

COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY, 11 JANUARY 2017

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB ON WEDNESDAY, 11 JANUARY 2017 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
EP Foley	CA Green	M Gregory	EM Hughes
CJ James	RM James	PN John	B Jones
CL Jones	M Jones	RC Jones	DRW Lewis
JE Lewis	JR McCarthy	HE Morgan	MEJ Nott OBE
AD Owen	DG Owen	D Patel	G Phillips
DR Pugh	CL Reeves	M Reeves	CE Smith
JC Spanswick	G Thomas	M Thomas	RL Thomas
JH Tildesley MBE	E Venables	KJ Watts	C Westwood
DBF White	PJ White	HM Williams	R Williams
M Winter			

Apologies for Absence

M Butcher, N Farr, P James, LC Morgan, D Sage, HJ Townsend and RE Young

Officers:

Susan Cooper	Corporate Director - Social Services & Wellbeing
Julie Ellams	Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Randal Hemingway	Head of Finance & Section 151 Officer
Andrew Jolley	Corporate Director Operational & Partnership Services
Darren Mepham	Chief Executive
Andrew Rees	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Mark Shephard	Corporate Director – Communities

692. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were made:-

Councillors RM James - Prejudicial interest in Agenda item 6 due to having close relatives in receipt of Council Tax Reduction and Prejudicial interest in Agenda item 7 due to the individual nominated for appointment being a close personal friend.

Councillors DBF White, PJ White and CL Jones – Prejudicial interest in Agenda item 6 due to having close relatives in receipt of a Council Tax Reduction.

693. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of a meeting of Council dated 30 November 2016, be approved as a true and accurate record subject to the addition of the announcement from the Corporate Director – Communities, as circulated at the meeting.

694. TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM:

Mayor

The Mayor hoped that all had a lovely Christmas and New Year and were rested and ready for the months ahead.

The Mayor and his Consort, Teresa were busy over the festive period and had the pleasure of visiting a number of care establishments to wish residents and users a happy Christmas. They were also invited to a number of schools to share in their celebrations and witnessed all the hard work that teachers and children put into their concerts and carol services.

They were made extremely welcome by everyone and said a big thank you to all involved. The Mayor also took the opportunity to thank the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Cherie Jones and her consort Marjorie who ably shared the workload.

To ease Members and Officers into the New Year, the Mayor's Charity Committee would be hosting a post-Christmas dinner on Sunday 15th January in the Hi-Tide, the guest speaker would be Mr. Chris Elmore, MP and tickets could be purchased via Mari Major. There would be a warm welcome and it would be a nice way to spend a cold January afternoon.

To conclude, the closing date for the Mayor's Citizenship Awards was fast approaching, the deadline for nominations was Friday 27 January. This was a wonderful chance to tell the rest of the county borough about the amazing things that local people do and he asked for nominations to be submitted, or for others within the communities to do so.

Nominations could be for an individual, a group or a local business and there was a downloadable form and further details on the BCBC website or via the Mayoral office.

Deputy Leader (Announcement made on behalf of Cabinet Member – Wellbeing & Future Generations)

The Deputy Leader announced that the Cabinet Member Wellbeing & Future Generations was pleased to inform members that ongoing efforts to champion inclusive sports opportunities had been recognised by Disability Sport Wales. Having presented BCBC with Bronze level accreditation back in 2014, the organisation had now increased this to Silver as a result of work supporting local sports clubs and organisations to become more inclusive.

The legacy of Team GB's Paralympic success, along with support from local authorities and organisations such as Disability Sport Wales, was seeing more people with disabilities across Wales taking part in physical activities.

As well as nurturing disabled elite athletes, it was important to make sure that people of all levels of ability had the opportunity to be active in some way. A dedicated Disability Sport Wales Officer operated the National Disability Sport programme and worked with schools and local organisations to identify opportunities for people with disabilities.

A range of targeted services and programmes were also in place to support all groups of people to be more active including those with disabilities, older people, women and girls and people living in disadvantaged areas. This was excellent news and meant that Gold level accreditation was within sight and he congratulated staff for their hard work and dedication.

Deputy Leader

Pre-Council briefings for the first part of 2017 would include updates from Sustrans on 1 February, the Welsh Community Care Information System on 1 March and Dark Skies on 29 March.

Topics under development for future pre-Council briefings included updates on Domestic Violence, the Motivational Preparation College for Training, National Autistic Society Cymru, Lessons from Fu-ku-shima, the Community Health Council and the City Deal. Further details would be circulated when they had been confirmed.

