

COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY, 18 SEPTEMBER 2019

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB ON WEDNESDAY, 18 SEPTEMBER 2019 AT 15:00

Present

Councillor SE Baldwin – Chairperson

S Aspey	TH Beedle	JPD Blundell	NA Burnett
RJ Collins	HJ David	P Davies	PA Davies
SK Dendy	J Gebbie	T Giffard	RM Granville
CA Green	DG Howells	A Hussain	RM James
M Jones	MJ Kearns	DRW Lewis	JR McCarthy
RL Penhale-Thomas	AA Pucella	JC Radcliffe	KL Rowlands
B Sedgebeer	RMI Shaw	CE Smith	JC Spanswick
G Thomas	T Thomas	JH Tildesley MBE	E Venables
SR Vidal	MC Voisey	LM Walters	KJ Watts
DBF White	PJ White	AJ Williams	HM Williams
RE Young			

Apologies for Absence

MC Clarke, N Clarke, DK Edwards, B Jones, SG Smith, RME Stirman, CA Webster and A Williams, Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing

Officers:

Jackie Davies	Head of Adult Social Care
Mark Galvin	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Lindsay Harvey	Corporate Director Education and Family Support
Gill Lewis	Interim Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer
Mark Shephard	Chief Executive
Kelly Watson	Head of Legal & Regulatory Services

348. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor N Burnett declared a prejudicial interest in Agenda item 9. as BCBC's elected Member representative for meetings of the Court of Swansea University.

Councillor RE Young declared a prejudicial interest in Agenda item 7. as BCBC's representative Member of the Police and Crime Panel.

Both Members left the meeting when respective the items they had declared an interest in were considered.

349. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of a meeting of Council dated 23 July 2019, be approved as a true and accurate record.

350. TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM:

Mayor

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The Mayor announced that it gave him great pleasure to say that the Youth Mayor for the forthcoming year will be Megan Lambert and the Deputy Youth Mayor, Todd Murray.

The Youth Mayor's Charity ball was held on the 6th of September at the Hi Tide in Porthcawl, in aid of the charity Prostate Cymru, a charity chosen by the young people in the Youth Council. Around 30 prizes were donated by local businesses.

All present and new members of the youth council were invited to the Ball, as well as a number of dignitaries including himself, the Leader, Cllr Patel, the Chief Executive and Lyndsay Harvey.

He stated that the Ball was a fun way to end Lewis's term as Youth Mayor and was used as the official handover ceremony for Megan and Todd.

The night was a great success and raised in the region of £400, and it was also encouraging to see our future politicians so eagerly engaged and wanting their voices heard.

On Friday evening his Consort and he, attended the Bridgend Business Forum Awards which were sponsored by Valleys to Coast Housing and took place at the Coed-y-Mwstwr Hotel. These prestigious awards recognise and reward excellence across all sizes and sectors of business in the county borough.

There were various categories of winners, but the overall winner was Rockwool UK Ltd who scooped the overall title of 'Bridgend Business of the Year 2019'.

The awards showed the diversity of business talent within the county borough and over the next few weeks he would be visiting the businesses personally to offer congratulations and see first hand the services that they provide. The evening also raised over £800.00 towards his charity for this year PRIDE Cymru.

The Mayor was also extremely pleased to inform Members that Bridgend Fire Station were crowned overall world champions for the 4th year running in the World Rescue Championships. The finals were held recently in France with Bridgend representing South Wales Fire and Rescue Service and the UK. This is the 7th year that they have won the title and he was sure that members and officers would join him in offering their sincere congratulations, which he would ask our representatives Cllr David White and Cllr Rod Shaw to convey to the Service.

The Mayor stated that he had the pleasure of attending the official opening of the Wales and West Hafod Housing affordable housing scheme in Coity on 28th August. He seen the inside of one particular home that was physically adapted with hoists and wheelchair accessibility. Finally, he also attended the opening of the Porthcawl Town Beach Flood defences last week with members of the Cabinet and Lesley Griffiths, AM. It was heartening to see that this very well executed project is now protecting over 260 sea front properties.

Deputy Leader

The Deputy Leader advised that the Council's annual budget consultation is underway, and he thanked everyone who attended the pre-Council briefing. If all Members hadn't attended this, he strongly encouraged them to stay for the second session at the end of Council, so that Members can ensure that they have all the information they need to advise your constituents.

