

COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY, 29 NOVEMBER 2017

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB ON WEDNESDAY, 29 NOVEMBER 2017 AT 3.00 PM

Present

Councillor PA Davies – Chairperson

S Aspey	SE Baldwin	TH Beedle	JPD Blundell
NA Burnett	MC Clarke	N Clarke	RJ Collins
HJ David	P Davies	DK Edwards	J Gebbie
T Giffard	RM Granville	CA Green	DG Howells
A Hussain	RM James	B Jones	M Jones
DRW Lewis	JE Lewis	JR McCarthy	DG Owen
D Patel	RL Penhale-Thomas	JC Radcliffe	KL Rowlands
B Sedgebeer	RMI Shaw	CE Smith	SG Smith
JC Spanswick	RME Stirman	G Thomas	T Thomas
JH Tildesley MBE	E Venables	SR Vidal	MC Voisey
LM Walters	KJ Watts	CA Webster	DBF White
PJ White	A Williams	AJ Williams	HM Williams
JE Williams	RE Young		

Apologies for Absence

SK Dendy, MJ Kearn and AA Pucella

Officers:

Susan Cooper	Corporate Director - Social Services & Wellbeing
Lindsay Harvey	Corporate Director Education and Family Support
Randal Hemingway	Head of Finance & Section 151 Officer
Andrew Jolley	Corporate Director Operational & Partnership Services
Gary Jones	Head of Democratic Services
Darren Mepham	Chief Executive
Jonathan Parsons	Group Manager Development
Helen Picton	Service Manager Trading Standards
Andrew Rees	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Mark Shephard	Corporate Director - Communities

85. MINUTES' SILENCE

The Mayor referred with sadness to the recent death of Mr Carl Sargeant, Assembly Member and requested Members observe a minutes' silence.

All present stood in silence in tribute.

86. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Declaration of Interest was made:

Councillor JC Spanswick declared – Agenda item 15 – Notice of Motion, personal interest as an employee of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and one of the offices responsible for implementing the Public Spaces Protection Order.

All members of the Corporate Management Board, the Group Manager Development and Operational Manager Enterprise & Specialist Services with the exception of the

Chief Executive declared a personal interest in agenda item 7 – JNC Pay Structure and withdrew from the meeting during consideration thereof.

87. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of Council of 1 November 2017 be approved as a true and accurate record.

88. TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM:

The Mayor

The Mayor announced with sadness that she had been informed that Councillor Pucella's grandson, Luca had recently passed away. She stated that she had sent a letter of condolence to Councillor Pucella and his family.

The Mayor announced that she and her Consort had the pleasure of opening a new residential care home in North Cornelly called the Morgana Court and Lodge. She and the Consort were taken on a tour and were amazed at the new ideas that had been incorporated into the site to stimulate clients with Dementia. She stated that music was being played in a bar which looked like a local public house, a bus stop in the corridor with a bench, telephone box and post box. There was also a room with a television screen showing moving country side and had people waving from the fields. With all of the sights and sounds in the room it resembled being on a train, which provided a fantastic way to stimulate memories and a great way of remembering for the residents.

The Mayor informed Council that she recently had the honour of attending the 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. She stated that it was heartening to meet so many young people who are actively making a positive contribution to our communities.

The Mayor announced that November is when the nation remembers and honours those who have sacrificed themselves to secure and protect our freedom. She had represented the Authority at the Remembrance Sunday event held in Bridgend where the Mayor and Consort marched in the parade and laid a wreath on behalf of the Council and its residents. They also attended events which supported armed forces including the a concert for Help for Heroes which had incredible Choirs and Bands and the Royal British Legion Concert held in Maesteg Town Hall which was very touching.

The Mayor also announced that she had the pleasure of attending two events with the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service. The first was at Fire Brigade Headquarters in Llantrisant for the presentation of Long Service and Good Conduct medals for personnel who had served between 20 and 42 years. They also had the pleasure of meeting the dedicated staff and Officers who work as retained Firemen at Porthcawl Fire Station, who demonstrated the rescue tender and its extraction equipment before also demonstrating a simulated road traffic collision. She stated that i was clear to see that they all worked as a team and were extremely proud of the Fire Service.

The Mayor also announced she and the Consort had been invited to Swansea University to celebrate the Life of the late Rhodri Morgan. His brother described a picture of the 'true' Rhodri with AMs and other's in academia sharing some of the stories when they worked together. It was very inspiring and showed what a great Humanitarian and Statesman he was.

The Mayor informed Council that she and the Consort attended the Royal Welsh Showground yesterday and launched the Argora Food Project which brought together

like minded organisations and individuals from across Wales to discuss the challenges facing the produce sector. The project will be led by Bridgend County Borough Council in partnership with seven other Rural Development Plan Local Action Groups. This three-year initiative will be focused on creating strong supply-chains so that small rural-based firms can work together to meet the demands of retail and tourism businesses for locally produced goods.

The Mayor announced that as December is almost upon she was looking forward to being busy over the festive period and will be visiting a number of care establishments to wish residents and users a happy Christmas.

The Mayor also announced that all Members will all have received an email informing that the nominations for the Mayor's Annual Citizenship Awards are now open. The awards are open to people who live in the county borough, as well as groups and businesses based locally. More information can be found on the Mayoral webpages where a nomination form can be downloaded. The deadline for nominations is Friday 26 January and the winners will be honoured at an event in March.

