

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD IN REMOTELY - VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON WEDNESDAY, 20 OCTOBER 2021 AT 15:00

Present

Councillor JC Spanswick – Chairperson

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

Apologies for Absence

SK Dendy, DK Edwards, T Giffard, RM James, B Jones and B Sedgebeer

Officers:

Mark Galvin	Interim Democratic Services Manager
Laura Griffiths	Principal Solicitor
Lindsay Harvey	Corporate Director Education and Family Support
Gill Lewis	Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change
Claire Marchant	Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing
Janine Nightingale	Corporate Director - Communities
Michael Pitman	Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Andrew Rees	Democratic Services Officer – Committees
Mark Shephard	Chief Executive

582. TWO MINUTES SILENCE FOR TRIBUTES PAID TO THE LATE COUNCILLOR PHILIP WHITE AND IN RESPECT OF SIR DAVID AMESS

Prior to proceeding into the business of the agenda, the Mayor asked Members and Officers to join him in a two minutes silence, as a mark of respect to the recent passing on of Councillor Philip White, former Cabinet Member and member of BCBC for the Caerau Ward and Sir David Amess, Conservative MP for Southend West.

The Mayor then added that words were not enough to express the extent of the very sad loss of friend and colleague Councillor White. He added that his thoughts were with his family at this most tragic time, to which he offered his sincere condolences.

The Leader then gave the following tribute on behalf of the Council.

'All colleagues will have been informed of the sudden passing of our friend and colleague, Councillor Phil White.

As you know, Councillor White was hospitalised with Covid-19. He fought it to the very end, but sadly was lost to the virus late last week.

Phil was passionate about people, his community, and his beliefs long before he became a member of the authority in 2008.

He earned a place in the industrial history and folklore of our nation when he played a crucial role as one of the leading coal miners in the buyout and re-opening of the Tower deep mine. Becoming the first colliery in British history to be owned and run by its own workers it was run successfully and profitably until all the coal reserves were fully mined in 2007.

I won't forget how, when the UK Government was conducting their 2006 energy review, he sat alongside Tyrone O'Sullivan and NUM Secretary Wayne Thomas to address the Select Committee on Welsh Affairs at the House of Commons. Phil was not backward in coming forward when he believed in an issue, and he certainly made his views known on that occasion.

It was shortly after this that he stood for election and became the representative for the community of Caerau and Nantyllyon.

Councillor White's qualities quickly saw him appointed to the position of Cabinet Member for Communities.

He continued to serve as a Cabinet member throughout the majority of the thirteen years he served as a councillor, and until he retired from the role last year, he was most recently our Cabinet Member for Social Services and Early Help.

This was, of course, only the tip of the iceberg when it came to Councillor White's public service.

Among the many responsibilities that he fulfilled, Councillor White was an enthusiastic and active council champion for both older people, and for children and young people. This including chairing our Corporate Parenting Committee and becoming a passionate vice-chair of our Fostering Panel. He was a keen mental health advocate and proud to represent us on Bridgend Care and Repair and the Welsh Local Government Association.

At Nantyllyon Primary, he was a chair of governors and the school described him in their tribute to him as a hugely loyal and supportive friend to staff and pupils, a dedicated and valued member of the Nantyllyon family and will be a huge loss to our school community.

Councillor White offered tireless service, and I know only too well that he did so while battling with significant health issues of his own. Despite this, he never once allowed it to prevent him from carrying out his responsibilities, and his dedication proved to be an inspiration.

In the days since his passing was announced, we have been inundated with messages of condolences and tributes from a wide range of partners as well as individuals across all political parties.

They have all made it very clear that Phil was a respected and well-liked elected representative, and a gentleman.

I won't quote any individuals, but to give you an idea of the regard in which he was held, the WLGA commented that 'Phil was a great character. Larger than life with great humour, he was hugely supportive of us, and he will be missed by his many friends'.

Similarly, the Cwm Taf regional partnership board summed up the thoughts of many when they said that Phil was 'passionate about supporting people. He worked tirelessly to make a huge difference, by representing, empowering and standing up for his community.'

Serving alongside Councillor White was a real pleasure and a privilege. He always offered fantastic support to his colleagues especially our staff and workers, served the people of the county borough to the best of his abilities, and will be greatly missed by all who knew and worked alongside him.

He will of course, most of all, be most deeply missed as a loving and loved husband, son, father and grandfather.

With the flag outside the Civic Offices in Angel Street flying at half-mast to mark the passing of one of our own members, all that remains for me to say is that, on behalf of us all, we offer our heartfelt condolences to Phil's devastated family and friends and especially to his widow Irene, his mother, his children, and his grandchildren'.

Further tributes to Councillor White were given in turn by the Deputy Leader, Councillors RC Collins, G Howells, CE Smith, RE Young, A Hussain, Alex Williams, MC Voisey, G Thomas and J Radcliffe.

The Mayor concluded, by stating that many wonderful words had been spoken by Members, in tribute to a dear colleague who would be sadly missed.

583. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were made:-

Councillor HM Williams personal interest in Agenda item 8, as Chair of Governors at Abercerdin Primary School.

Councillor Amanda Williams personal interest in Agenda item 8, as an LA Governor on Brynteg Comprehensive School.

Councillor N Burnett personal interest in Agenda item 8, as an LA Governor at Brynteg Comprehensive School as well as a prejudicial interest in the same item, due to a close family member being with an organisation that could benefit from the report. Councillor Burnett left the meeting whilst this item was being considered.

Councillor J Gebbie personal interest in Agenda item 13, as a member of the NJC Committee.

584. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of a meeting of Council dated 15 September 2021, be approved as a true and accurate record, subject to Councillor E Venables being added to the list of meeting attendees.

585. TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM:

Mayor

The Mayor started off his announcements to Council today by first of all making a personal statement as follows:-

It seems a recent comment I made in conversation with someone while using my own personal Facebook account has offended some members of the opposition as it has been copy and pasted by them across various pages on social media along with calls for me to resign. For the sake of clarity, my comment concerned the perceived rivalry between my role as Mayor of Bridgend County Borough, and the role of the local Bridgend town mayor. More specifically, I said that I was looking forward to 'winding him up' at a forthcoming event we were both attending, referred to him in jest as a 'minor mayor', and joked that his chain was 'probably bigger than mine'.

