

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD REMOTELY - VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS
ON TUESDAY, 22 JUNE 2021 AT 14:30**

Present

Councillor HJ David – Chairperson

CE Smith
SE Baldwin

HM Williams

D Patel

NA Burnett

Officers:

Claire Marchant	Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing
Janine Nightingale	Corporate Director - Communities
Gill Lewis	Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change
Julie Ellams	Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Laura Kinsey	Head of Children's Social Care
Deborah Exton	Interim Deputy Head of Finance
Lindsay Harvey	Corporate Director Education and Family Support

668. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Charles Smith declared a personal interest in agenda item 11
Cllr Nicole Burnett declared a personal interest in agenda item 11
Cllr Stuart Baldwin declared a personal interest in agenda item 11
Cllr Dhanisha Patel declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 16, and withdrew from the meeting during this item.

669. CROSS-PARTY RECOVERY PANEL - RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chairperson of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee presented a report which outlined the recommendations of the Cross-Party Recovery Panel attached at Appendix A to the report, which had been endorsed by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

She explained that the Cross-Party Recovery Panel met on 7 December 2020, considered the PSB Community impact assessment, the Cabinet response to the Phase 1 Recommendations and selected Housing and Homelessness as a key area for examination in greater depth. The Panel met on 11 March and 14 May 2021 and heard from invitees from: Community Housing Cymru; the Chartered Institute of Housing Cymru; the Authority's Housing Team and the Shared Regulatory Service Neighbourhood Service Team.

She advised that recommendations were made on Housing and Homelessness at its meeting on 14th May 2021. The COSC endorsed the recommendations at its meeting on 9th June 2021. She outlined these recommendations as attached in Appendix A to the report.

The Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations thanked all Members for engaging in the process for putting the recommendations together. She added that the recommendations were not out of the ordinary and had been important topics which had been engaged in considerably and very regularly. The Leader echoed this and stated that BCBC were already prioritising one and two-bedroom accommodation to meet the need. He added that working with partners, BCBC were developing on site provision for people which involved the conversion of redundant and derelict commercial properties.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet agreed to consider the recommendations of the Cross-Party Recovery Panel (Appendix A) which had been endorsed by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee as part of the recovery process.

670. SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME : BRIDGEND WEST SCHOOLS MODERNISATION PROPOSAL - DRAFT OBJECTIONS REPORT

The Corporate Director Education and Family Support presented a report which:

- informed Cabinet of the statutory objections received by the local authority during the objections period in respect of the proposal;
- sought Cabinet's approval to publish the draft 'Objections Report' on BCBC's website (Appendix A to the report); and to
- requested that Cabinet determines the proposal.

The Corporate Director Education and Family Support provided background to the report and the Councils agreement to adopt the 5 revised principles as a framework for school organisation in Bridgend as indicated in section 3 of the report.

He explained that the report detailed the preferred way forward for the Bridgend West schemes and the preferred site location for the new schools. These were set out at section 3.3 and 3.4 of the report.

The Corporate Director Education and Family Support added that a consultation exercise was carried out between 25 January 2021 and 7 March 2021 in accordance with the statutory School Organisation Code. A copy of the consultation document was made available during this time on the Council's website, this was hyperlinked at 3.7 of the report for information. The consultation document invited views and opinions to be submitted in respect of the proposal. A summary of these views and opinions were then published in the form of a Consultation Report. The outcome of the consultation was reported to Cabinet on 6 April 2021 and it gave approval to issue a public notice.

He stated that a number of objections were received regarding the proposals which prompted the need for a objections report which needed to be published summarising the objections and the authority's response to the objections. Cabinet needed to consider the proposal in light of objections. Cabinet could then accept, reject or modify the proposal.

The Corporate Director Education and Family Support outlined the key issues raised from the objections which were summarised as the following:

- Small school moving to a larger school concerns
- Site size/facilities concerns
- Safety/security, parking, infrastructure concerns
- Condition of the school building at Afon Y Felin
- Timing/process concerns
- Area housebuilding
- Alternate options

Details of the above were listed in section 3 of Appendix A.

The Corporate Director Education and Family Support outlined the financial implications as set out in section 8 of the report. He explained that if approved, the budget requirements would need to be built into the MTFS as an annual charge over a 25-year period.

The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration stated that this had been an ongoing issue and a number of meetings had been held regarding this. He explained that there had been assumptions and confusions which were understandable, but believed these had been dealt with thoroughly and meticulously in the report. He added that the schools had served their purpose and were no longer fit for that purpose. The children in Cornelly deserve better schools and this report proposed that. He added that the children would not need to move into the new school until everything was finalised giving time for getting used to the new surroundings.

The Deputy Leader agreed with the proposals and was pleased to see the small school ethos being continued as this was important for Cornelly schools. He added that the current school was not in a fit state to be used for much longer and believed that time was of the essence in securing a fit for purpose school.

The Leader asked what the extent of repairs was like at the current school sites. The Corporate Director Education and Family Support explained that the exterior of the Afon Y Felin building there were numerous repairs relating to the windows and walls, and within the building the areas identified were flooring, heating and electrical. These were then prioritised in order of severity and necessity. The Leader asked what the condition of the other two schools, Ysgol Y Ferch o'r Sgêr and Corneli Primary School were.

