

COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY, 30 NOVEMBER 2016

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB ON WEDNESDAY, 30 NOVEMBER 2016 AT 3.00 PM

Present

Councillor RD Jenkins – Chairperson

S Aspey	N Clarke	HJ David	G Davies
GW Davies MBE	PA Davies	E Dodd	DK Edwards
N Farr	EP Foley	CA Green	EM Hughes
CJ James	P James	RM James	PN John
B Jones	CL Jones	M Jones	RC Jones
DRW Lewis	JE Lewis	JR McCarthy	HE Morgan
LC Morgan	AD Owen	D Patel	CL Reeves
M Reeves	CE Smith	JC Spanswick	G Thomas
M Thomas	RL Thomas	JH Tildesley MBE	HJ Townsend
KJ Watts	C Westwood	DBF White	HM Williams
R Williams	M Winter	RE Young	

Officers:

Susan Cooper	Corporate Director - Social Services & Wellbeing
Nicola Echanis	Head of Education & Family Support
Mark Galvin	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Randal Hemingway	Head of Finance & Section 151 Officer
Andrew Jolley	Corporate Director Operational & Partnership Services
Gary Jones	Head of Democratic Services
Mark Shephard	Corporate Director - Communities

683. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the following Members/Officer:-

Councillor D Sage
Councillor MEJ Nott OBE
Councillor M Gregory
Councillor E Venables
Councillor G Phillips
Councillor MW Butcher
Councillor D Pugh
Councillor PJ White
D Mephram – Other Council business

684. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

685. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of a meeting of Council dated 2 November 2016, be approved as a true and accurate record.

686. TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM:

Mayor

The Mayor announced that his Consort and himself were nearing the end of their visits to the winners of the Bridgend Business Forum Awards 2016. It had been a pleasure to pay a personal visit to the winners to congratulate them on their success and gain a better understanding of the types of businesses that operate in the county borough. They had met with some excellent, interesting and diverse people over the last few weeks who in different ways bring so much to our communities.

He added that they also had the honour of attending the inaugural Bridge FM Young Achiever Awards. This impressive event celebrated the young people from around the county borough and recognised their achievements in business, training, education, arts, music and voluntary work. It was heartening to meet so many young people who are actively making a positive contribution to our communities confirmed the Mayor.

Staying with the subject of youth achievements, the Mayor confirmed that he was asked to attend the Wildmill Youth Club presentation evening last week which highlighted the importance of giving recognition to the children, young people and families who attend the youth club. This youth club has gone from strength to strength in the past couple of years and he was pleased to be invited to present the certificates and trophies to these well deserving young people in order to give them some recognition for their participation, commitment and hard work.

As the Christmas season was getting near, the Mayor advised that he was delighted to announce that there will be a special performance of Jack and the Beanstalk in the Grand Pavilion Porthcawl with the proceeds going to his Charity Committee. It would be lovely to see Members (and Officers) there with their families he confirmed. Tickets could be purchased as usual via Mari Major he added.

To conclude, The Mayor knew it was early, but as this would be the last Council before the New Year, he took the opportunity to wish all those present a happy Christmas and a healthy New Year.

Deputy Leader

The Deputy Leader reminded members that there would be pre-Council briefings on Dementia Friendly Communities on 11th January and an update from Sustrans on 1st February.

In March 2017 it was hoped to have two pre-Council briefings, one on 1 March which will involve a progress update from the Welsh Community Care Information System, and another on 29 March that will be on the subject of 'Dark Skies'. Both of these would be confirmed at a later date.

Members would also be aware that an internal audit report recommended that all members should complete a corporate parenting induction and relevant safeguarding training, plus annual refresher sessions.

To date, unfortunately only 19 members out of a total of 54 have completed the refresher training, so a third session has been arranged for Tuesday 13 December in the committee rooms. He encouraged those members who have not yet taken part to attend this session.

The Deputy Leader informed Members that there would also be a Member Workshop on 1 April 2017, that would explain to them the Council's new Waste Collection Service.

Members may also be interested to know that four hundred more homes took part in the 2016 garden waste collection scheme than in 2015, and that we have doubled the amount of waste collected since the scheme was launched in 2013.

