to commissioning including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the extent to which commissioned services meet the objectives the Council has set; and the value for money of chosen commissioning models including consideration of inputs, outputs and outcomes.
	Does the Council routinely share any lessons learned to inform future commissioning exercises?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council shares and applies any lessons learned from its approach to commissioning widely across the organisation, and with partners where relevant.



Audit Wales

1 Capital Quarter

Cardiff CF10 4BZ

Tel: 029 2032 0500

Fax: 029 2032 0600

Textphone: 029 2032 0660

E-mail: info@audit.wales

Website: www.audit.wales

We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh and English. Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg.

Management response form



Audit Wales use only

Audited body	Bridgend County Borough Council
Audit name	Commissioning Arrangements
Issue date	05.06.25

Ref	Recommendation	Commentary on planned actions	Completion date for planned actions	Responsible officer (title)	Audit Wales only
R1	<p>Establish commissioning arrangements</p> <p>The Council should strengthen and formalise current practice, to assure itself that the decisions it makes to commission services are consistently shaped by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an understanding of the service to be commissioned 	Good practice guidelines will be produced to ensure that the existing practice highlighted in the report is standardised across all service areas	December 2025	Chief Executive / CMB	

Ref	Recommendation	Commentary on planned actions	Completion date for planned actions	Responsible officer (title)	Audit Wales only
	<p>and its intended outcomes (para 17);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• setting out how it will assess and monitor the value for money of commissioned services over the short to longer term (para 18);• an appraisal of all the options to deliver the service from the perspective of economy, efficiency and effectiveness over the short to longer term (para 19);• planning over an appropriate timescale (para 20);• an understanding of long-term resource implications (para 21);				

Ref	Recommendation	Commentary on planned actions	Completion date for planned actions	Responsible officer (title)	Audit Wales only
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensuring that wider impacts of the service are maximised (para 22); working with the right people and partners to design and deliver the service (para 23); and sharing lessons across the organisation (para 25). 				
R2	<p>Strengthen compliance with its commissioning arrangements</p> <p>To ensure that the Council's corporate approach to commissioning is consistently used across service areas, the Council should introduce</p>	Directors will bring bi-annual reports to CMB to monitor arrangements and ensure the corporate approach is being consistently applied.	December 2025	Chief Executive / CMB	

Ref	Recommendation	Commentary on planned actions	Completion date for planned actions	Responsible officer (title)	Audit Wales only
	arrangements to monitor compliance with its corporate approach to commissioning. (Para 25).				
R3	<p>Introduce regular review of the Council’s commissioning arrangements</p> <p>To ensure the Council identifies opportunities to improve value for money it should routinely evaluate the effectiveness of its corporate commissioning arrangements across the organisation. (Para 25).</p>	The commissioning arrangements will be reviewed annually and amended if considered appropriate.	March 2026	Chief Executive / CMB	

Ref	Recommendation	Commentary on planned actions	Completion date for planned actions	Responsible officer (title)	Audit Wales only
		The commissioning arrangements will b			

This page is intentionally left blank

Meeting of:	CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	23 OCTOBER 2025
Report Title:	FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE
Report Owner/ Responsible Chief Officer / Cabinet Member:	CHIEF OFFICER – LEGAL & REGULATORY SERVICES, HR & ELECTORAL
Responsible Officer:	MERYL LAWRENCE SENIOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER – SCRUTINY
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	The work of the Overview & 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.
Executive Summary:	<p>The Council's Constitution requires the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to develop and implement a Forward Work Programme for the Committee.</p> <p>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, note the Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet for this Committee and the Forward Work Programmes for each of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees attached for information</p>

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- a) Present the Committee with the Forward Work Programme attached as **Appendix A** for consideration and approval;
- 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 3.5 of this report;
- d) Present the Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet for this Committee attached as **Appendix B** to track responses to the Committee's recommendations made at previous meetings;
- e) Present the Forward Work Programmes for the other Overview and Scrutiny Committees attached as **Appendices C, D and E** for information, following consideration in their respective 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 of the other Overview and Scrutiny Committees to propose items for the Forward Work Programme having regard for the Council's Corporate Priorities and Risk Management framework. Where a matter for consideration by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee also falls within the remit of one or more other Committees, the decision as to which Committee will consider it will be resolved by the respective Chairs or, if they fail to agree, the Chair of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

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 maximise 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

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee Draft Forward Work Programme

- 3.1 Following the approval of the schedule of Scrutiny Committee meeting dates at the Annual Meeting of Council on 14 May 2025, the standing statutory reports to this Scrutiny Committee 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 draft Forward Work Programme.
- 3.2 The draft outline Forward Work Programme for each of the other Overview and Scrutiny Committees 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 scheduled for consideration in January 2026, following which the Committee will make conclusions and recommendations in a report on the overall strategic overview of Cabinet's draft Budget proposals to the meeting of Cabinet in February 2026.
- 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 and any updated information gathered from Forward Work Programme Planning meetings with Corporate Directors.

