

**COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY, 26 JULY 2017**

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB ON WEDNESDAY, 26 JULY 2017 AT 3.00 PM**

Present

Councillor PA Davies – Chairperson

S Aspey	SE Baldwin	TH Beedle	JPD Blundell
HJ David	P Davies	SK Dendy	DK Edwards
J Gebbie	T Giffard	RM Granville	CA Green
DG Howells	A Hussain	RM James	B Jones
M Jones	MJ Kearns	DRW Lewis	JE Lewis
JR McCarthy	D Patel	AA Pucella	JC Radcliffe
KL Rowlands	RMI Shaw	CE Smith	SG Smith
JC Spanswick	RME Stirman	G Thomas	T Thomas
JH Tildesley MBE	SR Vidal	MC Voisey	LM Walters
KJ Watts	DBF White	PJ White	A Williams
AJ Williams	JE Williams	RE Young	

Apologies for Absence

NA Burnett, MC Clarke, N Clarke, RJ Collins, RL Penhale-Thomas, B Sedgebeer, E Venables, CA Webster and HM Williams

Officers:

Susan Cooper	Corporate Director - Social Services & Wellbeing
Jackie Davies	Head of Adult Social Care
Lindsay Harvey	Corporate Director Education and Family Support
Andrew Jolley	Corporate Director Operational & Partnership Services
Gary Jones	Head of Democratic Services
Laura Kinsey	Head of Children's Social Care
Darren Mepham	Chief Executive
Anne Rawling	CSSIW Inspector
Andrew Rees	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Mark Shephard	Corporate Director - Communities

36. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Declaration of Interest was made:

Councillor JC Spanswick - declared a prejudicial Interest in agenda item 8 – Appointment of Registered Representatives to the Overview and Scrutiny Subject Committees as a named representative in the report is a family member. Councillor Spanswick withdrew from the meeting during consideration of this item.

37. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of Council of 28 June 2017 were approved as a true and accurate record.

38. TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM:

The Mayor

The Mayor announced that many of the outdoor engagements she had attended with her Consort such as the Bridgend Show which took on the Pencoed campus had coincided with the recent good weather, where they had met some of the exhibitors and attendees.

The Mayor was delighted to have attended a wonderful performance of “Les Miserables” by the pupils of Bryntirion Comprehensive School where she had the opportunity of meeting the cast and crew afterwards. She stated that the production was mesmerizing and every person involved should be proud of such a professional performance. Similarly, Pencoed Comprehensive’s production of “Chicago” was impressive in its high quality and she extended her congratulations to the staff and pupils for all their dedication and hard work.

The Mayor also announced that she had been kindly invited by Councillor Janice Lewis to the Heol y Mymydd Community Garden Society Open Day. Councillor Lewis and the Society gave the Mayor and Consort a very warm welcome. There was an amazing community spirit which was clear for all to see, and a lovely mix of ages learning and sharing experiences, with the allotments being so tidy and full of healthy growth.

The Mayor announced with pleasure that Bridgend has produced another champion, with Aled Davies MBE putting Bridgend on the map again with his gold medal in the Paralympics and setting the world record as the first man in his particular classification of shot put to pass the 17m mark. She stated that the County Borough is proud of this young man and a formal letter of congratulations was being sent on behalf of the County Borough, from the Mayoral office.

The Mayor was pleased to announce her chosen charities for this year will be Bridgend Youth Theatre; Breast Cancer Care – Princess of Wales Hospital and the Alzheimer’s Society Bridgend. She stated that over the coming months there will be plenty of opportunity to support her fundraising and the events will be put into Members’ calendars.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Malcolm James and the Ramblers who stood in at the final moment when entertainers booked for the Charity Strawberry Tea were unable to attend. All who attended enjoyed every minute of the performance and she thanked Councillor James for coming to the rescue and for providing the event with such fun.

Cabinet Member Communities

The Cabinet Member Communities was delighted to see six local sites included among this year’s Green Flag awards from Keep Wales Tidy. The Green Flag scheme recognises the best public parks and open spaces, and this year’s winners featured Maesteg Welfare Park, Bryngarw Country Park and Wilderness Lakes in Porthcawl. Caerau Market Garden and the Wilderness Allotment Association also picked up Green Flag community awards, while Coychurch Crematorium won its Green Flag for the eighth year in a row. Thanks are due to the staff, volunteer groups and individuals who work tirelessly to maintain these sites to such high standards. Their Green Flag success is a fitting tribute to their on-going efforts.

The Cabinet Member Communities announced that a bid was recently submitted to the Welsh Government to fund road safety improvements along the A48 between Laleston and Waterton. While that bid was unsuccessful, work was underway to ensure that the designs will be in place so there are no further delays once alternative funding has been confirmed.

