

CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - MONDAY, 4 NOVEMBER 2019

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB ON MONDAY, 4 NOVEMBER 2019 AT 10:00

Present

Councillor CA Green – Chairperson

JPD Blundell
T Giffard

NA Burnett
RMI Shaw

N Clarke
T Thomas

J Gebbie

Apologies for Absence

RL Penhale-Thomas, KL Rowlands and JC Spanswick

Officers:

Mark Galvin	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Laura Griffiths	Principal Solicitor
Andrew Rees	Democratic Services Manager
Kevin Stephens	Democratic Services Assistant
Tracy Watson	Scrutiny Officer

Invitees:

Kevin Mulcahy	Group Manager - Highways Services
Zak Shell	Head of Neighbourhood Services
Mark Shephard	Chief Executive
Guy Smith	Community Asset Transfer Officer

140. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were made:-

Councillor R Shaw – Prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 3., in that he was involved in the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) with several Clubs/Associations. He left the meeting whilst the item was being considered.

Councillor N Burnett – Personal interest in Agenda Item 3., due to her father being Chairperson of Bridgend Athletic Rugby Club.

Councillor JP Blundell – Personal interest in Agenda Item 3., due to him being a non-paying fee Member of Brackla AFC.

Councillor J Gebbie – Personal interest in that she had been involved in initial discussions regarding a possible CAT to be pursued in respect of an asset(s) in the location of Kenfig Hill, which had not yet commenced.

141. CALL-IN OF CABINET DECISION: PLAYING FIELDS, OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES AND PARKS PAVILIONS

The Chairperson opened the meeting and welcomed all those in attendance. She thanked all the public speakers for attending and contributing towards debate on this important item.

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She advised that there had been some criticism received with regard to holding the meeting so early in the day, as opposed to in the afternoon, ie around 5.00pm or later after people finished work. She confirmed however, that this was difficult given that the Council closed its offices at 6.30pm.

She finally confirmed that after the public speakers had given their submissions then they would retire from the lectern and remain in the meeting to observe proceedings, during which time they could not ask questions of the Invitees or 'heckle' during debate.

The Legal Officer advised that a number of Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members had signed the appropriate form calling-in the decision made by Cabinet at its last meeting with regards to the future support of Playing Fields, Outdoor Sports Facilities and Parks Pavilions. In terms of this, she reiterated that those Members were required to attend today's meeting with an open mind and it was a decision for them whether the extent of interest they had shown in this item had been pre-determined or not.

If they had pre-determined the matter then they should declare a prejudicial interest and retire from the meeting. Or if they felt that they had not made any such pre-determination, then they could declare a personal interest (if they so wished, as it was a decision for Members to make ultimately), and remain in the meeting and include themselves in general debate, including asking questions of the Invitees.

The Member who had initiated the call-in advised that he had adopted an open mind to the Cabinet proposals and the report before Members, though he had adopted a stance objectively with regard to the Cabinet resolution. He assured those present however, that he had not pre-determined this matter despite what had been said on social media, ie that he was against the Cabinet's proposals.

The Chairperson then invited public speakers to, in turn, to address the Committee through inviting their comments, objections and representations to the decision of Cabinet (made at its meeting on 22 October 2019).

There were also some written representations and objections received and these were read out by the Democratic Services Manager after the public speakers had given their respective submissions.

The list of public speakers together with those who gave written representations/objections were as follows:-

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Club</u>
1.	Terry Boast	Nantyllyllon RFC
2.	Richard Edwards	Bridgend Town AFC
3.	John Sawyer	Bridgend Sports RFC
4.	Jamie Wallis	Not known
5.	Richard Walters	Bridgend District Football League
6.	Stephen Davies	Chair, Pencoed FRC
7.	Graham Thomas	Tondu RFC