Identification of Further Items

- 3.5 The Committee are reminded that the Scrutiny selection criteria used by Scrutiny Committee Members to consider, select and prioritise items emphasises the need to consider issues such as impact, risk, performance, budget and community perception when identifying topics for investigation to maximise the impact scrutiny can have on a topic and the outcomes for people. The 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

- 3.6 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.
- 3.7 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.
- 3.8 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.

- 3.9 The Forward Work Programme for COSC is attached as **Appendix A** for the Committee's consideration.
- 3.10 The Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet to track outstanding responses to the Committee's recommendations made at previous meetings is attached as **Appendix B**.
- 3.11 The Forward Work Programmes for the other Overview and Scrutiny Committees are attached as **Appendices C, D and E** for information.
- 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 4 Wellbeing Objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015** as follows:

1. A prosperous place with thriving communities
2. Creating modern, seamless public services
3. Enabling people to meet their potential
4. Supporting our most vulnerable

6. Climate Change and Nature 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 or Nature 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 this 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 3.5 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 the Forward Work Programmes for the other Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees attached as **Appendices C, D and E for information**, following consideration in their respective Committee meetings.

Background documents

None.

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee
2025-26 Forward Work Programme

Monday 30 June 2025 at 10.00am		
Report Topics	Any Specific Information Requested	Invitees
Revenue Budget Outturn 2024-25		<u>All Cabinet Members</u> <u>Officers</u> Chief Executive; Chief Officer - Finance, Housing and Change; Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People; Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing; Corporate Director – Communities; Chief Officer Legal and Regulatory Services, HR & Electoral.
Scrutiny Budget Working Group		N/A
Corporate Parenting Champion Nomination		N/A
Nominations to the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Arrangements following Transition to a Single Public Services Board (PSB) for Cwm Taf Morgannwg		N/A
Forward Work Programme Update		N/A

Thursday 24 July 2025 at 10.00am		
Report Topics	Any Specific Information Requested	Invitees
Budget Monitoring 2025-26 – Quarter 1 Revenue Forecast		<u>All Cabinet Members</u> <u>Officers</u> Chief Executive; Chief Officer - Finance, Housing and Change; Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People; Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing; Corporate Director – Communities; Chief Officer Legal and Regulatory Services, HR & Electoral.

APPENDIX A

Quarter 4 / Year End Performance 2024-25		As above plus: Corporate Policy and Public Affairs Manager; Corporate Performance Manager; and Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisational Development.
Self-Assessment 2024-25		As above.
Digital Strategy		<u>Cabinet Members</u> Cabinet Member(s) for Resources <u>Officers</u> Chief Executive; and Chief Officer - Finance, Housing and Change
Scrutiny Budget Working Group		<u>N/A</u>

Thursday 23 October 2025 at 10.00am

Report Topics	Any Specific Information Requested	Invitees
Budget Monitoring 2025-26 – Quarter 2 Revenue Forecast		<u>All Cabinet Members</u> Chief Executive; Chief Officer - Finance, Housing and Change; Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People; Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing; Corporate Director – Communities; and Chief Officer Legal and Regulatory Services, HR & Electoral.
Arrangements for Commissioning Services		<u>Cabinet Members</u> Leader of the Council; Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance <u>Officers</u> Chief Executive; Chief Officer - Finance, Housing and Change; and Chief Officer Legal and Regulatory Services, HR & Electoral.

Thursday 11 December 2025 at 10.00am

Report Topics	Any Specific Information Requested	Invitees
Quarter 2 Performance Report 2025-26		<u>All Cabinet Members</u> <u>Officers</u> Chief Executive;

APPENDIX A

		<p>Chief Officer - Finance, Housing and Change; Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People; Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing; Corporate Director – Communities; Chief Officer Legal and Regulatory Services, HR & Electoral; Corporate Policy and Public Affairs Manager; Corporate Performance Manager; and Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisational Development.</p>
Corporate Plan Delivery Plan 2025-26		As above.
Scrutiny Annual Report 2024/25		N/A

Thursday 15 January 2026 at 10.00am

Report Topics	Any Specific Information Requested	Invitees
Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2026-27 to 2029-30 and Budget Proposals		<p><u>All Cabinet Members</u></p> <p><u>Officers</u> Chief Executive; Chief Officer - Finance, Housing and Change; Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People; Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing; Corporate Director – Communities; Chief Officer Legal and Regulatory Services, HR & Electoral; Corporate Policy and Public Affairs Manager;</p> <p>Deputy Head of Finance; and Finance Manager – Social Services & Wellbeing / Chief Executive's Directorate; and Finance Manager – Education, Early Years and Young People / Communities Directorate.</p>

APPENDIX A**Tuesday 27 January 2026 at 10.00am**

Report Topics	Any Specific Information Requested	Invitees
Scrutiny Recommendations on Medium Term Financial Strategy 2026-27 to 2029-30 and Draft Budget Consultation Process		<p><u>Cabinet Member</u> Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance; Cabinet Member(s) for Resources; and</p> <p><u>Officers</u> Chief Officer - Finance, Housing and Change</p>
Capital Strategy 2026-27 onwards		<p><u>Cabinet Members</u> Leader of the Council; Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance;</p> <p><u>Officers</u> Chief Officer Finance, Housing and Change; and Group Manager – Chief Accountant</p>
Budget Monitoring 2025-26 – Quarter 3 Revenue Forecast		<p><u>All Cabinet Members</u></p> <p><u>Officers</u> Chief Executive; Chief Officer – Finance, Housing and Change; Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People; Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing; Corporate Director – Communities; and Chief Officer Legal and Regulatory Services, HR & Electoral.</p>