Deputy Leader

The Deputy Leader advised Members that the next round of pre-Council briefings have been scheduled to take place on 20 December, the topic will be Digital Transformation. On 31 January, there will be a pre-Council on the implementation of Universal Credit, and on 28 February there will be a presentation on the Local Development Plan. He stated that the final Code of Conduct training session is being held on 13 December at 2pm. This was specifically for those Members who have not completed this training during the current term of office. He also hoped that all Members will be able to attend a briefing from the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission, to take place at 4pm on 9 January 2018, which will see the Commission outline the work it will be undertaking over the next few years.

The Deputy Leader stated that Members will have seen the recent media coverage about the extremely encouraging recycling statistics. These have revealed that overall recycling between July and September rose from a 2016 rate of 57 per cent to almost 74 per cent for the same period in 2017.

The community recycling centres have recorded a 254 tonne increase in recycling between June and August, and waste sent for disposal as landfill during that same period decreased by 957 tonnes. 7,720 households have signed up for the AHP service, with an average of 100 additional requests being received every week. To date, 278 tonnes of nappies and AHP waste have been diverted from going to landfill. He informed Council that these results are extremely significant in light of the well-publicised issues and concerns that have been expressed about the introduction of the new scheme. He stated that whilst the scheme is not yet perfect and some work is still required with Kier to get the scheme fully to where the Council would want it to be, the results are nevertheless demonstrating that the new procedures are indeed capable of achieving the strict new national targets.

He was looking forward with interest to finding out how Bridgend County Borough's performance will be officially rated when compared against other councils in Wales.

Cabinet Member Communities

The Cabinet Member Communities stated that as the Council's Domestic Abuse champion, he was pleased to see a strong response to this year's White Ribbon Appeal.

A number of local events were organised, some of which are still ongoing, and the message this year was to 'break the cycle'.

To help support this, staff from Calan DVS, PCSOs and the Police Youth Volunteers took a roadshow to different parts of the county borough to raise awareness and publicise the fact that a wide range of help and support is at hand for anyone who is suffering from domestic abuse or who suspects that it might be taking place with a neighbour, relative or friend. He informed Council that the roadshow will be visiting the Y Centre in Porthcawl on Thursday 30 November between 9.30am and 12.30pm, the Co-operative in Porthcawl on Monday 4 December between 10am and 12noon, and Asda in Bridgend on Thursday 7 December between 10am and 12noon. He hoped Members would show their support and he thanked Councillor David White for his efforts as White Ribbon champion. Further details about the White Ribbon Campaign, are available on their website www.whiteribboncampaign.co.uk

The Cabinet Member Communities announced that he was also delighted to see that the authority has worked in partnership with Porthcawl Town Council and that 15 new bins have been installed along Porthcawl sea front as a result. He stated that all of the new bins provided have been funded by Porthcawl Town Council, and will be serviced by Bridgend County Borough Council. He stated that there were now a third more bins in place and there was now no excuse for dog owners and visitors not to bag and bin their pet waste anymore. He thanked the Town Council for working with the Council, which demonstrates how such partnerships can operate for the benefit of local residents, and he hoped to see many more.

The Cabinet Member Communities reminded Members that at the last meeting of Council he announced the award of a £2,500 grant for the Caerau Minewater Project, which aims to create a heat network for local homes using water that has collected in old mine workings. Further to that announcement, he now had the pleasure in announcing that the project has attracted further grant funding, with the Council receiving a formal offer of grant from the Welsh European Funding Office, amounting to just under £6.5m for the further development of the scheme, subject to a degree of match funding. The Caerau Project is one of only three such projects in the UK, and the amount granted reflects the profile and kudos of the Project, and represents 100% of the grant monies bid for. No grant money will be drawn down until all the match funding is in place, but once in place the grant will enable the project to further develop. He congratulated all who are involved in this project and he would bring more information to Members as this exciting project develops.

Cabinet Member Social Services and Early Help

The Cabinet Member Social Services and Early Help announced that with forty-five Extra Care units currently under construction in Ynysawdre, he asked Members to help spread the word about a competition being run alongside the Jehu Group and Linc Cymru. Local people were being asked to help name not only the new development, but also the street that will run through it. He stated that the two successful suggestions will win £50 gift vouchers, and people can enter the competition simply by emailing their suggestions to sian.bridge@jehu.co.uk The closing date for entries is 1 December. He also informed Members that with a second Extra Care facility being built in Maesteg, this was a great idea and one that will help the local community become involved in this excellent development.

The Cabinet Member Social Services and Early Help requested Members help in raising awareness that the safeguarding of vulnerable adults and children is everyone's business. He stated all can help prevent abuse and neglect simply by becoming more aware of the danger signs, not just the giveaway physical injuries, but also tell-tale

changes in people's behaviour. He informed Members that abuse can take many forms, and further details can be found by visiting the Western Bay Safeguarding Board's website, www.WBSB.co.uk

Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations

The Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations announced that following an increase in complaints to the Shared Regulatory Services (SRS), Members may want to advise their constituents to be alert for 'free trial offers' which could result in them paying monthly sums for unwanted subscription goods and services. It was estimated that two million people across the UK experience difficulties trying to cancel monthly subscription payments, many of which have resulted from cold calls and scams. After an initial 14 day cooling-off period, some customers only realise months after the fact that they have been set up for continuous payments from their bank accounts. She stated that the warning from SRS comes during National Consumer Week, who advise that anyone who thinks they may have fallen victim to a scam or who wants more information to contact the Citizens Advice Consumer Service either online or by calling them on 03454 040506.

Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration

The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration announced that Members will already be aware that this Council was instrumental in bringing the old watchtower at Porthcawl back into use by working alongside the National Coastwatch Institution. He was delighted to receive a recent email from station manager Phil Styles which informed me that the station has now been officially recognised as a search and rescue organisation by the Coast Rescue Co-ordination Centre based at Milford Haven. He stated that this was very well deserved as the station is currently the organisation's second busiest in the UK. With a crew of 43 volunteers, they have logged more than 5,000 hours, recorded 4,500 vessel movements, been directly involved with 36 incidents and have helped monitor a further 46. He congratulated the volunteers on their success.

The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration was delighted to attend the launch of the county borough's new SEREN network. Designed to support the area's brightest young minds, the network provides special events and workshops throughout the year that help them target places at leading universities. He stated that around 150 of the highest achieving A Level students gathered for the launch at Bridgend College where they met with representatives from the likes of Oxford and Bath universities. Also present was the Brilliant Club, a charity which supports children from under-represented communities to access the country's best institutions. He stated that it has been set up in partnership with sixth forms, Bridgend College and Welsh Government, the network forms part of a wider regional hub and is sure to be of huge benefit to talented local young people.

The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration also announced another recent launch was the county borough's first-ever Junior Apprenticeship programme which is offering vocational courses in hair and beauty, public services, and construction or garden design. This was a partnership between Welsh Government, the Council, schools and Bridgend College and is supporting forty-five teenagers who are studying at the college while also working towards GCSEs in English and Maths. He stated that this was a great opportunity for year 10 and 11 pupils to gain hands-on experience, and Bridgend College has extensive links with local employers to help them get a head-start.

The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration stated that Members will no doubt have seen local news about Bridgend Indoor Market's new business enhancement plan. This has been produced alongside the Bridgend Market Partnership to create new stalls,

attract more visitors and improve the overall shopping experience at the market. He stated that the traders were currently considering the proposals and their feedback was awaited. The proposals have been put together to achieve some very specific things. Among its proposals are a restructured rent policy, a 15 per cent rent rebate during the post-Christmas 'off-peak' trading period, the appointment of commercial agents to promote and let market stalls, the establishment of a Market Association and an improvement and communications plan, a market enhancement fund and more. He informed Council that this is a very exciting and ambitious piece of work which demonstrates the Council's commitment, and which could prove to be the key for delivering a prosperous future for the indoor market. He acknowledged and thanked the Bridgend Market Partnership for all their efforts and support during the plan's development.

Chief Executive

The Chief Executive announced that the budget consultation will come to a close this weekend on Sunday 3 December and he updated Members on how it was going and asked Members to encourage their constituents to make sure they have had their say before the deadline expires. He informed Members that the budget consultation is asking residents to help identify which areas should be prioritised in next year's budget. To help achieve this, the Council has carried out a range of advertising across social media, online and in local newspapers such as the Glamorgan Gazette and Glamorgan Gem. He stated that a series of media release have been issued, the last of which went out earlier this week to help remind people about the imminent deadline.

He informed Council that he and the Deputy Leader also took part in a live debate on Facebook and Twitter where questions and opinions on budget-related issues were invited.

He also informed Members that the Council has met with local groups such as Bridgend Shout, Bridgend Youth Council, Maesteg-based over-50s group Shedquarters and members of Bridgend Business Forum in order to get their views and feedback. A simplified version of the consultation survey has been produced specifically for younger residents, and to date 100 responses had been received. He stated that a series of local workshops have been held at different venues around the County Borough, and the last one is due to take place on Thursday evening at Ogmores Valley Life Centre between 4pm and 6pm. To date, 1,572 completed budget survey questionnaires have been received and consultation carried out with the Citizen's Panel. The majority of these returns have been filled in online, although the survey has also been available in hard copy format from local libraries. With the deadline looming, he hoped Members will encourage as many people as possible to have their say and help decide how these challenges are going to be faced.

The Chief Executive informed Council of the outcome of further error testing work undertaken on Housing benefit claims following the work carried out by the Wales Audit Office, wherein it had tested a sample of 45 Housing Benefit cases. The sample contained 11 cases with errors and when extrapolated would produce a hypothetical error of circa £1.9m. Further detailed work had been conducted with 120 cases checked, which revealed 2 errors in the sum of £97 out of a total benefit sum of £500k. Following an audit of the DWP claim, errors totalling £350 had been found out of a total of claims of £50m. He stated that the DWP regard a reasonable variation to be £200k. In summary, he stated that no significant control weaknesses were found.

Monitoring Officer

The Monitoring Officer announced the following changes to the Committee cycle:-

1. Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 scheduled for 7 December 2017, will now commence on this date at 1.00pm and not 9.30am as originally planned. This change has been required, as the original timing of the meeting clashed with another important Council led event (Olympage).
2. The Licensing Committee originally diarised for 19 December 2017 has been brought forward to 11 December at 2.00pm, in order to not delay a key item of agenda business.
3. A further meeting of the Democratic Services Committee has been deemed necessary, in order to consider preparation for the WLGA Charter for Member Support and Development. It is proposed that this be convened for 17 January 2018 at 4.00pm.
4. Finally, it has been considered necessary to diarise a further meeting of Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 for 18 January 2018 at 9.30am. The reason for this is to consider further information with regard to the Residential Remodelling of Children's Services, prior to the Committee making comments and recommendations on the proposed model going forward.

He informed Council that the Chairpersons of each of the above Committees have been consulted and they are in agreement with the proposals.

89. TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE LEADER

The Leader advised Members of the recent response he had received from the Chair and Chief Executive of Cwm Taf University Health Board regarding the Council's concerns about the potential impact of proposed boundary changes. He stated they had offered a number of assurances in the event that the changes go ahead, which highlighted the following:

- They are committed towards maintaining and improving health services for local people, and also to the outcome of the South Wales Programme.
- The forthcoming consultation is solely about the organisational boundary. Any service changes would require a separate public consultation process in line with regulatory frameworks.
- Current Cwm Taf hospital waiting times are lower than they are in the ABMU area. In the event the Princess of Wales becomes part of Cwm Taf UHB, the focus will be firmly fixed on bringing PoW waiting times in line with this.
- No service reductions are planned for the PoW.
- Cwm Taf intended to work with ABMU to ensure service sustainability across all sites.
- Cross-boundary access to treatment and inter-regional services will continue.
- While patient pathways may be reviewed at a later date, it will only occur if it improves the accessibility and quality of care, and demonstrates clear benefits for patients.
- As regards Maesteg Community Hospital, the response admitted that Cwm Taf are currently unfamiliar with the site and services, but stressed that the intention is to understand the whole of the community infrastructure over coming weeks.

- While they could not comment specifically on the hospital, Cwm Taf has a track record of investing in community services and establishing community hospitals as cluster hubs which bring together primary, secondary and social care services together. This is certainly something they would seek to explore locally.

The Leader informed Members that the letter concludes by stating that Cwm Taf view proposed boundary changes as an opportunity to improve services across all three local authority areas, to share expertise and resources, and enhance patient experience and access to services. He stated that both the Chief Executive and the Chair have also stressed that they will be happy to come and meet Members to answer questions and discuss any concerns directly, and he would bring further details about this as it develops.

The Leader also advised Members of a letter he had received from the Director General of the Universal Credit programme informing the authority that four main changes are to be made to the system once appropriate legislation has been approved. He stated that the first change will enable short stays in temporary accommodation to be paid through housing benefit, and is intended to ease financial concerns expressed by local authorities. The other changes all concern the first assessment period.

The letter also advised that the current waiting time of seven days is to be abolished, the transition time for anyone transferring across from Housing Benefit will be two weeks, and the period of repayment for new advances will be extended to 12 months to enable claimants to receive up to 100 per cent of their entitlement. The changes are intended to support claimants during the first assessment period following lobbying from councils amid complaints that people have been left without payments during processing. These changes will affect the roll-out schedule of the system and the DWP will be contacting affected councils with further details, and it was hoped to have more information about this soon.

The Leader informed Council that whilst giving evidence to the Parliamentary Commission into Health and Social Care, the Chair Dr Ruth Hussey and Professor Keith Moultrie were clear that the Council's integrated model of intermediate community care for older people was a beacon of best practice not just in Wales but across the UK. He stated that if there is a change, it would be ensured that these vital community services will continue to be developed.

The Leader also announced that as part of the Our Valleys Our Future, he was very pleased that the new Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public Services Alun Davies has announced a seventh strategic hub northern Bridgend. The Council had worked hard to ensure the Garw, the Llynfi and Ogmore is a focus for public sector investment, with the aim to ensure that the hubs will in turn attract private sector investment creating jobs and opportunities. He stated that the process of developing the proposals for the strategic hub based on the initial themes included in the Welsh Government's delivery plan was now underway. He also stated that the taskforce and each of the seven local authorities will hold a strategic hub seminar to support the development of an investment blueprint for each area over the next 15 years. The specific projects to be funded over the term of the Assembly will be identified by April 2018. In addition to the strategic hubs a Valleys Landscape park is being considered by Welsh Government to maximise the tourist and leisure opportunities of the natural landscape and rich heritage.

He also announced that Heathrow has unveiled a longlist of sixty-five Logistic Hub locations, off-site centres for construction and manufacturing which will help the airport deliver its expansion plan. He stated that the Logistics Hubs will participate in offsite

construction of the third runway, bringing jobs to every corner of the UK and that a site at Brocastle was among the shortlisted sites. The airport had also unveiled ten Business Summit locations, including one to be held in Cardiff, ensuring every region across the UK benefits from supply chain opportunities via expansion.

The Leader informed Council of the progress being made in the construction of Betws Primary School and Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Cwm Garw which will share the same site to be ready in January 2018. The new Bynmenyn Primary School will be ready in February and construction on the new Pencoed Primary School was continuing and would be ready in September 2018. He stated that Band B submission of the School Modernisation Programme would be considered as part of the budget setting process.

90. INTERIM APPOINTMENT - HEAD OF FINANCE

The Chief Executive sought approval to make an interim appointment to the role of Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer.

The Chief Executive informed Council that the current post holder had tendered his resignation and his contract will end on 3 January 2018 and to enable him to review the current arrangements he proposed that an appointment process for an interim Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer be undertaken. This would ensure there is sufficient leadership and management capacity and that financial decisions and timely advice is available during the absence of a permanent Section 151 Officer.

He informed Council that the process for the appointment of an interim Head of Finance will involve sourcing suitably qualified and experienced candidates to undertake the role and would involve an officer interview panel, comprising the Chief Executive, outgoing Head of Finance and a representative of HR who will assess the abilities of the candidates.

Members questioned the arrangements proposed by the Chief Executive as they had been involved in the previous appointment of Chief Officers and Heads of Service through the Appointments Committee. Members also questioned the length of time it was proposed to have the interim appointment for. The Chief Executive informed Council that this was the first time for an interim appointment to be considered in this way and that more formal arrangements are usually put in place for appointments. He stated that consultation will take place with the Cabinet prior to an interim appointment being made. He informed Council that the timescale for an interim appointment was for approximately 6 months, with the possibility of an extension beyond that. He stated that it was not an easy market to make a permanent appointment for senior posts and that he would take the time during the interim appointment to review the structure of senior management. He highlighted the importance of making an interim appointment in order to have continuity and due to the need to have a Section 151 Officer in post. The Chief Executive also informed Council that as it was proposed to make an interim appointment, the JNC pay scales would not apply. The appointment would be made on the basis of a fixed price and value for money would be a key consideration.