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8.	Rhys Jones	Bridgend Athletic RFC
9.	Darren Ward	Brackla under 12's Football Coach
10.	Alun Bunston	Bridgend Town Cricket Club
11.	Ian Brunt	Barckla FC Seniors
12.	Keely Svikeris	Not known
13.	Chairman	K. Hill RFC Mini/Junior Club
14.	Andrew Jones	Maesteg Park Secretary
15.	Matthew Symonds	Heol Y Cyw Rugby Club
16.	Dr Richard Lewis	Maesteg Harlequins
17.	Paul White	Chairperson, Wyndham Bowls Club
18.	Michelle Mitchell	Porthcawl Town AFC
19.	Cllr Keith Edwards	County Borough Councillor
20.	Cllr Amanda Williams	County Borough Councillor
21.	Cllr Tim Thomas	County Borough Councillor
22.	Cllr Carolyn Webster	County Borough Councillor
23.	Cllr Ross Penhale-Thomas	County Borough Councillor
24.	Cllr Alex Williams	County Borough Councillor

The comments, objections and representations so made, covered the following themes and issues:-

- The reduction in subsidence will cost our Club £900k and we will cease to exist
- This is a 'Poison Chalice' passed on to Clubs to deal with
- Maintenance costs for the up-keep of facilities will be too high for Clubs/Associations to fund some of which are already in a poor condition
- There will be Insurance and Public Liability issues as a result of the proposals
- Some Clubs will end up playing away games only as they will have no facilities to play at home
- The reduction in subsidy by the Council would see a maximum rise of 500% compared with current costs that Clubs/Associations would have to bear. This for one Club would see an increase from £2,600 to £15,000 per season/year
- Reliance would have to be made upon the goodwill and generosity of others such as local businesses to assist with such increase in costs
- Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC have continued their support to Clubs and Associations regarding subsidising fees for Playing Fields, Outdoor Sports Pavilions and Parks Pavilions hire. Why can't BCBC?

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- The proposals are wrong and this has been reflected by the level of public opposition against them
- If the subsidy is lost a lot of Clubs will no longer be able to function
- Have enough comparisons with the proposals been 'benchmarked' against what other authorities are doing
- If there is to be an decrease in subsidy, it should be more gradual and staggered over a number of years, not imposed in one go
- Costs are not just associated with hiring facilities, Clubs also have to pay for referees, match balls, team kit etc. Of the 27 Bridgend town based football teams, only a few will survive if the subsidy is taken away to the level proposed
- The proposals go against the principles of core priorities of Welsh Government, 'Play Sport and participate in Leisure and Cultural activities' & their Healthy Weight: Healthy Wales' programme
- Of the 1,000's participating in sports within the County Borough, the proposals will reduce this to a few 100
- The reduction in subsidy will go against one of the Council's core commitments, namely the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Further engagement needs to be made between Council officials and representatives of all Clubs and Associations that will be affected.
- Loss of sport will take away the good start in life for the younger generation
- Proposals will discourage progress made to date in the playing of sports by females, for example, in football, rugby and even cricket
- 3 pitch allocations per week in Bridgend over an 8 month period of a season will see a cost increase of £30k which is far too high
- Participation in leisure and sporting activities encourages good mental health, combats obesity, reduces crime and school suspensions, illegal drug use and crime
- Proposals will jeopardise the population, community and long term financial benefits BCBC are trying to achieve.
- Community Asset Transfer process appears flawed and though a £1m has been set aside to aid Clubs in the financial support of assets, this is well short of the £3.5m required for this purpose. This fund has also targeted building maintenance, but what about pitch maintenance also?
- Reduction in sport will go against a growing population in the BCB, borne out by the fact that there has been and still is, a significant amount of new housing being developed in the location of Bridgend, with a lack of infrastructure to support this.
- Any financial turnover made by Clubs, ie through gate entrance charges and bar intakes will not go anywhere near covering the cost required for Clubs to bear the running costs of sports facilities.
- Funding available should also be put aside for pitch maintenance and not just the up-keeping of Sports Pavilions etc.
- Full charging from September 2020 gives little time for Clubs and Associations to generate income and be able to afford to take over the operation and maintenance assets from the Council
- Sports bring together local communities
- The Council and its partners should re-look at its whole Sport and Leisure Strategy
- The proposals of Cabinet go against Maslow's theory of belongings of the five tiers of human needs, namely, physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem and self-actualisation