Thursday 26 March 2026 at 10.00am

Report Topics	Any Specific Information Requested	Invitees
Quarter 3 Performance Report 2025-26		<p><u>All Cabinet Members</u></p> <p><u>Officers</u> Chief Executive; Chief Officer - Finance, Housing and Change; Corporate Director - Education and Early Years and Young People; Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing; Corporate Director – Communities; Chief Officer Legal and Regulatory Services, HR & Electoral; Corporate Policy and Public Affairs Manager</p>

APPENDIX A

		Corporate Performance Manager; and Group Manager – Human Resources and Organisational Development.
Corporate Plan Delivery Plan Review 2025-26		<p><u>Cabinet Members</u> Leader of the Council; Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance;</p> <p><u>Officers</u> Chief Executive; Chief Officer Finance, Housing and Change; Corporate Policy and Public Affairs Manager.</p>

Reports to be Scheduled		
Report Topics	Any Specific Information Requested	Invitees
Staff Survey	Including responses, outcome of staff focus groups and future staff surveys.	<p><u>Cabinet Members</u> Leader of the Council; Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance;</p> <p><u>Officers</u> Chief Executive; Group Manager – Communications and Public Affairs</p>
Engagement and Participation Strategy Action Plan	Update to be provided within 12 months	TBC
Workforce Strategy Monitoring Action Plans	To monitor progress / implementation of Action Plans	<p><u>Cabinet Members</u> Leader of the Council; Deputy Leader of Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services, Health and Wellbeing; Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance;</p> <p><u>Officers</u> Chief Executive; Chief Officer Legal and Regulatory Services, HR & Electoral; Group Manager – Human Resources Organisational Development</p>
Whole-Council response to Climate Change and the Environment	Information on how the Council manages contingencies for emergency responses, e.g. the impact on the Highways budget due to recent storm damage.	<p><u>Cabinet Members</u> Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment;</p> <p><u>Officers</u> Chief Executive; Chief Officer – Finance, Housing and Change; Corporate Director – Communities; Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing; and</p>

APPENDIX A

		Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People.
Independent review and transfer of Early Help service from the Education, Early Years and Young People Directorate to the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate	Recommendation from COSC 30 June 2025	To be discussed in work planning meeting.

Briefings and Workshops:

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Information Required / Committee's Role</u>	<u>Invitees</u>
Funding arrangements with, and the steps being undertaken to ensure fair contributions from, partner organisations, including the Health Board, for the provision of residential placements and the delivery of social care.	Recommendation from COSC on 24 October 2024.	<u>Cabinet Members</u> Cabinet Member for Social Services, Helah and Wellbeing; <u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing

APPENDIX B**CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - RECOMMENDATIONS MONITORING ACTION SHEET 2025-26**

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Outcome	Response
30 June 2025	Revenue Budget Outturn 2024-25	The Committee expressed concern regarding the shortfall for teachers' pay and pensions from the Revenue Support Grant and the impact of late settlements and grant funding and recommended that conversations needed to be boosted on a political level to support additional allocation and multi-year settlements.	Chief Officer – Finance, Housing and Change / CCMB	ACTIONED - Response circulated to Members of the Committee on 16 October 2025	Follow link here
30 June 2025	Revenue Budget Outturn 2024-25	The Committee expressed concern regarding the unexpected storm damage costs arising from Storm Bert and Storm Darragh and recommended that consideration be given to establishing an earmarked reserve/contingency fund for use in the event of an emergency arising from adverse weather events.	Corporate Director – Communities	ACTIONED - Response circulated to Members of the Committee on 16 October 2025	Follow link here
30 June 2025	Revenue Budget Outturn 2024-25	The Committee requested copies of the information regarding the work undertaken around the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) agenda in England and the 2014 Estyn report	Corporate Director - Education, Early Years and Young People	Circulated for response. Chased.	

APPENDIX B

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Outcome	Response
		referred to by the Corporate Director.			
30 June 2025	Revenue Budget Outturn 2024-25	The Committee discussed the impact of redundancies in schools and requested the number of voluntary redundancies for the period reported.	Corporate Director - Education, Early Years and Young People	Circulated for response. Chased.	
30 June 2025	Revenue Budget Outturn 2024-25	The Committee requested information regarding the sum of money funding hospital education referred to in Budget Reduction Proposal EDF515.	Corporate Director - Education, Early Years and Young People	Circulated for response. Chased.	
30 June 2025	Revenue Budget Outturn 2024-25	The Committee requested an all Member Briefing be provided detailing the specialist hospital provision for learners referred to above.	Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People	Circulated for response. Chased.	
30 June 2025	Revenue Budget Outturn 2024-25	The Committee requested a Briefing paper outlining the Council's earmarked reserves, their purpose and up to date position as of 31 March 2025.	Chief Officer – Finance, Housing and Change	ACTIONED - Response circulated to Members of the Committee on 16 October 2025	Follow link here
30 June 2025	Revenue Budget Outturn 2024-25	The Committee discussed the impact of late grant funding on the overall financial position of the Council and requested clarity on whether the realignment of base budgets had been sufficient to	Chief Officer – Finance, Housing and Change	ACTIONED - Response circulated to Members of the Committee on 16 October 2025	Follow link here