The Leader undertook to consult with the Group Leaders on the interim appointment of the Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer.

RESOLVED: That Council delegated to the Chief Executive authority to undertake the recruitment and appointment of an interim Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer.

91. JNC PAY STRUCTURE

The Chief Executive sought approval to implement a new approach to senior management pay.

He informed Council that the current JNC salary structure highlighted had been in existence since 2008. The current structure has large gaps between the senior management tiers. He stated that the current structure has resulted with an inability to be sufficiently flexible to position roles so that the Council can provide a remuneration package which can attract staff of the appropriate calibre. It also limited the ability to succession plan and to allow for career progression.

He reported on a proposal to implement a more flexible senior manager pay scale which had the objective of addressing those concerns whilst enabling a targeted 20% reduction in senior management costs to the Council over the next two years, which equated to approximately £500,000 a year. He stated this was expected to largely arise from staff turnover and consequent restructuring of the organisation and with the proposed pay structure in place the Council will be in a position to more ably respond to market forces. No changes were proposed to be made to the NJC structure as part of this exercise. The new JNC structure also proposed to be extended downwards to bridge the gap with that of the top end of the NJC scale. He highlighted the proposed JNC pay structure which it was proposed would be in place by the end of the financial year. Consultation will take place with the trade unions on the proposed changes to the JNC pay structure and notice of formal consultation issued to existing JNC post holders. He informed Council that the proposals would be referred to the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales to seek their agreement.

RESOLVED: That Council approved the new JNC pay structure with an effective date of 1 April 2018.

92. 2018-19 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 2018-19.

He advised that the estimated council tax base for 2018-19 was 54,403.60 and the estimated collection rate was 98%. The net council tax base was therefore 53,315.53. He added that collection rates over the previous 3 years had been the highest achieved and the estimated collection rate in the last year was 97.6%, which was the highest collection rate ever achieved in this Authority.

The Section 151 Officer advised Members that the authority does not write off Council Tax debt and will continue to collect historical debt.

RESOLVED: That Council:

- (1) Approved the council tax base and collection rate for 2018-19, as shown in paragraph 4.1 of the report.
- (2) Approved the tax bases for the community areas set out in Appendix A to the report.

93. AMENDMENT TO THE FINANCIAL PROCEDURE RULES WITHIN THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION

The Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer sought approval of proposed amendments to the Constitution which reflect changes to the Financial Procedure Rules (FPRs). He stated that the FPRs had not been revised for a number of years, during which time new financial processes and procedures and legislation and guidance have come into effect.

He informed Council that officers had reviewed the FPRs and had made changes relating to:

- new rules regarding payment of consultants;
- new methods of payment e.g. purchasing cards;
- new policies and strategies e.g. Grants Policy, Reserves and Balances Protocol, Anti-Fraud Bribery Policy.

He stated a further revision would need to take place to reflect legislative changes when the Data Protection Act will be replaced by the Data Protection Bill (which incorporates the General Data Protection Regulation).

A member of Council questioned the security in place on the use of purchasing cards. The Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer commented that purchasing cards are only available to authorised officers. Cards have credit limits and all spend on the cards have to be authorised by line managers. The use of purchasing cards is reviewed by officers from Finance and Procurement and there are rigorous controls in place governing their use. He informed Members that the Council gains a rebate from the use of purchasing cards and he undertook to provide Members with details of the rebate.

RESOLVED: That Council approved the amendments to the Financial Procedure Rules and consequently approved the updated Constitution.

94. 2017 ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT FOR THE BRIDGEND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2006 - 2021

The Group Manager Development reported on the findings of the Local Development Plan 2017 Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) and sought approval that the Development Control Committee takes on the role of the LDP Steering Group.

The Group Manager Development informed Members that the report is the 3rd such report that has been produced since the LDP was adopted in 2013. He stated that the LDP is one of the high level strategies which must be prepared by the Council which sets out in land use terms the Council's priorities but also must be in conformity with national policy and regulations. The plan is evidence based and involves considerable consultation and independent scrutiny. The Council has a statutory duty to keep all matters under review that are expected to affect development within its area and Section 76 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires these matters be expressed in the form of an Annual Monitoring Report for submission to Welsh Government. He informed Council that the AMR is essentially a 'Health Check' of the LDP, determining how effective it has been in meeting the objectives of the plan and whether the development strategy that underpins the plan remains valid. The AMR also considers how contextual changes, such as the state of the economy and national and regional influences and changes to legislation may also have influenced the success or validity of the Plan. He highlighted some of the 'key findings' from the 2017 data analysis for the period 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017 are:-