Just over 2,800 households used the fortnightly service which ran between April and October, and more than 468 tonnes of garden waste was collected and sent to be converted into compost fertiliser instead of being disposed of as landfill.

This is good news and a sure sign that the scheme is making steady progress he concluded.

Cabinet Member – Communities

The Cabinet Member – Communities was sure that members will be aware of the narrow escape that two separate households had in Caerau recently. It seems that a blocked chimney caused carbon dioxide to build up in one household and seep through into the adjoining property.

A tragic ending was avoided after a detector alarm went off, but nine people were still hospitalised, including three children under 12 years of age.

A media issue had been released making people aware of eight simple rules that will help them avoid falling victim to what has been called ‘the silent killer’.

Carbon monoxide can be produced by any fuel-burning appliance, so regular maintenance and proper ventilation is essential.

Symptoms included headaches, dizziness, breathlessness, nausea, tiredness and visual problems.

People might feel chest or stomach pain and act erratically before ultimately losing consciousness and even low-level exposure to carbon monoxide over a long period of time can lead to significant health problems.

Warning signs that carbon monoxide is being released can include seeing yellow or orange flames instead of blue flames, finding soot or staining on or around appliances which is yellow or brown in colour, pilot lights that frequently blow out and increased condensation building up inside windows.

She hoped that members would help spread awareness about this potentially deadly issue, and will advise their constituents that more information is available online at websites such as the Welsh Government’s advice page on carbon monoxide.

The Cabinet Member – Communities also briefly mentioned Storm Angus, which caused widespread flooding up and down the UK and affected communities here in Bridgend County Borough.

The worst of the severe weather hit the county borough at around 2am on the morning of Sunday 20 November.

The council’s frontline staff worked alongside the likes of South Wales Fire and Rescue and South Wales Police to help keep residents safe from the heavy rainfall that overwhelmed local streams, rivers and culverts and caused damage to roads and homes.

The Council's highways team distributed more than 3,500 sandbags during the height of the storm and worked flat-out to keep culverts clear from leaves, wood and debris.

Once it was over, street cleansing staff began clearing up the residue while our social services team supported vulnerable residents affected by the weather.

We also worked in partnership with town and community councils and other organisations as part of our response to Storm Angus so that skips were made available and affected householders could get easy access to civic amenity sites.

Offers of help were also received from groups that ranged from the players of Maesteg Celtic RFC to the Muslim Youth Association of Wales.

Without these efforts, the impact of the extreme weather would have been much, much worse, and I'm sure that members will want to acknowledge the efforts of council staff, the emergency services and everyone else who played a part in trying to limit the impact of the flooding throughout Bridgend County Borough.

A Member from Maesteg East in view of the ongoing financial constraints that local authorities have continually faced, asked for an assurance that this would not compromise front line services, to such a degree that it would impact on the Authority's ability to protect its residents, and particularly to prevent repeat incidents of blocked culverts etc, which contributed to the flooding incidents. He asked the Cabinet Member – Communities if an assurance could be given to constituents, that should repeat incidents of flooding occur, then resources will be found to put in place preventative measures that will protect their homes from the possibility of further flooding.

The Cabinet Member – Communities advised that the Council would investigate the culverts in question which became blocked following bad weather, resulting in flooding having taken place in the location(s) referred to by the Member. If there was deemed to be any particular problems there that could be remedied with a view to alleviating and/or assisting in minimising future cases of flooding in these areas, then these would be pursued.

Cabinet Member – Equalities and Children's Social Services

The Cabinet Member – Equalities and Children's Social Services advised that the annual White Ribbon campaign to highlight domestic violence was underway in the county borough and was launched recently with a flag-raising event in Maesteg.

This global campaign spreads awareness and recognises that while women are disproportionately affected by domestic violence, it is not and has never been simply a 'women's issue'.

Since the Assia Suite opened at the Civic Offices in October 2015, a total of 442 people have received help and support.

Of these, 10 were men and two were trans-gender, and the service helped more than 500 children who were living in situations where domestic violence was commonplace.

Men and boys have a crucial role to play in creating a culture where violence, abuse and harassment against women and girls is seen as unacceptable, and Bridgend County Borough Council remains committed to helping highlight this problem and providing support to our local residents.