APPENDIX B

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Outcome	Response
		meet the pressures from 2024-25. The Committee also requested information regarding which grants were one-offs and which were ongoing.			
30 June 2025	Revenue Budget Outturn 2024-25	The Committee discussed the shortfall against Bridgend Market due to the identification of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) and the subsequent closure of the market and loss of rental income and requested a confidential Briefing be provided to Members regarding the Council's future plans for the Market.	Corporate Director – Communities	ACTIONED - Response circulated to Members of the Committee on 16 October 2025	Follow link here
24 July 2025	Budget Monitoring – Quarter 1 Revenue Forecast 2025-26	The Committee requested: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. the terms of reference for the fleet services review report be circulated to Members;b. that the scope of the report should include the extent of the losses and the importance of the fleet services function; andc. the date by which the Committee could expect the report scheduled.	Interim Head of Operations – Community Services	Circulated for response. Chased.	

APPENDIX B

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Outcome	Response
24 July 2025	Budget Monitoring – Quarter 1 Revenue Forecast 2025-26	The Committee requested an update confirming when the exit terms of the recycling centre at Tythegston are likely to be finalised and the likely costs of any remediation works.	Corporate Director – Communities / Interim Head of Operations – Community Services	Circulated for response. Chased.	
24 July 2025	Budget Monitoring – Quarter 1 Revenue Forecast 2025-26	The Committee requested the most up to date figure of deficit balances for schools.	Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People	Circulated for response. Chased.	
24 July 2025	Quarter 4 / Year End Performance 2024-25	The Committee expressed concern regarding the lack of a target regarding sickness levels and recommended that the issue of sickness and appraisals is strengthened in the Corporate Plan Delivery Plan which is scheduled to the December meeting of the Committee.	Corporate Policy & Performance Manager	ACTIONED - Response circulated to Members of the Committee on 16 October 2025	Follow link here
24 July 2025	Quarter 4 / Year End Performance 2024-25	The Committee recommended that the Deep Dive Group for the Chief Executive Directorate explore the support available for employees and the issues of	Scrutiny to Action with Chairs of Deep Dive Groups	Scrutiny actioned with Chair of Deep Dive Group.	Complete

APPENDIX B

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Outcome	Response
		staffing in the financial and legal departments.			
24 July 2025	Quarter 4 / Year End Performance 2024-25	The Committee requested comparative sickness data from other Welsh local authorities when available from Data Cymru.	Group Manager – Human Resources	Circulated for response. Chased.	
24 July 2025	Quarter 4 / Year End Performance 2024-25	The Committee expressed concern regarding the achievability of the 100% target for mandatory e-learning modules and requested an update demonstrating the change to the Performance Indicator for the upcoming year and how mandatory e-learning will be managed. In addition, the Committee requested that Members be kept informed of the movement from the old to the new model.	Chief Officer – Legal & Regulatory Services, HR and Electoral	Circulated for response. Chased.	
24 July 2025	Quarter 4 / Year End Performance 2024-25	In relation to the staff survey, the Committee requested : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. a written briefing on the work being undertaken; b. confirmation of when the Committee could receive a full report on the topic; and c. data demonstrating any directorates/service areas 	Chief Officer – Legal & Regulatory Services, HR and Electoral / Group Manager – Communications, Public Affairs & Policy	Circulated for response. Chased.	

APPENDIX B

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Outcome	Response
		where the response rate has been particularly low.			
24 July 2025	Self-Assessment 2024-25	The Committee recommended that the new Welsh-Medium Seedling School planned for Porthcawl be included in 'expanding Welsh medium education opportunities' section of the report.	Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People	ACTIONED - Response circulated to Members of the Committee on 16 October 2025	Follow link here
24 July 2025	Self-Assessment 2024-25	The Committee expressed concern regarding the Council's ability to recruit to certain technical positions and recommended that a recruitment plan be developed exploring creative approaches and a sustainability plan for recruitment.	Corporate Director – Communities / Interim Head of Operations – Community Services	Circulated for response. Chased.	
24 July 2025	Digital Strategy	The Committee expressed concern regarding the relatively low number of responses received to the consultation and recommended that responses be sought from young people in schools, Bridgend College and Bridgend Youth Council.	Chief Officer – Finance, Housing and Change / Group Manager – Transformation, Business Support & Customer Services	Circulated for response. Chased.	