With standard, youth, large-print and easy read versions of the consultation available, a full communications plan is in place to encourage participation. This includes tools and

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materials such as an explainer video, radio advertising, posters, leaflets, business cards, QR codes, digital signage, social media posts, media releases and more.

A live social media debate will take place on Tuesday 2 October as part of this, and once more he hoped Members would show their support for this.

Our consultation team is holding awareness events and are visiting equality groups, schools, town and community councils and more.

Five Citizens' Panel events have been organised, and partners at BAVO will be holding two events of their own to support this.

He further hoped Members would encourage people to participate with the consultation as we analyse and use this feedback to inform our final decisions.

Members may be interested to know that we have teamed up with Porthcawl Town Council, Surfers Against Sewage, Keeping Porthcawl Tidy and other volunteer groups who care about the local environment to try and make Porthcawl the county borough's first plastic-free town.

A community group called Plastic Free Porthcawl has been formed, and a dozen businesses have already agreed to stop using at least three plastic items.

Plastic straws, bottles, tops, cutlery, sachets, drinking cups, lids, bags and other on-the-go packaging are all among the biggest offenders when it comes to littering, and too many of them are damaging the planet.

As part of the scheme, we are organising workshops for Porthcawl businesses where they can discover more about the importance and benefits of reducing the use of polystyrene and plastics.

BCBC also want more businesses to sign up to the 'Refill' app which shows where people can fill up reusable bottles with free tap water.

If the scheme is a success, it could be developed further, and he was looking forward to bringing Members more news on this.

Cabinet Member – Future Generations and Wellbeing

The Cabinet Member – Future Generations and Wellbeing, provided Members with an update on the strong local response to the childcare offer from Welsh Government. The Council has received around 450 applications since it was introduced in May.

The scheme enables working parents of children aged 3 and 4 to access up to 30 hours of free childcare and early years education for up to 48 weeks of the year.

Applications are currently open for children born between 1 September 2015 and 31 August 2016.

She was sure that Members would wish to help promote this within their wards, and remind working parents that they may be eligible to access free childcare.

Cabinet Member – Communities

The Cabinet Member - Communities advised Members that a new re-use shop will open this autumn at the community recycling centre in Maesteg.

Household items that people no longer need and which are in a good condition can be donated to the at the Heol Ty Gwyn Industrial Estate centre.

The shop will be run by social enterprise Waste Savers in partnership with Bridgend County Borough Council and Kier, and will be called 'The Siding' in recognition of Maesteg's mining past.

All of the profits from the sale of re-usable items at The Siding will be re-invested into social programmes.

Waste Savers already operate similar shops at recycling centres in Llantrisant, Newport and Treherbert. They are all extremely popular, so bargain hunters will be in for a real treat, he added.

On another note, the Chief Executive together with himself, will be attending a Valleys Taskforce public engagement event in Tondy on 30th September 2019.

Focusing on the issue of local rail links and the adoption of the valleys lines, this had been organised in collaboration with Transport for Wales and will take place at Coleg Cymunedol Y Dderwen.

Featuring information stands from a number of different organisations, the event will be presented as an informal drop-in between 4.00pm and 7.00pm, and will include a Q&A session which will start at 5.30pm.

He hoped that Members will support this event, and help publicise it within their wards.

Cabinet Member – Education and Regeneration

The Cabinet Member – Education and Regeneration, announced that Members may recall how the Valleys Regional Park or 'VRP' initiative is seeking to develop a highly visible network which incorporates uplands, woodlands, nature reserves, country parks, rivers, reservoirs, canals, heritage sites and attractions, all linked with towns and villages across the Valleys.

We received some very good news recently with the announcement that VRP funding has been approved to help support this in Bridgend County Borough.

Bryngarw Country Park is set to receive £500,000, and Parc Slip has been allocated £400,000. In partnership with Awen Cultural Trust and Wildlife Trust, South and West Wales, we will be making a wide number of improvements to enhance the overall visitor experience.

These include habitat and access improvements, solar panels, energy-efficient lighting, new play opportunities for children, 'green-roofed' bike shelters and more.

Electric car and bicycle charging points will be introduced at Parc Slip, while Bryngarw will receive a new education building for visiting schools.

Members may have seen that colleagues in Carmarthenshire recently agreed to mark the anniversary of the Aberfan disaster with a minute's silence at local schools.