The School Programme Manager explained that these schools were also in similar condition to Afon Y Felin and the backlog of repairs were also at a similar level. The Project Manager – School Modernisation outlined key details relating to the types of repairs.

The Cabinet Member Social Services and Early Help empathised with the concerns shared by the parents but added that the small school ethos can exist in a larger school, with the added benefits of what larger schools can provide in terms of more afterschool clubs, greater variety of teachers etc. She provided examples of her own children making a similar move and the positive effect it had on them.

The Cabinet Member Communities welcomed the report and echoed the comments by the other Cabinet members. He mentioned the ever-growing population and the requirement for school spaces and asked how the new school would facilitate that. The Corporate Director Education and Family Support stated that wherever possible the aim was to include surplus spaces within the classrooms to be able to facilitate the growth and provide some futureproofing.

The Leader asked what lessons had been learned from previous experiences in transitioning from an old site to a new site and what can be expected with this transition. The Corporate Director Education and Family Support explained that a similar transition occurred with schools in the Bettws area whereby meetings were set up with teachers and headteachers who had previously gone through that experience and discussed the issues relating to transitioning which proved to be beneficial going forward. He added that formal and informal arrangements will take place regarding the current proposals. The formal arrangements will be following the guidance and legislation changes from Welsh Government, the informal arrangements will be engagement with the current schools and governing bodies with the aim to maintaining the strengths and identities of the current schools going forward to the new school.

The School Programme Manager also outline some key areas of improvement going in to the new school which included soft play area and library facilities, potential drop off area for children, staff parking, the configuration of the school would suit the daily running of the school better than the old schools, the access into the school as well as the orientation of the school in terms of visible daylight.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- Noted the statutory objections received as detailed in the attached draft objections report and appendices;
- Approved the draft objections report for publication; and
- Agreed to proceed with the scheme as outlined

671. CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING POLICY

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing presented a report which sought approval for a revised Corporate Safeguarding Policy as attached at Appendix 1.

She explained that the policy was last revised in August 2020 and had now been further developed to expand policy requirements in the areas of governance, quality assurance, safe workforce, and safe services. The revision outlined the specific accountabilities of each Councillor and member of the BCBC workforce to safeguard adults and children at risk.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing explained that the revised policy was based on 4 key areas of safeguarding which were:

- Effective governance
- Quality assurance of performance
- Safe workforce
- Safe services

She added that to ensure quality assurance and reporting, an annual report would be presented to Scrutiny Committees as well as Cabinet, with the appropriate reporting from Audit Wales, CIW and ESTYN being presented to the Governance and Audit Committee, Scrutiny Committees and Cabinet. She further added that safeguarding must be considered in all future contracting and commissioning arrangements.

The Cabinet Member Social Services and Early Help welcome the report and stated that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility individually as well as collectively. She asked that LEA Governors that were appointed by the authority receive necessary safeguarding training. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing explained that the role of the Chair of Governors had been updated and had the expectation that governors with responsibilities in safeguarding must take the relevant training at level 3 or BCBC equivalent qualification, and all governors must complete the relevant modules on 'keeping learners safe'.

The Cabinet Member Communities asked how the policy would be published and the responsibilities within it to ensure that the understanding of the risks are shared among the community and the awareness made. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing explained that there was always a push to raise awareness of safeguarding

as well as reporting any issue that may see relevant and that it was better to report something than not. She added that it was important to ensure the information was displayed on the BCBC website and it was accessible to everyone, how to report issues as well as in hours and out of hours contact information.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet approved the Corporate Safeguarding Policy

672. **DEVELOPMENT OF BRYNMENYN CHILDRENS HUB**

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing presented a report which updated Cabinet on:

- developments at Maple Tree House (children's emergency and assessment unit/Children's Placement Hub") in respect of the plans to relocate the service, and;
- requested Cabinet approval for the Head of Children's Social Care (in their capacity as Responsible Individual for the service) to oversee and monitor the implementation of the plans as set out in this report.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing explained that it was a priority to ensure the safe reduction of Looked after Children (LAC) but it was equally as important that all children had access to timely assessments therapeutic interventions and accommodation care and support.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing outlined the current situation as indicated in section 4 of the report. She outlined the designs and plans for the proposed new development for the specially designed and purpose-built Children's Placement Hub, from which the newly implemented service model can be effectively delivered.

She outlined t Capital funding totalling £2.25 million has been secured for the development of the new Hub, broken down as below:

- A BCBC Capital Bid of £600k has been approved, which was originally included in the Capital Programme for 2018/19, and subsequently rolled forward as a result of the delays outlined above;
- £750k has been ringfenced from BCBC earmarked reserves; and
- BCBC have also been allocated ICF (Integrated Care Fund) Capital Funding of £900k, made up of £164k in 2020/21 and £736k in 2021/22.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing explained that additional funding had been applied for from regional ICF in order to fund the furnishings required. She added Implementing the new model had already resulted in recurrent MTFS savings of £245k, and the service was fully committed to the new model in the expectation that additional savings could be made in the future, as well as enabling a reduction in the dependence on high-cost Out-of-County placements.

The Cabinet Member Social Services and Early Help welcomed the report and expressed her pride in having a facility like this in the county. She explained that these children have had a wide range of experiences traumas and the new facility will provide the best setting for them and allow them to be catered to in a holistic, therapeutic and child centred way.