- Sport assists individuals who are not academic, promoting their feeling of being valued
- Friendships made through sports helps people who feel isolated, makes them feel disciplined and enhances community spirit
- £3m from Council Reserves was contributed to the regeneration of Porthcawl harbour to enhance sailing, why cannot a similar amount go to continuing subsidising the hire of Sports Playing facilities
- My 3 children participate in sport. The removal of the subsidy would result in me facing an annual increase from £750 to £3,750
- The proposed increase would be too much for families on low income and their children would therefore be prejudiced from engaging in competitive sport and recreation
- How much will there be in the proposed Trust Fund that has been set aside to support mini Clubs etc, largely supported by volunteers and does this include support for the elderly and disadvantaged groups
- Could the Council be financially supported by some of the Sports Governing bodies, for example the Welsh Rugby Union (WRU) and the Football Association (FA) in order to minimise the financial impact for Clubs/Associations
- Some alternatives should be shared with all Members (ie through Council) before final determination by Cabinet.

The Cabinet Member – Communities opened debate after the Committee had heard from all the public speakers and commenced by stating that he had an immense sense of sympathy with some of the issues they had shared with Members/Invitees at today's meeting.

He fully acknowledged the value of sport and what it brought to the County Borough, particularly its values and especially for the younger generation as a form of enjoyment and a welcome alternative to their studying in school or college. Team building for one assisted them in other aspects of their life he felt.

He was not adverse to some of the raised today, but he reminded those present, that the local authority had suffered 10 years of austerity which had led to unprecedented cutbacks in budget which inevitably then meant, it having to cut back its level of services previously provided due to a lack of resources.

The Cabinet Member – Communities advised that BCBC had to make £36m in savings during the last 10 years and still had to make a further £34m in the next 4 years. It was required to achieve this level of savings in order to make year on year during the recession, a balanced budget.

The cuts had impacted all areas of the Council including statutory services provided in respect of Children's and Adults Social Services. These service areas were very important, in that they were services that the Authority provided to its most vulnerable, ie for both the young and the elderly and the level of the services had to be maintained as effectively as possible, as not to do so would place these categories of the population in the County Borough at risk. Local authorities were duty bound he added to protect these elements of society.

Therefore, in order not to compromise the levels of support provided for the above key services, the Communities Directorate, that provided mostly non-statutory services, had also faced some considerable cuts to its Budget and he acknowledged that these had been unprecedented.

The Council were also, in the face of continued cuts, having to make harder and harder decisions, the level of which, were now starting to a degree to impact upon constituents. He wanted to assure however, that the Council did not wish to make some of these decisions, though it was faced with the fact that it had no alternative as it could not provide the services to the level it had before with continuous diminished budgets year on year.

With regards to the future maintenance of assets such as Outdoor Sports Pavilions, Parks Pavilions and Playing Fields, the Council had to look to work together with organisations such as clubs and organisations as users or Town/Community Councils, as failure to do so, would result in these facilities closing as there would be little or no investment committed to them to maintain them to the standard required for usage under health and safety regulations.

The Cabinet Member – Communities raised the point also, that the Council had set its Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) in February of this year and part of this included a cut in terms of subsidy previously given to Clubs and Associations, in support of their use of the facilities subject of the report.

He wished to emphasise however, that notwithstanding this, the Council did wish to work with them to ensure that they can pursue financial support through CAT. He reiterated that there was a significant saving that was required to be made in respect of the future running and maintenance of these assets and the Council could simply not sustain the financial commitment it had previously made due to its financial restraints.

A Member recognised the extent of financial cuts that had to be made in respect of supporting financially, Outdoor Sports Facilities, Pavilions and Playing Field areas. He asked if a Strategy could be introduced that would help Clubs and Associations from a financial perspective, in order that they could still exist and play sport at within these locations.