October 21st 1966 is one of those rare dates where you can remember exactly where you were and what you were doing when the tragic news emerged.

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Shortly after the primary school had completed morning assembly, and started the first lesson of the day, one hundred and forty-four people were killed in the disaster, 116 of whom were children.

He applauded the move by Carmarthenshire, and thought it was only right and fitting that we invite our own local schools to mark this year's anniversary in an appropriate and sensitive fashion, with pupils of an appropriate age.

If Members were so inclined, it could also be made a permanent act of remembrance in years to come, not necessarily through a motion to Council like our friends in Carmarthenshire, but perhaps just by general agreement followed by a circular from the education service.

Cabinet Member – Social Services and Early Help

The Cabinet Member – Social Services and Early Help advised that our work with Young Carers hit a milestone recently when the 300th young carers ID card was issued to a local youngster.

The card was developed four years ago to support children and young people who have a caring role in their lives, and is intended to support them in education and make it easier when they find themselves having to explain their circumstances.

Young Carers can simply show the card to their teacher or another adult to let them know about the added responsibilities they have at home.

If a child or young person is in a position where they take responsibility for someone who is ill, disabled, elderly, experiencing mental illness or who is affected by substance misuse, then they are, by definition, a Young Carer.

If they have considerable responsibility for caring for a sibling, this also makes them a Young Carer.

The Council is actively working to identify people who may be young carers, and to offer them support and information.

The scheme has drawn the attention of Welsh Government, and he was delighted to note that they are considering the introduction of a national version that will target Young Carers throughout Wales.

The Cabinet Member – Social Services and Early Help advised that the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) was undertaking a National Inspection here at Bridgend this month. He confirmed that the purpose of the inspection, was to explore how well local authorities and local health boards are promoting independence and preventing escalating needs for older adults. The inspection would identify those factors that drive good outcomes for people, as well as the barriers to progress.

Chief Executive

The Chief Executive announced that an important briefing would be held for Members on the subject of Brexit Plans on Friday 4 October 2019 at 9.30am in the Council Chamber.

He hoped as many Members as possible could attend this session.

Monitoring Officer

The Monitoring Officer announced to Council three changes of dates to the following Committees :-

1. Audit Committee dated 23rd January 2020 to change to 30th January 2020. An announcement to this effect was made at the last Audit Committee dated 8 August 2019.
2. Subject O&SC 1 which was due to be held on 9 September 2019 has been re-scheduled to 30 October 2019. Members of the Committee have been made aware of the change previously by email.
3. Subject O&SC 3 dated 4 November 2019 to change to 14 November 2019. An announcement to this effect was made at the last Subject O&SC 3 dated 5 September 2019.

351. TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE LEADER

In a major vote of confidence in the Bridgend and Welsh economy in a very challenging and uncertain time, today INEOS Automotive announced it will be constructing a new, bespoke 250,000 sq foot manufacturing and assembly plant at the Brocastle Business Park for the production of their new 4x4 Grenadier vehicle.

With Welsh Government and UK Government support the facility will create 200 jobs initially, and it is hoped up to 500 in the long term. To house this new facility the company is purchasing 14 acres of land from the Welsh Government at market value and with development of the site infrastructure already underway, production of the new vehicle is projected to start as early as 2021.

INEOS Automotive has signed up to the Economic Contract, designed to drive growth and responsible business behaviors in companies. The health and wellbeing of workers is an important part of INEOS' ethos.

INEOS Automotive are already in talks with two Wales-based component supply companies to support their work which could provide a further boost to the Welsh economy.

This new development, will have capacity to accommodate a further 500,000 sq ft and the potential for many more jobs for expanding companies and other new investors. The Minister for Economy and Transport Ken Skates AM has confirmed today that the work to support Bridgend in the wake of Ford's plans will not stop here and he confirmed Welsh Government will continue to do all it can to attract new business opportunities, to support Ford workers and secure further investment in the future of Bridgend.

We look forward to further announcements.

BCBC were also thrilled that Welsh Government has confirmed a vital £3.5m contribution of European Union funding towards the planned extension and redevelopment of the iconic Maesteg Town Hall.

With additional investment in place from this council, Awen, the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Welsh Government Communities Facilities Programme, Maesteg Town Council and the Davies Trust, work can shortly begin on the £6m project, which will repair the 138-year-old landmark building and refurbish it with modern arts and culture facilities.