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The Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations asked for further information on the community engagement involved of this scheme.

The Head of Children's Social Care explained that plans were discussed with local Members and further plans were being made for discussion with the local residents and wider community. She added that a press release was issued and discussions with the developer had occurred and they had stated that further information via leaflets would be provided to local residents to outline the start dates and other milestones relating to the work. She added that the local MS and MP were also consulted and they supported the scheme.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- Noted the contents of this report; and
- Approved for the Head of Children's Social Care (in their capacity as Responsible Individual for the service) to oversee and monitor the implementation of the plans as set out in this report

673. SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP ORDER FINANCIAL POLICY

The Group Manager Placements & Provider Services presented a report which:

- Provided Cabinet with details of the proposed Special Guardianship Order (SGO) Financial Policy (which will support the updated Special Guardianship Order Policy).
- Requested Cabinet approval of the policy and delegate authority to the Head of Children's Services to implement the new policy.

The Group Manager Placements & Provider Services provided background on the Special Guardianship Order (SGO) and when it was appropriate to be carried out and provided figures on the number of ceased to be looked after children the since 2014. He explained that BCBC had a Special Guardianship Policy, but following a review in November 2020, the need for greater clarification was required in relation to the Financial Support that is available to Special Guardians and, in order to do this, a standalone "Special Guardianship Orders Financial Policy" was required. This was attached at Appendix 2 of the report.

The Group Manager Placements & Provider Services explained that a public consultation on the Special Guardianship Order Financial Policy was undertaken over a twelve-week period from 15 February to 9 May 2021 and the full Consultation Report was attached at appendix 3 with the summary of key figures highlighted in section 4.4 of the report.

The Cabinet Member Social Services and Early Help welcomed the report and was shocked with the significance of the drop in figures in the uptake of special guardianship orders and to see an increase in this would show a positive decrease in numbers of looked after children. She added that if children can be in a stable environment within their own family with the support for them and the special guardians then this would be beneficial for the children.

The Leader echoed this and stated that special guardianship was one of the most beneficial tools available to secure permanency for the children. He added that the policy would be reviewed to ensure that it was the most suitable it could be and make

changes if necessary. The Head of Children's Social Care added that the policy would be reviewed but also assured that any comments or suggestions that were made outside of an annual review would be taken into consideration.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet approved the Special Guardianship Order Financial Policy and delegated authority to the Head of Children's Services to implement the new policy.

674. **WELSH PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARDS 2019-2020**

The Group Manager Sports and Physical Activity presented a report which outlined the Council's performance against the Welsh Public Library Standards (WPLS) sixth framework for the period 2019-20

The Group Manager Sports and Physical Activity explained that on the 1st October 2015, BCBC transferred the operational management of a range of cultural services, including the library service, to the Awen Cultural Trust. The statutory duty to provide the library service and report on its performance remained with the Council, but Awen, under the terms of the management agreement, provided the Council with the information required on performance in relation to the standards to satisfy itself that the service is meeting the desired outcomes.

The Chief Executive of Awen Cultural Trust thanked the officers involved and was pleased to see that Awen Cultural Trust (AWC) was rated the best in Wales in a survey. He added that AWC had been working closely with BCBC for a number of years in the strategic planning of library services and how work had been carried out in investing in children and young people

The Chief Executive of Awen Cultural Trust outlined a number of changes that had occurred during the start of the pandemic. He stated that there was an increase in E book and E Resources being accessed during that time as well as 30% more people using the library services overall. He added that there was a further increase in people receiving books from home, which BCBC encouraged through the pandemic.

The Director of Operations at Awen Cultural Trust explained that Welsh Government for the next 2 years were not going to be issuing assessment reports as they had done in previous years. Instead, they would be providing analysis of how library services across Wales had responded to the pandemic. This was largely down to how library services have had to react and cope in different ways to the effects of the pandemic.

The Leader highlighted the importance of the mobile library service and how beneficial it had been during the pandemic, particularly for people who were shielding/self-isolating.

The Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations welcomed the report and agreed with the point that libraries were not just books, that they were a place for a number of resources as well as use of computers. She was pleased that the quality of the computers had been improved which showed that the strategy was about providing quality over quantity. She added that the outreach to younger people was really positive as reading was an important part of learning.

The Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations asked how the replacement of the older vehicle used for the mobile library had been in terms of operations and had there been any feedback or comments of the new vehicle. The Director of Operations at Awen Cultural Trust explained that the new vehicle had allowed for a more efficient service as well as improve the delivery to a wider scope of the community.

The Cabinet Member Social Services and Early Help welcomed the report and echoed the comments from the Cabinet member. She believed books to be an important part of learning and an escape for many so was pleased to see the service doing so well. She asked that with the increase in digital demands, were the plans to keep the same level of printed books or move towards the digital books.

The Director of Operations at Awen Cultural Trust believed that the demand for printed books was not going to drop in any significant numbers any time soon, but this was something that was regularly monitored. He added that it was on a year by year basis whereby the demand was looked at and how and where to invest funds. He added that this year, funds had been increased for e-books due to the pandemic and the library being unable open.