The Chief Executive advised those present that austerity had brought about a stark reality for local authorities and BCBC was no exception to that end. He explained that the Operating Module supporting organisations in Outdoor Sports activities and, in particular, the financial commitment previously given by the Council, was no longer sustainable. The Council could not provide financial support for the maintenance of facilities and some of these buildings were not in a good condition and would deteriorate further and eventually have to close, as had been the case for 4 or 5 pavilions to date. Any financial commitment made also had to be for the longer term, as opposed to a 'quick fix' type of arrangement in order to support the provisions of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. He acknowledged that CAT was challenging, however, this option was definitely the option that organisations should look at committing to. Other Councils such as Neath Port Talbot, the Vale of Glamorgan and Carmarthen had successfully adopted that which BCBC were pursuing ie the CAT process, though Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC had invested further in such assets. Under CAT Clubs would take an increased responsibility in Pavilions and Playing Fields, though they would still be supported by BCBC, as appropriate. He felt it was important to stress, that the Council would not increase charges next year for any for those organisations that fully committed to CAT and that this pot of money would be supported further through the Authority's Capital Fund. He added, that a further fund would be set aside for junior Clubs and teams, who were more volunteer led and who had less income than Senior Clubs. Town/Community Councils would be approached he added, as this could alleviate the financial pressures also. The Chief Executive could understand Clubs and Organisations being sceptical over having increased responsibility for the above assets, though he again stressed that failure to do so, would lead to more structures being closed due to their state of disrepair.

A Member felt that female participation in outdoor sports would be compromised as a result of the Council's proposals. He felt also that there should be more interaction between the Council and all Clubs and Organisations who use facilities, so that they could be made more aware of the CAT process, which was somewhat complex. Also, there was only one designated CAT Officer and he would not be able to support the amount of work the changes would bring about.

The Head of Operations – Community Services acknowledged that the CAT process was not straightforward, in that it was not a process that could be completed from start to finish quickly. Though a revised process introduced by the CAT Task and Finish Group had streamlined this to a degree. There was likely to be a situation in the immediate future, whereby a considerable number of CAT's would be coming into the Council for completion in a relatively short space of time and this may result in increased administrative support being required in order to cope with the extra work pressures, this would bring about, by the September 2020 deadline. Clubs taking over assets under a Licence arrangement, meant that this could be achieved fairly quickly, however, if the takeover was by way of lease, this took a longer time to complete.

The Cabinet Member – Communities reiterated that there were issues at Newbridge Fields that needed to be looked at separately from other areas, so Clubs that used the facilities there may not be required to enter into any CAT arrangement and any increase in fees would not apply to these Clubs in the first instance. He also emphasised that any Club or Organisation that submitted an Expression of Interest in the CAT Scheme, even if this was received after the deadline date, would not be subject to any increased subsidy proposals.

A Member felt that aside of looking at Clubs/Organisations and Town or Community Councils to face an increase in subsidy fees previously financially supported by the local authority, such assistance could be looked at elsewhere, such as through certain 3rd sector organisations.

The Cabinet Member – Communities advised, that BCBC were increasingly having to make difficult decisions the more the recession continued and that if cuts were not made in certain service areas that comprised the Council, then they would either have to be made in alternative areas, or increase Council Tax (next year), somewhere in the region of 8.5%.

A Member stated that he fully appreciated, as did all Members, the financial pressures the Council faced both in the past and the future. He acknowledged that these were unprecedented and that some very hard decisions were needed in order to fully achieve these. He was concerned however, of the impact on sport within the area if Clubs had to bear the cost of the reduced subsidy that the Authority would be withdrawing. This would, he felt as had been borne out by some of the public speakers, have a negative impact on both the mental and physical health of residents within the County Borough, for both the young and more elderly citizens alike. He felt that it would also result in an increase in anti-social behaviour and criminal activity. He added that an increase in charges for Clubs would also to a degree be counterproductive, in that less of them would be able to continue producing teams, which would in turn, result in Sports Pavilions having to close in any event due to them not being used.

The Chief Executive advised that the idea behind CAT was that no Club or Association would be required to face an increase in subsidy, nor would they if they took over assets through a Lease or Licence Agreement. This was the way forward in order to make outdoor sport throughout communities sustainable. This would in turn, assist the health and wellbeing of individuals who participated in such sports throughout the County

Borough. The Council did not wish to take the option it was pursuing, but the decision had been taken out of its hands due to ongoing budget pressures that showed no signs of easing. This was therefore the only feasible long term solution. Cuts were being imposed basically throughout the Authority including in key areas where the Council provided statutory services such as in Childrens (including schools) and Social Services. The Strategy supporting CAT would preserve sport in the County Borough he added.