Planned improvements include a modern library, a heritage and volunteering centre, a café, new workspaces, toilets and fully accessible 'changing place' facilities. A multi-functional performing arts centre is to be created on the first floor, and this will incorporate the main hall, a renovated stage, improved dressing rooms, a bar and for the first time a smaller, more intimate studio theatre and community cinema. The balcony seating area will be refurbished, and both upper and lower floors will be linked by a modern glazed atrium and foyer to address accessibility throughout the building.

Additional funding bids will be submitted early in 2020 to ensure that the building is fully equipped with state of the art furniture and fittings for the reopening. We are thrilled that thanks to our joint efforts with Awen Cultural Trust we have been able to safeguard the future, a bright future of this historic building at the heart of the town, for generations to come.

Hundreds of vacancies will be available at our annual jobs fayre with Job Centre Plus at Bridgend Life Centre tomorrow. Please encourage your constituents who are looking for employment, training and volunteering opportunities to visit the Bowl Hall tomorrow between 10.00am and 1.00pm for support and advice. Residents who cannot make it are welcome to contact our employability team or see them face to face at ti4e- weekly drop in sessions held throughout the County Borough.

Finally, the Leader extended his personal thanks to Cllr M James who had stepped down as Leader of the Plaid Cymru group. Both he and other Group Leaders had worked very effectively and closely together on a cross party basis. He extended his congratulations to Cllr T Thomas as new Leader of this group, who he was sure would want to work as constructively as Cllr James had done during his time as group Leader.

352. ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN REPORT 2018-19

The Deputy Head of Finance presented a report, the purpose of which, was to comply with the requirement of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy 'Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice' (referred to as the Code) to report an overview of treasury activities for the preceding financial year, including the Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators for 2018-19, and to highlight compliance with the Council's policies and practices.

She advised, that as set out in paragraph 3.2 of the report, the Council is required to operate the overall treasury function with regard to the Code and this was formally adopted by the Council in February 2012. This includes a requirement for the Council to approve a Treasury Management Strategy (TMS) before the start of each financial year which sets out the Council's and Chief Financial Officer's responsibilities, delegation and reporting arrangements. Council approved the TMS 2018-19 at its meeting on 28 February 2018.

Paragraph 3.2 also explained that late in December 2017 CIPFA published new editions of Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice and the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities. However, the TMS 2018-19 and this report has been produced using the 2011 Codes, as due to the late publication of the 2017 Codes, they were not implemented until the TMS 2019-20.

Paragraph 3.4 of the report reminded Council, that Members approved a revised Minimum Revenue Provision policy for 2018-19 on 19th September 2018, which amended the method of calculating the amount to charge to revenue to repay capital financing costs.

All other investment activities not covered by the Code, such as property investments, would be subject to normal Council approvals and need not comply with the Treasury Management Strategy. The current value of these investment properties was £4.635 million.

Section 4.1 of the report outlined the Council's External Debt and Investment Position for 2018-19, with a summary position in Table 1. This shows total external borrowing at year end of £96.87 million, with an average interest rate of 4.69%. This was split between loans from the Public Works Loans Board and Lender's Option Borrower's Options (also known as LOBOs). No additional borrowing was taken out during 2018-19. There are also other long term liabilities totalling £17.88 million, the majority of which relates to the Maesteg School PFI scheme.

In terms of investments, the year-end position was total investments of £27.4 million, with an average interest rate of 0.94%, £21 million of which was held by other local authorities. This has reduced since the start of the year when it was £30.4 million as a result of a higher level of investments being repaid than raised. This leads to a total net debt at year end of £87.35 million.

Paragraph 4.1.6 of the report, referred to the review of the treasury management function by both internal and external audit during the year, with an overall view by internal audit that the internal control environment is sound and that substantial assurance can be placed upon the management of risks.

Paragraph 4.1.7 of the report referred to the Authorities Treasury Management advisors Arlingclose. The contract runs for four years and is due to expire in September 2020.

Section 4.2 of the report outlined Treasury Risk Management 2018-19 and details how the Council has mitigated and minimised risks, particularly from the unpredictability of financial markets. The main risks the Council faces are Credit Risk, Liquidity Risk and Market Risk, and in managing its investments the Council gives priority to security and liquidity of its funds before seeing the best yield, or rate of return.