The Cabinet Member Social Services and Early help thanked the library staff for their hard work in the community

The Chief Executive commented on the second recommendation in the report and emphasised the importance of this moving forward. He explained that one of the challenges was to continue to invest in libraries and enhancing their role in terms of providing a community hub for working or for accessing particular information or services. The Leader added that moving forward, the service would need to adapt to needs and trends of what people want, and asked the for reassurance on this. The Chief Executive of Awen Cultural Trust confirmed that this was the case and provided an example of a Click and Collect service during the pandemic. He stated that this had proven to be extremely popular and would likely continue post-pandemic.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- Considered and noted the content of the report and Appendix 1 recognising a positive year of progress against the Welsh Public Library Standards;
- Noted that a further report would be submitted to Cabinet on making best use of resources to support library operations linked to Covid-19 recovery planning, including future venue availability and alternative approaches to delivering services.

675. **CAERAU HEAT SCHEME**

The Corporate Director Communities presented a report which:

- Updated Cabinet on recent activity in relation to the Caerau Heat Scheme
- Sought a decision on the way forward and;
- sought authority to submit a re-profiled scheme to the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO).

She explained that a report to Cabinet in January 2021 provided an update on the progress made in 2020 and the challenges (particularly financial), faced by the scheme at that time. It was agreed that an Options Appraisal would be undertaken to determine the viability and suitability of alternative delivery methods for delivering a low carbon heat scheme in Caerau that meets the requirements of the approved ERDF funding. The recommendations of the Options Appraisal would then be reported back to Cabinet.

The Corporate Director Communities explained that while this Caerau scheme was fully funded, there were a number of decision gateways set out in table 1 of the report, which allowed the scheme to close should there be not enough progress made.

The Corporate Director Communities highlighted the options that were reviewed in the options appraisal and these were considered against certain criteria. Further details were at 4.2 and 4.3 of the report. She added that the Decarbonisation 2030 programme board undertook a review of these information and determined that option (d) under section 4.2 above should be pursued and presented via a re-profile to WEFO. Option (d) was a 'blended option', comprising a set of small-scale low-carbon heat demonstrator projects, each developed to suit a different setting based on variables such as type of customer, housing density and proximity to resources. Further information was at 4.4 of the report,

The Corporate Director Communities added that subject to Cabinet's approval, the essential next steps in relation to the delivery of the small-scale mine water heat demonstrator are to secure the necessary agreements from the Coal Authority to progress with mine water exploration at the demonstrator site and to put in place all necessary licenses, permissions and consents to do so within the target timeframe of Autumn 2021. Further details were at section 4.7 and 4.8 of the report.

She outlined the financial implications as set out in section 8 of the report and reiterated that the scheme was fully funded up to the commencement of heat and power delivery.

The Cabinet Member Communities welcomed the report and emphasised the importance of this project in achieving the goal of decarbonisation by 2030. He thanked his former Cabinet Member, Councillor Richard Young for the work he placed on the project as well as the Caerau Members for their support and hard work.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- Approved pursuing the recommended way forward for the Caerau Heat Scheme as outlined in section 4.4 of the Report, being the delivery of a blended solution of a demonstrator mine water scheme, serving Caerau Primary school, a district heat network with an alternative heat source serving homes on the Tudor Estate and a private wire power supply from Llynfi Afan Renewable Energy Park;
- Delegated authority to the Corporate Director Communities, in consultation with the Chief Officer - Legal, HR & Regulatory Services and the Interim Chief Officer, Finance, Performance and Change, to submit the 2021 Scheme re-profile to WEFO based on the recommended way forward outlined in section 4.4 and the financial information in section 8.2; and,
- If the 2021 Scheme re-profile was accepted by WEFO, delegate authority to the Interim Chief Officer, Finance, Performance and Change to sign and accept the revised ERDF grant offer and funding letter from WEFO in consultation with the Corporate Director Communities and the Chief Officer - Legal, HR & Regulatory Services

676. **TRAFFIC SIGNALS MANAGEMENT**

The Corporate Director Communities presented a report which sought Cabinet approval to suspend the relevant Contract Procurement Rules and to enter into a service level agreement with Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC) for the management of the council's traffic signals.

She explained that the monitoring and management of traffic signals had previously been managed through the Joint Venture consultancy arrangement between Capita Redstart, Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC), Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC) and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (MTCBC).

She added that RCTCBC had taken 'in-house' the management of traffic signals, which resulted in a TUPE of staff from the Joint Venture to RCTCBC from March 2021. As a result the Joint Venture no longer has the capability to continue to provide this monitoring service for BCBC.

RCTCBC had offered BCBC the opportunity, via a service level agreement, to have BCBC traffic signals monitored by RCTCBC with no detriment in service level or cost of service which is circa £35,000 per annum.

The Corporate Director Communities explained that consideration had been given to our own in-house provision and this suggested that apart from the requisite monitoring software and equipment there would also be the requirement for additional staffing to carry out the monitoring and technical expertise in the adjustment of traffic signals. These factors alone suggested costs in excess of £35,000. She outlined the benefits of RCTCBC managing the traffic signalling service as listed at 4.3 of the report.

She explained that to enter into this agreement, BCBC would need to suspend the Contract Procedure Rules. Officers had considered the benefits of joint working with RCTCBC against the risks of not complying with the council's Contract Procedure Rules, and believe on balance that a collaborative working arrangement with RCTCBC represented both good value, maximised public safety and was proposed as the preferential way forward.