The proposed improvements include a 50mph speed limit, new pedestrian refuges at key points along the route, resurfaced footpaths, extended footway links, new signage and road markings, and more. He stated that the report found that although the route 'generally benefits from good forward visibility with an average carriageway width of 10metres', there were 32 collisions between 2011 and 2015. While the accidents accounted for an above-average casualty severity ratio, collision rates were less than the national average for corresponding types of road. The study found that nine of the 32 collisions occurred at night while six took place during wet weather. Alcohol, driver error and illegal manoeuvres also figured in the data. He hoped to bring positive news on this very soon.

The Cabinet Member Communities also announced in his role as Armed Forces Champion of an event to commemorate Corporal James Llewellyn Davies who was killed in action on the Western Front in the Battle of Passchendaele during the first World War. Corporal Davies was born and brought up in Nantymoel and is the only resident of the County Borough to have been awarded the Victoria Cross. The event will be marked by the laying of a commemorative paving stone and will take place on 30 July 2017 in Nantymoel, all are welcome to attend.

#### Cabinet Member Social Services and Early Help

The Cabinet Member Social Services and Early Help announced on behalf of the Deputy Leader that the annual electoral canvass was underway to confirm that information held on the electoral register for each property is correct. Any residents who provided their email address in the last canvass are being advised to look out for an email, which will present itself as coming from 'Elecreg on behalf of Bridgend County Borough Council', and will have the subject title 'Bridgend CBC – Electoral Registration 2017'. He advised Members of asked by constituents to advise that this is a genuine and important email, and not spam or a scam. He stated that the main postal canvass is also getting underway to ensure that the details we have for each household are correct.

The Cabinet Member Social Services and Early Help also announced that the next training session for rota visiting will be held on 31 July in the Council Chamber between 12:30pm – 1.30pm. He urged all Members to make every effort to attend and take part in the next session as only three Members had attended the most recent session.

#### Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations

The Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations announced that the school summer holidays have started and as usual the Council is supporting a wide range of free initiatives to keep local children happy, healthy and active. Park Lives is offering free activity sessions at several local parks including zumba, bubble football, free running classes, family tai chi, mini gladiators and more, while Active 4 Life sessions will mix sports with games, arts and other creative activities. The Welsh Government's free swimming sessions will be running alongside bilingual activities such as snorkelling and water polo. Communities First are providing health and learning events, Urdd Gobaith Cymru have organised several Welsh-language sports camps for youngsters and further fun Welsh activities are being offered by Menter Bro Ogwr. Awen are running the summer reading challenge at local libraries which will culminate with a book tower building event at Newbridge Fields, and are also offering reading, lego, film, coding and storytime clubs. The Grand Pavilion and Maesteg Town Hall are hosting puppet shows, panto auditions and more, and Bryngarw Country Park will feature outdoor theatre performances of popular books such as 'Billionaire Boy', 'The Wind in the Willows' and 'Alice Through the Looking Glass'. She urged Members to let their constituents know about the events and full details are available on the 'school's out' pages on the Council's website.

The Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations also announced that a video has been uploaded to the Council's website which features Cefn Glas teenager Jodie Coupland describing how the Get On Track programme helped her turn her life around. Run by the Dame Kelly Holmes Trust and supported locally by Bridgend County Borough Council, the programme uses world-class athletes to help young people aged 16 to 25 to develop their skills and find work. Jodie was mentored by Wales women's rugby international Philippa Tuttiett, who recently travelled to the Senedd to talk about what a difference it has made to her life. She now works for Halo Leisure and mentors other young people. The Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations congratulated Jodie and everyone who has helped deliver the programme. More details can be found in the new edition of the BridgeMembers newsletter, and she hoped that Members would also view the video to see for themselves what an impact Get On Track is having.

#### Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration

The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration was delighted to see school inspectors from Estyn remove Coleg Cymunedol Y Dderwen from 'special measures'. He stated that when the school was inspected in October 2015, inspectors identified a number of urgent actions. In order to improve the effectiveness of leadership at all levels and ensure clear direction, high expectations and accountability, the Council had arranged for Nick Brain, Head teacher of Bryntirion Comprehensive, to provide executive leadership at Coleg Cymunedol Y Dderwen. Less than two years later, a follow-up inspection has concluded that the school has delivered significant improvements across all of Estyn's recommendations. He informed Council that this was fantastic news and marked a significant first step forward in ensuring that the school has a strong foundation on which it can build and deliver further improvements. He stated that Estyn's confidence in Coleg Cymunedol Y Dderwen's progress was a clear indication of the positive ways in which the teachers, staff, governors, parents and students at the school have engaged with the process, and a further sign of their commitment and dedication towards providing pupils with the very best levels of education.

The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration also congratulated three other local schools on some recent successes. Cefn Glas Infants had seen Keep Wales tidy renew their platinum eco award and healthy schools status, while Garth Primary have won three awards in the Welsh National Enterprise Troopers scheme with an idea based on recycling old crayons and using them to make new ones shaped like letters. Meanwhile, Porthcawl Primary has won the Wales category of the 'Achievement For All' award scheme – a national initiative that recognises and celebrates the achievements of children, young people, leaders and teachers.