Section 4.3 of the report then gave information regarding the external context in which we were operating during 2018-19. The Bank Rate started the financial year at 0.50% and remained at that rate until 2 August 2018, when the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee increased the rate by 0.25% to 0.75%. The Bank Rate remained at 0.75% for the remainder of the 2018-19 financial year.

Section 4.4 of the report detailed the Borrowing Strategy and Outturn for the year, with the main objective here being long term affordability. The majority of the Council's borrowing is from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) at long term fixed rates of interest, and as reported previously, no additional borrowing was taken out during 2018-19. The Council is currently maintaining an under-borrowed position substituting loan debt with internal cash reserves where possible on a temporary basis.

The Investment Strategy and Outturn information was set out in Section 4.5 of the report, which has been managed taking into account the main risks identified, published credit ratings, and advice from our Treasury Management advisors. Appendix B to the report, showed the equivalence table for the published credit ratings and explained the different investment grades. The majority of investments in 2018-19 were held as short term investments with UK Local Authorities, banks of high credit quality and in Money Market Funds, which give instant access to funds. A summary of our investment profile by counterparty type was set out in Table 2 within the report, with the maturity profile of the investments in Table 3. The majority of BCBC's investments mature within 12 months.

Section 4.6 of the report then highlighted performance management by the Council in terms of the adequacy of its treasury function. This showed that the Council's average rate of return on investments was above that of the average rate of return for Arlingclose's Welsh Local Authority Unitary clients internally managed investments, for the majority of the year.

The Deputy Head of Finance concluded her report, by stating that the reporting arrangements were set out in section 4.8 and the Council's Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators were shown in Appendix A (to the report). This reflected that in 2018-19, the Council operated within the limits and indicators as set out in the agreed TMS 2018-19, as well as complying with its treasury management practices.

There were no questions from Members on this agenda item, therefore it was

RESOLVED: That Council:

- (1) Approved the Treasury Management activities for 2018-19.
- (2) Further approved the actual Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators for 2018-19, against the ones approved in the Treasury Management Strategy 2018-19.

353. **DEPARTURE FROM DEVELOPMENT PLAN PLANNING APPLICATION P/19/140/FUL - DEVELOPMENT OF A POLICE LEARNING CENTRE, GYMNASIUM, SITE REGRADING, ACCESS, CAR PARKING AND ASSOCIATED WORKS**

The Group Manager Development and Planning Services presented a report on the above planning application previously considered by the Development Control Committee.

He advised Members that they would be familiar with him attending Council to provide updates on the LDP and other development planning matters, whereby he usually emphasised the importance of compliance with and delivery of the Development Plan. Occasionally however, reports were required to be referred to Council, in relation to any developments that are not in accord with the development plan where the Development Control Committee have resolved to approve. This Committee is unable to make this type of determination and the matter must then be referred to Council for decision.

The current application before Members, seeks permission for the redevelopment of the north-western area of the SWP Headquarters site. It is proposed to develop a four storey Police Learning Centre (PLC) and Human Resources Building, a two storey gymnasium, new access arrangement, parking provision and associated hard and soft landscaping works. The scheme also involves the redirection of a mains sewer. The full detail and assessment was outlined in the report.

The application site forms part of a residential allocation in the Bridgend Strategic Regeneration Growth Area for approximately 138 units under Policy COM1 (5) of the Local Development Plan (LDP) (2013). South Wales Police (SWP) have undertaken a large-scale rationalisation programme of their existing facilities and assets and, their original rationalisation proposals, which involved the release of the entire northern part of their existing HQ facilities for alternative development has been replaced. They are now however, pursuing an alternative strategy which entails carrying on with their programme of refurbishment and improvement works and retaining the whole of their existing HQ site at Cowbridge Road.

On the basis that the SWP rationalisation strategy has evolved since the adoption of the LDP in 2013, the investment in the HQ site and that their asset plan going forward is now to consolidate their activities and facilities at their existing site at Cowbridge Road, there is now no realistic prospect of the delivery of any housing under Policy COM1(5) on this site and the housing numbers no longer count towards the Council's land supply. Members may also recall that Council approved a new café building on site in 2017, also as a departure application. The café has now been completed and is operational.