It was never meant to be a public post as I was under the impression this was a private conversation I was having, but as soon as I realised it was open to the public, I immediately deleted the post in order not to upset or offend anyone. No harm or insult was ever intended by any of this, and I am sorry if it caused offence to any individual or organisation as that was never my intention.

Since our last Council meeting there has not been a great deal of Mayoral visits, but I was pleased to be invited by Steve Brace of Bridgend Athletics to re-launch their re-furbished athletic track and facilities at Newbridge Fields. There were a number of sporting stars there, including previous Cllr. Eric Hughes who is still running on a regular basis after major heart surgery and now being in his 80's. Bridgend Athletics have produced a number of regional, national, world and Olympic stars over the years and long may this continue as they embark upon the next chapter in their development as a club.

I have been visiting recipients of the Mayors Citizenship awards from when Councillor Stuart Baldwin was Mayor, that could not be presented due to the pandemic. Last week it was a pleasure to visit Isabella Evans who at 15 years old has done some amazing work in learning sign language known as Makaton to help with her siblings and their development. She is clearly a star of the future.

Then it was Pencoed Comprehensive School and their Young Carers Group. It was great to learn of the support they are getting from the school and hearing some of their stories as to how they help and support their parents and siblings prior to school and after school made me realise how remarkable these young adults are who will surely grow into even more remarkable adults in the future.

Lastly it was on to Kenfig Hill RFC to present the award to Chris Leyshon who is doing some amazing work in raising vital funds and awareness of Prostate Cancer. It's the most common form of cancer in men in the UK, with 1 in 8 being affected and this increases to 1 in 3 if there is a family history of prostate cancer. There is no automatic screening of men in this country and therefore I would recommend that all men over 50 or anybody with a concern or family history, to log onto the Prostate Cymru website, where there is a simple checklist to complete and it will advise you whether to go and visit your doctor to request a PSA blood test.

The next round of Mayors Annual Citizenship Awards will soon be launched and nominations will be invited from Monday 8 November, next. The awards are open to people who live in the county borough, as well as groups and businesses based locally. More information is on the BCBC website where a nomination form can be downloaded and members will also receive an email with all the relevant information. The deadline for receipt of nominations is Friday 7 January 2022 and the winners will be announced in March 2022.

The Mayor would be hosting a Mayors Pre - Christmas Charity event on Saturday 27 November at the Heronston Hotel & Spa with a comedy stage hypnotist and music by Lee Jukes of Bridge FM. Tickets are £22.50 and include a buffet meal. Tickets are selling fast, so he urged those interested not to leave it too late to get one. The event is open to all and it would be great to see as many Councillors as possible along with your partners, family or friends.

In addition to this, he was in the process of arranging a Christmas Raffle and tickets will soon be on sale at £2 each with a first prize of £200 cash. He was looking to draw the winning tickets on Wednesday 15 December just after the Council meeting for that month. The Mayor had received great support with raffle prizes from a number of Bridgend Town traders and also Sony, Pencoed and Asda, Bridgend.

Your support for the above would be greatly appreciated he added, as there is no longer a charity committee or officer assistance in arranging any Mayoral fundraising activities for Lads & Dads and Bridgend Carers Centre, and therefore he hoped these events would be successful as his wife and he had put in a lot of work to date in arranging them, and would continue to do so for the remainder of their term as Mayor and Mayoress of the County Borough of Bridgend.

586. **TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE LEADER**

The Leader announced that everyone was shocked last week by the killing of a dedicated member of parliament when he was holding an advice surgery. In an act of terror, Sir David Amess MP was stabbed to death in a church in his own constituency of Southend West when he was just doing his duty, as an elected representative.

In the aftermath, very moving tributes were made to Sir David and his contribution to parliament and the way he championed Southend. Sadly, we also heard in that session of parliament, how commonplace abuse of our MPs has become, with all having received abuse, attacks and threats and many having received death threats.

Parliamentarians from across the chamber reminded us that what we have in common matters far more, we must cherish those bonds and shared values. A point was made consistently that whatever political difference we have, we are all here for the same reason, which is to try and do what we think is best for the people who we represent.

The Leader was thinking of this when he heard another news report, this time about the MP for the Rhondda who had received a death threat on the weekend from a member of the public. It was especially sobering to learn that an arrest of a man was subsequently made right here in the county borough.

If we are to learn anything from these tragic events, it must surely be the need for a greater focus on mutual respect and the simple ability to be able to discuss and disagree, without having to destroy or attack individuals or resort to the deliberate, harmful spread of disinformation.

He was not interested in that type of politics, and hoped that Members all agreed that there needs to be far greater focus on mutual respect, respect for one another as political colleagues, respect for one another as human beings, and respect for all of our democratically elected representatives, regardless of what party they may or may not belong to.

587. **ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21**

The Chief Executive submitted a report presented by the Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change, the purpose of which, was to present the Annual Report 2020-21 (at Appendix A to the report) for Council to consider and approve.

By way of some background, she explained that under section 15 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and in accordance with the related statutory guidance issued by the Welsh Government, the authority must publish its assessment of performance for the previous financial year before 31 October.

In March 2020, the Council published its new Corporate Plan 2018-23, revised for 2020-21. To take account of the impact of COVID-19 on priorities which was significant, the Plan was revised and some adjustments were made to it, which were agreed at Council in September 2020. The Plan as a result of Covid-19, then concentrated upon the more urgent priorities from March 2020 onward.

The revised Plan defined 32 commitments to deliver the three well-being objectives and sets out 46 success measures to monitor progress. However, to take account of COVID-19 and redirect resources, targets were removed for 14 success measures. At year-end, data was unavailable for 7 success measures, which are predominantly in education following the Welsh Government decision to postpone exams and use alternative arrangements to determine grades.

The Annual Report, prepared under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, evaluates how well the Council succeeded in 2020-21 in delivering its commitments and planned outcomes for the financial year, using success measures and other associated evidence.

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change confirmed, that the Council made 32 commitments to support the delivery of its well-being objectives. 13 (40.6%) of these were fully completed with 19 (59.4%) achieving most of their milestones.

