

**COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY, 26 FEBRUARY 2020**

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB ON WEDNESDAY, 26 FEBRUARY 2020 AT 15:00**

Present

Councillor SE Baldwin – Chairperson

|                   |              |              |             |
|-------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| S Aspey           | TH Beedle    | JPD Blundell | NA Burnett  |
| MC Clarke         | N Clarke     | RJ Collins   | HJ David    |
| P Davies          | PA Davies    | SK Dendy     | DK Edwards  |
| J Gebbie          | RM Granville | CA Green     | DG Howells  |
| A Hussain         | RM James     | B Jones      | M Jones     |
| DRW Lewis         | JE Lewis     | JR McCarthy  | D Patel     |
| RL Penhale-Thomas | AA Pucella   | 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   | MC Voisey    | LM Walters  |
| CA Webster        | DBF White    | PJ White     | A Williams  |
| AJ Williams       | HM Williams  | RE Young     |             |

Apologies for Absence

T Giffard, MJ Kearn, SR Vidal, KJ Watts and JE Williams

Officers:

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| Susan Cooper   | Corporate Director - Social Services & Wellbeing |
| Deborah Exton  | Interim Deputy Head of Finance                   |
| 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              |

398. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

399. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of a meeting of Council dated 22 January 2020, be approved as a true and accurate record.

400. TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM:

Mayor

The Mayor announced that nominations for the Mayor's Annual Citizenship Awards have now closed and the winners have been invited to a ceremony to be held in late March. The standard of entries was particularly high and he thanked all those who took the time to fill in a nomination. It was great to read about all the fantastic residents of the county borough and the stellar and often hidden work that they do within our communities, and he looked forward to meeting with these people in person next month.

Staying with the theme of awards it was a pleasure to welcome all sectors of the building industry to Bridgend to celebrate the fourteenth annual Building Excellence Awards. The awards are aimed across the building industry and are there to help, encourage and commend high quality building, construction techniques, communication skills and customer satisfaction. The Mayor thanked everyone for participating, Bridgend building control staff for organising the event and extend our congratulations as a council to the winners.

One of privileges of being Mayor is an invite to visit local organisations and charities to meet the staff, volunteers and service users. Last week he was invited to the YMCA in Porthcawl to view their facilities and witness some of the activities that take place at the centre. The centre was established in 1908 and has continued to serve as a support for many different groups. It has become a not just a place to learn but to be safe and make friends. He therefore thanked the Porthcawl YMCA centre for their time and hospitality.

On taking office the High Sheriff of Mid Glamorgan decided to work with all local authorities and organise a “Musical Extravaganza”, this was a celebration of young musical talent from across the communities and included solo vocalists, solo instrumentalists and choirs. Heats took place around Mid Glamorgan and the final was held at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama last week. The evening was a wonderful celebration of our young musical talent and the Mayor thanked Simon Gray our music instructor for all his hard work, all the young people who participated and send congratulations to the well-deserved winners.

#### Deputy Leader

The Deputy Leader announced that he was delighted to see three surplus council properties sell at auction recently to help generate some very welcome funds for the authority.

The auction saw a former public toilet block in Derwen Road, Bridgend, the former Hyfrydol care home in Maesteg and the former town council offices in Porthcawl sell for £736,000.

This was more than a quarter of a million pounds over the reserve price, and a very good result in anyone’s language.

The receipts will help fund our capital programme, which includes the 21st Century schools modernisation initiative featuring an estimated investment into band B schools of £68 million.

As members were aware, the sale of Hyfrydol was part of the business case for providing the all-new extra care facility in Maesteg, while Porthcawl Town Council relocated to more suitable premises in the town centre last year.

As part of a partnership between Bridgend Town Council and the market traders association, new Bridgend town centre toilets will be opening soon in the indoor market, while public toilets also remain available at Bridgend Bus Station.

He was sure that members will welcome this new as part of the Council’s ongoing long-term asset management plan to re-model services, and sell assets which are surplus to requirements.

The Deputy Leader also reminded members, that a development session on Universal Credit has been arranged for Monday 9th March. This will take place here in the council chamber at 9.30am and will offer an overview of Universal Credit and additional

activities provided by the Job Centre, so he asked Councillors to please make every effort to attend.

Finally, a drop-in session is being arranged for any member who requires support with completing their annual reports.

This will take place on Monday 2 March in Committee Rooms two and three, and the Democratic Services Manager will be available to offer advice and guidance between 9am and 11am.