The council's Family Information Service has become the first local authority in Wales to receive the revised Families First Quality Award from the Family and Childcare Trust.

The free service offers parents access to a wide range of useful information that ranges from classes and groups for new mums and dads to childcare provision and summer activities.

She was really proud to see that the service had been rated so highly, and congratulated them on their success.

Cabinet Member – Regeneration and Economic Development

The Cabinet Member – Economic Development and Regeneration confirmed that he was happy to announce that ambitious plans are underway for designing and developing a new water sports centre at Rest Bay in Porthcawl.

The project was intended to provide new high-quality facilities for local people and visitors to the award-winning Blue Flag beach. It will also establish an iconic, contemporary attraction capable of supporting and developing sports and leisure activities in the area.

Funding was currently being sought for the project, and the centre forms part of an initiative to create a year-round, family-friendly local hub for water-based sports that will appeal to a broader audience of seasoned enthusiasts and beginners alike.

The proposals aim to make the most of Rest Bay's unique setting and could include enhanced café and kiosk facilities as well as improved changing and public toilet amenities, to cater for sporting and non-sporting visitors.

In fact, the potential and quality of local water sports provision was highlighted recently when Porthcawl Surf School beat off 150 competitors to be named Best Surf School In Britain at the UK Pro Surf Tour Awards 2016. He congratulated Mr H Murray and his team for putting Porthcawl on the map

Visitors, tourists and holidaymakers spent more than £313m in the county borough last year. If funding can be secured, an all-new water sports centre at Rest Bay would also further consolidate Porthcawl's growing visitor appeal and secure its potential as a coastal resort fit for the 21st century.

The Cabinet Member – Regeneration and Economic Development asked members to remind constituents that in the run-up to Christmas, free car parking will be available after 10am at council-run town centre car parks in Porthcawl and Bridgend on Saturdays throughout December.

In response to a members query, the Cabinet Member – Regeneration and Economic Development confirmed that some method of signage would be placed in car parks affected making it clear that free car parking was available at the times/dates in question.

With the all-new Rhiw multi-storey now open in Bridgend town centre and a range of Christmas events taking place in Porthcawl, Maesteg, Pencoed and Bridgend, this was a perfect opportunity to do a bit of festive shopping, support local trade and have a good time.

The Christmas parking and local events were currently being promoted across social media, on local radio and in the press, and more details were available on the council's website he concluded.

Corporate Director - Communities

The Corporate Director - Communities advised Members of an issue on behalf of the Chief Executive.

The first is that on Tuesday 6th December, the Partnerships and Governance Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be receiving a presentation and holding a discussion on the Cardiff Capital City Deal.

Any Members who have an interest in the City Deal are encouraged to attend this event.

Discussions were progressing well between the 10 Leaders and with both the UK and Welsh Government, and it is anticipated that all Councils will be looking to enter into a joint working agreement in the New Year.

This will have the effect of formalising the Joint Cabinet that is currently in shadow form.

In doing so, it would allow Welsh Government to pass the first contribution of £10m from the UK Government along to the City Deal partners.

There was a lot of detail and further information behind this, and the Scrutiny Committee would no doubt ask questions of the Invitees in relation to this and other related issues.

If it looks like we will be ready to ask Council to agree to the joint working required to take the City Deal forward, the Authority were also proposing to hold an all-Member briefing in the New Year.

Further details on this will be forthcoming the Corporate Director Communities concluded.

687. TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE LEADER

The Leader advised that when he took up the role of Leader, he informed members that he intended to look at the structure of the Cabinet portfolios, and that he would come back to them with an update.

This has now been completed, and he was pleased to be able to outline some changes that he wished to introduce with immediate effect.

In the Corporate Plan that members steered, the need to act as one council wherever we can was identified. This was in recognition of the fact that people don't live their lives in discreet areas of service, even if local authorities are organised that way.

He wanted to reflect this, with Cabinet members having a broader range of cross-cutting responsibilities so that they can each work across directorates wherever possible.

With this in mind, the most experienced Cabinet member, Councillor Phil White, will gain responsibility for children and early help and intervention, as well as adult social services as the Cabinet Member for Social Services and Early Help.