The facility in question, will provide the Police with their own in-house, on-site training, continual professional development, human resources and recruitment centre. The PLC will provide 22 Training classrooms with associated breakout space, a human resource recruitment centre as well as office space for internal departments across the force. It will include provision for an assessments and standards unit, an operations training unit, investigative training and 'policing through technology' facilities. The building would also accommodate an office for the Police and Crime Commissioner.

The new PLC building will be utilised roughly in the ratio of 75% for training and 25% for human resources.

The main access will be via the industrial estate to the north with enhanced pedestrian facilities from Cowbridge Road and a detailed transport assessment has been submitted and agreed by highway officers.

Planning law requires that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material circumstances dictate otherwise.

In this case, notwithstanding the loss of the housing allocation, it is clear that the residential development can now no longer take place in view of the previous development and revised estate strategy. Furthermore, the investment in the site and its comprehensive redevelopment is welcomed as SWP has made a firm commitment to consolidate and retain its operations within the County Borough. The strategy will ensure that a highly prestigious HQ facility will be retained within Bridgend, thereby retaining and creating highly skilled employment opportunities as well as providing a valuable social and community service to the residents and communities of Bridgend.

The Group Manager – Development and Planning Services concluded his report, by confirming that alternative housing allocations will be considered as part of the review of the LDP and consultation on the preferred strategy will commence at the end of the month.

There were no questions from Members on the report.

RESOLVED: That Council be minded not to refuse the development and after the Section 106 Legal Agreement between the South Wales Police and the Council has been signed, that the Group Manager – Development and Planning Services (within the Communities Directorate) be given delegated powers to issue a decision notice in respect of this proposal, to include the standard 5 year time limit for implementation and the Conditions attached to the recommendation.

354. APPOINTMENT OF A REGISTERED REPRESENTATIVE TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY SUBJECT COMMITTEES

The Head of Legal and Regulatory Services presented a report that sought Council's approval of the appointment of Ms. Lynsey Morris as the Secondary School Parent Governor Registered Representative to the Overview and Scrutiny Subject Committees (for Education related items), for a maximum of four years.

She explained that Ms. Morris had been nominated in place of Mr. Kevin Pascoe whose term in the same role had now come to an end.

Accordingly, following an election held in accordance with the Parent Governor Representatives and Church Representatives (Wales) Regulations 2001, the above change had been put forward.

RESOLVED: That Council noted the report and approved the appointment of Ms. Lynsey Morris as a Registered Representative for Education terms considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Subject Committees, for a maximum term of four years as the Secondary School Parent Governor Representative.

355. INFORMATION REPORTS FOR NOTING

The Head of Legal and Regulatory Services submitted a report, the purpose of which was to inform Council of the Information Reports for Noting which have been published since its last scheduled meeting.

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

356. TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING QUESTION FROM:

Councillor Tim Thomas to the Cabinet Member – Education and Regeneration

Neighbouring local authorities such as the Vale of Glamorgan have similar characteristics and challenges in terms of the Welsh language. Would the Cabinet Member agree that Welsh medium schools provision in this authority should, at the very least, match provision in the Vale of Glamorgan?

Response

1. Bridgend County Borough Council is keen to promote the Welsh language and is fully committed to working with Welsh Government to achieve its aim of one million Welsh speakers by 2050. Elected members and officers all fully support the Welsh language and what it means for Bridgend and our nation's future. The local authority readily promotes the benefits of bilingualism at every opportunity and places significant emphasis on the importance of the Welsh language and Welsh-medium education.
2. There is limited value in comparing Welsh-medium education provision in Bridgend with that of Vale of Glamorgan. Welsh Government's proposed methodology (refer to the recent consultation on the draft Welsh in Education Strategic Plans Regulations (Wales) 2019 and Guidance) takes into account the range of Welsh-medium education provision across Wales by introducing a group system. The factors considered when grouping local authorities include: the percentage of learners taught in Welsh, the models of Welsh-medium education provision adopted by the local authority and the linguistic nature of a local authority.
3. The proposed guidance identifies 'Group 3' local authorities as having between 13% and 19% of Year 1 children being taught through the medium of Welsh (in 2017-2018). It may be that Welsh-medium community education is the norm in one/a very small number of areas, but this is the exception not the rule. There is

usually a choice between Welsh-medium education and English-medium education. 'Group 4' local authorities are identified as having 12% or fewer Year 1 being taught through the medium of Welsh (in 2017-2018). There is a choice between Welsh-medium education and English-medium education in these local authorities. On this basis, Bridgend is identified as a Group 4 local authority while Vale of Glamorgan falls into Group 3.