#### Cabinet Member – Communities

The Cabinet Member – Communities advised that he was sure that members will be pleased to note that a full business case is being submitted to Welsh Government for the provision of a new £6m flood defence scheme in Porthcawl.

If successful, this will see major work undertaken on the Western Breakwater, Eastern Promenade and Sandy Bay areas, and will take the amount that has been invested into the town's ongoing regeneration over the last six years to more than £17m.

Designed to protect 530 homes and 175 businesses while complementing regeneration plans for Salt Lake, the work follows the introduction of new sea defences at Town Beach, which is protecting 260 homes, businesses and historic buildings such as the Grand Pavilion.

The Western Breakwater is 200 years old now, while the Eastern Promenade sea wall is only slightly younger at 160 years. This work will offer continued flood protection, and act as assurance for future and current investors, businesses, visitors, residents and so on.

Engineering works and void repairs will help strengthen them, but as listed structures, all work must satisfy heritage conservation requirements.

A small scour protection wall will be added around the head of the breakwater, while the promenade area will be resurfaced and landscaped with raised planters, new seating areas and more.

Following the success of the £3m replacement sea defences at Town Beach, he had high hopes for this latest scheme, and was looking forward to bringing Members more news as it developed further.

Finally, the Cabinet Member – Communities thanked all those who had contacted him mostly through emails recently, so as to wish him a speedy recovery after his recent fall while on Council business in Merthyr.

#### Cabinet Member – Future Generations and Wellbeing

The Cabinet Member – Future Generations advised that she recently had an opportunity to view two innovative housing schemes which she hoped will be of interest to members. The first involved the renovation of the vacant Gaylards Building on Court Road in Bridgend Town Centre which is conveniently a few steps away from Bridgend Train Station.

The vacant town centre property has been brought back into public use as 15 fully-equipped modern and affordable flats and were created using Homes In Town grant funding. The homes are being marketed by V2C with rents set below average market

rates and are suitable for people who work in the town centre or use the nearby train station to commute to and from work.

The second, featured 4 semi-detached homes constructed through the Welsh Government Innovative Housing Fund by Wernick Buildings on Kenfig Industrial Estate for V2C.

Thanks to a unique modular design, these homes are made ready for families to move in very, very quickly. The homes are constructed off-site with appliances such as, heating and electrics pre-fitted during the construction phase. Modular homes significantly reduce utility costs for home owners, do not have as much of a negative environmental impact as traditional methods of construction and cause less disruption to the community.

Both schemes offered a revealing insight into how modern housing is being provided, she concluded.

#### Cabinet Member – Social Services and Early Help

The Cabinet Member – Social Services and Early Help announced that he was delighted at the results of the recent joint inspection into services for older people in Bridgend County Borough.

The Care Inspectorate Wales and Health Inspectorate Wales explored how the council and its partners promote independence among older adults and prevent their needs and problems from escalating.

They found that good progress is being made, and that services have strongly-embedded procedures and approaches, with evidence of early intervention and significant and successful efforts to focus upon the best interests of the individual as well as the outcome.

Inspectors said that with strong engagement in place to help guide service development, people feel they are being listened to and heard, and that feedback from staff is positive and demonstrates a strong commitment to their roles.

A good range of community groups for older people is available, and integrated health and social care services are benefitting from quick decision-making, and a joined-up approach.

In terms of areas for improvement, the report recommended ensuring that people can receive support using the Welsh language, simplifying some processes in order to increase the timeliness of support, ensuring that the system for arranging domiciliary care is as efficient as possible, and improving the consistency of how people are directed towards services.

Many of these had already been identified by the council, and progress is being made on developing them further.

The report demonstrates a visible commitment towards integrated working for the benefit of the people of Bridgend County Borough, and he extended his thanks to council staff and partners for their ongoing hard work and dedication.

Members may also want to make their constituents aware of an ongoing social care recruitment campaign called 'We Care'.

The campaign is being run as part of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg partnership and aims to showcase why so many people from all walks of life chose to work in social care. It also aims to displace some of the myths around what is an exciting and growing sector.

Social care offers the stability of a job you can keep for life, and being able to specialise in a certain area while making a difference on a daily basis.

It was a great opportunity to progress a career and undertake further training, and with plenty of opportunities, this is a sector which can provide stability and opportunity in equal measure.

For more information, he asked those present to visit the social care jobs page at [www.bridgend.gov.uk](http://www.bridgend.gov.uk).