The Cabinet Member – Communities advised that the Cabinet together with Officers were fully aware of the health benefits for people who regularly played sport and how this combated health problems such as obesity, high blood pressure and the onset of diabetes etc. That's why the Council were looking to financially support Clubs taking over facilities via CAT's. The Council would both meet and work with them in order to benefit both, he added.

The Head of Operations – Community Services advised that Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council had previously had to withdraw the subsidy they paid to Clubs and Associations within their area due to budget pressures and they introduced CAT. Since then they had successfully worked with the above and as a result of this all their Sports Facilities and Playing Fields had remained in being for continued use by teams competing in a variety of different sports.

The Chairperson questioned some of the costings outlined in the Cabinet report (paragraph 3.6) dated 22 October 2019 in respect of savings required in respect of Sports Pavilions and Playing Fields etc, in that these did not accurately correspond (when cross-referencing) to those detailed in Appendix E to the report, where various charges for different sports users were itemised.

The Head of Operations – Community Services advised that the proposed hire charges were shown more for a guide of the level of scale of increases

She added that she had calculated that there would be an average increase in pitch hire cost from approximately £36 to £199, so Members and the public who participated in outdoor sports, needed to know if there was any variance with this cost, in relation to how many games were played at any particular Sports area/Playing field location.

A Member noted that there had been a number of public speakers present at today's meeting, representing different Sports Clubs and Associations and she enquired how many of these played sport on Council owned facilities and what was the total number of teams from all the different areas of the County Borough who used these facilities. She also asked why the Council charged teams per game and not per season as did Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC.

The Head of Operations – Community Services explained that BCBC did charge annually for hire of its facilities, though this was also broken down into game fees.

The Member followed-up by asking, for example, if a Club was to be charged £199 for pitch hire upon which to play a home game and they played 30 home games, then the total cost for this when the subsidy was reduced/withdrawn would then be £5,970.

The Head of Operations – Community Services, advised that Sports pitches etc were used not just for matches but for other purposes too. Therefore, calculation of costs was not necessarily as simple as that expressed above, in that the total cost over the course of a season was dependent upon all usage, ie league games and training sessions. This could be further broken down if different teams and/or Clubs shared sports facilities he added. The cost was generally calculated on a per use fee for each separate occasion of hire, multiplied by how many times over the course of a season.

The Member felt that how the costs were calculated, ie either per session of hire or for the season overall, should have been more simply explained in Appendix E to the report where these charges were broken down, as the way they were explained did not make for easy reading and were inconsistently applied for the different sports so listed.

An example of this, was that in this Appendix it was reflected that from 1 April 2020 the cost for Sport pitches for Bowls would be £23k. She asked if this was per facility; the cost per Club or the cost per green.

The Group Manager – Highways and Green Spaces advised that these costs were based on the costs the Council would have had to bear if it still provided a subsidy, based on an average cost. That is the average cost per pavilion/per Club (over a season).

A Member advised that she had some involvement in the CAT process in her Ward area. She acknowledged that the Council had previously made a decision when it had last determined its Budget (ie the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)) to make a saving in respect of Playing Fields, Outdoor Sports Facilities and Parks Pavilions, by reducing the subsidy it provides to Clubs and Associations who use them. If the savings earmarked in this service area were not realised, then they would have to be made elsewhere in the Communities Directorate or from statutory services supported by Adult Social Care or Children's and Education Services. There was no easy answer she felt. She added that she was concerned of the impact the proposals would have on females participating in sport, as currently there were a lack of facilities available for them ie changing rooms and showers etc before/after matches. The reduction in subsidy she felt would also compromise the provisions of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The Deputy Leader advised that the Council was now starting to feel the extent of austerity and continued reduced settlements from Central and Welsh Government. Annually the BCBC went through a rigid process prior to setting its Budget. This involved consultation with the public to receive their input on where they considered areas where the level of cuts required could best be made. The proposals aligned to the budget were also regularly monitored during the year leading to the MTFS being set, by the Council's Budget Research and Evaluation Panel (BREP) as well as through the Overview and Scrutiny process. All recommendations and proposals during the course of these processes so followed were considered and deliberated upon, before the Council set a balanced budget he added. Issues had to be considered during the process on matters such as liabilities, income and the level of Council Tax that a local authority deem required to put in place, as this was its main course of income. Following the above processes being followed, Cabinet would then consider all proposals made through consultation both internally within the Council by Members/Chief Officers and externally through public engagement, following which, Council would then determine its Budget for the year ahead.