The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration announced that the iconic Jennings Building on Porthcawl Seafront was now home to a new restaurant, pizzeria and a coffee bar. All three are open for business, and it was wonderful to see how the Grade II-listed structure has been invested with a new lease of life. As part of a £2.5m project by Wales-based developers ABA Holdings with support from Bridgend County Borough Council, Finance Wales, the Heritage Lottery Fund and Cadw, the upper level also featured 13 live-in units with workspaces and loft bedrooms that will create a community of people living and working on site. He stated that this was great news for Porthcawl, and a landmark development that will attract locals and visitors alike.

#### Chief Executive

The Chief Executive referred to his announcement made at the previous meeting of Council where he gave an update on fire safety across the Borough including the

Council's response to the Grenfell tower fire. He stated that at that time there were a number of properties where the Council was undertaking investigation and some Members raised queries about some additional properties throughout the County Borough.

He informed Council that the priority of government has been to ensure testing is undertaken for certain types of premises where aluminium composite material cladding (ACM) is in place. It had been the Council's priority at properties with residential accommodation. The Council has 11 properties that fall into this category but none are 18 metres or more in height. Additionally none have any cladding.

Most importantly, the Chief Executive confirmed that in all cases these properties have fire risk assessments in place that have been completed over the past 12 months and regular testing of alarms and evacuation drills, with the exception of the Coychurch Crematorium supervisor's house which is vacant. The tallest building in council ownership is the Civic Offices and there is no cladding, again current fire risk assessment, evacuation and drill procedures are in place. He stated that 48 of the Council's schools do have cladding installed but none of these are above 18 metres and none are residential. Again all schools have up to date fire risk assessments and weekly testing of alarms and termly fire evacuation drills. He stated that the only other properties identified so far as having ACM cladding are the Pyle Life Centre which is neither residential or above 18 metres and Pyle Enterprise Centre. In both of these cases this is a different type of ACM to that used in Grenfell Tower.

The Chief Executive informed Council that outside of the estate, the Council has also looked into the Caerau Regeneration schemes which are all fully compliant with building regulations. With regard to buildings over 18 metres, the Bottle bank building in Porthcawl and the Rhiw development are both compliant with the building regulations. He stated that the Job Centre Plus building has crown immunity but the Council's Building Control function and the fire service have checked from the outside and do not believe it poses a risk but assurances are being sought from the DWP.

The Chief Executive informed Council there is still work to be completed on evaluating some of the industrial estate sites and some libraries and community centres but again these are buildings of typically one storey and not used for residential purposes and so are considered low risk.

He stated that he would shortly be winding up the task and finish group pending any further developments at a national level and once the remaining outstanding checks on remaining low risk buildings have been completed.

The Chief Executive announced that Members would no doubt have seen the recent statement from Mark Drakeford, the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government, in which he discussed local government reform.

The AM set out three areas that he intends to focus on, namely the form and function of town and community councils, changes to the local government electoral system with a lower voting age of 16, and mandatory regional collaboration between councils.

Each of these will have significance for this County Borough and its communities but he firstly focused on the mandatory regional working. He stated that the Cabinet Secretary had indicated a direction of travel whereby the pace of collaboration would be accelerated by Welsh Government mandating specific services or groups of services to be delivered on a prescribed geographical "footprint".

For a long time, this Council had been making the point that Bridgend County Borough is unusual in that it operates looking both east and west at the same time. The Council undertakes collaborative work with the health board through the Western Bay partnership, while in the opposite direction it has collaborations in place on education, regulatory services and the Cardiff City Deal.

He stated that while the Council is regarded as an effective and valued partner on all of these fronts, looking in two directions is inherently unsustainable. It makes it more difficult to truly integrate working across the economy, health, education and so on. This specific anomaly had been acknowledged by the Cabinet Secretary in the White Paper that was published earlier in the year.

The Welsh Government's preferred solution is for the Bridgend locality of the ABMU health board to become part of the Cwm Taf Health Board. This would mean that for the first time in many years, all of the Council's services and collaborations would be lined up with a consistent group of partners.

The Cabinet Secretary is proposing further dialogue over the coming months on these proposals, but his statement suggests that the work on social services and health integration across the communities of Bridgend County Borough will continue.

Most of the Council's operational relationships are within the Bridgend locality with GPs, community health and the Princess of Wales hospital. While this would carry on, the Council's partners would become RCT and Merthyr Tydfil Councils, third sector partners operating in Bridgend County Borough and the Cwm Taf Health Board.

This clearly involves a lot of work. He believed there is a need to focus on bringing the Western Bay 'culture' to the new partners, and also consider whether there are any key aspects in which the Council could work with former Western Bay partners and the Cwm Taf partners in a similar way to what South Wales Police are doing.

For services like strategic transport, economic development and planning, the Cabinet Secretary's announcement confirms our existing commitment to developing meaningful sharing or collaboration across the City Deal area.