4. As a local authority, we identify our Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) as the key strategic document which outlines our strategy to support the delivery and growth of Welsh-medium education. I can confirm that Bridgend County Borough Council's WESP has been approved by Welsh Government. The recent consultation on the draft Welsh in Education Strategic Plans Regulations (Wales) 2019 and Guidance recently closed (on 13 September 2019) and, therefore, we await the outcome of this consultation. The local authority will respond accordingly to the new regulations if approved as drafted.
5. However, as noted in the local authority's recent inspection, we need to strengthen the role of the Welsh Education Strategic Forum in delivering the priorities identified in our WESP. This priority will form a key part of our post-inspection action plan (PIAP) which will be shared with and monitored by the Welsh Education Strategic Forum.
6. It is important to note that there remains a 13.9% surplus in the local authority's four Welsh-medium primary schools and a 20.9% surplus in the Welsh-medium secondary school which must be taken into consideration. Officers have recently met with Welsh Government officials to explore ways in which the local authority can better promote the Welsh language, and the benefits of Welsh-medium education, with a view to filling the available places in our Welsh-medium schools. We will be working closely with Welsh Government officials over the next few months to address this issue.
7. The local authority's school modernisation plans, which have recently been submitted to Welsh Government, have identified the areas of Bridgend in greatest need of additional Welsh-medium provision, to meet both demand and anticipated demand from new housing projects. The dissemination of the detail associated with these proposals has been constrained by the process that needs to be worked through which is governed by a strict legislative framework.
8. The current recommendation from the local authority's School Modernisation Board, is for increased provision in both the north east and west of Bridgend. Table A below identifies what the School Modernisation Board will be proposing to Cabinet in the coming months to ensure that the number of Welsh-medium places grows to meet both our desire and duty as a local authority as part of Band B.

Table A Welsh-medium primary school places in Bridgend (current and projected)

Location	Current places in Welsh-medium primary schools	Welsh-medium primary school places scheduled for Band B (2019-2024)
Bridgend North East	378	525
Bridgend West	231	420
Ogmore and Garw Valleys	210	210

Llynfi Valley	315	315
Total	1134	1470

9. By the end of Band B, in order to support the WESP and Cymraeg 2050 initiative, there will be a proposed 30% increase in the number of primary school places in Bridgend to support children entering Welsh-medium education. This is clearly significant.
10. The local authority has been proactive in pursuing and securing significant additional funding for Welsh-medium provision within the county borough. For example, current and projected activity will see an investment of almost £3m in Welsh-medium provision across Bridgend. The local authority will be using this funding to support the development of four new Welsh-medium childcare settings across Bridgend. The planned Welsh-medium childcare settings are designed to offer full-day care, wrap-around care, holiday care and sessional Cylch Meithrin provision. The local authority has also used this funding to facilitate the provision of a new all-weather facility for Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd.
11. Areas identified for the new Welsh-medium childcare developments are Bettws, Ogmored Valley, Bridgend central area and Porthcawl. The intention is to increase the number of children who will enter Welsh-medium childcare and then progress into Welsh-medium education. The provisions will all offer an effective feeder for the Bridgend Welsh-medium schools and, as a consequence, hopefully address the current capacity issues within these schools. Alongside this, the local authority has recently developed an information booklet to promote the benefits of Welsh-medium provision for children and their families.
12. The recently completed Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Calon y Cymoedd formed part of the Garw Valley South scheme. This scheme involved the replacement and re-location of the existing Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Cwm Garw and replacement of Bettws Primary School, to the existing Bettws Primary School site. The total investment for the scheme was £11.2m for the two new-build schools.
13. The co-location of Welsh-medium and English-medium provision on a single site facilitates the sharing of good practice and equality of provision, together with increased educational opportunities. The new Welsh-medium school provides suitable and sufficient learning spaces with the aim of resulting improvement in educational standards. It is encouraging to note that there has been an increase in the number of pupils attending Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Calon y Cymoedd since it opened in its new location.
14. As part of the Cymraeg 2050 capital grant funding, a new Welsh-medium childcare building will be provided in Bettws to serve the Garw Valley. This provision aims to promote the Welsh language and increase intake into Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Calon y Cymoedd. The re-location of Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Calon y Cymoedd to a more central location will help to address surplus places and meet the demand for Welsh-medium education.
15. As far as standards are concerned, all five of our Welsh-medium schools are, currently, either in 'green' or 'yellow' support category. Estyn, in its recent inspection of Bridgend's local government education services, noted that pupils' attainment in Welsh compares favourably with that of pupils in other local authorities. We believe we have effective head teachers in our Welsh-medium

schools and we are pleased to see that they work well with colleagues in other Welsh-medium schools across the region.

