

**COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY, 9 FEBRUARY 2022**

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD REMOTELY - VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS  
ON WEDNESDAY, 9 FEBRUARY 2022 AT 15:00**

Present

Councillor JC Spanswick – Chairperson

SE Baldwin	TH Beedle	JPD Blundell	MC Clarke
N Clarke	RJ Collins	HJ David	C Davies
P Davies	PA Davies	SK Dendy	DK Edwards
J Gebbie	RM Granville	CA Green	DG Howells
M Hughes	RM James	B Jones	M Jones
MJ Kearns	DRW Lewis	JE Lewis	JR McCarthy
D Patel	RL Penhale-Thomas	AA Pucella	KL Rowlands
B Sedgebeer	RMI Shaw	CE Smith	RME Stirman
G Thomas	T Thomas	KJ Watts	A Williams
AJ Williams	HM Williams	JE Williams	RE Young

Apologies for Absence

NA Burnett, A Hussain, SG Smith, JH Tildesley MBE, E Venables, SR Vidal, MC Voisey, LM Walters and CA Webster

Officers:

Deborah Exton	Deputy Head of Finance
Mark Galvin	Interim Democratic Services Manager
Lindsay Harvey	Corporate Director Education and Family Support
Janine Nightingale	Corporate Director - Communities
Michael Pitman	Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Mark Shephard	Chief Executive
Kelly Watson	Chief Officer Legal, HR and Regulatory Services

628. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

M Shephard, Chief Executive, declared a prejudicial interest in Agenda item 6, in his capacity as the Council's Returning Officer. He left the meeting whilst this item was being considered.

629. TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM:

Mayor

The Mayors Citizenship Awards have now been concluded and after receiving over 30 nominations it has been decided that 22 of these have been successful. The standard of all nominations received has yet again been very high and while they are all worthy of recognition, there are some that score higher than others. Nevertheless, all those who submitted nominations will be written to, thanking them for taking the time to participate in the process and there is nothing stopping them making another nomination next year.

The presentation of the awards were now being arranged through either a personal visit by myself or possibly a presentation in the Mayors Parlour subject to the appropriate risk assessments taking place and will all be completed by the end of March. I would like to thank the officers and also the Deputy Mayor who were involved in the process for their help and assistance and for taking note of my comments in relation to possible amendments to the scheme for next year.

Deputy Leader

As National Apprenticeship Week is running all this week, I want to provide a very brief update to members on how the council's own apprenticeship scheme is progressing.

Since it was launched in 2013, we have successfully supported 116 apprentices, many of whom have gone on to gain full employment with the council.

We currently have 27 apprentices working across departments ranging from business support and marketing to social care and procurement where they are making a valuable contribution.

The apprentice scheme allows us as a local authority to recruit new talent. It enables people to develop professional skills and gain valuable experience, all while earning a wage and working towards an accredited qualification.

Members may wish to let their constituents know about our apprentice programme, and to advise them to look out for future opportunities via the job pages of the corporate website.

I would also like to thank all of our apprentices for their hard work, particularly during the difficult circumstances of the past two years, and to wish them the best of luck with their careers.

Cabinet Member – Communities

I'm sure councillors will be all too aware of the problems caused by unadopted roads within the county borough.

These are streets that have not been adopted by the council where the upkeep remains the responsibility of residents and property owners.

A new pilot scheme from Welsh Government has provided £230,000 to bring a local unadopted street up to a high standard so that it can become the responsibility of the council.

Intended to enable councils and Welsh Government to better understand the cost implications for tackling the historical backlog of such streets throughout Wales, Ynyslas in Porthcawl was selected based on factors such as the poor condition of its footways and concrete road, and the number of properties it serves.

Now, footways and carriageways have been reconstructed, highway drainage has been repaired and further work is being carried out to ensure Ynyslas is suitable for adoption.

We have received some very positive comments from householders on the work, and it has proven to be a big success.

A review of other unadopted streets is underway, and we are reporting back on the scheme to Welsh Government.

Hopefully, this will lead to further funding being made available that will enable us to target further unadopted streets in the county borough, and I hope to bring you more news on this soon.

Cabinet Member – Social Services and Early Help

Members may have seen the recent announcement from Welsh Government that it is increasing the amount of support available to eligible residents via its household support fund.

Designed to help communities cope with the huge rise in energy bills, the £100 relief payment has now been increased to £200.

It is available to households where someone is claiming universal benefit, income support, working tax credits, means-tested welfare benefits, income-related jobseeker's allowance, or employment and support allowance.

Needless to say, I hope that all members are publicising this within our local wards and are encouraging all eligible households to apply for it.