Of the 46 indicators identified for the Corporate Plan, 25 can be compared against their target: 14 (48%) met their target, 2 (8%) were off target by less than 10% and 11 (44%) missed the target by more than 10%. Detailed information about the Council's performance was included at the report's Appendix A. The Annual Report during this period including the Council's performance against its objectives and the Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change, commended the report given the difficulties experienced by local authorities since the pandemic. The Annual Report showed some considerable progress against the Council's wellbeing objectives and its seven goals.

Once approved, she confirmed that the Annual Report will be published on the Council's website and shared with stakeholders. Hard copies of the report will also be produced and placed in the Council's public libraries.

The Leader commended the Annual Report for 2020-21 and all staff in BCBC who had worked tirelessly to make it so pleasing to read. He felt staff had gone over and above the call of duty considering the pressures of the pandemic which was still ongoing and gave examples of this in the different Council service areas. Where there was room for improvements, these would be pursued he added, including through not just the continued support of our employees, but also through Members such as those part of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

A Member supported the views of the Leader, but asked how BCBC compared against other 'like Authorities' in terms of performance.

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change, stated that for the last two years, many of the national indicators had not been collated for obvious reasons, ie this duty had been suspended. However, Officers had recently been notified that these (ie the PAM) would be retrospectively collected, but more to inform future service delivery, rather than necessarily as a comparison. She added, that some of the Education Indicators had not been collected for comparable and publishing purposes and due to this, it was not easy to make a comparison on a like to like basis as part of any local performance indicator information. These were more compared nationally however, through the issuing to Authorities of a table type format. So we were able to compare performance with other like sized local authorities here. The Council did however look at how other neighbouring authorities ran their services as comparisons, to ascertain if they were operating these in a more improved way than BCBC were process wise, so that we could adopt also this style of approach going forward.

RESOLVED: That Council approved the Annual Report 2020-21 (at Appendix A to the report).

588. **TREASURY MANAGEMENT - HALF YEAR REPORT 2021-22**

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change presented a report, in order to:

- comply with the requirement of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's 'Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice' to produce interim Treasury Management reports;
- seek Council approval the Council's Treasury Management activities for 2021-22 for the period 1 April 2021 to 30 September 2021 and the projected Treasury Management Indicators for 2021-22.

She reminded Members, that treasury management is the management of the Council's cash flows, borrowing and investments, and the associated risks. The Council is exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of financial risk are therefore central to the Council's prudent financial management.

The Council's treasury management advisors as Council was aware, was Arlingclose. The current services provided to the Council included:

- advice and guidance on relevant policies, strategies and reports
- advice on investment decisions
- notification of credit ratings and changes
- other information on credit quality
- advice on debt management decisions
- accounting advice
- reports on treasury performance
- forecasts of interest rates
- training courses

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change, confirmed that the TMS 2021-22 was approved by Council on 24 February 2021 with the Half Year Report scheduled to be presented on 20 October 2021.

A summary of the treasury management activities for the first half of 2021-22, was shown in table 1 at Appendix A to the report. Since the start of the financial year the Council has had surplus funds for investment, she added. The Council receives two instalments of Welsh Government core funding (Revenue Settlement Grant) during April at £12.6 million per instalment and was able to carry forward additional grant funding from 2020-21. As a result, the balance on investments at 30 September 2021 was £79.84 million with an average rate of interest of 0.06%. This was a significant reduction from the same time last year when the average rate was 0.24% and showed the impact of the reductions in interest rates as a result of the pandemic.

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change, advised that Council has not taken long-term borrowing since March 2012. The TMS 2021-22 anticipated that the Authority would need to borrow £30.37 million during the year. However, this was on an assumption that the Council would have £43 million held in usable reserves that it could use in the short term to finance expenditure. As at 31 March 2021 the Council's usable reserves stood at £114 million, an increase from £83 million as at 31 March 2020, which was not foreseen when the TMS was approved. The Council received £20.6 million from the Welsh Government Hardship Fund, which was more than had been anticipated during the year, as well as further additional grants from Welsh Government in the final quarter of 2020-21 of £8.9 million and capital receipts during the year of £2.9 million

Based on the current capital programme and the expected use of reserves allocated therein, it was expected that there will not be a requirement for new long-term borrowing in 2021-22. Details on forecast capital spend was provided in the Capital Strategy 2021-22, which was approved by Council on 24 February 2021 and the Quarter 2 Capital Monitoring report going to Council on 20 October 2021.

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change referred Members to Table 4 in section 4 of Appendix A, which detailed the movement of the investments by counterparty types and showed the average balances, interest received, original duration and interest rates for the first half of 2021-22.

Details of the estimates for 2021-22 set out in the Council's TMS, against current projections, were shown in Appendix A and these reflected that the Council is operating in line with approved limits.

The Council defines high credit quality as organisations and securities having a credit rating of A- or higher and Appendix B to the report, showed the equivalence table for credit ratings for Fitch, Moody's and Standard & Poor's and explains the different investment grades.

She concluded by advising, that CIPFA's Code of Practice for Treasury Management required all local authorities to conduct a mid-year review of its treasury management policies, practices and activities. The outcome of this review is that there are no changes required in BCBC.

RESOLVED: That Council approved the Council's treasury management activities for 2021-22 for the period 1 April 2021 to 30 September 2021 and the projected Treasury Management Indicators for 2021-22.

589. **CAPITAL PROGRAMME UPDATE - QUARTER 2 REPORT 2021-22**

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change presented a report, the purpose of which was to:

- comply with the requirement of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) 'The Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (2017 edition)
- provide an update of the capital position for 2021-22 as at 30 September 2021 (Appendix A)
- seek approval for a revised capital programme for 2021-22 to 2030-31 (Appendix B)
- note the projected Prudential and Other Indicators for 2021-22 (Appendix C).

She explained that the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (Wales) Regulations 2003, as amended, contain detailed provisions for the capital finance and accounting controls, including the rules on the use of capital receipts and what is to be treated as capital expenditure. They modify accounting practice in various ways to prevent adverse impacts on authorities' revenue resources.

As well as this legislation, the Council manages its Treasury Management and Capital activities in accordance with the associated guidance shown in paragraph 3.2 of the report.