APPENDIX B

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Outcome	Response
24 July 2025	Digital Strategy	The Committee requested a copy of the draft Digital Strategy 2025-2029.	Chief Officer – Finance, Housing and Change / Scrutiny	Digital Strategy circulated to Members on 6 August 2025.	Follow link here
24 July 2025	Digital Strategy	The Committee requested the number of Hwb devices apportioned per School and further detail of the investment in the replacement programme.	Interim Head of Operations – Community Services	Circulated for response. Chased.	
24 July 2025	Digital Strategy	The Committee requested that detail of broadband social tariffs for individuals on means tested benefits be circulated to Members to allow them to update residents accordingly.	Cabinet Member - Resources	Circulated for response. Chased.	
24 July 2025	Forward Work Programme Update	The Committee requested that the Audit Wales Report, <i>Arrangements for Commissioning Services – Bridgend County Borough Council</i> referred from the Governance and Audit Committee be circulated to Members of the Committee for consideration and that an update on the report be added to the Committee's FWP on 23 October 2025.	Scrutiny / Chair of COSC	Report circulated to Members of the Committee on 16 October 2025 and Report added to the Committee's Forward Work Programme for 23 October 2025.	Complete

This page is intentionally left blank

APPENDIX B**CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - RECOMMENDATIONS MONITORING ACTION SHEET 2024-25**

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Outcome	Response
9 September 2024	Director of Social Services Annual Report 2023/24	The Committee requested that the Recovery Plan considered by the Social Services Improvement Board be circulated to Members of the Committee.	Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing/ Scrutiny.	Response circulated to Members of the Committee on 22 August 2025	Complete
24 October 2024	Budget Monitoring 2024-25 - Quarter 2 Revenue Forecast	The Committee expressed concern regarding the risk that next year, many schools could have deficit budgets of over 5% which require a deficit recovery plan, as schools' budgets are being based on this year's figures and not taking account of further indicative budget reduction proposals for 2025-26. The Committee therefore recommended that future reports relating to the budget include projected deficit figures for schools accordingly.	Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change / Corporate Director - Education, Early Years and Young People	ACTIONED: Response circulated to Members of the Committee on 2 September 2025	Follow link here
24 October 2024	Budget Monitoring 2024-25 - Quarter 2 Revenue Forecast	The Committee recommended that the next quarterly report include details of the actions taken by Cabinet and the Corporate Management Board, to find the full required savings in respect of non-	Corporate Management Board	ACTIONED: Response circulated to Members of the Committee on 2 September 2025	Follow link here

APPENDIX B

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Outcome	Response
		essential recruitment and expenditure.			
24 October 2024	Budget Monitoring 2024-25 - Quarter 2 Revenue Forecast	The Committee requested additional information on the funding arrangements with, and the steps being undertaken to ensure fair contributions from, partner organisations, including the Health Board, for the provision of residential placements and the delivery of social care.	Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing	ACTIONED: Response circulated to Members of the Committee on 2 September 2025	Follow link here
15 Jan 2025	Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-25 to 2027-28	<p>The Committee recommended that a letter be sent on behalf of the Committee to Welsh Government and the UK Government regarding the following:</p> <p>a. expressing that national policy commitments resulting from legislative changes should be fully funded both in terms of capital funding and ongoing revenue funding including a commitment to fund employer national insurance payments for individuals employed by agencies who provide services to the Council which currently results in a £1.5m cost pressure;</p>	Chair/ Scrutiny	ACTIONED: Response and information circulated 22 August 2025.	Follow link here

APPENDIX B

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Outcome	Response
		and b. expressing concern regarding the repeated lateness of the settlement and requesting a commitment to bring forward the settlement date and to request that consideration be given to providing indicative multi-year settlements.			
28 January 2025	Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-25 to 2027-28 and Draft Budget Consultation Process	The Committee expressed concern regarding the perceived discrepancy between the Welsh Government promoting a 4% investment in education and Bridgend proposing a 1% cut to school budgets. The Committee were advised that Bridgend's allocation from the additional Welsh Government funding for education in Wales equated to around £10.8m. The Committee requested a copy of the letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Education detailing the breakdown of this allocation referred to by the Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People.	Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People	ACTIONED: Response circulated to Members of the Committee on 2 September 2025	Follow link here
28 January 2025	Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-	The Committee expressed concern regarding the impact of falling pupil roll numbers on funding for schools	Corporate Director – Education, Early	ACTIONED:	Follow link here

APPENDIX B

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Outcome	Response
	25 to 2027-28 and Draft Budget Consultation Process	and requested the pupil numbers on roll for past years and a projection of future numbers including the Pupil Admission Number (PAN) for each school.	Years and Young People	Response circulated to Members of the Committee on 2 September 2025	
28 January 2025	Budget Monitoring 2024-25 - Quarter 3 Revenue Forecast	The Committee expressed concern that the White Paper from Welsh Government regarding home to school transport is still awaited and the impact being a significant recurring overspend on service provision. The Committee recommended that transformation of the service was required and that there needed to be work and education around the public bus network. The Committee also expressed concern, that a Welsh Government review of bus network services and franchising will commence in North Wales so that a review of Bridgend is not scheduled for at least two years.	Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People	ACTIONED: Response circulated to Members of the Committee on 2 September 2025	Follow link here
28 January 2025	Budget Monitoring 2024-25 - Quarter 3 Revenue Forecast	The Committee expressed concern regarding the significant increase in demand for learners with additional learning needs (ALN) driving the overspend position in this area and queried whether the reasons for the increase in	Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People	ACTIONED: Response circulated to Members of the Committee on 2 September 2025	Follow link here