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- 4978 new dwellings have been completed during the plan period up to 2017 – 1150 have been affordable.
- The Council has a housing land supply assessed against the housing requirement of the LDP of 4.0 years, which is below the 5 year minimum requirement.
- During the monitoring period 1.4 hectares of vacant employment land was developed, which is substantially below the LDP's proposed take up of 6.3 hectares per annum.
- In determining how successful the LDPs Regeneration-Led Spatial development strategy has been, the LDP identifies 4 Strategic Growth areas at Bridgend, the Valleys Gateway, Maesteg and Porthcawl. Monitoring of implementation of housing and employment allocations shows that the Bridgend and Valleys Gateways strategy areas have been very successful in terms of delivery but that Maesteg and Porthcawl Growth Areas have underperformed. This underperformance is largely attributed to issues of viability in Maesteg and land ownership issues in Porthcawl where the wider Porthcawl Waterfront Regeneration Area has failed to deliver the anticipated levels of growth.
- Vacancy Rates within our town centres are 17.7% in Bridgend, 4.9% in Porthcawl and 6.0% in Maesteg. In this context Bridgend Town Centre Vacancy Rate is higher than the LDP target of 15%.
- In terms of monitoring the need to provide a permanent or transit Gypsy and Traveller Site this has been determined by updated evidence contained in the recent Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Survey. The survey shows that there is no requirement up to 2021 and a requirement for 1 additional pitch up to 2031.
- The County Borough is making a significant contribution to national renewable energy targets. The generating capacity within and immediately adjacent the refined SSA (north of Evanstown and the Ogmore Valley) is 65MW, which is considerably higher than the estimated capacity of the SSA of 31MW.

The Group Manager highlighted the key conclusions from this year's Annual Monitoring Report, that plan policies are generally being met with the Plan moving towards its targets and that the LDPs Development Strategy remains fundamentally sound. However, the Local Planning Authority acknowledges that it must progress with a Review, given that there is a statutory obligation to undertake a full review 4 years after adoption and an imperative to address the shortfall in housing land supply.

He stated that the recommendations of the AMR are that Bridgend Local Planning Authority commences a statutory Review of the LDP in early 2018 and in order to facilitate the review, the Development Control Committee takes on the role of LDP Steering Group, whose function will be to scrutinise the key stages of plan preparation and evidence gathering and make future recommendations to Council.

The Group Manager Development reported that the next stage of Plan review requires the preparation of a detailed 'Review Report' that will be reported to Development Control Committee and Council. The Review Report will set out clearly what has been considered, which key stakeholders have been engaged and, where changes are required, what needs to change and why.

The Group Manager Development reported on a proposal that the Development Control Committee takes on the role of LDP Steering Group, to oversee the review of the Local Development Plan from start to completion.

A Member of Council questioned the impact of the northern employment hub on the LDP. The Group Manager Development stated that the development of the hub will be taken into account as part of the evidence which would inform the LDP.

Members of Council questioned why vacancies to commercial properties in Pencoed town centre did not feature amongst the key findings of the AMR. The Group Manager Development informed Council that Bridgend was included in the AMR for monitoring purposes as it is a 'sub regional centre' and Maesteg and Porthcawl are classed as 'town centres' Pencoed does not fall within this category as it is a 'district centre' and is not subject to the same level of monitoring. Members also expressed concern that the vacancy rates of commercial properties was above the target in Bridgend although Maesteg and Porthcawl town centres were exceeding targets. The Group Manager Development commented that it was disappointing the vacancy targets in Bridgend had not been met, although the rates are only slightly below target there were signs of a marginal improvement over last year. He stated that the scope of the LDP review could be widened to look at town centre boundaries and to have a more realistic delivery of targets for commercial property vacancies.

Members also requested that the review fully utilises current industrial sites. The Group Manager Development stated that the LDP process will see a considerable amount of engagement and efforts would be made to ensure that industrial sites are occupied.

A Member of Council referred to the lowering of the percentage to provide affordable housing in the current LDP and asked whether this would be increased as part of the review. The Group Manager Development stated that this was again based on evidence and that the LDP had to be deliverable. He stated that commercial housebuilders have an input to the Joint Housing Land Availability Study and that the County Borough has a housing requirement of 4 years in the current LDP, which had recently dipped below 5 years. The housebuilders will also be engaged as part of the LDP review, He also stated that the affordable housing requirement may affect the deliverability of some sites. Any new LDP will be subject to external examination conducted by an independent Planning Inspector and the plan would need to demonstrate deliverability before approval by Welsh Government. Members expressed concern at the lack of 1 bedroom properties in the County Borough.

A Member of Council commented on the need for engagement to take place with primary health care providers in order to improve community health facilities as part of the theme of social progress which recognises the needs of everyone. The Group Manager Development confirmed that engagement will take place with primary health care providers which will be a key element in preparing the new plan.

The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration commented that school places would also need to be reviewed as part of the process. The Group Manager Development confirmed that the supply of school places would have to be reviewed in addition to housing development. He highlighted the importance of providing the right infrastructure in order to support new housing developments.

A Member of Council commented on the importance of having vibrant and diverse town centres and it appeared that Pencoed had been missed out from the review process. The Group Manager Development informed Council that Pencoed had not been missed out from the process and is identified within the LDP as a District Centre along with

other areas including Kenfig Hill, Aberkenfig and Pyle. He also informed Council that all parts of the Council will be part of the LDP review process.

RESOLVED: That Council:

- (1) Noted the content of the AMR;
- (2) Agreed that the Development Control Committee takes on the role of the LDP Steering Group to assist in the production and replacement of the Bridgend Local Development Plan.

95. DEPARTURE FROM DEVELOPMENT PLAN - PLANNING APPLICATION P/17/585/FUL

The Group Manager Development reported that the Development Control committee at its meeting on 9 November 2017 considered planning application P/17/585/FUL as a departure from the Local Development Plan. He stated that the Committee resolved not to refuse planning permission and the application referred to Council requesting that it approve the application subject to conditions.

The Group Manager Development reported that the application seeks retrospective consent for a physiotherapy clinic and studio within an existing industrial unit. The application site is located within Bridgend Industrial Estate which is allocated and protected for employment uses falling within uses B1, B2 and B8 employment uses by policies REG1(2) and REG2 of the adopted Bridgend Local Development Plan (LDP). He informed Council that the site had recently been vacated by South Wales Police who used the area as B1 office space. The site was now being utilised by the applicant as a physiotherapy studio and clinic without the benefit of planning permission.