Cabinet Member – Communities

Llynfi Valley residents were being invited to come and find out more about an exciting project which could use heat taken from underground mine water to provide energy for nearly 1,000 homes. Two public exhibitions on the project would be held next month. The first would take place between 3pm – 8pm on Monday 13 February at Noddfa Chapel Community Centre in Caerau Road. The second would be held between 11am-4pm on Wednesday 15 February at the Caerau Development Trust, Woodland Terrace. Heat networks were believed to have the potential to supply between 14 and 43 per cent of UK buildings by 2050. The Department of Energy and Climate Change had been providing grant funding and expert guidance to support 190 network projects since 2013. They worked by pumping water from old disused mine workings and transporting it through a network of pipes to residents' properties where heat was extracted and passed through a pump, which then provided heat for the property using existing radiator systems. The Cabinet Member was pleased to see this innovative project making progress, and hoped that as many people as possible would come and take part in the public exhibitions.

A member asked if this scheme to use heat taken from underground mine water to provide energy for nearly 1,000 homes applied to all Llynfi Valley residents or just residents in Caerau. The member was advised that further information would be available at the information day and this project was still progressing and could be extended.

Elsewhere in the county borough, the first of two drop-in sessions had taken place as part of a study into coastal erosion and flood risk at Beach Road in Newton. Local residents were informed and invited and members of the public, who were able to drop in to find out more and share information about past experiences with flooding in the area. A second drop-in session was being planned for March. The study was assessing whether improvements to manage coastal flood risk at Beach Road were possible, and if so, how they might be delivered. It included a topographical survey of the area and further information would be given once the second drop-in event had been confirmed.

Cabinet Member – Social Services & Early Help

The Cabinet Member – Social Services & Early Help reminded Members about several events that took place shortly before Christmas which had helped to raise awareness about a number of important issues.

Young people in care recorded a song called 'Now Is The Time' which was released to great acclaim. It was designed to encourage more people to become foster carers, and drew support from the likes of interior design expert Anna Ryder Richardson, Olympic

athlete Jamie Baulch, chef Lorraine Pascale, author Kathy Glass and BBC presenter Ashley John-Baptiste.

In Cefn Cribwr, more than 200 older people took part in the OlympAge Games at the Bethlehem Centre – a Rio inspired wellbeing event which featured sporting events such as new-age kurling, basketball, target throwing and bounce-ball.

Maesteg's Cwm Calon Day Centre was the highest scoring elderly team, the Bridgend SHOUT forum were crowned community team winners, and the top spot in the disability category was taken by the Sarn Valleys Gateway Day Centre.

Thanks to the overwhelming generosity of local people, hundreds of Christmas presents were distributed to vulnerable and under-privileged children across the county borough to make sure that nobody missed out on a visit from Santa. Bridge FM, Brynteg Comprehensive School and Hafod Y Wennol all dropped off Christmas presents to the council after organising separate toy appeals, and staff arranged for the presents to be handed out.

In particular, he mentioned the staff and pupils of Brynteg as they raised £3,200 to buy gifts for 109 local children by holding a range of charity events throughout the year. He asked members to join him in congratulating everyone who played a part in each of these very worthwhile events.

Cabinet Member – Education & Regeneration

The Cabinet Member Education & Regeneration was delighted to be able to inform members that the Welsh Government had provided the Council with funding of £600,000 as part of a Food Supply Chain project.

The funding would be used to support small food businesses within the county borough and create strong supply chains that would help them to access new markets and offer locally produced goods to meet the demands of retail and tourism businesses.

Bridgend County Borough Council would lead on the three-year project in partnership with seven other Rural Development Plan Local Action Groups. It recognised that the majority of food and drink businesses in Wales were independent producers, and that just eight per cent were part of a larger organisation.

Strong supply chains and consistent quality were essential for them to thrive and prosper, and the project aimed to help local businesses overcome barriers and maximise economies of scale through things like collaboration, co-operatives and networks.

Bridgend would play a very prominent role in this new initiative, and he was looking forward to seeing it develop and grow.

On another note, there were a large number of festive events in the county borough during the run-up to Christmas and the New Year, and they involved a wide number of organisations, businesses, local groups, council departments, staff and town and community councils.

He asked members to join him in acknowledging the efforts of everyone who played a part in making them such a success.

Chief Executive

Members were already aware that Deborah McMillan, `Director of Education and Family Support, would shortly begin a two-year secondment with Welsh Government advising the Cabinet Secretary on education matters.