However, his announcement may well result in a greater impetus for this, and will almost certainly cast a wider net for a range of services that could be brought together on a similar basis, for example, by building further on the existing school improvement collaboration, or continuing to explore the sharing of support services.

Before any potential re-alignment or local government reform can take place, a great deal of formal consultation will be necessary as well as further work to fully understand the consequences of such a move.

He stated that the Cabinet Secretary's proposals clearly have major implications, but they also present many positive opportunities, and there would be engagement as fully as possible in shaping these further. This includes the other proposals relating to changes to the electoral system including how councillors are elected and council decisions are made and the "root and branch" review of town and community councils that the Cabinet Secretary has referred to.

The Chief Executive informed Council that the Minister anticipates making a further statement in the autumn, when there will be more clarity on how any move would affect the Council's current working partnerships, and a greater insight into what shape future reorganisation might take.

39. TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE LEADER

The Leader announced that the proposal for Bridgend by the Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Finance offers an opportunity to forge a stronger partnership with RCT, Merthyr and a new and close relationship with Cwm Taf Health Board. The change if it happens, would not take place overnight and the Council will of course continue to work closely with Swansea, Neath Port Talbot and ABMU. The Cwm Taf partnership is very excited by the proposal of the Council working together across the region in the future on health, social services and wellbeing.

A Member of Council requested an assurance that proposals for a new partnership with the Cwm Taf Health Board would not see the downgrading of services being delivered by the Princess of Wales Hospital. The Leader stated that the Cabinet Secretary was very clear that the proposal was not about the downgrading of services being delivered by the Princess of Wales Hospital and Consultants at the hospital were very pleased with the new proposals. The Leader gave an assurance that he would keep Group Leaders of the proposals as they develop in detail.

He also informed Members that in the last week, the Welsh Government Ministerial Taskforce for the South Wales Valleys published a high-level action plan called 'Our Valleys, Our Future'. This aimed to focus efforts and resources across all levels of government in order to deliver real and lasting positive change, and close the employment gap between the valleys and the rest of Wales by creating new, secure jobs.

He stated that as the County Borough was not included among the list of strategic hubs, he had requested and held an urgent meeting with the Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language Minister, Alun Davies AM, and Huw Irranca-Davies AM. He was pleased to be able to inform Members that as a result, the Minister had given assurances that when the detailed action plan is published, it will feature specific proposals to meet the needs of communities in the Llynfi, Garw and Ogmore valleys. As such, the Leader had asked officers to prioritise work with Welsh Government officials throughout the summer to develop proposals that will support our valleys. He hoped to be able to bring more news on this soon.

The Leader announced that he was very disappointed to receive a letter from the Secretary of State for Transport and Secretary of State for Wales confirming that the UK Government had scrapped plans to electrify the Great Western Railway line between Cardiff and Swansea. Instead, new 'bi-mode' trains that swap between diesel and electric and extra seats on rush hour services would be operated on the line. He stated that the line would not have the same kind of modern railway technology that nearly all European counterparts and competitors already have in place and there was concern that this decision will deter national and international businesses from investing in Wales any further down the line than Cardiff.

A Member of Council shared his disappointment at the scrapping of plans to electrify the railway line from Cardiff to Swansea and asked whether the decision would impact on the proposal for increased frequency of services on the Tondu loop to Maesteg. The Leader informed the Member that he would get back to the Member concerned whether it would impact on the proposal for increased frequency of services to Maesteg.

A Member referred to the proposed abolition of tolls for the Severn Bridge and expressed concern that the Welsh Government had yet to approve a route for the M4 relief road around Newport which was causing delays to road freight. The Leader considered that it was equally important for the rail line to be electrified to enable more

freight to be carried by rail. He stated that he would contact the Welsh Government to establish the progress being made with the M4 relief road around Newport, but was aware that the matter was subject to inquiry.

He informed Members that the disappointment turned to anger when the Secretary of State for Transport had this week pledged to consider support for Crossrail 2, yet another project for London, this time a multibillion north-south rail line running across the capital between Hertfordshire and Surrey. In response to this, the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure Ken Skates has written to the Secretary of State to demand that Wales still receives the £700m earmarked for electrification so it can be invested in local rail projects.

He informed Members that Council Leaders from across South and West Wales across the political party divide are united in calling for the UK government to honour its long standing commitment to the people of Wales.

He stated that the situation would be watched closely, but whatever lay ahead, he assured Members that Bridgend would do all it can to get the modern rail service that local people deserve and need.

The Leader announced that sporting legends like Nick Faldo have arrived in Wales, for the most prestigious event in the European Seniors Tour, The Senior Open Championship, will begin at Royal Porthcawl Golf Club tomorrow. He stated that the event which took place at Porthcawl in 2014, the first time in Wales, drew universal praise and acclaim from the golfing world and the area was showcased to a global audience of millions. Last time 43,000 visitors flocked to the town and over £2 million was brought into the local economy. He stated that this is a major event which helps to put the County Borough and a world class destination on the map, and hoped the event would be just as successful this time around.