APPENDIX B

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Outcome	Response
		<p>demand and the projected likely demand for ALN services were sufficiently understood.</p> <p>The Committee requested a copy of the Estyn review report referred to by the Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People regarding the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 which considered some areas of learning needs and support required for learners and which provided a helpful summary of themes from a number of schools across Wales.</p>			

This page is intentionally left blank

Education and Youth Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
2025-26 Forward Work Programme

Thursday, 3 July 2025 at 11.00am		
Report Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Bridgend Youth Justice Service and Bridgend Youth Support Service		<p><u>Cabinet Member</u> Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance</p> <p><u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People; Strategic Manager – Youth Justice Service; Operational Managers - Youth Justice Service; Group Manager (Early Years and Young People); and Youth Support Services Manager (BYS)</p> <p>Youth Council Representative</p>

Monday, 15 September 2025 at 11.00am		
Report Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Mental Health and Wellbeing Support for Learners	To include a holistic focus on the mental health and wellbeing support provided to learners to assist them to attend education, and information regarding any support regarding any support available from Social Services, General Practitioners, the Health Board and third sector.	<p><u>Cabinet Member</u> Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Services, Health and Wellbeing; Cabinet Member for Education and Youth Services;</p> <p><u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People; Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing; Head of Learning; Group Manager – Prevention and Wellbeing</p> <p>Youth Council Representative</p> <p>Representatives from Health Representatives from CAMHS</p> <p>Headteacher Nominees</p>

Monday, 13 October 2025 at 11.00am CANCELLED		
Report Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Online Safety and Digital Learning - To be rescheduled to 24 November 2025	<p>Overview of the issues regarding online safety and key priorities and challenges.</p> <p>To include: Safeguarding/online safety Digital Learning Use of mobile phones/devices</p>	<p><u>Cabinet Member</u> Cabinet Member for Education and Youth Services</p> <p><u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People; Head of Learning; Group Manager – (Schools); Digital Lead Officer; Lead Officer – Strategic Development (Primary Sector) Lead Officer – Strategic Development (Secondary Sector)</p> <p>Youth Council Representative</p> <p>Headteacher Nominees</p>

Monday, 24 November 2025 at 11.00am		
Report Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Teaching and Learning in Schools in Bridgend	<p>Teacher and Learner Feedback</p> <p>Progress Update - Implementation Curriculum for Wales</p>	<p><u>Cabinet Member</u> Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Services, Health and Wellbeing; Cabinet Member for Education and Youth Services;</p> <p><u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People; Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing; Head of Learning; Group Manager – Prevention and Wellbeing</p> <p>Youth Council Representative</p> <p>Headteacher Nominees</p> <p><u>External</u> Representatives from Health</p>

Physical Health, Healthy Living and Wellbeing	To include an Update on the Universal Primary Free School Meals Implementation.	<p><u>Cabinet Member</u> Cabinet Member for Education and Youth Services</p> <p><u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People; Head of Learning; Group Manager – (Schools)</p> <p>Youth Council Representative</p> <p>Headteacher Nominees</p>
--	---	---

Monday, 9 February 2026 at 11.00am		
Report Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
<p>Future School Modernisation</p> <p>School Maintenance</p>	<p>An audit of the condition of all schools in Bridgend County.</p> <p>An analysis of the lessons learned from the school modernisation projects that have happened or in the process of being planned and built, including the impact of wider political and economic forces. The report would need to consider such issues as the role and value of price caps; risk management and mitigation, including the impact of ecological ones on project timing and costs; procurement; land acquisition; the impact of design changes to projects; and project management and oversight, especially in terms of the contribution made by Cabinet and the Corporate Management Board.</p> <p>The future demography of the County Borough, and the impact of new and proposed housing developments, and the potential knock-on impact on school catchment areas and pupil numbers.</p> <p>The future of school modernisation and project finance in Wales.</p> <p>To include an on the progress of increasing specialist provision.</p>	<p><u>Cabinet Member</u> Cabinet Member for Education and Youth Services; Cabinet Member for Finance & Performance;</p> <p><u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People; Corporate Director - Communities; Head of Learning;</p> <p>Deputy Head of Finance; Accountant – Capital and Grants;</p> <p>Interim Head of Operations - Community Services; Manager (Sustainable Communities for Learning); Group Manager – Corporate Landlord; Senior Portfolio Surveyor, Education and Wellbeing;</p> <p>Youth Council Representative</p> <p>Headteacher Nominees</p>

Monday, 16 March 2026 at 11.00am		
Report Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Early Review of School Improvement Arrangements into the Local Authority		<u>Cabinet Member</u> Cabinet Member for Education and Youth Services <u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People; Head of Learning; Group Manager – (Schools); and Youth Council Representative Headteacher Nominees

Briefings and Workshops:

Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees and Date
New Estyn Inspection Framework / Local Government Education Services (LGES)		
Update on Effective School Governing Bodies – Appointment, Support and Funding	Invitation to be extended to Governors Association	
School Safeguarding Audits Summary		Autumn 2025
Pupil and Learner Attainment Outcomes	To include Validated Exam Results	January 2026
Support for Home-Educated Learners		TBC