He informed Council that the application is a resubmission of a previous application for the “change of use from an ancillary office to Class D1 (physiotherapy clinic)” under planning reference P/17/44/FUL and was refused on 24 April 2017.

RESOLVED: That Council is minded not to refuse the development and the Corporate Director Communities be given plenary powers to issue a decision notice in respect of this proposal subject to the conditions contained in the report of the Corporate Director Communities.

96. ELECTED MEMBER LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The Corporate Director Operational and Partnership Services sought approval of the Elected Member Learning and Development Strategy.

He stated that a desktop review of the Strategy had been undertaken to ensure that it is fit for purpose and updated to reflect a number of factors which have changed since the approval of the original Strategy. He informed Council that newly elected Members have indicated that changes are needed in the delivery of Member Development Activities and it was proposed to divide the Strategy into the following 5 phases: Administration; the Essentials; the Core Functions; Identifying the needs of the individual Councillors and Continuing Development.

He reported on a proposal that the Democratic Services Committee categorise member development topics as follows: Essential; Recommended and Optional. He also informed Council of a proposal to make greater use of e-learning facilities to be incorporated into the member development programme.

RESOLVED: That Council approved the Elected Member Learning & Development Strategy.

97. **INFORMATION REPORTS FOR NOTING**

The Corporate Director Operational and Partnership Services presented a report, the purpose of which was to inform Cabinet of the Information Reports which had been published since the last meeting.

RESOLVED: That Council acknowledged publication of the documents listed in the report:-

<u>Title</u>	<u>Date Published</u>
Urgent Delegated Decision	23 November 2017
Response to the Draft Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel For Wales	23 November 2017

98. **TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS TO THE CABINET**

Question from Councillor A Hussain to the Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations

“Data from the British Pest Control Association (BPCA), identified that in 2015-16 Bridgend County Borough Council dealt with more rat problems per head than any other authority in Britain. Last year Bridgend had a 4% reduction in the pest call out levels compared to other Authorities across the UK, which appears to be a step in the right direction. However in recent weeks the number of rats seen across the County Borough appears to be increasing including in my own ward of Pen-y-fai. Although many of these rat sightings are of dead rats, can the Cabinet Member explain what is being done to minimise the rat population across the County Borough and what steps are being taken to ensure that the health and wellbeing of the residents is not adversely impacted by the rat population?”

Response from the Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations

The opportunity to provide further information regarding the British Pest Control Association’s view that Bridgend County Borough Council dealt with more rat problems per head than any other authority in Britain in the year 2015-2016, is something that I’m sure members are keen to read.

It should be noted that BPCA survey itself recognises limitations in comparing the Pest Control activity of different local authorities. Unlike 92% of authorities in the UK, Bridgend County Borough Council provides a free service for pests of public health significance, including rats. It is well documented that the introduction of pest control charges by a local authority reduces the number of treatments undertaken by the Council. The figures produced by the BCPA are therefore likely to be a reflection of the pricing policy that Bridgend Council operates rather than a true comparison of the scale of rat problems in UK local Authorities.

It should also be noted that a significant number of UK local Authorities no longer provide any Pest Control Services and thus the BPCA survey does not include any information from those areas or from private Pest Control companies.

In light of this, and the fact that the BPCA have stated that their figures were incomplete, to describe Bridgend as having a particular problem is hugely unfair. The British Pest Control Association's view highlights both the sterling work that Bridgend County Borough Council are doing in relation to dealing with pests, as well as the fact that unlike most other local authorities, Bridgend County Borough Council still offers a free service which residents are engaging with. Retaining this free service, amongst the background of financial cuts, is a positive step which prevents the health and wellbeing of the residents being adversely impacted by the rat population.

All of the pest related calls received relating to residential dwellings are referred to Mitie Pest Control, who are the Council's contracted service provider. During comparable periods in the last 4 years the number of pest related calls have remained at a consistent level, so I cannot comment on what other local authorities have done to increase their call out rate, but our figures show residents are still engaging with our service at the same rate they were in 2015-16.

In relation to the Pest Control treatment service, the contractor liaises with officers within the Shared Regulatory Service to highlight areas of concern. Officers will then investigate issues whether there may be a problem with disrepair to a property allowing entry to rats or also if there are accumulations of refuse which are providing a food source. Officers have the powers to serve notice, and prosecute for non-compliance or carry out work in default the costs of which are then recharged to the notice recipient who may be either the owner or occupier of the property.

In relation to call, all calls concerns and complaints are logged directly by our call centre, which has resulted in officers taking both informal and formal action requiring persons to arrange for the removal and proper disposal of refuse which removes food sources for rats, so helping to control the population.

Bridgend County Borough Council also manages the Sewer Baiting Contract on behalf of Welsh Water, and officers of Shared Regulatory Services can direct sewer baiting to be carried out in specific areas where reports or calls have been received of increased rodent activity. This again highlighting the positive steps that Bridgend County Borough Council have been taking and the high regard that other organisations have for the Pest Control Service.

We are proud to be one of the few councils still providing this service free of charge, and will continue to respond promptly to all calls relating to pest control.

Councillor Hussain in asking a supplementary question, questioned whether there are plans to improve the quality of bags in order to deter pests from breaking into them and whether the pest control service would continue to be provided as a free service. The Deputy Leader stated there were no plans to change the bags and that pests would not be attracted to residual bags provided citizens placed their food waste in the food caddies. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that the pest control service is provided free of charge and there were no plans in the budget process to change that.