With regard to facilities subject of the report that had been called-in, the Council had already had to close 6 Sports Pavilions due to health and safety reasons and more would follow, if Clubs and Associations did not engage with the Council to keep these in being through processes such as CAT (which the Authority had set up a Fund for) or taking such facilities over through lease or Licence Agreements etc. Bryncethin RFC had engaged with the Council over CAT and had some financial support through the CAT fund. This together with other streams of funding had resulted in them providing a state of the art facility and other Clubs could follow their lead and similarly upgrade and improve the facilities they used also, he added.

There were a number of Sports Clubs within the County Borough that were self-sustaining and financially resilient and the Council's wish was to work with more organisations in order to achieve this. Working together in this way going forward, would help keep facilities open and being used, as opposed to seeing them have to close due to lack of use and them being maintained, the Deputy Leader added.

Aside of the CAT Fund, the Deputy Leader added that a separate fund would be established for youth and junior teams who have little or no self-funding and more rely on volunteers assisting them to participate in sport.

There were complications in Newbridge Fields and one or two other Sports areas within the County Borough where there was multiple use of facilities by different teams etc, and the Council would have to adopt a different process here in terms of reduction of subsidies and these had yet been fully decided upon.

He made the point that in the region of £429k in savings had been earmarked within the budget set last year with regards to Playing Fields, Outdoor Sports Facilities and Parks Pavilions. This was a significant amount and if this level of savings was not made here, it would be required to be met elsewhere and no such alternative proposals where this level of saving could be made instead had been put forward. He also wished to point out that evidence of how closely the Council's proposals were in relation to its MTFS was evident on the Council's website, in the form of reports and minutes arising from Committees such as Cabinet, Overview and Scrutiny Committees (particularly the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee) and full Council.

The Council were fully open and transparent in regards to its intentions with its Budget and the savings that had to be made overall and on a Directorate by Directorate basis.

Committees such as the above also had quarterly Performance and Treasury Management reports, that outlined the likes of budget pressures and where any savings in service areas were best served.

Further support would be sought also the Deputy Leader further added, from Town/Community Councils, in order to establish if they would assist in the future responsibility of facilities in terms of their funding, through increasing their precept for this purpose.

The Council would also look for avenues of support to assist Clubs and Associations, through the FA, WRU and the WCA. Welsh Government could also be approached he added.

The Deputy Leader also advised, that Clubs and Associations themselves could obtain grant funding via other avenues that the Council were unable to access. This in the form of financial assistance, could assist them in taking such assets over from the local authority.

He acknowledged that consultation between the Council and Clubs and Associations moving forward needed to improve, but added that this was a two way issue. If this was successfully pursued and achieved, he was confident that progress could be made in respect of the future operation of Sports Playing fields and associated Facilities, without any reduction in the participation of sports through teams currently playing having to consider ceasing to operate.

The Cabinet Member – Communities added that if Clubs and Organisations worked with the Council, there would be no need for them to pay full cost recovery to use and maintain assets as instead they would be financially supported through CAT. Following

this process, would mean that there would be less cost for them taking over facilities and would prove to be a more sustainable approach over the longer term.

The Chief Executive added that Expressions of Interest for CAT funding by Clubs etc, were welcomed. This would then have to be supported by a Business Case. Clubs would not be penalised financially if they pursued this course of action. There was a deadline for accessing the CAT fund, though if interest was shown in accessing the financial opportunities the fund offered, yet they missed this deadline, again they would not lose out because of this. He added that Clubs could also engage with the Council in shorter term leases if they so wished, in order to see how these progressed, prior to engaging in anything more longer term.