#### Cabinet Member – Education and Regeneration

The Cabinet Member – Education and Regeneration advised that a new accessible market square had been created. This had been designed to host specialist events, family entertainment, children’s play facilities and exhibitions, all of which is intended to draw more shoppers into the market

This is part of an ongoing project to give the market a new lease of life, which includes new toilets that are being provided thanks to a partnership with Bridgend Town Council; the market traders association and ourselves at BCBC.

Over the past year, a series of illustrative panels providing information about the market’s rich history have been set up to welcome shoppers, and the market bell which dates back to 1837 has been relocated to make it more visible.

A new rent system and flexible lease terms was introduced along with significant rent reductions for existing stallholders. As well as supporting long term stall holding, we want the market to also cater for new entrepreneurs, who can take up a smaller unit and give their idea a try before deciding on their next move in the retail sector.

We have seen a number of new tenants coming into the market, and once the current works have been completed, we will be marketing to fill the remaining stall vacancies. The market square would also be an ideal place to meet-up in town with friends he added.

The Cabinet Member – Education and Regeneration advised Members that all schools had been receiving advice on the coronavirus through suitable medical guidance that would be updated as things develop, through their weekly mailshot.

Finally, he asked all Members to link in with residents in their communities, to advise them that a number of school governor vacancies still existed within County Borough schools in order to generate interest with a view to filling these vacancies.

#### Chief Executive

The Chief Executive announced that some members have asked him about what Bridgend County Borough Council is doing in regards to the Covid-19 coronavirus, so I thought it might help to provide a brief update of where we are.

It was important he felt to strike a balance between scaremongering and confirming suitable advice and any precautions that the public could take in terms of planning for any future outbreak. The reality of the situation is that local authorities are not currently

being asked to undertake any particularly drastic actions, such as closing public buildings or postponing public events.

We are following official advice and guidelines provided by UK and Welsh Government and organisations such as Public Health Wales, all of whom are working together to co-ordinate efforts to combat the spread of the virus.

On a local level, current advice is that schools, offices and public buildings should remain open. We have already provided schools with specialist advice, and are prepared to issue further guidance as the situation develops.

While it is hoped that we will not need to implement them, business continuity and emergency plans are in place to ensure the council can remain resilient and capable of providing services should the situation become more serious.

On a national level, people who have returned since 19 February from Iran, Northern Italy, South Korea, Wuhan province or Hubei Province should automatically self-isolate, avoid public contact NHS Direct Wales for further advice, even if they are not exhibiting symptoms.

The same advice applies to people who are exhibiting symptoms having returned from Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos or Myanmar area since 19 February.

Finally, anyone who has returned from China, Thailand, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia or Macau within the last 14 days and who have developed symptoms, should self-isolate at home and call NHS Direct Wales.

In all of this, it is important to note that Covid-19 is very much like winter flu. The severity of infection ranges from mild symptoms of the upper respiratory tract and possible fever, to the other end of the extreme where it can cause severe cases of pneumonia requiring hospitalisation and advanced respiratory support.

To date, Covid-19 has been found in thirteen UK nationals, none of whom are from Wales. Sadly, the disease has proven to be fatal for more than two thousand people in China. As with winter flu, the vast majority of those fatalities have been elderly people, or people with underlying health conditions.

To give you some context of those deaths, nearly eleven per cent were people with diseases of the heart, seven per cent had diabetes, and six per cent had long-term lung problems.

In terms of age, the current fatality rate is very low, less than nought-point-five per cent for people under fifty. This rises to eight per cent for people in their seventies, and fifteen per cent for people who are older than eighty.

With robust infection control measures in place on both an international and national level, it is important to ensure that our response as a local authority is similarly appropriate and well-considered. In that respect, our approach is very much one of 'business as usual', and we are continuing with our roles as normal.

Public Health Wales have advised that the best way to guard against infection is by following some general principles, which we are helping to publicise.

These include washing your hands regularly for at least 20 seconds using soap and water, using alcohol-based hand sanitisers, disposing of used tissues immediately, cleaning and disinfecting frequently-touched objects and surfaces, and more.

Members may want to advise their constituents that they can find out more from the Public Health Wales website, which offers a list of frequently asked questions about Covid-19 as well as advice and support in both English and Welsh.

In the meantime, the council remains resilient and aware, and ready to take further action as may be required.

Monitoring Officer

The Monitoring Officer asked Council to consider the change of dates to the following up and coming Committees:

1. Combined Meeting of Subject OSC1 and Subject OSC2 to consider the Learner Travel and Post 16 Education reports together, moved to 19 March at 2.30pm and scheduled SOSC1 meeting on 9 March cancelled.
2. Subject O&SC 3 which was due to be held on 18 March 2020 has been re-scheduled for 23 March 2020.
3. Corporate O&SC which was due to be held on 23 March 2020 has been re-scheduled for 30 March 2020.