The Leader announced The Mayor announced that the annual anniversary service to mark the Parc Slip disaster would be taking place on 26 August 2017. A full day of events is planned at the Parc Slip Nature Reserve to mark the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the disaster.

40. SOCIAL SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing presented her Annual report for 2016/17 for approval and requested that Council note the judgements reached locally about social care services in Bridgend. She stated that this was the eighth Annual Report of the Director of Social Services and was based on the Authority's self-assessment of the performance and delivery of social services.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing informed Council that from October 2016, the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) changed the way they inspect children's and adult social services. The new framework will ensure that authorities are inspected using the wellbeing outcomes of the Act. This placed an emphasis on hearing the views and voices of people and their carers who need care and support. She stated that Authorities were advised that the new framework could be tested in this transitional year and Bridgend, like most other authorities, had adopted this approach for the 2016/17 report.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing presented a summary of performance in Adult Social Care, whereby 4923 adults had been supported in the community; the number of people who received a Telecare package had increased from 2643 in the previous year to 2921 in the current year. Demand for services in Adult Social Care had continued to increase in 2016/17 with 7623 referrals received, being an



increase of 136 in the previous year. The number of people supported in residential / nursing care had reduced from 1493 to 986. The number of people who received a reablement service had increased from 388 in the previous year to 394. The service had supported 420 people at home through the Better at Home service which enabled people to be discharged from hospital and not kept in hospital for a package of care.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing presented a summary of performance in Children's Social Care, whereby 6134 new contacts had been received during the year, while the number of children and families the service was involved with had led to an increase in demand of 42%. The number of children that required a child protection intervention had decreased to 689, which were 75 less than in the previous year and the number of children on the child protection register at the end of the year was 175. The number of looked after children as at the end of March 2017 was 390.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing highlighted the key parts of the annual report template and the 6 quality standards which must be answered. In addition, the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and National Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS) were implemented. The Population Assessment across the region which will inform future service planning and commissioning was completed. Key drivers for the year were the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014; Western Bay; Medium Term Financial Strategy and WCCIS. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing highlighted the key actions for the Directorate in 2017/18.

A Member of Council whilst commending the Directorate for its performance expressed concern at performance being variable and in the UK context commented on the timeliness of support from partners which had led to a number of high profile public inquiries. The Member also expressed concern at the potential for a failure in communication or something being missed between the daytime service and the emergency duty team. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing commented that the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) would be going live in 3 - 4 months, which will bring a number of agencies together, sharing information and making collaborative decisions. She stated that the Directorate has a sound infrastructure in place and has a sound relationship with the police. The Head of Children's Social Care that the development of the MASH will have a compliment of full time staff to carry out assessments and referrals. She stated that the Inspector had observed good multi agency work and a well-established Safeguarding Board.

Ann Rawling, representing the CSSIW stated that she had met the Head of Children's Social Care to discuss the Action Plan and found evidence of very positive joint working not only within the Council but with partner agencies. This was evidenced by the development of the MASH. She stated that the CSSIW constructively challenges processes within the Directorate and many of the areas identified by the Inspectorate were already the subject of review by the Directorate. The Leader stated that the implementation by the authority of the WCCIS had greatly assisted communication between agencies and where there were risks to a child, swift action had been taken by the authority to safeguard the child.

The Cabinet Member Social Services & Early Help thanked the Corporate Director, Heads of Service and the whole team in the Directorate for producing the Annual Report which is a good reference document. He also commented that multi-agency and preventative work is at the forefront of the Directorate's focus.

A Member of Council asked what support was given to carers and for respite and the impact caring responsibility could have on young carers' education. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing informed Council that there is a young carers

group in being and each young carer is issued with a card to show to teachers at school who will understand that they may have difficulty in meeting homework deadlines. Young carers cards would now be rolled out to young carers across the Western Bay region in Neath Port Talbot and Swansea Councils. She also informed Council that a young carers conference is held annually. The Head of Adult Social Care informed Council that there is respite in place for carers and that the Act gives carers an entitlement to respite. She stated that support services would be developed over the next 6 months. There is also a Carers Development officer whose remit is to actively support carers. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing informed Council that it is a priority of the Directorate to support carers.

A Member of Council how was the population assessment done. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing informed Council that the population assessment was done across the region using 3 work streams in which officers produced evidence against work stream. She stated there had been a number of performance management surveys and a series of public meetings over a 6 – 9 month period across region. The work on the population assessment would result in a Bridgend plan and there would also be a commissioning plan in place over the coming months.

A Member of Council commented that demand for social services continued to be high and asked whether the MTFs could cope with the demand. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing commented that it had been difficult to meet the requirements of the MTFs and that the Directorate had started this financial year with £2.3m less than the previous year's budget. She stated there is a strategy in place to meet the requirements of the MTFs. The Directorate in the previous year had broken even with its spending and that it would be difficult to repeat that situation. She stated that the Directorate had to pursue a strategy of doing things differently and through service transformation.