Items to be Scheduled to the Committee's 2026-2027 Forward Work Programme

- May/June 2026 – Close Current 3 year Strategic Plan and Open New 3 Year Strategic Plan (possibly to include Review of Post Inspection Plan)
- September 2026 – Future School Improvement Arrangements
Home to School Transport Update Report

Information Report to be provided:

- Autumn 2025/Spring 2026 – English Language School Catchment Areas / Capacity

Research and Evaluation Panel

- From Autumn 2025 - School Improvement Research and Evaluation Panel (REP)

Social Services, Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee
2025-26 Forward Work Programme

Wednesday, 9 July 2025 at 10.00am		
Report Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Regional Partnership Agreement	Pre-Decision	<p><u>Cabinet Member</u> Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Services, Health and Wellbeing</p> <p><u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing; Head of Adult Social Care; Group Manager – Integrated Community Services Manager; and</p> <p><u>External</u> Regional Integrated Services Director for Cwm Taf Morgannwg; and Director, Primary Care, Community & Mental Health – Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board</p>

Thursday 11 September 2025 at 10.00am		
Report Topics	Any Specific Information Requested	Invitees
Social Services Annual Report 2024-25	Pre-Decision	<p><u>Cabinet Member</u> Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services, Health and Wellbeing;</p> <p><u>Officers</u> Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing; Head of Adult Social Care; Head of Children and Family Services. Group Manager - Prevention and Wellbeing; Group Manager – Commissioning; and Group Manager - Business Strategy, Performance & Improvement.</p>
Social Services Representations and Complaints 2024-25	Pre-Decision	<p><u>Cabinet Member</u> Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services, Health and Wellbeing;</p> <p><u>Officers</u> Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing.</p>

APPENDIX D**Thursday, 25 September 2025 at 10.00am**

Report Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Care Inspectorate Wales Improvement Check of Children and Family Services - June 2025 and Care Inspectorate Wales Fostering Service Inspection - June 2025	CIW to present the Improvement Check report to the Committee.	<u>Cabinet Member</u> Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Services, Health and Wellbeing <u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing; Head of Children and Family Services; Deputy Head of Children and Family Services; <u>External</u> Representatives from Care Inspectorate Wales

Thursday, 6 November 2025 at 10.00am

Report Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report 2024-25		<u>Cabinet Member</u> Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Services, Health and Wellbeing <u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing; Head of Adult Social Care; Head of Children and Family Services; Group Manager – Information, Advice and Assistance and Safeguarding; Team Manager – Older People Mental Health; and Education and Community Safety Leads
Community Hubs Strategy	Including Libraries post consultation.	<u>Cabinet Member</u> Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Services, Health and Wellbeing <u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing; Group Manager – Prevention and Wellbeing; <u>External</u> Chief Executive – Awen

APPENDIX D**Thursday, 4 December 2025 at 10.00am**

Report Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Halo, Leisure Arrangements and Wellbeing	Including plans and various programmes provided e.g. carer's offer.	<p><u>Cabinet Member</u> Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Services, Health and Wellbeing</p> <p><u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing; Group Manager – Prevention and Wellbeing;</p> <p><u>External</u> Active Communities Manager – Halo Leisure</p>

Thursday, 12 March 2026 at 10.00am

Report Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Assisted Transport Policy Implementation Progress	Post implementation progress report	<p><u>Cabinet Member</u> Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Services, Health and Wellbeing</p> <p><u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing; Head of Adult Social Care; Policy Officer – Social Care;</p> <p><u>External</u> Representatives from People First</p>
Learning Disability Transformation Programme Progress	Post implementation progress report	

Monday, 27 April 2026 at 10.00am

Report Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Provision of Accommodation Based Regulated Support Services in Bridgend	<p>Post implementation progress report</p> <p>To include information setting out the provision of accommodation based regulated support services in Bridgend to include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> whether they are private, public or charity sector; how staff are contracted; and the ownership of the buildings. 	<p><u>Cabinet Member</u> Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Services, Health and Wellbeing</p> <p><u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing; Head of Adult Social Care.</p>

Briefings and Workshops:

Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Overview – Social Services & Wellbeing Directorate / Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act	Attendance from: Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing Head of Adult Social Care Head of Children and Family Services Group Manager – Prevention and Wellbeing	To be scheduled.
The Replacement System for CareDirector (WCCIS)	The Committee requested a briefing on COR-2024-01 on the Corporate Risk Assessment: The 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 CareDirector (WCCIS). <i>CareDirector</i> is a Cloud-based case management solution for social care organisations that supports integrated working across health and social care.	Members and officers for the Briefing and Workshop – TBD. To be scheduled in early 2026 in partnership with IT.
Use of Artificial Intelligence within Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate	The Committee recommended that there be an all Member briefing on the use of artificial intelligence within the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate and how it is envisaged it could safely aid a reduction in staff numbers.	This will form part of the Digital Strategy which will be reported to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee Pre-Decision. To be scheduled after the Digital Strategy has been considered at COSC.
Foster Carers	The importance of promoting becoming a foster carer for Bridgend.	To be discussed in work planning meeting.

Items to be Scheduled to the Committee's Forward Work Programme

- Support for Care Leavers (including input from Employability and Housing).
The Committee have requested that Care Experienced young people be invited for this item.