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change reminded Members that on 24 February 2021, Council approved a capital budget of £62.363 million for 2021-22 as part of a capital programme covering the period 2021-22 to 2030-31. The programme was last updated and approved by Council on 21 July 2021.

This report provided an update on the following:

- Capital Programme monitoring quarter 2 2021-22
- A revised Capital Programme for 2021-22 to 2030-31
- Capital Strategy monitoring
- Prudential and other indicators

This section of the report provided Members with an update on the Council's capital programme for 2021-22 since it was last approved by Council and incorporated any new schemes and grant approvals. The revised programme for 2021-22 currently totals £76.600 million, of which £54.378 million is met from Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) resources, including capital receipts and revenue contributions from earmarked reserves, with the remaining £22.222 million coming from external resources, including General Capital Grant.

Table 1 in the report, reflected the capital programme for each Directorate from July 2021 (quarter 1) approved Council position to quarter 2.

Table 2 summarised the current funding assumptions for the capital programme for 2021-22. The capital resources are managed to ensure that maximum financial benefit for the Council is achieved. This may include the realignment of funding to maximise government grants.

A number of schemes had already been identified as requiring slippage of budget to future years (2022-23 and beyond). At quarter 2 the total requested slippage is £12.826 million. Details of these were outlined in paragraph 4.4 of the report.

Since the last capital report approved by Council in July 2021, there has been a number of new externally funded schemes approved and internally funded schemes, which have been incorporated into the capital programme, as itemised in paragraph 4.5 of the report. The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change gave a resume of these for the benefit of Members

In February 2021, Council approved the Capital Strategy for 2021-22, which included the Prudential Indicators 2021-22 to 2023-24, together with some local indicators.

Appendix C to the report, then detailed the actual indicators for 2020-21, the estimated indicators for 2021-22 set out in the Council's Capital Strategy and the projected indicators for 2021-22, based on the revised Capital Programme. These show that the Council is operating in line with the approved limits.

The Capital Strategy also requires the monitoring of non-treasury management investments and other long-term liabilities. The Council does have an existing investment portfolio which is 100% based within the County Borough and primarily the office and industrial sectors. The income streams are generally spread between the single and multi-let office investments on Bridgend Science Park, the multi-let industrial estates and the freehold ground rent investments. The total value of Investment Properties was £5.090 million as at 31 March 2021, confirmed the Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change.

The Council also had a number of other long-term liabilities which are included within the Capital Strategy, as specified in paragraph 4.12 of the report.

RESOLVED: That Council:

- noted the Council's Capital Programme 2021-22 Quarter 2 update to 30 September 2021 (Appendix A)
- approved the revised Capital Programme (Appendix B)
- noted the projected Prudential and Other Indicators for 2021-22 (Appendix C).

590. **MARKET SUPPLEMENT POLICY**

The Chief Executive presented a report, the purpose of which, was to seek approval of the Market Supplement Policy.

He explained that currently, there was no provision within the Council for the payment of market supplements. The implementation of the Council's Single Status Job Evaluation Collective Agreement in September 2013, meant that all former market supplements ceased with the introduction of the new pay and grading structure.

The Chief Executive advised further, that the Pay Policy agreed by Council on 10 March 2021 confirmed this position. It was, however, referenced that consideration would be given to the introduction of market supplements, in recognition of the challenges faced in recruiting and retaining staff in some professions on the current pay structure.

The introduction of the Market Supplement Policy would address the issue that the council's job evaluation scheme and grading structure did not take into account, market factors such as market pay rates or fluctuating demand for skills in the market place.

The Chief Executive Officer referred to the Market Supplement Policy, at Appendix 1 to the report, which would enable the Council to respond to any established recruitment and retention issues, by temporarily increasing the pay awarded to a post, without altering the determined job evaluation grade. This will ensure that the principles within the job evaluation scheme in maintaining equal pay are preserved.

He emphasised, that Market Supplements would be used as an exception rather than the rule and must be considered through submission of a robust business case, comprising clear objective evidence on all the relevant factors in place.

The Chief Executive concluded the report, by stating that Trade Union representatives had been fully engaged with the report's proposals and indeed had contributed to the development of this new policy. In the event that Council approves the policy, Trade Union partners have acknowledged that it will be necessary to agree an addendum to the council's Single Status Job Evaluation Collective Agreement accordingly.

The Deputy Leader supported the report, given that it addressed an issue the Council had been experiencing for some time, and that the Policy would assist in filling key posts it had previously had difficulty recruiting to, which would in turn contribute to making our services more resilient.

A Member whilst not being against the Policy, enquired how the Authority intended putting steps in place to try and dissuade members of staff in key posts leaving the Council for another Authority with the same type of policy in place supporting a similar job only offering a better salary.

The Chief Executive advised that if other Authorities were paying a better salary than BCBC were for a similar job, there was always a risk of that employer leaving. However, the Policy was aiming at recruitment and retention of staff and this was one of a few tools the Authority was putting in place, including enhanced payments for some jobs where there had traditionally been problems experienced around recruitment and retention.

A Member noted from the Policy, that the Market Supplement would apply for 2 years and then be the subject of review following that period. She felt that after the 2 year period expired, the employer in post may start then to look for a similar job with a more attractive package elsewhere. She further asked if the number of employers affected by the provisions of the Policy, ie those having an increased salary etc, would be monitored for example through CMB.

The Chief Executive advised that within the terms of the Policy there was a requirement for a Business Case for each case that would be based on its individual merits and signed off accordingly by the appropriate Manager.

The Policy and the employers affected by it would be regularly monitored by Corporate Management Board, he added.

The review period was included in the Policy in terms of salary as a temporary payment only, as otherwise this would have an impact on Equal Pay claims. There was scope to look at paying the market supplement for a longer period and/or other ways by which to look at retaining staff, if required. The Policy could be applied for jobs anywhere within the Authority he added, but in order for it to apply to any position, there had to be sufficient evidence base before doing so.

RESOLVED: That Council approved the Market Supplement Policy, at Appendix 1 to the report.

591. CHANGES TO THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report, the purpose of which, was to consider changes to the membership of the Governance and Audit Committee to take effect following the Annual Meeting of Council on 18 May 2022.

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change presented the report and explained, that whilst the Authority already has a Governance and Audit Committee, the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 made this a statutory requirement. The Measure makes a number of requirements in relation to the Audit Committee's membership, including the appointment of the Chairperson and the Committee's remit.