The Cabinet Member Communities welcomed the report and stated that the previous staff that worked on the joint venture had moved across to RCTCBC and had the necessary skills and knowledge to provide an effective service.

The Cabinet Member Social Services and Early help echoed the comments and believed that procuring from a partner and bordering local authority made sense given the level of expertise that they had on our traffic system.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

- suspended the relevant parts of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules in respect of the requirements relating to the procurement of the provision of traffic signal monitoring which RCTCBC would fulfil;
- delegated authority to the Corporate Director – Communities to approve the final terms of the service level agreement with RCTCBC and arrange execution of the collaboration agreement on behalf of the Council, subject to such delegated authority being exercised in consultation with the Chief Officer – Legal, HR and Regulatory Services and Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change.

**677. BRIDGEND TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION MASTERPLAN AND CONSULTATION
BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

The Corporate Director Communities presented a report informing Cabinet of the development of the Bridgend Town Centre Masterplan and the outcome of the public consultation process which concluded on 1st March 2021. The Corporate Director Communities also requested that Cabinet agree the proposed next steps in approving the final plan.

The Corporate Director Communities gave the background to the Bridgend Town Centre Masterplan. The Masterplan would be a dynamic long-term planning document that

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offered a theoretical layout, building on the Town's many strengths, to guide future regeneration and growth.

The Corporate Director Communities outlined what was included in the Masterplan and she explained that it was deliberately ambitious and set out a series of deliverable and aspirational projects over the short, medium and long term. The consultation took place over a 12 week period from 7th December 2020 to 1st March 2021. There were 1402 interactions received from a combination of survey completions, social media engagements, emails and letters and engagement sessions. In total, there were 51 questions and comments and opinions were also welcomed via social media. The webpage received 1,549 total link clicks, with the explainer video being viewed 10,673 times. Appendix C to the report was the full Consultation Report, detailing all responses to all questions and all comments and themes of engagement from social media and the engagement sessions.

The Corporate Director Communities provided some headline responses and reported that the vast majority of responses were positive and saw the opportunities presented as constructive for the Town Centre. She added that there would be a meeting in July with partners regarding the entrance to the railway station.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration reported that he had been involved in discussions with a number of different groups about the masterplan and the general public had been included in the consultation. The findings were consistent and all very positive and supportive of the concept.

The Cabinet Member for Communities reported that this was an ambitious report and plan for the town centre and he looked forward to seeing some of the outcomes as it progressed over the years.

The Leader explained that as demonstrated by the next agenda item, this was an example of ambition turning into reality. He was happy with the level of engagement and happy to support the Masterplan and that it would be aligned with the LDP. They were working closely with WG as one of the key partners and one of the key funding organisations and would continue to do so.

The Cabinet Member for Social Services and Early Help said that as one of the local members, she was aware of this on different levels. They would be working with local residents and were aware there would be issues and concerns raised which they would look at and consider. A number of residents lived directly surrounding the town centre area. Bridgend was a very vibrant town centre with a diverse, healthy mix of residents, traders and community facilities and they wanted to keep it that way.

The Leader added that it was heartening to see that even though they had lost some businesses from the town, other businesses were opening all the time.

The Corporate Director Communities assured residents that nothing would go ahead without planning permission and that as part of that process, they would consult widely again. There would be plenty of opportunity for residents to get involved and for the Council to understand their views.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration replied that it was not about bulldozers and that the term, Masterplan referred to a vision and taking the community forward to modernise what's there, use the heritage and take forward. He believed this was appreciated by local residents

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- Endorsed the consultation results and confirmed these results could be fed into the Consultation Note within the Masterplan document.
- Approved a review of the policy section within the Masterplan to ensure alignment with the new LDP.
- Welcomed a future report to sign off the final document and receive an update of progress made on key projects.

678. PROPOSED PURCHASE OF BRIDGEND TOWN CENTRE POLICE STATION

The Corporate Director Communities presented a report updating Cabinet on the progress that had been made on a potential purchase of Bridgend Town Centre Police Station at Cheapside with a view to supporting the aspirations of Bridgend College to relocate their main campus to the Town Centre, and to seek approval to progress with a grant funding application to Welsh Government (WG) to support the proposed acquisition and future demolition of the Police Station building.

The Corporate Director Communities explained that officers had been working alongside Bridgend College to support their aspirations to transform their learning environment. This started with their Strategic Outline Programme identifying the need for modernisation of the College's Cowbridge Road main campus through WG's 21st Century Schools programme. Cowbridge Road would be split into two schemes, a new STEAM academy (centre for Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics) at the Pencoed Campus and then relocate part of the provision to the Town Centre. In tandem, there were discussions with South Wales Police (SWP) surrounding their decision to consolidate their offices at their Cowbridge Road site, indicating that the Police Station at Cheapside would potentially become vacant from March 2022. The re-development of the Police Station site had therefore been identified as one of the key deliverable regeneration sites. At just 0.2 miles from Pen-y-Bont Train Station, there were considerable opportunities to promote active travel and the use of public transport to the site