(Will be a joint report between Social Services, Health and Wellbeing and the Communities and Housing Directorates)
- Regional Partnership Agreement Progress Update (12 months from July 2025)
- Future Arrangements for Advocacy for Adults and Children

- A closed session detailing confidential information presented to Social Services Improvement Board (including live case studies)
- Review of the regional operating model of the Emergency Duty Team
- Review of the fostering service (in 9-12 months)

This page is intentionally left blank

Communities, Environment and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee
2025-26 Forward Work Programme

Monday, 14 July 2025 at 4pm		
Report Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Community Asset Transfers	<p>Position Update</p> <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Its impact - Success stories - Good practice researched from other Welsh local authorities - Reflection on lessons learned 	<p><u>Cabinet Member</u> Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment;</p> <p><u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Communities; Interim Head of Operations – Communities; and Community Asset Transfer Officer.</p>
Porthcawl Regeneration Masterplan	<p>Public Consultation Feedback from Feb/March 2025</p> <p>and</p> <p>Pre-Planning Consultation</p>	<p><u>Cabinet Member</u> Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Economic Development and Housing;</p> <p><u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Communities; Group Manager – Strategic Regeneration; and Porthcawl Regeneration Programme Manager.</p>

Monday, 29 September 2025 at 4pm		
Report Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What we did - Lessons Learned - Progress Update - How the system has changed - A look back and a look forward. <p>Detailed Financial Information including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Funds received by which groups/organisations 	<p><u>Cabinet Member</u> Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Economic Development and Housing;</p> <p><u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Communities; Interim Head of Operations – Communities; and Group Manager – Economy, Natural Resources & Sustainability.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Their purpose - How much 	
Social Housing Allocation Policy	Pre-Decision	<u>Cabinet Member</u> Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Economic Development and Housing; <u>Officers</u> Chief Officer – Finance, Housing and Change; Strategic Housing Commissioning Manager; and Housing Solutions Team Manager.

Monday, 3 November 2025 at 4pm		
Report Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Net Zero Strategy Review	Pre-Decision	<u>Cabinet Member</u> Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment; <u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Communities; Interim Head of Operations – Communities; Group Manager – Economy, Natural Resources & Sustainability; Decarbonisation Programme Manager; and <u>External</u> Representatives from Carbon Trust.
Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy	Pre-Decision	<u>Cabinet Member</u> Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment; <u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Communities; Interim Head of Operations – Communities; and Group Manager – Economy, Natural Resources & Sustainability.

Monday, 8 December 2025 at 4pm

Report Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Porthcawl Grand Pavilion	To include a walkaround before the meeting.	<p><u>Cabinet Member</u> Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Economic Development and Housing;</p> <p><u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Communities; Group Manager – Strategic Regeneration; and Porthcawl Regeneration Programme Manager.</p> <p><u>External</u> Director of Development and Partnerships – Awen</p>

Monday, 23 February 2026 at 4pm

Report Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Maesteg Town Hall TBC	<p>To include a walkaround before the meeting.</p> <p>Lessons learned</p> <p>To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reasons for the overall project cost; - Detail of what led to the increased cost and challenges encountered; and - An appraisal of what could have changed or been done differently. 	<p><u>Cabinet Member</u> Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Economic Development and Housing;</p> <p><u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Communities; Group Manager – Strategic Regeneration.</p>

Monday, 20 April 2026 at 4pm

Report Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Condition of the Highways and Status of Road Resurfacing Programme	<p>Including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Repairs, maintenance and prioritisation process; - Road resurfacing and potholes; - Network management of utilities; and 	<p><u>Cabinet Member</u> Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment;</p> <p><u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Communities;</p>

	- The development of internal metrics for repairs and closing referrals.	Interim Head of Operations – Communities; Group Manager – Highways and Green Spaces; and Highways Network Manager.
--	--	--

Briefings and Workshops:

Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Future Waste Services		All Member Briefing To be scheduled Early 2026
Corporate Joint Committees Regional Responsibilities		All Member Briefing Date to be confirmed

**Items to be Scheduled to the Committee's Forward Work Programme -
To be discussed in next Scrutiny Forward Work Programme Planning Meeting**

- A report on the CAT Programme to be added to the Forward Work Programme in 12-18 months to evaluate progress, including an update on the recommendations of an internal audit which took place in April 2025, set out in paragraph 2.1.6 of the report.
- Communities Directorate Target Operating Model (TOM) – Autumn 2025 TBC
- Bridgend Town Centre Masterplan and Regeneration
- Council's Preparedness to Respond to Storms and Adverse Weather
To Include:
 - Preventative measures against foreseeable damage;
 - Impact of adverse weather and any fallout (e.g. loss of power) on vulnerable residents;
 - Invitees from Communities and Social Services; and
 - Information shared during internal and Local Resilience Forum debrief sessions held following Storm Darragh and any other inclement weather events.
- Car Parking Charging Review
To Include:
 - Outcome of the review;
 - Free parking offers; and
 - The difference in revenue between the free parking period and a full charging model.
- Major Parks in the Borough
- Valleys to Coast.

Information reports to be provided

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