The Chairpersons of each of the above Committees have agreed to such proposed changes.

401. TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE LEADER

The Leader announced that the UK has been beset by some truly woeful weather recently, and he commended council staff who have worked tirelessly, day and night, throughout the recent storms and heavy rainfall.

As always, they have made a maximum effort to protect people and property, and to help keep the county borough moving.

Bridgend County Borough luckily escaped most of the widespread damage that was experienced by our near neighbours the Leader added.

He believed that a large part of this was again down to the professionalism, experience and commitment of BCBC staff.

All around the county borough, culverts and drains were checked and cleared well in advance of the incoming storms, and floodgates were put in place along the Angel Gateway.

Thousands of sandbags were filled and made ready, and crews prepared for the worst with equipment ranging from water-based jets and chainsaws to JCBs and hoists.

When the storms hit, crews were out in the thick of it, clearing debris from drains, distributing sand bags, removing fallen trees and damaged signs, replacing broken fencing, making street lighting columns safe, and much more besides.

Sadly, the Leader added that we did see rainwater flood several properties in the Ogmores Valley, and our staff attended to help householders. Investigations to establish the cause of the flooding is ongoing by officers from our flood management team

At the height of the rainfall, several roads were flooded with some being closed until the water subsided and storm debris could be cleared, and crews had to unblock culverts in Pencoed after they became clogged by debris which was washing downstream.

A fallen tree temporarily blocked the road between Bridgend and Maesteg, while on the Bwlch, water was discharging with such force that it overtopped walls and drains, and pushed rocks and stones down onto the road.

In the wake of the storms, council staff had also been carrying out further precautionary checks to ensure that forty-one former coal mining sites remain safe in the Ogmore, Garw and Llynfi valleys.

In the spirit of mutual aid, our staff also offered support and equipment for colleagues in Rhondda Cynon Taf, where several hundred homes and properties have been devastated by the flooding where a major emergency was declared. The Leader took the opportunity to pay tribute to colleagues in the emergency services especially South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, that alongside South Wales Police, NHS and Council staff sometimes at risk to their own lives have been there in their hour of need.

As all the evidence and forecasts are that more extreme weather conditions will be experienced more frequently in the future, BCBC will carefully consider in the coming months how it can increase the resources to reduce the risk of flooding in the future. The Authority will also consider how it can bolster capacity to respond to flooding when it does take place.

The Leader announced that he was pleased that the Authority were developing plans for a new £600,000 apprenticeship programme which will ensure that specialist skills can be retained and grown within the organisation.

The proposals will enable staff to undertake formal training alongside the development of practical skills, and will target specialist areas such as highways, engineering, planning, surveying, IT, building control, transportation and more.

Since 2013, the council has supported 51 apprenticeships, with many going on to work full time for the local authority.

But not unlike other large organisations, the Council also had an ageing workforce and many people that we rely on are approaching retirement age, so this is an excellent way of ensuring that those invaluable skills are not lost, but are passed on to the next generation of employees.

402. PRESENTATION BY THE SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

The Mayor introduced to the meeting, C Barton, Treasurer and H Jakeway, Chief Fire Officer from the South Wales Fire Authority to the meeting to give a joint presentation.

It was confirmed that there were 47 Fire Stations comprising the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service (SWFRS) covering the following areas:-

- Bridgend CBC
- Blaenau Gwent
- Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Vale of Glamorgan
- Caerphilly
- Merthyr Tydfil

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- Torfaen
- Monmouthshire
- Newport, and
- Cardiff

Each of the above Unitary Authorities committed the following towards the SWFRS, with the population of each County Borough area shown in brackets thereafter:-

1. Merthyr Tydfil - £2,790,365 (59,254)
2. Rhondda Cynon Taf - £11,252,298 (238,945)
3. Bridgend - £6,746,905 (143,272)
4. Vale of Glamorgan - £6,047,690 (128,424)
5. Cardiff £17,437,965 (370,299)
6. Torfaen £4,336,523 (92,087)
7. Newport £7,028,029 (149,243)
8. Monmouthshire £4,382,814 (93,070)
9. Blaenau Gwent £3,266,932 (69,374)
10. Caerphilly £8,537,563 (181,297)

The 2019/20 Revenue Budget of the SWFRS was just over £70m of which 75% was spent on staff costs. A considerable amount of this was spent on operational personnel, with some services being external but most being internal expenditure.