A robust recruitment process had been undertaken for an interim director and he was pleased to confirm that Lindsay Harvey had been appointed as Interim Director on a temporary basis, and would be in post soon.

Lindsay would be joining the authority from Swansea Council where he is the Chief Education Officer. He had been in local and central government for over 25 years working with young people in a wide range of posts, and he brought outstanding energy and experience to the role.

Lindsay was a former pupil of Maesteg Comprehensive School, captain of Maesteg RFC, and a former Deputy Head Teacher at Maes Yr Haul Primary School in Broadlands. The arrangements and dates of the handover between Deborah and Lindsay were being finalised and would be confirmed soon.

The Chief Executive also advised members that the Care and Social Services Inspectorate of Wales would be carrying out a full core inspection of Children's social services and early help between 30th January and 13th February. The inspectors would be interviewing front line staff, managers, senior managers, Cabinet Members, partners, children and families. They would track and review individual case files, staff supervision files, complaints records and observing practice, so it would be an intense and comprehensive process.

Finally, there were reports that Wales was set to experience a phenomenon known as 'Thundersnow' later in the week. The met Office had issued a yellow warning of snow for areas that included Bridgend County Borough, but hopefully it would escape the worst of the weather. In the event that snow did fall and cause disruption, members could remind their constituents that the Council website offered a one-stop-shop of information relating to severe weather. This included details of school closures, what happened with waste and recycling collections, information about gritting routes, explanations about how and when roads were treated, links to other useful websites and more. This could be accessed by going to the 'weather the winter' page at www.bridgend.gov.uk

Corporate Director – Operational & Partnership Services

The Corporate Director – Operational & Partnership Services announced changes to dates of forthcoming Committee meetings agreed following discussion with the appropriate Chairpersons and relevant members:-

Licensing Sub-Committee A – changed from Tuesday 28 February to Monday 27 February at 10 am and Community Environment & Leisure O&SC – changed from Thursday 30 March to Thursday 6 April 2017 at 2 pm. Members and Officers electronic calendars would be updated accordingly to reflect the changes as would the Council's website.

695. TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE LEADER

The Leader advised that National Holocaust Memorial Day would be marked in Bridgend County Borough on Friday 20 January with the annual event at Bridgend College's Sony Theatre. This year, it would focus on the Holocaust and genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur and would ask "How Can Life Go On?" To help answer that

question would be Antoinette Mushimi-yim-ana, a survivor of the 1994 Rwandan genocide where approximately one million Tutsus and Hutus were murdered in just 100 days. Antoinette was now an active advocate of reconciliation and justice, and worked to create peaceful environments in every society. For the first time Members of the public were being invited to attend the event and could pre-book a space, contact details were available from the Democratic Services team.

Members will have seen the rare “double excellent” judgement made by Estyn in its inspection report on Bryntirion Comprehensive shortly before Christmas. This was in recognition of both the school’s current performance, and its prospects for improvement which were deemed to be of the highest possible standard. No pupil had left the school without a qualification in the last two years, and the inspectors found that the school’s motto of “We learn how to live” was very well embedded among pupils and staff alike. The double excellent report had been achieved thanks to a combination of strong leadership, good teaching and exceptional care, support and guidance and he was certain that members would join him in congratulating the school for its inspirational success.

Demolition work recently began as part of the plans to construct a modern new Pencoed Primary School on a single site. Redundant buildings across the road from the main school comprising of the former kitchen and canteen, classroom block and gymnasium would be demolished by the works, which were expected to last approximately eight weeks. A letter had been issued to residents living near the school explaining the timescales and advising where they could get additional information.

696. COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME

The Head of Finance and S151 Officer presented a report, the purpose of which was to provide Council with information regarding the implementation of the 2017-18 Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTR) (to be adopted by 31 January 2017), together with the funding implications.

He confirmed that on 20 January 2016, the Council adopted the CTR for 2016-17 in accordance with the Council Tax Reduction Schemes and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2013, with this scheme ending on 31 March 2017.

There were currently 14,251 households receiving CTR, 8,616 of these were working age and 5,635 were of pensionable age. Of the 14,251 households receiving CRE, 10,848 were entitled to a full CTR reduction.