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, has now added additional responsibilities to the Committee linked with governance, including consideration of aspects of performance and complaints.

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change advised that the current membership of the Governance and Audit Committee comprises 12 Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) Members and one Independent (Lay) Member.

Members will recall that under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, it will be a legislative requirement from 5 May 2022 for one third of the membership of the Committee to be Lay Members. It is therefore proposed that the membership of the Governance and Audit Committee is changed to 12 Members consisting of 8 BCBC Members and 4 Lay Members and that Council approve the appointment of additional Lay Members to ensure it is compliant with the legislation from 5 May 2022 onwards.

The guidance recommends that a Lay Member should not be appointed for more than two full terms of a local authority. Any Lay Member with voting rights is subject to the provisions of the Code of Conduct for Members.

The next sections of the report outlined the recruitment process for Lay Members, which the Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change elaborated upon for Council, as well as the criteria to be adopted for suitable candidates to be considered suitable to be shortlisted for interview.

Shortlisted candidates would then be interviewed by an Officer Panel.

A Member sought confirmation that a Lay Member would have to be Chairperson of the Governance and Audit Committee following next year's Elections and, if so, would they receive training for the role. He also asked what level of remuneration the Lay Member would receive as Chairperson.

The Interim Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change confirmed that extensive training would be made available both internally from Officers and from an external provider, probably the WLGA.

The Group Manager – Legal and Democratic Services added that there would be an enhanced daily payment rate for the Chairperson and statutory guidance was still being awaited on the detail of this and on the training regime for Lay Members, including the Chairperson.

RESOLVED: That Council:

- (1) Approved the changes to the membership of the Governance and Audit Committee as outlined at paragraph 4.2 of the report to take effect following the Annual Meeting of Council on 18 May 2022;
- (2) Delegated the process for selecting and recommending appropriate Lay Members to an Officer Panel comprising the Monitoring Officer, Chief Finance Officer and Head of Internal Audit;

(3) Receives a further report advising of the appointments.

592. **INFORMATION REPORTS FOR NOTING**

The Chief Officer Legal and Regulatory Services, HR and Corporate Policy (and Monitoring Officer), reported on the Information Reports which had been published since the last meeting of Council.

The Chief Executive referred Members to the two Information Reports in question, contained in the covering report.

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

593. **TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING QUESTION FROM:**

Councillor Altaf Hussain to the Leader

Leader, we are all responding to competing needs, the environment and future of the planet at the same time as responding to a housing crisis. Can you confirm how you will balance the need to both develop our environment and reduce carbon emissions at the same time as engaging communities about proposed developments which are sometimes poorly thought through?

Response

The Leader confirmed, that in 2020 this authority declared a Climate Emergency and Cabinet created a Climate Emergency Response Programme. These actions highlighted that the authority has a role as:

- A community leader – to work with residents, groups and businesses in relation to their energy use and preparing for climate impacts
- A service provider – to deliver more resource efficient services that are less carbon intensive, encourage more resilience and support the most vulnerable in society.
- The manager of an estate – to ensure that the estate and its operations are as resource efficient as possible, to use clean energy and prepare for the impacts of climate change.

A target for Local Authorities in Wales to be net-zero carbon must be met by 2030. In response, the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) with local government Leaders have established a Decarbonisation Strategy Panel, supported by all 22 local authorities, WG, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and Cardiff University. The Decarbonisation Strategy Panel, alongside WG, have defined the areas of focus in reaching net-zero carbon as follows:

- Mobility and Transport
- Building and Energy
- Land Use and Biodiversity
- Procurement

The planning system plays a key role in tackling this climate emergency through the decarbonisation of the energy system and the sustainable management of natural resources (Planning Policy Wales 11, 2021).

The recently published Future Wales – the National Plan 2040 is the national development framework, setting the direction for development in Wales to 2040. It is a development plan with a strategy for addressing key national priorities through the planning system, including sustaining and developing a vibrant economy, achieving decarbonisation and climate resilience, developing strong ecosystems and improving the health and well-being of our communities. At a local level, national planning policy is reinforced via the Local Development Plan (LDP) which, is a high level strategy document which must be prepared by the Council. The LDP also expresses in land-use terms the vision, wellbeing objectives and priorities of the Council and sets the strategic direction for development in Bridgend. The LDP is currently being reviewed and consultation on the draft plan has recently ended and a consultation report will be prepared in due course.

The Welsh Government published its Welsh Public Sector Net Zero Carbon Reporting Guide in May 2021. This sets out detailed scope and boundaries of the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions and a consistent calculation methodology to determine the degree to which Public bodies are progressing towards reaching net-zero carbon. In developing a position of net-zero carbon for Council operations, this authority is seeking to undertake an innovative and radical decarbonisation programme across the Council and in doing so develop accurate, scientific and robust technical support to enable the delivery and achievement of this ambition. Work is well underway to complete a thorough GHG emissions scoping and emissions baseline review to support the authority to consider and set the boundary, period and scope of what will be included and excluded from the authority GHG emissions baseline. This will define and calculate a robust carbon footprint to take forward as the baseline for the reduction trajectory and net-zero carbon route map. This will be followed by the creation of a wide-ranging GHG emissions reduction trajectory that will adjust according to annual data to align this authority's carbon reduction pathway with international agreements on carbon budgeting to tackle climate change and limit global warming to well below 2 °C. This will result in the development of a net-zero carbon route-map with comprehensive Decarbonisation strategy and action plan that set out the objectives and actions required to achieve net-zero carbon. This will develop a robust pipeline of projects and activities with detailed assessment and prioritised opportunities based on carbon saving potential, costs and timeframes.

Focusing on the priority themes of (a) mobility and transport (b) buildings and energy (c) land use and biodiversity and, (d) procurement is not new for this authority. Amongst other recent activities in relation to these themes this authority has secured a grant from The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to develop The Bridgend District Heat Network, secured funding through the Re:fit programme to retrofit 18 buildings installing energy conservation measures such as LED lighting replacement, Solar PV systems and Building Managements Systems, secured funding to plant a targeted 15,000 trees in 2021/22 and been awarded a grant of nearly £500k from Welsh Government as part of the national Ultra Low Emissions Vehicle (ULEV) Transformation Fund to improve its electric vehicle charging infrastructure with the possibility of further funding of £300k via the Welsh Local Government Association. In addition to these projects, work is also progressing in relation to phase 2 property rationalisation via the updating homeworking policy and development of active travel routes, Metro Plus Schemes across the Borough and a Metro link bus facility in Porthcawl.

