

CABINET RESPONSE TO CRI OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

	BREP/Scrutiny Recommendation	Cabinet Response
1	<p>The Panel expanded upon their recommendation from last year and proposed that a data exercise be carried out to track the number of pupils using the buses throughout the year to determine how significant a decrease there is in service users. This information can then be used to inform whether a mechanism for revisiting contracts mid-year would be beneficial and cost effective.</p>	<p>While Cabinet understand and welcome this suggestion, they note that that the Council has a legal requirement to provide a transport place for every eligible child, whether that child chooses to utilise the transport or not. The education directorate intend to explore with providers how usage could be collected, but this may not be possible if the costs of doing so are disproportionate.</p>
2	<p>The Panel recommend that BCBC put out an expression of interest to other LAs to take forward the regionalisation of payroll; in order to give an indication of whether there could be a gain for the LA and the region as a whole.</p>	<p>Bridgend continues to deliver against the collaboration agenda in areas of major spend such as social care, education and transportation / city deal. All collaborations require significant resource investment from across the Council and therefore payroll as a relatively small area of the Council's operations is not currently a priority.</p>
3	<p>The Panel recommend that for future consultation reports, the findings be displayed as the number of people, not just as percentages as this can sometimes be misinterpreted as the percentage of all constituents in the County Borough.</p>	<p>Cabinet accept the recommendation, whilst also noting the very significant growth in response rate that reflects favourably</p>
4	<p>The Panel recommend the need to coordinate the TCC Budget setting process with the BCBC Budget Setting Process to ensure the TCCs have information in time to inform their precept. The latest the information would need to be communicated with the TCC is the by the September Budget Review.</p>	<p>While a sensible suggestion, this is impossible in practical terms, as BCBC's budget is influenced by the WG settlement which is not available in September. However, Cabinet will give consideration to what information could be decided upon early and communicated to TCCs to improve collaboration and joint working.</p>

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5	<p>The Panel recommend the need for improved communication between the LA and TCCs over planned policy changes or cuts that the Authority is introducing i.e. if a service is going to cease to be continued the TCC may need to put in place some transitional planning, rather than it being cut and finding out too late.</p>	<p>Noted – see response to recommendation 4</p>
6	<p>The Panel recommend that any communication between the LA and TCCs involve the clerk who, undertaking a coordinating role, can then ensure that matters are taken before the full Town or Community Council as appropriate. Similarly, it is recommended that TCC clerks be invited to attend the TCC Forum to ensure that they are kept informed of the discussions and outcomes.</p>	<p>Cabinet agree with this recommendation, though note that there is also a role in implementation for TCCs themselves</p>
7	<p>The Panel recommend that a standardised structure be established for approaching TCCs for assistance with future service provision and that they be provided with suitable detail and information to ensure that there is clarity from the start. Supplement dialogue needs to be provided from the Authority to determine what services, beyond the core services that BCBC will continue to maintain, that TCCs could potentially take ownership of.</p> <p>It is proposed that estimated figures could be provided to TCCs in the first instance in order that they can respond as to whether there is an appetite/expression of interest. Following which the Authority will be able to determine the viability of providing further detailed information.</p> <p>Further to this it is recommended that the Authority share its knowledge and provide additional support to TCCs as requested such as contractual assistance in order to take forward proposals for the transfer of services.</p>	<p>Cabinet are keen to support Town and Community Councils as much as possible to encourage greater partnership working and where appropriate assistance with future service provision.</p> <p>Unfortunately it is not always possible to provide estimates ‘ upfront’ for the cost of a wide range of services as often they are part of a wider ‘peripatetic’ service covering the whole of the County Borough and breaking that cost down to an individual Town and Community Council area can be difficult.</p> <p>However, the idea of giving high level estimates to see whether there is an appetite / expression of interest may be workable and is one that can be pursued. In addition the Council is seeking to provide greater assistance for third sector organisations and Town and Community Councils with regard to the kind of matters highlighted, recognising this is an area where greater support would be welcomed. Unfortunately in some Council services there is insufficient resource for this to be easily provided.</p>