The Corporate Director Communities explained that in April this year Bridgend College took a Strategic Outline Proposal (SOP) to Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme Investment Panel for consideration to be elevated into its current Band B programme. This was successful, and the College were now progressing discussions with their governing body to invest in the detailed development and design stage for a Town Centre campus. The proposal was for BCBC to acquire the current Police Station site at Cheapside and to demolish the existing building, with the aim of leasing the site to Bridgend College via a long term lease. This would enable the relocation of the remaining education provision at Bridgend College's Cowbridge Road campus to the Town Centre. Officers had progressed tripartite discussions with Bridgend College and SWP in respect of the sale and purchase of the site. A market valuation of the property in accordance with the Land Transfer Protocol provided a land value of £650,000 and all parties concurred with the value reported. A grant from WG's Transforming Towns programme was being sought to support the proposed acquisition of the freehold title, to regenerate an urban vacant site, to demolish the building and to secure and make good the site.

The Corporate Director Communities reported that she had just heard that WG Capital Panel had met and recommended that the grant money be approved so this would now be presented to the Minister for sign-off.

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The Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration stated that this was an historic day. He thanked the Regeneration, Education and Communities Teams for collaborating on this.

The Deputy Leader added that this was an opportunity to influence a key site in Bridgend and he was delighted to support the proposal.

The Leader thanked the team for their hard work on the Masterplan and this proposal.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- Noted the progress that had been made in connection with the proposed acquisition of the current Bridgend Town Centre Police Station at Cheapside and regeneration proposals to create a new Bridgend College Campus at the site.
- Authorised officers to pursue discussions with SWP on the acquisition of the current Bridgend Town Centre Police Station with WG Estate Co-location & Land Transfer Protocol
- Authorised officers to engage with WG on an application for grant funding to support the initial acquisition and future demolition of the current Police Station building,
- Agreed to receive a future report on progress of regeneration plans for the site in conjunction with Bridgend College.
- If recommended for approval to delegate the acceptance of a grant towards the proposed redevelopment of site to the Director of Communities and Section 151 Officer.

679. OBJECTION AND REPRESENTATION TO PROPOSED ACTIVE TRAVEL ROUTE - COWBRIDGE ROAD ACTIVE TRAVEL ROUTE

The Corporate Director Communities presented a report seeking Cabinet approval to proceed with the active travel route in view of the formal observations received in respect of the proposed improvements to the active travel route along a stretch of Cowbridge Road, in Bridgend, which formed part of the wider strategic Bridgend to Pencoed active travel route. The proposal was to create a permanent active travel facility, including improved crossing facilities, the widening of footways to become a shared walking and cycle route, as well as a reduction of the current speed limit along Cowbridge Road. This scheme was being funded by the Welsh Government under its Active Travel Fund programme. Observations to the proposals were received from local residents/adjoining landowners and local Councillors.

The Corporate Director Communities explained that two local Members and 19 local residents registered objections to the proposal, which had been summarised and included in Appendix 2 to the report. The proposed active travel route was considered vital as it was the final major link in the Pencoed to Bridgend active travel network which, in turn, would connect to the existing active travel network into Brackla, as well as NCN 885 which linked the town centre with Bridgend Railway Station, Broadlands and Tondy. Officers considered all the observations regarding the proposals and arrived at final drawings for the proposed scheme. In post engagement discussions with local Members, it was agreed to exhibit the final drawings at Civic Offices to enable local residents on Cowbridge Road and other members of the public to view the proposals that would finally be implemented.

The Group Manager, Planning and Development Services outlined the concerns raised by residents and the BCBC responses as detailed in the report. He explained that a number of audits and risk assessments had been done and the scheme was considered

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to be fully compliant in safety terms. The benefits of implementing the scheme outweighed the concerns raised.

The Team Leader – Policy Development and Transport provided further information regarding on street parking, the proposal for an extra 53m of space where residents could park over 2 sections and the pinch point designed so that users would be cautious and cyclists would dismount.

Cabinet considered the officers' comments in response to the observations and the final drawings to be exhibited.

The Corporate Director Communities assured Cabinet that the proposals were all very safe and this would be a compliant active travel route. The Leader stressed that safety was of the utmost importance and that safety assessments had been undertaken as on all schemes. The primary concern was for the safety of those using that route.

The Cabinet Member for Communities thanked the team for such a comprehensive report. Officers had clarified a number of points during their presentation. There was a similar example in Porthcawl and in all major cities across the UK. He had listened and read all the concerns raised and agreed with the proposals as presented.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration stated that this was one more step towards a complete alternative travel route covering the whole of the County.

The Deputy Leader asked officers to clarify their response to concerns raised by a Member that there were no viable alternatives and he asked what alternatives were considered and how were they discounted. The Group Manager, Planning and Development Services replied that they discounted the alternative to place the route on the other side of Cowbridge Road. That was the main alternative considered. There could have been other options but they could not offer the same capacity as Cowbridge Road. The Team Leader – Policy Development and Transport explained that when they did a consultation in 2015 and that was the route that was selected. Active Travel Guidance stated that the route must be direct and that settlements of 2000 or above must be connected by the most direct route possible and Cowbridge Road was the most direct route.