To oversee the current and future work which the authority has to undertake we have internally developed a new governance structure, the Bridgend 2030 Decarbonisation Programme Board. The Bridgend 2030 Decarbonisation Programme Board will receive direct engagement with a Citizens Assembly once established and a Steering Group of interested delivery partners. Direct engagement is held with Public Services Board (PSB) to establish synergies, shared resources and commonality of vision.

The land use planning system must balance the need for future growth, to provide the necessary homes and employment land to ensure a vibrant and healthy economy whilst protecting natural assets, ensuring sustainability and promoting a low carbon environment. One of the key objectives of the LDP is to create high quality sustainable places through sound placemaking principles and whilst there are number of large strategic development sites coming forward these must be developed in a sustainable way. This will include developing in locations close to or on the edge of existing settlements with existing infrastructure and good links to centres of employment and retail/leisure/education facilities (20 minute neighbourhoods), inclusion of sufficient open space/recreational areas with priority given to active travel and public transportation and the ability for homes and businesses to connect to district heat networks. It is crucial therefore to ensure that the replacement LDP is adopted in order to ensure that future sustainable development and avoid sporadic, unplanned development.

As such it is considered that the future development in Bridgend if managed correctly via the land use planning system and the LDP will make a significant contribution to meeting carbon reduction targets.

Supplementary question from Councillor Altaf Hussain

Proportionality of the LDP in BCBC is failing our valleys communities which is evident when one sees 14% or 1,360 of the 9,200 homes planned are situated in valleys on the North of Bridgend like Ogmore and Garw.

Why is our LDP process in Bridgend failing our valleys communities when levelling up of the valleys is a new political buzzword?

Response

The Chief Executive confirmed that the Local Development Plan (LDP) of BCBC when finalised has to be evidence based and credible, as it has to get through an inspection by Welsh Government. In terms of our valley areas, particularly in Ogmore and Garw, there were limitations for housing development infrastructure. Though smaller more limited housing sites were encouraged for build in these areas. There were examples of the construction of residential developments in valley areas, namely at Ewenny Road, Maestws and a small site at Bettws, he added.

The Corporate Director – Communities supplemented this by adding that within the LDP consultation had to take place on areas to locate Strategic Housing sites, as the local authority had to meet specific targets here, identified by Welsh Government. It was difficult currently to provide housing north of both the M4 and the Level Crossing at Pencoed, whilst money had been allocated by Welsh Government to build at the Ewenny Road development. Every encouragement was being given to site developers etc, so that they may consider providing smaller infill housing at Ogmore and Garw, in-keeping with the limited size of areas of land available there. She added that Planning and Development Officers were also looking at the Placemaking agenda and the value of smaller housing sites, as not everyone wanted to live within large housing developments. Areas for these were in the process of being identified. The Council were also placing a Bid for funding to remove the Level Crossing at Pencoed and put there in its place, a foot bridge and road bridge. This would improve public transport access there, as well as releasing sites for development, north of the M4 junction.

The above was echoed by the Leader, who added that both the Garw and Ogmore Valleys were narrower than the Llynfi Valley and were also dominated by mountains and hillsides with not a lot of area in between upon which site developers could build, due to the geography and topography of the land. He welcomed the views of all Members of

locations where housing could be considered for development. The Council had also received Social Housing grant funding he added, from Welsh Government.

The Cabinet Member – Communities further added that the Authority was looking at a ‘whole system’ Council approach, including the making good of empty properties and where there was supply and demand also, so market assessments would be analysed here, including those based on need. There was also difficulty building on contaminated sites, as had been the case in respect of the Ewenny Road development, until funding had been received to alleviate this.

Second supplementary question from Councillor Tim Thomas

Within the Valley Gateway locations there are smaller blockages and cases of over development that haven’t addressed certain over capacity issues, such as at the River Bridge, Abergarw Road and the A4061. Does the Cabinet Member – Communities have any comment to make on how these blockages could be retrospectively improved, since development has taken place at locations such as these.

Response

As this would be an expansive answer that would need to be investigated and fully prepared prior to a substantive response, the Cabinet Member – Communities advised that this would be put together outside of the meeting and forwarded onto Councillor Thomas and fellow Council Members, at the earliest convenience.

Third supplementary question from Councillor Rod Shaw

How can we address the imbalance of resourcing, that if achieved, could free up many of the available sites located in the Valley areas.

Response

The Corporate Director – Communities confirmed that there was not really an imbalance in terms of resources, as there weren’t any large sites in the Valley areas where development was currently proposed. BCBC were looking at instead, to develop housing at infill plots or through the provision of smaller developments (in perhaps more innovative ways) both in the locations of Ogmore and Garw in order to meet need and the requirements of the LDP. As part of the consultation here, anyone who may be interested had been invited to come forward if they had any suggestions of Candidate Sites where to build on.

The Leader added that expressions of interest weren’t just being sought from residents, builders and developers, but Registered Social Landlords also. All levels of interest needed to be looked at he added, based on sites that are available and the need for housing at various different locations.

594. **QUARTERLY DEBATE - "HOW WILL SOCIAL CARE BE FUNDED POST THE COVID PANDEMIC?"**

The Leader opened debate on this item.

He confirmed that COVID-19 highlighted just how essential social care is in supporting people to be as independent as possible. The issues facing social care – particularly the increase in demand, scale of funding pressures and workforce challenges – are just as pressing now as they were before COVID, with many having been exacerbated by the pandemic.

Increasing need for services is clearly evident post Covid, and as we reported to Cabinet yesterday, we are providing 8% more domiciliary care than at this time last year. This is as a result of delays in people accessing NHS treatment due to the pandemic, the deconditioning as a consequence of lockdowns and shielding and the impact of long covid. There is therefore a need for much greater funding to support greater levels of social care over the next 5 years

At its centre, social care is first and foremost about human relationships and supporting the care and support needs of individuals and their families, including older people, those that are vulnerable and those with complex needs, to improve their quality of life. An important feature of discussions about the future of social care should be around improving the quality of care and achieving outcomes for the individual, based on 'what matters to them'. This starts at the local level and should build on the strength of local authorities in their role in place and community, addressing the needs of individuals and families, building resilience and focusing on wellbeing.