The Community Asset Transfer Officer advised all Clubs, Associations and Organisations to contact him and then he would visit them and discuss CAT, in order that they have a better understanding of the process.

A Member advised that many residents and stakeholders throughout the County Borough benefit from Sports Facilities and Health Clubs etc, as well as just keeping fit through walking in playing fields and on public footpaths. In view of the financial restraints the Council were facing which meant that they have had to consider withdrawing the subsidy they have previously given to Clubs for pitch and sports pavilion hire etc. She felt that to bridge the financial gap, BCBC should approach other organisations such as the Health Authority for some assistance in future funding of Sports assets.

A Member noted the works that had been carried out at Bryncethin RFC to their Clubhouse etc, and he asked how they had generated the finance to produce such a state of the art facility.

The Chief Executive advised that it had taken over 3 years of negotiation between the Club and the local authority before the works to the above had been completed. In this time the Club had secured CAT funding as well as other funding streams (not available to BCBC), that included from Welsh Government. Bryncethin RFC stakeholders had been patient during this time; been assisted by many volunteers and shown an active interest all through the process to work with the Council and all this hard work then eventually resulted in the completion of a first class facility.

The Cabinet Member – Communities added that the Council had also learnt a lot from the above, which had resulted in the CAT process being updated and streamlined to achieve easier access to funding.

As this concluded debate on the call-in of the decision of Cabinet in respect of Playing Fields, Outdoor Sports Facilities and Parks Pavilions made at its meeting on 22 October 2019, Members had a vote by way of a show of hands, in order to establish whether or not the decision be referred back to Cabinet for further consideration.

The vote resulted, by way of a majority decision, to refer the item back to Cabinet on the following grounds:-

Conclusions:

Concerns were expressed by the Committee in relation to the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) process. Whilst the Committee acknowledged the excellent work done by the CAT Officer, Members felt that the process was under resourced and was still too complex for many clubs to consider, despite the process having been recently streamlined. Given the potential increase in CAT's in the run up to the September 2020

deadline, the Committee therefore recommend that the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) process and the process for clubs entering into Licence Agreements be reviewed.

The Committee also expressed concerns about the length of time that the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) process currently took and further raised concerns about the number of completed transfers. The recent completion of a CAT by Bryncethin Rugby Club did however provide an opportunity to demonstrate to other sports clubs/community groups how the process can be achieved and the Committee therefore recommend that a Case Study of Bryncethin Rugby Club be put together to provide to other sports clubs/community groups for information.

Concerns were further expressed by the Committee about the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) process for Newbridge Fields. Members acknowledged that Newbridge Fields was a potential non-standard process but felt there was insufficient information contained within the Cabinet report of 22 October 2019 to understand the issues of CAT transfer of Newbridge Fields and therefore recommend a further report is provided for clarity.

The Committee expressed concern that there is insufficient information contained within the Cabinet report of 22 October 2019 as to the number of sporting clubs and teams affected by the changes to an increase in hire fees and how many games are played on the pitches. Therefore, the Committee recommend that greater detail is provided for clarity.

Concerns were also expressed by the Committee that there was insufficient information provided within the Cabinet report of 22 October 2019 in respect of charges. It was noted that the figures provided showed an annual charge, but this did not break down to a fee per use. It was further noted that the financial information is not explicit and is misleading given the examples shown at Appendix E of the report. Members further highlighted that income generation appeared to be in excess of savings to be made. The Committee therefore recommend that greater detail as to how much the proposals will cost clubs per season is provided for clarity and Appendix E of the Cabinet report is amended accordingly.

Members noted the Cabinet Decision Record with regards to the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA). In particular where reference is made to the impact specifically relating to both younger and older persons in society and noted that 'a fund be set aside for this category of users to provide continued support for their access to facilities'. It was noted that a further report will be presented to Cabinet at the earliest opportunity. The Committee therefore recommend that Cabinet provide this report at its earliest opportunity and clarity is provided in respect of the fund.

The meeting closed at 12:40