The council has already contacted thousands of people whom we believe are entitled to receive the payment, and applications can also be made online through the council's 'My Account' facility.

There is a deadline of 28 February to make an application, and people who have already received a £100 payment under the scheme will not need to reapply as they will automatically receive the remainder within the next few weeks.

Nobody should be without warmth and heating during the winter months, and we hope that this will support some of the poorest and most vulnerable residents of Bridgend County Borough.

#### **Cabinet Member – Future Generations and Wellbeing**

A new short break programme is available for local unpaid carers which members may wish to let their constituents know about.

Launched in partnership with Halo Leisure, BAVO, the council and Welsh Government, the programme enables carers to access a wide range of facilities at Bridgend Life Centre free of charge every Tuesday between 2pm and 4pm.

With facilities ranging from a steam room, sauna and ice room to heated lounge beds and a toning suite, carers can make the most of specialist relaxation therapies and advice on diet and nutrition.

Most importantly, the programme includes replacement care which will be provided by SEW Carers Trust to enable unpaid carers to take a break from their caring responsibilities.

If members know of unpaid carers within their wards who would benefit from this free initiative, please ask them to contact Bridgend Life Centre and ask for the active Communities Support officer.

#### **Cabinet Member – Education and Regeneration**

Inspectors from Estyn have made a number of recent visits to some of our local schools, and I would like to draw members' attention to the outcomes.

Following visits in November 2021, Plasnewydd Primary School and Ogmores Vale Primary School have been judged by Estyn to have made sufficient progress against the

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education and training inspectorate's recommendations and have been formally removed from special measures.

Cefn Cribwr Primary School has also been removed from the list of schools requiring Estyn review after it was deemed to have made appropriate progress in respect of key issues for action.

Following an inspection carried out shortly before Christmas, inspectors have confirmed the school has developed sufficient capacity for bringing about further improvements.

Archbishop McGrath Catholic High School was also reviewed in December. Inspectors have noted that good progress has been made and are continuing to monitor the school for the time being to ensure that this can continue.

All other local schools have been classified as either good or satisfactory, and I would like to congratulate teachers and staff for their ongoing efforts.

### 630. TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE LEADER

We were pleased to confirm yesterday support for the Senior Open Golf Championship returning to Royal Porthcawl Club in 2023.

As Europe's only senior major championship golf tournament, this is a major event which brings with it lasting benefits for tourism and the local economy.

When we first hosted it back in 2014, more than 43,000 people visited the county borough and it was hailed as a success which generated millions of pounds for the local economy and drew an international television viewing audience with millions of viewers across the globe. We look forward to bringing you updates as the plans develop.

Another major development in regional tourism took a step closer to becoming a reality recently when the transformational Afan Valley adventure resort project, in neighbouring Neath Port Talbot but on our doorstep, was granted conditional planning permission.

The impressive new development is part of the Wildfox Resorts brand and has been likened to a valleys-set, self-contained Centre Parks-style holiday and leisure site.

Members may recall that the project was first mooted by applicants Afan Valley Ltd. However, it has since been taken over by the multi-national Salamanca Group which has a track record of 20 years of successful development, and they are driving the plans forward at a rapid pace.

It could create hundreds of new jobs and provide significant social and economical advantages which could also benefit Bridgend County Borough. I have asked for a detailed update and when that is provided, I will share it with members.

Finally, work is gathering pace on plans for how the site of the former Ford engine plant will be used in future.

Council officers have been working closely alongside the Ford Motor Company and the commercial real-estate and investment specialists, CBRE.

A meeting is scheduled to take place later this month where we shall be discussing plans for the proposed redevelopment of the site, timescales, marketing opportunities and more.

The intention is to enable the site to be brought to market within the first quarter of 2022.

As members know, until its closure the engine plant was a major employer within South Wales, and the 1.6 million square foot site remains a prime piece of commercially valuable land.

Both Ford and CBRE tell us that it is attracting strong interest, with at least one potential client having already made an approach about occupying the site.

We should know more once the meeting has taken place, and I will of course bring you further news as this situation develops further.

631. **ADVANCE VOTING PILOT SCHEME AT LOCAL ELECTIONS MAY 2022**

The Chief Executive presented a report, to seek approval to participate in the Advanced Voting pilots allowing voting at the Local Elections in May 2022 in certain Polling Stations on the Tuesday and Wednesday before Polling Day on Thursday 5th May 2022.

Following consultation with group leaders, he advised that he had informed Welsh Government of Bridgend's interest in establishing an advance voting pilot to open polling stations in specific wards on the Tuesday and Wednesday before polling day including a separate pilot within a school solely for eligible pupils in that school.