Health and social care are equally important and are often inter-dependent in terms of ensuring flow through the health and social care system. Decisions and prioritisations about the future of each service should reflect that and the need to plan and work together, embedding far more preventative approaches to wellbeing that work closely with public health and housing. Councils are best placed to convene partnerships locally to bring these services together, in a locally focused and democratically led way.

When considering the future of social care and support, addressing the most urgent priorities should be the starting point, these include:

- The provision of long-term, sustainable funding that is sufficient to meet the predictable additional demands on social care driven by demographic and other pressures, including of course a rapidly ageing population.
- Additional funding is also needed to tackle unmet need. There is a need to place greater value on an approach to social care which is person centred and recognises the desire of people to continue to live in their communities, mainly in their homes, with meaning and purpose.
- Improving outcomes for children. There remain significant challenges in providing the right placements for children in care, particularly for those with the most complex needs locally. The past 18 months has also put many children and families under immense pressure and strain, with concerns about increased exposure to 'hidden harms' as well as lost learning and the impact of social distancing on children and young people's development and on their mental and emotional health and wellbeing too.
- value and investment in the social care workforce is also urgent, valuing the need of parity of esteem with NHS workers, including ensuring the workforce is appropriately and fairly rewarded for the invaluable work they do and have a pathway to career progression within a professionalised care sector.
- Integration of health and social care, where social care is at last seen as an equal partner to the NHS. This requires trusting and empowering local government to deliver and meet the needs of local communities and accelerating the move, away from health systems centred around hospitals to ones where health and social care systems focus on place-based communities; primary and community services and wellbeing, addressing people's physical health, mental health and social needs together.

When looking at the future of care and support, the Welsh Government also need actively promote the 'principle of subsidiarity' as a necessary underpinning feature of effective health, care and wellbeing and consider how this can be most effectively reinforced as part of the system.

The inadequacy of the current funding model for social care is now well known and there is a real need to invest time and resources to bring coherence and to design a system which is able to effectively meet both the demands which social care will face in the future.

A long-term, sustainable solution to the way social care is funded is essential if we are to deliver a system that is organised around the individual and their family which meets their needs and promotes their wellbeing with safe and high-quality services.

Given the immediacy of the severe economic challenges facing Wales and its communities, councils have previously called for an ambitious programme of investment in several capital programmes which could help rebuild Wales' community and economy. There remains a need to invest in our social care infrastructure. This is essential to help bring buildings up to modern standards. 'Extra-care' facilities have also been developed by a number of local authorities including in BCBC, at Maesteg, Ty Llwyn Derw, Ty Ynysawdre and Llys Ton, Kenfig Hill.

We believe there is scope for further investment in these if capital and revenue were made available at a national level. The 21st Century Schools initiative provides a model that could be used to support a jointly devised programme of work of long-term investment in the improvement and development of our social care infrastructure.

Local government has been broadly supportive of the commitments made in the Welsh Government Programme for Government that relate to social care and is committed to working with Welsh Government to achieve these ambitions. This includes the need to find a sustainable funding solution that enables us to meet our long-term care needs, something that local government has long been calling for.

The UK Government's announcement on 7 September which set out their plans for healthcare, adult social care and their funding plan, will result in Wales benefitting from around £700m from the additional funding raised. This additional funding provides the prospect of a significant opportunity for Wales to reform the social care system and help tackle the urgent priorities set out. Increased investment brings opportunities to develop sustainable long-term solutions.

Local government, through the WLGA, continue to meet with and discuss the need for long-term and sustainable funding with Ministers on a regular basis to help shape Welsh Government's thinking on how the additional funding could be used, reflecting local government's ambition and priorities for the future. In addition, WLGA Spokespeople for Health and Social Care continue to meet with the Minister for Health and Social Services to highlight the increasing concerns about the current pressures being experienced in social care and seeking discussions on potential actions now, that could be taken at a national level to help tackle and address the challenges being identified now across the Council.

As part of this we believe there is a need to develop a balanced approach that does not give one part of the system primacy over the other in dealing with the pressures facing social care and health in the short and long-term, with health and social care being treated with parity in the budget considerations, recognising that health and social care

are equal partners in the aspiration of delivering one seamless health and social care system for Wales, organised around the individual and their family.

Local government does not want to be in a position where we compete with health for investment in local services that address the health, social care and wellbeing needs of our citizens. We are partners and work together to deliver services, although we all know that we could and should do more to ensure there are seamless services from the citizen's point of view. But it must be recognised and addressed that the social care services that local authorities and our partners provide are not valued or understood by the public sadly, in the same way that citizens view the NHS – this is reflected in the fact that the public understand the need for further investment in health but do not call for the same investment in social care. We must continue to raise awareness with the public about the value of social care and its impact on people's wellbeing and independence.

A Member pointed out that every local authority and most providers have changed their recruitment practices. Having previously worked in Social Care, he explained how rewarding this is, ie the relationships you build, the staple feature you become in making a difference to people's everyday lives. In spite of all that, we were facing the biggest recruitment and retention crisis in living memory.

He advised that social care in this country has been underfunded for decades and the chickens are coming home to roost with an increasingly ageing population and significant numbers of people living longer with health needs.

A fair day's wage for a fair day's work, is fair. In too many situations, however, that simply was not the case. Social care colleagues in the past 18 months have done extraordinarily well, but their wages reflect differently. While there are many ethically responsible third sector and private providers, there are still that come where contractual obligations are less than favourable, for example employees having to pay for their own uniform, or the Real Living Wage not being paid.

He stated that pay needs improving, terms and conditions need improving and funding of the system needs improving.

It has come at no surprise, that successive UK governments have, since 1996, commissioned seven policy papers, five consultations, and four independent reviews into social care. Successive UK governments have also kicked recommendations into the long grass and not grasped the nettle in ensuring there is a unified health and social care system, where nobody falls between the gaps.