16. In conclusion, Bridgend County Borough Council remains firmly committed to promoting the Welsh language and Welsh-medium education. In line with our WESP commitments, we will work closely with partners such as Welsh Government and the Welsh Education Strategic Forum to ensure Welsh-medium education in Bridgend provides the best possible opportunities for learners.

Supplementary question by Councillor Thomas

The Vale of Glamorgan have similar demographics to Bridgend in terms of Welsh medium schools, however, they have 6 primary schools who practice in the medium of Welsh while BCBC only have 4. Any additional schools within the Bridgend area that are earmarked as additional to this, are being planned through major Regeneration projects yet to be realised. He asked what conversation is the Cabinet Member – Education and Regeneration and Corporate Director – Education and Family Support having with Planning colleagues to increase additional schools to practice in the medium of Welsh.

Response

The Cabinet Member – Education and Regeneration advised that both he and the Corporate Director – Education and Family Support were proactive raising the profile of literacy in both Welsh and English language at schools throughout the County Borough. He also had also been proactive in encouraging discussion between Education and Planning within BCBC about school provision in the Local Development Plan, examining new sites allocated for housing and as a result of this, whether there was a necessity to build new schools to support. He reiterated that it was difficult to compare BCBC with the Vale of Glamorgan Council on the subject of educating children in the medium of Welsh at schools, for the reasons alluded to in the response to the initial question. In order to reach Welsh Government targets for a given number of Welsh speakers, it is important not just to rely on Welsh medium schooling, it requires many changes throughout the education system, promoting interest in all modern international languages, including Welsh, and going beyond mere language learning to promote interest in languages and cultures in general. We should look at cost-effective immersive techniques for rapid language learning, also engage with Lifelong Learning and Adult education services, and encourage multi-lingual and multi-cultural awareness in the media. He hoped that a re-configured WESP Forum would incorporate a wide-ranging approach that would ensure interest in Welsh language and culture in an outward-looking European and global context.

The Leader added that the authority had invested £11.2million in the two new build schools in Bettws which reflected BCBC's commitment to educating students in both the Welsh and English language, continuing the excellent work delivered to date under the Council's flagship 21st Century School Modernisation Programme. The Council's biggest capital investment in future years will be in the next phase, Band B of the School Modernisation programme a total of over £65 million. All members of the authority had committed 50% of the new primary provision in Band B of the programme to Welsh medium places. The authority had also committed to developing new Welsh medium childcare facilities in the Ogmere Valley, Bettws, Porthcawl and Bridgend. The authority would enthusiastically consider any opportunities arising from extra funding from Welsh Government funding to further increase Welsh medium provision.

The Corporate Director – Education and Family Support further added that that there had been a significant growth in the use of Welsh medium in Band B, with schools having accommodated 300 additional places for pupils in our Welsh medium schools.

Second supplementary question by Councillor Gareth Howells

Please could you share with Members the objectives contained in the Council's Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP)?

Response

The Corporate Director – Education and Family Support advised that the Bridgend WESP's aims are:

- More seven-year-old children being taught through the medium of Welsh
- More learners continuing to improve their language skills on transfer from primary to secondary school
- More students aged 14-16 studying for qualifications through the medium of Welsh
- More students aged 14-19 in study subjects through the medium of Welsh, in schools, colleges and work-based learning
- More students with advanced skills in Welsh
- More Welsh-medium provision for learners with ALN
- Workforce planning and continuing professional development

Bridgend's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2017 – 2020 was developed with stakeholders and approved by Welsh Government in September 2018. This means that Welsh Government considers our vision, objectives and outcomes in respect of Welsh education in Bridgend to be appropriate.

Third supplementary question raised by Councillor Nicole Burnett

In percentage terms, how many more pupils will have been taught at schools in the medium of Welsh by the end of Band B (ie 2024)?

Response

Approximately 30%.

357. URGENT ITEMS

None.

The meeting closed at 16:10