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8	<p>The Panel recommend that formal arrangements be established for TCCs to co-operate more together, share best practice and possibly look at sharing resources and joint commissioning of services. One proposal was to consider the possibility of utilising the TCC Forum to take on a coordinating role. Such cooperation would also assist the LA in engaging with TCCs to determine expressions of interest for the future provision of services on a much simpler and larger scale rather than approaching each TCC individually which can be extremely time consuming.</p>	<p>Cabinet agree that potential opportunities for TCC co-operation and collaboration, but would see BCBC's role as a facilitator in this process</p>
9	<p>The Panel also recommended that TCCs discuss and share experience of the issue of double taxation to discover from those who have already hired private contractors whether this is actually an issue for members of the public and if it is really a barrier to taking on community services.</p>	<p>Cabinet do not consider this is currently an issue or a barrier, and do not consider the recommendation is appropriate for Cabinet to respond to</p>
10	<p>The Panel recommend that the Capital fund designed for allocation to TCCs to assist them with renovation of Community Assets, be used to repair and renovate the Authority's buildings before getting people interested, as the current state of the buildings could be a significant barrier to asset transfer.</p>	<p>In practice, Cabinet consider that the two things must be aligned – the Capital Fund is specifically designed to enable assets to be transferred on a sustainable basis – it would not represent value for money for the Council to invest in an asset that might otherwise close without successful asset transfer</p>

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11	Based on the fact that funding for schools varies for each LA and that Bridgend has historically been poorly funded per pupil; rated as one of the lowest in Wales and with one of the highest pupil teacher ratios in Wales; the Panel recommend that Cabinet put pressure on Welsh Government to rectify the issue of school funding in order that funding is distributed in a more fair and balanced manner across Wales.	BCBC has the 3 rd highest PTR in Wales at primary schools (20/22 LAs). This equates to an average of one adult to 22.6 pupils. BCBC is average in terms of PTR for secondary schools. The Education Secretary has announced £36m to cut infant class sizes. BCBC has 13 infant classes in excess of 30 pupils. The funding will ensure that we can cut class sizes across the county borough in these schools.
12	The Panel recommend that the proposal for a 1% school efficiency not be progressed in light of the risks it poses to pupils and their attainment as well as continued school improvement. It also could potentially impact negatively on pupil teacher ratios and the most vulnerable pupils with Special Educational Needs.	Cabinet disagree with this recommendation. In determining the final range of budget reductions to include in the 2017-18 MTFS for full Council approval, Cabinet have sought to follow the Council's corporate priorities, whilst also being mindful of public consultation and scrutiny responses. In being tasked with a 1% efficiency target, school budgets will still be the most protected area of Council budgets. Once pay and inflationary pressures are allowed for, school budgets actually increase slightly.
13	Members were in agreement that the Community Action Fund was a good idea in principle, but that it was not an appropriate initiative to take forward at this time given the level of cuts that are being made in other areas.	Cabinet have considered this proposal carefully, including majority support from the public consultation. Whilst recognising the inevitably trade off, Cabinet believe in the importance of trialling this innovative approach.
14	The Panel recommend that the savings against the school efficiency proposal be partially offset by the funding that was proposed for the Community Action Fund, with consideration given to the remainder of the savings being taken from the £6,194,000 allocated for other Corporate Budgets' for 2017-18; as recommended by the CYP Overview and Scrutiny Committee.	See response to recommendation 13

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15	The Panel recommend that the initial proposal of 3.9% increase for Council Tax be reinstated instead of the 2.9% put forward in the draft budget proposals.	In light of the better than expected WG settlement, Cabinet have sought to balance the financial needs of the Council in the delivery of services with the impact on residents' bills.
16	The Panel recommend that the proposal COM15 for 2018-19 to turn off all street lights in areas other than key sites and junctions be reconsidered in light of the potential risks of increased crime and accidents as well as a risk to the general feeling of safety for residents.	Cabinet have tasked officers with further investigating the potential savings which LED replacement lighting could deliver to mitigate the impact of this proposal in future years
17	The Panel recommend that the proposal COM 23 to reduce the frequency of gully cleansing not be progressed for 2017-18 in light of the increased risk of flooding reduction would create. Alternatively, Members recommend that savings are achieved through Council Tax income with a 3.9% increase.	Cabinet accept this recommendation and the proposal has been removed
18	The Panel did not support the proposal to reduce weed spraying over the year and recommend that Town and Community Councils be approached to consider taking part of the cost of this service on when determining their precept.	Cabinet accept this recommendation and the proposal has been removed
19	The Panel recommend that the Authority carry out a review of potential retiring Headteachers and work with schools on succession planning and possible savings that could be achieved through various options and models such as Federations.	This review has carried out by the task and finish group and informs the strategic review. The workstream on leadership will report to Cabinet in summer 2017.

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20	The Panel recommend that the opening times of the Rhiw Car Park be changed to 24hr in order to encourage and support night time economy within the town centre.	This option was considered when the Rhiw car park was being developed but ruled out at that time based on security and cost grounds. There are other pay and display car parks available to serve the night time economy (both Council and privately operated) which adequately cope with the current demand for parking in the evening, and the particular characteristics of the new park, which is not staffed, it is thought on balance could lead to potential problems. There will be a full review of car parking undertaken in 2017-18.