A Member of Council congratulated the Directorate for its implementation of the When I am Ready scheme and for its role in safeguarding all vulnerable people.

RESOLVED: That consideration of the Annual Report be deferred to the next meeting of Council due to the unavailability of certain documents electronically to Members.

41. OUTCOMES OF THE TIMINGS OF MEETINGS SURVEY

The Corporate Director Operational and Partnership Services reported on the outcomes of the timings of meetings survey of Council and its Committee meetings and sought approval to use the data from the survey to set the timing of meetings from 1 September 2017.

He informed Council that the responses to the survey had been considered, including a significant number of comments which identified specific timings and which had been taken into account as part of the timing of meetings proposals. The responses had been considered in respect of the revised calendar of meetings and proposals had been identified.

He also reported that prior to the survey; a request had been made to change the days on which Licensing Sub-Committees are held which had been discussed with officers.

A Member of Council was disappointed at the findings of the survey as the timings of meetings could inhibit members of the public from standing as Councillors in the future. The Member also stated that consideration should be given to developing proposals to increase the use of webcasting of meetings, particularly Overview and Scrutiny

Committee meetings. The Corporate Director Operational and Partnership Services informed Council that programme for the webcasting of meetings would need to be developed within the existing number of contracted hours with the webcast supplier.

**RESOLVED:** That Council:

- (1) Noted the outcome of the timings of meetings survey as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report;
- (2) Approved the proposed Programme of Meetings as shown in Appendix 2 of the report, which had been compiled from the survey and developed using the rationale outlined in paragraph 4 of the report.

42. **APPOINTMENT OF REGISTERED REPRESENTATIVES TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY SUBJECT COMMITTEES**

The Corporate Director Operational and Partnership Services sought approval of the appointment of Registered Representatives for Education items considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for a maximum term of four years.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted and Council approved the following individuals as Registered Representative for Education items considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for a maximum term of four years:

- (1) Mr William Bond as Special School Parent Governor Representative;
- (2) Mr Ciaron Jackson as Primary School Parent Governor Representative.

43. **TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND REGENERATION**

**Question from Councillor Alex Williams to the Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration**

*“Will the Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration outline Bridgend County Borough Council’s view on the Welsh Government’s proposals to change the School Organisation Code”?*

**Response from the Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration**

The School Organisation Code, which came into force in October 2013, underpins the provision introduced by the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013. The Code, which is the statutory process with regards to school organisation changes, has been applied to all proposals since that time.

Certain sections of the original Code were not considered sufficiently explicit which resulted in clarifications being sought from Welsh Government in relation to a number of elements prescribed within the document.

Council officers across Wales have had an opportunity to contribute to the amended Code and Welsh Government have taken their views on board and incorporated changes to reflect those clarifications within the draft revised document.

There are some proposed changes contained within the Code, one of which is in respect of surplus school places. Proposers are asked to manage excessive surplus places; however this does not automatically mean closing schools.

The Code encourages proposers to look at other options available to them and their schools, for example clustering, collaboration or federation with other schools and making use of the existing building as a community resource. They are also encouraged to rationalise school space by co-locating services within the school to offset costs.

Also, there is a change proposed in respect of a presumption against rural schools. The aim is to ensure that decisions are taken to close rural schools only after all alternatives to closure have been conscientiously considered. This will require proposers to follow a more detailed set of procedures and requirements in formulating a rural school closure proposal and in consulting on and reaching a decision as to whether to implement a rural school closure proposal.

Welsh Government has produced a list of rural schools which has been included within the draft revision of the Code. While there are no schools within Bridgend currently identified within Welsh Government's list of rural schools, we will have to consider whether there are any schools within the borough which should be given this status and ensure this is conveyed within the Council's response.

The revised document appears to give clarity and is more explicit and this is welcomed. Officers are in the process of formulating a response to Welsh Government's consultation which closes on 30 September 2017.

Councillor A Williams asked a supplementary question in that what criteria would be used for schools with capacity issues and would Heol Y Cyw Primary School be saved from closure.

The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration commented that there were no schools within the County Borough listed as rural as defined by the Welsh Government. The Corporate Director Education and Family Support informed Council that the School Organisation Code was live until 30 September 2017 and there would be parental engagement on the Welsh Government's proposals.

44. **TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES**

**Question from Councillor A Hussain to the Cabinet Member Communities**

*"In the BCBC Public Toilet Review Consultation report dated March 2015, its conclusion states that "Aberkenfig, Pricetown and Blackmill all received lower level of support, however, further research into the closest public facilities in these areas would be desirable". It is now 2 years since this review, could the Cabinet Member for Communities advise what action he has taken to-date and if nothing has been done so far, can he tell us what he is going to do?"*

**Response from the Cabinet Member Communities**

The public toilets in Aberkenfig, Pricetown and Blackmill were permanently closed as part of proposals included in the Medium Term Financial Strategy agreed by Council. The relevant Town and Community Councils were written to at that time asking if they were interested in taking over the responsibility for operating, cleaning and maintaining the toilets. None at that time felt that they were in a position to do so.