A decision was now required on whether Bridgend County Borough Council will now proceed with the advance voting pilot.

The wards chosen for the advance voting pilot are listed below, with their new names from May 2022, with the current wards shown in brackets: -

- Brackla East and Coychurch Lower [Brackla, Coychurch Lower]
- Brackla East Central [Brackla]
- Brackla West [Brackla]
- Brackla West Central [Brackla]
- Cornelly [Cornelly]
- Pyle, Kenfig Hill and Cefn Cribwr [Pyle, Cefn Cribwr]
- St Bride's Minor and Ynysawdre [Bryncethin, Bryncoch, Sarn and Ynysawdre]

The Chief Executive added that initial selection of the pilot wards was based on the turnout rates at the Local Elections in 2017, which identified 5 wards both ranked with the overall lowest turnout rates and the lowest turnout rates at polling stations. The table in paragraph 4.2 of the report showed the turnout and ranking.

He added that there were three additional wards from the Local Elections in 2017 that have been added to the pilot, due to the implementation of the Boundary Commission review which has combined them with existing wards identified for the pilot. These wards are Cefn Cribwr, Coychurch Lower and Ynysawdre.

Separately, because Cynffig Comprehensive school was a separate pilot within a school solely for eligible pupils in that school, the ward of Cornelly was added to the advanced voting pilot as the catchment area for Cynffig Comprehensive is almost entirely within the Pyle, Cefn Cribwr, and Cornelly boundaries and the majority of the pupils eligible to vote would be included.

The Chief Executive concluded his submission, by confirming that there will be 20 polling stations open from 7am to 9pm across the seven advanced pilot wards on the

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Tuesday and Wednesday, giving the electorate a choice of 3 days to cast their votes. In Cynffig Comprehensive, there would be 2 polling stations open on the Tuesday from 8.30am to 4.30pm solely for the purpose of the 16+ registered students. This will allow them to vote in an environment they are comfortable with and to encourage forming the habit of voting, although they could choose to vote in one of the pilot ward polling stations if they so wished.

The Leader welcomed the report and the Pilot and how the changes proposed would fit in with changes in society that have evolved over the years and that it was encouraging to see that 16 and 17 year old people would be able to vote in the Elections. He hoped the Pilot would encourage and increase voters.

RESOLVED: That Council approved participation in the Advance Voting pilot, as set out in the report.

### 632. LOCAL ELECTION FEES - COUNTY BOROUGH AND TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCILS

The Monitoring Officer presented a report on behalf of the Chief Executive, the purpose of which, was to seek Council's approval of the election fees proposed to be applied for the County Borough and the Town and Community Councils election from May 2022 as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

By way of background, in accordance with established practice, funding has been set aside for the local elections, and an earmarked reserve is currently available to meet the costs of the County Borough elections in May 2022.

In accordance with established practice, funding has been set aside for the local elections, and an earmarked reserve is currently available to meet the costs of the County Borough elections in May 2022.

The Monitoring Officer explained that additional administration costs were difficult to assess until the extent of contested elections is known, as this significantly impacts on the workload of the Electoral Services team.

Additional payments to Electoral Staff during recent major elections have ranged from £2,000 to £4,000 depending upon specific roles and responsibilities. It is therefore proposed that the Returning Officer be granted specific powers to determine the level of payments for additional administrative work once the election is complete.

A Member referred to Appendix 1 of the report and the fee for Polling Clerks set at £150. She felt that this was quite low for 15 hours of work.

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that there was some discretion regarding the setting of the various fees, however, she confirmed that the Electoral Manager would have looked at other neighbouring authorities for comparisons when setting the election fees. She would though ask him to contact the Member outside of the meeting regarding this point.

RESOLVED: That Council:

- (1) Approved the schedule of fees set out in Appendix 1 to the report
- (2) Delegated authority to the Returning Officer to determine the level of payments for additional administrative work in consultation with the Section 151 Officer.

**633. CAPITAL PROGRAMME UPDATE**

The Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change presented a report, the purpose of which, was to seek approval from Council for a revised capital programme for 2021-22 to 2030-31 (Appendix A to the report, referred).

She reported that the Council on 24 February 2021 approved a Capital Strategy, incorporating the Prudential Indicators for 2021-22, along with a capital programme covering the period 2020-21 to 2030-31 as part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The capital programme had been updated during the year with new schemes, amendments to existing funding packages and changes to delivery profiles. New grant awards, outcomes of tender processes and updates on existing schemes which need including within the capital programme had occurred since the programme was last approved by Council on 19 January 2022.

The Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change informed Council, that a capital programme covering the period 2021-22 to 2031-2032 will be presented to Cabinet and Council, on 22 and 23 February 2022 respectively, as part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2022-23 to 2025-26, alongside the proposed Capital Strategy for 2022-23 to 2031-32. She stated that there exist a number of financial pressures arising as a result of current market conditions, impacted by the pandemic and Brexit.

The Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change reported that the capital programme for 2021-22 to 2030-31 approved by Council in January 2022 is £212.439m, of which £118.094m is met from the Council's resources, including capital receipts, revenue contributions from earmarked reserves and borrowing, with the remaining £94.345m coming from external resources, including General Capital Grant. She informed Members that the following new schemes now need to be included in the capital programme, some of which are wholly or partly grant funded, along with others which needed amending:-

- Net Zero Carbon Fleet
- Cardiff Capital Region Metro Plus
- Ewenny Road Industrial Estate
- Porthcawl Regeneration
- Brynmenyn Children's Hub
- Community Energy Safety Programme / Arbed Phase 1
- ICT Equipment – Schools
- Welsh Government Un-Adopted Roads Pilot
- Heronsbridge Special School Additional Accommodation

There were also a small number of other amendments and changes to grant approvals, reflected in the updated capital programme.

The Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change concluded her submission, by advising that the revised Capital Programme, incorporating the schemes outlined above and expanded upon further within the report, were detailed at Appendix A of the report.

A Member referred to the works to Ewenny Road Industrial Estate and the £3.5m Cardiff Capital Region City Deal funding allocation towards this and he hoped that certain external factors had been looked at and that the remediation and infrastructure works on site would go to plan as per the necessary timetable, so as not to hamper progress in relation to the following development works planned for that site.

He also expressed his disappointment regarding the Arbed Project and the previous works undertaken. Therefore, he hoped that residents in the area as well as local Ward Members would be kept informed of progress regarding the remedial works, including the Procurement programme, use of materials being used for the works etc, so that the project is transparent and open to scrutiny during the lifetime (of the project).

In terms of Ewenny Road, the Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change, confirmed that this scheme would be monitored in terms of its progress, including any risks regarding costs and timelines for completion of each stage of the works required to be carried out there. All schemes included in the Capital Programme would be monitored for the same reasons and to secure all the different avenues of funding allocated to these. Any cases of delays or slippages to the projects and schemes would be reported back to Council for Members information.

The Chief Executive advised that he gave an explanation at yesterday's Cabinet meeting on the process to be followed in respect of the Arbed Scheme. Following the submission, and hopefully approval of a business case to Welsh Government, there would be engagement with local residents and local Members over the works to be undertaken including the timescale for these. The approval of the Capital Programme today would allow the for inclusion in the business case submission of the necessary Council funding.

A Member referred to the Porthcawl Metro Plus works which had an initial estimated cost of £400k. However, this had now been modified due to a more substantial build having been proposed, to £2m. Welsh Water had confirmed that there was a rising main where the bus terminal had been proposed to be positioned. He asked if works required with regards to this had been factored into the overall revised estimate for the scheme and why wasn't the Council aware of this rising main previously.

The Corporate Director – Communities advised that a site investigation had been initially undertaken before the works proposed had been designed, so the Council were aware of the rising main previously. This was discussed with Welsh Water where it was agreed that the Metro Link shelter would be moved a couple of metres into the site, so as not to interfere with the rising main. The extra costs were not in the main as a result of moving the shelter, but upgrading this and providing further works to make the Metro Link facility both more improved and eco-friendly, which will in turn, provide more benefit to the town than the one planned previously. The £2m would include the cost of moving the shelter away from the rising main.

£1m would also be committed to the Penprisk Scheme, added the Corporate Director – Communities, while in Pyle a commitment will be made to relocate the Railway Station in accordance with a provision of the new Local Development Plan (LDP).

A Member asked if any residents affected by the Arbed Project would be reimbursed in monetary terms, if they had paid themselves previously to make good the work deemed unsatisfactory when undertaken previously some years ago.

The Chief Executive, whilst very much regretting the position the residents of the properties affected at Caerau as a result of the previous failing wall insulation work found themselves in, and emphasising that it was important that the Council took responsibility for the role it did play, wished to stress that for the vast majority of work completed to these properties, the Council had not had any involvement in. The Council had no involvement at all in 79 of the 104 properties where wall insulation work was carried out, and which would now be eligible for the proposed scheme. He could not accurately respond to this question of any reimbursement at this stage, as the Authority had yet to submit the Business Case. However, he emphasised that the Welsh Government Funding for the works would in all probability, come from its Energy



Efficiency Fund, which would likely focus on the removal of the old cladding provided 10 years ago and replacing it with new cladding.