The Deputy Leader asked where the dismount signs would be located. The Team Leader – Policy Development and Transport replied that they would be placed around the corner of the property at number 79 and by the junction to the Asda link. WG accepted that these pinch points and constraints would exist. If this link was not provided, people would continue to cycle either on the carriageway or pavements and this would be dangerous. This scheme would give right of way to each user of the carriageway and this would be a big improvement over the existing situation. The Deputy Leader thanked the officers for their response.

The Cabinet Member for Social Services and Early Help shared that she was aware of residents who would use the route to get to work and that this would make a big difference to their safety and journey times. She asked how motorists would know when exiting the junctions, that they should check both directions. The Team Leader – Policy Development and Transport replied that there would be signs and cyclists had to stop if they saw vehicles leaving or entering properties. All road users had to be observant and careful. The Cabinet member for Social Services and Early Help asked if there had been any discussions with the college. The Team Leader – Policy Development and Transport replied that they did consult with the college and had held a session in the college. The college was a Travel Plan Champion and supported BCBC and they would work closely with the Council on both campuses.

The Leader referred to ward members concerns who had been diligent in representing their constituents and undertaken extensive correspondence with officers. One issue in particular was the deployment of an Active Travel Route along a series of junctions. Officers had said that there were examples in Wales and there was evidence that it was safe and people adapted and changed their behaviour. There were no guarantees but that design had been deployed successfully elsewhere. Also if the scheme progressed and there were issues, they would consider those and take appropriate action to mitigate those even though the design was considered to be safe. The Corporate Director Communities replied that it was a WG compliant Active Travel Scheme and it was quite normal to cross junctions and mitigations were in place. This was how it was delivered in Swansea and Cardiff and all other boroughs across Wales. If there were issues, it would be down to culture and changing behaviours and if necessary they would review and use guidance and signs.

The Cabinet Member for Communities suggested that the decision should be amended to reflect that Cabinet had noted and given due regard to the objections before deciding to proceed.

The Corporate Director for Communities confirmed that the purpose of the exhibition was to show that officers had listened to the concerns raised, amended and approved the plans and this was the final design that would be implemented.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- Considered the objections received and responses made to the proposed Cowbridge Road active travel route.
- Noted and gave due regard to the objections and authorised the implementation of the Cowbridge Road active travel route that would complete the final major link in the Pencoed to Bridgend active travel network.
- Approved the final drawing.
- Approved that the final drawing be placed on public exhibition for a specific period.

680. REVENUE BUDGET OUTTURN 2020-21

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change presented a report providing Cabinet with an update on the Council’s revenue financial performance for the year ended 31st March 2021. On 26th February 2020, Council approved a net revenue budget of £286.885 million for 2020-21. As part of the Performance Management Framework, budget projections were reviewed regularly and reported to Cabinet on a quarterly basis. The delivery of agreed budget reductions was also kept under review and reported to Cabinet as part of this process.

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change explained that the 2020-21 financial year had been a unique and complex year in managing the financial position of the Council primarily as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Significant changes had occurred throughout the year as circumstances altered and services were supported in different ways to deliver outcomes in the best way possible. A Covid-19 Hardship fund was set up at an early stage by the Welsh Government to the tune of £188.5 million which the Council was able to draw on for financial support. The Council was extremely successful at securing support for many of the additional costs incurred along with loss of income claims. Some of the results of this success materialised in the last quarter of the financial year giving the Council a more favourable end of year position than anticipated. Claims against the WG Hardship fund totalled £21.5 million of which only

£882,000 were disallowed. The other significant change between quarter 3 and quarter 4 was the £1.261 million contribution from WG in February 2021 in recognition of the reduced council tax collection rates experienced by Councils in 2020-21 as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Council was able to apply some of this funding to investments to help accelerate the recovery of the County Borough from COVID and to support its residents. The key areas of investment were outlined in Appendix 1 to the report and the Council's net revenue budget and final outturn for 2020-21 were shown in Table 1 of the report.

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change explained that the overall outturn at 31st March 2021 was a net under spend of £432,000 which had been transferred to the Council Fund, bringing the total Fund balance to £9.771 million in line with Principle 9 of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). Total Directorate budgets provided a net under spend of £5.479 million, and Council Wide budgets a net under spend of £11.726 million. The Council was in a position to utilise the related monies for 2020-21 to fund a range of initiatives to enable the Council to mitigate current and future risks and expenditure commitments to meet specific costs as in paragraph 4.1.1 and Appendix 1. The net position also took into account a net under spend of £1.702 million on council tax income during the financial year. The outturn position had also been impacted by unexpected grant funding and maximisation of grant funding streams since quarter 3 in Directorate budgets of over £2.361 million and £2.393 million in Council Wide Budgets - £4.754 million in total. She stressed that the Authority would not have been aware of these funding streams when setting and approving its 2020-21 budget and the majority of the additional grants were one-off as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change explained the ways that Covid 19 had had an impact on the council's financial position as in table 4.1.12 of the report. Tables 3 and 4 showed the claims submitted to WG in 2020-21 and the outcome of the claims. Table 5 showed the outstanding prior year budget reductions and table 6 was the monitoring of budget reductions. Table 7, Outstanding Budget Reductions included detail on why some had not been achieved. A summary of the financial position for each main service area was attached as Appendix 4 to the report and comments on the most significant variances were provided.

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change explained that the underspend from the additional monies significantly masked what was still an underlying deficit position in many of the Directorates and in many of the schools. Home to School Transport and Adult Social Care alone had a combined overspend of £2 million.