The Officer then gave a resume of what the SWFRS budget covered, which included:-

- Transport
- Supplies
- Training
- Premises
- Capital Financing Income
- Other

The budget for employees was split into Control, Support, Operational and other costs.

Officers confirmed that the SWFRS had to use around 7% of its budget to finance borrowing for its Capital programme, in order to fully discharge its functions. In real terms however, since the inception of austerity and the resulting recession, there had been a change in the Net Revenue Budget equating to a reduction of approximately 17% in real terms.

Council were then informed that there were three Fire Authorities in Wales, covering the areas of South Wales, Mid and West Wales and North Wales. The SWFRS also received towards its overall income, Welsh Government grants and funding for pension costs. It was estimated that funding from Welsh Government for pension costs would be cut by £200k next financial year.

There were financial pressures with regards to premises costs and the requirement to renew some equipment, i.e. fire engines and other fire-fighting equipment.

The SWFRS also had to maintain a level of funding as reserves to cover unforeseen expenditure, for example industrial action costs, where emergency services would still be required.

In terms of budget pressures, the SWFRS budget assumed a £0.4m efficiency saving on staffing each year. All other inflation factors were absorbed within existing budgets. A

current projected overspend of £0.9m had been absorbed through other methods of expenditure savings.

With regards to the risks within the area of South Wales, Officers explained that these related to the Fire Authority playing its part in looking after the infrastructure in the form of the highway network and other structures such bridges, as well as those that related to large sports and other events (music) that attracted a considerable amount of the public in one place at any given time.

The Service was also looking at Fire Cadet programmes, with 13 taking place across local authority areas, with the programmes catering for ages 13 – 18 to encourage young people (including through pursuing an appropriate BTEC qualification).

The SWFRS also deliver at home safety initiatives, issuing in at risk homes free smoke and heat detectors, ie particularly in homes where there were the elderly/vulnerable. The Service were also looking at safety levels and requirements at commercial and industrial premises too.

The SWFRS were also looking at safety levels at any high rise buildings, looking in particular, for any possible inflammable risks comprising the structure of the building, particularly after tragedies such as the Grenfell towers. It was imperative that that building construction conformed with fire regulation safety standards.

The Fire Authority since 2017, also now had a statutory duty to respond to incidents of flooding.

The Service has a joint control room function with Mid and West wales FRS and South Wales Police. This collaborative arrangement had resulted in a saving exceeding £1m per annum.

The Officers then referred to emergency call-outs carried out by the SWFRS in 2018 compared to 2003, in 16 different categories and this made for positive reading, as there had been a reduction in the number of these 14 of the 16 categories, with just an increase of 3% in Special Service calls and an increase of 8% in Other Special Service calls, which was as a result of a national trial of fire crews assisting the ambulance service with certain life critical calls.

The final slides of the power point presentation gave information from the period of 2009/10 to 2018/19, on the following:-

1. Bridgend Operational incidents
2. Bridgend Fires attended
3. Bridgend Fatalities from fires
4. Bridgend Injuries from fires, and
5. Bridgend Accidental Dwelling fires

The Mayor, following questions from Members which the Fire Officers responded to, thanked them for attending and sharing key information with Council which was echoed by the Leader, following which they retired from the meeting.

**RESOLVED:** That Council noted the covering report and accompanying presentation given by Officers of the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, on some of the key services it delivers in the County Borough.

403. CORPORATE PLAN 2018-2022 REVIEWED FOR 2020-21

The Interim Head of Finance presented a report, that sought Council approval of the Corporate Plan 2018-2022 reviewed for 2020-21 (Appendix A to the report referred).

The Corporate Plan 2018-2022, described the council's vision for Bridgend County Borough; its 3 well-being objectives and our organisational values and principles that underpin how the Council will work to deliver its priorities.

She explained that the comments received through the overview and scrutiny process had proven valuable and had led to the Corporate Plan being modified accordingly, to incorporate some of their recommendations.

The Interim Head of Finance gave a resume of some of the key themes that were included in the Corporate Plan, including the fact that BCBC had 4,225 full time employees, providing over 800 separate services.

The Plan included 7 long-term well-being goals, defining 5 clear ways of working. It also included information on how the local authority set its budget and explained also how the Council worked with some key partners and stakeholders, in order to deliver the Plans aims and objectives.

There were a number of new success measures in the Plan (some of which are new national indicators), linked to BCBC's commitments to ensure the Authority can monitor progress. Where possible targets had been set to help drive improvement, in the case of new indicators with no benchmark information, the target was to establish a baseline.