This will help strengthen our work to improve the transition from child-to-adult services. Safeguarding our most vulnerable adults and children will be a key priority for Councillor

White, as will ensuring that we help individuals, families, carers and parents as early as we can.

Councillor White will continue to be the champion for mental health across the organisation, and will lead on the ongoing modernisation of services for older people and people with learning disabilities.

Councillor Hailey Townsend will be Cabinet member for Wellbeing and Future Generations, and the authority's new anti-poverty champion.

Her portfolio will align with the new Future Generations Wellbeing Act and our own intervention and prevention agenda. It will encompass Housing, the Youth Offending Service, Trading Standards, Environmental Health and all the shared public protection services, and Sport and Physical Activity which will include our partnership with Halo.

Councillor Townsend will also be the champion for play opportunities for children, and will continue to be our effective lead member for equalities and diversity.

Councillor Charles Smith will become Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration. He was a teacher by profession, and has taught in many of our schools and has spent his career teaching or lecturing, so he brings that experience to the role.

He will now lead on our exciting 21st Century school modernisation programme, and will also prioritise the continued improvements in standards and outcomes in all our secondary and primary schools, special schools and early years' settings.

Councillor Smith will also continue to be responsible for leading on the regeneration of our towns.

Councillor Ceri Reeves will continue as the Cabinet Member for Communities. She will have responsibility for Transportation, Highways, Parks and Playing Fields, bereavement services, street cleaning, Planning, Libraries and cultural services.

Councillor Reeves will also take the Cabinet lead for tackling domestic violence alongside Councillor Thomas and Councillor White's roles in this important field.

As the Deputy Leader, Councillor Hywel Williams will lead on Finance, Human Resources, Customer Services, ICT, Procurement and Legal. He will also now have responsibility for Property and Health and Safety across the authority. The new Deputy Leader was also keen to retain the overseeing the new Waste Services contract.

As for himself as Leader, because he was newly elected to the role, the Leader advised that he would continue to chair the joint committee of the Central South Consortium School Improvement service.

He would chair the new shadow regional transport authority, and continue to represent all local authorities across Wales as the WLGA spokesperson for Health and Social Services. In addition, he would become a member of the Bridgend Public Services Board.

The Leader confirmed that he intended undertaking regular reviews of the Cabinet structure in future to see if it could be improved further, or if additional changes were required, to ensure that it could best reflect the business needs and priorities of the Authority. In the meantime, the Leader believed that these cross-cutting changes will help the Cabinet better reflect the authority's stated aim of working as one council, and will strengthen our overall leadership role.

In other news, the Leader reported that the council's outline business case for an all-new Pencoed Primary School had been approved by the Cabinet Secretary for Education. This means that BCBC could move to the next stage, so work was already progressing on developing a full business case that will focus on the outcomes, benefits and community benefits of developing a much-needed new school facility in the Pencoed area.

By coincidence, this news arrived as pupils from Brymnennyn Primary were visiting the site of their new school. This will be based next to Coleg Cymunedol Y Dderwen where construction work will shortly begin. Its opening is planned for January 2018 when it would become the latest in a long line of modern, state of the art educational facilities to be introduced in Bridgend County Borough.

Elsewhere, St Robert's RC Primary in Aberkenfig has become the latest local school to achieve a Platinum Eco award. These awards are presented by Keep Wales Tidy to schools who develop a culture of environmental awareness and global citizenship among their pupils. It takes the total number of schools in the county borough who have achieved this status to 24, so the Leader extended his thanks to the pupils, teachers, governors and staff at St Robert's for helping to deliver this.

The council's Childcare team has also played a significant role in helping a local day care nursery achieve a prestigious award. Banana Moon, which is based in Brackla, had been presented with the Gold Standard Plus Healthy Snack Award.

This has been developed by the council in partnership with the City and County of Swansea, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board, Change for Life and Design to Smile. It was designed to teach children from an early age about the importance of eating healthily, so the Leader stated that he was looking forward to seeing other childcare providers signing up to the scheme.

Finally, following the stepping-down of the former Leader Councillor Mel Nott, Councillor David advised that he would be replacing Councillor Nott on the Town and Community Council Forum as Chairperson of that body. The next meeting of the forum would take place on 12 December 2016.