There are currently no plans in place to re-open these facilities. However, the Council is still open to entering into discussions with Town and Community Councils on the possibility of transferring the facilities as part of the Council's Community Asset Transfer Programme [CAT]. The Council also runs an approved 'Comfort Scheme' that allows local businesses to make their toilets available to the public and in return they receive an annual payment from the Council. At this time no appropriate local businesses in the locations referred to in the question have applied to be part of the Comfort Scheme.

Councillor Hussain asked a supplementary question as to whether there had been savings derived following the closure of toilets and would there be facilities available in the Pricetown area temporarily during the Victoria Cross commemoration this weekend.

The Cabinet Member Communities stated that it had been necessary to close the facilities due to budgetary pressures at the time, which had now worsened. He stated that the running of public toilets could be considered as part of a Community Asset Transfer, although there had been no such approaches received from Town and Community Councils as yet. The Cabinet Member Communities stated there would be no facilities available in the Pricetown area temporarily during the Victoria Cross commemoration this weekend. The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration informed Council that Cornelly Community Council had kept public toilets open at the Kenfig Nature Reserve and that discussions were taking place with the indoor market partner for a solution at the Rhiw.

The Corporate Director Communities informed Council that the strategy for public toilets was reliant on Town and Community Councils being able to take over the running of the facilities and he them and businesses to do so.

A Member of Council expressed concern that some public toilets had been demolished without giving Town and Community Councils the option of a Community Asset Transfer. The Corporate Director Communities informed Council that there were certain circumstances due to the condition of the building that the Council was left with no alternative but to demolish the facility.

45. TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR WELLBEING & FUTURE GENERATIONS

RESOLVED: That consideration of the question and response be deferred to the next meeting of Council.

46. TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR SOCIAL SERVICES & EARLY HELP

**Question from Councillor J Radcliffe to the Cabinet Member Social Services & Early Help**

*"Can the Cabinet Member for Social Services provide an update on changes to the complaints procedure and how complaints are handled following publication of the Public Services Ombudsman's report of December 2016 regarding the savings of looked after children?"*

**Response from the Cabinet Member Social Services & Early Help**

Regulation 11, of the Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014 states:

“A complaint to a local authority may be made about the exercise of its social services functions including—

- (a) the discharge by a local authority of any of its social services functions or a failure to discharge any of those functions;
- (b) the provision of services by another person or body in accordance with arrangements made by the local authority in the discharge of those functions;
- (c) the provision of services by the local authority in pursuance of arrangements made by that local authority under section 33 of the National Health Service (Wales) Act 2006 in relation to the functions of an NHS body (within the meaning of that section).

The Welsh Government: *A Guide to handling complaints and representations by Local Authority Social Services* (August 2014), states ...”This guidance covers all complaints and representations to a local authority about the exercise of its social services functions”.

In relation to social service functions, the guidance defines a complaint as:

- An expression of dissatisfaction of concern;
- Either written or spoken.....;
- Made by one or more members of the public;
- About a public service provider’s action or lack of action; or
- About the standard of service provided.

Our usual process is:

1. A complaint is received. We assess whether the complaint falls under “a social services function” (as per guidance above) and we assess whether it is subject to any other ongoing investigation which may take precedence over the complaints process – ie POVA/CP/criminal etc. We do this based on knowledge and understanding of the complaints process and in liaison with the person who has knowledge of the case - Team Manager/Group Manager.
2. Dependent on the nature of the complaint, a decision is made on whether it should be investigated formally under Stage 1 or whether, due to its nature it would be appropriate to address as a service issue and resolve informally (outside of the statutory complaints procedure).
3. Either way, an investigation is always undertaken by a lead officer – this is normally the team manager – for both formal Stage 1 and service issues.
4. For Stage 1 investigations, written responses are provided within statutory timescales (total for meetings, investigation and written response is 15 working days). For service issues, written responses aren’t always provided as they can often be easily resolved via telephone communication.

In the case described below, as there was no formal policy in place governing the amount of “pocket money” that should be put away by foster carers for a child in their care, there was no requirement for this service to be provided. It was therefore deemed that the matter did not fall under a social services function. The complaint was therefore considered to not fall under the remit of Social Services Representations and Complaints Process. However, as can be seen from the detail below, the format of the complaints process was still followed.