She explained that the Plan would be reviewed annually to take into account changing circumstances and progress made against the well-being objectives and also to ensure that the requirements of Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 are met.

The Interim Head of Finance concluded her submission, by advising that a well-being assessment of the impact of the Corporate Plan had been completed and was included at Appendix B to the report.

The Leader thanked all those who had contributed to the Corporate Plan. He advised that it was 'refreshed' annually and though it did not include an exhaustive list of the services the Council provided, it did detail some of the more important ones. The Plan he added, also focussed on the risks of the Council and areas where there was some scope for improved performance

RESOLVED: That Council approved and adopted the Corporate Plan 2018-2022 reviewed for 2020-21.

404. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2020-21 TO 2023-24

The Interim Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer presented a report, the purpose of which, was to seek Council approval of the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020-21 to 2023-24, attached at Annex 3, which includes a financial forecast for 2020-24, a detailed revenue budget for 2020-21 and a Capital Programme for 2019-20 to 2029-30. This is dependent on Cabinet approval on 25 February 2020.

She advised that the allocation of budget determines the extent to which the Council's well-being objectives can be delivered. The Corporate Plan and Medium Term Financial

Strategy (MTFS) identify the Council's service and resource priorities for the next four financial years, with particular focus on 2020-21.

This report was presented to Council to provide details of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy for the four year period 2020-21 to 2023-24. The MTFS is complimentary to the Council's Corporate Plan, and looks to provide the resources to enable the Council's wellbeing objectives to be met. The MTFS outlines the principles and detailed assumptions which drive the Council's budget and spending decisions, outlines the financial context in which the Council is operating, and tries to mitigate any financial risks and pressures going forward, at the same time as taking advantage of any opportunities arising.

The Interim Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer, explained that the announcement of the final local government settlement for 2020-21 was approximately two months later than previous years, due to the changing Brexit deadline and then the UK general election, and as a result this budget is being proposed on the basis of the provisional settlement received in December 2019. Whilst we do not anticipate any significant change in funding between the provisional and final settlement, how the Authority will deal with any changes, would be made clear in the Medium Term Financial Strategy and reported back to Council at a later date. It was not envisaged that any changes will impact upon council tax.

The report outlined the financial issues that Council is requested to consider as part of the 2020-21 to 2023-24 MTFS. The Council's Section 151 Officer was required to report annually on the robustness of the level of reserves. The level of Council reserves was sufficient to protect the Council in light of unknown demands or emergencies and current funding levels. It must be emphasised that the biggest financial risks the Council is exposed to at the present time relate to the uncertainty of Welsh Government funding, the increasing difficulty in the delivery of planned budget reductions, as well as the identification of further proposals. Therefore, it was imperative that the Council Fund balance is managed in accordance with the MTFS Principle 9, as set out in the MTFS, and it is essential that revenue service expenditure and capital expenditure is contained within the identified budgets.

The Section 151 Officer was further required to report to Council if they do not believe that they have sufficient resource to discharge their role as required by S114 of the Local Government Act 1988. Members should note explained the Interim Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer, that there is sufficient resource to discharge this role.

The Interim Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer, then referred to the reports Appendices and gave a resume of some of these for the benefit of Members. This supporting information was as follows:-

- Annex 1 – Equality Impact Assessment
- Annex 2 – Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Assessment
- Annex 3 – MTFS 2020-21 to 2023-24
- Appendix A – 2020-21 Budget Pressures
- Appendix B – Budget Reduction Proposals 2020-21 to 2023-24
- Appendix C – Fees and Charges proposals 2020-21
- Appendix D – Directorate Base Budgets by service area 2020-21
- Appendix E – Directorate Base Budgets in line with Wellbeing Objectives
- Appendix F – Reserves and Balances Protocol
- Appendix G – Capital Programme 2019-2030
- Appendix H – Cabinet response to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny on Budget Issues

- Appendix I – Corporate Risk Assessment

The Deputy Leader wished that his thanks be placed on record to the Interim Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer, for all the hard work they had committed, in order to ensure that the Council had set a balanced budget for 2020-21.

BCBC had already reduced its services since austerity and this had equated to £68m during this time. A further £26m in savings was planned for the next 3 years he added. The Council were still intent however, on delivering high quality services whilst at the same time meeting its objectives as outlined in its Corporate Plan.

The Deputy Leader also extended his thanks to Members of Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Budget Research and Evaluation Panel (BREP) and those constituents who had taken part in the budget consultation. He also thanked Welsh Government for the extra funding it had committed to local authorities such as BCBC.