688. 2017-18 COUNCIL TAX BASE

The Section 151 Officer submitted a report, the purpose of which, was to provide Council with details of the council tax base and estimated collection rate for 2017-18

He advised that the estimated council tax base for 2017-18 was 53,835.72, and the estimated collection rate was 98%. The net council tax base was therefore 52,759.01. He added that the estimated collection rate was ½% increase on last year and better than the actual collection rate of the year before, of 97.3% which was the highest collection rate ever achieved in this Authority.

The Section 151 Officer added that the net council tax base was also used by precepting authorities in calculating their precepts, and that Town/Community Councils based their precepts on the tax base for each community area, details of which were shown in Appendix A to the report.

RESOLVED: That Council:

- (1) Approved the council tax base and collection rate for 2017-18, as shown in paragraph 4.1 of the report.
- (2) Further approved the tax bases for the community areas set out in Appendix A to the report.

689. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2015-16

The Corporate Director – Operational and Partnership Services presented a report, the purpose of which, was to present Council with a review of work undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Unit during the period September 2015 – September 2016.

He reminded Members that the Overview and Scrutiny Committees oversee the decision making of the Cabinet as a whole, and Cabinet Members, as well as supporting their work and Council also. The Scrutiny function allowed citizens to have a greater say in Council matters by holding public meetings into matters of local concern. This process led to reports being compiled and recommendations which advised the Cabinet and the Council on its policies, budget and service delivery.

Paragraph 3.2 of the report confirmed that in 2012/13, BCBC took an active role in a WAO Improvement Study in respect of Scrutiny, and as a result of this, the Authority had been considered 'excellent' in terms of the way it approached scrutiny and was a lead for other neighbouring authorities to follow in this regard.

Paragraph 3.2.2 of the report, then advised that in the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2014-15, it was identified that 3 developments required further work and improvement. These were detailed in this part of the report, and were important in terms of making further progress in these areas, as they were linked to the Corporate Assessment and the Corporate Priorities of the Council.

The Corporate Director – Operational and Partnership Services, then gave a resume for the benefit of Members on the current situation/proposals, and in particular, the within the following areas:-

- Impact Monitoring (of Scrutiny and the scrutiny process)
- Key outcomes and achievements
- Webcasting (of Scrutiny & other Committee meetings)
- A review of Scrutiny, and
- Further development of Scrutiny

He referred Members to the reports Appendices, one of which was as a result of Scrutiny Officers undertaking an assessment of the scrutiny function using the "Characteristics of Good Scrutiny" to determine performance during 2015-16 (Appendix A to the report referred). In addition to this, Members attended a series of workshops to enable Overview and Scrutiny Committees to carry out a review and forward planning exercise in terms of the work and service areas it should scrutinise. Members as part of this exercise, were also provided with an opportunity to look back over the past 12 months and consider what worked in Scrutiny, as well as areas that could be improved. Some of the main key points raised and suggestions for change, were shown in Appendix B of the report.

Council commended the report and supporting information, and recognised that the support of Overview and Scrutiny within the Authority had been in the past and still was strong and proactive. However, it was noted that there were cuts proposed as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy that would affect staffing levels in the Scrutiny Section. To this end, Members asked for an assurance from the Leader, that if these were

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realised, they would not impact in a detrimental way on the excellent progress that had been made in this area of the Authority, since the introduction of the Local Government Act 2000.

The Leader advised that he recognised the importance of Overview and Scrutiny and its role in looking at service and performance areas of the Council, as well as holding decisions made by the Cabinet to account, through the call-in process. He assured Members that whilst all areas of the Authority had to be examined in order to ascertain where savings could, and indeed were required to be made, he would also ensure that its role would continue to be proactive and robust, and maintained as a key part of the Democratic Services function of BCBC.

RESOLVED: That Members noted the content of the report and attached Appendices A and B.

690. INFORMATION REPORTS FOR NOTING

RESOLVED: That the report of the Monitoring Officer advising of the Information Report considered since the last ordinary meeting of Council, as detailed in Paragraph 4.1 of the report, be noted

691. URGENT ITEMS

None.

The meeting closed at 4.10 pm