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change referred to the schools and the significant change in school balances from where they were forecasting £108k surplus in total to £8.4 million at year end and the reasons why they were received. They would be managed in line with financial protocols and spent in accordance with the terms and conditions. Table 8 showed the draw down, Table 9 showed the year end position and Table 10 showed the Total Reserve position.

The Leader explained that there were regular reports and the main change in the last quarter was the pay out from WG and additional grants. The report had been published and members could contact the officers if they had any questions.

The Deputy Leader added that the figures in the report were unreal and could not have been predicted when they set the annual budget. He thanked the Finance Team for the amount of support they had provided to local businesses and for the incredible effort they had put in. He also thanked WG because without their support, the authority would be in a very different position.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet noted the revenue outturn position for 2020-21.

681. **CAPITAL PROGRAMME UPDATE**

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change presented a report seeking agreement from Cabinet to present a report to Council for approval for a revised capital programme for 2020-21 to 2030-31.

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change explained that on 24 February 2021, Council approved a capital programme covering the period 2020-21 to 2030-31 as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). Since then a review had been undertaken of available capital resources, taking into consideration uncommitted funding in the capital programme, the anticipated year end revenue position for 2020-21, the position on earmarked reserves and revenue budgets available for 2021-22. As a result, a number of new capital schemes had been proposed by Directorates, which had undergone rigorous review and challenge by members of Corporate Management Board and Cabinet, before being submitted for inclusion in the capital programme. This report was only seeking approval for the inclusion of new schemes within the capital programme that was approved by Council in February 2021.

The capital programme approved by Council in February 2021 for the period 2020-21 to 2030-31 totalled £205.732 million, of which £116.147 million was to be met from Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) resources, including capital receipts and revenue contributions from earmarked reserves, with the remaining £89.585 million coming from external resources, including General Capital Grant. The total cost of the new schemes was £4,552,271 and this was broken down in Table 1, with Table 2 showing the breakdown of funding for the proposed new capital schemes.

The Deputy Leader said that there were some very exciting new schemes including the replacement of the CCTV system and the footpath and playground refurbishments.

The Leader added that there were some important investments that would enable the authority to progress, with all members support. It gave flexibility because the Capital Programme was heavily oversubscribed.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet agreed that the revised Capital Programme (Appendix A to the report) be submitted to Council for approval.

682. **SUSPENSION OF CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES AND AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR FINANCIAL ADVICE AND SUPPORT SERVICE**

Cllr Patel declared a prejudicial interest in this item as she was appointed to the Trustee Board of the current provider and left the meeting when this item was considered.

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change presented a report seeking approval to continue delivery of the existing Financial Advice and Support Service, to allow time for a fully compliant tender process to take place, including an adequate mobilisation period. Approval was also being sought to suspend the relevant parts of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs) with regards to the requirement to re-tender the contracts detailed in this report and to authorise the Head of Partnership Services to enter into a short term (4 month) contract with the current provider to ensure continuity of service

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change explained that the contract commenced on 1st October 2018 and was due to expire on the 31st March

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2021. The successful bidder was CAB in Bridgend. The contract had been highly successful and had helped a number of residents who had had difficulties in these areas. The contract was modified twice, initially to extend it by a two month period to 31st May 2021 and then extended for a further month to 30th June 2021.

The Cabinet Member for Social Services and Early Help stated that CAB had done a sterling job and a number of residents from her community had called on them for assistance for the first time ever in the last year. She appreciated the patience, skills and empathy that the staff had to help those in dire straits.

The Leader added that they needed to ensure the service continued until they could recommission it as part of this process.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- Approved the continuation of the existing Financial Advice and Support Service, to allow time for a fully compliant tender process to take place.
- Suspended the relevant parts of the Council's CPRs in respect of the requirement to re-tender the proposed contract;
- Authorised the Head of Partnership Services to enter into a contract for the provision of the Financial Advice and Support Service with the CAB until 31st October 2021.

683. REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES AND JOINT COMMITTEES

The Chief Officer, Legal, HR and Regulatory Services presented a report seeking Cabinet's approval for the appointment of Members to joint committees and the nomination of Members to outside bodies. A list of the joint committees and outside bodies concerned was appended to the report at Appendix 1. It was proposed that Members be appointed for a term of one year except where earlier revocation of appointment was appropriate. It was proposed that where Cabinet nominated on the basis of a Member's role within the Authority the appointment be attached to the role and not to the individual Member, e.g. Scrutiny Chair, Cabinet Member.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet appointed the requisite number of Members to the joint committees and other outside bodies as listed in Appendix 1 of the report.

684. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMMES

The Chief Officer, Legal, HR and Regulatory Services presented a report seeking Cabinet's approval for items to be included on the Forward Work Programme for the period 1 July to 31 October 2021 and for Cabinet to note the Council and Overview and Scrutiny Forward Work Programmes for the same period.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- Approved the Cabinet Forward Work Programme for the period 1 July to 31 October 2021 at Appendix 1;
- Noted the Council and Overview and Scrutiny Forward Work Programmes for the same period as above, shown at Appendix 2 and Appendix 3 of the report, respectively.

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685. **URGENT ITEMS**

None

The meeting closed at 18:40