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

"What assessment has the authority – either alone or as part of regional collaboration – made (or intends to make) of the implications of the recent British Medical Journal research (<http://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/7/11/e017722>) on the link between social care cuts and mortality rates in care homes in England, and how will the authority use this research to inform budget planning and service design?"

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

It should be noted that this research relates to care homes in England, rather than Wales, and the article itself refers to limitations and that it needs to be treated carefully at a lower level of population. As such:

- Variations may exist at the local level which were not identified by the study (i.e. it is not inevitable that this pattern is repeated in any one LA area or indeed in Wales compared to England)
- There may be other mediating factors beyond those explored in this analysis (i.e. lots of factors as well as macro-economic conditions may have an influence, including, I would assume, the actual population make up including the age at which people come into care homes and nursing homes, male/female mix, Learning Disability survivals etc.)

There is a potentially a simpler explanation to the finding identified by Cllr Radcliffe: older people are going into residential care at a later stage in their lives and their length of stay are shorter.

Pressures due to social care continue to pose a risk to the Council's financial sustainability in the medium to long term. The wider challenges facing social care have been well documented; as a result of demographic changes primary and community services are facing increasing and more complex demands. More people are diagnosed with one or more preventable health conditions and frail older people increasingly have more complex needs. It can be argued that these significant challenges facing social care are such that new thinking on funding is required and new models of service delivery are required.

The Western Bay Commissioning Strategy (which was developed with regional Local Authority and Health partners alongside the independent health and social care consultancy, the Institute of Public Care) focuses on a shift in care from residential services to an increase in services in the community with the introduction of intermediate care and so on.

This is very much in keeping with legislation in Wales, Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, which came into force in April 2016. The Act provides the legal framework for improving the well-being of people who need care and support and for transforming social services in Wales, a fundamental principle of which is around Prevention and Early Intervention – increasing preventative services within the community to minimise the escalation of critical need.

Therefore, more people are going into residential care/nursing care at a later stage for shorter periods with more complex needs. The focus of this shift is better outcomes for older people and enabling them to be more independent for longer, although in the vast majority of cases care and support at home is also less costly than residential care. We cannot continue with the 'old models' as financially they are not sustainable, so more services are now available in the community. This is generally better for individuals too. However, if an individual is assessed to require a care home placement, the LA or HB will make the necessary placement and pay for it.

Councillor Radcliffe commented that given the uncertainty which the Council would be part of with its collaboration with health, asked whether discussions had taken place with Cwm Taf Health Board on pooled budgets for registered social nurses. The Cabinet Member Social Services & Early Help commented that pressure will continue to be put on the Welsh Government, which has social care, health and education high on its agenda for more funding. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing informed Council that the Council has Integrated Managers who work with nurses; however there is a shortage of registered nurses working in registered homes. She confirmed that work is progressing to align budgets which need to be in place by April 2018.

99. NOTICE OF MOTION PROPOSED BY COUNCILLOR A WILLIAMS

Councillor A Williams proposed the following Notice of Motion.

“That Bridgend County Borough Council:

Recognises the public concern about dog fouling in the County Borough.

Notes that dog fouling can have serious health implications, including toxocariasis which can cause infections leading to gangrene and amputations.

Applauds Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's efforts to implement new harder-hitting dog fouling rules through its Sort **IT Out! campaign.

Calls on Bridgend County Borough Council to immediately introduce a similar scheme which includes a Public Spaces Protection Order which would:

- ban dog walking from all schools, children’s play areas and marked sports pitches maintained by the Council.
- compel dog owners to keep a dog on a lead at all times at Council maintained cemeteries.
- compel dog owners to clean up their dogs’ mess immediately and dispose of it properly.
- compel dog owners to carry means to pick up dog mess (i.e. bags) at all times.
- compel dog owners to follow a direction from an authorised officer to put a dog on a lead.
- empower authorised officers to levy an increased penalty on irresponsible dog owners who flout these rules”.

The Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor KJ Watts.

The Cabinet Member Communities expressed some sympathy with the sentiments of the Notice of Motion as action against dog fouling was one of the key pledges in the manifesto. He stated that in order to implement a Public Spaces Protection Order as proposed in the Notice of Motion, significant public consultation will firstly have to take place. He also commented that as the matter is a Cabinet function it would need address to explore all avenues open to the Council to bring forward robust measures in order to address the spirit of the original Notice of Motion and that a report be presented to a future meeting of Cabinet. He also informed Council there would need to be engagement with key partners and the proposals would also need to be considered by Scrutiny.

Councillor JP Blundell in seconding the proposal made by the Cabinet Member Communities commented that the implementation of a Public Spaces Protection Order would need to be financed. Engagement would also need to take place with key partners in order to enforce such an Order and the experiences of other local authorities would had implemented Orders would need to be looked at.

Having had those assurances from the Cabinet Member Communities, Councillor A Williams then withdrew the Notice of Motion, which was duly seconded by Councillor KJ Watts.

RESOLVED: That the original Notice of Motion be withdrawn and that an amendment is made in that consultation take place to explore all

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avenues open to the Council to bring forward robust measures in order to address the spirit of the original Notice of Motion and that a report be presented to Cabinet due to it being a Cabinet function. There would need to be engagement with key partners and a report on the proposals be placed on the Scrutiny Forward Work Programme.

100. NOTICE OF MOTION PROPOSED BY COUNCILLOR DG HOWELLS

This item was withdrawn.

101. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

The meeting closed at 5.38 pm