He explained there was a case here to look at, economies of scale.

The Leader mentioned that Councils are best placed to provide care and, while he did not disagree with this principle, he wondered if there is a half-way house whereby packages can be devised and delivered locally, but perhaps overseen more on a regional basis. He absolutely understood that bigger isn't always better in terms of service delivery and outcomes, but did think it needs analysis on a similar basis to Wales' economic footprint with regional deals.

He challenged UK and Welsh Governments to look internationally and learn from others, in particular, our neighbours in Scandinavia who properly recognise and their fund social care and health system, in this case by up to twice as much as the UK currently does. Hence part of the reason that Scandinavians enjoy the best quality of life in the world.

A Member pointed out that he was not an expert in Social Care, nor did he have the answers in terms of sustainable long-term solutions with regard to adequate support

being provided in this crucial work area. He too paid tribute to staff in due to their extraordinary efforts during the pandemic.

Whilst the subject of today's debate was how Social Care can be funded in future, Covid-19 had undoubtedly demonstrated the fragility of the Social Care system as a whole and that the experience should be a catalyst for some change.

Welsh Government had stated that future funding of the system would be challenging and that even if annual spend increased in the support of Social Care by 6%, as it did between 2017 and 2019, this was unlikely to meet future costs of demand for Social Care. Therefore, if this demand continues, as was expected, together with financial and workforce pressures also increasing, the need for a solution to the problems being experienced overall would be greater than ever.

He was aware that the Welsh Government had focussed on joining up Health and Social Care and attempting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse in the first instance. He therefore believed that with an ageing population likely to see a further increase in Social Care support being required, further funding avenues being sought for preventative measures to be put in place were critical for this Authority.

Audit Wales had recently published a report on Social Care which found that some Councils had increased their preventative services by starting a shift from Social Care per se, to preventative and community based provision. But to make this move successfully, there was a need to have sufficient preventative measures in place in the first instance.

He asked therefore, how well the Council was performing in preventative and community based provision, which ultimately over the longer term, will alleviate pressures in Social Care and also, how will funding be diverted in future to support preventative measures, while we still continue to be responsive to residents more immediate Social Care needs.

The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing confirmed that funding of Social Care was a political consideration which gave rise to very important political decisions having to be made, both in the past and the present time. This would undoubtedly continue to be the case also in the future.

One of her duties as a Statutory Officer, was to ensure that the Council had the level of resources required to adequately support the statutory duties in terms of providing Social Care, Safeguarding and Wellbeing services, the latter of which, where the Authority had made some significant progress in terms of fulfilling its Wellbeing Objectives, both through a Council and through some award winning and exemplar schemes obtained with third sector partners, an example being the 'Super Ages Scheme.' There was more work to do however, including putting together a Business Case in order to move to more preventative services, which are crucially important going forward.

In a professional capacity, she wished to advise that there was still a need to invest in Social Care provision as well as preventative services, brought about as a result of the pandemic and previous to this.

Pre-Covid-19, local authorities were still coming to terms with supporting an ageing population, the complexity of needs, through those individuals with a disability and those who as they get older in life develop health problems. As a result of the pandemic, now added to these issues were Long-Covid support requirements and delays in obtaining treatment for this and other medical ailments and diseases. People had also experienced long periods of isolation during Covid, as well as whilst shielding and had experienced de-conditioning as a result of being inactive for long periods during

lockdown. So a twinned track approach was needed in terms of investment in both Social Care and preventative services, in the short, medium and long term future, particularly since the pandemic.

Investment was also a priority she felt, to address the robustness of the Social Care workforce which was reaching a critical point, due to challenges regarding the recruitment and retention of staff across the board. Career pathways had to be developed to mitigate this, such as more effective pay and grading structures being put in place. ADSS Cymru have worked with officials from both Welsh Government and the WLGA, so that consideration can be given as to the best way to invest in Social Care in the future. This if realised, will give a better quality of care and lead then to better outcomes for those who received it.

The Leader picked up on some of the points made earlier in debate. He was pleased to confirm that regional solutions to regional problems surrounding Social Care were being looked at, through work which was effectively ongoing with Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board, in conjunction with Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Councils and the third sector, in relation to commissioning of services at that level, through initiatives such as ICF Welsh Government funding.

Issues such as terms and conditions of staff were also being looked at with the assistance of partners, including the introduction of the Real Living Wage, as a minimum salary offering to Social Care staff. There was a problem however, in that there was not the level of interest being shown by members of the public seeking employment, in this type of work as there had been previously. Also to compound that, the private sector were still offering better terms of conditions both in this and other similar areas of employment which had not helped the situation. This was resulting in some shortages in labour across the economy in what was a competitive environment. This all culminated then, in difficulties in terms of both recruitment and retention of the workforce.

In terms of financial support, the Leader highlighted that there was a genuine and real opportunity, with £800m funding having been committed to Wales and he felt that this should focus upon Social Care including preventative services, as well as the NHS, based upon reasons of parity and need. Statutory Social Care support avenues continued to be very much available he added and importantly, such support was also continuing to be provided in recipients homes and community settings also.

A Member said that she did not dispute some of the points made today on this item of business and she was conscious of the fact that Welsh Government have endeavoured to reward Health and Social Care staff in Wales. She seen care providers making an easy profit at the expense of public money, due to them refusing all the complex packages of care requirements that are needed. Debate today had included the disparity of pay and terms of conditions for Health and Social Care staff when compared to NHS staff. The NHS staff received 41 days leave entitlement each year and had been offered a 4% pay rise.

Local Government staff were paid under the Green book and we have been informed, that our employers are not negotiating any further regarding this year's pay claim, which stands at 1.75% which is unacceptable, given that if this was not at 5.6%, it would actually mean a pay cut. Most of the staff were also in part time posts also in the Health Service, she added.

A Member concluded by stating how important it was to maintain both the quality and quantity of staff in the field of Health and Social Care, as employees there faced tough conditions in terms of the work they had to do. A considerable number of them on top of these hard working conditions, were also working a lot of extra hours, due to the high

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sickness levels experienced in the workforce due to the pressures of work, that had inevitably increased as a result of the pandemic.

595. **URGENT ITEMS**

None.

The meeting closed at 17:32