The Council he added, as part of the MTFs, had given a financial commitment to Schools, including Special Educational Needs (SEN) and towards the recruitment of apprentices. £2m had also be committed to the Public Realm to assist in the Council's Infrastructure and to assist the ever increasing problem with flooding due to a change in climate conditions.

A Member noted from the report that there were underspends in the Chief Executives Department and the Communities Directorate, the latter of which had received a considerable number of cuts to its budget during the years that formed the recession. So she questioned an under spend in a Directorate that had been subjected to such significant budget cuts in the last good few years. The Education and Family Support Directorate had over spent, whilst the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate had over spent by a significant amount. This is, in addition to the Directorates allocation of savings it was required to make in the next financial year. Presently in the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate, £175k of budgeted savings do not have robust plans and are rated red, ie at present, unaccounted for.

The Chief Executive responded to the question about the under and overspends from the Chief Executives directorate perspective. He explained that the under spend had arisen as a result of a combination of factors, both the inability to recruit, plus the holding of posts whilst anticipating a worse settlement than BCBC actually received. He explained that he had undertaken an exercise with Finance Officers, to identify where the vacancies were and the reason for those vacancies. Going forward a review would be undertaken to determine whether or not these posts are still required. In terms of the Communities Directorate underspend, he stated that this wasn't that large and that it is impossible to get the spend exactly to budget. He referred to the over spend in Education and handed over to the Corporate Director - Education and Family Support who outlined the reasons for these overspend pressures in his Directorate, which related to Home to School Transport and Out of County placements as a result of demands on these services or legislative requirements, both of which it was incumbent upon the Authority to meet. The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing added that these reasons also largely applied to the overspend that had occurred in her Directorate, ie statutory demands on certain key service areas, some of which were to a degree out of her control.

A Member asked if there was any further updates as part of the MTFs, with regards to Community Asset Transfer in relation to Clubs, Associations and other Organisations taking over the responsibility for Sports Pavilions and Playing Fields etc, previously subsidised by the local authority.

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The Leader advised that the Council would honour any Expressions of Interest shown by Clubs etc, in the taking over of these assets with any charges for the operation and/or maintenance of them being financially supported by the local authority. This commitment may not be given he added in terms of the long term future, but such a financial commitment had been set aside up until the next local elections.

Members then asked for an electronic vote to be undertaken, with a view to having a recorded vote on the recommendations of the report. Following this vote taking place, it was unanimously agreed by Council to have a recorded vote on the MTFs proposals, the result of which was as follows:-

| <b>Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020-21 to 2023-24 (Resolution)</b> |         |
|---|---------|
| Councillor Sean Aspey   | For     |
| Councillor Stuart Baldwin   | Abstain |
| Councillor Tom Beedle   | Abstain |
| Councillor Jon-Paul Blundell  | For     |
| Councillor Nicole Burnett   | For     |
| Councillor Mike Clarke  | For     |
| Councillor Norah Clarke   | For     |
| Councillor Richard Collins  | For     |
| Councillor Huw David  | For     |
| Councillor Paul Davies  | For     |
| Councillor Pam Davies   | For     |
| Councillor Sorrel Dendy   | Abstain |
| Councillor Keith Edwards  | Abstain |
| Councillor Jane Gebbie  | For     |
| Councillor Richard Granville  | For     |
| Councillor Cheryl Green   | For     |
| Councillor Gareth Howells   | For     |
| Councillor Altaf Hussain  | Abstain |
| Councillor Malcolm James  | Abstain |
| Councillor Brian Jones  | Abstain |
| Councillor Martyn Jones   | For     |
| Councillor David Lewis  | For     |
| Councillor Janice Lewis   | For     |
| Councillor John McCarthy  | For     |
| Councillor Dhanisha Patel   | For     |
| Councillor Ross Penhale-Thomas  | Abstain |
| Councillor Aniel Pucella  | Abstain |
| Councillor James Radcliffe  | Abstain |
| Councillor Kay Rowlands   | Abstain |
| Councillor Bridie Sedgebeer   | For     |
| Councillor Charles Smith  | For     |
| Councillor Stephen Smith  | For     |
| Councillor John Spanswick   | For     |
| Councillor Roz Stirman  | Abstain |
| Councillor Gary Thomas  | For     |
| Councillor Tim Thomas   | Abstain |
| Councillor Jefferson Tildesley MBE                                    | Abstain |
| Councillor Elaine Venables  | Abstain |
| Councillor Matthew Voisey   | Abstain |
| Councillor Lyn Walters  | Abstain |
| Councillor Carolyn Webster  | Abstain |
| Councillor David White  | For     |