In his report, entitled *The Investigation of a Complaint by Mr N against Bridgend County Borough Council* (22<sup>nd</sup> November 2016), the Ombudsman concluded that:-

**Point 50: ‘ From a complaints perspective, it seems to me that the Council took too narrow a view when it concluded that Mr N’s case was not one that fell within its social services complaints procedure. I have concerns that the way the Council dealt with and responded to Mr N’s complaint meant that his voice as a LAC was not properly heard. As a consequence the Council lost the opportunity to learn lessons’.**

The Ombudsman Recommended that:-

**(b): ‘The Council should review this case from a complaint handling perspective and share with the Ombudsman’s office any lessons learned’.**

The Ombudsman report was presented to Corporate Parenting on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2017.

On the basis of the information provided, the complaint was considered not to fall under the remit of Social Services Representations and Complaints Procedure but the decision was taken to address the matter as a service issue rather than as a Stage 1 complaint.

This decision was explained in writing to Mr N who was also advised at that time of the availability of an advocate to assist him, if he wished.

The Authority takes all complaints very seriously, and the process adopted to address service issues is very similar to that undertaken for a Stage 1 complaint under the Social Services and Representations process. Once the complaint had been investigated, a written response was provided to Mr N.

All service issues addressed via the Social Services Complaints Section are recorded in the same manner as a formal Stage 1 complaint to ensure that any trends can be picked up and that these are appropriately reported to senior management and included in the Complaints Annual Report.

The Ombudsman’s findings and recommendation in respect of how this complaint was handled was accepted by the Council.

The changes we have implemented as a result of this are:

- We now ensure that we check and seek advice from legal regarding any complaints received where there is any ambiguity or doubt about whether the complaint fits under the definition “..... the exercise of its social services functions”. The process for investigation remains the same.
- In addition to the regular reports to Group Managers, we now also provide regular reports to the senior management team of the Directorate detailing current complaints (formal and service issues) with an update of required actions. These reports include any ombudsman investigations.

Councillor Radcliffe asked a supplementary question in response to the Ombudsman’s findings that the Council had been dismissive of the findings.

The Cabinet Member Social Services and Early Help commented that the Council had not been dismissive of the complaint and Ombudsman’s findings and staff are more than aware of the complaints procedure.

A Member of Council asked whether there is an Annual Report of Complaints. The Cabinet Member Social Services and Early Help confirmed that there is an Annual Report of Complaints.

47. **TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND REGENERATION**

**Question from Councillor T Thomas to the Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration**

*“What is the Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration doing to narrow the literacy, numeracy and general attainment levels for children in receipt of free school meals”?*

**Response from the Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration**

The Programme for Government identifies the importance of closing the attainment gap for poorer pupils and makes a clear commitment to ensure that every child gets the best start in life through an extended Pupil Development Grant (formerly known as the Pupil Deprivation Grant).

The Cabinet Secretary for Education has pledged that the Pupil Development Grant (PDG) will continue for the remainder of this Assembly term. This long-term commitment will enable schools to make sustainable decisions on investment that help identify and address barriers to learning.

The PDG for the financial year 2017–2018 is as follows:

- for each child aged 5 to 15 years old who is eligible for free school meals (eFSM), as reported in the January 2016 Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) return, the school will receive £1150;
- each child who is looked after (LAC) as reported in the April 2016 Children in Need Census, the regional consortium will receive £1150 (this will subsequently be allocated via the relevant local authority on a needs basis); and
- for each child aged 3 to 4 years old in the Foundation Phase maintained and non-maintained settings, an allocation of £600 will be made.

The strategy to tackle deprivation across Central South Consortium (CSC) region encourages all schools to support their disadvantaged pupils in their individual contexts. Best practice sharing in the spirit of a self-improving school system is intrinsic to this.

Regional consortia identify this as one of their main priorities. The CSC Business Plan for 2017–2018 identifies improving the outcomes of the most vulnerable and underperforming groups in the region, working in partnership with local authorities and community partners.

Schools should:

- understand the nature of deprivation in their context and accurately track the performance of eFSM pupils;
- have a clear rationale for how they deploy their PDG effectively;
- outline how they will use this accurately in their school’s development plans; and
- publish how they will spend their PDG to other stakeholders (ie through the school’s website).



CSC will:

- ensure schools plan effectively, and that they allocate the PDG in a clear manner to raise the attainment of eFSM pupils;
- ensure schools monitor and evaluate the impact of their strategies;
- challenge schools to set stretching targets; and
- broker support from the strategic team and hub schools or other schools where schools are having little or no impact on the performance of eFSM pupils.

All challenge advisers have undertaken work this year to ensure all Bridgend schools have planned, monitored and evaluated strategically to ensure schools are improving the attainment of their eFSM pupils.

Councillor T Thomas asked whether arrangements had been in place to prevent child hunger during the school summer holidays. The Leader confirmed that such arrangements had been put in place as part of the summer play scheme.

A Member of Council asked whether the gap in attainment between pupils in receipt of free school meals and pupils not in receipt of free school meals was narrowing. The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration commented that the attainment rate has increased for all pupils. The Corporate Director Education and Family Support confirmed that was the case although there had been a slight dip in performance in the last year but officers were working on narrowing that gap.

48. **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

The meeting closed at 5.12 pm