The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2017 had now been laid. These regulations uprated the financial figures used in the CTR schemes and made amendments to:

- Explicate how a local authority should calculate an applicant’s weekly income (i.e. to consider income that the person expects to receive as well as income that has been received).
- Ensure consistency with other inter-related social security legislation by taking tax reliefs into account when determining net earnings, and with regards the treatment of the Universal Credit carer’s element in determining the applicable amount.
- Correct inconsistencies between the Welsh and English language versions of the 2016 Regulations.

The new regulations did not contain any significant changes from the claimants' perspective to the current scheme, and the maximum level of support that eligible claimants could receive remained at 100%.

The Head of Finance and S151 Officer explained the limited discretion given to the Council, to apply discretionary elements that were more generous than the national scheme. These discretionary elements were contained in the report.

The last consultation on the three discretionary elements was undertaken in 2013, and therefore a new consultation exercise was undertaken between 31 October 2016 and 18 December 2015 for the 2017-18 scheme. A total of 681 responses were received, with the minority of respondents (16.6%) indicating that they were currently in the receipt of CTR.

The total estimated cost to the Council for the most supported options was £22k, and it was therefore proposed, that the discretionary elements be as follows:-

- The extended payment period is maintained at the minimum standard of 4 weeks.
- War Disablement Pensions and War Widows Pensions are fully disregarded when calculating entitlement to CTR. The estimated cost of this proposal is £22,000.
- Backdating was reduced to the minimum standard of 3 months.

Members raised concerns that on occasions there were extenuating circumstances for late applications and 6 months rather than 3 months should be allowed.

The Corporate Director Operational and Partnership Services confirmed that there was already discretion to backdate claims in extreme circumstances.

RESOLVED:

That Council:

- (a) Noted the Council Tax Reduction Schemes and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2013, and the 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017 amendment regulations.
- (b) Noted the outcome of the consultation exercise undertaken by the Council on the discretionary elements of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.
- (c) Adopted the scheme, details of which were given in paragraphs 4.24 to 4.29 of the report.

697. APPOINTMENT OF REGISTERED REPRESENTATIVE TO THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and Council approve the appointment of Mr Tim Thomas as the Primary School Parent Governor Representative to the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee, for a term of four years.

698. AMENDMENT TO THE SCHEME OF DELEGATIONS

The Corporate Director Operational and Partnership Services presented a report to seek approval for a series of amendments which had been made to the Scheme of Delegation of Functions.

The titles and portfolios of the Cabinet Members had been revised, and the functions allocated to each Cabinet Member required some amendments to be made in particular to Scheme A, to reflect the changes to their responsibilities accordingly.

A desktop review had been undertaken, to ensure that the Scheme was up-to-date and fit for purpose. Some revisions were also required and these together with the other changes were summarised in paragraph(s) 4.2 and Appendix A to the report.

To meet operational requirements it was proposed that a new paragraph be added to Scheme B1 for the Chief Executive. An amendment was made to the list of Consultee(s) where additional expenditure from within the capital programme for new or existing schemes, subject to a maximum limit of £100,000 and funding availability, which for reasons of urgency could not await the next meeting of Council. The Leader or in his absence, the Deputy Leader were added to the list of consultees.

RESOLVED:

That Council:

- (1) Approved the Scheme of Delegations in relation to its functions as attached at Appendix A to the report, subject to the addition of the Leader and Deputy Leader as consultees to Scheme B1 in the absence of the Chief Executive.
- (2) Authorised the Corporate Director Operational and Partnership Services and Monitoring Officer to make minor textual changes and amendments to the Scheme of Delegations to take account of changes in legislation and changes to Officer and Member titles and responsibilities.

699. REVIEW OF POLITICAL BALANCE - CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Corporate Director Operational and Partnership Services presented a report advising Council of the outcome of a review of the political balance of the Authority resulting from changes to the membership of the Labour Group. The report also sought approval of the revised political balance, listed nominations and appointed the necessary members to Committees to reflect the changes in the political balance.

Following the review the membership of the committees had been updated to reflect the composition of the Council accordingly and was shown at Appendix 1 to the report. 3 committee seats had been allocated to each of the Independent Members to ensure that all members were able to engage in the Council's decision making process.

RESOLVED

That Council

- (a) Noted the change to the political composition of the Council
- (b) Approved the allocation of seats to political groups in accordance with the political balance rules as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

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- (c) Sought nominations as shown in paragraph 4.3 to be removed from or to be appointed to serve on each of the Committees, Panels and other bodies.
- (d) Appointed the nominations named at the meeting to their respective committees (attached to the Minutes).

700. **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.

701. **URGENT ITEMS**

None.

The meeting closed at 4.00 pm