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|   |         |
|---|---------|
| Councillor Philip White                               | For     |
| Councillor Alex Williams                              | For     |
| Councillor Amanda Williams                            | Abstain |
| Councillor Hywel Williams                             | For     |
| Councillor Richard Young                              | For     |
| <b>Recommendations of report Carried as follows:-</b> |         |

For - 28

Against - 0

Abstentions - 19

Did not vote - 1

405. COUNCIL TAX 2020-21

The Interim Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer presented a report, the purpose of which, was to provide Council with details of the Council Tax requirement for the County Borough Council together with the requirements of the Police & Crime Commissioner for South Wales and Community/Town Councils.

The report outlined certain background information, following which the Interim Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer referred Members to paragraph 4.4, that showed the average Council Tax for the County Borough for 2020-21 in Table 3.

She added that, the Council, as the billing authority, is required to formally approve the Council Tax for its area. This must be set to meet the net budget requirement of the Authority and its precepting authorities. Details of this were outlined in Table 5 within the report.

The Council was also required to approve the Council Tax charges for Band D properties for the chargeable financial year beginning 1 April, for each of the community areas. These were shown in Table 6 of the report. All calculations so highlighted were for a Band D equivalent property.

The Interim Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer concluded her submission by stating that for the sake of clarity, the resulting charges for each Band were reproduced in Appendix A (to the report).

RESOLVED: That Council approved:

- a Band D Council Tax for Bridgend County Borough Council of £1,537.06 for 2020-21, and
- the Council Tax charges for Band D properties for 2020-21 for each of the community areas as outlined.

406. TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND CAPITAL STRATEGIES 2020-21 ONWARDS

The Interim Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer submitted a report, the purpose of which, was to present to Council the Treasury Management Strategy 2020-21 (Appendix A to the report) which includes the Treasury Management Indicators, and the Capital Strategy 2020-21 to 2029-30 (Appendix B) which includes the Prudential Indicators for approval.

The Treasury Management Strategy 2020-21 confirmed the Council's compliance with the Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice. It also fulfils the Council's legal obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to both the CIPFA Code and the Welsh Government Guidance.

She advised that, the Treasury Management Strategy is an integrated strategy where borrowing and investments are managed in accordance with best professional practice. The Council borrows money either to meet short term cash flow needs or to fund capital schemes within the capital programme but loans taken are not associated with particular assets. The Council is exposed to financial risks including the potential loss of invested funds and the effect on revenue of changing interest rates. The Council endeavours to minimise the risks by investing its funds prudently, and having regard firstly to the security of investments then to their liquidity and finally to the seeking the highest rate of return, or yield. The Strategy outlined the Council's definition of specified and non-specified investments, the financial limits for each category of investments and the approved counterparties with associated credit ratings.

The Interim Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer proceeded, by confirming that the Capital Strategy 2020-21 to 2029-30 (Appendix B of the report) was presented to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 13 February 2020 for information. It confirmed the Council's compliance with the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities. It sets out the guiding principles for capital decisions as to:-

1. Focus capital investment on delivery of the Council's Objectives and Priorities
2. Ensure strong governance over decision-making
3. Ensure that capital plans are affordable, sustainable and prudent
4. Maximise and promote the best use of available funds

The Capital Strategy set out a framework for the self-management of capital finance and examines the following areas:

- Capital expenditure and investment plans
- Prudential Indicators
- External debt
- Treasury Management

It also reported on the delivery, affordability and risks associated with the long-term context, in which capital expenditure and investment decisions are made.

The Local Authority (Capital Finance and Accounting) (Amendment) (Wales) Regulations 2008, also required the Council to produce and approve an Annual Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement before the start of the financial year. Where a Council finances capital expenditure by debt, it must put aside revenue resources to repay that debt in later years and this is charged to revenue.

To conclude her submission, the Interim Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer advised that this Statement was attached at Appendix B - Schedule A, to the report.

**RESOLVED:** That Council approved:

- The Treasury Management Strategy 2020-21 including the Treasury Management Indicators 2020-21 to 2022-23 (Appendix A to the report);
- The Capital Strategy 2020-21 to 2029-30 including the Prudential Indicators 2020-21 to 2022-23 (Appendix B);
- The Annual Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement 2020-21 (Appendix B - Schedule A).

407. **URGENT ITEMS**

None.

The meeting closed at 17:45