A Member noted that the delivery of the Metro Plus Scheme was time bound and therefore it was vital that the scheme be completed on time in order to utilise Council funding being allocated to this. He noted that a bid needed to be made to the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal by June of this year. He further noted that the public consultation had just been completed, so he asked if the above target date was possibly too ambitious.

The Corporate Director – Communities confirmed that the Council were applying to the Levelling up Fund for funding for the Pencoed Bridge project. Though we were working towards a bid being made by June 2022, the submission date of this could be subject to change. The Council were considering currently the outcomes of the consultation and working with Network Rail, with regards to the design of the bridge. Then the bid would be submitted around May/June time. The design works would not be completed by the time the bid was submitted, but this was not a requisite in terms of the scheme overall. The scheme was considerable in terms of its size and the extent of the infrastructure works required, so it would not be completed within the timescales of both the Levelling Up Bid/grant.

In terms of Arbed, a Member noted that £855k had been requested as part of the capital programme by the Council and on page 19 of the report pack, the delivery of the project including for the tendering and procurement proposals, would take around 2 years. He asked therefore, why the £855k was being front loaded this year, as opposed to being spread over this and next year to coincide with the estimated lifetime of the total project works. He also asked, would there need to be increased funding required for the project as and when the works progress and in terms of the bid for UK Government funding through its Eco Scheme, is this likely to be secured and, if so, how much would this be.

The Chief Executive advised that he agreed that the profiling of the allocation of £855k may need to be reviewed once the business case was approved, as it may be that less funding will be required in the first year as inevitably much of the year would be taken up with the engagement plan, surveying the homes and procuring expert contractors. It was unknown at this stage whether UK Government would provide any funding but Welsh Government continue to push this hard as the Community Energy Savings Scheme [ CESP ] was a UK Government sponsored programme and the majority of homes had work done under that scheme. He added that the revised total estimate for all the works in the project of £3.5m was now deemed to be reasonable with the capital cost of works to each property having increased in the last couple of years. External providers would undertake the work A Member referred to page 25 of the report pack and Unallocated Funds. He noted that there was a considerable variation in this figure in recent years varying from £3m in some years, to £300k in others. He asked why there was such a large variation.

The Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change confirmed that Unallocated Funds were part of the overall budget to deal with unknown pressures moving forward. These were often subject to change year on year, depending upon the local authority's settlements. Whilst there was an allocation in the Fund this financial year, this will roll over to next financial year if it was not required to be used. The Council like other authorities, were experiencing a considerable number of pressures financially speaking, such as an increase in material costs for projects and additional spend for the 2030 Decarbonisation Agenda, so this pot of money may be required to financially support these. She concluded by stating that this was also an estimated fund that would change with the course of time and demands.

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A Member asked if residents who may have suffered physically through previous works undertaken at their properties as part of the Arbed Project, would be financially reimbursed through a compensatory payment, for conditions such as, for example lung problems.

The Chief Executive advised that claims such as this would ordinarily be pursued through an Insurance Claim and that was not the purpose of this scheme and funding.

The Leader concluded debate on the report, by apologising to residents affected by works previously carried out as part of the Arbed Project in Caerau. He assured that the Council would work on a Communication and Engagement Plan with both householders and local Members in the area from the start through to completion of the new works.

He also assured Members that the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal was wholeheartedly behind the funding of the Metro Plus Project and welcomed other schemes outlined in the Capital Programme, such as Heronsbridge Special School, the Children's Hub at Brynmenyn and the Net Zero Carbon Fleet Project.

RESOLVED: That Council approved the revised Capital Programme at Appendix A to the report.

### 634. 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.

She referred Members to the two Information Reports in question, that were contained in the covering report.

In relation to the Member Induction Programme report, a Member noted that a considerable amount of training here may continue to be given remotely via Teams etc and she was aware that some Members, particularly in the valley locations, often didn't have a good broadband signal, whilst others were not fully IT literate. She asked if these barriers may prohibit certain Members in the new administration, fully participating in the Programme.

The Monitoring Officer advised that under the new legislation that will be coming in in May, it will be incumbent upon local authorities to arrange remote, hybrid and possible live meetings and training sessions and that Members will have the necessary equipment at their disposal to participate in these meetings. Those that were not confident in attending meetings remotely, would receive the necessary training in order that they could do so.

A Member reiterated previous comments that he had made at a previous Democratic Services Committee, ie that he felt it was important for Treasury Management training to be extended to all Members and not just those that were members of the Governance and Audit Committee.

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

### 635. URGENT ITEMS

None.

The meeting closed at 4:20pm